

Neoplatonic Demons and Angels

Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition

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Luc Brisson
Seamus O'Neill
Andrei Timotin



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Introduction

According to Sallustius, a Roman statesman and Neoplatonic philosopher, who composed a summary of Neoplatonic thought in the fourth century, “the wider the gap is between our nature and the first God, the more powers must be there between us and Him.”¹ Henri Dominique Saffrey has emphasised that there are two sides to this propensity in Late Neoplatonism: “First of all, the tendency to monotheism, which generates a supreme and first God, but confines it as far away as possible from the grasp of intelligence and human knowledge; this is the unknown god. Correlatively, between this inaccessible God and us, the intermediaries (secondary gods, angels, demons and heroes) multiply, but these are the agents of an ascension towards the first God.”² The intermediaries are theoretically necessary within the Neoplatonic theological system and their *raison d’être* directly ensues from the absolute transcendence of the first principle. A thorough understanding of their nature and function is, therefore, one of the major imperatives for the study of Neoplatonic theology.

This book, which originates from a panel on Demonology and Theurgy organized at the annual ISNS meeting in Lisbon in June 2014, aims to study the place of angels and demons in Neoplatonic thought.³ The topic was chosen not only because their theological significance is undeniable, but also because these beings are mutually dependent within the various Neoplatonic metaphysical systems. This book brings together eleven studies which examine in chronological order the place reserved for angels and demons not only by the main Neoplatonic philosophers (Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus), but also in Gnosticism, the *Chaldaean Oracles*—an essential, though still understudied ingredient in Neoplatonic thought—, Christian Neoplatonism, and especially by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, as well as by other important precursors to Neoplatonic and Christian angelology such as Philo of Alexandria.

1 Sallustius, *On the Gods and the Universe* XIII 26. Trans. Nock (1926).

2 Saffrey (1981), 168 [= (1990), 48]: “d’abord la tendance au monothéisme, qui forge un dieu suprême et premier, mais en le reculant le plus loin possible, hors de la prise de l’intelligence et de la connaissance humaines, c’est le dieu inconnu. Corrélativement, entre ce dieu inaccessible et nous, on multiplie les intermédiaires, dieux secondaires, anges, démons et héros, mais ceux-là sont les agents d’une ascension vers le premier.” See Trouillard (1957), for Proclus as “théoricien des médiations.”

3 We leave aside the Neoplatonic heroes and secondary gods, but we maintain that they certainly deserve more scholarly attention than they have received so far. See however the second contribution of Luc Brisson and the contributions of Helmut Seng and Seamus O’Neill in this volume.

An important reason for studying the notions of “angel” and “demon” together is that they belong both to religious and philosophical vocabularies, although demons admittedly have enjoyed a more prominent philosophical career than have the angels. As a general characterization, one could say that “demon” (δαίμων) designates, in the Greek religion,⁴ a kind of divinity, without specific cult and mythology, distinct from the gods and the heroes, although δαίμων may be often understood as an equivalent term for θεός.⁵ It can refer to fate (μοῖρα), to revenging spirits (Erinyes), or to the souls of the dead. The semantic fluidity of the term is one of the reasons why the notion of the “demon” became an important factor for the philosophical rationalisation of religion, especially in Plato’s dialogues, but already in Pre-Socratic philosophy, and in the Pythagorean and Stoic traditions. Plato defined the “demon” as an essentially good middle-being between gods and humans (*Symposium* 202d–203a), as a personal tutelary being (*Republic* 617d–e, 620d–e, *Phaedo* 107d), or as an equivalent to the divine part of human soul, the νοῦς (*Timaeus* 90a–c).⁶ Plato’s authority and influence were enormous in Middle- and Neoplatonism to such an extent that the philosophical demonologies of Late Antiquity can be analysed as an exegesis of his texts concerning “demons.”⁷

In Neoplatonism, with which this volume deals specifically, this attempt to interpret and explain Plato’s writings about demons is observed first in Plotinus—as shown by the study of Thomas Vidart—, who tries to harmonise, notably in *Ennead* III 4 [15], a series of Platonic references to the demons (especially *Republic* 617d–e and *Timaeus* 90a–c) with the principles of his own philosophy. Plotinus’ demonology is intertwined with his theory of the soul, but Vidart shows the limits of Plotinus’ interest in demons, an attitude significantly different than that of the Later Neoplatonists.

Porphyry seems to have been the first Neoplatonic philosopher to assign demons a specific place within a complex theological system. Luc Brisson accurately defines this place by reconstructing the Porphyrian theology and by highlighting its debt to Plotinus and, of course, to Plato. Porphyry does not hesitate to use the demons to criticize popular religion, but he tried to

4 See Hild (1881); Gernet (1917), 316–321 and 328–329; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1931), I, 362–370; Nilsson (1941), 201–206 and (1950), 199–207; François (1957); Rexine (1985); Suárez de la Torre (2000); Timotin (2012), 13–36.

5 See especially François (1957), 64 n. 2 and 336 n. 3, for statistical lists.

6 On Plato’s views on demons, see Robin (1908) [31964]; Motte (1989), Timotin (2012), 37–84.

7 This is one of the conclusions of the most recent synthesis of Platonic demonology; see Timotin (2012).

make demonology compatible, at least in part, with philosophical religion. Porphyry's mythological exegesis, like that developed in *De Antro Nympharum*, poses nevertheless, specific problems regarding the relationship between the demons and human souls or the gods, and this aspect of Porphyry's thought is explored by Nilufer Ackay. From a different perspective, Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum highlights the importance of astrology (underestimated so far) in Porphyry's thought. Greenbaum shows how Porphyry's astrological concerns have informed a significant part of his approach to different topics like the personal demon, the incarnation of the soul, and its choice of the way of life.

The polemical function of demonology in Neoplatonism is particularly noteworthy in Iamblichus and Proclus, as shown by Seamus O'Neill and Andrei Timotin, who focus on the criticism respectively of Porphyrian demonology by Iamblichus and of Plotinian demonology by Proclus. In Late Neoplatonism, demonology is no longer thought of only in relation to the soul, and the place of demons in the *kosmos* is defined according to a different theological basis. Iamblichus' views on demons are not, however, devoid of ambiguities, as O'Neill shows, especially concerning the respective descriptions of good and evil demons in the *De mysteriis*, and given that Iamblichus denies some of the ontological and psychological grounds to which his predecessors appealed to account for how and why demons can be evil.

By analysing Proclus' criticism of Plotinian demonology, Timotin explains why Proclus does not refer in this context to the doctrine of the undescended soul, on which Plotinus' theory relies, and which Proclus refuted on various occasions. Timotin shows that Proclus' strategy is related to the fundamental change in the reading order of Plato's dialogues introduced by Iamblichus, which, in turn, increased the importance of *Symposium's* demonological passage and, correspondingly, decreased the significance of *Timaeus' locus* equating *daimon* with *νοῦς*.

The new functions that the demons perform in Late Neoplatonism are not unrelated to the influence of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, the "pagan Bible" (the appellation belongs to H.D. Saffrey) of Late Antiquity. Helmut Seng assumes the arduous task of studying the place of demons in this challenging work. He shows that in the *Chaldaean Oracles*, demons appear as evil beings (related to Hecate or to the Moon), which are understood to disturb the theurgical rituals and to keep human beings close to material life. Seng also highlights the mediating function of *συνοχεῖς*, borrowed from the *Symposium*, and raises the question of whether these middle-beings are to be regarded as demons.

In Ancient Greece, the word "angel" (ἄγγελος, which means "messenger") designates either a specific function of gods (especially Hermes) and humans,

or a specific type of divine being, like, for instance, the psychopomps.⁸ The notion had no philosophical career prior to the post-Hellenistic period. This new usage begins only when the angels in Jewish thought are equated with Platonic *daimones*. Philo of Alexandria is probably the first to assimilate the two terms, and thus, he plays an essential role in acclimatizing the notion, borrowed from the Semitic heritage, into Hellenic culture.⁹ The Semitic heritage (especially esoteric Judaism) also inspires the various Gnostic angelologies of Late Antiquity, and to a lesser extent was influenced by Middle- and Neoplatonism, as Madeleine Scopello convincingly shows.

In Late Antiquity, angels become a religious reality in their own right in the Greco-Roman world. They are distinct from their Jewish and Christian parallels, though perhaps not always unconnected to them.¹⁰ During the same time, the philosophical life of the notion continued in the works of authors such as Cornelius Labeo, Nicomachus of Gerasa, Calcidius, and in the *Chaldaean Oracles*. The presence of angels in the *Chaldaean Oracles* is studied by Seng, who analyses their function and their analogical relationship relating to the figure of the theurgist and also questions their relation to the Platonic (good) *daimones*.

Starting with Iamblichus, the angels have a permanent presence in Late Neoplatonic theology.¹¹ Luc Brisson defines their place in Proclus' theological system and their office on the earth through rituals performed by priests who play the role of messengers, making the gods appear to human beings, and transmitting the prayers of human beings to the gods. Ghislain Casas examines Christian Neoplatonic angelology, studying the Neoplatonic heritage in Pseudo-Dionysius' angelology and highlighting the differences between the latter and the angelology of Philo of Alexandria. A comprehensive study of the place of angels in Pseudo-Dionysius' theology is offered by Marilena Vlad.

This book aims to encompass and address a wide spectrum of problems raised by the place of angels and demons in the various Neoplatonic theological systems and in related works, such as the Gnostic texts and the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Without pretending to have exhausted such a wide and complex sub-

8 See Michl (1962).

9 On Philo's angelology, see Dillon (1983), 187–206; Calabi (2004); Timotin (2012), 100–112, and Ghislain Casas' article in this volume.

10 On angels in Late Antique pagan milieus, see Cumont (1915); Guarducci (1939); Pippidi (1949); Michl (1962), 53–60; Sokolowski (1960); Sheppard (1980/1981); Belayche (2010); Cline (2011).

11 The classical study of Cumont (1915) still remains the main reference for the philosophical angelology of Late Antiquity.

ject, we hope that significant progress has been made towards understanding this essential aspect of Neoplatonic metaphysical and religious thought. We would like to extend our thanks to the General Editors, Robert Berchman and John Finamore, for accepting this volume into the series. We would also like to thank the anonymous referee for his or her insightful and helpful comments, which served to improve scholarly quality of the volume.

The Editors

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The *Daimon* and the Choice of Life in Plotinus' Thought

Thomas Vidart*

A whole treatise is devoted by Plotinus to the nature of the *daimon*: it is the fifteenth treatise in the chronological order, entitled, *On our Allotted Daimon*. This treatise has to do with a very particular demonology which is developed out of exegetical concerns: Plotinus aims to account for the different passages that deal with the *daimon* in Plato's work. In particular, according to the myth of Er, the soul has to choose before incarnation a *daimon* which will guide it during its existence: it does not change its demon during its incarnate life. This would imply, if we follow Plotinus' understanding of the nature of the *daimon*, that one has to let the same power prevail in one's soul throughout one's entire existence. How could one keep one's *daimon* during one's entire life if this means that one is deprived of the possibility of moral improvement? The aim of this paper is to show that Plato's statement cannot be accepted by Plotinus because of its consequences. For instance, one could not become wise because becoming wise means making the intellect be dominant in the soul, thereby changing one's *daimon*. Thus, we have to inquire into how it is possible that the soul makes a choice in the course of life itself.

The Nature of the *daimon* according to Plotinus

We first have to explain what the *daimon* is in Plotinus' thought. In a general manner, the *daimones* are characterized by their intermediary situation between the place where men are and the realm of gods. This way of describing the *daimones* is in particular inherited from the *Symposium* (202d–203a), in which Plato maintains that Eros and the other demons are intermediaries between human beings and gods. When he evokes the influence of magical incantations in the Treatise *On Difficulties about the Soul II*, Plotinus explains that the *daimones* are wont to pay attention to prayers made by people living in

* I would like to thank very much Seamus O'Neill who accepted to read over this study and to correct its English.

the sensible world.¹ It is tempting to establish a link between this thesis and the event that Porphyry narrates in his *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books*. He illustrates that Olympius of Alexandria was jealous of Plotinus in an anecdote dealing with the latter's own *daimon*: to explain why the different hostile practices of Olympius of Alexandria failed, Porphyry underlines the fact that Plotinus' soul was outstandingly powerful. In this way, he relates that an Egyptian priest invited Plotinus to come to the Iseion, a temple devoted to Isis in Rome, and succeeded in making Plotinus' *daimon* appear. The latter was in fact a god:

When the *daimon* was summoned to appear a god came and not a being of the *daimon* order, and the Egyptian said, 'Blessed are you, who have a god for your *daimon* and not a companion of the subordinate order.'²

This anecdote suggests that the power of one's soul is the result of the rank of one's *daimon*. According to Porphyry, this event is important since it highlights the reason why Plotinus was interested in the question of the *daimones* and more precisely in the hierarchy between them. He explains that the fact that Plotinus' soul was directed towards his own *daimon*, which was actually a god, may account for his writing the Treatise *On our Allotted Daimon*:

So the companion of Plotinus was a *daimon* of the more god-like kind, and he continually kept the divine eye of his soul fixed on this companion. It was a reason of this kind that led him to write the treatise 'On Our Allotted *Daimon*,' in which he sets out to explain the differences between *daimon*-companions.³

There is a contrast between this anecdote and the ideas that Plotinus develops in the treatise *On our Allotted Deamon*.⁴ We thus have to be cautious when we

1 See Plotinus IV, 4 [28], 43, 12–16.

2 Porphyry, *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books*, 10, 21–25. I use here, as for Plotinus' treatises, A.H. Armstrong's translation, but I render the word δαίμων as "*daimon*" in order to harmonize the study (the title of Treatise 15, which is *On our Allotted Guardian Spirit* in A.H. Armstrong's translation, thus becomes *On our Allotted Daimon*). We can find *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books* written by Porphyry in the first volume.

3 Ibid. 10, 28–33.

4 See on this point Guyot (2003), 335: "Outre que, pour des raisons chronologiques, Porphyre n'a pu assister à cette séance, il s'avère difficile d'accorder beaucoup de crédit à ce récit, dans la mesure où l'anecdote proposée pour rendre compte du traité 15 est contredite, dans sa

study the way in which Plotinus considers the manifestation of *daimones*: that he is interested in the effects of magical incantations does not thereby mean that according to him demons manifest outside the soul as a result of spells.⁵

Plotinus does not discuss *daimones* from the perspective of theurgy, that is to say, the ritual practices that reveal the presence of deities in the world in which human beings live and enable the latter to unite with those deities.⁶ He puts the emphasis on the fact that the *daimon* is to be found within the soul itself. More precisely, the *daimon* is defined in chapter 3 of the Treatise *On our Allotted Daimon* as the part of the soul that is above the one that is active in the human soul:

Who, then, becomes a *daimon*? He who was one here too. And who a god? Certainly he who was one here. For what worked in a man leads him [after death], since it was his ruler and guide here too. Is this, then, 'the *daimon* to whom he was allotted while he lived'? No, but that which is before the working principle; for this presides inactive over the man, but that which comes after it acts. If the working principle is that by which we have sense-perception, the *daimon* is the rational principle; but if we live by the rational principle, the *daimon* is what is above this, presiding inactive and giving its consent to the principle which works. So it is rightly said that 'we shall choose.' For we choose the principle which stands above us according to our choice of life.⁷

We have to notice a shift in this text: the first question concerns the kind of beings who can become *daimones* through reincarnation, and when he defines the demon that is mentioned in the *Phaedo* (107d6–7), Plotinus refers to the one that each human being has. The *daimon* is not a particular power of the soul: its identity depends on the power of the soul that is the most active.⁸

possibilité même, par les thèses de ce traité". He shows in particular that the *daimon* is considered to be a part of the soul, which means that it cannot appear, and that the *daimon* of the wise man, which is the One itself, cannot be seen in a sensible way at all.

5 See Brisson (1993) and (2009).

6 We have in this way to underline the difference between Plotinus and Iamblichus (see the *De mysteriis*).

7 Plotinus III, 4 [15], 3, 1–10.

8 Timotin (2012), 295 underlines this point: "Dans cette perspective, la notion de δαίμων ne désigne plus une réalité spécifique, mais un rapport de subordination, elle est une notion relative, sans contenu préétabli".

According to Plotinus, a hierarchy between the different kinds of life corresponds to the hierarchy between the different parts of the soul. Indeed, the kind of life that one has depends on the part of the soul that dominates and therefore on the position of the *daimon* in the soul.

The *daimon* thus appears as a psychological function: it is described as a power of the soul which stands just above the active power in the soul. It is not itself active, but it is dominating the power that is active. There is indeed a hierarchy between the different powers of the soul: the rational principle is, for instance, above sense-perception. What is the role of the *daimon*, if it is not active? It is the guide of our existence: it agrees with the power that we have chosen, but it also shows the way that has to be followed. Indeed, it leads us to adopt the kind of life that is just above the kind of life adopted at the present time.

In the following lines of chapter 3, Plotinus opposes the wicked man to the one who is good. The latter is able to coincide with the life of the *daimon* which is located above the active part of his soul:

But if a man is able to follow the *daimon* which is above him, he comes to be himself above, living that *daimon's* life, and giving the pre-eminence to that better part of himself to which he is being led; and after that *daimon* he rises to another, until he reaches the heights.⁹

The good man thus does not keep the same *daimon*: he has in fact successively several ones. Plotinus insists that the soul's many different powers account for the different ways of life that people adopt. To make a choice means that the soul pays attention either to the sensible world or to the intelligible one, since the human being holds a position intermediate between them. In this way, the *daimon* is not allotted to the soul from the outside: its allotment depends on the world which is chosen by each soul.¹⁰ This conception holds human beings liable for the choices that they make.

9 Plotinus III, 4 [15], 3, 18–20.

10 We have to point out the contrast between the title of Treatise 15 (*On our Allotted Daimon*: Plotinus uses a similar expression in chapter 3, 3–4), which comes from a way of speaking that we find in the *Phaedo* (107d6–7), and the idea of a choice made by the soul: it appears that the attribution of a *daimon* is not imposed, since the soul itself chooses its *daimon*.

The Responsibility of Each Soul for Its Choice of Life

The choice of a kind of life implies the responsibility of the one who chooses. According to the myth of Er, which can be found in book x of the *Republic*, the different souls choose before their reincarnation the new kind of life they are going to experience. The myth sets out what Er has observed concerning the path followed by souls separated from the bodies after death. As he himself died in the battle, Er could accompany the souls of the dead, but he has been allowed to come back to life. What interests us in this myth deals with the step that precedes the reincarnation of the soul: Plato underscores the fact that each soul has to choose a *daimon* which will accompany it during its new life until its next reincarnation, one thousand and one hundred years later. There are, more precisely, two different stages: first, each soul receives a lot which gives it a rank to make the choice, and next, the soul has to make the choice itself. Plato thus stresses that each soul chooses its kind of existence and therefore is responsible for the life it will have, as we can see when we read the speech of the one who is presented as a kind of interpreter of the Fates:

The word of the maiden Lachesis, daughter of Necessity. Souls of a day, this is the beginning of another round of mortal kind that ends in death. No *daimon* will select you by lot, but you will be the one to choose a *daimon*. Let the one who draws the first lot be the first to choose a life to which he will adhere of necessity. But virtue has no master; by honoring or dishonoring it, each will have a greater or lesser share of it. The responsibility is the chooser's; god is not to be blamed.¹¹

The *daimon* is chosen, and its assignment is not the result of fate.¹² It is even the case for the soul that chooses last: it has the opportunity to make a choice which will be advantageous for it since there are more samples of lives than souls. Among the different samples of lives, one can find lives of human beings

11 Plato, *Republic*, x, 617d6–e5. I render δαίμων as “*daimon*” instead of “divine spirit”.

12 This conception of the *daimon* contrasts with the previous representation of it. See on this subject the study of Aubry (2008) who maintains that the idea of an inner *daimon* is to be found before Plotinus' treatises and highlights how it evolved. She underlines the change that occurs with the myth of Er: “Platon, ici, inverse la signification cosmologique du démon. Car celui-ci est choisi et, le texte est insistant, ‘la responsabilité revient à qui choisit; le dieu, lui, n’est pas responsable’ (617e5). Le démon dès lors n’est plus en l’individu la part subie, le lot hérité, l’intériorité comme contrainte, mais au contraire l’objet du choix” (262).

and lives of animals. After the choice of a kind of life, each soul is allotted a *daimon*, which will guide it during the new life. As a result, when one chooses a life, one chooses a *daimon*. When the souls choose their future life, they are supervised by the Fates and especially by Lachesis. But the latter does not impose the different *daimones* on the souls that are present. She only grants to each soul the *daimon* that it has chosen:

So when all the souls had chosen their lives, according to the draw they approached Lachesis in order and she gave each the *daimon* they had chosen to escort them as protector through their lives and as fulfiller of their choices.¹³

The *daimon* appears in this way as a guide and associate of a soul.¹⁴ The choice that each soul makes is in tune with the kind of life that has been experienced during the previous existence. But according to the myth of Er, the choice is made only once, and it determines the whole life. We have to notice that the choice made by the soul can lead it to become more virtuous or less so: its moral characteristics depend on the sample of life that has been chosen. Moreover, the one who succeeds in being virtuous is happy. In agreement with Plato's description of the conditions of reincarnation in book x of the *Republic* (617d–e), Plotinus underlines that the soul chooses its *daimon*, and thus its kind of life. Moreover, he agrees with the idea that virtue has no master.¹⁵ When he discusses the change of *daimon* that occurs when one dies, he also seems to consider that the same demon accompanies the soul during its entire life:

It is not possible for the principle which led the man in life to lead [after death], but only before, when the man lived; when he ceases to live the principle must hand over its activity to another, since he has died in the life which corresponded to that *daimon's* activity.¹⁶

But in order to be more or less virtuous, one has to change one's *daimon*: the moral change implies the possibility of changing one's demon. In this respect,

13 Plato, *Republic*, x, 620d6–e1. I use the word “*daimon*” instead of “spirit”.

14 The view that the god has allotted to everyone a *daimon* is defended by Plato in the *Timaeus* (90a).

15 Plotinus quotes the statement of the *Republic* (x, 617e3) in IV, 4 [28], 39, 2, VI, 8 [39], 5, 31, and II, 3 [52], 9, 17.

16 Plotinus III, 4 [15], 3, 10–13.

there seems to be a conflict between Plotinus' conception and the myth of Er: according to the myth, the choice made by the soul determines the entire future existence. Plotinus understands Plato's thought in this way since he maintains in chapter 5 of the treatise, *On our Allotted Daimon*, that according to Plato the soul keeps the same *daimon*:

But if the soul's purpose is decisive, and that part of it dominates which lies ready to hand as the result of its previous lives, the body is no longer responsible for any evil which may affect the man. For if the soul's character exists before the body, and has what it chose, and, Plato says, does not change its *daimon*, then the good man does not come into existence here below, and neither does the worthless one.¹⁷

The thesis that the *daimon* does not change during life, which is defended by Plato, makes moral change impossible according to Plotinus.

The Change of the Individual *Daimon* Appears to be Moral Necessity

The choice that the soul makes has two different aspects which are strongly connected with each other: we choose at the same time our *daimon* and our life, or rather, we choose our *daimon* because we choose our life. It has to be noticed that the platonic idea of a choice made by the soul is deeply modified. There is indeed a choice, but this choice is not made by the soul before its reincarnation: it is made in our life itself when we let one of the powers of our soul be active. For instance, if we make the rational principle active, we choose our life, which is the rational one, and therefore we choose the *daimon*, since it stands above the active power. But this is a choice that comes second and not first, in so far as we choose what power is active in the soul and not the one which stands above. Plotinus' interpretation of the myth of Er puts the emphasis on the preliminary choice (προαίρεσις): in chapter 5 of Treatise 15, the choice (αἴρεσις) evoked in the myth of Er is defined by Plotinus as a preliminary choice (προαίρεσις).¹⁸ We have perhaps to understand that this choice is made before

17 Plotinus III, 4 [15], 5, 4–9.

18 See Plotinus III, 4 [15], 5, 2–4: "Ἡ καὶ ἡ αἴρεσις ἐκεῖ ἢ λεγομένη τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς προαίρεσιν καὶ διάθεσιν καθόλου καὶ πανταχοῦ αἰνίττεται. A.H. Armstrong translates this passage in this way: "The choice in the other world which Plato speaks of is really a riddling representation of

the other ones, but most importantly, this word refers to a moral tradition. Plotinus borrows the term *προαίρεσις* from Aristotle and from the Stoics.¹⁹ According to the latter, the preliminary choice is the tendency that precedes the different actions and gives them their moral signification. In order to have moral signification, our actions thus have to be explained by a preliminary choice, and not by a lot that is imposed. Things depending on chance do not have any influence on preliminary choice. If one is to be responsible for one's life, one has to make a preliminary choice of one's life. One must therefore have the opportunity to follow one *daimon* and then another one in order to get wiser. One has indeed to change one's life, as explained in the treatise *On Virtues*:

Perhaps the possessor of the virtues will know them, and how much he can get from them, and will act according to some of them as circumstances require. But when he reaches higher principles and different measures he will act according to these. For instance, he will not make self-control consist in that former observance of measure and limit, but will altogether separate himself, as far as possible, from his lower nature and will not live the life of the good man which civic virtue requires. He will leave that behind, and choose another, the life of the gods: for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like. Likeness to good men is the

the soul's universal and permanent purpose and disposition." As Plotinus seems to evoke the soul in a general manner and not only the soul of the world, I consider *καθόλου* and *πανταχοῦ* to be adverbs which apply to the verb *αἰνίττεται*. That is why I propose the following translation: "Otherwise what is called the choice made there refers in riddles, generally and absolutely, to the preliminary choice and to the disposition of the soul." We have to notice that the word *ἐκεῖ* ("there"), which we can find both in the question and in the answer, does not refer, as it often does in Plotinus' work, to the intelligible world, but to the place where the different souls choose their lot according to the myth of Er.

- 19 This notion plays a very important role in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (book III) of Aristotle: he distinguishes in particular the preliminary choice (*προαίρεσις*) that concerns the means and the wish (*βούλησις*) which is directed at the aim (see chapter 4). Epictetus also often refers to the preliminary choice in the *Discourses*: for instance, he grounds freedom in the preliminary choice (see *Discourses* I, 12, 9–10). On the meaning of the preliminary choice in the works of the Neoplatonists and also in those of Aristotle and the Stoics (especially Epictetus), see Rist (1975). The difference between Aristotle's conception and Epictetus' is presented in this way: "In Aristotle a *prohairesis* is an act of choosing, while in Epictetus it is the state of having chosen in the moral area, that is, of having become moral or immoral" (106). On Plotinus' understanding of the preliminary choice with regard to Aristotle and to the Stoics, see in particular 107–109.

likeness of two pictures of the same subject to each other; but likeness to the gods is likeness to the model, a being of a different kind to ourselves.²⁰

Plotinus highlights in this text the way the wise man (*σπουδαῖος*) lives. Even if those who have the civic virtues become similar to gods, the latter are themselves beyond these civic virtues. The wise man has therefore to reach a kind of life that is higher. He does not only have to improve his life: he has to change his life, that is to say, to leave the life that he has and to adopt a new one, the life of gods themselves, which is above the life corresponding to the civic virtues. This implies that the soul has to adopt a new life, the life of the Intellect. In this way, Plotinus appropriates the precept presented by Plato in the *Theaetetus* (176a–b) according to which one has to escape and to be similar to the god.

There must be a mobility in existence that enables the human being to favour a specific part of his soul and therefore a particular kind of life. The soul has to be able to make a choice in the course of life itself. Plotinus seems to preserve the power of the soul to choose its kind of life and therefore to change its *daimon*, which is underlined in chapter 7 of the treatise *On Love*. We can find in this chapter and the following ones Plotinus's reading of the myth dealing with the birth of Eros that can be found in the *Symposium* (203a–204c). When he studies the link between Eros and the other *daimones*, Plotinus underlines the fact that the characteristics of Eros, and especially the insatiable desire, enable us to conceive the identity of the demons:

But one must consider that the whole race of *daimones* is like this and comes from parents of this kind; for every *daimon* is able to provide himself with that to which he is ordered, and impelled by desire for it, and akin to Love in this way too, and is like him, too, in not being satisfied but impelled by desire for one of the partial things which he regards as goods. For this reason we must consider, too, that the love which good men in this world have is a love for that which is simply and really good, not just any kind of love; but that those who are ordered under other *daimones* are ordered under different ones at different times, leaving their love of the simply good inoperative, but acting under the control of other *daimones*, whom they chose according to the corresponding part of that which is active in them, the soul.²¹

20 Plotinus I, 2 [19], 7, 19–30.

21 Plotinus III, 5 [50], 7, 26–36.

Plenty and Poverty are the parents of Love and the other *daimones*. This parentage accounts for the fact that the *daimones* are, as is Eros himself, at the same time ingenious and deficient. We can find in this text an opposition between good men who love the good itself and people who follow one *daimon* and then another one: good men act in agreement with Eros whereas the others do not follow only one demon.²² They choose their *daimon*: we can find here the idea of choice, which comes from the myth of Er, but Plotinus appropriates this idea since the choice depends on the part of the soul that is active. How can we explain that good men only follow one *daimon*? It is implicit that change is not necessary since one has reached one of the highest levels. According to Plotinus, love and true things are indeed linked since the object of love is the intelligible realm: “hence our love is of simple realities, for so are our thoughts.”²³ The other people follow one *daimon* and then another because they only desire particular things. Good men do not have to be guided by various *daimones* because the change has been made before: they have indeed chosen to live the life of the Intellect.

The soul’s choice of one life rather than another is not only, according to Plotinus, the stage that precedes its reincarnation, but it is also the condition that enables it to become moral. In particular, this choice is necessary for the one who wants to reach happiness, since Plotinus maintains in the treatise *On Well-Being* that the latter consists in adopting the life of the Intellect, which is characterized by its perfection:

If then man can have the perfect life, the man who has this life is well off. If not, one would have to attribute well-being to the gods, if among them alone this kind of life is to be found. But since we maintain that this well-being is to be found among men we must consider how it is so. What I mean is this; it is obvious from what has been said elsewhere that man has perfect life by having not only sense-life but reasoning and true intelligence.²⁴

22 We do not have to do with people who have evil desires since they are discussed in the following lines: “But those who are impelled by desire for evil things have fettered all the loves in them with the evil passions that have grown up in their souls, just as they have fettered their right reason, which is inborn in them, with the evil opinions which have grown upon them” (lines 36–39).

23 Plotinus III, 5 [50], 7, 55–56.

24 Plotinus I, 4 [46], 4, 1–8.

Plotinus explains that a hierarchy has to be found between the different kinds of life, and the perfect life is described as a life characterized by its brightness. One adopts the perfect life, which is the life of the Intellect, or rather, one becomes this life itself, in so far as one's own intellect is not separate from the Intellect as principle. Such a thesis implies that one's life does not coincide at once with the perfect life of the Intellect, and therefore that the *daimon* is not from the beginning of existence situated above the Intellect. Only the soul of the wise man possesses this configuration.

Indeed, he is characterized by his ability to make the intellect dominate his entire soul. In the last chapter of the Treatise *On our Allotted Daimon*, Plotinus underlines the fact that in order to be wise, one has to make the best part of one's soul, that is to say the intellect, be active. If the intellect is active, the *daimon* necessarily is to be found at the level of the One. But how can the *daimon* stand at the level of the first principle, which is simple in an absolute manner? The answer consists in maintaining that the *daimon* is not different from the One, the intellect, the rational principle and so on ... In other words, the *daimon* is not located at the level of the power that is above the active power in the soul, rather, it *is* the power that is above the active power in the soul.

This leads us to conclude that Plotinus does not seem to give great importance to the existence of the *daimon*: he only tries to harmonize his own doctrine with the myth of Er and other passages of Plato's work dealing with the demons. But he has then to face a problem: if the *daimon* is chosen once before incarnation, moral improvement is not possible since the demon is, in his doctrine, the power of the soul that is above the one which is active. The *daimon* is only a psychological function. As a result, it cannot move from a power to another one, and the soul has to change the *daimon* it follows. The thesis that the *daimon* changes during life is deeply called into question by Proclus. In his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* (75–76), he criticizes the identification of the *daimon* with the principle that directs in the soul or with the aspect of the soul that dominates the active power in the soul. In this last option we recognize the thesis defended by Plotinus.²⁵ According to Proclus, this idea has to be dismissed because its consequences are absurd: a change in the soul would imply a change of the *daimon* itself. Proclus does not accept that the activity of a new faculty in the soul could lead a new *daimon* to take the place of the present one. He maintains indeed that only one *daimon* is allotted to a person during his entire existence.

25 See Andrei Timotin's contribution in this volume.

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The Angels in Ancient Gnosis: Some Cases

Madeleine Scopello

Ancient Gnosis has given much attention to angels, as evidenced by both the excerpts transmitted by the heresiologists and the first-hand sources preserved in Coptic. In my opinion, Gnostic angelology constitutes a sort of canvas on which metaphysical, cosmological, and anthropogonic themes have been grafted. The reflection on the angels is closely intertwined with the founding theme of Gnosis, which dissociates an inferior creator and enemy of mankind from a perfectly good and transcendent god, who is the source of knowledge. Both are accompanied by angels: evil angels surround the creator, and good angels, the transcendent God.

The creator, the demiurge, identified in several systems with the god of the Bible, shapes the cosmos in order to imprison man and make him his slave, depriving him of the spark of knowledge which the transcendent God had provided him. In his creative act, this ignorant and incapable god is assisted by entities often qualified in the texts by the term “angel.” In several Gnostic systems, creation is also attributed to angels acting collectively. These angels, who are co-responsible, or even responsible for creation, can also be characterized by the term “demon” (δαίμων), or by the more technical Gnostic term “archon” (Greek ἄρχων, Latin *princeps*, Coptic ἈΡΧΩΝ). These (bad) angels also produce the body of man, likened to a dark jail wherein the spark of light that he possesses is stifled and extinguished. Other functions are exercised by the associate angels of the demiurge: they govern the cosmos and are the merciless guardians of the spheres who strive to block the Gnostic on the road to his heavenly abode.

As for the transcendent God, the Unknowable, towards whom those who have revived in themselves the cognitive spark try to return, he is also surrounded by angels. They form his heavenly court and honour him with a perpetual worship. But the angels can also act as intermediaries to lead the man who aspires to knowledge to the One; they instruct and support him in mystical experiences, most often throughout his journey to heaven: they are the agents of revelation. In addition, the enunciation and invocation of angelic names foster mystical experience and help to attain the celestial mysteries.

Within the limits of this article I will provide an overview of Gnostic angelology, using both the heresiological sources and the first-hand documentation preserved in Coptic. We shall first examine the function of the angels in their

relation to a defective demiurgy and, in a second stage, the various roles of the angels in the wake of the transcendent God.

Let us remind that the texts preserved in the codices found in Egypt—the codex Askew,¹ the codex Bruce,² the Berlin codex,³ the Nag Hammadi codices,⁴ and the codex Tchacos⁵—were translated from Greek into Coptic towards the middle of the 4th century. The lost Greek texts had been composed by anonymous Gnostic authors between the middle of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century, which situates them at about the same period as the refutations of the Fathers of the Church. The only treatises that were probably written later in Greek at the end of the 3rd or even the beginning of the 4th century, and which are therefore closer in time to their Coptic translation, are those transmitted by the codex Bruce and the codex Askew.

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- 1 This codex, on parchment, was bought by Antoninus Askew in London, from an antique dealer in 1750. It is preserved in the British Museum (British Library Additional 5114). It contains a treatise of 178 leaves (356 pages) usually designated by the (modern) title of *Pistis Sophia*. See Schmidt—MacDermot 1978a.
 - 2 This codex, on papyrus (in total 78 leaves = 156 pages), was purchased by the Scottish traveller James Bruce in 1773 near Thebes. It is kept at the Bodleian Library (Bruce Mss. 96). It contains two esoteric treatises: the two *Books of Jeu*, which form a single set, and a treatise commonly called the *Untitled Text*. See Amélineau 1882; Schmidt—MacDermot 1978b; new edition by Crégheur 2018. See also Evans 2015.
 - 3 Purchased in 1896 in Ahmim from an antique dealer by the German philologist Carl Reinhardt, and subsequently identified as Gnostic by the coptologist Carl Schmidt, this codex was acquired by the Berlin Museum of Egyptology (Berlinensis 8502). It contains four treatises: the *Gospel of Mary (Magdalene)*, the *Apocryphon of John*, *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, and the *Act of Peter*. See Tardieu 1984.
 - 4 A complete translation of the first-hand Gnostic Coptic texts discovered in 1945 in Upper Egypt at Nag Hammadi was established by Robinson—Smith 1988. See also Robinson 2000 and the new translation by Meyer 2007. In French, we refer to the work of the French-Canadian team working on the texts of Nag Hammadi (Université Laval): *Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi*, Section “Textes”, Québec (36 volumes published in the series *Textes concordances*); Mahé—Poirier 2007 (2012), with the contribution of the members of the team *Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi*. In German, see Schenke, Bethge, Kaiser 2001, 2003.
 - 5 This codex, found in 1980 in the region of al-Minya, was made available to specialists in 2006. See Kasser et al. 2007.

The Angels in the Sphere of Demiurgy

To illustrate this fundamental theme of the Gnostic doctrine, I will present, by way of example, the theories of some teachers and Gnostic groups mentioned by the heresiologist Irenæus of Lyons,⁶ and by the primary documentation, notably the Nag Hammadi texts.

The Angels in the Gnostic Systems Known by Heresiology

The theme of the activity of the angels in demiurgy is well illustrated by three teachers whom Irenæus of Lyons considers to be the first representatives of the Gnostic doctrine in his work *Against Heresies: Detection and Refutation of the So-Called Gnosis*,⁷ composed about 180. These teachers are Simon of Samaria, Menander, also a Samaritan, and Saturnine of Antioch.

Before considering their systems, it is worth recalling how Irenæus constructed his work. The Bishop of Lyons first gives a general overview of the most well-known Gnostic teachers, taking as his point of departure those who were his contemporaries—notably the Valentinians—and then goes back to the origins of the doctrine. He thereby sets up a kind of heresiological genealogy, albeit an artificial one, in order to emphasize, on the one hand, the lack of originality of thinkers who are only deemed to repeat the theories of their predecessors by making some “innovations,” and on the other hand, to put this heretical path in opposition to the apostolic succession, the sole depository of truth: one Creator God, Incarnate Son, Holy Spirit.⁸ Simon, Menander, and Saturnine are all of Jewish origin, and have in common an extremely polemical exegetical reading of the Bible and in particular of the Genesis narrative.

6 Let us mention for the record the other main heresiological works: the *Elenchos* of the pseudo-Hippolytus (beginning of the 3rd century); the *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis (315–403); various treatises of Tertullian of Carthage (160?–220), concerning especially the Valentinians; the numerous excerpts of Gnostic teachers refuted by Clement of Alexandria (150–216); the refutation by Origen (185–254) of a part of the commentary of the Gnostic Heracleon on the Gospel of John.

7 Rousseau—Doutreleau 1979 (book I–II); 1965 (book IV); 1969 (book V). Cf. Rousseau 1984; Irenæus of Lyons 2010. I use the abbreviation AdvHaer (*Adversus Haereses*).

8 This is what Irenæus calls the “Rule of truth,” which the Gnostics do not respect: “For us, we keep the rule of truth, according to which there exists one Almighty God who created everything by his Word, has organized everything and has made all things so that they are” (AdvHaer I, 22, 1). Cf. *ibid.*, I, 9, 4.

In the section dedicated to Simon of Samaria, the so-called Magician,⁹ who lived in the time of the Apostles,¹⁰ Irenaeus relates that Simon identified himself with the supreme Power. Having rescued in Tyros, in Phoenicia, a prostitute named Helen, he claimed that she was his first Thought (*Ennoia*), the mother of all things, from whom he originally got the idea to make the angels and archangels (*angelos et archangelos*). Now *Ennoia* had descended to the lower places and had given birth to the angels and powers (*angelos et potestates*) who later created the world. But these entities were jealous of their mother and subjected her to all kinds of outrages so that she would not go back to her Father. They also enclosed her in a female body and subdued her to the cycle of transmigrations.¹¹ Simon then intervened to deliver her and to provide humans with knowledge of himself. His purpose was to correct things: the angels were badly governing the world, for each of them wanted full command over it.¹² Here we find a trace of the Jewish conception of the angels of the Nations: God had kept Israel for himself, and gave a nation to each angel. Manlio Simonetti underlined the Jewish origin of this theme (cf. for instance, *Daniel* 10:13ss, *Jubilees* 15, 31ss, and *1 Enoch* 89, 51ss) which Gnostic thinkers resume by charging it with a more negative tonality.¹³ The theme of the angels of the Nations is also to be found in Basilides. Simon further asserts that these angels who created the world had also inspired the Prophets. The humans were made slaves by the observance of the precepts established by the angels.¹⁴

In the few lines that Irenaeus dedicates to Menander (c. 80 CE),¹⁵ presented as Simon's successor, the emphasis is also on the role played by angels in creation. Being a magician like his teacher, Menander posits the existence of a first Power (*Virtus*) unknown to all and presents himself as the Saviour sent from the invisible places for the salvation of humans. The angels, he says, created the world after being emanated by Thought (*ab Ennoia emissos*). Through the magic he practiced, Menander asserted that he communicated a knowledge capable of defeating the demiurgical angels.

Irenaeus then presents Saturnine¹⁶ and puts him in the wake of Simon and Menander. Originally from Antioch, Saturnine founded a school of thought

9 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 23, 1–3.

10 Cf. *Acts of the Apostles* 8.

11 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 23, 2.

12 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 23, 3.

13 Simonetti 1970, p. 7, note 8. See also Daniélou 1951.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 23, 5.

16 *Ibid.* I, 24, 1–2.

in the first half of the 2nd century. The place of angels in creation is the leitmotiv of his doctrine. According to Saturnine, the unknowable Father made angels, archangels, virtues, and powers (*angelos, archangelos, virtutes, potestates*). The world and all that it contains were made by seven of these angels, and man is also *factura angelorum*. Saturnine develops an exegesis of *Genesis* 1:26, which highlights the incapability of the angels: a resplendent image of the supreme Power appeared to them, but they could not hold it back, for this image had immediately ascended to the heights. The angels exhorted one another, saying, "Let us make a man according to the image and to the likeness!" (*Genesis* 1:26). But, because of their incapability (*imbecillitas*), the work they had shaped (*plasma*) could not stand up, but it squirmed like a worm. Moved by pity, the Power from above sent a spark of life that raised man and made it alive. After death, this spark of life ascends alone to that to which it is akin, while the rest from which man was made dissolves.¹⁷ This polemical explanation of the Genesis narrative is a leitmotiv of Gnostic thought, and appears in several sources under much amplified and elaborated forms. Saturnine also maintains that the god of the Jews is one of the angels.¹⁸

At this stage of the doctrine, creation is still the collective work of the angels,¹⁹ and the figure of the demiurge, the biblical god, is not clearly distinguishable as the main artisan of creation. It is in the presentation of the doctrine of Basilides that the character of a single creator begins to appear. Moreover, the terms "angel" and "archon" are almost interchangeable. Let us also note that with Basilides, the founder of a school in Alexandria and active between 120 and 150 CE,²⁰ we leave the territory of the very first thinkers, anchored in Samaritan Judaism (Simon and Menander) and Antioch (Saturnine), to penetrate into multicultural Egypt, where Gnosis had developed and flourished. Basilides proclaimed that his doctrine came from a secret tradition dating back to the apostle Matthias.²¹

17 Ibid. I, 24, 1.

18 Ibid. I, 24, 2.

19 The Gnostics could find in Judaism elements about the demiurgical angels which they reinterpreted in a polemical way. See Simonetti 1970, 9, note 15, quoting the article of Grant 1967.

20 This information comes from Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* VII 106, 4), according to whom Basilides taught in Alexandria in the time of Hadrian (117–138), and Antoninus Pius (138–161).

21 Cf. Hippolytus, *Elenchos* VII, 20, 1–5.

If one keeps to the report of Irenaeus,²² the presence of the angels in the system of Basilides is of foremost importance. Virtues, archons, and angels (*virtutes, principes, angelos*) are born of the union between Power and Wisdom and are called “the first ones” because they made the first heaven. From these, other angels came into existence by way of emanation, who made a second heaven similar to the first, and so on, down to the constitution—through a process of degradation (*ab derivazione*)—of successive series of archons and angels and 365 heavens.²³ At the end of the section devoted to Basilides,²⁴ Irenaeus mentions that “the Basilidians determine the position of the heavens in the same way as the astrologers: by borrowing their principles, they adapt them to the proper character of their doctrine.” Here we find a recurring motif in Irenaeus and, more generally, among heresiologists who accuse the Gnostics of taking up, in various fields—from the Bible to philosophy or astrology—already existing theories which they shamelessly adapt to their needs. Irenaeus, in this passage, adds that “the chief of heaven is Abrasax, and that is why he possesses the number 365.”²⁵ The name Abrasax (or Abraxas), whose secret numerical value is the number 365, also appears in some treatises of Nag Hammadi²⁶ and in the magical literature.²⁷

Basilides also asserts that “the angels who occupy the lower heaven, which we see, have done all that is in the world, and have divided between them the earth and the nations that are in it.”²⁸ It is at this point in the mythical narration that the presence of a chief of the angels is mentioned: “Their leader is he who passes for being the god of the Jews.”²⁹ As he had wished to subdue the other nations to his own people (the Jews), the other nations and other archons stood up and waged war against him. Faced with this situation and seeing the perversity of the archons, the unbegotten Father sent the Intellect, his first-born Son, Christ, to release those who believed in him from the power of the creators of the world. Basilides further maintains that the prophecies of the Old Testament originate from the world’s archons, but that it is from their leader that the Law comes.³⁰ According to the testimony of Irenaeus, the

22 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 24, 3–7.

23 *Ibid.* I, 24, 3.

24 *Ibid.* I, 24, 7.

25 *Ibid.*

26 See the Index (by E. Crégheur) at “Abrasax”, in Mahé—Poirier 2007 (2012).

27 Barb 1957.

28 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 24, 4.

