

Human and Divine Interaction in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*:
Astrology as a Paradigm of the Interaction with the Divine

‘A dissertation submitted to the University of Wales Trinity
Saint David in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts’

2017

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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ABSTRACT/ SUMMARY

The mode of interaction between human and divine planes of existence constitutes a major background in the metaphysical landscape of *De Mysteriis*. Incited by Porphyry's queries on polytheistic religious practices, such as divination, sacrifice and theurgy, Iamblichus suggests that humans, through the appropriate ritual, ethical and intellectual preparation, may see and listen to the gods. In that theoretical framework, astrology is examined as a representative example of interaction with the divine. Even though the divine always remains impassive, the visions, sounds and messages emanating from the gods give rise to the art of inspired interpretation of those signs. If the ritual practitioner succeeds in deciphering the heavenly signs in accordance with the cosmic laws of sympathy (*sympatheia*) and divine love (*theia philia*), the human soul may begin its re-ascent to the realm of the gods. In the course of that self-transformative process, the soul may come to act on the level of the personal *daimon* and receive the particular planetary god, which rules over its *daimon*, as its leader. From that viewpoint, astrology can be performed as a form of theurgy initiating the process of negotiation with fate.

INTRODUCTION

i) *De Mysteriis*: The Title

Iamblichus Chalcidensis (c.240-c.325 CE) was a Syrian-born late antique thinker who wrote his philosophical works in Greek.¹ Although Iamblichus was principally inspired by Plato (c.428-348 BCE) and thought of himself simply as Platonist, modern scholars generally call him a ‘Neoplatonist’. ‘Neoplatonism’ is a term artificially coined by eighteenth-century German scholars seeking to distinguish the movement inspired by Plotinus (204-270 CE) from the Platonic Academy (c.387-83 BCE) and from the so-called ‘Middle-Platonists’ (80 BCE-220 CE).² Iamblichus’ treatise *De Mysteriis* (*On the Mysteries*), composed between 280 and 305 CE, constitutes one of the most extensive surviving works from Late Antiquity on complex polytheistic religious phenomena and practices, such as divination, sacrifice and theurgy.³ Theurgy (θεουργία, literally meaning

¹ For a comprehensive discussion on Iamblichus’ dates, see John M. Dillon, *Iamblichus Chalcidensis In Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta*, Westbury, Prometheus Trust, 2009 [1973], pp. 5-10 [hereafter John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*]. For an account on Iamblichus’ life, see John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*, pp. 3-18; John M. Dillon and Wolfgang Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, Boston, Leiden, 2010, pp. xiii-xiv [hereafter Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*]; Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon and Jackson P. Hershbell (edited and translated by), *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, pp. xviii-xxvi [hereafter Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*]; Henri Dominique Saffrey, Alain-Philippe Seconda and Adrien Lecerf (ed. and trs.), *Jamblique: Réponse à Porphyre (De Mysteriis)*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2013, pp. xxxiii-lix [hereafter, Saffrey et al., *Jamblique: Réponse à Porphyre*].

² For the use of the term ‘Neoplatonism’ and its derivatives, cf. R.T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, London and Indianapolis, Bristol Classical Press, 1995 [1972], p. viii [hereafter, R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*]; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism, Oracles of the Gods*, Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2014, p. 1, n. 2 [hereafter, Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*].

³ For the dating of the *De Mysteriis*, Dillon suggests a date around 280 CE (Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*, p. 13), while Saffrey, Athanassiadi and Clarke assign it to c.300 CE (H. D. Saffrey, ‘Abamon, Pseudonyme de Jamblique’, in R. B. Palmer and R. G. Hamerton-Kelly (eds.), *Philomathes: Studies and Essays in the Humanities in*

‘god-working’ or ‘divine work’) aimed for the soul’s contact, assimilation and union with the divine, and was, according to Sarah Iles Johnston, ‘a religious movement that arose during the latter half of the second century CE and significantly affected subsequent Neoplatonic philosophy and mysticism’.⁴

The original title *The Reply of Master Abamon to the Letter of Porphyry to Anebo and the Solutions to the Questions it Contains* indicates that this treatise was a reply to Porphyry’s *Letter to Anebo*.⁵ Porphyry (c.234-c.305 CE), also a Neoplatonist philosopher and probably Iamblichus’ former teacher, aimed his *Letter* (c.263-268) at Anebo, an Egyptian priest or one of Iamblichus’ disciples, and indirectly at Iamblichus himself, challenging the forms of divination practiced by theurgists and the overall role of theurgic ritual within the Platonic tradition, and inaugurated a philosophical dialogue seeking to elucidate the profound nature of those religious mysteries.⁶ In his reply, which is a point by point answer to Por-

Memory of Philippe Merlan, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, 227-239, here pp. 231-233 [hereafter, Henri Saffrey, ‘Abamon, Pseudonyme de Jamblique’]; Polymnia Athanassiadi, “Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus”, *Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 83, 1993, 115-130, p. 116, n. 13 [hereafter, Polymnia Athanassiadi, “Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus”]; Emma C. Clarke, *Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate, 2001, p. 6 [hereafter, Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*]).

⁴ Sarah Iles Johnston, ‘Cavalier Gods and Theurgic Salvation in the Second Century A.D.’, in *Classical Philology* Vol. 87, No. 4, Chicago University Press, Oct. 1992, 303-321, here p. 303. For a comprehensive discussion on theurgy, cf. Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 24-40. Aspects of theurgy are presented in the Appendix II and are furthermore discussed throughout the present essay.

⁵ Porphyry, *Epistula ad Anebo (Letter to Anebo)*, ed. A.R. Sodano, Naples, L’Arte Tipografica, 1958. The original title of Iamblichus’ treatise *Ἀβάμμωνος διδασκάλου πρὸς τὴν Πορφυρίου πρὸς Ἀνεβὼ ἐπιστολὴν ἀποκρίσεις καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ἀπορημάτων λύσεις* appears in the prefatory note from the eleventh-century Byzantine scholar Michael Psellus. See Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, pp. 2-3, n.1.

⁶ For a discussion on the relationship between Porphyry and Iamblichus in the *De Mysteriis*, see *infra*, Appendix I. For Iamblichus as Porphyry’s disciple, see Eunapius, *Lives of Philosophers*, 458.1-4, in Philostratus: *Lives of the Sophists*. Eunapius: *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, trs. by Wilmer C. Wright, Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library 134; Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, p. 15, n. 27). For Anebo as a one of Iamblichus’ disciples (or, rather, ‘Abamon’s’), see Iam-

phyry's queries, Iamblichus assumes the *persona* of the Egyptian priest Abamon, which is either a sensible choice of an Egyptian-sounding name, or may derive from the Egyptian word for 'priest' (*w'b*), or for 'heart' (*ib*), meaning 'priest' or 'heart of Ammon'.⁷

The modern title *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians* was coined by the Renaissance scholar, priest and *magus* Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), who translated, or rather paraphrased, parts of the book in Latin in 1497.⁸ In the Introductory Argument preceding his translation, Ficino qualifies Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo* as 'very rich in asking different and important questions, pertaining to philosophy in many respects, and more in particular to god, angels, *daimones*, souls, providence, fate, prophecy, magic, miracles, sacrifices and prayers'.⁹ The subject topic of *De Mysteriis* emerges, according to Ficino, from a metaphysical landscape containing constant interaction between humans and the divine. Henri-Dominique Saffrey remarks that Ficino's choice of the word

blichus, *De Mysteriis*, I.1 (2.6), [hereafter, Iamblichus, *DM*], in Jamblique, *Les Mystères d'Égypte*, ed. and trans. Des Places, Paris, Budé-Les Belles Lettres, 1996 [1966]. All references and quotations are from this edition. English translations of non-English texts will be quoted accordingly.

⁷ Or might even mean 'father of Ammon'. For the scholarly debate regarding the exact meaning of this pseudonym, Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, pp. xxxiii-xxxviii; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 138. For 'Abamon' as 'Father of Ammon', since 'aba' is Syriac, Chaldean and Hebrew for 'father', see Henri Saffrey, 'Abamon, Pseudonyme de Jamblique', pp. 234-235.

⁸ The title in Latin is *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum, Chaldeorum, Assyriorum*.

⁹ [epistolam] '...uariarum & grauium quaestionum plenam ad omnes philosophiae partes spectantium, praesertim ad deum, atque angelos, daemonesque, & animas ad prouidentiam. ad fatum. uaticinia. magicen. miracula. sacrificia. uota'. (my translation) For Ficino's text in Latin, Saffrey et al., *Jamblique: Réponse à Porphyre*, p. xvii, n. 1. I use the term *daimon* (italicised) and its derivatives throughout this essay as semantically equivalent to the concept and the uses of the Greek δαίμων and the Latin *daemon*, and also in order to avoid confusion with the 'demon' or 'daemon' in a Christian context.

‘*mysteria*’ in the title is a sensible one, since this term ‘indicates the gods, spiritual entities and practices of our relationship to the divine’.¹⁰

From that perspective, astrology may be viewed as a representative example of a *mysterium*. As will be argued, astrology, which is discussed throughout the treatise, constitutes in the *De Mysteriis* a paradigm of the practices connecting humans with fate (εἰμαρμένη) and the divine.¹¹ Although it would be preferable to refer to ‘varieties of astrological experience’ rather than to a single ‘astrology’, the term is intended in its etymological sense of the ‘word’ (*logos*) or ‘language’ of the stars’.¹² Astrology, which assumes, according to Nicholas Campion, ‘that there is a significant relationship between the stars or planets and affairs on earth’, might be provisionally defined, then, as ‘a unique system of interpretation of the correlation of planetary action in human experience’.¹³ Astrology also represents in *De Mysteriis* the fusion of the Eastern cultic elements of its origins with the Platonic philosophical tradition.¹⁴ Ficino’s inclusion of Near-Eastern and Egyptian

¹⁰ (les *mysteria*) ‘désignent les dieux, les êtres spirituelles et les pratiques de notre relation à dieu’, Saffrey et al., *Jamblique: Réponse à Porphyre*, p. xviii (my translation).

¹¹ Astrology is discussed throughout the *De Mysteriis*, but especially in Books I, III, VII, VIII and IX.

¹² I have borrowed the term ‘varieties of astrological experiences’ from Patrick Curry and Roy Willis, *Astrology, Science and Culture. Pulling Down the Moon*, Oxford and New York, Berg, 2004, p. 65 [hereafter, Patrick Curry and Roy Willis, *Astrology, Science and Culture. Pulling Down the Moon*]. Curry and Willis have in turn borrowed and amended the phrase from William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York, Mentor/New American Library, 1958 [1912]. For the etymological definition, Patrick Curry and Roy Willis, *Astrology, Science and Culture. Pulling Down the Moon*, p. 1.

¹³ Nicholas Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World’s Religions*, New York and London, New York University Press, 2012, p. 11 [hereafter, Nicholas Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World’s Religions*]; definition of the influential British astrologer Margaret E. Hone, *The Modern text-Book of Astrology*, Romford, L. N. Fowler & CO. LTD., 1995 [1951], p. 16.

¹⁴ For the Babylonian origins of astrology, see Francesca Rochberg, *The Heavenly Writing: Divination, Horoscopy, and Astronomy in Mesopotamian Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. i, x, 13, *passim*; Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology. Vol. 1: The Ancient World*, New York and London, Continuum, 2008, pp. 35-85 [hereafter, Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology. Vol. 1: The Ancient World*]. For the Egyptian influence in the development of the horoscope, see Dorian Gieseler

religious traditions in the modern title highlights Iamblichus' spirit of synthesising Greek religious practices with Egyptian and Mesopotamian ritual elements, and the Platonic philosophical discourse.¹⁵ As Crystal Addey remarks, 'Iamblichus identifies the roots of theurgy jointly in the Egyptian, Chaldean and Greek religious traditions'.¹⁶

ii) *De Mysteriis*: Stages of Interaction between Human and Divine Planes of Existence and the Paradigm of Astrology

The relationship between humans and the divine is a crucial issue for Neoplatonist philosophers. Even though Iamblichus holds that the divine is impassive (*ἀπαθὲς*), since none of the superior classes possesses a nature that is susceptible to passion, he nevertheless maintains that the ascent of the human soul to the realm of the gods is accompanied with the simultaneous divine descent.¹⁷ The interaction between the human and divine planes of existence forms the theoretical

Greenbaum and Micah T. Ross, 'The Role of Egypt in the Development of the Horoscope', in Ladislav Bares, Filip Coppens and Kveta Smolarikova (editors), *Egypt in Transition. Social and Religious Development of Egypt in the First Millennium BCE*, Prague: Charles University, 2010, 146-182 [hereafter, Greenbaum and Ross, 'The Role of Egypt in the Development of the Horoscope'].

¹⁵ Cf. Iamblichus, *DM* I.1 (4.10-5.1). For the suggestion of such synthesis, see also Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes. A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 132 [hereafter, Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*].

¹⁶ Crystal Addey, 'Oracles of Fire: The Ritual Formation of the *Chaldean Oracles*', in *Fortune et Réception des textes oraculaires dans l'Antiquité tardive et le monde médiéval* (Conference), Université de Libre Bruxelles, Bruxelles (5-6 September 2016), p. 13.

¹⁷ For the impassibility of the divine, see Iamblichus, *DM* I.10 (33.12-34.5). For the ascent of the human soul through *anagoge*, see *infra*, Appendix II.vii. For the simultaneous divine descent and human ascent, Iamblichus, *DM* I.9 (28.11-29.3); *DM* III.2 (103.8-104.10); *DM* III.17 (139.8-140.4); Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 221-236.

background of this investigation, starting from two interrelated research questions. The first seeks to elucidate the phases through which such an interaction takes place, while the second analyzes the place of astrology within ritual practices uniting humans to gods. The topic of human and divine interaction has been principally approached by Gregory Shaw in relation to theurgy, by Crystal Addey within the framework of divine possession and by John Dillon in reference to prayer.¹⁸ Astrology in *De Mysteriis* has been examined in relation to the personal *daimon* by Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum and as divination by Addey.¹⁹ The contribution of these scholars will be highlighted whenever necessary. Nevertheless, astrology has not yet been explored as a paradigm of the human and divine interaction in *De Mysteriis*.

¹⁸ Gregory Shaw, 'Theurgy as Demiurgy: Iamblichus' Solution to the Problem of Embodiment', *Dionysius* 12, 1988, pp. 37-59; Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, University park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995 [hereafter, Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*]; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*; Crystal Addey, "Ecstasy between Divine and Human: Re-assessing Agency in Iamblichean Divination and Theurgy," in John F. Finamore and John Phillips (eds.), *Literary, Philosophical and Religious Studies in the Platonic Tradition: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual International Society for Neoplatonic Studies Conference* (Bonn: Academia Verlag, 2013), pp. 7-24 [hereafter, Crystal Addey, "Ecstasy between Divine and Human: Re-assessing Agency in Iamblichean Divination and Theurgy,"]; Crystal Addey, 'Divine Possession and Divination in the Graeco-Roman World: The Evidence from Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries*,' in Bettina E. Schmidt and Lucy Huskinson (eds.), *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 171-185 [hereafter, Crystal Addey, 'Divine Possession and Divination in the Graeco-Roman World: The Evidence from Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries*']; John Dillon, 'The Platonic Philosopher at Prayer', in T. Kobush and M. Erler (eds.), *Metaphysik und Religion: zur Signatur des spatantiken Denkens* (Akten des Internationalen Kongresses vom 13-17 Marz 2001 in Wurzburg), Munchen, Saur, 2002, pp. 279-295; John Dillon, 'Iamblichus' Defence of Theurgy: Some Reflections', *The International Journal of Platonic Tradition* 1 (2007), pp. 30-41 [hereafter, John Dillon, 'Iamblichus' Defence of Theurgy'].

¹⁹ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology. Origins and Influence*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016 [hereafter, Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*]; ¹⁹ Crystal Addey, 'Oracles, Dreams and Astrology in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*', in Patrick Curry and Angela Voss (eds.), *Seeing with Different Eyes: Essays in Astrology and Divination*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007, pp. 35-57 [hereafter, Crystal Addey, 'Oracles, Dreams and Astrology in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*']; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*.

The process of human interaction with gods and semi-divine entities will be unfolded from three different angles, each representing a distinctive phase of a cumulative level of intimacy with the divine. Initially, I will examine the internal journey of the ritual practitioner seeking to enhance his or her own level of receptivity in order to receive the divine, often manifested by means of visions and sounds. Afterwards I will focus on the art of interpretation of the divine signs, which, especially in the case of the inspired form of divination, entails the soul's ascent to the realm of the gods.²⁰ Finally, I will explore the human potential to act on the level of the personal *daimon*, which will be approached as the most representative entity hovering between the human and divine planes of existence.

The second research question pertains to the perplexing and elusive status of astrology in *De Mysteriis*, since Iamblichus appears to entertain a multilayered approach to it. In the first place, he claims that astrology is a science (*episteme*) handed down to men by the gods.²¹ Subsequently, he analyses it as an artificial, but also a potentially inspired, form of divination.²² Finally, he tackles the idea that astrology could additionally be viewed as an important theurgic tool which might illustrate and even fill the ontological gap between gods and humans. As Greenbaum remarks, 'Iamblichus allows that astrology could be a tool of their-

²⁰ For the category of inspired, natural, or unprovoked divination (*mantike*) as opposed to artificial, inductive or provoked form of divination (augury), see Plato, *Phaedrus* 244 c-d, trs. by Harold North Fowler, in Plato, *Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Phaedrus*, Loeb, Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1914 [hereafter, Plato, *Phaedrus*]; Cicero, *De Divinatione* I.vi.10-12; II.xi.26-27, trs. by W.A. Falconer, in Cicero, *On Old Age. On Friendship. On Divination*, Loeb, Cambridge MA and London, Loeb Classical Library, 1923 [hereafter, Cicero, *De Divinatione*]. Divination is intended throughout this essay within the framework of understanding of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, cf. the above-mentioned texts of Plato and Cicero.

²¹ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.4 (277.9-278.9).

²² Crystal Addey, 'Oracles, Dreams and Astrology in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*', pp. 47-52.

gy'.²³ Therefore astrology, which is presented in the text by different designations, may serve as a paradigm in order to concretize the initiatory journey of the ritual practitioner and the three stages of the human and divine interaction. Nevertheless, it is not my intention either to enumerate an all-inclusive list of all possible means by which the process of this interaction could take place, or to provide an exhaustive account of the role of astrology in the *De Mysteriis*. Either option would exceed the scope and the length of the present research.

iii) Iamblichus' Syncretism: Intertextual References

The third and fourth centuries CE were marked by the spirit of religious and intellectual fusion in the Roman Empire, especially in its Eastern, Hellenised parts, characterised principally by the spread of heterogenous cults and traditions, such as the Mithraic Mysteries, the propagation of astrology, the Hermetic texts, the *Chaldean Oracles*, the amalgamation of the classical philosophical currents, all accompanied by the simultaneous rise of Christianity which became in 395 the official State religion, although Christianity co-existed with classical paganism until the sixth century.²⁴ Similarly, in the field of philosophy, Neoplatonists drew their doctrines not only from the Platonic dialogues, but also from Aristotle, whom they saw as complementary to Plato, and the Stoics.²⁵ It is therefore no surprise that the *De Mysteriis*' textual background is formed by Plato, several centu-

²³ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 247.

²⁴ Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology. Vol. 1: The Ancient World*, pp. 257-266.

²⁵ R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, p.17. For the sources of Neoplatonism, *idem.*, pp. 16-36.

ries of interpretation of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy, Chaldean thought, astrological terminology, the *Hermetica* and the *Greek Magical Papyri* (PGM), the latter accounting for several centuries of Egyptian and Graeco-Egyptian ritual practices.²⁶ Such intertextual references and cultural influences in the *De Mysteriis* can be summarised in the following trends: i) the importance of Hermes/Thoth; ii) the great reverence for the sages of the East, and especially for the Chaldeans and the Egyptians; iii) the Plotinian distinction of the three levels of Reality, or ‘Hypostases’, and the hierarchical/metaphysical structure of the universe; iv) the multiplication of the ranks of being and divine entities in the universe, presented as intermediary powers to bridge the vast gulf between the One and the material world; v) the divine is presented as being transcendent and immanent throughout the cosmos simultaneously; vi) the prominence of the solar cult; vii) the emphasis on salvation through *anagoge*, the ascent of the soul to the realm of the gods; viii) the cosmological principles of ‘sympathy’ and ‘divine love’ as the foundation of the living and interconnected universe in which theurgy operates. The above-mentioned cultural influences and intertextual references highlight the richness and the complexity of Iamblichus’ treatise.²⁷

As only a fraction of Iamblichus’ works have survived, additional knowledge of his system relies on fragments preserved by Stobaeus and others. The notes of his successors, especially Proclus, also reveal much of Iamblichus’ thinking. Hence, the *De Mysteriis* constitutes a highly polysemic text which might at times appear enigmatic, like a riddle or a palimpsest. Iamblichus’ syncretism embraces and reinterprets Plato, Aristotle and the Chaldean, Hermetic and Pythagorean

²⁶ See also Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, p. xviii.

²⁷ For an extensive presentation of the above-mentioned cultural influences and intertextual references, see *infra*, Appendix II.

writings to such an extent that, as John Finamore claims, ‘Iamblichus enfolds them into a complete mutually compatible system’.²⁸ More than half a century following Dodds’ famous dismissal of the book as ‘a manifesto of irrationalism’, recent scholarship insists on the examination of this work in its own terms and according to its own inherent logic.²⁹ It is in that spirit of respect for the text and for its intertextual relations that the present essay will proceed with the examination of its principal research questions.

iv) Structure of the Dissertation

The present essay contains three chapters. The first chapter (‘Seeing and listening to the gods’), in which astrology (*mathematike episteme*) will be viewed as a divine science, focuses on the sun’s passage through the zodiac, the divinity of the planets, the circular motion of their orbits in parallel with the circularity of the ‘vehicle of the soul’, the nature of the signs emitted by the gods and the enhancement of the ritual practitioner’s receptivity (ἐπιτηδειότης) in perceiving the divine messages. In the second chapter (‘The art of interpretation’), astrology will be examined as divination, with emphasis on Iamblichus’ objections to the casters of nativities (γενεθλιαλόγοι) and the soteriological function of theurgic divination. Finally, in the third chapter (‘Acting on the level of the personal *daimon*’), astrology will be approached in its theurgical aspect as a means to transcend fate, with

²⁸ John F. Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*, Chico CA, The American Philological Association, 1985, p. 165 [hereafter, John Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*].

²⁹ E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 1951, p. 287; for the examination of Iamblichus’ text in its own terms, Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, p. 1.

stress laid on the synchronization of the human mind with the noetic dimension of the personal *daimon*. The attainment of this stage may lead the soul to receive the particular god, or planet, which rules over the *daimon*, as its leader.

CHAPTER 1- SEEING AND LISTENING TO THE GODS

1.1 Astrology as a Divine Science (*episteme*)

The discussion regarding the epistemological status of astrology takes place in the fourth chapter of Book IX which examines the nature and origins of the personal *daimon*, along with its potential identification through the horoscope. In his *Letter to Anebo*, Porphyry suggested that the astrological science (μαθηματική ἐπιστήμη) was impossible to grasp, due to the fact that there has been much ‘disagreement’ (διαφωνία) about it, or because Chaeremon or some other authority may have written against it.³⁰ Possibly Porphyry also had in mind Plotinus’ objections regarding the scientific validity of astrology, beginning with what the latter considered as its internal contradictions.³¹ Athanassiadi claims that Iamblichus distinguishes astronomy from astrology and that by using the term μαθηματική he exclusively refers to the former.³² However, astronomy and astrology were not separated in the Greek mentality and language of Late Antiquity and many ancient astronomers, such as Hipparchus and perhaps Ptolemy, were also practicing astrologers.³³ The split between these two notions is

³⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.4 (277.1-4).

³¹ Plotinus, *Enneads*, III.1.5.33-59 and II.3.*passim.*, in Plotinus, *Enneads*, ed. and trs. by A. H. Armstrong (1966-1988), 7 vols., Loeb, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press [hereafter, Plotinus, *Enneads*,]. Some of Plotinus’ objections against his contemporary astrologers will be examined *infra*, Chapter 2.2.

³² Polymnia Athanassiadi, ‘Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus’, p. 121.

³³ G. E. R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience. Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science*, London and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 5, 180, n. 16 and n. 292. It cannot be verified that Ptolemy actually practised astrology, but he

anachronistic when applied to the third and fourth centuries CE.³⁴ The use of the term μαθηματική rather alludes to the *Timaeus*, in which the Soul is presented as a mixed entity, composed of numbers and ratios, and placed between the sensible and the intelligible cosmos.³⁵ In his account of the creation of the Soul by the demiurge, Plato suggests that the revolution of the Same represents the celestial Equator, while the revolution of the Different may be identified with the Ecliptic, or rather with the signs of the zodiac, according to Francis Cornford.³⁶ In either case, Plato subdivided the inner circle of the Different into seven unequal circles, standing for the seven known planets in Antiquity, three revolving at an equal speed, while the other four have different speeds from one another and from the three, each moving at different speeds and ratios.³⁷ The Platonic theory that the Soul itself was composed of Number, or of all numbers by means of which the cosmos was organised, gave credence to what Johnston qualifies as ‘the Platonic equation of the Ideas or Forms with mathematical entities’.³⁸ Johnston argues that

certainly knew a lot about it, at least on a theoretical level, as it can be attested by his *Tetrabiblos*, edited and translated by F. E. Robbins, Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press: Loeb Classical Library, 2001 [1940] [hereafter, Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*].

