Iamblichus and the Foundations of Late Platonism

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Press, 1991), (with E.C. Clarke and J. Hershbell) Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), and (with W. Polleichtner) Iamblichus, *The Letters* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2009).

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INTRODUCTION

Born to a noble family in Chalcis ad Belum (in Coele-Syria, modern Qinnesrin) c. 240 AD, and studying with the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry—probably—in Rome, Iamblichus (Ἰάμβλιχος) established in his native Syria a philosophical school which constituted an important link in the Golden Chain of the Platonic tradition. His difficult and controversial works have provoked a good deal of attention on the part of historians of philosophy and religion and occupy a distinct place in modern scholarship. Hailed by some as the most sublime and dazzling metaphysician who changed the course of Platonism, he is deprecated by others as the most obscure though prolific author, who imported into his texts all sorts of superstition, oriental beliefs and magic, and eclectically fitted all this into his own bewildering metaphysical schema with a heavy reliance on triadic subdivisions.

On his death in around 325 AD, Iamblichus left to posterity a diverse body of writings, some of which are still extant in their complete form, while others are now available in the extracts preserved, most notably, in Stobaeus' vast *Anthologia* and in Neoplatonic commentaries. His writings influenced the later Neoplatonists, such as Syrianus, Proclus and Damascius, while his name became talismanic in the course of the pagan opposition to Christianity, most notably in the case of the Emperor Julian.

To the student of antiquity Iamblichus is perhaps best known as the author of a treatise *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*, originally intended to be an introduction to his 'Compendium to Pythagorean Doctrine' in ten volumes, and now valued as a major source for our knowledge of the Pythagorean tradition. Probably the most popular of Iamblichus' works, the treatise is much studied and translated into modern languages.[1]

A treatise, *On the Mysteries of Egypt*, a defense of theurgy more properly entitled *A Reply of the priest Abammon to the letter of Porphyry to Anebo, and the solutions to the questions it contains*, is equally popular among students

[1] To mention complete and relatively recent translations only, the treatise was rendered at least once into German (Albrecht 1963) and French (Brisson–Segonds 1996), twice in English (Clark 1989, Dillon–Hershbell 1991) and Spanish (Ramos Jurado 1991, Periago Lorente 2003), three times in Italian (Montoneri 1973, Giangiulio 1991, Romano 2006) and Russian (Poluektov 1997, Chernigovskij 1998, Melnikova 2002), etc. The edition: Deubner–Klein 1937, 1975[2]. For further details and bibliography cf. the paper by Eugene Afonasin, included in this volume.

of Platonism and classical religion. This difficult work has been regularly rendered into modern languages, and is now available in a new edition with an English translation and extensive commentary by E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon and J. Hershbell (2004).[2]

Another text in the Pythagorean sequence, entitled the *Exhortation to Philosophy* (*Protrepticus*), a work based on Aristotle's lost *Protrepticus*, which also includes an important extracts from an unknown sophist (the end of the fifth century BCE), the so called *Anonymus Iamblichi*, and various *Pythagorica*, has also received much scholarly attention, both in a 'disassembled' form and as a complete work, although no modern English translation of the *Protrepticus* exists.[3]

The third Pythagorean treatise *On the General Principles of Mathematics* (*De Communi Mathematica Scientia*) was edited by Festa and Klein (1891, 1975[2]) and translated into German (Schönberger–Knobloch 2000) and Italian (Romano 2006). A paper by Luc Brisson, included in this volume, signals the beginning of a new stage of research on the treatise.

Iamblichus' Commentary on the *Introduction to Arithmetic* of Nicomachus of Gerasa, edited by Pistelli–Klein (1894, 1975[2]) and recently translated into Italian by Romano (2006) definitely deserves more attention.

Other volumes of the *Compendium* are not extant, although Dominic O'Meara (1981 and 1989, 217–229) recently identified a text in Psellus as comprising excerpts from Iamblichus' *On Pythagoreanism* V–VII (*On Physical Number* and *On Ethical and Theological Arithmetic*).

Although from a different hand, *The Theology of Arithmetic*, a cento of passages from a lost homonymous work of Nicomachus of Gerasa and *On the Decad* of Iamblichus' teacher Anatolius, is a work of some significance for the history of ancient numerology and, in such capacity, also deserves more attention.[4]

The fragments of Iamblichus' commentaries to Plato's dialogues were independently collected and analyzed by Dalsgaard Larsen (1972) and John

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[2] Edition: Parthey (1857, 1965[2]); translations: three French (Quillard 1895, Des Places 1966 and Broze–Van Liefferinge 2009), two Italian (Sodano 1984, Moreschini 2003), one German (Hopfner 1922), Russian (Lukomskij 1995) and Spanish (Ramos Jurado 1997).

[3] For the complete English translation we still have to rely on that by Thomas Johnson, prepared in 1907. Besides, one can recollect German (Schönberger 1984), French (Des Places 1989), Spanish (Molina Ayala 1998) and two Italian (Periago Lorente 2003, Romano 2006) translations. Also note special works on *Anonymus Iamblichi* (Mari–Musti 2003, Brisson 2009). Edition: Pistelli–Klein 1888, 1996[2].

[4] Edition: De Falco–Klein (1922, 1975[2]). Translations: English (Waterfield–Critchlow 1988), Italian (Romano 2006), Russian (Bibikhin–Schetnikov 2009).

Dillon (1973),[5] while for the Aristotle commentaries we still have to rely on Dalsgaard Larsen's edition and various specialized studies. Clearly more work could be done in this respect.

Other minor fragments and testimonia concerning Iamblichus, scattered in various sources, still await their editor, while a fragment of an Arabic version of a Commentary on the Golden Verses, attributed to Iamblichus, has been recently edited and translated by O'Meara (1989, 230–232) and Daiber (1995). On the other hand, the doxographical sections of Iamblichus' original treatise *On the Soul*, preserved in Stobaeus' *Anthology*, collected and for the first time studied by Festugière (1953), are now comprehensively edited, translated and commented by J. Finamore and J.M. Dillon (2002).

Finally, Iamblichus as a public figure emerges from a collection of *Letters*, addressed to his friends, pupils and local dignitaries, recently independently collected and studied by J. Dillon and W. Polleichtner (2009), and D. Taormina and R. Piccione (2010).[6]

Clearly, thanks to recent scholarship, many old prejudices have been overcome and Iamblichus has become a more attractive figure for the student of the history of Late Platonism. The bibliography below is designed to illustrate the process of these advances and highlight the areas for possible further development.[7]

The idea of this volume was conceived at a seminar on Iamblichus which took place in the Irish Institute of Hellenic Studies at Athens on March 8–10, 2009, organized with the help of the Centre for Ancient Philosophy and the Classical Tradition (Novosibirsk, Russia) and the Olympic Centre for Philosophy and Culture (Athens). The director of the Irish Institute, John Dillon, presented to the public his new edition of Iamblichus' *Letters*, while the participants discussed Iamblichus' heritage against the background of the greater Platonic and Pythagorean tradition in Late Antiquity. This anthology contains developed versions of some papers given at the seminar as well as a number of studies written especially for this volume.

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[5] J.M. Dillon's book is now reissued with corrections by The Prometheus Trust in a new series "Platonic texts and translations" (2010). Also note a Russian translation of the fragments by R. Svetlov (2000).

[6] Cf. articles by J. Dillon and D. Taormina included in this volume. Also note Johnson (1907, 1988[2]), Molina 2005, O'Meara–Schamp 2006 (which also contains a fine selection of the letters by Iamblichus' best student Sopater), and Afonasin 2010.

[7] Many thanks go to A. Lecerf and J. Molina for consultations concerning French and Spanish bibliography.

Covering the totality of Iamblichean scholarship was certainly not our purpose, but nonetheless the contributors managed to isolate and treat a number of important issues, ranging from Pythagorean *paideia* to the metaphysics and hierarchy of virtues in Late Platonic philosophy.

The collection opens with two studies on the Pythagorean tradition. Eugene Afonasin highlights the wealth of information on Pythagoras and his tradition preserved in Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis* and presents them against the background of Later Platonic philosophy. He first outlines what Clement knew about the Pythagoreans, and then what he made of the Pythagorean ideal and how he reinterpreted it for his own purposes. Clement clearly occupies an intermediate position between the Neopythagorean biographical tradition, firmly based on Nicomachus, and that more or less vague and diffuse literary situation which preceded the later developments, and in this respect is a very good source, worth studying for its own sake and as supplementary material which can help to understand the great Pythagorean synthesis attempted by Iamblichus. Developing their variants of the "exhortation to philosophy" (*protreptikoi logoi*), these men were much concerned with the educational value of the Pythagorean way of life rather than biographical circumstances, designed to place the ancient sage in the proper cultural context.

In his contribution to the volume, Luc Brisson first outlines the content of Iamblichus' *On the common mathematical science*, the third book of the ten-volume compendium of Pythagoreanism, envisaged and partially accomplished by the Syrian Neoplatonist, and then offers a new translation of an extract from the treatise (chapter 18), interesting in at least two respects. The chapter is devoted to changes in the pedagogical technique, allegedly introduced by the Pythagoreans in the teaching of mathematics: namely, having taken numerology as a deductive system, they, according to Iamblichus, perceived it as leading towards the intelligible realm, after purification achieved by means of preliminary knowledge revealed in σύμβολα and αἰνίγματα. Thus Iamblichus introduces his famous picture of the Pythagorean School, distinguishing, on the one hand, between the so-called hearers (ἀκουσματικοί) and the scientists, or disciples (μαθηματικοί), whom he identifies with those on the inside (τοὺς εἴσω) and those on the outside (τοὺς ἔξω), and, on the other hand, equating the σύμβολα with ἀκούσματα. However anachronistic, this view was quite widespread in Late Antiquity (cf. the previous study for greater details). Besides, Iamblichus shows how "the Pythagoreans" derived the entire metaphysical structure from the One-Good and the first principles (Limit and Unlimited): they first produced numbers, which, by means of participation, largely dependent on resem-

blance, were then placed in relation to genuine realities (Plato's Forms) along with the rest of reality from the gods to matter.

Two subsequent contributions deal with the *Letters* of Iamblichus. John Dillon starts with general observations on protreptic epistolography in Antiquity and notes that, of the Neoplatonists, Iamblichus appears to be among those few who took interest in the possibilities offered by this genre. We have no idea who collected the letters, but it well could be that Iamblichus and his circle perceived them as a good introduction to philosophy for the uninitiated. While the style of Iamblichus' more technical works in general leaves much to be desired, the letters show the author of a lost treatise 'On judging the best type of speech' as a reasonably good stylist. Asking what makes a piece of writing a philosophical letter, Dillon answers tentatively that, unlike a treatise in the form of a letter, a real letter must be personalized, contextualized, and pitched firmly at the level of popular philosophy. Indeed, among the correspondents of Iamblichus one finds his pupils, the members of local aristocracy, and friends, although some of the correspondents cannot be identified with any certainty. The letters address the ideas of political justice and right education and revolve around the concept of fate. All forms of divine agency, from blind fate to personalized *tychai*, Iamblichus derives from one general source, a certain "most comprehensive principle of causality" (Letter 8, fr. 1), ultimately responsible for all cosmic order. Various means of instruction and, most notably, four forms of dialectical argumentation (Letters 5 and 13), should constitute the educational system which leads to knowledge of this causal principle (Letter 14). Dialectical reasoning is the major milestone on the way of self-knowledge and apprehension of true virtues, first addressed in general terms in Letter 16 and then specified in a series of letters, dedicated to such virtues, as *arête, phronêsis, homonoia, andreia*, and, on the contrary, *akharistia*. Although no traces of a very detailed hierarchy of virtues, introduced by Iamblichus and discussed by J. Finamore below in this volume, can be discerned in the letters, still "to the very culmination of all the virtues and the summation of all of them … one can come being led by justice" (Letter 2, fr. 1), while "multiform" virtue of self-control brings about a suitable apportionment among these of ruling and being ruled (Letter 3, fr. 1, and also 6, fr. 2). Good government depends on an advantageous combination of natural (φύσει) and social (νόμῳ) factors, on the one hand, and the personality of the ruler and his personal skills (τέχνη) and luck (τύχη καὶ καιρός), on the other. Appropriate concord and ὁμογνωμοσύνη is a sign of good government (Letters 9 and 6). On the contrary, good social contract is undermined if the ruler is found "in two minds toward himself" (διχογνωμονῶν) (Letter 9).

The two-fold nature of the human personality (soul), one part of which is affected by fate, while the other is free of its influence, is further discussed by Daniela Taormina. She offers a very detailed analysis of two relevant passages: the fragment of a letter addressed to Macedonius, *On Fate* (Letter 8, Dillon–Pollechtner) and *De mysteriis*, VIII 6–7. Both texts link the individual soul to two principles: one included within the order of fate, the other superior to nature and free from the order of fate. The latter principle does not make individual soul belong to the intelligible realm; nor does it infuse the soul with the intelligible. Rather, it reflects the metaphysical view of participation that Iamblichus adopts to describe the one-sided relation between inferior and superior.

In her study of Neoplatonic metaphysics, Claudia Maggi asserts that Iamblichus' doctrine of mathematical entities as *metaxy* follows from a background mixing different traditions: not only the Neopythagorean one, but also Platonic, Aristotelian and Plotinian ones. The hierarchy of numbers, presented by the philosopher, probably lies not only with Neopythagorean models, but also with Aristotle's attribution to Plato of the doctrine that there are two kinds of separated numbers, the *eidētikoi* and the mathematical ones, and with Plotinus' numerical structure of being. The Neopythagorean idea of the duplicity of *archai* mixes Old Academic doctrines, which can be traced back to Speusippus, and the Aristotelian notion of intelligible matter, also used by Plotinus. Plotinus' influence on Iamblichus is particularly visible through the doctrine of vertical causation. One of the most peculiar aspects of Iamblichus' solutions is that they carry out a synthesis capable of recovering, behind the name of Pythagoras, an agreement underlying all ancient philosophical tradition, and of catching a glimpse of such agreement in mathematical knowledge.

Gregory Shaw, who has done so much previously for conveying to the scholarly world a true understanding of the nature and role of theurgy in later Platonism, here contributes an insightful study of the status of sense-perception (*aesthesis*) in theurgic practice. The gods of theurgy, after all, penetrate the material realm with their influence, and theurgists are concerned to engage and embody these gods by means of prayer and ritual. This means that the aesthetic life of theurgists is necessarily the medium through which they contact the gods. Far from escaping from the material world and the senses, the theurgist employs aesthetic experience as the necessary path to deification, and the vehicle through which this deification occurs is the soul's subtle body, the *ochêma*. In theurgic ritual, the *ochêma*, purified by daily prayer, is filled with the light of the gods and becomes shining, *augoeides*: theurgists, in effect, become gods. The role of the *ochêma*

is not to lift the soul out of the sublunary realm; rather, the light-filled *ochêma* becomes simultaneously a vehicle for the descent of the god and the deification of the soul. As Shaw emphasizes, it is important for us to overcome our natural resistance to this way of looking at the theurgist's experience, and recognize that there is much in their thought-world that remains alien to us.

Next, John Finamore addresses the intriguing question of Iamblichus' contribution to the theory of the grades of virtue initiated by Plotinus, specifically in his treatise I 2 [19]. Plotinus was initially seeking to address the problem of the different, but analogous, ways in which the canonical four virtues manifest themselves at various levels of human spiritual progress. It is arguable that Plotinus was only proposing to distinguish between two levels of virtue proper, the 'political' (of the soul as immersed in civic affairs and the material life) and the 'purificatory' or *kathartikai*, proper to the philosophical soul that has diverted itself from worldly concerns. The 'paradigmatic virtues' above these are properly *paradigms* of virtue manifested in higher beings from pure souls up to gods. However that may be, Porphyry, in s. 32 of his *Sententiae*, which is an exegesis of *Enn*. I 2, chooses to discern fully four levels of virtue; and Iamblichus, in a treatise *On the Virtues* (now lost), caps this by adding three more levels, one below the Plotinian / Porphyrian levels (the 'natural', proper even to irrational animals), and two above, to accommodate the accomplished theurgist. All this John Finamore discusses with great lucidity.

The significance of the role of divine providence, love and will in the philosophy of Iamblichus is the theme of the essay of Crystal Addey, as well as his defense of the operation of theurgic prayer, religious invocation and sacrifice. Recognizing that theurgy has all too often in the past been aligned with magical practices, she argues that, on the contrary, the significance of divine providence within Iamblichus' defense of theurgic prayer and religious invocation serves to distinguish theurgy definitively from contemporary magical practices.

Svetlana Mesyats deals with the doctrine of divine henads, which she accepts as being initially developed by Iamblichus, and identifies as arising, in all probability, as the result of an exegesis of the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides*, in particular in relation to taking the predicates denied and then asserted of the One as characteristics of different classes of henads. She proposes a new reconstruction of Iamblichus' doctrine of henads, according to which they are neither products of the One nor some lower substances following after it, but rather different modes of its being a cause, insofar as the One anticipates in itself this or that particular order of Being.

Lastly, Adrien Lecerf focuses on an interesting connection between Iamblichus and the Emperor Julian. In the latter's Oration *To the Mother of the Gods*, which is a philosophical interpretation of the myth of Cybele and Attis, reference is made to an enigmatic 'third Demiurge'. Contrary to the usual identification of this figure with the visible Helios, or to attempted links with the theory of 'three demiurges' of Amelius and Theodorus of Asine, he suggests that it may be better to make a comparison with the system of Demiurges to be discerned in Proclus, where we find a hierarchy of Zeus, Dionysus and Adonis. Such a hierarchy of entities, he argues, on the basis of parallels with Damascius, may well go back to Iamblichus, and illuminate the revolution for which he is responsible in the field of Neoplatonic theology.

It is to be hoped that this collection of papers will contribute to a further deepening and refining of our appreciation of the contribution of Iamblichus to the development of later Platonism.

The editors wish to thank the authors for their papers, Jacqueline Jones who worked on the index for us, and the editors at Brill, especially Thalien Colenbrander. Their hard work and diligence is much appreciated.

Iamblichus of Chalcis: Texts and Translations[8]

De vita Pythagorica

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THE PYTHAGOREAN WAY OF LIFE IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND IAMBLICHUS

Eugene Afonasin

Introductory Remarks

In his *De communi mathematica scientia* Iamblichus famously distinguishes two orders of initiation within the Pythagorean School.[1] However anachronistic, this distinction reflects a profound change of attitude to Pythagoreanism which took place in the process of transition from the Late Hellenistic to the Early Roman period.[2]

Clement of Alexandria as a 'Neopythagorean Philosopher' is relatively badly served, however. It will be useful therefore to collect various observations on this issue in a single outline. Clement is not only a good source, which enhances our knowledge of the Pythagorean tradition. He also was one of the first Christian philosophers to adopt the ancient theory of symbolism and to sow it in the new Christian soil. In his works the conceptual system of the second-century Middle Platonists and Neopythagoreans and the method of allegorical exegesis of Philo of Alexandria were incorporated

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[1] 76, 16 ff. Festa. Cf. also *De vita Pythagorica*, 81. For text, translation and discussion see the article by Luc Brisson, included in this volume.

[2] As a part of the classical heritage, transmitted to Late Antiquity, the Pythagorean tradition is relatively well documented by the extant sources, fragments and *testimonia*, and much work has recently been done in the field. One can also observe the real renaissance of interest to philosophical biography in recent scholarship. This is especially true about the mysterious figure of Apollonius and the Neoplatonic philosophical biographies. The subject in general is covered in M. Hadas and M. Smith (1965). Also consider the numerous publications on Apollonius of Tyana, such as the progressive editions and translations of his *Letters*, Eusebius' polemical work and Philostratus' *Bios* (F. Conybeare 1950, R. Penella 1979, and Ch. Jones 2005–2006), now classical monographs on Apollonius by M. Dzielska (1986) and G. Anderson (1986), an account of scholarship on the subject by E. Bowie (1978), as well as more recent studies by J.-J. Flinterman (1995) and Th. Schirren (2005).

Cf. also J. Bollansée (1999) on Hermippos, as well as M. Edwards (1993 and 2000b), G. Clark (2000) É. Des Places (1982), A.-J. Festugière (1937), J. Dillon and J. Hershbell (1991), G. Staab (2002), Al. Oikonomides (1977), P. Athanassiadi (1999 and 2006) and D. O'Meara (1989 and 2006) on the Neoplatonic biographies by Porphyry, Iamblichus, Marinus, and Damaskius. One can also recollect studies on Diogenes Laertius and Hippolytus (A. Delatte 1922, A.-J. Festugière 1945, B. Centrone 1992, and J. Mansfeld 1992).

in the open texture of the Christian Weltanschauung. His distinction between fundamental belief (*koine pistis*) and the highest faith, on the one hand, and the scientific knowledge (*episteme*) and *gnosis*, on the other, became fundamental for the later Christian theory of knowledge. The highest faith and *true gnosis* were considered to be the final steps leading to Gnostic perfection, and symbolism played the central role in the process of its achievement. Clement believed that the student should be directed and educated according to a certain model (partially cast, as I shall argue, according to the Pythagorean paradigm). The education under the direction of a learned instructor required time, ability to listen and understand, and a special disposition towards knowledge, fortified by faith that the real knowledge could be achieved. In the process of *paideia* the student was supposed to acquire a certain state of moral perfection, in a symbolic way learning things, that could not be perceived otherwise, and exercising his analytical ability by means of natural and precise sciences.

Clement is not unique in his interest in Pythagoreanism. It is quite probable that, in his case, it was inherited from Philo (the best example being a community of the Pythagorean type, described by Philo in his *De vita contemplativa*), but equally possible is that the process went in both directions: Philo, the Gnostics, Clement (and other Christian philosophers), on the one hand, and Platonists like Nicomachus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, on the other, more or less independently created an image that agreed with the best ideals and expectations of the epoch. As a result, Clement's Pythagoras resembles the true Gnostic, while the lives of Pythagoras and such 'Neoplatonic saints', as Plotinus, Proclus or Isidorus are often reminiscent of the Christian *vitae* and even the Gospels.[3]

Working with Clement I have found it useful to compare his approach to the Pythagorean tradition with that of Iamblichus. The reasons, I believe, will become clear below, but what should be mentioned at the outset is that my interest is substantially based on the fact that, developing their variants of the "exhortation to philosophy" (*protreptikoi logoi*), these men were much concerned with the educational value of the Pythagorean way of life rather than (however important) biographical circumstances, designed to place the ancient sage in the proper cultural context. Besides, Clement

[3] A well known example is Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica*, 12, where Thales is said to proclaim 'good news'. J. Dillon and J. Hershbell (1991) rightly suspect a Christian influence here. Especially on the subject, see a useful though doubtful book by I. Lévy (1927) as well as the studies by M.L. Lagrange (1936–1937), P. Jordan (1961), D. Blanch (1972), J. Schattenmann (1979), D. Dombrowski (1987), R. Grant (1980), and J. Thom (1994).

clearly occupies an intermediate position between the Neopythagorean biographical tradition, firmly based on Nicomachus, and that more or less vague and diffuse literary situation which preceded the great Neoplatonic synthesis. Finally, as a relatively independent student of Pythagoreanism, freely appropriating his sources for quite external purposes, Clement often appears to be a good and disengaged *testis*.

What Did Clement Know about Pythagoras and the Pythagorean Tradition?

Let us now turn to Clement's writings, looking everywhere for the Pythagorean elements in them.[4] Clement speaks about Pythagoras in various contexts and dedicates a special chapter (*Stromateis* V 27–30) to the Pythagorean symbolism. No surprise that for the lover of mysticism Pythagoras was an ancient sage and religious reformer; a God-inspired transmitter of the spiritual tradition, which itself reaches back to the most ancient times. From the very beginning the Pythagorean School functioned as a secret society and was shrouded in mystery.

> Pythagoras from Samos,—says Clement,—was a son of Mnesarchus, as Hippobotus says. But Aristoxenus in his book the *Life of Pythagoras*, as well as Aristarchus and Theopompus say that he came from Tyre, Neanthes from Syria or Tyre, so the majority agrees that Pythagoras was of barbarian origin. (*Strom*. I 62, 2–3; cf. Diog. Laert. VIII 1)

He was a student of Pherekydes[5] and his *floruit* falls at the time of the dictatorship of Polycrates of Samos, around the sixty-second Olympiad [ci. 532–529 BCE].[6] But the real teacher of his was certain Sonchis, the highest prophet of the Egyptians.[7] Pythagoras traveled a lot and even "… underwent circumcision in order to enter the Egyptian shrines to learn their philosophy". He communicated with the best among the Chaldaeans and the Magi.

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[4] The works of Clement are extracted according to Otto Stählin's edition. The *Stromateis* I–III are quoted according to J. Ferguson's translation, occasionally altered; for the rest of Clement's text I use William Wilson's translation with alterations. A partial earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference "The Quest for Truth: Greek Philosophy and Epistemology" (Samos, Greece, August, 2000).

[5] *Strom*. I 62, 4. Cf. Diog. Laert. I 12 and VIII 2.

[6] *Strom*. I 65, 2.

[7] *Strom*. I 69, 1. Actually, Clement makes almost all the Greek philosophers Egyptians, and even Homer 'as the majority agreed' was of Egyptian origin (*Strom*. I 66, 1). So, Homer was a local man, while Plato, Pythagoras, Thales and many others, though from the other place, studied there. Apparently, the idea that he lived in a historic and intellectual centre of the world was dear to Clement's heart.

And their "common table (τὸ ὁμακοεῖον) symbolizes (αἰνίττεται) that which is called the Church (*Strom.* I 66, 2)". Pythagoras was enthusiastic about Zoroaster, the Persian Magus, and the followers of Prodicus' heresy claim to have obtained secret books of this prophet and religious reformer. "Alexander in his book *On Pythagorean Symbols* says that Pythagoras was a student of an Assyrian, named Zaratas".[8] In addition, he believes that Pythagoras has learnt many things from Gauls and Brahmans (*Strom.* I 69, 6–70, 1).

Clement is inclined to think that Pythagoras composed some writings himself, but gave them out as if they contained ancient wisdom, revealed to him for the first time. So did some of his students:

> Ion of Chios[9] in his *Treblings* says that Pythagoras attributed some of his works to Orpheus. Epigenes in his book *On Poetry attributed to Orpheus* says that the *Descent into Hades* and the *Sacred Doctrine*[10] are works of the Pythagorean Cercops and the *Robe* and the *Physics* of Brontinus.
>
> (*Strom.* I 131, 4–5)

Pythagoras was by no means a mere transmitter; he himself was a sage, prophet and the founder of a philosophic school:

> The great Pythagoras applied himself ceaselessly to acquiring knowledge of the future (*Strom.* I 133, 2). The Italian Pythagorean school of Philosophy, which settled in Metapontum, lasted here for a long time.[11] (I 63, 1)

Students underwent serious tests and exams before entering the school. And even after being accepted they for many years remained only 'hearers', or (ἀκουσματικοί), those who heard the voice of the master, but he himself stayed hidden behind a curtain. Only after many years of preliminary studies did they become initiated or "learned enough" (μαθηματικοί)

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[8] Hippolytus (*Ref.* I 11, referring to Diodorus and Aristoxenus) even retells the teaching of this Zaratas about two *daimones*, the celestial and the '*khthonion*'. Cf. Porphyry, *VP* 41 which seems to be based on the same source (Alexander Polyhistor).

[9] Cf. Diog. Laert. I 120. The testimony of this tragic poet (circa 490–422 BCE) and other early references to Pythagoras are conveniently assembled in Kirk–Raven–Schofield 1983, 216 ff., esp. on this text, 220–221.

[10] Ὁ ἱερὸς λόγος. Cf. ἱρὸς λόγος in Herodotus, II, 81. The historian says here that it was Pythagoras, not Orpheus who borrowed the sacred rites from the Egyptians and introduced them to the Greeks. Cf. Diog. Laert. VIII 7.

[11] Having accepted the notion of continuity of the Pythagorean tradition, Clement was quite comfortable with various Pseudo-Pythagorica; at any rate no mention of the Anti-Pythagorean revolt is recorded (for complete accounts of the historical Pythagorean School cf. W. Burkert 1972, Ch. Kahn 2001 and L. Zhmud 2011 (forthcoming); on the Pseudo-Pythagorica cf. H. Thesleff 1961, 1965 and 1971, W. Burkert 1961, A. Städele 1980, B. Centrone 1990, C. Macris 2002).

and accorded a privilege of seeing the Master himself.[12] If a candidate was rejected or accused of a bad deed a burial mound was erected in commemoration of his 'death'.

Imagine now, that we are students at the Alexandrian school allegedly founded by Clement's teacher Pantenus,[13] and listen to his lectures. What shall we learn about Pythagoras?

Clement would tell us that Pythagoras was a perfect example of righteousness among the Greeks who was worth following. But the road that leads to perfection is full of labor and everybody has to overcome it personally:

> Pythagoras used to say, that it is reasonable to help a man to lift a burden up, but there is no obligation to help him down.[14]

Pythagoras instructed one to clean one's body and soul before entering the road by means of strictly drawn dietary regulations.[15] One of the reasons for this is that the burden of food prevents soul from 'rising to higher levels of reality', a condition which, after certain exercise, could be reached during sleep or meditation. Maintaining self-control and a right balance is therefore absolutely necessary for everyone entering on the path of knowledge:

> 'A false balance (ζυγὰ δόλια) is an abomination in the Lord's eye, but a just weight is acceptable to him.' (*Prov*. 11.1). It is on the basis of this that Pythagoras warns people 'Step not over a balance (ζυγὸν μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν)'.[16]
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> It is said that the Pythagoreans abstain from sex. My own view, on the contrary, is that they married to produce children, and kept sexual pleasure under control thereafter. This is why they place a mystical ban on eating beans, not because they lead to belching, indigestion, and bad dreams, or because a bean has the shape of a human head, as in the line: *To eat beans is like eating your parents' heads*,—but rather because eating beans produces sterility in women.[17] (*Strom*. III 24, 1–2)

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[12] *Strom*. V 59, 1 (cf. V 67, 3). Note that Clement happened to be the first writer to use these terms.

[13] On the question of historicity of the school see A. van den Hoek (1997).

[14] *Strom*. I 10, 3; the very first reference to Pythagoras in the *Stromateis*.

[15] *Strom*. II 92, 1. For a detailed account of the dietary regulations and philosophy beyond them see R. Grant (1980) and D. Dombrovsky (1987).

[16] *Strom*. II 79, 2 and V 30, 1; cf. Iamblichus, *Prot*., 21.

[17] For this well attested Orphic fragment (648 Bernabé / 291 Kern) cf. also Diog. Laert. VIII, 34–35 (where Alexander Polyhistor, quoting from Aristotle, relates that abstention from beans is advised either because they resemble privy parts, or because they are like the gates of Hades …, or because they are destructive, or because they are like the nature of the universe, or, finally, because they are oligarchical, being used in the choice of rulers by lot), Iamblichus, *VP* 61 (a curious story on how Pythagoras taught an ox to abstain from beans) and 109 (on

> Pythagoras advised us to take more pleasure in the Muses than in the Sirens, teaching the practice of all form of wisdom without pleasure (*Strom.* I 48, 1).[18] Heraclides of Pontus records that Pythagoras taught that happiness is the scientific knowledge of the perfection of the numbers of the soul.[19]
>
> (*Strom.* II 130, 1)

The goal of the Pythagoreans consists therefore not in abstaining *from* doing certain important things, but rather in abstention from harmful and useless things *in order to* attain to a better performance in those which are really vital. As in the case with marriage (above), Clement generally disagrees with those who put too much emphasis on self-restriction. He has a good reason for doing this, as we shall see later whilst analyzing Clement's critique of some Gnostic ideas that are closely connected with the Pythagorean problematic. Pythagorean *abstinentia* should be based on reason and judgment rather than tradition or ritual. Thus κοινωνία καὶ συγγένεια unites not only all mankind, but also all living beings with the gods. This alone is the sufficient reason for abstaining from flesh meat:

> I think that it was a splendid statement of Hippodamus the Pythagorean: 'Friendships are of three kinds, one group arising from knowledge of the gods, one from the service of human beings, and one from animal pleasures.' These are respectively the friendships enjoyed by philosophers, ordinary men and animals (*Strom.* II 102, 1) … I personally think that Pythagoras derived his gentle attitude to irrational animals from the Law. For example, he declared that people should refrain from taking new births out of their flocks of sheep or goats or herds of cattle for immediate profit or by reason of sacrifice.
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> (*Strom.* II 92, 1)

Blaming those who justify unnecessary cruelty because of avarice or similar external reasons, Clement completely ignores the traditional Pythagorean explanation, based on the concept of the 'unity of all living beings', i. e. the doctrine of reincarnation. Clement certainly knows this, but definitely

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the fact that abstaining from beans has many unnamed sacred, natural and psychological reasons) and the very end of his *Protreptikos* (where a theological reason is given). Hippolytus (*Ref.* I 14, relaying on the above mentioned Zaratas) and Porphyry, *VP* 43 (also mentioning the Chaldeans two sections above) say that beans were created simultaneously with men and even suggest two experiments designed to prove this!

[18] Cf. the beginning of the last chapter of Clement's *Protreptikos*. In order to clean and harmonize the soul the Pythagoreans had a habit of playing the lyre before going to sleep, a fact also attested in Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride*, 384a) and Iamblichus (*De vita pyth.* 110–115).

[19] The whole passage II 131, 2–133, 7 is obviously taken from a doxography, which records various 'opinions of the philosophers about happiness'. Clement even indicates where he has finished copying, saying 'so much of that' at the end of the extract.

prefers another, more practical explanation, leaving metempsychosis to the Gnostics who, according to his opinion, are guilty of a distortion of the Pythagorean doctrine. Pythagoras is taken here as a good example, opposed to those who also claim to derive their views from the ancient sage, but tend to misuse and misinterpret them.

Among the sources of his information[20] Clement acknowledges Aristarchus, Aristoxenus, Heraclides, Hippobotus, Theopompus, Neanthes, Alexander, Epigenes, Didymus, and some others.[21] The extracts and comments on the Pythagoreans are scattered all over his voluminous writings and he does not fail to mention almost all the authors known to have written on the subject.[22]

We know nothing about the nature of Pythagorean works by Aristarchus.[23] Aristoxenus of Tarentum was a student of Aristotle, who is reported to have known the 'last generation' of the Pythagoreans (Diog. Laert. VIII 46; Iambl., *VP* 251). As opposed to his contemporaries Dicaearchus and Heraclides Ponticus,[24] he is valued as the author of the first 'serious' biography of Pythagoras and a balanced description of the Pythagorean way of life (including the accepted rules of behavior, dietary regulations, the role of sciences and music in educational discipline, etc.).[25] Two more early

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[20] On Clement's sources in general see: Vol. 4 (Indices) in the Stählin edition of Clement's works. Also there is a book by J. Gabrielsson, Ueber die Quellen des Clemens Alexandrinus (Uppsala, 1906–1909) in two vols.

[21] In order to see the context the reader is encouraged to refer to the passages cited above.

[22] With the important exception of Dicaearchus (who is mentioned once in *Prot*. II 30, 7, but in a different context), Hermippos of Smyrna (mentioned in *Strom*. I 73, 1 in relation with the Greek mythology; wrongly identified with Hermippos of Berytos, the author of *On the Hebdomad* referred to in *Strom*. VI 145, 3; cf. Diog. Laert. VIII 41 and Bollansée 1999), Satyrus (cf. Diog. Laert. VIII 40 on Pherecydes), and some others. Apollonius (either a Pythagorean miracle-worker, or an alleged author of a biographic work on Pythagoras referred to by both Porphyry and Iamblichus) is also never mentioned. Having noticed Numenius, Clement could know the work of another Neopythagorean philosopher Nicomachus of Gerasa (roughly the beginning of the second century CE; cf. Dillon 1996, 352 ff.), the major source for Porphyry and Iamblichus, but he never mentions the man and his writings (which does not necessarily mean he does not use him).

[23] Unless this in fact is a reference to Aristotle, as O. Stählin suggests (cf. Arist. fr. 190 Rose). A certain Aristarchus of Samothrace was an Alexandrian librarian (the second century BCE).

[24] In his dialogue *Abaris* Heraclides lists the reincarnations of Pythagoras and describes his underworld journey, while Dicaearchus in his *On the Greek way of life* portrays Pythagoras as a skilled sophist, who attracted people in Croton by his speeches.

[25] Quite naturally, Clement refers to Aristoxenus again in his discussion of the musical styles (*Strom*. VI 88, 1). For the fragments of Aristoxenus, Dicaearchus and Heraclides see Wehrli, Bds. 1, 2, 7. Carl Huffman is preparing a new collection of Aristoxenus' fragments.

historians, Timaeus of Tauromenium and Duris of Samos, are mentioned several times, but not in connection with Pythagoras.[26] The Hellenistic historians, Theopompus of Chios[27] and Neanthes of Cyzicus,[28] contribute to the question of Pythagorean origin and, in line with Hippobotus,[29] rely that Pythagoras' father Mnesarchus (not Mnemarchus as in Iamblichus) came from Syria or Tyre, not Samos (*Strom.* I 62, 2–3, quoted above). Epigenes was a grammarian of the Hellenistic period, quoted by Clement in *Strom.* I 131, 4–5 (above) and V 49, 3, in relation with the Pythagoreans.

Of later authors Didymus' *On the Pythagorean Philosophy*[30] and Alexander Polyhistor's *On Pythagorean Symbols*[31] (both no longer extant) are known to be also used by Diogenes Laertius, Nicomachus of Gerasa, Porphyry and Iamblichus. The Pythagorean Androcydes (mentioned in *Strom.* V 45, 2) had also written a book on the Pythagorean symbols, which was among the principal sources of the later tradition.[32]

Judging from the variety of the sources used, one is inclined to think that in the majority of cases the opinions of the Pythagoreans (along with

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[26] For Timaeus, cf. *Strom.* I, 64, 2, in the context of a long succession of philosophers; both Timaeus and Duris are referred to in I, 139, 4, on the date of the Trojan War and universal chronology, etc. Timaeus is a source for later reports about the Pythagorean community. He says, for instance, that citizens converted the house of Pythagoras in Metapontum into a temple, that Pythagoras' daughter (Theano?) led the chorus of woman in Croton, and that all Pythagorean converts had to undergo careful examination before being allowed to see the master face to face. Cf. Porphyry, *VP* 4, Diog. Laert. VIII 10–11, Athenaeus, IV 56, etc. Duris of Samos records a story about Pythagoras' son Arimnestus, who erected a dedicatory monument in the temple of Hera with an epigram and seven mathematical formulas (σοφίας). A certain musicologist Simos had stolen one of the κανών and destroyed the monument (Porphyry, *VP* 3; cf. Burkert 1972, 455). This instance of κλοπή would definitely interest Clement who produced a huge list of similar stories at the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth books of the *Stromateis*.

[27] A historian, the fourth century BCE. For details cf. FGrHist 115 and M. Flower 1994.

[28] The end of the fourth century BCE. He knew Plato's secretary Philippus of Opus and is used in Philodemus' *Academica*. For details cf. FGrHist 84 and S. Schorn 2007.

[29] A historian of philosophy, of the third century BCE.

[30] (Arius) Didymus is also used by Diogenes Laertius, Eusebius and Stobaeus. Hermann Diels has identified him with the Stoic philosopher and confidant of Augustus, Arius of Alexandria (around 70–75 BCE). 'During the last 15 years there has been a gradual recognition that the hypothesis has its shaky aspects, but no direct challenge was mounted',—note J. Mansfeld and D. Runia in their *Aetiana* (1997, 240; esp. on Clement 239, ftnt 129).

[31] The historian Alexander (the first century BC) had also written the *Succession of Philosophers*, from which Diogenes Laertius (VIII, 25) derived his famous account of the Pythagorean doctrine. See A.-J. Festugière (1945).

[32] Androcydes lived in the third century, or later, as W. Burkert suggests (1972, 176, 174). Cf. also P. Corssen (1912).

those of many other thinkers) had traveled to the pages of Clement's works directly from various collections. Therefore, in order to get the information Clement gives us, one could, I would suggest, simply consult a good anthology and possibly (but not necessarily, a biography) without undertaking actual studies of more extensive Pythagorean works.[33] It goes without saying that the history of the Pythagorean school and the life-story of Pythagoras had already become an established legend long before Clement's time and (probably, though not necessarily) the original sources were no longer available. But, given the keen interest of Clement in Pythagoreanism, we should not rule out the possibility that he carried out some study himself and consulted more specialized books. It will be safe to presuppose, I trust, that, in addition to an extensive doxography and isolated records, picked up in writings of various origin (mostly Platonic, Gnostic, and Christian), he must have had at his disposal a *Vita of Pythagoras* (quite possibly, that by Nicomachus or another Neopythagorean variation) and some Pseudo-Pythagorica (these two can easily, by the way, go together). A source used by Clement in his account of the Pythagorean symbolism is close to that utilized by Plutarch.[34]

What Did Clement Make of the Pythagorean Ideas?

The texts quoted and pointed out above, combined with some other, quite numerous, instances, where Clement makes use of traditional Pythagorean wisdom, signal clearly that these ideas mean for him something more than just accidental references. Although sometimes he almost automatically copies from anthologies, in the majority of cases, the Pythagoreans (second only to Plato) seem to supply him with necessary means to state his own position in a more conventional way.

The Pythagorean community, with its specific regime, walks alone (κατὰ μόνας), common table and temple, ascetic practice, abstinence, ἐχεμυθία, ἀπάθεια, μετάνοια,[35] ἐγκράτεια, etc., resembles greatly the Christian monastic

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[33] Indeed he refers to a certain collection of biographies by Neanthes. Some list of philosophical successions must have also been used (a long account of philosophic schools in *Strom*. I 59–65 is a perfect example of this sort).

[34] In concentrated form the examples of Pythagorean 'symbols' and their interpretation see in Clement's *Strom*. V 27, 1–30, 5 and the final sections of Iamblichus' *Protreptikos*. For detailed analysis cf. A. Le Boulluec (1981, vol. II, p. 114 ff.) and E. Afonasin (2003, 161 ff., 311 ff.). See also an important study by J. Thom 1994.

[35] Cf. e.g. *Strom*. V 67, 1. This 'repentance' recalls Plato's περιαγωγὴ (*Rep*. VII 518 d 4).

ideal, definitely known to Clement.[36] He adds a great deal of Pythagorean coloring, depicting a portrait of his true Gnostic first at the end of the *Stromata* VI, and then, in enormous detail, in *Stromata* VII.

Who are, according to Clement, the 'Pythagoreans'? We find him referring to and quoting from Cercops (*Strom*. I 139, 3),[37] Brontinus (I 131, 1 above), Theano (I 80, 4; IV 44, 2; 121, 2),[38] Zamolxis (IV 58, 13),[39] Philolaus (III 17, 1),[40] Hippodamus (II 102, 1),[41] Theodotus (IV 56, 1),[42] Lysis, Hipparchus (V 57, 3)[43] and Hippasus (*Prot*. 5, 64 and *Strom*. I 51, 4),[44] Timaeus Locrus (V 115, 4),[45] Eurysus (V 29, 1–4),[46] and some other ancient and later Pythagoreans, a

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[36] P. Jordan (1961, 438) says: "At any point we meet parallels which would suggest a certain affinity in concept between Pythagoras and early Christian monachism".

[37] This Cercops, as presented in Arist. fr. 75 and Diog. Laert. II 46, appears to be a legendary rival of Hesiod. So he was made a Pythagorean later and no doubt on the ground that Orphica and ancient cosmogony became an integral part of the Pythagorean doctrine. Cf. Burkert 1972, 130 n. 60–61.

[38] Brontinus was the father or husband of the Pythagorean Theano. Theano is also mentioned by Clement: 'Didymus in his work *On Pythagorean Philosophy* records that Theano of Croton was the first woman, who wrote philosophic and poetic works' (*Strom*. I 80, 4). Cf. also *Strom*. IV 44, 2 and 121, 2 where Clement cites from some 'works' of Theano. Diogenes Laertius (VIII 42) reports two alternative traditions concerning Theano: she was either a daughter of Bro(n)tinus and the wife of Pythagoras, or the wife of Brontinus and a student of Pythagoras.

[39] "A servant of Pythagoras". Cf. Diog. Laert. VIII 2; both Clement (expressly) and Diogenes (tacitly) depend on Herodotus, IV, 93.

[40] Quoted in the context of anti-Gnostic polemics. On this most important Early Greek philosopher cf. Huffman 1993.

[41] Quoted from a doxography (see above); a Pythagorean of the fifth or fourth century BCE (?), but also the Pseudo-Pythagorean author of *On the republic* (Thesleff).

[42] An otherwise unknown character of Timotheus of Pergamum's book *On the fortitude of philosophers*. He endured tortures but did not disclose a secret (not clear, whether Pythagorean or not). The information is based on Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber sit*, 16 ff.

[43] Lysis belonged to the younger generation of the Pythagorean School, of whom the story (based on Aristoxenus) is told that, together with certain Archippos, he managed to escape from the fire that killed all the rest in the house of Milo in Croton (see, for instance, Iamblichus, *VP* 248), but Clement does not know this. Hipparchus is otherwise unknown and occurs only in the context of the *Letter of Lysis to Hipparchus*, which Clement quotes. For details, see below.

[44] Mentioned twice in doxographic contexts (cf. fr. 5 DK), not associated with the role the man allegedly played as the founder of the 'mathematic' branch of ancient Pythagoreanism.

[45] An ancient Pythagorean, the character of Plato's dialogue and a Neopythagorean philosopher, and the author of *De natura mundi et animae*, a pseudopythagoric tract, allegedly used by Plato in his *Timaeus* (Marg 1972 and Baltes 1972).

[46] Must be Eurytus, who is recorded among the most ancient and "committed" (Iamblichus, VP 226) members of the school, along with Philolaus, Lysis, Empedocles, Zamolxis, Alkmaion, Hippasus, etc. (Iamblichus, *VP* 103, esp. 139 and again in 148), but what is quoted by Clement is an extract from the Pseudo-Pythagoric Ekphantus (Thesleff 1965, 78–84 and

'Pythagorean' collection of sayings by Sextus (*Pedagogue* I, 81, 3, II 46, 3, 99, 3),[47] the Neopythagorean philosopher Numenius (I 71, 1),[48] *but also* Numa, king of the Romans[49] (I 71, 1; V 8, 4), Pindar (V 102, 2),[50] the Gnostic Isidore (II 114, 1), Philo of Alexandria (I 72, 4; II 100, 3) and even a literary personage, the 'Pythagorean' of Plato's *Statesman*!

Such diversity requires explanation. What made Clement affiliate all of them with Pythagoreanism? Clement states his approach quite plainly:

> I do not speak of Stoic, Platonic, Epicurean or Aristotelian philosophy, but apply the term philosophy to all that is rightly affirmed by members of each of these schools concerning righteousness in accordance with sacred science. All this I call, in an eclectic way, philosophy. (*Strom.* I 37, 6)

Clement appears to have no intention to bother his listeners by sharp distinction between the schools and their theories. Quite on the contrary, he is much concerned to show that *essentially* they all are similar, since they ultimately ascend to the same ancient tradition. "There is just one unique truth", but the philosophic sects, like Maenads that scatter around the limbs of Pentheus, claim individual opinions to be the whole truth (*Strom.* I 57, 1). They have forgotten, says Clement, that there is the only one originator and cultivator of the soil[51] and there is the only one way of truth, while many paths, leading from different places, join it (*Strom.* I 129, 1).

1961, 39, 65, 69 n. 4, 70). E. Goodenough (1932) argues that this tract was used by Philo in his *Quis rerum divinarum heres*. Actually Eurytus is also found among the Pseudo-Pythagoreans, as the author of a treatise *On fate* (extracted in Stobaeus; Thesleff 1965, 87–88).

[47] The *Sentences* 231, 280 and 283 (Chadwick) of a famous collection, enjoyed popularity in Christian circles and preserved in the original Greek, as well as in numerous translations, including the Coptic (The Nag Hammadi Library, Cod. XII 7). See a detailed study of the collections and the principles of their organization by Martha Turner (1996, 99 ff., on Clement; 104 ff., on Sextus). The text is preserved in four separate witnesses (two Greek manuscripts, a Syriac manuscript and a selection in Stobaeus), and all these collections are ascribed to Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans. Clement seems to be among the first authors to use these texts. Numerous extracts from a similar 'Pythagorean collection' are found in Porphyry's *Letter to Marcella* (cf. Turner 1996, 109 for a useful stemma).

[48] The earliest reference to the author, which gives the *terminus* for dating Numenius' life.

[49] Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome (715–673 BCE), was indeed a religious reformer. It is almost certain that Plutharch's *Numa*, 8 is Clement's source here.

[50] He quotes the beginning of the *Nem.* 6: "ἓν ἀνδρῶν, ἓν θεῶν γένος, ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ ματρὸς πνέομεν ἄμφω", and adds "scil. τῆς ὕλης". With a degree of imagination this indeed can be interpreted in a Pythagorean sense. On metempsychosis in Pindar cf. K. von Fritz 1957.

[51] *Strom* I 34, 1 and again 37, 2: 'the only cultivator of the soil who from the beginning of the universe has been sowing the seeds and who sends rain when it is needed in the form of his sovereign Logos'. Compare this with Numenius, fr. 13 Des Places.

Entering this path presupposes a certain technique of teaching, which starts from a preliminary level[52] and gradually proceeds towards special instructions directed to those of the students who are not only more gifted by nature in comparison with the rest, but also are 'inclined to virtue' and, consequently, are able to make better progress.[53] Finally, only those 'struck by the thyrsus', with great effort, attain to 'epoptic' knowledge.[54] For those who have approached the highest knowledge, school-distinctions are no longer valid, since they have already seen a glimpse of the true doctrine.

Well aware of the past and present school controversies, Clement knew the difference between, say, the Stoic and Pythagorean styles of thinking much better then we do now. At any rate, he certainly was better informed. Interestingly enough, that whilst speaking about the Peripatetic, Stoic or Pythagorean philosophers, Clement never uses the term 'Platonic' applied to a specific writer. Moreover the names of all his Platonizing contemporaries (definitely known to him) seem to be deliberately avoided. Did he think that the Platonic school no longer existed? Or can it mean that, for some reason, Clement did not like his Platonizing contemporaries and preferred to seek support in Plato himself? The only Neopythagorean Platonic philosopher he refers to, but not necessarily approves of, is Numenius. The epithet Pythagorean is perfectly in place here. Clement is quite moderate in his tone and certainly does not appeal to the authority of the ancient sage. His implied meaning is something like, [Even] Numenius the Pythagorean philosopher has (or is willing) to admit that Plato is no one but 'Μωυσῆς ἀττικίζων',[55] gives the argument its force here. Numenius, in the same way as the 'Peripatetic' Aristobulus,[56] is quoted in support of the 'dependence theme' favored by Clement.[57]

Clement does not fail to mention the major Ancient Pythagoreans (with a conspicuous omission of Archytas), but the references are short and betray his dependence on an established doxographic tradition.[58] The epithet Pythagorean applied to Numa could well be a commonplace or borrowed from

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[52] *Strom.* I 45, 1 and 32, 4 ff.
[53] *Strom.* I 34, 3 ff.
[54] *Strom.* I 14, 1 and I 5, 1.
[55] Cf. *Strom.* I 150, 4 = fr. 8 Des Places.
[56] *Strom.* I 72, 4, cf. V, 97, 7; 99, 3. For fragments cf. Walter 1964.
[57] For a detailed account cf. D. Ridings 1995.
[58] As in *Strom.* II 127, 1 ff., where Pythagorean views on happiness, reported by Heraclides Ponticus, occur in a list of opinions on the same subject of such philosophers as Epicurus, Hieronymus the Peripatetic, Zeno the Stoic, Anaxagoras, Critolaus, etc.

Plutarch.[59] To call the *Italian* stranger in Plato's dialogue the Pythagorean instead of Eleatic, as it is traditionally taken, is an understandable mistake.[60]

The remaining two instances, however, pose a problem. To call Isidore and Philo the Pythagoreans is certainly quite ingenious. Philo's 'Pythagoreanism' has been discussed by David Runia. His point here is that (1) the epithet Pythagorean, applied to Philo twice[61] is a sign of Clement's favor or a compliment towards his Jewish predecessor, rather than an attempt to conceal his Jewishness, as it was sometimes suggested and (2) in general, Clement qualifies thinkers on the ground of 'affinity of mind', rather than any actual 'membership in' or 'affiliation with' this or that school (Runia 1995, 18). Indeed, while Philo's Jewishness is more or less obvious, various numerological speculations and some other elements of his thought betray clearly their 'Pythagorean' origin. The words of Clement quoted above (*Strom.* I 37, 6) perfectly agree with the latter assumption, and, given the context in which the epithet is used, the former one also appears to be quite justified. So, basically I find myself in agreement with D. Runia. One may say now that Clement literally rediscovered Philo and saved his works from possible oblivion.[62] Since Clement considers Philo as belonging to the same exegetical tradition, he probably thinks that acknowledgment of a friendly source is not so important.[63]

The Gnostic Isidore's 'affinity of thought' with the Pythagoreans points in quite a different direction. Isidore misuses Pythagoras, but nonetheless he has a good reason for doing this: "Isidore postulated two souls within us,

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[59] Cf. Plutarch, *Numa* 8. One must suspect direct or indirect influence of Plutarch on Clement, judging from close parallelism, observed in such places like, e.g. *Strom.* I 70, 4 (just before the passage on Numa!) as compared with Plutarch, *The Oracles at Delphi* (*Moralia*, 397c–d).

[60] I mean *Strom.* I 48, 2 where Clement says: 'The Pythagorean in Plato's *Statesman* suggests …' (and a quote from the *Statesman*, 261e is following).

[61] *Strom.* I 72, 4 and II 103, 1. Philo is mentioned by name only two more times in *Strom.* I 31, 1 and I 152, 2, though Clement uses him to a much greater extent.

[62] For details cf. Hoek 1988. To do Clement justice, one can remember that he acknowledges his debt to Philo, since his name is expressly mentioned in the beginning of three of the four long sequences of borrowings which constitute (as A. van den Hoek has calculated) approximately 38% of all real quotations, while the majority of disconnected 'citations' where O. Stählin suspected Philo's influence are in fact nothing more than reminiscences or literary commonplaces, which nobody would expressly acknowledge (Hoek 1996, 223–243, esp. 232).

[63] On the contrary, he always gives the exact reference in the cases of polemics. Clement's attitude towards the material and ideas borrowed from his Jewish predecessor is very 'creative': normally, he appears to use several Philo's treatises simultaneously and always extends his interpretations beyond Philo's exegetical limits, offering at least one new simile with expressly Christian meaning.

like the Pythagoreans" (*Strom*. II 114, 1). It is the Pythagoreans who should be blamed for propagation of the two-soul theory, and Clement thinks that the Pythagorean doctrine, especially in the form taken over by Isidore, must be abandoned, as well as the Pythagorean 'isonomia', appropriated by some Gnostics.[64] Lack of criticism and bad will brought these theories forth:

> It is strange, that the zealots (ζηλωτάς) of Pythagoras of Samos, when called for [positive] demonstration of the objects of their investigation, found ground for faith in *Ipse dixit*, holding that in those words there was enough to establish all that they had heard. (*Strom*. II 24, 3)

My second example concerns Marcion. According to Clement, he and his followers derived their doctrine that birth is evil from Plato and the Pythagoreans. In accordance with Philolaus they hold that the soul is punished in the body and transmigrates (III 12, 1ff.; 13, 1–3):

> The follower of Pythagoras says: "The theologians and the wise man of old witness that the soul is yoked to the body to undergo acts of punishment and is buried in it as in a grave".[65]
>
> (*Strom*. III 17, 1 = Philolaus, fr. B 44 DK / 14 Huffman)

Porphyry and Iamblichus testify that the doctrine of two souls (as opposed to a distinction of rational and irrational parts within one soul) was accepted only by Numenius (fr. 43–44 Des Places). Moreover, this makes Cronius, Numenius and Harpocration think that "all embodiments are evil" (Iamblichus, *De anima*, 29; Finamore–Dillon 2002, 57). It is interesting that Iamblichus approves and develops this concept in *De mysteriis* (VIII 6), *The Letter to Macedonius* (fr. 4 Dillon–Polleichtner) and elsewhere with the exception that not each contamination with matter is evil, since the most

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[64] For instance, the Pythagorean ideas of the Monad and 'community spirit', understood badly, are found among the sources of the Carpocratian heresy. The founder of this heresy, says Clement, taught his "son" Epiphanes "the knowledge of the Monad". In an otherwise unknown tract *On Righteousness* of this Epiphanes, quoted by Clement at some length, it is said that God in his 'righteousness' treats everybody equally, all men as well as irrational animals. Consequently, if God created everything in common and brings the female to male in common and joins all animals in a similar way, why should human beings be an exception to this rule and not hold wives in common? (*Strom*. III 5, 1ff.). While the idea of 'isonomia' itself is dear to Clement's heart (cf. *Strom*. II 92, 1), the conclusion derived by Epiphanes is rejected. In this particular case it is not so difficult indeed, because the argument of Epiphanes is based on quite an obvious confusion of the terms *common* and *equal*.