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.* I, 24, 5.

disciples of Basilides perpetuate their teacher's interest in angels. In fact, they invent names which they claim to be those of the angels, by classifying them heaven by heaven: "they endeavour to present the names of the archons, angels, and virtues of their so-called 365 heavens."³¹ According to them, the knowledge of the angels and their primary causes would enable those who possess this Gnosis to make themselves invisible and elusive before angels and powers.

Irenaeus later examines the theories of Carpocrates³² who taught in Alexandria during the first half of the 2nd century. His teaching reached Rome, carried there by his disciple Marcellina,³³ at the time of Anicet (about 154). The starting point of the doctrine of Carpocrates is also constituted by the demiurgical activity of the angels; largely inferior to the ungenerated Father, they created the world and what it contains. These *κοσμοποιοί*, who are also defined by the term 'archon', hinder the rise of Jesus to the Father as well as that of souls.³⁴ But souls can redeem themselves if they despise these entities. The Carpocratians claim that they can already dominate the archons and the creators of the world by magic techniques.³⁵ As for the devil, the Adversary, he is one of the angels in the world.³⁶ He was created to lead the souls of the dying towards the Archon, who is the first author of the world. This archon delivers the souls to another angel, who is the guardian of the sky, that he may shut them up in other bodies, for, according to the Carpocratians, the body is a prison.

While nothing is said about angels or archons in the passages that Irenaeus devotes to Cerinthus, the Ebionites, the Nicolaites, Cerdon, and Marcion,³⁷ such is not the case for the *sectae* which Irenaeus examines later. The Barbeloites³⁸ affirm that the First archon,³⁹ author of the universe, having carried a part of the power of his mother Wisdom, and having moved to inferior places,

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid. I, 25, 1–6, and also Hippolytus, *Elenchos* VII, 32, a faithful reprise of the text of Irenaeus in its Greek original form. AdvHaer I, 1–2 presents the theories of Carpocrates, the next part concerns his followers.

33 On Marcellina, cf. Scopello 2015, 218–221.

34 Irenaeus, AdvHaer I, 25, 1–2.

35 Ibid. I, 25, 3.

36 Ibid. I, 25, 4.

37 Ibid. I, 26–27.

38 Ibid. I, 29, 1–4. In this system there are also angels *in bonam partem*.

39 The acts and gestures of the Protarchon are described in AdvHaer I 29, 4.

made the firmament in which he lives. Being himself Ignorance, he made powers and angels, as well as firmaments and earthly things, and in joining with Presumption (Authadia), he also produced negative entities: Wickedness, Jealousy, Envy, Discord, and Desire (Zelum, Phthonum, Erin, and Epithymian). When his mother finally departed from him, saddened by his son's actions, the First Archon saw himself as the only God, which is why he said: "I am a jealous God, and apart from me it is not God" (*Exodus* 20:5, *Isaiah* 45:5–6, 46:9).⁴⁰ This expression has often been interpreted in Gnostic milieus,⁴¹ in contexts characterised by a very negative image of the creator, identified with the biblical God.

As for the Ophites, to whom Irenaeus devotes a long section,⁴² the terms of 'angel,' 'heaven,' 'power,' and 'creator' are allotted to the seven sons of the Mother.⁴³ The first of them is called Yaldabaoth.⁴⁴ This name also appears in the primary sources in which the character enjoyed some popularity. The etymology of Yaldabaoth is uncertain: the meanings, "begetter of powers" (Heb. yāld + (s)aba'oth)⁴⁵ and "son of shame" (Heb. Behūthā)⁴⁶ have been proposed. Yaldabaoth is surrounded by a hebdomade that governs the things of heaven and earth. Likewise, angels, archangels, virtues, powers, and dominions were made by Yaldabaoth. But as soon as these entities came into existence, they rose against their creator claiming the first place.⁴⁷ The myth continues with a series of episodes. Let us mention the episode based on *Exodus* 20:5,⁴⁸ where Yaldabaoth proclaims his authority and encourages the powers collectively to create the First Man: "Come, let us make a man according to the image" (cf. *Genesis* 1:26). Thus, six powers convened and shaped a man of prodigious length and breadth, who, however, wriggles like a worm (*scarizante autem eo tantum*). Only an intervention from above can straighten it out.⁴⁹ This last theme was already present in Saturnine. In this passage one could find the echo of the speculations

40 The theme of the blasphemy of the archon was dealt with by Johnston 2010.

41 For the attestations of these quotations in the texts of Nag Hammadi, see Evans—Webb—Wiebe 1993.

42 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 30, 1–14.

43 *Ibid.* I, 30, 4.

44 *Ibid.* I, 30, 5.

45 Cf. Scholem 1974.

46 Black 1983. On these etymologies, see Poirier 2006, 257–259.

47 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 30, 5.

48 *Ibid.* I, 30, 6.

49 *Ibid.*

of mystical Judaism on the cosmic size of the First Man,⁵⁰ which are grafted on those of the incommensurable dimensions of God (*Shiur' Qomah*, “the measure of stature”).

Angels and Demiurge in Nag Hammadi Texts

The theme of the role of angels *in malam partem* in demiurgy is also widely discussed in the writings of Nag Hammadi, where a number of mythic large-scale frescoes depicting creation have been preserved: the *Apocryphon of John* (NH II, 1; III, 1; IV, 1; BG 2), the *Hypostasis of the Archons* (NH II, 4),⁵¹ and the treatise *On the Origins of the World* (II, 5).⁵²

We will take as an example the case of the *Apocryphon of John*. Let us first mention that the term “angel” is present about 150 times in the collection of Nag Hammadi, and that it appears in 23 treatises (the collection contains 53). It is rendered without exception by the Greek ἄγγελος, transcribed in Coptic. As in the Gnostic excerpts preserved by heresiologists, the term “angel” is applied either to the evil entities associated with the act of creation or to the positive entities of the higher world. In the narratives of creation, the terms “angel” and “archon” are interchangeable.⁵³

The Apocryphon of John

The *Apocryphon of John*⁵⁴ is one of the treatises of the Nag Hammadi collection in which the work of revision and interpretation by the Gnostic exegetes of the Scriptures is particularly perceptible.⁵⁵ Originally composed in Greek in the second half of the 2nd century, it has been preserved in four copies: three in Nag Hammadi and one in the Berlin codex. There are two versions: two are long (Nag Hammadi codex II, 1 and IV, 1) and two are short (Nag Hammadi codex III, 1 and Berlin Codex [BG 2]). The short versions are older. Irenaeus of Lyons most probably used a Greek version of the short text, which he summarizes in order to construct his account of the Barbeloites.⁵⁶

50 On this theme, see Stroumsa 1992, especially 75; Mopsik 1989, 208–211. See also Barc 1975.

51 See Layton 1989, 2000.

52 See Tardieu 1974. See also Layton 1989, 2000; Painchaud 1995.

53 “When the seven archons were thrown down from their skies on the earth, they made for them angels in great number, that is demons for their service” (II, 5 124, 1–8).

54 See Giversen 1963; Tardieu 1984; Waldstein—Wisse 1995 (2000); Mahé—Poirier 2007 (2012), 217–295 (*Livre des secrets de Jean* by B. Barc).

55 Luttikhuisen 2006.

56 Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* I, 29, 1–4. Irenaeus summarizes here the content of the first part of *The*

The *Apocryphon of John* is a discourse of revelation delivered to John by the risen Jesus, whose starting point is the account of *Genesis* which the anonymous author of this text reinterprets in the light of the Gnostic myth in order to answer the questions about the origin of evil and human destiny. This very rich and complex presentation has been called the “Gnostic Bible” by Michel Tardieu since it deals with the history of origins “until now,” according to the words of its author.

The central character of the treatise is the evil creator, the archon Yaldabaoth, the bestial abortion born of Sophia. Following the version of Nag Hammadi Codex II, we will consider the episodes in which Yaldabaoth builds his angelic court, then, with its help, shapes the first man. Yaldabaoth, the first archon (ἄρχων), having retained a part of the power of his mother Sophia, first creates his own aeon and, copulating with Ignorance, generates Authorities (ἐξουσίαι), whose names are indicated (II 10, 22–11, 4). He also established seven kings for the seven heavens and five kings of chaos to reign there (II 11, 4–7). Yaldabaoth actually has three names: Yaldabaoth, Saklas, and Samael. He is arrogant and impious, and claims to be the only god (II 11, 7–22). Seven powers (ἰσχυρῶν, the Coptic equivalent of δύναμις) constitute the hebdomad. Each possesses a name, and together they create 365 angels (II, 11, 23–35). Having proclaimed himself god, Yaldabaoth unites to the powers (ἰσχυρῶν), which are with him, 7 authorities (ἐξουσίαι), by giving a name to each of them (II 12, 10–13, 5).

Seeing the creation that surrounds him and the crowd of angels (ἄγγελοι) stemming from him, Yaldabaoth affirms that he is a jealous god and that there is no other god apart from him (II 13, 5–13).⁵⁷ Contemplating the figure of the primordial man reflected in the water, Yaldabaoth urges his acolytes to reproduce it: “Come on! Let us make a man in the image of God and in our likeness, so that his image becomes for us light!” (cf. *Genesis* 1:26).⁵⁸ It is first of all the psychic body of Adam,⁵⁹ which is shaped by the seven powers (δύναμις) (II 15, 13–29). This body is made up of a bone-soul, a sinew-soul, a flesh-soul, a marrow-soul, a blood-soul, a skin-soul, and a hair-soul. Then the authorities (ἐξουσίαι), whose names are provided, undertake the task of creating the different parts of his body, from the head to the toenails (II 15, 29–17, 32).

Secret Book of John, but it is not possible to detect any precise parallels with any of the preserved versions.

57 Cf. *Exodus* 20:5; *Deuteronomy* 5:9 LXX. See Johnston 2010.

58 ApJohn NH II, 15, 1–6.

59 See Van den Broek 1996.

The *nomina barbara* attributed to the entities mentioned in these sections were mainly studied by Sören Giversen⁶⁰ and Michel Tardieu.⁶¹ Interpreting these names is often extremely difficult. As Michel Tardieu says, “Quant à la fabrication de noms barbares, ils sont composés la plupart du temps par jeux de métathèses sur des racines sémitiques ou sur des noms grecs déformés, désignant les fonctions attribuées aux démons par le folklore.”⁶²

The names of the 5 governors of the sensitive soul (II 17, 32–18, 2), of the demons (δαίμονες) that govern the body (II 18, 2–14), as well as those of the leaders of the passions (II 18, 15–19, 1) are also mentioned in the next part of the *Apocryphon of John*. The angelic account concludes with an indication of the number of angels (II 19, 2–10), totalizing 365. The author refers here to the “Book of Zoroaster” for further information. This book, according to Michel Tardieu, could be part of the “opuscules astrologico-apocalyptiques des ‘nouveaux Chaldéens’ de langue grecque.”⁶³ The purpose of this construction, both detailed and complex, is to enclose Adam in a material body which will be his tomb (II 21, 10–14): “This is the tomb (σπήλαιον) of the body (σῶμα) with which the robbers (λησται) have clothed the man, the fetter of forgetfulness. And he became a mortal man.”⁶⁴

The rest of the narrative indicates that the psychic body of Adam, created by angels and demons, remains inactive and motionless for a long time (II 19, 11–14). Through a trick, Sophia leads Yaldabaoth to blow on Adam’s face: the archon loses some of the power that he possessed, which penetrates through the breath into the psychic body of Adam. Adam is vivified, begins to move and becomes luminous and intelligent. Afterwards, Yaldabaoth’s acolytes, devoured by envy, deliver Adam into matter and shape him a body from earth, water, fire, and breath in order to deprive him of his superiority.

The Angels of the Spheres

In addition to their cosmogonic role, the angels who accompany the demiurge also have other functions, including guarding the spheres. They try to prevent the return of souls to their heavenly homeland; they question them and demand answers or passwords to let them cross the heaven over which

60 Giversen 1963.

61 Tardieu 1984.

62 Ibid., 310.

63 Ibid., 300–301.

64 Translation by Waldstein—Wisse 1995 (2000), 123.

they preside. In the *First Apocalypse of James*,⁶⁵ preserved in two very close versions at Nag Hammadi (codex v, 3) and in the codex Tchacos (treatise 2), Jesus reveals to James the answers that he must pronounce to escape the guardians of the spheres when he faces them. These guardians are called “toll collectors” (τελώναι). The content of James’ answers represents “redemption”: “The Lord [said] to [him]: [James,] behold, I shall reveal to you your redemption. When [you] are seized, and you undergo these sufferings, a multitude will arm themselves against you, that they may seize you. And, in particular, three of them will seize you—they who sit as toll-collectors. Not only do they demand toll, but they also take away souls by theft. When you come into their power, one of them who is their guard will say to you: ‘Who are you or where are you from?’ You are to say to him: ‘I am a son, and I am from the Father’. He will say to you: ‘What sort of son are you, and to what father do you belong?’ You are to say to him: ‘I am from the Pre-[existent] Father and a son in the Preexistent One’” (v 32, 28–33, 24).⁶⁶ And further: “[Why have you come?]” (33, 25).⁶⁷ And finally, later in the text: “‘Where will you go?’ you are to say to him: ‘To the place from which I have come, there shall I return’. And if you say these things, you will escape their attacks (v 34, 16–20).”

In this passage we can recognize the echo of the existential interrogations expressed in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (78, 2), transmitted by Clement of Alexandria:⁶⁸ “Who were we? What have we become? Where were we? Whither have we been cast? Whither do we hasten? From what have we been set free?” This striking formula, which the Gnostics probably pronounced, appears, with variations and additions, in several writings.⁶⁹ As in the case of the *First Apocalypse of James*, this formula is often inserted in a dialogue, articulated in questions and answers, between the toll collectors and the soul at the end of its life. In the *First Apocalypse of James*, the answers that James must provide reveal the privileged relationship between James, who symbolizes every soul, and the pre-existing Father, as well as his connection to the supra-celestial world outside of the grasp of the archons. This same dialogue occurs in the

65 Schoedel 1979 (2000); Veilleux 1986. See the commentary of Veilleux 1986, 85–92.

66 Text translated by Schoedel 2000, 87–89.

67 This reconstruction has been made possible thanks to the lines of *James* of codex Tchacos, which are in a better condition, and has been adopted in Mahé—Poirier 2007 (2012), 752.

68 Sagnard 1970, 201–203.

69 See DeConick 1996, 48, note 14; according to DeConick, the origin of these existential questions may come from Iran, following Widengren 1952, 103–104. An Egyptian background is also possible.

writing entitled *James* from Codex Tchacos (T 20, 2–22, 3),⁷⁰ which is very close to the Hammadi text. This passage from the *Apocalypse of James* has parallels in Irenaeus' section on the Marcosians, in which are cited the ritual words they pronounce when they are going to die.⁷¹

The motif of the guardian entities of the spheres also appears in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (Nag Hammadi V, 2).⁷² During his journey through the skies, Paul sees the punishment of a soul at the door of the fourth heaven: angels whip the soul and a toll collector interrogates it, before it is rushed to earth into a body (20, 5–21, 20). In the fifth heaven, Paul sees “a great angel holding an iron rod in his hands and three other angels with a whip in their hands, rivalling each other: they are goading the souls on to the judgment” (21, 26–22, 12). At the sixth heaven, Paul directly confronts a toll collector and tells him: “Open to me and the [holy] spirit who is before me!” The toll collector obeys, and Paul with his companion ascends to the seventh heaven (22, 19–24). Paul converses here with a character called the Ancient, a version of the figure of the Ancient of Days, familiar in apocalyptic Judaism. We find in this passage the Gnostic questioning concerning the origin and the end.⁷³ To the question “Where are you going, Paul?”, Paul answers: “I am going to the place from which I came.” The identification between the place of origin and the place of destiny deserves to be underlined. This knowledge constitutes the central point of both the *Apocalypse of James* and the *Apocalypse of Paul*, and of many other Gnostic writings.

I shall not deal here with the angelic categories mentioned in the Nag Hammadi collection, having already done so elsewhere.⁷⁴ These categories come from the Bible, but also from the Old Testament pseudepigrapha, an important stream of Second Temple Jewish literature. Some of these angelic classes,

70 The questions are the following: “Who are you and where are you from?” (T 20, 10–11); “What son and what father?” (20, 14–15), “Where have you come from?” (20, 19–20); “Why have you come?” (20, 22); “And where will you go now?” (21, 16).

71 AdvHaer I, 21, 5. See the commentary of Veilleux 1986, 86–88.

72 Murdock—MacRae 2000, 47–63 (I quote their translation); Rosenstiehl—Kaler 2005 (see especially 62–66 for a commentary on this passage).

73 A passage from Puech 1978, 96, illuminates this tension between beginning and end: “Révélant à l’homme qui il est, pourquoi il est venu en ce monde et comment il lui est donné d’en sortir, la connaissance est instrument de salut, ou plutôt, sauve par elle-même. Elle dévoile les ‘mystères’, livre le secret des énigmes, rend accessibles et transparentes les réalités les plus cachées, les plus insaisissables. Elle est découverte du ‘Royaume’, c’est-à-dire du Plérôme, de l’Être—et de notre être—en sa plénitude”.

74 Dogniez—Scopello 2006 (C. Dogniez, “Les emplois d’*aggelos* dans la LXX”, 179–195; M. Scopello, “La bibliothèque de Nag Hammadi et ses anges”, 196–225).

which intervene in the world of the demiurge as well as in that of the transcendent God, have a clear Gnostic origin.⁷⁵

The negative angelology developed in these texts is part of a program of critical interpretation of the Bible, carried out by Gnostic authors, who had a deep knowledge of the Scriptures and skilfully used allegorical exegesis. Nevertheless, in several writings, there is also a positive repurposing of angelic material from Judaism. In my opinion, Gnostic authors drew several motifs from the rich angelic heritage of Jewish pseudepigrapha to elaborate a reflexion about the angels of the transcendent God. These borrowings are nevertheless adapted to Gnostic thought and to its fundamental opposition between the creator and the superior god.

The Transcendent God and His Angels

The Angelus Paedagogus

The figure of an angel having the function of an instructor appears in Gnostic narratives relating the journey of a seer to heaven during which the secrets of the higher worlds and their entities are revealed to him. The Gnostics borrowed the theme of the journey to heaven from a form of marginal Judaism exhibiting mystical and apocalyptic tendencies. This esoteric literature paid close attention to the celestial adventures of Enoch (I and II *Enoch*), who during his journey receives revelations from an angel and experiences ecstatic visions.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the heroes of these heavenly journeys also include other important characters such as Abraham (*Apocalypse of Abraham*), Baruch (*Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*; *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*), Ezra (*Apocalypse of Ezra*), and Jacob (*The Ladder of Jacob*).

Several Gnostic texts have taken up the theme of the journey to heaven, and among them, are some treatises having a strong philosophical content, inspired by Middle-Platonism and, in some cases, by Neoplatonism. These writings combine in an original way a philosophical perspective with the traditions of esoteric Judaism. In several of my works,⁷⁷ I have highlighted this aspect, which had been neglected in the research which had mostly emphasized the contribution of philosophy to these Gnostic treatises. Let us note that, in comparison with the Jewish texts, in three treatises from Nag Hammadi—namely

75 Dogniez—Scopello 2006.

76 The theme of the heavenly journey in Judaism has given rise to an abundant literature. We mention here only Collins 1979; Yarbro Collins 1986; Himmelfarb 1993. Comparisons with Gnostic sources have very rarely been addressed in these works.

77 I mention them hereafter, in relation to the texts I am examining in this article.

Zostrianos (VIII, 1), *Marsanes* (X, 1), and *Allogenes* (XI, 3)—this ascent gets interiorised and becomes an ascent through the levels of the intellect to the One.

These esoteric Jewish traditions—some of which include speculations on the divine throne and chariot (the Merkabah)⁷⁸—have been skilfully revisited in light of Gnostic doctrine. The elements that, in the Jewish texts, illustrated the glory (*kavod*) of a unique god are now applied to the ἄγνοςτος, opposed to the lower demiurge.

As in the Jewish esoteric texts, the Gnostic *angelus paedagogus* suggests to the seer how to behave before the mystery, strengthens him in the difficult moments during his rise, supports him in ecstasy, and reveals to him the hidden meaning of what he hears or sees. Indeed, this journey is also dangerous; because the seer could be lost in the infinity of the intelligible, the angel teaches him the best attitude to adopt: to stand still, to withdraw, to pronounce a hymn or an invocation in silence, for example.

The pattern of the *angelus paedagogus* was already partially sketched in the Bible. In *Ezekiel* 40:3, a man whose appearance was like bronze (who is not identified as an angel) instructs the prophet about the rebuilding of the Temple; in *Zechariah* 1:9,19 (cf. 4:1–6, 6:4–5) an angel explains the visions the prophet had received; in *Daniel* 8:15–17 “a vision of man,” that is, an angel, interprets the meaning of a vision to Daniel, and in 9:2 the angel Gabriel gives him instruction concerning the future.⁷⁹

But the Gnostics drew their inspiration mainly from Jewish apocalyptic writings having strong mystical features. The numerous literary relations between the treatises of Nag Hammadi and these Jewish texts suggest that some Gnostic authors had a first-hand knowledge of this literature and used it to fuel their narrative.

The Case of the Treatise *Allogenes* (Nag Hammadi XI, 3)

As a case study, I choose the Nag Hammadi treatise entitled *Allogenes*.⁸⁰ This treatise, strongly coloured by Middle-Platonic elements, also contains Neoplatonic concepts. This suggests that *Allogenes*, in its lost Greek version, is to be

78 The bibliography on the Merkabah is immense, since the indispensable works of Gershom Scholem. Let us refer to the article by Pierluigi Piovanelli, which presents the essential points of the history of research (Piovanelli 2016).

79 These references come from the study of Cécile Dogniez in Dogniez—Scopello 2006, 192–193.

80 Funk—Poirier—Scopello—Turner 2004 (personal contribution: French translation of the Coptic text, 189–239). I quote in this article my own translation. See also Madeleine Scopello, *L'Allogène*, in Mahé—Poirier 2007 (2012), 1544–1546 (“Allogène et la tradition

placed at a date later than most of Nag Hammadi writings, probably in the second half of the 3rd century. The Coptic translation of this treatise dates, however, from the middle of the 4th century. In its Greek original, this text had a certain diffusion, as the philosopher Porphyry testifies.⁸¹ The studies on *Allogenes* rightly emphasize its philosophical content,⁸² but it seems to me that other traditions had played an important part in its composition.

This treatise is an account of a journey to heaven that a seer, who bears the symbolic name of Allogenes, the Stranger, gives to his disciple and spiritual son, Messos,⁸³ after he returns to earth. In fact, Allogenes makes this trip both inside himself and in the celestial spheres, to the threshold of the One. During this journey, Allogenes receives five secret teachings delivered by an angelic entity bearing the name of Youel “she-of-all-the-Glories.” Of the seven instructions that Allogenes receives during his itinerary, five⁸⁴ are actually transmitted by this angel, while the last two⁸⁵ are communicated to him by entities called the Luminaries of Barbelo: Salamex, Semen, and Armê.⁸⁶ The first revelation of Youel deals with the aeon of Barbelo and the Triple Powered One (XI, 3 45, 6–49, 38). The content of this revelation arouses in Allogenes a feeling of terror to such an extent that he is tempted to turn to the “crowd,” that is, to the world of matter. The second part of Youel’s teaching concerns Barbelo again (51, 1–38). The angel states that this is a revelation that “nobody can hear, except the great Powers” (50, 22–24). Youel also recalls that the power that inhabits Allogenes allows him to escape, going up to his origins (50, 33–34)—the theme of the return to the heavenly homeland is frequent in Gnostic literature. The third revelation of Youel is preceded by Allogenes’ mystical experience: he suffers a loss of consciousness and falls into an ecstasy during which he becomes god (52, 7–13). Youel puts an end to this

juive”) and the translation of this treatise (1551–1574). Cf. also Clark Wire (Introduction), Turner and Wintermute (Transcription and Translation; notes by Turner) 1990 (2000), 173–267; King 1995.

81 Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 16. Cf. Brisson et al. 1992 (especially Michel Tardieu, “Les gnostiques dans la *Vie de Plotin*. Analyse du chapitre 16”, 503–563); Tardieu—Hadot 1996; Poirier—Schmidt 2010.

82 In the commentary to *Allogenes* that I prepared for the *Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi*, I also took into account the contribution of the Platonic tradition.

83 The name Messos, always quoted as “my son Messos,” is mentioned in Allog 49,39–40; 50,18; 68,28; 68,35–69, 1.14–16. It is probably a symbolic name, like that of his master Allogenes, the Stranger.

84 These teachings begin in Allog 1 45, 6 and end in 57, 23.

85 Cf. Allog 59,8–60, 12 and 61,24–67, 38.

86 These names are provided in Allog 56,24–25.

ecstatic state by touching Allogenes and bringing him back to consciousness (52, 14–15).⁸⁷ Now Allogenes can listen to Youel's third teaching on the Triple Powered One. The angel instructs the seer to keep this teaching secret and in silence because only those who are worthy can hear it (52, 16–28). Then Youel invokes angelic powers, probably of a higher degree than his own (54, 6–37). Having listened to the names of these angels, Allogenes has a vision (55, 11–16) that introduces the fourth part of Youel's teaching, on the Triple Powered One (55, 17–30). The fifth and final part of the revelation concerns the Triple Male. Youel announces to Allogenes that after a hundred years of meditation, a teaching will be provided by the Luminaries of Barbelo (55, 33–57, 23). Then Youel leaves the scene and departs. At the end of the treatise, Allogenes states that he has been ordered to record in a book the secrets he received from Youel and the Luminaries.⁸⁸ He also instructs his spiritual son Messos to communicate the contents of this book to those who will be worthy to hear them.⁸⁹

The name of Youel had aroused my curiosity.⁹⁰ It was indeed astonishingly close to the name of the angel Yaoel, which appears in some Jewish mystical texts. The Hebraic name of Yaoel, because of the lack of vocalization, could have become Youel in the Greek and Coptic transcriptions.

But the presence of a similar name was not enough to support a comparison. It had also to be determined whether the angel Yaoel from Judaism had a role analogous to that of the angel Youel from Nag Hammadi. I found an interesting track to explore in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.⁹¹ This apocalypse, preserved in Slavonic, consists of two parts: the first one (I–VIII) relates the calling of Abraham and the destruction of the idols made by Terah; the second (IX–XXXI) narrates Abraham's sacrifice, but especially his journey to heaven under the guidance of the angel Yaoel, and the ecstatic vision he experiences. This second part, as first noted by George H. Box, bears the mark of Chariot

87 On this gesture, cf. *Daniel* 10:10–11 where, during the vision, the Angel's hand touches Daniel and puts him on his knees and palms.

88 One of the Luminaries of Barbelo says to Allogenes (68, 16–23): "Writ[e] [wh]at I shall [te]ll you and that I shall remind you for those who will be worthy after you; and you will place this book upon a mountain and you will invoke the guardian: 'Come, dreadful One!'"

89 Allog 69,15–16.

90 Scopello 1981; 2008a.

91 This text was translated by Box 1918. See also *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, translated by R. Rubinkiewicz, revised with notes by H.G. Lunt, in Charlesworth 1983, 687–705; B. Philonenko-Sayar and M. Philonenko, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham*, in Dupont-Sommer—Philonenko 1987, 1697–1730 (translation, presentation, and notes).

mysticism, the Merkabah. The two texts could therefore be compared, for the angel Yaoel of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* has the same function of accompanying the heavenly traveller and revealing secrets to him that we find in the Nag Hammadi tractate *Allogenes*.

In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, Yaoel is an angel of ineffable beauty and bears royal attributes: purple and sceptre (XI). For forty days and forty nights, Yaoel and Abraham travel together to the mountain of Horeb. The angel instructs Abraham on the sacrifice that God has commanded him to perform (XII), and tells him how to escape from the unclean angel, Azazel (XIII–XIV). Then Yaoel and Abraham ascend to heaven, the angel on the left wing of a turtle-dove, and Abraham on the right wing of a pigeon (XV). Abraham has a vision that makes him feel completely lost (XVI: “and the place of highness on which we were standing now stopped on high, now rolled down low”).⁹² The angel advises Abraham to recite a hymn with him (XVII), and then the ineffable vision of the heavenly throne, the Merkabah, opens to Abraham and to his guide (XVIII).

Let us first say a word about the name of Yaoel, whose meaning is given in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: Yaoel is the angel of the Tetragrammaton. The name Yaoel is formed out of two letters drawn from the Tetragrammaton to which are added two letters of the name Elohim (or of “El”, which represents its abbreviation). *Exodus* 23, 20–21 is the point of departure of this theme: “See, I am sending an angel before you, to keep you on your way and to be your guide into the place which I have made ready for you. Give attention to him and give ear to his voice; do not go against him, for your wrongdoing will not be overlooked by him, *because my Name is in him.*”

We read in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (x, 4): (words of God) “Go, Yaoel, you who bears My name, through My ineffable name ...”; and in x, 8: (words of Yaoel) “I am Yaoel, and I was called so by Him who causes those with me on the seventh expanse, on the firmament, to shake, a power through the medium of his ineffable name in me.” Finally, we read in XVII, 13–14, in the hymn that Abraham sings with Yaoel before having the vision of the throne: “Eli, eternal, mighty one, holy Sabaoth, most glorious El, El, El, El, Yaoel.” The angel Yaoel is also associated with the Tetragrammaton in *3 Enoch*, where he is identified with Metatron.⁹³

92 I quote, for this passage and the following ones, the translation of R. Rubinkiewicz in Charlesworth 1983, 696–697.

93 *3 Enoch* 48D: “Metatron has seventy names. The first of his names is Yaoel Yah Yaoel.” See Mopsik 1989, followed by the study of Moché Idel, “Hénoch c’est Métatron” (*ibid.*, 381–406). See also Odeberg 1973; Ph. Alexander, *3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch*, in Charles-

The treatise *Allogenes* does not bear any indication of the identification of the name of Youel with the Tetragrammaton. This identification is nevertheless present in another Nag Hammadi text, the *Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (codex III, 2), wherein it is stated that Yoel⁹⁴ is the “angel who presides over the Name of him (...), the incorruptible one” (65, 23–26).

But we could go further in this comparison. In *Allogenes* 52, 7–15, the protagonist’s fright and weakening at the threshold of ecstasy are described in terms very close to what one finds in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* X, 1–5. We read in *Allogenes* 52, 7–15: “[My s]oul [became] weak and [I] esca[ped, I was] very [distur]bed [and I] turned to my-se[lf]. I saw the light [that] was[ar]ound me and the good that was in me. I became god. Then Youel, she of all the Glories, touched me and gave me strength back.” We read in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* X, 1–5:

I heard the voice telling such words to me and I looked here and there. And behold there was no human breath, and my spirit was filled with terror. My soul escaped from me. And I became like a stone, and fell face down upon the earth, for there was no longer strength in me to stand upon the earth. And while I was still face down on the ground, I heard the voice of the Saint speaking: ‘Go Yaoel, who bears my name, through my ineffable name, put his man on his feet and strengthen him, dispelling his fear.’ And the angel who he had sent to me came to me in the likeness of a man: he took me by my right hand and put me on my feet.⁹⁵

Let us note that the expression “my soul escaped from me” in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* X, 3 is very similar to the phrase used in *Allogenes*: “[My s]oul [became] weak and [I] esca[ped]” (52, 8). Let us also observe the link established by the author of this apocalypse between the moment when the soul escapes—when Abraham leaves his psychic state—and the moment when he

worth 1983, I, 223–315. Regarding the first name of Metatron, Yaoel, the point of view of Gershom Scholem (Scholem 1960, 41) should be recalled. According to this scholar, Yaoel is the equivalent of Metatron in an earlier stage of the speculations on the first angel; the reference to Yaoel provides, therefore, an explanation for the sentence from the Talmud that claims that Metatron possesses a name which is like that of his Master (*Sanhedrin* 38b). Scholem notes that the name of Metatron would have been created to replace the name of Yaoel as a *vox mystica*, and that it would gradually take its place: Scholem 1994, 83. I have dealt more specifically with Youel in Scopello 2007.

94 The form “Yoel” is given here.

95 I follow here the translation of Belkis Sayar-Philonenko and Marc Philonenko.

falls with his face to the ground: this indicates the state of the mystical torpor (*tardema*). This self-abandonment is temporary, and the angel Yaoel puts an end to it by seizing Abraham by the hand and putting him back on his feet (*Apocalypse of Abraham* x, 5). The same is true for *Allogenes*, whereby the angel Youel, with a gesture, puts an end to the visionary experience of the initiate, giving him his strength back (52, 15).

But all borrowing involves modifications. In *Allogenes*, Youel is a feminized angel. The same is true in *Zostrianos* and in the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit*,⁹⁶ which reinforce the feminine character of Youel by calling her “Male Virgin.” The author of *Allogenes* thus elaborated, or adopted a Gnostic tradition that feminized the angel Yaoel. A trace of this tradition also appears in some Manichaean texts mentioning an angel called Ioel, who is also defined as “Male Virgin” and “Virgin of light.”⁹⁷

The complete name of Youel in *Allogenes* is “Youel, she-of-all-the-Glories” (ΤΑΝΙΕΘΟΥ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΙΟΥΗΛ).⁹⁸ The “glories” have not attracted the attention of scholars either. The Coptic word εοΟΥ used in *Allogenes* translates the Greek δόξα which in turn renders the Hebrew *kavod* and its synonyms, *tifearah*, *tehillah*, *hod*, *yadah*.⁹⁹ These are the founding terms of a mysticism of Glory based on the book of Ezekiel and its mysticism of the throne.

In *Allogenes*, however, the term “glory” is used in the plural, which seems to refer to a category of angelic entities. I thought of the angels of Glory, or the Glorious Ones, who stand around the throne of Glory. The starting point of this tradition is *Exodus* 15:11 where, in the interpretative translation of the LXX, the δόξαί of God are quasi-personified entities. The Glories also appear in the *Testament of Judah* xxv, 2 (the Powers of Glories) and especially in *2 Enoch*, where the Glorious Ones are in charge, night and day, of the liturgical service of the Lord (xxi, 1); Gabriel is one of them (xxi, 5).¹⁰⁰ The Glorious Ones also grant Enoch permission to ascend into the heavens. At the summit of his mystical quest, Enoch, after having received the attributes of a celestial high priest, will become like them, without difference of aspect (xxii, 7). The

96 Böhlig—Wisse 1975.

97 Cf. Theodoret of Cyrhus, *Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium* I, 26 (PG 83, 380). This angel intervenes in the creation of Eve.

98 Cf. *Allog* 50, 19–20; 52, 13–14; 55, 34; 57, 25. In 55, 18 she is called “[she of the great] Glories Youel”.

99 Cf. Jarl E. Fossum, “Glory,” in Van der Toorn—Becking—Van der Horst 1999, 348–352.

100 I follow the translation of André Vaillant and Marc Philonenko, *11 Hénoch*, in Dupont-Sommer—Philonenko 1987, 1185.

Glorious, or the Glories, would therefore be a particularly high category of angels,¹⁰¹ as is confirmed by *3 Enoch* 22B6, where “600,000 myriads of angels of Glory, carved in flaming fire, stand facing the throne of Glory.” The angels of Glory, with the Ophanim and Cherubim, pronounce the Qedousha.¹⁰² The Glories are mentioned in the New Testament,¹⁰³ and also appear in the Greek magical papyri,¹⁰⁴ where they are characterized by the uninterrupted service offered to the Lord, an element that was already highlighted in *2 Enoch*. In the *Untitled Text* chapter 13, myriads of Glories (εσοϋ) are given to the Forefather with the aeons. This one is called “self-glorified” (αὐτοδοξαστός), because he reveals himself with the Glories he possesses. In chapter 14, the Glories are members of a list of categories which also includes angels, archangels, and ministers.

Allogenes provides an additional clue that makes it possible to consider the Glories as an angelic category. In 49, 21–25 it is stated that those who truly exist “have brought nothing beyond themselves, neither Power, nor Rank, nor Glory, nor Aeon, because they are eternal beings.” The four terms in this list refer, in my opinion, to the categories of angels forming the celestial court of the Triple Powered One, and this interpretation makes sense in light of comparisons with Jewish angelology.



Further examples could be provided. In the course of my research I have been able to trace the traditions of esoteric Judaism in several Nag Hammadi writings. I provide a few examples here. The treatise *Zostrianos* (VIII, 1) includes, in the narrative of the ascent of the seer, two quasi-literal quotes from the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*.¹⁰⁵ These passages deal with the identification of the visionary patriarch with the angels of Glory (*2 Enoch* XXII 7 = *Zost* 5, 15–17) and also the privilege of knowing secrets that even angels do not know (*2 Enoch* XXIV 3 = *Zost* 128, 14–18). In addition, the language of *Zostrianos* is entirely woven out of terms characteristic of Jewish mysticism.

Other Nag Hammadi treatises infused with motifs from mystical Judaism are worthy of further study, as it is the case with *Eugnostos*¹⁰⁶ (Codex III, 3 and V, 1),

101 So *ibid.*, 1185, footnote to XXI 1.

102 *3 Enoch* 35, 36, 37.

103 *2 Peter* 2:10; *Jude* 8:10.

104 PGM I 199 and IV 1051.

105 Scopello 1980.

106 Marvin Meyer and Madeleine Scopello, “Eugnostos the Blessed,” in Meyer 2007, 271–274.

which offers a highly structured angelological system. The same is true for the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (Codex III, 2 and IV, 2), which describes the sumptuous hall of the throne of Glory and emphasises the ritual and liturgical functions of angels.

If we turn to codex Tchacos, the *Gospel of Judas* contains very interesting angelological elements.¹⁰⁷ For example, Judas' vision¹⁰⁸ of "the house in the heights" of immeasurable dimensions, surrounded by "great men"—"man" is a technical term for angels in esoteric Judaism—is a motif that appears both in the books of Enoch and, later, in the literature on the divine palaces (Hekhaloth).¹⁰⁹

But research on angels should also be extended, on the one hand, to the Gnostic excerpts preserved in the refutations of the Church Fathers and, on the other, to the Bruce Codex, rich in mystical, theurgical, and ritual elements, without forgetting the codex Askew.

This research could be pursued in order to obtain an accurate overview of the impact of marginal Judaism, not only on the theme of angels but also on other esoteric issues. Such an enquiry should also permit us to trace contacts between mystical Judaism and Gnosis that went beyond a literary level and reached the social fabric of mystical groups.

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¹⁰⁷ Scopello 2009; 2011.

¹⁰⁸ *Gospel of Judas* 45, 3–10.

¹⁰⁹ Scopello 2008b.

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Demons and Angels in the *Chaldaean Oracles*

Helmut Seng

The word δαίμων covers a broad range of meanings.¹ While it has referred to the gods since Homer and Hesiod,² it later came to designate those beings who occupy a middle position between gods and men,³ and to whom Plato allots a mediating function.⁴ Later, certain evil beings are also called demons.⁵ In Christian literature, the word δαίμων can also refer to the devil.⁶ ἄγγελος⁷ serves, first of all, to name a function, and thus, can be applied to men, but also to gods.⁸ From the Jewish or general Semitic tradition comes the idea of beings who are not divine, but are messengers of God occupying a separate status between him and men.⁹ They can, therefore, be equated with the demons, or be conceived as a separate class of beings, existing beside or above them; occasionally ἄγγελοι appear as gods of a lower rank.¹⁰ Furthermore, ἄγγελοι can also refer to beings who are subordinate to the devil.¹¹

- 1 Cf. Timotin (2012), 13–36. In *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* the demons are treated under the heading “Geister”.
- 2 Cf. ter Vrugt-Lentz (1976), 600–602; Timotin (2012), 15–19.
- 3 Cf. Zintzen (1976).
- 4 See below, pp. 62–69.
- 5 Cf. ter Vrugt-Lentz (1976), 600–604, who sees such tendencies already in the *Odyssey*; Timotin (2012), 26–31, on *daimon* as “esprit vengeur”; Böcher (1981), on the New Testament.
- 6 Cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 31; VI 42, 44 and 45; Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* v 21, 2; also Kallis (1976), 701.
- 7 Cf. in general Michl (1976) and Klauser (1976).
- 8 Cf. for instance Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 255.18–23 Kroll: οἱ γὰρ ἄγγελοι τίνες εἰσὶν ἢ οἱ ἄλλων λόγους ἐκφαίνοντες; τίνες δὲ καὶ οἱ θεῶν μὲν ὑπερέται, δαιμόνων δὲ ἐπίσταται πλὴν τῶν ἀγγέλων; καὶ οὐ ξενικὸν τὸ ὄνομα καὶ βαρβάρου θεοσοφίας μόνης, ἀλλὰ καὶ Πλάτων ἐν Κρατύλῳ τὸν Ἑρμῆν καὶ τὴν Ἴριν ἀγγέλους εἶναι φησιν, with reference to Plato, *Cratylus* 407e6 and 408b5 (καὶ ἦ γε Ἴρις ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶρειν ἔοικεν κεκλημένη, ὅτι ἄγγελος ἦν in Duke-Hicken-Nicoll-Robinson—Strachan only in the apparatus).
- 9 Cumont (1915); von Rad (1933); Kittel (1933); Michl (1962), 60–97; Seebaß (1982); Grözinger (1982); Böcher (1982); Sheppard (1980/1981); Belayche (2001), 96–104.
- 10 Cf. for instance Cumont (1915); Michl (1962), 58–59; Belayche (2010); Cline (2011), 47–76; Tissi (2013), 51–57 (with rich bibliography); case studies in Cline (2011). A much discussed text is *Theosophia* § 13, 93–108 Erbse = I 2, 14–29 Beatrice; the last three verses of the Oracle run as follows:

In the *Chaldaean Oracles* [= OC], four groups of beings are to be distinguished, which in a narrower or wider sense can be understood as demons or angels, even though the term ‘demons’ is applied only to group 1 in the fragments of the OC, the term ‘angels’ only to group 4:

1. Evil demons (δαίμονες), also known as dogs (κύνες), appear mainly as disruptive forces in ritual.
2. Nature spirits can be conceived as demons, but they are not explicitly designated as such.
3. Beings that mediate between men and god or gods, thus fulfilling at least the function allotted to the demons in the Platonic tradition.
4. Angels who perform the same task in a different way.

The relevant fragments are discussed below.¹²

Evil Demons or “Dogs”

The basic characteristic of the demons in the OC¹³ is their connection with matter. OC 88 states:¹⁴

αὐτοφυής, ἀδίδακτος, ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος,
οὐνομα μηδὲ λόγῳ χωρούμενος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων,
τοῦτο θεός· μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς.

They are slightly different in the oracle of Oinoanda, v. 1–3—cf. Robert (1971) = (1989)—and in Lactantius, *Institutiones* 1, 7, 1. Cf. Seng (2016b), 160–163 (with bibliography). Cf. also the ἄγγελοι in the magical papyri; on this Grundmann (1933) 73–74.

- 11 Michl (1962), 112; Böcher (1982), 598.
- 12 One must refer to the commentaries of des Places and Majecik, as well as to the respective discussions in the monographs by Kroll (1894), Lewy (1956 = 2011, especially 259–309: “Chaldæan demonology”), and Seng (2016a); cf. further Zintzen (1976), 647–652; Moreschini (1995), 90–110 (especially 90–96); Cremer (1969), 63–86; Geudtner (1971), 56–64 (with numerous references to Synesius).
- 13 Regarding the following section cf. also Seng (2016a), 109–110, as well as Seng (2015), 287–289.
- 14 Unmetrical (and unfounded) is the proposal to v. 1 in Lewy (1956 = 2011), 263 n. 14: ἡ φύσις πείθει πιστεύειν [εἶναι] τοὺς δαίμονας ἀγρούς.

Nature

persuades us to believe that the demons are pure,
and that the offspring of evil matter are good and useful.¹⁵

In the OC, matter is an ambivalent entity.¹⁶ It is true that, like everything, it ultimately comes from the divine.¹⁷ Matter is derived from the demiurgical Intellect, who is the ποιητής και πατήρ or δημιουργός πατήρ τε,¹⁸ and is thereby called πατρογενής.¹⁹ As the substrate underlying the cosmos, which is formed through divine action by means of Ideas, matter can appear in neutral formulations.²⁰ In most cases, however, matter is negatively characterized by such expressions as κακός (OC 88, 2) or πικρός (OC 129), or even by the formulation ὕλης σκύβαλον (OC 158, 1), insofar as it represents the opposite pole to the intelligible and diverts man from it.²¹ In OC 88, this evaluation is transferred to the demons, who are the offspring of matter.²² But the deceptive influence of φύσις—also seen in the OC as a negative power²³—creates the opposite impression. Deception thus belongs to the characteristics associated with

15 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 136.15–16 O'Meara: ἡ φύσις / πείθει πιστεύειν εἶναι τοὺς δαίμονας ἀγνοῦς, / και τὰ κακῆς ὕλης βλαστήματα χρῆστα και ἐσθλά. The translations of the OC, including the respective contexts, are those of Majercik (sometimes modified), unless otherwise stated.

16 Cf. Seng (2016a), 91–93 and (2015).

17 OC 7, 1: πάντα γὰρ ἐξετέλεσε πατήρ ...; OC 10: εἰσὶν πάντα ἐνὸς πυρὸς ἐκγεγαῶτα. Cf. Seng (2016a), 41–42 and (2015), 293–300.

18 As in Plato, *Timaeus* 28c2–3 and 41a7.

19 Cf. Psellos, *Scripta minora* II, p. 130.1–3 Kurtz: Πατρογενὴ δὲ τὴν ὕλην ὀνομάζει τὰ λόγια, ὡς ἐκ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ πατὴρ ὑποστάσαν ἄνευ τινὸς μέσης ἀπογεννήσεως (“The oracles describe matter as born of the father because it comes into being from the demiurge as father without a process of intermediate filiation”); John Lydus, *De mensibus* II 11, p. 32.3 Wuensch; IV 159, p. 175.9 Wuensch; Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 40, p. 151.9 O'Meara; John Italus, *Quaestiones Quodlibetales* 71, p. 122.17–18 Joannu; cf. Seng (2015), 294–298 (also on John Lydus, *De mensibus* II 11, p. 32.3 Wuensch = OC 173). However, it cannot be completely ruled out that this epithet, which is attested to in the fragments of the OC only for Hecate, was transferred to matter by the Oracles' exegetes; cf. Seng (2015), 301–302.

