

The Personal *Daimōn* in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*: Astral Origins, Ritual and Divinization¹

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In his reply to Porphyry's letter inquiring into the *modus operandi* of polytheistic ritual phenomena and practices,² Iamblichus suggests that the theurgists' ultimate objective is to completely abandon the dimension of the human soul-body composite by shifting their identity to the intelligible realm of the gods.³ To that end, Iamblichus highlights the need to ascend to the divine in due order and worship all the classes of the gods. The stages of ritual worship are cumulative, and since the heavenly gods are the first to be worshipped,⁴ humans should follow this ontological order in ritual worship, by using the

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² Porphyry, *Letter to Anebo*: Sodano (1958), Saffrey-Segonds (2012). It is well known that the original title of Iamblichus' treatise was *Ἀβάμμωνος διδασκάλου πρὸς τὴν Πορφυρίου πρὸς Ἀνεβὼ ἐπιστολὴν ἀπόκρισις καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ἀπορημάτων λύσεις*. The modern title *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum, Chaldeorum, Assyriorum* was coined by Marsilio Ficino who translated parts of the book into Latin in 1497. For the dating of the *DM*, Dillon (1973) 13 suggests a date around 280 CE, while Athanassiadi (1993) 116, Clarke (2001) 6 and Saffrey-Segonds-Lecerf (2013) xxix-xxxii argue convincingly for sometime around 300 CE.

³ Iamblichus, *DM* I.12 (41.9-13); *DM* IV.2 (184.1-6); *DM* X.6 (292.4-12); Clarke-Dillon-Hershbell (2003). All quotations and translations are from this edition unless otherwise specified. The pagination is that of the Parthey edition. Due to word-count limitations, I was obliged to omit the references to the pagination of the Saffrey-Segonds-Lecerf (2013) edition.

⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* V.14 (217.4-13); *DM* I.17 (51.9-52.12).

appropriate *sunthēmata*⁵ as receptacles of the gods. Nonetheless, Iamblichus holds that human beings cannot be immediately joined to the gods but require the greater beings as intermediaries.⁶ He therefore stresses that ‘divine works cannot be accomplished with due propriety (ἱεροπρεπῶς) without some presence of superior beings, beholding and contemplating the sacred action (ἔφορον καὶ ἀποπληρωτὴν τῆς ἱερᾶς ἐνεργείας)’.⁷

Iamblichus proceeds accordingly to a further elaboration of the Platonic hierarchy of intermediaries,⁸ which he views as divine agencies mediating and facilitating—although occasionally hindering as well⁹—the soul’s cosmic ascent towards the One. For Iamblichus, *daimones* administer their influence over restricted portions of the cosmos, possessing only a partial form of essence and power, and fulfilling whatever acts the gods command.¹⁰ Consequently, Iamblichus 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’.¹¹ Gregory Shaw argues 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 visible gods and their *daimones*.¹² The personal *daimōn*, conceived in the myth of Er as the expression of the soul’s imminent earthly destiny, is the most

⁵ Stones, herbs, animals, aromatic substances, a musical composition or a text, each belonging to the ‘sympathetic’ chain of a deity: Iamblichus, *DM* V.23 (233.9-13); *DM* V.24 (235.1-15). See also Shaw (2014) 53-55; Addey (2014) 31, 36-37.

⁶ Iamblichus *DM* I.5 (17.6-15); see also Finamore (1985) 33-53.

⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* III.18 (144.1-3).

⁸ Iamblichus, *DM* II, *passim*: secondary gods, archangels, angels, *daimones*, archons, heroes and purified souls.

⁹ That might be the case for the wicked or evil *daimones* which are occasionally discussed in the *DM*. Their first general mention is in *DM* II.10; and then in III.31 (177.4; 177.13-14); *DM* X.7 (293.8-10). However, they will not be discussed in the framework of the personal *daimōn*, since Iamblichus explicitly states that evil *daimones* are in no case assigned an administrative role (*DM* IX.7, 282.2-4). On evil *daimones* in the *DM*, Timotin (2012) 225-228; in relation to the *Chaldean Oracles*, Lewy (2011) 273-309; Seng (2018) 61-62. For an extensive discussion of Iamblichus’ demonology and its apparent inherent contradictions, O’Neill (2018) 169-188.

¹⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* I.20 (63.6-64.7).

¹¹ Iamblichus, *DM* II.1 (67.2-5).

¹² Shaw (2014) 174.

representative celestial entity hovering between the divine and human realms in order to supervise the fulfilment of human destiny.¹³

As will be argued below, human fate (εἰμαρμένη) is tied to the stars and the personal *daimōn*, and it is through the appropriation of all the heavenly influences, personified on an intelligible level by the *daimōn*, that the process of divinization may be triggered, marking a significant shift in the direction of ritual activity. In the first section, I shall argue that there is a subtle contrast between astrology as *technē* and astral theurgy, and the philosophical dimensions implied. Subsequently, the interplay between the cosmic and intelligible realms will be explored, especially in regard to the soul's ability to be liberated from a material fate. In the third section, focus will be placed on the role of the personal *daimōn* in the process of divinization. Finally, based on John Dillon's insightful suggestion that the theurgic rituals aiming for the discovery and invocation of the personal *daimōn* might be addressed to *Helios*, I shall examine the validity and repercussions of this hypothesis in theurgic ritual. I shall additionally attempt to draw some parallels with other late antique cultic texts which offer valuable information about ritual, and testify to the inextricable link connecting the personal *daimōn* with the heavenly gods, *Helios* and the distribution of human destiny.

I. Porphyry and the Astrological Research of the *oikodespotēs*

Incited by Porphyry's astrological queries seeking to discover the personal *daimōn* as a means of transcending fate (τὰ εἰμαρμένα) through sacrifices (ἐκθύσαιτο),¹⁴ Iamblichus undertakes the task of investigating the *daimōn*'s origins and the theurgic rites pertaining to its invocation and cult.¹⁵ Porphyry sought to discover the *daimōn* by means of astrological calculations related to the discovery of the 'master of the house', the so-called *oikodespotēs*.¹⁶ Iamblichus clearly

¹³ Plato, *R.* X, 617d-e; 620d-e.

¹⁴ Porphyry, *Letter to Anebo*, Fr. 84 Saffrey-Segonds (=DM, IX.3, 275.1-3). Reading ἐκθύσαιτο, with Parthey, for the ἐκθήσαιτο of the MSS.

¹⁵ Throughout DM IX.

¹⁶ Iamblichus, DM IX.2 (274.1-3). For the various astrological connotations of the *oikodespotēs* and the different methods for its discovery, Bouché-Leclercq (1899) 385-390, 403-406; Greenbaum (2016) 255-266. In the *Introduction to Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos* (chapter 30), Porphyry suggests a method based on two steps for the discovery of the *oikodespotēs*: first it was necessary to determine the predominator (*epikratētōr*), the planet which was most prominent in the

opts for the theurgic method and advances three sets of arguments against Porphyry's approach. In the first place, he argues that according to the theurgic mode of approach, 'one summons the *daimōn* down from the higher causal principles' without making use of horoscopes, since the theurgic method operates on a more universal level and transcends nature.¹⁷ Secondly, if one resorted to the technical mode of approach in order to discover the *daimōn* by using horoscopes and the visible cycles of the generated realm, as did the casters of nativities, it would still be necessary to take into account a multitude of additional factors, such as 'the decans, the servitors (*leitourgoi*), the zodiacal signs and the stars, the sun and the moon, the Great and Lesser Bear, and all the elements and the cosmos as a whole', instead of focusing exclusively on the *oikodespotēs*.¹⁸ On top of that, Iamblichus claims that even if one investigated the master of the house as the principal factor bestowing the *daimōn*, it would nevertheless be essential to examine 'by what sort of displacement (*atopia*) or emanation (*aporroia*) or life (*zōi*) or power (*dynamis*) it descends to us from it'.¹⁹ Consequently, although Iamblichus engages genuinely with Porphyry's approach and discusses in detail the technical procedures relating to the discovery of the *daimōn*, he nevertheless argues that Porphyry's methodology is insufficient, even on the grounds of its own rationale, to deal with this complex issue.