[65] Scholars note that this fragment must be a later attempt to prove that Philolaus anticipated Plato and Aristotle's doctrines, which places it in the Neopythagorean context. Huffman (1993, 404–406) is also inclined to think that the fragment is spurious (mostly on the basis of its style and vocabulary).

pure souls remain immaculate (ἄχραντοι) in their descent "for the salvation, purification and perfection of this realm" (*De anima*, 29 Finamore–Dillon).[66]

Philolaus is also quoted in *Strom.* V, 140, 1, but in this case with obvious approval. The number seven is called by the Pythagoreans ἀμήτωρ, says Clement, which is perfectly correct and even corresponds with Lc. 20: 35.[67] A similar idea is repeated in *Strom.* V 126, 1.[68]

Speaking about the adherents of Pythagoras (the ζηλωτάς as opposed to the listeners, ἀκροαταὶ) who prefer *Ipse dixit* to positive demonstration of the objects of their investigation, "holding that in those words there was enough to establish all that they had *heard*" (*Strom.* II 24, 3, above), Clement definitely alludes to the so-called 'Hearers' (ἀκουσματικοί), who, as opposed to the 'Scientists', or Disciples (μαθηματικοί) preferred to stay on the firm ground rather then pursue an inquiry which could bring about very unexpected and shaky conclusions. Apparently, the Gnostics are not on

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[66] This is discussed in detail by J. Finamore and J. Dillon (2002, 156 ff.) and D. Taormina in her article included in this volume.

[67] Fr. B 20 DK / 20 Huffman; Clement does not mention the name, but the information is borrowed from Philo (*De opificio mundi*, 100; *Legum alleg.* I 15; *Quis rerum div. heres*, 170). The fragment is genuine, although Thesleff identifies a Pseudo-Pythagorean Onetor behind the testimony (Huffman 1993, 334 ff.).

[68] Quoting here from an Orphic poem (fr. 248 Kern / 691 Bernabé) Clement approves of the (well attested) concept of μητροπάτωρ as applied to the divinity. A close parallel in the Gnostic literature is found in a certain Monoimos the Arabian (Μονόϊμος ὁ Ἄραψ), an otherwise unknown person, whose work of doubtful provenance is summarized by Hippolytus, *Refutatio* VIII 12, 1–15, 2. Developing a numerological scheme based on the Pythagorean Decad, interpreted as the letter Iota ("a single Stroke"), this author says: "The man is a single unity, incomplete and indivisible, composite and divisible; wholly friendly, wholly peaceable, wholly hostile, wholly at enmity with itself, dissimilar and similar, like some musical harmony, which contains within itself everything which name and leave unnoticed, producing all things, generating all things. This unity is Mother and Father, the two immortal names (*Ref.* VIII, 12, 5; cf. V 6, 5, trans. G.C. Stead)". Hippolytus ends by quoting from a letter of this Monoimos to a certain Theophrastus: "Cease to seek after God and creation and things like these, and seek after yourself of yourself, and learn who it is who appropriates all things within you without exception and says, "*My* God, *my* mind, *my* thought, *my* soul, *my* body", and learn whence comes grief and rejoicing and love and hatred, and waking without intention (μὴ θέλοντα), and sleeping without intention, and anger without intention, and love without intention. And if you carefully consider these things", he says, "you will find yourself within yourself, being both one and many like that stroke, and will find the outcome of yourself" (*Ref.* 15, 1). We have no idea who this Monoimos could be. According to Julian (*Or.* IV 150 d), a god named Monimos was worshipped in Emesa, therefore in this case we may deal with a 'Pythagorean' letter ascribed to the name of a certain deity. Probably this is a mere coincidence, but from Photius (*Bibl.*, cod. 181) we learn that, according to Damascius, among Iamblichus' ancestors there were Sampsigeramos and Monimos. Dillon (1987, 865) notes that Sampsigeramos was the founder of the line of priest-kings of Emesa, while, Monimos, if we emend Stephanus of Byzantium's record (s. v. Χάλκις: πόλις ἐν Συρίᾳ, κτισθεῖσα ὑπὸ Μονικοῦ τοῦ Ἄραβος), could become none other than the founder of Iamblichus' native city.

the safe side. Still, himself being obsessed with mystery, Clement definitely prefers the second possibility, embracing the way of inquiry, leading to things concealed from the multitude, and the Pythagorean 'two levels of initiation' (*Strom.* V 59, 1), along with the real or alleged esotericism of other philosophical schools, is perceived as an example which is worth following:

> Objects, visible through a veil, look greater and more imposing than they are in reality; as fruits seen through water, and figures behind the curtain, which are enhanced by added reflection to them … Since the thing expressed in a veiled form allows several meanings simultaneously, the inexperienced and uneducated man fails, but the Gnostic apprehends (σφάλλεται μὲν ὁ ἄπειρος καὶ ἀμαθής, καταλαμβάνει δὲ ὁ γνωστικός). Now it is not wished that all things be exposed indiscriminately to everybody, "or the benefit of wisdom communicated to those who have their soul in no way purified, for it is not just to give to any random person things acquired with diligence after so many labors or to divulge to the profane the mysteries of the word".[69] They say that Hipparchus the Pythagorean was expelled from the school, on the ground that he had published the Pythagorean theories, and a mound was erected for him as if he had already been dead. In the same way in the barbarian philosophy they call those dead who have fallen away from the teaching and have placed the mind in subjection to the passions of the soul.
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> (*Strom.* V 56, 5–57, 4)

Fortunately, the text appropriated, the so-called *Letter of Lysis to Hipparchus*, has come down to us independently and is quoted in greater length by Iamblichus (*VP* 75–78) and other authors, although Clement is the first writer to use it.[70] What is wrong with Hipparchus?

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[69] "οὐδὲ κοινοποιεῖσθαι τὰ σοφίας ἀγαθὰ τοῖς μηδ' ὄναρ τὴν ψυχὴν κεκαθαρμένοις· οὐ γὰρ θέμις ὀρέγειν τοῖς ἀπαντῶσι τὰ μετὰ τοσούτων ἀγώνων πορισθέντα οὐδὲ μὴν βεβήλοις *τὰ τοῦ λόγου μυστήρια* διηγεῖσθαι" (Dillon–Hershbell's translation is consulted).

[70] The original text runs: ὅσιον κἀμὲ μεμνᾶσθαι τῶν τήνου θείων τε καὶ σεπτῶν [ἀνθρωπείων] παραγγελμάτων, μηδὲ κοινὰ ποιεῖσθαι τὰ σοφίας ἀγαθὰ τοῖς μηδ' [οὐδ'] ὄναρ τὰν ψυχὰν κεκαθαρμένοις. οὐ γὰρ θέμις ὀρέγεν τοῖς ἀπαντῶσι τὰ μετὰ τοσούτων ἀγώνων (σπουδᾷ) ποριχθέντα, οὐδὲ μὰν βεβάλοις *τὰ ταῖν 'Ελευσινίαιν θεαῖν μυστήρια* διαγέεσθαι·. "For it is pious to remember the divine and holy [in Iamblichus: human] precepts of the famous one, not to share the good things of wisdom with those who have their souls in no way purified. For it is not lawful to give to any random person things acquired with diligence after [so many] struggles, or to divulge to the profane the mysteries of the Eleusinian goddesses" (Dillon–Hershbell's translation). The complete text see in Thesleff 1951, 111–114; text, translation and analysis in Städele 154–159, 203–251; for a detailed study cf. Burkert 1961, 16–43, 226–246 and Tardieu 1974 (esp. on Clement). The letter, written in 'Pythagorean Doric', is ascribed to Lysis, one of the last Pythagoreans, who survived after the revolt in Croton in around 450 BC. Its author blames certain Hipparchus for his infidelity and reminds him the story about Pythagoras' daughter Damo, who did not break his father's will and saved the texts entrusted to her. Iamblichus quotes the letter in *VP* 75–78, starting from the end with an unexplainable exclusion of the story about Damo and her daughter Bistala. Diogenes Laertius VIII 42, on the other hand,

> They say you philosophize in public with ordinary people, the very thing Pythagoras deemed unworthy, as you learned, Hipparchus, with zeal, but you did not maintain, having tasted, good fellow, Sicilian extravagance, which ought not to happen to you a second time. If you repent of your decision, I will be pleased, but if not, you are dead (εἰ δὲ μή γε, τέθνακας).
>
> (Thesleff 1965, 114, l. 2–3 and 12; Iamblichus, *De vita pyth.* 75, Dillon–Hershbell's translation)

A nice warning in the spirit of Sicilian vendetta! In a less radical manner Clement adds that this is exactly what the Christians do with those who have proven to be untrue, lamenting over them as if they are dead. Could the story described in the letter correspond to a historical event? We will never know this. Suppose, one Hipparchus was a talented mathematician, who decided that he is "learned enough" to pursue independent studies. It is quite imaginable that more orthodox members of the society did not like the situation and determined that it is time to intervene and restore order. Being symbolists they punished him in a symbolic manner, while the later generations of the Pythagoreans, being unable to see the real reasons behind the old controversy, invented several plausible hypotheses with a metaphysical meaning, as if, as in the novel by the Strugatski brothers *Definitely Maybe*, Nature itself retaliates for this deed.[71] In this vein Plutarch warns that disclosure of a mysterious geometrical demonstration could invite a smaller or bigger disaster (*Numa* 22, 2–4). Commenting on the well-known story about the wrongdoer (Hipparchus or Hippasos), who has died as the result of a shipwreck, Pappus writes:

> This is most probably a parable by which they sought to express their conviction that firstly, it is better to conceal every surd, or irrational, or inconceivable in the universe, and, secondly, that the soul which by error or heedlessness discovers or reveals anything of this nature which is in it or in this world,

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is interested in Damo only and identifies this Hipparchus with Hippasos, the well known 'Apostate', who disclosed the mystery of irrationality to the laymen (see 18 DK). Iamblichus clearly distinguishes these two men: the quote from the letter remains the only mention of Hipparchus, while Hippasus is on the record three times and is included in the catalogue (VP 81, 88, 104, 257). Curiously enough, affirming that 'some say that Hippasus came from Croton, some from Metapontum (81)', he then mentions him in the catalogue as a citizen of Sybaris. Although Clement quotes two purely doxographical reports about Hippasus (*Prot.* 5, 64 and *Strom.* I 51, 4; cf. fr. 5 DK) he does not seem to associate these men with each other and, in general, tends to level all the breaks in the Pythagorean tradition.

[71] Or *A Billion Years Before the End of the World* (1974), a story about an astrophysicist who, working on his thesis "Interaction of Stars with Diffused Galactic Matter" feels that someone or something is trying to prevent the completion of his work and finally realizes that the mysterious force is the natural reaction on the human scientific pursuit which threatens to harm the very essence of the Universe.

> wanders thereafter hither and thither on the sea of non-identity, immersed in the stream of coming-to-be and passing-away, where there is no standard of measurement.
>
> (*Syn.* I 2, p. 64 Junge–Thomson, quoted after Burkert 1972, 457–458)

Proclus echoes this, making them hint at the fact that all that is irrational likes to hide and that the intruder would not get away with that (Proclus, *In Euclid.* I, 44). Iamblichus informs us that Hippasus' fault consisted in unauthorized publication of a geometric theorem on the sphere constructed of twelve pentagons (that is to say, the dodecahedron), and he was lost at sea for his impiety (*De vita pyth.* 88).[72]

This is a deviation, however regrettable, but what about the norm? On two possible interpretations of the split within the Pythagorean society—and we clearly have to choose between two schools (those of Pythagoras and Hippasus)[73] or two types of order within a single school—the later authors almost unanimously opt for the second. Clement (*Strom.* V 59, 1) says that the Pythagorean School was subdivided into two levels of initiation by its founder himself. The picture is quite peaceful and this division has nothing to do with the break of secrecy:

> But the Pythagorean society (ἡ Πυθαγόρου συνουσία) and two-fold communication (διττὴ κοινωνία) with its associates, the majority, ἀκουσματικοί, and the so-called μαθηματικοί, genuine philosophers, signifies that "something was said openly, while something had to be kept secret". (Hom. *Od.* XI 443)

Thus, Pythagoras discoursed about sciences with those inclined to philosophy, while the rest received ethical maxims in a 'symbolic' manner. The terminology occurs in Clement for the first time and it is safe to suppose that it can be traced back to Neopythagorean biography.[74]

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[72] The Pythagoreans are less bloodthirsty than 'nature'. Iamblichus says that if this kind of problem happened at any time after the surrender of goods by a student, he received the double of what he had brought to the community (*De vita pyth.* 118). Dodecahedrons were probably cult objects, later interpreted as the images of the whole (as in Plato's *Timaeus*). For a detailed study cf. Burkert 1972, 460 ff. At any rate, unlike Pappus or Proclus, Clement, Iamblichus and similar 'pure humanitarians' are not really concerned with mathematical peculiarities, taking 'irrationality' in the epistemological and even everyday sense of the word.

[73] Cf. Diog. Laert. VIII 7, based on Heraclides Lembos (where Hippasus is reported to attack the good reputation of his relative Pythagoras by disseminating the *Sacred Logos* under his name), Iamblichus, *DCMS* 76, 19 and *De vita Pyth.* 88, 246 and 257.

[74] For detailed accounts see W. Burkert (1972, 192–217) and L. Zhmud (1997, 93 ff. and, in developed form, 2011, Ch. 5; I am grateful to the author for allowing me to consult the work prior to its publication). Could the historical truth be stripped of later inventions? This is the question which admits no single solution for us and the ancient authors alike. W. Burkert

It is remarkable to observe how Iamblichus manages to combine these two approaches together. He says that a certain 'hearer' Hippomedon was teaching that the ἀκούσματα are in fact the remnants of the old wisdom, once explained by Pythagoras and widely understood. But because their original sense is now lost they must be interpreted in a symbolic manner, and this task has been assumed by those among the Pythagoreans who are most concerned with ethical and political problems. On the contrary, the μαθηματικοί busied themselves with scientific inquiry ("as Pythagoras called geometry") and followed the teaching of Hippasus, who introduced this novelty. Therefore the μαθηματικοί agree that the ἀκουσματικοί are genuine Pythagoreans, but insist on the superiority of their teachings.[75]

Still the idea itself comes back to Pythagoras: when he came from Samos to Italy some leading politicians got interested in his teachings. Since they were too busy with current politics, he gave them very short instructions without explanation ("just as those medically treated, even when not learning the reason why each thing must be done to them, no less attain health"). On the other hand, young peoples interested in science had enough time and disposition to receive the complete instructions. This is the origin of the two groups, says Iamblichus, remarking that Hippasus, although he was a Pythagorean, died in the sea for his impiety (*De vita pyth*. 88–89, cf. 81):

> Those who heard Pythagoras either within or without the curtain, those who heard him accompanied with seeing, or without seeing him, and who are divided into the "in" (esoteric) and "out" (exoteric) groups are properly

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traces the evidence back to Aristotle and admits that 'it must be taken seriously as an expression of historical facts' (1972, 205), although he accepts that the terms 'do not go back to the original schism, but were only later applied to the rival groups' (217, n. 80). L. Zhmud argues that it was Iamblichus (*VP* 82–83, 85), who associated ἀκούσματα with the Pythagorean σύμβολα, and that the terminology could hardly go back further then Nicomachus. Cf. Porphyry, *VP* 37 who, as Iamblichus below, could also be based on Nicomachus.

[75] Thus in *De vita pyth*. 87; while a few sections earlier (81) 'the μαθηματικοί do not agree that the ἀκουσματικοί are Pythagoreans, or that their mode of study derived from Pythagoras, but from Hippasus'. In *De com. math. scientia* 76, 19 these two passages stand together, but the μαθηματικοί and the ἀκουσματικοί are reversed, which results in the claim that the μαθηματικοί were willing to accept the ἀκουσματικοί as the low level of initiation within the Pythagorean school, while the latter continued to dismiss the former as deviant followers of Hippasus: τούτων δὲ οἱ μὲν *ἀκουσματικοὶ* ὡμολογοῦντο Πυθαγόρειοι εἶναι ὑπὸ τῶν ἑτέρων, τοὺς δὲ *μαθηματικοὺς* οὗτοι οὐχ ὡμολόγουν, οὔτε τὴν πραγματείαν αὐτῶν εἶναι Πυθαγόρου, ἀλλὰ Ἱππάσου. The extract is based on Nicomachus, and the text in *DCMS* is considered to be the original, changed in *VP* to suit Iamblichus' theory (Burkert 1972, 193, n. 8). Clement may also take this from Nicomachus, as Burkert (1972, 459, n. 63) and other scholars suspect. Leonid Zhmud (2011, Ch. 5) takes the authorship of Nicomachus for granted, although evidence adduced is clearly insufficient to decide upon the matter.

> not to be considered other than those already mentioned; and the political, economic, and legislative divisions are to be ranked as subdivisions of the same groups. (Dillon–Hershbell's translation)

Besides, people asked him to give a series of public lectures which certainly could not contain explanations and technical details, more suitable for a sufficiently prepared audience. These lectures were concerned with ethical and political problems and made him a famous 'sophist'. Young people started to flock around him seeking for instruction, but he did not allow everybody to enter the inner circle, "behind the curtain", the place reserved to the genuine disciples. This is how the ἀκουσματικοί and politicians differ from the μαθηματικοί and philosophers.[76]

Clement, however, does not want to know about any schism: this twofold education is considered by him a well-designed technique, which gradually leads the students to the 'revealed knowledge, reserved for the elite' ("only the Gnostic apprehends"). Moreover, he argues, that this kind of teaching was commonly accepted by all ancient philosophic schools, including the Stoic, Epicurean and even Peripatetic (*Strom*. V, 58 ff.). As prolegomena to the true knowledge, symbols and ἀκούσματα reveal the basic truths worth following, but their meaning remains hidden and could only be discovered by those capable of keeping on the way of intellectual inquiry. As preliminary instructions they help the student "to lift a burden up" but the labour remains everybody's personal endeavour. However different in details from Iamblichus, Clement vindicates the fame of the old sage, although the highest knowledge (*gnosis*) revealed to the initiate has nothing to do with the irrationality in mathematics and the original "mysteries of the Eleusinian goddesses" are replaced with "the mysteries of *Logos*".

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[76] Pythagoras' eloquence is mentioned already by Isocrates (*Busiris*, 28) while his speeches at Croton, attracted young people, women etc. and 'reproduced' by Iamblichus, are alluded to by the Peripatetic Dicaearchus (fr. 33 Wehrli = Porphyry, *VP* 18).

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CHAPTER 18 OF THE *DE COMMUNI MATHEMATICA SCIENTIA* TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

Luc Brisson[1]

In this article, I would like to propose a translation[2] with commentary of chapter 18 of the *De communi mathematica scientia* (ed. Festa 1891). This chapter, which deals with the teaching dispensed by the Pythagoreans, is of considerable interest, for it reminds us of Iamblichus' project in his great work on the Pythagorean School. In addition, this chapter allows us to reconstruct the structure of the metaphysical system within which Iamblichus wants to situate mathematics, as well as the organization of the Pythagorean group, and particularly the distinction between acousmatics and mathematicians.

1. *The Book on the Pythagorean School*

We do not know exactly how many books were included in the work Iamblichus wished to devote to the Pythagorean School. The table of contents of a manuscript at Florence[3] mentions nine titles. The first book, which was to be the Introduction, is a *Life of Pythagoras* (Περὶ τοῦ Πυθαγορικοῦ βίου). It is followed by an *Exhortation to Philosophy* (Προτρεπτικὸς ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν), by a work on the *Common mathematical science* (Περὶ τῆς κοινῆς μαθηματικῆς ἐπιστήμης), and by a commentary on the *Introduction to Arithmetic* by Nicomachus (Περὶ τῆς Νικομάχου ἀριθμητικῆς εἰσαγωγῆς). The other books, which have not come down to us, concerned arithmetic as considered in its relations with physics, ethics, and theology; that is, a study of the importance

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[1] Translated from the French by Michael Chase (CRNS, Paris).

[2] I have had the benefit of consulting the translation by J. Urmson, made available to me by Mr. Henry Hardy, Wolfson College, Oxford. I was able to consult the Italian translation by Francesco Romano (1995) and the German translation by Otto Schönberger and Eberhard Knobloch (2000). This translation was prepared for my participation in a Seminar organized by Satoshi Horie at Keio University, Tokyo, on 31th July, 2010.

[3] Laurentianus 86, 3, 14th century. More information can be found in D. O'Meara (1981 and 1989).

of arithmetic in the fields of physics, ethics, and theology, and then in those of geometry and music, as they were taught by the Pythagoreans.[4] Since, moreover, at the end of his *Commentary on the Introduction to Arithmetic of Nicomachus* (*In Nicom.* 125.15–25), Iamblichus alludes to an *Introduction to Astronomy*, we can suppose that a tenth book was devoted to this subject. This would correspond well to the reverence the Pythagoreans had for the decade [1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10].

Hence the following program, which would respect the overall plan of Iamblichus' great work on Pythagoreanism:

- Introduction to Pythagoreanism (2 books)
  - Pythagoras and his School: *The Life of Pythagoras* (book I)
  - Exhortation to practice the Pythagorean philosophy in general: *Protreptic* (book II)
- Introduction to Pythagorean mathematics (1 book)
  - Mathematics in general (book III)
- Arithmetic (4 books)
  - in itself (book IV)
  - in relation to physics (book V)
  - in relation to ethics (book VI)
  - in relation to theology (book VII)
- Geometry (book VIII)
- Music (book IX)
- Astronomy (book X)

More generally, we may note that arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy constitute what is known as the *quadrivium*, considered from a Pythagorean perspective, whereas physics, ethics, and theology represent the three parts of philosophy. Quite obviously, Iamblichus' work on Pythagoreanism was only a sketch, and did not attempt to cover the entire domain of what Iamblichus presents as genuine philosophy. It did not touch upon what constitutes the highest level of the Platonic system, the intelligible and the divine.

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[4] Psellos has preserved extracts from Books V to VII, as has been shown by D. O'Meara (1981, reprint in O'Meara 1989), when he published two fragments from *On physical number* (Περὶ τοῦ φυσικοῦ ἀριθμοῦ) [book V] and another [books VI–VII] *On ethical and theological arithmetic* (Περὶ τῆς ἠθικῆς ἀριθμητικῆς καὶ τῆς θεολογικῆς).

2. *On the Common Mathematical Science*

On the common mathematical science (Περὶ τῆς κοινῆς μαθηματικῆς ἐπιστήμης), which follows the *Protreptic*, is an introduction to mathematical science considered as a whole, that is, in itself, and not in its branches: arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy, or in its philosophical applications: physics, ethics, and theology. The table of contents of *On the common mathematical science* includes 35 chapters.

1. General intention
2. Common theory
3. The principles of all branches of mathematics in their totality
4. The principles proper to each branch
5. The elements common to all
6. Usefulness and goal of teaching mathematics
7. The object of each branch
8. The criterion of truth common to all branches
9. The soul in its relations to the various branches of mathematics
10. The mathematical structure of the soul
11. The acquisition of mathematics through teaching or by personal discovery
12. Division and re-assembly
13. Relations between the elements of mathematics and of philosophy
14. Resemblance to and dissimilarity from philosophy
15. Relations to philosophy
16. The contributions made by teaching mathematics
17. Order of presentation of the mathematical sciences
18. Teaching methods
19. Division of mathematical science according to the Pythagoreans
20. What characterizes the mathematical method, and what assistance it can bring to the other sciences
21. Who were the ancestors of Pythagoras in the field of mathematics?
22. Benefits for the individual
23. The field of mathematics according to the Pythagoreans
24. The approach of the Pythagoreans
25. The difference between mathematicians and acousmatics
26. Reply to those who believe that mathematics is useless
27. What an educated person may expect from mathematics
28. When is a demonstration mathematical?
29. Argumentation, definition, and division

30. Mathematics in general and according to its branches
31. Applications to various domains
32. The sensible leads to the intelligible
33. What is common, and what is specific
34. Whence comes the name given to mathematics?
35. Conclusion

3. *Translation and Commentary*

Here, I will content myself with offering a translation with commentary of chapter 18, on the teaching of mathematics by the Pythagoreans. The chapter opens with an introduction that presents its contents:

Καὶ μὴν οἵ γε ἴδιοι τρόποι τῆς Πυθαγορείου παραδόσεως τῶν μαθημάτων θαυμαστὴν εἶχον ἀκρίβειαν καὶ πολὺ παρήλλαττον τὴν τεχνικὴν τῶν ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασι διατριβόντων διδασκαλίαν. ὑπογράψωμεν οὖν ἐν τύποις αὐτήν, ὡς ἂν μάλιστα δυνατὸν ᾖ κοινῷ λόγῳ περὶ αὐτῆς εἰπεῖν.

18. [60, 12] It is nevertheless true that the approach that characterizes the teachings of mathematics by the Pythagoreans featured an amazing precision, and introduced an important change into the pedagogical technique of those who are interested [60, 15] in mathematics. We shall therefore give a brief sketch of this technique, in so far as it is possible to hold a common discourse on this subject.

This exposition can be qualified as "common", for, as is explained in the second chapter of the work, it will hold true of all four branches of mathematical science: arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy (whose objects are indicated in chapters 7 and 19), and for its philosophical applications, in physics, ethics, and theology.

Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans are distinguished from their predecessors—who, according to chapter 21, are Thales, the Egyptians, and the Chaldaeans—by the fact that they have a particular approach to mathematical science: they consider this science as a deductive system. Deduction is the procedure by which one concludes, from principles taken as premises, to a truth that results from it by virtue of logical rules. In a Platonic context, it is discursive thought that leads this development, since, as is explained in chapter 8, it is situated half-way between sensation, which has the sensible as its object, and the intellect, which has the intelligible as its object. The ascent toward the intelligible is an instrument of purification (chapter 16).

Ἓν μὲν δὴ οὖν τοῦτο διομολογείσθω, ὡς ἄνωθεν ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν ὁρμώμενοι τὴν πρώτην ἐποιοῦντο τῶν μαθηματικῶν θεωρημάτων σύστασιν, ὡς ἂν ἀπ' αὐτῆς τῆς πρώτης οὐσίας αὐτῶν ποιούμενοι τῆς διανοίας τὰς ἐπιχειρήσεις, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἀνάγοντες τελευταίαν τὴν ὅλην μαθηματικὴν ἐπιβολήν. ἔτι τοίνυν τῷδε ἑπόμενον, ἐπετήδευον τὸ καταδεικνύναι πρώτας τὰς εὑρέσεις τῶν θεωρημάτων, μηδενὶ δὲ ὡς ἤδη ὑπάρχοντι χρῆσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάντων θεωρεῖν πῶς ἂν εἰς ὑπόστασιν ἔλθοι τὸ δεικνύμενον ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν.

Well then, we must agree on this unique fact that the Pythagoreans have established [60, 20] the first system of mathematical knowledge,[5] taking as their starting point the first principles, which are situated above, making the arguments[6] utilized by discursive thought derive from the primary reality[7] represented by these principles,[8] and tracing all research in mathematics back toward this reality.[9] And it was still by following this rule that they had acquired the custom of setting forth [60, 25] the fundamental discoveries made by mathematics, without taking anything for granted, but in every case considering how what is proved in mathematics comes to existence.[10]

This system is based on the principles of the limit and the unlimited, the one and the multiple, as is indicated by chapter 3, which are common (chapter 5), for they are found in all branches. Yet the objects on which mathematical science works are situated at a level intermediary between the sensible and the intelligible, which allows one to rise back up to the ultimate reality known as the Beautiful or the Good. But the soul, which itself presents a mathematical structure (chapter 10), also belongs to this level (chapter 9).

To transmit mathematical science, the Pythagoreans had recourse to two methods: one proceeded by symbols, the other by scientific instruction.

ἦν δὲ καὶ ἄλλος τρόπος παρ' αὐτοῖς ὁ διὰ συμβόλων μαθηματικός, οἷον τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἡ πεντάς, διότι πάντα τὰ εἴδη τῶν

One of their methods was the one that proceeds [61, 1] by symbols in mathematics;[11] for instance, showing that the

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[5] This is how I translate θεωρημάτων, which derives from the verb θεωρεῖν and the suffix -μα, which indicates the result of an action. My translation must therefore be broader than 'theorem', which signifies a proposition that can be demonstrated from other propositions. Here, θεώρημα signifies an object of study, knowledge, etc.

[6] For this translation, see 62, 13.

[7] This primary reality πρωτὴ οὐσία, corresponds to intelligible numbers.

[8] The antecedent of αὐτῶν must be ἀρχῶν.

[9] That is, the πρωτὴ οὐσία.

[10] How mathematical entities derive from the first principles.

[11] See the teachings of Pythagoras in the *Life of Pythagoras* § 161.

δικαίων συμβολικῶς σημαίνει. χρήσιμον δὲ τὸ εἶδος ἦν αὐτοῖς εἰς πᾶσαν φιλοσοφίαν, ἐπειδὴ συμβολικῶς τε τὰ πολλὰ ἐδίδασκον, καὶ ἡγοῦντο τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον τοῖς θεοῖς εἶναι οἰκεῖον καὶ τῇ φύσει πρόσφορον. ἀλλὰ μὴν ὅτι γε καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς τὰς πρώτας καὶ τὰς εὑρέσεις παρεδίδοσαν τῶν μαθημάτων, δῆλον μέν ἐστι καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων μαθηματικῶν ἐπιστημῶν, φανερὸν δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἀριθμητικῶν μεθόδων. ἕκαστον γὰρ γένος καὶ εἶδος ἀριθμῶν πῶς ἀπογεννᾶται πρώτως καὶ πῶς ὑφ' ἡμῶν εὑρίσκεται ἀναδιδάσκουσιν, ὡς μὴ οὔσης ἐπιστημονικῆς τῆς περὶ αὐτὰ θεωρίας, εἰ μή τις αὐτὰ ἄνωθεν ὁρμώμενος καταλαμβάνοι.

number 5 is the symbol of justice,[12] because it signifies symbolically all the possible forms of what is just. This kind of instruction was useful to them for philosophy as a whole, because it was by using symbols that they taught most things, [61, 5] for they felt that this way of doing things was appropriate to the gods and well-adapted to nature.[13] Nevertheless, the fact that they also taught the first principles and the discoveries made by mathematics, is clearly shown from the various branches of mathematics, and is made apparent in particular [61, 10] by the methods of arithmetic. For they taught how, at the beginning, each genus and each species of numbers is engendered, and how we discover them, since there cannot be a scientific theory about them, unless one grasps them while starting out from above.[14]

Teaching proceeds in two ways: first, by setting forth scientifically the knowledge discovered by mathematics (see chapter 11), and then by expressing them in the form of symbols.

The main instrument used to maintain secrecy (chapter 24) concerning doctrines is orality. To this initial restriction, concerning the means of transmitting Pythagorean doctrines, viz. orality, another one is added, concerning the mode of their formulation; for these oral doctrines are formulated in a language with a double meaning. Iamblichus is very explicit on this subject:

> And unless one interprets the symbols themselves, and <embraces> them by means of an interpretation that enables them to escape sarcasm, what they say must seem to the reader ridiculous and worthy of an old wives' tale, full of foolishness and idle chatter. However, once they have been deciphered in

[12] See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* M 4, 1078b23, according to whom numbers expressed the essence of "the occasion, the just, or marriage". Alexander (*in Met.* 38, 16 ff.) specifies that occasion was identified with the number 7, the just with the number 4 (because it is divided into equals and is itself equal) or 5, and marriage with 5 (the union of the first even number, 2, and the first odd number, 3). See also [Iamblichus], *Theol. arithm.* 43.5 ff.

[13] See *De Myst.* 3.9.21 and 5.18.20.

[14] In conformity with what was said above.

> accordance with the intention that presided over their constitution, instead of remaining obscure, as for most people, they become transparent and luminous, comparable to prophecies or to the oracles of Pythian Apollo. They reveal an amazing thought, and they produce a demonic inspiration in those of the lovers of study who have taken the trouble to understand them.
>
> (*VP* § 105, transl. J. Dillon and J. Hershbell)

In short, the language used by the Pythagoreans, following Pythagoras, seeks to be symbolic and enigmatic, and this, moreover, is why their doctrines are called σύμβολα and αἰνίγματα. This form of instruction was very dear to Pythagoras:

> For Him, it was a vital necessity to transmit his teaching by means of symbols.[15] Indeed, this type of teaching was greatly appreciated by almost all the Greeks because of its antiquity, but the Egyptians used it quite particularly in the most varied ways. In the same way, in Pythagoras as well, this type of teaching was the object of much attention, if one can clearly articulate the signification of symbols and their hidden meaning,[16] and can see how great is their share of rectitude and truth, once they have been revealed and rid of their enigmatic form,[17] and how, in their simple transmission, without artifice, they adapt themselves to the grandiose conceptions of these philosophers, and to the divine things that transcend human intelligence.
>
> (*VP* 103, see § 161, transl. J. Dillon and J. Hershbell)

The other method was that of the scientific exposition, which proceeds by analysis and synthesis (chapter 12). It was divided into the various branches of mathematics.

ἔτι τοίνυν τοῖς ὄντως οὖσι καὶ τοῖς θείοις πᾶσι καὶ ταῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ἕξεσι καὶ δυνάμεσι, τοῖς τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ φαινομένοις καὶ ταῖς περιόδοις τῶν ἄστρων, καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῇ γενέσει πᾶσι στοιχείοις τε σωμάτων καὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ τούτων συγκρινομένοις, τῇ τε ὕλῃ καὶ τοῖς ἀπ' αὐτῆς γεννωμέ-

The Pythagoreans also always assimilated mathematical knowledge [61, 15], in absolutely all cases and in each in particular, to true beings, to all the gods, to the dispositions and powers of the soul, to the celestial phenomena and the orbits of the stars, to all

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[15] The term most commonly used to qualify the oral doctrines of Pythagoreanism is σύμβολα. In its first meaning, this Greek term, of which the English word "symbol" is merely a transliteration, designates an object cut into two pieces which, when joined together, could serve as a sign of recognition. By analogy, every object, every message susceptible of a twofold level of identification, came to be called a "symbol", with the deepest level being reserved for a small number of initiates, whereas the most superficial one was accessible to anybody.

[16] ἀπόρρητα σύμβολα, an expression pertaining to the vocabulary of the Mysteries (cf. already *VP* § 2).

[17] For αἰνιγματώδης, which is peculiar to the Oracles, cf. Iamblichus, *VP* § 155, 227, 247 and Porphyry, *VP* § 42, 53, as well as the Introduction.

νοις προσῳκείουν ἀεὶ τὰ θεωρήματα τὰ μαθηματικά, πάντα τε ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀφ' ἑκάστου λαμβάνοντες τὰ οἰκεῖα μιμήματα πρὸς ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων. τὰς δὲ ἀναφορὰς ἐποιοῦντο τῶν μαθημάτων ἐπὶ τὰ ὄντα ἢ κατὰ κοινωνίαν τῶν αὐτῶν λόγων, ἢ κατὰ ἔμφασίν τινα ἀμυδράν, ἢ κατὰ ὁμοιότητα ἐγγὺς πλησιάζουσαν ἢ πόρρωθεν ἀφεστηκυῖαν, ἢ κατὰ εἰδώλων τινὰ ἀπεικασίαν, ἢ κατ' αἰτίαν προηγουμένην ὡς ἐν παραδείγματι, ἢ κατ' ἄλλον τρόπον. καὶ ἄλλως δὲ πολυειδῶς συζευγνύουσι τοῖς πράγμασι τὰ μαθήματα, ὡς καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ὁμοιοῦσθαι τοῖς μαθήμασι δυναμένων καὶ τῶν μαθημάτων τοῖς πράγμασι φύσιν ἐχόντων ἀπεικάζεσθαι καὶ ἀμφοτέρων πρὸς ἄλληλα ἀνθομοιουμένων.

the elements of bodies in becoming and the things that are composed from these elements, and to matter and all things that come to be from it [61, 20], taking their proper images with regard to each of these beings, both all of them in general and from each one. They traced mathematical objects back to the genuine beings,[18] either because they have the same account in common, or through [61, 25] a dim impression, or because of a resemblance, very close or very distant,[19] or because images feature a resemblance with their model,[20] or because the model plays the role of cause that precedes its effect, as is the case for a model,[21] or in still some other way. They couple mathematical objects to things in several other ways as well, [62, 1] since things can be assimilated to mathematical objects, and mathematical objects can by nature be likened to things, both being in a relation of mutual resemblance.

Yet mathematics takes its place within a complex system. It is always referred to the three great domains of philosophy: theology, ethics, and physics. This paragraph is interesting in that it presents the metaphysical structure of the system. The point is to show how numbers first derive from the One-Good and from the principles. Then, numbers must be placed in relation to the genuine realities, an expression that designates the Forms in Plato, along with the rest of reality: 1) the gods, 2) the souls, 3) the celestial bodies, 4) the sublunary bodies, and even 5) matter, taking for granted that they all are in relation to numbers. The participation thus evoked is justified in several ways. It depends 1) either on a community of relations between models and images, or 2) on an obscure appearance of the models in the images, or 3) on a close or distant relation between models and images, or

[18] These are probably the intelligible numbers which are the Forms.
[19] See *DCMS* § 14.
[20] See *DCMS* § 32.
[21] See *DCMS* § 34.

4) on an imitation of models, such as those implied by images, or 5) because the cause precedes the effect, as is the case for the model, or in still another way. We have here an exposition of the metaphysics of Iamblichus. The levels of realities are the One-Good, the Limit and Unlimited, the intelligible, the soul, and celestial and terrestrial bodies. Between these levels of reality, relations are established by participation, with the inferior being in a relation of model to image with the superior, which is its cause.

And it is less their demonstrative technique than the relations they establish with the other levels of reality that interest the Pythagoreans.

τῇ μὲν οὖν ποικιλίᾳ τοῦ λόγου καὶ τῇ τῶν μεθόδων εὐπορίᾳ οὐ πάνυ τι ἔχαιρον, ὡς λογικωτέρᾳ οὔσῃ καὶ τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἀληθείας ἀφεστώσῃ, προηγουμένως δὲ ἠσπάζοντο τὴν αὐτῶν τῶν προβλημάτων γνῶσιν, ὡς ἂν συμβαλλομένην εἰς τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἐπιστήμην τε καὶ εὕρεσιν. καὶ μᾶλλον τῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εὑρέσει ἰσχυρίζοντο καὶ τῇ πρὸς τὰ πράγματα ἐπιβολῇ, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τῇ δριμύτητι καὶ ὀξύτητι τῶν περὶ τὰ προβλήματα συλλογισμῶν. ὅθεν οὐδὲ τῇ εὐπορίᾳ μέγα ἐφρόνουν τῶν μαθηματικῶν ἐπιχειρημάτων, τὸ δὲ εἰς τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων εὕρεσιν συμβαλλόμενον προτιμῶντες ἐφαίνοντο. Τρόποι μὲν οὖν οὗτοι καὶ τοιοῦτοί τινες ἦσαν παρ' αὐτοῖς τῆς μαθηματικῆς παραδόσεως. ἐχρῶντο δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐπιστημονικῶς καὶ μετὰ τῆς θεωρητικῆς φιλοσοφίας τῶν ὄντων καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ στοχαζόμενοι, τό τε πεπερασμένον ἀεὶ καὶ τὸ ἐν βραχυτάτοις συναγόμενον πρεσβεύειν οἰόμενοι δεῖν καὶ τιμᾶν, εἴ τι δὲ χρήσιμον ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐκλεγόμενοι πρός τε ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τοὺς συνόντας καὶ πρὸς ὅλην τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἐπιστήμην.

The Pythagoreans did not much rejoice in the variety of their argumentation and the wealth [62, 5] of their methods, in so far as this was, for them, something rather logical and far from the truth of things, but they appreciated above all the knowledge provided by the solution of these problems, for it contributes to the science of beings and to their discovery. And they focused their effort [62, 10] more on the discovery of the truth and on its application to things, than on the subtlety and acuity of the demonstrations linked to the problems. This is why they did not take pride in the abundance of mathematical proofs either, [62, 15] showing a preference for what contributed to the discovery of realities instead. These methods, and others like them, were the methods of mathematical instruction among them. And they made scientific use of them, along with theoretical philosophy by aiming at genuine beings and at the Beautiful, convinced as they were that they should venerate and honor [62, 20] what is always limited and what is concentrated in the greatest brevity, and by selecting whatever of them that was useful for themselves, for their disciples, and for the whole of knowledge of beings.

In addition, the Pythagoreans ranked the objects of their teachings, and they did the same for their disciples. The group of Pythagoreans includes the acousmatics and the mathematicians (chapter 25):

τι τοίνυν ἐστοχάζοντο ἐν τῷ παραδιδόναι, κατ' ἄλλον μὲν τρόπον, τῶν πραγμάτων, ὡς εἶχε ταῦτα τάξεως καὶ τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα συνεχείας (κατὰ γὰρ τὴν τοιαύτην ἀκολουθίαν τὸ πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερον θεώρημα ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀφώριζον), καθ' ἕτερον δὲ τρόπον ἀπέβλεπον καὶ πρὸς τοὺς μανθάνοντας, καὶ τούτων ἐστοχάζοντο, πῶς μὲν ἔχουσι δυνάμεως πῶς δὲ καὶ ὠφεληθήσονται ἀπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ τίνα μὲν ἀρχομένοις τίνα δὲ προκόπτουσι παραδοτέον, καὶ τίνα μὲν ἐσωτερικὰ τίνα δὲ ἐξωτερικὰ μαθήματα, καὶ ποῖα μὲν ῥητὰ ποῖα δὲ ἄρρητα, καὶ τίσι μὲν μετ' ἐπιστήμης τῶν πραγμάτων παραδιδόμενα τίσι δὲ αὐτὸ τοῦτο μόνον μαθηματικῶς. ἡ γὰρ διὰ πάντων τούτων ἀκρίβεια οὐκ ἀργῶς παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπετηδεύετο, ἀλλ' ἕνεκα τοῦ τὴν μαθηματικὴν πραγματείαν ἑνὸς ἔχεσθαι, τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ, καὶ πρὸς ἓν συντετάχθαι, τὴν τοῦ ὄντος ἐπιστήμην καὶ τὴν πρὸς τἀγαθὸν ὁμοίωσιν. καίτοι οὕτως οὐ μόνον γνῶσις ψιλὴ τῶν μαθημάτων παρεδίδοτο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ζωὴ προσήκουσα αὐτοῖς συνετάττετο, καὶ ἄνοδος ἐπὶ τὰ τιμιώτατα δι' αὐτῶν καθίστατο δεόντως.

[62, 25] Finally, it is fitting to add that in their teaching, they aimed, in one way, at realities, with a view to determining their order, the way in which one follows the other, and in which, indeed, their hierarchy may be established; it is according to this sequence that they classify knowledge in first or in second position. In another way, they paid attention to their disciples, to find out [63, 1] what their capacity is, and how to help them, what things it is fitting to teach to beginners and what teachings to those making progress, what teachings should be considered as esoteric and what teachings as exoteric, what things one could talk about and what teachings one should keep silent about, [63, 5] and to whom these teachings should be taught with the science of realities, and to whom they should be taught exclusively in a mathematical mode. For them, precision in all these teachings was not a vain occupation, [63, 10] but in order that the fields of mathematics should be concerned with only one thing—the Beautiful and the Good—, and should be ranged with a view to only one thing: science of being and assimilation to the Good. And indeed, not only was pure knowledge of mathematics transmitted, but also an appropriate way of life was provided to them, and there was duly implemented the reascent by means of these things toward what counts the most.

Iamblichus traces this distinction back to the arrival of Pythagoras in South Italy:

> The important people in the cities made his acquaintance. Among them, he contented himself with having discussions with those who were elderly

> and who had no leisure, because they were busy with public affairs, since it would have been difficult to instruct them by means of mathematics and demonstrations. He was convinced that it was nevertheless useful that they know what must be done, even without knowing the reason, just as the people treated by a doctor, even if they have not learned why each treatment must be applied to them, nevertheless regain their health. In contrast, all those who were young and could work hard in order to learn, these he instructed by means of mathematics and demonstrations. The 'mathematicians' descend from the latter, whereas the 'acousmatics' come from the former.
>
> (*VP* § 88, transl. J. Dillon and J. Hershbell)

It seems, moreover, that Pythagoras himself considered the 'mathematicians' to be superior (*VP* § 80) to the 'acousmatics', who were also called 'politicians', 'administrators', or 'legislators'. Iamblichus further informs us that the mathematicians refused to consider the 'acousmatics' as true Pythagoreans, on the grounds that their doctrine derived not from Pythagoras, but from Hippasus (*VP* § 81).

All indications are that the 'acousmatics' ensured the proper material functioning of the group (*VP* § 74, 75) and the legislative, political, and even social organization of the city led by this group (*VP* § 72). The philosophy of the 'acousmatics' was made up of oral maxims (ἀκούσματα, σύμβολα, αἰνίγματα), bereft of demonstrations and arguments.

Whereas the 'acousmatics' seem to have concerned themselves with concrete problems, the 'mathematicians', for their part, seem to have devoted the essential part of their time to study. In a few paragraphs (§ 96–100), Iamblichus describes one of their days, from rising to bedtime. This program evokes a life in common, exclusively dedicated to the training of the body and the perfecting of the soul, insisting on a certain number of prohibitions, especially alimentary. Yet vegetarianism, which was obligatory among the 'mathematicians', seems to have been attenuated for the 'acousmatics' and for the common people. As far as science was concerned, however, the Pythagoreans privileged the relations established between numbers and realities to demonstrations. Hence this conclusion:

διόπερ δὴ τὴν Πυθαγορικὴν ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασι διατριβήν, ὡς ἐξαίρετον οὖσαν καὶ προκεκριμένην πασῶν τῶν μαθηματικῶν τεχνῶν, οὕτως ἐπιτηδεύειν ἄξιον.	Thus it is worthwhile to practice [63, 15] the Pythagorean approach in mathematics which is superior and preferable to all other mathematical techniques.

This organization imposes a group life, and a specific type of property. Iamblichus repeats the Pythagorean adage several times, moreover, according to which "Among friends, everything is in common (κοινὰ τὰ φίλων)" (*VP* § 32, 74, 168). Every postulant had to entrust his possessions to the

'administrators', and if, for one reason or another, he was not accepted into the community, he was sent away with more wealth than he had brought (*VP* § 74, 75). This proves that the sect[22] was not motivated by the appetite for gain, since all remuneration for teaching was also condemned.

As one can observe, admittance into the group was not automatic. Pythagoras carefully examined the family, education, and character of the postulant, who was subject to a probationary period of three years. The master also made use of physiognomy, which allowed him to read the penchants of the young man's soul and his aptitudes from his body and behavior. If he was judged worthy of entering the group, the young man was received as an exoteric disciple. For five years, he had to listen the lessons of Pythagoras without ever speaking or seeing the master, who remained hidden behind a curtain, in order to fully enter the group (*VP* § 71–74). It may be interesting to cite the passage in which Iamblichus explains the exoteric / esoteric opposition in very concrete terms:

> Those who followed the oral instruction of Pythagoras on one side of the curtain or the other, who heard him, while being allowed to see him or not, and who were distributed among those on the inside (τοὺς εἴσω) and those on the outside (τοὺς ἔξω), they are none other than those about whom we have gathered this information. (*VP* § 89, transl. J. Dillon and J. Hershbell)

Those on the outside were the 'acousmatics' and those on the inside, the 'mathematicians'.

The teaching of the Pythagoreans did not concern only, or even primarily, mathematics. The teaching of mathematics was subordinated to that of a philosophical system that strikingly resembled the doctrines that some commentators in Antiquity, and some interpreters in our time, attribute to the unwritten teachings of Plato. In addition, among the Pythagoreans, instruction was inseparable from a way of life that was itself situated in the context of a communal existence, structured like a sect. This is what is evoked by this chapter of the *De communi mathematica scientia*; and this is what makes it interesting.

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[22] On the nature of the Pythagorean "school", see W. Burkert (1983).

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THE LETTERS OF IAMBLICHUS: POPULAR PHILOSOPHY IN A NEOPLATONIC MODE

John Dillon

I. *Introduction*

My purpose in the present essay is to introduce to you the fragments of the *Letters* of Iamblichus of Chalcis, preserved at various points in the vast *Anthologia* of John of Stobi. John is the only man to show any interest in these letters,[1] but he plainly values them a good deal, having preserved substantial fragments of as many as twenty of them. These letters I originally collected many years ago, when I was taking an interest also in Iamblichus' treatise *On the Soul* (also preserved exclusively by John),[2] and have now at last published, in cooperation with Dr. Wolfgang Polleichtner of Bochum, with the Society for Biblical Literature, in their Texts and Translations series (2009).[3]

These letters seem to derive from the later stage of Iamblichus' career, when, probably somewhere in the early 280's, after a period of study with Porphyry in Rome, he returned to his native Syria, to set up a philosophical school of his own in Apamea. It is in that context that these letters may be viewed. In them, he is addressing his own pupils, and—perhaps more importantly—a cross-section of prominent members of Syrian and Anatolian society, including some imperial administrators, on a series of philosophical topics, mostly of an ethical nature. I would regard these as something like calling cards, especially when addressed to the latter category of

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[1] Apart from two passing, though rather significant, references, one in Damascius' *Commentary on the Phaedo*, p. 203, 26 ff. Norvin (our Testimonium 1), the other in Olympiodorus' *Commentary on the Gorgias*, 46. 9. 20–28 West. (our Testimonium 2). These demonstrate that a collection of the letters was available to the philosophers of the later Athenian Academy, as one would after all expect.

[2] Subsequently published as Finamore–Dillon 2002.

[3] Much of this essay has been incorporated into the Introduction to that volume. Of course, there has since appeared the very fine, and much more copious, edition of Daniela Taormina and Rosa Maria Piccione (2010). A number of the more 'political' letters have also been published, with commentary, by D.J. O'Meara and J. Schamp (2006).

recipient, but they are nonetheless, I feel, not without some philosophical interest; and they certainly possess a modicum of sociological significance as well. They remind us, in fact, of the extent to which a late antique philosopher was a public figure, despite the determined otherworldliness of their philosophical stance.[4] The interesting fact remains, however, that from no other philosopher of the Neoplatonic period do we have such a collection of letters as this, and that, I think, is the significance of this collection.[5]

II. *Protreptic Epistolography As a Genre*

Protreptic epistolography as a philosophic genre goes back, so far as we can see, no further than Epicurus, who communicated a significant part of his philosophy in this form. It does not seem to form any part of the Platonist tradition.[6] For Iamblichus, however, we must recognise that the practice of writing philosophic letters went back to the oldest generations of Pythagoreans, and even to Pythagoras himself. We do indeed have testimonies, and even fragments, of letters[7] from Pythagoras (to Anaximenes, and to King Hiero of Syracuse), as well as from his wife Theano (to eight different correspondents, seven of them female), his daughter Myia (to her friend Phyllis), and his son Telauges (rather anachronistically, to Philolaus).[8] Apart from Pythagoras and his immediate family, we have evidence of letters from Lysis to Hipparchus, from Archytas to Plato (and a reply to this, in the form of Plato's *Epistle* XII), and from the lady Melissa to her friend Cleareta. The fact that all these documents appear to us palpably and

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[4] Cf. my paper: Dillon 2004.

[5] I realise that we have from the hand of Porphyry two documents described as 'letters', the *Letter to Marcella* and the *Letter to Anebo*, but I would regard the former rather as a treatise in epistolary form, and the latter as a polemical 'open letter', which again would not qualify as a philosophical letter in the present sense.

[6] Those letters of Plato that may possibly be genuine, notably *Epistles* VII and VIII, are really primarily apologiae for his actions (despite the 'philosophical digression' in VII), and so do not strictly count as philosophical epistles. The more 'philosophical' members of the collection, such as *Epp*. II and VI, are of much later provenance—though this was, of course, not obvious to ancient readers. In any case, all of the Platonic epistles are presented as 'real' letters, rather than epistolary philosophical essays.

[7] Most conveniently collected by Thesleff (1965).

[8] As regards anachronisms, we may note that Theano, in her letter to her friend Rhodope (Thesleff, p. 200), excuses herself for not sending a copy of "the book of Plato, which is entitled *Ideas*, or *Parmenides*"! It is not easy to penetrate the mental state of the author of such a document.

woefully bogus is not much to the point; Iamblichus will have accepted them, along with all the other Pythagorean pseudepigrapha, as genuine—as, of course, he would those of Plato. The composition of protreptic epistles, therefore, was for him an activity endowed with the best possible pedigree.[9]

It is undeniable, however, that there is very little evidence of such epistolography by later Platonists before him. Among the heads of the New Academy, Carneades is attested as having composed letters—and nothing else![10]—but he would hardly figure in Iamblichus' pantheon of suitable models. In the vast and varied oeuvre of Plutarch, no epistles are preserved,[11] and from the Neopythagoreans of the second century CE, Nicomachus of Gerasa and Numenius of Apamea, whom Iamblichus certainly did hold in high honour, there is no sign of a letter surviving (though they may have written them). Only in the case of the Pythagorean 'holy man' Apollonius of Tyana (late 1st cent. CE) do we find a collection of letters—like everything else about that remarkable figure, probably spurious, but good enough for Iamblichus, who would have held him in high regard.

Philosophical epistolography, indeed, in the period of the early Empire, is very much the preserve of Stoics, such as Seneca, but he is not someone of whom Iamblichus would have had any knowledge. In the generation or so after Iamblichus, we have an outpouring of letter-writing, philosophical and other, from the pens of such figures as the Emperor Julian, the distinguished Antiochene rhetorician Libanius, and the Christian bishop Basil of Caesarea, but prior to Iamblichus, in the late third century CE, there is precious little evidence of philosophical epistolography surviving, and this makes the letters of Iamblichus all the more significant. It is of interest in this connection that two members of Iamblichus' immediate circle are also

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[9] There is evidence of letters also by Aristotle, Theophrastus, and later Peripatetics such as Strato, but these would be of less importance for Iamblichus. We also have, preserved in one manuscript (Cod. Vat. gr. 64), a collection of letters of 'Socrates and the Socratics', including such stalwarts of the Old Academy as Speusippus and Xenocrates—certainly spurious (except perhaps for the *Letter of Speusippus to Philip*—but that is not properly a philosophical epistle), but not without entertainment value—which Iamblichus would presumably have accepted as genuine, if he were acquainted with them.

[10] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, IV 65.

[11] Unless his *Consolations* (*paramythêtikoi logoi*), to his wife, and to a certain Asclepiades (lost; no. 111 in the Lamprias catalogue) should count as letters. There is also record of a 'letter' to Favorinus, *On Friendship*, of which a number of fragments are preserved in Stobaeus (frr. 159–171 Sandbach). Three of his essays are addressed to recipients, *Precepts of Marriage* being addressed to Pollianus and Eurydice, *On Tranquillity* to Paccius, and the *Consolation to His Wife* to Timoxena, but they are all better regarded as treatises with epistolary introductions.

known as letter-writers: his mysterious admirer[12] in Licinius' court whose letters to him became included in the letters of Julian; and the son of his chief pupil Sopater, also called Sopater, of whom a letter (to his brother Himerius) is also preserved by Stobaeus.