³⁴ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 210, n. 199; Wolfgang Hübner, Die Begriffe "Astrologie" und "Astronomie" in der Antike: Wortgeschichte und Wissenschaftssystematik, mit einer Hypothese zum Terminus, *Quadrivium*, vol. 1989/7, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989.

³⁵ Plato, *Timaeus* 35A ff. in Plato, *Timaeus. Critias. Cleitophon. Menexenus. Epistles*, Loeb Vol. IX, trs. by R. G. Bury, Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press in *Plato: Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, ed. and translated by Lamb, W.R.M., Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University press, 1975 [1925] [hereafter, Plato, *Timaeus*].

³⁶ Plato, *Timaeus* 36C-D. See also *ibid.*, p.72, n.1. For the idea that the circle of the Different must be identified with the Zodiac, rather than the ecliptic, see Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology, The Timaeus of Plato*, Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett publishing, 1997 [1937], p. 76 [hereafter, Francis Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*].

³⁷ Plato, *Timaeus* 36D. At 38D it appears that the three planets that revolve at equal speed are the Sun, Venus and Mercury (viewed from Earth as the ‘inner planets’); the other four are the Moon and Mars, Jupiter, Saturn (the last three are seen from Earth as the ‘outer planets’). See also Francis Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* p. 80.

³⁸ Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira. A Study of Hekate's Roles in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature*, Atlanta, The American Philological Association, 1990, p.17 [he-

‘number, in Pythagorean and Platonic theory, was responsible for the organization of physical space and thereby for the construction of the physical Cosmos’.³⁹ Moreover, the term ἐπιστήμη, which derives from the verb ἐπίσταμαι, meaning ‘to know, to understand, or to be acquainted with’, takes in *Republic* V the additional meaning of philosophical knowledge whose objects are the pure Forms or Ideas.⁴⁰ Socrates defines *episteme* as the ability to know the real as it is, in a context that shows that when Socrates talks about the real, he is referring to the Forms.⁴¹ Thus by viewing it as *mathematike episteme*, Iamblichus introduces astrology as a body of knowledge of philosophical significance which seeks to unveil the metaphysical dimension of the manifest cosmos by means of abstract mathematical symbols.

For Iamblichus, Porphyry’s arguments do not devalue the epistemological status attributed to astrology, since ‘all sciences have attracted countless sceptics, and the points of controversy that they contain are innumerable’.⁴² Furthermore, Iamblichus does not only claim that astrology is a science, but also that those who contradict it do so because of ignorance. As he puts it, ‘so also in the case of

reafter, Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira*]; see also R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 50-51.

³⁹ Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira*, p.17. The Pythagorean idea that the cosmos is governed by numerical laws is also recurrent in other works of Iamblichus: Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica (On the Pythagorean Way of Life)*, ed .and trs. by J. Dillon and J. Hershbell, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991; Iamblichus, *The Theology of Arithmetic. On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the first Ten Numbers* [attributed to Iamblichus], trs. by R. Waterfield, Grand Rapids, MI, Phanes Press: Kairos, 1988.

⁴⁰ Plato, *Republic* V 477a-478a, ed. and trs. P. Shorey, 2 vols., Loeb, Cambridge, MA and London:Harvard University Press and Heinemann, 1975 [1925] [hereafter, Plato, *Republic*].

⁴¹ Plato, *Republic*, 477b. See also Richard Parry, ‘Episteme and Techne’, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/episteme-techne/>>. Accessed 28/1/2017.

⁴² Iamblichus, *DM* IX.4 (277.5-6) Μυρίους γὰρ ἐσχέκασιν αἱ ὅλαι ἐπιστήμαι τοὺς ἀμφισβητοῦντας, καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐταῖς ἀπορήματα ἀναρίθμητα γέγονεν (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

astrology our response is that it itself is true, but those who are wrongly informed about it fall into contradictions, since they know nothing about the truth'.⁴³ Iamblichus justifies this ignorance on the basis that astrology is among the sciences handed down by the gods to men.⁴⁴ In such cases, 'progressively, through the repeated admixture of much that is mortal, the divine character of the knowledge contained in them comes to be extinguished'.⁴⁵

Despite the substantial loss of the original knowledge revealed by the gods *in illo tempore*, Iamblichus offers two sets of arguments providing 'clear proof' (τι τεκμήριον τῆς ἀληθείας) of the scientific validation of astrology. His first argument is empirical and concerns the mathematical aspect of this science, 'for the signs of the measuring function of the heavenly circuits are manifest to our eyes, when they announce eclipses of the sun and moon and conjunctions of the moon with the fixed stars, and the experience of our sight seems to confirm the interpretations which have been put forward in advance'.⁴⁶ Iamblichus' second set of arguments in favour of the scientific validity of astrology is historical, pertaining to the observations and the records of celestial phenomena preserved

⁴³ Iamblichus, *DM IX.4* (277.9-10)...οὕτω καὶ περὶ τῆς μαθηματικῆς ἀντεροῦμεν, ὥς ὑπάρχει μὲν ἀληθείας, οἱ δὲ πλανώμενοι περὶ αὐτῆς οὐδὲν εἰδότες τῶν ἀληθῶν ἀντιλέγουσιν (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

⁴⁴ Iamblichus, *DM IX.4* (277.10-12)

⁴⁵ Iamblichus, *DM IX.4* (277.12-14) προϊόντος γὰρ αἰὲ τοῦ χρόνου, πολλῶ τῷ θνητῷ καὶ πολλάκις ἀνακεραννύμεναι, ἐξίτηλον τὸ θεῖον ἦθος τῆς γνώσεως ἀπεργάζονται. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

⁴⁶ Iamblichus, *DM IX.4* (278.2-5) Ἐπεὶ καὶ τῆς τῶν θεῶν περιόδων ἀναμετρήσεως ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐστὶ κατάδηλα τὰ σημεῖα, ὅποταν ἐκλείψει ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης καὶ παραβολὰς πρὸς τοὺς ἀπλανεῖς ἀστέρας τῆς σελήνης προμηνύη, καὶ συνομολογουμένη φαίνεται τῇ προσημασίᾳ τῆς ὄψεως ἢ πεῖρα (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* with emendations). I have translated προσημασίᾳ as interpretations since the word belongs to the semantic field of signification.

through the centuries by the Chaldeans and the Egyptians.⁴⁷ Additionally, Iamblichus alludes to many other manifest proofs testifying to the scientific status of astrology but, since the discussion topic concerns the identification of the personal *daimon*, he leaves them aside.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Iamblichus discusses the scientific validity of astrology in other chapters of *De Mysteriis*. Various passages confirm the essential epistemological presupposition of astrology, namely that there is a link between the physical cosmos, its metaphysical dimension and the place of humans within, even though this correspondence is not only on the physical level of events. In *De Mysteriis* III.28-30, where Iamblichus explains his objections against the makers of images (οἱ τῶν εἰδώλων ποιητὲς), he clearly draws from Plato's portrayal of the demiurge and the creation of the cosmos in the *Timaeus*, and views subsequently the whole cosmos as a divine unified creation, in which the demiurge, 'by his conceptions, his volitions, and his immaterial forms, and by means of the eternal soul, whether mundane or supramundane, fashions the universe'.⁴⁹ Iamblichus clearly contrasts the celestial motions on the physical level, on which the makers of images depend, with the 'unlimited range of powers belonging to the celestial gods [the planets], one genus of which, and the lowest, is the physical'.⁵⁰ Therefore, Iamblichus suggests that the stars' influence is not to be intended

⁴⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.4 (278.5-8). Cf. also Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, Book I, Fr. 11, in John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries* [hereafter, Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*].

⁴⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.4 (278.8-11).

⁴⁹ Plato, *Timaeus* 29E-30D; Iamblichus, *DM* III.28 (168.14-169.2) ταῖς δὲ ἐννοίαις καὶ βουλήσεσι καὶ τοῖς ἀύλοις εἶδεσι διὰ τῆς αἰδίου τε καὶ ὑπερκοσμίου καὶ ἐγκοσμίου ψυχῆς δημιουργεῖ τοὺς κόσμους· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* with slight emendations).

⁵⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* III.28 (169.4-6) Οὐσῶν γὰρ περὶ τοὺς οὐρανίους θεοὺς ἀπείρων δὴ τινῶν δυνάμεων, ἐν γένος τῶν ἐν αὐταῖς πάντων ἔσχατόν ἐστι, τὸ φυσικόν. (my translation)

mechanistically. The cause of events on the physical realm, he argues, represents only the lowest level of expression of the heavenly powers. Celestial powers emanating from the visible gods are always in the process of being unfolded to the whole manifest cosmos, but the image-maker is incapable of understanding and aligning himself or herself with them. As Iamblichus explains, ‘the image-maker does not use the astral revolutions or the powers inherent in them, or the powers found naturally around them, nor is he able to apply himself to them completely.’⁵¹ Addey remarks that Iamblichus explicitly contrasts here the ‘technical’ skill of the wonder-worker operating only on the horizontal level of the realm of nature with the theurgic skill which operates on a vertical axis by connecting material objects with their divine causes.⁵² It is crucial, however, to note that Iamblichus does not dismiss the astral influence upon the realm of generation. On the contrary, he implicitly uses the *Phaedrus* myth, whereby human souls follow, prior to incarnation, their gods in their celestial circuits, the procession of the planets.⁵³ Iamblichus claims that ‘even the lowest beings in the realm of generation are moved by the celestial circuits, and are affected sympathetically by the emanations descending to them’.⁵⁴ The term ἀπόρροια (emanation) is used throughout the *De Mysteriis* to denote astral influence.⁵⁵ In

⁵¹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.28 (170.2-6) οὕτω δεῖ καὶ ἀποφαίνεσθαι, ὅτι δὴ αὐταῖς μὲν ταῖς περιφοραῖς ἢ ταῖς ἐνυπαρχούσαις ἐν αὐταῖς δυνάμεσιν ἢ ταῖς κατὰ φύσιν περὶ αὐτὰς ἐνιδρυμέναις οὔτε χρῆται εἰδωλοποιός, οὔθ’ ὅλως δυνατός ἐστιν αὐτῶν ἐφάπτεσθαι· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* with emendations).

⁵² Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 254. Iamblichus’ remarks echo the differences between inspired and artificial forms of divination, which will be explored in Chapter 2.2.

⁵³ Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a-249d.

⁵⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III.30 (173.10-12) Καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἔσχατα τῶν ἐν τῇ γενέσει κινεῖται τοῖς οὐρανίοις δρόμοις καὶ συμπάσχει πρὸς τὰς ἀπ’ αὐτῶν κατιούσας ἀπορροίας· (my translation).

⁵⁵ For the use of the term ἀπόρροια, Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (55.4), I.18 (55.6), III.16 (137.13), III.30 (173.12), IV.10 (194.10), IX.2 (274.5), IX.3 (276.12). Porphyry uses that

the context of astral influence, it is the ‘emanation’ from the stars that allots us with the personal *daimon*.⁵⁶

Furthermore, in *De Mysteriis* V.10, while dismissing the view that *daimones* might be nourished by human sacrifices, Iamblichus remarks that ‘terrestrial things derive their nourishment from the heavens’.⁵⁷ Clarke considers that in this particular passage, Iamblichus ‘is thinking of the influence of the sun on all living things’, although Iamblichus resorts to the term οὐρανίων (of the heavens) and not ἡλίου (of the sun).⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the term ἡλίου is employed nine times (in the genitive) throughout the *De Mysteriis*, often to summarise all the heavenly influences, but also as a reflection of the demiurge and a physical symbol of the One.⁵⁹ The following section will examine the scientific foundations of astrology as resulting from the symbolic method of signification of the sun’s powers as they activate the zodiac.

same word in his *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos* as an astrological term, usually translated loosely as ‘separation’ of one planet from another; see Porphyry, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*, chapters 12 and 13, in CCAG V/4 (edited by Emilie Boer and Stephan Weinstock), Brussels, Henri Lamartin, 1940, pp. 185-228, here p. 199 [hereafter, Porphyry, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*]. For the authorship, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 266-270. For ἀπόρροια in a similar astrological context, see also Paulus Alexandrinus, *Elementa Apotelesmatica*, (*Introduction to Astrology*), chapter 17, edited by Emilie Boer, Leipzig: Teubner, 1958.

⁵⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.3 (276.11-12). For a discussion on the personal *daimon*, see *infra*, Chapter 3.1.

⁵⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* V.10 (213.12-13) καὶ γὰρ τὰ περίγεια ἀπὸ τῶν οὐρανίων τρέφεται (my translation).

⁵⁸ Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, p. 245, n. 307.

⁵⁹ For the use of the term ἡλίου, Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (56.2), III.13 (130.8), III.14 (133.11), III.14 (134.13), VI.7 (248.7), VII.3 (253.4), VII.3 (253.11), IX.2 (273.13), IX.4 (278.3).

1.2 The Sun and the Zodiac

In Book VII, which examines Egyptian symbolism, Iamblichus discusses the allegorical interpretation of some Egyptian symbols. According to Iamblichus, the Egyptians, ‘imitating the nature of the universe and the demiurgic power of the gods, display certain images of mystical, arcane and invisible intellections by means of symbols’.⁶⁰ In VII.2, while analysing the image of ‘sailing in a ship’, Iamblichus views the sun in parallel with the helmsman of the *Phaedrus*.⁶¹ The image of sailing in a ship is similarly employed by Plotinus for the soul coming into life with its *daimon*; Porphyry uses it as well.⁶² For Iamblichus, sailing in a ship ‘represents the sovereignty that governs the world. Just as the helmsman presides over the ship while taking charge of its rudder, so the sun is transcendently in charge of the helm of the whole world’.⁶³ Based on their reception of the myth of the cave in the *Republic*, Neoplatonist philosophers used the sun as an image and a symbol of the One and of the divine Intellect.⁶⁴ Plotinus

⁶⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.1 (249.11-250.2)...οὔτοι γὰρ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ παντὸς καὶ τὴν δημιουργίαν τῶν θεῶν μιμούμενοι καὶ αὐτοὶ τῶν μυστικῶν καὶ ἀποκεκρυμμένων καὶ ἀφανῶν νοήσεων εἰκόνας τινὰς διὰ συμβόλων ἐκφαίνουσιν... (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* with emendations). I have considered it more appropriate for this passage to translate εἰκόνας as ‘images’ rather than ‘signs’ as do Clarke et al. in their translation. The choice of the verb ἐκφαίνουσιν and the series of archetypal images which Iamblichus will analyse further point in the direction of ‘images’. For Iamblichus’ reverence for the Egyptian sages, see Appendix II.ii.

⁶¹ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247c.

⁶² Plotinus, *Enneads* III.4 (6.47-60). Greenbaum analyses thoroughly the use of κυβερνήτης in Porphyry’s works in relation to the personal *daimon* and the *oikodespotes*, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, ‘Porphyry of Tyre on the *Daimon*, Birth and the Stars’, to be published; Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 266-275.

⁶³ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.2 (252.8-12) Ὁ δ’ ἐπὶ πλοίου ναυτιλλόμενος τὴν διακυβερνῶσαν τὸν κόσμον ἐπικράτειαν παρίστησιν. Ὡς περ οὖν ὁ κυβερνήτης χωριστὸς ὢν τῆς νεῶς τῶν πηδαλίων αὐτῆς ἐπιβέβηκεν, οὕτω χωριστῶς ὁ ἥλιος τῶν οἰάκων τοῦ κόσμου παντὸς ἐπιβέβηκεν. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

⁶⁴ Plato, *Republic* VII, 514a2-517a7. For the prominence of the solar cult in the Roman Empire in the third CE century, see Appendix II.vi.

views the sun as a physical example of the One, comparing the supreme Good to light and divine Intellect to the sun.⁶⁵ Proclus comments that Socrates in the *Republic* discloses, through the analogy with the sun, the remarkable supremacy of the Good.⁶⁶ By comparing the sun to the helmsman, Iamblichus considers it a reflection of the Platonic demiurge which also resembles to the Aristotelian ‘Prime-mover’.⁶⁷ Iamblichus discovers through the sun ‘the god from on high [who] gives out, indivisibly, from the first principles of nature, the primordial causes of movement’.⁶⁸ Shaw argues that the sun, besides being a conceptual analogue of the noetic demiurge, was also for Iamblichus a *sunthema* of the One itself.⁶⁹

Furthermore, at *De Mysteriis* VII.3, Iamblichus asserts that the potencies emanating from the sun activate ‘the entire zodiac’ (πᾶν ζῳδιακόν), along with every portion of the heavens, all the heavenly motions, all time, according to which the cosmos is moved, and all things in the universe.⁷⁰ Like all divine entities, the powers emanating from the sun are immanent and transcendent

⁶⁵ Plotinus, *Enneads* I.7 (*On the Primal Good*) 1.25-29; *Enneads* V.6 (*What is Beyond Being Does Not Think*) 4.15-16; *Enneads* V.6 (*On Numbers*) 7.1-7.

⁶⁶ Proclus, *Plat. Theol.* 3.30.2.19-22 in Proclus, *Platonic Theology (Théologie Platonicienne)*, eds. and trs. H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink, 3 vols., Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968-1988. English translation T. Taylor, Proclus: *The Theology of Plato*, Frome: Prometheus Trust, 1995 [1816], [hereafter, Proclus, *Plat. Theol.*].

⁶⁷ For the Platonic demiurge, Plato, *Timaeus* 29d-30c, *passim*; Francis Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, pp. 34-39. For the Aristotelian prime-mover, Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII(Λ), VII-VIII (1072a ff.) in Aristotle, *Metaphysics, Volume II Books 10-14. Oeconomica. Magna Moralia*, trs. by Hugh Tredennick and G. Cyril Armstrong, London and Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1961 [1933]; Joseph G. Defilippo, ‘Aristotle's Identification of the Prime Mover as God’, *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (1994), pp. 393-409.

⁶⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.2 (252.14-15) οὕτω πολὺν πρότερον ὁ θεὸς ἄνωθεν ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν τῆς φύσεως τὰς πρωτοουργοὺς αἰτίας τῶν κινήσεων ἀμεριστῶς ἐνδίδωσι (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

⁶⁹ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 195.

⁷⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.3 (253.2-4).

simultaneously.⁷¹ In the symbolic method of signification of the sun's powers lies the scientific validation of astrology, which expresses through words the different qualities of time, intended not only as ordered and measured *chronos*, but also as *kairos*. Greenbaum analyses thoroughly this double aspect of time in relation to providence (*pronoia*), and suggests that *kairos*, which is connected with the divine and the immortal, 'seems to be above *chronos*, or at any rate to regulate it'.⁷² As Iamblichus maintains,

'...the symbolic method of signification represents the forms [of the sun] shaped by the signs of the zodiac and its [the sun's] hourly changing forms by means of signifying them through words, while indicating its [the sun's] immutable, stable, unfailing, and complete gift to the whole universe at once'.⁷³

Iamblichus refers here to the movement of the sun through the signs of the zodiac and the perpetual change of the *horoscopos* (Ascendant), both of which can be expressed by means of a signifying system of discourse, despite the fact that their origins derive from observation and mathematical calculations. From that perspective, astrology emerges as an epiphany of the divine, and the powers descending from the sun designate the constantly changing face of the gods emanating from the One. Proclus holds that all gods derive from the First god.⁷⁴ Niketas Siniossoglou notes that 'Neoplatonic philosophic monotheism was substantiated with reference to the exegesis of Plato's ontology'.⁷⁵ According to

⁷¹ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.3 (253.4-5). For the simultaneous immanence and transcendence of the divine in *De Mysteriis*, see Appendix II.v.

⁷² Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 43-45, here p.44.

⁷³ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.3 (253.6-9)...παρίστησι καὶ ταύτας ὁ συμβολικὸς τρόπος τῆς σημασίας, τὸ σχηματίζεσθαι μὲν κατὰ ζῳδίων καὶ τὰς μορφὰς ἀμείβειν καθ' ὥραν τοῖς ῥήμασι διασημαίνων, ἐκδεικνύμενος δὲ τὴν ἀμετάβλητον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐστῶσαν καὶ ἀνέκλειπτον καὶ ὁμοῦ πᾶσαν καὶ ἀθρόαν εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον δόσιν. (my translation).

⁷⁴ Proclus, *Plat. Theol.* 3.30.2.31.

⁷⁵ Niketas Siniossoglou, 'From Philosophic Monotheism to Imperial Henotheism: Esoteric and Popular Religion in Late Antique Platonism', in Stephen Mitchell and Peter Van

Iamblichus, the Egyptian teaching indicates that ‘he [the god] is actually one and the same, but allots to his recipients a variety of forms and changing configurations.’⁷⁶ Hence it indicates that he is changed, according to the zodiac, every hour, just as these are around the god, according to the many modes of receiving him’.⁷⁷ Iamblichus describes this procedure as a ‘symbolic mystagogy’ (συμβολικὴ μυσταγωγία) and concludes his chapter with the comment that the Egyptians address their visions and prayers to the sun in accordance with the above-mentioned astrological mystical doctrine, which was in line with sun worship in Late Antiquity.⁷⁸ Therefore, as Shaw remarks, ‘man’s prayers must be presented to Helios through the many zodiacal *schemata* that the god assumes’.⁷⁹ As a result, humans may interact with the divine through vision and prayer based on astrological knowledge.

Moreover, Iamblichus affirms that the observation of the critical time (καιρός) for action is a necessary measure before engaging with theurgic rituals.⁸⁰

This remark is a clear reference to katarchic astrology, the branch of astrology

Nuffelen (eds), *Monotheism between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity*, Leuven: Peeters, 2010, pp. 127-148, here p. 129.

⁷⁶ There is a number of spells with the changing appearance of the sun in the *PGM*, many of which have Egyptian origins. See, for example, *PGM* IV.633-639 in the so-called ‘Mithras Liturgy’ (*PGM* IV. 475-829); *PGM* IV. 1596-1715 (‘Spell to Helios’); *PGM* 1928-2005 (‘Spell of Attraction to King Pity over any skull cup’, with prayer/petition to Helios), in Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, edited and translated by Karl Preisendanz, 2 vols, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973-1974; Hans Dieter Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1986.

⁷⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.3 (253.14-254.4) διὸ καὶ φησιν αὐτὸν ἓνα εἶναι καὶ τὸν αὐτόν, τὰς δὲ διαμείψεις τῆς μορφῆς καὶ τοὺς μετασχηματισμοὺς ἐν τοῖς δεχομένοις ὑποτίθεται. Διόπερ κατὰ ζῳδιὸν καὶ καθ’ ὥραν μεταβάλλεσθαι αὐτόν φησιν, ὥς ἐκείνων διαποικιλλομένων περὶ τὸν θεὸν κατὰ τὰς πολλὰς αὐτοῦ ὑποδοχάς (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*). The hourly change of the sun is also reminiscent of the *dodekaoros*, which is two hour segments each assigned to an Egyptian animal, but is linked to the sun as well.

⁷⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.3 (254.4-7). For the sun worship in late antiquity, see Appendix II.vi.

⁷⁹ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 199 (italics by the author).

⁸⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.4 (267.6-10).

seeking to determine the appropriate moment for engaging with a specific action in accordance with the most auspicious astrological configuration for the action in question.⁸¹ Thus, it may be argued that the scientific foundations of astrology merge its physical components (observations and mathematical calculations) with its metaphysical dimension (divine epiphany of the sun as manifested through its interaction with the degrees of the zodiac). In order to clarify the interaction between the sensible and the intelligible in Iamblichus' understanding of astrology, we will examine the divine nature of the planets.

1.3 The Divinity of the Planets, the Circle and the Realm of Intellect

Neoplatonist philosophers follow Plato and view the heavenly bodies as gods.⁸² Iamblichus claims that 'the entities visible in heaven are all gods, and in a certain way incorporeal.'⁸³ The divine nature of the planets is mostly discussed in Book I. In I.17, Iamblichus examines Porphyry's query about the paradox surrounding the divinity of the planets. Porphyry wonders how the heavenly bodies were divine in spite of their corporeal substance, since the gods ought to be

⁸¹ See Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. (40-45), 247-8; Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 225; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 105-106, 211. Katarchic astrology in relation to theurgy will be examined further in Chapter 3.1.2.