Despite the apparent dichotomy he establishes between the technical doctrines of natal astrology (*genethliologia*) and the theurgic approach, Iamblichus repeatedly insists on the astral origins of the

horoscope. Then, the planet dominating the astrological sign in which the *epikratētōr* was located, would become the *oikodespotēs*. For the authorship of this work which is generally taken to be, at least in the majority, a genuine work of Porphyry, see G. Bezza in Goulet (2012) 1381-1384. For a comprehensive analysis of this astrological treatise in relation to the discovery of the *oikodespotēs*, see Greenbaum (2016) 266-279. For the translation of chapter 30, *ibid.*, 441.

¹⁷ Iamblichus, *DM*, IX.1 (273.2-9).

¹⁸ Iamblichus, *DM*, IX.2 (273.10-274.1). For a commentary on these technical terms, see Greenbaum (2016) 251-253.

¹⁹ Iamblichus, *DM*, IX.2 (274.3-5). For a discussion on these four terms, see Broze and Van Liefferinge (2011) 70-72.

daimōn and the rehabilitation of astrology as *mathēmatikē epistēmē*,²⁰ which he views as ‘initially handed down to men by the gods’:²¹

So also in the case of astrology (περὶ τῆς μαθηματικῆς) our response is that it itself is true, but those who are wrongly informed about it fall into contradictions, since they know nothing of the truth. This situation, after all, is not peculiar to it alone, but it is true of all the sciences (ἐπιστήμας) that have been handed down by the gods (ἐκ θεῶν παραδοθείσας) to men; for progressively, in the course of time, through the repeated admixture of much that is mortal, the divine character of the knowledge contained in them comes to be extinguished.

Iamblichus seems to introduce, in relation to the practice of astrology, a subtle distinction between, on the one hand, the terms ‘casting of nativities’ (*genethliologia*), or the *di’asterōn technē* –both standing for the popular form of inductive divination through the stars which was commonly practiced in the Graeco-Roman world by professional astrologers– and, on the other, the theurgic mode of apprehending cosmic events.²² Only the theurgic approach provides access to the divine, while the technical mode operates exclusively within the realm of nature which progressively extinguishes the initially divine knowledge. Iamblichus discusses astrology as an artificial mode of divination (τὸ τεχνικὸν εἶδος τῆς μαντικῆς), accomplished by human skill and partaking largely of guesswork and supposition, initially in parallel with ornithomancy and haruspicy.²³

²⁰ Iamblichus, *DM*, IX.4 (277.2).

²¹ Iamblichus, *DM*, IX.4 (277.9-14) καὶ περὶ τῆς μαθηματικῆς ἀντεροῦμεν, ὡς ὑπάρχει μὲν ἀληθῆς, οἱ δὲ πλανώμενοι περὶ αὐτῆς οὐδὲν εἰδότες τῶν ἀληθῶν ἀντιλέγουσιν. Συμβέβηκε δὲ τοῦτο οὐ περὶ ταύτην μόνην, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ πάσας ἐκ θεῶν παραδοθείσας ἀνθρώποις ἐπιστήμας· προϊόντος γὰρ αἰεὶ τοῦ χρόνου, πολλῶ τῷ θνητῷ καὶ πολλάκις ἀνακεραυνόμεναι, ἐξίτηλον τὸ θεῖον ἦθος τῆς γνώσεως ἀπεργάζονται.

²² Following Shaw’s (2007) 74 excellent suggestion to distinguish ‘astral theurgy’ from the ‘astrology practiced by the Greeks’. For the occurrences of *genethliologia*: *DM* I.18 (53.2); IX.1 (273.5-6); IX.2 (274.5-6); IX.5 (279.10). For *di’asterōn technē*, *DM* III.15 (135.4).

²³ Iamblichus, *DM* III.15 (135.1-4). Astrology, ornithomancy (or augury) and haruspicy are the three technical forms of divination presented in the *Chaldean Oracles* as ‘playthings, the props of commercial fraud’ (*Orac. chald.* Frg. 107 Des Places, trans. Majercik). Similarly, Frg. 217 Des Places 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. Frg. 217 is reported by Proclus, *In Remp.*, II 126, 15-17 and

Concerning these *technai*, Iamblichus holds that ‘this kind uses certain 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’.²⁴ Crystal 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.²⁵

On the other hand, in his presentation of Egyptian theological symbols, Iamblichus appears to appreciate the mystagogical dimension of astrology which represents the symbolic method of interpretation of the sun’s movement through the signs of the zodiac.²⁶ In the context of progressing through the zodiac, the powers of the sun change, indicating the diversity of the mystical techniques used by the Egyptians in their worship of the Sun-god.²⁷ Likewise, by viewing it as *mathēmatikē epistēmē* rather than *technē*,²⁸ Iamblichus introduces astrology within a Neopythagorean and theological framework, in which the divinity of numbers serves as a means of expression of the intercorrelation between the ratios of the soul and the movement of the heavenly gods as they progress through the zodiac.²⁹ Whereas *technē*

23-26, but listed among the *fragmenta dubia* by Des Places. Lewy (2011) 254-257, Majercik (1989) 182 and Iles Johnston (1990) 86-87 argue that the distrust of artificial forms of divination in the *Chaldean Oracles* is the result of their comparison with theurgy.

²⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III.15 (135.6-10).

²⁵ Addey (2014) 241.

²⁶ Cf. Iamblichus, *DM* VII.3 (253.2-9).

²⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* VII.3 (253.9-254.8).

²⁸ Throughout Late Antiquity the term *mathēmatikē technē* was used to designate astrology as *technē*, e.g. Sallustius, *Concerning the Gods and the Universe*, IX.4.5.

²⁹ The Neopythagorean doctrine of the cosmos being governed by arithmetical laws is particularly recurrent in Iamblichus’ *De Vita Pythagorica* and *The Theology of Arithmetic*. For a plausible reconstruction of Iamblichus’ work *On Pythagoreanism* in 9 or 10 books, see O’Meara (1989) 30-105. For Pythagoras and his reception by the Neoplatonists, see Macris (2004) and C. Macris in Goulet (2018) 681-850, 1025-1174. For Iamblichus and the pseudo-Pythagorean texts, Macris (2002). Additional academic research on the theurgic and mathematical components of astrology could elucidate further the interconnection between ritual and states of rationality. On this multifaceted interconnection, see

is associated with the craft or technical skills of knowing how to accomplish certain activities, *epistēmē* indicates the theoretical component upon which *technē* operates.³⁰ The term ἐπιστήμη, deriving from the verb ἐπίσταμαι, ‘to know something substantially, to understand in depth’, takes in *Republic* V the additional meaning of philosophical knowledge whose objects are the pure Forms or Ideas.³¹ Socrates defines *epistēmē* 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.³² Hence, the theoretical component of substantial knowledge correlates with both theology and ontology, since only things that really exist have a permanent and fixed nature.