What is it, then, which makes a letter count as a *philosophic* letter—and not, as in the cases of the above-mentioned works of Plutarch and Porphyry, a treatise in epistolary form?[13] The philosophic letter, as a genre, is really a short philosophical (usually moral) essay, given a lively and personalized slant by being addressed to a particular recipient, usually a friend or student of the author, but sometimes a patron or other public figure. The subject matter of the epistle should doubtless be tailored to some extent to the position or role in life of the recipient (e.g. letters on ruling we might expect to be addressed to senior imperial administrators, or at least local grandees; and letters on dialectic to other practising philosophers), but this need not necessarily be so, if the letter concerns a very general moral topic, such as justice or self-control.[14]

A salient feature of these letters, and one that renders them of great interest for this period, is that they are pitched firmly at the level of popular philosophy. From a perusal of the present collection, one would derive no hint of the complexities of Iamblichus' metaphysical system, nor yet, in the sphere of ethics, of his theory of multiple levels of virtue. Hints of the one can be glimpsed, perhaps, by one who knows, behind his utterances on Providence in the *Letter to Macedonius*, and of the other as lurking behind the *Letter to Sopater, On Virtue*; but in neither case are we presented with any characteristic technicalities. This is philosophy for the general (educated) public, and it reminds us forcefully of the public role in society which all philosophers of this period played, despite their strongly otherworldly tone.

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[12] Presumably a former student, and possibly none other than Julius Julianus, Licinius' Praetorian Prefect, and maternal grandfather of the Emperor Julian (which would help to explain why his letters are included in the Julianic corpus). See J. Vanderspoel 1999.

[13] Even the letters of Seneca to Lucilius do not quite qualify, perhaps, as they come across rather as real letters, combining personal details with philosophic exhortation. It must be admitted, though, that, since what we have of Iamblichus' letters are merely extracts preserved by Stobaeus, there may in fact have been personal details included in the full versions, at the beginning or end.

[14] There has in fact been a certain amount of discussion of this rather 'fuzzy' genre down the years. Back in 1923, A. Deissmann, writing from a patristic perspective, makes a useful distinction between a *Brief* (sc. an ordinary letter) and an *Epistel* (a theological or philosophical epistle), which I find most helpful for our present purpose. Further contributions were made by J. Sykutris (1931) and H. Koskinnieni (1956).

III. *Iamblichus' Correspondents*

It is a source of considerable frustration to us that we cannot securely identify the great majority of Iamblichus' correspondents in this collection, since we must reckon with the strong probability that most of them belonged to the higher ranks either of the imperial administration or of Syrian (and perhaps more generally Anatolian) society.

A number of letters, admittedly, are addressed to his pupils: to Dexippus, author of a surviving short introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*, in question and answer form, very appropriately, one on Dialectic; to Eustathius, who succeeded to the headship of the School (and moved it to Caesarea in Cappadocia), one on Music; and, last but not least, to his favourite pupil (and perhaps also patron) Sopater, a string of letters, *On Fate, On Dialectic, On Bringing up Children* (Sopater being a family man, father of at least two sons), *On Ingratitude, On Virtue, On Self-Respect*, and *On Marriage*. There is also the probability that the Anatolius to whom is addressed a letter *On Justice* is none other than his old teacher, the 'second-in-command' to Porphyry in his school in Rome.[15]

Beyond these, however, there are pretty slim pickings for the prosopographer. Two, we feel, can be identified with fair certainty. Dyscolius, the recipient of a letter *On Ruling*, bears the same name as a governor of Syria attested for the period around 320 CE,[16] and this topic would suit him very well; and the lady Arete, recipient of a letter *On Self-Control* (*sôphrosyne*), turns up later in the correspondence of the Emperor Julian (*Letter to Themistius*, 259D), being annoyed by her neighbours in Phrygia, in some unspecified manner—an annoyance from which Julian saved her, by appearing in person![17]

Of the others, Agrippa and Macedonius are probably members of the imperial administration and/or the local aristocracy, but no suitable names turn up in the inscriptional material. On the other hand, in the correspondence of Libanius (e.g. *Ep*. 1353) we find a Macedonius listed as the father of

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[15] So described by Eunapius, *VP* 457–458. It is not at all clear what Eunapius means by his characterization ὁ μετὰ Πορφύριον τὰ δεύτερα φερόμενος, but it may be that Anatolius was 'filling in' for Porphyry as Head of School, while Porphyry was in Sicily. He is presumably identical with the dedicatee of Porphyry's *Homerika Zétémata*.

[16] *PLRE* I p. 275.

[17] We cannot, after all, be quite certain that this is the same Arete, but the fact that Julian is prepared to take such trouble on her behalf, and refers to her as 'that marvellous woman' (ἡ θαυμάσια), should indicate her status in Neoplatonist circles. The dating of this intervention is uncertain, but it probably took place in the early 350's, when Arete would necessarily be quite an old woman. Whether she had always been in Phrygia is not clear either.

certain of his pupils. This man was an advocate, who had studied rhetoric under the distinguished sophist Ulpianus, and who, on reaching retirement, was appointed *defensor* of Tarsus. Chronologically and geographically, he makes a rather good fit with Iamblichus' correspondent. Another Macedonius, possibly a son or grandson of this man, is mentioned by Libanius as a former pupil, and as a *philosophos*, as well as an orator (*Epp*. 672–674). We also know of an Olympius who was the father of a pupil of Libanius in the 360's, and this pupil went on to become a doctor in Antioch, and was also skilled in grammar and philosophy (*Ep*. 539). Of Asphalius, however, recipient of a letter *On Practical Wisdom* (*phronesis*) and Poemenius, recipient of one *On Fate*, there is no other trace.

IV. *The Philosophy of the Letters*

In the surviving fragments, Iamblichus touches on many aspects of philosophy, logical, ethical and even metaphysical, though not, as we have said above, in such a way as to reveal the more technical levels of his philosophy. However, a distinct philosophical stance is presented here, of which we may summarize the salient aspects.

To take logic first, we find two letters in praise of dialectic, one to Dexippus and one to Sopater. That to Dexippus, as we shall see below, is a rather high-flown production, while that to Sopater is much more prosaic, but both manage to mention the main subjects of logical study, ambiguity, homonymy, induction, elenchus (or refutation), and syllogistic. Above all, the foundational role of dialectic in all philosophical activity is stressed in both epistles.[18]

Ethics is, naturally enough, the chief theme of such documents as these letters.[19] There are praises of Virtue itself as a whole, and all of the four canonical virtues, justice (*dikaiosyné*), self-control (*sóphrosyné*), wisdom, or prudence (*phronésis*), and courage (*andreia*). Particularly with respect to this last, but in general with all of them, Iamblichus is disposed to stress the 'higher' or 'purificatory' aspects of the virtue concerned, though not to the exclusion of its more practical, 'civic' applications. The letter to Anatolius, indeed, dwells (in Fr. 2) on the civic aspects of justice, the due

[18] This topic is well surveyed by Taormina (2010) 89–134: 'La dialettica come propedeutica'.

[19] On this topic see now Taormina (2010) 227–271.

apportionment of honours and rewards, leading to civic harmony and goodwill (though it may well have gone on, in what is lost to us, to praise its 'higher' aspects as well). That to Arete, on the other hand, stresses rather the capacity of *sóphrosyné* to free us from "the pleasures which nail us to the body", and assimilate us to the gods. *Phronésis*, likewise, in the letter to Asphalius, "contemplates the Intellect itself and derives its perfection from it", though it also "has the characteristic of directing men and administering the whole structure of their relations with one another"—though even that "renders those who possess it godlike (*theoeideis*)". As for courage, in the letter to Olympius it is presented as "an unshakable intellectual potency, and the highest form of intellectual activity, constituting self-identity (*tautotés*) and a state of mind steadfast within itself"—a formulation that gives at least some hint of Platonist efforts to re-define of this rather troublesome virtue.[20]

Lastly, we have a letter to Sopater on Virtue as a whole, which also stresses its other-worldly aspect. It is "the perfection and proper balance of the life of the soul, the highest and purest activity of reason and intellect and discursive intelligence (*dianoésis*)", which is characterised by "beauty, symmetry and truth, unchanging identity and simplicity, a transcendent superiority to all other things, and a purity which is raised above all other things and unmixed with them."

Behind all this there is a Neoplatonic theory of grades of virtue, to which Iamblichus himself, in a treatise *On the Virtues* (now lost), had added his own refinements (an ascending scale of fully seven grades, building on the Porphyrian four, as set out in *Sententiae* § 32), but it remains here, quite properly, very much in the background.

Apart from essays on Virtue and each of the virtues, we have discourses on more properly political topics, such as ruling (to Agrippa and to Dyscolius), and concord (to Macedonius), all of which dwell on topics of relevance to an imperial administrator, or indeed a local grandee involved in public office; and two on aspects of household management (*oikonomia*), marriage and bringing up children—the latter to Sopater, who was in need of such advice. Thus are all three of the traditional sub-divisions of the ethical branch of philosophy given at least some attention.

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[20] The process begins already in Plato's *Laches*, where Socrates, at 199Aff., takes on board the definition of courage attempted by Nicias at 195A, "Knowledge of what is to be feared and hoped for in war and all other situations", and in effect generalizes it, to make it co-extensive with virtue in general (199E). More immediately, however, Iamblichus is probably influenced also by the Stoic definition of courage as 'knowledge of what is and is not worthy to be feared' (e.g. *SVF* 3. 262)

The subject of physics, or metaphysics, is dealt with, in fact, only incidentally to a topic which straddles the areas of ethics and physics, that of fate, providence and free will. This latter topic is dealt with most fully in the letter to Macedonius (*Letter* 8), but also, more briefly, in *Letter* 11, to Poemenius, and *Letter* 12, to Sopater. The metaphysical system revealed in the letter to Macedonius is fairly simple by Iamblichean standards, but still involves a One, as supreme principle, generating a realm of primal Being (τὸ πρώτως ὄν), which is also that of Intellect, and which constitutes the sum-total of the multiplicity of Forms. This multiplicity is in turn referred back to 'the principle of Multiplicity' (ἡ τῶν πολλῶν ἀρχή), which may be identified as the Indefinite Dyad. Below this in turn is a World Soul, and below that the realm of Nature, which may be taken as being that aspect of the World Soul that concerns itself with the generation and administration of the physical world. It is this latter level of being that we find to be the sphere of operations of Fate (*heimarmené*).[21] It is defined at the end of Fr. 1 of *Letter* 8 as "the one order (*taxis*) that comprehends in itself all other orders."

What emerges from this is to all appearances a strictly determined world, on the Stoic model—as indeed one finds also in Plotinus (e.g. *Enn.* III 2–3); but Iamblichus is also at pains to emphasise (in Fr. 2) that the soul *in itself*, insofar as it emancipates itself from worldly influences and concerns, "contains within itself a free and independent life." In Fr. 3, this concept is developed as follows:

> It is the life lived in accordance with intellect and that cleaves to the gods that we must train ourselves to live; for this is the only life which admits of the untrammelled authority of the soul, frees us from the bonds of necessity, and allows us to live a life no longer mortal, but one that is divine and filled by the will of the gods with divine benefits.

This is in fact more or less in accord with the doctrine of Plotinus, who also holds that what is for him the 'higher' soul is free from the bonds of Fate, though it is really only free to assent to the order of the universe. For Iamblichus, Fate itself is dependent on Providence, which is the benign force guiding the higher, intelligible realm of reality. In Fr. 4, their relationship is set out as follows:

> For indeed, to speak generally, the movements of destiny around the cosmos are assimilated to the immaterial and intellectual activities and circuits, and its order is assimilated to the good order of the intelligible and transcendent realm. And the secondary causes are dependent on the primary causes, and

[21] On this topic, see now Taormina (2010) 181–225.

> the multiplicity attendant upon generation on the undivided substance, and the whole sum of things subject to Fate is thus connected to the dominance of Providence. In its very substance, then, Fate is enmeshed with Providence, and Fate exists by virtue of the existence of Providence, and it derives its existence from it and within its ambit.

We find, then, in the *Letter to Macedonius* a fairly comprehensive picture of a simplified version of Neoplatonic metaphysics, suitable to a popular context, but yet not at odds with Iamblichus' deepest insights; and this will be true of the doctrines set forth in the *Letters* as a whole.

V. *Characteristics of Style and Vocabulary*

Iamblichus' biographer Eunapius is on record as remarking that his subject, in respect of style, "did not sacrifice to the Graces" (*VP* 458), and this evaluation would certainly seem to be borne out by a number of the verbatim fragments which still remain of his more technical treatises, as well as by the surviving *De Mysteriis*, which, notwithstanding its great interest, is a work of considerable turgidity. Even the prose style of the works making up the 'Pythagorean Sequence', such as the *Pythagoric Life*, leaves much to be desired.[22] But this verdict does not seem to be so justified in respect of the *Letters*—as indeed befits their popular nature. Not that there are not occasional runs of parallel clauses or epithets such as are characteristic of his more technical treatises; but they are thankfully not a dominant feature.

On the other hand, we find a number of lively images and turns of phrase, together with some employment of literary and mythological allusions. The whole of the fragment *To Dexippus, On Dialectic* may serve as a good example of what Iamblichus is capable of in this regard:

> Θεὸς ἦν τις ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁ καταδείξας τὴν διαλεκτικὴν καὶ καταπέμψας τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· ὡς μὲν λέγουσί τινες, ὁ λόγιος Ἑρμῆς, ὁ φέρων ἐν ταῖν χεροῖν τὸ σύνθημα αὐτῆς τὸ τῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους ἀποβλεπόντων δρακόντων· ὡς δ' οἱ δεδοκιμασμένοι καὶ πρόκριτοι τῶν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διατείνονται, ἡ τῶν Μουσῶν πρεσβυτάτη Καλλιόπη τὴν ἄπταιστον ἀσφάλειαν τοῦ λόγου καὶ ἀνελέγκτον "αἰδοῖ μειλιχίῃ" διαπρέπουσαν παρέσχηκεν. ὡς δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ δείκνυσιν, αὐτὸς ὁ ἐν Δελφοῖς θεὸς οὔτε λέγων καθ' Ἡράκλειτον, οὔτε κρύπτων ἀλλὰ σημαίνων τὰς μαντείας, ἐγείρει πρὸς διαλεκτικὴν διερεύνησιν τοὺς ἐπηκόους τῶν χρησμῶν, ἀφ' ἧς ἀμφιβολία τε καὶ ὁμωνυμία ἐκρίθησαν καὶ διττὸν πᾶν ἀνερευνηθὲν φῶς ἐπιστήμης ἀνῆψεν· ὃ κατιδὼν καὶ Θεμιστοκλῆς

[22] Though this remark strictly only applies to those portions of the works that are actually composed by Iamblichus himself.

> καλῶς καὶ διερευνήσας δεόντως τὸ ξύλινον τεῖχος, αἴτιος ἀναμφισβητήτως κατέστη τῆς σωτηρίας τοῖς Ἕλλησιν. ἀδελφὰ δὲ τούτων καὶ ὁ ἐν Βραγχίδαις θεὸς ἐκφαίνει τῆς διαλεκτικῆς ἔργα, περιφανῆ τὴν ἐπαγωγὴν παραδηλῶν, ὅταν λέγῃ· "οὔτ' ἂν ὠκυπέτης ἰὸς οὔτε λύρη οὔτε νηῦς οὔτε ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἄνευ ἐπιστημονικῆς χρήσιος γένοιτ' ἄν κοτε ὠφέλιμον."
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> It was some god, in truth, who revealed dialectic and sent it down to men; as some say, Hermes, the god of rational discourse, who bears in his hands its symbol, of two snakes looking towards each other; but as the acknowledged masters of philosophy maintain, it is the eldest of the Muses, Calliope, who has provided the unshakeable and irrefutable firmness of reasoning, which shines forth "with honey-sweet modesty". And as the facts themselves demonstrate, the God in Delphi himself, in Heraclitus' words, "not speaking out, nor yet concealing, but signifying" his prophecies, rouses up those who hearken to his utterances to dialectical enquiry, on the basis of which they discerned ambiguity and homonymy, and the ferreting out of every double meaning kindled in them the light of knowledge. This indeed was something well discerned by Themistocles, who, in duly unravelling the riddle of the 'wooden wall', indisputably established himself as the cause of salvation for the Greeks. And akin to these also are the feats of dialectic of the God in Branchidae, revealing clearly the procedure of induction, when he says, 'No swift-flying arrow, nor lyre, nor ship, nor anything else would ever attain a useful end without use based on knowledge'.

We find here the use of both mythological and literary allusions to reinforce his claim for the fundamental importance of dialectic. In the *Letter to Arete* also we find some fine turns of phrase, and mythological and literary allusions: an allegorization of Bellerophon's slaying of the Chimaera, and a quotation from the Cynic Crates which may in fact be a line of iambic verse. The *Letter to Sopater on Bringing Up Children* makes much use, not unreasonably, of references to Plato's *Laws*, and some lively writing as well.

It cannot be denied, however, that there are also many passages in these letters which give some credence to Eunapius' evaluation quoted above. Iamblichus is prone to long runs of parallel phrases or clauses in his efforts to define some concept or other which make one long for a full stop. One example will suffice, from the *Letter to Sopater on Fate*:

> Τῆς δ' εἱμαρμένης ἡ οὐσία σύμπασά ἐστιν ἐν τῇ φύσει· φύσιν δὲ λέγω τὴν ἀχώριστον αἰτίαν τοῦ κόσμου καὶ ἀχωρίστως περιέχουσαν τὰς ὅλας αἰτίας τῆς γενέσεως, ὅσα χωριστῶς αἱ κρείττονες οὐσίαι καὶ διακοσμήσεις συνειλήφασιν ἐν ἑαυταῖς. ζωή τε οὖν σωματοειδὴς καὶ λόγος γενεσιουργός, τά τε ἔνυλα εἴδη καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ ὕλη, ἥ τε συντεθειμένη γένεσις ἀπὸ τούτων, κίνησίς τε ἡ τὰ πάντα μεταβάλλουσα καὶ φύσις ἡ τεταγμένως διοικοῦσα τὰ γιγνόμενα, ἀρχαί τε αἱ τῆς φύσεως καὶ τέλη καὶ ποιήσεις, καὶ αἱ τούτων συνδέσεις πρὸς ἄλληλα ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τε ἄχρι τοῦ τέλους διέξοδοι συμπληροῦσι τὴν εἱμαρμένην.

> The essence of Fate subsists entirely within the ambit of Nature, by which latter I mean the immanent causal principle of the cosmos, and that which immanently comprises the totality of causes of the realm of generation, such as the higher essences and orders comprehend within themselves in a transcendent mode. That life, therefore, which relates to body and the rational principle which is concerned with generation, the forms-in-matter and Matter itself, and the creation that is put together out of these elements, and that motion which produces change in all of these, and that Nature which administers in an orderly way all things that come into being, and the beginnings and ends and creations of Nature, and the combinations of these with each other and their progressions from beginning to end—all these go to make up the essence of Fate.

There is little that is graceful in this, certainly, but Sopater was a serious philosopher, and doubtless he could take it. At all events, Iamblichus is shown to be capable of fine writing when he puts his mind to it—as indeed befits the author of a treatise *Peri kriseós aristou logou*, 'On judging the best type of speech.'[23]

VI. *Conclusion*

The collection of letter-fragments which John of Stobi has preserved for us may not be either great philosophy or great literature, but it does, I think, serve to broaden somewhat our perspective on the oeuvre of Iamblichus overall. He is not simply (what used to be regarded as) the rather seedy magician of the *De Mysteriis*, nor yet the abstruse metaphysician of the Platonic Commentaries, particularly those on the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides*. His more popular side was, admittedly, already on view in the works of the so-called *Pythagorean Sequence*, particularly the *Bios Pythagorikos* and the *Protreptikos*, composed primarily, we must suspect, for the students in his School; but with the *Letters* we see him interacting, in the public arena, with prominent members of society from Syria and other parts of the Eastern Empire, and thus fulfilling one of the important roles of a philosopher in this era. The fact that from no other of his fellow Neoplatonists do we have such a collection may perhaps be accidental, but, so far as we can see, he stands alone not only among his contemporaries, but within the earlier Platonic tradition as well.

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[23] Attested by Syrianus, *In Hermogenem* I, p. 9, 11 Rabe. In the context, this was presumably a treatise on rhetoric rather than anything philosophical.

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IAMBLICHUS: THE TWO-FOLD NATURE OF THE SOUL AND THE CAUSES OF HUMAN AGENCY

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Introduction

Iamblichus' doctrine of the soul poses a problem of internal consistency. Based on the fragments of *De anima* preserved in Joannes Stobaeus' writings, the evidence provided by Priscian of Lydia and the commentary on *De anima* attributed to Simplicius in the manuscript tradition, the very core of Iamblichus' doctrine would appear to coincide with the notion that once the human soul has descended into the world of becoming and joined the body, it changes in substance while preserving its identity.[1] As it has been emphasized in a number of important studies, this thesis was developed and formulated by the philosopher in opposition to Plotinus' doctrine that the soul possesses an immutable and unchanging nature. Usually referred to as the doctrine of the "undescended soul", the latter view rests on a strict ontological distinction between the level of the soul and those of realities superior to it.[2] A closer examination of other fragments of *De anima*, as well as evidence from Damascius and Hermias of Alexandria, would however appear to challenge the above reconstruction of Iamblichus' doctrine. Based on these sources, Iamblichus would seem to be drawing a hierarchical distinction among individual souls according to their relation to change. What he would be arguing is that the superior class of souls undergoes no change in substance (see in particular Damascius, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* IV p. 24.1–23 W.-C.). Iamblichus would thus appear to be granting certain categories of souls the same status as the one Plotinus confers on all souls—something Iamblichus criticises in other passages of his writing.

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[1] See Prisc. Lyd. *Metaphr. in Theophr.* p. 32.13–19. See too J.F. Finamore—J.M. Dillon (2002) 238–241, 258–259. Other crucial sources for Iamblichus' doctrine of the soul are Procl. *In Tim.* III p. 333. 23 ff. and Simpl. (?) *In de an.* p. 5. 33 ff., p. 89. 22 ff., p. 240. 33 ff., p. 313. 1 ff. (cf. ibid. p. 237. 37 ff.). These passages have been collected and translated by A.J. Festugière (1953) 252–257 and J. Finamore (2002) 229–278.

[2] I would here refer to what by now has become a classic work on the subject: C. Steel (1978). For more recent studies, see J.M. Dillon (2005) and J. Finamore (2009).

I will be discussing this problem in the light of two passages on the two-fold nature of the human soul: the fragment of an epistle addressed to Macedonius, *On Fate*, preserved in Joannes Stobaeus, *Anthologion* II 8. 45 p. 174.9–27;[3] and *De mysteriis* VIII 6–7.

The Fragment from the Epistle to Macedonius

The fragment from the *Epistle to Macedonius* (*On Fate*) preserved in Joannes Stobaeus II 8. 45 p. 174. 9–27 W. (45a in the Taormina-Piccione edition) focuses on the human being (ἡμεῖς), conceived as a moral agent situated within the order of the universe yet at the same time independent of it. Iamblichus' approach to this issue—one he inherited from the philosophical tradition—is ethical and metaphysical in nature and consists in linking the individual to the principles determining his action. This epistolary fragment, no doubt drawn from a wider textual context, describes the relation between the principles in question and those of the whole. In doing so, it raises a problem crucial for the purposes of the present enquiry: for one of the principles discussed in the fragment, that "of actions" (τῶν πράξεων ἀρχή), is described as being "separate from nature" (ἀφειμένην ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως) and "emancipated from the movement of the whole" (ἀπόλυτον ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς κινήσεως). At the same time, this principle is unambiguously said to be located "within us" (ἐν ἡμῖν)—and the "us" here is part of the sphere of nature. Within us, then, would appear to reside a principle that belongs to an ontological sphere superior to us. Is such a view compatible with the theory that distinguishes the soul from levels of reality superior to it, as it is preserved in Joannes Stobaeus I 49. 32 pp. 365.5–366.11 and other passages of Iamblichus? Let us first examine the text:

> Τούτων δὲ οὕτως ἐχόντων καὶ ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρχὴ τοῦ πράττειν ἔχει μὲν συμφωνίαν πρὸς ἀμφοτέρας ταύτας τὰς τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχάς· ἔχει δὲ καὶ ἀφειμένην ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως καὶ ἀπόλυτον ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς κινήσεως ἐν ἡμῖν τῶν πράξεων ἀρχήν· διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔνεστιν ἐν τῇ τοῦ παντός. διότι μὲν γὰρ ⟨οὐκ⟩ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως παράγεται οὐδὲ ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς κινήσεως, πρεσβυτέρα καὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς ἐνδιδομένη, προτέτακται· δίοτι γε μὴν ἀφ' ὅλων τῶν τοῦ κόσμου μερίδων καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων στοιχείων μοίρας τινὰς κατενείματο καὶ ταύταις πάσαις χρῆται, περιέχεται αὐτὴ καὶ ἐν τῇ τῆς εἱμαρμένης διατάξει, συντελεῖ τε εἰς αὐτὴν καὶ συμπληροῖ τὴν ἐν αὐτῇ κατασκευὴν καὶ χρῆται αὐτῇ δεόντως. καὶ καθ' ὅσον μὲν λόγον καθαρὸν αὐθυπόστατον καὶ αὐτοκίνητον ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τε ἐνεργοῦντα καὶ τέλειον ἡ ψυχὴ

[3] For a study of the fragments from the *Epistle to Macedonius, On Fate*, see D.P. Taormina (2010) 181–225, 336–386.

> συνείληφεν ἐν ἑαυτῇ, κατὰ τοσοῦτον ἀπόλυτός ἐστι πάντων τῶν ἔξωθεν· καθ' ὅσον γε μὴν καὶ ζωὰς ἄλλας προβάλλει ῥεπούσας εἰς τὴν γένεσιν καὶ ἐπικοινωνεῖ τῷ σώματι, κατὰ τοσοῦτον ἔχει συμπλοκὴν καὶ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ κόσμου διάταξιν.
>
> Given this state of things, **the human principle of acting** too is consonant with **both these principles of the whole** [i.e. fate and providence]; but on the other hand, it also implies the presence **within us** of **a principle of actions** separate from nature and emancipated from the movement of the whole: for this reason, the principle in question is not contained within the principle of the whole. Because it derives <neither> from nature nor from the movement of the whole, as it is more eminent and is not produced by the whole, it comes first. But as it has distributed some of its parts from all the regions of the universe and all the elements, and makes use of these parts, it is itself situated within the order of fate, contributes to this order, brings its establishment to completion and makes appropriate use of it. Insofar as the soul contains a pure, self-subsistent and self-moving reason that operates by its own means and is perfect in itself, it is free from all external things; but insofar as it also projects other lives that incline towards generation and is in contact with the body, it is also intertwined with the order of the universe.[4]

The above passage presents a number of difficulties. The first is of a textual nature. The surviving text reads ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρχὴ τοῦ πράττειν ἔχει μὲν συμφωνίαν … ἔχει δὲ καὶ ἀφειμένην ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως καὶ ἀπόλυτον ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς κινήσεως ἐν ἡμῖν τῶν πράξεων ἀρχήν, but the second part of the sentence (ἔχει δὲ καὶ ἀφειμένην … ἀρχήν) is rendered problematic by its context. The immediately preceding lines (9–11) mention the "human principle of acting" (ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρχὴ τοῦ πράττειν), said to be consonant with the principles of the whole. If we are to trust our manuscripts, Iamblichus explains that the principle in question implies the existence within us of another principle, apparently identical to the first (and here described as the principle of actions: τῶν πράξεων ἀρχήν). However, insofar as this principle is independent of nature and the movement of the whole, it is also independent of fate; as such, it appears to possess characteristics that would make it incompatible with the former principle.

Not only is the text preserved rather problematic, but so is the emendation Wachsmuth has suggested: ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἀφειμένη … ἀπόλυτος … ἀρχή.[5]

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[4] All translations from the Greek are my own.

[5] See G. Staab (2002) 405 n. 998, translating the passage as "Allbewegung (in uns?)", with added in brackets "ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς κινήσεως ἐν ἡμῖν—Bezug von bleibt in der Schwebe". The problematic nature of Wachsmuth's emendation has most recently been stressed by Dillon and Polleichtner (2009), who believe it is necessary to add ἡ before ἐν ἡμῖν: … ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἀφειμένη ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως καὶ ἀπόλυτος ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς κινήσεως <ἡ> ἐν ἡμῖν τῶν πράξεων

This emendation hardly solves the difficulty posed by the text: for it fails to explain how two apparently identical principles may be assigned antithetical characters. The textual problem is here closely intertwined with the philosophical.

I have thus chosen to keep the text as it is preserved. In justification of this choice, two elements may be invoked for the time being:

1. The parallel structure of the first and second sentence of the text: line 10 ἔχει μὲν συμφωνίαν … and line 11 ἔχει δὲ καὶ … ἀρχήν.
2. A parallel with *De myst*. VIII 7 p. 269.15: ἔχει γὰρ ἀρχὴν οἰκείαν ἡ ψυχή—which we shall shortly return to.

What requires some clarification is the meaning of the expressions ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρχὴ τοῦ πράττειν (lines 9–10) and τῶν πράξεων ἀρχήν (line 13).

What Are These Principles?

Lines 10–11 mention "both these principles of the whole" (ταύτας τὰς τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχάς). These "principles" were no doubt also originally featured in a section of the text that is now lost, as is suggested by the pronoun "these" which is used. It is likely the two principles in question are providence and fate, which are examined in the previous eclogue. While the second passage does not immediately follow the first, it is highly probable that it is from the latter that the two terms are here taken up again. The reference subsequently made to nature and the movement of the whole no doubt lends confirmation to the hypothesis that one of the two principles is fate, since Iamblichus describes fate as nature. Evidence is instead lacking for the second principle, although its identification with providence is perfectly plausible, not least because in the writings of later Platonists—particularly those following Iamblichus—providence is commonly regarded as one of the causes of human action. What is crucial, in this respect, is Proclus' *De providentia*, which argues that providence and fate differ from one another

> *ambo* [*scil. providentia et fatum*] *quidam* ***causas*** *mundi et eorum que in mundo fiunt esse, preexistere autem providentiam fato, et omnia quidem quecumque*

ἀρχή ("but it is also the case that the origin of action in us is both independent of Nature and emancipated from the movement of the universe"). The two scholars argue that "it seems necessary to insert <ἡ> before ἐν ἡμῖν, as this phrase needs to be subject rather than predicate of the sentence preceding it" (ad. loc.).

> *fiunt secundum fatum multo prius a providentia fieri; contrarium autem non iam verum esse: summa enim totorum a providentia recta esse, diviniora fato.*
> (*De prov*. II 3.7 ff.)
>
> in that—while both are **causes** of the world and of the things that take place in the world—providence precedes fate, and everything that comes about according to fate comes about far more according to providence. The converse, however, is not true, as the highest things of all are governed by providence, for it is more divine than fate.

This classification which Proclus inherited from tradition essentially coincides with the one Plato developed in *Laws* IV 709 B 7–C 1—a passage Proclus explicitly refers to. Plato envisages human action as depending upon three factors: God (θεός), destiny and opportunity (τύχη καὶ καιρός), and human ability (τέχνη). But what is most relevant for the present enquiry is the fact that in relation to the distinction drawn between fate and providence Proclus mentions Iamblichus himself: the difference between fate and providence, the philosopher explains, "has been examined by Iamblichus in countless writings on providence and fate" (*enim Iamblichus in hiis que de providentia et fato mille accessibus elaboravit*).

According to Proclus, therefore, Iamblichus argued that both providence and fate are the causes of the world and its events, yet in different ways: for everything that takes place according to fate also depends on providence, yet the highest things in the universe depend on providence but not fate.[6] This evidence from Proclus is further confirmed by fragments of Iamblichus' epistles. In his *Epistle to Poemenius* (I 1. 35), Iamblichus describes the order of fate as being subject to providence and identifies its subordination as the source of the self-determination or independence of the soul (I p. 43.12: τὸ αὐτεξούσιον τῆς ψυχῆς).

The various elements gathered so far quite clearly indicate that the expression "both these principles of the whole" (ταύτας τὰς τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχάς) at lines 10–11 refers to providence and fate. In the light of this, what also becomes clear is the fact that Iamblichus is free to use the expressions ἡ … ἀρχὴ τοῦ πράττειν and τῶν πράξεων ἀρχήν with different meanings and to speak both of a principle of human acting (ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρχὴ τοῦ πράττειν at lines 9–10) consonant with the principles of the whole—and hence with providence and fate—and of another principle (τῶν πράξεων ἀρχήν) which in turn depends on providence but not on fate, and as such possesses power

[6] On this distinction which Proclus himself adopted, drawing upon Iamblichus, see C. Steel (2005) and (2007) 9–10, 16.

of self-determination. This principle of acting that depends on providence but not on fate would transcend the latter. In the extract from Iamblichus' epistle, as line 23 reveals, this principle is said to reside in the soul: in its inferior part, which is subject to fate, as well as in its superior part, which is independent of fate.

The overall structure of the argument presented in eclogue 45a would now appear to be largely consistent.

At lines 9–11 we find a principle of human acting describing the condition of the embodied soul. This principle by necessity obeys the laws of providence and fate.

At lines 11–13 this principle is said to imply a principle of individual actions that escapes the laws of fate. It is further specified (lines 13–16) that this principle of individual actions precedes and is more noble than the order of fate.

Then (at lines 16–21) the theme of lines 9–11 is taken up again and it is stated that by the process of generation souls are allotted certain regions of the universe, through an act presupposing the totality of the universe.

It may thus be argued that the first section of the text and the last (lines 9–11 and 16–21) refer to the condition of souls within the realm of generation and describe the ontological condition of embodied souls, whereas the remaining sections (lines 11–16) point to a specific possibility within this condition: the persistence in the soul of the 'input' of a principle superior to the natural order.

In the light of the above considerations, it is clear that the text preserved in the manuscript tradition is perfectly acceptable and that it would be a mistake to emend it, both from a philological and a philosophical perspective. In the passage in question, Iamblichus does not merely identify two principles of human action (as Wachsmuth's text would suggest), but also defines the relation of subordination between the two, which in turn explains the presence within us of an immanent principle ontologically dependent upon a superior and transcendent principle.

The Network of Principles—Ethics

The theory presented in the fragment of Iamblichus' epistle possesses general value and is centered around the source or cause of action. Starting from the "human principle of acting" (ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρχὴ τοῦ πράττειν), a network of four principles is established, all of which lack any designation but are scrupulously defined with respect to one another. The "human

principle of acting" is consonant with the principles of the whole (αἱ τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχαί), meaning it does not stand in opposition to these principles, but is rather closely connected to them and contributes to the order they establish.

To this first connection a second one is juxtaposed: for the "human principle of acting" implies the existence "within us" of a "principle of actions" (ἐν ἡμῖν τῶν πράξεων ἀρχή) which does not depend on nature and is superior to it—in other words, a principle free from fate.

The explanatory categories for the two principles of action, then, are "included in the order of fate" and "free from such order". These categories ensure continuity with the subsequent argument: for they continue to illustrate the two-fold nature of the soul on p. 174. 21 ff.—a notion crucial for the attempt to explain how escaping the laws of fate is possible. Insofar as the soul is self-moving, it is independent of external things; yet insofar as it is in contact with the body, it is intertwined with the order of the universe, that is to say fate. In such a way, a strong correspondence is drawn between these conditions and the previous two ἀρχαί of human action, suggesting it is these ἀρχαί that determine the various activities of the soul.

The Network of Principles—Metaphysics

The network of principles established in the fragment from the *Epistle to Macedonius*, along with the notion of the two-fold condition of the soul, finds a significant and enlightening parallel in book VIII of the so-called *De mysteriis*.[7] The question here is once more the influence of fate, yet this is examined not from an ethical standpoint (as is the case in the *Epistle to Macedonius*), but from a metaphysical perspective. Based on this new perspective, Iamblichus recalls the Hermetic doctrine according to which man has two souls:

> **Δύο** γὰρ ἔχει **ψυχάς**, ὡς ταῦτά φησι τὰ γράμματα [i. e. τῶν Αἰγυπτίων], ὁ ἄνθρωπος· καὶ ἡ μέν ἐστιν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου νοητοῦ, μετέχουσα καὶ τῆς τοῦ δημιουργοῦ δυνάμεως, ἡ δὲ ἐνδιδομένη ἐκ τῆς τῶν οὐρανίων περιφορᾶς, εἰς ἣν ἐπεισέρπει ἡ θεοπτικὴ ψυχή· τούτων δὴ οὕτως ἐχόντων ἡ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν κόσμων **εἰς ἡμᾶς** καθήκουσα ψυχὴ ταῖς περιόδοις συνακολουθεῖ τῶν κόσμων, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ νοητῶς παροῦσα τῆς γενεσιουργοῦ κυκλήσεως ὑπερέχει, καὶ κατ' αὐτὴν ἥ τε λύσις γίγνεται τῆς εἱμαρμένης καὶ ἡ πρὸς τοὺς νοητοὺς θεοὺς ἄνοδος, θεουργία τε ὅση πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον ἀνάγεται κατὰ τὴν τοιαύτην ζωὴν ἀποτελεῖται.

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[7] On the context in which the relation between these two texts is to be envisaged, see I. Hadot (2004) esp. 116 and n. 405.

> For man, as these writings [i.e. those of the Egyptians] affirm, has **two souls**: one is from the first intelligible and is participant of the power of the demiurge, while the other is given from the revolutions of the heavenly worlds, to which the God-beholding soul returns. Given these conditions, the soul that comes **into us** from the worlds follows the periodic circuits of those worlds; but the soul that stems from the intelligible and is present intelligibly is superior to the cycle of generation, and through this occur both the unbinding of fate and the upward progress to the intelligible gods. Theurgy, insofar as it conducts upward to the unbegotten, is made complete by a life of this kind. (VIII 6 p. 269.1–12)

The idea of the unbinding of fate here is founded upon the same metaphysical notion that underlies the ethical view espoused in the *Epistle to Macedonius*. The two souls described in *De mysteriis* exist within us just like the two principles in the epistle, and their status too in no way differs from that attributed to the principles. The soul stemming from the movement of celestial bodies may be compared to the principle consonant with the principles of the whole; the soul situated above the cycle of becoming, to the principle separate from nature and independent of the whole.

Both the two kinds of souls and the two principles, moreover, are said to coexist "within us": in the *De mysteriis* the soul deriving from the intelligible and immanent within us enters as an addition (ἐπεισέρπει) into the other kind of soul, that deriving from the universe. Similarly, in the *Epistle to Macedonius* the principle depending on the principles of the whole coexists within us as a principle which is not contained within that of the whole. This correspondence between the two principles and the two kinds of souls is further confirmed by Iamblichus himself, who in order to explain the Hermetic doctrine interprets the term "soul" used by the Egyptians as denoting the latter's "principle": "For the soul has a principle of its own (ἔχει γὰρ ἀρχὴν οἰκείαν ἡ ψυχὴ) leading around to the realm of the intelligible (εἰς τὸ νοητὸν περιαγωγῆς), of separation from generated things (τῆς ἀποστάσεως … ἀπὸ τῶν γιγνομένων), and of contact with being and that which is divine (ἐπὶ δὲ τὸ ὂν καὶ τὸ θεῖον συναφῆς)";[8] "there exists another principle of the soul which is superior to all nature" (ἔστι καὶ ἑτέρα τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρχὴ κρείττων πάσης φύσεως).[9]

Finally, in *De mysteriis* the passage from abstraction (the arrangement of elements lacking any denomination) to concreteness (the definition of the principle in question) may again be compared to what we find in the *Epistle to Macedonius*. In *De mysteriis*, this passage takes place through a transition

[8] *De myst*. VIII 7 p. 269.15–17.
[9] *De myst*. VIII 7 p. 270.9–10.

from the "principle", conceived as the cause of being and movement, to "what is best in us" and finally the "soul":

> Κατὰ δὴ ταύτην οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν καὶ ἑαυτοὺς λύειν. Ὅταν γὰρ δὴ τὰ βελτίονα τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργῇ, καὶ πρὸς τὰ κρείττονα ἀνάγηται αὐτῆς ἡ ψυχή …
>
> Through this principle we are able to set ourselves free [from the bonds of fate]. For when what is best in us is in activity and the soul is exalted to what is superior to itself … (*De myst.* p. 270.13–15)

The *Epistle to Macedonius* transposes the same argument on an ethical level:

> καὶ καθ' ὅσον μὲν λόγον καθαρὸν αὐθυπόστατον καὶ αὐτοκίνητον ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τε ἐνεργοῦντα καὶ τέλειον ἡ ψυχὴ συνείληφεν ἐν ἑαυτῇ, κατὰ τοσοῦτον ἀπόλυτός ἐστι πάντων τῶν ἔξωθεν.
>
> Insofar as the soul contains a pure, self-subsistent and self-moving reason that operates by its own means and is perfect in itself, it is free from all external things. (II 8. 45 p. 174.21–24 W.)

The similarities, correspondences and parallels between *De mysteriis* VIII 6–7 and the surviving fragment from the *Epistle to Macedonius* make the question originally raised in this paper relevant to both texts: is the presence within us of a principle superior to nature inconsistent with the distinction drawn in the fragments of *De anima* and in other passages between the soul on the one hand and the intelligible and divine order on the other? I would suggest a negative answer, based in particular on the evidence from *De mysteriis*. The soul is here described as undertaking a journey. Its point of departure is the realm of becoming, from which it moves in the direction of the intelligible, finally reaching the intelligible and the divine. This passing of the soul into a different realm is constantly emphasized in the text via the description of a series of transformations that the soul undergoes and which ultimately lead it to transcend its own limits and the bonds of fate. In doing so, the soul abandons its own order and common form of life to turn towards a different order: "there exists another principle of the soul" by virtue of which it "is exalted to what is superior to itself" (πρὸς τὰ κρείττονα ἀνάγηται αὐτῆς ἡ ψυχή). By this process it then "becomes totally separate from everything that held it fast in the realm of generation (χωρίζεται παντάπασι τῶν κατεχόντων αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν γένεσιν), keeps itself aloof from inferior natures (ἀφίσταται τῶν χειρόνων), exchanges one life for another (ζωὴν … ἑτέραν ἀνθ' ἑτέρας ἀλλάττεται), and gives itself to a different order, entirely abandoning the former (δίδωσιν ἑαυτὴν εἰς ἄλλην διακόσμησιν τὴν προτέραν ἀφεῖσα παντελῶς)."[10]

[10] *De myst.* VIII 7 p. 270.14–19.

Conclusion

The principle superior to nature that is within us, then, would not appear to make the soul—each soul—belong to the intelligible realm; nor would it appear to infuse the soul with the intelligible without altering the latter's transcendent status. Rather, this principle reflects the metaphysical view of participation that Iamblichus adopts to describe the one-sided relation between inferior and superior. In this respect, the soul which has freed itself from fate also acquires a share in the power of the demiurge and operates in such a way as to ascend to what is superior to itself. The law of the distinction separating the various orders of reality here still holds; in a way, it is even reinforced: for the soul is regarded as having utterly descended into the sensible realm—of which it forms an integral part—even if it is independent of this realm when it turns to ontologically superior natures, participating in them through assimilation.[11]

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[11] I am very grateful to Sergio Knipe for the English translation of this paper.

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IAMBLICHUS ON MATHEMATICAL ENTITIES*

Claudia Maggi

1. *Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus*

The question as to whether numbers (and figures) are ontologically separate from computation is answered affirmatively in the *Phaedo*. The notions of cause and participation, central to the model presented in the dialogue, are also applied to numbers as well as to other Forms:

> Would you not shrink from asserting that, when one is added to another one, the addition causes the creation of two, or is it caused by division, in case one was split? Wouldn't you shout [...] that you do not have any other reason for the creation of two, if not its participation in the dyad [...], and that what will be one will be in the monad?[1]

There is no conclusive evidence, however, of the presence in the dialogues of a clear distinction between two kinds of numbers and figures, ideal and mathematical ones. In the *Republic* Plato talks about two forms of reality, the visible and the intelligible, and about four kinds of knowledge.[2] The dialogue testifies to the inferiority of mathematics to dialectics, and highlights the intermediate status of *dianoia* between *doxa* and *noēsis*; but this is not enough to prove that mathematical entities are different from Forms. Scholars are not unanimous about the so-called 'privileged' condition of mathematics in relation to other sciences, and some of them do not rule out regarding mathematics, within the divided line pattern, as an example, "l'esempio di un metodo, di una forma di sapere che, praticato da coloro che si occupano di geometria, di aritmetica e di scienze simili, consiste nell'assumere certe ipotesi e svolgere poi da esse certe conseguenze".[3]

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* I am grateful to Eugene Afonasin, Luc Brisson and John Finamore for their suggestions.

1 *Phaed.* 101b9–c7.

2 See *Resp.* VI 509d–511e; VII 533e–534c.

3 L. Palumbo (2008) 108–109. See also B. Vitrac (2005) 21–22. These questions are dealt with in detail in C. Maggi (2010) 30 sqq.; it should be consulted for literary criticism on this subject. See also F. Fronterotta (2001) 128–134.

Aristotle is an indispensable mediator both in the formulation of a 'Platonic' mathematical ontology, and in the Pythagorean heritage of several Platonic doctrines. In refuting Plato's theory of Forms, he is the first to speak of a 'strong' doctrine, attributed to Plato, of geometrical and arithmetical entities. Although he does not promote a structured mathematical model, his arguments not only make some difficulties in Plato's doctrines clearer—something which Plato himself was no doubt aware of—but they also offer an example of the first ontological 'organization' which contained Forms, ideal numbers, intermediate and sensible entities.

The first historical-doxographic acknowledgement of Pythagorean mathematical ontology is also to be found in Aristotle:

> The so-called Pythagoreans [...] believed that the principles of mathematics were peculiar to all the things which exist. And since, in mathematics, numbers come first in a natural way (*physei*), and since they saw in them, rather than in fire, earth or water, many features similar to the things which are and those liable to coming-to-be, they inferred that [...] the elements of numbers (*stoicheia*) were elements of all the things which exist.[4]

Aristotle himself also traces Pythagoras' paternity for many Platonic doctrines, thus paving the way for identifying Pythagoreanism with Platonism: this identification was to be the key to the Neoplatonic tradition after Plotinus.[5]

The identification Plato-Pythagoras is accompanied by the attribution to the former of the doctrine of ontological tripartition, which does not seem to be explicitly and deliberately confirmed in the dialogues:

> Plato claims that, next to sensible entities and Forms, there are the mathematical entities, an intermediate stage between the two other realms: they differ from sensible entities since they are eternal and motionless, but they are also different from Forms since there are many similar kinds of them, whereas Forms are indivisible.[6]

Aristotle also states that Plato made a distinction, founded on a doctrine of principles which are recognized to possess a generative function, between two kinds of numbers, those that are ideal—uncombinable (*asymblētos*) and not liable to calculus—and those that are arithmetical:

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[4] *Metaph.* 985b23 sqq. On Aristotelian testimony see B. Centrone (2009).

[5] See *Metaph.* 987a29 sqq. On the association Plato-Pythagoras in Aristotle see Th.A. Szlezák (2008) 98–112.

[6] *Metaph.* 987b14–18. See also *Metaph.* 1028b 20.

> As Plato claimed that Forms are the cause of the other entities, he inferred that the elements of Forms were the elements of all the other entities. The principles of Forms are, in his opinion, the great-and-small, acting as matter, and the one, acting as substance. Forms <and> numbers originate from the great-and-small, through participation in the one.[7]
>
> The following kinds of numbers are both believed to exist: the former, bearing a distinction according to before and after, is ideal; the latter, the arithmetical number, is different from both Forms and sensible realm. Both of these numbers are supposed to be separate from the sensible realm.[8]

The problem of the distinction between two kinds of numbers, the identification or not of ideal numbers with Forms, the compatibility between the model in the dialogues and that of the doctrine of principles seem to have created trouble within the Old Academy.[9] According to Aristotle, who reports it in detail—although I do not intend to discuss it here—there is only one solution to this problem: the negation of the hypotheses generating aporias; the negation both of the ontological separation of mathematical entities from sensible substances and, above all, of the existence of non-arithmetical numbers.

In response to these aporias, Aristotle, as is common knowledge, solves the issue of the constitution of mathematical entities by considering them as attributes (*pathē*) of what is sensible and only exists *per se*: it follows that "one can allow that the mathematical sciences are true without having to admit the existence of ideal objects".[10] Nevertheless, mathematics is not about attributes as such (*qua*).[11]

Once he has denied the mathematical entities' ontological separation, Aristotle has a problem with geometrical objects: that of accounting for the fact that one can think about a particular geometrical object "in abstraction

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[7] *Metaph.* 987b18–22. For the notion of 'cause', here used by Aristotle, see E. Cattanei (1996) 239 sqq.; G. Fine (1987). For the philological question of text integration with a conjunction, the speculative consequences of whether or not one identifies Forms with numbers, and uncombinable numbers, see C. Maggi (2009) 37 sqq. and cross references.

[8] *Metaph.* 1080b11–14.

[9] See L.M. Napolitano Valditara (1988) 156 sqq.

[10] J. Lear (1982) 165.

[11] If so, the mathematician could not leave out of consideration the sensible substance affections inhere in, and what marks it, i.e. mutability and generation. The solution provided is an operation of *reduction* by which the part-feature is separate from the whole-substance only as far as the mathematician leaves out the other *pathē* which are not relevant for him. Therefore, mathematical entities only enjoy the property of existence *en allōi*, but not that *kath'hauta*. I cannot refer here to the debate on the Aristotelian abstractive model. See E. Cattanei (1996) 184 sqq.; J.J. Cleary (1995) 312 sqq.; J. Lear (1982) 168–175; 183–184; J. Barnes (1985) 101 sqq.; J. Annas (1987); M. Mignucci (1987).

from the fact that it is composed, for example, of bronze".[12] He resorts to a peculiar notion of matter as intelligible. Intelligible matter is understood as what lets thought imagine geometrical shapes;[13] it is also by virtue of intelligible matter that it is possible to think about the parts of a particular geometrical object, considered as a *whole*, as if they were provided with properties which the whole does not possess. Although he follows a different path from 'Plato', through the doctrine of intelligible matter Aristotle formulates a similar tripartite model, in which the mathematical entity occupies an intermediate place between the *katholou*, meant as *to koinon legomenon kath'hypokeimenou tinos*, devoid of parts, and the sensible entity, whose parts cannot be really divided from the living being.[14]

In the philosophical tradition that followed there are many examples of treatises on numbers.[15] Plotinus' *On numbers* (VI 6 [34]), "le seul de tous les traités [...] qui soit formellement et uniquement consacré à la question des nombres",[16] is the most singular one. One may say that VI 6 "se situe au confluent de deux lignes de pensée que l'on trouve chez Plotin":[17] (1) the relationship between numbers and second hypostasis; and (2) that between *arithmoi* and *degrees of reality*. I cannot detail all of Plotinus' themes,[18] but these are the most significant conclusions he reached: (1) while Aristotle asserts that numbers are caused by computation (*logismos*) and *noein*, Plotinus, like Plato, speaks of numbers as if they were apart from the sensible realm and *dianoia*;[19] (2) Plotinus interprets Plato's dialogues in order to equate "number with substance, power, and activity of being",[20] i.e. with the second hypostasis; (3) as S. Slaveva-Griffin pointed out, Plotinus "makes number the building block of the intelligible",[21] as *unified number* (Being), *number moving in itself* (Intellect), *encompassing number* (Complete Liv-

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[12] J. Lear (1982) 182.

[13] Just as geometrical shapes are not really divided from sensible entities, but result from a functional separation capable of establishing the object of mathematical science, so matter, acting as a substratum for these objects, does not exist by itself, but represents that by virtue of which the geometrical object is thought *qua* provided with spatial configuration.

[14] See *Metaph.* 1036a9–12; 1036b28 sqq. For the role of intelligible matter in Aristotle see J. Lear (1982) 181–183; J. Barnes (1985) 116–118; G. Patzig (1987) 119–126; Ch. Helmig (2007a).

[15] See J. Bertier (2003) 9–17; S. Slaveva-Griffin (2009) 3–8.

[16] J. Bertier (2003) 18.

[17] J. Bertier (2003) 25.

[18] See J. Bertier (2003) 32 sqq.; C. Maggi (2009) 17 sqq.

[19] See VI 6, 4–5.

[20] S. Slaveva-Griffin (2009) 87. See VI 6, 7–9; 17–18.

[21] S. Slaveva-Griffin (2009) 87.

ing Being) and *number unfolded outward* (beings):[22] it follows that "substantial number then divides Being, which is unified number, according to the whole number of beings that is already predetermined";[23] (4) Plotinus asserts that just as the One is the "principe de l'existence de l'être", so number is "principe et source d'existence pour les êtres": thanks to "cette liaison des êtres et du nombre", "la pluralisation de l'être ne va pas à l'infini";[24] (5) the 'Platonic' doctrine of two kinds of numbers is transformed: substantial number is *ho men epitheōroumenos tois eidesi kai syggennōn auta* and beings *basin de echei* [...] *en autōi kai pēgēn kai rhizan kai archēn*; the intermediate one seems to be produced, according to Aristotle, only by *dianoia* (*allos de ho monadikos legomenos eidōlon toutou*).[25]

The purpose of this preamble was to identify two models in the ancient tradition capable of describing the nature of mathematical entities: (1) the 'Platonic' one, which assumes the ontological separation of mathematical entities and the differentiation of levels of realms; (2) the 'Aristotelian' one, which rejects ontological separation and reduces numbers and figures to properties of bodies.

Here I will focus on the idea of the survival of similar issues in Iamblichus, which are interconnected with his taking over Neopythagorean models scattered among pseudo-epigraphic imperial age texts: it is in fact by comparison with the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition that some of the themes making up the structure of *De communi mathematica scientia* can be best focused on.[26]

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[22] VI 6, 9, 29–31. See S. Slaveva-Griffin (2009) 88: "*the unfolded number* of all beings and the encompassing number of the Complete Living Being involve motion away from the unified number of Being. In other words, the substantial number in beings and the Complete Living Being separate from the unified number of Being just as multiplicity separates from the One".

[23] S. Slaveva-Griffin (2009) 88.

[24] J. Bertier (2003) 74.

[25] VI 6, 9, 34–36; 38–39. See also VI 6, 16 and J. Bertier (2003) 74–76; C. Maggi (2009) 43 sqq.; C. Maggi (2010) 104 sqq.

[26] No doubt Iamblichus can be considered as mainly responsible for the process which created the philosophical *hybrid* that is the Neopythagorean variety of Neoplatonism (see D.J. O'Meara (1989) 30 sqq.; 213–215; D.J. O'Meara (1990) 412; F. Romano (2000) 1–3; S. Cuomo (2001) 234–237): regarded as the first guardian of divinely revealed science, Pythagoras ensured the legitimacy of the extension of the field of mathematical sciences. In the same mathematicizing perspective Pythagoras is also the privileged reference point both for the defence of Platonism against Aristotelian criticism (see R.L. Cardullo (1993) 195), and for building a unitary knowledge capable of overcoming the *diaphonia* underlying the philosophical tradition. Moreover, Pythagorean doctrine allowed Iamblichus to assert that mathematics can be considered as the *anodos epi ta timiōtata*—so it is intermediate science—that is to say, the *klimax* through which one can reach *amerista eidē* (see chapters 1; 18; 19 of *Comm. math. sc.*).

2. *The Ideal Number*

In VI 6, 9 Plotinus presents the "one-in-many nature of Intellect"[27] through substantial-true number, whose different aspects in the intelligible realm reproduce all the ontological expressions and levels caused by the simple One, which remains far from the multiplicity deriving from itself. In *Comm. math. sc.* 63, 23 sqq. Iamblichus seems to set up a hierarchy of numbers, which from the *divine* number would lead to the *physical* one: he acknowledges them as having a 'theological' aspect (*to theologikon*), as they have the faculty to accommodate themselves (*synarmozomenon*) to divine being, power, order and acts (*tēi tōn theōn ousiāi kai dynamei, taxei te kai energeiais*); he adduces the *arithmos eidētikos*, with reference to the intelligible level; he speaks of *autokinētos arithmos*, probably referring to the soul;[28] finally he alludes to numbers as *logoi* immanent in matter.[29] Are these sufficient reasons to conclude that Iamblichus accepted both the 'Platonic' distinction between two (or more) kinds of numbers and the Plotinian model of substantial number?