⁸² Plato, *Republic* VI 508a4; *Epinomis* 984d, in Plato, Volume XII. *Charmides. Alcibiades I and II. Hipparchus. The Lovers. Theages. Minos. Epinomis*, translated by W. R. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library 201, Harvard University Press. The view that the planets are divine is also expressed by Plotinus and Porphyry, cf. Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 205-211. For an overview of the origin of the belief in the divinity of the planets in ancient Greece, Martin P. Nilsson, 'The Origin of Belief among the Greeks in the Divinity of the Heavenly Bodies', *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 33, No.1 (Jan., 1940), pp. 1-8.

⁸³ Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (52.13-14) ...οἱ κατ' οὐρανὸν ἐμφανεῖς θεοὶ τέ εἰσι πάντες καὶ τρόπον τινὰ ἄσώματα· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

exclusively incorporeal.⁸⁴ Iamblichus' reply stresses the dialogical interaction between the sensible and the intelligible, inasmuch as the latter contains the former and guides it into a single unified action. Iamblichus asserts that 'they [the heavenly gods] are not enveloped by bodies, but it is rather they that envelop bodies in their divine lives and activities.'⁸⁵ In I.8, Iamblichus advances the principle that 'the genera of superior entities are not even present in bodies, but rule them from outside; and there is no question of their sharing in the changes to which bodies are subject'.⁸⁶ Appearing to allude to the procession of the gods in the heavens from *Phaedrus*, Iamblichus views the heavenly bodies following the gods in a unified action of ascent to the One.⁸⁷ Shaw remarks that 'the only body that exemplifies unified action is the sphere, so the bodies of the gods were spheres, the geometric complement of their unity.'⁸⁸ In his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, Iamblichus views the spherical shape as the only one in the cosmos capable of taking in all shapes, and 'which is both itself one and capable of containing multiplicity, which indeed makes it truly divine, in that while not departing from its oneness it dominates all the multiple'.⁸⁹ Hence, the planets are closely akin to the incorporeal essence of the gods.⁹⁰

The planets' spherical shape is complemented by the spherical motion of

⁸⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* I.17 (50.11-13).

⁸⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* I.17 (50.13-51.2) ὅτι δὴ οὐ περιέχονται ὑπὸ τῶν σωμάτων, φαιμέν ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ ταῖς θεαῖς ζωαῖς καὶ ἐνεργείαις περιέχουσι τὰ σώματα· (my translation).

⁸⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* I.8 (24.2-3) Ἐτι οὐδὲ ἐνεστιν ἐν τοῖς σώμασι τὰ γένη τῶν κρειττόνων, ἔξωθεν δ' αὐτῶν ἡγεμονεύει· οὐκ ἄρα συναλλοιοῦται τοῖς σώμασιν. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

⁸⁷ Plato, *Phaedrus* 246E-247B; Iamblichus, *DM* I.17 (51.5-8).

⁸⁸ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p.153.

⁸⁹ Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, III. fr. 49 (3.26-29) τοιοῦτον δὲ τὸ σφαιρικόν, ἅμα ἐν ὃν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος περιέχειν δυνάμενον, ὃ δὴ θεῖόν ἐστιν ὄντως, τὸ μὴ ἐξιστάμενον τῆς ἐνότητος παντὸς τοῦ πεπλοθησμένου κρατεῖν. (translated by John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*).

⁹⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* I.17 (51.9-10).

their orbits and of the universe itself. In a passage echoing the choric dances of the planets in the *Timaeus*, and also Plotinus' trope of the cosmic choral dance, Iamblichus presents the whole cosmos performing its circular revolution in imitation of the divine illumination⁹¹:

It is, indeed, in imitation of it [the light emanating from the gods] that the whole heaven and cosmos performs its circular revolution, is united with itself, and leads the elements round in their cyclic dance, holds together all things as they rest within each other or are borne towards each other, defines by equal measures even the most far-flung objects, causes lasts to be joined to firsts, as for example earth to heaven, and produces a single continuity and harmony of all with all.⁹²

In Iamblichean cosmology, the interaction between the sensible and the intelligible may be explained through the inextricable link which puts in parallel the planets, the circular motion and the realm of Intellect (νοῦς). The relationship between Intellect and circle is explicitly analysed through the Egyptian symbol of 'sitting on a lotus', which signifies transcendency over the materiality represented by the symbol of the 'mud', and also indicates intellectual leadership.⁹³ According to Iamblichus,

For everything to do with the lotus is seen to be circular, both the forms of the leaves and the produce of the fruit, and it is the circular motion that is uniquely connatural with the activity of intellect, and which exhibits itself consistently in one order and according to one principle.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Plato, *Timaeus* 40C-D; Plotinus, *Enneads (On Difficulties about the Soul II)* IV.4.33-34.

⁹² Iamblichus, *DM* I.9 (31.14-32.6) ὅπερ δὴ καὶ ὁ σύμπας μιμούμενος οὐρανὸς καὶ κόσμος τὴν ἐγκύκλιον περιφορὰν περιπολεῖ, συνήνωταί τε πρὸς ἑαυτόν, καὶ τὰ στοιχεῖα κατὰ κύκλον περιδινούμενα ποδηγεῖ, πάντα τε ἐν ἀλλήλοις ὄντα καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλα φερόμενα συνέχει, μέτροις τε τοῖς ἴσοις ἀφορίζει καὶ τὰ πορρωτάτω διωκισμένα, καὶ τὰς τελευτὰς ταῖς ἀρχαῖς οἷον γῆν οὐρανῶν συγκεῖσθαι ποιεῖ, μίαν τε συνέχειαν καὶ ὁμολογίαν τῶν ὅλων πρὸς ὅλα ἀπεργάζεται. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

⁹³ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.2 (251.1-252.2).

⁹⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.2 (252.2-6) κυκλοτερῇ γὰρ πάντα ὁρᾶται τὰ τοῦ λωτοῦ, καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς φύλλοις εἶδη καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς καρποῖς φαινόμενα, ἥπερ δὴ μόνῃ κινήσει τῇ κατὰ κύκλον νοῦ ἐνέργειά ἐστι συγγενής, τὸ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως καὶ ἐν μιᾷ τάξει καὶ καθ' ἓνα λόγον ἐμφαίνουσα. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

It appears that through its contact with the circular shape or motion, materiality is transformed and consequently transposed into the intelligible realm in a reinvented form. In *De Mysteriis* V.4, while explaining the reasons for which terrestrial vapours of sacrifices cannot approach the heavens, Iamblichus holds that the body of the heavens is unmixed with the material elements from the realm of generation and qualifies the heavens as ‘a cyclic and immaterial body’.⁹⁵ The circle purifies matter by liberating it from its changeable form, which is liable to corruption and decay, and by transforming each heavenly body into an ‘aetherial body’ (αἰθέριον σῶμα). As Iamblichus claims,

For it is agreed that the aetherial body is exempt from all contrariety, and is free from all variation, completely purified from any capacity for changing into something else, and utterly liberated from any tendency towards the centre or away from the centre, because it is free of tendency, or rather is borne around in a circle.⁹⁶

Taking into account the Aristotelian definition of substance as ‘that which, being numerically one and the same, is able to receive contraries’, Clarke points out in this passage that ‘at the heavenly level the contraries are present, but simultaneously, in contrast to what is true of sublunar substance’.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, within the elaboration of the interaction between the sensible and the intelligible in Iamblichus’ understanding of astrology, it is sufficient to mention that Iamblichus views in astrology a discipline focused not only on the sun, but also

⁹⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* V.4 (202.4-9); V.4 (202.8-9) ...τὸ κυκλοφορητικὸν καὶ ἄυλον σῶμα (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

⁹⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* V.4 (202.10-203.1) Ὁμολογεῖται γὰρ δὴ τὸ αἰθέριον σῶμα πάσης ἐκτὸς εἶναι ἐναντιώσεως, τροπῆς τε πάσης ἀπηλλάχθαι, καὶ τὸ δύνασθαι εἰς ὅτι οὖν μεταβάλλειν πάντα καθαρεύειν, ῥοπῆς τε τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ μέσον καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ μέσου παντελῶς ἀπολελύσθαι, διότι ἀρρεπές ἐστιν ἢ κατὰ κύκλον περιφέρεται· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

⁹⁷ Aristotle, *Categories*, 4a10 in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 2 vols., trs. by J.L. Ackrill, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014; Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, p. 231, n. 286. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, the identification of the soul with its corporeal image, the soul-body composite, imprisons the soul in the contrary tendencies of the realm of generation.

around the planets, which, through their spherical shape and their circular revolutions, manifest the pattern of noetic deities on a lower ontological level. In the following section, emphasis will be placed on the visual interaction with the divine through the intermediary function of the soul's vehicle.

1.4 Seeing the Gods by means of the Soul-Vehicle

In the context of that unified cosmic dimension which is capable of receiving contraries, the planets emerge as the *agalmata*, the visible bodies and images of the gods.⁹⁸ In *De Mysteriis* I.19, while seeking to demonstrate the essential unity which attaches the visible to the incorporeal gods, Iamblichus maintains that the visible gods are mounted on the heavenly spheres as incorporeal, intelligible and unified entities, whose originating principles are in the realm of the intelligible.⁹⁹ According to Iamblichus, 'the visible gods are outside their bodies, and for this reason are in the intelligible realm, and the intelligible gods, by reason of their infinite unity, embrace within themselves the visible ones, and both take their stand alike according to a common unity and a single activity'.¹⁰⁰ Hence, the gods are a totality in unity, a communion of indissoluble connection.

Iamblichus stresses that the gods may be apprehended visually by means of the *ὄχημα-πνεῦμα*, the soul's vehicle. Combining the Platonic 'vehicle'

⁹⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* I.19 (57.12).

⁹⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* I.19 (57.3-7).

¹⁰⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* I.19 (60.8-11) Οἱ τε γὰρ ἐμφανεῖς θεοὶ σωμάτων εἰσὶν ἔξω, καὶ διὰ τοῦτό εἰσιν ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, καὶ οἱ νοητοὶ διὰ τὴν ἄπειρον αὐτῶν ἔνωσιν περιέχουσιν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τοὺς ἐμφανεῖς, ἀμφοτέροί τε κατὰ κοινὴν ἔνωσιν καὶ μίαν ἐνέργειαν ἵστανται ὡσαύτως. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

(ὄχημα), in which the demiurge placed the soul in the *Timaeus*, and the ‘chariots’ (ὀχήματα) of the gods in the *Phaedrus*, with the Aristotelian πνεῦμα, which was analogous to the element comprising the stars, Neoplatonist philosophers viewed the pneumatic soul-vehicle as a way to join the incorporeal soul with the corporeal body.¹⁰¹ In the section discussing the gifts arising from the manifestation of the gods, Iamblichus states that their presence ‘shows what is not body as body to the eyes of the soul by means of those of the body’.¹⁰² Iamblichus’ reference to corporeal vision as the means to see the formless and invisible divine epiphany points to the ‘image-making faculty’ of the soul (*phantasia*).¹⁰³ Within Neoplatonism, the vehicle was considered as the seat of *phantasia* and sense perception.¹⁰⁴ Shaw remarks that, ‘by means of images, the “eyes of the soul” clothed the gods in an interior space. Clearly, a contribution on the part of the soul

¹⁰¹ Plato, *Timaeus* 41e1; Plato, *Phaedrus* 247b2; Aristotle, *De Gen. An.* II, 736b37-39, in Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, translated by A. L. Peck, London and Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1943. For an overview of the vehicle’s origins and functions in Neoplatonic theory, E. R. Dodds, ‘The Astral Body in Neoplatonism’, in Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, (Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary by E. R. Dodds), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2004 [1963], pp. 313-321 [hereafter, Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*]; John Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*, pp. 1-6; Robert Christian Kissling, ‘The OXHMA-IINEYMA of the Neo-Platonists and the De insomniis of Synesius of Cyrene’, *American Journal of Philology* 43, no. 4, 1922, pp. 318-30 [hereafter, Robert Kissling, ‘The OXHMA-IINEYMA of the Neo-Platonists’]; Crystal Addey, ‘In the Light of the Sphere: The Vehicle of the Soul and Subtle Body Practices in Neoplatonism’, in Geoffrey Samuel and Jay Johnston (eds.), *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West: Between Mind and Body*, London: Routledge, 2013, pp. 149-167 [hereafter, Crystal Addey, ‘In the Light of the Sphere’].

¹⁰² Iamblichus, *DM* II.6 (81.15-82.1) τὸ μὴ ὄν σῶμα ὡς σῶμα τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ὀφθαλμοῖς διὰ τῶν τοῦ σώματος ἐπιδείκνυσιν· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysterioriis*).

¹⁰³ Crystal Addey, ‘In the Light of the Sphere’, p. 150. For the subtle differences between *phantasia* in the context of late antiquity and ‘imagination’ with modern connotations, *ibid.*, p. 150. See also Anne Sheppard, ‘Phantasia and Inspiration in Neoplatonism’, in M. Joyal (ed.) *Studies on Plato and the Platonic Tradition: Essays Presented to John Whitaker*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1997, pp. 201-210 [hereafter, Anne Sheppard, ‘Phantasia and Inspiration in Neoplatonism’].

¹⁰⁴ Robert Kissling, ‘The OXHMA-IINEYMA of the Neo-Platonists’, p. 321; Crystal Addey, ‘In the Light of the Sphere’, p. 150; Anne Sheppard, ‘Phantasia and Inspiration in Neoplatonism’, p. 206.

was necessary to reveal what was invisible, and Proclus explains that it was the soul's "body of light" (*augoeides soma*).¹⁰⁵ Proclus asserts that 'those who see the gods witness them in the luminous garments of their souls'.¹⁰⁶

In his description of different types of divine possession throughout Book III, Iamblichus merges the element of circularity accompanying the divine epiphanies with the luminous soul-vehicle which provides extrasensory perception. In dream divination, 'sometimes an intangible and incorporeal spirit encircles those lying down, so that there is no visual perception of it, but some other awareness and self-consciousness'.¹⁰⁷ Iamblichus claims that those who are truly possessed by the gods 'have subjected their entire life as a vehicle (*ὄχημα*) or instrument (*ὄργανον*) to the gods who inspire them'.¹⁰⁸ Iamblichus explicitly links the illumination of the soul-vehicle with the procedure of 'evoking the light' (*φωτὸς ἀγωγή*), which was a way of making higher entities visible through light shining on water or oil. This procedure, 'somehow illuminates the aether-like and luminous vehicle surrounding the soul with divine light, from which vehicle the divine appearances, set in motion by god's will, take possession of the imaginative power in us'.¹⁰⁹ In the Delphic oracle, 'when the fiery spirit coming up from the

¹⁰⁵ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 246.

¹⁰⁶ Proclus, *In Remp.* I.39, 8-10 ... καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ὁρῶσιν αὐτοῖς ὁρᾶται τοῖς αὐγοειδέσι τῶν ψυχῶν περιβλήμασιν· in Proclus, *In Platonis Rem publican commentaria*, ed. G. Kroll, 2 vols., Leipzig: Teubner, 1899-1901 (translated by Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 246).

¹⁰⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* III.2 (103.11-104.1) Καὶ ποτὲ μὲν ἀναφῆς καὶ ἀσώματον πνεῦμα περιέχει κύκλῳ τοὺς κατακειμένους, ὡς ὄρασιν μὲν αὐτοῦ μὴ παρεῖναι, τὴν δ' ἄλλην συναίσθησιν καὶ παρακολούθησιν ὑπάρχειν (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mystериis*).

¹⁰⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* III.4 (109.10-11) εἰ γὰρ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ζωὴν ὑποτεθείκασιν ὅλην ὡς ὄχημα ἢ ὄργανον τοῖς ἐπιπνέουσι θεοῖς (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mystериis* with slight emendations).

¹⁰⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.14 (132.9-12) Αὕτη δὴ πού τὸ περικείμενον τῇ ψυχῇ αἰθερῶδες καὶ αὐγοειδὲς ὄχημα ἐπιλάμπει θεῖῳ φωτί, ἐξ οὗ δὲ φαντασῆται θεοὶ καταλαμβάνουσι τὴν

aperture, dense and abundant, envelops her [the prophetess] entirely in a circle, she is filled by it with a divine brightness'.¹¹⁰ As Addey explains, 'during oracular and other types of divination rituals, the *phantasia* is [...] emptied of all the ritual practitioner's images and human images, and thus is receptive to and able to receive the images sent from the gods'.¹¹¹

Therefore, the ritual practitioner constantly seeks to purify his/her soul-vehicle which serves as a medium to receive the divine illumination. Through the process of purification which includes ritual, intellectual and ethical means, the theurgist and the prophet enhance their level of receptivity (ἐπιτηδεϊότητης) regarding the appearances or messages emanating from the gods. According to Iamblichus, the most useful results of purification (κάθαρσις) are 'removal of foreign elements, restoration of one's own essence, perfection, fulfilment, self-sufficiency, ascent to the engendering cause, conjoining the parts to wholes, and the gift of power, life, and activity from wholes to individuals'.¹¹² Addey argues that receptivity is 'implicitly coded as a developable sacred space which is marked by a subtle blend of openness and humbleness combined with an active and simultaneous cultivation of intellectual, ritual, and ethical discipline and

ἐν ἡμῖν φανταστικὴν δύναμιν, κινούμεναι ὑπὸ τῆς βουλήσεως τῶν θεῶν. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriorum*).

¹¹⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* III.11 (126.9-11) Καὶ ὅταν μὲν ἀθρόον καὶ πολὺ τὸ ἀναφερόμενον ἀπὸ τοῦ στομίου πῦρ κύκλῳ πανταχόθεν αὐτὴν περιέχῃ, πληροῦται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ θείας αὐγῆς· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriorum*).

¹¹¹ Crystal Addey, 'In the Light of the Sphere', p. 154; see also Anne Sheppard, 'Phantasia and Inspiration in Neoplatonism', p. 208.

¹¹² Iamblichus, *De Anima* fragment 43 (1-5) Καὶ μὴν τῆς γε καθάρσεως ἀφαίρεσις τῶν ἄλλοτριῶν, ἀπόδοσις τῆς οἰκείας οὐσίας, τελειότης, ἀποπλήρωσις, αὐτάρκεια, ἄνοδος ἐπὶ τὴν γεννησαμένην αἰτίαν, συναφὴ πρὸς τὰ ὅλα τῶν μερῶν, δόσις ἀπὸ τῶν ὅλων εἰς τὰ μεριστὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ζωῆς καὶ ἐνεργείας καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα νοεῖσθω ὡς πάντων χρησιμώτατα. (translated by John Finamore and John Dillon in Iamblichus, *De Anima*, text, translation and commentary by John Finamore and John Dillon, Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2002 [hereafter, Iamblichus, *De Anima*]).

praxis'.¹¹³ While describing the oracular procedure at the oracle at Colophon, Iamblichus explains that the water, from which the prophet drinks, 'only bestows the receptivity and purification of the luminous spirit in us, through which we are able to receive the god'.¹¹⁴ Thus, the vehicle, purified and lifted above through theurgic rites, may house the rational soul's return to the gods.

The doctrine of the soul-vehicle provides the theoretical background for the scientific validation of astrology, at least according to Iamblichus' metaphysics. There are striking similarities in the way Iamblichus perceives the vehicle's shape and movement with his understanding of the planets. Like the planets, the vehicle is spherical and composed of aether. In his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, Iamblichus argues that the demiurge 'constructed the universe in the form of a sphere, to be an image of the Soul's self motion. For which reason also our vehicle is made spherical, and is moved in a circle, whenever the Soul is especially assimilated to Intellect (*Nous*)'.¹¹⁵ Iamblichus suggests here that Intellect is spherical and therefore the soul vehicle, when the soul becomes perfected and enlightened, becomes spherical, imitating *Nous*. As Addey discloses, 'Iamblichus emphasises that the vehicle is made more spherical whenever the human soul is assimilated to the Divine Mind (*Nous*)'.¹¹⁶ The key point is that the human soul and the World Soul both imitate the shape and motion

¹¹³ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 237. See also *ibid.*, pp. 226-229.

¹¹⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III.11 (125.4-6) ἀλλ' αὕτη μὲν ἐπιτηδειότητα μόνον καὶ ἀποκάθαρσιν τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν αὐγοειδοῦς πνεύματος ἐμποιεῖ, δι' ἣν δυνατοὶ γινόμεθα χωρεῖν τὸν θεόν. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹¹⁵ Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, III. fr. 49 (1.12-15) οὕτω καὶ τὸ πᾶν σφαιροειδὲς ἀπετέλεσε πρὸς τὴν αὐτοκίνησιν αὐτῆς ἀπεικαζόμενον. διὸ καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον ὄχημα σφαιρικὸν ἀποτελεῖται καὶ κινεῖται κυκλικῶς, ὅταν διαφερόντως ὁμοιωθῇ πρὸς τὸν νοῦν ἢ ψυχὴν (translated by John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries with slight emendations*).

¹¹⁶ Crystal Addey, 'In the Light of the Sphere', p. 153.

of *Nous*, which is circular.¹¹⁷ Moreover, in fragment 84 of the same *Commentary*, Iamblichus affirms that the substance of the soul-vehicle is produced from the aether as a whole, which has a generative (ἀπογεννώμενη) power.¹¹⁸ Iamblichus modifies Porphyry's view of the vehicle as composed of successive subtractions from the planets' substance in such a way that it would diminish them.¹¹⁹ Iamblichus holds that 'the individual pneumatic vehicle is composed and given shape in accord with the life-principles of the encosmic gods'.¹²⁰ Dillon argues that τὰς ζωὰς τὰς θείας refers to the planets, since, in theological terms, 'these are the aethereal source of the individual πνεύματα/ὀχήματα'.¹²¹ The expression *life-principles* (of the planets) points to the particular principles that each heavenly god conveys to humans. It appears that Iamblichus complements the astrological connotations of Porphyry's explanation on a metaphysical level.

Furthermore, Finamore views in the doctrine of the sowing of the vehicles, that is to say the dispersion of souls together with their vehicles around the visible gods, the philosophical basis upon which is founded the Neoplatonic theory of astrological influences on human life.¹²² As he argues, 'Iamblichus would have seen the sowing of souls into the gods as the cause of both similarity and differences between the souls: similar in that all souls are given a leader [planet],

¹¹⁷ Crystal Addey, 'In the Light of the Sphere', pp. 150, 152-153; John Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*, pp. 49-50.

¹¹⁸ Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, IV. fr. 84 (4-5).

¹¹⁹ Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, IV. fr. 84 (6-7); Proclus, *In Timaeum* V: 234.18-24 (311A) in *Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, ed. E. Diehl, 3 vols, Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1906; Porphyry, 'Περὶ τοῦ ἐφ' ἡμῖν' 305.68-71, in Porphyry, *Fragmenta*, edited by Andrew Smith, Stuttgart/Leipzig: Teubner, 1993. For a comprehensive discussion on Porphyry's views on the vehicle, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, 'Porphyry of Tyre on the *Daimon*, Birth and the Stars', to be published; Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 240 and n. 26.

¹²⁰ Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, IV. fr. 84 (7-8, my italics) κατὰ τὰς ζωὰς τὰς θείας προϊόντων καὶ μορφουμένων τῶν μερικῶν πνευμάτων. (my translation).

¹²¹ John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*, p. 380.

¹²² John Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*, pp. 59-114.

different in that each leader exerts a different influence on the soul under its power.’¹²³ From that viewpoint, each planet has a different influence which may be perceived in a double manner. Iamblichus suggests that there is a constant ‘participation’ (μετάληψις) intermingling the material elements with immaterial emanations in the cosmos.¹²⁴ Therefore the influence of each planet is different on the physical level of the realm of generation and on the pneumatic sphere of the noetic world. As Iamblichus explains,

For example, the emanation (ἀπόρροια) deriving from Saturn tends to pull things together, while that deriving from Mars tends to provoke motion in them; however, at the level of material things the passive generative receptacle receives the former as rigidity and coldness, and the latter as a degree of inflammation exceeding moderation.¹²⁵

Therefore, it may be argued that the vehicle’s spherical shape and circular motion serve as a means of synchronisation with the planets’ noetic emanations in the realm of the intelligible. From that viewpoint, the ritual practitioners who purify their vehicle and enhance their level of receptivity, imitate the visible gods’ relationship with their bodies, the planets; thus, the prophet and the theurgist can sense and ‘see’ the gods because of their attainment of divine assimilation and likeness.

1.5 Listening to the Gods

Within Book III, Iamblichus describes divinatory operations in terms of the

¹²³ John Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*, p. 68.

¹²⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (55.3-5).