The use of the term *mathēmatikē* 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 intelligible realms.³³ In his account of the creation of the Soul by the demiurge, Plato implies that the revolution of the Same represents the internal power by which the World Soul returns to its causes, while the revolution of the Different may be viewed as the external power to move the sensible world.³⁴ The former partakes of Intellect and stands for the celestial equator and the fixed stars,³⁵ whereas the latter may be identified with the Ecliptic and the corresponding signs of the zodiac, as well as with the planets.³⁶ The demiurge 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 revolve at different speeds from one another and from the other three, each moving at different speeds and ratios.³⁷ According to Francis

Saffrey (1981); Berchman (1991); Shaw (1999); Berchman (2002); Uždavinys (2008) 183-188; Addey (2014) 188-9, 196, 239, 273-5.

³⁰ See Parry (2020), online.

³¹ Plato, *R.* V 477a-478a.

³² Plato, *R.* V 477b.

³³ Plato, *Ti.* 34c ss. For the soul as number in Plato, see Festugière (1932) 49-50.

³⁴ Plato, *Ti.* 35a-37c.

³⁵ Burry (1929) 72, n.1 held that the Revolution of the Same represents the celestial Equator.

³⁶ Plato, *Ti.* 36c-d. For the rationale that the circle of the Different should be identified with the zodiac, rather than the ecliptic, see Cornford (1937) 76.

³⁷ Plato, *Ti.* 36d. At 38d it appears that the three planets revolving 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 Cornford (1937) 80.

Cornford, ‘since the Different is associated with the planets and the Wandering cause (πλανωμένη αίτία), the possibility remains that the World-Soul is not wholly rational’.³⁸ The Platonic theory that the Soul itself was composed of Number, or of all numbers by means of which the cosmos was organized, gave credence to what Sarah Iles Johnston qualifies as ‘the Platonic equation of the Ideas or Forms with mathematical entities’.³⁹ Iles Johnston argues that ‘number, in Pythagorean and Platonic theory, was responsible for the organization of physical space and thereby for the construction of the physical Cosmos’.⁴⁰ Thus, by using the term *mathēmatikē epistēmē*, Iamblichus seems to view in astrology a divinely inspired body of knowledge which sought to unveil the metaphysical dimension of the manifest cosmos by means of mathematical symbols.

Such an approach aims for the interiorization of the cosmos and the divinization of the soul. It relies on the repetition of the cosmogony by the theurgist⁴¹ and the unified ‘vision’ of the cosmos rather than on the deterministic and often fatalistic rules of technical astrology.⁴² Astral theurgy might have been a *sine qua non* in the successful accomplishment of theurgic rituals. *Katarchic* astrology (in this case the election of the most favorable moment for initiating a specific activity) was most probably used by theurgists in order to determine the appropriate *kairos* for ritual activity.⁴³ *Katarchic* astrology is, according to Dorian Greenbaum, purposely designed to negotiate fate rather than passively accept it.⁴⁴ Iamblichus, while insisting that the personal *daimōn* originates from the emanations of the stars, maintains that there is at least one form of astral divination which may be

³⁸ Cornford (1937) 76.

³⁹ Iles Johnston (1990) 17; see also Wallis (1995) 50-51.

⁴⁰ Iles Johnston (1990) 17. For the philosophical approach, according to which the mathematical structure of the World Soul does not constitute the foundation for the harmony of the spheres, since ‘being’ in Plato is not equivalent to number or harmony, see Brisson (1998) 314-332.

⁴¹ For the identification of the theurgist with the demiurge, see Shaw (2014) 51-53; Uždavinys (2008) 225-227; Addey (2014) 235-236.

⁴² For particularly insightful comments on the theurgic aspect of astrology, see Shaw (2007); Addey (2007) 47-52; Redondo (2016).

⁴³ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.4 (267.2-10).

⁴⁴ Greenbaum (2016) 248; 113, n. 183; Addey (2014) 105-106. Champion (2008) 175 remarks that there are ‘two ways of relating to the cosmos; one in which fate is negotiated and the other in which it is accepted’.

practiced as an inspired or theurgic divinatory art, since: ‘it is the emanation from the stars that allots us our *daimōn*, whether we comprehend this or not; the divine principles of divination can teach us about the stars on the truest principles, and we do not have any need of the “computation of tables” or of the *technē* of (inductive) divination’.⁴⁵ Iamblichus argues that only the theurgic approach can help us apprehend the cosmic events in a genuine manner, since it correlates with the revolutions of both the Same and the Different. He consequently dismisses Porphyry’s quest for the ‘master of the house’ as a technical method which fails to take into account more universal principles and focuses exclusively on the manifest revolution of the inner circle of the Different.⁴⁶ Therefore, Iamblichus stresses that Porphyry’s approach introduces a technical and human perspective into the inquiry about the personal *daimōn*, which confines the *daimōn* within the dominance of Fate.⁴⁷

II. The Astral Origins of the Personal *daimōn*

We now turn our attention to what Iamblichus considers as the truth about the *daimōn*.⁴⁸

If I am to reveal to you the truth about the personal *daimōn*, it is not from one part only of the heavenly regions nor from any one element of the visible realm that this entity is imparted to us, but from the whole cosmos and from the whole variety of life within it and from every sort of body, through all of which the soul

⁴⁵ Iamblichus, *DM IX.3* (276.13-15) ὁμοῦς ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄστρον ἀπόρροια ἀπονέμει τὸν δαίμονα, ἄν τε ἡμεῖς γινώσκωμεν ἄν τε μή· δύναται δὲ ἡ θεία μαντική διδάσκειν ἡμᾶς περὶ τῶν ἄστρον κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀληθέστατον, καὶ οὐ πάντως δεόμεθα τῆς τῶν κανόνων διαριθμήσεως ἢ τῆς μαντικῆς τέχνης. (trans. Clarke, Dillon, Hershbell with slight emendations). Reading μαντικῆς, with the MSS and Parthey, for the μαθηματικῆς of the Saffrey-Segonds-Lecerf edition (2013). Both options might be possible, since Iamblichus seeks to devalue here inductive divination as mere *technē*.

⁴⁶ Iamblichus, *DM IX.5* (279.10-16).

⁴⁷ Iamblichus, *DM IX.3* (276.2-4).

⁴⁸ Iamblichus, *DM IX. 6* (280.1—6) Εἰ δὲ δεῖ σοι τὸν ἀληθῆ περὶ τοῦ οἰκείου δαίμονος λόγον ἀποκαλύψαι, οὐκ ἀφ’ ἐνὸς μέρους τῶν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ οὐδ’ ἀπο τινος στοιχείου τῶν ὀρωμένων ἀπονέμεται ἡμῖν οὗτος, ἀφ’ ὅλου δὲ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς παντοδαπῆς ἐν αὐτῷ ζωῆς καὶ τοῦ παντοδαποῦ σώματος, δι’ ὧν ἡ ψυχὴ κάτεισιν ἐπὶ τὴν γένεσιν, ἀπομερίζεται τις ἡμῖν μοῖρα ἰδίᾳ πρὸς ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀπομεριζομένη κατ’ ἰδίαν ἐπιστάσιαν.

descends into generation, there is apportioned to us an individual lot, assigned to each of the parts within us according to an individual authorizing principle.

Here the personal *daimōn* is put implicitly in parallel with the belief that the soul, along with its vehicle, acquires astral ‘garments’ (χιτῶνες) in the course of its descent through the planetary spheres.⁴⁹ The *daimōn* appears to be imparted from the whole cosmos and from all sort of life within it and from the heavenly bodies through which the soul descends into generation. Therefore, the *daimōn* could be viewed as the amalgamation of all the astral influences which constitute human destiny. It is this acquisition of an astral ‘lot’ (μοῖρα) which is primarily personalized by Iamblichus as the personal *daimōn*. In that context, the heavenly gods are considered as bringers of fate.