The notion of *synarmogē* is perhaps an important interpretative key to the problem: rather than allowing the assumption of a doctrine of ideal numbers in *Comm. math. sc.*, or an even more complex articulation of numbers (as in Plotinus), it discloses a model of *omniextension* of the arithmetical number as an intermediate entity: it is precisely its intermediate status that makes it available both to the higher and the lower realms.[30]

The possibility of the extension-*synarmogē* of arithmetical number to the whole of the intelligible and sensible universe remains therefore *symbolic*.[31] It is thus possible in this perspective to agree that Iamblichus' theory of mathematical entities "devrait inclure [...] une mention du fait que toute une hiérarchie de nombres se dessine [...]. Il existe [...] des nombres

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[27] S. Slaveva-Griffin (2009) 81.

[28] About the relationship between soul and mathematical entities see C. Maggi (2010) 200 sqq.

[29] See D.J. O'Meara (1989) 62; 79 sqq.; G.R. Giardina (2000) 151–155; R.L. Cardullo (1993) 190–191. About Iamblichus' notion of *logos* see Ch.P. Manolea (1998). About the distinction between ontological and arithmetical number in Neopythagorean tradition see S. Slaveva-Griffin (2009) 47; 52 n. 53; 94; Ch. Helmig (2007b); G.R. Giardina (1999) 286–289 and nn. 70; 75–76.

[30] See F. Romano (2000) 6.

[31] See *Enn.* VI 6, 5, 10–12. Perhaps in this perspective we must accept G. Shaw's statement (1999) 126, by which "the divine numbers [...] sustain all forms of life and allow the soul its most intimate participation in the One". See also G. Shaw (1995) 205–208.

intellectuels, des nombres idéaux ou intelligibles, et enfin des nombres qui trascendent l'intelligible, les nombres divins".[32]

3. *The Intermediates, the Causal Relation with Forms, and the Criticism of the Doctrine of Abstraction*

Iamblichus takes on the ontological tripartition, which Aristotle attributes to Plato, and the consequent defence of the intermediate and separate nature of mathematical entities.[33] However, he combines this model with an unusual interpretation of the *Sophist* and a Neopythagorean-derived reading of the 'divided line' in *Resp*. VI 509d 6–511e 5.[34]

By the interaction of *genē* and by their action on intermediate entities there results an affinity (*syggeneia*) between these and Forms and the *mesotēs* of *ta mathēmatika*;[35] from *mesotēs* finally derives the possibility that the intermediates link fully separate intelligible entities with those in the realm of what is coming-to-be.[36]

It must be pointed out that the *genē*'s causal action involves, in spite of affinity, a separation of the mathematical entities from Forms as regards their features, on the ground of the use of the model of vertical causality, originating from Plotinus, according to which what comes first ontologically produces what follows, without sharing its nature.[37] It is possible to assign this semantic field to the notion of *aitia*, starting from the way in which Iamblichus deals with the theme of the causal action of that which is a principle:

> Principles are not only characterized notionally (*kat'epinoian*)[38] [...]. It is not the same thing for an immaterial entity to exist in itself and to make up other natures' being (*symplērōtikon allōn*).[39]

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[32] D.J. O'Meara (1990) 415.

[33] See *Comm. math. sc*. 10, 7–13. For the differences between Iamblichus and Aristotle see C. Maggi (2010) 173–178.

[34] For the divided line in Iamblichus see *Comm. math. sc*. 32, 13 sqq. For a comment on the passage and its sources see L.M. Napolitano Valditara (2000).

[35] See C. Maggi (2009) 57–61 for the presence of a similar doctrine in Plotinus.

[36] See *Comm. math. sc*. 10, 20; 10, 24 sqq.; 11, 3–7.

[37] For the theme of vertical causality in Plotinus see discussion and bibliographic references in C. Maggi (2009) 29–31; C. Maggi (2010) 81 sqq.; 123–125.

[38] For the use of the term *epinoia* in Neoplatonic mathematical ontology after Plotinus see G.R. Giardina (2000) 158–159 and nn. 28–29.

[39] *Comm. math. sc*. 49, 22–28. See also *Comm. math. sc*. 50, 1 sqq.

By intersecting the levels of *syggeneia*, *mesotēs* and of causal action, Iamblichus obtains two results: (1) he interprets the Aristotelian tripartition from a clearly generative point of view; (2) since what is intermediate is similar to *eidos*, but also to the sensible entity, Iamblichus can recognize a specific mathematical method and admit, at the same time, that it can extend to dialectics as well as to knowledge associated with the sensible realm.

By applying the vertical causative model to the exegesis of the divided line, Iamblichus is finally able to rule out a lower realm as causing a higher one, and, consequently, to deny that mathematical entities are obtained *kata aphairesin* from sensible ones.[40]

The criticism of the doctrine of abstraction is linked to the formulation of a peculiar notion of *phantasia* in the sense of 'projection'. The doctrine of imagination in relation to the nature of mathematical entities is made clear by Proclus[41] and is implicitly present in Plotinus,[42] but, as A. Sheppard points out, Iamblichus plays an essential intermediary role in the development of this model.[43] The philosopher's conscious use of the notion of projection is proved, according to the scholar, by the use of the verb *proballein* in the same context in which he deals with the function of *anamnēsis*.[44] Here he develops the idea that any arithmetical and geometrical operation is no more than the result of a projection produced by the soul as from principles which are innate to it and that somehow transcend it: "such intelligible principles remain the ultimate objects of mathematical thought".[45] It follows that imagination is the opposite of abstraction.[46]

Although Iamblichus never speaks of projection explicitly, we can infer that he "does then provide all the materials for the theory of mathematical projection which we find in Syrianus and Proclus".[47]

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[40] See *Comm. math. sc.* 89, 5–6. For Iamblichus' criticism of abstraction see F. Romano (1997) 60–61; D.J. O'Meara (1990) 414; F. Romano (2000) 10. About Plotinus' influence on Iamblichus see C. Maggi (2010) 181–183.

[41] *In Eucl.* 51, 9–56, 22; 78, 20–79, 2; 141, 2–19. See A. Charles (1971); G. Watson (1988) 119–121; D.J. O'Meara (1989) 166–169.

[42] See A. Sheppard (1997) 115–116.

[43] See A. Sheppard (1997) 113.

[44] *Comm. math. sc.* 43, 21; 44, 9. See A. Sheppard (1997) 118.

[45] A. Sheppard (1997) 113.

[46] This correlation is made clear by Syrianus. See *In Metaph.* 91, 11–92, 10; A. Sheppard (1997) 114–115 and cross-ref. On Syrianus see also D.J. O'Meara (1989) 119 sqq.; I. Mueller (1990) 470–474. For a comparison between Iamblichus and Syrianus on the theme of projection see I. Mueller (1990) 477–478.

[47] A. Sheppard (1997) 119. See D.J. O'Meara (1990) 415.

4. *The Doctrine of Principles*

According to Iamblichus[48] *to peperasmenon kai apeiron archai eisi pantōn tōn mathēmatōn kai pasēs mathēmatikēs ousias*. While Plotinus, in his treatise *On numbers*, adopts a unipolar framework, by which the only principle of numbers is the One,[49] Iamblichus returns to the idea of the duplicity of *archai* and their nature of contraries,[50] a model Iamblichus claims he has drawn from the Pythagoreans; yet he follows a far more complex tradition, mixing *Parmenides* and *Philebus* with *Chaldean Oracles*.[51]

Iamblichus refers to the two principles differently: besides the 'Pythagorean' couple *peras* (*peperasmenon*)-*apeiron*, there is also *hen-plēthos* for the production of intermediates. These names perhaps refer back to the various positions that, according to Aristotle, the Academics were supposed to have assumed regarding the doctrine of principles.[52] The second principle is also called *hypodochē-hylē*,[53] a definition in which we can see the synthesis of the features of the Platonic *chōra* with those of the Aristotelian *hylē*.[54]

As it is equal to itself in every entity, Iamblichus finds in the one the resemblance pattern which makes mathematical entities similar; he finds in matter the principle of diversification and multiplication.[55] If the diversification of *ta mathēmatika* is not based on the one, but on matter, then it will not be possible to accept one sole *hylē* for all the mathematical entities.[56] An 'Aristotelian' model is evidently operating here, which, by comparing the one and multiplicity, principles of numbers, with form and matter,[57] requires an appropriate matter for any form and demands that, once we admit the simplicity of the one, we must likewise accept the multiplication

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[48] *Comm. math. sc.* 12, 22.

[49] See *Enn.* VI 6, 9, 35–42. For a note on the passage see C. Maggi (2009) 220–221.

[50] See *In Nic.* 78, 18–19. See J.M. Dillon (1973) 268–270; 319–320. For the use in this sense of *Sophist*'s *genē* see J.M. Dillon (1997) 71. On the presence of monism in Iamblichus see G. Shaw (1995) 33; G. Shaw (1999) 129; G. Van Riel (1997) 44–45.

[51] See G. Shaw (1995) 31 and nn. 10; 12; D.P. Taormina (1999) 39–44; 76–78.

[52] Iamblichus often passes from one definition to another, among those attributed to Academics. In the *Commentary on Nicomachus*, the one and two are identified with the principles of identity and alterity, of equal and unequal, of the one and the indefinite dyad (see 30, 9–12; 43, 27 sqq.; 73, 5–8; 74, 7–14; 82, 27 sqq.; 88, 13–14).

[53] See *Comm. math. sc.* 15, 6–14; 16, 15.

[54] See C. Maggi (2010) 72–77.

[55] See *Comm. math. sc.* 14, 12–16. For the relationship between Speusippus and Iamblichus about the doctrine of the One see J.M. Dillon (1984); C. Maggi (2010) 192–193 and n. 126.

[56] *Comm. math. sc.* 16, 18–22.

[57] See *In Nic.* 78, 11–14; 86, 25–27.

of kinds of matter or dyads. In this sense the philosopher talks about receptive principles (*hypodochai*) of mathematical entities,[58] whose difference is produced by different kinds of matter, that is by suitable repositories (*tas oikeias hypodochas*).[59] If matter is the second and necessary principle of any mathematical entity, it follows in fact that it is neither its absence nor its presence that makes the difference, but its distinction into levels.[60]

The distinction among *hypodochai* is, in turn, associated with the notion of density: depending on whether it is greater or lesser, it does not make the one, which is always equal to itself, always clearly and *brightly* show its nature.[61] Density, meant as a progressive *precipitate* of what is higher into a lower nature, makes geometrical objects turn out to be ontologically subsequent to numbers, in their being *heavier*.[62]

5. *Mathematicization of the Sensible Realm*

In the function acknowledged for matter we can glimpse an attempt to recover the underlying structure of sensible nature: sensible matter is actually considered as the last precipitate of intelligible matter's various levels, hence it represents "no subtraction of intelligible power because it was derived directly from the highest intelligible being, the *aoristos duas*".[63] In this sense, "Pythagorean mathematics allowed Iamblichus to exorcize sensible matter of the evil with which it had been identified by Gnostics, Platonic dualists, and even by Plotinus".[64]

The exegesis of *Timaeus* is central in Iamblichus' work of 'exorcizing' the wickedness of sensible matter. This dialogue not only leaves space for an intermediate mathematical model, which runs parallel to the demiurgic act and to the status, neither eidetic nor sensible, of the World Soul, but is also the Platonic work which *seems* most marked by Pythagorean traces, which Iamblichus is well aware of in treating the origins of the theory of

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[58] *Comm. math. sc.* 14, 9–10.
[59] See *Comm. math. sc.* 17, 28–29.
[60] See *Comm. math. sc.* 17, 25–27.
[61] *Comm. math. sc.* 17, 1–7.
[62] *Comm. math. sc.* 17, 20–22.
[63] G. Shaw (1995) 29.
[64] G. Shaw (1999) 129. See also J.M. Dillon (1987) 898–899. For the differences between the Plotinian and later Neoplatonic notions of matter see J. Opsomer (2001); G. Van Riel (1997) 36–37; 42.

mesotētes.[65] Iamblichus' intention of reading *Timaeus* in a 'physical' rather than allegorical sense[66] is to be framed in this project of revaluating the sensible realm, which is possible when "la procession [...] reproduit, à un niveau inférieur [...], la synthèse des opposés présente dans l'unité du modèle".[67] This operation appears to the philosopher not only as the result of a correct interpretation of the Platonic dialogue, but also as a strategy that can direct the Platonic tradition towards theurgy: when "the attitude of Platonists toward embodiment and the physical world" is conceived as theurgy and theurgy "is understood as cooperative demiurgy", it follows that it fulfills itself in the disposition of matter, as if it were taking part in the original demiurgic act.[68]

From these questions also arises, as mentioned, the insistence on the possibility of intermediates being the essential intermediary in order to know sensible nature and to achieve a contact between higher and lower entities.[69] Since what is sensible is, in itself, undetermined, it follows that "whoever wants to understand things, must look at mathematical entities [...], because it is through them that everything is revealed clearly".[70] In other words, it is the possibility of *mathematicizing* what is sensible that makes it an object of knowledge.

In order to make this happen, what is lower must, in turn, *offer itself* to what precedes it. What of the sensible nature is offered to the individual soul and leads it to intermediates is, in the full Platonic sense, opposition.[71] This is the same principle which governs mathematical entities themselves.

The issue of the relationship between mathematical entities and the sensible realm makes it possible to describe the abstraction model from a different point of view. Iamblichus seems to deal with *aphairesis* in two ways: when—as is the case for the Pythagorean-Platonic divided line—he concentrates on the 'genetic' aspect of mathematical entities, he rules

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[65] See *In Nic*. 104, 27 sqq. On *mesotētes* in Plato see *In Nic*. 110, 7 sqq.; 118, 19 sqq.

[66] As Porphyry would rather have it: see B. Dalsgaard Larsen (1975) 17.

[67] D.P. Taormina (1999) 79.

[68] See G. Shaw (1995) 23–24, who does point out that, against a plausible exegesis of *Timaeus* offered by Iamblichus, "there is evidence in Plato's dialogues that seems to contradict Iamblichus' positive view of matter and embodiment", but, on the other hand, the conflict "is in the dialogues themselves and was the inheritance of any Platonist who attempted to resolve the problem of embodiment". The reference is, of course, to dialogues such as *Phaedo*. See also G. Shaw (1995) 38 sqq.

[69] See *Comm. math. sc*. 25, 28 sqq.

[70] *Comm. math. sc*. 78, 15–18. On the impossibility of the soul knowing the sensible in itself (but, actually, the intelligible as well) see Ch.P. Manolea (1998) 169–170.

[71] *Comm. math. sc*. 25, 26–28.

out their deriving from the sensible entity 'by abstraction', because it is not possible for what is higher to derive its reason from what is lower. But when, in the extensive section devoted to Pythagorean mathematics, Iamblichus investigates the application range of mathematical sciences, he recognizes that they have the power to separate shapes and figures from the bodies by mental acts (*to chōrizon tais epinoiais tēn morphēn kai ta schēmata apo tōn sōmatōn*).[72]

However, it is a 'separation' which does not concern mathematical entities in themselves; neither is it to be considered, in the manner of Aristotle, as functional abstraction: it concerns the power to separate *immanent reasons* and *immanent forms* from bodies (*tous enylous logous kai ta enyla eidē*)[73] and not merely attributes devoid of ontological *concreteness*.

The extension of mathematics to the sensible realm proves to be dependent on the model given by *Timaeus* to the structure of what is sensible:

> Mathematical theory is accustomed to arguing sensible entities from a mathematical point of view, assuming for instance either a geometrical or arithmetical or harmonical way of knowing the four elements.[74]

The mathematical way of considering the structure of the four elements reminds us, not so much of an Aristotelian functional abstractionism, as of a structure underlying the sensible realm which offers itself to mathematics, because it is itself mathematical, even though not in a pure and separate way.[75]

Therefore, abstraction is to be understood within a model which justifies a form of participation of sensible entities, or of some of their attributes, in mathematical ones—so we have the affinity between what is coming-to-be and the intermediates[76]—and simultaneously a causal action of mathematical entities on sensible ones, which conveys to the latter the causality exerted by the principles and by the intelligible level on the intermediates.

Here we have an interesting model, which finds a sort of participative 'interface' in mathematical entities, granted by the Platonic notion of affinity, by which they are part of intelligible entities, but are in their turn shared in by sensible ones.[77]

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[72] *Comm. math. sc.* 64, 16–17.
[73] *Comm. math. sc.* 64, 13–14.
[74] *Comm. math. sc.* 93, 11–14.
[75] See *Comm. math. sc.* 93, 18 sqq.; D.J. O'Meara (1990) 413.
[76] See *Comm. math. sc.* 94, 12–16.
[77] See *Comm. math. sc.* 95, 8–10.

The re-appraisal of what is sensible that emerges from this operation involves in turn the extension of eidetic causality: in this sense "Jamblique peut insister sur la construction d'une architecture des rapports intelligible/sensible" which "contient les éléments théoriques fondamentaux pour construire un modèle rationnel de causalité capable d'exercer un contrôle sur tous les ordres du réel".[78]

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[78] D.P. Taormina (1999) 49; 51.

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THE ROLE OF *AESTHESIS* IN THEURGY

Gregory Shaw

> [T]he henad communicates even to the body an echo of its own quality: in this way the body becomes not only animate and intellective, but also divine.
>
> Proclus, *Elements of Theology*[1]

> Philosophy is united with the art of sacred things since this art is concerned with the purification of the luminous body, and if you separate philosophical thinking from this art, you will find that it no longer has the same power.
>
> Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*[2]

Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries* is a sharply polemical treatise written by a platonic philosopher and theurgist exasperated at the profound misunderstanding of his former teacher, Porphyry, concerning their common tradition.[3] The divine way of life that had been the inheritance of Platonists and Pythagoreans was being lost, according to Iamblichus, due to mistakes in metaphysical thinking and—more significantly—the exaggerated importance given to abstract thought over the direct experience of the gods.[4] Porphyry's errors were emblematic of a growing trend among Greek philosophers who had lost touch with the priority and the depth of divine symbols and rituals. While rational reflection was certainly valued among

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[1] Proclus ed. Dodds (1963; 1992) 114.28–29; Proposition 129: οὕτω γίνεται τὸ σῶμα οὐ μόνον ἔμψυχον καὶ νοερόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ θεῖον.

[2] *Hierocles*; I. Hadot, tr. M. Chase (2004) 48: 26.24–28.

[3] Many instances can be found in Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries* (E. Clarke, J. Dillon, and J. Hershbell 2003). All references will follow the Parthey pagination preceded by *DM* (*de Mysteriis*). See for example the derisive tone of Iamblichus at 49.9–13, where he says that Porphyry's assumptions about gods and daimones is "so far removed from outlining the proper features of their essences that one is unable even to conjecture anything about them at all …." Cf. *DM* 156.3–5; 26.12–14.

[4] P. Athanassiadi (2006) says that Iamblichus felt his tradition was threatened by "l'hérésie de l'intellectualisme" (213). It was precisely against this heresy that Iamblichus directed his efforts, seeking to protect the revelatory core of Platonism from those who would reduce it to a framework of abstractions.

Pythagoreans and Platonists, it had long been their practice—especially among Pythagoreans—to subordinate their philosophic discourse to the esoteric wisdom conveyed by divine symbols received from the ancients.[5] Therefore Iamblichus' spirited promotion of theurgy should not be seen, as some have argued, as an attempt to introduce something new to his tradition—for example, an effort to compete with Christianity—but rather to preserve something old, the integrity and sanctity of his received way of life.[6]

In *On the Mysteries* Iamblichus made explicit what had been implicit in his tradition: the intimate experience of divinity recognized and shared by both philosophers and the larger community, but in the late 3rd century CE this was threatened by the intellectual habits of the Greeks. Iamblichus defended the esoteric element of his tradition, namely, that the goal of the philosophic life is realized not by becoming good human beings but by becoming gods. In this Iamblichus followed Porphyry's teacher Plotinus who said precisely the same. "Our concern," he says, "is not simply to avoid error but to be god (*alla theon einai*) … for it is to gods, not to good men, that we are to be made like."[7] Under the rubric of *theurgy* Iamblichus extended this understanding to all forms of worship where human beings receive the gods.

That Porphyry disdained theurgic rites as unworthy of a Platonic philosopher was symptomatic of how misguided the Greeks had become. Beguiled by the hubris of discursive power, philosophers like Porphyry believed their ability to think abstractly freed them from the constraints of the material realm. In Iamblichus' view, their conceptual constructs and lack of piety had precisely the opposite effect: it cut them off from the divinity of the world and communion with the gods. *On the Mysteries* is his attempt to demonstrate the importance of the reception of the gods in theurgic ritual and particularly through the transformation of the soul's subtle body, the *ochêma*, through acts of divination and sacrifice.

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[5] S. Rappe (2000) explicates with great nuance and insight the neoplatonic belief that wisdom "could not be transmitted by rational thought or language" (xiii). Neoplatonists, then, engage in intense rational reflection that aims not to outline dogmatic truths but to awaken the non-discursive and symbolic in a ritual mode. She highlights the essential contribution of Iamblichus to this "symbolic mode of discourse" (13).

[6] The notion that theurgy was an attempt to compete with Christianity continues to appeal even to eminent scholars such as Pierre Hadot. He dismisses the ritual element of theurgy as "superstitious and puerile," "an unfortunate attempt to compete with Christianity;" P. Hadot, tr. M. Djaballah (2009) 38. As to the trend among the "Greeks" toward rational hubris and intellectual instability see *DM* 259.5–14.

[7] Plotinus, tr. Armstrong (1966) *Ennead* I.2.6.3; I.2.7.27–28.

Specifically, Porphyry had asked how gods become present in divinations where the theurgist loses self-consciousness, and Iamblichus replies with a striking example. He writes:

> This is the greatest evidence; for many, even when fire is applied to them, are not burned, since the fire does not touch them on account of their divine inspiration. And many who are burned do not react, because at this time they are not living the life of a [mortal] creature. And some who are pierced with spits have no awareness of it, nor do others who are struck on the back with axes; still others whose arms are cut with knives do not feel it at all. *Their actions are in no way human, because what is inaccessible becomes accessible under divine possession*:[8] they cast themselves into fire and they walk through fire, and they walk over rivers like the priestess at Kastabala. From these examples it is clear that those who are inspired are not conscious of themselves, and they lead neither the life of a human being nor or a living animal so far as concerns sensation or appetite; they exchange their life for another more divine life, by which they are inspired, and by which they are completely possessed. (*DM* 110.4–111.2)

Obviously, being pierced with knives, hacked with axes, and exposed to fire are not on the itinerary of Platonic philosophers. But the example of those possessed in this fashion dramatically makes the point, both for Porphyry and for us, that human beings are capable of profound shifts in awareness and orientation. There is abundant evidence that ecstatic phenomena similar to those described by Iamblichus are taking place even today in cultures that encourage them.[9] Ecstasy, moving out of one's habitual orientation, was an essential element in all of theurgy, and Iamblichus reveals the subtle mechanics involved in these ecstatic states. In his view, awareness is removed from our physical bodies only by entering another body, invisibly present in the physical and activated in moments of ecstatic release. This subtle body was described by Iamblichus as the vehicle of the soul (*ochêma tês psuchês*), and it is through this vehicle that the soul animates the physical body and through which it receives the presence of the gods. It is through the *ochêma* that the soul enters embodied life, and it is through this same *ochêma* that the soul receives the gods and becomes divine. If the Platonic philosopher was to become an embodied god, as Plotinus encouraged, it was by means of the *ochêma*.

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[8] Αἵ τε ἐνέργειαι αὐτῶν οὐδαμῶς εἰσιν ἀνθρώπιναι· τά τε γὰρ ἄβατα βατὰ γίγνεται θεοφορούμενα …

[9] F. Smith (2006) provides a wealth of examples as well as a perceptive analysis of these phenomena and our attempt to study them.

The doctrine of the subtle body in Iamblichus has been carefully examined by John Finamore and, while I will focus specifically on its physical sensations in theurgy, his summary will help us proceed. Finamore says:

> For Neoplatonists, the vehicle fulfills three functions: it houses the rational soul in its descent from the noetic realm to the realm of generation; it acts as the organ of sense-perception and imagination; and, through theurgic rites, it can be purified and lifted above, a vehicle for the rational soul's return through the cosmos to the gods.[10]

Finamore outlines the Platonic sources of this doctrine: the *Timaeus* (41e) where the Demiurge places souls in starry vehicles (*ochêmata*) and the *Phaedrus* (247b) where the chariots of souls are, again, described as *ochêmata*. Perhaps more significantly, as regards physical sensation, is Aristotle's theory (*De Gen. An.* 736b)—also noted by Finamore—that each soul has a pneumatic body made like the heavenly aether to serve as intermediary between the immaterial soul and the physical senses. As Finamore puts it: "… it is a small step for later philosophers to combine Aristotle's *pneuma* with ether, the element of the stars, and with the 'Platonic' *ochêma* onto which the Demiurge placed the soul."[11] Thus, for Iamblichus, souls have an eternal aetheric vehicle that animates the body with breath (*pneuma*) and coordinates sense impressions. The soul's vehicle is also associated with *phantasia*, and this follows Aristotle's belief that mental images are necessary for engaging the world. The imagination, like the *ochêma* itself, functions as a kind of intermediary between material and immaterial realms.

If it is through the *ochêma* that the soul becomes a god, it necessarily plays a critical role in theurgic divination. Fortunately, Iamblichus provides quite a few clues about how this transformation happens, but it is easy to misunderstand what he says. As scholars we are far more the heirs of Porphyry than of Iamblichus, and to grasp the theurgic function of the *ochêma* we naturally look for discursively coherent descriptions. Porphyry did just that. He asked Iamblichus for a *diarthrôsis*, a precise articulation of the divination of the future—a request which seems reasonable to us—but Iamblichus objects to the question and chastises Porphyry for assuming that divination could be understood as if it were a natural phenomenon or human technique capable of discursive analysis.[12] He says:

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[10] J. Finamore (1985) 1.
[11] Ibid., 2.
[12] *DM* 99.10–100.6; *diarthrôthênai* at 99.9.

> For, according to the gist of your question, you believe something like this about foreknowledge: "that it can come into being," and is among "the things existing in nature." But it is not one of the things coming into existence, and it does not behave at all like a natural change, nor is it an artifact invented for use in daily life, nor is it, generally, a human achievement at all.
>
> (*DM* 100.2–5)

To return to Finamore's definition of the *ochêma*, it is the third function that is the most challenging: "[that the *ochêma*] can be purified and lifted above, a vehicle for the rational soul's return through the cosmos to the gods."[13] Finamore has examined the relevant passages in Iamblichus and Proclus that describe how the *ochêma* ascends to the gods. He gives a more generous explanation than Iamblichus who bluntly reproved Porphyry, telling him—and by extension all who think as he does—not merely that his assumption about theurgic divination is mistaken but that *his very way of thinking is mistaken* and keeps him alienated from divinity and any hope of understanding the phenomenon.

For those of us who sift evidence and provide rational accounts of ancient philosophy Iamblichus' rebuke is sobering. Even to begin to understand the later Platonists we need to recognize the profound challenge they pose to our accustomed habits of thought. Plotinus says discursive thinking itself is a kind of sorcery that puts us under the spell of our "thoughts,"[14] and Iamblichus tells Porphyry he needs a mental talisman to protect him from the habit of trying to understand theurgical phenomena in discursive categories.[15] Yet as scholars we think and write discursively. For us it makes sense that the purified *ochêma* allows the soul to ascend through the cosmos and rejoin the gods. After all, Iamblichus explicitly says the soul makes an ascent (*anagôgê*);[16] we have seen diagrams of the planetary spheres, and we can visualize the *ochêma's* purification—moving up through these spheres—as the soul rises out of this world. But the clarity of this schema, inviting us

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[13] J. Finamore (1985) 1.

[14] *Ennead* IV.4.43.16. Cited by S. Rappe (2000) 104.

[15] The term Iamblichus uses is "greatest talisman / counter-spell," μέγιστον ἀλεξιφάρμακον; *DM* 100.8–101.2. Plato uses ἀλεξιφάρμακον in a similar way to indicate an antidote to mistaken views. Those who would be lawgivers must possess the writings of *the divine lawgiver* and use these as a talisman (ἀλεξιφάρμακον) against all other speeches (*Laws* 12.957d).

[16] Throughout the *DM* Iamblichus argues that the presence of the gods—through their theophanies or their *sunthêmata*— lift the soul to the divine realm: 42.12; 81.12; 114.8–9; 292.7–12, et al. In sum, the apotheosis of the soul in theurgy is imagined as an "ascent" (*anagôgê*) to the gods. But it is precisely how we are to understand this theurgic "ascent" and how Iamblichus understood it that is the focus of this essay.

to take the ascent literally, causes us to miss something fundamental and theurgic. As Iamblichus says to Porphyry: "[W]hat you are trying to learn is impossible" because Porphyry—like us—wants to understand divination in rational terms.[17] The continual challenge of the later Platonists is that they use discursive language as a glyph, leading *not* to rational conclusions, but to a non-semantic awareness that, in Iamblichus' terms, was activated in theurgy.[18] So, rather than stay with the discursive clarity of seeing the soul ascend through the cosmos, I think we would have a more accurate sense of the theurgic function of the *ochêma* if we see it, not as a vehicle of ascent but as a vehicle of descent, where the gods reveal themselves in and through the embodied soul. In this way the *ochêma* would fulfill the goal of Platonic life, transforming us into gods: not as elevated and inert statues lifted above the pollution of the world but as deities living and breathing in sublunary flesh.[19]

The embodied and lived aspect of theurgic divination can be seen in Iamblichus' remark to Porphyry after explaining the revelations at the sanctuaries of Asclepius. He says:

> But why go through such occurrences one by one when *events that happen every day* (καθ' ἡμέραν ἀεὶ συμπιπτόντων) offer a clarity greater than any explanation (κρείττονα τοῦ λόγου)? (*DM* 109.1–3)

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[17] ὃ ἐπιχειρεῖς μαθεῖν ἐστιν ἀδύνατον (*DM* 99.10–100.1). And, of course, for scholars it is assumed without question that neoplatonic divination is a product of *human* culture. One of the most brilliant scholars of late antique magic and religion puts it this way: "Whatever our ancient sources may claim about the greater powers that enabled it to work—gods, demons, the cosmos itself—*divination is an utterly human art* …" S. Johnston (2005) 10 (my italics).

[18] Iamblichus says that while *henôsis* does not take place "without knowledge," such knowledge is only useful if it takes us *beyond* knowing, for "divine union and purification go beyond knowledge" (*DM* 98.7–10). S. Rappe (2000) explores this non-semantic aspect of Neoplatonism, so difficult and so often over-looked. She writes: "… it had already become a standard topos for Plotinus that his designation for the absolute principle, 'the One,' was not semantically significant … for Damascius, the ineffability of the One engulfs the metaphysical enterprise, infecting it with non-sense, with in-significance" (209).

[19] This, of course, is the crux of the issue. I believe that exoterically we think of the *ochêma* as going up, but this metaphorical ascent releases the divine presence in us that becomes more real, more present, and more embodied. In becoming "like the divine" mortals contact the immortal and by participation are made divine, filled with piety and wonder. And in this transformative experience of the mortal "going up" to immortality, at a distinctively theurgic and pivotal moment, the perspective shifts: it is no longer the mortal reaching up to immortality but the other way around. The divine takes on a mortal body and this descent is entirely dependent on providing a receptacle, a porous *ochêma* to receive the divine light. The ascent and the descent of the soul, while discursively distinct, are esoterically simultaneous and co-present. I wish to thank Peter Durigon for this insight.

The Asclepian sanctuaries, the oracles at Delphi, Claros, and Didymos, and the example of ecstatics immune to pain from knives and fire all demonstrate the effects of theurgic possession. But Iamblichus seems almost dismissive of these extraordinary examples and "far-famed oracles."[20] He seems more interested in the divination that was the *everyday experience* of those who live in communion with the gods.

The daily practice of Iamblichus was prayer. He says plainly that no theurgic ritual can take place without it[21] and that in prayer the *ochêma* is purified. He explains:

> The extended practice of prayer nurtures our intellect, greatly enlarges our soul's receptacle of the gods, reveals to us the life of gods, accustoms our eyes to the brightness of divine light, and gradually perfects our capacity for intimate union with the gods … It gently elevates our habits of thought and gives us those of the gods … It increases divine love and inflames the divine presence of the soul; it cleanses (ἀποκαθαίρει) all contrary tendencies of the soul and removes from its aethereal and luminous vehicle (αἰθερώδους καὶ αὐγοειδοῦς πνεύματος) everything inclined to generation … It makes those who pray, if we may express it, the companions of the gods (ὁμιλητὰς τῶν θεῶν).[22]

To bear the light of the gods we must become godlike. In theurgic prayer the soul is released from the oppositions of embodied life: our divided *dianoia* is replaced by unified *noêsis* and the contrary tendencies of the pneumatic body are also unified, which is to say our pneumatic body is made spherical, like the bodies of the heavenly gods. As Iamblichus puts it:

> The aethereal body [of heavenly gods] is exempt from all contrariety and is free from every change … it is utterly liberated from any centripetal or centrifugal tendency because it has neither tendency or *because it is moved in a circle*.[23]

In his *Timaeus* commentary Iamblichus says the Demiurge creates the soul with a vehicle "produced from the entire Aether (*pantos tou aitheros*) … [and] possessing a creative power."[24] But, unlike the heavenly gods, in the exercise of this power, we become self-alienated (*allotriôthen*).[25] When we

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[20] *DM* 124.1–2.

[21] *DM* 238.11–12: ἔργον τε οὐδὲν ἱερατικὸν ἄνευ τῶν ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἱκετειῶν γίγνεται.

[22] *DM* 238.13–239.10. (modified).

[23] *DM* 202.10–203.1 (modified).

[24] Frag. 84.4–5; J. Dillon tr. and ed. (1978) 196.

[25] Simplicius ed. M. Hayduck (1882) 223.26; he also says that according to Iamblichus the embodied soul is also "made other to itself" (*heteroiousthai pros heautên*), 223.31.

animate bodies we lose our spherical form and become trapped in the oppositions of material life: the divisions, collisions, impacts, reactions, and changes that Iamblichus says are the unavoidable experiences of embodied life.[26] In theurgic prayer we balance these oppositions in the pneumatic body; we receive the *noêsis* of the gods. As Iamblichus puts it: "our *ochêma* is made spherical and is moved circularly whenever the soul is especially assimilated to the *Nous*."[27] The *ochêma* has a critical function in this assimilation. It is the vessel in which we become gods and the vessel where gods take possession of our bodies. As Iamblichus puts it: "the god uses our bodies as its organs."[28] But to become an organ of the god the *ochêma* must be purified and filled with light, a process that the 6th century Platonist Damascius compares to photonic saturation. He says:

> Like a sponge, the soul loses nothing of its being but becomes porous and rarified or densely compacted. Just so does the immortal body of the soul … sometimes it is made more spherical and sometimes less; sometimes it is filled with divine light and sometimes filled with the stains of generative acts …[29]

Damascius contrasts divine light with the "stains of generative acts," the same distinction Iamblichus makes when he says that prayer cleanses the *ochêma* of "everything that tends to generation."[30] It might seem they are suggesting that the *ochêma* must escape from generation, but this is not the case.[31] For Iamblichus, the ascent of the soul is realized as the descent of the god: in the alchemical vessel of the *ochêma* the god becomes flesh. The soul's descent and ascent are not opposed but mysteriously linked. Iamblichus says: "There is no opposition between the descents of souls and their ascents … Freedom from generation is in harmony with our concern for generated life."[32] Iamblichus approves the view of 2nd century Platonists who taught that the "purpose of the soul's descent is to manifest the divine life, that the will of the gods is to reveal themselves (*ekphainesthai*) in human souls."[33] This theophanic view of human existence was not novel

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[26] These are experiences in the material realm according to Iamblichus; *DM* 217.

[27] Frag. 49.13–15 Dillon (1978) 152.

[28] *DM* 115.4–5.

[29] Damascius ed. C.A. Ruelle (1889), II.255.7–10. μανούμενη = made porous / rarefied; πυκνουμένη = closed / compacted.

[30] *DM* 238.8.

[31] As Jean Trouillard put it, to purify the *ochêma* of its "corporealité" is not to reject the body; J. Trouillard (1957) 103.

[32] *DM* 272.7–11.

[33] See *Iamblichus, De anima* tr. and commentary J. Finamore and J. Dillon (2002) 54.20–26.

with Iamblichus. It was the recognized tradition of pre-Socratic, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic philosophers: while remaining mortal they became gods.[34] But in Iamblichus' era the hieratic purpose of this tradition—rooted in non–discursive experience—was being lost due to the intellectualism and metaphysical dualism that disparaged embodied life.

In theurgy the opposition between divine and human was transformed in the unity of theurgic ritual. Iamblichus explains:

> All of theurgy has a two-fold character. One is that it is a rite conducted by men that preserves our natural place in the universe [i.e. we remain human]; the other is that it is empowered by divine symbols and is raised through them to be joined on high with the gods …. This latter aspect is rightly called "taking the shape of the gods."[35]

To take this shape, the *ochêma*'s imaginative receptacle (*hupodochê*) had to be enlarged through prayer to contain the light of the gods. The quality of the light indicated the presence of the entity received and Iamblichus provides a lengthy taxonomy, from the bright and uniform light of the gods to the cloudy light of daimones, to identify the entities that appear in theurgic divination.[36] He describes the technique of drawing in the light (*phôtagôgia*), and it is through these illuminations that the soul joins the god.[37] He explains:

> *Phôtagôgia* somehow illuminates with divine light the aethereal and luminous vehicle of the soul (*aitherôdes kai augoeides ochêma*), from which divine visions (*phantasiai theiai*), set in motion by the gods, take possession of our imaginative power.[38]

Phantasia was instrumental in attaching the soul to a mortal body through its attraction to sensate images and, again, *phantasia* was instrumental in leading the soul back to its union with the gods in *phôtagôgia*. For Iamblichus, *phantasia* has a dual function: it mirrors sensate phenomena and our concepts about it, and it is the medium for the appearances (*phasmata*) of the gods. Quoting from Iamblichus on *phantasia*, Priscian says:

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[34] As the evidence gathered by D. O'Meara (2003; 2005), 32–36, clearly demonstrates.

[35] *DM* 184.1–8.

[36] This taxonomy is discussed in *DM* II.3–9 where Iamblichus outlines at least 140 kinds of light images received by the *phantasia*. These epiphanies are thoroughly examined by E.C. Clarke (2001) 100–118. See also S. Johnston (2004) 16.

[37] S. Johnston (2004) reviews the role of light among Platonists and Iamblichus in particular and notes that the goal of the theurgist was *sustasis*, (standing with) the divine. Since for Iamblichus god was revealed as light, *sustasis* was experienced as illumination (10–11).

[38] *DM* 132.9–11.

> [*Phantasia*] rouses up images from sense-perception (*tês aithêseôs*) to opinion and extends images from the *Nous* down to opinion as it receives these images (*phantasmata*) from wholes.[39] And *phantasia* is uniquely characterized by this two-fold assimilation: as both producing and receiving likenesses that are appropriate, either to noetic or to materially generative activities, or to those in the middle, fitting the outside with the inside and establishing the images that descend from the *Nous* upon the lives extending down around the body.[40]

In *On the Mysteries* Iamblichus warns that "divine imaginations" (*theiai phantasiai*) should not be confused with images caused by human conjecture or illness,[41] but it is not entirely clear how to understand this distinction.

To receive the gods and restore our luminous *ochêma*, the mirror of imagination must be turned, but the turn is not from the outer world to the inner. Noetic images are *not* immaterial "objects" accessible by mental abstraction.[42] The imaginative turn required in theurgy is not toward a different kind of object; it is, rather, a different way of seeing altogether. In a theurgic context the image is not simply "what" one sees but more importantly "the *way* in which one sees ...."[43] This determines whether our vision engages an imaginal world of noetic entities as described by Henry Corbin,[44] or remains personal imagination, mere projections of the psyche. One might compare these two imaginations to Coleridge's distinction between the primary imagination, in which one enters god's "eternal act of creation," and mere fantasy, made up of abstractions of sensate experience.[45] If Iamblichus' distinction of divine and human imagination is not based on whether the image is material or immaterial but rather on our orientation to the image, it may be easier to understand his otherwise puzzling description of how we see the gods. He says:

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[39] From "wholes," that is to say, from the noetic realm, which is defined as undivided unity.

[40] Prisican tr P. Huby (1997) 23.16–23 (translation modified slightly).

[41] *DM* 160.8–12.

[42] For Neoplatonists, *noêsis* is clearly distinguished from discursive thinking (*dianoia*). *Noêsis* is non-representational; it is *not* a conceptual representation of the Platonic Forms; see Rappe, op. cit., 101–102.

[43] I borrow this phrase from J. Hillman (1997) 7.

[44] H. Corbin (1969), *passim*. In terms of Sufi angelology, Corbin grasps clearly the theurgic function of these noetic entities. As he puts it: "... each sensible thing or species is the 'theurgy' of its Angel ...." and it is the turning to one's angel that transforms the sensible into a theurgic symbol. H. Corbin (1980) 115–116.

[45] S. Coleridge (1817): "[[ON THE IMAGINATION OR THE ESEMPLASTIC POWER] fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space .... The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and *as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM* (my italics)."

> The presence of the gods gives us health of body, virtue of soul, purity of mind and, in a word, elevates all things in us to their proper principles …. It brings all things in the soul into proportion with the *Nous*, makes light shine with noetic harmony, and *reveals the incorporeal as corporeal to the eyes of the soul by means of the eyes of the body* (τὸ μὴ ὂν σῶμα ὡς σῶμα τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ὀφθαλμοῖς διὰ τῶν τοῦ σώματος ἐπιδείκνυσιν).[46]

The gods appear in forms that correspond to our aesthetic perceptions; aesthesis gives them a body. This suggests that our sensate experience, far from being an obstacle to contacting the gods, was a necessary medium. While αἴσθησις is correctly translated as sense perception, according to Onians it is rooted in the Homeric ἀΐω which means "I breathe," and derives from its middle form, ἀΐσθω, meaning "I gasp, breathe in."[47] Sense experience is as intrinsic to the animation of our bodies as breathing; aesthesis *is* a kind of breathing and is thus intimately connected with our pneumatic body. For Iamblichus aesthesis is an essential function of the soul.

Priscian says that according to Iamblichus imagination translates noetic impressions into sensate and divided images. He explains:

> Although imagination receives impressions from all the superior activities [noetic wholes], it represents them in images divisibly and in sensible forms (αἰσθητικὰ) that refer back to sensible objects (αἰσθητὰ); therefore, while imagination receives impressions from superior activities, at the same time, it is moved by sensible forms.[48]

For Iamblichus, to animate a body is to clothe noetic forms in matter, to bring them forth in sensate imagery. The human soul identifies with its animal life; it lives entirely in sensation: embodiment is literally "breathed in." In this process, the *ochêma* becomes dense and the imagination filled with habits of animal life. Because our impulses trap us in the oppositions of the sublunary world, theurgists must cleanse the pneumatic body of those habits that Damascius calls the "stain of generative acts." But how? The discursively obvious answer is to reject the life of sensation, and this is how we have interpreted theurgic *anagôgê*, making it a literal ascent and escape from material life. But for Iamblichus, the answer is that the soul's apotheosis is realized as the descent of a god into flesh and was achieved by careful attention to the physical body. Reflecting this theurgic practice in 5th century Alexandria, Hierocles says:

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[46] *DM* 81.10–82.1 (modified).

[47] R.B. Onians (1989) 74–75.

[48] Priscian tr. P. Huby (1997) 24.4–9; see also, *Iamblichus, De anima* J. Finamore and J. Dillon (2002) 240–241. My translation draws from both with modifications.

> We must take care of the purity relating to our luminous body (*augoeides*), which the *Oracles* call "the light vehicle of the soul" (*psuchês lepton ochêma*). *Such purity extends to our food, our drink, and to the entire regimen of our mortal body in which the luminous body resides*, breathing life into the inanimate body and maintaining its harmony. For the immaterial body is a kind of life, which also engenders life within matter; it is thanks to this last life that that part of myself that is the living mortal being is made complete …[49]

The life of the theurgist aimed at nothing short of the transformation of his or her body into the body of a god, in eating, drinking, and in prayer. Prayer perfects the pneumatic body, making it porous and rarified, which gives us the capacity to receive the gods. Our bodies become their organs: the gods reveal themselves (*ekphainesthai*) through us.[50]

It is important to remember that Platonists and Pythagoreans are not dualists; there is no opposition between noetic and sensible worlds. Their universe is asymmetrical, not symmetrical. Noetic wholes remain present in sensible particulars just as primary numbers are present in their multiples: for Pythagoreans the immaterial is always present in matter.[51] Iamblichus' contribution to his tradition was in making this metaphysical law explicit. Theurgy is its ritual *praxis*: the ritual reception and expression of the supernatural *in nature*. The noetic whole is recovered, not by abandoning particulars—including our own bodies—but by realizing, in theurgy, *that we are creating them continually*. According to Iamblichus this noetic/theurgic demiurgy is the essential function of the soul: "to mediate divisible and indivisible, corporeal and incorporeal beings, to receive universal ratios (*logoi*) and serve the work of creation."[52] To abandon sublunary life in order to "ascend" to the gods is a failure to make this demiurgic—and theurgic—turn in which sensate particulars are recognized as creations of one's own demiurgic will. The soul's encounter with the gods, then, does not abandon aesthetic experience, for there is no other way to recover our divinity. If we miss this, we miss the heart of Iamblichean theurgy.

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[49] *In Carmen aureum 26*; I. Hadot, tr. M. Chase (2004) 37.

[50] In his discussion of divine possession Iamblichus says there are many different kinds of possession, reflecting distinctions among the gods who possess the soul as well as the degree to which the soul is able to unite with the deity: "And sometimes we share in the god's lowest power, sometimes in his intermediate, and sometimes in his primary power. And sometimes there is a mere participation, sometimes a communion, and sometimes even a union …." (*DM* 111.9–11).

[51] *DM* 232.12: πάρεστιν ἀύλως τοῖς ἐνύλοις τὰ ἄυλα.

[52] C. Wachsmuth and O. Hense, eds. (1884) *Stobaeus* I.365,25–366,5; see also tr. by John Dillon (1987) 893. This teaching, Iamblichus said, was shared by "Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, and all of the Ancients …." (*Stobaeus*, I.366.6–8).

Edward Butler has recently explored the existential consequences of theurgy and their relation to Neoplatonic metaphysics.[53] He focuses on the singular importance of the introduction of henads into Neoplatonic discourse, which he describes as a revolutionary movement in the history of Greek philosophy.[54] Each henad, each god, is *above* Being, and is therefore not subject to the gradations of Being and Form. Conversely, from the perspective of Being, a particular entity: a plant, a stone, a human soul, as particular, is at the furthest extreme of universal Being, and its very particularity and density—putting it *below* Being—inversely corresponds to the One and henadic gods above Being.[55] Butler argues that theurgists were able distinguish between the universal orders of Being and the more primary and existential orders of the henads, between the henadic *huparxeis* and their derivative *ousiai*.[56] Butler maintains that it is *precisely* in physical—and particular—rituals that the henadic gods may be engaged. This is consistent with what I have argued: to grasp the theurgic function of the *ochêma* we must see how it is revealed in and through the sensate particularity of aesthesis. As Butler puts it:

> To turn toward its ultimate causes does not call for the soul to lift itself out of its particular context, even if its nearer causes—that is, in the hierarchy of Being—demand just this. Although we must be properly positioned with respect to the hierarchy of Being in order to perform it correctly, the point of ritual lies in the affirmation of that context itself, for *this completes the act of procession begun by the Gods*.[57]

To deny the aesthetic is to deny divine procession. This is what Iamblichus feared in Porphyry's approach, for it severs us from the activity of the gods who reveal themselves aesthetically, "through the eyes of the body," and in the particularities of ritual. As Butler correctly observes, from a theurgic perspective "it is only in the particular that the universal is active and

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[53] E. Butler (2007) *passim*.

[54] Butler (2007) cites Christian Guérard, the student of Jean Trouillard, who thusly characterized the role of henads in later Greek philosophy. 19: C. Guérard, (1982) 81. John Dillon has argued persuasively that Iamblichus is responsible for the doctrine of henads; J. Dillon (1993) 48–54. Now see the lucid argument that Iamblichus' use of *monoeides* was functionally equivalent to Proclus' use of "henads" by D. Clark (2010) 54–74. For further discussion, cf. the study of henads by S. Mesyats, included in this volume.

[55] E. Butler (2007) 9.

[56] E. Butler (2007) 5. These distinctions correspond to Rappe's distinction between the discursive (Butler's formal) and symbolic (Butler's existential).

[57] E. Butler (2007) 14, my italics.

authentic."[58] Turning to the example of the names—the particular aural manifestations—of the gods, Butler tells us that Porphyry had wanted to know their conceptual meanings and to translate this into equivalent concepts; he wanted to lift names out of the density of their cultural and aesthetic contexts and find their universal significance. Iamblichus recognizes this approach but wants to honor primarily their audible and aesthetic expression. Butler explains:

> The opposition here is not between intellectual insight and "irrationalism," but rather between two different modes of signification, one that is universalizing while the other is purely of, by, and for the particular. Iamblichus discerned two modes of signification where Porphyry only perceived one.[59]

The priority of aesthetic particularity in divine names was also recognized in the *Hermetica*. There Asclepius warns King Ammon:

> For the Greeks, O King, who make logical demonstrations, use words emptied of power [because they have been uprooted from their cultic contexts], and this very activity is what constitutes their philosophy, a mere noise of words. But we do not use "words" (*logoi*) but "sounds" (*phônai*) which are full of effects.[60]

In the case of the human soul and its *ochêma*, it is precisely through incorporating aesthetic experience in ritual that we may enter into the theurgic procession of the henads: we embody the gods only in the particularity of our flesh. Yet in our Porphyrian habit of universalizing, we have missed this and have focused almost entirely on the conceptual and disembodied. We have missed the existential consequences of the Iamblichean One and the doctrine of the henads.[61] Although it is recognized that the Iamblichean One extends into matter, which allows theurgists to find traces of the One in material objects, we have not come to terms with the deeper significance of this doctrine. For, if the One penetrates material objects such as stones, plants, and animals, it is certainly the case that the One penetrates us! If a material object can become a *sunthêma* of the gods, a person most surely can. The mystagogues of Iamblichus' tradition were seen as living

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[58] E. Butler (2007) 15.

[59] E. Butler (2007) 16.

[60] *Corpus Hermeticum* XVI.2; 4 Vols., tr. A.-J. Festugière, ed. A.D. Nock (1954–1960; reprint, 1972–1983) 232. Also see my chapter "Naming the Gods" in G. Shaw (1995) 179–188. For similar reasons the *Qur'an* is untranslatable, for to uproot it from the sounds in which it was originally (and still is) recited would forfeit its transformative and revelatory power, its *wahy*.

[61] Again, see J. Dillon (1993) 48–54.

sunthêmata; they were venerated as god-men. Pythagoras was believed to be Apollo himself who incarnated for the benefit of mortals.[62] The magician and healer Empedocles announced plainly: "I walk among you a deathless god."[63] Iamblichus was called *theios* by his students and by later Platonists. We tend to dismiss the title as a mere honorific but it points to the recognition that divinity was revealed in these men who were not other-worldly hermits but lived among their associates with great intimacy and intensity. For them, the boundary between the visible and invisible worlds was porous in ways we can scarcely imagine. Iamblichus believed the gods were here, in matter. He explains:

> Primary beings illuminate even the lowest, and the immaterial are present in the material immaterially (πάρεστιν ἀύλως τοῖς ἐνύλοις τὰ ἄυλα). And let there be no astonishment if we say that there is a pure and divine matter; for this matter issues from the father and creator of all and thus it is perfect and has the capacity (*epiteideian*) to be a receptacle (*hupodokhên*) of the gods … Nothing hinders superior beings from being able to illuminate their inferiors, nor is matter excluded from participating in these higher beings; matter that is perfect and pure and well-formed is fit to be a receptacle of the gods ….[64] For there is no other way that the places on earth or the men who dwell here can have a share in the life of higher beings unless this sort of foundation were laid down in advance. We should believe the secret teachings that a kind of matter is given by the gods through blessed visions—which is similar in nature (*sumphuês*) with the divinities who give it. The sacrifice with this kind of matter … ensures the perfect reception and representation of the gods.[65]

In Pythagorean terms, matter is the indefinite Dyad, the principle of otherness (*heterotês*) that allows the One to *be* one and without which there would be no procession, no multiplicity, no reality. In his treatise *On General Mathematical Science* Iamblichus describes this Dyad as the material principle. He says:

> Of the mathematical numbers the two highest are the One—which one must not yet call "being" on account of its being simple, the principle (*archê*) of beings and not yet that sort of being of which it is the principle—and the other is the principle of the Many which, of itself, provides division … [which] we compare to a completely fluid and pliant matter (*eupladei hulê*).[66]

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[62] *Iamblichus On the Pythagorean Way of Life* [*VP*], tr. J. Dillon and J. Hershbell (1999), 55.
[63] C. Kahn, (2001) 18; Fragment 112.
[64] *DM* 232.11–233.6.
[65] *DM* 234.4–11.
[66] *On General Mathematical Science* Iamblichus ed. N. Festa (1891) 15.6–14.

Without the Many, the One could not *be* one, as Plato's Parmenides taught.[67] This essential Pythagorean principle, that higher beings must be inverted—in some sense negated—and thus veiled, to reveal themselves, underlies all Iamblichean metaphysics and helps to explain his embrace of the senses in theurgic ritual.[68] In his discussion of Egyptian and Hermetic theology Iamblichus maintains that the material principle of divinity extends into sensible existence. He says:

> God produced matter (*hulê*) out of the division of materiality from substantiality, which the Demiurge, receiving as a living substance, fashioned into simple unshakeable spheres and organized the last of this into generated and mortal bodies.[69]

The immortal spheres of the heavenly gods as well as our mortal bodies are expressions of the Pythagorean law of inversion, but in the case of higher beings their inversion causes no disturbance. Their manifesting activity (*prohodos*) is never cut off from the return (*epistrophê*) to their essence. In geometric terms, their procession and return trace an unbroken circle, but for human souls the circle breaks: our creative activity shatters our essence. As Carlos Steel puts it: "[the human soul] experiences procession as an actual alienation from itself, its *prohodos* [divine unfolding] becomes *probolê* [alienating projection]."[70] Iamblichus describes this alienation starkly. He says:

> What is immortal (*athanaton*) in the soul is filled completely with mortality (*anapimplatai tou thnêtou*) and no longer remains only immortal.[71]

The Pythagorean law of inversion functioned at all levels of existence. Our mortality and "self-alienation"[72] was seen by Iamblichus as an expression of divine will. Yet theurgy turned this alienation around; it allowed theurgists to discover the unities hidden in the world—and in our own alienation—and thus to recover our continuity with the gods. To avoid the aesthetic,

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[67] *Parmenides* 142–143.

[68] The theme of negation in Neoplatonic metaphysics, with a comparison to the productive negation in the work of Martin Heidegger, has been explored with great insight by P. Durigon (1998) in his unpublished dissertation, *Heidegger and the Greeks; Hermeneutical–Philosophical Sketches of Ignorance, Blindness and Not Being in Heidegger's Beiträge, Plato, Plotinus and Proclus*.

[69] *DM* 265.5–8.

[70] Carlos Steel (1978) 69.

[71] Priscianus = Simplicius ed. C. Kalbfleisch (1907) 90.22–24.

[72] Priscianus = Simplicius ed. C. Kalbfleisch (1907) 223.31: ἑτεροιοῦσθαι πρὸς ἑαυτήν.

sensate, and material realm, was to step out of this divine activity: from the procession of the One hiding/revealing itself in the Many to the self-alienation of souls animating bodies.[73] In theurgy the soul recovered its spherical *ochêma* not by escaping from nature but by acting with the supernatural powers hidden within it. As Iamblichus put it: "ineffable realities are expressed through secret symbols and *things greater than every image are captured in images* ...."[74] Only by finding the supernatural (*huperphuês*) in nature (*phusis*) could theurgists recover the divinity hidden in their own mortal lives.