20 OC 5, 1; 34, 1. Cf. also the differentiations in OC 216 (see below pp. 58–59 with n. 83).

21 Indirectly OC 134, 1: Μηδ' ἐπὶ μισοφαῖ κόσμον σπεύδειν λάβρον ὕλης (“Do not hasten to the light-hating world, boisterous of matter”), from which also OC 180: τῆς ὕλης τὸ λάβρον (“the turbulence of matter”), cf. Seng (2016), 38. Cf. further Seng (2015), 282–283.

22 In return, matter is certainly demonized.

23 Seng (2016a), 106–107.

the demons. According to Psellos, the Oracle refers to demonic apparitions in the theurgical ritual preceding the epiphany of φύσις itself.²⁴ The role of φύσις is somewhat forcibly restricted by Psellos to providing, when invoked, the occasion for the onslaughts of demons from all elemental spheres.²⁵ These demons appear in various material forms, which are often pleasant and charming. The corresponding idea that demons appear during ritual so that they might enjoy the worship and sacrifice offered to the gods is widespread.²⁶

More dynamic than the image invoked in the term βλαστήματα in OC 88 is the origin of the demons in OC 90:

... from the hollows
of the earth leap chthonian dogs, who never show a true
sign to a mortal.²⁷

Here demons are depicted as dogs²⁸ that spring from the earth,²⁹ an idea that comes close to their designation as the offspring of matter, by transferring the vegetal metaphor to the animal. The designation of demons as dogs³⁰ is also

24 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 136.17–22 O'Meara. Generalizing interpretation in Lewy (1956 = 2011), 263–264.

25 See also below pp. 60–61.

26 Cf. for instance Porphyry, *De abstinence* II 2, 2–3; *Ad Anebonem*, fr. 62; 65; 65b; 65e; 65j; 65o; 69 Saffrey—Segonds; further Tanaseanu-Döbler (2013), 70.

27 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 138.26–28 O'Meara: ... ἐκ δ' ἄρα κόλπων/ γαίης θρώσκουσιν χθόνιοι κύνες οὔποτ' ἀληθές/ σήμα βροτῶ δεικνύντες.

28 Cf. also Hecate's χθόνιοι κύνες in Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* III 1217, which, however, are not characterized as demons.

29 Thus, it is assumed that the habitual abode of the demons is subterranean. However, the interpretation of OC 170 given by Lewy (1956 = 2011), 259 n. 2 remains doubtful. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, p. 121.21–24 Kroll reads: τί δέ, εἰ τὰ ὄρη συμπέσοι, πνεύματος αὐτὰ ῥήξαντος ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπογείων τόπων, ὑφ' οἴου τὰ λόγια καὶ αὐτάνδρους πόλεις ἀπόλλυσθαι φησιν, ἐν οἷς ἡ τῶν νεφῶν σύστασις; (“What if the mountains against which the clouds gather were to collapse, with that wind, by which the Oracle says cities too are destroyed men and all, ripping them from their ground-level locations?”): the subterranean winds that trigger earthquakes (as often assumed in ancient times, cf. for instance Seneca, *Naturales quaestiones* 6, 24–26, as well as Williams (2012), 230–251 or Proclus, *In Tim.* I, p. 188.1–12 Kroll), ambiguously called πνεύμα, for Lewy would be evil demons (likewise Majercik (1989), 206).

30 Cf. also Proclus, *Scholia ad Opera et dies* 82 (ad v. 152–155): τὸ θηροφανές τῶν δαιμόνων γένος, οὗς κύνας εἶωθε τὰ λόγια καλεῖν; *In Remp.* II, p. 337.17–19 Kroll, on which Johnston (1990), 134 n. 1.

attested to outside the OC.³¹ Again, deception is mentioned, so it seems reasonable to suppose that OC 88 and OC 90 refer to the same context.

The false signs indicate a demonic apparition, occurring in the context of the theurgical ritual, in which the apparitions of the gods and their questioning play an important role.³² The demons try to disturb the cult of mortals and attempt to deceive them. Correspondingly, OC 149 recommends:

When you perceive a demon near the earth approaching,
offer the *mnouziris* stone and say ...³³

According to Psellos, the sacrifice of the stone³⁴ serves to summon an immaterial demon, more powerful than the one near the earth:

This stone has the power to evoke another, greater demon, who will invisibly approach the material demon and proclaim the truth about the questions asked, answering the interrogator. And he³⁵ utters the evocative

31 Cf. Scholz (1937), 28–29; Loth (1993), 788 and 822–823; Johnston (1990), 140; Seng (1996), 154–155 (with further details).

32 Cf. OC 72, 142 and 146–148; cf. also Saffrey (1999 = 2000), especially 30–31; Tanaseanu-Döbler (2013), 34–38. On the theurgical ritual including the constraint of gods (which is not found in the OC themselves), cf. also OC 223 (δαίμονας in v. 5), attributed to the OC by Terzaghi (1904) 189 = (1963) 610 who refers to Nicephore Gregoras, not withstanding that the author explicitly states the opposite, and taken by des Places as dubium; cf. Seng (2016b), 147.

33 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 144.28–29 O’Meara: ἡνίκα δ’ ἐρχόμενον δαίμονα πρόσγειον ἀθρήσῃς, / θύε λίθον μνούζιριν ἐπαυδῶν ... Cf. Kroll (1894), 58; Lewy (1956 = 2011), 289; Seng (2016a), 114. Tardieu (2010) explains the name of the stone (μνούζιριν in the older Psellos manuscripts, which contain the fragment, μνίζουριν in the younger) by the port town of Μούζιρις (now Kodungallur) in Southwestern India and identifies the stone as the Indian agate, which according to Pliny (NH 37, 142) was used for fumigating (crushed in a combustible mixture?). What kind of material is involved in the different “agates” of Pliny, *Naturales historia*, 37, 139–142 is not always clear, cf. Saint-Denis XXXVII 168. However, Lewy (1956 = 2011), 289–290 thinks of a consecration. Cf. further Tanaseanu-Döbler (2013), 26–28.

34 The ritual use of stones (besides herbs and incantations) for the purification of the soul is also attested to in Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 132.12–13 O’Meara.

35 The formulation λέγει ... μετὰ τῆς τοῦ λίθου θυσίας transfers the imperative θύε λίθον ... ἐπαυδῶν into the indicative mode. The adverbial phrase cannot be related to the Oracle as subject (as does des Places), but only to the performer of the ritual.

name at the same time as the sacrifice of the stone. The Chaldean distinguishes between good and bad demons; but our pious doctrine defines that all are evil.³⁶

For such a demonic hierarchy (and rivalry), however, there is no indication in the OC. Rather, the appearing gods' superiority to the demons is to be understood, as in Iamblichus, who refers to Χαλδαῖοι προφήται,³⁷ saying:

When these shine forth, that which is evil and demonic disappears and makes way for superior beings, just as darkness before light, and does not trouble the theurgists even occasionally.³⁸

The OC themselves are also regarded as utterances of the gods, never of demons. It is therefore probable that in Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 145.4–9 O'Meara, the ideas of the Oracles' exegetes are reflected.³⁹ The additional explanation that the Chaldaean distinguished good and evil demons is evidently not due to the Neoplatonic tradition,⁴⁰ but is intended for a Christian reader, whose natural assumptions this explanation contradicts. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that such a distinction is made in the OC themselves. The invocation of a "greater" demon seems to be an interpretation of the expression ἐπαυδῶν in the sense of "calling, invoking." But the meaning "to say in addition" is also possible.⁴¹ The missing hexameter closure apparently contained the

36 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 145.4–9 O'Meara: ὁ δὲ λίθος οὗτος δύναμιν ἔχει προκλητικὴν ἑτέρου μείζονος δαίμονος, ὃς δὴ ἀφανῶς τῷ ὕλικῷ δαίμονι προσίων προφωνήσει τὴν τῶν ἐρωτωμένων ἀλήθειαν, ἣν ἐκεῖνος ἀποκρινεῖται τῷ ἐρωτῶντι. λέγει δὲ καὶ ὄνομα προκλητικὸν μετὰ τῆς τοῦ λίθου θυσίας. καὶ ὁ μὲν Χαλδαῖός τινὰς μὲν τῶν δαιμόνων ἀγαθούς, τινὰς δὲ κακοὺς τίθεται· ὁ δὲ ἡμέτερος εὐσεβῆς λόγος πάντας κακοὺς ὀρίζειται.

37 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* III 31, pp. 176.3–177.6 Parthey = p. 132.3–26 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecercf. Cf. also Lewy (1956 = 2011), 273–275; Cremer (1969), 150–151; Timotin (2012), 225–228 (with bibliography).

38 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* III 31, p. 176.7–9 Parthey = p. 132.7–10 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecercf (trans. Clarke—Dillon—Hershbell): Τοῦτων δὲ ἐπιλαμπόντων ἀφανὲς τὸ κακὸν καὶ δαιμόνιον ἐξίσταται τοῖς κρείττοσιν, ὥσπερ φωτὶ σκότος, καὶ οὐδὲ τὸ τυχὸν παρενοχλεῖ τοῖς θεουργοῖς.

39 Cf. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 289 n. 116: "Psellos' interpretation of this fragment is not based on Chaldaean tradition."

40 Kroll (1894), 45 and Theiler (1942), 36 = (1966), 296 attributed the distinction to the OC themselves.

41 Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐπαυδάω. The change of ἐπαυδῶν in ἐπάδων proposed in Kroll (1894), 58 is superfluous.

formula for repelling a demon,⁴² possibly an ὄνομα βάρβαρον.⁴³ There is no need to interpret it as an ὄνομα προκλητικόν as does Psellos (which makes the second demon necessary); much better in this context, it can be understood as apotropaic.⁴⁴ As further safeguards against demons, Psellos identifies the diamond, the coral, the thunderstone, and the sword with which a man has been killed (to be put down on the altar).⁴⁵ To what extent the practices to which Psellos refers reflect ideas already present in the OC remains unclear.

A warning, which recommends rites of purification with an apotropaic effect,⁴⁶ can be found in the testimonies concerning OC 135.⁴⁷ First, Proclus, *In Alc.*, p. 40.2–7 Creuzer/Westerink:⁴⁸

42 Cf. Thillet in des Places (1971), 184 n. 3.

43 Cf. OC 150: ὄνόματα βάρβαρα μή ποτ' ἀλλάξῃς; see also below n. 138.

44 The affirmation in Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* I, 3, 138 Duffy—cf. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 288—that the Chaldaeans venerated subterranean deities might be based on such conjurations. Remarkably similar is Porphyry, *Ad Anebonem*, fr. 10 Saffrey—Segonds (= Iamblichus, *De myst.* I 9, p. 29.17–30.1 Parthey = p. 22.17–21 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf).

45 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* I 19, 167–171 Duffy. Cf. Seng (2016a), 114–115. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 291 and n. 124 thinks of “brass instruments”, referring to the declaration by Proclus (*In Crat.* 71, p. 35.2–5 Pasquali = OC 210) that the Chaldaeans, having learned from the gods, designated the bird, which is called κύμινδης by the humans, as χαλκίς “of course” (according to *Iliad* XIV 291), and that this name is to be attributed to its bronze-like voice. But this statement does not allow this conclusion; moreover, Proclus is being somewhat ironic here, cf. Seng (2018). To what context the amulets mentioned in Suda I 433, II, p. 640.33–34 Adler belong is not clear. The human figurines (Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* I 3, 150–152 Duffy) discussed by Lewy (1956 = 2011), 291–292 serve to ward off diseases, the statue of Hecate—cf. also Tanaseanu-Döbler (2016), 186–190—does not belong to a Chaldaean context.

46 Since the diversion from the spiritual (that is, in the ritual context of the OC, from the sacred) is caused precisely by the body (cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 64e8–67b6, especially 66b1), a special protection is required against the demons and the passions caused (or personified) by them (cf. Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 133.15 O’Meara: θελακτηρίοις ... πάθεισιν), which are physical or physically mediated.

47 Cf. Kroll (1894), 55; Lewy (1956 = 2011), 227 n. 1 and 264 n. 15; Saffrey (1969), 67–68; Seng (1996), 154–156; Seng (2016a), 109–110.

48 Proclus quotes two pieces, which are not directly connected, separating them by a parenthesis; there is no evidence that the first verse in Proclus forms a continuous text with the two verses of the Scholion, as printed by des Places, which is questionable methodology, as is the insertion of the first verse of the Scholion into the Proclus text (before the parenthesis, separating it from the immediately following verse) as does Majercik.

Therefore, even the gods exhort us not to gaze at these (demons) beforehand, until we have been strengthened by the powers from the initiation rites:

For you must not gaze at them until you have your body initiated.

And for this reason, the Oracles add:

They enchant souls, forever turning them away from the rites.⁴⁹

Second, there is a Scholion in *Codex Parisinus Graecus* 1853, fol. 68^r:

Another (oracle) about maleficent demons
Being terrestrial, these ill-tempered dogs are shameless
and they enchant souls, forever turning them away from the rites.⁵⁰

Again, the demons show themselves as forces that disturb the ritual by distracting men from it.⁵¹ The old topos associating dogs with shamelessness, as in the case of the associations in *Iliad* I 158–159 and IX 372–373, is apparent here as well.⁵²

Psellos' explanations are similar:

... the demons. In this class, a type has a boniform power: it helps the hieratic ascents against their opponents; the other draws down the souls; it is

49 Proclus, *In Alc.*, p. 40.2–7 Creuzer/Westerink: διὸ καὶ οἱ θεοὶ παρακελεύονται μὴ πρότερον εἰς ἐκείνους (sc. δαίμονας) βλέπειν πρὶν ταῖς ἀπὸ τῶν τελετῶν φραχθῶμεν δυνάμεσιν· οὐ γὰρ χρὴ κείνους σε βλέπειν πρὶν σῶμα τελεσθῆς, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὰ λόγια προστίθησιν, ὅτι τὰς ψυχὰς θέλγοντες αἰεὶ [τῶν] τελετῶν ἀπάγουσιν.

50 Saffrey (1969), 67: ἄλλο περὶ κακοποιῶν δαιμόνων/ ὄντες γὰρ χθόνιοι χαλεποὶ κύνες εἰσὶν ἀναιδεῖς/ καὶ ψυχὰς θέλγοντες αἰεὶ τελετῶν ἀπάγουσιν.

51 Too general Lewy (1956 = 2011), 264: “The mortal who does not constantly perform the prescribed lustrations cannot keep himself free from the delusions that she”—the personified nature (see above p. 49 with n. 25)—“provokes” (similarly 275–276); this does not fit well with the idea of an initiation that removes the threat of demons; see Lewy (1956 = 2011), 266. Overall, Lewy attaches to the demons an importance which is hardly reflected in the fragments of the OC. An example of cathartic consecration is provided by OC 133: Αὐτὸς δ' ἐν πρώτοις ἱερεὺς πυρὸς ἔργα κυβερνῶν / κύματι ραινέσθω παγερῶ βαρυηχέος ἄλμης (“Above all, let the priest himself who governs the works of fire, be sprinkled with the coagulated billow of the deep-roaring sea”).

52 Cf. Faust (1970), 26–27; Loth (1993), 823 and the references in Seng (1996), 155–156.

called the “bestial and shameless” type; turned towards nature and serving the gifts of destiny, it “charms the souls” or chastises those who have been left devoid of divine light ...⁵³

It is uncertain whether OC 89: “... bestial and shameless ...” (... θηροπόλον και ἀναιδές ...) can be derived from this. It seems more appropriate to see in the formulations of Psellos, on the one hand, a testimonium to OC 135, 2–3 (ἀναιδές and θέλγον τὰς ψυχάς) and, on the other hand, to isolate only the *hapax legomenon* θηροπόλον as an additional expression of the OC.⁵⁴ It is attractive to presume that the word belongs to a preceding verse.

Remarkable here is the distinction between two opposing types of demons. It would be the only evidence⁵⁵ for good demons in the OC, who stimulate the ascent of the soul, thus counteracting the evil demons who want to prevent it. In this way, they are attributed a function which is usually assigned to the angels.⁵⁶ In this respect, it seems reasonable to attribute these good demons not to the OC themselves but to their exegesis.

The treachery of the evil demons entails a positive evaluation of the material, which implies a detachment not only from the ritual, but also from the

53 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 40, p. 150.26–31 O’Meara: ... τὸ δαιμόνιον. οὐ τὸ μὲν δύναμιν ἀγαθοειδῆ κέκτηται συλλαμβάνον ταῖς ἱερατικαῖς ἀνόδοις ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐναντίους ταύταις· τὸ δὲ καθέλκει τὰς ψυχάς, ὃ και θηροπόλον και ἀναιδές καλεῖται, τὴν φύσιν ἐπιστρεφόμενον και ταῖς μοιραίαις δόσεσιν ὑπηρετοῦν και θέλγον τὰς ψυχάς ἢ κολάζον τὰς ἐρήμας ἀπολειφθείσας τοῦ θείου φωτός ...

54 The exact form of the word does remain unclear; also ἀναιδές and θέλγον τὰς ψυχάς are fitted into the context; θηροφανές in Proclus, *Scholia ad Opera et dies* 82 (ad v. 152–155) may be a variation (see above n. 30). The animals in OC 157 (Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 138.8 O’Meara: σὸν ἀγγεῖον θῆρες χθονὸς οἰκήσουσιν) do not appear to be demons—as claimed by Lewy (1956 = 2011), 265 n. 19; Cremer (1969), 79 n. 335 and 85 n. 414; Geudtner (1971), 59—but rather, worms feeding on corpses; cf. Kroll (1894), 61 and Tardieu (1987), 160.

55 On Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 145.8–9 O’Meara (και ὁ μὲν Χαλδαῖός τινας μὲν τῶν δαιμόνων ἀγαθούς, τινὰς δὲ κακοὺς τίθεται· ὁ δὲ ἡμέτερος εὐσεβῆς λόγος πάντας κακοὺς ὀρίζεται) see above pp. 50–51 with n. 36.

56 Questionable, however, is the identification of angels as good demons, for instance in Kroll (1894), 45; Lewy (1956 = 2011), 260–262; Geudtner (1971), 57 n. 238; or Majercik (1989), 175; cf. also Cremer (1969), 68–69 and Zintzen (1976), 648. The factual identification of the good demons here and in Iamblichus with the Iynges (unattested to in the fragments of the OC)—for which, see Cremer (1969), 69–77; Geudtner (1971), 57 n. 238; Zintzen (1976), 649–650 and Moreschini (1995), 93–94—is unfounded; what the Neoplatonic exegesis of the OC attributes to them belongs only to later interpretations—cf. Seng (2016d), 295–301—and does not fit Psellos’ description.

spiritual. Correspondingly, the demons are associated with the *πάθη* (passions), by which man is endangered in his earthly life.⁵⁷ This is the case in Psellos:

Chaldaean Oracle: Avengers, stranglers of men.

Explanation: The angels of ascension bring souls towards them by drawing them from becoming. But the avengers, that is to say the vindictive natures of demons and slanderers of human souls, chain these into the passions of matter and, it would be said, strangle them.⁵⁸

Such *Ποιναί* are also attested to in Synesius⁵⁹ and in Proclus' hymns.⁶⁰ This evidence, too, indicates their association with matter.⁶¹ The expression *ἄγκτειρα* is specifically Chaldaean.⁶² Derived from this is the corresponding use of the masculine *ἄγκτήρ*⁶³ in Proclus.⁶⁴ It is not clear whether there is a precise distinction between generally evil and specifically punitive demons⁶⁵ in the OC; and also

57 Similarly in Iamblichus; cf. Shaw (1988), 48: "In a theurgical context, Iamblichus personified the impediments of particular souls as demons, invisible entities that draw souls down into the material world and hold them there." On the demons in Iamblichus and parallels in the OC, cf. also Cremer (1969), 78–85.

58 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 139.18–22 O'Meara [OC 161]: Χαλδαϊκὸν λόγιον. ποιναὶ μερόπων ἄγκτειραι. Ἐξήγησις. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀναγωγοὶ ἄγγελοὶ ἀνάγουσι τὰς ψυχὰς ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς ἐκ τῆς γενέσεως ἐφελκόμενοι, αἱ δὲ ποιναί, ἦτοι αἱ τιμωρητικαὶ τῶν δαιμόνων φύσεις καὶ βάσκανοι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ψυχῶν, ἐνδεσμοῦσι ταύτας τοῖς ὑλικοῖς πάθεσι καὶ οἷον ἀπάγχουσι.

59 Synesius, *Ep.* 43, p. 77.18; 80.3 Garzya; *De insomniis* 8, p. 160.13 Terzaghi; *De providentia* II 3, p. 121.14 Terzaghi; *Catastasis* II 6, p. 293.3 Terzaghi (possibly to be understood as personification in some cases).

60 Proclus, *Hymns* 1, 37; 7, 41; singular in 4, 12; cf. also van den Berg (2001), 180–181, as well as ποιναῖοι δαίμονες in Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 168.13–14; p. 180.8; p. 295.28–296.2 Kroll.

61 Lewy (1956 = 2011), 298 and n. 251 suspects that they are demons torturing "sinners" in the underworld; this is clearly proven wrong by Proclus, *Hymns* 4, 10–12: μὴ κρυερῆς γενέθλης ἐνὶ κύμασι πεπτωκυῖαν / ψυχὴν οὐκ ἐθέλουσαν ἐμὴν ἐπὶ δηρὸν ἀλάσθαι / Ποινὴ τις κρυόεσσα βίου δεσμοῖσι πεδήσῃ [emphasis mine].

62 Attested to only in the quotations of OC 161 in Psellos and Pletho, as well as in his commentary (p. 3.3; 14.12–13 Tambrun-Krasker). The change proposed by Lewy (1956 = 2011), 298 n. 151 in *ἄγκτειραι* does not improve the text; *ἄγκτειρα* relates to *ἄγκτήρ* as ἐλάτεια to ἐλάτηρ or σώτεια to σωτήρ etc.

63 Otherwise in the sense of "instrument for closing wounds" etc., cf. LSJ s. v. *ἄγκτήρ*.

64 Cf. Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 150.24–25 Kroll: τῶν ὑλικῶν καὶ τῶν ποιναιῶν ἄγκτήρων τῶν εἰς τὸ σκότος ἀγόντων; (however without personification), and *In Eucl.*, p. 20.24–25 Friedlein: τῶν ἐν τούτῳ γενεσιουργῶν δεσμῶν καὶ τῶν ἄγκτήρων τῆς ὕλης (on the cave in Plato's parable); *In Alc.*, p. 42.1 Kreuzer/Westerink: τῶν ἄγκτήρων τῆς ὕλης.

65 In addition to the evidence mentioned in n. 60, cf. also Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 139.1–

whether the Ποναί can be regarded as female demons alongside the “dogs” as male demons.⁶⁶ All the more obvious is their common connection to matter and the passions with which they corrupt souls.

Proclus correspondingly writes of materially oriented people:

For they do not differ in great measure from dogs without reason,
says the oracle of those who lead a wicked life.⁶⁷

Demons are, however, not only presented as generally material or chthonic, or as earthly beings. There are also air and water spirits, as in Damascius:

Starting from the spirits of the air, irrational demons begin to come into existence. Therefore, the oracle says:

Mistress driving dogs of the air, earth, and water.⁶⁸

The designation as dogs may characterize them as demonic in the negative sense. The identity of the ἐλάτεια κυνῶν remains problematic. Traditionally, this expression would suggest Hecate,⁶⁹ as could be substantiated by the following text of Porphyry, who lists exactly the three elements mentioned above:⁷⁰

3 O'Meara (commentary to OC 90, quoted above p. 49): περί δαιμόνων ἐνύλων ὁ λόγος· καὶ κύνας μὲν τούτους καλεῖ ὡς τιμωροὺς τῶν ψυχῶν, χθονίους δὲ ὡς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ πεπτηκότας καὶ καλινδουμένους περὶ τὴν γῆν. The tripartition into good, punishing, and evil demons in Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*—cf. Cremer (1969), 68–86—does not likely go back to the OC; see above n. 56.

66 Cf. the distinction into male and female demons in Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 40, p. 150.31–32 O'Meara; sceptical in this respect Kroll (1894), 45. It is questionable whether the passage could refer to nature spirits like the nymphs mentioned in OC 216, 1.

67 Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 309.10–11 Kroll [OC 156]: Οἶδε γὰρ οὐκ ἀπέχουσι κυνῶν ἀλόγων πολὺ μέτρον./ οἱ ζῶντες πονηρὰν ζωὴν, φησὶ τὸ λόγιον.

68 Damascius, *In Phaedonem* II 96, 3–5 Westerink [OC 91]: ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἀερίων ἄρχονται συνυφίστασθαι οἱ ἄλογοι δαίμονες· διὸ καὶ τὸ λόγιόν φησιν/ ἡερίων ἐλάτεια κυνῶν χθονίων τε καὶ ὑγρῶν.

69 Cf. for instance her invocation as σκυλακάγεια in PGM IV 2719–2720 = LIX 13, 7 Heitsch. For the association of Hecate and dogs cf. Scholz (1937), 40–42 and Johnston (1990), 134–142, especially 135–136; ample archeological and (only partially relevant) textual evidence in Werth (2006), 173–184, especially 173–175. See also n. 28 above.

70 Sarapis, portrayed as an underworld god, could be regarded as an equivalent to Hades,

Perhaps it is over these that Sarapis rules, and their symbol is the dog with three heads, that is, the evil demon in the three elements, water, earth, and air. The god who has them under his hand will bring them to rest. Hecate also rules over them, since she holds the sphere of the three elements together.⁷¹

In light of this evidence, the semantics of ἐλάτειρα might be elucidated: Hecate is here a helpful power whose control over the demons includes her ability to reject them.⁷² However, the idea of a mistress of the demons does not fit rightly with what the OC otherwise say about Hecate. Where she is mentioned, she appears as a metaphysical figure, which can be understood as an intelligible world or reservoir of (general) Ideas.⁷³ In this respect, it seems more reasonable to think of another entity. Psellos connects φύσις⁷⁴ and its epiphany with φυσικῶν δαιμονίων ... πληθύν and πολὺς ... δαιμόνων χορός (referring to OC 101 and 88).⁷⁵ Hecate is intimately connected to φύσις insofar as she is its origin (OC 54).⁷⁶ Another possibility would be the moon, to which refers the composition of the demons mentioned here ἀπὸ πάντων δὲ τῶν μερῶν τοῦ σεληνιαίου

whom Lewy (1956 = 2011), 279–293 regards as the head of the demons, which is not obvious from his evidence; cf. especially 279–282 on Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 39, p. 148.3–7 O'Meara.

71 Porphyry, *De philosophia ex oraculis*, p. 150 Wolff [= fr. 327F 3–7 Smith]: Μήποτε οὐτοί εἰσιν ὧν ἄρχει ὁ Σάραπισ καὶ τούτων σύμβολον ὁ τρίκρανος κύων, τουτέστιν ὁ ἐν τοῖς τρισὶ στοιχείοις, ὕδατι, γῆ, ἀέρι, πονηρὸς δαίμων; οὓς καταπαύσει ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἔχων ὑπὸ χεῖρα. ἄρχει δ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ Ἐκάτη, ὡς συνεχόουσα τὸ τρίστοιχον.

72 Cf. Theocritus, *id.* II 12: τῆ χθονίᾳ Ἐκάτᾳ, τὰν καὶ σκύλακες τρομέοντι and the lexicographic entries ἐλάτειραν· ἀπελαστικήν (Photius, *Lexicon* ε 557; Suda ε 749 II, p. 239.18 Adler; Ps-Zonaras, ε p. 686 Tittmann) or ἐλάτειραν· ἀπελατικήν (Συναγωγή λέξεων χρησίμων, *versio antiqua* ε 274), probably (as the entry in the accusative singular suggests) with reference to Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De caelesti hierarchia*, p. 28.1 Heil: πάσης ἀλαμποῦς σκοτοποίας ἐλάτειραν.

73 Seng (2016a), 52–55. Cf. also Johnston (1990), 135, whose characterization of Hecate in the OC is, nevertheless, different in many respects.

74 This is the suggestion of Johnston (1990), 136–141. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 269–273 conflates Hecate and φύσις.

75 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 136.13 and 18 O'Meara. The formulation τὴν φύσιν ἐπιστρεφόμενον (referring to δαίμονιον, ὃ καὶ θηροπόλον καὶ ἀναιδὲς καλεῖται) in Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 40, p. 150.29 O'Meara, referred to by Johnston (1990), 139 n. 23, may perhaps be understood by analogy to a pack of hounds surrounding a hunter (cf. LSJ, s.v. II 2), but the context is probably too abstract.

76 Cf. Seng (2016a), 81–83.

κόσμου,⁷⁷ and which Proclus seems to identify as the φύσεως αὐτοπτον ἄγαλμα mentioned in OC 102.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Hecate's association with the moon is found in connection with demons.⁷⁹ There are two other arguments in favor of this hypothesis. On the one hand, the infrequently used word ἐλάτεια is attested to in Nonnus in the formulaic hexameter closure βοῶν ἐλάτεια Σελήνη, which can be understood to be a variegated borrowing.⁸⁰ On the other hand, the material world, and thus the area of air, water and earth, begins just below the moon.⁸¹ This aspect will be examined in the following section.

Nature Spirits

Nature spirits are mentioned in OC 216 (*dubium*).⁸² John Lydus, who transmits the fragment, places them directly under the moon:

The moon is immediately mounted on the universe of generation and all the beings in this world are manifestly governed by it, as the Oracles say,

Nymphs of the springs and all water spirits;
hollows of earth, air and beneath the rays
of the moon; who mount and ride all
matter, heavenly, stellar and fathomless.⁸³

77 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 136.20 O'Meara.

78 Cf. the somewhat tortuous formulation in Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 133.15–18 Kroll: εἰ δὲ (the τόπος δαιμόνιος in Plato, *Republic* x 614c1, equated by Proclus with τρίσδος and λειμών in *Gorgias* 524a2) καὶ προσεχῶς εἰς τὴν σεληνιακὴν ἀνήρτηται σφαῖραν, ἐν ἣ τῆς γενέσεως αἰτία πάσης καί, ὡς φησὶν τις ἱερὸς λόγος, τὸ αὐτοπτον ἄγαλμα τῆς φύσεως προσλάμπει; cf. Johnston (1990), 137 n. 14.

79 Cf. *ibid.*, 29–38.

80 Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* I 331; V 72; VII 247; XI 186; XII 5; XXIII 309; XLVIII 668; cf. also Vian (1976), 141 and Chuvin (1992), 164. The model for the syntagm βοῶν ἐλάτεια seems to be Colluthus, 110: ποιμενὴ δ' ἀπέκειτο, βοῶν ἐλάτεια, καλαῦροψ (the only previous evidence for ἐλάτεια seems to be Pindar, fr. 89a: Τί κάλλιον ἀρχομένοισι(ν?) ἢ καταπαυομένοισιν / ἢ βαθύζωνόν τε Λατώ / καὶ θοᾶν ἵππων ἐλάτειραν αἰεῖσαι;). A parallel can be found in the adaptation of ἀμφιφάης (from OC 1, 4) which in the Chaldaean tradition is applied to Hecate and to the moon in Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* IV 281; XXII 349; cf. Seng (2010), 235–244 and 252–253.

81 Cf. Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 133.11–15 Kroll.

82 Cf. the more detailed discussion in Seng (2016c), with further references.

83 John Lydus, *De mensibus* III 8, p. 41.5–42.4 Wuensch: "Ὅτι ἡ σελήνη προσεχῶς ἐπιβέβηκε τῷ

Whether the fragment is of Chaldaean or Orphic origin cannot be ultimately determined.⁸⁴ Even if specific uncertainties remain, the following analysis appears to be the most probable: first, cosmic (sublunary) regions (κόλποι) are differentiated (v. 1–3a)⁸⁵ in a way that corresponds to the four elements, including the spirits contained therein (explicitly only νύμφαι and πνεύματα).⁸⁶ The second part (v. 3b–4) reaches beyond and incorporates the spheres of the fixed stars and planets, while the sublunary world is summarily designated as ἄβυσσος.⁸⁷ These areas, as well as those mentioned above in v. 1–3a, include divine beings ἐπιβήτορες ἢ δ' ἐπιβήται, which perform the function of cosmic administration.⁸⁸ It remains unclear whether it is a list in the nominative sense, or a series of vocatives to be understood as a hymn or incantation.⁸⁹ It is noticeable that instead of fiery demons, ὕπαυγοι μηναῖοι are mentioned. This confirms once again the relation between demons and the moon, as suggested in the previous section. On the other hand, this specific position of the fiery beings, which are characterized by their particular proximity to the moon,⁹⁰ would be compatible with the classification of the ἄλλοιοι δαίμονες among the lower elements.⁹¹

γεννητῶ παντί και πάντα κυβερνάται τὰ τῆδε ἐναργῶς ὑπ' αὐτῆς, ὡς τὰ λόγια φασι/ Νύμφαι πηγαῖαι και ἐνύδρια πνεύματα πάντα/ και χθόνιοι κόλποι (τε) και ἡέριοι και ὕπαυγοι/ μηναῖοι πάσης ἐπιβήτορες ἢ δ' ἐπιβήται/ ὕλης οὐρανίας τε και ἀστερίας και ἄβύσσων.

- 84 It is a Chaldaean fragment according to John Lydus, *De mensibus* III 8, p. 41.10–13 Wuensch; cf. also II 11, p. 32.1–4 Wuensch (evidence for v. 4); however, Olympiodorus, *In Alc.*, p. 19.7 Creuzer/Westerink quotes v. 4 as Orphic.
- 85 Intuitively, it seems plausible to assume that the pause of sense coincides with the end of the verse after ὕπαυγοι. In this case, μηναῖοι would refer to ἐπιβήτορες ἢ δ' ἐπιβήται. These are, however, placed above the matter of the sky of the planets and fixed stars, which is above the moon. Thus, the identification of μηναῖοι with ἐπιβήτορες ἢ δ' ἐπιβήται is unlikely.
- 86 However, since water is named first, the elements are not listed in the usual order, starting from the bottom with earth, then water, air, and fire.
- 87 Or the singular ἄβυσσος in Olympiodorus.
- 88 The verb ἐπιβαίνω designates the superior rank and effectiveness of one entity over another cosmologically and ontologically; cf. for instance ἡ σελήνη προσεχῶς ἐπιβέβηκε τῷ γεννητῶ παντί in John Lydus (*De mensibus* III 8, p. 41.7 Wuensch), in the introduction of the quoted fragment; Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 59.31; 165.10; 195.22 and 31; 199.18 Kroll; Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 40, p. 149.18–19 O'Meara etc.
- 89 Lewy (1956 = 2011), 266–267 suspects it is “the beginning of a conjuring hymn”.
- 90 Cf. also the idea, which goes back to Aristotle, that the inhabitants of the fiery zone, which is directly adjacent to the moon, are the demons; cf. also Lameere (1949); Détiéne (1963), 146–154; Timotin (2012), 103–105. The location of the demons near the moon is already attested to in Xenocrates; cf. Brenk (1986), 2088–2090 and Timotin (2012), 93–99.
- 91 Fire is also associated with the divine.

OC 92, quoted by Proclus, belongs to the same context:

Furthermore, in the case of things that are divine, the word aquatic indicates the inseparable superintendence over water, which is the reason why the Oracles call these gods ‘those who walk on water’.⁹²

Here Proclus speaks of gods. However, he does not only explain that the terms gods and demons can include all the levels of the *κρείττω γένη* (gods, angels, demons, and heroes), but also that identical expressions, as in the case of *πτηνός* and *ἀεροπόρος*, can refer both to gods in the narrow sense and to gods and demons generally.⁹³ The exact status of the beings designated as *ὕδροβατήρες* in the OC themselves and their relation to the water spirits in OC 216 are impossible to identify from this expression alone.⁹⁴

In a work attributed to Psellos⁹⁵ on the activity of demons,⁹⁶ the expression *τὰ τῶν δαιμόνων πολυχέυμονα φύλα*⁹⁷ immediately precedes a differentiation of their (deceptive) nature according to the elements.⁹⁸ It is unclear whether the last two words, which could form a hexameter closure, originate from the OC.⁹⁹ In any case, they are not quoted as Chaldaean in Pseudo-Psellos. The expression *πολυχέυμων* first appears in an effusive letter of Basil of Caesarea to Libanius, in the syntagm *πηγῆς πολυχέυμονος*.¹⁰⁰ Whether it is an *ad hoc* image or represents the adoption of an earlier formulation is difficult to say. The phrase is picked up and variegated by certain Byzantine authors; mainly in the 12th and 13th

92 Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 110.3–7 Kroll: ἔτι τὸ ἔνυδρον ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν θεῶν τὴν ἀχώριστον ἐπιστάσιαν ἐνδείκνυται τοῦ ὕδατος, διὸ καὶ τὸ λόγιον ὕδροβατήρας καλεῖ τοὺς θεοὺς τοῦτους.

93 Ibid. III, p. 109.1–110.12 Kroll.

94 While Festugière (1954), IV, 143 n. 4, thinks of demons, Baltzly 197 n. 463 opts for gods.

95 *De operatione daemonum* (Boissonade) and *De daemonibus* (Gautier). On the question of authorship, cf. Gautier (1980), 128–131.

96 Ps.-Psellos, *De operatione daemonum*, p. 30.7–8 Boissonade = line 537 Gautier.

97 Boissonade (1838), 262 n. 5 notes the variant *πολυχλεύμονα*, which is not mentioned by Gautier. This word is not otherwise attested, and would be a *lectio difficilior*; the meaning “making a lot of fun” (cf. *χλεύη*, *χλευάζω* etc.) would describe well the deceptive demons.

98 Ps.-Psellos, *De operatione daemonum*, p. 30.8–19 Boissonade = lines 537–545 Gautier (beyond the series of elements is named τὸ μισοφάεζ ... γένος).

99 Cf. Kroll (1894), 46 n. 1: “Haud scio an ...”; more resolute Lewy (1956 = 2011), 260 and n. 4 with reference to *μισοφάης* (Ps.-Psellos, *De operatione daemonum*, p. 30.12 Boissonade = line 540 Gautier). Neither des Places—there OC 93—nor Majercik characterize the expression as *dubium*.

100 Basil the Great, *Ep.* 353.

centuries, *πολυχεύμων* is a fashionable expression,¹⁰¹ but is mostly related to water metaphores. The *πολυχεύμονα φύλα* do not appear to belong to this context. This suggests that Pseudo-Psellos draws it from another source, possibly from the OC (which Basil might already have used). At least the Chaldaean expression *μισοφαής*,¹⁰² as well as the more common *αύχημρός*, are present in the same section of Pseudo-Psellos. Both words are used in OC 134. The metaphors of pouring and flowing for the process of formation are familiar in the OC,¹⁰³ so that the “multiflowing tribes” of demons do not have to be associated with water.

In this respect, there is another indication that is particularly important. In his commentary on OC 88, Psellos describes the assault of the demons preceding the apparition of Physis in the following way:

A whole chorus of demons flows in, and various demonic apparitions rush forth, aroused from all the elements, formed and divided from all the sections of the lunar world.¹⁰⁴

This corresponds, approximately, to the more detailed account of Pseudo-Psellos; in particular, the formulation *πολὺς ἐπιρρεῖ δαιμόνων χορός* seems to paraphrase the expression *πολυχεύμονα φύλα*. A more similar formula referring to the apparition of evil demons is to be found in Iamblichus: *ἐπιρρέον τὸ*

101 Cf. already Leo the Deacon (10th c.), *Historia*, p. 51.21 Hase: ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν πηγῶν πολυχεύμων τις; *Ἀνέκδοτον ἐγκάμιον εἰς Βασιλεῖον τον Β΄*, p. 428.33 Συκουτρής: πηγὴ πολυχεύμων. Among the authors who display a knowledge of Chaldaean vocabulary are Michael Italikos (cf. especially *Ep.* 28), here *Ep.* 14, p. 142.21 Gautier; *Ep. ad Nicephorum Bryennium* 1, p. 371.20 Gautier; Gregorios Antiochos (cf. *Oratio in Sebastocratore Constantinum Angelum*, p. 400.11 Bachmann-Dölger; cf. Seng (2009), 67), here *Epitaphion* 5, p. 87.21; 8, p. 156.19 Sideras; further Gregorios Palamas (cf. Seng (2009), 28; (2010), 251), here *Ep. ad Barlaam* I 14, p. 232.14 Meyendorff; *Contra Nic.* III 5, p. 324.11 Χρήστου.

102 Ps.-Psellos, *De operatione daemonum*, p. 30.12 Boissonade = line 540 Gautier. The expression comes from OC 134, 1 for which Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 325.32–326.1 Kroll [OC 181] provides testimony; *In Remp.* II, p. 158.1 Kroll offers another attestation in addition to Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* I 3, 130 Duffy and II 38, p. 146.11 O’Meara. Afterwards, the word is used as a sophisticated expression in Michael Choniates I 3, p. 87.18 Lampros (about Lucifer); Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, p. 264.22 van Dielen; Ephraem Aenii *Historia Chronica*, v. 5087 and 5540; Gregorios Palamas, *Contra Nic.* I 10, p. 239.16 Χρήστου (μισοφαεῖ δαίμονι).

103 OC 37, 15; 56, 3; 51, 2; 218, 2 (*dubium*).

104 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 38, p. 136.18–21 O’Meara: πολὺς ἐπιρρεῖ δαιμόνων χορός, καὶ πολυειδεῖς προφέρονται μορφαὶ δαιμονιώδεις, ἀπὸ πάντων μὲν τῶν στοιχείων ἀνεγειρόμεναι, ἀπὸ πάντων δὲ τῶν μερῶν τοῦ σεληνιαίου κόσμου συγκείμεναί τε καὶ μεριζόμενα. See also above pp. 48–49 with n. 24.

κακοποιὸν φύλον.¹⁰⁵ This does not yet prove whether, in its original meaning, πολυχεύμονα φύλα aims to differentiate the demons according to the elements (the paraphrase does not mention them) or whether this understanding of the phrase is attributable to the Neoplatonic exegesis. But the assumption that the formulation is a fragment of the OC increases in probability.

The contingent evidence and ambiguity of the sources allow for only a very cautious conclusion: the OC probably know natural or elementary spirits, which can be interpreted as demons. On the one hand, we must think of cosmologically active beings (OC 216, if Chaldaean; perhaps OC 92), and on the other hand, of evil powers (OC 93 in context).

Intermediate and Connecting

The idea of demons who mediate between gods and men is formulated prominently in Plato's *Symposium*,¹⁰⁶ in which Socrates reports Diotima's doctrine on Eros:

A great *daimon*, Socrates. For all that is 'daimonic' is between god and mortal.

But what power does it have?

Its task is to interpret and convey human things to the gods and divine things to humans—prayers and sacrifices, religious ordinances and rituals, and the exchange of favors. Being in the middle, the daimonic can supplement each, so that the totality is bound together by it. Through the daimonic comes all mantic and the art of the priests who oversee sacrifice, religious rituals, incantations, and the whole mantic art, as well as

105 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* IV 7, p. 190.10–11 Parthey = p. 142.20–21 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf. Cf. τὸ δαιμόνιον φύλον and especially τὸ τῶν πονηρῶν δαιμόνων φύλον, *ibid.* I 6 and IV 13, p. 19.11 and 198.3–4 Parthey = p. 14.18 and 148.8–9 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf. Iamblichus never quotes the OC literally, but refers paraphrastically to them. Cf. *ibid.* III 28, p. 168.6 Parthey = p. 126.10 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf; II 7, p. 84.7–9 Parthey = p. 63.14–17 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf; V 18, p. 223.15–17 Parthey = p. 166.24–27 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf (cf. Cremer (1969), 79 n. 346); II 4, p. 75.10–14 Parthey = p. 56.23–27 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf (cf. Tardieu (2010), 104–105); II 7, p. 84.6–9 Parthey = p. 63.13–17 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf (and n. 5); II 7, p. 84.14–17 Parthey = p. 63.23–25 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf (cf. Seng (2016a), 99 n. 14). As for ἐπιρρόεον, Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf (p. 142 n. 4) suspect a possible allusion to Plato, *Phaedrus* 229d7; the context could also be a model of the *Oracle's* formulation.

106 Cf. also Timotin (2012), 36–52.

sorcery. God does not mix with men, but through the daimonic all association and converse comes between gods and men, whether sleeping or awake. The person wise in these matters is the daimonic man. A person wise in other matters, such as arts and crafts is really a vulgar type. These *daimones* are in fact very numerous and different, and one of them is Eros.¹⁰⁷

From this passage, two aspects have emerged within the Platonic tradition that describe the nature and activity of demons: maintaining the cohesion of the cosmos and mediating (ritual) communication between humans and gods.¹⁰⁸ Both aspects are taken up in the OC.

On the one hand, the existence of entities, whose cohesive effect on the cosmos is indicated by their designation as *συνοχεῖς*, is well-attested.¹⁰⁹ It is not always clear whether the term denotes a pure function¹¹⁰ or serves as a name-like designation of specific beings. The latter case is at any rate attested to in Proclus (*In Parm.*, p. 647.6–8 Cousin), where the expression is attributed to the Assyrians (equivalent to the Chaldaeans)¹¹¹ (OC 188):

[...] such as the Zones and the Independent of Zones, the Sources, the Implacables and the Connectors, celebrated by the Assyrians.¹¹²

107 Plato, *Symposium* 202d3–203a8: Δαίμων μέγας, ὃ Σώκρατες· καὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον μεταξὺ ἐστὶ θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ. Τίνα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δύναμιν ἔχον; Ἑρμηνεῖον καὶ διαπορθμεῖον θεοῖς τὰ παρ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, τῶν μὲν τὰς δεήσεις καὶ θυσίας, τῶν δὲ τὰς ἐπιτάξεις τε καὶ ἀμοιβὰς τῶν θυσιῶν, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ὄν ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδέσθαι. διὰ τούτου καὶ ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τελετὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπιτάξεις καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν. θεὸς δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ οὐ μείγνυται, ἀλλὰ διὰ τούτου πᾶσά ἐστιν ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος θεοῖς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ ἐγγηγοροῖσι καὶ καθεύδουσι· καὶ ὁ μὲν περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα σοφὸς δαιμόνιος ἀνὴρ, ὁ δὲ ἄλλο τι σοφὸς ὢν ἢ περὶ τέχνας ἢ χειρουργίας τινὰς βάνουσος. οὗτοι δὲ οἱ δαίμονες πολλοὶ καὶ παντοδαποὶ εἰσιν, εἷς δὲ τούτων ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ Ἔρως. Translation borrowed from Brenk (1986), 2086.