From that perspective, it is interesting that Iamblichus discusses, right before the section dedicated to the personal *daimōn*, the Hermetic concept of two souls. He introduces it while examining key points of Egyptian and Hermetic astrology. Taking his cue from the importance of the movement of the stars, Iamblichus holds that, according to the Hermetic writings, the human being has two souls: one deriving from the primary intelligence (ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου νοητοῦ), partaking also of the power of the demiurge, the other being contributed to humans from the circuit of the heavenly bodies (ἐκ τῆς τῶν οὐρανίων περιφορᾶς).⁵⁰ This being the case, ‘the soul which descends to us from the (celestial) realms accommodates itself to the circuits of those realms, but that which is present to us in an intelligible mode from the intelligible transcends the cycle of generation, and it is in virtue of it that we may attain to emancipation from fate and ascent to the intelligible gods’.⁵¹

The doctrine of two souls is of a dualistic nature, probably originating from ancient Mazdaism, and postulates that the first soul is intelligible and arises from the primary intelligence, whilst the second is rather irrational⁵² and inclined towards materiality. The second soul,

⁴⁹ Porphyry, *What is Up to Us*, 271F, 68-71; Iamblichus, *In Tim.* IV Fr. 84; Proclus, *In Alc.*, 224.1-225.2; Proclus, *ET* §209.

⁵⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.6 (269.1-4). Same doctrine is attested in Proclus, *In Tim.* III 285.1-12 Diehl. For the Hermetic concept of two souls, cf. *C.H.* 1.15, and *Ascl.* 7. See also Festugière (2014) 1145 n.1, 1148-1150; Fowden (1986) 152-153; Philonenko (1987); Mihai (2015) 297-299.

⁵¹ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.6 (269.4-9).

⁵² Whereas Porphyry, *On the Powers of the Soul*, uses the exact words *logikos* and *alogos* in order to qualify the two souls, Iamblichus only uses the word

which is qualified as ‘avenging *daimōn*’ (τιμωρὸς δαίμων) in the *Corpus Hermeticum*,⁵³ emanates from the heavenly revolutions. It is therefore subject to fate. This leads to the following paradox: even though the gods are liberators 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’.⁵⁴ Hence, the soul becomes subject to necessity and fate when it attaches itself to the bodily condition. Citing Iamblichus’ *In Phaedrum*, Hermeias reports that ‘the fate he [Iamblichus] is referring to is that which is concerned with bodily life and order. Iamblichus defines fate (εἰμαρμένη) as the nature of the universe’.⁵⁵

Iamblichus examines the paradox of the heavenly gods being simultaneously ‘rulers of destiny’ (μοιρηγέτας) and possible liberators from fate (λυτῆρας τῆς εἰμαρμένης) and asserts that ‘in each of the gods, even the visible ones, there are certain intelligible principles (νοηταὶ ἀρχαί) of essence (οὐσίας), through which it is possible for souls to gain release from the generative process deriving from the cosmic spheres’.⁵⁶ That Iamblichus fully endorses this doctrine is also clear from his *Letter to Macedonius on Fate*,⁵⁷ in which he views the cosmic movements generating Fate as assimilated (*aphomoiountai*) to the immaterial and intellectual activities and circuits.⁵⁸ Iamblichus postulates that the destiny enmeshed with the cosmic revolutions incorporates the secondary causes which are dependent upon the primary causes of the intelligible and transcendent realm governed by Providence. Therefore, Fate concerns the cosmic procedures that tend to assimilate themselves to the dominance of Providence: ‘Fate is enmeshed with Providence, and Fate exists by virtue of the existence

noetos in relation to the ‘intelligible’ soul, without employing any corresponding word with opposite meaning in order to qualify the ‘irrational’ soul, cf. Boys-Stones (2014) Fr. 43: Iamblichus ap. Stob. *Ecl.* i. 374.21-375.1, 12-18 W; Fr. 44, Porphyry, *On the Powers of the Soul*, ap. Stob. *Ecl.* i. 350.25-351.1 W; Smith (1993) p. 272. I am grateful to Dorian Greenbaum for this observation.

⁵³ For the δαίμων τιμωρὸς as opposed to Νοῦς πλωρὸς, cf. *C.H.* 1.22-23.

⁵⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.6 (270.1-3).

⁵⁵ Iamblichus, *In Phaedr.* Fr. 6A Εἰμαρμένην δὲ λέγει τὴν περὶ τὴν σωματοειδῆ ζῶην καὶ τάξιν· ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος δὲ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ παντὸς εἰμαρμένην καλεῖ. (trans. Dillon).

⁵⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.8 (271.5-8).

⁵⁷ Iamblichus, *Letter 8: To Macedonius on Fate*, in Dillon and Polleichtner (2010).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Fr. 4, 1-4, apud Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.8.45.

of Providence, and it derives its existence from it and within its ambit'.⁵⁹ As a result, Iamblichus considers that there might be an underlying *symphonia* between the cosmic and intelligible realms. He consequently attributes the originating cause of human action to both of them.⁶⁰

In that context, the personal *daimōn* resumes the orchestration of all the cosmic and supra-cosmic influences which are unique for each individual soul. When the soul selects the personal *daimōn* as its guide, then straightaway the *daimōn* acts as the fulfiller of the various levels of the life of the soul.⁶¹ The Platonic expression ἀποπληρωτῆς τῶν βίωων τῆς ψυχῆς⁶² suggests that the *daimōn* watches over the purpose of each descent. The type of guidance the *daimōn* 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 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.⁶³ For the immaculate souls, the *daimōn* provides only supervision and guidance in the fulfilment of their choices, while for the last two categories of souls the *daimōn* ensures that through their choices they might liberate themselves from errors committed in former lives in order to attain purification from bodily passions. For that matter, Iamblichus clearly specifies that in their idea of justice, superior entities take cognizance of the whole of our soul and all its previous lives.⁶⁴ Thus, the *daimōn* distributes the astral destiny

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Fr. 4, 4-8. Same doctrine in Proclus, *In Tim.* III 274.7-12; III 275.16-19 Diehl. In the *De fato* (568e2-5, 572f6-573a5 Sieveking), Pseudo-Plutarch conveys similar ideas on the relationship between Providence and Fate. The author attributes primary providence to the intellection or will of the primary God and secondary providence to the heavenly gods, and he additionally introduces tertiary providence attributed to *daimones*. Dillon (1996) 320, 338 suggests that the three forms of providence may come out of Athenian scholasticism of the early 2nd century, or from a yet uncertain teacher of Apuleius. For a comprehensive discussion on the *daimōn*, fate and providence, especially in relationship with astrology, see Greenbaum (2016) 28-45.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Fr. 4, 9-23.

⁶¹ Iamblichus, *DM IX.6* (280.8-11).

⁶² Plato, *R. X* 617d.

⁶³ Iamblichus, *De Anima*, Fr. 29.

⁶⁴ Iamblichus, *DM IV.4* (186.11-14).

corresponding to each soul, and simultaneously it establishes the connection with the intelligible principles, reflected in the heavens, which might make it possible for humans to be liberated from the bonds of Fate.

III. The Personal *daimōn* and the Process of Divinization

The next function the *daimōn* undertakes sets the basis for the communication between human and divine realms:⁶⁵

And all our reasonings we pursue thanks to the first principles which it [the personal *daimōn*] communicates to us, and we perform such actions as it puts into our minds; and it 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; for then it either withdraws in deference to the superior principle, or surrenders its administrative role, or subordinates itself so as to contribute to the god's direction of the soul, or in some other way comes to serve it as master.