In response to a question by Porphyry concerning the appearance of the gods Iamblichus makes it plain that to be called back to the gods is not to be lifted out of the body. He says:

> The gods, in their benevolence and graciousness, generously (*aphthonôs*) shed their light upon theurgists, calling their souls back to themselves and orchestrating their union with them, accustoming them, *even while still in the body*, to detach themselves from their bodies (ἐθίζοντές τε αὐτὰς καὶ ἔτι ἐν σώματι οὔσας ἀφίστασθαι τῶν σωμάτων), and to turn themselves towards their eternal and intelligible first principle.[75]

Iamblichus describes the gods acting generously (*aphthonôs*); significantly, this is precisely the term that Plato uses to describe the will of the Demiurge[76] in the creation of the world: the Pythagorean law of procession is generous, and this includes the animation of bodies. So, when souls are called back to the gods (*anakaloumenoi*)[77] they are not being called out of their bodies; rather, they are called to their innate awareness (*sumphutos katanoêsis*)[78] of the gods given to each soul eternally. This awareness,

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[73] The Pythagorean term used by Iamblichus to describe the intimate continuity throughout the cosmos is *allêlouchia*. Translated as "indivisible mutuality," E. Clarke, J. Dillon, and J. Hershbell (2003) 25, Iamblichus maintains that it is what seamlessly holds together both numbers (esp. as "magnitude") and the orders of the cosmos (cf. *Protrepticus* 116.15, Pistelli (1887); *In Nicomachi Arithmeticam Introductionem* 7.10–18, Pistelli, (1894); *Theologoumena Arithmeticae* 3.8, De Falco (1922)). Yet for human souls *allêlouchia* is experienced in a passionate way (*meta pathous*; *DM* 196.8–10), reflecting the condition of the embodied soul under the sway of the sublunary realm. The Iamblichean approach, as opposed to the Porphyrian or Plotinian, is not to escape these *pathê* but to ritually coordinate them into a receptacle that would give a body to the god. The theurgic approach is comparable to that of tantra in both Hindu and Buddhist traditions in that theurgy stresses the continuity, integration, and transformation of "lower" impulses through ritual.

[74] *DM* 65.7–8: *ta de aneidea krateitai in eidesi*, (modified translation).

[75] *DM* 40.14–41.8 (modified).

[76] *Tim*. 29e.

[77] I translate *anakaloumenoi* (*DM* 40.4) as "calling *back*" rather than as "summoning *up*".

[78] *DM* 9.8–9.

Iamblichus says, is not a kind of "conjecture or opinion or form of syllogistic reasoning."[79] It is received as divine imagination, shaped and revealed by our aesthetic life and in a pneumatic body that has balanced the attractions and repulsions of embodied experience.[80] Proclus describes this reception of the gods as follows:

> The gods themselves are incorporeal, but since those who see them possess bodies, the visions which issue from the gods to worthy recipients possess a certain quality from the gods who send them but also have something connatural with those who see them. This is why the gods are seen yet not seen at all. In fact, those who see the gods witness them *in the luminous garments of their souls* ….[81]

Human souls are like the gods. We too are incorporeal, but due to our rank in the hierarchy of divinities we must become mortal and material to exercise our demiurgic power. The *photagogic* reception of the gods described by Proclus was thus, simultaneously both an encounter with a god and the recovery of our own divinity in the illuminated *ochêma*, the *Augoeides*.[82] The theurgic reception of the gods in luminous imagination was the recovery of our own divinity.

Conclusion

In their introduction to *On the Mysteries*, the translators warn the reader of the difficulty of trying to understand something that cannot be conceptually expressed. They write:

> We should remember that Iamblichus felt that his task of producing a written defense of theurgy was inherently impossible …. Throughout the work, he thus urges Porphyry to replace verbal discourse and learning with a superior kind of γνῶσις, that which comes with the experience of revelation.[83]

If it was a challenge for Iamblichus, it is even more difficult for us. However, I think we can be sure that in light of Iamblichus' positive view of matter and embodiment, and because the gods—as henads—are revealed precisely in

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[79] *DM* 9.11–12.

[80] This is what I take to be the meaning of *aphistasthai* = to be detached, in the quotation above.

[81] Proclus *In Rem. Pub.*, ed. Kroll (1903–1906) I 39.5–11.

[82] Iamblichus refers to the *augoeides ochêma* (luminous vehicle) in the context of his description of the techniques of *phôtagôgia*; *DM* 132.7–14.

[83] E. Clarke, J. Dillon, J. Hershbell (2003) xlil–l.

their concrete particularity, he would have encouraged theurgists to receive the gods in their bodies. For Iamblichus, our aesthetic experience is not an obstacle to deification; it is, in fact, the only way to embody the god.

I would like to conclude with a short vignette from Eunapius describing a conversation between the *theios* Iamblichus and his adoring disciples. The "most eloquent" among them had the following exchange with his teacher:

> "O Master … a rumor has reached us through your slaves that when you pray to the gods you soar aloft from the earth more than fifteen feet to all appearance; that your body and your garments change to a beautiful golden hue; and presently when your prayer is ended your body becomes as it was before you prayed, and then you come back down to earth and associate with us." Iamblichus was not at all inclined to laughter, but he laughed at these remarks. And he answered them thus: "He who thus deluded you was a clever man, but the facts are otherwise …"[84]

I believe we have been similarly misled. Far from trying to lift us up to the gods, ascending through the gradations of Being and the astral spheres, Iamblichus recognized the heavenly orders on earth. He saw the gods here below, hidden in our embodied and aesthetic life.

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[84] W. Wright, tr. (1968) *Philostratus and Eunapius Lives of the Sophists*, 365–367; translation slightly modified.

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IAMBLICHUS ON THE GRADES OF VIRTUE

John F. Finamore

How many virtues does a philosopher require? Plato gave us four in the *Republic*: temperance, courage, justice, and wisdom. Plotinus argued that although these were indeed the four major virtues, they in fact exist at different levels: there are the four Political Virtues (πολιτικαὶ αρεταί) at the level of the embodied life (which we find in the *Republic*) and a higher sort of these virtues, the Purificatory (καθαρτικαί), that he found in the *Phaedo* and that lead the soul to the Intellect, where the paradigms of these four virtues pre-exist (*Enneads* I.2). Plotinus argues that the lower, Political Virtues are necessary for our embodied existence in that in this state we must control our lower souls. He also argues that, since our goal is to become like god (*Theaetetus* 176 BC), the higher, purificatory virtues, in freeing soul from body, lead us more directly to that goal.

Plotinus' student Porphyry in his *Sententiae* 32 agrees with Plotinus concerning these two sorts of virtue but adds two more (although he himself would have argued that they are latent in Plotinus' treatise). As in Plotinus, the Political Virtues "provide order for the mortal human being" (i.e., for the soul when it is embodied, αἱ δὲ πολιτικαὶ τὸν θνητὸν ἄνθρωπον κατακοσμοῦσι, 32.19–20),[1] while the Purificatory Virtues "are seen in withdrawal from the actions of the body and from the affections connected with it" (ἐν ἀποχῇ θεωρούμεναι τῶν μετὰ τοῦ σώματος πράξεων καὶ συμπαθειῶν τῶν πρὸς αὐτό, 32.17–18). Porphyry adds two higher levels: one without a name that is higher than purification, when the soul after being purified attaches itself to Intellect (32.33–62), and another termed Paradigmatic (παραδειγματικαί), which exist in the Intellect and serve as the paradigms for the soul's virtues (32.63–70).

These then were the Neoplatonic precedents for Iamblichus' own gradations of virtue. He added three more levels to Porphyry's: the Natural (φυσικαί) and Ethical (ἠθικαί) at the lower end of the scale, and the Hieratic

[1] The text is that in Brisson (2005). I have consulted both the French and English translations in Brisson's edition, but all translations are my own. I have also benefitted from the notes of Brisson and Flamand, Vol. 2, 628–642.

or Theurgic Virtues (ἱερατικαί / θεουργικαί) at the top.[2] Thus, in Iamblichus' doctrine, there are seven grades of virtue:

- Hieratic/Theurgic (ἱερατικαί / θεουργικαί)
- Paradigmatic (παραδειγματικαί)
- Contemplative (θεωρητικαί)
- Purificatory (καθαρτικαί)
- Political (πολιτικαί)
- Ethical (ἠθικαί)
- Natural (φυσικαί)

It is mainly the two lowest classes of virtue, the Natural and Ethical, and the highest class, the Hieratic / Theurgic, that will concern us in this paper, but we will have occasion to consider the other grades of virtue as well. Iamblichus' writings on the grades of virtue have not survived, but his doctrine is recoverable from Damascius' commentary to the *Phaedo* I.138–144, Olympiodorus' commentary to the same dialogue (I.8.2–3), and Marinus' *Life of Proclus* (3.8–33; 21.1–9; 22.1–15; 24.3–25.13; 28). The purpose of this paper is to investigate why Iamblichus added the three new grades and to see how they fit with the other grades to form a coherent part of Iamblichus' metaphysical / religious system. We will begin with the Natural and Ethical Virtues and see what role they play in Iamblichus' philosophy before embarking on a consideration of the other grades and especially of the Hieratic / Theurgic.

Natural (φυσικαί) and Ethical (ἠθικαί) Virtues

Damascius (*In Phaed.* I.138) introduces the Natural Virtues as proper to the lower nature in human beings. They are found also in animals, he says, and are associated with our bodily mixtures (or "temperaments," κράσεις, line 2). The virtues at this level are in conflict with one another (presumably as one sees in animals, when they seem calm one moment and agitated the next).[3]

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[2] For the evidence that Iamblichus is the author of these classifications, see Westerink, *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, Vol. 1 Olympiodorus (Amsterdam 1976) 117 and Saffrey and Segonds (2002) lxxxiii.

[3] Cp. Olympiodorus, *In Phaed.* 1.5.7–11, where in the lordship of Dionysus (which is at the level of the natural and ethical virtues in the soul) the god is torn apart because the virtues at that level "do not reciprocally imply one another" (οὐκ ἀντακολουθοῦσιν ἀλλήλαις, line 9). Unlike the four virtues at the higher level, where having one virtue means that you have them all, at these two lowest levels, one may have one virtue and not the others, as for example certain animals seem to do.

Damascius intriguingly adds that these virtues might have been the result of training in a previous existence (ἀπὸ προβιοτῆς γεγυμνασμέναι, line 4). We will return to this point shortly.

We gather corroborating evidence from Olympiodorus *In Phaed.* 8.2–3. While enumerating five of our classifications of virtue (omitting Paradigmatic and Hieratic at the top of the scale), he glosses the Natural Virtues as those that come from our bodily mixture (αἳ ἀπὸ κράσεως ἐπιγίνονται, 8.3.2). They are "especially appropriate to irrational animals, since they are from the [bodily] mixture" (καὶ οἰκεῖαι αἱ μὲν φυσικαὶ μάλιστα τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις, αἳ ἀπὸ κράσεώς εἰσιν, lines 3–4). Olympiodorus explains that these virtues are naturally connected to these animals: all lions and their offspring are brave "because of their mixture" (διὰ τὴν κρᾶσιν, line 5), all oxen temperate, all storks just, and all cranes wise (φρόνιμοι) (lines 4–7).

The natural virtues are then closely associated with the body and the way that the physical structure is organized at birth. We might, for the sake of illustration, compare what the Epicureans believed about the innate structure of the human soul at birth. The soul is, for them, made up of atoms of different sorts: fiery, windy, airy ones. Lions have an excess of fiery atoms and so are anger-prone, deer have an excess of wind and so are skittish, and cattle have an excess of air and so are calm (Lucretius, *DRN* III.288–306). So too we might think of the blending of the humors in medical texts.

We may wonder how a natural structure of the body might be termed "virtuous." Clearly Olympiodorus (most probably recording Proclus' beliefs) had no trouble saying that animals had virtues. But what would such virtues consist in?

Here we may go to Marinus' *Life of Proclus* for help. As Saffrey and Segonds point out in the outline of the biography in their introduction,[4] Marinus has structured his biography around the grades of virtue, treating each ranking and the associated virtues of Proclus in turn. Proclus, he says, possessed these Natural Virtues:

> 3.13–18: Proclus was endowed from birth with good perceptible capacity (εὐαισθησία, 3.13), which Marinus equates with "corporeal wisdom" (φρόνησις σωματική, 3.14). This inborn virtue, especially involving sight and hearing, is a divine gift that promotes philosophy and well-being.
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> 3.19–27: Bodily strength (ἰσχὺς σωματική, 3.19) is a kind of courage (τις ἀνδρία, 3.26). It endured in spite of Proclus' light diet and his constant study.

[4] Saffrey and Segonds (2002) xcviii–c. Cf. M. Edwards, *Neoplatonic Saints* (Liverpool 2000) 61 note 36.

> 3.27–43: Bodily temperance turns out to be a kind of corporeal beauty, for just as temperance is a harmony of the faculties of the soul, so too beauty is "a symmetry of the organic parts of the body" (3.32–33). Proclus had this physical beauty and it (most importantly for a Platonist) "blooms from the soul in the body like a living light" (τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπανθοῦν τῷ σώματι οἱονεὶ φῶς ζωτικόν, 3.36–37).[5]
>
> 3.44–60: Justice at this level corresponds to bodily health, for both are a kind of order or harmony of parts. Proclus was so constituted that he was ill only two or three times in his 75-year life span.[6]

Thus, the Natural Virtues are indeed inborn (συμφύντα, 4.5) with us. Like the Epicurean traits they might be better or worse. Proclus, of course, according to Marinus, is gifted with the finest innate constitution, but not all of us will be so lucky. As a category of virtue, they seem to be more impulses toward virtuous conduct than actual virtues, and we may consider them as virtues *in potentia*. If we have the four natural virtues (or indeed any combination of them, since they need not all exist in us from the beginning), it should make it easier for us to develop the next stage of virtue.

Before moving on to the Ethical Virtues, it will be good to pause and consider Damascius' statement that these Natural Virtues may be related to a previous earthly existence. This idea goes hand-in-hand with Plato's conception in the Myth of Er that each soul chooses its own future life. If the soul has led a good philosophical life before and has not drunk too deeply of the waters of Lethe (*Rep*. 621ab), it will choose a good, philosophical life—and not rush off and choose accidentally the life of a cruel tyrant or choose purposely some lesser life. Thus, training in the higher virtues in a previous existence may indeed help condition the choice of life and so also help determine the Natural Virtues with which we are born. So, in a real sense, the Natural Virtues are not merely determined by fate (as the Epicureans would have had it), but are also under "our" control.[7] Thus, Marinus can say of Proclus that he alone seems not to have drunk of the cup of forgetfulness (μόνος οὗτος οὐδὲ τοῦ τῆς λήθης ἐδόκει πεπωκέναι πόματος, 5.6–7).[8]

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[5] See the notes of Saffrey and Segonds, 71.

[6] On Proclus' age at his death, see Saffrey and Segonds 73 note 4 and Edwards 63 note 47. He seems in actuality to have lived 73 years.

[7] That is to say, it is under the control of our immortal rational soul. Since Iamblichus believed that the irrational soul (and vehicle) were also immortal, the training in the previous life (i.e., that of the immortal over the lower parts) should carry over into the next re-embodiment.

[8] See Saffrey and Segonds 76 note 5; Edwards 65 note 58.

We learn about the Ethical Virtues in Damascius, *In Phaedonem* I.139 and Olympiodorus, *In Phaedonem* 8.2–3. These virtues build upon the Natural Virtues, and are ingrained in us by habituation and right opinion (ἐθισμός, ὀρθοδοξία, 139.1; cf. Olympiodorus, *In Phaed.* 8.2.3 αἱ ἀπὸ συνηθισμοῦ). The two terms are important because these virtues are, unlike the Political Virtues above them, somehow connected to reason. There at first seems to be a variance between Damascius and Olympiodorus, for Olympiodorus tells us that the Ethical Virtues are not rational, and indeed restricts the term "rational virtue" to the Political and higher virtues at 8.2.9.[9] Damascius, on the other hand, says that they belong to both the rational and irrational parts of the soul (εἰσὶ δὲ ὁμοῦ λόγου τε καὶ ἀλογίας, 139.4). The discrepancy is only apparent, however, since the Ethical virtues are appropriate to the lower-order of rational functioning in human beings that is roughly equivalent to the higher critical faculties of certain animals. As Damascius explains, the Ethical Virtues belong to children who are being brought up well and to certain animals (8.2.2), and so the kind of rationality involved is that which is inculcated in children and animals through habituation—that is to say, as we train dogs not to growl at friends or children not to chew with their mouths open. As Olympiodorus puts it, Ethical Virtues are appropriate to human beings and to such animals as have a more developed imaginative faculty and can learn through habituation (8.2.7–8). Thus, the Ethical virtues are instilled by repetition. Whereas the Natural Virtues were genetically determined traits (as anger in lions), the Ethical virtues are learned, both by children and domesticated animals, and so to that extent "rational." Thus, Damascius says that they come to exist in us through "right opinion," Plato's term in the Divided Line for lower-order knowledge as opposed to *epistêmê*, which is the true mark of the rational human being. Children use lower-level reasoning (λογισμός) without abstract reasoning or concepts.

Damascius makes the further point that these virtues do not depend on bodily mixtures, as the Natural Virtues had done, and so they are not opposed to one another (τῶν κράσεων ὑπερανέχουσαι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐναντιούμεναι ἀλλήλαις, I.139.2–3).[10] Thus, if we have one of these virtues (Ethical justice, say) then we must have the others.

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[9] "The virtues that use reason" (λόγῳ χρῶντο αἱ ἀρεταί). Cf. 8.3.4–5: καὶ αἱ ἠθικαὶ δὲ ἀρεταὶ ἄλογοί εἰσι.

[10] I must disagree with Dillon (1987, 903), who says that the Ethical virtues "are also dependent on one's physical make-up and conflict with one another."

The differences between the Natural and Ethical virtues are clear enough. Natural Virtues are inherited at birth, what we might call our "genetic inheritance." Ethical Virtues cover the moral training that we gain in youth from our parents or guardians. Since we are not yet fully rational creatures, the virtues are learned by rote and not fully understood rationally. We act morally, but only in the way that a trained dog refrains from bad behavior. As we advance through the higher levels, the reason plays more of a role. In the Political Virtues, Reason regulates the lower soul parts (the irrational and spirited, as in the *Republic*). The Purificatory Virtues belong to reason alone, as it separates itself from all bodily aspects and passions. The Contemplative and Paradigmatic virtues involve the separated rational soul first as it intelligizes the Intellect in a separate fashion and then as it participates in Intellect inseparably.

We are left then with the puzzle of why Iamblichus thought that the lower two orders of virtue were necessary to his grades of virtue. It is of course true that as a scholastic philosopher, Iamblichus would have wanted to fill any perceived void in the grades of virtue, but the question remains as to why he would have thought there was a void at the lower levels at all.

An answer to this question may be found in Iamblichus' tendency to divide humanity into separate categories depending on our mental abilities and theurgic practices. Here is what he says at *De Mysteriis* V.18, 223.8–224.4.[11]

> We may however employ another basis of division. The great mass of men, on the one hand, is subject to the domination of nature, and is ruled by natural forces, and directs its gaze downwards toward the works of nature, and fulfills the decrees of fate, and takes upon itself the order of what is brought about by fate, and always employs practical reasoning solely about natural phenomena. A certain few individuals, on the other hand, employing an intellectual power which is beyond the natural, have disengaged themselves from nature, and turned toward the transcendent and pure intellect, at the same time rendering themselves superior to natural forces. There are some, finally, who conduct themselves in the middle area between nature and pure mind, some following after each of them in turn, others pursuing a mode of life which is a blend of both, and others again who have freed themselves from the inferior level and are transferring their attention to the better.

There is a triple division of humankind here. The highest level represents Iamblichus' class of theurgists. These make use of intellectual activity and have easy access to the Forms and the gods. Next come those who use both

[11] Translation of Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell (2003) 257. On this passage see Finamore and Dillon (2002) 161.

intellect and "nature." At the bottom are the mass of humanity who are subject to nature. If we impose this triple division on the grades of virtue, it should be clear that the lowest group in the *De Mysteriis* are those possessing the two lowest grades of virtue. They use at best πρακτικὸς λογισμός (223.12) and are subject to the forces of fate. As Damascius said, the Ethical Virtues are appropriate to rational and irrational activities. Olympiodorus adds (8.3.1–5):

> Inasmuch as we possess Natural Virtues, we have knowledge of encosmic bodies, for bodies and what underlies them belong to such virtues. Inasmuch as we possess Ethical Virtues, we know what is fated in the cosmos, because what is fated abides around irrational forms of life, for the rational soul is not under fate and the Ethical Virtues are irrational.

Thus what Iamblichus has done is to associate the largest group of humanity with the lower two virtues. It is not surprising therefore that he had to add these virtues to Porphyry's scale. He could not have left out the bulk of humanity.

What is of interest to us is how he has combined the division of humanity with the grades of virtue. The lowest of the three groups in the *De Mysteriis* passage lives at a mere animal level. It does not look up to the higher regions of the cosmos and does not make use of its intellectual capacity. For this reason it is subject to fate, which is of course all it can know. Even when this group reasons, it does so at the lowest level, thinking only about natural phenomena and never rising to intellectual thought about universals. It is divorced from the gods and subject to the conditions of the realm of generation. Their possibilities for redemption through theurgy are bleak, mainly because they have no impetus to seek out theurgic practices.

In a very real sense, then, what caused Iamblichus to add the lower orders of virtue was indeed his belief in theurgy. His view represents his pessimistic side. The mass of humanity never actualizes its divine aspect and so never seeks access to theurgic salvation. These people are touched by the goodness of the One, but fail to realize it and so are deprived of the gifts of the ascent of the soul.

As we move up the scales of virtue, the possibilities for humanity improve. The intermediate class of the *De Mysteriis*, which subdivides into three parts, does not map itself tidily onto the sevenfold classification of virtues, but it seems clear that this middle group is midway between a theurgist who actualizes the intellect in the soul and so achieves the highest degrees of the salvific ascent, including union with the divine Intellect and the One, and this lowest level of humanity. The three middle sorts of human beings are:

– Those pursuing a life of both *logismos* and intellect in turns.
– Those pursuing a life that is a mixture of both *logismos* and intellect.
– Those freeing themselves from the lesser *logismos* and changing themselves to the better (i.e., pure intellect).

Since the two lowest of these sub-groups make use of both lower reasoning and higher intellegizing, it would seem that they both fall into the grade of Political Virtue, which Damascius says uses the rational aspect of the soul for ordering the irrational (λόγου κοσμοῦντος τὴν ἀλογίαν ὡς ὄργανον ἑαυτοῦ, I.140.2). The highest of these sub-groups is marked by a change from the lower sort of thinking to the higher, and as such would fall into the grades of Purificatory, Contemplative, and Paradigmatic, where the soul mounts to Intellect and joins with it in varying degrees but (presumably) returns afterwards to its own human body and again exercises the lower sort of reasoning.

The Higher Virtues: Damascius, Olympiodorus, and Marinus

We have seen how the two lowest grades fit into Iamblichus' philosophical system, and we can now turn to the higher virtues and ultimately to the highest grade of Hieratic / Theurgic. We will proceed in three phases. First, we will look at the explanations of what theurgic virtues might entail based on the writings of these three philosophers, who took their ideas from Proclus and through him from Iamblichus. There are, I realize, problems with this way of proceeding since Iamblichean ideas might have been distorted by Proclus and by Syrianus before him. Nevertheless I believe that the consistency among the three authors together with Damascius' adherence to Iamblichean ideas gives credibility to the view that they are espousing basic Iamblichean doctrine, even if somewhat transformed. Next we will consider a problem, raised by several recent scholars, about the rank of Theurgic Virtues in these three philosophers, and argue that there is a consistent pattern of placement in all three. Finally, we will return to the role of the Theurgic Virtues in Iamblichus and demonstrate what he thought their purpose and effect was.

Damascius explicitly tells us that Iamblichus added the Hieratic Virtues to the list (*In Phaed.* I.144). It is clear from Plotinus and Porphyry that the grades of virtue are linked to stages in the life of the soul. The Political virtues concern the soul when embodied, the Purificatory the soul when it is freeing itself from the body and its passions, etc. The higher virtues therefore are linked to even higher stages in the soul's ascent to and becoming like the gods.

If we turn to the three philosophers and look briefly at what they say about the Political and Purificatory virtues, we will see that they match what we found in Plotinus and Porphyry. Political virtues belong to an embodied soul with the body's attendant passions, while Purificatory virtues belong to a soul that is in the process of freeing itself from the body and its passions.[12] Marinus expresses the difference between these two grades in the soul of Proclus in this way:

> And thus the soul of the happy man [= Proclus] bringing itself together from all of these things and collecting into itself, nearly stood apart from its body, though still seeming to be held by it. For it no longer possessed a practical knowledge of a political kind—to fare well in matters that could be otherwise—but it intelligized purely itself by itself and was turned to itself, in no way in agreement with the body.
>
> Καὶ οὕτος ἐκ πάντων ἑαυτὴν συνάγουσα καὶ ἀθροίζουσα πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἡ τοῦ μακαρίου ἀνδρὸς ψυχὴ ἀφίστατο σχεδὸν τοῦ σώματος ἔτι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κατέχεσθαι δοκοῦσα. Ἦν γὰρ αὐτῇ τὸ φρονεῖν οὐκέτι οἷον τὸ πολιτικόν, τὸ πράττειν εὖ περὶ τὰ ἐνδεχόμενα καὶ ἄλλως ἔχειν, αὐτὸ δὲ καθ' αὑτὸ εἰλικρινὲς τὸ νοεῖν καὶ τὸ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἐστράφθαι, μηδαμοῦ δὲ συνδοξάζειν τῷ σώματι.[13] (21.1–9)

Thus, the Purificatory virtues are marked by the soul turning inward and finding its true self, leaving the kind of thought associated with practical matters aside and beginning to use intellectual thought. Olympiodorus (8.3.5–6) sums up the difference from another perspective by stating that we know encosmic things by the Political virtues but hypercosmic reality by the Purificatory. Thus the difference is marked by an ascent to a kind of thought associated with Intellect itself.[14]

The ascent to the Contemplative virtues marks the accomplishment of the purification that was begun earlier with the Purificatory virtues. The purpose of purifying the soul is to ascend to Intellect and join with it. Thus, while the Purificatory virtues belong to a soul in the process of this purification, the Contemplative virtues belong to the soul that has successfully purified itself and has arisen to Intelligible Realm. As Olympiodorus remarks (8.2.11–12), the Purificatory virtues flee passions but the Contemplative have already fled them (ἢ φεύγουσι τὰ πάθη, ὡς αἱ καθαρτικαί, ἢ πεφεύγασιν, ὡς αἱ θεωρητικαί).

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[12] Olympiodorus, *In Phaed.* 8.2.9–11; Damascius, *In Phaed.* I.140–141; Marinus, *Vita Procli* 22.1–9.

[13] For the Plotinian vocabulary in this passage, see Saffrey and Segonds (2002) 137–138 notes 2–4.

[14] Cf. Damascius I.140–141.

Damascius also makes this distinction, stating that the Contemplative virtues arise "once the soul is already setting itself free or rather is bringing itself to what is prior to it" (τῆς ψυχῆς ἤδη καὶ ἑαυτὴν ἀφιείσης, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῖς πρὸ αὐτῆς ἑαυτὴν προσαγούσης, 142.1–2). Thus the process of separation and liberation, begun with the Purificatory virtues, is already assumed as the soul begins to take on the Contemplative. Indeed Damascius adds that the soul "as it were longs to be intellect instead of soul" (οἷον γὰρ νοῦς ἀντὶ ψυχῆς ἐπείγεται γενέσθαι, 142.3–4). Damascius then compares these Contemplative virtues with the Political ones below the Purificatory (142.4–6):

> These [Contemplative virtues] are correlative with the Political since they [the Political] have their activity around what is inferior in accordance with reason while these [the Contemplative] have theirs around what is superior in accordance with intellect.
>
> ἀντίστροφοι αὗται ταῖς πολιτικαῖς, ὡς ἐκεῖναι περὶ τὰ χείρω κατὰ λόγον ἐνεργοῦσαι, αὗται περὶ τὰ κρείττω κατὰ νοῦν.

Thus, for Damascius both the Purificatory and the Contemplative virtues belong to a soul in progression from its former embodied state to its future unification with Intellect. It longs to be Intellect, but is not yet so, and holds its activity around what is still superior to it.

Marinus presents the same sort of distinction as he describes Proclus' ascent from the Purificatory to the Contemplative virtues (22.5–15):

> For having been purified from and rising above generation and scorning those bearing the wand in it, he [Proclus] became a Bacchic adept in primary things and saw with his own eyes the truly blessed sights there,[15] no longer gaining knowledge of them through discursive thought and demonstration but as if through sight seeing the paradigms in divine Intellect by simple apprehension of intellectual activity. He thereby received in addition virtue, which one would no longer rightly name practical knowledge but will rather call wisdom or even some more august name than this.

[15] Marinus is making use of Platonic expressions from the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*. See Saffrey and Segonds (2002) 138 note 1 and 26 note 2; Edwards (2000) 91 note 238. In *Phd.* 69c8–d1, Plato has Socrates quote a saying of those who concern themselves with mystery rites (οἱ περὶ τὰς τελετάς, 69c8): "Many are the wand holders, but few the [true] followers of Bacchus" (ναρθηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, Βάκχοι δὲ παῦροί). Socrates equates the followers of Bacchus with those who have led a philosophical life (d1–2). In our text, Marinus calls those who have not ascended to Contemplative virtue "wand bearers," whom Proclus looks down on now that he is himself Bacchic, having attained to the Contemplative virtues (ἐβάκχευε, 22.8). Proclus can now enjoy a direct vision of the Intelligible objects, which are here termed μακάρια θεάματα, from *Phdr.* 247a4 (μακάριαι θέαι; cf. 250b6 μακάρια ὄψις).

> Ἤδη γὰρ κεκαθαρμένος καὶ τῆς γενέσεως ὑπερέχων καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ναρθηκοφόρων ὑπερορῶν, περὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἐβάκχευε καὶ αὐτόπτης ἐγίνετο τῶν ἐκεῖ μακαρίων ὄντως θεαμάτων, οὐκέτι μὲν διεξοδικῶς καὶ ἀποδεικτικῶς συλλογιζόμενος αὐτῶν τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ὥσπερ δὲ ὄψει ἁπλαῖς ἐπιβολαῖς τῆς νοερᾶς ἐνεργείας θεώμενος τὰ ἐν τῷ θειῷ νῷ παραδείγματα καὶ ἀρετὴν προσλαμβάνων, ἣν οὐκέτ' ἄν τις φρόνησιν κυρίως ἐπονομάσειε, σοφίαν δὲ μᾶλλον προσερεῖ, ἢ καὶ τινα σεμνοτέραν ταύτης ἐπωνυμίαν.

Marinus, here making use of Platonic terminology from the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, illustrates the distinction as between the "wand bearers" (who have mere Purificatory virtue and have not yet attained the status of a true philosopher) and "Bacchics" (who are the real philosophers, having attained to the Contemplative virtues). The Bacchics no longer think discursively with *phronêsis* but have an instantaneous awareness of the Intelligible objects that is akin to *sophia*. Thus, again, the Contemplative virtues belong to a soul that has united with Intellect and shares in its vision of the Forms.

For the Paradigmatic virtues, we must rely upon Damascius and Olympiodorus, since Marinus does not mention them. (We will return to this seeming discrepancy shortly.) The distinction between the Contemplative and the Paradigmatic virtues has to do with the kind of knowledge that the soul has of the Intelligible objects. Damascius writes (143.1–4):

> These are virtues of the soul when it no longer contemplates Intellect (for contemplation takes place with separation) but has established itself through participation in the being of the Intellect that is the paradigm of all things. Therefore these are paradigmatic because they are virtues primarily of the Intellect itself.

> Ὅτι παραδειγματικαὶ ἀρεταὶ αἱ μηκέτι θεωρούσης τὸν νοῦν τῆς ψυχῆς (τὸ γὰρ θεωρεῖν σὺν ἀποστάσει γίνεται), ἀλλ' ἤδη στάσης ἐν τῷ νοῦν εἶναι κατὰ μέθεξιν ὅς ἐστι παράδειγμα πάντων· διὸ καὶ αὗται παραδειγματικαί, ὅτι προηγουμένως αὐτοῦ εἰσιν τοῦ νοῦ αἱ ἀρεταί.

Paradigmatic virtues, which for Plotinus did not belong to the soul but to Intellect but for Porphyry were the soul's, now belong to the soul *through* the Intellect, once the soul has united with the Intellect without separation or distance from it.

Olympiodorus explains this unification with an analogy. After stating that Plotinus added Purificatory virtues to the list, he says (8.2.13–20):

> For there are Paradigmatic virtues, for just as our eye before it is illuminated by sunlight differs from what is illuminating it inasmuch as the eye is illuminated, and then later it is somehow united and conjoined and as it were becomes one and sunlike, thus also our soul is in the beginning illuminated by Intellect and actualizes in accordance with the Contemplative virtues, and later as it were becomes the illuminator and actualizes in a unified way in

> accordance with the Paradigmatic virtues. The task of philosophy is to make us intellect, but that of theurgy is to unite us with the Intelligible objects so that we actualize conformably to the [Intelligible] paradigms.
>
> εἰσὶ γὰρ καὶ παραδειγματικαὶ ἀρεταί· ὥσπερ γὰρ τὸ ἡμέτερον ὄμμα πρότερον μὲν φωτιζόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡλιακοῦ φωτὸς ἕτερόν ἐστι τοῦ φωτίζοντος ὡς ἐλλαμπόμενον, ὕστερον δὲ ἑνοῦταί πως καὶ συνάπτεται καὶ οἷον ἓν καὶ ἡλιοειδὲς γίνεται, οὕτω καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα ψυχὴ κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν ἐλλάμπεται ὑπὸ νοῦ καὶ ἐνεργεῖ κατὰ τὰς θεωρητικὰς ἀρετάς, καὶ ὕστερον οἷον ὅπερ τὸ ἐλλάμπον γίνεται καὶ ἑνοειδῶς ἐνεργεῖ κατὰ τὰς παραδειγματικὰς ἀρετάς. καὶ φιλοσοφίας μὲν ἔργον νοῦν ἡμᾶς ποιῆσαι, θεουργίας δὲ ἑνῶσαι ἡμᾶς τοῖς νοητοῖς, ὡς ἐνεργεῖν παραδειγματικῶς.

Again the distinction has to do with the kind of union involved. When the soul acts in accordance with Contemplative virtues, it is like an eye that sees in sunlight. The soul is separate from the Intellect and sees the Intelligible through it. When the soul acts in accordance with the Paradigmatic virtues, it is like an eye that has become sunlike, by which Olympiodorus means that it is more unified with that sunlight. Thus, the soul now is unified with Intellect and sees the Intelligible objects not separately by participation with the Intellect but by being actually conjoined and united with the Intellect.

At this point two things seem clear. First, whatever else Iamblichus may have said about the grades of virtue, he clearly accepted a notion that as the soul ascended, its ascent involved not only a refinement in its thinking but also in the sort of virtues that accompanied those modes of thought. Second, concomitant with the refined thought processes was a similar closeness in the sort of unity with the higher principles that the soul underwent. Each step in the ascent and each grade of virtue involves more unitary thought and a more unified conjunction with the principle.

A Problem in Our Sources?

Before we can discuss the Hieratic virtues, however, we must consider a possible disharmony among our three sources. Festugière has argued that our three main sources for Iamblichus' grades of virtue (Damascius, Marinus, and Olympiodorus) gave differing accounts of the top grades of virtue.[16] He was followed in this by Saffrey and Segonds and by Westerink.[17] According to these scholars:

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[16] Festugière (1969) 294–296.

[17] Saffrey and Segonds (2002) xciii–xcviii; Westerink (1976) Vol. I, 117–118. Cf. Brisson (2005) Vol. II, 637 note 63.

1. Damascius alone places the Paradigmatic Virtues between the Contemplative and the Hieratic.
2. Marinus, although he does not mention the Paradigmatic Virtues by name, places them above the Hieratic, which he calls "Theurgic Virtues."
3. Olympiodorus equates the Paradigmatic Virtues with the Theurgic (which are equivalent to the Hieratic).

Thus, we would have Damascius following the schema we laid down for Iamblichus, Marinus switching the places of the Paradigmatic and Hieratic virtues, and Olympiodorus equating these two grades. This is an intriguing set of deductions about the placement of the virtues in Marinus and Olympiodorus, but it is (I believe) a mistaken notion. Let's look at the evidence.

Olympiodorus (8.2) first lays out five classes of virtue, corresponding to the first five classes of Iamblichus: Natural, Ethical, Political, Purificatory, and Contemplative (lines 1–12). He then considers a sixth class, referring to Plotinus' category of Paradigmatic Virtues (lines 12–20). As we have seen, he considers the Paradigmatic virtues more unitary. At the end of his discussion (lines 19–20), he draws a distinction between philosophy (which makes us intellect) and theurgy (which unites us with the Intelligible objects). The scholars just mentioned take theurgy here as a seventh kind of virtue, one that is superior to Paradigmatic Virtue. It makes more sense, however, since Olympiodorus neither here nor elsewhere mentions a Theurgic or Hieratic Virtue, to note the distinction as between philosophy and theurgy (which is a typical Iamblichean distinction) and then to connect philosophy with Contemplative Virtue and theurgy with Paradigmatic. In this case, what philosophy and the Contemplative Virtues do is bring the soul into contact with the Intellect and its objects so that it can contemplate them, whereas theurgy and the Paradigmatic Virtues actually make us one with the Intellect and its objects. There is a distinction, in other words, between thinking the intelligible objects as other and unifying with them so that they and we become one.

If we turn to Damascius' interpretation of the virtues, we can form a better picture of what Olympiodorus is saying. Damascius describes the Contemplative Virtues as leading the soul to Intellect, and the soul then strives to become Intellect (I.142). The soul possesses Paradigmatic Virtues when it no longer is separate from and contemplates Intellect but rather *is* the Intellect by virtue of participating in it (since the Intellect is the paradigm of all). These virtues are paradigmatic, Damascius says, because they are primarily the virtues of the Intellect itself. Thus at this stage the

soul participates in Intellect and is unified with it, but its virtues are those properly of the Intellect (not of itself) which it possesses by participation in Intellect (I.143).[18] The Hieratic Virtues exist in the godlike aspect of the soul (κατὰ τὸ θεοειδὲς ὑφιστάμεναι τῆς ψυχῆς, 144.1) and unlike the other virtues are unifying (ἑνιαῖαί, 144.2). Thus, the three grades of virtue go along with a greater amount of unity between soul and Intellect. It is precisely this degree of unity that the passage in Olympiodorus is trying to capture, at least with regard to the Contemplative and Paradigmatic virtues.

Thus Olympiodorus is *not* discussing Hieratic Virtues, but is leaving them (perhaps purposefully) off his list. The highest grade that he discusses is the Paradigmatic, and like Damascius' ranking, these virtues are unifying (and so "theurgic" in that sense) whereas the Contemplative maintained the distinction between thinker and thought (soul and Intelligible entities), and so they are "philosophical" rather than "theurgic." If there is a difference between Olympiodorus and Damascius, it would seem to be that Olympiodorus thinks that the Paradigmatic virtues imply a greater degree of unity than Damascius would allot them. Olympiodorus' analogy of sunlight suggests that the soul unifies with Intellect. However, it is important to notice two points. First, Olympiodorus qualifies the sort of unity involved by use of the words οἷον ὅπερ (line 18). The soul "as it were" becomes Intellect. Thus the kind of unity involved may be more akin to Damascius'. Second, in the final sentence (lines 19–20) Olympiodorus contrasts philosophy (which makes us intellect) with theurgy (which fully unifies us with the Intelligibles). The distinction may at first seem to imply that we are fully unified under the Paradigmatic virtues, but since our unity is qualified by οἷον ὅπερ Olympiodorus may be suggesting that there is another step taken with theurgy that finally unifies our souls to a greater degree. If so, there may be Theurgical / Hieratic virtues in Olympiodorus' system, about which he chooses to remain silent, possibly because of their ineffability.

Let us turn to the passage in Marinus, where he lays out the grades of virtue (3.1–7).[19] There are seven grades: Natural, Ethical, Political, Purificatory, Contemplative, Theurgical, and the highest virtues that are given no name but about which Marinus will remain silent because they are above

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[18] On the soul participating in Intellect, see Finamore (2009) 129–134, where Priscianus' *Metaphrasis* is combined with Iamblichus' *In Tim*. Frr. 55–56 to show that the human soul is incapable of intelligizing without the aid of the fully actualized Intellect. Thus, the human soul must participate in the transcendent Intellect. The Intellect is therefore "paradigmatic" in the sense that it provides the paradigms of intellectual activity to the soul.

[19] Marinus discusses the differences between Purificatory and Contemplative virtues in chapters 21 and 22.

the human level (τὰς δὲ ἔτι ἀνωτέρω τούτων σιωπήσαντες ὡς καὶ ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον ἤδη τεταγμένας, 3.4–6). There is no indication here that these unnamed virtues are the Paradigmatic.[20] It seems doubtful that they are to be so identified, since both the Paradigmatic and Theurgic virtues in Damascius are distinctively associated with the human soul and so are not "above the human level." They are human but at a very advanced state of human ability. Further Marinus himself, when he discusses Proclus' Chaldaean studies in chapter 26, specifically calls the Theurgic virtues human (26.20–22):

> … he [Proclus] ascended to the highest of the virtues for the human soul, which the inspired Iamblichus excellently called Theurgic.

Thus, the Theurgic virtues in both authors are decidedly human virtues.

When Marinus later discusses Proclus' ascent to the Theurgic virtues at 28.1–8, he indicates that, like Damascius, he sees these virtues as involving a higher perch in the metaphysical hierarchy.

> But since, as I said, he [i.e., Proclus] came to the still greater and more perfect Theurgic Virtue from his study concerning such things [i.e., concerning the Chaldaean texts, mentioned in 26.1–23], he no longer remained among the Contemplative Virtues nor did he situate himself in one or the other of the two properties belonging to the gods, viz., intellegizing and reaching toward what is better, but he established now a pre-intellective activity[21] over secondary entities in some manner more divine than and not in accordance with the previously mentioned Political manner.
>
> … ἀλλ' ἐπεί, ὡς ἐκ τῆς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα σχολῆς ἀρετὴν ἔτι μείζονα καὶ τελεωτέραν ἐπορίσατο τὴν θεουργικήν, καὶ οὐκέτι μέχρι τῆς θεωρητικῆς ἵστατο οὐδὲ κατὰ θάτερον τῶν ἐν τοῖς θείοις διττῶν ἰδιομάτων ἔζη, νοῶν μόνον καὶ ἀνατεινόμενος εἰς τὰ κρείττονα, πρόνοιαν ἤδη καὶ τῶν δευτέρων ἐτίθετο θειότερόν τινα καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὸν ἔμπροσθεν εἰρημενον πολιτικὸν τρόπον.

Theurgic virtue, then, transcends the Contemplative (which, as we saw, included instantaneous vision of the Intelligible at that level, 22.1–15). It involves not a mere use of intellectual thought or the contemplation of entities above Intellect *from the level of Intellect*, but actually acting *prior to Intellect* (πρόνοια, 28.6, = πρὸ νοῦ).[22] Thus, Theurgic virtue is associated with a higher kind of thought than simple unification with Intellect. It transcends Intellect itself, and so would seem to involve a higher kind of unity, most likely at the henadic level. Conceptually, the soul exists intermediate between One and Intellect.

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[20] As Saffrey and Segonds (2002) 68 note 13 contend. So too Festugière (1969) 295–296.

[21] For the translation of πρόνοια, see Saffrey–Segonds (2002) 152–153 n. 1.

[22] See, with Saffrey and Segonds (2002) 153 n. 1, Proclus, *El. Th.* Prop. 120.

Before turning to the role of the Theurgic virtues in Damascius, we must first look at the next sentence in Marinus. He has just stated that the Theurgic virtues exist at a level between Intellect and the One. He now explains further about this ranking using Chaldaean terminology (28.8–10):

> He made use of Chaldaean conjunctions,[23] prayers,[24] and divine and unspeakable Iunges.[25]
>
> Ταῖς γὰρ τῶν Χαλδαίων συστάσεσι καὶ ἐντυχίαις καὶ τοῖς θείοις καὶ ἀφθέγκτος στροφάλοις ἐκέχρητο.

Marinus here uses three technical terms from the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Their importance for our purpose is that they are associated with the gods and communications between cosmic realms. A conjunction (σύστασις) is a form of communication with a divinity of any sort. Julian the Chaldaean performed a rite with σύστασις to associate his son, Julian the Theurgist, with

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[23] For the term σύστασις, see Des Places (1996) 150; Majercik (1989) 214; Lewy (1978) 228–229; Edwards (2000) 100 note 293; Saffrey and Segonds (2002) 153 note 2. It denotes the conjunction between the theurgist and the god or administering daemon that takes place before the soul's ritual ascent.

[24] For the term ἐντυχία, see Des Places (1966) 117 note 1; Lewy (1978) 239; Majercik (1989) 214; Saffrey and Segonds (2002) 153 note 3. These are prayers to the gods and daemons offered preparatory to the ascent ritual.

[25] For the term στρόφαλος (= ἴυγξ or ῥόμβος), see Lewy (1978) 249–252; Majercik (1989) 214 (her commentary to the use of the word in *Chald. Or.* Fr. 206) and 9–10; Saffrey and Segonds (2002) 153–154 note 4. The Iunx was originally a bird, the wryneck, which could twist its head about while standing still. The term was later applied to a disk that was spun on a thread between the fingers in magic rituals, the whistling sound being assimilated to apotropaic prayers. See Ogden (2009) 240–242 and for further bibliography 350. For the Iunges in the *Chaldaean Oracles*, Frr. 75–77, see Des Places (1996) 85 and 136 and Majercik (1989) 171–172. See also Lewy (1978) 132–137 and Finamore and Johnston (2010) 167–169 and 172. In the *Oracles* the Iunges are both Intelligible entities that help guide the universe and descend to the planetary spheres when called upon by priests and also the magical wheels which are used not for erotic attraction, as in common magical practice, but for calling the Intelligible Iunges to the cosmic realm to assist in ritual ascent. It should be noted that the Iunges in Fr. 77 are conceived as the descending thoughts of the highest god, the Father, who (we are told) sends the Iunges "by means of his unspeakable will so that they might intelligize" (βουλαῖς ἀφθέγκτοις κινούμεναι ὥστε νοῆσαι, 76.3). Thus the adjective used by Marinus to describe the Iunges themselves was used in the *Oracles* to describe the moving activity of the highest god. This "will" is therefore akin to the Iunges themselves, which in Fr. 76 "move into" (ἐπεμβαίνουσι, 76.2) our cosmos. It is difficult to translate the plural "wills" into English, but the idea is that the Father sends individual instances of his eternal Will into the cosmos, just as he sends individual Forms. It should be noted that Marinus cites a more typical "white magic" use of a Iunx in 22.19–21, where Proclus is said to have prevented a drought in Attica by using a Iunx. See Edwards (2000) 101 note 301.

all the gods and the soul of Plato.[26] The rite is preliminary to the actual ascent ritual, the priest calling upon the divinity to aid in the rite. The prayers (ἐντυχίαι) are also preliminary to the ritual, addressed to divinities to gain their assistance.[27] The Iunx, a magical disk spun between the two hands on a thread to create a whirring noise, is also the name of an Intelligible entity sent from the Father into the cosmos. Like the Forms they can move easily between realms and assist the priest in the ascent ritual. The material Iunx is used by sympathetic magic to set the Intelligible Iunges in motion. Thus, all three of these Chaldaean terms are applicable to pre-noetic gods. We can therefore imagine Proclus invoking these higher gods in theurgic ritual as he enlists their aid in the ascent of his soul. In such a case, the Theurgic virtues associated with these rites would involve unity with gods above the Intellect.

Thus the three philosophers, though not in perfect harmony, are in general accord. The higher virtues are aligned with purer thought and greater unity. Marinus leaves the Paradigmatic virtues off his list, and Olympiodorus does not discuss the Hieratic virtues (although this need not imply that he does not accept their existence). Damascius presents the clearest picture, with all seven grades of virtue. The differences between the philosophers is consistent with an Iamblichean doctrine that parallels that of Damascius.

Iamblichus and the Hieratic Virtues

What then was Iamblichus' doctrine about the Paradigmatic and Theurgic/Hieratic Virtues? If we are right that the sort of unity attained involves the gods existing above Intellect and below the One, then Damascius' description of these virtues is apt:

> The Hieratic virtues subsist in the godlike [element] of the soul and are parallel to all the above-mentioned [grades], which were related to being, while these are related to unity. Iamblichus introduced these [virtues], and those around Proclus [discussed them] more clearly.
>
> Ὅτι εἰσὶ καὶ αἱ ἱερατικαὶ ἀρεταί, κατὰ τὸ θεοειδὲς ὑφιστάμεναι τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀντιπαρήκουσαι πάσαις ταῖς εἰρημέναις οὐσιώδεσιν οὔσαις ἑνιαῖαί γε ὑπάρχουσαι. καὶ ταύτας δὲ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐνδείκνυται, οἱ δὲ περὶ Πρόκλον καὶ σαφέστερον.
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> (144.1–4)

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[26] Lewy (1978) 229; Majercik (1989) 25–26. According to Lewy (1978) 234, Chaldaeans summoned Aion (= the Father, and so above Intellect) with conjunctions.

[27] Lewy (1978) 238–240. As with the conjunctions, the rites addressing the divinities could involve *nomina barbara*.

Given Damascius' emphasis here on the distinction between Being (in the lower grades of virtue) and Unity (in the Theurgic) and also given that Being is the lowest moment of the Realm of the One (as well as the highest of the Intelligible Realm), we have more evidence that the Theurgic virtues involve pre-Intelligible entities, such as the Henads.[28] Further the place of the Theurgic virtues—and so the source of the kind of thought that accompanies them—Damascius calls the "godlike element of the soul" (τὸ θεοειδὲς τῆς ψυχῆς). As Westerink states, this would be "the 'divine' or 'one-like' element in the soul."[29] Since one would expect to have contact with pre-Intelligible entities not via the intellectual capacity of the soul but through its one-like capacity, the term further corroborates our view that Theurgic virtues belong to a soul that is actualizing its henadic aspect.

We are now in a position to see how Iamblichus distinguished the Paradigmatic and Theurgic / Hieratic virtues. As we have seen, the Paradigmatic virtues are marked by participation in Intellect. Like objects that participate in the Form of, say, Red, they are what they are by virtue of the Form, not by virtue of themselves. As the object's redness depends on the presence of the Form in it, so too the soul's intellectual nature depends on the presence of the Intellect. In the Hieratic virtues, however, the one-like aspect of the soul surpasses mere participation in the Intellect.

In his *De Anima* section 50, Iamblichus compares the views of Numenius and "the ancients" (i.e., of Iamblichus himself) about the sort of unity the soul has to Intellect. Whereas Numenius prefers an undifferentiated sameness (ταυτότης ἀδιάκριτος, 72.19) that is a kind of dissolving of itself into Intellect (ἀνάλυσις, 72.21) and a union without individuation (ἀδιόριστος συναφή, 72.22), Iamblichus prefers a unity with more individuality for the soul. This would seem to be the sort of unity, then, that he champions in the passage about the Paradigmatic Virtues. The soul is still itself but is co-arranged with the Intellect and filled by it. The relationship is more participation in a higher entity than total submersion. The human soul remains what it is even in its highest form of union with Intellect.[30]

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[28] For the Henads in Iamblichus, see *In Parm.* Fr. 2 with Dillon's notes ad loc and his Appendix B, 412–416. There are two new, important articles on the Henads in Iamblichus by Svetlana Mesyats (in this volume) and Dennis Clark (2010), both of which support Dillon's thesis against Saffrey and Westerink (2003) xvii–xl.

[29] Westerink (1977) Vol. II, 87.

[30] See the notes of Finamore and Dillon (2002) 218–221.

Theurgic virtues surpass Paradigmatic ones in regard to the entity with which the soul unites. The one-like aspect of soul reaches out and creates a more unitary (ἑνιαῖος) type of bond. The amount of internal differentiation is necessarily reduced, but it would not disappear. The human soul remains a mean and cannot achieve total unification without differentiation. Nonetheless, the type of union and the accompanying process of thought (if that is indeed a proper term at this level) is more unified than that at the Intelligible level.

In Book 5 of the *De Mysteriis*, Iamblichus says that union with the One happens, if at all, late in life and rarely.[31] It is the highest form of union allowed to a human being, and it is appropriate that it coincide with the highest grade of virtue. Unless of course Iamblichus, like Marinus, thought there was another, higher form of virtue, one which cannot be spoken. If Iamblichus did hold such a view, it would help explain the positions of both Marinus (a highest grade about which one must remain silent) and Olympiodorus (who omits mention of the Theurgic virtues, the highest grade). If I may carry this speculation further, one could imagine Iamblichus dividing Theurgic/Hieratic virtues into two sorts: a henadic union and one beyond that with the One proper (the second One in Iamblichus' system, or perhaps even the Ineffable One?), which would be unable to be expressed in words. The dichotomy in the Theurgic virtues could also explain the divergence in Marinus and Olympiodorus.

However one may view such speculative thoughts, we can safely conclude that Iamblichus championed the seven grades of virtue that we discover in Damascius. The grades parallel the soul's ascent to higher levels in the universe. As the soul ascends, the soul's thinking becomes more unified and so does its virtue. Thus, the four cardinal virtues assume different aspects at each level, and the higher the grade the more simple and unified the virtues and the soul's cognizing becomes.

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[31] *De Myst*. 5.22, 230.14–231.2.

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THE ROLE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE, WILL AND LOVE IN IAMBLICHUS' THEORY OF THEURGIC PRAYER AND RELIGIOUS INVOCATION

Crystal Addey

Iamblichus provides a defence and explanation of the operation of theurgic prayer and invocation within his treatise, which is now called *De Mysteriis*,[1] one of the most extensive surviving Late Antique works on Graeco-Roman polytheistic religious practices.[2] This work answers the questions posed by the philosopher Porphyry on the nature of various kinds of religious phenomena. In this sense, the work functions as a kind of dialogue. Theurgic prayer and invocation included the use of "unknowable" or so called "meaningless"' names and probably also included the use of strings of vowels (*voces magicae*), although Iamblichus does not refer to these explicitly.[3] The use of such sacred names and strings of vowels is well attested within ritual invocations found in religious, magical and theurgic Late Antique texts, such as the magical handbooks found in Egypt and now known under the name of the *Greek Magical Papyri*.[4] The vowel-strings are a written record of a sound sequence, while the names, which were often referred to as *onomata barbara* ("non-Greek names / words"), are strange words which do not have any obvious meaning. Both were spoken or uttered within ritual

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[1] The original title of the work is: *The Reply of the Master Abamon to the Letter of Porphyry to Anebo and the Solutions to the Questions it Contains*. The modern title which the work is now commonly known as, *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldaeans and Assyrians* (*De mysteriis Aegyptiorum, Chaldaeorum, Assyriorum*) was coined by Marsilio Ficino in the fifteenth century.

[2] Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* (*On the Mysteries*), E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon and J.P. Hershbell (2003). All quotations and translations from this work are from this edition, unless otherwise specified. Henceforth, this work will be referred to using the abbreviation *DM*.

[3] E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon and J.P. Hershbell (2003) 275, n. 354.