¹²⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (55.5-8) Οἷον ἡ τοῦ Κρόνου ἀπόρροιά ἐστι συνεκτική, ἡ δὲ τοῦ Ἄρεος κινητική· πλὴν ἐν γε τοῖς ἐνύλοις ἡ παθητὴ γενεσιουργὸς ὑποδοχὴ τὴν μὲν κατὰ πῆξιν καὶ ψυχρότητα ἐδέξατο, τὴν δὲ κατὰ φλόγῳσιν ὑπερβάλλουσιν τὸ μέτριον. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* with slight emendations).

luminous and circular descent of the divine; this account also details the sounds experienced during the divinatory episode. By repeatedly employing the Chaldean and Pythagorean term *ῥοῖζος*, a ‘whistling’ or ‘rushing’ sound which refers to the harmony of the spheres and the motion of the planets and stars, Iamblichus explicitly connects the audible vibrations emitted by the motion of the planets in their revolutions with the divine apparitions.¹²⁶ In dream divination, the divine spirit, ‘when entering, makes a whooshing sound’.¹²⁷ Furthermore, each planet makes a distinctive sound corresponding to a separate and proper divine voice. In his unfoldment of the importance of sound and music in the phenomena of divine possession, Iamblichus claims that, ‘those things such as sounds and tunes are properly consecrated to each of the gods, assigned to them in accord with their proper orders and powers, the motions in the universe itself and the harmonious sounds rushing (*ῥοιζουμένας*) from its motions’.¹²⁸

In addition, each planetary voice contributes in suitable measures to the divine harmony. According to Iamblichus, ‘the inspiration of the gods is not separated from the divine harmony, having been allied to it from the beginning,

¹²⁶ For the term *ῥοῖζος*, see *Oracles Chaldaïques*, edited and translated by Édouard Des Places, Paris, Budé-Les Belles Lettres, 1996 [1971], Fr. 37, Fr. 146; Hans Lewy, and Michel Tardieu (ed.), *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the later Roman Empire*, Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978 [1956], p. 19, n. 46 [hereafter, Hans Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*]; Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, pp. 101, 198; Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, p. 141, n. 188; Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira*, pp. 104, 108, 122; Crystal Addey, ‘Oracles, Dreams and Astrology in Iamblichus’ *De Mysteriis*’, pp. 44-45, 55-56, n. 52; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 263-264.

¹²⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* III.2 (104.1-2) *ῥοιζομένου τε ἐν τῷ εἰσέναι* (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹²⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* III.9 (118.13-119.3) *ὥς ἥχοι τε καὶ μέλη καθιέρονται τοῖς θεοῖς οἰκείως ἐκάστοις, συγγενεία τε αὐτοῖς ἀποδέδοται προσφόρως κατὰ τὰς οἰκείας ἐκάστων τάξεις καὶ δυνάμεις καὶ τὰς ἐν αὐτῷ <τῷ> παντὶ κινήσεις καὶ τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν κινήσεων ῥοιζουμένας ἐναρμονίους φωνάς*: (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

[and] it is shared by it in suitable measures'.¹²⁹ In a passage which strongly links cosmology and metaphysics, and echoes the Platonic theory of Recollection and the myth of Er from the *Republic*, Iamblichus justifies the innate knowledge that humans hold from the gods as the result of the soul's descent through the planetary spheres before incarnation.¹³⁰ As Iamblichus puts it,

Before it gave itself to the body, the soul heard the divine harmony. And accordingly even when it entered the body, such tunes as it hears which especially preserve the divine trace of harmony, to these it clings fondly and is reminded by them of the divine harmony; it is also borne along with and closely allied to this harmony, and participates in it (μεταλαμβάνει) as much as can be shared (μετέχειν) of it'.¹³¹

The verbs μεταλαμβάνειν and μετέχειν highlight the process of 'participation', intermingling material elements with immaterial emanations in the perception of the cosmic harmony.¹³²

Thus, it can be argued that the mathematical aspect of astrology corresponds to the musical imitation of the celestial spheres, through the measurement and the identification of each planetary voice in the horoscope. This process may be technical, but it describes the mathematical ratios apportioned, or

¹²⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.9 (119.9-11) ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ τῆς θείας ἁρμονίας ἢ τῶν θεῶν ἐπίπνοια οὐκ ἀφέστηκεν, οἰκειωθεῖσα δὲ πρὸς αὐτὴν κατ' ἀρχὰς μετέχεται ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἐν μέτροις τοῖς προσήκουσιν· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹³⁰ For the theory of Recollection, Plato, *Phaedrus* 250b-251a; *Timaeus* 42c; *Phaedo* 70c-72e in Plato, *Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Phaedrus*, Loeb, Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1914; *Meno* 81a in Plato, *Laches. Protagoras. Meno. Euthydemus*, Loeb, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press and Heinemann, 1962 [1924]. For the myth of Er, see Plato, *Republic* 614b-621b.

¹³¹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.9 (120.5-10) ὅτι δὴ ἡ ψυχὴ, πρὶν καὶ τῷ σώματι δοῦναι ἑαυτήν, τῆς θείας ἁρμονίας κατήκουεν· οὐκοῦν καὶ ἐπειδὴν εἰς σῶμα ἀφίκεται, ὅσα ἂν μέλη τοιαῦτα ἀκούσῃ οἷα μάλιστα διασώζει τὸ θεῖον ἵχνος τῆς ἁρμονίας, ἀσπάζεται ταῦτα καὶ ἀναμιμνήσκειται ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῆς θείας ἁρμονίας, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν φέρεται καὶ οἰκειοῦται, μεταλαμβάνει τε αὐτῆς ὅσον οἷόν τε αὐτῆς μετέχειν. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* with emendations).

¹³² This process of 'participation' is elaborated further *infra*, see chapter 2.2.1.

allotted, to each divinity.¹³³ Thus, as Addey asserts, ‘astrology encompasses the entire circuit of the heavens which reflects the divine procession through which, according to Plato, we travelled with the gods before descending [...] into the world of generation’.¹³⁴ True knowledge of the gods, and ultimately of ourselves, is, according to Iamblichus, the ultimate goal of astrology, and of every other science, or branch of knowledge.¹³⁵

¹³³ For a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the myth of Er highlighting the importance of the lot or portion which the soul chooses before each incarnation, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 282-285.

¹³⁴ Crystal Addey, ‘Oracles, Dreams and Astrology in Iamblichus’ *De Mysteriis*, p. 51.

¹³⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* X.1 (286.7-10).

CHAPTER 2-THE ART OF INTERPRETATION

2.1 Astrology as an Inductive Form of Divination

Recent scholarship has examined and analysed astrology as an inductive form of divination throughout the *De Mystериis*.¹³⁶ Iamblichus discusses astrology as an artificial mode of divination (τὸ τεχνικὸν εἶδος τῆς μαντικῆς), accomplished by human skill and partaking largely of guessing and supposition, initially in parallel with ornithomancy and haruspicy.¹³⁷ These were exactly the three means of prophecy which were strongly disapproved of in the *Chaldean Oracles*. Fragment 107 qualifies all three as ‘playthings, the props of commercial fraud’.¹³⁸ Similarly, Fragment 217 warns against the art of haruspicy on the basis that those who rely on it will not set foot in the halls of the Olympian gods.¹³⁹ Lewy, Majercik and Johnston argue that distrust of artificial forms of divination in the *Chaldean Oracles* is the result of their comparison with theurgy.¹⁴⁰

Concerning haruspicy, ornithomancy and the practice of astrology based on human interpretation and guessing, Iamblichus holds that ‘this kind uses certain

¹³⁶ Crystal Addey, ‘Oracles, Dreams and Astrology in Iamblichus’ *De Mystериis*’, pp. 47-50; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 240-243; Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 247; Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 48, n.19.

¹³⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* III.15 (135.1-4)

¹³⁸ Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles*, Fr. 107, 8-9 τὰδ’ ἀθύρματα πάντα, ἐμπορικῆς ἀπάτης στηρίγματα (translated by Ruth Majercik).

¹³⁹ Fragment 217 is reported by Proclus but listed among the *fragmenta dubia* by Des Places; see Proclus, *In Remp.*, II, 126, 15-17 and 23-26, in *Oracles Chaldaïques*, edited and translated by Édouard Des Places, Paris, Budé -Les Belles Lettres, 1996 [1971], Fr. 217.

¹⁴⁰ Hans Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*, pp. 254-257; Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles*, p. 182; Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira*, 86-87.

divine signs that have been perfected by the gods in various ways. From divine signs, in virtue of the relationship of things to the signs shown, the technique somehow draws conclusions and guesses at the divination, inferring it from certain probabilities'.¹⁴¹ Addey suggests that the inferiority of inductive divination does not stem from the nature of the signs (σημεῖα, σύμβολα), which are perfect since they are implanted by divinities or semi-divine beings, but rather from the central role of human interpretation in deciphering their meaning.¹⁴² Clarke, Addey and Greenbaum argue convincingly that Iamblichus' scepticism towards astrology as an artificial form of divination stems from its comparison with inspired divination and theurgic ritual.¹⁴³

Nevertheless, Iamblichus, like Plotinus, views in the stars and their movements a perfect way of foreknowledge. Plotinus claims that those who know how to read the stars by looking at them as if they were letters, can read the future from their patterns, discovering what is signified by the systematic use of analogy.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Iamblichus holds that the movement of the stars is due to the gods' commands and that those movements approach the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, 'not only locally, but also in their powers and emissions of light'.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, the stars and planets may be viewed as an ideal means of

¹⁴¹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.15 (135.6-10) Ὡς μὲν οὖν τὸ ὅλον εἰπεῖν, σημείοις τισὶ τοῦτο θείοις χρῆται ἐκ θεῶν ἐπιτελουμένοις κατὰ ποικίλους τρόπους. Ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν θεῶν τεκμηρίων κατὰ τὴν συγγένειαν τῶν πραγμάτων πρὸς τὰ δεικνύμενα σημεῖα συμβάλλει πως ἡ τέχνη καὶ στοχάζεται τὴν μαντείαν, ἐξ εἰκότων τινῶν αὐτὴν συλλογιζομένη. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹⁴² Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 241.

¹⁴³ Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus' De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, pp. 30-31; Crystal Addey, 'Oracles, Dreams and Astrology in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*', p. 50; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 241-243; Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 247- 249.

¹⁴⁴ Plotinus, *Enneads (On Destiny)* III.1(6.20-24).

¹⁴⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* III.16 (137.8-11) οὐ τόπῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς δυνάμεσι καὶ ταῖς τοῦ φωτὸς διαδρομαῖς· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

providing foreknowledge. As Lawrence remarks, ‘Plotinus not only accepts astral divination, but also thinks that the stars are best and brightest of all for giving signs of the future to those who can read such celestial writing’.¹⁴⁶ How Iamblichus can view astrology as an inspired form of divination, and his objections to nativity-casters (γενεθλιαλόγοι) as practising inductive divination, will now be discussed.

2.2 Astrology as an Inspired Form of Divination & Iamblichus’ Objections to the Casters of Nativities

The term ‘casting of nativities’ (γενεθλιαλογία) and its derivatives appear four times in *De Mysteriis*, and denote the kind of astrology that was commonly practiced by Iamblichus’ contemporary natal astrologers who performed their art as an inductive form of divination.¹⁴⁷ Iamblichus maintains that astrology may be practiced as an inspired or theurgic divinatory art, since ‘the divine principles of divination can teach us about the stars on the truest principles, and we don’t have any need of the “computation of tables” or of the art of (inductive) divination’.¹⁴⁸ As will be argued below, the inspired mode of interpretation of the heavenly signs entails the metamorphosis of the ritual practitioner’s identity through the

¹⁴⁶ Marilynn Lawrence, ‘Who Thought the Stars are Causes? The Astrological Doctrine Criticized by Plotinus’, in John F. Finamore and Robert M. Berchman (editors), *Metaphysical Patterns in Neoplatonism. Ancient, Medieval and Modern Times*, Westbury, The Prometheus Trust, 2014 [2007], pp. 13-25, here p. 24 [hereafter, Marilynn Lawrence, ‘Who Thought the Stars are Causes?’].

¹⁴⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (53.2); IX.1 (273.5-6); IX.2 (274.5-6); IX.5 (279.10).

¹⁴⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.3 (276.13-15) δύναται δὲ ἡ θεία μαντικὴ διδάσκειν ἡμᾶς περὶ τῶν ἄστρον κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀληθέστατον, καὶ οὐ πάντως δεόμεθα τῆς τῶν κανόνων διαριθμήσεως ἢ τῆς μαντικῆς τέχνης. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

attainment of divine assimilation and likeness. Throughout the *De Mysteriis*, Iamblichus advances four arguments in favour of the inspired mode of divination, which will now be examined in regard to the practice of astrology:

2.2.1 Astrology as an Inductive Form of Divination operates exclusively within the Realm of Generation

Concerning the belief held by *genethliologoi* that there are beneficent and maleficent planets, Iamblichus claims that all the planets are good, are causes of good, and direct themselves through their circular revolutions unitarily to the Fine and Good alone.¹⁴⁹ According to Iamblichus, the potencies emanating from the visible gods proceed from their divine bodies, ‘into the nature of the cosmos and the actual cosmos, descending in order through the whole realm of generation, and extending unhindered as far as individuals’.¹⁵⁰ Iamblichus does not deny that the planets’ influence in the realm of becoming may be perceived in an evil and disordered manner, but he views this distortion as inherent to the terrestrial world and not pertaining to the planets themselves.¹⁵¹ Plotinus thought similarly that the effects of the stars became evil only because of their mixture with the realm of generation.¹⁵²

In his analysis of Saturn and Mars, the so-called ‘maleficent’ planets, Iamblichus stresses that ‘since the feebleness of the material and earthly realm is not able fully to take in the unsullied power and pure life-force of aethereal

¹⁴⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (53.1-4).

¹⁵⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (53.4-9)...τὰς δ’ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν προϊούσας εἰς τὴν φύσιν τοῦ κόσμου καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν κόσμον, δι’ ὅλης τε τῆς γενέσεως ἐν τάξει κατιούσας, καὶ μέχρι τῶν κατὰ μέρος διατεινούσας ἀκωλύτως. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹⁵¹ Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (53.10-55.2).

¹⁵² Plotinus, *Enneads*, (*On whether the stars are causes*) II.3 (9.43-44).

elements, it transfers its own vulnerability to the primary causes'.¹⁵³ The material and earthly cannot take the pure power of aetherial elements and so humans often transfer their own vulnerability to the primary causes. Hence, humans ascribe and 'project' their own weakness onto the primary causes because they identify themselves within the realm of generation, rather than with the divine. Furthermore, Iamblichus holds that there is a constant participation (μετοχή) between the immaterial emanation of the heavenly bodies and the divergent, material elements of each individual. As he puts it, '... there would never have been any such thing as participation in the first place, if the participant had not some divergent element in it as well'.¹⁵⁴ This process of intermingling of heterogenous elements is not a problem in itself. The responsibility lies with the earthly and material elements within humans, which cannot receive the full powers of the gods unless the human soul and body have been made purified and receptive, in order to experience the planets' potencies in a less distorted manner. Therefore, an analogy may be traced with the astrological notion of 'participation' or 'joint possession' (μετοχή), employed by Porphyry in his *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*, to denote an exchange between two dignified planets.¹⁵⁵ In astrology, 'sharing' or 'participation' involves planets having some kind of rulership over the same sign. For Porphyry, the phenomenon of μετοχή takes place, 'when a planet

¹⁵³ Benefic and malefic planets are an extremely common trope in Hellenistic astrology. For Mars and Saturn as 'malefic' planets, see, for example, Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.5.19. Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (55.10-56.2) ἔτι τοίνυν ἡ ἀσθένεια τῶν ἐνύλων καὶ περιγείων τόπων τὴν ἀκραιφνῆ δύναμιν καὶ τὴν καθαρωτάτην ζωὴν τῶν αἰθερίων μὴ χωροῦσα τὸ ἐαυτῆς πάθημα μεταφέρει εἰς τὰ πρῶτα αἴτια· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysterioriis*).

¹⁵⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* I.18 (54.12-13) Τὴν ἀρχὴν γὰρ οὐδ' ἂν ἦν μετοχὴ τὸ τοιοῦτον, εἰ μὴ τι καὶ παραλλάττον εἶχε τὸ μεταλαμβάνον. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysterioriis*).

¹⁵⁵ Porphyry, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*, chapter 26. I owe this rapprochement to Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum's suggestion.

which shares similar qualities with a sign, is present in it or beholds it from a friendly position, while there is also co-presence of the co-ruler of the sign. A planet co-rules the sign when it is in its own domicile or exaltation'.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, as discussed earlier, Iamblichus believes that it is only when the ritual practitioner is purified and dignified, through ethical, ritual and intellectual preparation, that he or she can 'see' and 'listen to' the gods properly.¹⁵⁷

For Iamblichus, friendship, love, and strife, which operate as activities at the level of the universe, become passions at the level of the individuals which participate in them.¹⁵⁸ Hence, prognostications based exclusively on human reasoning and skilled observation originating from the realm of becoming are subject to this dimension's phantasms and produce predictions linked to corporeality.¹⁵⁹ For Iamblichus, perfect foreknowledge comes only through inspired divination, 'for it is that which is entirely immutable and also immaterial and entirely pure that is accustomed to apprehending future events; but that which is mingled with the irrationality and shadowiness of corporeal forms and matter is filled with abundant ignorance'.¹⁶⁰ Addey concurs with this interpretation of Iamblichus' view of inductive divination's inferiority.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Porphyry, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*, chapter 26, Μετοχή ἐστίν, ὅταν ὁ συμμετέχων τοῦ ζωδίου συμπαρῇ, ἢ οἰκείως αὐτὸ ἐφορᾷ· συμμετέχει δὲ τοῦ ζωδίου ὁ συνδεσπόμενος· συνδεσπόμενος δὲ, ὅταν τοῦ μὲν οἶκος, τοῦ δὲ ὕψωμα ᾗ. (my translation).

¹⁵⁷ See *supra*, chapters 1.4 and 1.5.

¹⁵⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* IV.9 (192.14-193.1).

¹⁵⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* X.3 (288.5-11); Iamblichus, *DM* III.27 (164.12-165.6).

¹⁶⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* VI.4 (245.1-4) αὐτὸ γὰρ μάλιστα τὸ ἄτρεπτόν τε καὶ ἄυλον καὶ πάντα καθαρὸν τῷ μέλλοντι ἐπιβάλλειν εἶωθε, τὸ δὲ συμμεινόμενον πρὸς τὸ ἀλόγιστον καὶ σκοτεινὸν τοῦ σωματοειδοῦς καὶ ὕλικου πληροῦται πολλῆς ἀγνωσίας· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹⁶¹ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 248-9.

2.2.2 The State of Consciousness Experienced by the Ritual Practitioner in the Act of Interpretation

Iamblichus recognises a certain permeability between the two categories of divination and maintains that certain signs employed in inductive techniques stem from divine divination and may, therefore, carry a trace of good in them.¹⁶² He even holds that certain inductive techniques may stimulate a higher state of understanding, and thus engender greater acuteness.¹⁶³ He nevertheless maintains that the diviner operating through discursive reasoning in a state of passion, resulting from the proximity to the material world, will never accomplish perfect foreknowledge.¹⁶⁴ Addey argues that it is the state of mind or consciousness experienced by the ritual practitioner which becomes a key criterion for distinguishing the modes of divination.¹⁶⁵ As she suggests, ‘if this is a divine state of consciousness sent directly by the gods, the divination is inspired, while if the ritual practitioner uses guesswork, deductive reasoning, skilled observation or discursive logic, the divination is inductive’.¹⁶⁶

Iamblichus’ theory of divination postulates a type of divine consciousness of the prophet who ‘receives from them [the gods] a power and knowledge embracing things that were and will be, and takes a view of all time, and surveys events happening in time’.¹⁶⁷ In analysing the phenomena of divine possession

¹⁶² Iamblichus, *DM* III.27 (164.8-12).

¹⁶³ Iamblichus, *DM* III.15 (136.6-7); Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 251.

¹⁶⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* VI.4 (244.15-245.1).

¹⁶⁵ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 251-252.

¹⁶⁶ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 252.

¹⁶⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* III.3 (107.12-108.1)...δύναμιν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν προσλαμβάνει καὶ γινῶσιν ἀναλογιζομένην ὅσα τε ἦν καὶ ὅσα ἔσται, θεωρίαν τε παντὸς χρόνου ποιεῖται καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ συμβαινόντων ἐπισκοπεῖ τὰ ἔργα... (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De*

and inspired divination, Addey highlights that the states of mind of the prophet and the theurgist transcend rationality, rather than lack it, proposing the term ‘supra-rationality’ to designate the ritual practitioner’s level of rationality.¹⁶⁸ The ‘supra-rational’ mode of interpretation of the heavenly signs is unitary, operating without division and perceiving the whole, rather than parts, because this kind of ‘supra-rational’ insight reaches the level of Intellect (*Nous*), or beyond. *Nous* is described by Neoplatonists as a kind of unified and unitary vision where one sees things as a whole rather than in parts or discursive steps. Iamblichus claims that prophetic inspiration is separate and free from places and times measured by number (τοῖς ἀριθμοῖς), since it is superior to things happening in time and held in place, and embraces *in one* the truth of all existing things because of its own separate and superior essence.¹⁶⁹ When the ritual practitioner is operating ‘supra-rationally’, their insight is closely allied to the harmony of the spheres and the gods’ motions of their bodies, the planets.¹⁷⁰ Plotinus held that ‘all [planets] contribute to the whole, and are therefore related to each other in a way that brings advantage to the whole, as we see that all the parts individually are of a living thing [...] So the universe is one and a single melody’.¹⁷¹

Mysteriis); Crystal Addey, ‘Divine Possession and Divination in the Graeco-Roman World: The Evidence from Iamblichus’ *On the Mysteries*’, p. 175.

¹⁶⁸ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 188-9, 196, 239, 273-5. Emma Clarke has proposed the term ‘super-consciousness’ in order to designate the ritual practitioner’s level of psychic consciousness (Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, p. 83); however, her analysis is not always clear and presents some self-contradictory arguments.

¹⁶⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.12 (128.5-13, my italics)

¹⁷⁰ See *supra*, chapter 1.5.

¹⁷¹ Plotinus, *Enneads*, (*On whether the stars are causes*) II.3.12 (24-27, 32-33, my italics)[According to Ficino and the *editio princeps* of Perna that part of the text does not belong in chapter 12, and it is therefore placed at the end of chapter 5. For the issue of placement of this section in the treatise, see *ibid.*, Introductory Note, pp. 54-55] Πάντες δὲ πρὸς τὸ ὅλον σύμφοροι· ὥστε πρὸς ἀλλήλους οὕτως, ὡς τῷ ὅλῳ συμφέρει, ὡς ἐφ’ ἐνὸς

For Iamblichus, the parts of the universe are in constant interaction. He holds that the cosmos being a single living being, ‘the parts within it are spatially distinct, but strive towards each other by virtue of their single nature. The force of cohesion in the universe and the cause of their blending draws the parts naturally towards mingling with one another.’¹⁷² Iamblichus suggests that the gods distribute the mantic power throughout the whole cosmos, and among all the different natures found there.¹⁷³ Moreover, Iamblichus clarifies that the ‘supra-rational’ state of inspired divination not only perceives the signs of divination unitarily, but also entails divine illumination. Iamblichus claims that, ‘the divinatory power of the gods is bounded to nothing divisible [...] but being separate by itself and indivisible, it is wholly present everywhere to those able to share (μεταλαμβάνειν) in it. And it both *illuminates* from without and fills all things, and permeates all the elements’.¹⁷⁴ In his analysis on light and the transparent, Finamore suggests that ‘this incorporeal light is the higher gods’ manifestation in all the lower realms. It is not visible to the eyes, but for Iamblichus as for Proclus, it is visible to the “eyes” of the purified vehicle’.¹⁷⁵

Iamblichus specifies that this light has a sacred brightness and shines from

ζώου ἕκαστα τῶν μερῶν ὁρᾶται...οὕτω γὰρ ἓν καὶ μία ἁρμονία. (translated by A. H. Armstrong).

¹⁷² Iamblichus, *DM* IV.12 (195.10-196.1) Τὰ δ’ ἐν αὐτῷ μέρη διέστηκε μεν τοῖς τόποις, τῇ δὲ μιᾷ φύσει σπεύδει πρὸς ἄλληλα. Τὸ δὲ συναγωγὸν ὅλον καὶ τὸ τῆς συγκράσεως αἴτιον ἔλκει μεν καὶ αὐτοφυῶς τὰ μέρη πρὸς τὴν ἀλλήλων σύμμιξιν. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹⁷³ Iamblichus, *DM* III.1 (102.1-3).