This passage alludes to the process of divinization, since the *daimōn* appears to be the substantial link uniting humans to the gods. According to the Iamblichean doctrine of the fully descended soul,⁶⁶ it is the personal *daimōn* who conveys the first principles of Intellect to the rational part of the soul.⁶⁷ The idea that Intellect (νοῦς) and the cosmic order may be communicated to the human mind through the personal *daimōn* originates in the *Timaeus*, where the god-sent *daimōn* arouses humans, through their natural affinity with the sky, to raise

⁶⁵ Iamblichus, *DM IX.6* (280.12-281.4) ...καὶ ὅσα λογίζόμεθα, αὐτοῦ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἡμῖν ἐνδιδόντος διανοοῦμεθα, πράττομέν τε τοιαῦτα οἷα ἂν αὐτὸς ἡμῖν ἐπὶ νοῦν ἄγῃ, καὶ μέχρι τοσούτου κυβερνᾷ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἕως ἂν διὰ τῆς ἱερατικῆς θεουργίας θεὸν ἔφορον ἐπιστήσωμεν καὶ ἡγεμόνα τῆς ψυχῆς· τότε γὰρ ἢ ὑποχωρεῖ τῷ κρείττονι, ἢ παραδίδωσι τὴν ἐπιστασίαν, ἢ ὑποτάσσεται ὡς συντελεῖν εἰς αὐτόν, ἢ ἄλλον τινὰ τρόπον ὑπηρετεῖ αὐτῷ ὡς ἐπάρχοντι.

⁶⁶ Cf. Iamblichus, *De Anima* Fr. 6 and 7.

⁶⁷ Dillon (2001) 4 suggests that in this sense the *daimōn* represents for Iamblichus 'the theurgic solution to the problem of the origin of the first principles of reasoning – what Aristotle terms simply *ta prōta*, but which in Stoic theory would be termed *prolēpseis*—in accordance with which we act'. Timotin (2012) 315-316 explains πράττομέν τε τοιαῦτα οἷα ἂν αὐτὸς ἡμῖν ἐπὶ νοῦν ἄγῃ in relation to Porphyry's suggestion that humans opt for good or bad based on the accordance of their soul either with the gods or with the evil *daimōn* (*Letter to Marcella* 21, 118.9-14).

upwards like heavenly plants.⁶⁸ 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 *daimōn* who dwells together with him well-ranked, he must be especially good-spirited (*eudaimōn*)’.⁶⁹ However, as Andrei Timotin has remarked, the *noūs-daimōn* is not identical and should not be confused with the personal *daimōn*.⁷⁰ Both Iamblichus and Proclus stress that the latter has the additional potential to direct the actions of the soul and body composite.⁷¹

The personal *daimōn*’s principal role as the supervisor of the soul-body composite is to direct human thoughts and actions towards the signs which attest the divine presence in the cosmos. The principal function attributed to *daimones* throughout *De Mysteriis* is that of a guiding principle seeking to fulfil divine providence.⁷² The type of guidance the personal *daimōn* provides might be further elucidated by the role assigned to *daimones* in divinatory rituals. In apparent contrast to the standard Platonic view, that *daimones* convey divinatory inspiration from gods to humans, Iamblichus attributes inspiration directly to the gods.⁷³ In inductive divination however, divine signs are produced by means of nature or through the agency of *daimones*. As Iamblichus explains, ‘the gods produce the signs (σημεῖα) either by means of nature (διὰ τῆς φύσεως) [...] or through the agency of *daimones* concerned with creation (διὰ τῶν γενεσιουργῶν δαιμόνων), who, presiding over the elements of the universe (τοῖς στοιχείοις τοῦ παντὸς) and individual bodies, indeed over all living beings in the cosmos, guide the phenomena with ease in a manner pleasing to the

⁶⁸ Plato, *Ti.* 90a. For the *noūs-daimōn* in the *Ti.*, Timotin (2012) 75-81.

⁶⁹ Plato, *Ti.* 90c (trans. Greenbaum 2016: 23).

⁷⁰ Timotin (2012) 80.

⁷¹ For an insightful discussion of this question, Timotin (2012) 310-313. See also Proclus’ objections to the Plotinian thesis that the personal *daimōn* may be identical with Intellect (Proclus, *In Alc.* 76.26-77.10). For Proclus’ criticism, see Timotin (2018) 195-200.

⁷² Iamblichus, *DM* I. 20 (64.2-7); *DM* II.1 (67.2-5); *DM* II.10 (91.2-5); *DM* III.18 (144.1-6). For a discussion on this sublimation of the role undertaken by *daimones* in Iamblichus, Timotin (2012) 237, 217.

⁷³ Iamblichus, *DM* III.7 (114.6-9). See also Shaw (2014) 231-236; Clarke (2001) 58-69; Timotin (2012) 222-3. Despite the apparent Platonic view which attributes divination to *daimones* (cf. *Symp.* 202e-203a), Plato holds in the *Ion* 534c-d that (poetic and divinatory) inspiration originates directly from the gods through divine possession. On this matter, see Addey (2014) 66, 107-108.

gods (ὄρηπερ ἂν δοκῆ τοῖς θεοῖς).⁷⁴ A *daimōn* presides over the entrails and the life of all living beings.⁷⁵ Iamblichus holds that ‘birds are moved not only by the impulse of their own particular soul, but also by the guardian *daimōn* of living beings’.⁷⁶ 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 animals.⁷⁷ Greenbaum points out that if the divine sign is indeed an act of communication, ‘then again the *daimōn* works as a mediator, communicator and administrator between the divine and human’.⁷⁸

Once the communication between the human and divine realms has been established, the personal *daimōn* may surrender its administrative role to the particular god who presides over the *daimōn*. 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.⁷⁹ The first classification echoes the *Phaedrus* 247a-c, while the second recalls the *Timaeus* 42d. The origins of each personal *daimōn* in one of the heavenly gods is further elaborated by Proclus:⁸⁰

The *daimones* then are ‘many and of all kinds’, as Diotima observes, and the highest unite the souls that proceed from the father to the gods that are their own rulers. For each god, as we have said, rules primarily over *daimones*, and next over individual souls; some of the latter, as Timaeus says, the creator

⁷⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III.15 (135.10-136.1).

⁷⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* III.16 (136.9-12). Iamblichus refers to haruspicy here.

⁷⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* III.16 (136.9-137.2) Iamblichus refers to ornithomancy or augury, that is to say divination based on the observation of the birds’ flying patterns.

⁷⁷ Iamblichus, *DM* VI.3 (243.6-244.5).

⁷⁸ Greenbaum (2016) 337. For the divine sign as an act of communication, see Struck (2007) 17.

⁷⁹ Proclus, *In Alc.* 68.9-69.3.

⁸⁰ Proclus, *In Alc.* 72.14-23 πολλῶν τοίνυν καὶ παντοδαπῶν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ Διοτίμα φησί, τῶν δαιμόνων ὄντων οἱ μὲν ἀκρότατοι τὰς ψυχὰς τὰς προελθοῦσας ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς συνάπτουσι τοῖς ἑαυτῶν ἡγεμόσι θεοῖς. ἕκαστος γὰρ ὡς εἶπομεν θεὸς ἡγεῖται πρώτως μὲν δαιμόνων, ἔπειτα καὶ ψυχῶν μερικῶν· ἔσπειρε γὰρ καὶ τούτων ὁ δημιουργός, ὡς φησιν ὁ Τίμαιος, τὰς μὲν εἰς ἥλιον, τὰς δὲ εἰς σελήνην, τὰς δὲ εἰς τοὺς ἄλλους θεοὺς. οὗτοι δὲ οὖν οἱ θεοὶ δαίμονές εἰσιν οἱ κατ’ οὐσίαν εἰληχότες τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ συνάπτοντες αὐτὰς τοῖς οἰκείοις ἄρχουσι· (trans. O’Neill slightly modified). Lines 14-15=*Symp.* 203A 7; for lines 19-21, cf. *Ti.* 42d 4-5. Reading θεῖοι in line 22, with Dodds, for the θεοὶ of the N manuscript.

sowed in the sun, some in the moon, and some in the other [visible] gods. The divine *daimones*, then, are those which are guardians of souls according to their essential nature and unite them to their appropriate rulers.