[4] Cf. for example, *PGM* IV.930; 960–965; XIII.762–772; XIII.880–886; ed. K. Preisendanz (1928–1931). Cf. P. Cox Miller (1986) 481–505; F. Graf (1991) 188–213; S. Pulleyn (1997) 111–112; 137–139. I do not wish to imply in any way that Iamblichus would have approved of such "magical" usages of sacred names and invocations (such as are attested to in the *PGM*); to the contrary, Iamblichus emphatically distinguishes theurgy from contemporary magical practices and I will argue that the role of divine providence and will within theurgy constitutes one of his key criteria for drawing a firm distinction between them.

contexts, as well as being inscribed upon cult statues and other ritual paraphernalia. Some examples of theurgic prayer can be found in the works of the later Neoplatonist philosopher, Proclus, who habitually opens with a prayer as the preface to his main works. For example, at the beginning of the *Commentary on the Parmenides*, Proclus' prayer invokes the whole divine hierarchy, from the intelligible gods down to angels, *daimones* and heroes, and asks for appropriate help from each divine class of deities for the reception of the mystical vision of Plato.[5]

Within Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*, one of the central questions raised by Porphyry concerns the question of the operation and purposes of theurgic prayer and religious invocation:

> Ἀλλ' αἱ κλήσεις, φησίν, ὡς πρὸς ἐμπαθεῖς τοὺς θεοὺς γίγνονται, ὥστε οὐχ οἱ δαίμονες μόνον εἰσὶν ἐμπαθεῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ θεοί.
>
> "But invocations," the objection goes, "are addressed to the gods as if they were subject to external influence, so that it is not only daemons that are thus subject, but also the gods."[6]

Porphyry seems to be pointing towards a popular, contemporary criticism of prayer and invocations: that is, if the gods are unchangeable, eternal and are not subject to passions, a position accepted by most contemporary Late Antique philosophers, what is the purpose of prayers and invocations? Do they aim to influence, compel or constrain the gods?[7] As John Dillon has aptly phrased this significant issue, "Once one accepted, as anyone with any philosophical training did, that God, or the gods, were not subject to passions, and that … the world-order was (either entirely or very largely)

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[5] Proclus, *In Parm.* 617–618, trs. G.R. Morrow and J.M. Dillon (1987). Both the *In Parm.* and *Theol. Plat.* begin with a prayer to the gods. Cf. also Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* 1.1–2, trs. G. Clark (1989), for Iamblichus' invocation to the gods to guide his discourse on the philosophy of Pythagoras, which he considers to be a gift of the gods to mortals.

[6] *DM* 1.12 (40.12–13). E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon and J.P. Hershbell (2003) 51, n. 74 note that their translation "as the objection goes" seems to be a reasonable rendering of the third person φησίν "which is otherwise a little odd, since "Abamon" addresses Porphyry directly most of the time". The use of the third person φησίν here may well point towards the popularity and frequency of this objection to magical and religious invocation within Late Antique philosophical discourse and religious debate. Cf. Z. Mazur (2004) 37, who notes that the complaint that magicians coerce the gods was commonplace by Plotinus' time.

[7] Cf. also *DM* 1.11 (37.4–5), where Porphyry raises a similar question regarding the operation of theurgic ritual: "Why is it that many theurgical procedures are directed towards them [i.e. the gods] as if they were the subject to passions?" (Πῶς οὖν πρὸς ἐμπαθεῖς αὐτοὺς πολλὰ δρᾶται ἐν ταῖς ἱερουργίαις;); *DM* 4.1 (181.2–3).

determined as a product of God's providence, it became a serious problem as to how precisely one could influence the gods, or the course of events, by one's prayers or sacrifices."[8]

Iamblichus answers this challenge in three ways: firstly, through a discussion of the "One of the soul", which is the divine imprint or principle of the human soul. Secondly, and consequently, through a discussion of assimilation and likeness to god, which Iamblichus considers to be the central goal of theurgic ritual and invocation. Thirdly, through a discussion of the nature and significance of divine providence, divine love and divine will in connection with the operation of prayers and religious invocations. This study will focus on the last discussion: the significance and context of the role of divine providence, love and will in theurgic ritual, particularly within prayer and religious invocation. However, the first two elements of Iamblichus' defence will be briefly discussed since they are intimately related to the role of divine providence and will within theurgic ritual.[9] It will be argued that an exploration of Iamblichean ideas of divine providence and necessity can illuminate the philosophical theory of theurgy expounded in the *De Mysteriis* and explains one of the key criteria which Iamblichus uses to distinguish theurgy from the often antagonistic "magical" practices of his contemporaries, those generally subsumed under the rubric γοητεία.[10]

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[8] J.M. Dillon (2007) 30–31. Cf. also C. Van Liefferinge (1999) 55–56.

[9] Two recent studies focus explicitly on the role of magic and theurgy in Iamblichus' writings: J.F. Finamore (1999) 83–94 and J.M. Dillon (2007) 30–41. Both studies contain valuable and important insights and inspired me to undertake this study. While I disagree with John Dillon's conclusions regarding the relationship between magic and theurgy (see below), it should be noted that I have only the greatest respect and admiration for Dillon's vast erudition and enormous contributions to scholarship on the Platonic Tradition, not least of which is his exemplary contribution towards Iamblichean studies. This study has benefited from my personal communication and discussion with him; and his work continues to inspire me.

[10] Scholarly debates on the nature of "magic" (in both ancient and modern contexts) are extensive: anthropologists, classicists and historians of religion have long debated the meaning of the term "magic" and the general consensus seems to be the impossibility of agreeing on a definition of "magic" which is universally applicable across all cultures and times. Cf. H.S. Versnel (1991) 177–197 for a comprehensive summary of scholarship in this area. I discuss ancient magical practices in full awareness of the problematic nature and complexities of categorically defining such practices; generally, I describe ancient "magical" practices as those which are subsumed under the (often derogatory) term γοητεία, often construed as involving malicious enchantment and antagonistic practices such as binding spells and the making of curse tablets.

The "One of the Soul" and Divine Assimilation

In response to Porphyry's questions regarding the use of invocations and whether this usage implies that the gods are subject to external influence and compulsion, Iamblichus begins his defence of theurgy by explaining how theurgic ritual operates:

> Τῶν γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἑκάστοτε ἐπιτελουμένων τὰ μὲν ἀπόρρητόν τινα καὶ κρείττονα λόγου τὴν αἰτίαν ἔχει· τὰ δ' ὡς σύμβολα καθιέρωται ἐξ ἀιδίου τοῖς κρείττοσι· τὰ δ' εἰκόνα τινὰ ἄλλην ἀποσώζει, καθάπερ δὴ καὶ ἡ γενεσιουργὸς φύσις τῶν ἀφανῶν λόγων ἐμφανεῖς τινας μορφὰς ἀπετυπώσατο· τὰ δὲ τιμῆς ἕνεκα προσάγεται ἢ ἀφομοιώσεως ὁποιασοῦν ἢ καὶ οἰκειώσεως στοχάζεται·
>
> Of the works of theurgy performed on any given occasion, some have a cause that is secret and superior to all rational explanation, others are like symbols consecrated from all eternity to the higher beings, others preserve some other image, even as nature in its generative role imprints (upon things) visible shapes from invisible reason-principles; others yet are performed in honour of their subjects, or have as their aim some sort of assimilation or establishment of familiarity.[11]

Although religious invocations may appear coercive, Iamblichus maintains that the theurgist is rather attuning him or herself to the gods, utilising the *symbola* which have been sown throughout the cosmos by the gods themselves.[12] Iamblichus also asserts that some theurgic works aim at a kind of assimilation or establishment of familiarity with the divine. What exactly does he mean by this claim? Later in the *De Mysteriis*, Iamblichus emphasises the inherent "doubleness" of ritual acts, which seems to correspond to the double nature of the human soul itself:

> τὸ μὲν ὡς παρ' ἀνθρώπων προσαγόμενον, ὅπερ δὴ τηρεῖ καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν τάξιν ὡς ἔχει φύσεως ἐν τῷ παντί, τὸ δὲ κρατυνόμενον τοῖς θείοις συνθήμασι καὶ ἄνω μετέωρον δι' αὐτῶν τοῖς κρείττοσι συναπτόμενον, περιαγόμενόν τε ἐμμελῶς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκείνων διακόσμησιν, ὃ δὴ δύναται εἰκότως καὶ τὸ τῶν θεῶν σχῆμα περιτίθεσθαι. Κατὰ τὴν τοιαύτην οὖν διαφορὰν εἰκότως καὶ ὡς κρείττονας καλεῖ τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς δυνάμεις, καθόσον ἐστὶν ὁ καλῶν ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἐπιτάττει αὐταῖς αὖθις, ἐπειδὴ περιβάλλεταί πως διὰ τῶν ἀπορρήτων συμβόλων τὸ ἱερατικὸν τῶν θεῶν πρόσχημα.

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[11] *DM* 1.11 (37.6–11).

[12] On *symbola* and their use within theurgic ritual cf. *DM* 3.15 (135.10–136.4); 5.23 (233.9–13); *Or. Chald.* F 108 (= Procl. *In Crat.* 20.31–21.2), trs. R. Majercik (1989) 91. "Symbols" are the main elements of theurgic ritual (within this context, the term σύμβολα is used interchangeably with the term συνθήματα, literally "tokens"). A σύμβολον could be a physical object such as a plant, gem, bone, stone, herb or type of incense or another material object, a verbal utterance, musical composition, ritual or text thought to be ontologically linked with a specific deity through "divine love" and "supracosmic sympathy".

> On the one hand, it is performed by men, and as such observes our natural rank in the universe; but on the other, it controls divine symbols, and in virtue of them is raised up to union with the higher powers, and directs itself harmoniously in accordance with their dispensation, which enables it quite properly to assume the mantle of the gods. It is in virtue of this distinction, then, that the art both naturally invokes the powers from the universe as superiors, inasmuch as the invoker is a man, and yet on the other hand gives them orders, since it invests itself, by virtue of the ineffable symbols, with the hieratic role of the gods.[13]

Iamblichus claims that from one perspective, theurgic rituals are performed by humans. Yet, according to Iamblichus, all humans bear an imprint or principle of the divine within their soul: in his *Commentary on the Phaedrus*, Iamblichus refers to this principle as the "One of the Soul" (τὸ ἓν τῆς ψυχῆς).[14] Theurgic ritual, by using "unknowable, ineffable *symbola*," such as the unknowable names used within invocations, activates this divine element of the soul allowing it to "assume the mantle of the gods" and *ascend* to the gods, rather than implying that the gods descend to human beings. Thus, the ritual utterance operates as a powerful speech-act: enabling the human to assume a divine role by ascending, through similarity, to the divine.[15] When the theurgist prays and invokes the gods, he or she is able to do so because of the divine principle in his or her soul which has the potential to be awakened and activated so that it becomes conscious of the constant illuminations of the gods:

> Τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ νοερὸν καὶ ἕν, ἢ εἰ νοητὸν αὐτὸ καλεῖν ἐθέλοις, ἐγείρεται τότε ἐναργῶς ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς, ἐγειρόμενον δὲ ἐφίεται τοῦ ὁμοίου διαφερόντως καὶ συνάπτεται πρὸς αὐτοτελειότητα.
>
> For that element in us which is divine and intellectual and one—or, if you so wish to term it, intelligible—is aroused, then, clearly in prayer, and when aroused, strives primarily towards what is like to itself, and joins itself to essential perfection.[16]

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[13] *DM*, 4.2 (184.2–10). On the double status of human beings cf. *DM* 5.15 (219.1–10); G. Shaw (1995) 51, 67, 187–188; H. Feichtinger (2003) 126–127.

[14] Iamblichus, *In Phaedrum*, Fragment 6, ed. J.M. Dillon (1973). Cf. also *DM* 5.26 (239.6); 8.7 (269.11–13; 270.6–14); J.M. Dillon (1973) 253; G. Shaw (1995) 118–126; H. Feichtinger (2003) 133; G. Shaw (2005) 148.

[15] Cf. also Iamblichus, *De Anima*, 379.23–26; *DM* 1.11 (38.8–10); G. Shaw (1995) 111, 186–188; J.F. Finamore (1999) 87–88; H. Feichtinger (2003) 126–127, 129; P.T. Struck (2004) 211, describes the verbal symbol in Iamblichus as follows: "Like the password of the mysteries, it verifies a mortal's fitness to inhabit a higher plane of reality and to receive the divine."

[16] *DM* 1.15 (46.9–12).

Rather than human ordering divine, the "unknowable names" used in the ritual involve a process whereby the divine communicates with the divine.[17] Subject and object are dissolved to some extent in Iamblichus' explanation.[18] However, the divine still maintains its transcendence and its causal superiority: in Iamblichean metaphysics, the gods are both transcendent and immanent simultaneously. The philosopher maintains that the gods are primarily located in the divine realm but simultaneously manifest throughout the cosmos through their divine illumination.[19] This simultaneous transcendence and immanence of the divine is based on the principle that there is an unbroken continuity throughout the cosmos.[20] The ascent to the divine is conceptualised as enabling the human to participate in divine power and activity through assimilation and likeness to the divine through the effective utilisation of divine *symbola*: the "unknowable names" contained within theurgic and religious invocations are one example of such *symbola*.[21] Therefore, for Iamblichus, the ultimate goal of prayer is assimilation and likeness to god; in this respect, he draws on a well-established idea within the Platonic tradition. For example, conforming to wisdom and becoming like the divine are the key goals of prayer which Plato expressed in the *Laws* and the *Theaetetus*.[22] Many of Socrates' prayers in Plato's dialogues have the goal of becoming like god.[23]

Iamblichus explains that theurgic prayer does not operate as a simple, dualistic process whereby the human speaks and the god hears, since the gods do not possess or require sense-organs; rather, theurgic prayer and

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[17] *DM* 1.15 (47.3–9). Cf. E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon and J.P. Hershbell (2003) 59, n. 86: "These would presumably include the various kinds of *voces magicae* recognised in theurgic ritual. This is in accord with the view that Iamblichus expresses elsewhere that theurgic formulae have a special power deriving from the fact that they are in some way divine language, immediately comprehensible to gods, though not to us. It is therefore as if the divine in us is communicating directly with the divine in the universe." Cf. also *DM* 7.4 (255.13–256.2): C. Van Liefferinge (1999) 56–57.

[18] Cf. *DM* 4.3 (185.9–186.4).

[19] For Iamblichus' view of the immanence and presence of the gods throughout the cosmos, including the physical world: cf. *DM* 1.8 (27.7–29.7); 1.9 (29.13–30.2); 5.23 (232.11–12; 233.2–8); G. Shaw (1995) 29–30, n. 6; C. Van Liefferinge (1999) 82–85; P.T. Struck (2004) 220; L. George (2005) 293, n. 33. For the role of light and divine illumination in Iamblichus' philosophy cf. especially J.F. Finamore (1993) 55–64.

[20] *DM* 1.6 (20.2–9); G. Shaw (1995) 133–134.

[21] *DM* 1.7 (21.7–10); 1.15 (48.4–8); 7.4 (255.1–5; 255.7–256.2); 7.5 (257.5–14); 8.5 (267.11–268.3); G. Shaw (1995) 110–111; J.F. Finamore (1999) 90; C. Van Liefferinge (1999) 56–57.

[22] Plato, *Laws* IV.716b–d, III.687d–688b, ed. R.G. Bury (1952); *Theatetus* 176b–c, ed. H.N. Fowler (1967).

[23] D. Jackson (1971) 26, 29–30, 35, 37.

invocation is efficacious because the primary causes (i.e. the gods) know and comprehend within themselves all that is inferior to them.[24] This explanation is clearly based on the Neoplatonist idea that superior causes contain everything which is ontologically and causally dependent upon them, best summarised by Proclus' proposition that "Every productive cause is superior to that which it produces" (Πᾶν τὸ παρακτικὸν ἄλλου κρεῖττόν ἐστι τῆς τοῦ παραγομένου φύσεως).[25] Iamblichus concludes that:

> οὔτε δὴ οὖν διὰ δυνάμεων οὔτε δι' ὀργάνων εἰσδέχονται εἰς ἑαυτοὺς οἱ θεοὶ τὰς εὐχάς, ἐν ἑαυτοῖς δὲ περιέχουσι τῶν ἀγαθῶν τὰς ἐνεργείας τῶν λόγων, καὶ μάλιστα ἐκείνων οἵτινες διὰ τῆς ἱερᾶς ἁγιστείας ἐνιδρυμένοι τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ συνηνωμένοι τυγχάνουσιν· ἀτεχνῶς γὰρ τηνικαῦτα αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον πρὸς ἑαυτὸ σύνεστι, καὶ οὐδ' ὡς ἕτερον πρὸς ἕτερον κοινωνεῖ τῶν ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς νοήσεων.
>
> So then it is neither through faculties nor through organs that the gods receive into themselves our prayers, but rather they embrace within themselves the realisations of the words of good men, and in particular of those which, by virtue of the sacred liturgy, are established within the gods and united to them; for in that case the divine is literally united with itself, and it is not in the way of one person addressing another that it participates in the thought expressed by the prayers.[26]

Thus, the correct usage of the "unknowable names" and prayer itself within the appropriate context was considered to be a pious and *divine* display of ritual power and creativity, whereby the divine (within the human soul) communicates directly with the (transcendent) divine. This process is envisaged by Iamblichus as representing the divinization of the human being, as is made clear in his comments on the benefits bestowed by the extended practice of prayer:

> Ἡ δ' ἐν αὐταῖς ἐγχρονίζουσα διατριβὴ τρέφει μὲν τὸν ἡμέτερον νοῦν, τὴν δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς ὑποδοχὴν τῶν θεῶν ποιεῖ λίαν εὐρυτέραν, ἀνοίγει δὲ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ τῶν θεῶν, συνήθειαν δὲ παρέχει πρὸς τὰς τοῦ φωτὸς μαρμαρυγάς, κατὰ βραχὺ δὲ τελειοῖ τὰ ἐν ἡμῖν πρὸς τὰς τῶν θεῶν συναφάς, ἕως ἂν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀκρότατον ἡμᾶς ἐπαναγάγῃ, καὶ τὰ μὲν ἡμέτερα τῆς διανοίας ἤθη ἠρέμα ἀνέλκει, τὰ δὲ τῶν θεῶν ἡμῖν ἐκδίδωσι, πειθὼ δὲ καὶ κοινωνίαν καὶ φιλίαν ἀδιάλυτον ἐγείρει, τόν τε θεῖον ἔρωτα συναύξει, καὶ τὸ θεῖον τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνάπτει, ἀποκαθαίρει τε πᾶν τὸ ἐναντίον

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[24] *DM* 1.15 (46.12–47.3); 1.19 (59.11–60.3). Cf. also J.F. Finamore (1999) 92. Iamblichus uses the same line of argument to defend divination based on divine foreknowledge: *DM* 3.1 (100.3–7; 101.12–102.11).

[25] Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Propostion 7, trs. E.R. Dodds (1933). Cf. also *DM* 3.8 (116.13–14).

[26] *DM* 1.15 (47.3–9).

> τῆς ψυχῆς … καὶ τὸ ὅλον εἰπεῖν, ὁμιλητὰς τῶν θεῶν, ἵνα οὕτως εἴπωμεν, τοὺς χρωμένους αὐταῖς ἀπεργάζεται.
>
> Extended practice of prayer nurtures our intellect, enlarges very greatly our soul's receptivity to the gods, reveals to men the life of the gods, accustoms their eyes to the brightness of divine light, and gradually brings to perfection the capacity of our faculties for contact with the gods, until it leads us up to the highest level of consciousness (of which we are capable); also, it elevates gently the dispositions of our minds, and communicates to us those of the gods, stimulates persuasion and communion and indissoluble friendship, augments divine love, kindles the divine element in the soul, scours away all contrary tendencies within it … and, in a word, it renders those who employ prayers, if we may so express it, the familiar consorts of the gods.[27]

Iamblichus claims that prayer has many benefits for human beings, accustoming their eyes to divine illumination and perfecting their capacity for contact with and receptivity to the gods. Eventually, it leads the human soul to the highest level of consciousness and kindles the divine element of the soul, divinizing the soul and making it aware of its ultimate source of being. Yet, paradoxically, Iamblichus maintains that, for human beings, it is "consciousness of our own nothingness" (ἡ συναίσθησις τῆς περὶ ἑαυτοὺς οὐδενείας) in comparison with the gods, that makes us turn to supplications and prayers addressed to the gods, and "we gain likeness to it [i.e. the divine] by virtue of our constant consorting with it, and, starting from our own imperfection, we gradually take on the perfection of the divine" (καὶ τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸ ὁμοιότητα ἀπὸ τοῦ συνεχῶς αὐτῷ προσομιλεῖν κτώμεθα, τελειότητά τε θείαν ἠρέμα προσλαμβάνομεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀτελοῦς).[28] Iamblichus' idea of the "One of the soul" marks the human being's ontological (or pre-ontological) connection with the divine, but this element is considered to be suspended from the gods as a gift of the gods: the human race is feeble and the only "remedy" for its inherent straying and confusion, according to Iamblichus, is its participation in divine illumination.[29] Therefore this humility is based on a true knowledge of the nature of the gods and the self and is indispensable and vital for theurgic ascent and assimilation to the gods.[30]

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[27] *DM* 5.26 (238.12–239.7; 239.9–10).

[28] *DM* 1.15 (47.13–48.3). On the nature and function of this humility and "consciousness of our own nothingness" in Iamblichus' thought cf. H. Feichtinger (2003) 123–160; G. Shaw (1995) 111–112.

[29] *DM* 3.18 (144.10–13).

[30] H. Feichtinger (2003) 139–141.

Necessity, Divine Providence and the Gods

Despite Iamblichus' defence of theurgic prayer and religious invocation as enabling assimilation with the divine, critics, both ancient and modern, have claimed that theurgy shares the same underlying mentality as ancient magical practices and should therefore be classified together with them, since both are considered to constitute attempts to influence and compel the gods. This rhetorical strategy is particularly noticeable in early Christian writers, whose polemical agenda included discrediting traditional, "pagan" religious practices, such as religious invocation, and theurgy; part of their strategy involved attempting to invalidate the efficacy and morality of such practices by assimilating them to magical practices. For example, Augustine equates magic with theurgy, maintaining that both are fraudulent practices which attempt to constrain the gods.[31] Recent scholars have also equated, or at least assimilated, ancient magic and theurgy. In a recent essay on Iamblichean theurgy, John Dillon concludes that:

> The distinction commonly made between magic and theurgy is in fact, in my view, basically an unreal one. The real distinction is between magic/theurgy—and its remote descendant, the modern scientific world-view—and religion. Behind the latter is the impulse to abase oneself before some force alien to oneself that is infinitely powerful and mysterious; behind the former is the impulse to come to terms with that force, and the physical world it has created, to ferret out what makes it tick, and to manipulate it for one's own ends … deep down he [i.e. the theurgist] knows this great truth: that if he presses the right buttons, *they will come*.[32]

Dillon equates theurgy with magic, on the grounds that the theurgist, like the magician, considers that he has some kind of power over the divine and

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[31] Augustine, *City of God*, 10.9: "Moreover, they [i.e. Christian miracles] were performed through simple faith and pious trust in God, not by means of incantations and charms, products of an art that wickedly meddles with the occult, an art that they call either magic or, using a more hateful name, witchcraft or, using a more honourable one, theurgy. This terminology is employed by those who make as if an attempt to distinguish two kinds of magic … And yet both groups alike are devotees of the fraudulent rites of demons masquerading under the names of angels" (*Fiebant autem simplici fide atque fiducia pietatis, non incantationibus et carminibus nefariae curiositatis arte compositis, quam vel magian vel detestabiliore nomine goetian vel honorabiliore theurgian vocant qui quasi conantur ista discernere et inlicitis artibus deditos alios damnabiles … cum sint utrique ritibus fallacibus daemonum obstricti sub nominibus angelorum*); 10.10; 10.11; 10.27, trs. D.S. Wiesen (1968). It should be noted that Augustine only seems to have known Porphyry's work(s) on theurgy and does not seem to have read Iamblichus directly, although scholars disagree with regard to exactly which Porphyrian works Augustine *did* read and have access to.

[32] J.M. Dillon (2007) 40.

that the divine is subject to necessity within ritual invocations: the phrasing of the latter part of his statement implies that theurgic prayer and invocation operate in an automatic and somewhat mechanistic fashion. Having equated theurgy with magic, Dillon opposes them to religion, following Sir James Frazer's distinction between religion and magic: religion seeks to propitiate a higher power, or powers, while magic aspires to dominate them or bend them to the magician's will.[33]

Iamblichus directly addresses the subject of the "necessities of the gods" (αἱ θεῶν ἀνάγκαι), which, as Dillon points out, must have been something of a catch-phrase among either magicians or opponents of magic, or both:[34]

> Ἔτι τοίνυν αἱ λεγόμεναι θεῶν ἀνάγκαι τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο θεῶν εἰσιν ἀνάγκαι καὶ ὡς ἐπὶ θεῶν γίγνονται. Οὐκ ἄρα ὡς ἔξωθεν οὐδ' ὡς κατὰ βίαν, ἀλλ' ὡς τἀγαθὸν ὠφελεῖ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, οὕτως ἔχουσι τὸ πάντῃ οὑτωσὶ καὶ μηδαμῶς ἄλλως διακεῖσθαι. Βουλήσει ἄρα ἀγαθοειδεῖ συγκέκραται αὕτη καὶ ἔρωτός ἐστι φίλη ἡ τοιαύτη ἀνάγκη, τάξει τε οἰκείᾳ θεῶν ἔχει τὸ ταὐτὸν καὶ ἄτρεπτον, καὶ ὅτι κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἑνὶ ὅρῳ συνέχεται, καὶ ἐμμένει τούτῳ καὶ οὐδέποτε ἐξίσταται. Διὰ πάντα δὴ οὖν ταῦτα τὸ ἐναντίον συμβαίνει οὗ σὺ συνελογίσω· ἀκήλητον καὶ ἀπαθὲς καὶ ἀβίαστον συμβαίνει εἶναι τὸ θεῖον …
>
> Furthermore, the so-called "necessities of the gods" are just that: necessities of the gods, and come about in accordance with the nature of the gods. It is not, then, as from an outside source or by force, but as their good would have it of necessity, that they are always so disposed, and never inclined otherwise. Such a necessity as this, then, is mingled with a benign will and is a friend of love, and by virtue of an order proper to gods possesses identity and unchangeability, and because it is, according to the same terms and conditions, held within a single limit, it remains within it and does not step outside of it. So, for all these reasons, there results the contrary of your conclusions; the consequence is that the divine is exempt from external bewitchment or affection or constraint …[35]

As John Dillon notes, Iamblichus interprets the objective genitive as a subjective genitive here; he claims that these necessities are not imposed upon the gods, but rather are directed by them and emanate from them.[36] This view is postulated explicitly by Iamblichus in response to Porphyry's inquiry about necessities being imposed on the gods through the invocations of human beings:

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[33] J.M. Dillon (2007) 31–32, 40.
[34] J.M. Dillon (2007) 35.
[35] *DM* 1.14 (44.8–45.5).
[36] J.M. Dillon (2007) 35 and n. 13; J.M. Dillon, E.C. Clarke and J.P. Hershbell (2003) 55, n. 80.

> … οὐ μὴν ἔτι γε δίδομεν ὃ σὺ προσέρριψας ὡς ὁμολογούμενον, ὅτι δι' ἡμῶν ἑλκόμενος ἀνάγκαις ταῖς τῆς κλήσεως ταῦτα ἐπιτελεῖ. Κρείττων γὰρ ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πᾶς ὁ συναπτόμενος αὐτῷ τῶν κρειττόνων χορός, οὐ τῆς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἐπαγομένης μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅση τὸν κόσμον κατείληφεν … Εἶτα μέντοι καὶ ἡ κλῆσις καὶ τὰ δρώμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπιστήμονος τῇ ἐξομοιώσει καὶ τῇ οἰκειώσει προστρέχει τοῖς κρείττοσιν αὐτὰ καὶ συνάπτεται, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ διὰ βίας ἀπεργάζεται τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἐνέργειαν.
>
> … yet we do not accept what you toss in as if agreed upon, that "it is through being drawn down to us by the necessities of our invocation that the superior being accomplishes these things." For the god is superior to necessity, and the whole chorus of superior beings [i.e. the gods, angels and *daimones*] attached to it is superior to necessity, not only that imposed by human beings, but also from the necessity which embraces the cosmos … So then, the invocation and rites performed by the expert ascend to the superior beings and attach themselves to them by assimilation and appropriation, but not through force do they achieve their own activity.[37]

Such a view accords with Iamblichean metaphysics, where the gods are placed ontologically on a superior hypostasis to necessity and operate according to a higher ontological grade; in other words, the divine occupies a higher place within the hierarchy of grades of being than necessity and consequently transcends it.[38] From the perspective of the physical world, the gods may *appear* to operate according to necessity since their nature is unchangeable and eternal rather than in any way arbitrary. Yet, Iamblichus maintains that this necessity *emanates* from the gods rather than being imposed upon them by an external force; moreover, he claims that the necessity which emanates from the gods is mixed with benign will and is a "friend of love" (βουλήσει ἄρα ἀγαθοειδεῖ συγκέκραται αὕτη καὶ ἔρωτός ἐστι φίλη ἡ τοιαύτη ἀνάγκη). This accords with his earlier statement that

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[37] *DM* 3.18 (145.4–8; 145.10–13). Cf. also *DM* 5.7 (208.1–5).

[38] Cf. *DM* 3.17 (139.10–140.4): "But you don't properly understand what you call "service" when applying this word to the overwhelming power of the gods, and their superabundant goodness, and their all-encompassing responsibility, their care and patronage. Moreover, you ignore the manner of their activity, that this is neither drawn down nor turned toward us, but, being transcendent, it guides and gives itself to its participants; and is neither altered in itself nor made less, nor is it subservient to its participants, but, on the contrary, it makes use of all that is subservient to it" (Τὸ δὲ οὐ καλῶς ὑπολαμβάνεις, τὴν περιουσίαν τῆς δυνάμεως τῶν θεῶν καὶ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν ἀγαθότητα καὶ τὴν πάντα περιέχουσαν αἰτίαν κηδεμονίαν τε ἡμῶν καὶ προστασίαν ὑπηρεσίαν ἐπονομάζων. Καὶ ἔτι ἀγνοεῖς τὸν τρόπον τῆς ἐνεργείας, ὥστε οὐ καθέλκεται οὔτε ἐπιστρέφεται οὕτος εἰς ἡμᾶς, χωριστὸς δὲ προηγεῖται καὶ δίδωσι μὲν τοῖς μετέχουσιν ἑαυτόν, αὐτὸς δὲ οὔτε ἐξίσταται ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὔτε ἐλάττων γίγνεται οὔθ' ὑπηρετεῖ τοῖς μετέχουσιν, ἀλλὰ τοὐναντίον πᾶσιν ὑπηρετοῦσι προσχρῆται.).

the divine illumination that results from invocations is ultimately caused by and directed by divine will, by which he seems to be alluding to divine providence (*pronoia*):[39]

> Αὐτοφανὴς γάρ τίς ἐστι καὶ αὐτοθελὴς ἡ διὰ τῶν κλήσεων ἔλλαμψις, πόρρω τε τοῦ καθέλκεσθαι ἀφέστηκε, διὰ τῆς θείας τε ἐνεργείας καὶ τελειότητος πρόεισιν εἰς τὸ ἐμφανές, καὶ τοσούτῳ προέχει τῆς ἑκουσίου κινήσεως ὅσον ἡ τἀγαθοῦ θεία βούλησις τῆς προαιρετικῆς ὑπερέχει ζωῆς. Διὰ τῆς τοιαύτης οὖν βουλήσεως ἀφθόνως οἱ θεοὶ τὸ φῶς ἐπιλάμπουσιν εὐμενεῖς ὄντες καὶ ἵλεῳ τοῖς θεουργοῖς, τάς τε ψυχὰς αὐτῶν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀνακαλούμενοι καὶ τὴν ἕνωσιν αὐταῖς τὴν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς χορηγοῦντες, ἐθίζοντές τε αὐτὰς καὶ ἔτι ἐν σώματι οὔσας ἀφίστασθαι τῶν σωμάτων, ἐπὶ δὲ τὴν ἀίδιον καὶ νοητὴν αὐτῶν ἀρχὴν περιάγεσθαι.
>
> For the illumination that comes about as a result of invocations is self-revelatory and self-willed, and is far removed from being drawn down by force, bur rather proceeds to manifestation by reason of its own divine energy and perfection, and is as far superior to (human) voluntary motion as the divine will of the Good is to the life of ordinary deliberation and choice. It is by virtue of such will then, that the gods in their benevolence and graciousness unstintingly shed their light upon theurgists, summoning up their souls to themselves and orchestrating their union with them, accustoming them, even while still in the body, to detach themselves from their bodies and to turn themselves towards their eternal and intelligible first principle.[40]

Because of divine will, love and providence, the gods unceasingly shed their illumination on humans and orchestrate the union of theurgists with the divine; the union of human beings with the divine is considered to be a gift of the gods.[41] Although this divine illumination is constant and unceasingly available to mortals, making it *appear* from a human perspective as if it is subject to necessity because of its constant availability and presence, Iamblichus maintains that it is superior to necessity and manifests on lower, ontological grades "by reason of its own divine energy and perfection" (διὰ τῆς θείας τε ἐνεργείας καὶ τελειότητος).[42] Iamblichus' view of the gods and their divine will is paradoxical: their divine illumination is constant and will always manifest itself if the appropriate conditions and receptivity are in

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[39] *DM* 3.17 (140.10–141.3); C. Van Liefferinge (1999) 79–82. G. Shaw (1995) 42, n. 18, suggests that the term *pronoia* is inadequately translated by "providence". For Neoplatonists it suggested the unknowable / (pre)knowable presence of the divine in the world.

[40] *DM* 1.12 (40.14–41.8). Cf. also 3.14 (132.9–133.3; 134.10–15); 5.9 (209.9–11).

[41] Cf. also *DM* 3.18 (143.14–144.3); 3.20 (149.4–150.2); 4.1 (181.6–9); 5.9 (209.9–11); 5.10 (211.10–14); 5.25 (236.1–8); 5.26 (238.6–9; 240.3–6); *Vita Pyth.* 1.1–2: on Pythagorean philosophy as a gift of the gods which can only be understood by humans with the assistance of the gods; G. Shaw (1995) 51, 92–93, 141; J.F. Finamore (1999) 87, 90; H. Feichtinger (2003) 133.

[42] *DM* 1.12 (41.1); 1.11 (37.13–16); 4.3 (184.14–185.8).

place, yet simultaneously it is, in an ontological and causal sense, *superior* to necessity and is viewed as encompassing a spontaneous and creative graciousness and benevolence.[43] This reflects Iamblichus' claim that the gods are both transcendent (and thus superior to necessity) and immanent (through their benevolence, will and love) throughout the cosmos, another paradoxical conception of the divine.

These paradoxical views of divine providence, love and will are based on the Platonic notion that those who know the good will *always* act according to it.[44] This idea acts as a central foundation of Platonism and underlies Neoplatonist metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. For Iamblichus, divine illumination and providence actively manifest and express the One and the Good to lower ontological levels of being. Iamblichus states that divine illumination is as far superior to human voluntary motion as the divine will of the Good is to the (human) life of ordinary deliberation and choice (προαιρετικῆς ζωῆς).[45] According to this viewpoint, human beings live a life subject to rational choices between alternatives:[46] the appearance of alternatives arises as a result of human ignorance of, and thus alienation from, the true nature of the good.[47] The gods have true will, however, since they know the good completely; therefore, they do not have to make choices between alternatives as mortals do.[48] From this perspective, the task of the theurgist is to reveal the will of the gods, having aligned him or herself to divine will through direct realisation of the good:

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[43] Cf. H. Feichtinger (2003) 134. Note also Iamblichus' related claim at *DM* 8.8 (271.13–272.11) that the gods' ordinance laid down "from the beginning" that every human soul should (eventually) ascend to the divine realm, meaning that the gods do not change their plans as a result of any subsequently-performed theurgic ritual.

[44] This notion, commonly referred to as "Socratic intellectualism", is evident in the following Platonic dialogues: Plato, *Meno* 78a–b, 88a–b, ed. W.R.M. Lamb (1967); *Protagoras* 358c–d, ed. W.R.M. Lamb (1967).

[45] *DM* 1.12 (41.1–3); H. Feichtinger (2003) 134.

[46] E.C. Clarke (2001) 48–49; E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon and J.P. Hershbell (2003) 51, n. 76; H. Feichtinger (2003) 133–134.

[47] Iamblichus, *In Tim*, 4, Frag. 87, 11–14: "The divine Iamblichus is quite correct, therefore, in attacking those who hold this opinion; for what element in us is it that makes mistakes, when the unreasoning principle in us is stirred, and we chase after a lawless notion? Is it not our free will? And how would it not be this?" (ὀρθῶς ἄρα καὶ ὁ θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος διαγωνίζεται πρὸς τοὺς ταῦτα οἰομένους· τί γὰρ τὸ ἁμαρτάνον ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅταν τῆς ἀλογίας κινησάσης πρὸς ἀκόλαστον φαντασίαν ἐπιδράμωμεν; ἆρ' οὐχ ἡ προαίρεσις; καὶ πῶς οὐχ αὕτη;), trs. J.M. Dillon (1973) with my own slight emendations. Cf. G. Shaw (1995) 68–69.

[48] *DM* 1.7 (21.1–22.5); 1.5 (16.12–17.5); 2.2 (69.6–9); 2.11 (97.12–13); 3.17 (139.13–140.4); 3.23 (155.14–156.2).

> Σκοπεῖν δὴ δεῖ τίς αὐτοῦ γίγνεται λύσις καὶ ἀπαλλαγὴ τῶν δεσμῶν. Ἔστι τοίνυν οὐκ ἄλλη τις ἢ τῶν θεῶν γνῶσις· ἰδέα γάρ ἐστιν εὐδαιμονίας τὸ ἐπίστασθαι τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὥσπερ τῶν κακῶν ἰδέα συμβαίνει ἡ λήθη τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ ἀπάτη περὶ τὸ κακόν … ἡ δ' ἱερατικὴ καὶ θεουργικὴ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας δόσις καλεῖται μὲν θύρα πρὸς θεὸν τὸν δημιουργὸν τῶν ὅλων, ἢ τόπος ἢ αὐλὴ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ … κατάρτυσιν τῆς διανοίας εἰς μετουσίαν καὶ θέαν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων πάντων ἀπαλλαγήν, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πρὸς τοὺς τῶν ἀγαθῶν δοτῆρας θεοὺς ἕνωσιν.
>
> Hence we must consider how one might be liberated and set free from these bonds. There is, indeed, no way other than the knowledge of the gods. For understanding the Good is the paradigm of well-being, just as obliviousness to the Good and deception concerning evil constitute the paradigm of evil things … But the sacred and theurgic gift of well-being is called the gateway to the creator of all things, or the place or courtyard of the good … it prepares the mind for the participation in and vision of the Good, and for a release from everything which opposes it; and, at the last, for a union with the gods who are the givers of all things good.[49]

The possibility of such an alignment between the theurgist and divine will is intimately linked with Iamblichus' notion that an innate knowledge of the gods is coexistent with our own nature:

> Φῂς τοίνυν πρῶτον διδόναι εἶναι θεούς· τὸ δ' ἐστὶν οὐκ ὀρθὸν οὑτωσὶ λεγόμενον. Συνυπάρχει γὰρ ἡμῶν αὐτῇ τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἡ περὶ θεῶν ἔμφυτος γνῶσις, κρίσεώς τε πάσης ἐστὶ κρείττων καὶ προαιρέσεως, λόγου τε καὶ ἀποδείξεως προϋπάρχει· συνήνωταί τε ἐξ ἀρχῆς πρὸς τὴν οἰκείαν αἰτίαν, καὶ τῇ πρὸς τἀγαθὸν οὐσιώδει τῆς ψυχῆς ἐφέσει συνυφέστηκεν.
>
> You say first, then, that you "concede the existence of the gods": but that is not the right way to put it. For an innate knowledge about the gods is coexistent with our nature, and is superior to all judgement and choice, reasoning and proof. This knowledge is united from the outset with its own cause, and exists in tandem with the essential striving of the soul towards the Good.[50]

Iamblichus claims that Porphyry's assertion represents a fundamentally mistaken approach towards knowledge of the gods. Rather, he claims, knowledge of the gods is coexistent with our own nature and is superior to all judgement and choice because it is united with its own cause. In other words, Iamblichus maintains that knowledge of the gods is innate and pre-existent within the human soul; strictly speaking, it is not something which human beings can assent to or reject using their power of choice and

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[49] *DM* 10.5 (290.12–291.1; 291.10–12; 292.1–3). Cf. also 1.7 (21.2–9); G. Shaw (1995) 68–69; 187.
[50] *DM* 1.3 (7.10–8.1).

deliberation because, in his view, it *always exists*.[51] Rather, in Iamblichus' view, knowledge of the gods is either discovered and activated or it is not; yet even if it remains undiscovered by the human being, he maintains that it still exists as a primary cause within the human soul. Such a view of the divine is in marked opposition to Judeo-Christian traditions where belief and faith in God are central axioms of religiosity. Belief and faith are not central to Iamblichean religiosity: discovery and realisation of, and consequently assimilation to, the divine realm through ritual contemplation and action characterise theurgy and the hieratic path it entails. In connection with divine illumination, Iamblichus maintains that this is always active and present; its eternal presence reflects its manifestation of the Good and is seen as superior to any notion of divinity as arbitrary, involving random acts of grace which, to Iamblichus, would imply changeability and instability.[52] Such characteristics are typical of the human condition, according to Iamblichus, and are attributed to the divine by a kind of projection and ignorance on the part of human beings.[53] Within Iamblichus' cosmological framework, the innate presence of the divine within the human soul is the anthropological equivalent of the innate presence of divine providence and will throughout the whole cosmos.

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[51] *DM* 1.3 (8.2–9). Cf. H. Feichtinger (2003) 152: "… the grace of union that is unique in the person of Christ for Augustine is somehow present in all souls for Iamblichus, and it is the theological basis for the conversion and redemption of the human soul …"

[52] *DM* 4.7 (191.4–6). Iamblichus' paradoxical concept of divine will would seem to negate the possibility of "personal intervention of the gods", a notion attributed to Iamblichus by Rist (1992) 144 and Feichtinger (2003) 149. Although the spontaneous benevolence of the gods in Iamblichus' cosmology may seem to imply "personal intervention", the latter notion is generally taken (at least in common parlance) to imply an *arbitrary* act of grace which derives from outside of or beyond natural laws and/or necessity. Within Iamblichean cosmology and metaphysics, however, the gods are superior to necessity *yet necessity emanates from them*; this must imply that the gods manifest themselves *through* lower ontological grades, not outside of them (this notion represents Iamblichus' concept of divine immanence). Moreover, the constant availability of divine illumination to beings who have cultivated the appropriate receptivity also implies a stability and consistency not usually associated with the phrase "personal intervention". Feichtinger (2003) 157, does seem to recognise this vital distinction elsewhere: "If *in Augustine there is danger of opposing the work of grace to nature*, in Iamblichus the danger comes from the other side: *theurgy is fundamentally "a function of the actual nature of the universe*," in which the One is so transcendentally present as to make it difficult to imagine a new kind of presence to be able to occur" [my italics].

[53] *DM* 1.3 (8.10–9.7). Cf. Iamblichus' similar comments about human views and misconceptions of divine providence: *DM* 4.5 (187.3–188.3); 4.6 (189.9–190.3); C. Van Liefferinge (1999) 80–81.

Conclusion

Thus, divine providence, love and will are of central significance to Iamblichus' defence of theurgy. In response to the frequent objection to theurgic prayer and invocation (that they constitute attempts to compel and to force the gods and, consequently, that the *modus operandi* of the theurgist is similar to that of the magician) posed by certain of his contemporaries and by the polemical writings of early Christian writers such as Augustine, Iamblichus provides a philosophically coherent defence of theurgy, particularly relating to ritual invocation and prayer. After demonstrating that this critique is based on the notion that the gods are ontologically inferior to necessity, Iamblichus answers this challenge in three ways: firstly, by claiming that human beings are ontologically (or pre-ontologically) linked with the divine through the "One of the soul". Secondly, and consequently, he argues that theurgic prayer and invocation work on the human soul, not on the gods, potentially enabling human beings to assimilate themselves to, and thus become like, the gods. Finally, Iamblichus argues that divine providence, love and will are the true, primary causes of theurgy; they are ontologically superior to necessity, which indeed emanates from the gods. Paradoxically, divine will and illumination are seen as both constantly present and spontaneously beneficent. This paradoxical conceptualisation of divine will, love and providence is based on the notion that divine will is a complete understanding of the good. The centrality of divine providence and will in theurgic ritual, and the metaphysical and cosmological framework upon which this view of ritual is based, represent one of the key criteria which Iamblichus uses to distinguish theurgy from the often antagonistic "magical" practices of his contemporaries, those generally subsumed under the rubric γοητεία.

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IAMBLICHUS' EXEGESIS OF *PARMENIDES*' HYPOTHESES AND HIS DOCTRINE OF DIVINE HENADS

Svetlana Mesyats

1. *Henads and the Problem of the Transcendent First Principle*

The question about the First Principle is one of the central problems of Neoplatonism as well as that of every monistic system of philosophy, that considers the world as a creation of a single divine Cause. The problem here is the following: the absolutely transcendent and self-sufficient Principle does not need to cause anything outside itself, because to be transcendent means to be entirely independent from all the rest. But a principle, which is entirely independent from its own effects, cannot be a cause, since causality presupposes some relationship between the causative principle and its effects. Consequently we are faced with a dilemma: either to define some principle as a cause, so that it depends by nature on its own effects and is no longer transcendent; or to define it as transcendent, so that it cannot be a cause. In the history of Platonic philosophy there were many efforts to solve this dilemma. In one of his treatises Plotinus described the One as a "productive power of all things" (δύναμις τῶν πάντων)[1] and so to some extent introduced into the Absolute all the plurality of its effects, at least in the mode of potency, power. Plotinus' pupil Porphyry abandoned the idea of the transcendent Principle and identified the supreme One with Being.[2] Iamblichus after him proposed the theory of "two" Ones, first of which he thought to be completely ineffable and inexpressible, whereas the second one he understood as a cause in the true sense of the word in so far as it

[1] Plotinus, *Enneads* III, 8, 10, 1.

[2] Damascius, *De principiis* I, 86, 8–10: κατὰ δὲ τὸν Πορφύριον ἐροῦμεν τὴν μίαν τῶν πάντων ἀρχὴν εἶναι τὸν πατέρα τῆς νοητῆς τριάδος; Proclus. *In Parm.* VI, 1070, 15–19: "we shall, therefore, be far from making the primal God the summit of the intelligible world, as I observe to be the practice of some leading theologians, and making the father of that realm the same as a cause of all things" (transl. by G.R. Morrow and J.M. Dillon (1987) 423–424).

contains in itself all things (though "in a hidden mode … not distinctly, … in a manner inexpressible and inconceivable to us")[3] and being simultaneously One-total (ἕν πάντα).[4]

The doctrine of the divine henads (ἑνάδες- "unities"), one of the most remarkable modifications introduced by the later Neoplatonists into the Plotinian metaphysical system, is very important in the context of the efforts to solve the problem of a transcendent First Principle. In its fullest form we find it in Proclus' treatises *Elements of Theology* (Prop. 113–165) and *Platonic theology* (Book III). Proclus was not its author, and in his own philosophy henads or "gods" formed a special level of reality, situated between the supreme One and the intelligible level of being. Like the First One they are beyond all beings, but at the same time somehow include in themselves all things, and come into relationship with the world. According to the *Elements of Theology* (Proposition 116), henads are entirely like the First One except that they are participated substances (μετεχόμεναι, μεθεκταί), whereas the One itself is absolutely unparticipated (ἀμέθεκτος). "If after the First Principle there be another imparticipable henad,—asks Proclus,—how will it differ from the One?"[5] Every causative principle, which can produce a lower order of reality without being itself affected by this production, is called by Proclus "imparticipable" or "transcendent". It does not change, nor turn itself into its results, nor mix with them, but remains essentially pure, separate and self-sufficient in its being. On the other hand, there must be some likeness between the cause and its effects, so that the procession from the higher orders of reality to the lower ones may take place.[6] It means that the proceeded term must contain an element of identity with its producer or some reflection of it. Proclus names this reflection of a transcendent cause "participated term". It seems that, according to this definition, all participated terms necessarily belong to their participants (μετέχοντα), that is to say, they exist only in some other thing and not by themselves. But Proclus distinguishes two classes of participated terms, which he names

[3] This is a quotation from Proclus, *In Parm.* 1114, 1–10, where he describes Iamblichus' exegesis of the words of Athenian Stranger in the *Laws* IV, 715e, that God possesses the beginning, the middle and the end of all existing things. Cf. Proclus (1987) 457.

[4] Damascius, *De principiis* I, 87, 8–10. A more detailed discussion of the efforts of the Neoplatonic philosophers to solve the aporia of the First Principle cf. J. Halfwassen (1996) 54–83.

[5] Proclus, *El. Th.* 116. Cf. E.R. Dodds (1963) 102.

[6] According to the general principle: "All procession is accomplished through a likeness of the secondary to the primary" Cf. Proclus. *El. Th.* 29 (transl. by E.R. Dodds).

respectively "autonomous substances" (αὐτοτελεῖς ὑποστάσεις) and "reflections" (ἐλλάμψεις).[7] Only the latter ones have their existence in something other than themselves and belong to their participants, while the former ones exist on their own and have no need in the inferior beings. A. Lloyd demonstrated,[8] that the two classes of participated terms correspond to the two types of predication in Aristotle: common and individual. Though every predicate is always connected with some substrate, there can be characteristics which can be predicated to many different substrates and thus be common to all of them. From the viewpoint of Proclus it means that such predicates can be regarded independently, as if they exist by themselves. Nevertheless, while being predicates, they must remain in connection with their substrates, though this connection is logical rather than actual. For example, in the notion of a "white skin" the idea of "whiteness" is united with another idea (that of "skin"), which plays here a role of a logical substrate; or in the notion of a "rational animal" the idea of "rationality" is brought into connection with that of "animal" and so on. In the intellectual realm of reality this sort of connection of one idea to another can be named "participation". Thus "participated term" is a term that is not entirely self-identical as a pure unparticipated idea, but exists only in connection with something else. As Proclus says in Book VII of his *Commentary on Parmenides*:

> Being together with "life" is *a* being and not Being itself; and "life" together with "intellect" is intellectual life, and not Life pure and simple; and everything taken with some differentiating addition is other than that thing considered as it is in itself and before differentiation.[9]

So far as henads are "participated substances", they are not pure unities, not unities as such, but have some differentiating addition. They are in connection with something other than themselves—with Being, Life, Intellect, Soul and so on. As compared with the First One (the One in itself) they are, so to say, more particular sorts of unities—unities peculiar to Being, Life, Intellect etc. Simultaneously, as "substances complete in themselves", they exist independently of their substrates and form a special level of reality. Thus before Being in itself there is a Unity of Being, independent from the Being as such; before Life—a Unity of Life, etc. It is evident that such unities cannot be absolutely transcendent. In contrast to the First Principle, which can be called "One" and "Cause" only negatively, henads are "ones" (unities)

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[7] Proclus, *El. Th.* 64.
[8] A.C. Lloyd (1983) 19–45.
[9] Proclus, *In Parm.* VII, 36, 8–29, Klibansky, cit. J. Dillon (1993) 49.

in a positive sense of the word. They function as uniting principles of different sorts of Being, and in so doing can be regarded as causes in the true sense of the word. As Proclus says, each henad "is nothing else than the One in its participated aspect".[10] They are the supreme One, multiplied through participation in the plurality of Being. E.R. Dodds was quite right describing the role of henads in the Neoplatonic system of reality as follows: "The henads are not merely a piece of ornament without structural significance in the system. They are like πέρας and ἀπειρία, and like the second "One" of Iamblichus, an attempt to bridge the … gulf which Plotinus had left between the One and reality".[11]

2. *Henads and the Hypotheses of* Parmenides

Proclus was not the author of the theory of henads. According to his own testimony, this doctrine was already known to his master Syrianus. In the Book VI of his *Commentary on "Parmenides"* while describing Syrianus' mode of exegesis Proclus reports that his teacher identified the subject of the 1st hypothesis with the primal God and included all the multiplicity of the divine henads besides the intellectual orders of being in the 2nd one.

> The whole second hypothesis, therefore, he says, reveals to us a multiplicity of autonomous henads, on which are dependent the entities, about which the second hypothesis teaches us [i.e. intellectual beings], revealing to us in its terms all their specific characteristics in turn.[12]

Under the terms that reveal specific characteristics of henads, Proclus understands predicates attributed to the One in the 2nd hypothesis: existent, whole, infinite, having parts, shape (beginning, middle and end), being in itself and in another, being in movement and in rest, equal and unequal, continuous and discrete etc. Each term is, according to Proclus, a symbolic description of a definite divine order. For example, the One, which together with Being forms the One-existent, is a henad of intellectual Being. As Plato argues, ἕν and ὄν, which together constitute One-existent, differ in their significance, for otherwise, "it would not be the Being of the One; nor would the One have participated in Being, for the proposition that One is,

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[10] Proclus, *In Parm*. VI, 1069, 7.
[11] E.R. Dodds (1963) 259.
[12] Proclus, *In Parm*. 1062, 34–35, G.R. Morrow and J.M. Dillon (1987) 418.

would have been identical with the proposition that One is One".[13] If these terms are different and at the same time participate in each other as two parts of a single thing (One-existent), then it is clear that the One, which is participated by Being, is neither the primal One (because the primal One has nothing in common with Being), nor the One inherent in Being as its predicate. Therefore this One is simultaneously connected with Being and exists separately from it. Consequently it can be nothing else as an autonomous participated henad—a henad of Being.

> The One in the second hypothesis is neither the primal One (for it is completely interwoven with Being) nor is it that which is inseparable from Being and thus, as being a state of it, is in it. Plato thus clearly distinguishes this One from the first and declares that this One, being such as it is, is distinct [from Being]. It is plain in fact that this term signifies an autonomous divine henad.[14]

Another discussion of the 2nd hypothesis we find in Book III of *Platonic Theology*.[15] Here Proclus speaks about the passage where Plato argues that the Being and the One, while participating in each other as parts of the One-existent, are necessarily divided and broken by each other into an infinite number of parts. As Plato says, "We were wrong in saying just now, that Being was distributed into the greatest number of parts. For it is not distributed into parts more than the One … One itself, then, having been broken up into parts by Being, is many and infinite". Plato makes it clear that he speaks here not about the One-existent, but about the One, which together with Being constitutes ἕν-ὄν. He continues: "Then not only the One which has being is many, but the One itself distributed by Being must also be many."[16] Let us consider then what these parts of the One can be? As we have seen, each of them coexists with a relevant part of Being in the same manner, as the One itself coexists with the whole Being. It means that they are participated and at the same time independent entities, existing separately from that which participates them. It means in turn that they have the same characteristics as henads. So they are henads indeed. It follows that henads are equal in number to the parts of Being and that the main divisions of Being coordinate with the general divisions of henads as well. Consequently, as the predicate "existent", attributed to

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[13] Plato, *Parmenides* 142c.

[14] Proclus, *In Parm*. VI, 1062, 17–23. Here I disagree with the translation of Morrow and Dillon: "for it is (sc. the One) complex, being all things" (συμπέπλεκται γὰρ πάντα τῷ ὄντι).

[15] Proclus, *Th. Pl*. III, 15, 8–15.

[16] Plato, *Parmenides* 144e.

the One at the beginning of the 2nd hypothesis, indicates the henad of Being, so other predicates ("whole", "many", "infinite", "having shape" etc.) point to different classes of henads, i.e. special kinds of unity, peculiar to different beings. According to H.-D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink Proclus detects fourteen predicates of the One-existent altogether, corresponding to the fourteen orders of divine henads from the intellectual one down to the intracosmic.[17] Proclus, according to his own words, follows in this point his master Syrianus, who was the first to interpret positive predicates of the One in the 2nd hypothesis as symbolic names of gods.

> As far as I know only our own master out of all the commentators, closely in accordance with Plato himself in the knowledge of things divine, has seen that all the things in order which he asserts in the second hypothesis he denies in the first, as has been stated often before, but that each of these there is a symbol of some divine order, namely Many, Whole, Shape, "Being in itself" and "in another" and each of the others in order.[18]

All these testimonies make it obvious that the theory of henads in the Athenian school of Neoplatonism was ingeniously connected with the exegesis of Plato's *Parmenides*. It provokes us to look for its origin and to suggest that this theory could appear along with the composition of the first detailed commentaries on this dialogue. Probably this could help us to trace the philosopher who introduced henads into the Neoplatonic system of reality for the first time.

3. *Iamblichus As the Author of the Doctrine of Henads*

In 1972 J. Dillon published an article, where he argued that the author of this doctrine could be Iamblichus.[19] He attributed the doctrine of the divine henads to Iamblichus on the basis of two pieces of evidence, both found in Proclus' *Commentary on "Parmenides"*. In one of them Proclus speaks about

> that set of commentators, who declare the first hypothesis … to be concerned with God and the gods—for the discussion is not only about the One, but about all the divine henads; <the second will concern the intellectual realm, rather than the> intelligibles; the third is no longer about Soul, as previous commentators had declared, but about the classes of beings superior to

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[17] H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink (1968–1987) I, LXIX; III, XLIX–L.
[18] Proclus, *In Parm.* 1085, 12–24, G.R. Morrow and J.M. Dillon (1987) 435.
[19] J. Dillon (1972) Cf. also Appendix B in Dillon (1973) 412–416.