¹⁷⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III.12 (129.1-6, my italics) ὑπ’ οὐδενὸς [...] περιεῖληπται μεριστῶς ἡ μαντικὴ τῶν θεῶν δύναμις, χωριστὴ δ’ οὕσα καὶ ἀδιαίρετος ὅλη πανταχοῦ πάρεστι τοῖς μεταλαμβάνειν αὐτῆς δυναμένοις, ἔξωθεν τε ἐπιλάμπει καὶ πληροῖ πάντα, δι’ ὧν τε τῶν στοιχείων διαπεφοίτηκε (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹⁷⁵ John Finamore, ‘Iamblichus on Light and the Transparent’, in H.J. Blumenthal and E.G. Clark (eds.), *The Divine Iamblichus: Philosopher and Man of Gods*, Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1993, pp. 55-64, here p. 57 [hereafter, John Finamore, ‘Iamblichus on Light and the Transparent’]. See also *supra*, chapter 1.4.

above in the aether, or from the air, or moon or sun, or any other heavenly sphere, even though it appears autonomous (αὐτεξούσιος) from these things.¹⁷⁶ Thus, astrology as an inspired form of divination entails a ‘supra-rational’ perception of the divine signs as they are distributed through the heavens. The ritual practitioner should be able to ‘see’ the divine. As Greenbaum suggests in her study on light and divination in Hellenistic astrology, ‘both kinds of astrology, the phasic [or visual] and the rational, are oracular, in that they encompass both the showing of visible signs and the imaginative systems and patterns formed by the mind’s inner sight’.¹⁷⁷

2.2.3 Astrology as an Inspired Form of Divination is Dynamic like the Repetition of an Act of Cosmogony

While discussing the discovery of the personal *daimon*, one of the things Iamblichus reproaches in the ‘technical’ approach of his contemporary *genethliologoi* is that their methodology is exclusively based on the visible cycles of the generated realm.¹⁷⁸ They work with cosmic sympathy on a horizontal level, the realm of generation, rather than on a vertical level, connecting the realm of generation to the intelligible world of the gods.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, they have not purified their souls and soul-vehicles through the enhancement of their receptivity

¹⁷⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* III.14 (134.10-15).

¹⁷⁷ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, ‘Rising to the Occasion: Appearance, Emergence, Light and Divination in Hellenistic Astrology’, in Angela Voss and Jean Hinson Lall (eds.), *The Imaginal Cosmos: Astrology, Divination and the Sacred*, Canterbury, Kent: University of Kent, School of European Culture and Languages, 2007, pp. 9-24, here p. 20.

¹⁷⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.1 (272.12-273.5).

¹⁷⁹ See *infra*, chapter 2.2.4.

via intellectual, ethical and ritual means.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, in order to identify the *daimon*, they resort to a mechanistic calculation of any particular factor of the natal horoscope they consider most relevant, such as the ‘housemaster of the nativity’ (οἰκοδεσπότης), rather than looking at the horoscope as a whole or a *symbolon*.¹⁸¹ However, as seen earlier, Iamblichus condemns the maker of images because the latter did not share any analogy with the cosmogonic activity of the divine creation.¹⁸² For Iamblichus, the most perfect divination results from what Addey qualifies as ‘the imitation of the creative action of the demiurge’ by the theurgist.¹⁸³

In exploring dream divination, Iamblichus uses a cosmological vocabulary which points to the dynamic character he attributes to the theurgical practice of astrology. According to Iamblichus,

‘It [the Intellect, νοῦς] produces an even more perfect divination, when it unites its apportioned lots of life (τὰς μοίρας τῆς ζωῆς) and intellectual activity (τῆς νοερᾶς ἐνεργείας) to the universals (τοῖς ὅλοις) from which it had been separated. For it is then filled from the universals of total knowledge, so that, for the most part, it arrives at conceptions of what goes on in the cosmos’.¹⁸⁴

Finamore argues that by the term ‘universals’, Iamblichus refers here to the visible gods.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the term μοίρας, mostly used to describe an allotted portion,

¹⁸⁰ See *supra*, chapters 1.4, 2.2.1.

¹⁸¹ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.5 (278.12-279.16). For the various meanings of the term *oikodespotes* and the multitude of techniques for its discovery within the framework of Hellenistic astrology, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 255-275, 423-438.

¹⁸² Iamblichus, *DM* III.28 (168.10-12). See also *supra*, chapter 1.1.

¹⁸³ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 235-236.

¹⁸⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III. 3 (106.14-107.4) Καὶ ταύτης δ’ ἔτι τελειοτέραν ποιεῖται μαντείαν, ἥνικα ἂν τοῖς ὅλοις, ἀφ’ ὧν ἀπεμερίσθη, συνάπτη τὰς μοίρας τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς νοερᾶς ἐνεργείας· πληροῦνται γὰρ ἀπὸ τῶν ὅλων τότε τῆς πάσης εἰδήσεως, ὥς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον ἐξικνεῖσθαι ταῖς ἐννοίαις τῶν περὶ τὸν κόσμον ἐπιτελουμένων (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

¹⁸⁵ John Finamore, ‘Iamblichean Dream Theory’, in R. M. Berchman (ed.), *Mediators of the Divine: Horizons of Prophecy, Divination, Dreams and Theurgy in Mediterranean*

is also employed by Iamblichus in his account of Egyptian cosmology to designate the number of even parts in which the sky is divided by the Egyptians, before he engages with their astrological doctrines.¹⁸⁶ Throughout the astrological literature of the Hellenistic period, that same term refers to the degrees of the zodiac or to portions of the heavens.¹⁸⁷ Hence, Iamblichus' passage conjoins dream divination to the planets' movements describing a cosmogonic dimension in the practice of astrology, according to which the Intellect mobilises its inherent noetic powers in accordance with the allotted portions in the heavens (the astrological signs, or the *dekanoi*, or the degrees of the zodiac) in order to interact with the visible gods (the planets), from which the Intellect (*nous*) had been separated and with which it can be reunited.

The use of the term 'world lord' (κοσμοκράτωρ) in Books II and IX seems to favour this interpretation. First attested as a title of the planets by Vettius Valens in the second century CE, the term is also used by Iamblichus in his *Timaeus Commentary*.¹⁸⁸ In that particular context, Iamblichus refers to the astrological records of the Assyrians who, 'actually handed down to memory whole periodic returns and cycles of the seven world lords'.¹⁸⁹ In Book II, while discussing divine epiphanies, Iamblichus claims that these 'world lords' (κοσμοκράτορες)

Antiquity, South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism No. 163, Atlanta GA, Scholars Press, 1998, pp. 155-164, here p. 162 and n. 18. Finamore also cites Proclus, *In Tim.* 3.276.19-22).

¹⁸⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.3 (264.8).

¹⁸⁷ For a comprehensive discussion on the origins and various uses of the term *Moirai*, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 412-414.

¹⁸⁸ Vettius Valens, *Anthologiarum libri novem*, 171,6, edited by David Pingree, Leipzig, Teubner, 1986 [hereafter, Vettius Valens, *Anthologiarum libri novem*]; Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, fr.11.8.

¹⁸⁹ Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, fr.11 (6-8) Ἀσσύριοι δὲ, φησὶν Ἰάμβλιχος, [...] ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅλας ἀποκαταστάσεις καὶ περιόδους τῶν ἐπτὰ κοσμοκρατόρων μνήμη παρέδωκαν (translated by John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries* with slight emendations).

administer the sublunary elements.¹⁹⁰ Dillon notes that these ‘must be here identified with the planets, who are thus credited with administering the elements of the physical world’.¹⁹¹ Iamblichus clearly distinguishes the world lords from the hylic lords who preside over the material world.¹⁹² The world lords manifest along with themselves certain cosmic allotments (μοίρας κοσμικὰς) and dwell in the cosmic dominion assigned to them.¹⁹³ Possibly Iamblichus refers here to the dominion of each planet in certain parts of the horoscope, perhaps through the signs of domicile or exaltation, triplicity rulerships, or the zodiacal degrees assigned to the terms or the faces of the planets.¹⁹⁴ It is also probable that through the use of κοσμοκράτορες Iamblichus makes a reference to the distribution of destinies and souls, along with their vehicles, among the stars in the *Timaeus*.¹⁹⁵

The importance of *kosmokratores* highlights the dynamic and cosmogonic character of the inspired mode of interpretation. As seen earlier, in the discussion on Iamblichus’ *modus operandi* of dream divination within a cosmic framework, the prophet attains foreknowledge through the heavenly gods. According to Iamblichus, the epiphany of the world lords provides cosmic goods and all those

¹⁹⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* II.3 (71.3-5).

¹⁹¹ John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*, p. 276; contra Clarke, *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, pp. 87 (n. 122) and 341 (n. 483) who claims that κοσμοκράτορες always refers to the planetary gods in later authors, such as Proclus or Damascius, but holds that Iamblichus seems to imply ‘a broader category of being here’.

¹⁹² Iamblichus, *DM* II.3 (71.3-7). For an analysis of the differences between the two types of lords or archons, see Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, pp. 110-111.

¹⁹³ Iamblichus, *DM* II.7 (84.3-4); II.8 (85.11-12).

¹⁹⁴ For an overview of the dignities with domiciles, exaltations, triplicities, Egyptian bounds and decanic faces through the zodiac, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 410. For the impact these terms may hold for the astrological interpretation see, for example, Porphyry, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*, chapters 53-54.

¹⁹⁵ Plato, *Timaeus*, 41d-e.

of life.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, the humans making invocations to the world lords are moved in the soul, in parallel with the cosmic movements (κοσμικὰς κινήσεις).¹⁹⁷ Iamblichus seems to imply that the diviners achieve foreknowledge through the active act of synchronisation of their intellect, and soul, with the heavenly revolutions. According to Plato, the congenial motions of the divine part within humans are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe.¹⁹⁸ As Plato maintains,

These [heavenly revolutions] each one of us should follow, rectifying the revolutions within our head, which were distorted at our birth, by learning the harmonies and revolutions of the Universe, and thereby making the intelligent part like unto the object of its thought, in accordance with its original nature, and having achieved this likeness attain finally to that goal of life which is set before men by the gods as the most good both for the present and for the time to come.¹⁹⁹

For Plato, the synchronisation of human intellect with the cosmic revolutions conjoins humans to the work of the demiurge and heals the embodied soul from the distortions afflicted by its entrance into the realm of becoming. Likewise, for Iamblichus, the final purpose of sacrifice is to bring humans into contact with the demiurge, since it renders us akin to the gods through acts.²⁰⁰ Thus, the inspired interpretation of the heavenly signs entails the ritual practitioner's active participation in the cosmic movements by means of alignment of the human intellect with the heavenly revolutions.

¹⁹⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* II.6 (82.12-83.1); II.9 (89.12-13).

¹⁹⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* II.9 (88.8-10).

¹⁹⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, 90c-d. See also *supra*, chapter 1.5.

¹⁹⁹ Plato, *Timaeus*, 90c-d ταύταις δὴ ξυνεπόμενον ἕκαστον δεῖ, τὰς περὶ τὴν γένεσιν ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ διεφθαρμένας ἡμῶν περιόδους ἐξορθοῦντα διὰ τὸ καταμανθάνειν τὰς τοῦ παντὸς ἀρμονίας τε καὶ περιφοράς, τῷ κατανοομένῳ τὸ κατανοοῦν ἐξομοιωῶσαι κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν, ὁμοιώσαντα δὲ τέλος ἔχειν τοῦ προτεθέντος ἀνθρώποις ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀρίστου βίου πρὸς τε τὸν παρόντα καὶ τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον (translated by R. G. Bury with slight emendations).

²⁰⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* V.26 (239.12-240.1). See also Appendix II.viii.

2.2.4 Divination in Accordance with the Cosmic Laws of *Sympatheia* and *Theia Philia*

The cosmic law of sympathy (συμπάθεια) pervades the whole universe and propels separate elements bearing similar identifying marks in their respective (horizontal) realm of expression into a single vibration.²⁰¹ In his analysis of Iamblichus' objections to the wonder-worker, Shaw maintains that 'the horizontal sympathy that the soul shared with a symbol became the foundation through which its vertical power was received, [but] any ritual that stopped at the horizontal level of *sympatheia* and did not "preserve the analogy with divine creation" was not theurgy at all, but sorcery (*goeteia*)'.²⁰² Iamblichus thinks that the cosmic force of cohesion, which draws the disparate parts of the universe to naturally mingle with each other, may be artificially aroused.²⁰³ However, artificial divination omits divine agency and fails to perceive 'the indissoluble principle of love' (ἔρωτός τε ἀδιάλυτον ἀρχὴν), which dominates and brings together in unity the intelligible with the material world.²⁰⁴ Therefore, Iamblichus asserts that artificial divination which is exclusively based on the law of sympathy 'has the power to predict only trifling and everyday events, things which lie in the sphere of divided nature and directly concern generation'.²⁰⁵ Moreover, Iamblichus affirms that 'foreknowledge and forecasting are not the province of a power exerting sympathetic influence or of something enmeshed in matter and

²⁰¹ Iamblichus, *DM* V.7 (207.9-12). See also Appendix II.viii.

²⁰² Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 191.

²⁰³ Iamblichus, *DM* IV.12 (195.12-196.3)

²⁰⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* IV.12 (196.3-6).

²⁰⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* VI.4 (244.9-13) [ἔστι μὲν οὖν ὁ τρόπος τῆς μαντείας οὗτος τοιοῦτος πάντῃ διεστικῶς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἀληθινοῦ τρόπου] περὶ μικρῶν τε καὶ ἐφημέρων πραγμάτων δυνάμενος προλέγειν, περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ διηρημένῃ φύσει κειμένων ὅσα ἤδη περὶ τὴν γένεσιν ἐμφέρεται (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

held fast in a specific place and body, but, on the contrary it is characteristic of a power that is freed from all these'.²⁰⁶

On the other hand, the prophets who attune their intellect to the vertical dimension of divine love anchor inspiration to the first cause of divination, the gods. Throughout the *De Mysteriis*, Iamblichus affirms that divination is imparted by the gods and that, 'all foreknowledge and execution of eternal works are divine works, not accomplished by necessity or by other human causes, but by reason of such as the gods alone know'.²⁰⁷ The hieratic rites derive their coherence from a communion of friendship based on like-mindedness and an indissoluble bond of unity with the divine.²⁰⁸ Iamblichus proposes that each divine work is accomplished through identity, unity and accord, and that the divine fire shines universally, communicating its power to those who are able to receive it.²⁰⁹ In his description of prayer, Iamblichus suggests that the intelligible element in us, when aroused by prayer, 'strives primarily towards what is like to itself, and joins itself to eternal perfection'.²¹⁰ Furthermore, Iamblichus holds that 'it is better to seek the cause (of the efficacy of sacrifices) in friendship (φιλία) and affinity (οἰκείωσις), and in the relation that binds together creators with their creations and

²⁰⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* III.22 (154.10-12) Οὐ γὰρ συμπαθοῦς δυνάμεως οὐδ' ἐνύλου καὶ κατεχομένης ἐν τινι τόπῳ καὶ σώματι τὸ προγιγνώσκειν τε καὶ προμηνύειν τὸ μέλλον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὑπὸ πάντων τούτων ἀπολελυμένης. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

²⁰⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* III.19 (147.9-11) πρόγνωσις πᾶσα καὶ ἔργων αἰδίων πρᾶξις θεῶν μὲν ἐστὶν ἔργα, οὔτε δὲ δι' ἀνάγκης οὔτε δι' ἄλλας ἀνθρωπίνας αἰτίας ἐπιτελεῖται, ἀλλὰ διὰ τοιαύτας ὁποίας οἱ θεοὶ μόνοι γινώσκουσιν. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

²⁰⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* IV. 3 (184.14-185.1).

²⁰⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* IV. 3 (185.1-12).

²¹⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* I.15 (46.9-12) [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. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

generators with their offspring’.²¹¹ Dillon suggests that sacrifices work, not by putting any constraint on the gods, ‘but simply by activating those elements in the physical universe which possess a natural relationship of *oikeiosis* with higher powers. If one can do that the gods will come, of their own benevolent free-will’.²¹² From that perspective, divine love operates as ‘supra-cosmic’ sympathy.²¹³

In the case of astrology, the principle of divine love is revealed in the process of establishing contact with the planet which assumes the role of the leader god for each individual. Greenbaum argues that Porphyry sought to discover the planet representing the personal *daimon* in order to engage in a kind of astrological theurgy, ‘a ritual involving stars, mathematics, harmony (*sympatheia*) and light’.²¹⁴ For Iamblichus, the human ascent from generation to the divine, follows the inverse course of the sowing of the souls in the stars, each soul ascending to its leader god this time.²¹⁵ Hence, as Finamore explains, ‘if a soul is mercurial, it will ascend to the god Hermes; if Apollonian, to the sun; and so forth’.²¹⁶ Furthermore, according to the chariot myth in the *Phaedrus*, before it fell to earth, each soul-chariot was a dancer (χορευτής, 252d1) in the chorus (χορῶ, 250b6) led by one of the gods.²¹⁷ Under the influence of *eros*, the

²¹¹ Iamblichus, *DM* V.9 (209.9-11) Βέλτιον οὖν φιλίαν καὶ οἰκείωσιν αἰτιάσθαι, σχέσιν τε συνδετικὴν τῶν δημιουργούντων πρὸς τὰ δημιουργούμενα καὶ τῶν γεννώντων πρὸς τὰ ἀπογεννώμενα. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mystериis*).

²¹² John Dillon, ‘Iamblichus’ Defence of Theurgy: Some Reflections’, *The International Journal of Platonic Tradition* 1 (2007), pp. 30-41, here p. 39.

²¹³ See Appendix II.viii; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 29; Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mystериis*, p. 239, n. 299.

²¹⁴ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 273.

²¹⁵ Iamblichus, *De Anima*, fragment 49.

²¹⁶ John Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*, p. 131.

²¹⁷ Plato, *Phaedrus* 250b-252d. Plotinus also uses powerful images of dancing, dancers, and dances depicted throughout the *Enneads*: the dance of the heavenly bodies in

charioteer attempts to rejoin the gods by imitating the god he used to follow as a dancer, and by educating the beloved to follow the rhythm of the same god.²¹⁸ Since both the erotic and the prophetic manias share in the sacred trope through which humans may ascend to the gods, astrological theurgy may be viewed as a catalyst, inciting humans to join the particular god who leads their soul into the cosmic dance.²¹⁹ As Plato discloses,

when they [humans in the state of *eros*] search eagerly within themselves to find the nature of their god, they are successful, because they have been compelled to keep their eyes fixed upon the god, and as they reach and grasp him by memory they are inspired and receive from him character and habits, so far as it is possible for a man to have part in God.²²⁰

From that perspective, astrological theurgy is soteriological, and intimately linked to divinization, the process of making the soul divine.²²¹ Astrology as a form of theurgic divination entails only secondarily apprehension and knowledge of the future. Its principal function is to induce transformation of the ritual practitioner's identity. Therefore, the inspired interpretation of the heavenly signs, when operating in accordance with the laws of sympathy and divine love, bestows a 'supra-rational' state of unitary cognition which incites the ritual practitioner to

IV.4.33-35, the dance of Soul around Intellect in I.8.2, the divine dance of the incarnated soul which has achieved a complete union with its intelligible source in VI.9.8-10.

²¹⁸ Plato, *Phaedrus* 252d-e. For an approach of the *Phaedrus*' chariot myth focused on the poetic language and imagery of dance, see Elizabeth Belfiore, 'Dancing with the Gods: The Myth of the Chariot in Plato's "Phaedrus"', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 127, No. 2 (Summer, 2006), pp. 185-217.

²¹⁹ For the four divine manias, Plato, *Phaedrus* 265b. For the prophetic *mania* of Apollo, the mystic-telestic madness of Dionysus, and the poetic *mania* inspired by the Muses, see *Phaedrus* 244a-245a.

²²⁰ Plato, *Phaedrus* 253a1-6...ἰχγεύοντες δὲ παρ' ἑαυτῶν ἀνευρίσκειν τὴν τοῦ σφετέρου θεοῦ φύσιν εὐποροῦσι διὰ τὸ συντόνως ἡναγκάσθαι πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλέπειν, καὶ ἐφαπτόμενοι αὐτοῦ τῇ μνήμῃ ἐνθουσιῶντες ἐξ ἐκείνου λαμβάνουσι τὰ ἔθνη καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, καθ' ὅσον δυνατόν θεοῦ ἀνθρώπῳ μετασχεῖν (translated by H.N. Fowler).

²²¹ For a comprehensive discussion on divinization, see Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 265-267; Polymnia Athanassiadi, 'Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus', pp. 120-121.

seek synchronisation of his intellect with the heavenly revolutions and participation in the cosmic dance of the gods. Thus, the practice of ritualistic theurgy is the medium by which the fallen soul ascends to a point at which it becomes capable of engaging in a meaningful dialectic with the divinity.²²²

²²² For the concept of the fully descended soul in Iamblichus' metaphysical system, Iamblichus, *De Anima*, fragments 6 and 7; Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, IV. fr. 87 in John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*. See also *infra*, chapter 3.2.

CHAPTER 3-ACTING ON THE LEVEL OF THE PERSONAL *DAIMON*

3.1 The Personal *Daimon*

3.1.1 Nature of *Daimones* and the Celestial *Nous-daimon*

As examined earlier, the interpretation of the heavenly signs, when performed in accordance with the cosmic laws of *sympatheia* and *theia philia*, attracts the divine element within humans to the gods.²²³ Nevertheless, the ritual practitioner's ultimate objective is to completely abandon the dimension of the human soul-body composite by shifting his identity to the intelligible realm of the gods.²²⁴ Iamblichus highlights the need to ascend to the divine in due order and worship all the orders of the gods.²²⁵ The stages of ritual worship are cumulative, and Iamblichus stresses that theurgy links spirit and action to one another with a completely unbroken coherence.²²⁶ Since the material gods are the first to be worshipped, and the planets represent their visible bodies, humans should follow this ontological order in ritual worship, using the appropriate *sunthemata* (stones, herbs, animals, aromatics, a musical composition or a text, each belonging to the 'sympathetic' chain of a deity) as receptacles of the gods.²²⁷ However, Iamblichus stresses that the human beings are not immediately joined to the gods but require

²²³ See *supra*, chapter 2.2.

²²⁴ See *infra*, chapter 3.2.

²²⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* V.14 (217.4-13).

²²⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* V.26 (240.9-14).

²²⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* V.14 (217.14-218.13); *DM* I.17 (51.1-52.11). For *sunthemata*, see Iamblichus, *DM* V.23 (233.7-234.9); *DM* V.24 (235.1-15); see also Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, pp. 53-55; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 31, 36-37.

the greater beings as intermediaries.²²⁸ He conceives that ‘divine works cannot be accomplished with due property without some presence of superior beings, beholding and consecrating the sacred action’.²²⁹ For Iamblichus, *daimones* serve the gods, extending the divine influence over restricted portions of the cosmos.²³⁰ He defines *daimones* as ‘the generative and creative powers of the gods in the furthest extremity of their emanations and in its last stages of division’.²³¹ *Daimones*, like angels, always receive the truth from the gods.²³² Shaw suggests that the soul’s sacred ascent to the noetic realm of the immaterial gods follows an unbroken continuum and, therefore, must be mediated by the material gods and their *daimones*.²³³ As will be argued below, human fate (εἵμαρμένη) is tied to the stars and the personal *daimon*, and it is through the appropriation of all the heavenly influences, personified on an intelligible level by the *daimon*, that the metamorphosis of the human identity may be accomplished, coming closer to divinization.

The personal *daimon* is imparted by the heavenly gods. According to Iamblichus, the *kosmokratores* send, through their common leader, the personal

²²⁸ Iamblichus *DM* I.5 (17.6-9); see also Appendix II.iv; John Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*, p. 65.

²²⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.18 (1-3) ὥς οὐχ οἷόν τε τῶν θείων ἔργων δρᾶσθαι ἱεροπρεπῶς ἄνευ τοῦ παρεῖναι τινα τῶν κρειττόνων ἔφορον καὶ ἀποπληρωτὴν τῆς ἱερᾶς ἐνεργείας· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

²³⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* I. 20 (63.3-64.7) There are also wicked or evil *daimones* in the *De Musteriis* (their first mention is in *DM* II.7, 84.1, see also *DM* III.31.177-178; *DM* X.7, 293.8-10). However, they will not be discussed in the framework of the present essay, since Iamblichus explicitly states that evil *daimones* are in no case assigned an administrative role (*DM* IX.7, 282.3-4).

²³¹ Iamblichus, *DM* II.1 (67.2-5) Λέγω τοίνυν δαίμονας μὲν κατὰ τὰς γεννητικὰς καὶ δημιουργικὰς τῶν θεῶν δυνάμεις ἐν τῇ πορρωτάτῳ τῆς προόδου ἀποτελευτήσῃ καὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων διαμερισμῶν παράγεσθαι (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

²³² Iamblichus, *DM* II.10 (91.4).

²³³ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 174.

daimon to each individual.²³⁴ Iamblichus stresses that ‘the invocation of *daimones* is made in the name of the single god who is their ruler, who from the beginning has apportioned a personal *daimon* to each individual, and who in the theurgic rites reveals, according to his personal inclination, their personal *daimon* to each’.²³⁵ Neoplatonist philosophers considered that each *daimon* was in the sympathetic ‘chain’ of the specific god who leads it. Proclus distributes each class of *daimones* to the particular deity they belonged to and served, and divides *daimones* either according to the twelve supracelestial gods, or according to the visible gods, the planets.²³⁶ A similar link between stars and *daimon* is also attested in the *Hermetica*. Fowden points out that all the cosmic forces and sympathetic energies, personified as *daimones*, derive directly from the heavenly bodies.²³⁷ In *CH* XVI, ‘the sun sets in array the troop or, rather, troops of *daimones*, which are many and changing, arrayed under the regiments of stars, an equal number of them for each star. Thus deployed, they follow the orders of a particular star...’²³⁸

The principal function attributed to *daimones* throughout the *De Mysteriis*

²³⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.9 (284.3-5).