Proclus holds that each soul, as well as its personal *daimōn*, are ontologically subordinate to the astral deities from which they emanated from and with which they are interconnected. The more the soul resembles its *daimōn*, especially in the case of a divine *daimōn*, the more it partakes of heavenly emanations. In that case, the soul may choose by its own free will to live according to the life-principles of its leader god. The same doctrine is attested in Olympiodorus, according to whom the soul that is in agreement with its essential nature chooses the way of life corresponding to the series to which it belongs: a soldier's life if it belongs to the series of Ares, a lawyer's life if it belongs to the series of Hermes and a life of physician or seer if it is in accordance with the solar series of Apollo.⁸¹ Proclus claims that, during the famous episode at the Iseum,⁸² the Egyptian marveled at Plotinus' divine *daimōn*, because only a few individuals chose deliberately to embrace the principles of their leader god.⁸³ Proclus seems to imply that Plotinus was already acting voluntarily on the level of his guardian spirit, and consequently had direct communication with his leader god.

If we turn our attention back to Iamblichus and the intelligible principles (νοητὰ ἀρχαί) contained even among the visible gods, liberation from fate begins with the transmission of the intelligible principles inherent to each heavenly god.⁸⁴ As stated earlier, the cosmic gods retransmit, in their turn, the superior causes of divine Providence with which they tend to assimilate themselves. The diffusion of these universal principles is likely to be communicated by the agency of the *daimōn*, who, on the one hand, assures their transmission, but, on the other, presents them to the soul as personalized riddles, since the νοητὰ ἀρχαί have been modified because of their association with the cosmic spheres and each individual fate. Therefore, the theurgists who purified the soul's

⁸¹ Olympiodorus, *In Alc.* 20.3-14.

⁸² Porphyry, *Vit. Pl.* 10.15-33.

⁸³ Proclus, *In Alc.* 73.1-6.

⁸⁴ Subsequently, it was possible to have access to more universal principles which were inherent to the intelligible gods, cf. Iamblichus, *DM* VIII.6-8, *passim*.

‘vehicle’ from its astral ‘lot’(μοῖρα) and attained the necessary inner vacuity, were suitably prepared to receive (ἐπιτηδειότης) the influx of the superior causes deriving originally from the One and the intelligible gods through the mediation of the celestial god who presided over the personal *daimōn*. Iamblichus seems to imply that in the course of advanced theurgic rituals, the practitioners who cultivated a receptivity for the cosmic principles of their leader god, could enter into a dialectic relationship with the god and the fate it distributed, as well as with divine Providence. During this procedure, the theurgists might have been transformed into their own *daimonic* double.

From that perspective, the personal *daimōn* was still active in the service of the god but no longer functioning as the soul’s guide, since the theurgist was capable of acting jointly with it. Thenceforth, the heavenly god became the new ‘divine double’ and guide of the soul. The ‘divine double’ may be envisioned in the sense advanced by Charles Stang, as the ‘notion of the self as split, doubled, and thereby deified, under the banner “no longer I”’.⁸⁵ Shaw views the detachment of the soul from the personal *daimōn* as paradoxically depending on the degree of identity with the *daimōn*.⁸⁶ He describes this procedure as follows: ‘The *daimōn* was not left behind but was, as it were, digested and incorporated by the theurgist. In addition, insofar as *daimones* served a processional and dividing role in cosmology, the graduation to a god as overseer indicated that the soul was no longer identified with a “particular” self. When the soul became resonant with the ratios of the World Soul, it began to live for the entire world, and since *daimones* had jurisdiction over parts, not wholes, the soul then received a god for its leader’.⁸⁷

Therefore, by acting on the level of the personal *daimōn* as their own *daimonic* double, theurgists were likely to receive the divine illumination transmitted by the heavenly gods.⁸⁸ 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

⁸⁵ Stang (2016) 8. For the ‘divine double’, see *ibid.* 8-12.

⁸⁶ Shaw (2014) 245.

⁸⁷ Shaw (2014) 245.

⁸⁸ The encosmic deities retransmit in their turn the ἑλλαμυίς of the hypercosmic gods.

locally, but also in their powers and emissions of light'.⁸⁹ Based on Iamblichus' objections to the 'image-maker' (εἰδωλοποιός),⁹⁰ John Finamore points out that even though the planetary gods are involved with the lower powers of nature and would rather emit a corporeal form of light,⁹¹ their powers can be further subdivided: 'The first class of physical powers has its source in entities above the physical gods, namely the noetic Forms and the noeric seminal reasons. This power is, therefore, equivalent to the description of divine illumination, whose source is also noetic and noeric'.⁹² The heavenly gods could consequently be considered as agents of the retransmission of divine illumination in the cosmos. Iamblichus thinks that, through the sympathy and union which pervades the cosmos, as if it were a single living being, the divine signs are imparted 'first through the heaven and then through the air, with the greatest possible brightness (λαμπρότατα)'.⁹³ By shining their light from above, the heavenly gods may illuminate the ethereal and luminous vehicle of the soul with divine light which takes possession of our imaginative power (φαντασία).⁹⁴ Through the establishment of solid contact between the soul and its leader god, the personal *daimōn* seems to initiate the synchronization of the soul's vehicle with the noetic emanations of the planetary gods.

There are striking similarities between the way Iamblichus perceives the vehicle's shape and motion, and his understanding of the planets. Like the planets, the vehicle is spherical and composed of aether. In his *In Timaeum*, 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 (*noūs*)'.⁹⁵ Iamblichus suggests that the intellection of the soul

⁸⁹ Iamblichus, *DM* III.16 (137.8-11) ...ὄν τόπω μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς δυνάμεσι καὶ ταῖς τοῦ φωτὸς διαδρομαῖς·.

⁹⁰ Iamblichus, *DM* III.28 (169.4-12)

⁹¹ Finamore (1993) 61.

⁹² Finamore (1993) 59.

⁹³ Iamblichus, *DM* III.16 (138.1-5).

⁹⁴ Iamblichus, *DM* III.14 (132.7-14). On *phantasia* as directly inspired by the gods in Iamblichus, so that it may form images of the supra-rational powers in the soul, see Sheppard (1997) 207-208.

⁹⁵ Iamblichus, *In Tim.* III. fr. 49 (1.12-15) οὕτω καὶ τὸ πᾶν σφαιροειδὲς ἀπετέλεσε πρὸς τὴν αὐτοκινησίαν αὐτῆς ἀπεικαζόμενον. διὸ καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον

and the circular motion of the heavenly bodies recreate the activity of Intellect which is spherical.⁹⁶ Hence, as Addey discloses, ‘Iamblichus emphasizes that the vehicle is made more spherical whenever the human soul is assimilated to the Divine Mind (*noūs*)’.⁹⁷ Finamore stresses that both the human soul and the World Soul imitate the shape and the circular motion of *noūs*.⁹⁸ Thus, during the process of divinization, the personal *daimōn* –and at a later stage our *daimonic* double– may attain the level of *noūs*, from the moment that the *daimōn*’s activity may initially reproduce the circular movement of its leader god, and eventually that of the World Soul, establishing the suitable proportions between the circles of the Same and the Different,⁹⁹ that is to say between Providence on the one hand and the fate distributed by the cosmic movements on the other.