108 Cf. Timotin (2012), 37–46, 85–161, and 163–241.

109 Cf. Seng (2016d), 307–313.

110 This is perhaps the case in Proclus, *In Crat.* 107, p. 59.1–3 Pasquali [OC 152; 207] and in Damascius, *In Parmenidem* I, p. 95.1–6 [OC 81; OC 80]; III, p. 31.17–19 Westerink—Combès—Segonds.

111 Cf. Porphyry, *De philosophia ex oraculis*, p. 141 Wolff [= fr. 324F 8–9 Smith].

112 Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, p. 647.6–8 Cousin: οἶα τὰ τοῖς Ἀσσυριοῖς ὑμνημένα, Ζῶναι καὶ Ἄζωνοι, καὶ Πηγαὶ καὶ Ἀμελίωτοι καὶ Συνοχεῖς. Cf. also Damascius, *In Parmenidem* I, p. 67.19–20 [OC 83]; II, p. 97.1–98.4 [OC 82]; III, p. 31.20–23 Westerink—Combès—Segonds.

Moreover, there is a passage by Damascius from which the exact wording of OC 177 is difficult to extract:

[...] or the Masters of Consecration are, according to the Oracle, bound together with the Connectors.¹¹³

Proclus, *In Tim.* I, p. 420.11–16 Kroll can also be mentioned in this respect (OC 32):¹¹⁴

Living-Thing-itself, then, is the third intelligible triad. Of [this triad] the *Oracles* too say that it is ‘a worker’, that it is ‘the bestower of life-bearing fire’, that it ‘fills the life-producing womb of Hecate’ and
pours into the Connectors
the life-giving might of most puissant fire.¹¹⁵

The absolute use of συνοχεύσιν points to the fact that not only a functional description is given here. By receiving the effective power of the life-giving fire,¹¹⁶ the συνοχεῖς are characterized as mediating entities. They ensure the cohesion of the cosmos by communicating life and intelligible forms, i.e. Ideas, into the material world.¹¹⁷ In this respect the two demonic functions specified by Plato are held together, but have been applied to cosmology. In their connecting function, the συνοχεῖς act particularly to fulfill the same task as does Eros, as a power acting universally;¹¹⁸ in this respect, they are to be regarded as its particular manifestations, as ἔρωτες. This structuring seems to

113 Damascius, *De Principiis* 111, p. 117.9–10 Westerink—Combès: ἡ οἱ μὲν τελετάρχαι συνειληνται τοῖς συνοχεύσι, κατὰ τὸ λόγιον. Des Places' text reads οἱ μὲν τελετάρχαι / τοῖς συνοχεύσι συνειληνται; cf. Seng (2016d), 302–304.

114 Cf. also Seng (2016a), 52–54, as well as (2016d), 309–310. The establishment of two first verses by des Places is rather experimental, but unconvincing; OC 32, 1–2: Ἐργάτις, ἐκδότις ἐστὶ πυρὸς ζωηφόρου (αὐτή), καὶ τὸν ζωογόνον πληροῖς Ἐκάτης ~ ~ κόλπον.

115 Proclus, *In Tim.* I, p. 420.11–16 Kroll: Ἡ τρίτη τοίνυν τριάς ἡ νοητὴ τὸ αὐτοζῶον, περὶ ἧς καὶ τὰ λόγια φησιν, ὅτι ἐργάτις, ὅτι ἐκδότις ἐστὶ πυρὸς ζωηφόρου, ὅτι καὶ τὸν ζωογόνον πληροῖ τῆς Ἐκάτης κόλπον καὶ / ἐπιρρεῖ τοῖς συνοχεύσιν / ἀλλήν ζειδώριο πυρὸς μέγα δυναμένοιο. In the last verse the manuscripts read ζειδωρον.

116 On life, cf. also Proclus, *Theologia Platonica* IV 20, p. 59.1–6 Saffrey—Westerink.

117 Cf. also OC 32; 82, 2.

118 OC 39, 2: δεσμὸν περιβριθῆ ἔρωτος; 42, 1: δεσμῶ Ἐρωτος ἀγητοῦ; 46, 2–3: ἀγνὸν Ἐρωτα, / συνδαικὸν πάντων ἐπιβήτορα σεμνόν.

have its origins in the presentation of Eros as a δαίμων μέγας in Plato. However, there is no indication that the συνοχεῖς are considered to be or designated as demons.

Nor can their relation to the nature spirits discussed above (second section) be determined. Damascius writes (*In Parm.* I, p. 95.1–6 Westerink—Combès—Segonds, OC 81 and OC 80):

And the Connectors are not three, but each one is multiple; concerning the Empyric is said:

All things yield to the intellectual lightning-bolts of the intellectual fire.

And concerning the Material:

But also, all those things which serve material connectors.¹¹⁹

One observes here the Chaldaean three-world schema, which distinguishes between (ἐμ)πύριος, αἰθέριος, and ὑλαῖος κόσμος.¹²⁰ The relational determination by the adjective raises the question as to whether the συνοχεῖς here represent a separate class of beings, or rather, independent entities, which act on matter, an idea applicable to elemental demons, but also to other beings.¹²¹

Apart from the function of connecting, the OC adopt from Plato the activity of mediating between humans and gods, and provide a specific adjective in accordance with διαπορθμεύον in *Symposium* 202ε3: διαπóρθμιος.¹²² The oracle is quoted by Damascius:

119 Damascius, *In Parmenidem* I, p. 95.1–6 Westerink—Combès—Segonds: καὶ οἱ συνοχεῖς οὐ τρεῖς, ἀλλὰ πολλοὶ ἕκαστος· περὶ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ ἐμπυρίου λέγεται· τοῖς δὲ πυρὸς νοεροῦ νοεροῖς πρηστήρσιν ἅπαντα/ εἴκαθε δουλεύοντα./ Περὶ δὲ τοῦ ὑλαίου/ ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑλαίοις ὅσα δουλεύει συνοχεῦσι.

120 Cf. for instance Seng (2009), 75–79 and (2016a), 84–87. In Proclus, Damascius, and Psellos, this differentiation is related not only to the συνοχεῖς, but also to the νοητοὶ ἅμα καὶ νοεροὶ collectively (see below p. 68).

121 According to Psellos (*Opusc. phil.* I 46, 43–51 Duffy), Julian the Chaldaean asks the συνοχεῦς τοῦ παντός for the soul of an archangel for his son (see below p. 75).

122 At least, the word is found exclusively in Chaldaean contexts, which are discussed below. The corresponding verb can be applied to angels; cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, p. 314.16–17; II, p. 165.24 Kroll.

Henceforth, one could also understand this name [assimilator] from the truth of the magical art, both that which comes from the *Oracles* and that which comes from Persia. For the fathers who preside over magic bring forward everything into visibility and, conversely, they make everything go back into the invisible, as, in order to speak like the *Oracle*, they are “established as transmitters of messages” between the Father and matter, for of the visible things they make copies of the invisible and they engrave the invisible in the visible production of the world.¹²³

The actual *Oracle* text should be: διαπόρθμιοι έστηώτες; at least this could be the second part of a hexameter from the penthemimer onward, with bucolic dihaeresis.¹²⁴

Unlike in Plato, the expression is not related to demons, but to οί έπί μαγειών πατέρες. The identity and origin of these entities exclusively attested to in Damascius in Chaldaean contexts¹²⁵ and in Psellos (Ψελλού ύποτύπωσις κεφαλαιώδης τών παρά Χαλδαίοις άρχαίων δογμάτων)¹²⁶ are uncertain.¹²⁷ They may not be Chaldaean, but Persian, since the formulation in Damascius refers, on the one hand, to Persia, and, on the other hand, to Chaldaean tradition (άπό τών λογίων). The latter is represented by the quoted λόγιον; for the former, only the expression οί έπί μαγειών πατέρες is suitable, corresponding to

123 Damascius, *In Parmenidem* III, p. 124.3–10 Westerink—Combès—Segonds: “Ηδη δέ τοῦτο λάβοι τις ἄν και ἀπό τῆς μαγικῆς ἀληθείας, τῆς τε ἀπό τών λογίων και τῆς Περσικῆς. Οἱ γάρ έπί μαγειών πατέρες εἶς τε τὸ έμφανές πάντα προάγουσιν, και ἅλιν εἶς τὸ ἄφανές περιάγουσιν, ὡς ἄν “διαπόρθμιοι έστώτες”, κατὰ λόγιον φάναι, τῷ πατρὶ και τῇ ὕλῃ, και τά τε έμφανῆ μιμήματα τών ἄφανών έργαζόμενοι και τὰ ἄφανῆ εἶς τὴν έμφανῆ κοσμοποιτᾶν έγγράφοντες. Kroll emends κατὰ <τὸ> λόγιον; but perhaps the article is intentionally left out, because the fragment is not originally related to οί έπί μαγειών πατέρες and only the expression is picked up.

124 Cf. έστηώτ’ in OC 146, 8. However, the quotations from the OC are also grammatically fitted into their context, so that methodical doubts concerning the exact expression persist.

125 See below n. 130.

126 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 40, p. 150.9–10 O’Meara: και έπί μαγειών δέ τρεῖς πατέρες άρχικῆν ἔχουσι τάξιν. Cf. further *Opusc. phil.* II 39 (Τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔκθεσις κεφαλαιώδης και σύντομος τών παρά Χαλδαίοις δογμάτων), p. 148.11–12 (= *Opusc. theol.* I, 23 A, 56–57 Gautier): τοὺς δέ περι μαγειών λόγους συνιστῶσιν ἀπό τε άκροτάτων (μακροτάτων *Opusc. theol.* I, 23 A Gautier) τινών δυνάμεων ἀπό τε περιγείων ὕλῶν.

127 See below nn. 128–130. In Damascius (*In Parmenidem* III, p. 129.4 Westerink—Combès—Segonds) Julian’s Ὑφηγητικὰ are mentioned in direct connection with τοῖς μαγικοῖς πατράσιν, but in a new sentence; Kroll (1894), 39 concludes that they belong to this writing. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 138–139 not only equates them with the άρχαί or άρχικοί πατέρες, but also, definitely wrongly, with the κοσμαγοί; cf. Seng (2009), 37–74.

the Persian μάγοι.¹²⁸ The ontological level which Damascius attributes to them is described by the alternative expressions ἀρχικός, ἡγεμονικός, ὑπερκόσμιος, and ἀφομοιωτικός.¹²⁹ Their place is directly under the Demiurge, whose uniform activity they continue at a particular level,¹³⁰ and thus clearly above the demons.

The further attestations of the expression διαπόρθμιος can be found in Proclus, who attributes it to different entities, all of which are abstract. On the same level of the hierarchy of Being as οἱ ἐπὶ μαγειῶν πατέρες in Damascius are the forces that are assigned to the ἀφομοιωτικά γένη and which work demiurgically downward:

The liberated leaders, therefore, being such as we have shown them to be, let us survey the multiform orders of them adapted to this order. Some of them, therefore, we call *transporters*, and these are such as unfold to secondary natures, the progressions of the assimilative genera.¹³¹

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- 128 Evidence, however, is missing, as already stated. The reference to the Persian tradition might point to the cult of Mithras, high ranking practitioners of which are repeatedly called *pater sacrorum* (cf. the *indices* in Vermaseren I 352 and II 426; *Scholia vetera in Theocritum* on *id.* 2, 10a: ἐκ θυέων: ἐκ τῶν θυσιῶν, μαγειῶν θύος γὰρ τὸ θύμα) and once πατήρ νόμιμος τῶν τελετῶν (I 76, p. 74 Vermaseren).
- 129 Damascius, *In Parmenidem* III, p. 123.7–20 Westerink—Combès—Segonds, an instructive example of the Neoplatonic synopsis of the traditions; cf. Saffrey (1992 = 2000): ἀρχικός according to OC (θεία παράδοσις, 8; 19–20 quotation of OC 40), ἡγεμονικός according to Iamblichus (9–10, with reference 11–12 back to Plato, *Phaedrus* 246e4–247a3), ὑπερκόσμιος (οἱ δέ, 12), ἀφομοιωτικός according to the Orphic tradition (14–17, *testimonium* to *Orph. fr.* 192 Kern = 286 F (VI) Bernabé; but cf. also Westerink—Combès—Segonds (2002), III, 123 n. 6); cf. also *ibid.* III, 270–271.
- 130 Cf. Damascius, *In Parmenidem* III, p. 123.7–130.10 Westerink—Combès—Segonds, with the other evidence of the expression, from which it also becomes clear that they are three, as in Psellos (*ibid.* III, p. 129.8–12 Westerink—Combès—Segonds), as well as the variant μαγικοί πατέρες (*ibid.* III, p. 127.24–128.1; p. 129.1–3 Westerink—Combès—Segonds); further ἡ ἐπὶ μαγειῶν πηγῆ with similar characterisation in Damascius, *De principiis* III, p. 31.9–10 and p. 38.8–10 Westerink—Combès, as well as Westerink—Combès (1991), III, 185–186 and Lecerf—Saudelli (2016), 70–74. It is especially important to note that Damascius reads into the OC and Julian's Ὑφηγητικά propositions about the entities ἐπὶ μαγειῶν using formulations that reveal his approach. This reinforces the doubts about their original affiliation with the Chaldaean tradition, although a reference to Persia in the Ὑφηγητικά cannot be excluded; cf. also Lecerf—Saudelli (2016), 75–77.
- 131 Proclus, *Theologia Platonica* VI 17, p. 82.16–20 Saffrey—Westerink: Τοιοῦτων τοίνυν τῶν ἀπολύτων ὄντων ἡγεμόνων νοήσωμεν αὐτῶν τὰς πολυειδεῖς δυνάμεις τῆ τάξει αὐτῆ προσηκούσας

The reference to an oracle is missing; the formulation *διαπορθμίους καλέσωμεν* seems almost imperatively to imply that there is no Chaldaean evidence.

In *In Remp.* 11, p. 92.28–29 Kroll, Proclus uses *διαπόρθμιος* (without reference to the OC) to designate forces subordinate to the divinities that direct the heavens.¹³² The entities with which the expression *διαπόρθμιος* is otherwise associated in Proclus are much higher. These are *ἕγγες* and *τελετάρχαι*,¹³³ whose function the philosopher describes as demiurgic and cosmological. Obviously, the expression can be related, by the exegetes of the *Oracles*, to different entities with a certain freedom, but this does not allow conclusions to be drawn concerning the OC themselves. In the Neoplatonic systems of Proclus and Damascius, *ἕγγες*, *συνοχεῖς*, and *τελετάρχαι* form the Ennead of the *νοητοὶ ἅμα καὶ νοεροί*, the both intelligible and intellectual divinities, which collectively have a connecting and mediating position between the superior Ennead of the intelligible entities and the subordinate Hebdomad of the intellectual entities. However, this metaphysical system belongs not to the OC themselves but to their exegesis. Both the *ἕγγες* as a magic wheel,¹³⁴ and the *τελετάρχαι* as (human, demonic or divine) leaders of the theurgical ritual, but probably also *οἱ ἐπὶ μαγειῶν πατέρες*¹³⁵ in Damascius, belong originally to the sphere of the cult. In this respect, the expression *διαπόρθμιος* aligns perfectly with its Platonic origin.

However, Proclus obviously avoids applying the term to these entities themselves. Instead, he speaks of *δυνάμεις* (*In Parm.*, p. 1199.36 Cousin)¹³⁶ or *ὄνομα* (*In Alc.*, p. 150.12 Creuzer/Westerink; *In Crat.* 71, p. 33.14 Pasquali). This could be an indication that OC 78 originally did not refer to the *ἕγγες*¹³⁷ and the *τελετάρχαι* mentioned by Proclus, or more precisely, not in a context that allows them to be interpreted as metaphysical entities. On the other hand, *ὄνομα* may also have a ritual connotation; *ὄνόματα* with cultic significance are the *ὄνόματα βάρβαρα*, which were used as ritual calls for mediation between gods and humans

καὶ τὰς μὲν διαπορθμίους καλέσωμεν, ὅσαι τὰς τῶν ἀφομοιωτικῶν γενῶν προόδους ἐκφαίνουσι τοῖς δευτέροις: (trans. T. Taylor).

132 Perhaps the *Moirai* according to Plato, *Republic* x 617b7–d1; cf. Festugière (1953), III, 33 n. 2.

133 Cf. Seng (2016d), 302–313.

134 These are regarded as demons in Zintzen (1976), 649–650, but without specific reasons; for the series “angels, lynges, evil demons” he does not offer (648) any evidence.

135 Cf. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 139 and see above n. 128.

136 Likewise in Proclus, *Theologia Platonica* VI 17, p. 82.17 Saffrey—Westerink and *In Remp.* 11, p. 92.29 Kroll.

137 Which is impossible first of all for grammatical reasons, cf. the masculine *ἐστ(η)ώτες* (but see above n. 124).

in theurgy.¹³⁸ If, however, the expression διαπόρθμιος does belong to the context of the cult, then the τελετάρχαι are the grammatically appropriate reference¹³⁹ of OC 78 as well as οἱ ἐπὶ μαγείων πατέρες in Damascius, whose Chaldaean origin, however, has been shown to be questionable. An additional argument for this hypothesis would be their close association with the συνοχεῖς according to OC 177,¹⁴⁰ which corresponds to the complementary functions of the demons according to Plato. However, as in the case of the συνοχεῖς, it must remain an open question whether the τελετάρχαι or other entities, which OC 78 originally referred to, would have to be classified as demons according to Chaldaean understanding.¹⁴¹

Proclus more clearly refers to the demons in *In Alc.*, p. 69.15–70.3 Creuzer/Westerink:¹⁴²

Diotima has assigned them this rank that binds together divine and mortal, transmits the channels from above, elevates all secondary beings to the gods, and completes the whole by the continuity of the medium.

As a specific deviation from Plato, it is remarkable¹⁴³ that διαπόρθμιος here again denotes an action from the top downwards, while the complementary direction from the bottom upwards is designated by ἀναγωγός. Since Proclus refers explicitly to Plato and not to the OC, once more, a clue to the original reference of OC 78 is wanting.

To sum up: although the OC are aware of the idea of beings conceived of as διαπόρθμιοι ἔστ(η)ῶτες (OC 78) and συνοχεῖς (OC 188) in accordance with the functions attributed to the demons by Plato, there is no evidence that they were designated or thought of as demons.

138 According to OC 150 (quoted above n. 43); cf. Zago (2010), as well as Seng (2016a), 115–116 and (2017), 53–59, each with further references.

139 But see above p. 68.

140 See above p. 64.

141 Since the τελετάρχαι are subordinated to the συνοχεῖς, they could well be priests who communicate with them in the ritual.

142 Proclus, *In Alc.*, p. 69.15–70.3 Creuzer/Westerink: Διοτίμα ταύτην αὐτοῖς ἀποδέδωκε τὴν τάξιν, τὴν συνδετικὴν τῶν θείων καὶ τῶν θνητῶν, τὴν διαπόρθμιον τῶν ἄνωθεν ὄχρετῶν, τὴν ἀναγωγὸν τῶν δευτέρων ἀπάντων εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς, τὴν συμπληρωτικὴν τῶν ὅλων κατὰ τὴν τῆς μεσότητος συνοχήν. (Trans. Westerink modified).

143 The concept of channels as a means of communicating the Intelligible and Life, and of the soul's return, is also typically Chaldaean; cf. Seng (2016a), 82 and n. 41. In the background seems to be, of course, Plato, *Timaeus*, 43d1.

Angels

The conjectures on the nature and activities of the angels in the OC¹⁴⁴ depend to a very great extent on the conclusions from the *Oracles'* exegetical tradition. As we have seen, they are anagogic, and thus they are opposed to the demons, who, bound by their own material orientation, bind human souls to matter.¹⁴⁵ Their function in the ascent of the soul is described by Proclus in the *Excerpta Chaldaica* as follows:

How does the order of angels cause the soul to ascend? By shining round about the soul, he says. That is illuminating the soul on all sides and filling it with pure fire, which gives it an unswerving order and power through which it does not rush into material disorder but makes contact with the light of the divine beings, and holds it fast in its own place, and causes a separation from matter by lightening it with warm breath and causing a rising up through the anagogic life. For the warm breath is the sharing of life.¹⁴⁶

The text presents some problems, especially in the formulation φέγγουσα, φησί, περι τήν ψυχήν. The text transmitted reads, in abbreviated form, φέρουσα ..., but a mediopassive would be expected as in the closely related text from Psellos (*Opusc. phil.*, II 9, p. 17.19 O'Meara).¹⁴⁷ As a conjecture, Jahn proposes φαίνουσα, while Kroll proposes φέγγουσα as well as πυρί for περί. For the following paraphrase, φέγγω fits perfectly. But since it can be used not only transitively, but also intransitively,¹⁴⁸ the second change does not seem necessary. Des Places'

144 Cf. Cremer (1969), 63–68.

145 See above pp. 54–55. In Iamblichus, the angels liberate the souls from the material; cf. Cremer (1969), 66 and Finamore (2002), 428.

146 Proclus, *Excerpta Chaldaica*, p. 206.6–15 des Places [= p. 1.3–10 Jahn]: ἡ δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων μερίς πῶς ἀνάγει ψυχὴν; φέγγουσα, φησί, περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν, τουτέστι περιλάμπουσα αὐτὴν πανταχόθεν, καὶ πλήρη ποιούσα τοῦ ἀχράντου πυρός, ὃ ἐνδίδωσιν αὐτῇ τάξιν ἀκλιτον καὶ δύναμιν, δι' ἣν οὐκ ἐκροζεῖται εἰς τὴν ὑλικὴν ἀταξίαν, ἀλλὰ συνάπτεται τῷ φωτὶ τῶν θείων· καὶ συνεχέει δὲ αὐτὴν ἐν οἰκείῳ τόπῳ, καὶ ἀμιγῆ ποιεῖ πρὸς τὴν ὕλην, τῷ θερμῷ πνεύματι κουφίζουσα καὶ ποιούσα μετέωρον διὰ τῆς ἀναγωγῆς ζωῆς· τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα τὸ θερμὸν ζωῆς ἐστὶ μετὰδοσις. The text is given according to des Places, but without the conjecture πυρί for the transmitted περί p. 206.7 des Places (p. 1.4 Jahn); see below for the discussion on the text.

147 While des Places uses Psellos' *Opusc. phil.* II 9 as further text evidence, O'Meara (2013) shows that Psellos probably worked here and in *Opusc. phil.* II 38 with a longer version of the *Excerpta*.

148 Cf. LSJ.

attempt to extract from this text an *Oracles* fragment (OC 122: τὴν ψυχὴν φέγγουσα πυρί) is highly doubtful, especially given that no oracle seems to be the subject of φησί,¹⁴⁹ but rather, Proclus is the subject, as in Psellos, *Opusc. phil.*, II 9, p. 17.18–19 O’Meara. Less improbable is to see marks of a Chaldaean formulation in the phrase τῷ θερμῷ πνεύματι κουφίζουσα, but the version πνεύματι θερμῷ / κουφίζουσα (OC 123) proposed by des Places is uncertain.¹⁵⁰ The significance of light and fire should be highlighted, which are ciphers for the Divine-Intelligible in the OC,¹⁵¹ as well as the close connection of the angels to light and fire apparitions in Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*.¹⁵²

A partly similar description (without explicit reference to the OC) can already be found in Iamblichus:¹⁵³

By means of the gods’ good will and the illumination bestowed by their light, it often goes higher and is elevated to a greater rank, even to that of the angelic order. When it no longer abides in the confines of the soul, this totality is perfected in an angelic soul and an immaculate life.¹⁵⁴

What is particularly noticeable here is the transformation of the ascended soul into an angelic soul, a transformation which consistently performs the transposition into the rank of angels. In Proclus, the emphasis is shifted to stress the place.¹⁵⁵ For this, there is even a Chaldaean expression (OC 138), as appears from Olympiodorus, who ascribed already to Plato the following doctrine:

149 As des Places translates: “dit l’oracle”, correspondingly Majercik 95 and Lanzi 97. García Bažan 153 translates without an explicit subject “se refiere también al nombre que convoca”.

150 By maintaining the word sequence, θερμῷ / πνεύματι κουφίζουσα would also be possible.

151 Evidence in des Places’ and Majercik’s *indices* under πῦρ and compounds, φῶς (φάος) and πρηστήρ; cf. also Geudtner (1971), 66 and n. 277.

152 Cf. Cremer (1969), 65–66; moreover, 67 on the special beauty of the angels, for which there is no direct evidence in the *Oracles’* fragments.

153 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* II 2, p. 69.8–13 Parthey = p. 51.25–52.6 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecercf. Cf. Cremer (1969), 64–65 and Finamore (2002), 429–430.

154 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* II 2, p. 69.8–13 Parthey = p. 51.25–52.6 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecercf: ... διὰ δὲ τὴν τῶν θεῶν βούλησιν ἀγαθὴν καὶ τὴν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἐνδιδομένην φωτὸς ἔλλαμψιν πολλὰς καὶ ἀνωτέρω χωροῦσα, ἐπὶ μείζονά τε τάξιν τὴν ἀγγελικὴν ἀναγομένη. Ὅτε δὴ οὐκέτι τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ὅροις ἀναμένει, τὸ δ’ ὅλον τοῦτο εἰς ἀγγελικὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἄχραντον τελειοῦται ζωὴν.

155 Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 83.1–3 Parthey = p. 62.14–15 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecercf: ἢ γε τῶν ψυχῶν θέα τῶν μὲν ἀχράντων καὶ ἐν ἀγγέλων τάξει ἰδρυμένων ἀναγωγός ἐστι (τῶν ψυχῶν is *Genitivus obiectivus*).

On the other hand, he holds that even the souls of theurgists do not always remain on the intelligible plane, but that they too descend into genesis, those of whom the Oracle says ‘In the abode of the angels’.¹⁵⁶

According to Proclus and Olympiodorus, this area is opposed to the sphere of γένεσις, the sublunar world of becoming and passing away. Thus, the place of the angels belongs to the supralunar, celestial sphere. This is confirmed by a fragment from Porphyry (*De regressu animae*, fr. 293F 1–6 Smith),¹⁵⁷ wherein the angels are assigned the region of ether.¹⁵⁸ This should also correspond to a separate rank in the Chaldaean hierarchy of beings. In the Chaldaean-Neoplatonic systems, as summarized by Psellos,¹⁵⁹ the sequence is (gods—)angels—demons—heroes.¹⁶⁰ The angels are integrated into the older series: gods—demons—heroes.¹⁶¹ Possibly, this extension is due to the influence of the OC,¹⁶² without the series itself having to be Chaldaean.¹⁶³ However, angels are also present in the magical papyri (wherein their Jewish origin is obvious),¹⁶⁴ and appear as subordinate gods in some pagan sources.¹⁶⁵

156 Olympiodorus, *In Phaedonem* 10, 14, 8–10 Westerink: ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ τὰς τῶν θεουργῶν ψυχὰς βούλεται μείνειν αἰεὶ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατιέναι εἰς γένεσιν· περὶ ὧν φησιν τὸ λόγιον ‘ἀγγελικῶ ἐνὶ χώρῳ’. (Trans. Westerink).

157 Augustine, *De civitate dei* x 9, p. 416.9–14 Dombart—Kalb; cf. Kroll (1894), 45. The formulation (*loca aethera vel empyria*) may be deliberately imprecise.

158 This corresponds to the τόπος ἀμφιφάων in OC 158, 2; cf. Seng (2005), 854–860 and (2010), 244–252. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 219 equates the angels themselves with the individual parts of the place (which he identifies with the Paradise mentioned in OC 107, 10; his further interpretation 220–222 remains doubtful). On OC 107, cf. Tardieu (2014) and Fernández Fernández (2014).

159 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II 40, p. 150.20–23 O’Meara; cf.—without explicit mention of the gods—II 41, p. 152.2–3 O’Meara and already Olympiodorus, *In Alc.*, p. 22.2–3 Creuzer/Westerink, or more profusely Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* I 5, p. 16.6–16 Parthey = p. 12.3–14 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf, and Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 165.3–167.31 Kroll. Cf. also Lewy (1956 = 2011), 161–162 n. 365 and 261–262 n. 8; Timotin (2012), 153–158.

160 Originally Chaldaean according to Cremer (1969), 39; cautiously agreeing, Timotin (2012), 154–155.

161 According to Plato, *Cratylus* 397c8–e1; *Republic* III 392a3–6; *Laws* IV 717b2–4; cf. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 511 n. 9; Cremer (1969), 38 as well as Cumont (1915), 170 and n. 5.

162 Cf. Theiler (1942), 29 [= (1966), 287]; Festugière (1953), III, 253; Cremer (1969), 39; Timotin (2012), 154–155. However, it is already attested in Origenes, *Contra Celsum* III 37 and VII 68, although with slight modifications (ἀγαθοὶ δαίμονες and ἄλλοι δαίμονες).

163 The angels are regarded in this way as the equivalent of good demons whom the evil demons always oppose in the OC; see above n. 56.

164 Examples are PGM IV 1930–1950 and 2695–2704.

165 See above n. 10.

A complementary function of the angels, beside that of supporting the ascension of souls, is that of messengers of divine revelations, as in Porphyry:

He even said, in fact, that there are angels of two kinds, those who come down to earth to make divine pronouncements to theurgists, and those who live on earth to declare the truth of the Father, his height and depth.¹⁶⁶

The reference to the theurgists appears to be based on Chaldaean doctrine or practice;¹⁶⁷ the angels who are active on earth seem to be the theurgists themselves in accordance with Olympiodorus.

In a more specific context, Proclus quotes OC 137. It is a commentary on Plato's *Republic* x 614d1–3. There the Pamphylian Er, who has returned from the Other World, tells of his instruction:

When he himself stepped forward, they said they wanted him to act as a messenger to mankind, to tell them what was going on there. They urged him to hear and observe everything which happened in that place.¹⁶⁸

This activity as a messenger or angel is compared by Proclus to the content of the theurgical ritual:¹⁶⁹

166 Porphyry, *De regressu animae*, fr. 285F 4–7 Smith [= Augustine, *De civitate dei* x 26, p. 442.14–17 Dombart—Kalb]: *Et angelos quippe alios esse dixit, qui deorsum descendentes hominibus theurgicis divina pronuntient; alios autem, qui in terra ea, quae patris sunt, et altitudinem eius profunditatemque declarent* (Translation by Wiesen). Invoking this passage, Zintzen (1976), 648, refers OC 18 (οἱ τὸν ὑπέρκosμον πατρικὸν βυθὸν ἴστε νοοῦντες) to the theurgists. However, according to the Neoplatonic evidence, the νοεροὶ θεοὶ are concerned; cf. Proclus, *In Crat.* 107, p. 57.22–26 Pasquali; Damascius, *In Parmenidem* 1, p. 20.1–2 Westerink—Combès—Segonds; *De principiis* III, p. 119.3–6 Westerink—Combès. Cremer (1969), 65 thinks that the second group comprises the archangels alone, but the distinction between *deorsum descendentes* and *in terra* needs to be explained.

167 The revelatory function of the angels does not seem to suggest any apparition in the wake of gods, as mentioned by Iamblichus; cf. Cremer (1969), 66.

168 Plato, *Republic* x 614d1–3: Ἐαυτοῦ δὲ προσελθόντος εἰπεῖν, ὅτι δέοι αὐτὸν ἄγγελον ἀνθρώποις γενέσθαι τῶν ἐκεῖ καὶ διακελεύουσίντό οἱ ἀκοῦειν καὶ θεᾶσθαι πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. (Trans. T. Griffith).

169 The Er story described in the entire section of *In Remp.* II, p. 153.5–155.18 Kroll, is replete with theurgical imagery. Cf. Broze—Van Liefferinge (2007), especially 329–333; for references to the OC in the context, also Toulouse (2001), 182–191.

In this particular case, therefore, the Universe, on the one hand, initiated at the proper times the soul of this Er, such a blessed perfection being rightly due to this soul; on the other hand, as being initiated into this view by the Universe, his soul was raised to an angelic rank. In fact, it is to such a class that the theistic experts of this world belong. Whoever is truly hieratic, “shines like an angel living in power,” says the Oracle. He thus becomes, on the one hand, the epoptes of invisible things and, on the other, the messenger for the visible beings.¹⁷⁰

This description conforms to an interpretation of the ascent and descent of souls, as described in Proclus and Olympiodorus, as events of the theurgical ritual. However, the theurgist himself¹⁷¹ appears here as ἄγγελος, with emphasis not only on the ἀγγελικὴ τάξις, but also on the functional aspect.¹⁷²

However, the evidence in Olympiodorus on the descent of the souls of the theurgists from the place of the angels can also be understood differently: as a claim that these souls possess the status of an angel before they descend into the sublunary world, a status which to some extent persists, and is not completely annihilated by the descent.¹⁷³ The theurgists are not subject to *Heimarmene* (destiny), which operates below the moon,¹⁷⁴ as OC 153 makes clear:

170 Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 154.12–20 Kroll (with OC 137): καὶ δὴ (καὶ τὴν) τοῦ Ἡρώς τούτου ψυχὴν ἐν τοῖς καθήκουσι χρόνοις ἐτέλει μὲν τὸ πᾶν, κατὰ δίκην ὀφειλομένης αὐτῆ τῆς τοιαύτης εὐδαίμονος τελειότητος, ὡς δὲ πρὸς ἐκείνην τὴν (θέαν) ὑπὸ τοῦ παντὸς τελουμένη[ν] εἰς ἀγγελικὴν ἀνήγετο τάξιν. καὶ γὰρ οἱ τῆδε τελεστικοὶ τάξεώς εἰσι τοιαύτης· θέει ἄγγελος ἐν δυνάμει ζῶν, φησὶν τὸ λόγιον, ὅστις ἐστὶν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἱερατικός· γίνεται οὖν ἐπόπτης μὲν τῶν ἀφανῶν, ἄγγελος δὲ τοῖς ἐμφανέσιν ὁ αὐτός. (καὶ τὴν) Kroll; (θέαν) and τελουμένη[ν] Festugière (1953), III, 99 n. 2.

171 Lewy (1956 = 2011), 219–220 thinks of the soul of a dead theurgist (“disembodied” in Finamore (2002), 426) in heaven (which does not fit rightly with Proclus), but postmortal events and rituals correspond.

172 It is therefore unclear in the context whether this angel is running (Lewy (1956 = 2011), 223, n. 194) or shining (Festugière, *des Places*, Majercik, García Bazán); θέει can mean both. The latter corresponds to the description in *Excerpta Chaldaica*, p. 206.7–9 *des Places* (p. 1.4–6 Jahn), and the luminous appearances of the angels in Iamblichus (see above n. 152), however it cannot be excluded that the ambiguity is intentional.

173 Lewy (1956 = 2011), 223–224 n. 194 identifies the souls of the theurgists with the heroes (which are missing in the fragments of the OC); the evidence quoted (Proclus, *In. Crat.* 117, p. 68.25–26 Pasquali; Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* II, p. 150.25–26 O’Meara), however, is hardly convincing.

174 Cf. Seng (2016a); III n. 39 with the bibliography quoted there.

For the theurgists do not fall into the herd which is subject to destiny.¹⁷⁵

Psellos reports the outstanding case of Julian the Theurgist, the presumed author of the OC:

[...] the Julians under Marcus Aurelius. One was older than the other. As for the younger, if I can afford an excursus, there is an anecdote, namely that his father, when he was about to beget him, asked the Connector of the Universe for an archangelic soul to constitute the substance of his son, and that, after the birth of the latter, he brought him into contact with all the gods and with the soul of Plato, who was in the company of Apollo and Hermes; and enjoying *epopteia* by the means of hieratic art, he questioned this soul of Plato about what he wanted.¹⁷⁶

Here the soul of an angel descends from the heavenly place into the human body of a theurgist, that is, the soul of an archangel into the theurgist κατ' ἐξοχήν.¹⁷⁷ Pre- and postmortal events correspond to those of the ritual. This anecdote does not need to be regarded as historically reliable evidence¹⁷⁸ in

175 OC 153: οὐ γὰρ ὑφ' εἰμαρτὴν ἀγέλην πίπτουσι θεουργοί.

176 Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* 1, 46, 43–51 Duffy: [...] οἱ ἐπὶ τοῦ Μάρκου Ἰουλιανοῦ· ὁ μὲν γὰρ τις αὐτῶν πρεσβύτερος ἦν, ὁ δὲ νεώτερος. περὶ δὲ τοῦ νεωτέρου, ἵνα τι μικρὸν ἐκκόψω τὸν λόγον, καὶ τοιοῦτον ἐπιθρυλλεῖται φλυάρημα, ὡς ὁ πατήρ, ἐπεὶ γεννήσαι τοῦτον ἔμελλεν, ἀρχαγγελικὴν ἤτησε ψυχὴν τὸν συνοχέα τοῦ παντὸς πρὸς τὴν τούτου ὑπόστασιν, καὶ ὅτι γεννηθέντα τοῖς θεοῖς πᾶσι συνέστησε καὶ τῇ Πλάτωνος ψυχῇ Ἀπόλλωνι συνδιαγούσῃ καὶ τῷ Ἑρμῇ, καὶ ὅτι ταύτην ἐποπτεῦω ἕκ τινος τέχνης ἱερατικῆς ἐπυθάνετο περὶ ὧν ἐβούλετο.

177 However, one cannot conclude from this that in the OC themselves there is a distinction between angels and archangels (aiming at the differentiation between different classes of being or less specifically), as advocated by Majercik (1989), 13. Cf. Cremer (1969), 64.

178 Rather, it has to be seen within the narrower context of the legendary tradition on the Iulianoī, as first documented by the church historian Sozomen (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 1 18, 6–7)—cf. Seng (2009), 142–150 and Athanassiadi (2010), 203–208—, and within the wider context of the anecdotal tradition on the theurgical activity of Proclus in Marinus or of other philosophers in Eunapios. In this respect there is no reason to see a late invention in Psellos, *Opusc. phil.* 1, 46, 43–51 Duffy. Remarkable is the role of Plato in the text; normally, it is the gods who are said to reveal the oracles; cf. Hadot (1987), 27–29 = 44–46, as well as Seng (2017), 68–69. This point might have been controversial among the exegetes of the OC in antiquity; but perhaps the soul of Plato, who dwells with the gods, could be understood to be their mouthpiece vis-à-vis the human questioner. In any case, the reference to Plato has not been introduced by Psellos himself, since he states that there is a decided contrast between Graeco-Platonic and Chaldaean teaching; cf. Psellos, *Opusc. theol.* 1, 23, 46–52 Gautier and *Orat. for.* 1, 287–295 Dennis (almost identical), on which cf. Seng (2009), 134–135.

order to appreciate its importance as an illustration of the idea of the angelic theurgist.¹⁷⁹

In summary, the sources provide a close link between the angels and theurgists.¹⁸⁰ In the theurgical ritual, the angels lead the soul of the theurgist up to the supralunar sphere where, free from every inclination towards the material world of becoming, he contemplates the divine truth which he proclaims after his descent. Thus, he himself becomes an ἄγγελος, a messenger, that is, an angel.¹⁸¹ Similarly, the soul of an angel can descend from its place and live and operate through a human body as a theurgist.¹⁸²

Conclusion

The following picture emerges from the fragments of the OC which have come down to us¹⁸³ together with the interpretations of their Neoplatonic exegetes.

The demons appear in the OC as evil beings, who disturb the theurgical ritual and bind human beings to material life. They are specially related to the earth and are called dogs. This expression is also applied to water and air spirits, which therefore also seem to be evil and are regarded as ἄλογοι. They stand in a (traditionally given) relationship to Hecate or to the Moon, which occupies the

179 The role of the younger Julian in these interrogations of the gods has been interpreted to be that of a spiritual medium by Saffrey (1981 = 1990), 218–220 following Dodds (1947), 56 and 65–69 [= (1957), 284 and 295–299] and (1965), 56–57; similarly, Athanassiadi (1999), 151–152 and (2006), 48–54. The production of the OC could have been staged or imagined as such a collaboration between father and son.

180 Cf. Lewy (1956 = 2011), 260–262.

181 Gallavotti (1977), 101 goes certainly too far by supposing that the ἄγγελοι in the oracle of Oinoanda v. 3 (also *Theosophia* § 13, 108 Erbse = 12, 29 Beatrice and Lactantius, *Institutiones* 17, 1, v. 3) are to be understood as Chaldaean theurgists. The speaker belongs to the group of the lower gods, who are a subordinate part of God: μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερίς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς; cf also Pricoco (1987), 21–23. The text is not Chaldaean anyway; cf. Seng (2016b), 160–163, with further bibliography.

182 Whether the theurgical souls are to be assigned the “status” or “substance” of an angel (or whether such a distinction exists in the OC) cannot be decided from the existing fragments; cf. Finamore (2002), 427 and 432.

183 OC 215 (*dubium*) mentions two classes of demons, which are attributed to man in pairs and dispense good and evil to him; in this, they can be influenced by human action. This idea has nothing in common with the evidence that has been analysed. Whereas formal aspects do not suggest a Chaldaean origin, the quotation as χρῆσμός and not as λόγιον speaks strongly against it. Cf. Seng (2016e).

cosmological rank above them. Whether, in addition, there are good elemental or nature spirits, cannot be decided; at best this could be applied to the ὕπαυγοι, directly belonging to the moon, which may be associated with fire. That the OC should call such beings demons is, however, improbable, given that the meaning of the expression is always negative in the testimonies. The idea of demons as mediating beings according to Plato, *Symposium* 202d13–203a8 is taken up by the cosmologically effective συνοχεῖς as well as by the adjective διαπύρθμοις, whose reference, however, remains unclear. Whether these middle-beings are demons, according to Chaldaean understanding and parlance, is difficult to say, but once again unlikely. Angels are closely connected to the ascent of souls, as well as to theurgists, who accomplish it ritually. Whether they can be reckoned to be good demons or are explicitly not to be counted as a group of demons must remain an open question.¹⁸⁴

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What is a *Daimon* for Porphyry?

Luc Brisson*

Porphyry seems to have been the first to situate the particularly complex entity known as “demon” within a complete theological system. He takes his inspiration from Plotinus, who was himself strongly inspired by the Stoics, while remaining faithful to Plato.

Before Porphyry

In epic poems, in the *Homeric Hymns*, in tragedy, and in the Orphic poems, the term δαίμων frequently appears as a synonym of θεός;¹ this connection between the two terms is also obvious in Porphyry. In epic poems, δαίμων can designate an indeterminate divine power that unleashes the wind on the sea,² or that inspires reckless thoughts,³ a divinity linked to chance⁴ and fate.⁵ In the tragedians, one finds a representation of the δαίμων as a vengeful spirit.⁶ Finally, the term δαίμων could be considered as the posthumous title of some exceptional men.⁷

In Plato, the term designates an entity intermediary between the gods and the world whose task it is to administer it, as in the myth told in the *Statesman*,⁸ or in the *Symposium*,⁹ between the gods and human beings. Particularly by means of oracles, the demon transmits the gods’ instructions to human beings; they also convey the prayers of human beings up to the gods. We can therefore understand why Eros appears as the ideal intermediary, between the gods and human beings, between human beings in the context of amorous relations,

* I would like to thank Michael Chase for translating this article into English.

1 For systematic references, see Timotin (2012). This book was very useful to me.

2 *Odyssey* XIX 201; XII 169.

3 *Iliad* IX 600.

4 *Odyssey* XVIII 256; XIX 129.

5 Euripides, *Orestes* 1545.

6 Aeschylus, *Persians* 619–621 in particular.

7 In the myth of the races, Hesiod (*Works and days* 121–126) grants the men of the Golden Age the title of δαίμονες. See Plato’s adaptation of this myth in *Republic* iii 415a–c.

8 Plato, *Statesman*, 271c–274d.

9 Plato, *Symposium*, 203a–e.

and finally within the human being, between the body and the soul. To this process of mediation one may connect the assimilation, in the human soul, of the intellect to a δαίμων, for the intellect is the activity that makes possible the establishment of a link between the divine and the human being, assimilated to a celestial plant,¹⁰ whose roots are in the head. Also associated with this δαίμων is the notion of happiness, called εὐδαιμονία in ancient Greek, literally “whose δαίμων (the intellect) is in a good shape.” Finally, the demonic sign, that divine voice that prevents Socrates from acting in certain circumstances, is connected with this intermediary.¹¹

In the *Epinomis*,¹² a treatise attributed to Plato but which is not by him, one finds the first attempt to establish a hierarchy among divine beings in which the δαίμονες find their place. The general thesis defended by the author of the *Epinomis* is the following: philosophy is identified with astronomy, which is defined as the science of the heavenly bodies, considered as the highest divine beings, to which, moreover, a cult must be rendered. In this context, demons are situated between the visible gods, that is the stars, and human beings. They are made of either ether or air.¹³ If we believe Plutarch,¹⁴ moreover, Xenocrates, second head of the older Academy, considered demons to be intermediary beings in the manner of the *Symposium*, but associated them with the isosceles triangle, in reference to the *Timaeus*.¹⁵

With the renewal of Platonism at the beginning on the Roman Empire, which can be defined as a rejection of the aristotelianised and stoicised interpretation of Plato promoted by the New Academy, demonology assumes considerable importance. For Philo of Alexandria,¹⁶ the entire universe is provided with souls, and the souls in the air are precisely the angels of which *Genesis*

10 Plato, *Timaeus* 90a: “Now we ought to think of the most sovereign part of our soul as god’s gift to us, given to be our guiding spirit. This, of course, is the type of soul that, as we maintain, resides in the top part of our bodies. It raises us up away from the earth and toward what is akin to us in heaven, as though we are plants grown not from the earth but from heaven. In saying this, we speak absolutely correctly. For it is from heaven, the place which our souls were originally born, that the divine part suspends our head, i.e., our root, and so keeps our whole body erect” (trans. D.J. Zeyl).