> us—angels, daemons, and heroes (for these classes of being are immediately inferior to the gods and are superior to the universal souls; this is their most remarkable view, and it is for this reason that they assert that these take a prior rank to souls in the hypotheses).[20]

Proclus does not mention the names of these commentators, but as Dillon has demonstrated, the described mode of *Parmenides*' exegesis can be attributed only to Iamblichus. Dillon points out that Damascius in his *Dubitationes et Solutiones* refers to Iamblichus as the first one to identify the subject of the 3rd hypothesis with the "eternal companions of gods" (τὰ ἀεὶ θεοῖς ἑπόμενα),[21] that is with the aforementioned "superior classes of beings". Since according to Proclus, none of the earlier commentators had shared such a view, we can with great certainty attribute the whole report to Iamblichus. Another piece of evidence, also borrowed from Proclus (*In Parm*. 1066, 16–21), explains Iamblichus' concept of henads (or gods) in more detail.

> So they argue that since every god inasmuch as he is a god, is a henad (for it is this element, the One, which divinises all being), for this reason they think it right to join to the study of the First the discussion of all the gods; for they are all supra-essential henads and transcend the multiplicity of beings and are the summits of beings.

The testimony of Proclus makes it clear that Iamblichus conceived henads as unities, immediately following the One and together with it belonging to the 1st hypothesis. He called them "gods", because unity is a principle of divinity. He conceived them as supra-essential and as "summits" (ἀκρότητες) i.e. the first principles of beings. So in its main features Iamblichus' theory of henads seems to be very similar to that of Proclus. Therefore it is possible that Iamblichus "had worked out at least the substance of the later doctrine of henads".[22]

Dillon's conclusion became a matter of controversy among the scholars. H.-D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink criticized it in the Introduction to volume III of their edition of Proclus' *Platonic Theology* (1978). They argued that the henads or "gods", postulated by Iamblichus as the objects of the 1st hypothesis, are intelligible entities or even ideas; and that the doctrine of the henads in its Procline form cannot go back further than Syrianus.[23] To

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[20] Proclus, *In Parm*. 1054, 37–1055, 2, Morrow and Dillon (1987) 413.
[21] Damascius. *In Parm*. 247, 14–16.
[22] J. Dillon (1972) 414.
[23] D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink (1968–1987) III, IX–X.

support their argument they pointed out another passage in Proclus, where the Athenian philosopher apparently defines Iamblichean "gods" as intelligible entities.

> Nor is it true, as they maintain, that Parmenides is treating in the 1st hypothesis of the intelligible gods, declaring that it is to those gods that the negations refer, because they are united to the One and surpass all the divine classes in simplicity and unity. For how could 'like and unlike' and 'continuous and discrete' and all the other attributes, which are denied of the One, apply to the intelligible gods? No, while they are right, I think, to say, that the attributes being denied are properties of gods, they are wrong to claim that they are all properties of intelligible gods—apart from the fact that, according to this thesis, the subject of intelligible gods must be treated again in the second hypothesis, because what Parmenides denied in the 1st he affirms in the 2nd.[24]

According to Saffrey and Westerink, it's quite clear that "gods", mentioned here by Proclus, in spite of their unity with the One, are not supra-essential, but intelligible (νοητοί) entities and therefore belong to the realm of Being, because Being or One-existent (ἕν-ὄν) forms in Iamblichus' metaphysics the first and highest level of the intelligible world. This conclusion seems quite strange, because it implies that as a subject of the 1st hypothesis Iamblichus postulated not only the primal One, but also the One-existent. The latter however is treated by Plato in the 2nd hypothesis, which begins with the words (142b): "If the One *is* …". If Iamblichus postulated the One-existent as a subject of the 1st hypothesis, it would seem an unprecedented innovation in the traditional Neoplatonic exegesis of *Parmenides* and surely would have been noted by Proclus, who usually examines and criticizes all that seems to be wrong in the exegesis of previous commentators. But in connection with the Iamblichean interpretation of the subject matter of *Parmenides*' hypotheses Proclus notes as the "most unusual view" (παραδοξότατον) only his exegesis of the third hypothesis, which Iamblichus thought to be about the higher classes of beings. On the contrary, while discussing the inclusion of henads in the 1st one, Proclus speaks only about a mistake and not about an innovation. He points out that henads as "participated substances" (μεθεκταί), partaking in some degree in Being, Life and Intellect, cannot be placed in the same hypothesis with the entirely transcendent One.[25] Furthermore, he clearly characterizes the Iamblichean henads as "supra-essential" and "transcending the multiplicity of being", which also indicates

[24] Proclus, *Th. Pl.* III, 82, 4–22, quited in Dillon (1993) 50.
[25] Proclus, *In Parm.* VI, 1067.

that he thought of them as distinct from the intelligible level of reality. How then can his words about henads as *intelligible gods* be explained? This only looks like a contradiction. Proclus himself knows different classes of henads: intelligible, intellectual, psychical and even corporeal ones. It does not mean, however, that he puts all of them into the corresponding levels of being. Rather he regards them as the causes of these levels. Such predicates as "intelligible" or "intellectual" do not indicate an "essence" of the henads, but their distinctive characteristics (ἰδιότης), which they obtain from that class of being, which partakes in them. Similarly in the case of Iamblichus one may assume that his henads could be named "intelligible" as supra-essential causes of the intelligible Being. In other words, the predicate "intelligible" does not necessarily imply that henads belong to the realm of One-existent or that the "distinction between henadic and noetic realm of reality was not as rigid in Iamblichus as in Proclus", as J. Dillon believes.[26]

4. *Previous Attempts to Reconstruct Iamblichus' Doctrine of Henads*

Though the criticism of Saffrey and Westerink did not attain its goal and most scholars today believe that Iamblichus did really have a doctrine of henads, it is still not clear what kind of doctrine it was. Was it identical with the theory of Proclus and Syrianus or did it differ from it in any degree? And the main question: did henads in Iamblichus' system play the same role of intermediary substances as they did in the philosophy of Proclus? In other words: were they designated to solve the problem of the transcendent First Principle? As we have seen before, Iamblichus has solved this problem by introducing into his system the second "One", which unlike the absolutely transcendent first One somehow contained in itself all its effects and therefore could be named a cause in the strict sense of the word. And if the role of the second One was analogous to that of henads in the Athenian school of Neoplatonism, why did Iamblichus introduce into his philosophy henads as well? To answer this question we must attempt to reconstruct the Iamblichean theory of henads on the basis of all available testimonies.

A number of attempts to reconstruct this theory have already been undertaken. One of them belongs to J. Dillon.[27] To solve the problem of henads, thinks Dillon, we must clearly understand the structure of intelligible reality in the system of Iamblichus and its position in respect to the One.

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[26] G.R. Morrow and J.M. Dillon (1987) 389.
[27] Cf. his article: J. Dillon (1993) 48–54.

Iamblichus thought the intelligible realm to be a triad, consisting of Being, Life and Intellect (ὄν—ζωή—νοῦς, all three with a predicate "intelligible"). The highest member of this triad is Being, which is identical with ἕν-ὄν, One-existent, a subject-matter of the 2nd hypothesis of *Parmenides*. It follows immediately after the One and is "superior to the genera of Being and the Ideas", it is situated "at the summit of the noetic realm" and enjoys "primary participation of the One".[28] So, considered in itself, the One-existent is unintelligible and does not belong as such to the noetic level of reality, being identical with the "summit" or the "monad" of the noetic realm, that is to say, with its causative principle. Dillon thinks that here we are faced with a special feature of Iamblichus metaphysics: "that the lowest principle of a higher level of being is to be coordinate with the highest principle of the next lower one".[29] In accordance with this rule, the One-existent must be seen as a part of the realm of the One-itself and treated together with it in the 1st hypothesis. On the other hand, as a first member of the intelligible triad, it is the object of intellection for νοῦς and as such can be viewed as a multiplicity of ideas, or to be more precise—as a multiplicity of their constituting elements or "monads". Such "monads", suggests Dillon, could be regarded by Iamblichus as henads or gods.[30] So "it is in this ambiguous entity that the henads of Iamblichus' system are to be found—or rather, the ἕν-ὄν is the sum-total of those henads".[31]

Jens Halfwassen holds a similar opinion. He notices that according to Iamblichus the One of the 1st hypothesis has a character of totality. It is ἕν πάντα, One-total, containing in itself the causes of Being, Life, Intellect and thus anticipating in itself all the totality of Intellect. This fact in particular gives Proclus an occasion to criticize Iamblichus for the doubling of reality. As Proclus argues, if we place in the One the unknowable causes not only of Intellect, Life and Being, but also of all other things such as Beauty, Virtue, Justice and so on, then "the One will be equal in multiplicity to Intellect".[32] If Proclus did not exceed in his criticism the bounds of Iamblichus' theory, it follows that the One contains in itself the causes of all ideas. It is interesting indeed, that Iamblichus has named causative principles hidden in the One "models prior to models". But "models" (παραδείγματα), as Halfwassen

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[28] Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 230, 5 = Fr. 29, J. Dillon (1973).

[29] J. Dillon (1993) 49.

[30] "The role of these henadic numbers … is to be archetypes or monads of forms". Cf. J. Dillon (1993) 52.

[31] J. Dillon (1993) 51.

[32] Proclus, *In Parm.* 1107, 38–1108, 6 in Morrow and Dillon (1987) 453.

rightly notes, is for the Neoplatonists a usual name for ideas. So this name could point out that Iamblichus indeed thought of the One as containing in itself the causative principles of ideas.[33] What could these principles be? Halfwassen thinks that they could be nothing else but henads. Thus according to his reconstruction Iamblichean henads were different aspects of the One, serving as the basic principles of ideas and determining therefore the whole structure of the intellectual world. And so far as the same role was reserved by Platonists for idea-numbers, henads could be seen as these idea-numbers, raised up to the supra-essential level.[34]

Some questions can be posed in view of these reconstructions.

1. In the represented form Iamblichus' doctrine of henads differs essentially from that of Proclus and Syrianus. For Proclus each henad is a head of a definite class of beings. In his system there are intelligible henads, staying at the head of intelligible Being; intelligible and intellectual henads, staying at the head of Life, intellectual henads, staying at the head of Intellect etc. Members of every class, which is named by Proclus σειρά—series, have one and the same essence and are situated at the different levels of reality—from intelligible down to the bodily. For example, a life of an Intellect, of a Soul, of a Nature and of a body form together the series of Life. In Iamblichus' theory, on the contrary, henads appear to be causative principles not of the series, but of ideas, that is only of intelligible beings and not of intellectual, psychic or corporeal.

2. Iamblichus doctrine seems to be very similar to that of Plotinus, who in his treatise "On numbers" considered ideas as the actualization of the power of number, contained in the One-existent (ἕν-ὄν) due to the element ἕν. Plotinus says: "Now number was in Being, not as a number of being—for being was still one—but the power of number, which had come to exist divided being and made it, so to speak, in labour to give birth to multiplicity".[35] … "Being, therefore, standing firm in multiplicity, was number … and was a kind of preparation for the beings and a preliminary sketch, and like unities (henads) keeping a place for the beings which are going to be found on them".[36] By "Being" in this fragment Plotinus means ἕν-ὄν, and by "beings" ideas. The latter are based on henads, which constitute the first multiplicity

[33] Proclus, *In Parm.* 1107, 9–20. См J. Halfwassen (1996) 77–78.
[34] J. Halfwassen (1996) 80.
[35] Plotinus, *Enneads* VI 6, 9, 25–27, trans. by A.H. Armstrong (1988) 35.
[36] Plotinus, *Enneads* VI 6, 10, 1–4.

or the first number contained in the One-existent. In so far as henads are in "Being" but before "beings", they could be called "not beings" (οὐκ ἦν ὄντα).[37] All this looks very similar to Iamblichus, if we are to agree that he postulated henads as parts of the One-existent. If it is so, we must look for the origin of the theory of henads in the time of Plotinus and even earlier.

3. Dillon's reconstruction does not take into account a connection between henads and negations, attributed to the One in the 1st hypothesis of *Parmenides*. As we have seen, those commentators who maintained the 1st hypothesis to be about God and gods, said also that "the attributes being denied [of the One] are properties of gods [sc. henads]." They possibly meant that the predicates like "whole", "having parts", "limited", "unlimited", "discrete", "continuous" are the characteristics of henads. These characteristics however appear to be more general than "whiteness", "beauty", "humaneness" and other ideas. They seem to be more like predicates, which characterize Being as such and may be therefore applied to every being, not to some particular beings as are ideas. Still more important is the fact that negations are limited in number and that their number (14 according to Saffrey and Westerink) is considerably less than that of ideas.

4. And last but not least: the reconstructions of Dillon and Halfwassen apparently try to explain why the supra-essential henads could be at the same time named by Proclus "intelligible". But as we have shown above, the predicate "intelligible" does not necessarily mean that henads belong to the level of Being by virtue of their essence or that they must be "objects of intellection". Henads can be named "intelligible" simply as being the causes of the intelligible realm, as in the system of Proclus himself they are named cosmic and supra-cosmic in virtue of being the causes of corporeal and psychic reality.

5. *Some Preliminaries to a New Reconstruction*

The difficulties of previous reconstructions force us to reexamine all the available testimonies in order to gain a better understanding of Iamblichus' doctrine of henads. I would like to formulate some preliminary outlines of

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[37] Plotinus, *Enneads* VI 6, 9, 23–25: Πᾶς ἄρα ὁ ἀριθμὸς ἦν πρὸ αὐτῶν τῶν ὄντων. Ἀλλ' εἰ πρὸ τῶν ὄντων, οὐκ ἦν ὄντα. "The whole number therefore existed before beings themselves. But if numbers were before beings, they were not beings".

this possible reconstruction. Let us again set forth all the characteristics of henads known to us from Proclus' reports:

1. Henads are unities, which are immediately following the One and together with it are treated in the 1st hypothesis of *Parmenides* (*In Parm*. 1054, 37–1055, 2; 1066, 16–21; 1066, 28–33; *Th. Pl*. III 82, 4–5).
2. Henads are gods, because a unity is a causative principle of all the divine. There are also other classes of the divine beings, but henads surpass them all in unity and simplicity (*In Parm*. 1066, 22–24; *Th. Pl*. III 82, 13–14).
3. Henads can be named "intelligible gods" (*Th. Pl*. III 82, 13).
4. They are supra-essential, that is to say—above Being. And while transcending the multiplicity of beings, they are the summits of beings (ἀκρότητες τῶν οὐσιῶν), i.e. their causative principles (*In Parm*. 1066, 26–28).
5. Attributes, being denied of the One in the 1st hypothesis, are also denied of henads (*Th. Pl*. III 82, 12–18).

The last characteristic seems to be the most important for the correct understanding of the role of henads in Iamblichus' philosophy. Most of the Neoplatonists understood predicates denied of the One in the 1st hypothesis as the apophatic mode of describing the Absolute. For Plotinus even such names as "One", "Good" and "Cause" were only negative characteristics of the First Principle, incapable of revealing it in its own nature and, therefore, describing it only from its effects.[38] Proclus in this connection formulates a general rule: "No cause is the same as its own products. If, then, the One is nothing of those things which it produces, and it produces everything, it is no one of all things".[39] In the true sense of the word the One is not even a Cause, but "above cause" (ὑπὲρ αἴτιον *In Parm*. 1123, 37) or "before cause" (προαίτιον *In Parm*. 1210, 11). Iamblichus on the contrary, as J. Halfwassen has shown,[40] understood the apophatic description of the One more positively. He was convinced that negations can reveal us the true nature of the first Principle as well as affirmations. Let us consider some examples concerning his mode of exegesis of the 1st hypothesis. For example, in *Parmenides* 137c Plato postulates that the One is neither whole, nor has parts. Proclus interprets his words in the sense that the One is neither a whole

[38] Plotinus, *Enneads* VI 8, 8, 7–15.
[39] Proclus, *In Parm*. VI, 1075, 30–33 in Morrow and Dillon (1987) 428.
[40] J. Halfwassen (1996) 62–63.

before parts, nor a whole after parts. Iamblichus chooses another way of interpretation: he introduces a new type of whole—"whole prior to wholes", which unlike other types of wholes has nothing in common with parts at all.[41] Such a whole exists in a way unknowable to us, so one can indicate it only with the help of negation. From the viewpoint of Iamblichus, negation therefore is a sort of definition, for why did Plato deny of the One not any predicate, but even quite definite predicates? Negations can be regarded as indications of some hidden characteristics of the first Principle, anticipating such categories of the intelligible world as whole, part, manifold, movement, rest, identity etc. Since the One is the cause of Being, Life and Intellect, argues Iamblichus, it must possess within itself in some way the causes of all these things, because otherwise why did it produce them? Could a principle, which cannot be defined either as One or as Cause, produce from itself a multitude of beings? If it is impossible, then the first One must be a positively defined Unity.[42]

There is another example of how negative attributes of the First Principle were turned by Iamblichus into positive ones. In *Parmenides* 147d Plato says that since the One is neither whole nor has parts, it also cannot have beginning, middle and end. In *Laws* 715e he, on the contrary, calls God the beginning, middle and end of all beings. Explaining this contradiction, Iamblichus proposes to consider the One as both possessing and not possessing this triad:

> The first Principle both possesses beginning and middle and end, and does not possess them; for it possesses them in a hidden mode, whereas it does not possess them distinctly; for it contains everything within itself in a manner inexpressible and inconceivable to us, but knowable to itself.[43]

Proclus rejects such an interpretation as inadequate, because it apparently multiplies the One. But for Iamblichus such a multiplication seems to be a quite natural consequence of its being a cause. In order to produce all things, the first Principle must somehow coordinate with its products, because otherwise it could not produce them. So indeed it must possess multiplicity to some extent and be One-total, uniting everything in itself. This specific mode of exegesis of the 1st hypothesis gives us a key to understanding of the role of henads in Iamblichus' philosophy. If all the negations, brought

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[41] Proclus, *In Parm.* VI, 1107, 9–20: "The Primal Entity itself is a whole prior to wholes, not having need of parts".

[42] J. Halfwassen (1996) 63.

[43] Proclus, *In Parm.* VI, 1114, 1–10, G. Morrow and J. Dillon (1987) 457.

together, characterize the One as a cause of all things in general, then taken separately each negative predicate could characterize the One as a cause of this or that entity. For example, denying of the One the predicate "whole", we maintain that it is a cause of a whole. But the One, which produces nothing else except wholes, is a more particular unity than the One, which produces everything. Therefore one and the same first Principle, regarded as cause of different classes of being, appears to be a sum of different types of unity: a unity peculiar to wholes, parts, multiplicity, identity and otherness, state and movement etc. We can suggest that Iamblichus has named these particular unities henads and thought them to be contained in the One as a first revelation of its diverse causative power or as different modes of its being a cause. If this reconstruction is true, then it can be easily explained, why did Iamblichus put henads into the same hypothesis as the One itself. Henads in his system are not products of the One as they were for Syrianus and Proclus. They are not "inferior substances" and do not "follow the One",[44] but are this One itself, taken in connection with this or that multitude of beings and considered as a cause (unity) of this multitude.

To specify some details of Iamblichus' doctrine, it will be interesting to consider its critical discussion in Proclus' *Commentary on "Parmenides"*. In Proclus' view, Iamblichus errs by placing henads in the same 1st hypothesis with the One, because the One is not only supra-essential, but also imparticipable for everything, whereas henads are participated substances, related to the different classes of beings. How then, wonders Proclus, could an entirely unparticipated entity be described by the same negations as participated ones, if their properties are not only different, but even opposite?

> Why should that One which is not reckoned with beings, nor ranked at all with the Many, be placed in the same hypothesis with henads which are participated in by beings, and serve to confer coherence on the Many? After all, we do not get the same account given of the unparticipated and participated Soul; for the properties of the participated would never accord with those of unparticipated, nor those of the superior with those of the inferior.[45]

In order to show that Iamblichus not only makes a sort of a logical mistake here, but also contradicts himself, Proclus points out that he and his followers described the One of the 1st hypothesis as "simply and solely One" (πάντων μόνως ἐστι), "unconnected with everything else" (ἀσύνταχτον πρὸς

[44] Proclus, *In Parm.* VI, 1068, 21: τῶν μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον ἑνάδων.
[45] Proclus, *In Parm.* VI, 1067, 9–19, G. Morrow and J. Dillon (1987) 421.

τὰ ἄλλα πάντα), "unparticipated" (ἀμέθεκτον), "snatching itself away from everything" (αὑτὸ ἁρπάσαν πρὸς τῶν ὅλων), "transcendent" (ἐξῃρημένον) and "unknowable to everything" (ἄγνωστον τοῖς πᾶσιν).[46] In Proclus' view, all these terms show with certainty that Iamblichus understood the primal One as entirely transcendent and unparticipated. How should then this superior God be placed side by side with other gods, which are not as much transcendent as it is?

Proclus' critique does not however reach its goal, because Iamblichus, as is clear from his own writings, never opposes gods to the "first God and king", as he names the One of the 1st hypothesis.[47] On the contrary, in his treatise *On the Mysteries* he constantly speaks about gods as if they were absolutely transcendent and describes them almost in the same terms as the One itself. For example in *De Mysteriis* I, 4, 46–49[48] he calls gods "separate" (χωριστά) because they "exist by themselves and don't depend upon other things or have in them a hypostasis". In *De Mysteriis* I, 4, 1–14 he defines properties of gods as "totally transcendent" (ἐξῃρημένα), "separate" (χωριστά) and "simple" (ἁπλά), because, as he argues, gods are entirely delimited in themselves and cannot be distinguished from other beings or even from each other with the help of specific difference, as if they formed one and the same genus with something else. So gods not only exist separately, but also are not ranked with other things by their essence. In *De Mysteriis* I, 5, 61–69 divine beings are characterized as "superior over all beings (ὑπερέχον τῶν ὅλων), having nothing in common with them, unmixed and transcendent alike in essence, potency and activity".[49] In *De Mysteriis* I, 8, 8, while arguing against the assignment of gods to aetherial, aerial and earthly bodies, Iamblichus calls them "absolute (ἀπόλυτα) and autonomous in themselves (ἄφετα καὐθ'ἑαυτά)". One more example can be found in Iamblichus' excerpt *On ethical and theological arithmetic*, published by D. O'Meara in 1989, where the higher natures (i.e. gods) and "their number" are said to "transcend all being" (ἐξῄρηται πάσης οὐσίας), be "absolute and of itself" (ἀπόλυτος καὶ καθ'ἑαυτόν).[50]

Proclus, as is clear from some of his writings, regarded Iamblichus' terms ἐξῃρημένος and ἀπόλυτος as synonyms of his own "imparticipable" (ἀμέθεκτος). In the *Commentary on "Timaeus"* he writes: "But the divine Iamblichus

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[46] Proclus, *In Parm.* VI, 1066, 33–1067,4.
[47] E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon, and J.P. Hershbell (2003) 307, note 401.
[48] É. des Places (1966).
[49] Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 25.
[50] D. O'Meara (1989) 226–227.

considers that we should understand here that Soul, which is transcendent (ἐξῃρημένη) and hypercosmic and absolute (ἀπόλυτον) and exerting authority over all; for Plato is not here concerned with the Soul of a cosmos, but that Soul which is imparticipable (ἀμέθεκτος)".[51] And though Iamblichus himself never uses the word ἀμέθεκτος in his extant writings, his gods can well be seen as "unparticipated" according to Proclus' terminology. It is interesting that in *Platonic Theology* and in *The Elements of Theology* Proclus specially examines a question, whether henads could be unparticipated entities.[52] It may well be that he asked this question for purely theoretical reasons, in order to point out the difference between the primal One and henads, but it is possible also that he argued here against some actual doctrine, which was still influential in his times. We can suggest that the target of his critique was Iamblichus, because in the *Commentary on "Parmenides"* henads are disproved to be unparticipated just at the same place where Iamblichus' exegesis of the 1st hypothesis was criticized.[53]

Though being transcendent and, in Proclus' terms, "unparticipated", Iamblichean gods allow other things to take part in them. That's why in *On the Mysteries* they are sometimes called μετεχόμενα.[54] Moreover, participation (μετουσία) in the divine beings is the main theme of discussion in the course of the whole treatise. Gods, as Iamblichus says, are present everywhere in the cosmos, so that even earthly things take part in them.[55] Gods "contain everything in themselves", "provide" everything with form and essence, "know" their products, "rule" and "guide" them, "give" themselves to their participants, "provide union" and "link" other things with themselves.[56] Though the presence of gods can be found everywhere, they are neither contained in other things nor reside in them. "As sunlight envelops what it illuminates, so also does the power of gods embrace from outside that which participates in it. And similarly, even as the light is present in the air without blending with it … even so the light of the gods illuminates its subject transcendently, and is fixed steadfastly in itself even as it proceeds throughout the totality of existence".[57] Though the light of gods is one and the same

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[51] Proclus, *In Tim*. II, 105, 16–27 (= fr. 50 Dillon).

[52] Proclus, *Th. Pl*. III, 14, 11–16, 5; *El. Th*. 116: Πᾶς θεὸς μεθεκτός ἐστι, πλὴν τοῦ ἑνός.

[53] Proclus, *In Parm*. 1068, 1–1070, 15.

[54] Iamblichus, *De Myst*. I, 13, 8–12; I, 18, 38–40.

[55] Iamblichus, *De Myst*. I, 8, 85; I, 8, 99–103; III, 11, 27.

[56] Iamblichus, *De Myst*. I, 15, 29–35: περιέχειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, εἰδέναι; I, 8, 51; III, 1, 46; III, 17, 13–19: δίδωσι τοῖς μετέχουσι; I, 17, 8: ἔχουσι τὸ σῶμα; I, 8, 11: ἡγεμονεύει; I, 12, 30: συνάπτουσι; I, 12, 12: τὴν ἕνωσιν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς χορηγοῦντες.

[57] Iamblichus, *De Myst*. I, 9, 20–22, Clark, Dillon and Hershbell (2003) 39.

everywhere, different gods possess different divine "allotments", that is the places where their power becomes most apparent. It can be some parts of the world—heaven, earth, certain countries, towns, temples and sculptures. While discussing the distribution of the divine allotments Iamblichus points out that gods select them according to their own properties "and not because they assimilate themselves to the nature of their receptacle".[58] So the characteristics of the "allotments" are anticipated in the properties of gods. It means that gods are not absolutely independent of other beings, but stay in some sort of connection with them.

So Iamblichus' gods possess properties both of participated and unparticipated entities. They allow other things to take part in themselves but at the same time do not mix with their participants, remaining wholly independent and transcendent.[59] In Proclus' philosophy, as we have seen, such a combination of opposite characteristics was peculiar only to intermediary "autonomous substances", situated between the absolutely transcendent monad and its "reflections" in different receptacles. Iamblichus, as it seems, had a simpler scheme of participation. He did not make a difference between unparticipated term in the strict sense of the word and that which is participated in by other things without loss of its separate existence. His concept of transcendence was not as radical as that of Proclus. He did not think that every transcendent principle is to remain in pure identity with itself without being connected with anything else. His view was, on the contrary, that every "absolute", "independent", "transcendent" and "unparticipated" cause is to contain and anticipate in itself all its products, because otherwise it would not be a cause. This specific account of transcendence forced him to multiply every unparticipated cause into a number of more particular transcendent principles, each of which produces this or that multitude of lower beings. Consequently at the head of every level of reality in Iamblichus' metaphysics there appeared to be not only one unparticipated monad, as it is in Proclus' system, but a whole number of unparticipated entities, seen as different aspects of one and the same transcendent cause or as different modes of its infinite productive power.[60]

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[58] Iamblichus, *De Myst.* I, 8, 27, Clark, Dillon and Hershbell (2003) 33.

[59] Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* III, 33, 17–27 = Iamblichus, Fr. 64 Dillon. Here Proclus quotes Iamblichus, who maintains that the highest entities (πρώτισται) are participated in by other things without being themselves affected by their participants: "the highest beings do not participate inasmuch as they are highest—rather, they are participated by others, not coming to be in the things that participate them, but turning the participants towards them, in another way". Transl. by J. Dillon (1973) 171.

[60] As a sort of analogy to Iamblichus' henads we can mention divine attributes or Divine

This conclusion can be confirmed by an analysis of some fragments of Iamblichus' lost *Commentary on "Timaeus"*. In fr. 50 Iamblichus describes unparticipable (ἀμέθεκτος) soul in terms which unambiguously point to its transcendence (such as "transcendent", "hypercosmic", "absolute", "independent", "separate from anything"). But at the same time he says that this soul "animates everything", "exerts authority over all", and that bodies "participate in it to a greater or lesser degree".[61] In Fr. 52 Iamblichus expresses himself even more definitely, while calling the hypercosmic unparticipated soul "both transcendent and united with body".[62] As J. Dillon notes, the soul is thus described in opposite terms. He explains this fact through soul's middle position between the realm of true being and generation.[63] But, as we have seen before, according to Iamblichus, even the highest (πρώτισται) causes of being (gods or henads) combine properties both of participated and unparticipated entities, so that such an account can be applied to every level of reality. In fr. 54, while interpreting *Timaeus* 36b, Iamblichus maintains that through the division of soul's initial mixture "lengthwise" the Demiurge creates from the one and hypercosmic soul two participated ones, for, as Proclus explains, at the head of every order there must be an unparticipated monad before the participated. "And Timaeus indeed, creating in speech through the generation of the soul the one and supracosmic Soul, from which springs the Soul of the all and the others, producing from it at this point the dyad … And through these are generated two souls after the one".[64] J. Dillon thinks that Iamblichus speaks here about the generation of two intracosmic souls: the Soul of the Universe and the Soul divided among bodies.[65] But his opinion can hardly be accepted. As W. Deuse in his arti-

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Names of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. According to him: "We do not regard the Good as one thing, the Existent as another, and Life or Wisdom as another; nor do we hold that there are many causes and different Godheads producing different effects and subordinate one to another" (Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De Divines Nominubus*, V, 2, 181, 16–18).

[61] Fr. 50 Dillon = Proclus, *In Tim.* II, 105, 16–27: φιλόσοφος Ἰάμβλιχος ἀξιοῖ ψυχὴν ἀκούειν ἡμᾶς τὴν ἐξῃρημένην καὶ ὑπερκόσμιον καὶ ἀπόλυτον καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνεξουσιάζουσαν· μηδὲ γὰρ εἶναι περὶ τῆς κοσμικῆς τῷ Πλάτωνι τὸν λόγον, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῆς ἀμεθέκτου ψυχῆς καὶ ὑπὲρ πάσας τὰς ἐγκοσμίας ὡς μονάδος τεταγμένης· εἶναι γὰρ τοιαύτην τὴν πρώτην ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ μέσον ἐπὶ ταύτης ὡς πᾶσιν ὁμοίως παρούσης, διὰ τὸ μηδενὸς εἶναι σώματος μηδὲ ἐν σχέσει πω γεγονέναι κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον, καὶ πάντα ὁμοίως ψυχούσης καὶ πάντων ἴσον ἀφεστώσης· οὐ γὰρ ἄλλων μὲν ἧττον, ἄλλων δὲ μᾶλλον ἀφέστηκεν–ἄσχετος γάρ—ἀλλ' ὁμοίως ἀπάντων, εἰ καὶ μὴ πάντα τὸν αὐτὸν αὐτῆς ἀφεστήκοι τρόπον· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς μετέχουσι τὸ μᾶλλόν ἐστι καὶ ἧττον.

[62] Fr. 52 Dillon = *In Tim.* II, 142, 27; 143, 21: ἡ δὲ ἐξῃρημένη τε ἅμα καὶ τεταγμένη.

[63] J. Dillon (1973) 326.

[64] Fr. 54, 9–15 Dillon: ψυχήν, ἀφ' ἧς καὶ ἡ τοῦ παντὸς καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι, τὴν δυάδα παράγει νῦν ἀπὸ ταύτης … διὰ δὲ τούτων ἀπογεννῶνται ψυχαὶ δύο μετὰ τὴν μίαν.

[65] J. Dillon (1973) 336.

cle "Demiurg bei Porphyrios und Jamblich" rightly notes, Dillon does not take into account the end of this fragment, where these two souls are said to be created before the generation of the Universe. "Before even heaven came into existence the Demiurge bent them into a circle and encompassed them with the motion that moves about the same things in the same way".[66] It follows that these two souls existed before the heavens and were independent of it. Therefore they in no way could be reckoned among the "intracosmic" souls. Deuse notes also that Proclus himself, while criticizing below Iamblichus' mode of exegesis, calls the two generated souls "hypercosmic": "From our point of view, it is more concordant with Plato's words to refer this text not to those aforementioned hypercosmic souls, … but to the Soul of Universe".[67] So Proclus himself recognizes that according to Iamblichus' exegesis the single unparticipated soul (presented in the dialog by the soul's initial mixture) is divided into two equally transcendent souls,[68] which in spite of their transcendence allow participation by bodies and therefore can be named "participated". Therefore at the head of the souls' order Iamblichus places two transcendent hypercosmic souls, proceeding from the one hypercosmic monad of souls.

This procession is to be seen not as a production of lower entities by a higher one but as a division of initial unity into parts. A little below Iamblichus describes two generated souls as follows: "And through these are generated two souls after the one, each of which has the same system of principles and are combined with each other and are in each other and are distinguished from each other and preserve unmixed purity along with their mutual unity".[69] Such a relationship between members of the psychic order is very similar to that of the ideas within the divine Intellect, as far as every idea, being a part of the intelligible being, mirrors and contains in itself all its totality. Here also the two hypercosmic souls are said to be, on the one hand, different from each other, but, on the other hand, present in each other, so that each one of them can be seen as the whole hypercosmic Soul. In another fragment (fr. 55) Proclus repeats Iamblichus' argumentation by saying that unlike Intellect, which is one and indivisible, the soul "is dividing

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[66] Fr. 54, 20–21 Dillon. Cf. W. Deuse (1977) 271, Anm. 68.

[67] Proclus, *In Tim.* II, 241, 3–6: συμφωνότερον δὲ τοῖς τοῦ Πλάτωνος ῥήμασιν εἶναι νομίζομεν τὸ μήτε ἐπὶ τῶν ὑπερκοσμίων ἐκείνων ψυχῶν ἀκούειν τὰ λεγόμενα νῦν μήτε ἐπὶ τῶν ἐγκοσμίων τῶν πολλῶν, ἀλλ' ἐπ' αὐτῆς τῆς τοῦ παντὸς ψυχῆς.

[68] W. Deuse (1977) 271: "Die Verbindung mit den Zwischengeisten spaltet sie [die transzendente Monade vor allen Seelen] in zwei transzendente Seelen".

[69] Fr. 54, 15–17, J. Dillon.

and multiplying itself" (ἑαυτὴν διαιροῦσα καὶ πολλαπλασιάζουσα).[70] These words clearly show that the two generated souls are to be seen as parts or "aspects" of the one hypercosmic Soul, but neither as its products, nor as the souls of lower order. It is important also that in some fragments Iamblichus calls the unparticipated monad of souls the Whole Soul (ἡ ὅλη ψυχή), as if all other members of the psychic order were really its parts.[71] While discussing Iamblichus' interpretation of *Timaeus* 36b in his own commentary Proclus makes a correspondence between the plurality of Iamblichean hypercosmic souls and the souls within the Universe.[72] He brings the unparticipated monad of souls into correlation with the Soul of the Universe, and of its two parts the first one (the Soul of the all) compares with the soul of the fixed stars and the second (the Soul of other beings) with the soul of planets, divided in its turn into seven more particular souls. Therefore, in Proclus' view, the whole structure of intracosmic souls by Iamblichus was initially set forth at the level of hypercosmic souls, which in spite of their separate existence anticipated the future division of the Universe into different regions and spheres.

The foregoing analysis confirms our previous conclusion that in Iamblichus' metaphysics the multiplication of the initial unity takes place among transcendent causes and not just among their products. So at the head of every order of reality Iamblichus places a number of transcendent (or unparticipated) entities, regarded as different parts or aspects of one and the same unparticipated monad. For Proclus, on the contrary, at the beginning of every class of being there is only one transcendent unparticipated monad, which originates the appropriate manifold of participated lower terms. As we have already shown, this discrepancy between the two philosophers can be explained by their different concepts of transcendence. Whereas Proclus describes the transcendent unparticipated principle as absolutely self-identical and unconnected with anything else, Iamblichus depicts it as containing and anticipating in itself all the posterior. Consequently Iamblichus' transcendent principle appears to be one-manifold and, so to say, "splitting" itself into a number of more particular causes, every one of which mirrors the total content of the initial unity. In the case of the One itself it leads to the appearance of the system of henads

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[70] Fr. 55 Dillon = *In Tim.* II, 250, 22–251, 11. Cf. J. Dillon (1973) 336: "Proclus approves thoroughly of Iamblichus' interpretation, and any explanation he would give can hardly be other than that of Iamblichus".

[71] Fr. 56, 8 Dillon (= *In Tim.* II, 252, 27) and Fr. 58, 5 Dillon (= *In Tim.* II, 306, 3).

[72] Proclus, *In Tim.* II, 240, 30–241, 3.

contained in the primal One as different modi of its being a cause. So we can see that Iamblichus' doctrine of henads differs from that of Proclus not only because these two philosophers placed henads in different hypotheses of *Parmenides*. The fact of the matter is that in Iamblichus' metaphysics henads played a considerably different role than in that of the Athenian Neoplatonists. Iamblichus did not see henads as intermediary substances, bridging the gap between the absolutely transcendent One and the plurality of its effects. His concept of the primal One implied it to be a cause in the positive sense of the word, so that there was no need for him to introduce an additional class of entities capable of establishing a connection between the self-sufficient Absolute and the plurality of its products. In other words, for Iamblichus the henads did not solve the problem of a transcendent First Principle, because it was already successfully solved by means of two Ones. He understood henads rather as different manifestations of the One-total, in so far as it anticipates in itself particular orders of Being and can be seen therefore as a multitude of different sorts of unity.

Though Iamblichus' doctrine of henads, according to our reconstruction, differs in some points from the classical version of Syrianus and Proclus, it has nevertheless much in common with it and can be therefore conceived as its predecessor. On the contrary, to bring Iamblichus' doctrine together with earlier "Neopythagorean" versions, where henads were regarded as monads of forms or even as idea-numbers, seems to be impossible. We have at least two fragments reporting that Iamblichus placed "monads of forms" or "intelligible monads" after the primal One and not together with it. One of these reports belongs to Proclus (*In Parm*. 1090, 13–25), another one to Damascius (*In Phileb*., 105, 1–6 = fr. 4, Dillon). According to Proclus, *Parmenides*' commentators discussed a question, what sort of multiplicity is denied of the One at the beginning of the 1st hypothesis? Some commentators thought this multiplicity to be intellectual, others sensible and so on. But the "divinely inspired" opinion, which most probably belongs to Iamblichus, was that this multiplicity must be that of "intelligible monads" (νοητὰς μονάδας): "it is that multiplicity, then, which is removed from the One, that is to say the intelligible, inasmuch as it is the next after the One, which the intellectual is not".[73] Could these "intelligible monads", which are removed from the One by means of negation, be Iamblichean henads as well? It seems to be impossible, because as we have mentioned before,

[73] Proclus, *In Parm*. 1090, 19–21 in G. Morrow and J. Dillon (1987) 438.

Iamblichus thought that attributes denied of the One in the 1st hypothesis are also denied of the henads. It follows that the multiplicity of intelligible monads must be removed from them also. Damascius seems to confirm this conclusion by reporting that Iamblichus puts the "monads of forms" (another term for "intelligible monads") on the level of the "first pure Intelligence" and not of that of the One itself.[74]

6. *Conclusion*

The doctrine of divine henads was developed in late Neoplatonism in the course of efforts to solve a problem of a transcendent First Principle. In the classical form of this doctrine, which it received from Syrianus and Proclus, henads were thought to be supra-essential unities, proceeding directly from the One and differing from it only by their connection with Being. Due to the connection with something other than themselves henads could not be as much transcendent as the primal One; they came in some relationship with the world and therefore played the role of intermediary substances between the absolutely unparticipated Principle and the plurality of its effects. It seems probable that this theory appeared as a result of exegesis of Plato's *Parmenides* and in particular of the idea to consider predicates of the One in the first two hypotheses as the characteristics of the different classes of henads. We suppose that the author of this idea could be Iamblichus, because he was the first to mention divine henads in connection with *Parmenides*, and to conceive the predicates denied of the One in the 1st hypothesis to be also denied of henads. We have tried to reconstruct Iamblichus' doctrine of henads, since some previous attempts at reconstruction, where henads were identified with monads of forms and idea-numbers, seem to be unsatisfactory. According to our interpretation, henads in Iamblichus' theory were neither products of the One nor some lower substances following after it, but rather different modi of its being a cause, in so far as the One anticipates in itself this or that particular order of Being. Iamblichus owed this doctrine to his concept of transcendence, according to which every transcendent and self-sufficient principle was thought to have some sort of connection with all that was posterior to it and to be participated in by other things. In so far as such a principle could be regarded as a cause in the positive sense of the word, Iamblichus had no need to introduce any sort of

[74] Damascius, *In Phil.* 105, 1–3.

mediating substances between the absolutely unparticipated One and the Universe. That's why henads were designed not to establish a relationship and thus solve the problem of the transcendent First Principle, but rather to manifest diverse productive power within the One. Iamblichus solved the aforementioned problem by introducing into his system a "totally ineffable" principle that is the Absolute in the strict sense of the word. And in so far as the next generation of Neoplatonists did not accept Iamblichus' concept of two Ones, they were compelled to look for other solutions to the same problem, which led to the re-examination and further development of Iamblichus' doctrine of henads in the Athenian Neoplatonic school.

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IAMBLICHUS AND JULIAN'S "THIRD DEMIURGE": A PROPOSITION*

Adrien Lecerf

One Demiurge, Many Demiurges

In a chapter of the great book he devoted to the work of Julian the Apostate, Jean Bouffartigue enumerates some of the Emperor's philosophical doctrines that he thinks can be traced back to Iamblichean influence.[1] One of those is the notion of a "third Demiurge", appearing three times in the Oration *To the Mother of the Gods* (Oration VIII in the Belles Lettres edition begun by Joseph Bidez, Oration V in Wilmer Cave Wright's translation in the Loeb collection). This enigmatic deity is intimately tied with Attis, the main protagonist of Julian's *Oration*. The following texts contain all the references that are made to it:

> Text nº 1: τοῦ τρίτου δημιουργοῦ, ὃς τῶν ἐνύλων εἰδῶν τοὺς λόγους ἐξῃρημένους ἔχει καὶ συνεχεῖς τὰς αἰτίας, ἡ τελευταία καὶ μέχρι γῆς ὑπὸ περιουσίας τοῦ γονίμου διὰ τῶν ἄνωθεν παρὰ τῶν ἄστρων καθήκουσα, φύσις ὁ ζητούμενός ἐστιν Ἄττις.
>
> The nature of *the third creator, who contains in himself the separate concepts of the forms that are embodied in matter and also the connected chain of causes*, I mean that nature which is last in order, and through its superabundance of generative power descends even unto our earth through the upper region from the stars—this is he whom we seek, even Attis.[2]

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* It was not before this paper was very close to publication that I took knowledge of an article by Jan Opsomer (2008), other than the one I frequently quote in the course of this work, which reaches conclusions quite similar to those that I have personally been led to. I cannot but refer my reader to his article, which is certainly more detailed; I will be happy if mine can be considered as a useful complement.

I wish to thank Prof. Constantinos Macris for allowing me to take part in the original seminar in his place—without his kind proposal nothing would have been possible.

[1] J. Bouffartigue (1992) 356–357.

[2] *Mother of Gods*, 161d–162a. English translations of Julian's theological *Orations* are taken from Wilmer Cave Wright's edition in the Loeb collection (as are those of *To King Helios*). The text is that of the Belles Lettres edition by G. Rochefort (Paris, 1963) and does not differ substantially from Wright's for the passages I quote.

> Text nº 2: Οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ δέδοταί τις καὶ τῶν ἐνύλων εἰδῶν αἰτία προηγουμένη παντελῶς ἄϋλος ὑπὸ τὸν τρίτον δημιουργόν, ὃς ἡμῖν οὐ τούτων μόνον ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ φαινομένου καὶ πέμπτου σώματος πατὴρ καὶ δεσπότης, ἀποδιελόντες ἐκείνου τὸν Ἄττιν, τὴν ἄχρι τῆς ὕλης καταβαίνουσαν αἰτίαν, καὶ θεὸν γόνιμον Ἄττιν εἶναι καὶ Γάλλον πεπιστεύκαμεν [...]
>
> Accordingly, since for the forms embodied in matter a wholly immaterial cause has been assigned, which leads these forms under the hand of *the third creator—who for us is the lord and father not only of these forms but also of the visible fifth substance—from that creator* we distinguish Attis, the cause which descends even unto matter, and we believe Attis or Gallus is a god of generative powers.[3]
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> Text nº 3: Οὐκ ἄτοπον οὖν καὶ τὸν Ἄττιν τοῦτον ἡμίθεόν τινα εἶναι, βούλεται γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὁ μῦθος τοῦτο, μᾶλλον δὲ θεὸν μὲν τῷ παντί· πρόεισί τε γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ τρίτου δημιουργοῦ καὶ ἐπισυνάγεται[4] πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν Μητέρα τῶν θεῶν μετὰ τὴν ἐκτομήν· ἐπεὶ δὲ ὅλως ῥέπειν καὶ νεύειν εἰς τὴν ὕλην δοκεῖ, θεῶν μὲν ἔσχατον, ἔξαρχον δὲ τῶν θείων γενῶν ἁπάντων οὐκ ἂν ἁμάρτοι τις αὐτὸν ὑπολαβών.
>
> Therefore it is not contradictory to suppose that our Attis also is a sort of demigod—for that is actually the meaning of the myth—or rather for the universe he is wholly god, for *he proceeds from the third creator*, and after his castration is collected again and reunited to the Mother of the Gods. But though he seems to lean and incline towards matter, one would not be mistaken in supposing that, though he is the lowest in order of the gods, nevertheless he is the leader of all the tribes of divine beings.[5]

Some context is provided so as to make the general meaning clearer. The myth of Attis, as expressed and interpreted by Julian, introduces this god as a young boy, playing innocently on the banks of the river Gallos, under vigilant protection of the Mother of the Gods. Eventually, however, he leaves the Mother in order to rejoin the Nymph, whom Julian defines as the cause presiding over matter. It is then made clear that the myth is an allegory of a demiurgic power endangering itself while getting closer to the matter it must inform.

Three points seem of interest in the depiction of the third Demiurge: 1) Attis depends on him, "proceeds" from him (πρόεισι, T3) and he is his "subordinate" (ὑπὸ τὸν τρίτον δημιουργόν, T1); 2) he possesses dominion over enmattered Forms (T1, T2); 3) he possesses dominion over the "visible fifth

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[3] *Mother of Gods*, 165a–b.

[4] Wright has ἐπανάγεται here: therefore I had to modify her translation ("is led upwards again to the Mother of the Gods").

[5] *Mother of Gods*, 168a.

body" (T2). This last point would require a detailed analysis that would extend beyond the scope of the present paper, and this is why I shall not deal with it within these pages.

How is the presence of this odd entity in Julian's *Oration* to be accounted for? That it was created out of nothing by the Emperor must certainly be ruled out: why would he have, then, spoken about a third Demiurge, without explaining who were the first and second? it remains, then, that the justification of this entity's presence lies in a philosophical teaching.

While trying to discover the meaning of the notion, Bouffartigue[6] mentions the doctrine of Amelius and Theodorus of Asine; but, as he himself points out, these authors maintain that there are three Demiurges[7] (He who Is, He who Has, He who Sees for Amelius; the Essential Intellect, the Intellective Substance and the Source of Souls for Theodorus). Their position was fought and refuted in chap. 14, Book V of Proclus' *Platonic Theology*: there are not three Demiurges in the *Timaeus*, only one.

Iamblichus, on the contrary, taught the unicity of the Demiurge, whom he allotted "the third place among the Fathers in the Intellective Hebdomad".[8] We know, from at least three different references, that the Demiurge was for him Zeus.[9] It is actually no wonder at all: if one is right to accept the Iamblichean authenticity of Proclus' extract attributing to Iamblichus the intellective Hebdomad (the belief in which Proclus actually expressed throughout his whole work, see in particular *Platonic Theology* Book V), then it becomes highly probable that the names of the members of this Hebdomad (Zeus being the third god of the first intellective Triad, Kronos—Rhea—Zeus, as explained in length in this same text) were inherited from Iamblichus by Proclus as well.[10]

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[6] J. Bouffartigue (1992) 357.

[7] Amelius: Proclus, *In Timaeum* I, 306.1–3 (all references given in Diehl's edition); Theodorus: *In Tim.* I, 309.14–20.

[8] Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 308.22–23.

[9] Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 308.19–20 (a quotation of the title *On the Speech of Zeus in the* Timaeus—which obviously refers to the speech of the Demiurge); Olympiodorus, *In Alcibiadem* 2.1–5 Westerink (confirming the title); Fr. 3 *In Phaedrum* Dillon (= Hermias, *In Phaedr.* 136.17–19 Couvreur) and, indirectly, the Fr. 1 *In Sophistam* in which the "Jovian" Socrates is compared to the "demiurgic thoughts" (which are therefore probably the thoughts of Zeus).

[10] On this question, I cannot but refer the reader to my article "La 'triade paternelle' et la théologie de Jamblique", which is due to appear in the proceedings of the colloquium "Damascius et le parcours syrien du néoplatonisme", held at the Institut Français du Proche-Orient (2008, October).

Iamblichus' tenets on the one hand, Amelius' and Theodorus' on the other, are clearly irreconcilable: for Proclus says: "after Iamblichus, Theodorus, following Amelius, says that there are three Demiurges".[11] Iamblichus' position on the subject of the Demiurge is fundamentally a monistic one. And nothing, except a biased reading of the Greek text, enables us to say that Iamblichus' Demiurge, who has received *third* place among the intellectual Fathers, could be identical with Julian's "third Demiurge" (as if the phrase meant "the Demiurge, which is the third", which it does not). Bouffartigue's own conclusion, suggesting that the "third Demiurge" could be the result of a syncretistic Iamblichean-Theodorean teaching improvised by Julian's professors (most notably Maximus of Ephesus), is tempting but, in my opinion, ultimately untrue.

Indeed, the characterization of Iamblichus' thought of the Demiurge as pure monism is itself not true, as we will see. As for Julian, his position on the matter is best summed up by two sentences of his theological *Orations*: "Again, to take another point of view, the creator of the whole is one, but many are the creative gods";[12] and "now there are many substances and

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[11] Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 309.14–15: μετὰ τοῦτον τρεῖς μὲν Ἀμελίῳ συνεπόμενος εἶναί φησι δημιουργούς.

[12] *King Helios*, 140a: εἷς μὲν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός, πολλοὶ δὲ οἱ κατ' οὐρανὸν περιπολοῦντες δημιουργικοὶ θεοί. The very same idea is expressed by Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 12.6–7: εἷς γάρ ἐστιν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός· κατενείμαντο δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ὅλην δημιουργίαν μερικώτεραι δυνάμεις (while rejecting Amelius' and Theodorus' views) and therefore constitutes a strong link between Julian / Iamblichus and Proclus. Julian's sole Demiurge here is obviously a central figure in his system and cannot but be the "first" Demiurge: there is an apparent contradiction between Julian's two statements, that, on the one part, the Demiurge is "one", and, on the other, that there exists some entity such as a "third Demiurge" (and therefore a first and a second). Therefore, we cannot easily use these texts and explain one by the other, as does A. Penati (1983) 552.

Julian's words deserve careful attention: Πάλιν δὲ κατ' ἄλλο σκοποῦντι εἷς μὲν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός, πολλοὶ δὲ οἱ κατ' οὐρανὸν περιπολοῦντες δημιουργικοὶ θεοί. Μέσην ἄρα καὶ τούτων τὴν ἀφ' Ἡλίου καθήκουσαν εἰς τὸν κόσμον δημιουργίαν θετέον. W. Cave Wright translates: "Again, to take another point of view, the creator of the whole is one, but many are the creative gods who revolve in the heavens. Midmost therefore of these also we must place the creative activity which descends into the world from Helios". From this we might understand that Helios serves as intermediary between an absolute Demiurge and all the partial Demiurges in the world: since, from 138c on, Julian has consistently explained Helios' median character (μεσότης) by referring to his three-layered conception of reality (the "intelligible" world, dominated by the One-Good; the "visible" world, ruled by the visible Sun; and, as intermediary, the "intellectual" world of which Helios is the centre), Penati's interpretation—identifying here ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός to *il Principio ineffabile* (on the first level), and seeing in the intellectual Helios and the visible Sun respectively the second and third Demiurges—is clearly possible. However, it does not seem wholly impossible to think that Julian is here reasoning

very many creative gods […]".[13] Julian, then, maintains simultaneously the unicity of the Demiurge (which is Iamblichean dogma), that is king Helios, and a plurality of Demiurges. His position, then, is to be described as a system of Demiurgic uni-plurality. As we will see, it is both Proclus' position and Iamblichus'.

Julian, Iamblichus and Proclus: Comparison

Following a principle set out by Bouffartigue,[14] we may consider substantially Iamblichean any passage of Julian's *Orations* that bears parallels with Proclean texts. In effect, Julian himself did not influence the Athenian school, nor did his teachers of the school of Pergamum: whereas it is known for certain that both Julian and Proclus were enormously influenced by the writings of Iamblichus. Neither Julian's own masters of the School of Pergamum, who have left almost no trace in Athenian Neoplatonism, nor other representatives of the first post-Plotinian generations (Amelius, Porphyry, Theodorus of Asine), who are for the most part ignored or despised by Julian seem to be likely candidates for influencing both authors.

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analogically and intends to show the necessity of means *in general*: the means would then be, in strict accordance with Julian's text, Helios' *creative activity* (τὴν ἀφ' Ἡλίου καθήκουσαν εἰς τὸν κόσμον δημιουργίαν) and not Helios himself: and then, it is no more impossible to identify Helios and ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός. What incites us to promote such an interpretation is the fact that the assimilation of the First Cause to the Demiurge—even a *primo Demiurgo*—is unheard of in mainstream Neoplatonism (specifically in Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, the main authors whose influence Julian may have been profoundly subject to), this passage being the only one in Julian which may be taken as a reference; whereas the demiurgic attributions of Helios (who rules amongst the "intellectual and demiurgic causes", νοεραὶ καὶ δημιουργικαὶ αἰτίαι, 133a) are frequently referred to by Julian (see also 141c).

Let us also point out that Penati's interpretation blurs the boundaries between the intellectual Helios and the visible Sun: this fact, acknowledged on p. 552 (*rimane tuttavia difficile comprendere se si tratti di Helios invisibile o del pianeta solare, sua epifania*), leads her to identify Julian's Helios in 140a with the visible Sun (*il Demiurgo del mondo sensibile è il Sole visibile o, più precisamente, la demiurgia che da lui discende*, p. 553)—although this Helios, as a mediator, cannot be but the intellectual or second Helios, from which the demiurgy "descends into the world" (as a matter of fact, the demiurgy could not *descend* if it did not proceed from an entity superior to the world, and the visible Sun obviously does not meet this requirement: it is even doubtful that a celestial object could possess a demiurgic function at all, and, at any rate, Julian merely ascribes to it a soteriological role: *King Helios*, 133c5–6: ἐναργῶς αἴτιός τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τῆς σωτηρίας).

[13] *Mother of Gods*, 161d: Οὐσῶν δὴ πολλῶν οὐσιῶν καὶ πολλῶν πάνυ δημιουργῶν.

[14] J. Bouffartigue (1992) 355.

With this principle in mind, the publication of a brilliant article by Jan Opsomer[15] helps us greatly to understand the characteristics and tenets of the Diadochus' theological system. Proclus believes in the existence of an "universal Demiurge" (ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός, the very same expression employed by Julian),[16] and in a multiplicity of partial Demiurges who split his demiurgic powers and attributions. The universal Demiurge (that is Zeus, third intellectual God) is then most often characterized as a demiurgic Monad.