Moreover, 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.¹⁰⁰ Iamblichus holds that ‘the individual pneumatic vehicles proceed and are given shape in accord with the *life-principles* of the (encosmic) gods’.¹⁰¹ John Dillon argues that τὰς ζωὰς τὰς θείας refers to the planets, since, in theological terms, ‘these are the aethereal source of the individual πνεύματα/ὄχήματα’.¹⁰² The expression *life-principles* (of the planets) points also to the particular principles that each heavenly god conveys to humans. It seems that here too Iamblichus complements the astrological connotations of Porphyry’s explanation on a metaphysical level.

ὄχημα σφαιρικὸν ἀποτελεῖται καὶ κινεῖται κυκλικῶς, ὅταν διαφερόντως ὁμοιωθῇ πρὸς τὸν νοῦν ἢ ψυχή (trans. Dillon with slight emendations).

⁹⁶ Iamblichus, *In Tim.* III. fr. 49 (1.15-16). For an insightful discussion on the connection between the visible and the invisible gods in *DM* I.19 (60.11-15), see Finamore (1985) 43-44.

⁹⁷ Addey (2013) 153.

⁹⁸ Finamore (1985) 49-50; see also Addey (2013) 150, 152-153.

⁹⁹ On that matter, see Timotin (2012) 80.

¹⁰⁰ Iamblichus, *In Tim.* IV. fr. 84 (6-7); Proclus, *In Tim.* III 234.18-24; Porphyry, *What is Up to Us* 305.68-71. For the astrological connotations in Porphyry’s understanding of the vehicle, Greenbaum (2018) 122-125; Greenbaum (2016) 240, n. 26.

¹⁰¹ Iamblichus, *In Tim.* IV. fr. 84 (7-8, my italics) κατὰ τὰς ζωὰς τὰς θείας προϊόντων καὶ μορφουμένων τῶν μερικῶν πνευμάτων (trans. Dillon with slight emendations).

¹⁰² Dillon (1973) 380.

Thus, it may be argued that the vehicle's spherical shape and circular motion serve as a means of synchronization with the planets' noetic emanations. From that viewpoint, the ritual practitioners who enhance their level of receptivity and act voluntarily on the level of their personal *daimōn* can eventually become their *daimonic* double, directing their body-soul composite from a superior ontological and cosmological status. Therefore, the invocation of the personal *daimōn* could mark a turn in the 'direction' of ritual activity, which progressively passed from the horizontal level of *sympatheia* related to *daimones* to the vertical dimension of *theia philia* uniting humans to the gods.¹⁰³ The theurgists were likely to attain emancipation from the corporeal order by simply ruling their bodies from outside, by imitation of the visible gods' relationship with their own bodies, the planets;¹⁰⁴ consequently, through the invocation of the personal *daimōn*, the theurgists could sense and 'see' the heavenly gods because of their attainment of divine assimilation and likeness.

IV. Rituals of Invocation

Concerning the rituals aimed at the invocation of the personal *daimōn*, taking into account the cosmic origins of the *daimōn* as well as its reliance upon an astral deity, it is reasonable to suggest that the personal *daimōn* is essentially connected to a heavenly god. The visible gods ascend, along with the intelligible ones, to the One.¹⁰⁵ In the discussion regarding the theurgic rituals pertaining to the discovery and invocation of the personal *daimōn*, Iamblichus specifies that:¹⁰⁶

The invocation of *daimones* is made in the name of the single god who is their ruler, who from the beginning has apportioned a

¹⁰³ Addey (2014) 29 envisions divine love (*theia philia*) as 'supracosmic' sympathy which enables the phenomenon of *sympatheia* to arise.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Iamblichus, *DM* I.19 (60.8-15).

¹⁰⁵ Iamblichus, *DM* I.17 (50.11-51.8).

¹⁰⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* IX. 9 (283.13-284.7) Διὰ τί οὖν κοινῇ κλήσει καλεῖται ὑπὸ πάντων; ὅτι καθ' ἓνα τὸν κύριον θεὸν τῶν δαιμόνων ἡ κλήσις αὐτῶν γίνεται, ὃς ἐξ ἀρχῆς τε ἀφώρισε τοὺς ἰδίους δαίμονας ἐκάστοις, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἱερουργίαις ἀναφαίνει κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν βούλησιν τοὺς ἰδίους ἐκάστοις. Ἄει γὰρ ἐν τῇ θεουργικῇ τάξει διὰ τῶν ὑπερεχόντων τὰ δεύτερα καλεῖται· καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν δαιμόνων τοίνυν εἷς κοινὸς ἡγεμῶν τῶν περὶ τὴν γένεσιν κοσμοκρατόρων καταπέμπει τοὺς ἰδίους δαίμονας ἐκάστοις.

personal *daimōn* to each individual, and who in the theurgic rites reveals, according to his good pleasure, their personal *daimōn* to each. For it is always the case, in the theurgic hierarchy, that secondary entities are summoned through the intermediacy of their superiors; and in the case of *daimones*, then, the single common leader of the cosmocrators in the realm of generation sends down to the individual recipients their personal *daimones*.

John Dillon has suggested that this ‘common leader of the cosmocrators’ might be *Helios* if indeed Iamblichus when using the term ‘cosmocrators’ is merely referring to the planetary gods.¹⁰⁷ In his *In Timaeum* Fr.11, Iamblichus is employing the term ‘cosmocrators’ as a clear reference to the seven planets.¹⁰⁸ A more problematic use of this term, as equivalent to the cosmic archons which administer the sublunary elements, is attested in the section describing the divine apparitions.¹⁰⁹ Dillon holds that in this passage the cosmocrators, ‘must be identified with the planets, who are thus credited with administering the elements (whether material or daimonic) of the physical world’.¹¹⁰ This particular passage could additionally be explained in relation to the *In Timaeum* Fr. 79, in which Iamblichus suggests that there are subdivisions of the heavenly gods either according to the four elements or to any other dividing cause. Apparently, each multiplication in the number of the heavenly gods divides analogically the power of each of the created divinities, since the latter only represent a partial dimension of the original astral deity from which they emanated from. Thus, the cosmocrators are still connected in their essence with the heavenly gods.

Additionally to this, in his account of Egyptian theology, Iamblichus postulates Kmeḫ as ‘the leader of the celestial gods’, whom Hermes declares to be ‘an intellect thinking himself, and turning his thoughts

¹⁰⁷ Dillon (2001) 7, n. 16. Dillon equally suggests that *Hades* might be ‘the common leader of the cosmocrators’, if the latter are to be intended as the sublunary archons of *DM*, II.3 (71.3-7).

¹⁰⁸ Iamblichus, *In Tim.*, Fr. 11.6-8: Ἀσσύριοι δὲ, φησὶν Ἰάμβλιχος, οὐχ ἑπτὰ καὶ εἴκοσι μυριάδας ἐτῶν μόνας ἐτήρησαν, ὡς φησὶν Ἰππαρχος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅλας ἀποκαταστάσεις καὶ περιόδους τῶν ἑπτὰ κοσμοκρατόρων μνήμη παρέδωσαν·

¹⁰⁹ *DM*, II.3 (71.3-7) ...τὰ δὲ (*scil.* φάσματα) τῶν ἀρχόντων, εἰ μὲν σοι δοκοῦσιν οὗτοι εἶναι οἱ κοσμοκράτορες οἱ τὰ ὑπὸ σελήνην στοιχεῖα διοικούντες, ἔσται ποικιλώτερα μὲν, ἐν τάξει δὲ διακεκοσμημένα, εἰ δ’ οἱ τῆς ὕλης προεστηκότες, ἔσται ἀτελέστερα μὲν, ἀτελέστερα δὲ τούτων μᾶλλον...