11 See Brisson (2005a).

12 Ps.-Plato, *Epinomis* 984d–985b.

13 Ps.-Plato, *Epinomis* 984e–985a.

14 Plutarch, *De facie in orbe lunae* 943e–944a.

15 Plato, *Timaeus* 31b–32b. The gods are represented by the equilateral triangle, the δαίμονες by the isosceles triangle, and human beings by the scalene triangle (see Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 416c4–d4).

16 Philo, *De gigantibus* 6–18; *De somniis* 1 134–143; *De plantatione* 12–13.

6:3, speaks, which are to be identified with the demons mentioned by the Greek philosophers. Such demons are the instruments of divine providence, which excludes the existence of evil demons. For his part, Apuleius¹⁷ establishes a twofold hierarchy among living beings, physical and theological. One has four parts: fire, air, earth, and water; while the other has three, comprising the supreme god, the star-gods, and the demons. Different degrees of providence correspond to this hierarchy. The approach is similar in Maximus of Tyre.¹⁸ In contrast, Alcinoos, in his handbook intended for teaching Plato's doctrines, the *Didaskalikos*, does not seem to have shown any particular interest in demonology. He does not establish a twofold hierarchy, physical and theological, among living beings, and does not connect the doctrine of the demons with that of providence.¹⁹

In Porphyry

Porphyry's theological system²⁰ takes its inspiration from that of Plotinus, but is much more systematic.

The First God

According to Porphyry's treatise *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*,²¹ at the summit of the hierarchy is the first god: "The first god, being incorporeal, unmoved and indivisible,²² neither contained in anything nor bound by himself,²³ needs nothing external, as has been said.²⁴"²⁵ In Porphyry, this god seems to have been less separate from the Intellect, and hence from the Soul, than the

17 Apuleius, *De dogm. Platon* I 11; *De deo Socratis* I, 116; II–III, 121–124.

18 Maximus of Tyre, *Discourse* VIII and IX.

19 Alcinoos, *Didaskalikos* 171.15–20.

20 Described in the *De Abstinencia*; this system seems to be the one defended in the *Letter to Anebo the Egyptian* (ed. Saffrey-Segonds, Première partie: Les êtres supérieurs, fragments 2–32). On this subject, see Porphyre, *De l'abstinence*, ed. Bouffartigue-Patillon, vol. I, xxix–xliv.

21 Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, trans. G. Clark. We also use Porphyre, *De l'abstinence*, éd. Bouffartigue-Patillon. The *De Abstinencia* is here abbreviated DA and the English translation is G. Clark's sometimes modified.

22 These are the predicates of the incorporeal; see Porphyry, *Sentences* 1–3.

23 The incorporeal is everywhere and nowhere; see Porphyry, *Sentence* 31.

24 DA I 57, 3. Naturally, the first god is self-sufficient.

25 DA II 37, 1.

One-Good of Plotinus.²⁶ The typical formula that qualifies him is ὁ ἐπὶ πάντι (‘‘he who is above all things’’).²⁷ The priest of this supreme god is the philosopher.²⁸ The appropriate cult for this god is, quite naturally, silence: ‘‘To the god who rules over all, as a wise man said,²⁹ we shall offer nothing perceived by the senses, either by burning or in words. For there is nothing material, which is not impure to the immaterial. So even *logos* expressed in speech is not appropriate for him, nor yet internal *logos* when it has been contaminated by the passion of the soul.’’³⁰ But we shall worship him in pure silence and with pure thoughts about him.’’³¹ This very fine text may be compared to this other passage: ‘‘So, inasmuch as the father of all is simpler and purer and more self-sufficient, being established far from the material reflection, the one who approaches him should be pure and holy in all respects, beginning with the body and culminating in the inner man, assigning to each of his parts, or altogether to what is his, the holiness that is natural to each.’’³² These lines evoke, it seems, the soul’s union with the supreme god.³³ It should be noted, moreover, that the use of the term ‘‘father’’ associated with the first god may well refer to the *Chaldaean Oracles*,³⁴ where the first god is called Father, and is at the opposite extreme from matter, which Plotinus describes as a ‘‘ghostly image of a bulk.’’³⁵ The soul’s approach to this father and its union with him³⁶ demands the practice of all the virtues.³⁷ This supreme god corresponds to the One-Good of Plotinus, with which, in the *Life of Plotinus*,³⁸ Porphyry, who was seventy years old at the time, says he was united only once, whereas Plotinus had had this experience several times in his life.

26 On Porphyry’s doctrine, see Hadot (1966).

27 See *DA* I 57, 2; II 34, 2; and III 5, 4; *Life of Porphyry* 23, 26; Eusebius, *Preparatio Evangelica* IV 5, 1.

28 *DA* II 49, 1.

29 Perhaps Apollonius of Tyana; cf. Eusebius, *Preparatio Evangelica* IV 10, 7.

30 A Stoic distinction.

31 *DA* II 34, 2. For silent worship, see also *Corpus Hermeticum* I, 31; XIII, 17–21.

32 *DA* I 57, 3. The words ὑλικῆς ἐμφάσεως means the body, that is a reflection on the matter described as a mirror; see Plotinus, III 6 [26], 7, 25. The ‘‘inner man’’ refers to *Republic* IX, 598a7.

33 Plotinus, VI, 7 [38], 34, 28–31.

34 *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 1 Des Places.

35 Plotinus, III 6 [26], 7, 13: εἰδωλον καὶ φάντασμα ὄγκου, trans. A.H. Armstrong.

36 See Brisson (2005b).

37 See Porphyry, *Sentence* 32, and Brisson (2006).

38 Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, chap. 23.

The Other Gods

The other gods are described as “particular (μερικοί).”³⁹ This qualification indicates that the other gods are multiple. They belong to very different groups, who are distributed between the level of the Intellect and that of the Soul.

The Intelligible Gods

Since the Intellect follows immediately upon the One, the intelligible gods, offspring of the supreme god,⁴⁰ come first. Their priest is also the philosopher, who must add to pure silence the singing of hymns:⁴¹ “For sacrifice is an offering to each god from what he has given, with which he sustains us and maintains our essence in being.”⁴² The intelligible is the food of the soul;⁴³ this is why Porphyry establishes a parallel between this act and that of a peasant offering a part of his harvest as an act of thanks. The Platonic maxim that seeks “assimilation to god” must be understood as assimilation to the Intellect, through which the soul can unite with the One. Plotinus⁴⁴ also recommends the singing of hymns, and Porphyry mentions the Pythagorean practice in this context: “The Pythagoreans, who are committed students of numbers and lines, made their main offering to the gods from these. They call one number Athena [7], another Artemis [2], and likewise another Apollo [1]; and again they call one Justice [4] and another Temperance [9],⁴⁵ and similarly for geometrical figures.”^{46,47} In a Platonic context, the goal is by no means to relate the intelligible forms to specific traditional divinities, but simply to contemplate the intelligible forms as such. The critical remark about those philosophers who busy themselves with statues⁴⁸ could well be directed against Amelius, Porphyry’s fellow-disciple at Plotinus’s school,⁴⁹ who used to make the rounds at the temples. A bit further on, we find a mention of the sacrifices that should be offered by philosophers: “Holiness, both internal and external, belongs to a godly man, who strives to fast from the passions of the soul just as he fasts from those foods which arouse

39 DA I 57, 2.

40 DA II 34, 4. The term “offspring” (ἔκγονος) is, as it were, called for by the qualifier “father” applied to the supreme god.

41 See Pernot (1993). See also Proclus, *Hymnes et prières*, trad. Saffrey; *Proclus’ Hymns*, Van den Berg (2001).

42 DA II 34, 4.

43 This metaphor comes from *Phaedrus* 248a–c.

44 Plotinus, II 9 [33], 9, 33.

45 Hymns to numbers were attributed to the Orphics: fr. 309–317 Kern = 695–705 Bernabé.

46 See Steel (2007).

47 DA II 36, 1–2.

48 DA II 35, 1.

49 Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 10.

passions, who feeds on wisdom about the gods and becomes like them by right thinking about the divine; a man sanctified by intellectual sacrifice (ἱερωμένου τῆ νοερά θυσία), who approaches the god in white clothing, and with a truly pure dispassion in the soul, with a body which is light and not weighed down with the alien juices of other creatures or with the passions of the soul.”⁵⁰ In this paragraph, we find a more precise mention of the cult that the philosopher must render to the intelligible gods.

The Gods Associated with the Soul

Then comes the domain of the Soul, upon which we find little interesting informations in the *DA*. First and foremost, one finds the world soul, for the world is a living being, and is therefore made up of a body and a soul; then the souls of the visible gods that are the heavenly bodies, the souls of the invisible gods that are the demons, and even the souls of human beings and animals. All these souls are linked to a body, which in the case of the invisible gods is the *pneuma*, whereas for mankind this body, which initially is also a *pneuma*, is, at the end of its descent to earth, an organism containing the four elements.

The World Soul

What one finds on the world soul corresponds to what Plato and Plotinus say about it: “Nor does the soul of the world, which by nature has three-dimensionality⁵¹ and self-movement;⁵² its nature is to choose beautiful and well-ordered movement,⁵³ and to move the body of the world in accordance with the best reasons (*logoi*).⁵⁴ It has received the body into itself and envelops it,⁵⁵ and yet is incorporeal and has no share in any passion.⁵⁶”⁵⁷ The allusion to reasons gives a clear indication that we are in a Plotinian context.⁵⁸

50 *DA* II 45, 4.

51 Perhaps an allusion to the definition of the soul by Xenocrates, according to Aristotle in the *De anima* I 2, 404b16–30.

52 See Plato, *Phaedrus* 247a–b. The intelligible is food for the intellect.

53 The soul is defined as the principle of spontaneous motion (*Phaedrus* 245c–d). These motions are beautiful and orderly, for they are circular and obey a mathematical harmony (*Timaeus* 36c–d).

54 The *logoi* are the Forms that are present in the Soul in the mode of succession, and no longer of simultaneity as are the Forms in the Intellect.

55 See Plato, *Timaeus* 34b, 36e. The soul is everywhere in the body of the world, but nowhere because it is incorporeal.

56 Since the soul is incorporeal, it cannot be subject to affections, according to Porphyry’s *Sentence* 21.

57 *DA* II 37, 2.

58 See Brisson (1999).

The Visible Gods, That is, the Heavenly Bodies

Next comes the world itself, that is, the fixed stars and the wandering stars, in particular the sun and the moon, since they are made up of a soul and a body: “To the other gods, the world and the fixed stars—visible gods composed of soul and body—we should return thanks as has been described, by sacrifices of inanimate things.”⁵⁹ In a more positive sense, one must proceed as follows: “But for the gods within the heaven, the wandering and the fixed (the sun should be taken as leader of them all and the moon second) we should kindle fire which is already kin to them, and we shall do what the theologian⁶⁰ says. He says not a single animate creature should be sacrificed, but offerings should not go beyond barley-grain and honey and the fruits of the earth, including flowers. ‘Let not the fire burn on a bloodstained alter’ and the rest of that he says, for what need is there to copy out the words?”⁶¹ Sacrifices of plants pertained to the first men, who burned these plants to honor the heavenly bodies. Hence this remark by Porphyry on a practice of his time: “It is for them that we preserve an underlying fire in the temples, this being the thing most like them.”⁶² In the *Timaeus*, fire is the element associated with the dwelling of the gods.⁶³ For the philosopher, however, the mere fact of contemplating the stars is already a form of cult.⁶⁴ Here, Porphyry coincides with the position of the *Epinomis*, where philosophy was fused with astronomy.

The Invisible Gods, That is, the Demons

Finally, we come to the invisible gods, identified with the demons: “So there remains the multitude of invisible gods, whom Plato called *daimones* without distinction.”⁶⁵ This remark refers to this famous passage of the *Timaeus*, which, after evoking the celestial gods, moves on to the traditional gods:

To describe the dancing movements of these gods, their juxtapositions and the back-circlings and advances of their circular courses on themselves, to tell which of the gods come into line with one another, at their

59 DA II 37, 3.

60 This could well be Orpheus, but it is a Pythagoreanized Orpheus.

61 DA II 36, 3–4.

62 DA II 5, 2.

63 See the *Timaeus* 39e–40a.

64 DA II 35, 1.

65 DA II 37, 4. The full grading: god, archangel, angel, demon, archon, soul (*Letter to Anebo*, fr. 28a Saffrey-Segonds) is not taken into account here.

conjunctions and how many of them are in opposition, and in what order and at which times they pass in front of or behind one another, so that some are occluded from our view to reappear once again, thereby bringing terrors and portents of things to come to those who cannot reason—to tell all this without the use of visible models⁶⁶ would the labor spent in vain. We will do with this account, and so let this be the conclusion to our discussion of the nature of the visible and generated gods.

As for the other gods it is beyond our task to know and to speak of how they came to be (Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων δαιμόνων εἰπεῖν καὶ γινῶναι τὴν γένεσιν). We should accept on faith the assertion of those figures of the past who claim to be the offspring of gods. They must surely have been well informed about their own ancestors. So we cannot avoid believing the children of gods, even though their accounts lack plausible or compelling proofs. Rather, we should follow custom and believe them, on the ground that what they claim to be reporting are matters of their own concern. Accordingly, let us accept their account of how these gods came to be and state what it is. Earth and Heaven gave birth to Ocean and Tethys, who in turn gave birth to Phorcys, Cronus and Rhea and all the gods in that generation. Cronus and Rhea gave birth to Zeus and Hera, as well as all those siblings who are called by names we know. These in turn gave birth to yet another generation. In any case, when all the gods had come to be, both the ones who make their rounds conspicuously and the ones who present themselves only to the extent that they are willing, the demiurge of the universe spoke to them.⁶⁷

This passage is highly interesting, because it considers the terms δαίμων and θεός as synonyms, and especially because it reminds us that a god, since he consists of a soul and body, is not immortal by nature: his immortality depends on a decision on the part of the demiurge, who has fashioned him. It should also be noted that Plato is very clear on the subject: the traditional gods are placed on the same level as the heavenly bodies. Porphyry continues by pointing out that some of these traditional gods have received a name, while others have not. Those who have been given a name receive honors like the other gods, and granted a cult; those who have not received a name also receive honors and are the object of a cult, albeit an obscure one. Whereas popular religion considers

66 An armillary sphere.

67 Plato, *Timaeus* 40c–41a.

that all demons can become angry if they are neglected,⁶⁸ Porphyry makes a very clear distinction between the good demons, who do only good, and the bad ones, who are maleficent.

All demons are thus made up of a soul and body. This body, however, is not a terrestrial body, but a vehicle made of *pneuma*.⁶⁹ Yet in what does this *pneuma*, to which the souls of the demons are associated, consist? This may, of course, be a case of a Platonic recuperation of a Stoic notion. The Stoics considered the world to be a divine, living unit, organized according to rational laws and governed in its slightest details by a providence from which all transcendence is excluded. At the basis of their cosmology, they placed the following two principles. One can only be affected: it is matter (ὑλη) lacking all determination, all motion, and all initiative, while the other has the ability to act, and brings to matter form, quality, and motion. This second principle is “reason”⁷⁰ (λόγος). In this context, the λόγος can also receive the name of “god”, for its action makes it, as it were, the artisan of the universe, but an artisan whose art resides in all the productions of nature. By taking the demand for the indeterminacy of matter to its limit, Stoicism was forced to recognize in the λόγος alone the cause of the most elementary physical characteristics, those of the four elements (fire, air, water, and earth) and those of the result of the combination of these four elements in sensible things. This is why we may speak of Stoic “corporealism” or even “materialism”: the action of the λόγος on matter and bodies remains a material, corporeal activity.

In addition, the active principle, which the Stoics call λόγος, also has physical name, “fire”. This is not concrete fire, but a fire that unites within itself all the powers of concrete fire. It is an energy, and the three other elements (air, water, earth) correspond to the three states in which it can also be found: gas, liquid, solid. This fire that is the λόγος identified with god can also be conceived as an igneous breath, the omnipresent πνεῦμα. In all the parts of the world penetrated by the πνεῦμα and informed by it, fire, which is hot, is associated with expansion, while air, which is cold, is characterized by contraction. This oscillation, which animates all bodies and ensures their cohesion, is called “tension” (τόνος), a tension that is diversified according to the regions of the universe. It assumes the name of “tenor” or “maintenance” (ἔξις) in inanimate solids, of “constitution” (φύσις) in plants, and of “soul” (ψυχή) in living beings.⁷¹ In all

68 DA II 37, 5.

69 On the *pneuma* in Porphyry, see Kissling (1922); Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, ed. Dodds, 318–319; Deuse (1983), 218–227.

70 As one will soon realize, this term should not be taken in its usual sense.

71 SVF II, 1013 [= Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* IX 78].

these cases, the function of this corporeal principle is to maintain cohesion in all bodies, including, and above all, the body of the world. Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Porphyry criticize this notion of *pneuma* because it remains corporeal and does not enable a distinction between body and soul. Yet Plotinus⁷² and Porphyry make it the body of the invisible gods, and this paradoxical function explains why *pneuma* is not translated here, for it has no equivalent in a modern language. In general, this body is not perceptible by the senses; sometimes, however, evil demons can, as we shall see, make themselves visible by projecting images on their *pneuma*.⁷³

Quite naturally, the *pneuma*, which is subject to affections, is liable to be destroyed: “The *pneuma*, insofar as it is corporeal, is passible and corruptible. Though it is so bound by souls that the form endures for a long time, it is not eternal; for it is reasonable to suppose that something continuously flows from them and that they are fed.”⁷⁴ In the good *daimones*, this is in balance as in the bodies of those that are visible, but in the malevolent it is out of balance; they allot more to their passible element, and there is no evil that they do not attempt to do to the regions around the earth.⁷⁵ It is thus the relation of their soul to their body that allows the good demons to be distinguished from the bad ones.

Demons can be good or bad, according to whether their soul dominates their vehicle or their *pneuma*, which, because it is corporeal, is subject to affections: “All the souls which, having issued from the universal soul, administer large parts of the regions below the moon resting on their *pneuma* but controlling it by reason, should be regarded as good *daimones* ...”⁷⁶ It is hard to determine whether the formula ὄσαι μὲν ψυχὰι τῆς ὄλης ἐκπεφυκυῖαι implies that these souls come from the hypostasis Soul or from the world soul.⁷⁷ It is also quite difficult to understand this other formula: ἐπεριδόμεναι μὲν πνεύματι. One thinks right away of the myth of the *Phaedrus*, in which all living beings, including gods and

72 We find this doctrine of the breath assimilated to a body in Plotinus III, 6 [26], 5. 22–29: “But the purification of the part subject to affections is the waking up from inappropriate images and not seeing them, and its separation is effected by not inclining much downwards and not having a mental picture of the things below. But separating it could also mean taking away the things from which it is separated when it is not standing over a vital breath (*pneuma*) turbid from gluttony and sated with impure meats but that in which it resides is so fine, that it can ride on it in peace.” (Translation by A.H. Armstrong modified).

73 See Porphyry, *Ad Gaurum* 6 (1), 6–11 and maybe Synesius of Cyrene, *De insomniis* 19, 2.

74 See Porphyry, *Sentence* 29.

75 *DA* II 39, 2.

76 *DA* II 38, 2.

77 The ambiguity is already present in Plotinus IV 3 [27], where the expression designates-

demons, are provided with a soul and a vehicle, the *pneuma*, the soul consisting of a driver who is reason, mounted on a chariot that is his vehicle, and of two horses, one good, corresponding to ardor, and another one bad, corresponding to desire. In Plato, no specification is made of the nature of this vehicle, and all the gods and demons are good.

The Good Demons

Porphyry takes up a tradition that goes back to Plato, according to which the good demons, intermediary between the gods and the world, ensure the government of the sublunary world: these demons care for animals, harvests, and atmospheric phenomena, particularly rain and wind.⁷⁸ These demons are also the intermediaries between gods and men: “Among them must be numbered the ‘transmitters’,⁷⁹ as Plato⁸⁰ calls them, who report ‘what comes from people to the gods and what comes from to gods to people’, carrying up our prayers to the gods as if to judges, and carrying back to us their advice and warnings through oracles.”⁸¹ In addition, they preside over liberal arts and techniques.⁸² In short, demons administer the sublunary world. This is a theme that goes back to the *De mundo*, a treatise attributed to Aristotle, but which contains several Stoic elements. Moreover, as is the case for Socrates’ divine sign, the good demons warn us, in so far as is possible, of the dangers to which the bad demons expose us.⁸³

The Evil Demons

By accepting the existence of evil demons, Porphyry departs from most of the Platonic tradition which acknowledges only good demons: “But the souls which do not control the *pneuma* adjacent to them, but are mostly controlled by it, are for that very reason too much carried away, then the angers and appetites of the

the hypostasis Soul in chapter 1, 32–33 and the world soul in chapter 2, 34–35. For parallels pointing toward the world soul, see *Corpus Hermeticum* x 7; Macrobius, *In Somnium Scipionis* I 6, 20.

78 DA II 38, 2.

79 Τὸς πορθμεύοντας.

80 Plato, *Symposium* 202e3–4: Ἐρμηνεύον καὶ διαπορθμεύον θεοὶς τὰ παρ’ ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν.

81 DA II 38, 3. One finds this representation, which comes from the *Symposium* (202d–203a) in Maximus of Tyre, Discourse VIII; Apuleius, *De dogm. Platon.* I 12, 204; *De deo Socratis* 6. 132–133; Plutarch, *De Iside* 26 and *De defectu* 471a–b.

82 DA II 38, 2.

83 DA II 41, 3.

pneuma are set off. These souls are also *daimones*, but may reasonably be called maleficent.”⁸⁴ These harmful demons are located in the region closest to the earth⁸⁵ and are subject to affections. The existence of evil demons allows one to account for evil in this world, and for deviant religious practices. Indeed, these demons “... are themselves responsible for the sufferings that occur around the earth: plagues, crop failures, earthquakes, droughts and the like ...”⁸⁶ They also stir up disturbances among mankind and in society: “They themselves rejoice in everything that is likewise inconsistent and incompatible; slipping on, as it were, the masks of the other gods, they profit from our lack of sense, winning over the masses because they inflame people’s appetites with lust and longing for wealth and power and pleasure, and also with empty ambition from which arises civil conflicts and wars and kindred events.”⁸⁷ Finally, they give rise to reprehensible religious practices: “Then they prompt us to supplications and sacrifices, as if the beneficent gods were angry. They do such things because they want to dislodge us from a correct concept of the gods and convert us to themselves.”⁸⁸ They inspire human sacrifices, rejoice in bloody sacrifices, and promote the practice of sorcery.⁸⁹

In fact, the evil demons allow a reconciliation between philosophical religion and critique of popular religion. It is the evil demons that give rise to the practices condemned by philosophy. If the evil demons come to wear the masks of the gods, it is because of their description by the poets, and of certain positions of the philosophers who borrowed heavily from tradition, whose authority was thereby reinforced.

Unlike the good demons, the evil demons become visible from time to time. Various forms can come to be imprinted on their invisible *pneuma*: “All these, and those that have the opposite power, are unseen and absolutely imperceptible to human senses.⁹⁰ For they are not clad in a solid body, nor do they all have one shape, but they take many forms.⁹¹ The shapes which imprint and are stamped upon their *pneuma* are sometimes manifest and sometimes invisible,

84 DA II 38, 4; see 58, 2. The word *ὄρμη* refers to an important notion in stoicism, the impulse to action.

85 DA II 39, 3. Influence by the *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 149 des Places. See H. Seng in this book.

86 DA II 40, 1.

87 DA II 40, 3.

88 DA II 40, 2.

89 DA II 42, 1–3. See Graf (1994).

90 This is already the case in *Epinomis* 984e.

91 See *Sentence* 29.

and the worse demons⁹² sometimes change their shape.⁹³ We find a detailed description of this process in the *Ad Gaurum*: “For instance, to begin with the last point, if we could imprint on our body what we represent—like the demons who, as the story goes, manifest the forms of their representations on the airy breath that is associated with them or connected with them, not by coloring it, but by manifesting the reflections of their imagination, in some ineffable way, on the surrounding air, as in a mirror—one could infer ...”⁹⁴ These evil demons, who are closer to the earth, masquerade as gods, and lead mortals astray by their change of forms. We find this conception of the demons in a Christian author such as Calcidius,⁹⁵ who identifies angels with the good demons, and evil demons with the henchmen of Satan (chap. 133). It is practically impossible to establish a direct historical link between Calcidius and Porphyry, but one may imagine that if Calcidius did not know Porphyry, both may depend on a common source.

In his critique of popular religion, Porphyry coincides with his adversaries, the Christians.⁹⁶ Yet whereas popular pagan religion was fiercely denounced by the Gnostics and by Christian apologists, it was only partially denounced by Porphyry. Hermetic literature,⁹⁷ the *Chaldean Oracles*,⁹⁸ Gnostics, and Christians⁹⁹ considered that the world in which we live is subject to the malevolent power of demons. Porphyry sought a conciliatory position that did not hesitate to criticize popular religion, but tried to make it partially compatible with philosophical religion. The main stumbling block¹⁰⁰ was blood sacrifice, the most important act of the religion of the city, which implied putting animals to death and eating their flesh.

An entire theology and demonology were attached to sacrifice (34–50). Different sacrifices must be offered to gods that differ in rank (37). To the highest god, one cannot offer corporeal sacrifices (34), for a sacrifice must be adapted to the nature of the god to whom it is offered (35). One must follow the example of the Pythagoreans, who offered numbers to the gods (36). Sacrifices attract the

92 See Calcidius (§ 135).

93 *DA* II 39, 1.

94 Porphyry, *Ad Gaurum* 6 (1), 6–11, trans. M. Chase.

95 Calcidius, *Commentaire au Timée de Platon*, ed. Bakhouché, § 127–136. On demons, see Den Boeft (1977); Timotin (2012), 132–141.

96 See Timotin (2012), 131–132 and 209–215.

97 *Corpus Hermeticum* IX 5; XVI 13–15; *Asclepius* 25–26.

98 *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 89–90 des Places. On these evil demons, see H. Seng in this book.

99 Paul, *Ephes.* 6:12; *Cor* 2:6–8.

100 Cf. Detienne (1979).

evil demons who, unlike the good ones, feed on blood and burned flesh (38–43). In fact, it is the consumption of animal flesh that constitutes a source of impurity for mankind (44–45). Flesh attracts evil demons (46). Contact with an inferior soul sullies the human soul (47–49).

Finally, we understand why the consumption of animal flesh is contrary to the supreme goal of philosophy, which is to tend toward union with god (50). Divination does not require animal sacrifices, for there are good demons who indicate to the good person, by means of dreams, signs, and voices, what he or she must do (51–53). Although, in some cases, one must allow animal sacrifice, nothing forces us to consume the flesh of the victims. Indeed, even if we accept that there were human sacrifices in the past, nothing authorizes us to eat our fellow-humans (53–57). Although it is not clear that Porphyry always accepted the doctrine of metempsychosis,¹⁰¹ according to which the soul could pass from one human or animal body to another as a function of the quality of its previous existence, one can assume that for a Platonist like him, putting an animal to death, and especially eating it, could not fail to be considered as homicide and an act of cannibalism.

The Human Soul

It is in this context that the human being must be situated: the being whose soul has fallen into an earthly body, and whose goal is to rise back up and return to the principle that is his origin. It should be noted that on the occasion of the human soul's descent from the star where it was located, to come and establish itself in a body to which it becomes attached at birth,¹⁰² the soul becomes laden with *pneuma*. In a way, human soul is a kind of demon inhabiting a body.¹⁰³

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101 See Deuse (1983); Smith (1984).

102 See Porphyry in the *Ad Gaurum*.

103 See Brisson (2018). The issue of the personal demon in Porphyry is dealt with in this book by Dorian D. Greenbaum and by Nilufer Akçay, and in Plotinus by Thomas Vidart.

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Porphyry of Tyre on the *Daimon*, Birth and the Stars

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Introduction

The works of Porphyry of Tyre—polymath, philosopher and astrologer¹—have enjoyed an upsurge in scholarly interest particularly in the last twenty years. This attention has forced a reassessment of earlier verdicts on Porphyry's thought. From formerly having been accused of being 'gâté par trop de souplesse'² and 'no consistent or creative thinker',³ his reputation has been rehabilitated: 'a very erudite intellectual with an amazing knowledge of the history of philosophy, an interest in religion, rhetoric, and the culture of his time';⁴ 'It is not inappropriate to compare Porphyry with Plutarch, who shared many of the same interests ...';⁵ Recent works featuring Porphyry have concentrated on religious issues (in some cases Christian, and the topic of salvation),⁶ identity and ethnography;⁷ and ritual, oracles and divination.⁸ Some have touched on the topic of Porphyry's interest in astrology (mostly tangentially)⁹ as well as his conception of the *daimōn*.¹⁰ However, aside from my own

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1 For evidence supporting this designation, see my recent book, Greenbaum (2016), 236, 251, 266–273; also Addey (2014a), 104–106, 117–124; also below, 'Porphyry on Astrology', esp. n. 22.

2 Bidez (1913), 132.

3 Dodds (1951), 286–287.

4 Karamanolis and Sheppard (2007), 4.

5 Smith (2007), 12.

6 Simmons (2015); Proctor (2014).

7 Johnson (2013).

8 Addey (2014a).

9 E.g., Johnson (2013); astrology is more central to his topic in Johnson (2015), 186–201.

10 Timotin (2012), 208–215; Alt (2005), 79–80; Nance (2002); however, Nance's point of view is somewhat blinkered as to Porphyry's other wide-ranging interests and how these might affect how he writes about *daimones*. See also Luc Brisson's and Nilufer Ackay's articles in this volume.

work,¹¹ no one has, as yet, considered how astrology has been integrated into Porphyry's ideas about birth and the *daimōn*, to say nothing of the relationship of the soul's attachment to the body at birth. This article aims to remedy that lack.

The focus of my investigation will be the way in which Porphyry combines the functions and interactions of the *daimōn*, humans and souls with his interest in astrology, particularly the astrological moment of birth. The primary texts I shall be looking at are *On What is Up to Us*, *To Gaurus on How Embryos are Ensouled*¹² and parts of Porphyry's understudied astrological treatise, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*,¹³ which integrates with the other two texts. A close reading of these texts in regard to the *daimōn*, astrology and when the soul comes into the body will demonstrate a coherent philosophical and astrological line followed by Porphyry in these treatises.¹⁴

In looking at Porphyry's astrological knowledge, this essay will also discuss astrological terms that relate etymologically to terms used by Porphyry in philosophical contexts, even if Porphyry does not make a specific connection between them. The point of giving these examples is not to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Porphyry equated, or even explicitly connected, such terms and doctrines. It is to show, in demonstrating the astrological knowledge base that would have been available to Porphyry as an astrologer, underlying similarities between the use of terms in astrological and philosophical contexts.

Porphyry on *Daimones*, Astrology and the Myth of Er

Porphyry on Daimones

Porphyry's abiding interest in *daimones* is revealed in a number of his works: *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, *Philosophy from Oracles*, *Life of Plotinus*, *Letter to Anebo*, *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey*, *Commentary on Plato's*

11 Greenbaum (2016), 247–255, 266–275.

12 The ascription of this text to Porphyry has mostly been agreed upon by scholarship, *pace* Barnes (2011), 109 n. 22, who calls it, in relation to Porphyry's authorship, 'doubtful'. But to my mind James Wilberding's argument for authenticity, expanding on Kalbfleisch's, is persuasive: Wilberding (2011), 7–10, esp. 9–10.

13 For the argument for Porphyry's authorship of this treatise (which has been accepted by most scholarship on the topic), see Greenbaum (2016), 266–270.

14 This discussion follows a holistic approach in line with recent scholarship (e.g. Johnson [2013], 13–14), in contrast to, e.g. Bidez's approach (1913), dating Porphyry's works by their so-called intellectual development.

Timaeus, *On What is Up to Us* and *To Gaurus*. Each of these has a different goal in mind. In *On Abstinence*, Porphyry defines and classifies the different kinds of *daimones* existing in the world, both good and evil (especially in relation to animals and blood sacrifice). The *Life of Plotinus* recounts the famous episode in which Plotinus's personal *daimōn* is conjured by an Egyptian and is found to be not merely a *daimōn*, but a godlike *daimōn* (10.14–33). In *Philosophy from Oracles*, the mention of *daimones*, especially those of less than sterling qualities, allows Eusebius to twist Porphyry's words to suit his polemical agenda of conflating gods and *daimones* and therefore condemning the pagan gods as merely evil demons. In the *Cave of the Nymphs* Porphyry mentions the 'natal *daimōn*' (35), discusses the descent and ascent of the soul through the Gates of Cancer and Capricorn (22–23) and notes that the rising places belong to the gods, but the setting ones to *daimones* (29). Fragments from the mostly lost *Commentary on the Timaeus* deal with various classes of *daimones* and how they manifest. The *Letter to Anebo* provides a full-fledged inquiry into the role of *daimones* in divine hierarchies but also discusses the role of the personal *daimōn*, in theurgy proper and in astrology. In *To Gaurus*, the *daimōn*'s ability to display images via an 'airy *pneuma*' is discussed. In *On What is Up to Us*, Porphyry's commentary on the Myth of Er examines the role of the personal *daimōn* that attaches to every person upon incarnation and the astrological moment of birth.

Daimones are approached from different angles in these treatises, and it is important to take account of the context in which Porphyry's information about them occurs. Sometimes his purpose is definition, classification and differentiation, as in *De abstinentia* and the *Commentary on Timaeus*. Other times his purpose is to provide discussion on the differences between gods and *daimones*, as in parts of *De mysteriis* (quoting the *Letter to Anebo*) or on souls and *daimones* (e.g. *Comm. Tim.*, Frag. x [Sodano]). But the *Letter to Anebo* also trains much of Porphyry's focus, daimonically speaking, on the personal *daimōn*, its attributes and its purpose in the lives of humans. Thus, it is clear that Porphyry considers '*daimones*' not as a monolithic class, but as varied beings with various functions and characteristics, performing various roles. Though Porphyry is unusual in that his works provide us with a large amount of material on *daimones*, what he tells us is quite consistent with the varied cultural views of *daimones* in the Greco-Roman era and Late Antiquity.¹⁵ In this essay, the personal/natal/guardian *daimōn* will be emphasised not only because this is the

15 For overviews of the *daimōn* in cultural contexts, see Greenbaum (2016), Introduction and Chs 1, 3, 5 and 6. For extensive analysis of the *daimōn* in a Platonic context as well as literally, philosophically and religiously see Timotin (2012).

kind of *daimōn* featured in the texts under discussion, but also because it represents one of the principal areas where astrology and philosophy intermingle, particularly in Porphyry's work.¹⁶

Porphyry on Astrology

Astrology is another topic treated by Porphyry in more than one work. These include *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, the *Letter to Anebo*, *Philosophy from Oracles*, *Life of Plotinus*, *On What is Up to Us*, *To Gaurus* and, obviously, the *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*, a strictly astrological text almost certainly written for students in astrology.¹⁷ As with his works discussing *daimones*, his treatments of astrology reflect the different issues he is addressing, although his views in the different treatises are not as inconsistent as some have asserted.

In the *Life of Plotinus* Porphyry mentions Plotinus's interest in astrology, 'more precisely the [astrological] outcomes of the natal astrologers', i.e. not tables or other mathematical tools, but how the astrologers derive astrological effects,¹⁸ which would naturally be of more interest from a philosophical perspective. In *Philosophy from Oracles*, he is concerned with the proper astrological moment for beginning an oracular ritual in order to obtain a valid oracle (this reflects the astrological technique of *katarchē*, which can include beginning a task or event based on the best astrological circumstances for what the

16 I thank Akindynos Kaniamos for his felicitous phrasing here.

17 H. Tarrant, personal conversation (17 Feb 2015); I share his position, especially because Porphyry inserts his own commentary into the astrological doctrines he draws chiefly from Antiochus of Athens (mostly unacknowledged) and Ptolemy. Manuals of astrology, aimed at current or would-be practising astrologers, are common in the Greco-Roman era and Late Antiquity, and even exist in Demotic Egyptian (Winkler 2016). Whether addressed to readers generally, dedicated to a particular student (such as Ptolemy to Syrus, Vettius Valens to Marcus, or Paulus Alexandrinus to Cronammon) or written as a series of classes over time (an example of such practice is Olympiodorus's *Commentary* on Paulus Alexandrinus's *Introduction to Astrology*, which took place between May and July of 564 CE in Alexandria; see Westerink [1971] and Greenbaum [2001], vii), such texts have much in common with Porphyry's treatise on technical doctrines of astrological practice. Johnson (2013), 162–164, is uncertain as to whom the text was addressed, but surmises it was for philosophy students who might like to know something about astrology (it does not seem to have occurred to him that Porphyry could teach *astrology* students, even though Johnson compares the *Introduction* to the teaching texts of other astrologers [164 and nn. 94–95]).

18 VP 15, 23–24: ... τοῖς δὲ τῶν γενεθλιαλῶγων ἀποτελεσματικοῖς ἀκριβέστερον. See the discussion of this passage in Adamson (2008), here 265–266 (but he has missed the specific reference to natal astrologers [γενεθλιαλῶγων], whom he calls, generically, 'horoscope casters').

event or task represent).¹⁹ The same criteria apply for the consecration of statues.²⁰ In *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, he describes a cosmology that is heavily infused with astrological motifs. The *Letter to Anebo* inquires about the identity of one's personal *daimōn* vis-à-vis the astrological technique of finding a 'housemaster' (οικοδεσπότης), providing one means for learning to achieve happiness and virtue.²¹ The *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos* devotes an entire chapter to the discovery of the *oikodespotēs* and lord of the nativity.

On What is Up to Us and *To Gaurus* combine matters of soul, *daimōn* and incarnation along with astrological content. The astrological viewpoint displayed here by Porphyry is applied in a philosophical context:²² he seeks to unpack the philosophical meaning behind certain doctrines and examine the

19 See Addey (2014a), 104–105, 117–124; contrast with Johnson (2013), 78–80, 113–118.

20 See Pérez Jiménez (2007); also my discussion in Greenbaum (2016), 253–254.

21 See my analysis in Greenbaum (2016), 266–275, esp. 273–275.

22 It is important to emphasise here that Porphyry was not an opponent or denier of astrology (even if he critiques it at times), as some scholars have declared: Saffrey and Segonds (2012), 77, comm. Fr. 83: Porphyry 'mettait en doute la possibilité même de l'astrologie' (in my view they have conflated Porphyry's inquiry about finding the astrological 'housemaster' with Iamblichus's own comments about it and astrology generally); Broze and Van Liefferinge (2011), 68, 77; Tanaseanu-Döbler (2013), 75–79, who seems to have misinterpreted Porphyry's positions. She claims he 'satirically questioned', among other things, 'astrology and the quest for the personal daimon' (75); her arguments on both topics are flawed, and she seems unaware that Porphyry also wrote an astrological textbook. The mere fact that Porphyry brings astrology into so many of his treatises, and authored an astrological text to boot, should give pause to those who assume his scorn for it. Some remark that Porphyry's view of astrology was 'ambivalent': Johnson (2013), 113; or 'agnostic': Wilberding (2013), 99; *contra* Wilberding (2011), 77 n. 227, when he criticises or questions astrological doctrines, e.g. *To Gaurus*, 16.6.1: 'I have mentioned these [the Chaldeans/astrologers] not because I agree with all their doctrines ...'. But it is not uncommon for astrologers to criticise and offer improvements for astrological practices (see, e.g., Ptolemy and Vettius Valens); this does not mean they disavow it. Furthermore, one should not assume, as Johnson (2013) does, a unanimous agreement for astrologers either on physical causation by the stars or on determinism ('hard' determinism, 112, subsequently called 'astrological determinism', 115), or even a default fatalism, to which Johnson contrasts Porphyry's 'soft astrology' (114). Finally, we should not assume that Porphyry is approaching astrology from an etic position (i.e., only as a philosopher critical of astrology as a knowledge system), as Johnson does, 162–164, esp. 164. Aside from his authorship of an astrological textbook, evidence for Porphyry's *practice* of astrology appears in Hephaestio, *Apotelesmatica* (11, 10. 23–27), who quotes Porphyry as giving an example birthchart showing how to determine length of life in months (mentioning a technique also covered in the *Intr. Tetr.*). For bibliography on this chart see Heilen (2015), I, 281 (Hor. gr. 234.X.5).

parameters of fate (εἰμαρμένη) in astrology. It is clear that Porphyry acknowledges a role for the stars in the incarnation of humans (or animals in general). His purpose, especially in *On What is Up to Us*, is to tease out the parameters of *heimarmenē* in this role from what is in our power. Furthermore, he wants to make clear that astrology in both practice and philosophy is concerned not only with *heimarmenē* and the things about life that are unchangeable (over which we have no control), but with the choices we have within the confines of astrological doctrine. In this he is not unlike other Hellenistic astrologers whose practice often shows not the rigidity of astrological fatalism (if such a thing even exists in practice: I argue for its rarity)²³ but the flexibility of astrology to interpret the choices available to people as they go through life.²⁴ This is not astrological fatalism, or a ‘hard’ determinism, to use a modern locution,²⁵ but the use of astrology as a stochastic art,²⁶ a divinatory tool based more on metaphor, and symbolic and significating language (which, after all, is its conception in Mesopotamian thought),²⁷ rather than as a causal and rigid proto-‘science’.²⁸ Undeniably, views of astrologers about their craft may display

23 See Greenbaum (2016), *passim*, but esp. Chs 1, 3 and 8.

24 Here I mean not only astrology’s common practice of assigning different attributions to the same astrological phenomena (planets, zodiac signs, as well as configurations): e.g., Mercury signifies education (παιδεία), letters, testing (ἐλεγχος), speech/reason (λόγος), having siblings, interpretation etc. (Valens, *Anthology*, 1.1.37); but also interpreting events with similar astrological characteristics in different ways. See below, ‘Astrology and Choice in the Soul’s Descent’ (pp. 130–131), for an example of different interpretations for the same astrological configuration by Vettius Valens.

25 Some modern scholarship on astrology and determinism has applied a slightly different terminology. Long (1982), 170 and n. 19 uses ‘hard’ astrology, ‘which claims that heavenly bodies are both signs and causes of human affairs’, and ‘soft’ astrology, in which they are only signs. Hankinson (1988), here 132–135, prefers ‘strong’ (‘concrete predictions for particular individuals’, 132) and ‘weak’ (‘general tendencies and predispositions’, 134) astrology.

26 See Greenbaum (2010).

27 See, e.g., Oppenheim (1974); Rochberg (1996); Rochberg (2004).

28 In its modern sense. Even in antiquity, Ptolemy is the main proponent of an astrology solely dependent on physical causation. Most other Hellenistic astrological texts, and I include Porphyry’s in that category, do not emphasise, or even discuss, a physical mechanism by which astrology works (indeed, they concentrate on elucidating the doctrines and techniques used in actual practice; as working astrologers they do not, for the most part, concern themselves with philosophical issues, though some—particularly Vettius Valens—give clues about their views in this regard). For a discussion of the issue of causality in astrology, especially in regard to Plotinus’s position, see Dillon (1999), Lawrence (2007).

contradictory or inconsistent notions about the role of fate—the point is that these varied viewpoints do *not* monolithically endorse a hard determinism or extreme astrological fatalism. Furthermore, the origins of western Hellenistic astrology in Mesopotamia and Egypt mean that, when we think about astrology and fate, we must be alert for those cultures' ideas about fate and the stars, and how they may inform Hellenistic astrology, and not merely consider Greek views.²⁹

When Porphyry talks about astrology, as far as a 'choice-based' practice is concerned, he is following in the steps of Dorotheus of Sidon, Manilius and Vettius Valens.³⁰ As far as astrological philosophy is concerned, he is following his teacher Plotinus, who looked at heavenly configurations as a language of signs³¹ rather than embracing Ptolemy's theories and explanations of pure physical causation.³² Above all he is following Plato in understanding how choice and necessity are a part of every human life, and in discerning what parts of our lives, which begin with particular positions of planets and stars in the heavens, are *not* under our control, and what parts are dependent on our ability of self-determination, to choose (or not) virtue and making our lives better. In this, even the interpretation of the astrological chart can allow for different outcomes based on our choices and mentality (see more discussion of this below).

29 See Greenbaum (2016), Chs 2 and 3.

30 The first two include katarthic astrology (which includes choosing the best astrological moment to begin something) in their treatises. Hephaestio (b. 380 CE), also covers katarthic astrology; I mention him here because he follows and enlarges on Dorotheus, whom he quotes extensively. Valens' position on *heimarmenē* in astrology is complicated, but his assertions of an unalterable fate are tempered by his clear belief in the power of providence and the *daimōn* for escaping from it: see Komorowska (2004), 294–334; Greenbaum (2016), 36–44; his positions on fate and providence are not dissimilar to those in Ps.-Plutarch's *De fato*: see Komorowska (2004), 332–334, *contra* Komorowska (1995); Greenbaum (2016), 28. He even speaks of astrology as a 'heavenly theory' (οὐρανία θεωρία) revealed to him by the aid of his personal *daimōn* (*Anthology*, VI, 1.7): see Greenbaum (2016), 34 and n. 70.

31 E.g. *Enneads* II, 3 [52], 7.1–13, 8.6–9. On this topic, see Dillon (1999); Lawrence (2007); Adamson (2008); Addey (2014a), 205–208, 211.

32 Most strictly astrological texts—including Porphyry's—do not contain much, if any, philosophical exegesis of astrology: they are concerned with practical techniques. Manilius, whose Stoic tendencies shine through in his *Astronomica*; and Vettius Valens, whose philosophy is eclectic but certainly present in his *Anthology*, are probably the two ancient astrologers (along with Firmicus Maternus) most devoted to expressing any kind of philosophical view of astrology. For Ptolemy's philosophical inclinations, see Taub (1993).