²³⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.9 (283.13-284.2) ὅτι καθ’ ἓνα τὸν κύριον θεὸν τῶν δαιμόνων ἡ κλήσις αὐτῶν γίγνεται, ὃς ἐξ ἀρχῆς τε ἀφώρισε τοὺς ἰδίους δαίμονας ἐκάστοις, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἱερουργίαις ἀναφαίνει κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν βούλησιν τοὺς ἰδίους ἐκάστοις. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* with emendations).

²³⁶ Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, 68.9-69.3, text edited by L. G. Westerink, Westbury, The Prometheus Trust, 2011 [1965, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers] [hereafter, Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*]. The twelve supracelestial gods are likely to be those from the heavenly procession of the gods in *Phaedrus* 247a and c.

²³⁷ Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, p. 78.

²³⁸ *CH* XVI, 13 (1-5) ὑπὸ τούτῳ δὲ ἐτάγη ὁ τῶν δαιμόνων χορός, μᾶλλον δὲ χοροὶ πολλοὶ γὰρ οὗτοι καὶ ποικίλοι, ὑπὸ τὰς τῶν ἀστέρων πλινθίδας τεταγμένοι, ἐκάστῳ τούτων ἰσάριθμοι. διατεταγμένοι οὖν ὑπηρετοῦσιν ἐκάστῳ τῶν ἀστέρων (translated by Brian Copenhaver) For the Greek text, *Corpus Hermeticum*, eds. A.D. Nock and A.-J. Festugière, Volume 1: *Traité I-XII* and Volume 2: *Traité XIII-XVIII: Asclepius*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1945. For the Eng. Trs: B.P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English translation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992 (repr. 1996).

is that of a guiding principle seeking to fulfil divine providence.²³⁹ Iamblichus claims that the substance (οὐσία) of *daimones* is fit for finishing and completing individual natures within the cosmos, but also for exercising oversight on each thing coming into existence.²⁴⁰ In apparent contrast to what most Platonists considered the standard Platonic view, that *daimones* convey divinatory inspiration from gods to humans, Iamblichus attributes inspiration directly to the gods.²⁴¹ However, Iamblichus assigns to *daimones* productive powers that oversee nature and the bond (σύνδεσμος) uniting souls to bodies.²⁴² In inductive divination, divine signs are produced by means of nature or through the agency of *daimones*.²⁴³ The *daimon* presides over the entrails and the life of all living beings.²⁴⁴ Iamblichus holds that ‘birds are moved not only by the impulse of their own particular soul, but also by the guardian *daimon* of living beings’.²⁴⁵ The contact with the organs of sacred animals in divinatory practices should be ascribed to *daimones*, who bring the divine signs into communion with human beings through the soul of the animals.²⁴⁶ Greenbaum points out that if the divine

²³⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* I. 20 (63.3-64.7); *DM* II.1 (67.2-5) *DM* II.3 (70.14-71.7); *DM* II.10 (91.4); *DM* III.18 (1-3). See also Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne. Histoire de la notion de daimon de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2012, pp. 217, 237 [hereafter, Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne*].

²⁴⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* II.1 (67.9-11).

²⁴¹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.7 (114.6-9); Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, pp. 231-236; Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus' De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, pp. 58-69; Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne*, pp. 222-3. Despite the apparent Platonic view which attributes divination to *daimones* (*Symposium*, 202e-203a), Plato holds in the *Ion*, 534c-d (*Ion*, ed. and trs. W.R.M. Lamb, Loeb, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press and Heinemann, 1962 [1924]) that (poetic and divinatory) inspiration originates directly from the gods through divine possession; see also Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 66, 107-108.

²⁴² Iamblichus, *DM* II.1 (67.12-68.1).

²⁴³ Iamblichus, *DM* III.15 (135.10-136.1).

²⁴⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III.16 (136.9-12).

²⁴⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* III.16 (136.14-137.2) Τοὺς δ' ὀρνιθας κινεῖ μὲν καὶ ἡ τῆς ἰδίας ψυχῆς ὁρμή, κινεῖ δὲ καὶ ὁ τῶν ζώων ἔφορος δαίμων (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

²⁴⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* VI.3.243 (243.6-244.5).

sign is an act of communication, ‘then again the *daimon* works as a mediator, communicator and administrator between the divine and human’.²⁴⁷

The personal *daimon*, conceived in the myth of Er as a divine entity chosen by the soul by lot before its descent, in order to watch over the whole embodied life, is the most representative entity hovering between the divine and human realms.²⁴⁸ Greenbaum highlights that the soul is responsible for this choice which, once made, ‘it is not God who fulfils it, but the *daimon*’.²⁴⁹ For Iamblichus, the personal *daimon* stands as a model (παράδειγμα) for humans even before the souls descend into generation:²⁵⁰

when the soul has chosen a *daimon* as its leader (ἡγεμόνα), then straightaway it [the *daimon*] stands over it as the one that fulfils completely [or, pays the debts of] the various lives of the soul, and as the soul descends into the body binds (συνδεῖ) it to the body, and it supervises the composite living being (κοινὸν ζῶον) arising from it, and personally regulates the particulars of the life of the soul.²⁵¹

The expression ἀποπληρωτῆς τῶν βίων τῆς ψυχῆς seems to stress that the *daimon* watches over the purpose of each descent.²⁵² The type of guidance the *daimon* provides is determined by the specific state of each soul. Iamblichus classifies the souls entering generation into three categories: immaculate souls descending for the salvation, purification and perfection of the generated realm; souls not entirely

²⁴⁷ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 337. For the divine sign as an act of communication, see Peter T. Struck, ‘A World Full of Signs: Understanding Divination in Ancient Stoicism’, in Patrick Curry and Angela Voss (eds.), *Seeing with Different Eyes. Essays in Astrology and Divination*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007, pp. 3-20, here p. 17.

²⁴⁸ Plato, *Republic* X 617e; *Symposium* 136 d-e.

²⁴⁹ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 285.

²⁵⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.6 (280.6-8).

²⁵¹ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.6 (280.8-11) ὃν ἐπειδὴν ἔλθεται ἡ ψυχὴ ἡγεμόνα, εὐθὺς ἐφέστηκεν ὁ δαίμων ἀποπληρωτῆς τῶν βίων τῆς ψυχῆς, εἰς τὸ σῶμά τε κατιοῦσαν αὐτὴν συνδεῖ πρὸς τὸ σῶμα, καὶ τὸ κοινὸν ζῶον αὐτῆς ἐπιτροπεύει, ζῶν τε τὴν ἰδίαν τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτὸς κατευθύνει (my translation).

²⁵² The verb ἀποπληρῶ also means ‘pay a debt’, see H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996 [1843], p. 213.

free from passions but directing themselves about bodies for the exercise and correction of their character; and souls which are dragged and forced to come down here for punishment and judgement.²⁵³ For the immaculate souls, the *daimon* provides only supervision and guidance in the fulfilment of their choice, while for the last two categories of souls the *daimon* ensures that through their choice they also pay the debts of former lives in order to attain purification from bodily passions. Iamblichus claims that in their idea of justice, superior entities take cognisance of the whole of our soul and all its previous lives.²⁵⁴

The expression κοινὸν ζῶον highlights the double status attributed to the human condition within Neoplatonism.²⁵⁵ The distinction between the living being, or soul-body composite, and the human being, ruled by Intellect, is elaborated by Plotinus.²⁵⁶ Plotinus contrasts this ‘living being’ (ζῶον), which includes the mixture with the lower or bodily parts, with the true human being (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀληθής) which is attuned to Intellect. As Plotinus puts it, ‘there is nothing against calling the whole “living being”, with the lower parts being mixed, while the true human being begins about there [with thinking]’.²⁵⁷ Influenced by Plato’s remark about the ‘human being within the human being’, Plotinus continues: ‘Given that the human being coincides with the rational soul, whenever human beings reason, it is we who are reasoning with the acts of

²⁵³ Iamblichus, *De Anima*, fragment 29.

²⁵⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* IV.4 (186.11-14).

²⁵⁵ The notion of the composite ‘living being’ originates in *Phaedrus*, 246c.

²⁵⁶ Plotinus, *Enneads* I.1 (*What is the Living Being*).

²⁵⁷ Plotinus, *Enneads* I.1 (7.18-20) Κωλύσει δὲ οὐδὲν τὸ σύμπαν ζῶον λέγειν, μικτὸν μὲν τὰ κάτω, τὸ δὲ ἐντεῖθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀληθής σχεδόν· (translated by John Dillon in John Dillon and Lloyd P. Gerson, *Neoplatonic Philosophy. Introductory Readings*, Indianapolis and Cambridge, Hackett publishing Company, 2004, p.7 [hereafter, John Dillon and Lloyd P. Gerson, *Neoplatonic Philosophy*]).

reasoning that are psychic products’.²⁵⁸ Plotinus holds that if humans identify themselves with the higher part of the soul (which does not descend into generation remaining within the realm of Intellect), then the true human being, instead of being associated with bodily passions, becomes divinized.²⁵⁹

In Iamblichus’ doctrine of the fully descended soul, the personal *daimon* communicates the first principles of Intellect to the rational part of the soul, the human mind.²⁶⁰ As Iamblichus puts it, ‘we pursue all our reasonings thanks to the first principles which it [the *daimon*] communicates to us, and we perform such actions as it puts into our minds’.²⁶¹ The idea that Intellect (νοῦς) may be communicated to the human mind through the personal *daimon* originates in the *Timaeus*, where the god-sent *daimon* arouses humans, through their natural affinity with the sky, to raise upwards like heavenly plants.²⁶² For Plato, someone who has devoted himself to learning and true thoughts partakes of immortality, ‘and inasmuch as he is always tending his divine part and keeping the *daimon* who dwells together with him well-ranked, he must be especially good-spirited (*eudaimon*)’.²⁶³ According to the Timarchus’ myth, reported by Simmias in Plutarch’s *De Genio Socratis*, all souls have understanding or intellect, but some

²⁵⁸ Plato, *Republic* 589A7 ... τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος... (my translation); Plotinus, *Enneads* I.1 (7.22-24) Συνδρόμου γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῇ λογικῇ ψυχῇ, ὅταν λογιζόμεθα, ἡμεῖς λογιζόμεθα τῷ τοῦς λογισμοὺς ψυχῆς εἶναι ἐνεργήματα (translated by John Dillon in John Dillon and Lloyd P. Gerson, *Neoplatonic Philosophy*).

²⁵⁹ Plotinus, *Enneads* I.2 *On Virtues* (3.19-21) Τὴν δὴ τοιαύτην διάθεσιν τῆς ψυχῆς καθ’ ἣν νοεῖ τε καὶ ἀπαθὴς οὕτως ἐστίν, εἴ τις ὁμοίωσιν λέγοι πρὸς θεόν, οὐκ ἂν ἀμαρτάνοι· (translated by A. H. Armstrong with slight emendations).

²⁶⁰ For the Iamblichean doctrine of the fully descended soul in each embodiment, see *infra*, chapter 3.2.

²⁶¹ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.6 (280.11-13) καὶ ὅσα λογιζόμεθα, αὐτοῦ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἡμῖν ἐνδιδόντος διανοούμεθα, πράττομέν τε τοιαῦτα οἶα ἂν αὐτὸς ἡμῖν ἐπὶ νοῦν ἄγῃ (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* with slight emendations).

²⁶² Plato, *Timaeus* 90a.

²⁶³ Plato, *Timaeus* 90c ἅτε δὲ ἀεὶ θεραπεύοντα τὸ θεῖον ἔχοντά τε αὐτὸν εἴ κεκοσμημένον τὸν δαίμονα ξύνοικον ἐν αὐτῷ διαφερόντως εὐδαίμονα εἶναι. (translated by Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 23). For the *nous-daimon* in the *Timaeus*, see also Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne*, pp. 75-81.

are so immersed in matter that their understanding becomes irrational.²⁶⁴ However, for those who keep partly clear of the body, ‘the part left free from corruption is called by the multitude Intellect (νοῦς), who take it to be within themselves, as they take reflected objects to be in the mirrors that reflect them; but those who conceive the matter rightly call it a *daimon*, as being external’.²⁶⁵ Louis Gernet remarks that the *daimon*, ‘is out of the individual and within simultaneously’.²⁶⁶

3.1.2 The Personal *Daimon* and the Horoscope

For Iamblichus, the personal *daimon* can be a liberator from fate by providing the essential intermediary link connecting humans to the divine. In the *Hermetica*, the *nous-daimon* is viewed as the most potent bond uniting gods to humans.²⁶⁷ Timotin suggests that the *nous-daimon* is a *desmos* or a *metaxy* which creates a bond uniting the human soul to the World-Soul on the one hand, and the human intellect to the divine Intellect on the other.²⁶⁸ In the Iamblichean metaphysical system, there is always a bond uniting humans either to the divine or

²⁶⁴ Plutarch, *De Genio Socratis* (*On the Sign of Socrates*), 591D in Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume VII* (edited by Jeffrey Henderson and translated by Phillip H. De Lacy and Benedict Einarsson), London and Cambridge, MA, Loeb: Harvard University Press, 1959 [hereafter, Plutarch, *De Genio Socratis*].

²⁶⁵ Plutarch, *De Genio Socratis* 591E τὸ δὲ φθορᾶς λειψὸν οἱ πολλοὶ νοῦν καλοῦντες ἐντὸς εἶναι νομίζουσιν αὐτῶν, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς ἐσόπτροις τὰ φαινόμενα κατ’ ἀνταύγειαν· οἱ δὲ ὀρθῶς ὑπονοοῦντες ὡς ἐκτὸς ὄντα δαίμονα προσαγορεύουσι. (translated by Phillip H. De Lacy and Benedict Einarsson with slight emendations), For the *nous-daimon* in the *De Genio Socratis*, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 21-25; Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne*, pp. 244-254.

²⁶⁶ Louis Gernet, *Recherches sur le développement de la pensée juridique en Grèce ancienne*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2001[doctoral dissertation, 1917], p. 319, ‘est à la fois hors de l’individu et en lui’ (my translation).

²⁶⁷ *CH X*, 23.1-5.

²⁶⁸ Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne*, p. 79.

to the realm of generation. Iamblichus clearly contrasts the horizontal, material bonds (δεσμοί) of necessity and fate with the vertical bond (συμπλοκή) binding together worshippers with the powers worshipped.²⁶⁹ In the former case the bond confines humans to generation, while the in the latter liberates from it. Hence, Iamblichus criticises the technical approach for the discovery of the *daimon*, the one practiced by *genethlialogoi*, on the basis that it is impossible to free oneself from fate if one relies on the configuration prevailing at birth, since the natal chart represents the entry into generation and, therefore, any mechanistic and fatalistic calculation deriving from it will not provide any information transcending nature and liberating from fate.²⁷⁰

However, Iamblichus insists on the celestial origins of the *daimon* and stresses that its discovery should not be derived from the *oikodespotes*, but rather from a more universal basis stemming from the divine mode of divination.²⁷¹ Consequently, recognition of the *daimon* was not gained by artificial or technical means, but was given theurgically through the appropriate *kosmokrator*.²⁷² Considering Iamblichus' preference for katarchic, rather than natal, astrology, it would be tempting to speculate that perhaps, in their attempt to discover the *daimon*, theurgists used some form of interrogational, or horary, astrology, that is to say the branch of katarchic astrology used in order to answer a specific question by casting an astrological chart for the particular moment the question was posed. Dorotheus' Book V demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of interrogational astrology in the 1st century CE, although David Pingree challenges, rather

²⁶⁹ For the bonds of necessity and fate, Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.7 (269.10-11); X.5 (291.11). For the bond binding together worshippers with the powers worshipped, Iamblichus, *DM* V.15 (220.8-10).

²⁷⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.3 (275.1-276.4).

²⁷¹ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.5 (279.10-15).

²⁷² Iamblichus, *DM* IX.9 (283.13-284.5).

unjustifiably, its overall authenticity.²⁷³ Nevertheless, theurgists used katarchic astrology in order to determine the appropriate time for rituals seeking to transcend generation.²⁷⁴ Hence, with the knowledge of the appropriate *kosmokrator*, they might have initiated rituals at the time when that particular planetary god would be favourably predisposed in revealing the identity of the *daimon*.²⁷⁵ Iamblichus stresses that the invocation of *daimones* is made in the name of their ruling god who reveals ‘according to his personal inclination’ the personal *daimon* to each individual.²⁷⁶ The expression κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν βούλησιν highlights the importance of the opportune astrological *kairos* in order to obtain the favourable predisposition of the leader god.

Furthermore, Shaw argues that since the material gods were revealed by *daimones*, material rites necessarily worked with *daimonic* orders: since these same *daimones* ruled over bodily instincts and passions, the rituals that established the proper measures for associating with them also stabilised the soul’s passions.²⁷⁷ Proclus highlights that while the *daimon* brings about fate, it also sets

²⁷³ Dorotheus of Sidon, *Carmen Astrologicum*, (edited by David Pingree) Liber V, Leipzig, Teubner, 1976; Dorotheus of Sidon, *Carmen Astrologicum* (translated by David Pingree), Abingdon, MD, The Astrology centre of America, 2005. For the transmission of Dorotheus’ text through Arabic translations, see *ibid.*, pp. xii-xiv. For a discussion on the authenticity of the chapters of Book V examining interrogational astrology, see David Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology: From Babylon to Binaker*, Istituto Italiano per L’Africa e L’Oriente, Rome, 1997, pp. 44-49. Pingree holds that Dorotheus’ relevant chapters from Book V are posterior Persian interpolations. However, Hephaestion of Thebes’ Book III on katarchic astrology (David Pingree, *Hephaestionis Thebani Apotelesmaticorum libri tres*, I–II. Leipzig: Teubner, 1973–1974), written around 415 CE, contains sections from Dorotheus’ Book V, and therefore suggests that at least a major part of Dorotheus’ Book V is authentic. Furthermore, Campion indicates that most probably astrologers in the first centuries CE had means of answering specific questions (Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology. Vol. 1: The Ancient World*, p. 339, n.15).

²⁷⁴ See *supra*, chapter 1.2.

²⁷⁵ For the choice of the appropriate *kairos* for engaging with ritual, see Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.4 (267.6-10).

²⁷⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.9 (283.13-284.2, my italics) κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν βούλησιν (my translation).

²⁷⁷ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, pp. 173-174.

free from it by perfecting reason, moderating passions and bestowing the gift of divine providence. According to Proclus:

The guardian spirit alone moves, controls and orders all our affairs, since it *perfects the reason, moderates the emotions*, infuses nature, maintains the body, supplies accidentals, *fulfils the decrees of fate* and *bestows the gift of providence*; and this one being is ruler of all that lies in us and concerns us, steering our whole life.²⁷⁸

From that viewpoint the natal horoscope may operate as a material *sunthema* seeking to stabilise the passions of the soul by conveying intellectual supervision over them. Greenbaum suggests that astrology is logically associated with a system like Plato's that ties fate and the *daimon* into incarnation.²⁷⁹ Moreover, she remarks that since *daimon* and soul were intertwined before birth, so why not at the moment of birth, in which case the birthchart would show this relationship in its arrangement of planets and zodiacal signs.²⁸⁰ Iamblichus claims that only one personal *daimon* guides each individual, and that it 'does not guide just one or another part of our being, but all of them at once, and it extends to the whole administration of us, even as it has been allotted to us *from all the regions of the universe*'.²⁸¹ Hence, the *daimon*, although initially sent by a particular heavenly god, appears as the intelligible personification of the sum-total of all astral and planetary influences at the moment of birth. When soul and Intellect are synchronized with the noetic dimension of the astral revolutions, the ritual

²⁷⁸ Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, 78.1-6 (my italics) μόνος δὲ ὁ δαίμων πάντα κινεῖ, πάντα κυβερνᾷ, πάντα διακοσμεῖ τὰ ἡμέτερα. καὶ γὰρ τὸν λόγον τελειοῖ καὶ τὰ πάθη μετρεῖ καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐμπνεῖ καὶ τὸ σῶμα συνέχει καὶ τὰ τυχαῖα χορηγεῖ καὶ τὰ εἰμαρμένα πληροῖ καὶ τὰ ἐκ τῆς προνοίας δωρεῖται· καὶ εἷς ἐστὶν οὗτος ἀπάντων τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ περὶ ἡμᾶς βασιλεύς, οἰακίζων ἡμῶν τὴν σύμπασαν ζωὴν. (translated by William O'Neill).

²⁷⁹ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 242.

²⁸⁰ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 242, n.30.

²⁸¹ Iamblichus, *DM IX.7* (281.6-8, my italics) Οὐ γάρ τινας τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν μέρους, πάντων δ' ἅπαξ ἀπλῶς ἡγεῖται, διήκει τε ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἀρχήν, ὥσπερ ἀφ' ὅλων τῶν ἐν τῷ παντὶ διατάξεων ἀπονενέμῃται. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

practitioner may act on the level of the *nous-daimon*, introspecting the whole cosmos in its intelligible dimension. Greenbaum proposes that through the *daimon*, humans can process the light of both the sun, representing *nous* and its place in the soul, and moon, standing for the body which holds the soul in each incarnation.²⁸² From that perspective, astrology, which seeks to decipher the divine Intelligence of the visible gods, emerges as an essential component of theurgy, with the potential to bestow upon humans liberation from generation and access to the realm of *Nous*. Plotinus says, echoing the *Timaeus*: ‘when the souls are set free they come to the star which is in harmony with the character and power which lived and worked in them; and each will have a god of this kind as its guardian spirit, either the star itself or the god set above this power’.²⁸³

According to Iamblichus, the personal *daimon* ‘continues to direct men’s lives up to the point at which, through sacred theurgy, we establish a god as the overseer and leader of our soul’.²⁸⁴ In that case, the *daimon* either withdraws out of respect for the superior principle, or surrenders its administrative role, or subordinates itself to the god, or serves the god as its lord.²⁸⁵ Plotinus constitutes a representative example of an individual whose *daimon* was god-like.²⁸⁶ As Porphyry reports, an Egyptian priest visiting Rome asked Plotinus to come to the

²⁸² Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 45.

²⁸³ Plato, *Timaeus* 41d6-42d1; Plotinus, *Enneads* (*On our Allotted Guardian Spirit*), III.4.6 (27-30) [καὶ τὰς παρ’ ἡμῖν εἶναι καὶ ἐνέργειαν εἶναι παρ’ ἐκάστης] καὶ ἀπαλλαγείσας ἐκεῖ γίνεσθαι πρὸς ἄστρον τὸ σύμφωνον τῷ ἐνεργήσαντι καὶ ζήσαντι ἥθει καὶ δυνάμει· καὶ τοιοῦτῳ θεῷ καὶ δαίμονι γε ἢ αὐτῷ τούτῳ χρήσεται ἢ τῷ ὑπὲρ ταύτην τὴν δύναντιν· (translated by A. H. Armstrong).

²⁸⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.6 (280.13-281.1) καὶ μέχρι τοσούτου κυβερνᾷ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἕως ἂν διὰ τῆς ἱερατικῆς θεουργίας θεὸν ἔφορον ἐπιστήσωμεν καὶ ἡγεμόνα τῆς ψυχῆς· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

²⁸⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* IX.6 (281.2-4).

²⁸⁶ Porphyry, *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books* (*ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ ΒΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΤΑΞΕΩΣ ΤΩΝ ΒΙΒΛΙΩΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ*), *Vita Plotini*, chapter 10, in Plotinus, *Enneads* I [hereafter, *Vita Plotini*].

temple of Isis and watch the evocation of his own companion *daimon*.²⁸⁷ Then, ‘when the *daimon* was summoned, a god came and not a *daimon*, and the Egyptian said, “Blessed are you, who have a god as *daimon* and not a companion of the subordinate order”.²⁸⁸ Proclus suggests that the Egyptian marvelled at Plotinus possessing a divine spirit because only the most perfect souls chose the manner of life appropriate to their leader god, acting by their own will on the level of the *daimon*, while the latter simply served as link uniting them to the god.²⁸⁹

3.2 Divinization and Negotiation with Fate

Iamblichus conceives of the ‘divinised man’ as he ‘who once was united to the contemplation of the gods, afterwards came into possession of another soul adapted to the human form, and through this was born into the bonds of necessity (ἀνάγκη) and fate (εἰμαρμένη)’.²⁹⁰ Iamblichus holds that humans beings have two souls, one deriving from the primary intelligence (ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου νοητοῦ), which partakes of the power of the demiurge, and another contributed from the revolutions of the heavenly bodies (ἐκ τῆς τῶν οὐρανίων περιφορᾶς).²⁹¹ Therefore, the celestial gods may be viewed as bringers of fate, but only to the extent that humans participate in the lowest level of the heavenly emanations, as

²⁸⁷ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 10.15-19.