¹¹⁰ Dillon (1973) 276. Plaisance (2013) 79-80 also reaches the same conclusion.

towards himself'.¹¹¹ In his perceptive commentary of this passage, Dennis Clark has advanced *Helios* 'as the most likely candidate to be the Hellenic deity meant by Iamblichus to correspond to Kmeph in this role. The crucial characteristics supporting this identification are to be found in the use of "ἡγούμενον" to describe this entity, Iamblichus' conception of Kmeph as noeric and as a god "thinking himself", and the fact that Kmeph/Kematef in Egyptian religion was associated with the sun via his relationship to Amun-Re'.¹¹² Also of particular interest is a fragment from Nechepso¹¹³, in which there is connection between Kmeph and astrology, as well as possible identification of the god with the Agathos *daimōn*.¹¹⁴ What is more, Julian displays in his *Hymn to King Helios* an exposition of Neoplatonic heliolatry in three hypostases,¹¹⁵ while insisting on following the insights of the divinely-inspired Iamblichus.¹¹⁶ Therefore, if we also consider Julian's three Suns, it would be reasonable to think that theurgic rituals addressed to *Helios* on the noeric level could be associated with invocations to the physical Sun in the manifest cosmos and the quest for the purest light of the Good in the noetic realm.¹¹⁷ It is highly probable then that the theurgic rituals Iamblichus is referring to, when discussing the invocation of the personal *daimōn*, were addressed to *Helios*, on the noeric level.

Similar links between *Helios*, the heavenly gods and the personal *daimōn* are also attested in other late antique cultic texts.¹¹⁸ 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

¹¹¹ *DM VIII.3* (263.1-3) Reading Κμηφ, with Scott, for the Ἡμῆφ of the MSS: προτάττει θεὸν τὸν Κμηφ τῶν ἐπουρανίων θεῶν ἡγούμενον, ὃν φησι νοῦν εἶναι αὐτὸν ἑαυτὸν νοοῦντα καὶ τὰς νοήσεις εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστρέφοντα.

¹¹² Clark (2008) 182.

¹¹³ P. Wash. Univ. inv. 181 and 221 which is an astrological papyrus dating from the 2nd or 3rd century, in Packman (1988) 93. See also *PGM*, CX.1-12. I thank Dorian Greenbaum for bringing this text to my attention.

¹¹⁴ Heilen (2011) 48-52.

¹¹⁵ Julian, *Hymn to King Helios* 133a-c, 139cd, 156d-157a.

¹¹⁶ On Julian's inspiration stemming from Iamblichus, *Hymn to King Helios* 146a, 150d, 157cd. See also Athanassiadi (1977) 370; Finamore (1985) 159, n. 29; Dillon (1999) 104.

¹¹⁷ For *Helios* and its three hypostases of expression, Finamore (1985) 133-140.

¹¹⁸ For the prominence of the solar theology in late antique cults, see Cumont (1913).

orders of a particular star'.¹¹⁹ Garth Fowden suggests that in the hermetic context all the cosmic forces and sympathetic energies, personified as *daimones*, derive directly from the heavenly bodies.¹²⁰ This also seems to be the case in the *PGM* VII. 505-528, where the discovery of the personal *daimōn* is sought through an invocation to *Helios* who begot the planets.¹²¹ The importance of solar divinities, such as Apollon and Abraxas is highlighted in the 'Eight Book of Moses', *PGM* XIII.1-733, in which the invoked god is presented as willing to reveal to the ritual practitioner the star he or she belongs to, the precise identity of their personal *daimōn* and the *hōroskopos*, the ascendant degree of the ecliptic at the moment of birth.¹²² Similarly, in another version of the same magical recipe, the god is invoked in order to reveal the astrological destiny and preserve the practitioner from its flaws.¹²³ Greenbaum points out that these passages present a sharp contrast with 'fatalistic' astrology. As she suggests, 'this is not so much astrological magic as it is magical (or better, religious) astrology, relying not on human abilities to make changes, but propitiating the god for divine intervention and assistance'.¹²⁴ Moreover, in the technical texts of Hellenistic astrology, the lot of the *daimōn* is connected to the sun.¹²⁵

Thus, the above-mentioned cultic texts also testify to the inextricable link connecting the personal *daimōn* with the heavenly gods, *Helios* and the distribution of human destiny. Taking into account that the personal *daimōn* seeks, like all the other superior entities, to 'assimilate what is in us to the gods',¹²⁶ it becomes clear that the *daimōn*'s ultimate objective is to shift the center of our identity from the corporeal self into the luminous sphere of the purified vehicle. This purification entails the knowledge of our astral destiny which reflects

¹¹⁹ *CH* XVI, 13 (1-5) trans. Copenhaver.

¹²⁰ Fowden (1986) 78.

¹²¹ Although Dodds (1951) 289 claims, perhaps unjustifiably, that the rite is incomplete, Betz (1981) 160-162 advances an insightful analysis of this *systasis* in its current form and points out some interesting parallels with the invocation of Plotinus' personal *daimōn* in Porphyry's *Vit. Pl.* 10. For the astrological connotations of *PGM* VII. 505-528, see Greenbaum (2016) 196-199.

¹²² *PGM*, XIII.709-711.

¹²³ *PGM*, XIII. 634-635. See also Greenbaum (2016) 200-204.

¹²⁴ Greenbaum (2016) 204.

¹²⁵ Greenbaum (2016) 305-307.

¹²⁶ Iamblichus, *DM* V.11 (214.14-215.5).

human passions and previous incarnations. By this transposition of our center of gravity from the soul-body composite into the subtle aethereal body surrounding us, the personal *daimōn* emerges as our first guide towards the intelligible light of the gods.

Conclusion

The mode of interaction between sensible and intelligible planes of existence constitutes a major background in the metaphysical landscape of *De Mysteriis*. By transposing Porphyry's technical questions into a wider cosmological and metaphysical context, Iamblichus suggests that, through its theurgic discovery and invocation, the personal *daimōn* could provide the necessary guidance in order to liberate humans from the bonds of a material fate. The personal *daimōn* is the principal intermediary entity who undertakes the distribution of human destiny and watches over its fulfilment, while providing at the same time the substantial link to a heavenly god. Therefore, the ritual practitioners who succeed in decrypting the intelligible principles and divine messages which are communicated as riddles by the *daimōn*, may acquire the potential to reconnect with their leader-god and, later on, with the intelligible circuits of Providence. Theurgists could progressively 'sense' their astral destiny personified by the *daimōn* and, eventually, dissipate it by becoming their own *daimonic* double. Thus, in its intelligible dimension, the personal *daimōn* marked a significant turn in the direction of ritual activity, establishing the synchronization of the soul's luminous vehicle with the circular and illuminating emanations of the heavenly gods. Last but not least, concerning the theurgic practice of astrology, Iamblichus is likely to have conceived of it as not confined within the physical world, but rather like a sort of mental bridge, or a cosmic rite of transition, which could facilitate the ascent to the noeric dimension of *Helios* and, ultimately, to the intelligible Light of the Good.

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