Porphyry on the Myth of Er

The main treatise in which Porphyry discusses Plato's Myth of Er in *Republic* X is the essay transmitted by Johannes Stobaeus under the title Περὶ τοῦ ἐφ' ἡμῶν (*On What is Up to Us*).³³ Fragments designated as a *Commentary on Plato's Republic* also deal with the Myth of Er, and may be part of what was originally one treatise.³⁴ I shall draw on both sets of fragments in this analysis. In them we find important material on Porphyry's ideas about incarnation, the *daimōn*, and what choice and self-determination ([τὸ] αὐτεξούσιον) the soul is capable of both before birth and after.

Porphyry's concern is to demonstrate Plato's ultimate consistency in allowing human choice over part of the human lived experience (especially the moral part).³⁵ Here his idea of 'first' and 'second' lives is an important part of his argument. The souls freely choose a 'first' life (though based on a lottery giving the order in which they choose). This choice is made on a biological and gender level: to be human or animal and, for those who have chosen to be human, to be male or female (268F, 48–54 Smith). Once the choice is made, certain necessitated consequences follow. The second life has two separate components,³⁶ one of which results in necessitated consequences and one which is 'up to us'. The former we may describe as environmental or situational (268F.54–67): for example, we may be born into a first-world or third-world environment, into poverty or riches or something in-between. We may be beautiful or ugly. Each of these yields certain consequences: if we are born male into a patriarchal culture, we immediately have certain advantages that a woman would not; being born into an affluent family provides more material advantages; and the same with physical appearance. So such a component of our lives, which are the soul's choice before birth, are *no longer* up to us after we are born and begin living our lives. These, Porphyry says, are 'provided by nature or by

33 Wilberding (2011) translates 'On What is In our Power', which also conveys an accurate sense of the Greek; to use the phrase 'On Free Will', as Johnson (2013, 2015) and others have done applies a modern connotation which is not present in the Greek and which can easily mislead a modern reader. For an excellent analysis of the term ἐφ' ἡμῶν and the dangers of mis-translation, see Eliasson (2008), 14–16.

34 The two sets of fragments are in Smith (1993), 181–187F and 268–271F. For discussion of the one treatise theory, see Wilberding (2011), 123–124.

35 This is also Plotinus's aim in *Ennead* III, 4 [15].

36 I agree with the parameters of Wilberding (2013), 93–101, who discusses the 'two domains' of the second life, one of which (the environmental) is chosen by the soul before incarnation. I disagree with the assessment of Johnson (2015), 189–191 about (lack of) choice in the environmental and familial aspects of the second life.

chance'.³⁷ This accords with *heimarmenē*³⁸—what we could call the physical and environmental circumstances under which someone is born, such as an acorn (to use a popular analogy)³⁹ necessarily growing into an oak tree, not a maple or an elm (and that acorn falling either on fertile or infertile soil). These circumstances of the second life are tied in with astrology, to be discussed below.

What *is* up to us, Porphyry says, are 'acquisition of skills and professions and knowledge', '... political lives and the pursuit of power' which 'depend on deliberate choice'.⁴⁰ These, for him, are another life (268F, 55), a 'kind of second character' (or: impression, 268F, 56, δεύτερον τινα χαρακτῆρα). These lives can be lived in a good or evil way (268F, 78–79). So, the soul chooses a first life and part of a second life that, once chosen, lead to necessary consequences and cannot be changed. But once this choice is made, the unfolding of that life—how we live that life—wisely or unwisely, with virtue or with vice, is up to us: this is the component of character in Porphyry's second life.⁴¹

The *daimōn* who accompanies the soul into life must also be examined here. As we know from the Myth of Er, the souls choose their *daimōn*, who accompanies them into life and ratifies the life they chose. Plato plainly states that choosing the *daimōn* is the soul's prerogative: 'Your *daimōn* will not be allotted to you, but you will choose your *daimōn*' (617e1).⁴² But Porphyry, perhaps following his master, Plotinus,⁴³ does not use the verb αἰρέω (choose) in regard to the *daimōn*, but instead λαγχάνω, 'obtain by lot', in *On What is Up to Us*: '... that the *daimōn* that we obtained by lot is some kind of inescapable guard for us' (268F, 15–16).⁴⁴ Why might this be? An important distinction between these two concepts (choice vs. allotment) is that the former gives more power and

37 268F, 65–66 Smith: διὰ φύσεως ἐπορίσθη ἢ τύχης. See Wilberding's argument (2013), 98–101, tying this phrase in with the soul's choice of this part of the second life and its astrological connection (271 F, 72–79).

38 This reference to nature and chance recalls the discussion in Pseudo-Plutarch's essay *On Fate* (571E–572C), where *heimarmenē* is associated with both nature and tyche.

39 See Hillman (1996, repr. 1997).

40 268F, 67–69: τὰς δὲ γε τῶν τεχνῶν ἀναλήψεις καὶ τὰς τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἐπιστημῶν τε καὶ (τὰς) τῶν πολιτικῶν βίων ἀρχῶν τε διώξεις. ... 268F, 74–75: ... (ἐκ) τῆς προαιρέσεως. ...

41 Note that Plato asserts, in *Phaedo*, 69b–c, that true virtue exists with intentional knowledge [φρόνησις]. Thanks to Crystal Addey for this observation.

42 Plato, *Republic*, 617e1: οὐχ ὑμᾶς δαίμων λήξεται, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς δαίμονα αἰρήσεσθε.

43 Cf. the title of *Ennead* III, 4: 'On our Allotted *Daimōn*', Περὶ τοῦ εἰλήχτος ἡμᾶς δαίμονος (thanks to Crystal Addey for this suggestion). Plotinus uses the verb as employed by Plato in *Phaedo* 107d (thanks to the anonymous reviewer for this reminder).

44 268F, 15–16: ... ὅτι ὃν εἰλήχαμεν δαίμονα ἀναπόδραστός τις ἡμῖν φρουρός.

responsibility to the soul and the latter does not. It could be that Porphyry (and Plotinus) merely acknowledge the role that allotment plays in the choice of the *daimōn*, since the souls' choice of a life and a *daimōn* is dependent on the order in which they get to choose, based on the lot they picked up. Or, this necessary ratification of the choices made is because the *daimōn* is connected with Lachesis, whose very name means 'Allotter'. And though it may be chosen, it is effectively part of the allotment specified by Lachesis.

James Wilberding suggests that the *daimōn*'s necessary ratification of the life is only of what Porphyry designates as the 'first' life, which amounts to the bare physical components of a life (species and gender), and thus the *daimōn* is 'naturalized'⁴⁵ (but I would prefer to think of the *daimōn* as enforcing nature rather than being 'naturalised'). Though Wilberding does not say it explicitly, I would add that the *daimōn* must also ratify those components of the second life that have necessitated consequences.

Thus there are two necessitations going on here: the physical and environmental components of the life as necessary consequences of the choice, and the *daimōn*'s necessary enforcement of that life. Furthermore, we see the workings of choice and necessity intertwined in this scenario, since the souls choose, freely in some respects, but the consequences of their choice are necessitated. Thus the consequences of the choice lack choice.⁴⁶ In addition, there is the possibility that this first choice before incarnation ('the soul still being outside'), is also 'stained' (χραίνεσθαι) by our past lives, and that it could give us a certain 'inclination' (ρόπή) toward the kind of life we choose; Plato, says Porphyry, calls this inclination a 'choice' (ἀρεσις) (271F, 16–20).⁴⁷ How free the choice is, however, is debatable: the 'inclination' seems to be more compelled than voluntary, which also points to some kind of necessitated allotment.

Another issue to consider is how 'informed' the choice is—are we choosing after thoughtful consideration, with all our rational faculties, or is the choice more impulsive? Porphyry seems to imply the latter, when he highlights the choice made 'on the spur of the moment and stupidly' (ἐξ ἐπιδρομῆς καὶ ἀμαθίας)

45 Wilberding (2013), here 91; and personal correspondence with him, 15 Dec 2015. I thank him for his insightful observations which have stimulated my train of thought here.

46 This scenario is reminiscent of the issue of tertiary *pronoia* raised in *De fato*, which operates within fate (*heimarmenē*) but allows some choice: it can work on antecedents, but the consequents are subject to fate: see Valgiglio (1964), 57. We should not forget that *De fato* puts the *daimōn* in charge of tertiary *pronoia*.

47 271F, 16–20: ἀρέσκει καὶ τὸ χραίνεσθαι τὸ μὲν ἐπὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς αὐτεξούσιον ὑπὸ τῆς ἐγγινομένης ἐνταῦθα προβιοτής, τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις αὐτεξούσιον ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τινα τῶν τῆδε βίων τῆς (ψυχῆς) ἕξω ἔτι οὔσης ῥοπῆς, ἣν ἀίρεσιν ὁ Πλάτων λέγει.

(271F, 124–125). And what are we to make of the soul who chooses first choosing tyranny (*Rep.* 619b)? One reason for this could be that a previous life, or familial inclinations, could induce the choice of tyranny.⁴⁸ Another could be the very abundance of life choices at this stage in the proceedings: the soul grabs onto what seems to be a wonderful life on the surface, but the choice is reckless and unconsidered. So, ‘virtue has no master’ and ‘God is not responsible’—but we have to live with the results of our choice, ratified by the *daimōn*.

The ‘second’ life, though, consists not only of physical or environmental factors but also intellectual, moral and virtuous concerns—and these latter are ‘up to us’. (When we examine the astrological factors associated with the first and second lives upon incarnation, we shall analyse how interpretations of these can also be ‘up to us’, even though the physical positioning of planets and stars at the time of birth are factors that cannot be changed.) These intellectual and moral faculties can be used by us *during* our incarnated lives, not only before we live them. Thus virtue has no master, and it is the soul’s choice to honour or disdain it.

And here we should not forget the power of the *daimōn* to play a guiding role in the (good) moral choices the soul makes, even as it necessitates the previous choices. Although he does not explicitly address this issue in *On What is Up to Us*, Porphyry does say that the daimons have ways to ‘reveal their gift to us through dreams and waking visions’ (182dF, 73–74)⁴⁹ after reminding us that Plato encourages the souls to flee injustice (182cF, 64–65). He also reminds us twice about the ability to choose moderation and avoid vice (268F, 77–78; 271F, 2–4): this ability conforms with a tyrant’s choice to live kindly and, as Wilberding noticed, with Porphyry’s advice to his wife Marcella to behave as if she were male.⁵⁰ These calls for moderation and choosing to live wisely echo *Rep.* 619a7–b1, which says that through such behaviour a human becomes the most happy (εὐδαιμονέστατος).

Porphyry does not address here Platonic and Plotinian considerations for the daimon’s ability to influence or encourage such behaviour, though these were surely known to him, and clues that he endorsed them are available, as we shall see. This ability occurs on the soul level, and reflects the *daimōn*’s deep association with soul in Platonic philosophy. The most pertinent texts are Plato’s *Timaeus* 90a–c, and Plotinus’s essay on our allotted daimon (III, 4 [15]).⁵¹

48 See Wilberding’s discussion of this issue: Wilberding (2013), 94–95, 102.

49 182dF, 73–74 (= Wilberding 2011, 136.70 ff.): ... διὰ δὴ τινων τοιούτων πλασμαίων ἡμῖν ἐκφαίνουσιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν δόσιν ὄναρ τε καὶ ὕπαρ ...

50 Wilberding 2011, 149 n. 18.

51 The analysis in Timotin (2012), 291–297, 300–302 has been helpful for this discussion.

In *Timaeus* 90a–c, the daimon is linked to the highest part of the soul, and its cultivation leads to happiness:

Concerning the most lordly part of our soul ... we say god has given each of us, as his *daimōn*, that which is housed at the summit of our body, and which raises us from earth to our kindred in heaven, since we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant. ... But he who has seriously devoted himself to learning and to true thoughts (*phronēseis*), and has exercised these qualities above all his others, must necessarily and inevitably think thoughts (*phronein*) that are immortal and divine, if he lays hold of truth ... 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 (*eudaimōn*).⁵²

As Timotin has pointed out,⁵³ Porphyry accepts this passage and the assimilation of the highest part of the soul to the daimon (*DM IX*, 8, 282.6–12); other texts mention the association with *nous*⁵⁴. This role for the *daimōn* strengthens the power of the soul-as-agent to choose a *daimōn* able to operate from the highest and most virtuous plane available to the soul, and representing the personal *daimōn* accompanying the soul into incarnation as well.

Plotinus considers the same passage in ‘On our allotted daimon’ (*Enn.* III, 4). He speaks of a human who is virtuous (*σπουδαῖος*) because he acts by his better part, which is associated to *nous*, and linked to the highest kind of *daimōn* (or even god) (III, 4, 6.1–5). And, for Plotinus, the personal *daimōn* is on a higher plane of virtue than the soul/human it accompanies: ‘But if one is able to follow the *daimōn* who is above him, he himself comes to be above, living like that

52 *Timaeus* 90a2–3, 3–7, 90b6–c2, 4–6 (Burnet, vol. 4): τὸ δὲ δὴ περὶ τοῦ κυριωτάτου παρ’ ἡμῖν ψυχῆς ... ὡς ἄρα αὐτὸ δαίμονα θεὸς ἐκάστῳ δέδωκεν, τοῦτο ὃ δὴ φαμεν οἰκεῖν μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπ’ ἄκρω τῷ σώματι, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ συγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἶρειν ὡς ὄντας φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλὰ οὐράνιον ..., ... τῷ δὲ περὶ φιλομαθίαν καὶ περὶ τὰς ἀληθείας φρονήσεις ἐσπουδακότι καὶ ταῦτα μάλιστα τῶν αὐτοῦ γεγυμνασμένῳ, φρονεῖν μὲν ἀθάνατα καὶ θεῖα, ἄνπερ ἀληθείας ἐφάπτεται, πᾶσα ἀνάγκη που ... ἅτε δὲ αἰεὶ θεραπεύοντα τὸ θεῖον ἔχοντα τε αὐτὸν εὐ κεκοσμημένον τὸν δαίμονα ξύνοικον ἑαυτῷ διαφερόντως εὐδαίμονα εἶναι. Trans. Bury, modified: see Greenbaum (2016), 23 and n. 24 The wordplay between δαίμων and εὐδαίμων is a well-known trope in antiquity.

53 Timotin 2012, 301 and n. 216.

54 As in the Platonist Plutarch’s take in the Myth of Timarchus in *De genio Socratis*: see Timotin (2012), 249–251; Broze and Van Liefferinge (2011), 74–75; Greenbaum (2016), 23–25, 34.

daimōn and giving the pre-eminence to that better part of himself to which he is being led, and after that one he rises to another.⁵⁵ In the *Life of Plotinus*, this notion seems exemplified in Porphyry's description of Plotinus's daimon being 'of the more godlike kind' and he adds that this revelation even inspired Plotinus to write III, 4 (*VP*, 10.28–29; 10.30–31).⁵⁶ Porphyry's characterisation of one type of *daimōn* as 'divine' in his *Commentary on the Timaeus* echoes the same idea.⁵⁷

Though Porphyry does not specifically apply Plotinus's hierarchical conception of *daimōn* in *On What is Up to Us*, other such hierarchies appear in *To Gaurus* (in this case, of souls from lower to higher). The 'self-moving' soul that enters the body at birth (10.6–11.2) is on a higher level than the previous souls involved with the embryo's creation and formation. Thus hierarchies of both *daimōn* and soul play a part in Porphyry's philosophical positions on aspects of birth. The *daimōn*'s ability to encourage the incarnated soul toward a life of virtue is clear in the *Timaeus* passage and in Plotinus's understanding of it.⁵⁸ We are reminded of Heraclitus: 'Character for a human is his *daimōn*.'⁵⁹ A *daimōn* so capable thus also aids in fulfilling Plato's dictum that the soul will possess more or less virtue depending on whether she honours or disdains it.

Finally, a brief word about the use of the word *bios* for life. Porphyry not only posits the choice of two kinds of life, he also makes a distinction between the two-fold nature of the second life: (1) *bios* as a physical phenomenon (dependent from *zoē*, the condition of being alive), that is, the physical circumstances and qualities under which someone is born; and (2) *bios* as a 'manner of living'.⁶⁰ Although I shall discuss Porphyry's astrological thoughts about the Myth of Er in the next section, here a brief observation about a pertinent astrological practice should be noted. In the description of the twelve sections ('places',

55 Plotinus III, 4 [15], 3.18–20: Εἰ δὲ ἐπεσθαι δύναίτο τῷ δαίμονι τῷ ἄνω αὐτοῦ, ἄνω γίνεται ἐκείνον ζῶν καὶ ἐφ' ὃ ἄγεται κρεῖττον μέρος αὐτοῦ ἐν προστασίᾳ θεμένοιο, καὶ μετ' ἐκείνον ἄλλον ἕως ἄνω. (Trans. Armstrong, modified).

56 Porphyry, *VP*, 10.28–29: Τῶν οὖν θειοτέρων δαιμόνων ἔχων τὸν συνόντα. See also Addey 2014b, 62 and 56.

57 Porphyry, *Comm. Tim.*, Fragment x.10–11 Sodano: τὸ μὲν θείων δαιμόνων γένος ...

58 Also as in Plutarch's *De genio* (593E–594A), where the *daimōn* can encourage and aid the best souls to reach the upper world. (And Plutarch compares the *daimōn* to a 'pilot' (κυβερνήτης) at 586A3–4).

59 Heraclitus, fr. B119 DK: ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳι δαίμων. For multiple translations and interpretations of this phrase, see Greenbaum (2016), 1–2.

60 Here I am following Wilberding's extensive treatment and analysis: see Wilberding (2011), 124–125, 131–132; Wilberding (2013), 92–94, esp. 96.

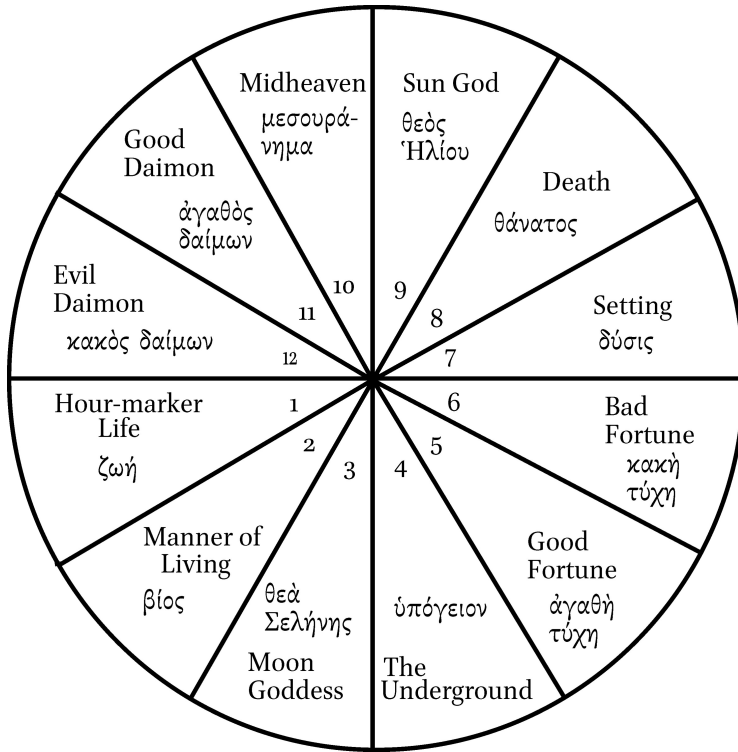


FIGURE 1 Places of the astrological chart

topoi in Greek) that make up the astrological chart, the names of the first and second places are commonly given as *zoē* and *bios*. The first place, *zoē*, is where the ecliptic with its zodiacal signs intersects with the eastern horizon of the birth's location (it contains the Ascendant, the rising degree at that moment and place in time), so it astrologically represents the physical moment of birth and the physical factors attendant at that moment. The second place is called *bios* because it is where the astrologer can discern *how* the life created at the first place may actually be lived. Moreover, in katarctic astrology, the centres, *kentra* (the Ascendant/first place is one of these), represent the present, the actuality of events, while the post-ascensional or succedent places (the second place is one) signify the future, still unrealised, where some choice or change is possible.⁶¹ We can only know with certainty that Porphyry was aware

61 See Greenbaum (2016), 66–67, citing Hephaestio and Julian of Laodicea.

of the name for the first place, not the second⁶² (interestingly, another name for the second place is ‘Gate of Hades’).

Certainly it is coincidental that these two terms for ‘life’ feature both in the basics familiar to any competent astrologer, as well as in Porphyry’s understanding of lives in the Myth of Er. Yet given Porphyry’s interest in astrology, it is worthwhile to point out their astrological usage.

The arrangements of the planets, stars and zodiac in the astrological birth-chart are also of concern to Porphyry in his exegesis of the Myth of Er, as we shall explore in the next section.

Linking the *Daimōn* to the Stars

Astrology meets daimonology in a number of Porphyry’s texts: *Philosophy from Oracles*, *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey*, *On What is Up to Us/Commentary on Plato’s Republic*,⁶³ the *Letter to Anebo*, and *To Gaurus*. The following discussion, however, will focus on the three texts where this intersection most distinctively shows how Porphyry’s views on the *daimōn* as a personal guide may be combined with the astrological components in the soul’s incarnation at birth: *To Gaurus*, *On What is Up to Us* (including what is known as the *Commentary on Plato’s Republic*) and the *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*. Each contains significant astrological content. Though *To Gaurus* only explicitly mentions the *daimōn* once (regarding its *pneuma*, at 6.1.5–6), and the *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos* mentions it not at all, when we combine the ideas expressed in these texts and examine them as a whole, we become able to see the coherent line in Porphyry’s thought concerning the *daimōn*, birth and astrology. We shall

62 See Porphyry, *To Gaurus*, 16.5.13, where the Ascendant is called ‘place of life’, ‘ζωῆς τόπον’. However, a ‘summary’ of an *Introduction* by Antiochus of Athens contains many of the items discussed by Porphyry in his *Intr. Tetr.*, and also includes some descriptions of the places: ‘... the Hour-marker [*Ascendant*] is the rudder of the manner of life and the [2] entrance of life itself, indicative of soul and manners and such things. [3] Its post-ascension [*i.e. the second place*] is a place of hopes and things that go along with them.’ (CCAG 8/3: 117.1–3: ... ὁ ὠροσκόπος καὶ οἶαξ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ζωῆς εἴσοδος, δηλωτικὸς τε ψυχῆς καὶ τρόπου καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα. τὸ δὲ ἐπαναφερόμενον αὐτοῦ ἐλπίδων τόπος καὶ τῶν συστοίχων) This seems to assert that the Ascendant and first place of the chart is the ‘rudder’ of *bios* (the second place), thus connecting *zoē* and *bios*.

63 In this essay I consider both these texts as parts of Porphyry’s overall commentary on the Myth of Er.

begin with an introduction to the physical origins of humans and the soul's part in this in *To Gaurus* and, I argue, an implied though unspoken involvement of the *daimōn* in the concepts and terms used by Porphyry to describe this process. We shall then consider how Porphyry treats the astrological components of birth in his philosophical as well as his astrological treatise(s), the *daimōn*'s role in this, and discover his use of a Platonic metaphor as a significant part of his thinking, both philosophically and astrologically.

The Soul Becomes Embodied at Birth in To Gaurus

Soul in this treatise is a crucial agent in the formation of the embryo's physical body. Two souls are involved: the father's soul, which operates in the formation of sperm (10.5.1–3), and the mother's soul, which takes over the formation of the baby's body once the seed is implanted in her (10.4–6).⁶⁴ In both cases it is the 'external' (ἐξωθεν, 10.6.3) or soul 'from above' (ἄνωθεν, 10.5.3) that has this ability. This process involves a hierarchy of soul, where the higher informs the lower.⁶⁵ The fetus's own soul cannot create its body—that must be done by a soul higher in the hierarchy, namely first the father's, then, even more importantly for the body's formation and construction, the mother's external soul (ἐκτός, 6.1.13–14).

... perhaps on account of this the embryo's own soul is not the craftsman of the formation of the [body] subordinate to it. Rather, it is the mother's soul that—though not being the craftsman of her own body either—is the craftsman of someone else's body which is in the mother and yet external to her substance ...⁶⁶

That the mother's soul is described in this context as a 'craftsman', *dēmiourgos*, seems deliberately meant to evoke the demiurge of the *Timaeus*. This section of *To Gaurus* foreshadows a further discussion of this topic in 10.5.1–5, where the functions of the father's and mother's external souls are to administrate or manage (literally, 'keep house', διοικέω; LSJ s.v.) the formation and construction of the embryo's body. In their functions as (consecutive) administrators these souls are called 'pilots' (κυβερνήτης):

64 In this the vegetative powers of both parents also play a part: see 10.5.1–5.

65 Previously (pp. 113–114) we saw the *daimonic* hierarchy in Plotinus [*Enn.* 111, 4], where the soul's *daimōn* is on a higher level than the soul and can steer it towards a more virtuous life.

66 Porphyry, *To Gaurus* 6.1.11–14: ... μήποτε διὰ τοῦτο ψυχὴ μὲν ἰδία τοῦ ἐμβρύου οὐ δημιουργὸς τῆς εἰδοποιίας τοῦ ὑπ' αὐτήν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τοῦ οἰκείου σώματος ἢ τῆς μητρὸς ψυχῆ, τοῦ δ' ἐν αὐτῇ ἀλλοτρίου καὶ τῆς οὐσίας ἐκτός ... Trans. Wilberding (2011), 39, slightly modified.

Therefore, nature even goes over to other pilots at other times: (i) For as long as the seed is in the father, it is administered by the vegetative [power] of the father as well as by the father's soul from above which conspires with the vegetative power towards its works. (ii) But when it has been released from the father into the mother, it goes over to the vegetative [power] of the mother and her soul ...⁶⁷

Several observations can be made about this passage's significance in relation to the practice of astrology. First, the idea of multiple administrators or managers over a particular process has parallels with astrological doctrines, where the rulership or authority of a particular planet over a certain function in a doctrine can change, and one planet 'hands over' to another. Two examples of this are (1) planetary hours, with different planets consecutively presiding over and managing the hours of day and night;⁶⁸ and (2) the doctrine of profections, where a particular planet ruling over a certain function in each year hands over in the following year to the next planet in the sequence.⁶⁹

A third, and more significant example in this context, is the astrological doctrine of the οἰκοδεσπότης ('house-master'). It is important because Porphyry examines this term both in his *Letter to Anebo* (in connection with the personal *daimōn*) and in two chapters of the *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*. The term *oikodespotēs* is multivalent, encompassing a number of different functions in astrological practice (I describe these and give examples in my recent book).⁷⁰ For example, a housemaster may be the 'house-lord'⁷¹ of a sign, planet or place, but may also become a ruler based on how many counts of rulership it has in a particular degree or place.⁷² There can be 'co-housemasters' as well as 'housemasters' ruling over very specific topics, making them a kind of sub-ruler; but

67 Ibid. 10.5.1–5: διὸ καὶ προσχωρεῖ ἄλλοτε ἄλλοις αὐτῇ κυβερνήταις· ἕως μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ τὸ σπέρμα, διοικεῖται ὑπὸ τε τῆς φυτικῆς τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ συμπνεύσεως τῆς ἄνωθεν τοῦ πατρὸς ψυχῆς τῇ φυτικῇ πρὸς τὰ ἔργα· ὅταν δ' ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς καταβληθῆ εἰς τὴν μητέρα, προσχωρεῖ τῇ φυτικῇ τῆς μητρὸς καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ ταύτης ... Trans. Wilberding (2011), 44, modified.

68 Paulus Alexandrinus, *Introduction*, ch. 21 (Boer, 41–45); Olympiodorus the Younger, *Commentary on Paulus' Introduction*, Ch. 18 (33–37 Boer).

69 Described in detail in Dorotheus, *Carmen Astrologicum*, IV, 1 (sim. at Hephaestio, *Apotelesmatica*, II, 27.1–11); Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, IV, 10 (Hübner); Vettius Valens, *Anthology*, IV, 11; and Paulus Alexandrinus, *Introduction*, Ch. 31 (82–85 Boer).

70 Greenbaum (2016), 255–266, 256–257; and Appendix 7, 423–438.

71 The planet ruling a particular zodiac sign, e.g. Venus rules Taurus and the Sun rules Leo.

72 It may be not only a 'house' ruler, but exaltation, triplicity or term ruler, or a combination of these.

a ‘housemaster’ may also be a compound ruler of these topics. For Porphyry, the rulership of these ‘sub-housemasters’ becomes a factor in finding an overall authority for the chart. This overall chart ruler is also called the ‘lord of the nativity’ or ‘house-master of the nativity’.⁷³ It is often used by other astrologers in calculating lifespan but, as we shall see below, for Porphyry it is far more morally important.

Porphyry’s use of the word ‘pilot’, κυβερνήτης, is noteworthy here. First, it signals his use of the ship metaphor for the soul coming into incarnation (the ship metaphor is also employed by Plotinus for the soul coming into life with its *daimōn* [*Enn.* III, 4 [15], 6.47–60]). Secondly, he uses the same word ‘pilot’ in connection with the *oikodespotēs* and lord of the nativity in his astrological text, *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos* (Ch. 30). The *kubernētēs* metaphor is a well-known trope in Plato and the Platonic tradition.⁷⁴ As noted above (n. 58), Plutarch even compares the *daimōn* to a *kubernētēs* in *De genio Socratis*, 586A3–4. That Porphyry would use this term in *To Gaurus* as well as in the *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos* thus seems deliberate and significant. In both of these texts, these intermediate pilots will yield to a more permanent guide once the fetus is born. In *To Gaurus* Porphyry says:

Indeed the entire time in the belly is spent in the formation and firming up [of the embryo], like the construction of a ship in which at the very moment when the ship-builder, having completed the ship, launches it into the sea, the pilot is settled in it.⁷⁵

The ship is obviously the physical body, but the meaning of ‘ship-builder’ (ναυπηγός) is more difficult to pin down. I think its sense here has two components. The stuff of which the ship is built, nature, is its building blocks. But the mother’s soul (along with the father’s), which has overseen the forming and ‘firming up’ of the fetus, can also be regarded as a ship-builder in the sense of one who constructs, or more importantly oversees (a ‘pilot’ in 10.5.1–5), the construction of the ship/body.

73 See Paulus, *Introduction*, Ch. 36, 95–98, esp. 97.19–20 Boer; Porphyry (1940), *Intr. Tetr.*, Ch. 30.

74 See Afonasin (forthcoming), 23–30; Afonasin (2014), who calls it the ‘pilot metaphor’; Greenbaum (2016), 269–270.

75 Porphyry, *To Gaurus* 10.4.1–10: ὁ δὴ πᾶς χρόνος ἐν τῇ γαστρὶ εἰς τε τὴν πλάσιν καὶ τὴν πῆξιν ἀναλίσκεται, εἰκῶς νεῶς κατασκευῆ εἰς ἣν αὐτίκα δὴ μάλα ὅταν ἐκτελέσας αὐτὴν ὁ ναυπηγός εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καθελκύσῃ, ὁ κυβερνήτης εἰσοικίζεται. Trans. Wilberding (2011), 44, modified.

The word *ναυπηγός* is interesting for another reason. First, it comes from the same root as *πῆξις*, emphasising its involvement with the ‘fixing’ or ‘gelling’ of the embryo. And interestingly, an astrological term for the birthchart, the ‘root’ chart representing the moment of the nativity is ‘πῆξις’ (called ‘radix’ in Latin).⁷⁶ The ‘gelling’ of the human fetus which is taking place is mirrored by the astrological ‘fixing’ of the natal chart at the moment of birth. Thus the chart represents the ‘root plant’ (the verb from which *πῆξις* comes, *πήγνυμι*, is commonly used of plants being ‘fixed’, i.e. planted).⁷⁷ Earlier in *To Gaurus*, Porphyry makes an analogy between the farmer’s tending of a plant and a soul’s cultivation of the embryo, saying their cultivation is: ‘... because they can be led and steered by a guide, hand-led by means of their passions.’⁷⁸ This foreshadows his use of *kubernētēs* for the ‘planting/fixing’ of the embryo by the soul. Porphyry also uses the analogy between plant and embryo at 4.8–11 and, citing *Timaeus* 77c3–5, emphasises the embryo being fixed and rooted at 4.4 and 4.11. (We may also note that *Timaeus* 90a6–7 refers to a human as a ‘heavenly plant’ (*φυτὸν ... οὐράνιον*) striving to move from earth to heaven.) Though no specific connection should be implied in this context between the *πῆξις* of plants/embryos and the astrological *πῆξις*, it is interesting that the same word has these multiple connotations.

- 76 The ‘fixed’ configuration of the planets etc. at birth. For the use of *πῆξις* meaning ‘fixed’ natal chart in astrological texts, see, e.g.: the Greek fragments of Dorotheus, *Carmen Astrologicum* (transmitted by Hephaestio); Serapion (in *CCAG* 8/4, 231.12); Valens, *Anthology*, Appendix XIX, sentence 7, (429.33 Pingree) and sentence 8, (430.3), where *πῆξις* replaces the word *genesis* used in Book IV, 10, 20–21. Also Hephaestio, *Apotelesmatica*, uses it in Books II and III, to compare the natal chart positions to those of other charts relevant to an individual’s life (as in profecions or *katarchai*); also Rhetorius, *Compendium*. In Antiochus, *πῆξις* occurs once, where it also appears to be a synonym for *genesis* (*Thesaurioi*, *CCAG* VII, 115.25–30).
- 77 LSJ s.v. A.1. Regarding the use of *πῆξις*, *πήγνυμι* in Porphyry: the latter is used in the *Cave of the Nymphs*, 25.4–9: ‘But the north wind is the proper wind for souls proceeding to genesis. It is for this reason that for those about to die the breath of the north wind “blowing upon them revives the soul from its grievous swoon”, [Hom. *Il.* 5, 697–698] while the breath of the south wind dissolves it. For the former, since it is colder, *congeals life and in the chill of earthly genesis locks it in*, while the latter, since it is warmer, dissolves it and impels it upwards to the heat of the divine.’ My italics. Trans Seminar Classics, 609, 25; Greek text, Sem. Clas. 609, 24.18–23: ... ἀλλὰ βορέας μὲν οἰκείος εἰς γένεσιν ἰούσαις· διὸ καὶ τοὺς θνήσκοντες μέλλοντας ἢ βορέου πνοῇ (5) ‘ζωγρεῖ ἐπιπνείουσα κακῶς κεκαφηῖτα θυμόν’, ἢ δὲ τοῦ νότου διαλύει. ἢ μὲν γὰρ πῆγνυσι ψυχροτέρα οὖσα καὶ ἐν τῷ ψυχρῷ τῆς χθονίου γενέσεως διακρατοῦσα, ἢ δὲ διαλύει θερμότερα οὖσα καὶ πρὸς τὸ θερμόν τοῦ θείου ἀναπέμπουσα.
- 78 Porphyry, *To Gaurus*, 6.3.7: ὅτι δὲ ἄγεσθαι [οἶά τε ἦν] καὶ [χ]υβερνάσθαι ὑπὸ προρηγητοῦ χειραγωγούμενα τοῖς πάθεσι.

Another word used in connection with the embryo's creation is *δημιουργέω*. As we saw above, what the mother produces is called 'δημιουργουμένος', (10.4.9–10). The same word is used of her soul in crafting the fetus at 6.1.13–14 (see above, p. 117 and n. 66). Thus the mother's soul is both a 'pilot' (10.5.3–5) and acts as a 'demiurge' (10.4.9–10, 6.1.11–14), in the role of overseeing the ship-building.⁷⁹ But in addition to the intermediate pilots who play a part in the creation of the fetus, there is also another pilot, the external, self-moving soul,⁸⁰ who comes in at the moment of birth to guide the human during its life (10.6.5–8 and 11.1.1–2):

... that [physical nature of the embryo] for its part is carried by the laws of nature from darkness into light, from a watery and blood-filled dwelling to an airy envelope.⁸¹ And it in turn at this time immediately gets from outside the pilot who is present by the providence of the principle that administers the whole.⁸² ... And the pilot embarks to deal with the task as soon as the [embryo's] nature has come forth into light, [but] under no compulsion to do so.⁸³

79 Here I would modify Wilberding's (2011) statement, 66, n. 119 (commenting on 10.4.7), that 'Nature is the ship-builder.' I would say rather that nature constitutes what the ship, the body, is, not the ship-builder itself, or more precisely, not the 'brains' behind the ship's construction.

80 Wilberding (2011), 67, n. 127 shows that *ἔξωθεν* is used by Porphyry of the self-moving soul.

81 Here I follow Brisson et al.'s translation, 177, of 'enveloppe aérienne' (ἐναέριον κύτος). Whether this means the atmosphere or that the body is an airy cavity is uncertain. In the *Timaeus*, the construction of a living being includes a 'vessel formed of air' (*Timaeus* 78c2: καὶ τὸ κύτος ἀεροειδῆ). Aristotle also uses *kutos* in reference to body cavities in, e.g., *De generatione animalium* 741–743. But *kutos* can also connote the 'vault' of heaven. Valens uses this connotation in *Anthology* III, 11.3, referring to the Sun's 'handing over' the vault when setting in the evening; and also in IV, 11.11 (163.26 Pingree), in one of two 'oath' passages, where Valens asks his disciple to swear by 'the starry vault of heaven', οὐρανοῦ μὲν ἀστέριον κύτος. So the common word *kutos* can be equally used for elements of both microcosm and macrocosm. Bodily cavities or vessels can have a heavenly analogue in the vault of heaven.

82 Porphyry, *To Gaurus* 10.6.5–8: ... φέρεται δὲ κάκεινη θεσμοῖς φύσεως ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς, ἀπὸ (5) ἐνύγρου καὶ ἐναίμου διαίτης εἰς ἐναέριον κύτος· κἀνταῦθα δὴ πάλιν εὐθύς ἔχει ἔξωθεν τὸν κυβερνήτην παρόν(τα πρ)ονοίᾳ τῆς τὰ ὅλα διοικούσης ἀρχῆς ... Trans. Wilberding (2011), 45, modified.

83 Ibid. 11.1.1–2: Ἐμβαίνει δὲ ὁ κυβερνήτης εἰς φῶς πρ(οε)λθούσ(ης) τῆς φύσεως μετὰ τοῦ ἔργου (οὐκ) ἀναγκαζόμενος. Here I follow Wilberding's interpretation, putting μετὰ τοῦ ἔργου with the pilot, *contra* Brisson, et al. (2012), 177 and 261 (6, 68–70), 'Nous entendons ici ἔργον comme renvoyant au nouveau-né.'

The phrase ‘providence of the principle that administers the whole’ demonstrates a connection between the baby’s guiding soul/pilot and the World Soul.⁸⁴ Porphyry emphasises the connection of birth and the soul to light when he says that the body moves from the darkness of pure matter to the light *contemporaneous* with the entrance of the self-moving (noetic) soul (the Platonic *Epistle VII*, 344b7 connects *nous* and light). That the pilot comes in under ‘no compulsion’ reminds us that the soul has freely chosen its existence on earth. We shall return to the topic of the pilot below, in the section ‘The Astrological Pilot and the Personal *Daimōn*’.

Daimōn, Human and the Pneuma-ochēma

The *daimōn* is mentioned only once in *To Gaurus*, as a possessor of *pneuma*: ‘*daimones* display the forms of [their] imaginings in the airy *pneuma* that either is present [with] or is adjacent to them.’⁸⁵ Porphyry brings this up to contrast it with the way the human soul’s *pneuma* functions, thus setting up the soul’s function in the development of the embryo, as we saw above. But the concept of *pneuma*, either as a composite with a vehicle (*ochēma*) or alone, can be relevant in the descent of the soul into incarnation, where the soul takes on qualities in a process with obvious astrological components.

When a child is born, according to Porphyry, its soul descends through the heavenly spheres, taking on different attributes from the planets as it descends. These, according to Porphyry, are what make up the soul-vehicle (*ochēma-pneuma*) and after death they are dispersed back into the cosmos.⁸⁶ Macrobius, following Porphyry, provides an example of this descent in his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (1, 12). 1, 12.13 refers to the ‘luminous body’ (*luminosum corpus*) by which the soul is enveloped as it descends. This is clearly the

84 Wilberding (2011), 15 and 64, n. 79; and Brisson et al. (2012), 261 (6, 65), make the same assessment.

85 Porphyry, *To Gaurus* 6.1.5–6 ... τοὺς δαίμονας τὰ εἶδη τῶν φαντασμάτων εἰς τὸ (5) συνὸν ἢ παρακείμενον αὐτοῖς ἀερώδες πνεῦμα διαδεικνύναι; trans. Wilberding (2011), 39, slightly modified. Brisson et al. (2012), 242, cite *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, 14.5–9 and *Sentences* 29.6–13 as correlatives for Porphyry’s idea here.

86 Kissling (1922), 318; Wilberding (2011), 74 n. 201, which supplies the relevant sources. Some followers of Porphyry, though, rejected an outright dispersal for the irrational soul and its vehicle, saying that their mixed-together components—acquired when the soul descended through the spheres—resolved into their constituent elements and then returned to the spheres from which they came (Sodano (1964), 68–69 [*Comm. Tim. fr. LXXX Sodano*]); see also Kissling, *ibid.*, 324; Berchman (2005), 51–52 and nn. 202–203.

ochēma-pneuma, as Kissling and others have pointed out.⁸⁷ Next, the soul takes on different qualities each associated with a planet:

in the sphere of Saturn, [it takes on] reasoning and intelligence, which they call *logistikon* and *theorētikon*; in Jupiter the power of acting, which is said to be *praktikon*; in Mars, a burning for boldness, which is called *thymikon*; in the Sun, the faculty of perception and imagination, which they name *aisthētikon* and *phantastikon*; the impulse for desire, which is called *epithymētikon*, in Venus; articulating and interpreting what it feels, which is said to be *hermeneutikon*, in the orb of Mercury; it exercises the faculty of forming and growing bodies, namely *phytikon*, on entering the lunar sphere.⁸⁸

The planetary order in which these qualities are received is called Chaldean, an order very commonly associated with astrology,⁸⁹ and some of the qualities also have an astrological background.⁹⁰ Macrobius is said to have

87 Kissling (1922); Dodds (1963), 318–319; Stahl (1952), 136 n. 22; Armisen-Marchetti (2001), 167 n. 258. For more on the development of the soul vehicle in Neoplatonism, see Addey (2013), 149–152. Synesius, who follows Porphyry's ideas, develops the idea of the soul-vehicle connected with the *daimōn* in his *De insomniis*, though he does not call it 'luminous' (ἀύγοειδές): see Kissling (1922), 327. For Synesius's dependence on ideas of Porphyry in this treatise, see Smith (1974), 156; Sheppard (2014), 97 and n. 2; Tanaseanu-Döbler (2014), 145–147. In *De insomniis* he explicitly associates the *pneuma* of the soul with the *daimōn*: 'The psychic *pneuma*, which the happy people [εὐδαίμονες] also call the "pneumatic soul", may become a god, a *daimon* of any kind and a phantom. It is in this that the soul pays its penalties.' *De insomniis*, 137D: τὸ γέ τοι πνεῦμα τοῦτο τὸ ψυχικόν, ὃ καὶ πνευματικὴν ψυχὴν προσηγόρευσαν οἱ εὐδαίμονες, καὶ θεὸς καὶ δαίμων παντοδαπὸς καὶ εἶδωλον γίνεται, καὶ τὰς ποινὰς ἐν τούτῳ τίνει ψυχῇ. Trans. Russell, with text in Russell and Nesselrath (2014), 24–25. Smith (1974), 156, cites the same passage.

88 Macrobius, *Somnium Scipionis* I, 12.14: *in Saturni, ratiocinationem et intellegentiam, quod λογιστικόν et θεωρητικόν vocant; in Iovis, vim agendi, quod πρακτικόν dicitur; in Martis, animositatis ardorem, quod θυμικόν nuncupatur; in Solis, sentiendi opinandique naturam, quod αἰσθητικόν et φανταστικόν appellant; desiderii vero motum, quod ἐπιθυμητικόν vocatur, in Veneris; pronuntiandi et interpretandi quae sentiat, quod ἑρμηνευτικόν dicitur, in orbe Mercurii; φυτικόν vero, id est naturam plantandi et augendi corpora, in ingressu globi lunaris exercet.*

89 The order is Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon. Macrobius mentions this order also at I, 4.2. For a discussion of planetary orders, including Chaldean, see Greenbaum (2016), 168–170 and Table 5.2, 404.

90 E.g., 'boldness' (τόλμα in Greek), is often an attribute of Mars, whose ancient name is also Pyroeis, 'fiery one'; *aisthesis* is associated with the Sun (see Vettius Valens, *Anthology*, I, 1), desire with Venus and interpretation with Mercury.

taken this material from Porphyry, who in turn was relating the ideas of Numenius.⁹¹

How does this material on soul vehicle and acquisition of planetary qualities compare with what Porphyry says in the *Commentary on Plato's Republic* and *On What is Up to Us*? Though developed in different ways, there are no serious ideological incompatibilities. In reference to the rainbow of light in *Republic* 616b–617a, Porphyry states that it is the ‘first vehicle of the cosmic soul, and analogous to the luminous vehicle of our soul’.⁹² A similar conception appears in 185aF.⁹³ The planetary spheres appear in *On What is Up to Us*: when the [soul's] ‘passage through the seven spheres of the first type of life happens, another passage down them incites [the soul] differently according to the desires it has for certain of the second lives.’⁹⁴

So the luminous vehicle of a human soul is analogous to that of the World Soul. The column of light in *Republic*, with its ‘rainbow’, contains, in fact, the spheres of the fixed stars and the planets, sun and moon, each sphere taking on a particular colour. When a soul comes into incarnation, then, its luminous vehicle takes on, in analogy to the World Soul's, the light in each of the heavenly spheres that represents the planets.⁹⁵ This idea is developed further in *On What is Up to Us*, when the soul descends, taking on the characteristics of each of the planets as it goes down into generation. The *daimōn* too (in its higher forms) is commonly associated with light, so we could speculate that the personal light attached to the soul may apply also to the *daimōn* who accompanies the soul into birth.⁹⁶

91 Armisen-Marchetti (2001), 66 n. 263, 169 n. 275; for Macrobius's general reliance on and quotation of Porphyry, see Gersh (1986), 11, 493, 495–496.