²⁸⁸ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 10.21-25, Κληθέντα δὲ εἰς αὐτοψίαν τὸν δαίμονα θεὸν ἐλθεῖν καὶ μὴ τοῦ δαιμόνων εἶναι γένους· ὅθεν τὸν Αἰγύπτιον εἶπεῖν· “μακάριος εἶ θεὸν ἔχων τὸν δαίμονα καὶ οὐ τοῦ ὑφειμένου γένους τὸν συνόντα.” (my translation).

²⁸⁹ Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, 73.1-5.

²⁹⁰ Iamblichus, *DM X* (290.8-11) Λέγω τοίνυν ὡς ὁ θεωτὸς νοούμενος ἄνθρωπος, ἡνωμένος τὸ πρόσθεν τῇ θεᾷ τῶν θεῶν, ἐπεισῆλθεν ἑτέρα ψυχῇ τῇ περὶ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον μορφῆς εἶδος συνηρμοσμένη, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν τῇ τῆς ἀνάγκης καὶ εἰμαρμένης ἐγένετο δεσμῶ. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

²⁹¹ Iamblichus, *DM VIII.6* (269.1-4).

seen earlier.²⁹² Iamblichus clearly states that, ‘while the gods free us from fate, the lowest level of natures which descend from them and interweave themselves with the generative processes of the cosmos and with body do bring about fate’.²⁹³

The liberation from fate begins when the soul assigns itself to Intellect to become its leader. Iamblichus notes that ‘the soul is brought to completion by intellect’.²⁹⁴ He views the soul as completely descended in each embodiment.²⁹⁵ He reproaches Plotinus for not sufficiently distinguishing the soul from Intellect and the gods, and he insists that soul is a distinct and self-subsistent hypostasis, separate and lower to the intelligible order.²⁹⁶ As Finamore and Dillon argue, ‘the doctrine that the soul is the mean between two extremes, Intellect and Body, is an integral part of Iamblichus’ theory of the soul’.²⁹⁷ When the soul attaches itself to its bodily condition it becomes subject to necessity and fate. Citing Iamblichus’ *Commentary on the Phaedrus*, Hermeias reports that ‘the fate he [Iamblichus] is referring to is that which is concerned with bodily life and order. Iamblichus

²⁹² See *supra*, chapters 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 2.2.1.

²⁹³ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.7 (270.1-3) Ἄλλ’ οἱ μὲν θεοὶ λύουσι τὴν εἰμαρμένην, αἱ δ’ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἔσχαται φύσεις καθήκουσαι καὶ συμπλεκόμεναι τῇ γενέσει τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῷ σώματι τὴν εἰμαρμένην ἐπιτελοῦσιν· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysterioriis*).

²⁹⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* V.10 (213.14) Ψυχὴ μὲν γὰρ ἀπὸ νοῦ τελειοῦται (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysterioriis*).

²⁹⁵ Iamblichus, *De Anima*, fragments 6 and 7; Proclus (*The Elements of Theology*, prop. 211) also shares Iamblichus’ view that the soul descends entirely into the world of becoming.

²⁹⁶ Iamblichus, *De Anima*, fragments 6 and 7; Iamblichus, *In Timaeum*, IV. fr. 87 in John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*. See also R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 118-120; Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, pp. 12-14; Carlos Steel, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascus and Priscianus*, Brussels, WLSK, 1978, pp. 27-31, 34-51 [hereafter, Carlos Steel, *The Changing Self*]. For a comprehensive discussion on Iamblichus and Plotinus on the descent of the soul and the implications for ritual, see Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 147-150. Aaron Johnson holds that Porphyry also adopts the Plotinian doctrine of the ‘undescended soul’ [‘Astrology and the will in Porphyry of Tyre’, in Anna Marmodoro and Brian Prince (eds.), *Causation and Creation in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 186-201, here p. 192].

²⁹⁷ Iamblichus, *De Anima*, p. 15.

defines fate (εἰμαρμένη) as the nature of the universe'.²⁹⁸ In Book VIII, while discussing Egyptian theology and the Hermetic concept of the importance of the movement of the stars, Iamblichus claims that even though emancipation from fate is accomplished principally through the soul deriving from the intelligible realm, it is because the second soul originates from the heavens that humans may begin to accommodate themselves with the cosmic movement and the fate it distributes.²⁹⁹

Hence, the planets may be viewed as an intermediary phase in the process of divinization. Iamblichus notes that even in the visible gods, 'there are certain intelligible principles of essence, through which it is possible for souls to gain release from the generative process deriving from the cosmic spheres'.³⁰⁰ He also maintains that the part of the soul that sees the divine (ἡ θεοπτικὴ ψυχὴ) slips into the second soul, the one fashioned by the heavenly gods.³⁰¹ Therefore, one may argue that humans attain access to the intelligible order through transformation of their perception of the nature of the universe into the divine Intelligence of the stars. This kind of intellectual mastery of the heavenly circuits, which represents the ultimate object of *mathematike episteme*, may transcend necessity and fate and allow a glimpse into the realm of the divine. Valens attests that the practice of his

²⁹⁸ Iamblichus, *In Phaedrum*, Fr. 6A, in John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries* Εἰμαρμένην δὲ λέγει τὴν περὶ τὴν σωματοειδῆ ζωὴν καὶ τάξιν· ὁ Ἰάμβλῖχος δὲ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ παντὸς εἰμαρμένην καλεῖ. (translated by John Dillon).

²⁹⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.6 (269.5-8) ἡ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν κόσμων εἰς ἡμᾶς καθήκουσα ψυχὴ ταῖς περιόδοις συνακολουθεῖ τῶν κόσμων, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ νοητῶς παρούσα τῆς γενεσιουργοῦ κυκλήσεως ὑπερέχει, καὶ κατ' αὐτὴν ἢ τε λύσις γίνεταί τῆς εἰμαρμένης καὶ ἡ πρὸς τοὺς νοητοὺς θεοὺς ἄνοδος, θεωργία τε ὅση πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον ἀνάγεται κατὰ τὴν τοιαύτην ζωὴν ἀποτελεῖται. (translated by Clarke and al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

³⁰⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.8 (271.6-8) ὥς ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν θεῶν, καὶ τῶν ἐμφανῶν, εἰσὶ τινες οὐσίας νοηταὶ ἀρχαί, δι' ὧν γίνεταί ἡ ἀπὸ τῆς γενέσεως τῶν κόσμων ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἀπαλλαγὴ. (translated by Clarke and al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

³⁰¹ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.6 (269.4).

research brought him in communion with the divine: ‘once I had experienced the holy, reverent contemplation of celestial phenomena, I wished to cleanse my character of every kind of vice and pollution and leave my soul immortal. I felt that I was communicating with divine beings, and I acquired a sober mind for my research’.³⁰²

The ascent to the realm of the gods may be viewed in parallel with the phenomena of divine inspiration and possession, when those who are inspired possess neither the life of a human being, nor of the composite living being, but exchange their life for a more divine one.³⁰³ Clarke proposes that through divine inspiration, the possessed ‘transcend both their humanity and their corporeality’.³⁰⁴ Hence, they transcend fate.³⁰⁵ Iamblichus holds that all things are not bound up by necessity and fate, ‘for the soul contains its own principle of conversion to the intelligible, and of detachment from the realm of generation, and also with union with true being and the divine’.³⁰⁶ Addey suggests that liberation from fate entails a transformation of consciousness for the theurgist, ‘where fate is viewed within its full cosmological context, as a reflection of divine providence’.³⁰⁷ Iamblichus clearly states that all things subject to fate are

³⁰² Vettius Valens, *Anthologiarum libri novem*, VI.1 (15-16) ἀλλὰ θεία καὶ σεβασμία θεωρία τῶν οὐρανίων ἐντυχὼν ἡβουλήθη καὶ τὸν τόπον μου ἐκκαθαῖραι πάσης κακίας καὶ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀθάνατον προλήψαι. ἐνθεν καὶ τὰ θεῖά μοι προσομιλεῖν ἐδόκει καὶ τὸ διανοητικόν μου πρὸς τὴν ἀναζήτησιν νηπτικὸν ἐκεκτήμεν. (translated by Georg Luck, *Arcana Mundi. Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, Baltimore MD, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006 [1985], p. 423).

³⁰³ Iamblichus, *DM* III.4 (110.13-111.2).

³⁰⁴ Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, p. 77.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Iamblichus, *In Phaedrum*, Fr. 6A in John Dillon, *Iamblichus. The Platonic Commentaries*.

³⁰⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.7 (269.11-13) ἔχει γὰρ ἀρχὴν οἰκείαν ἡ ψυχὴ τῆς εἰς τὸ νοητὸν περιαγωγῆς καὶ τῆς ἀποστάσεως μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν γιγνομένων ἐπὶ δὲ τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ θεῖον συναφῆς. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

³⁰⁷ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 268.

connected to the dominance of providence.³⁰⁸ As he puts it, ‘in its very substance, 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.’³⁰⁹ Iamblichus justifies this view of providence superseding fate, and fate being subject to it (also a Middle-Platonic conception), on the basis that the fated movements of the planets around the cosmos are assimilated (ἀφομοιοῦνται) to the immaterial and intellectual activities and circuits.³¹⁰ Similarly, Greenbaum observes for Valens that, ‘the way to come to prognosis is by studying the movements of the stars, for they are the embodiment and ensoulment of both *heimarmene* and *pronoia*’.³¹¹

Iamblichus postulates this, superior to nature and generation, soul principle which may unite humans to the gods, transcend the cosmic order, partake in eternal life and in the activity of the supracelestial gods.³¹² As Iamblichus explains,

for when the better elements within us are active, and the soul is elevated towards the beings superior to it, then it separates itself fully from those things that tie it to generation, and it detaches itself from the worse, and changes one life for another, and gives itself to another order of things, completely abandoning its previous one.³¹³

Iamblichus divides humans into three categories based on the above criterion. The

³⁰⁸ Iamblichus, *Letter 8 To Macedonius, On Fate* (fragment 4, lines 5-6), in Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, pp. 22-23.

³⁰⁹ Iamblichus, *Letter 8 To Macedonius, On Fate* (fragment 4, lines 6-8), in Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, pp. 22-23, κατ’αὐτὴν τὴν οὐσίαν ἄρα ἐπιπλέκεται ἡ εἰμαρμένη τῇ προνοίᾳ καὶ τῷ εἶναι τὴν πρόνοιάν ἐστιν ἡ εἰμαρμένη καὶ ἀπ’αὐτῆς καὶ περὶ αὐτὴν ὑφέστηκε.

³¹⁰ Iamblichus, *Letter 8 To Macedonius, On Fate* (fragment 4, lines 1-4), in Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, pp. 22-23. For the view of providence as superseding fate, and fate being subject to it, in a Middle-Platonic context, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 28-33.

³¹¹ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 45.

³¹² Iamblichus, *DM VIII.7* (270.6-9).

³¹³ Iamblichus, *DM VIII.7* (270.10-14) Ὅταν γὰρ δὴ τὰ βελτίονα τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργῇ, καὶ πρὸς τὰ κρείττονα ἀνάγηται αὐτῆς ἡ ψυχὴ, τότε χωρίζεται παντάπασι τῶν κατεχόντων αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν γένεσιν, καὶ ἀφίσταται τῶν χειρόνων, ζώῃν τε ἐτέραν ἀνθ’ ἐτέρας ἀλλάττεται, καὶ δίδωσιν ἑαυτὴν εἰς ἄλλην διακόσμησιν τὴν προτέραν ἀφεῖσα παντελῶς. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

great mass of men is subject to the dominion of nature and fate; a certain few individuals employ an intellectual power beyond nature, transcending generation and natural forces, while some individuals are in the middle between nature and pure mind.³¹⁴ These three divisions seem to match Iamblichus' division of souls entering generation into three categories, and his three stages of divine possession, that is to say participation (μετουσία), communion (κοινωνία) and union (ἔνωσις).³¹⁵

Iamblichus suggests that a life operating in accordance with intellect is the only kind of life that recognises the untrammelled authority of the soul, which consequently becomes free from necessity, and is able to live in a divine dimension with divine benefits.³¹⁶ These divine benefits may be similar to the sacred gifts arising from theurgy, namely purification of the soul, preparation of the mind for participation in and vision of the Good, and union (ἔνωσις) with the gods.³¹⁷ Union (ἔνωσις) with the gods constitutes for Iamblichus the third and most complete form of divine possession, in which 'we exercise our activity in common with him [the god]'.³¹⁸ In the case of union, it is clear that the individual participates simultaneously in a double dimension, a human and a divine one.

³¹⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* V.18 (223.8-224.4).

³¹⁵ Iamblichus, *De Anima*, fragment 29; Iamblichus, *DM* III.5 (111.9-11); For divine possession, see also Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 215-237; Crystal Addey, 'Ecstasy between Divine and Human: Re-assessing Agency in Iamblichean Divination and Theurgy'; Crystal Addey, 'Divine Possession and Divination in the Graeco-Roman World: The Evidence from Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries*'; Anne Shepard, 'Iamblichus on Inspiration: De Mysteriis 3.4-8', in H.J. Blumenthal and E.G. Clark (eds.), *The Divine Iamblichus: Philosopher and Man of Gods*, Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1993, pp. 138-143.

³¹⁶ Iamblichus, *Letter 8 To Macedonius, On Fate* (fragment 3, lines 1-4), in Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, pp. 22-23.

³¹⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* X.5 (291.10-292.3).

³¹⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* III.5 (111.7-9) κοινὴν ποιούμεθα πρὸς αὐτὸν τὴν ἐνέργειαν· (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*). For a comprehensive discussion on the three forms of divine possession, Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus' De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, pp. 70-86; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 215-237.

Iamblichus holds that the whole of theurgy presents this double aspect:

On the one hand, it is performed by men, and as such observes the 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.³¹⁹

According to Shaw, astrology is an attempt to penetrate to the essence of fate and recognise the presence of the liberating gods in their generative binding.³²⁰ He notes: ‘in this kind of “ascent”, the soul discovers that in the midst of being a fated and temporal creature it participates in the order of time itself; although present in a body, it begins to hear the rushing sound (*rhoizos*) of the stars as it enters their eternal order’.³²¹ Hence, as Addey proposes, ‘the theurgist attains a kind of divine consciousness which enables to see from the perspective of the gods, a perspective which is superior to human intellection while innately containing pure intellection’.³²²

Therefore, astrology may additionally be used as a noetic *synthema*, that is to say as a mandala, an intelligible whole, or one, in which, as Shaw postulates, each god would be associated with a geometric figure that appeared in the heavens ‘at critical moments’.³²³ The particular planetary deity which assumes the role of

³¹⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* IV.2 (184.1-6) Τῆς ὅλης θεουργίας διττόν ἐστι πρόσχημα, 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. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

³²⁰ Gregory Shaw, ‘Astrology as Divination: Iamblichean Theory and its Contemporary Practice’, in John Finamore and Robert Berchman (eds.), *Metaphysical Patterns in Platonism: Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Modern Times*, Westbury, The Prometheus Trust, 2014 [New Orleans: University Press of the South, 2007], pp. 73-86, here p. 77 [hereafter, Gregory Shaw, ‘Astrology as Divination’].

³²¹ Gregory Shaw, ‘Astrology as Divination’, p. 77.

³²² Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 194.

³²³ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, pp. 225-230, here p. 226.

the soul's personal leader would ensure that the soul, residing among humans and within the company of the gods *simultaneously*, may attempt to engage in a dialogue with the other planetary gods, seeking guidance from divine providence instead of passively suffering fate. Even though the gods always remain impassive, their patterns and relationships in the sky at any given moment may provide the necessary foundation for an active human participation within their realm. From that viewpoint, astrology emerges as a *dialogos* with divine providence. Thus, humans who succeed in acting on the noetic level of their *daimon*, and manage to attune their Intellect to the cosmic symphony, can follow their leader god into the divine realm and negotiate with fate.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined the mode of interaction between human and divine planes of existence in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*. Astrology was investigated in parallel as a paradigm of this interaction. Within the Neoplatonic framework of reference, the process of the interaction with gods and semi-divine entities was analysed from three different angles, each representing a distinctive phase of a cumulative level of intimacy with the divine.

I began with the analysis of astrology as a divine science. Iamblichus views in *mathematike episteme* a body of knowledge of philosophical significance which seeks to unveil the metaphysical dimension of the manifest cosmos by means of abstract, mathematical symbols. Even though the gods are transcendent, and therefore not subject to passions, they are simultaneously immanent and present throughout the cosmos imparting signs to humans. The study of the sun's transformations through the zodiac, expressed via a signifying system of discourse, constitutes the epistemological foundation of astrology, by means of which humans may see and honour the constantly changing patterns of the deities emanating from the One. In the Neoplatonic metaphysical landscape, the planets are the visible images and bodies of the encosmic gods. Through their spherical shape and motions, the planets were seen as inextricably linked to Intellect and the immaterial gods. The ritual practitioner who enhances his or her own level of receptivity, through ritual, intellectual and ethical means, may purify his aethereal soul-vehicle, rendering it spherical and akin to the planets. Through the inner sight of the image-making faculty (*phantasia*), residing in the purified vehicle, humans

may see and listen to the gods. Hence, astrology as *episteme* may free the soul from its sensible attachments, initiating a noetic procedure in which knowledge of the gods and knowledge of ourselves merge in a continuum.

Next, the phase of interpretation of the divine signs was considered. Astrology was examined as a form of divination. Based on Iamblichus' objections to the casters of nativities (*genethlialogoi*), I elaborated his preference for the inspired, or theurgic, mode of divination, as opposed to its inductive form. According to Iamblichus, the inductive form of divination operates exclusively through human skill and discursive reasoning, and concerns only trivial events manifested in the realm of generation. Its practitioners perform a mechanistic interpretation, based unilaterally on the horizontal level of cosmic sympathy (*sympatheia*). On the other hand, astrology in its theurgic aspect may be practiced dynamically, like the repetition of an act of cosmogony, resulting in a supra-rational mode of unitary cognition of the heavenly signs which are interpreted primarily through divine love (*theia philia*) and, subordinately, through *sympatheia*. Particular emphasis was placed on the soteriological dimension of inspired divination, since the ritual practitioner can engage in the ascent of the soul to the divine by first establishing contact with its leader planetary god. Therefore, astrology viewed as an inspired form of divination highlights the soul's capacity to bestow transformation of the identity through alignment with the divine principle.

Finally, I explored the human potential to act on the level of the personal *daimon*. The *daimon* was approached as a divine entity hovering between the human and divine planes of existence. Its mission is to guide the soul-body composite throughout the embodied life. However, in its noetic dimension, the

nous-daimon conveys the illumination of divine Intellect to human minds, and finalises the metamorphosis of the human identity from the sensible dimension of the soul-body composite into the intelligible self. The soul may hereafter receive the particular god, or planet, which rules over its *daimon*, as its leader. In the phenomena of divine possession and union with the gods, humans have the capacity to exercise their will in accordance with the gods and transcend fate. From that perspective, the horoscope operates as a material and a noetic *sunthema* and astrology emerges as a *dialogos* with divine providence.

Iamblichus' soteriological system proposes that humans follow the theurgic path aiming for the soul's contact, assimilation and union with the divine. In a multilayered but unified cosmos, in which different planetary voices resonate and form a single melody, the soul follows the gods in the course of their heavenly procession. Through a cumulative level of intimacy with them, the ritual practitioner may 'sense' the gods, approach them further in order to decrypt their messages, and act consequently according to divine providence instead of passively suffering fate. As a paradigm of the interaction with the divine, astrology may be performed throughout the spectrum of ritual practices uniting humans to the gods. Thus, astrology provides substantial ontological knowledge, activates the process of negotiation with fate, and may anticipate the radical transformation of the human identity into its intelligible double.

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APPENDIX I

Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo* and Iamblichus' *De Mystериis*: The Relationship between Porphyry and Iamblichus

The philosophical dialogue between Iamblichus and Porphyry forms the kernel of *De Mystериis*. Many scholars view this interrelationship as a hostile disagreement, and consider Porphyry as holding a sceptic and rationalistic position towards theurgy.³²⁴ According to Garth Fowden, Porphyry was an analytical thinker who tried to reconcile philosophy with conventional religion 'without sacrificing the assumption...that their levels of application are completely different'.³²⁵ Shaw stresses that, for Porphyry, theurgy functioned as 'a mere *preparatio* for the philosophic life and was to be left on the periphery of its highest disciplines', while Iamblichus 'moved theurgy from periphery to center, not only in the life of the philosopher, but for anyone who worshipped the gods'.³²⁶ For Shaw, the *De Mystериis* is a 'philosophical apology for a discipline [theurgy] that claimed to transcend philosophy'.³²⁷ Dillon considers Porphyry's *Epistle* as 'a polemical open letter attacking the practice and theory of theurgy', while Emma Clarke detects 'considerable tension' and a hostile atmosphere between the two philosophers.³²⁸

³²⁴ For a comprehensive discussion on those scholarly views, see Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 129-131.

³²⁵ Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, p.130.

³²⁶ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p.16.

³²⁷ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p.122

³²⁸ Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, p. xiv; Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus' De Mystериis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, p. 7.

On the other hand, some scholars hold more moderate views. Andrew Smith claims that Porphyry's *Letter* 'was written in a spirit of friendly criticism'.³²⁹ Polymnia Athanassiadi suggests that Iamblichus wasn't angry, but rather pleased to receive the *Letter to Anebo*, although he might have been 'shocked by Porphyry's naivety'.³³⁰ Crystal Addey points out that the two works function within two traditional genres of philosophy: the philosophical genre of 'Problems and Solutions' and within the tradition of Platonic dialogue, and the dialogical process in general, and argues that the exchange comprises 'a mystagogic dialogue and a type of philosophical and religious discourse with protreptic, educational and initiatory functions'.³³¹ Moreover, she stresses that Porphyry may have deliberately asked Iamblichus a series of provocative questions, 'as an *impetus* for him to write a treatise defending and explaining theurgy and other pagan religious phenomena...'.³³² Andrei Timotin considers the *De Mysteriis* as a form of apologetic discourse which, by means of a reply to a moderate advocate of civic cult such as Porphyry, renders theurgy philosophically immune against hostile criticism, stemming notably from the Christians.³³³

Textual evidence from the *De Mysteriis* supports this more moderate approach. Iamblichus assumes throughout his treatise the mantle of a Platonic instructor, like Diotima in the *Symposium*. In fact, Iamblichus employs a well-

³²⁹ Andrew Smith, *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition: A Study in Post-Plotinian Neoplatonism*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1974, p.135.

³³⁰ Polymnia Athanassiadi, "Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus", p.119.

³³¹ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 128. For the analysis of the exchange of the two works as an example of the genre of 'Problems and Solutions', *ibid.*, pp.131-133; for the similarities with the Platonic dialogues, *ibid.*, pp. 133-136.

³³² Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 166.

³³³ Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne. Histoire de la notion de daimon de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2012, p. 216 [hereafter, Andrei Timotin, *La Démonologie Platonicienne*].

known turn of phrase used by Diotima to Socrates before revealing to him the mysteries of Eros: ‘I will speak of them, she said, and will not stint my best endeavours; only you on your part must try your best to follow’.³³⁴ Furthermore, ‘Abamon’ closes his *Reply* with a prayer to the gods, requesting intellectual participation in the realm of the divine on behalf of both himself and Porphyry.³³⁵ The final words of *De Mysteriis* is a wish that the gods preserve ‘the authority of our [his and Porphyry’s] mutually concordant friendship’.³³⁶ Thus, Iamblichus and Porphyry appear to constitute a group of fellow philosophers who enter willingly in the process of discussing their differences of opinion through a commonly shared system of theoretical notions. Following the anthropological terminology, they may be both qualified as *insiders*, or as sharing an *emic* viewpoint resulting from studying ritual phenomena ‘as from inside the system’.³³⁷

From that perspective, criticism may be viewed as an essential component of a deliberate exchange between similarly oriented philosophers who, despite their divergences, partake of the same Platonic values and of a strong tendency to integrate Eastern ritual elements and astrology in their worldview. Both philosophers appear to have a marked interest in astrology and it is likely that they have practised it in some form. Porphyry, who manifests an astrological awareness

³³⁴ Iamblichus, *DM*, V.5.206.1-2 employing the well-known turn of phrase used by Diotima to Socrates before revealing to him the mysteries of Eros, in Plato, *Symposium*, 210a3-4, ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη, ἐγὼ καὶ προθυμίας οὐδὲν ἀπολείψω· πειρῶ δ’ ἐπεσθαι. ‘I will speak of them, she said, and will not stint my best endeavours; only you on your part must try your best to follow’, ed. and translated by W.R.M. Lamb, in *Plato: Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University press, 1975 [1925]. See also Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, p. 235, n. 290.