According to Opsomer, at least three presentations of the system of Demiurges coexist in Proclus' work: one two-termed (the Demiurge as opposed to the "young gods" of the *Timaeus*),[17] one four-termed (creating, respectively, "the whole (of the World) wholly", "the parts wholly", "the whole partially" and "the parts partially"), and one three-termed,[18] that we

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[15] J. Opsomer (2003).

[16] See *supra*, n. 12. It is also to be found after the quotation of Iamblichus' work *On the Speech of Zeus in the* Timaeus, *In Tim.* I, 309.8, and in Fr. 3 *In Phaedr.*, although we cannot know for sure if the phrase was used in the original Iamblichean text. In an extract of Johannes Lydus' *De Mensibus*, the god of the Old Testament is first identified by Porphyry to the lone Demiurge of the Universe (ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός), before being assimilated to the Demiurge of the sensible world (δημιουργὸς τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ κόσμου) by Iamblichus, Syrianus and Proclus (*De Mensibus* IV, 53.31–38 (p. 110.18–25 Wuensch)). See also *De Myst.* I, 21.12–13: τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων.

[17] Julian knew this opposition, which he mentioned in the *Contra Galilaeos*: see J.F. Finamore (1988).

[18] It appears in at least five texts: *In Rempublicam* II, 8.15–23; *In Tim.* I, 29.6–11; 30.25–30; 446.1–8 and a scholion to *Marcianus gr.* 195 reproduced by Diehl on p. 460 of his edition. The two most detailed references are the following (translations are my own, for the most part adapted from Festugière's French translation (1966–1968)): Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 446.1–8: "Of the Demiurgies, the first is total, one and indivisible; the second is divisible, pluralized and proceeds by fragmentation; the third is not only divisible, as is the one before it, but it is also in contact with things that come to be and the Forms contained in them. And in his work [Plato's] you may also find the Monads of these three Demiurgies, that of Zeus, that of Dionysus, that of Adonis, according to which he also distinguished between the three Constitutions, as we have said elsewhere [*sc.* in the following text]" (τῆς γὰρ δημιουργίας ἡ μέν ἐστιν ὅλη καὶ μία καὶ ἀμέριστος, ἡ δὲ μερικὴ καὶ πεπληθυσμένη καὶ προϊοῦσα κατὰ μερισμόν, ἡ δὲ οὐ μόνον οὖσα μεριστή, καθάπερ ἡ πρὸ αὐτῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν γενητῶν ἐφαπτομένη καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις εἰδῶν. Καὶ ἔχεις τῶν τριῶν τούτων δημιουργιῶν καὶ παρ' αὐτῷ τὰς μονάδας, τὴν Δίιον, τὴν Διονυσιακήν, τὴν Ἀδωναϊκήν, αἷς καὶ τὰς τρεῖς πολιτείας συνδιεῖλεν, ὡς ἐν ἄλλοις εἴπομεν); Proclus, *In Remp.* II, 8.15–21 Kroll: "Since the three constitutions bear a relation to the three Demiurgies, that of Zeus, that of Dionysus, that of Adonis (for every statesman wants to copy some Demiurge, the one promoting the community of all things, the Demiurge who makes the Whole, the one dividing and distributing, the Demiurge who separates parts and wholes, the one who straightens that which is twisted, the Demiurge who renews the things that come to be and come to pass) […]" (τῶν τριῶν πολιτειῶν εἰς τὰς τρεῖς δημιουργίας ἀναφερομένων, εἰς τὴν Δίιον, εἰς τὴν Διονυσιακήν, εἰς τὴν Ἀδωνιακήν (πᾶς γὰρ πολιτικὸς ἀπεικονίζεσθαι βούλεταί

will use as a piece of comparison. These are the gods Zeus, Dionysus and Adonis. Our hypothesis is simple: this is the fundamentally Iamblichean hierarchy that Julian bases himself upon in his theological *Orations*.

Zeus

The first god, then: Zeus.[19] The teaching about him is summed up in the *Platonic Theology*, Book V.[20] He is the demiurgic Monad, originator of the demiurgic series (σειρά), the lone Demiurge of the *Timaeus*.

Julian similarly tells us about the "great Demiurge",[21] the "universal God",[22] the "Demiurge of all things",[23] the "universal Demiurge",[24] and cites the *Timaeus* on this occasion (the speech of the Demiurge, from 41a7 onwards). Following Iamblichus (and opposing Porphyry),[25] he does not assign to the Christian God more than a small part: he is a "partial" God,[26] the "immediate creator of this Universe",[27] a mention explained some time later: "it follows that, according to Moses [i. e. the most important Christian "theologian", according to Julian], God is the creator of nothing that is incorporeal, but is only the disposer of matter that already existed".[28] In *Against the Galilaeans*, then, it is Zeus who receives the title of Demiurge: he is "our lord and father Zeus".[29]

The fact that the central figure, endowed with demiurgic attributions, is in the Oration *To King Helios* not Zeus but Helios does not speak, I think, against our hypothesis. In this Oration, indeed, Zeus and Helios are perfectly inseparable. In a great thrust of syncretism, an equivalence is made between

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τινα δημιουργόν, ὁ μὲν πάντα κοινὰ ποιῶν τὸν τὰ ὅλα ποιοῦντα, ὁ δὲ νέμων καὶ διαιρῶν τὸν διελόντα ἀπὸ τῶν ὅλων τὰ μέρη, ὁ δὲ ἐπανορθῶν τὸ διάστροφον εἶδος τὸν τὰ γιγνόμενα καὶ φθειρόμενα ἀνυφαίνοντα) […]).

[19] J. Opsomer (2003) 11–13, rightly calling him "la monade de la démiurgie universelle"; see also C. Van Liefferinge (2003).

[20] See, in particular, 41.21–22 (references given in Saffrey and Westerink's Belles Lettres edition): καὶ τοῦτον (ὁ τρίτος πατήρ, i. e. Zeus, third intellective God) εἶναι τὸν τῶν ὅλων δημιουργόν; 43.18 sqq. (the Demiurge is neither an intelligible nor an hypercosmic deity and is rather an intellective God). He is unique: see *In Tim*. I, 12.6: εἷς γάρ ἐστιν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός.

[21] *Against the Galilaeans*, 69d: μέγας δημιουργός.

[22] Ibid., 148c: ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεός.

[23] Ibid., 148c: ὁ πάντων δημιουργός.

[24] Ibid., 58b: ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός.

[25] See *supra*, n. 16.

[26] Ibid., 148c: μερικός.

[27] Ibid., 96c: ὁ προσεχὴς τοῦ κόσμου τούτου δημιουργός.

[28] Ibid., 49e.

[29] Ibid., 198c: ἡμῶν δεσπότης καὶ πατὴρ Ζεύς.

"Zeus, Hades, Helios, Sarapis".[30] The identity of the two gods is hinted at in several other works authored by the Emperor. In *Against the Galilaeans*, Zeus and Helios jointly give birth to Asclepius;[31] in *To the Mother of the Gods*, Cybele's consort and co-ruler is at times Zeus,[32] at times Helios;[33] and in *Against Heracleios*, when asked by Julian about the way leading to him, Zeus simply designates Helios.[34] Even in a political *encomium* such as is the second *Panegyric of Constantius* (or *On Kingship*), Zeus appears as the Demiurge: "However it is not to bees that we must look for our analogy, but in my opinion to the king of the Gods himself [*sc*. Zeus], whose prophet and vice-regent the genuine ruler ought to be. For wherever good exists wholly untainted by its opposite, and for the benefit of mankind in common and the whole universe, of this good God was and is the only creator (δημιουργός)".[35]

Julian, therefore, while identifying him with Helios, remains consistent with Iamblichus' views on the identity of Zeus and the Demiurge. This entity (Zeus-Helios) is, for him as for Proclus, the summit of the demiurgic chain, lone Demiurge preceding other demiurgic deities. Outside of our present enquiry, but a very interesting subject indeed, is the question of the Iamblichean basis of Julian's heliolatry: was a worship of the Sun central in Iamblichus' creed also?[36]

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[30] *King Helios*, 136a: "Let us then assume that, among the intellectual gods, Helios and Zeus have a joint or rather a single sovereignty". See also 143d7: "creative virtue of Zeus"; 153d7: Zeus is ὁ πάντων πατήρ. In 149c7, there is little Julian could do to make himself clearer: ὑπὸ Διὸς δήπουθεν, ὅσπερ ἐστὶν ὁ αὐτὸς Ἡλίῳ; similarly, in 149b6: οὐδὲν διαφέρειν Ἡλίου Δία νομίζοντες. See J. Bouffartigue (1992) 334, well summing up Julian's position: "par rapport à Hélios, les autres dieux sont mi-parèdres, mi-puissances hypostasiées, et leur relation avec lui est saisie tantôt comme dépendance, tantôt comme identité. Ainsi, Hélios et Zeus sont d'abord présentés comme associés, puis Julien rappelle le vers qui les désigne comme une seule et même personne"; J.F. Finamore (1985) 137; P. Athanassiadi (1977) 368 n. 3.

[31] *Against the Galilaeans*, 200a.

[32] *Mother of Gods*, 166a3; b1; 170d3–4; 179d5–6.

[33] *Mother of Gods*, 167b4.

[34] *Against Heracleios*, 231b5: ὁ δὲ [Zeus] αὐτῷ [Julian] δείκνυσιν αὐτὸν τὸν Ἥλιον.

[35] *Oration II*, 90a (transl. Wright).

[36] Let it suffice to remark two things on the subject of Julian's originality: a) pertaining to his life: Julian says he is "king Helios' adept" (130c1) and devotes some forty lines to explaining his personal relationship with the god, dating back to his childhood—when he certainly was not Iamblichus' follower!; b) pertaining to his politics: Julian considers that the foundation of Rome is due to Helios' intervention (ἡμῖν δέ ἐστιν ἀρχηγὸς καὶ τῆς πόλεως, 153d5) and he carefully relates him to the City's foundation myths (the birth of Remus and Romulus, the latter's manifestation as Quirinus, the legislative work of Numa Pompilius; Julian also mentions the "official title" (κοινὸν ὄνομα, 153d9) under which Helios is known

Dionysus

Leaving this matter and Zeus aside, we will now turn to Dionysus. A thorough exposition of all parallels existing between Proclus and Julian would extend beyond the scope of this article. Let us simply show briefly that Julian's depiction of Dionysus as solely responsible for a "divided Demiurgy" (μεριστὴ δημιουργία),[37] strictly parallels Proclus' doctrine of the God,[38] for example in the *Cratylus* commentary: "all particular creation depends on the Dionysiac monad" (§ 182, ll. 25–26: ἡ μεριστὴ δημιουργία πᾶσα τῆς Διονυσιακῆς ἐξήρτηται μονάδος).

There is even a striking parallel between Julian: "the essential nature of Dionysus, uniform and wholly indivisible as it is in the divisible world and preexisting whole and unmixed in all things",[39] and the Iamblichean extract preserved in Psellus, entitled *On Ethical and Theological Arithmetic* (edited by Dominic O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, pp. 222–229), which describes

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in Rome, i. e. *Sol invictus exsuperantissimus*). Some fifty more lines are devoted to this. At the crossroads of the personal and political dimensions lies also the question of Julian's Mithraism, another extra-Iamblichean influence that may have led Julian to become a Sun-worshipper. What seems to me to be most important is the fact that the Sun, in Iamblichus' extant works or *testimonia*, is almost nowhere to be found (which is also the case in Proclus and Damascius, where Helios nowhere has near the central role he plays in Julian's *Orations*). Let us therefore warn our reader against an overly Iamblichean reading of Julian, as appears in F. Cumont (1909) 31: "un penseur oriental, un Syrien comme Posidonius, Jamblique de Chalcis, accommoda à ces théories nouvelles le système de son compatriote et convertit encore le dernier empereur païen à son héliolâtrie transcendante". At any rate, this problem cannot receive proper elucidation until the question of Porphyry's treatise *On the Sun* and its influence on Macrobius' *Saturnalia* is settled satisfactorily.

[37] *King Helios* 144a: "But Apollo too in no case appears to separate the dividing creative function of Dionysus (τὴν Διονύσου μεριστὴν δημιουργίαν) from Helios"; 144c: "the dividing part of his [Apollo's] function which he shares with Dionysus who controls divided substance (μετὰ τοῦ τὴν μεριστὴν ἐπιτροπεύοντος οὐσίαν Διονύσου)"; *Mother of Gods*, 179b: "and I discern also the divided creative function of Dionysus (τὴν Διονύσου μεριστὴν δημιουργίαν), which great Dionysus received from the single and abiding principle of life that is in mighty Zeus"—a passage in which the demiurgic function of Dionysus is attributed to him alone, apart from any association with Zeus, Helios or Apollo; his subordination to Zeus is also asserted. See also Rochefort's good note on *Against Heracleios* 220c in the Belles Lettres edition: "le rôle imparti par l' Empereur à Cybèle s' explique par le fait que la même divinité supérieure devait apporter le salut à la suite de leur folie passagère à la fois au 'créateur immédiat du monde matériel'—Attis—et à son tuteur—Dionysos".

[38] See J. Opsomer (2003) 17–27 and also 9–11, citing *In Tim.* I, 310.15–24. The "monad of divided Demiurgy" also appears in Damascius, *In Phaedonem* I, § 3 (quotation in Opsomer p. 17): this, then, was common philosophical ground for the school of Athens.

[39] *Against Heracleios*, 222a3–5 (transl. Wright): τῆς ἑνοειδοῦς καὶ ἐν τῷ μεριστῷ παντελῶς ἀδιαιρέτου ὅλης τε ἐν πᾶσιν ἀμιγοῦς προϋπαρχούσης τοῦ Διονύσου οὐσίας.

"the earthly [aspect of the monad], *indivisible in the divided*, full in the lacking" (ll. 74–75: καὶ τὸ περίγειον [*sc.* τῆς μονάδος] ἀδιαίρετον ἐν τοῖς διῃρημένοις, πλῆρες ἐν τοῖς <ἐν>δεέσιν).

The "dismemberment" (σπαραγμός) of Dionysus, which is almost certainly the basis for the doctrine of the "divided demiurgy" is mentioned in *Against the Galilaeans*, 49a.

We therefore think that Julian's second Demiurge, left unmentioned but necessarily preceding the third, must be Dionysus, who must have become known to Julian through the reading of Iamblichus or the Iamblichean teachings of his masters (i. e. Maximus of Ephesus). It is hard to explain, otherwise, the strong parallels existing between Proclus and Julian. As it seems to me, this hypothesis rests on more solid grounds than the common opinion[40] making the visible Sun the "third Demiurge".

Adonis or Attis?

If this is correct, then, the consequence must be that Julian's "third Demiurge" is an equivalent to Adonis, the third term of Proclus' demiurgic Triad that acts, for us, as a piece of comparison. But this is obviously more difficult, as nowhere in Julian's works is Adonis to be found.[41] We then have to take into account the functional analogies between the two gods.

*"*Generation*": Attis and Adonis Associated; the Problem of Fr. 1* In Sophistam

According to Proclus, Adonis, who is responsible for the third Demiurgy, is the "Demiurge who renews what is submitted to birth and death" (τὸν τὰ γιγνόμενα καὶ φθειρόμενα ἀνυφαίνοντα (δημιουργόν)).[42] We have an exact parallel for this phrase in Sallustius' *Concerning the Gods and the Universe*: ὁ δὲ Ἄττις τῶν γινομένων καὶ φθειρομένων δημιουργός.[43] Sallustius (a close collaborator of Julian) does not mention the third Demiurge, which we take as hint of the fact that the distinction made by Julian between him

[40] A. Penati, see *supra*, n. 12; G. Mau (1908); n. 2 p. 107 of Rochefort's Belles Lettres edition of the *Mother of Gods*; J.-C. Foussard (1978) 207 also seems to accept this idea.

[41] The only exception is *Caesars* 329c, a reference to the Gardens of Adonis, in which we are not entitled to see anything more than the quotation of a proverb. But see *infra*, p. 188.

[42] *In Remp*. II, 8.20–21, quoted *supra*, n. 18.

[43] *De Diis et Mundo*, IV, 8.

and Attis was a bit far-fetched (suggesting that the third Demiurge and Attis may have been quite comparable deities, as are Adonis and Attis). He indeed mentions Adonis,[44] but as a physical allegory standing for fruit, an association already made by Porphyry (and totally forgotten by Proclus), who mentioned Attis in the process:[45] there is no need to think that this was the standard interpretation by Julian's time, as Sallustius explicitly mentions it as an example of the "material" type of myths. By the end of the fourth century, other types of exegesis had been developed, particularly the theological kind, as Julian himself testimonies in *Against Heracleios*—where he strongly suggests that Iamblichus himself was responsible for it.[46]

Julian himself maintained a slight distinction between the third Demiurge and his Attis. This slight difference may be the consequence of the similarities that Adonis and Attis themselves share. They are both divinized mortals, known for being in love with goddesses (Aphrodite and Cybele respectively), and are subjected to tribulations ultimately leading to their death: thence the name of "dying gods" that Frazer famously gave them. An interesting point to note here is the association of these two gods in philosophical and theological texts of late Antiquity: Porphyry, as we mentioned, but also the hymns of the Naassene Gnostic sect (preserved in Hippolytus)[47] or the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius (where they are both assimilated with the Sun).[48] The rise of Neoplatonism, especially in its theological bent that I think may be traced back to Iamblichus, coincides very closely with the evolution of the cult of these gods, who become cosmic entities (this is particularly visible in the Naassene hymn).[49]

The proximity between these two gods, then, would tentatively account for the substitution of Attis in place of Adonis (or, rather, the former's subjection to the latter, if he really is the "third Demiurge"). That it made more

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[44] *De Diis et Mundo*, IV, 3.

[45] *On Statues*, p. 10.1–7 of Bidez' edition (Bidez (1913)) = Fr. 358, ll. 22–29 in A. Smith's Teubner edition of Porphyry's *Fragmenta* (Smith (1993)).

[46] When Julian says, 217b–c, that "we will follow in the fresh footprints of one whom next to the gods I revere and admire, yes, equally with Aristotle and Plato", on the subject of the "myths suited to initiation" (οἱ τελεστικοὶ μύθοι, that is, myths containing secret teachings on metaphysical subjects and able to help the soul in her ascension towards the divine; these should not be confused with physical allegories as commented upon by the Stoics and Porphyry; on the subject, the reader may consult the fourth part of F. Buffière's classic book (Buffière (1956)), and, for Julian's position, J. Bouffartigue (1992) 337 sqq.), the allusion can hardly be taken as referring to a philosopher other than Iamblichus.

[47] *Refutation of all Heresies*, V, 9, §§ 8–9.

[48] *Saturnalia*, I, chap. XXI.

[49] See in particular M.G. Lancellotti (2002) chap. 3.7: "The astralization of Attis", 115–118, for the general context, and the following pages for an analysis of the hymn.

sense, from an Iamblichean point of view, to include Adonis was well seen by Opsomer,[50] who convincingly asserts that the theologization of Adonis in Neoplatonism rose from an interpretation of *Phaedrus* 276b: the "gardens of Adonis", which, growing and decaying soon after, can easily be interpreted as symbols of generation and corruption. That Adonis was indeed "seen" by Iamblichus in the text of the *Phaedrus* and consequently adduced into a theological system is not something that could be proven with certainty: nevertheless, this is what J. Opsomer believes, after comparison of the Proclean system and a most interesting testimonium of Iamblichus, the extraordinary Fr. 1 *In Sophistam* Dillon.

Indeed, it is very tempting to draw a parallel between these two phenomena: the 'exalted' interpretation of the divinities appearing in Plato's dialogues (most notably in the *Cratylus*—a simple glance at Proclus' commentary on the dialogue teaches that he considered it to be primarily a catalogue and exemplification of divine names) on the one hand, and a new attention paid to the organic unity of Plato's dialogues on the other. These two phenomena lead to one of Proclus' major works, the *Platonic Theology*, which is at the same time a sum of theology and a thorough, systematic reading of Plato. That Iamblichus was the first to promote a philosophical curriculum consisting of twelve Platonic dialogues is known for fact;[51] that he included in it the *Phaedrus*, and deemed this dialogue to be concerned with "theology" (although the simplest interpretation will assume—rightly, I think—this theology to be primarily concentrated in the central Myth of the *Phaedrus*), is very intriguing.

It is not utter nonsense, then, to assume Iamblichus to have "theologized" Adonis out of the *Phaedrus*. However, I would seriously doubt the plausibility of Opsomer's hypothesis in his article, tentatively identifying Adonis with the sublunar Demiurge of Iamblichus' Fr. 1 *In Sophistam*. I would rather see in him the god Hades, because of his association to soul *katharsis* (a prerogative of Hades, according to Proclus' *In Cratylum*),[52] and above all because the sublunar Demiurge is described as a Sophist. Hades is described as a Sophist in Plato's dialogues;[53] Adonis is not.[54] With this identification

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[50] J. Opsomer (2003) 40–42.

[51] See the *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic philosophy*, § 26.13–44.

[52] *In Crat.* § 153 8–9: τὰς ψυχὰς μετὰ θάνατον καθαίρων ἐλευθεροῖ τῆς γενέσεως.

[53] *Cratylus*, 403e3–5: "this god is a perfect sophist (τέλεος σοφιστής) and a great benefactor to those near him".

[54] Adonis' presence in Plato's work (παρ' αὐτῷ, says the text of *In Rempublicam* quoted in n. 18), contrasted with Attis' absence, could similarly explain why Julian maintains a formal distinction between the third Demiurge and his Attis, whereas Attis clearly assumes the

in mind, I would rather read this testimonium as the first occurrence of yet another Demiurgic triad, that constituted of Zeus, Poseidon and Hades (most notably appearing in the *Platonic Theology*, Book VI). This would be further accredited by the association, in the text, of Socrates and Zeus.

This triad, anyway, cannot possibly be detected in Julian's *Orations*. Poseidon is almost entirely absent; Hades too, while in his case we may notice a short passage of *To King Helios* "rehabilitating" him and attributing him a role in delivering souls from the bonds of generation:[55] this notation may have sprung from a mere reading of the *Cratylus*,[56] but may also reflect Iamblichean teachings on the importance of this god.

We would then refrain from identifying Adonis, Julian's "third Demiurge" and Iamblichus' sublunar Demiurge. However, it is clear that all these divinities share common traits: notably, the association with generation (the sublunar Demiurge κατασκευάζει τὴν ποικιλίαν τῆς γενέσεως), with matter (he creates the material beings, τὰ ἔνυλα δημιουργῶν), with change (he is μεταβλητικός, adjective which, in Plato's original text, referred to the Sophist as a "trafficker", but, in Iamblichus' exegesis, relates to its ability to produce "change" (μεταβολή)—Dillon's translation—or maybe to himself undergo change). Neoplatonic triads of this type are interchangeable and seem to be motivated by the necessities of exegesis and by the text itself (be it the myth of Attis and Cybele, a Platonic dialogue or, in other instances, a Chaldaean Oracle or Orphic verse), rather than by philosophical and conceptual originality.

The Evidence of Damascius

Attis and Adonis are associated in at least two Neoplatonic texts: Proclus' *Hymn* I (which I will not discuss)[57] and an extract from Damascius' *In Parmenidem*:

> Αὐτίκα πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἔχωμεν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς θεολόγοις ὅτι εἰσὶν θεοὶ ἐν ὑπερτέρᾳ μὲν τάξει τὴν λῆξιν ἱδρυσάμενοι, τοῦ δὲ ἑξῆς διακόσμου προϊστάμενοι κατ' ἰδιότητα· οἷον ὁ Ἄττις ἐν τῇ σεληναίᾳ καθήμενος λήξει δημιουργεῖ τὸ γενητόν. Οὕτως ἔχοντα

functions ascribed to this Demiurge, as is shown by the parallel with Sallustius' work (see n. 43): both are τῶν γινομένων καὶ φθειρομένων δημιουργοί: but only Adonis appears in this role in Plato's work, and this might have embarrassed Julian if he really inherited from Iamblichus a demiurgic triad extracted out of Plato.

[55] *King Helios*, 136a3–b5.

[56] See the text quoted above, n. 53, describing Hades as a "benefactor".

[57] Let it suffice to refer our reader to J. Opsomer (2003) 40 n. 132.

> καὶ τὸν Ἄδωνιν εὑρίσκομεν ἐν ἀπορρήτοις, οὕτω πολλοὺς θεοὺς παρ' Ὀρφεῖ τε καὶ τοῖς θεουργοῖς. Οὕτω τοίνυν νοητέον καὶ τοὺς ἀπολύτους ἐσχάτους μὲν ὄντας τῶν ὑπερκοσμίων, προνοοῦντας δὲ τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου.
>
> As regards the first [question], we hold it to be fact that, in the writings of theologians also, there are gods who, while they have established their domain in some higher class, nevertheless preside, by means of their peculiar propriety, over the diacosm coming after them: for instance, Attis, while he has established himself in the domain of the Moon, nevertheless creates what is submitted to coming to be. The Mysteries represent Adonis also in a similar situation: and the same goes for many gods that Orpheus and the Theurgists deal with. Here is, then, the way one should conceive the fact that, while the Detached order is the last among the hypercosmic gods, it nevertheless exercises Providence over this world.[58]

Four points, I think, are worth mentioning in connection with Julian: first, the association with generation: δημιουργεῖ τὸ γενητόν;[59] second, Providence (προνοοῦντας δὲ τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου), a theme recurrent in *To the Mother of the Gods*, where it is considered an attribution of Cybele;[60] third, an intermediary position: Attis is the last of the superior gods ("hypercosmic") and he exercises his activity over the inferior: a theme paralleled in Julian, in his words: "though he seems to lean and incline towards matter, one would not be mistaken in supposing that, though he is the lowest in order of the gods, nevertheless he is the leader of all the tribes of divine beings.[61] But the

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[58] Damascius, *In Parmenidem* T. III 146.22–147.8 Combès–Westerink-Segonds (214.4–10 Ruelle; my transl.).

[59] See 161c: τὴν ἄχρι τῆς ἐσχάτης ὕλης ἅπαντα γεννῶσαν οὐσίαν; 171d: ἀεὶ δὲ ὀργᾷ εἰς τὴν γένεσιν; and Sallustius' text, *supra*, n. 43.

[60] See 166b: τὰ γινόμενα καὶ φθειρόμενα σώζουσα Προμήθεια; 167c–d: δημιουργικὴ προμήθεια; 170d: ἡ τῶν ὄντων Προμήθεια; 166b and 180a: πρόνοια.

[61] Note the Iamblichean terminology here: θεῖα γένη, probably identical with the κρείττονα γένη of the *De Mysteriis* (all the classes of beings situated below the gods and above the souls—in Julian's text, precisely, those beings are situated just below the "lowest of the gods"), which Iamblichus made to correspond with the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides* (see, for instance, C.G. Steel (1997) 15–16).

"The three leading personalities" translates αἱ τρεῖς ἀρχικαὶ [...] ὑποστάσεις and is probably misleading. One cannot but see the striking parallel with the title of Plotinus' tenth *Treatise* (V, 1), as given by Porphyry—but Julian's hypostases cannot possibly refer to the same theological levels as Plotinus', since they are not meant to cover all the field of the Divine (the One, the Intellect and the Soul, after which the divine ends (7.48–49: καὶ μέχρι τούτων τὰ θεῖα)), rather its lower end, beginning from the "higher beings". The only parallel I could gather for ἀρχικαὶ ὑποστάσεις in this sense is Damascius, *In Parm.* III, 130.16–17 Combès–Westerink-Segonds (see the good note ad loc.): it points to a common Iamblichean source for both passages. The three kinds of higher beings (three is also the number given by *King Helios* 151c: τῶν τριῶν κρειττόνων [...] γενῶν) may—or may not—be Iamblichus' angels, daemons and heroes.

myth calls him a demigod to indicate the difference between him and the unchanging gods. He is attended by the Corybants who are assigned to him by the Mother: they are the three leading personalities of the higher races that are next in order to the gods".[62] Fourth, the association with the Moon, present in Julian also.[63]

In consideration of these four points, the doctrine explained (or rather alluded to) by Damascius in this text and Julian's *Oration* appear to be strictly convergent. The association of Attis and Adonis in a Neoplatonic text of the School of Athens (which, for this reason, may derive inspiration from the works of Iamblichus) gives weight to the hypothesis that Julian may have had Adonis in mind while alluding to the "third Demiurge". The fact that he also makes Zeus the Demiurge of the Universe and speaks of Dionysus as an entity responsible for a "divided Demiurgy" gives further confirmation and allows us to assume that Iamblichus is the author of the grouping, in the form of a demiurgic Triad, of the gods Zeus, Dionysus and Adonis, that appears in Proclus' commentaries. At all events, the pattern followed by Julian when writing about three Demiurges appears not to have been that of a triad first Helios (the One)—second Helios (intellective God)—third Helios (visible Sun), as is generally believed (and as Julian's *Oration*, which indeed describes such a triad in 132c–133c, seems to prompt us); rather, Julian seems to have believed in the existence of a first, principal Demiurge of the Universe as a whole, that is Zeus (who, in accordance with Iamblichus and subsequent Neoplatonic developments, is not to be confused with the first Principle), followed by entities more and more "partial" (μερικοί), standing closer and closer to Matter. This, in turn, will prove to be the mainstream late Neoplatonic solution to the philosophical problem of demiurgy, with various tentative identifications of the demiurgic Triad, as we have seen (Zeus—Dionysus—Adonis; Zeus—Poseidon—Hades; or, considering as "demiurgic" too the gods constituting with Zeus the first triad of intellective Gods, Kronos—Rhea—Zeus); our claim, that in this particular instance an influence of a triad constituted by Zeus, Dionysus and Adonis

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[62] *Mother of Gods*, 168a7–b5.

[63] See 165d: Attis is "the intellectual god, the connecting link between forms embodied in matter beneath the region of the Moon"; 167d–168a, which establishes a parallel between Attis' "madness" and the ἀλλοίωσις of the fifth body in the region of the Moon (phases of the Moon are associated to earthly changes also in Iamblichus, Fr. 70 *In Tim.*, ll. 13–16: "the Moon has the first rank, in the area round the Earth, as having the relationship of generating power and mother to the realm of Generation (for everything turns with her, growing when she grows and declining when she declines)" (transl. Dillon)).

is likely to have been the *right* one, stands on ever fragile grounds and is simply a provisional conclusion, based on the reading of an allusive text, and not susceptible of ultimate proof: it may be considered successful, if it solves more problems than it creates.

Julian must have based himself (be it solely by recourse to memory) on Iamblichean teachings on Demiurgic hierarchies. These teachings were passed down to the School of Athens and became common philosophical material there. It is, however, quite difficult to determine what texts may have been in play. A fairly sound assumption would be to suppose an influence of the treatise *On Gods*, quoted by Iamblichus himself[64] as containing precise definitions of hypercosmic and encosmic gods—and therefore quite liable to have contained a developed Demiurgic hierarchy. We should also keep in mind that Damascius refers to the doctrines of Orpheus and the Theurgists: an influence of the *Chaldaean Theology* (which we know was not unknown to Julian)[65] cannot be excluded. There remains a third possibility, that of a book by Iamblichus on the mysteries of Cybele: it would not be easy to suppose such a commentary on the sole basis of Julian's work (Iamblichus, frequently quoted in *To King Helios*, is not even quoted once in *To the Mother of the Gods*—at least by name), but such a text as Damascius' *In Parmenidem* puzzles me: "Rhea, according to Socrates in the *Cratylus*, represents the "flowing" of all beings, and, as we are told by the Phrygian discourses [i. e. the cult of the Mother], she stabilizes all beings in herself and calls them back to her"[66]—which is exactly the role played by Cybele in Julian's *Oration*. Is it really possible to believe in Julian's originality while

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[64] *De Mysteriis*, VIII, 8, 10–17 = p. 271.10–17. This lost text may—or may not—have been a full-length *exposé* of theological traditions as well as an attempt to systematize them. This would explain Julian's many references to quite obscure traditions in *To King Helios*: the most important of which, for our purpose, are 150c–d, ascribing to Iamblichus developments on a "Phoenician theology" (Adonis was himself a Phoenician god, see ps.-Apollodorus, 3.183: "Hesiodos says that he was the son of Phoinix and Alphesiboia"; the Naassene hymn referenced in n. 47 mentions Ἀσσύριοι); and 143d–144a, a mention of Zeus' and Helios' common worship in the island of Cyprus (but Iamblichus is not quoted—at least explicitly—here): this allusion to Cyprus may shed some light on *In Crat.* § 180: "He has ranked the encosmic Dionysus with the encosmic Aphrodite because she loves him and forms a likeness of him, Adonis, who was much honoured along the Cilicians and Cypriotes" (transl. Duvick (2007)). If these two texts are to be traced back to a common Iamblichean source—but of course this is very fragile—, we would then have our triad Zeus—Dionysos—Adonis, and a common location.

[65] See *Letter 12* Bidez; J. Bouffartigue (1992) esp. 306 sqq. and 345 sqq.

[66] Damascius, *In Parm.* III 42.13–16 Combès–Westerink-Segonds = 154.15–17 Ruelle: ἥ τε γὰρ Ῥέα πάντων ἐστὶ ῥοὴ κατὰ τὸν ἐν Κρατύλῳ Σωκράτην, καὶ πάντα ἵστησιν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἀνακαλεῖται πρὸς ἑαυτήν, ὡς καὶ οἱ Φρύγιοι διδάσκουσι λόγοι. See Combès' note ad loc. and, for Julian, *Mother of Gods* 171c5–6: ἐπανάγει πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἡ θεὸς ἀσμένως, μᾶλλον δὲ ἔχει παρ' ἑαυτῇ.

coming upon such a text? Lack of sources forces us to remain cautious, but this strong parallel between Damascius (indebted to the traditions of the School of Athens) and Julian, in virtue of the principle formulated by Bouffartigue,[67] leads to the hypothesis of a common Iamblichean doctrine or text, such as may have provided a model for Proclus' *monobiblon* on the Mother of the Gods.[68]

The Functioning of the Triad: Levels of Forms and Levels of the Divine

In *To King Helios* (150a), Julian affirms that the Moon[69] "adorns with its Forms the realm of Matter". Iamblichus himself attributes to the Moon τὸ πολυειδὲς καὶ διάφορον τῆς γενέσεως.[70] It is troubling, then, to see that one of the major themes of Julian's *To the Mother of the Gods* is that of the information of matter by form. As we have seen (cf. *supra*, T1 and T2), the third Demiurge is himself associated with the causes of enmattered Forms, while Attis "comprehends in [himself] all the concepts and causes of the forms that are embodied in matter".[71] He is an "intellectual God", "the connective link between forms embodied in matter beneath the region of the Moon".[72] Pages 161c to 165a of Julian's *Oration* are devoted to a philosophical demonstration of the necessity of transcendent causes of the enmattered Forms, lest they associate with matter only by pure chance, as the Epicureans think:[73] by doing so, Julian explains the terms of the philosophical problem that the exposition of the myth and the revelation of Attis' identity are due to resolve.

Bouffartigue has drawn a parallel between Proclus' report on Iamblichus' Demiurge and Julian's own words: Julian, *Mother of Gods*, 161d (= our T1): τοῦ τρίτου δημιουργοῦ, ὃς τῶν ἐνύλων εἰδῶν τοὺς λόγους ἐξῃρημένους ἔχει καὶ συνεχεῖς τὰς αἰτίας; and Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 309.2–5: τοῦ δὲ τρίτου καὶ δημιουργοῦντος τὰ ὅλα τὰς μονίμους προόδους καὶ τὰς τῶν αἰτίων ὅλων ποιήσεις

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[67] See *supra*, n. 14.

[68] Mentioned by Marinus, *Proclus* § 33.

[69] See *supra*, n. 63 for the relationship between the Moon and Attis.

[70] Fr. 153 Dalsgaard Larsen (*In De Caelo*). On the Moon, see also Fr. 21 *In Tim.* and Dillon's good commentary; the texts he quotes should be compared to *King Helios*, 150a, which probably shows traces of Iamblichean influence; see also for her demiurgic function Julian's *Letter* 111, ll. 50–52 Bidez: τὴν δὲ ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ δημιουργὸν τῶν ὅλων Σελήνην οὖσαν οὐκ αἰσθάνεσθε πόσων ἀγαθῶν αἰτία τῇ πόλει γίνεται;.

[71] *Mother of Gods*, 161c7–9.

[72] *Mother of Gods*, 165d: τὸν τῶν ἐνύλων καὶ ὑπὸ σελήνην εἰδῶν συνοχέα.

[73] See J.-C. Foussard (1978) 197–198.

καὶ συνοχὰς τάς τε ἀφωρισμένας ὅλας τοῖς εἴδεσιν αἰτίας καὶ τὰς προϊούσας πάσας δημιουργίας.[74] Both Demiurges, then, possess in themselves causes of Forms, and this fact constitutes a strong parallel between Julian and Iamblichus. There is a slight difference however: while Iamblichus' universal Demiurge that Proclus describes possesses "universal" causes and forms (ὅλα), it is only in Julian's text that we find mention of the enmattered Forms.

This is probably not due to semi-automatic word-dropping: we think that in both texts, the vocabulary is precise and perfectly correct. If so, there must be some distinction to make between different levels of Forms, in relation to divine levels: while the universal Demiurge possesses universal causes,[75] the third Demiurge concerns himself with enmattered Forms, which are directly used in the production of mortal beings.[76] Using this hypothesis as a starting point, we may try to complete the hierarchy with respect to higher and lower entities.

Forms in the Higher Gods

Damascius provides us with a very interesting testimonium on an Iamblichean triad (yet again!): it is Fr. 4 *In Philebum* Dillon.

> Ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ διακόσμῳ ἡ πάντῃ διάκρισις. Ἡ γὰρ περιγεγραμμένη εἰδοποιΐα νοῦ πρώτου ἐστίν, νοῦς δὲ πρῶτος ὁ καθαρὸς νοῦς· διὸ καὶ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τούτῳ ὑφίστασθαι λέγει τὰς τῶν εἰδῶν μονάδας, <μονάδας>[77] τὸ ἑκάστου λέγων ἀδιάκριτον· διὸ νοητὸν ὡς ἐν νοεροῖς καὶ οὐσίας αἴτιος εἰδητικῆς, ὡς ὁ δεύτερος ζωῆς, ὡς ὁ τρίτος εἰδοποιΐας ἐν νοεροῖς.

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[74] "To the third Intellect, who creates the Universe, belong as attributes stability in processions, production and continuity of the universal causes, universal causes assigned to species and all proceeding Demiurgies".

[75] For instance, Proclus mentions τὰ πληρώματα τῶν εἰδῶν, contained by the Demiurge's διάνοια (*In Tim*. I, 224.2–3).

[76] In the text of *In Rempublicam* quoted above, n. 18, the demiurgy of Adonis is "in contact with things that come to be and the Forms contained in them", that is, since the fact is taken as a symptom of inferiority, the Forms-in-matter.

Julian, for his part, takes good care not to associate matter and "form", but rather matter and "enmattered form" (ἔνυλον εἶδος): see *Mother of Gods* 162a. Iamblichus may have had a distinction of this sort while describing, inside the "physical" kind of celestial gods' powers, a part "being inherent in seminal reasons and, before these seminal reasons, in unmovable ones: it essentially precedes generation" (τούτου δὲ αὖθις τὸ μὲν ἐν λόγοις σπερματικοῖς τε καὶ πρὸ τῶν σπερματικῶν τοῖς ἀκινήτοις ἱδρυμένον προηγεῖται καθ' ἑαυτὸ πρὸ τῆς γενέσεως, *De Myst*. III 28, ll. 37–39 = 169.7–9).

[77] Add. Westerink.

> Not even in the second realm is there separation properly so called. For the creation of distinct forms is a function of Intelligence in the first place, and the first Intelligence is the pure Intelligence; for which reason Iamblichus declares that on this level one may place the monads of the Forms, meaning by "monads" the undifferentiated element in each. Wherefore it is the object of intellection for the intellective realm, and the cause of Being for the Forms, even as the second element is the cause of Life in the intellective realm, and the third the cause of their creation *as Forms*.[78]

I suspect this diacosm to be the "intellective" one: coming after the second, it must be the third, that is the intellective diacosm (after the intelligible and intelligible-intellectual, in Proclus' terminology).[79] If this is correct, the first Intellect is the god Kronos (described as *katharos nous*, an etymology attributed to him in the *Cratylus*,[80] and therefore confirming my hypothesis),[81] first intellective God, that is, a god preceding Zeus (the Demiurge) in the great chain of supernatural entities. He then contains the "monads of the Forms" or the "undifferentiated" element of the Forms. The third Intellect (Zeus) is responsible for εἰδοποιΐα, that is, as I conceive it, the creation of Forms in such differentiated state as to be ready to be used in the creation of the World. In any case, the state of the Forms in the third Intellect is clearly more differentiated than in Kronos. Therefore it seems that Iamblichus indeed possessed the concept of several levels of Forms and was able to make them correspond to several godly orders. Damascius' testimony makes it plain that, for him, the philosophical question of the relationship of Form and Matter was to be asked at the level of the "intellective" gods, since this order contains the god or Intellect otherwise known as the Demiurge. It is he who is chiefly responsible for εἰδοποιΐα; however, since he is not the highest god in his own order (let alone in the whole of reality), he must look higher up, to his father Kronos who contains the "monads of the Forms", before looking down towards Matter which he is about to inform,

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[78] Iamblichus, Fr. 4 *In Philebum* Dillon = Damascius, *In Phil.* § 105 (transl. Dillon).

[79] For convenient figures summing up the Neoplatonic system of gods as exposed by Proclus, see for instance the Introduction provided to the Combès-Westerink-Segonds edition of Damascius' *In Parmenidem* in the Budé collection, vol. I, pp. XXXIII–VII, or the Appendix to Opsomer's article.

[80] *Crat.* 396c.

[81] An elaborated demonstration would, I fear, lead us too far. Let us simply quote Syrianus, whose doctrines are thus summed up by Proclus in the *In Timaeum*: the Demiurge is "himself producer of Substance, himself provider of Life, himself producer of Form" (III 248.1–2: αὐτὸς οὐσιοποιός, αὐτὸς ζῳογόνος, αὐτὸς εἰδοποιός), i. e. he gathers in his own being the attributions of the whole Triad to which he belongs (first intellectual triad; Zeus, the Demiurge, is its third member, while Rhea-Hecate, mentioned in the context of the passage, is its second).

thus breaking the undifferentiated state of Kronos' εἴδη. As such, he probably acted as the principal intermediary of Iamblichus' theological system, putting in the sensible world as much intelligible fixity as there could be: and then Julian's identification of his all-powerful mediator Helios[82] with Zeus becomes all the more comprehensible.

Forms in the Lower Gods

In Julian's *Oration*, Attis himself symbolizes the metaphysical tension that appears as the Form approaches matter. This is the meaning of the myth: Attis, possessing the causes of enmattered Forms, becomes mad and approaches the cave of the Nymph, i. e. the cause presiding over matter. Using metaphorical language, the myth describes this as madness and as a fall: Attis' "inclination" (νεῦσις, 166d) towards matter represents the danger of unlimitedness. Fortunately, the Mother saves him, at the expense of his castration. "What is the meaning of this castration?" Julian asks: "it is the checking of the unlimited: for now was generation confined within definite Forms checked by creative Providence".[83] "This castration, so much discussed by the crowd, is really the halting of his unlimited course".[84] We must above all notice the opposition between Form and unlimitedness here: "forever [Attis] cuts short his unlimited course through the cause whose limits are fixed, even the cause of the Forms" (ἀεὶ δὲ ἀποτέμνεται τὴν ἀπειρίαν διὰ τῆς ὡρισμένης τῶν εἰδῶν αἰτίας).[85] Then the justification of the existence of Attis given by Julian becomes clearer: "for truly the forms of all things are not in all things, and in the highest and first causes we do not find the forms of the lowest and last, after which there is nothing but privation".[86] The Iamblichean tenets of Julian's *Oration* now appear in full

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[82] The Greek root μεσ- (μέσον, μεσότης …) occurs thirty-five times in *To King Helios*, mostly in association with Helios: see in particular 141d–142a: τῶν νοερῶν θεῶν μέσος ἐν μέσοις τεταγμένος κατὰ παντοίαν μεσότητα, and 156d1: μέσος ἐν μέσοις τοῖς νοεροῖς θεοῖς (i. e. the intellective Gods: Julian alludes quite probably to an Iamblichean doctrine of the intellective Order as intermediary between the intelligible and sensible realms, such as that which is behind Fr. 4 *In Phil.*).

[83] 167c6–d1.

[84] 168d4–5.

[85] 171d2–3.

[86] *Mother of Gods*, 161c9–d3. Julian here clearly seems to stand in opposition to Plotinian metaphysics: the Intellect, that is the highest degree of Being, does not contain the forms of the inferior degrees. This in turn is a good example of the reinterpretation of the system of reality made by Plotinus' successors: in order to copy reality's hierarchy, the system itself had to be broken into several levels, the higher ones communicating with the lower not

light: while the highest divine levels preserve undefiled the Forms of higher beings, the lowest gods (and in particular Attis, often described by Julian as the "last of the Gods") take charge of the enmattered Forms, i. e. Forms that mingle with matter and accomplish a descent of sorts on their own. Attis' final victory, at the expense of castration, is a symbol of the Forms' eternal victory over Matter, and of Limit dominating the Unlimited. Thus all beings partake of Providence and are saved: but on the other hand, "the creation of distinct forms" (περιγεγραμμένη εἰδοποιΐα, see, *supra*, Damascius' testimony from the *In Philebum*) belongs exclusively to the intellectual Gods; and this world, our world, is forever deficient and strives towards unlimitedness.[87]

Conclusion

It is now time to draw some general conclusions from the preceding developments.

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immediately, but only through intermediaries (the image used to represent this succession being that of the "chain", σειρά).

[87] On the opposition of Limit and Unlimitedness in Iamblichus' philosophy, see D.P. Taormina (1999) chap. 1, and the Introduction to the Belles Lettres edition of Damascius' *In Philebum* by G. Van Riel (2008), pp. XL–LI.

This theory of differentiated levels of Forms (on which see also J.F. Finamore (1985) 141), among which the lowest are the "enmattered Forms", whose ontological status is ambiguous, seems to have been quite fecund, judging by its application in different fields and its apparition in Iamblichus' commentaries on Aristotle. See Frr. 38 (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 130.14–19) and 53 (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 145.15–19) Dalsgaard Larsen of Iamblichus (transl. taken from F.A.J. de Haas and B. Fleet (2001)): "But Iamblichus says: 'Like the other enmattered forms, number is present in, and co-exists with, things that are enumerated; but it does not have its being in them in an unqualified sense, nor is its being supervenient on them by concurrence, nor does it arrive with the status of an accident, but it has some substance of its own along with the things <that it is in>, according to which it determines the things that participate and arranges them according to the appropriate measure'" (ὁ δὲ Ἰάμβλιχός φησιν ὅτι "ὥσπερ τὰ ἄλλα ἔνυλα εἴδη, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς πάρεστι μὲν καὶ συνυπάρχει τοῖς διαριθμουμένοις πράγμασιν, οὐ μέντοι ἐν αὐτοῖς ἁπλῶς ἔχει τὴν ὑπόστασιν, οὐδὲ ἐπιγινομένην αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐπακολούθησιν οὐδὲ ἐν συμβεβηκότος τάξει παραγινομένην, ἔχουσαν δέ τινα ἰδίαν μετὰ τῶν πραγμάτων οὐσίαν, καθ' ἣν ἀφορίζει καὶ πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον συντάττει τὰ μετέχοντα"); "As the form approaches matter a certain power, a mixture of the two, comes-to-be; for in so far as this power partakes of the form, what is enmattered is likened to it and becomes great and small; but according to its own indeterminacy it partakes of the more and less, relationship to something and change to contraries" (προσιόντος γὰρ τοῦ εἴδους τῇ ὕλῃ σύμμικτός τις ἀπ' ἀμφοῖν γίνεται δύναμις· καθ' ὅσον μὲν γὰρ μεταλαμβάνει τοῦ εἴδους, ὁμοιοῦται πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ γίνεται πολὺ καὶ μέγα τὸ ἔνυλον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν οἰκείαν ἀπειρίαν τοῦ μᾶλλον καὶ ἧττον καὶ τῆς πρός τι σχέσεως καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐναντία μεταβολῆς μεταλαμβάνει).

First, Iamblichus influenced Proclean theology, and in no small way (this, arguably, was already known for a fact: let us remind the reader of Sallustius' hierarchy of encosmic gods, which Proclus also used, without a single change, in *Platonic Theology* Book VI).[88] Iamblichus himself, no doubt about this, has been influenced by his contemporaries: Amelius' and Theodorus' three Demiurges announce Iamblichus' demiurgic triads:[89] but he remained a convinced monist, and thus stressed the role played by Zeus, the Demiurge he detected in the *Timaeus*, and which Julian had no great difficulty to convert into king Helios.

The presence, in Iamblichus' theological system, of Zeus and Dionysus, seems to me to be beyond doubt. That of Attis and Adonis is clearly more difficult to determine: while they seem to be part of the common Iamblichean heritage of the school of Athens,[90] and their subtle presence could also mean that they were inherited and therefore not worthy of thorough examination, it is also true that Julian claims originality twice in his *Oration*.[91] At

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[88] Sallustius' development is to be found in *On the Gods and the Universe*, VI, 3: Proclus', in *Platonic Theology* VI, chap. 22. The texts strictly parallel each other and render necessary the hypothesis of huge advances made by Iamblichus (only possible common influence between Julian, Sallustius and Proclus) in the theological domain. This paper represents an endeavour to look into this in some depth, as far as is permitted by the paucity of our sources.

[89] This becomes rather clear if one quotes Proclus (*In Tim.* I, 309.18–20) on the characteristics of Theodorus' three Demiurges: τὸν μὲν ἀδιαίρετον, τὸν δὲ εἰς ὅλα διῃρημένον, τὸν δὲ καὶ τὴν εἰς τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα διαίρεσιν πεποιημένον, and recalls what we have said about the god Dionysus and the "partial Demiurgy" of which he is responsible, as well as Damascius' testimony from *In Philebum*, which made use of a similar vocabulary. Theodorus' triad is already laid out so as to favour undividedness over fragmentation, and if we had access to more sources, we would probably find Theodorus to be quite close to Iamblichus.

As for Amelius (on whom see J.M. Dillon (1969)), his exegetical method, which enabled him to "discover" his three Demiurges in Plato's text, has probably strongly influenced Iamblichus.

[90] Adonis is mentioned by Hermias *In Phaedr.* (cf. J. Opsomer (2003) 41–42), and thus appears to have been known by Syrianus, before Proclus; Damascius describes the statue of a god who, he says, is at the same time Osiris and Adonis (Fr. 76E in P. Athanassiadi's edition of the *Life of Isidore* (1999)); as for Attis, traces of his importance to Neoplatonic exegetes include, apart from Damascius' text (cf. n. 58), his relation of a festival celebrated at Hierapolis in honor of the god (Fr. 87A Athanassiadi). The moral message gathered by Damascius from this experience: "I celebrated the feast of […] the Hilaria, which signified my salvation from death" (καί μοι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι […] τὴν τῶν Ἱλαρίων […] ἑορτήν· ὅπερ ἐδήλου τὴν ἐξ Ἅιδου γεγονυῖαν ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν, transl. Athanassiadi), is similar to Julian's own soteriological interpretation of the same festival: οὗπερ γενομένου, πάντως ἔπεσθαι χρὴ τὰ Ἱλάρια. Τί γὰρ εὐθυμότερον, τί δὲ ἱλαρώτερον γένοιτο ἂν ψυχῆς ἀπειρίαν μὲν καὶ γένεσιν καὶ τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ κλύδωνα διαφυγούσης, ἐπὶ δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀναχθείσης; (*Mother of Gods*, 169c–d).

[91] See *Mother of Gods* 161c (ἐγὼ … αὐτὸς οἴκοθεν ἐπινοῶ), 178d–179a: "it was granted me to compose this hymn at a breath, in the short space of one night, without having read anything

the current state of research, I would tentatively conclude that Iamblichus had included Adonis (from the *Phaedrus*) in his theological system, that he may have made some references to Attis, for instance in *On Gods* (that he had an interest in the cult of Cybele is made certain by some references to it in the *De Mysteriis*)[92] but that Julian himself arranged the whole myth, gave it proper (that is, exhaustive) exegesis and endowed Attis with Adonis' attributes just as he did for his Helios, basing himself on Iamblichus' Zeus. This is a conjecture, and explains the title of this paper, which is a mere "proposition".

Second, Iamblichus decisively influenced Neoplatonism by establishing strict hierarchies (most often presented in the form of triads). His distinction of several levels of Forms, paralleling as many divine orders, was the starting point leading ultimately to Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, and parallels the theological interpretation of the *Parmenides* as a dialogue describing the whole of reality, from the One to matter. The fundamental opposition in reality is that of Limit and the Unlimited: the divine is limited, matter is unlimited, and the ontological shock of these two spheres colliding is the subject of Julian's *Oration*.

Third: with Iamblichus also seems to appear a newfound philosophical interest for gods whose cults are associated with soteriology (we may have mentioned Asclepius in this connection).[93] In this, Iamblichus was no more than a product of his time, an "age of anxiety" as Dodds famously called it: but turning away from Plotinus' teachings, he was, together with Amelius and Theodorus, a good representative of the post-Plotinian generation that multiplied its inquiries in the field of theological and mystical traditions—and this leads us to Proclus' characterization by Marinus as "the hierophant of the whole world", a title that would probably suit Iamblichus well. The

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on the subject beforehand, or thought it over". The exact scope of this "originality", of course, is impossible to determine with certainty.

92 *De Mysteriis*, III, 9.4–5 = 117.16–17: οἱ μητρίζοντες, cf. III, 10.19–20 = 121.14–15: τῆς δὲ μητρὸς τῶν θεῶν … τοὺς κατόχους; III, 10.14–15 = 121.9–10: τῶν μὲν Κορυβάντων φρουρητική πώς ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις, which parallels Julian's text quoted *supra* (cf. n. 62), even if, of course, there is no wonder as to the fact that the Corybants act as δορυφόροι or as φρουρητικοί (they were often confused with the Couretes, who were the protectors of young Zeus).

93 On this subject, see J.F. Finamore (1998) (I am indebted to Prof. Finamore for having kindly given me access to this article). The main texts are *Contra Galilaeos* 200a–b, quoted on p. 74, and, for Iamblichus, Fr. 19 *In Tim.* Dillon, quoted on p. 83. For traces of an Iamblichean exegesis of the god Asclepius, one should also keep in mind Marinus' reference to a hymn dedicated by Iamblichus to Machaon and Podaleirios (*Proclus*, § 32), Asclepius' sons, the letters of the ps.-Julian to Iamblichus, which, even if they were not authored by Julian, are nevertheless precious documents on the life of the philosopher's school and on his interests (see on the subject Barnes (1978)), and finally, Sallustius, *On the Gods and the Universe*, VI 4.7.

diversity of the divine parallels the diversity of reality: its highest degrees are forever preserved, its lowest are forever threatened by unlimitedness and non-being, but they are also susceptible of "salvation" (of which the highest degrees would not be in need anyway). This salvation is provided by gods who themselves undergo suffering and passion, and thus are themselves "saved" (as is Attis in Julian's *Oration*). In Julian's mind (and Iamblichus'), to create and care for the "last beings" (τελευταία),[94] there had to be a divine cause that would itself be "the last".[95] But this, in turn, was already Plato's idea in the *Timaeus*, when he set apart the Demiurge and the "young gods": as the *Republic* has it: *theos anaitios*: with this, neither Iamblichus nor Julian would have disagreed.

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[94] *Mother of Gods*, 164a8.

[95] Attis is ἡ τελευταία καὶ μέχρι γῆς ὑπὸ περιουσίας τοῦ γονίμου διὰ τῶν ἄνωθεν παρὰ τῶν ἄστρων καθήκουσα (αἰτία) (= our T1); see also 167d4–5: τὴν τελευταίαν τῶν θεῶν αἰτίαν and 170d6–7: τῆς τελευταίας <αἰτίας> τῶν θεῶν (where αἰτία is the result of a correction by Hertlein).

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