92 *Commentary on Rep.* = 185F, 4–6 Smith: ... και τῆς κοσμικῆς ψυχῆς ὄχημα πρῶτον εἶναι θέμενος αὐτὸ και ἀνάλογον τῷ ἀγροειδεῖ τῆς ἡμετέρας, trans. Wilberding (2011), 136. On this see also Kissling (1922), 326.

93 See Wilberding (2011), 139, nn. 12–13 (with references to ancient texts on this topic, citing Smith [1993], 213–214).

94 Porphyry 271F, 68–71 Smith: ... τοῦ (δὲ) πρώτου βίου ἢ διέξοδος διὰ τῶν ἐπτά σφαιρῶν γιγνομένη, ἄλλως ἄλλης κατ' αὐτὰς κινουμένης κατὰ τὰς προθυμίας πρὸς τινὰς τῶν δευτέρων βίων. Here I agree with Wilberding's ingenious analysis (Wilberding [2011], 130) that the souls go upwards through the seven spheres to the fixed stars, where they arrive at the horoscopes (which are decans in this case: see Greenbaum and Ross (2010), 166 and n. 111; Greenbaum (2016), 210, n. 67) and then back down through the seven spheres to incarnation (and a particular degree of the zodiac, the Ascendant).

95 For more on the ‘light’ names for the planets, see Cumont (1935).

96 For sources on the connections between the *daimōn* and light, see Greenbaum (2016), 21–27, 45, 197–198, 218, 273, 305–306, 340.

The connection of the vehicle to stars appears in both Plato and Aristotle. In *Timaeus* (41d–e) the demiurge assigns each soul to a star and places it in a vehicle (ἐς ὄχημα). Aristotle (*On the Generation of Animals*) first uses the word ‘analogous’ in relation to the *pneuma*: its nature is ‘more divine’ than the [four] elements (736b31: θειοτέρου τῶν καλουμένων στοιχείων), and thus it is ‘analogous to the element of the stars’ (736b37–737a1, ἀνάλογον οὐσα τῷ τῶν ἄστρον στοιχείῳ) which Kissling rightly identifies as aether.⁹⁷ Thus there are precedents for involving the *pneuma-ochēma* in the soul’s descent through the stars.

Astrology and Choice in the Soul’s Descent

In the astrological portions of these texts we can see how Porphyry weaves astrology into his philosophy of birth. Three passages are particularly important for this discussion. These are *To Gaurus* (16.5.1–15), *The Commentary on Plato’s Republic* (187F Smith) and *On What is Up to Us* (271F, 5–15, 42–100 Smith). We shall look at each of these in turn.

The passage in *To Gaurus* (16.5) begins by placing the self-moving (higher) soul in the body at birth, a soul which was described as a pilot and joins ‘in harmony’ with the body at exactly ‘the right moment’:

However, regarding the corporeal and irrational substance, what is lacking in terms of its being joined to [a pilot] at birth is provided and afforded by the universe, as an individual soul is immediately present, *the very soul which comes to be present to the [body] that has been brought forth at just the right moment, and comes to be in harmony with the instrumental body that is suited to receive it.*⁹⁸ (My italics.)

The moment when the soul, the pilot of the human’s life, joins the body is not random. This moment of birth is ‘according to *kairos*’ (κατὰ καιρὸν),⁹⁹ the right

97 Kissling (1922), 319. His article is extremely helpful for delineating the antecedents of the *ochēma*.

98 Porphyry, *To Gaurus* 16.5.1–5: κα(τ)ὰ μέντοι τὴν σω(ματικὴν) ἄλογον οὐσίαν τὸ ἐλλείπον τῆς συναρτήσε(ως) μ(ετ)ὰ τὴν κ(ύ)ησιν ἐνδίδωσί τε καὶ ἀποπ[ι]μπλησι τὸ πᾶν, ἰδίας ψυχῆς εὐθὺς παρούσης, ἥτις ἂν (ῆ) κατὰ καιρὸν* ψυχὴ τῷ τεχθέντι γενομένη καὶ σύμφωνος τῷ ἐπιτηδείως ἔχοντι(αὐτ)ὴν δέξασθαι (ὀργανικῶ σώ)ματι ... *Reading, with Festugière (1950, repr. 2006), III, 297, n. 1; and Wilberding (2011), 76, n. 220, ἥτις ἂν (ῆ) κατὰ καιρὸν for ἥτις ἂν κ...ν. Trans. Wilberding, 53.

99 I support the inspired emendation of κατὰ καιρὸν here (see n. 98 above) because Porphyry uses a very similar phrase later in the sentence (καθ’ ὃν καιρὸν) and because the lacunose portion begins with a κ and ends with a ν. (M. Chase in Brisson et al. [2012], 329 n. 29

and proper time, when it is ‘in harmony’ with the body. *Kairos*, in this context the ‘right moment’ for acting, is an important concept, not only in Neoplatonic ritual (as in *DM* 8.4, 267.6–10)¹⁰⁰ but in astrology—in fact, the entire branch of astrology called ‘katarchic’ depends on finding the right moment, the *kairos*, and the most propitious arrangement of the heavens, to begin something.¹⁰¹ It is at the *kairos* that body and soul are in harmony (*symphonos*). That Porphyry would have known of this practice can be seen in his exchange with Iamblichus on beginning a ritual at the proper astrological moment (*DM* 8.4), and his citation of the sub-branch of katarchic astrology called ‘questions’ in the *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*.¹⁰²

Next, Porphyry points out the divinity of the eastern or rising (*anatolika*) portions of the sky:¹⁰³

And the Chaldeans¹⁰⁴ say that from eternity there has been a divine and intelligible stream through the eastern/rising parts of heaven. And this stream both moves and turns the cosmos, and brings to life everything in it by sending them their own souls. And every degree, when it came to be around this eastern region/rising place, which is a gate of souls and the spiritual inlet of the universe, is made powerful. [This region] was called ‘centrepin’ and ‘horoscope’. And on this invisible stream depends everything that has emerged from a mother or that has in some other way become suited for being brought to life ... on account of which they also call this eastern/rising centrepin ‘place of life’ ...¹⁰⁵

follows Limburg’s ἔξωθεν; Dorandi’s text omits it—though he acknowledges Festugière in the *app. crit.*, and the French translation seems to reflect it.)

100 See Addey (2014a), 105–106, 211; Addey (2014b), 68–69; Greenbaum (2016), 247–248; also Addey (2015).

101 See Greenbaum (2016), 40–44, 360, 366–367.

102 In Ch. 19, ‘On Aversion’ he compares the lord of the ascendant in a chart to the lord of the ascendant in a chart associated with ‘questions’, *περὶ ἐρωτήσεων* (*CCAG* 5/4, 201.5–6).

103 See a similar sentiment in *De antro*, 29, where he tells us that the ‘rising portions are proper to the gods’ ὡς θεοῖς μὲν τὰ ἀνατολικά [sc. οἰκεία] (28.14–15 Seminar Classics 209).

104 By ‘Chaldeans’ Porphyry means ‘astrologers’ (or, perhaps more specifically, ancient astrologers, to emphasise the antiquity of the doctrine described). See Greenbaum (2013), s.v. Chaldaean, astrologers. Johnson (2013), 276, has not understood the common locution of ‘Chaldean’ for ‘astrologer’, even though this passage is highly astrological in content.

105 Porphyry, *To Gaurus* 16.5.5–10, 13 = 196.43–50, 52–53 Brisson et al. (2012): καὶ τῶν Χαλδαίων ῥέυμα θεῖον ἐξ αἰῶνος νοητῶν (γενέ)σθαι φαμένων κ(ατὰ τὰ ἀνα)τολικά μέρη | τοῦ (οὐρανοῦ,) ὁ (χι)νεῖ τ(ε) τὸν κ(όσμον) καὶ στρέφει καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐ(ν) αὐτῷ ψυχὰς πέ(μ)π(ον) οἰκειίας ζωογονεῖ. πάσα οὖν μοῖρα γιγνομένη περὶ τὸν ἀνατολικὸν τοῦτον τόπον, ὅς ἐστι ψυχῶν πύλη καὶ εἴσπνοια

This rising portion, named for the location where the sun rises to begin the day, contains, as described above (p. 126), the point where the ecliptic and eastern horizon meet at the moment of birth, and is called the Ascendant in the astrological chart (*hōroskopos*, ‘hour-marker’ in Greek). This first place is the ‘place of life’. It seems that Porphyry is reconciling basic principles of astrology—the mechanics of the chart and the moment of birth on which the layout of the chart is based—with philosophical concepts of souls and their entries into bodies through a place designated as divine. Thus the chart becomes a *de facto* illustration of birth arising from a divine and intelligible source.

A slightly different approach is taken in 187F, where we find an emphasis not on the eastern portion that contains the Ascendant, but on the risings (*anaphorai*) of the different zodiac signs and the *sphaera barbarica*:

... Plato, having learned about the ascensional times from the Egyptians, indicates that the soul of Ajax has the twentieth place in terms of the risings of the times that determine the lives, and that it was then by directing his attention to the universe that the messenger of these accounts [Er] counted the order, I mean [the order] of the souls that are choosing first, second, twentieth or whatever other position. For we too have encountered the *Sphaerae Barbaricae* of the Egyptians and Chaldaeans that determine the differences in lives according to the degrees of the zodiac, making the one degree, maybe, kingly, and the next one—and this is paradoxical to hear—a kind of mercantile degree or one that is worse than even this life, and another degree [they make] that of a priest, and the one after that is of a slave and—what is even worse than this—a man who is without shame regarding his male nature.¹⁰⁶

τοῦ παντός, δυναμοῦται· λέγεται δὲ κέντρον καὶ ὠροσκόπος. ... (δι') ὁ καὶ ζωῆς τόπον λέγουσι τὸ ἀνατολικὸν τοῦτο κέντρον ... Trans. Wilberding (2011), 53, modified.

106 Porphyry 187F, 5–18 Smith: ... παρ' Αἰγυπτίων μαθόντα τὸν Πλάτωνα περὶ τῶν ἀναφορικῶν χρόνων ἐνδείκνυσθαι διὰ τούτων, ὡς ἄρα κατὰ τὰς ἀναφορὰς τῶν τοὺς βίους ὀριζόντων χρόνων εἰκοστὴν εἶχεν τάξιν ἢ τοῦ Αἴαντος αὐτῆ ψυχῆ, καὶ τοῦτο ἀποβλέπων εἰς τὸ πᾶν ὁ τῶνδε τῶν λόγων ἄγγελος ἠρίθμει τὴν τάξιν, λέγω τῶν ψυχῶν τῶν πρώτων ἢ δευτέρων ἢ εἰκοστῶν ἢ ἄλλως ὅπως οὖν αἰρουμένων. Καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἐνετύχομεν σφαιραῖς βαρβαρικαῖς Αἰγυπτίων καὶ Χαλδαίων κατὰ τὰς μοίρας τοῦ ζωδιακοῦ τὰς τῶν βίων διαφορὰς ὀριζούσαις, καὶ τὴν μὲν ποιούσαις εἰ τύχοι βασιλικήν, τὴν δὲ ἐξῆς, ὁ καὶ παράδοξον ἀκούσαι, ἐμπορικὴν τινα καὶ ταύτης χείρονα τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ἄλλην ἱερέως, καὶ τὴν μετ' αὐτὴν δούλου, καὶ τὸ τοῦδε χείρον, ἀπηρυθριακότος πρὸς τὴν ἄρρηνα φύσιν. Trans. Wilberding (2011), 137–138.

Here Porphyry ties the order in which the souls choose with ascensional times, and thus some portion of the zodiac. He makes a similar connection in 271F, 5–12, where he says that the souls are allotted and ‘take their lives in order and as the period leads them’.¹⁰⁷ And each soul goes through the revolution and stops in order, ‘with the lots signifying first and second’ (271F, 10–12).¹⁰⁸ Lachesis the allotter, who gives the lots to the prophet, is said to be ‘the revolution of the universe’ (271F12–15).¹⁰⁹ This is extremely interesting, because it means that he is joining the order of the lots with the zodiac and thus with the lives they eventually choose. The case is made even clearer when he adds to the earlier passage (187F, 14–17): ‘it is not surprising that the souls drawing lots together have the first, middle and last [position] according to the ascensions of the degrees’¹¹⁰—thus, in regard to the first lives, the souls choose in an order prescribed by portions of the zodiac and how they rise. (In this case, these portions may be the decans, which would divide each sign into three portions of ten degrees each; see n. 94.) A further elaboration appears in 271F, 79–87, where he talks about the Egyptians considering ‘the first degrees of each zodiac sign as good’ because they were apportioned ‘to the lord of the sign’, but the final degrees were ‘assigned to the malefic stars’. This, as Stephan Heilen noticed,¹¹¹ surely refers to the Egyptian terms, where each sign is divided into portions of varying size each ruled by a planet, and the first terms are invariably given to a planet having significant rulership in that sign.

Ascensional times are found by measuring how many degrees of right ascension must pass over the meridian in order for a particular zodiac sign to rise.¹¹² The time it took zodiac signs to rise was affected by location (*klimata*, zones based on latitude) and their position relative to the Aries/Libra axis, and was long known by astrologers.¹¹³ Different systems for these had been codified for

107 Ibid. 271F, 6–7: ... τοὺς βίους καὶ λαμβάνειν αὐτοὺς, ἀλλὰ τάξει καὶ ὡς ἄγει αὐτὰς ἡ περίοδος. ‘Period’ in this context refers to the system of planetary periods, numbers of years conferred by planets, a system well-known in astrology and, e.g., in Valens, *Anthology*, III, 13, combined with ascensional times to give lifespan indications.

108 Ibid. 271F, 11–12: κλήρων σημαινόντων τὸ πρῶτον καὶ τὸ δεύτερον. Trans. Wilberding (2011), 144.

109 Ibid. 271F, 14–15: Λάχεσιν δὲ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς περιστροφὴν ... Trans. Wilberding (2011), 144.

110 Ibid. 187F, 14–17: ... οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν καὶ τὰς συγκλήρους ψυχὰς τὸ πρωτεῖον ἔχειν καὶ μέσον καὶ ἔσχατον κατὰ τὰς ἀναφορὰς τῶν μοιρῶν ... Trans. Wilberding (2011), 144.

111 Heilen (2010), 58.

112 Neugebauer (1975), 36, 979–980; Schmidt and Hand (1994a), 17; Schmidt and Hand (1994b), v.

113 Pairs of signs based on the Aries-Libra axis are equally ascending: Aries/Pisces, Taurus/Aquarius, Gemini/Capricorn, Cancer/Sagittarius, Leo/Scorpio, Virgo/Libra.

different vernal points and different locations (Babylon and Alexandria, for example). Porphyry himself includes two chapters on rising times for zodiac signs in his *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos* (chs. 41–42), in which he gives the traditional rising times for Alexandria, followed by Ptolemy's values. So when Porphyry says that one goes 'here' to be a dog and another 'there' to be a man, this would depend not only on a soul merely going to one particular Ascendant degree, but on the time relative to the location and the sign that was rising.¹¹⁴

Porphyry also considers the significance of the *sphaera barbarica*, a celestial globe of 'foreign' constellations. Some interpretations of these are given by Manilius, *Astronomica* Book 5, in relation to their co-rising with zodiac signs (known as *paranatellonta*): these produce certain characteristics for one who has these configurations in his birthchart.¹¹⁵ Teucer of Babylon wrote a commentary on *paranatellonta* and decans in antiquity. In mentioning the *sphaera barbarica* Porphyry further refines his technique for discovering the astronomical and astrological situation at birth. We have already seen (271F, 68–71, n. 94 above) that decans are likely involved in where the soul goes to align the first life with the right astrological moment.

But Porphyry is interested not only in the mechanics of the astrological moment of birth but also with how astrology can encompass choice and different outcomes for the same planetary positions and even similar Ascendant positions. He asks, 'Why, then, in the same ascension is, say, a dog generated and a man and a woman and many men, for all of whom neither the first life nor the second life is the same?'¹¹⁶ His answer: although the souls 'seem' to enter the world at the same moment, this is not true in actuality because of the differences in ascensional times (based on location) and because of the lot providing different examples of lives (271F, 60–67). First he tries to supply an astronomical reason for the variation: that different ascensional times can affect the ascendant in subtle ways, making it slightly different for each person, so that what appears to be the same actually is not.¹¹⁷ But he also brings up the 'lot' that allows the choice of different lives, and this goes back to the Myth of

114 For example, in System A for Alexandria, Leo/Scorpio took 35° of right ascension to rise at *Klima* 1, but 39° to rise at *Klima* 7: see Table in Schmidt and Hand (1994a), 21.

115 See Housman (1930), xl–xliv; Boll (1903), 75–77, 375–388; Greenbaum (2016), 226–227.

116 Porphyry 271F, 57–60 Smith: διὰ τί οὖν ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἀναφορᾷ φέρεται καὶ κύων γεννᾶται καὶ ἀνὴρ καὶ γυνή καὶ πολλοὶ ἄνδρες καὶ πάντων οὔτε ὁ πρῶτος βίος ὁ αὐτὸς οὔτε ὁ δεῦτερος; Trans. Wilberding (2011), 145.

117 Wilberding (2011), 152, n. 49.

Er and the soul's choice. The soul's internal disposition (διάθεσις) toward a particular life matches the external astrological 'disposition' (271F, 44–51).¹¹⁸

He also mentions Plato's assertion that 'configurations of a certain sort signify the lives, but they do not necessitate them' (271F, 87–88),¹¹⁹ and 'the cause of their moving' (271F, 90–92, αἰτία ... τῆς ... φοράς), first to a decan and then to an Ascendant degree (see above, n. 94), is their choice of a first and second life. In other words, it is not the stars but the souls, who, in choosing a first and second life, compel the necessity of physical and environmental consequences that come with that life, a life analogically portrayed ('written') by the astrological configuration. This configuration, then, only signifies what was chosen; the necessitations are a result of the souls' choices. However, the soul is still able to 'manage [this life] through either virtue or vice'.¹²⁰

We can see an example of this latter option even in astrological practice. Vettius Valens, in illustrating a technique called profections (*Anthology*, v, 6.121–125),¹²¹ uses the life of a dancer to show how the same configuration of profections twelve years apart produce different outcomes based on the dancer's psychological (and moral) reaction to events that happened to him when he was 19 and 31 years old. Valens emphasises different components of the configurations in each case, showing that the dancer's psychological outlook and moral reaction benefited or damaged him, particularly whether he followed a virtuous path and gained wisdom, or not. In his 20th year, when he escaped a ruined reputation, imprisonment and even risk of death, certain fortunate astrological circumstances prevailed. However, that this was a 'lucky break', that could have gone another way, did not occur to him. He learned no humility or moral lessons from it. So when the same astrological circumstances arose again, more negative components prevailed. Valens tells us that because the dancer had become 'insolent and a braggart',¹²² the events that now ruined his reputation and livelihood were his own fault—'he himself became responsible for his

118 Wilberding and I discussed this point: see Wilberding (2011), 151, n. 43; Johnson (2015), 198 gives the same assessment without citing Wilberding. The usual astrological term for this is διάθεμα (not διάθεσις), but Porphyry seems to be making a specific correlation between the two 'arrangements'.

119 Porphyry 271F, 87–88 Smith: σημαίνειν μὲν οὖν τὰ ποιά σχήματα τοὺς βίους τίθεται Πλάτων· ἀναγκάζειν δὲ οὐκέτι ... Trans. Wilberding (2011), 146.

120 Ibid. 271F, 109–110: ... δι' ἀρετῆς αὐτὸν διοικεῖ ἢ κακίας. Note the same verb, διοικέω, that Porphyry uses of the soul in *To Gaurus*, 10.5 and 10.6.

121 For a full discussion and interpretation of this passage, see Greenbaum (2016), 324–327.

122 v, 6.125 (220.9–10 Pingree): ... ὑβριστῆς καὶ ἀλαζῶν ...

downfall,¹²³ and this was specifically caused by his own mental stance, leaning not towards virtue and humility but pride and arrogance. (The situation illustrates the Myth of Er's statement, 'responsibility is with the chooser'.) Thus, for Valens, the same astrology can produce different outcomes based on whether the mental inclinations of the person incline the expression of the positive or negative components of that astrological configuration.

Thus, both in astrological and in philosophical approaches, we find choice and decision-making available in the interpretation of human lives. By including astrological material in his discussions of fate and human choice, Porphyry shows his desire to involve the doctrines of astrology with his philosophical expositions. It would have been easy for him just to leave out the astrology, or to decisively reject it, but that is not what he does. The very fact that he brings astrology into these discussions shows his concern for reconciling it with the philosophical positions he is taking. For him, astrology can reflect choice just as the soul can partake of it.

The Astrological Pilot of the Soul and the Personal Daimōn

The word 'pilot' (*kubernētēs*) mentioned in *To Gaurus* refers (1) to the external or self-moving soul that pilots the ensouled body during life and (2) to the 'intermediate' pilots, the father's and mother's souls, that helped to form and consolidate the fetus at fertilisation and while it was in the mother's womb. *Kubernētēs* and its variants are also important in Plato, where *nous* is the 'pilot of the soul' (*Phaedrus* 247c7) and the famous charioteer is also a kind of land pilot (*Phaedrus* 247b–248a). As Afonasin has amply demonstrated, the *kubernetes* metaphor is found in many venues associated with Platonism (see above, p. 119 and n. 74). As we have already seen, *nous* and its connections to the *daimōn* are also Platonic concerns (e.g. *Timaeus* 90a–c) continuing in the transmissions to Middle and Neo-Platonism. So Porphyry is following in a well-established tradition. When we add the idea of a *daimōn* accompanying the soul into life, we can infer another layer of guidance for an ensouled human being. Plutarch's earlier articulation of these concepts occurs especially in *De genio Socratis*, comparing the *daimōn* to a pilot (κυβερνήτης) at 586A3–4, speaking of the *nous/daimōn* guiding the soul as if it were a charioteer reining in horses (evoking the *Phaedrus* passage) and demonstrating how it aids in the saving of the best souls (593E–594A). Later, Plotinus posits a *daimōn* who can guide a life from a higher and more virtuous level than that on which the life is lived. The human so guided can then choose to follow this *daimōn* in becoming

123 V, 6.125 (220.9 Pingree): ... ἐαυτῷ παραίτιος τῆς καθαιρέσεως ἐγένετο ...

more virtuous. All of these interrelated conceptions form a constellation of what the personal *daimōn* is and can do.

The *Letter to Anebo* demonstrates Porphyry's urgent interest in the personal *daimōn*, and not only abstractly. He solicits Iamblichus's opinion about its capabilities and how to recognise it in one's own life. For Iamblichus, this *daimōn* is constellated from the entire cosmos. He repeats (*DM* 9.6) Plato's role for the *daimōn* in the Myth of Er, a role discussed in similar terms by Porphyry in *On What is Up to Us*, but for Iamblichus this *daimōn* should be sought with theurgy. In *DM* 9.7, Iamblichus reiterates that the personal *daimōn* rules over every part of us, and refers back to Porphyry's question about the *oikodespotēs* of the nativity, now blatantly inserting the word *daimōn* for *oikodespotēs* in responding to Porphyry's concerns. He thus supplies an equivalence between the personal *daimōn* as 'single *daimōn* over everything that concerns us' (*DM* 9.7.11–12) and the *oikodespotēs* of the nativity, in its sense of an overall ruler of the chart.

The discussion of the personal *daimōn* in the *Letter to Anebo* thus has direct philosophical relevance for Porphyry's method for obtaining an overall *oikodespotēs*, which he calls a 'lord' (*kurios*) of the nativity, in the *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*. Chapter 30 of this text, which draws the basic method for finding an overall chart ruler from Antiochus, is interspersed with commentary and additions by Porphyry that show evidence of this philosophical subtext. Though Porphyry does not use the word *daimōn*, let alone *oikeios* or *idios daimōn*, in his strictly astrological text, the word we do find is our old friend *kubernētēs*. Here is the relevant passage, with Porphyry's commentary on Antiochus's doctrine:¹²⁴

Furthermore, *precise definitions are required* to differentiate house-master of the nativity, lord and predominator from one another. *For the ancients entangle the names up and do not distinguish their characteristics. For each has its own power, just like a skipper and a pilot; so we will teach how they are different from each other.*

Porphyry goes on to give the method for finding this lord, finishing with this statement:

124 Porphyry's commentary is italicised here. *Introduction*, CCAG V/4, 206.3–7: "Ἐτι τίνι διαφέρουσιν ἀλλήλων οἰκοδεσπότης γενέσεως καὶ κύριος καὶ ἐπικρατήτωρ, χρῆ διεσταλκέναι. οἱ γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι πλέξαντες τὰς ὀνομασίας τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν οὐ διέκριναν. ἰδίαν γὰρ ἕκαστος ἔχει δύναμιν, ὥσπερ ναύκληρος καὶ κυβερνήτης· διδάξομεν οὖν, τίνι ἀλλήλων διαφέρουσι.

From all these they declare the lord to be the one placed most sympathetically in the nativity, that is the one more on a centrepin, more in a phase of visibility, or more on its own places and having the most power in relation to the figure of the nativity and those co-witnessing it. But how one must investigate the lord which has been so found will be said next, and how much power [it has] from this.¹²⁵

This method is designed to find the strongest, best and most effective planet in the chart. It is hard to ignore Porphyry's use of the word *kubernētēs* here, especially given its importance in *To Gaurus*. (Could Plutarch's comparison of *daimōn* with *kubernētēs* also have had an influence?) Let us connect the dots between the *Letter to Anebo*, the *Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*, *To Gaurus* and *On What is Up to Us*:

- (1) a personal *daimōn* equated with an *oikodespotēs* of the nativity, in its meaning of an overall ruler [*Letter to Anebo*/*DM*];
- (2) this chart ruler, the lord of the nativity, associated with a pilot responsible for steering the ship safely, who is represented astrologically by the strongest and best planet in the chart [*Introduction to the Tetrabiblos*];
- (3) a pilot associated with a higher soul, again steering a ship that is a metaphor for the body (following an important Platonic concept that also brings in the idea of *nous* and the *daimōn*) [*To Gaurus*];
- (4) a *daimōn* who ratifies the life chosen by the soul, some components of which are necessarily out of our control after being chosen and some which are up to us (the *daimōn* may also encourage virtue for us [*Timaeus* 90b–c]), and the soul entering life and the body within the matrix of the astrological chart fixed at the moment of birth [*On What is Up to Us*];

The result of these circumstances yields:

- (5) a *daimōn*/soul/pilot who steers and governs the ensouled human, joining with the body at birth, a birth which for Porphyry has clear and necessary astrological components.

125 *Intr. Tetr.*, CCAG V/4, 207.23–208.17: ἐκ δὲ τούτων πάντων τὸν συμπαθέστατα πρὸς τὴν γένεσιν κείμενον ἀποφαίνονται κύριον, τούτέστι τὸν ἐπικείμενον πρότερον, τὸν ἀνατολικώτερον ἢ τὸν μᾶλλον ἐπ' οἰκείων τόπων καὶ τὴν πλείστην δύναμιν πρὸς τὸ σχῆμα τῆς γενέσεως ἔχοντα τοὺς τε συμμαρτυροῦντας αὐτῷ. περὶ δὲ τοῦ εὐρεθέντος κυρίου πῶς δεῖ σκέπτεσθαι, ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς ῥηθήσεται καὶ ὅση ἢ ἐκ τούτου δύναμις.

The function of this *daimōn* is encapsulated beautifully in a statement by Proclus, another Neoplatonic philosopher (and follower of Plotinus and Porphyry) also interested in the *daimōn* and astrology:

The *daimōn* alone moves all, governs all, orders all our affairs. For it perfects the reason, moderates passions, inspires nature, maintains the body, provides the accidentals, fulfils the decrees of fate and bestows gifts from providence; and this one being is king of all that is in us and all that has to do with us, steering our whole life.¹²⁶

We could characterise Porphyry's whole complex of ideas here as just a combination of his philosophical concerns with his astrological ones, but at this point I shall venture a bolder statement about what Porphyry is doing. He is not merely adding on to his philosophical concerns with some astrology. On the contrary, his astrological observations have become a part of, even meshed with, his philosophical concerns. Indeed, they have informed a significant part of his approach to how a soul incarnates, how the *daimōn* guides a life, how that life comes into existence and what sort of virtue it chooses to embrace.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|---|
| CCAG | <i>Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum</i> . Edited by Franz Cumont et al. 12 vols. Brussels: Henri Lamertin, 1898–1953. |
| DM | Iamblichus, <i>De mysteriis</i> |
| D-K | Diels, Hermann, and Walther Kranz. <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker: griechisch und deutsch</i> . 6th ed. 3 vols. Vol. 1. Berlin: Weidmann, 1951, repr. 1966. |
| Intr. Tetr. | Porphyry, <i>Introduction to Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos</i> |
| LSJ | Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. |
| VP | Porphyry, <i>Vita Plotini</i> |

126 Proclus, *On Alcibiades* I, 78.1–6 (Westerink): *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 βασιλεὺς, οἰακίζων ἡμῶν τὴν σύμπασαν ζωὴν*. Trans. (modified) W. O'Neill, in Proclus *Diadochus* (1965). It seems likely that Proclus is following Porphyry here. This statement also has similarities with Iamblichus's at *DM* 1X.6, 280 (as quoted in Dillon (2001), 4). See also Timotin (2012), 311–312.

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Daimones in Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs*

Nilufer Akcay*

Introduction

In his *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, an allegorical interpretation of Homer's *Odyssey* XIII 102–112, Porphyry states that souls descend into genesis due to their inclination to pleasure, which is identified with 'becoming moist.' This discussion is primarily based on *De Antro* 10.8–25, in which Porphyry refers to a lost work of Numenius:

We specifically also call the powers that preside over water 'Naiad nymphs'; however, they also used to speak in general of all souls descending into genesis as Naiad nymphs. For they deemed that the souls settled on water, as being infused with the inspiration of the god, as Numenius says; because of this, he claims, the prophet also says that the spirit of God is born upon the water, and for this reason the Egyptians make all divine beings stand not on solid ground but all on a floating vessel, both the Sun and all the others. These should be understood to be the souls hovering over the moist element as they descend into genesis. And it is for this reason (Numenius says) that Heraclitus says that 'it is enjoyment, not death, for souls to become moist,' that is to say, falling into genesis is a delight for them, and that he (Heraclitus) also says elsewhere that 'we live the death of them, and they live the death of us.' For this reason, the poet (Homer) calls those in genesis 'wet' because their souls are wet. For both blood and moist sperm are dear to them, just like the nourishment of the souls of plants is water.¹

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1 Numenius, F 30 des Places = F 46 Leemans: Νύμφας δὲ ναΐδας λέγομεν καὶ τὰς τῶν ὑδάτων προεστῶσας δυνάμεις ἰδίως, ἔλεγον δὲ καὶ τὰς εἰς γένεσιν κατιούσας ψυχὰς κοινῶς ἀπάσας. Ἦγούντο γὰρ προσιζάνειν τῷ ὕδατι τὰς ψυχὰς θεοπνῶν ὄντι, ὡς φησὶν ὁ Νουμήνιος, διὰ τοῦτο λέγων καὶ τὸν προφήτην εἰρηκέναι ἐμφέρεσθαι ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος θεοῦ πνεύμα· τοὺς τε Αἰγυπτίους διὰ τοῦτο τοὺς δαίμονας ἀπαντας οὐχ ἰσθάναι ἐπὶ στερεοῦ, ἀλλὰ πάντας ἐπὶ πλοίου, καὶ τὸν Ἥλιον καὶ ἀπλῶς πάντας· οὐστὶνας εἰδέναι χρῆ τὰς ψυχὰς ἐπιποτωμένας τῷ ὑγρῷ τὰς εἰς γένεσιν κατιούσας. Ὅθεν καὶ Ἡράκλειτον ψυχῆσι φάναί τέρψιν μὴ θάνατον ὑγρῆσι γενέσθαι, τέρψιν δὲ εἶναι αὐταῖς τὴν εἰς τὴν

'Becoming moist' is apparently associated with the Naiad nymphs, who are the protectors of waters. This passage raises the question of the nature of the Naiad nymphs within the context of *De Antro* as a whole, as Porphyry employs their different symbolic interpretations. They are firstly identified as both souls and *dunameis* in *De Antro* 10.8–10, and then as *daimones* that preside over genesis (γενεθλίοις δαίμοσιν) in *De Antro* 12.5. Similarly, they are identified as *daimons* of generation (τὸν γενεθλίον δαίμονα) in *De Antro* 35.7, whom Odysseus appeases due to his blinding of Polyhemus, namely Thoosa. In addition, Porphyry specifies which region is appropriate to *daimones* or gods: according to his distinction, the West is appropriate to *daimones* (δαίμοσι δὲ τὰ δυτικά, *De Antro* 29.15), whereas the East is suited to gods (θεοῖς μὲν τὰ ἀνατολικά, *De Antro* 29.15).

Although all those brief statements provide little impression of Porphyry's demonology with his multifaceted identification of Naiad nymphs, they prompt us to examine whether *daimones* can also be considered as souls falling into genesis, what type of *daimones* or souls they may be in Porphyry's demonology, and how *daimones* have an influence or impact on the soul.

Following Porphyry's allocation of the regions to mortals and immortals, or more specifically, gods and *daimones* (τῷ μὲν θνητῷ καὶ γενέσει ὑποπτῶτῳ φύλῳ τὰ βόρεια οἰκεία, τῷ δὲ θειοτέρῳ τὰ νότια, ὡς θεοῖς μὲν τὰ ἀνατολικά, δαίμοσι δὲ τὰ δυτικά, 29.1–3),² this paper argues that *daimones*, symbolised by the Naiad nymphs, are closely related to those that cause souls to descend into the material realm in Porphyry's commentary on the story of Atlantis in *Timaeus* 20d8–9 (F 10 Sodano), which is preserved in Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 77.6–24. In accordance with his comment on the story of Atlantis, it then seeks to apply Porphyry's division of *daimones* and souls in particular, some of which are in the process of genesis, some of which are ascending to the higher realm of the celestial regions described in *De Antro* 29.1–3.

Next, following this connection, it draws a distinction between the guiding spirit and the idea of humans souls as *daimones*, the former having its source in *Timaeus* 90a, the latter in *Timaeus* 90c. On the basis of this distinction, it demonstrates that Odysseus may be deemed to be one of the heroic or divine

γένεσιν πτώσιν, καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ δὲ φάναι ζῆν ἡμᾶς τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον καὶ ζῆν ἐκεῖνας τὸν ἡμέτερον θάνατον. Παρὸ καὶ διερούς τοὺς ἐν γενέσει ὄντας καλεῖν τὸν ποιητὴν τοὺς διύγρους τὰς ψυχὰς ἔχοντας. Αἰμά τε γὰρ ταύταις καὶ ὁ διύγρος γόνος φίλος, ταῖς δὲ τῶν φυτῶν τροφή τὸ ὕδωρ. Unless otherwise indicated the translations are my own.

2 See Greenbaum (2016), 192 for ... 'ἀνατολικά' also means rising places.

souls allocated to the South in *De Antro* 29.2, while Athena is deemed to be his guiding *daimon*, ruling the rational part of Odysseus' soul and leading him to the divine.

Finally, given that 'the individual souls have received a daimonic lot' in F 10.8 of Porphyry's commentary on the *Timaeus*, this paper also covers the fact that Athena might operate as Odysseus' rational principle, since he has not yet completed his self-improvement. This aspect of Athena receives support from Plotinus' *On Our Allotted Daimon* (*Enn.* III 4.3), in which he deems the guiding *daimon* to be an entity superior to us.

In *De Antro* 10.16–17, Porphyry quotes Heraclitus 22B 77 DK to support the idea that 'becoming moist' gives pleasure to the souls falling into genesis ('Ἡράκλειτον ψυχῆσι φάναι τέρψιν μὴ θάνατον ὑγρῆσι γενέσθαι, τέρψιν δὲ εἶναι αὐταῖς τὴν εἰς τὴν γένεσιν πτώσιν). However, he does not provide a detailed explanation justifying the association of 'becoming moist' with pleasure and genesis. In order to elucidate this connection, my analysis draws on the relevant parts of *De Antro* and other texts by Porphyry on demonology and psychology, especially *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, whose content on demonology is the most elaborate among his other fragmentary writings, his commentary on the *Timaeus*, particularly F 7 and F 12 (Sodano),³ and *Sententia* 9. On the assumption that Porphyry uses *De Antro* to explain important religious and philosophical ideas, and to train his followers' way of thinking, this paper seeks to show that Porphyry's thoughts on demonology are consistent and that his works complement each other, thereby allowing for a coherent reading of the various identifications of the Naiad nymphs, and of Odysseus and Athena.

On the Cave of the Nymphs

On the Cave of the Nymphs is an elaborate allegorical reading of *Odyssey* XIII 102–112. In this section of the work, Homer describes the cave near the harbour of Phorcys in Ithaca where Odysseus is dropped by the Phaeacians, and in which, under the guidance of goddess Athena, he stores the Phaeacians' valuable gifts. Porphyry analyses these lines and provides a setting for an allegorical interpretation of the *Odyssey* as a narrative of the cyclical journey of the human soul.⁴ This soul becomes embodied in the material world where all

3 Sodano (1964), 4, 7–8.

4 Smith (2007), 13: he describes Porphyry's style of thinking in the treatise as 'paratactic' where 'Porphyry places a number of widely differing allegorical interpretations after each other and leaves the reader to make his own choices.'

kinds of pleasures try to beguile it and keep it from achieving its purpose. After its dissociation from the body, the soul returns to the point of its departure, the intelligible realm. Porphyry's interpretation of the religious and mythological symbols and images, in our case the Naiad nymphs, Odysseus, and Athena, reflects his particular interests, which also pervade many of his other works: the relationship between the soul and the body, and the salvation of the soul.

Porphyry's interpretation of *De Antro* is in fact based on Numenius' identification of Homer's cave as an image and symbol of the cosmos (τοῦ δὴ ἄντρου εἰκόνα καὶ σύμβολον φησὶ τοῦ κόσμου φέροντος Νουμήνιος καὶ ὁ τοῦτου ἑταῖρος Κρόνιος, *De Antro* 21.3–4) and of Odysseus as an image of the soul passing through successive stages of genesis and returning to the place where it is free from all the toils and passions of the material world (οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ σκοποῦ οἶμαι καὶ τοῖς περὶ Νουμήνιον ἐδόκει Ὀδυσσεὺς εἰκόνα φέρειν Ὀμήρῳ κατὰ τὴν Ὀδύσειαν τοῦ διὰ τῆς ἐφεξῆς γενέσεως διερχομένου καὶ οὕτως ἀποκαθισταμένου εἰς τοὺς ἔξω παντὸς κλύδωνος καὶ θαλάσσης ἀπείρους, *De Antro* 34.6–10). Numenius' identifications of the Homeric hero and the cave seem tailor-made for Porphyry, as they provide him with an opportunity to use the poet's verses as an exegetical exercise to show his followers the association between the soul and the body, an interest which also emerges within his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot* 13).

Not only Numenius, but also Plotinus in *Ennead* 1.6.8 interprets the journey of Odysseus,⁵ who flees from the pleasures offered by Circe and Calypso and eventually reaches his homeland, symbolising the successful journey of the human soul to return to the 'fatherland,' that is, the intelligible realm, while contrasting him with Narcissus, who loses himself in his own reflection in the water and 'drowns in material beauty.'⁶ In following Numenius' treatment of Odysseus, Porphyry's text was clearly not idiosyncratic, but followed a path that was to some extent familiar to his Neoplatonic audience. This familiarity is also corroborated by Porphyry's reference to another Odyssean image in his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot*. 22.27), of the hero eagerly swimming to the coast of the Phaeacians (νήχε' ἐπειγόμενος, *Od.* 5.399). This passage (*VPlot*. 22.23–34), as part of a lengthy Delphic oracle, reports an enquiry made by Amelius, who consulted the oracle of Apollo in Delphi, wondering where Plotinus' soul had gone. In revealing the fate of Plotinus' soul to him, the oracle borrowed Homeric phrases relating to Odysseus, pronouncing enigmatically that Plotinus had managed to 'escape from the bitter wave of blood-feeding life' (πικρὸν κῶμ' ἐξυπαλύξαι

5 Lamberton (1986), 132–133; Edwards (1988), 509–510.

6 See Hadot (1999), 225–266 for Plotinus' interpretation of the myth of Narcissus.

αίμοβότου βίτοιο, *VPlot.* 22.31–32; cf. 23.6), that is to say, from life entrapped in the body, in a way similar to how Porphyry interprets the soul of Odysseus escaping from all toils of the material world in *De Antro*.

Naiad Nymphs as Symbols of *Daimones* and Souls

Let us first begin by giving a short summary of Porphyry's treatment of *daimones* in *De Abstinētia* in particular.⁷ We learn from *De Abstinētia* II 37.10–38.1 that the region below the visible celestial bodies, that is, the sublunary region, including the cosmos,⁸ the fixed stars, and the seven planets, is filled with *daimones*, who can be sub-divided into different ranks. The class of the invisible gods (or *daimones*) must be appeased by people's prayers and sacrifices. Some of the *daimones* are well-known among people and bear names, while others are anonymous and only prayed to by fewer people. Not only in this passage of *De Abstinētia*, but also elsewhere in his works Porphyry mentions the anonymity of the *daimones*. For example, in his *Homeric Questions* VIII 1.93–94, he refers to this anonymity to explain Odysseus' prayer 'hear me, Lord, whoever you are' (κλῦθι, ἄναξ, ὅτις ἐσσί) in *Odyssey* V 445. In *De Abstinētia* he provides a more extensive discussion:

To the other gods, the world and the fixed and wandering stars—visible gods composed of soul and body—we should return thanks as has been described, by sacrifices of inanimate things. So there remains the multitude of invisible gods, whom Plato called *daimones* without distinction. People have given some of them names, and they receive from everyone honours equal to the gods and other forms of worship. Others have no name at all in most places, but acquire a name and cult inconspicuously from a few people in villages or in some cities. The remaining multitude is given the general name of *daimones*, and there is a conviction about all of them that they can do harm if they are angered by being neglected and not receiving the accustomed worship, and on the other hand that they can do good to those who make them well-disposed by prayer and supplication and sacrifices and all that goes with them.⁹

7 See Timotin (2012), 208–212 for a detailed discussion on Porphyry's demonology. See also Luc Brisson's and Dorian G. Greenbaum's contributions in this volume.

8 Here the cosmos may refer to the World Soul, which Porphyry would see as a god as a whole like the seven planets and the fixed stars.

9 Porphyry, *De abstinētia*, II 37.10–38.1: Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς θεοῖς, τῷ τε κόσμῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀπλανέσι καὶ

In this passage Porphyry refers to *Timaeus* 40d6–9, in which Plato describes *daimones*, the invisible gods, as the offspring of the visible gods (ἔκγονοι θεῶν), that is to say, of the cosmos, the fixed stars, and the seven planets. In accordance with custom, Plato gives the names of the traditional gods in the order of their generation: Ge, Uranus, Oceanus, Tethys, Phorcys, Cronus, Rhea, Zeus, Hera, and others (*Tim.* 40e5–41a2). In his *Symposium* (202d11–203a4), Plato regards *daimones* as intermediaries between gods and humans. After Plato, according to Plutarch's testimony in *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* 416c–d, Xenocrates, who is Porphyry's possible source, goes further and compares the equilateral to the nature of the gods, the scalene to that of man, and the isosceles to that of the *daimones*.¹⁰ The isosceles triangle, partly equal and partly unequal, shows the dual character of *daimones* because they have divine powers and human feelings.

Returning to *De Antro*, Porphyry states that Naiad nymphs are souls descending into genesis, despite the fact that they are traditionally the divine powers associated with water (Νύμφας δὲ ναΐδας λέγομεν καὶ τὰς τῶν ὑδάτων προεστῶσας δυνάμεις ἰδίως, ἔλεγον δὲ καὶ τὰς εἰς γένεσιν κατιούσας ψυχὰς κοινῶς ἀπάσας, *De Antro* 10.8–10). Porphyry corroborates this statement by quoting Numenius (F 30 DP), who refers to Egyptian rituals that represent all *daimones* on barques rather than on solid ground. As regards his first statement on Naiad nymphs, Porphyry ostensibly makes a generalisation related to a particular group of individual souls in the process of descending into genesis. In *De Antro* 12.1–4, he uses the etymology of the word nymph, which signifies not only female deities of nature at the lower ontological level, but also nubile women or brides:¹¹

πλανωμένοις, ἔκ τε ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος οὖσιν ὄρατοῖς θεοῖς, ἀντευχαριστητέον τὸν εἰρημένον τρόπον διὰ τῶν θυσιῶν τῶν ἀψύχων. λοιπὸν οὖν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τὸ τῶν ἀοράτων πλήθος, οὓς δαίμονας ἀδιαστόλως εἴρηκε Πλάτων. τούτων δὲ οἱ μὲν κατονομασθέντες ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων παρ' ἑκάστοις τυγχάνουσι τιμῶν τ' ἰσοθέων καὶ τῆς ἄλλης θεραπείας, οἱ δὲ ὡς τὸ πολὺ μὲν οὐ πάντι κατνωμάσθησαν, ὑπ' ἐνίων δὲ κατὰ κώμας ἢ τινὰς πόλεις ὀνόματός τε καὶ θρησκείας ἀφανῶς τυγχάνουσι. τὸ δὲ ἄλλο πλῆθος οὕτω μὲν κοινῶς προσαγορεύεται τῷ τῶν δαιμόνων ὀνόματι, πείσμα δὲ περὶ πάντων τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν, ὡς ἄρα καὶ βλάπτειεν (ἂν) εἰ χολωθεῖεν ἐπὶ τῷ παροράσθαι καὶ μὴ τυγχάνειν τῆς νενομισμένης θεραπείας, καὶ πάλιν εὐεργετοῖεν ἂν τοὺς εὐχαῖς τε αὐτοῦς καὶ λιτανείαις θυσίαις τε καὶ τοῖς ἀκολούθοις ἐξευμενιζομένους. (Trans. Clark 2000: 70).