³⁴⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* X.8 (293.12-294.4).

³³⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* X.8 (294.4) τὸ κῦρος τῆς ὁμονοητικῆς φιλίας τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους (my translation).

³³⁷ Kenneth L. Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Structure of Human Behavior*, The Hague, Mouton, 1967, p. 28. For the definition of ‘insider’, R.T. McCutcheon, *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*, New York, Continuum, 1999, p. 17.

throughout his philosophical writings, has also written the astrological treatise *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*.³³⁸ Iamblichus is knowledgeable in technical terminology throughout the Book IX, which principally discusses astrology in relation to the personal *daimon*, and appears, according to Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, ‘better versed in astrology than Plotinus’.³³⁹

³³⁸ Porphyry, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*, in CCAG V/4 (edited by Emilie Boer and Stephan Weinstock), Brussels, Henri Lamartin, 1940, pp. 185-228 [hereafter, Porphyry, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*]. For the authorship, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 266-270. For a comprehensive discussion on Porphyry’s integration of astrology within his philosophical works, see Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, ‘Porphyry of Tyre on the *Daimon*, Birth and the Stars’, to be published; Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, pp. 247-255, 266-275.

³³⁹ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, p. 251. For Plotinus’ relationship to astrology, *ibid.*, pp. 238-247, and for further bibliography, *ibid.*, p. 239, n. 17.

APPENDIX II

***De Mysteriis*: Principal Intertextual References and Cultural Influences**

i) The importance of Hermes/Thoth

The *De Mysteriis* opens with a dedication to ‘Hermes, the god who presides over rational discourse, [and who] has long been considered, quite rightly, to be the common patron of all priests; he who presides over true knowledge about the gods is one and the same always and everywhere’.³⁴⁰ Following the early Greek religious tradition which, at least since the archaic period, attributed to Hermes the role of the messenger of the gods, Hermes’ defining characteristic in the Hellenistic period was that, as Fowden discloses, of ‘the interpreter of divine will to mankind’.³⁴¹ Clarke points out that ‘the exact identity of Hermes here is ambiguous, since Iamblichus exploits the supposed attributes of both the Greek Hermes and the divine or semi-divine Hermes Trismegistus, a late-antique amalgam of Thoth and Hermes’.³⁴² The Egyptian divinity Thoth was the god of magic, speech, knowledge and of all science, and he also conducted the dead to the kingdom of the gods, participating in the judgement of their souls.³⁴³ Hermes carries therefore the ambiguity of a liminal figure hovering between the divine and human worlds. From that perspective, its functions appear quite similar to that of the personal *daimon*, which is explored in Chapter 3.1.

³⁴⁰ Θεὸς ὁ τῶν λόγων ἡγεμὼν, Ἑρμῆς, πάλαι δέδοκται καλῶς ἅπασι τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν εἶναι κοινός· ὁ δὲ τῆς περὶ θεῶν ἀληθινῆς ἐπιστήμης προεστικῶς εἰς ἐστὶν ὁ αὐτὸς ἐν ὅλοις·, *DM*, I.1(1.3-2.1), translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*.

³⁴¹ Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, p. 24.

³⁴² Emma Clarke, *Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis: A Manifesto of the Miraculous*, p. 9.

³⁴³ Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, pp. 22-23.

However, through the presence of Thoth/Hermes, Iamblichus may additionally seek to reinforce the ambiguous and signifying style of his own discourse, and to warn his potential reader that this work requires dialectical exegesis and initiation in order to be decrypted. In his *Letter to Dexippus*, Iamblichus acknowledges ‘Hermes, the god of rational discourse, who bears in his hands its symbol, of two snakes looking toward each other’.³⁴⁴ Further on in that same letter, after recognising similarly the importance of the muse Calliope in the elaboration of dialogical reasoning, Iamblichus cites Heraclitus’s famous phrase about the Delphic Oracle, that ‘the God in Delphi is not speaking out, nor yet concealing, but signifying his prophecies’.³⁴⁵ In that particular context, Iamblichus views the dialectical enquiry of the oracle as the basis through which ambiguity, homonymy and every double meaning may be dissipated.³⁴⁶ Iamblichus uses that same quotation in the fifteenth chapter of the Book III which examines divination, in the part where he discusses artificial forms of divination and astrology in relation to signs emitted by the gods.³⁴⁷ Addey highlights the exegetical status of Hermes and suggests that ‘Iamblichus places the *De Mysteriis* under the divine patronage of Hermes and also hints at the status of himself as exegete and of his text as a divine σύμβολον in the chain of the god Hermes’.³⁴⁸ In Book VIII of *De Mysteriis*, which examines Egyptian theology, Iamblichus specifically refers to the ‘Hermet-

³⁴⁴ ὁ λόγιος Ἑρμῆς, ὁ φέρων ἐν ταῖν χεροῖν τό σύνθημα αὐτῆς [τὸ] τῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους ἀποβλεπόντων δρακόντων, Iamblichus, *Letter 5 To Dexippus, On Dialectic* (lines 1-2), in Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, pp. 14-5.

³⁴⁵ ὁ ἐν Δελφοῖς θεός οὔτε λέγων καθ’ Ἡράκλειτον, οὔτε κρύπτων ἀλλὰ σημαίνων τὰς μαντείας, Iamblichus, *Letter 5 To Dexippus, On Dialectic* (lines 7-8), in Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, pp. 14-5. Heraclitus’ Fragment B 93 in the Diels-Kranz edition, is also quoted by Plutarch, *Pyth. orac.* 404E.

³⁴⁶ Iamblichus, *Letter 5 To Dexippus, On Dialectic* (lines 8-10), in Dillon and Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters*, pp. 14-5.

³⁴⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* III.15 (136.2-3).

³⁴⁸ Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 160.

ic books’ and the ‘way of Hermes’; allusions which seem to refer to the *Hermetica*, a series of metaphysical-soteriological texts, representing a synthesis of Platonism with Egyptian religious elements and astrological doctrines, often written in a dialogical form between a master and a disciple, composed between the first and third centuries CE and attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.³⁴⁹ Marilyn Lawrence remarks that this legendary Hermes was also credited with the invention of astrology.³⁵⁰

ii) The great reverence for the sages of the East, and especially for the Chaldeans and the Egyptians

From the first chapter of his *Reply*, ‘Abamon’ stresses that many of Porphyry’s queries will be clarified on the basis of the traditions of the sages of Chaldea and from the teachings of the prophets of Egypt.³⁵¹ Clarke considers that the sages of Chaldea is a reference for the *Chaldean Oracles*, a collection of revelatory, hexameter verses purported to have been ‘handed down by the gods’ (θεοπαράδοτα) and which flourished during the late second century CE.³⁵² The *Chaldean Oracles* contain the first surviving use of a deviate of the term ‘theurgy’, since *Fragment*

³⁴⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.1 (260.14-261.3); VIII.4 (265.10-266.1); VIII.5 (267.11-268.9); Cf. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, pp. 131-141; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 159-166. For an Introduction to the *Hermetica*, Walter Scott (ed. and trs. by), *Hermetica. The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which Contain Religious or Philosophical Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*, Boston, Shambala, 1993 [1985], pp. 1-16 [hereafter, Walter Scott, *Hermetica*]; Brian P. Copenhaver (introduced and translated by), *Hermetica*, New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. xiii-lxi [hereafter, Brian Copenhaver, *Hermetica*].

³⁵⁰ Marilyn Lawrence, “Hellenistic Astrology”. 2005. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/astr-hel/>. p. 3. Accessed 28/01/2017.

³⁵¹ Iamblichus, *DM* I.1 (4.10-12).

³⁵² Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, p. 7, n. 9. For an Introduction to the *Chaldean Oracles*, Ruth Majercik (ed. and trs. by), *The Chaldean Oracles*, Westbury, Prometheus Trust, 2013 [1989], pp. 1-46 [hereafter, Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles*].

153 uses the related noun *θεουργοί* (the plural noun ‘theurgists’).³⁵³ Nevertheless, Iamblichus clearly refers to the Chaldean-Assyrian religious tradition in a more general sense, and he seems to view the *Chaldean Oracles* as deriving from this tradition, either literally or in terms of spiritual ancestry. Ruth Majercik notes that ‘although the term “Chaldean” is generally understood in a metaphoric sense to designate Julian’s “spiritual” affinity with the wisdom of the East, it has also been argued that Chaldea was the actual homeland of Julian *pater*, who might have migrated to Rome following Trajan’s military campaigns in the East’.³⁵⁴ Hans Lewy remarks that the original theurgists drew on a pre-existing ‘Irano-Syro-Babylonian theocracy’.³⁵⁵ Additionally, in late antiquity, Chaldean was also an adjective which stood for astrologer.³⁵⁶ Franz Cumont holds that the Chaldean cosmology, which deified all elements but ascribed a predominant influence to the stars, influenced Syrian syncretism.³⁵⁷ The Hellenisation of the Near East in the centuries following Alexander’s conquests (334-323 BCE) must have been a potent factor in encouraging such cultural interaction.

³⁵³ Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles*, F153. There is a possible mention of theurgy in Nicomachus of Gerasa, *Excerpta de musica* 6.277.7 in Jan (1895; repr. 1962), written around 160 CE; but it is important to note that the use of the term ‘theurgy’ rests on a conjecture of a corrupt passage. Also in Julius Pollux, *Onomastikon* 114.4 (Bethe 1900-1939): this work was written between 166 and 176 CE and lists theurgists among cultic personnel and ritual specialists; see also Crystal Addey, ‘Oracles of Fire: The Ritual Formation of the *Chaldean Oracles*’, in *Fortune et Réception des textes oraculaires dans l’Antiquité tardive et le monde médiéval* (Conference), Université de Libre Bruxelles, Bruxelles (5-6 September 2016), p. 2, n. 4.

³⁵⁴ Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles*, p. 1.

³⁵⁵ Hans Lewy, and Michel Tardieu (eds.), *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the later Roman Empire*, Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978 [1956], p. 425 [hereafter, Hans Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*].

³⁵⁶ Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, ‘Chaldeans, astrologers’, *The Encyclopaedia of Ancient History*, First Edition, Bagnall R. S., Brodersen K., Champion C. B., Erskine A and Huber S. R. (eds.), Blackwell Publishing, 2013, pp. 1435-1436.

³⁵⁷ Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Company, 1911, p. 133 [hereafter, Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*].

Similarly, the Egyptian contribution in the *De Mystериis* should not be limited to the *Hermetica*, as Clarke suggests, but should be intended in a much wider sense.³⁵⁸ Besides the whole Egyptian fiction covering the *De Mystериis*, Book VII looks at Egyptian symbolism and Book VIII highlights some key points on Egyptian theology. Shaw suggests that Iamblichus revered Egyptian theology because it possessed real power, ‘imitating the nature of the universe and the creative energy of the gods’.³⁵⁹ The insistence on the use of the ‘unknowable’ or sacred names of the gods illustrates further Iamblichus’ reverence for the Egyptian and Near-Eastern civilisations.³⁶⁰ *Voces magicae*, the Latin term used by scholars to refer to the ‘unknowable names’ and strings of vowels within theurgic and magical formulae, are being used extensively in the *PGM*, which were produced in an Egyptian milieu. When scholars have been able to detect the meaning of the ‘unknowable’ names, they represent the names of Egyptian and Near Eastern deities.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mystериis*, p. 7, n. 9.

³⁵⁹ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 24.

³⁶⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.4 & 5. On the unknowable names of the gods, see Crystal Addey, ‘Assuming the Mantle of the Gods: “Unknowable Names”, Hieratic Formulae and Invocations in Late antique Theurgic Ritual’, in A.P.M.H. Lardinois, J.H. Blok and M.G.M. van der Poel (eds.), *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy and Religion*, Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World Volume 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 279-294.

³⁶¹ Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, Cambridge MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1997 [1994, Belles Lettres], pp. 219-221.

iii) The Plotinian distinction of the three levels of Reality or ‘Hypostases’ and the hierarchical/metaphysical structure of the universe

Plotinus’ treatise *On the Three Hypostases* postulates three unified levels of true or divine reality, those of Soul, Intelligence and the One.³⁶² As Wallis summarises them,

the first or highest of these is the formless, ineffable principle known as the one or the Good; next comes Intelligence, a timeless, self-contemplating divine mind containing the Platonic Forms (or “Ideas”); finally, mediating between eternity and time, there is Soul, producer and orderer of the sensible cosmos, which in its turn constitutes an Image of the Forms cast by Soul on the formless substratum Prime Matter.³⁶³

Therefore, an essential gap is created between the material world and its ideal archetype. Such a chasm is reaffirmed in the axiological and ontological evaluation between gods and men. As Iamblichus puts it, ‘god is all, and has power over all, and all things have been filled with by his own self, and he alone is worthy of highest esteemed of blessed honour. But the human being is shameful, and is as nothing, and a toy compared to the divine’.³⁶⁴

³⁶² Plotinus, *Enneads*, *On the Three Hypostases*, V.1, *passim*.

³⁶³ R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, p. 16.

³⁶⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III.19 (146.7-10) ὡς θεὸς μὲν πάντα ἐστὶ καὶ πάντα δύναται καὶ πάντα πεπλήρωκεν ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ μόνος σπουδῆς ἀξιολόγου καὶ τιμῆς μακαρίας ἐστὶν ἄξιος· τὸ δ’ ἀνθρώπειον αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἐν οὐδενὸς μέρει καὶ παίγνιον ἐστὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον παραβαλλόμενον. (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

iv) The multiplication of the ranks of being and divine entities in the universe, presented as intermediary powers to bridge the vast gulf between the One and the material world

Such spiritual entities mediating between the gods and (human) souls are the classes of *daimones* and heroes.³⁶⁵ In the beginning of Book II, primarily concerned with divine epiphanies, Iamblichus further adds in the group of divine intermediate entities the archangels, angels and lords.³⁶⁶ According to Iamblichus, ‘these classes of being bring to completion as intermediaries the common bond that connects gods with souls, and causes their linkage to be indissoluble. They bind together a single continuity from top to bottom, and render the communion of all things indivisible’.³⁶⁷ This idea is called by some modern scholars the ‘Principle of Continuity’, a term which refers to the ancient belief that, as Johnston explains, ‘there could be no gaps or discordances in the universe, physically or theologically; therefore dissimilar entities must be unified or at least buffered by a third entity that possessed characteristics of each. The third and middle entity served as an interface’.³⁶⁸ This kind of mediation and continuous hierarchy can also be seen in Plotinus and Porphyry, termed by Zeke Mazur ‘the axiom of continuous hierarchy’, and ‘entails that an ontologically-inferior principle can never control an ontologically-superior one and, concomitantly, that no ethically-inferior

³⁶⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* I.5 (16.5-17.5)

³⁶⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* II.3 (70.14-71.7)

³⁶⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* I.5 (17.6-9) Ταῦτα δὴ οὖν τὰ γένη μέσα συμπληροῦνται τὸν κοινὸν σύνδεσμον θεῶν τε καὶ ψυχῶν, καὶ ἀδιάλυτον αὐτῶν τὴν συμπλοκὴν ἀπεργάζεται, μίαν τε συνέχειαν ἄνωθεν μέχρι τοῦ τελοῦς συνδεῖ, καὶ ποιεῖ τῶν ὅλων τὴν κοινωνίαν εἶναι ἀδιαίρετον... (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

³⁶⁸ Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira. A Study of Hekate's Roles in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature*, Atlanta, The American Philological Association, 1990, pp. 15-16 [hereafter, Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira*].

entity could end up in a position of dominance over an ethically-superior one'.³⁶⁹

This principle of meditation becomes much more pronounced from Iamblichean Platonism onwards.³⁷⁰

v) The divine is presented as being transcendent and immanent throughout the cosmos simultaneously

As Iamblichus explains this paradox, the gods, 'while being transcendent over all things and free from every relationship with the realm of becoming, they lead everything in the realm of generation and nature in accordance with their own will'.³⁷¹ In fact, 'all things are full of gods'.³⁷² Shaw remarks that 'in the hands of Pythagoreans such as Iamblichus the transcendence/immanence distinction of Plato and Pythagoras was fused into an ineffable principle at once transcendent and immanent'.³⁷³

vi) The prominence of the solar cult

The Sun's light is compared to the truth emanating from the gods.³⁷⁴ The sun is used as a symbol or image of the One by Iamblichus and other Neoplatonists who read the sun in Plato's myth of the cave in the *Republic* as an image or symbol of

³⁶⁹ Zeke Mazur, 'Unio Magica: Part II: Plotinus, Theurgy, and the Question of Ritual', *Dionysius* 22, 2004, pp. 29-56, here p. 37; Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, pp. 178-179.

³⁷⁰ Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, (Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary by E. R. Dodds), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2004 [1963], pp. xxi-xxii; Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 28.

³⁷¹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.16 (138.11-13) Αὐτοὶ δὲ οὖν χωριστοὶ πάντων καὶ ἀπολελυμένοι τῆς σχέσεως καὶ συντάξεως τῆς πρὸς τὴν γένεσιν ἄγουσι πάντα ἐν τῇ γενέσει καὶ φύσει κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν βούλησιν (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

³⁷² Iamblichus, *DM* I.9 (30.2) πάντα γὰρ αὐτῶν [τῶν θεῶν] ἐστι πλήρη (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

³⁷³ Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, p. 33, n. 6.

³⁷⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* II.10 (90.13-91.1); *DM* III.13 (130.8-14)

the Supreme Good.³⁷⁵ Franz Cumont highlights the Babylonian and Egyptian elements in the solar cult and its implication with astrological doctrines.³⁷⁶ Giuseppe Muscolino points out that the solar cult of Mithras, which was introduced in Rome by Persian slaves in the first century BCE, was reinterpreted during the third century CE ‘platonically’, and gave rise to the cult of Sol Invictus, installed by Aurelian in 274 CE, in order to serve political purposes of unification under one imperial authority.³⁷⁷ According to Richard Gordon, the public cult of the sun was accentuated in Rome when political developments led to an affinity between the sun and the concept of monarchy.³⁷⁸

vii) The emphasis on salvation through *anagoge*, the ascent of the soul to the realm of the gods

For Iamblichus, the highest purpose of the hieratic art is the ascent to the One, which constitutes the supreme master of the whole multiplicity of divinities.³⁷⁹ However, very few individuals may ever attain this stage of supreme union.³⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the path leading to the soul’s salvation follows an unbroken line of

³⁷⁵ Plato, *Republic* VII, 514a2-517a7.

³⁷⁶ Franz Cumont, ‘La théologie solaire du paganisme romain’, *EXTRAIT DES MÉMOIRES PRÉSENTÉS PAR DIVERS SAVANTS À L’ACADÉMIE DES INSCRIPTIONS ET BELLES-LETTRES*, TOME XII, 11ePARTIE, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, pp. 447-479; Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans*, New York, Kessinger Publications, 1960 [1912], xxiii-xxiv, *passim*.; Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Company, 1911, pp. 133-134.

³⁷⁷ Giuseppe Muscolino, *Porfirio: La Philosophia ex Oraculis. Per una Nuova Edizione dei Frammenti* (PhD Thesis: UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MACERATA, DIPARTIMENTO DI FILOSOFIA E SCIENZE UMANE, 2013), pp. 36-40; see also R. Turcan, *Mithras Platonicus*, Leiden, 1975.

³⁷⁸ Richard L. Gordon (Ilmmünster) and Martin Wallraff (Bonn), ‘Sol’, in: *Brill’s New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes edited by Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, 2006, consulted online on 19/01/2017.

³⁷⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* V.22 (230.12-14).

³⁸⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* V.22 (230.14-231.2).

continuity, comprising intermediate divine and semi-divine entities extending from souls, heroes, *daimones* and angels to the visible and the invisible gods.³⁸¹ Furthermore, throughout the *De Mysteriis*, Iamblichus claims that the mystical ascent of the soul to the realm of the gods is assimilated with divine descent.³⁸² Iamblichus specifies that the ascent to the *intelligible fire* is a process which must be proposed as the goal of all foreknowledge and of every theurgic operation.³⁸³ Iamblichus is clearly using Chaldean terminology here, since the ‘empyrean’ or fiery realm was used in the *Chaldean Oracles* to characterise the divine.³⁸⁴ In his analysis of the *Chaldean Oracles*, Lewy considers theurgic elevation, or ἀναγωγή, as ‘the chief mystery of the Chaldean sacramental community, its goal being the immortalisation of the soul’.³⁸⁵ Wallis points out a supplementary Stoic dimension in the description of divine Intelligence as ‘fire’, as being equivalent to ‘light’; thus serving as a paradigm of its ‘dematerialisation’.³⁸⁶ Johnston highlights the soteriological function of *anagoge*. She views in the temporary raising of the soul to the ‘intellectual fire’ of the noetic realm, a practice, which, in its repetitiveness, purifies the soul ‘for its eventual release from Fate when the theurgist’s body died’.³⁸⁷ Moreover, the importance of ascension or *anagoge* may be highlighted in a cryptical way in Porphyry’s *Letter* by the name of Anebo (Ἀνεβώ, *anebo*),

³⁸¹ See Appendix II.iv.

³⁸² Iamblichus, *DM* I.9 (28.11-29.3); *DM* III.2 (103.8-104.10); *DM* III.17 (139.8-140.4); *DM* X.6 (292.4-14); Crystal Addey, ‘Divine Possession and Divination in the Graeco-Roman World: The Evidence from Iamblichus’ *On the Mysteries*’.

³⁸³ Iamblichus, *DM* III.31 (179.6-8, my italics).

³⁸⁴ Crystal Addey, ‘Oracles of Fire: The Ritual Formation of the *Chaldean Oracles*’, in *Fortune et Réception des textes oraculaires dans l’Antiquité tardive et le monde médiéval* (Conference), Université de Libre Bruxelles, Bruxelles (5-6 September 2016), p. 13.

³⁸⁵ Hans Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*, p. 177.

³⁸⁶ R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, p. 105.

³⁸⁷ Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira*, p. 89.

which is in Greek phonetically very similar to *anabo* (ἀνάβω), the past tense subjunctive of the verb ἀναβαίνω, 'ascend to heaven'.³⁸⁸

viii) The cosmological principles of 'sympathy' (συμπάθεια) and 'divine love' (θεία φιλία) as the foundation of the living and interconnected universe in which theurgy operates

Like all Neoplatonist philosophers, Iamblichus holds that 'the universe should be conceived as a single living being', a doctrine deriving from Plato's *Timaeus*.³⁸⁹

In that unified cosmos, elements, or parts of it, which share similarities, or are alike, tend to be mutually attracted to one another by means of the Stoic principle of 'cosmic sympathy' (συμπάθεια). As Iamblichus explains it,

...in the universe, being as it is one single living being, possessing a common life in all parts of itself, the communion of like powers, or the conflict of contrary ones, or a certain affinity of the active for the passive principle, propels together like and suitable elements, pervading in virtue of a single sympathy even the most distant things as if they were most contiguous...³⁹⁰

However, it is the principle of 'divine love' (θεία φιλία) which causes 'cosmic sympathy' to arise, since the gods bring the human mind into participation in the realm of the divine, and into accord with them, 'through harmonious persua-

³⁸⁸ H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996 [1843], p. 98. More precisely, ἀνάβω is the first singular person of the second aorist subjunctive of the verb ἀνέβην, second aorist of ἀναβαίνω.

³⁸⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* IV.12 (195.10-11) Δεῖ δὴ νοεῖν ὥς ἐν ζῳόν ἐστι τὸ πᾶν. (my translation); Plato, *Timaeus* 30b-d.

³⁹⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* V.7 (207.9-12)...ὥς ἐν ἐνὶ ζῳῷ τῷ παντὶ καὶ μίαν ζωὴν τὴν αὐτὴν πανταχοῦ ἔχοντι κοινωνία τῶν ὁμοίων δυνάμεων ἢ τῶν ἐναντίων διάστασις ἢ τις ἐπιτηδεϊότης τοῦ ποιούντος πρὸς τὸ πάσχον συγκινεῖ τὰ ὅμοια καὶ ἐπιτήδεια, ὡσαύτως κατὰ μίαν συμπάθειαν διήκουσα καὶ ἐν τοῖς πορρωτάτω ὥς ἔγγιστα οὔσι... (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

sion'.³⁹¹ As Addey maintains, ““divine love” is “supracosmic sympathy”: it enables the phenomenon of sympathy to arise’.³⁹² Thus, theurgy may be defined as designating ‘a lifelong endeavour incorporating a set of ritual practices alongside the development of ethical and intellectual capacities, which aimed to use symbols (σύμβολα) to reawaken the soul’s pre-ontological, causal connection with the gods, operating primarily through divine love and, subordinately, through cosmic sympathy’.³⁹³

³⁹¹ Iamblichus, *DM* I.12 (42.11) διὰ πειθοῦς ἐμμελοῦς (translated by Clarke et al., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*).

³⁹² Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 29.

³⁹³ Working definition of Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, p. 25.