10 Dillon (2005a), 128–129; Clark (2000), 154 n. 299 for Xenocrates as Porphyry's possible source. See also Dillon (1996), 37–38 for Xenocrates' interest in Pythagoreanism.

11 Larson (2001), 20–21.

Naiad nymphs are therefore souls entering into genesis. It is also customary to call brides nymphs as if they were closely connected with genesis and to pour water over them for bathing taken from springs or streams or fountains, which are ever-flowing.¹²

Porphyry predicates the connection between brides and Naiad nymphs on the fact that water used for bathing brides is under the protection of the Naiad nymphs, a belief which he touches on in various passages of *De Antro* (... διὰ τὰ ἐν ἄντροις καταλειβόμενα ἢ ἀναδιδόμενα ὕδατα, ὧν αἱ ναΐδες, ὡς προεστήχασιν νύμφαι in 6.21–22; Νύμφας δὲ ναΐδας λέγομεν καὶ τὰς τῶν ὑδάτων προεστῶσας δυνάμεις in 10.8–9; αἱ ναμάτων καὶ πηγῶν προεστῶσαι πηγαῖαι τε καὶ ναΐδες διὰ τοῦτο κέκληνται in 13.2–3; λίθινοι δὲ κρατῆρες καὶ ἀμφιφορεῖς ταῖς προεστῶσαις τοῦ ἐκ πετρῶν ἐξιόντος ὕδατος νύμφαις οἰκειότατοι in 14.1–2).

In *De Antro* 12.5, Porphyry defines the *daimones* that preside over genesis (γενεθλίοις δαίμοσιν), implying that they are divine powers, or, more precisely, Naiad nymphs, who traditionally belong to the lineage of Poseidon, but are among the multitude of the water-deities of lower rank. Another reference to *daimones* is found in *De Antro* 35.7, in which Porphyry explains Homer's description of Odysseus sitting under the olive tree, by specifying that he is 'appeasing the *daimon* of generation' (ἀπομειλισσομένῳ τὸν γενέθλιον δαίμονα)¹³ because of his sinful action, namely his blinding of Polyphemus, the son of the nymph Thoosa and the greatest among the Cyclopes (*Od.* 1 69–72). The *daimon* of generation, whom Odysseus appeases, is apparently the nymph Thoosa, the daughter of Phorcys, who is listed as one of the offspring of the visible gods in Plato's *Timaeus* 40e6. This interpretation is supported by the fact that *daimones* and nymphs are associated with pleasure and genesis throughout *De Antro*, and that Porphyry states in *De Antro* 35.10 that Odysseus must appease 'the gods of the sea and of matter' (ἀλίῳν καὶ ὑλικῶν θεῶν), which include the nymph Thoosa.¹⁴

12 Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 12.1–4: ναΐδες οὖν νύμφαι αἱ εἰς γένεσιν ἰοῦσαι ψυχαί. ὅθεν καὶ τὰς γαμουμένας ἔθος ὡς ἂν εἰς γένεσιν συνεζευγμένας νύμφας τε καλεῖν καὶ λουτροῖς καταχεῖν ἐκ πηγῶν ἢ ναμάτων ἢ κρηνῶν ἀένων εἰλημμένοις.

13 The phrase 'daimon of generation' is reminiscent of the phrase 'appeasing the gods of generation', ἀπομειλίξασθαι τοὺς γενεθλίους θεοὺς in *Ad Marcellam* 2.3 where Porphyry defends his marriage as a concession to the social norms. See Smith (1974:), xvii; Wicker (1987), 82; Whittaker (2001), 164; Greenbaum (2016), 273–274; trans. Zimmern (1986), 40.

14 On nymphs as daimonic figures, see also Plutarch, *De defectu* 415C and Proclus, *In Remp.* 1, p. 125.29–30 Kroll.

The last reference to *daimones* in *De Antro* should be considered in a wider cosmological and astrological context.¹⁵ In *De Antro* 29.1–3, Porphyry discusses proper assignments of the regions, asserting that the western regions are appropriate to *daimones*, while the eastern ones are appropriate to the gods. There are two further regions, the South and the North, which he allocates to the immortals or more divine beings, and to the race of mortals subject to genesis, respectively. In connection with Homer's double-gated cave, starting from Section 20 to 29 Porphyry explains the poet's assignment of the northern entrance of the cave of the nymphs to the mortals (θνητοί) and the southern to the immortals (ἀθάνατοι). His detailed discussion covers the gates of heaven (πύλαι οὐρανοῦ) or the gates of the Sun, the gates of the Sun and the Moon, and the solstitial gates.¹⁶ With regard to the solstitial gates, which the winter and summer solstices occur in Capricorn ruled by Saturn, and in Cancer ruled by the Moon respectively, the soul descends into the material world through the chain of the seven planets towards the Earth through the Moon, and ascends to the seven planets, each of which also represents a specific initiatory grade of the mysteries of Mithras, to the sphere of the fixed stars through Saturn.¹⁷

Porphyry's short statement about the celestial regions prompts us to raise a number of questions: first, why does Porphyry assign the western region to *daimones* in particular? Second, what precisely is the distinction between the souls falling into genesis from the North and those *daimones* who are placed in the West? Last, what is the link between the western region and the Naiad nymphs as *daimones*, seeing that Porphyry also identifies these nymphs with the souls coming into genesis in *De Antro* 12.1–2?

In *De Antro* 3.24–26, we receive some information on what 'the West' traditionally signifies: it is the quarter that people face entering into temples, whereas the statues of the gods and the entrances to almost all temples face the East (πάντων τῶν ἱερῶν τὰ μὲν ἀγάλματα καὶ τὰς εἰσόδους ἐχόντων πρὸς ἀνατολὴν τετραμμένας, τῶν δὲ εἰσιόντων πρὸς δύσιν ἀφορώντων). Indeed, according to Porphyry, Homer's use of the North and the South rather than of the West and

15 See Greenbaum (2016) and her article in this volume, for *daimon* in astrological contexts.

16 Numenius F 32 des Places = F 44 Leemans = *De Antro* 28.1–10 and Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 128.26–129.21 Kroll = Numenius F 35 des Places = F 42 Leemans: according to Numenius, the gates of the Sun signify the gates of Capricorn and Cancer. The correspondence of the solstices to the gates of the Sun seems to result from the fact that the Sun astrologically occurs in Capricorn during the winter solstice and in Cancer during the summer solstice.

17 See Beck (2006) and the relevant articles in Beck (2004) for the astrological interpretation of the solstitial gates, Greenbaum (2016), Chapter 5.

the East is a part of the puzzle that he puts forward in *De Antro* 3.16–4.2, and he describes it as ‘not a simple question’ (οὐ μικρᾶς οὔσης ἀπορίας).

Concerning our last question—whether there is a link between the western region and Naiad nymphs as *daimones*—the general association with the moistness of this region may at least offer some insights. In his *Tetrabiblos* (I 11.3–4.1), Ptolemy describes the region to the West as moist:

The region to the West is itself moist, because when the Sun is therein the things dried out during the day then first begin to become moistened; likewise the winds which blow from this part, which we call by the general name Zephyrus, are fresh and moist.¹⁸

We infer from Porphyry’s statement in *De Antro* 24.4–9 that the eastern and western regions correspond to the equinoctial points:

Homer attributed the cave’s entrances neither to the East and to the West nor to the equinoxes, that is Aries and Libra, but to the South and to the North and to the northernmost gates towards the North and the southernmost gates towards the South, because the cave is dedicated to souls and water nymphs, the regions are appropriate to souls subjected to genesis and apogenesis.¹⁹

Here, the East is the spring equinox occurring in Aries in the ascendant, the West the autumnal equinox occurring in Libra in the descendant. The northern region and the southern region are assigned to souls under the process of genesis and apogenesis, respectively, because of the dedication of the double-gated cave to souls and Naiad nymphs. In *De Antro* 29.8–9, we receive further information that the cardinal point (κέντρον) falling above the Earth (ὑπὲρ γῆν) corresponds to the East (τὸ ἀνατολικόν), the other under the Earth (ὑπόγειον),

18 Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I 11.3–4.1: ὁ δὲ πρὸς ταῖς δυσμαῖς τόπος αὐτός τέ ἐστιν ὑγρὸς διὰ τὸ κατ’ αὐτὸν γινομένου τοῦ ἡλίου τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἀναποθέντα τότε πρῶτον ἄρχεσθαι ὑγραίνεσθαι· οἱ τε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ φερόμενοι ἄνεμοι, οὓς κοινότερον ζεφύρους καλοῦμεν, νεαροὶ τέ εἰσι καὶ ὑγραντικοί. (Trans. Robbins 1940: 63).

19 Porphyry, *De Antro Nympharum* 24.4–9: οὐτ’ οὖν ἀνατολῆ καὶ δύσει τὰς θύρας ἀνέθηγεν οὔτε ταῖς ἰσημερίαις, οἷον κριῶ καὶ ζυγῶ ἀλλὰ νότῳ καὶ βορρᾷ καὶ ταῖς κατὰ νότον νοτιωτάταις πύλαις καὶ ταῖς κατὰ βορρᾶν βορειοτάταις, ὅτι ψυχαῖς καθιέρωτο τὸ ἄντρον καὶ νύμφαις ὑδριάσι, ψυχαῖς δὲ γενέσεως καὶ ἀπογενέσεως οἰκείοι οἱ τόποι. These cardinal signs, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn and Aries, are located where seasonal changes occurs, see Greenbaum (2016), 152–155 for a discussion of strong and daimonic signs of zodiac.

to the West (τὸ δυτικόν). In *Adversus Mathematicos* v 13.6–8 Sextus Empiricus also affirms that Libra is located under the Earth, whereas Aries is in the zenith or midheaven:

so—“for it will be clear by means of an example”—if Cancer is in the ascendant, Aries will be in the zenith, Capricorn sets, Libra is under the Earth.²⁰

As both Edwards and Johnson also point out, Porphyry's assignment of the western region to *daimones* is reminiscent of his commentary on the story of Atlantis in *Timaeus* 20d8–9 (F 10 Sodano),²¹ which is preserved in Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 77.6–24. Proclus' commentary gives a lengthy doxography including Crantor, Origen the Neoplatonist (F 12 Weber), Numenius (F 37 des Places = F 49 Leemans) and Iamblichus (F 7 Dillon), as follows:

Others combine (or so they believe) the views of Origenes and of Numenius and say that it [the conflict between Athenians and Atlantines] is a conflict between souls and daemons, with the daemons being a down-dragging force and the souls trying to come upwards. Their view is that there are three kinds of daemons, a divine type of daemon, a type that is 'relative' (*kata schesin*), which is made up of individual souls who have received a daemonic lot, and the other corrupt kind—the soul polluters. So daemons of the final type strike up this war with souls on their descent into generation. And they claim that, just as the ancient theologians refer this to Osiris and Typhon or to Dionysus and the Titans, Plato attributes it to Athenians and Atlantines out of reverence. For he hands down the tradition that, before they come into three-dimensional bodies, there is rivalry between souls and the enmattered daemons that he assigned to the West; for the West, as Egyptians say, is the region of harmful souls. The philosopher Porphyry is of this view, and indeed one would be surprised if he is saying anything different from the view authorized by Numenius.²²

20 Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* v 13.6–8: οἷον “ἔσται γὰρ σαφές ἐπὶ παραδείγμα-
τος” καρκίνου ὠροσκοποῦντος μεσουρανεῖ μὲν κριός, δύνει δὲ αἰγόκερως, ὑπὸ γῆν δέ ἐστι ζυγός.
For a detailed discussion of the cardinal points see Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathe-
maticos* 5.12–13.

21 Sodano (1964), 6–7; Edwards (1990), 259: “The notion that the west is the seat of daemons
is invoked in Porphyry's essay.” Johnson (2013), 92 n. 223. See Tarrant (2007), 60–84 for a
detailed discussion of the exegetical practices on the story of Atlantis.

22 Porphyry, *in Tim.*, F 10 Sodano: Οἱ δὲ καὶ μίξαντες τὴν Ὠριγένους, ὥσπερ οἴονται, καὶ Νουμηνίου

Porphry interprets the story of Atlantis as an allegory of hostility between souls who are trying to ascend to the higher realm and debased *daimones*, combining the interpretations of Origen and Numenius. Origen explained the story as a conflict between *daimones*: one group good, the other evil, one superior in numbers, the other in power, with the good *daimones* emerging victorious (Procl. *In Tim.* 76.32–77.3 Diehl). Numenius regarded the conflict as a battle between two different types of soul: more honourable souls, nurslings of Athena, an obvious symbol of practical wisdom or φρόνησις (compare *De Antro* 32.24),²³ and the souls who have dealings with generation and are under the protection of the god Poseidon, who is the ruler of genesis (ibid. 77.3–5).²⁴ Numenius' interpretation reflects the dualism in his doctrine of the human soul, which claims that the soul does not have two or three parts, but that there are two separate types of soul, the rational and irrational (τὴν μὲν λογικὴν, τὴν δ' ἄλογον, F 44 DP = Porphyry *περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων*, F 253.18–21 Smith).

Porphry's classification in his comment on the story of Atlantis includes three rather than two types of *daimones*, and according to Proclus' quotation, there is an intermediate type of *daimones* between the divine and those at the lowest level. These *daimones* are in fact a group of souls who have received daimonic lots, but are also in the process of generation, that is to say, of descending into the material world, which is associated with moisture in *De Antro*. The function of the *daimones* at the lowest level is to encourage these souls that are falling into genesis, whereas the divine type of *daimones* seems to remain secluded and free from the ongoing struggle.

As Porphyry assigns the western region to *daimones* connected with matter in *De Antro* 29.15, it is also the place assigned to Atlantis by Plato.²⁵ If we apply

δόξαν ψυχῶν πρὸς δαίμονας ἐναντίωσιν εἶπον, τῶν μὲν δαιμόνων καταγωγῶν ὄντων, τῶν δὲ ψυχῶν ἀναγομένων· παρ' οἷς ὁ δαίμων τριχῶς· καὶ γὰρ εἶναι φασὶ τὸ μὲν θείων δαιμόνων γένος, τὸ δὲ κατὰ σχέσιν, ὁ μερικαὶ συμπληροῦσι ψυχὰι δαιμονίας τυχοῦσαι λήξεως, τὸ δὲ πονηρὸν ἄλλο καὶ λυμαντικὸν τῶν ψυχῶν. τοὺς οὖν ἐσχάτους δαίμονας τὸν πόλεμον τοῦτον συγκροτεῖν καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἐν τῇ εἰς τὴν γένεσιν καθόδῳ· καὶ ἄπερ οἱ παλαιοὶ, φασὶ, θεολόγοι εἰς Ὅσιριν καὶ Τυφῶνα ἀνήγαγον ἢ εἰς Διόνυσον καὶ Τιτᾶνας, ταῦτα ὁ Πλάτων εἰς Ἀθηναίους καὶ Ἀτλαντίνους ἀναπέμπει δι' εὐσέβειαν· πρὶν δὲ εἰς τὰ στερεὰ σώματα κατελθεῖν, (ἐναντίωσιν) παραδίδωσι τῶν ψυχῶν πρὸς τοὺς ὕλικούς δαίμονας, οὓς τῇ δῦσει προσφκείωσεν· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡ δῦσις, ὡς ἔλεγον Αἰγύπτιοι, τόπος ἐστὶ δαιμόνων κακωτικῶν· ἐπὶ δὲ ταύτης ἐστὶ τῆς οἰήσεως ὁ φιλόσοφος Πορφύριος, ὃν καὶ θαυμάσειεν ἂν τις, εἰ ἔτερα λέγει τῆς Νουμενίου παραδόσεως. (Trans. Tarrant 2007: 76). See also Dillon (2009), 268–270 for a summary of the relevant doxography.

23 See Dillon (2009), 286 for Athena as symbolising practical wisdom.

24 In *Crit.* 113c Plato calls Poseidon the domain of Atlantis. See also Edwards (1990), 258.

25 See Tarrant (2007), 170 n. 316.

Porphyry's tripartite division of *daimones* and/or souls in the story of Atlantis to the region given in *De Antro* 29.13–15, I propose that:

- (1) The South seems to be suitable to more divine souls or more divine *daimones* (θειότεροι, *De Antro* 29.24; θείων δαιμόνων, F 10.9 Sodano = Procl. *In Tim.* 77.10 Diehl), that is to say, heroic or rational souls, which might include Odysseus insofar as he is under the guidance of Athena, associated with *phronesis* by Porphyry in *De Antro* 32.12.²⁶ In the context of *De Antro*, *phronesis* can be defined as knowledge of the future gained from experience and good judgment. The early warning and advice of Athena to Odysseus that every foreign possession must be put away in the cave (δεῖν τὸ ἄντρον ἀποθέσθαι πᾶν τὸ ἔξωθεν κτήμα), proves that the goddess manifests herself as knowledge of the future and that the hero is in the initial phase of ascending to the intelligible realm. This suggestion is compatible with *De Abſtinentia* II 41.16–20, in which Porphyry distinguishes good *daimones* from the harmful *daimones*. Accordingly, the idea that the good *daimones* have the capacity to foretell potential dangers about to be caused by the harmful ones (προσημαίνουσιν εἰς δύναμιν τοὺς ἐπηρτημένους ἀπὸ τῶν κακοεργῶν κινδύνους) corroborates Porphyry's identification of Athena with *phronesis*, that is knowledge of the future.
- (2) The North is appropriate to those souls who are subject to daimonic lots, and are in the process of falling into generation. 'The individual souls had received a daimonic lot' (ὁ μερικαὶ συμπληροῦσι ψυχὰι δαιμονίας τυχοῦσαι λήξεως, F 10.10 Sodano = Procl. *In Tim.* 77.11–12 Diehl) is an explicit reference to the souls to which a *daimon* is assigned in the *Republic* (617e1, 619c5, 620d8). In the context of *De Antro*, this reference would also pertain particularly to Odysseus.
- (3) The East is apparently allocated to the gods, though it is difficult to pin down precisely which gods Porphyry has in mind. Porphyry must allude to the visible gods mentioned in *De Abſtinentia* II 37. We also know from his *Life of Plotinus* that Porphyry calls Plotinus' guiding spirit alternately a god (*VPlot.* 10.22–25) and a more divine *daimon* (θείων δαιμόνων, *VPlot.* 10.28–29), which is also used in his commentary on the story of Atlantis as stated in (1), suggesting that in Porphyry's view a more divine *daimon* may also be called a god.

26 In *De Genio Socratis* 580d Plutarch connects Socrates' *daimonion* with Athena as 'standing at Odysseus and showed him the way, illuminating his path', see Greenbaum (2016), 22. See also Akcay (2018).

- (4) Lastly, the West is the region of the wicked or harmful *daimones*, who are embedded in matter, such as the Naiad nymphs in *De Antro*. They benefit from our thoughtlessness and stimulate our appetites (ἐπιθυμῖαι) with desire and longing for wealth, power, and pleasure (τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀβουλίας ἀπολαύουσι, προσεταιριζόμενοι τὰ πλήθη διὰ τοῦ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκκαίειν ἔρωσιν καὶ πόθοις πλούτων καὶ δυναστειῶν καὶ ἡδονῶν, κενοδοξίας τε αὖ, *De Abstinētia* II 40.15–19).

It seems difficult to distinguish the boundaries between *daimones* and souls, particularly those who are allocated to the southern and northern regions, which also correspond to *daimones* or souls in the intermediate condition in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* (77.10–12 Diehl). However, depending on which process he experiences, Odysseus belongs to both regions, the North and the South, in the sense that he is a soul who descends into the material world, but at the same time he is one of those who are trying to attain the intelligible realm. It is probable that the souls in the process of genesis or apogenesis can be called *daimones* themselves and are also accompanied by guiding spirits, who live with the souls. In fact, in the *Timaeus*, Plato separates *daimones* who preside over the top part of the soul (90a2–5),²⁷ which we liken to Athena, from those who dwell within the soul (90c2–6):

Now we ought to think of the most sovereign part of our soul as god's gift to us, given to be our guiding spirit. This, of course, is the type of soul that, as we maintain, resides in the top part of our bodies. It raises us up away from the Earth and toward what is akin to us in heaven, as though we are not plants of the Earth but of heaven.

[...] And to the extent that human nature can partake of immortality, he (a man) can in no way fail to achieve this: constantly caring for his divine part as he does, keeping well-ordered the *daimon* that lives within him, he must indeed be supremely happy.²⁸

27 See Plato, *Leg.* 732c for the guiding spirit as controlling power and 877a as the guardian spirit.

28 Plato, *Timaeus*, 90a2–5 and 90c2–6: τὸ δὲ δὴ περὶ τοῦ κυριωτάτου παρ' ἡμῖν ψυχῆς εἶδους διανοεῖσθαι δεῖ τῆδε, ὡς ἄρα αὐτὸ δαίμονα θεὸς ἐκάστῳ δέδωκεν, τοῦτο ὃ δὴ φαμεν οἰκεῖν μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπ' ἄκρῳ τῷ σώματι, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ συγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἴρειν ὡς ὄντας φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλὰ οὐράνιον. [...] καθ' ὅσον δ' αὖ μετασχεῖν ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει ἀθανασίας ἐνδέχεται, τούτου μηδὲν μέρος ἀπολείπειν, ἅτε δὲ αἰεὶ θεραπεύοντα τὸ θεῖον ἔχοντά τε αὐτὸν εὖ κεκοσμημένον τὸν δαίμονα σύνοικον ἑαυτῷ, διαφερόντως εὐδαίμονα εἶναι. (Trans. Zeyl 2000:

As Dillon remarks,²⁹ the idea that human souls are *daimones* has its source in *Timaeus* 90c, but this idea should be distinguished from the notion of guiding *daimones*, which are dwelling in the highest part of the body, or, properly speaking, in the dominant part of the soul, according to *Timaeus* 90a.³⁰ In keeping with Plato's distinction between the divine soul and the guiding spirit, Odysseus is one of those divine souls allocated to the South, who passes through all stages of genesis and returns to the Fatherland, that is to say, to the intelligible realm (*De Antro* 34.8–10, Plot. *Enn.* I 6, 8.16–20), whereas Athena as Odysseus' guardian *daimon* rules the rational part of Odysseus' soul and leads him to the divine. In his *On Our Allotted Daimon* (*Enn.* III 4, 3), Plotinus considers our guiding *daimon* to be an entity superior to us. Alluding to *Republic* 617e1, in which Plato discusses the choice of our own guiding *daimon*, Plotinus says that if our sense perception is active, the guiding *daimon* becomes the rational principle (εἰ μὲν τὸ ἐνεργούν ἢ αἰσθητικοί, καὶ ὁ δαίμων τὸ λογικόν, *Enn.* III 4, 3.5–6). However, if we live according to the rational principle, the guiding *daimon* stays above it, lying idle because the guiding *daimon* approves of what the rational principle performs. Plotinus' remarks support the idea that Athena operates as Odysseus' rational principle when he leads a sensible life.³¹

As regards his assignments of the gods to the East and of the *daimones* to the West, Porphyry's intention is to indicate two extremities: divine (good) and wicked (harmful) *daimones*. As opposed to the tripartite division of *daimones* in the commentary on the story of Atlantis, following Xenocrates' division of

85–86). I have changed the last sentence of 90a2–5 and kept 'daimon' in the translation of 90c2–6 instead of Zeyl's adopted 'guiding spirit' in order to underline the difference between the guiding spirit given to us and *daimon* which is the soul itself.

29 Dillon (1996), 319–320. Apuleius, *De Deo Socratis*, 15–16 for his tripartite division of *daimones* and identification of the human soul as a *daimon*.

30 Plato, *Phaedo* 107d–108c, *Rep.* 617e, 620d–e. See Alt (2005), 73–90 for a discussion of guiding and evil *daimones* in the Platonic tradition, particularly in Plotinus and Porphyry; Timotin (2012), 243–331 for Socrates' *daimon* and guiding *daimon* starting from Plutarch to Proclus; Finamore (2014), 36–50 on Socrates' *daimonion* in Apuleius and Plutarch; Addey (2014b), 51–72 for a detailed discussion of Neoplatonists' view of Socrates' *daimonion* where she particularly focuses on Proclus' *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* as a central study.

31 Dillon (2012), 12 convincingly interprets Plotinus' remarks on the guiding *daimon* as 'the undescended soul looked at from another angle' and likens our *daimon* to 'something like our "super-ego"'. For Plotinus' demonology and the notion of the guiding *daimon* see also Lepajoe (1998), 7–16; Dillon (2005b), 339–351; Brisson (2009), 189–202; Timotin (2012), 286–300; Corrias (2013), 443–462; Thomas Vidart's contribution in this book.

daimones into good and evil,³² Porphyry also divides them into two classes in *De Abstinencia* II 38.6–10 and II 38.24–29. Good *daimones* stimulate balance and reason; in a sense, they lead souls to the divine by controlling their *pneuma*.³³ On the other hand, harmful *daimones*, which Porphyry also calls souls, are subject to extravagancies in the material world due to their uncontrolled *pneuma* revealing anger, fear, and appetite.

In another passage of the commentary on the story of Atlantis, Proclus reports Porphyry's interpretation of a disaster in *Timaeus* 22d3–5 (F 13 Sodano).³⁴ The disaster of which Plato speaks is a destruction of the earth by fire because of a shifting of celestial bodies. Plato says that people who live in higher and dry places perish more than those who dwell near rivers and seas. Proclus criticises Porphyry on the grounds that, due to his ethical concerns, he has a propensity to interpret discourses on natural phenomena as referring to souls (*In Tim.* 116.26–117.18 Diehl).³⁵ Proclus' account shows other evidence of Porphyry's particular interest in the subject of the relationship between soul and body. More importantly, the passage bears a close resemblance to *De Antro* 10.8–25, in that Porphyry refers to the same fragment of Heraclitus 22 B 77 DK but not 22 B 62 DK as in *De Antro* 10.18–19, and he uses the same argument:

The philosopher Porphyry transfers the description from the phenomena to souls, and says, forsooth, that in these sometimes the spirited becomes overheated, and this ecpyrosis is the destruction of the 'men' within us:

'and his eyes were like gleaming fire.'

Homer says of the enraged Agamemnon in a temper (*Il.* 1.104).

But when the desiring part is flooded over by the creative wetness³⁶ and is unnerved and submerged in the streams of matter, then this is another death of intelligent souls, 'becoming wet' as Heraclitus says.³⁷

32 Plutarch, *De Iside* 361b = F 25 Heinze / 229 Isnardi Parente. See Dillon (2005a), 130; Schibli (1993), 147–148.

33 Johnson (2013), 86.

34 Sodano (1964), 8–9.

35 In the following discussion I will assume, with Dillon (2009), 277, that Proclus quotes Porphyry's text verbally except where he offers criticism. For Proclus' use of Porphyry see also Tarrant (2007), 212 n. 496.

36 Tarrant (2007), 212 n. 497.

37 Heraclitus 22B 77 DK: 'it is enjoyment not death for souls to become moist, falling into genesis is a delight for them,' as quoted in full in *De Antro* 10.20–21.

And if this is asserted correctly, as many as have their spirited part slackened, and symmetrical to a concern for secondary things, remain unvexed by the passions of the spirit; this is the meaning of the 'hollow places, near to water.' And those who have their desiring part keyed up and roused up from matter, are unvexed by those of desire; for this is the meaning of the 'higher places.' For the spirited part is somehow by nature quick of movement and energetic, while the desiring part is slack and weak; and it is the work of a man skilled in music to slacken the tension of the spirit, while tightening up the flatness of desire.³⁸

In this passage we may find evidence to show how Naiad nymphs (or *daimones*), who are associated with wetness in *De Antro*, have an influence or impact on the soul. Γενεσιουργός in 117.5 seems to be a reference to Poseidon as symbol of the ruler of genesis, which is also found in Proclus' commentary on the story of Atlantis (*In Tim.* 77.4). Quoting from Heraclitus 22 B 77 DK, Porphyry draws analogies between the spirited part of the soul (τὸ θυμοειδές, cf. *Rep.* 439d) and the high places, and the desiring part of the soul (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, cf. *Rep.* 439e) and the hollow places. The spirited part is located in a relatively higher part of the soul, manifesting itself as anger, temper, and so on, and suffering from overheating. The desiring part is the lower part of the soul, manifesting itself as slackness and weakness, and is associated with moistness.

In accordance with Porphyry's interpretation of Heraclitus 22 B 77 DK,³⁹ 'becoming moist' is an indication of a weakened rational part of the soul, while in *De Antro* 10.20–21 Porphyry says that 'becoming moist' is a pleasure for souls due to their fall into genesis. If we combine these two interpretations, 'wetness' symbolises the soul's tendency to incline towards materialistic pleasure, and its

38 Proclus, *In Tim.* 116.26–117.18 Diehl: 'Ὁ δὲ γε φιλόσοφος Πορφύριος καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπὸ τῶν φαινομένων μετὰγει τοὺς λόγους καὶ φησιν, ὅτι ἄρα καὶ ἐν ταύταις ποτὲ μὲν ὑπερζει τὸ θυμοειδές, καὶ ἡ ἐκπύρωσις αὕτη φθορὰ ἐστὶ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀνθρώπων·

ὅσσε δὲ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντι εἰκτενῆ

ἐπὶ θυμουμένου τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος ἐποίησεν Ὅμηρος· ὅτε δὲ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν ὑπὸ τῆς γενεσιουργοῦ κατακλυζόμενον ὑγρότητος ἐκνευρίζεται καὶ βαπτίζεται τοῖς τῆς ὕλης βέουμασι, καὶ ἄλλος οὗτος ψυχῶν τῶν νοερῶν θάνατος, ὑγρῆσι γενέσθαι, φησὶν Ἡράκλειτος. εἰ δὲ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς διατέτακται, τῶν μὲν κατὰ θυμὸν παθῶν ἀπείρατοι μένουσιν ὅσοι ἀν κεχλασμένον ἔχωσι τὸν θυμὸν καὶ σύμμετρον εἰς τὴν τῶν δευτέρων ἐπιμέλειαν· τοῦτο γὰρ οἱ κοῖλοι τόποι καὶ ὕδατων γείτονες σημαίνουσι. τῶν δὲ κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν, οἱ συντονώτερον ἔχοντες τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ ἐγγηγεμένον ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης· τοῦτο γὰρ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ τόποι δηλοῦσι. πέφυκε γὰρ πῶς τὸ μὲν θυμικὸν δέξικητον εἶναι καὶ δραστήριον, τὸ δὲ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἐκλυτον καὶ ἀσθενές· μουσικοῦ δ' ἀνδρὸς χαλάσαι μὲν το θυμοῦ τὸ εὐτόνον, ἐπιτείνειν δὲ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας τὸ ἐκμελές. (Trans. Dillon 2009: 276–277).

39 Kahn (1979), 245.

loss of rationality and genesis occur because of this tendency. In *De Antro* 10.22–23, Porphyry quotes another fragment of Heraclitus 22 B 62 DK: ‘we live their death, they live our death,’ and claims that Heraclitus says that Homer calls souls in genesis ‘wet.’ In line with Porphyry’s similar interpretations of Heraclitus 22 B 77 DK in his commentary on the story of Atlantis, ‘death’ in 22 B 62 DK⁴⁰ implies spiritual death of the rational part of the soul while living its corporeal life. This death refers to the predominance of the desiring or appetitive part of the soul. This idea receives support from *Timaeus* 88a7–b5, in which Plato advocates a balanced relationship between soul and body, explaining that if a body is too strong for its weak-minded soul, this leads to excessive bodily needs, that is, excessive desire for food, drink, sex and so on, and to negligence of the rational part of the soul:

But when, on the other hand, a large body, too much for its soul, is joined with a puny and feeble mind, then, given that human beings have two sets of natural desires—desires of the body for food and desires of the most divine part of us for wisdom—the motions of the stronger part will predominate, and amplify their own interest. They render the functions of the soul dull, stupid, and forgetful, thereby bringing on the gravest disease of all: ignorance.⁴¹

Regarding the spiritual death of the soul, we find significant remarks in *Sententia* 9 where Porphyry draws a distinction between the conventional and the philosophical understanding of death:

Death is twofold, in fact, the one generally understood is when the body unbinds itself from the soul; but the other, acknowledged by the philosophers, is when the soul unbinds herself from the body. The latter by no means follows upon the former.⁴²

40 Kahn (1979), 216–220; Marcovich (2001), 240–241.

41 Plato, *Timaeus* 88a7–b5: σώμα τε ὅταν αὐ μέγα καὶ ὑπέριψυχον σμικρὰ συμφυῆς ἀσθενεῖ τε διανοία γένηται, διττῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν οὐσῶν φύσει κατ’ ἀνθρώπους, διὰ σώμα μὲν τροφῆς, διὰ δὲ τὸ θειότατον τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν φρονήσεως, αἱ τοῦ κρείττονος κινήσεις κρατοῦσαι καὶ τὸ μὲν σφέτερον αὔξουσαι, τὸ δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς κωφὸν καὶ δυσμαθὲς ἀμνήμὸν τε ποιοῦσαι, τὴν μεγίστην νόσον ἀμαθίαν ἐναπεργάζονται. (Trans. Zeyl 2000: 83–84).

42 Porphyry, *Sententia* 9: Ὁ θάνατος διπλοῦς, ὁ μὲν οὖν συνεγνωσμένος λυομένου τοῦ σώματος ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς, ὁ δὲ τῶν φιλοσόφων λυομένης τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος, καὶ οὐ πάντως ὁ ἕτερος τῷ ἑτέρῳ ἔπεται.

The last sentence of *Sententia* 9 implies that the soul's 'self-detachment' from the body does not lead to the detachment of the body from the soul, thereby hinting at the ascent of the soul towards the intelligible realm while still living its corporeal life, which Smith calls 'spiritual death'.⁴³ On the other hand, 'becoming moist' may also be deemed to be the negative aspect of the spiritual death of the soul, reflecting the dominance of the irrational part of the soul over the rational figuratively as a result of the influence of the Naiad nymphs.

In conclusion, because of Porphyry's sophisticated interpretation of *daimones* and his symbolic language in *De Antro*, it is not an easy task to mark precisely the boundaries between *daimones*, souls, and gods in his doctrine. Ambiguity also results from the intermediate position of *daimones*, who are capable of participating in the world of humans and in the world of gods and are not completely impassible, having both human emotions and divine capacity. We might, however, come to the conclusion that the souls in the process of genesis or apogenesis can also be called *daimones* until they pass through the sublunary region, a region in which *daimones* dwell. The souls falling into genesis are those who have not yet completed their self-improvement and are accompanied by a guiding spirit, as in the case of Odysseus and the goddess Athena. On the other hand, it would appear that the souls who are in their ascent out of genesis are classified by Porphyry as 'more divine *daimones*,' or heroic souls. Porphyry's treatment of Homer's Naiad nymphs is multifaceted. They are not only defined as souls descending into genesis because of their association with wetness, but also are identified as *daimones* embedded in matter like the Atlantians in the *Timaeus*, in other words, harmful *daimones* who affect the desiring part of individual souls and take advantage of people's weaknesses.

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43 For the Neoplatonic treatment of the natural and spiritual death of the soul see Smith (1974), 22 n. 6.

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Evil Demons in the *De Mysteriis*

Assessing the Iamblichean Critique of Porphyry's Demonology

Seamus O'Neill

Introduction

To the ancient and early medieval mind, the position that demons possess material bodies simply made sense. Whether the doctrine was inherited, philosophically argued, divinely revealed, or confirmed by practical experience, there is a certain metaphysical simplicity and neatness in conceiving the demon to be an aerial being, residing in the realm between mortals and gods, sharing elements of both cosmic extremes. From Plato to Apuleius, Tertullian to Augustine, philosophers and theologians, Hellenic and Christian, relied on the demonic body to explain various aspects of their demonologies. How demons remain invisible; why they desire material sacrifice; how they acquire secret knowledge; why they live so long; how they turn to evil; and by what means they might invade and possess a human body, are all questions that could be entertained and explained in the context of the demon's physical ontology, which connected the aerial nature of the demonic body to the airy stratum of the cosmos in which it lived.

In the *De Mysteriis*, however, Iamblichus repudiates this principle connecting demonic ontology and agency to the hierarchical stratification of the cosmos and its material layers, as Porphyry, in both the *Letter to Anebo* and the *De Abstinentia*, implements and expounds upon it. The first book of the *De Mysteriis* raises arguments against what I will call the 'spatio-material principle,' which Porphyry inherited from Apuleius, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and other sundry doctrines that make up what John Dillon has called the "Platonic underworld."¹ Yet, in the second book of the work dealing with divination, Iamblichus affirms the existence of *evil* demons, who are deceitful, passionate, and adversely affect people seeking their intercession. This is surprising given his interpretation of the positive role of demons in theurgic liturgy. While Iamblichus undermines Porphyry's account of evil demons by criticizing the principles upon which the latter bases his demonic ontology, we

1 See Dillon (1996), 384 ff. Porphyry's demonological views might also have been influenced by Origen, whose writings on demons in the *Contra Celsum* and the *De Principiis* accord with Porphyry's demonology on many points.

nevertheless find Iamblichus inconsistently discussing evil demons in ways similar to those proposed by Porphyry and his predecessors, but without any explanatory ground. I will argue that Porphyry's more consistent demonology, which focuses specifically on the nature of the demonic relation to the material body, however conceived, highlights certain difficulties in the extant demonology of Iamblichus, which, although denying the materiality of demons, nevertheless must account for the very demonological disputes that demonic bodies were understood to solve. If Iamblichus's demons are bodiless and unaffected by matter, then how do some demons become evil? I cannot here address solutions to these difficulties, but only identify them and make a case for the need for further studies on the demonology of Iamblichus. Further, I wish to warn against speaking indiscriminately of 'demons' in general in Iamblichus's thought without qualifying between good demons and evil ones: what is true of the former is not always true of the latter, and vice-versa.

Porphyrian Demonology: Defining the Demonic in *De Abstinētia*

We will begin with the demonology of Porphyry in order to see how he accounts philosophically for the nature and agency of demons, good and evil. We may then more clearly understand Iamblichus's criticisms, indicate what is lacking in Iamblichus's demonology, and highlight his apparent inconsistencies. Porphyry's demonology is grounded in a particular philosophy of nature, which, while denied by Iamblichus, explains and corrects various traditional opinions about demons, their nature, place, and role.² The synthesis of philosophical reflection on the one hand, and traditional religion and myth on the other, is a defining characteristic of Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism in general, grounded in Plato's own philosophy.³ Demonology is also a pervasive science within the religious traditions that are taken up in Platonism, especially germane to the mediation between humans and the divine. Demonology develops alongside of and within philosophy as the Neoplatonic tradition grows and works out the relation between mortals and the gods. Peter Habermehl notes in his discussion of the impact of Middle Platonic demonology on the thought of Apuleius, for example:

2 On Porphyry's demonology, see the papers by L. Brisson, D. Gieseler Greenbaum, and N. Akcay in the present volume. See also Timotin (2012), 208–215, Edwards (2006), 117–122, Shaw (1995), 130–131, and Lewy (1978).

3 Cf. Narbonne and Hankey (2006).

The radical transcendence of the supreme godhead and the unbridgeable distance between gods and humans, as postulated by the Peripatetics, fueled the Platonists' urge to reconcile man with the divine [...] [D]emonology furnished a solution. It postulated a divine hierarchy in which the demons' protean agency guarantees all interaction between men and deity. By ascribing multiplicity and mobility to these intermediary beings, demonology helped to preserve traditional polytheism and, at the same time, the unity, remoteness and serenity of the divine realm.⁴

While much of our knowledge of Porphyry's demonology comes to us through Augustine, one finds important details about Porphyry's views in his own words in his *De Abstinencia*. The second book of this work is essentially a discussion of demons, their natures, powers, and limitations. Here we see that in addition to the hierarchy of the hypostases and visible gods, Porphyry notes that there also exists a "multitude of invisible gods, which Plato called *daimones* without distinction."⁵ As many know, Plato's description of *Eros* as a "Δαίμων μέγας" in the *Symposium* is foundational for subsequent demonological treatises, for Plato seems to have been the first to set out philosophically exactly what a demon is and what its functions are, and Porphyry certainly has this text in mind throughout his account of the demons in *De Abstinencia*.⁶ While he basically maintains Plato's schema, placing the demons spatially and ontologically between men and the gods, Porphyry's doctrine on the nature of demons is far more developed and intricate. Porphyry writes,

The remaining multitude is given the general name of *daimones*, and there is a conviction about all of them that they can do harm if they are angered by being neglected and not receiving accustomed worship, and on the other hand that they can do good to those who make them well-disposed by prayer and supplication and sacrifices and all that goes with them.⁷

This 'conviction' that Porphyry propounds is held by, among others, Apuleius in his *De Deo Socratis*; demons can either help or hinder human beings in response to the attention or neglect with which they are treated.⁸ Proper

4 Habermehl (1996), 134–135.

5 *De Abstinencia* (= *De Abs.*) 2.37.4.

6 Plato, *Symposium* (= *Symp.*) 202e.

7 *De Abs.* 2.37.5.

8 Although Porphyry argues against Apuleius' description of the demons, he does incorporate

sacrifice and supplication ensure their succor, whereas neglect procures their wrath.

Porphyry maintains, however, that this common opinion dangerously misrepresents an essential aspect of demonic nature.⁹ Porphyry explicitly presents his own views within the context of the correction of this error. In *De Abstinētia* at least, Porphyry does not deny that humans are helped or hindered by real powers possessed by demons, that is, their existence and agency is certain. However, he denies that the *same* demon can *both* harm and help; this is the “error” of the traditional view that Porphyry intends to correct. In fact, in the *Letter to Anebo* Porphyry accuses Iamblichus of committing this same error.¹⁰ Porphyry argues that “it is impossible for these *daimones* both to provide benefits and also to cause harm to the same beings.”¹¹ He holds to the principle that “the good never harms and the bad never benefits,” a form of the law of non-contradiction.¹² Thus, the harmful powers “must be separated from the beneficent *daimones*, for the power which is naturally and deliberately harmful is the opposite of the beneficent, and opposites can never occur in the same.”¹³ Thereby, Porphyry distinguishes between two different classes of demons based on their morality and agency: namely, between the good (ἀγαθούς) and the maleficent (κακοεργοί), characterizing the latter according to their *actions*, thus, “*kakoergoi*,” that is, “wicked-working,” or “doing evil deeds.”

Within the class of good demons Porphyry identifies two subclasses, distinguished by their respective functions: there are those demons that “do everything for the benefit of those they rule,” and those that he calls ‘transmitters’ (πορθημέοντα).¹⁴ As for the first class, everything in the world, that is, everything in the sublunary realm is assigned a demon that governs (διοιχοῦσι) its well-being.¹⁵ Animals, crops, weather, seasons, skills and arts, are all supervised by

some of Apuleius’ developments into his own account. For Apuleius, the demons are “between” men and the gods in that they share man’s slavery to the passions and emotions, yet not his potential mortality, while at the same time they enjoy the immortality of the gods, yet not their immutability.

9 *De Abs.* 2.38.1.

10 The position is summarised at the end of *De Abs.* 2.40.

11 *De Abs.* 2.38.2.

12 *De Abs.* 2.41.1. This position is defended in Book 1 of Plato’s *Republic*, wherein Socrates argues against Polymarchus’ definition of justice by showing the contradiction inherent in the position that someone could be made worse by the application of justice.

13 *De Abs.* 2.41.2.

14 *De Abs.* 2.38.2–3.

15 *De Abs.* 2.38.2.

demons who provide for them benefits and supervision.¹⁶ In this view, Porphyry follows Apuleius and the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which claims that “To [...] daemons is given dominion over all things upon earth.”¹⁷ For Porphyry, all human endeavours are also accompanied by demons.¹⁸ Every human pursuit, be it education, medicine, sailing, etc., is managed by a demon whose duty it is to guide and assist the human being in its fulfillment. Thus, the human is not alone in any of his activities.

Porphyry quotes Plato practically verbatim to explain the function of the second group, the ‘transmitters’: “Among them must be numbered the ‘transmitters’, as Plato calls them, who report ‘what comes from people to the gods and what comes from the gods to people’ carrying up our prayers to the gods as if to judges and carrying back to us their advice and warnings through oracles.”¹⁹ Porphyry does not say, as does Plato, “man with god does not mix,” yet, following Plato, he connects humans and the gods through demonic agency.²⁰ For Porphyry, however, although the demons are a medium through which communication between the human and the divine occurs, and demons thereby play an important anagogical role, it is unclear in this text whether or not this mediation is necessary for the human to attain union with the One-being. According to Augustine, Porphyry claims in other works, lost to us, that engaging the demons is ultimately unnecessary for him who has the intellectual capacity to attain this unity by his own power alone, which view places Porphyry more in line with Plotinus, who maintains the power of the soul alone to attain union with *Nous*.²¹

16 With regard to the first function, Porphyry mentions ‘skills’ and ‘education in liberal arts’ and ‘other similar things.’ See *De Abs.* 2.38.2.

17 Cf. *Corpus Hermeticum* 16. The *Corpus Hermeticum* also claims that evil demons are also given governance over things on earth. The Hermetic Corpus likens demons to troops of soldiers, marshaled together into bands and posted to different planets. These demons not only “do everything for the benefit of those they rule,” but further, they are “completely engaged in this activity.” The Greek term here is “πραγματεύεσθαι”—to treat labouriously, exert oneself, take trouble to. See Liddell, H. and Scott, R. (1999), 666; *De Abs.* 2.38.2. The “benefit” (ὠφελεία) they provide can be understood as an assistance or service to humanity. Liddell, H. and Scott, R. (1999), 909; *De Abs.* 2.38.2.

18 See *De Abs.* 2.38.2.

19 *De Abs.* 2.38.3. Cf. also the *Corpus Hermeticum* 16: “the daemons are subject to the gods, and govern men ... Working through gods and demons, God makes all things for himself.”

20 *Symp.* 203a. For Plato, because man and god do not mingle directly, the demons, and explicitly *Eros*, are necessary for the salvation of the human soul. The *Corpus Hermeticum* 16 also claims that “men are dependent on the demons.”

21 See Augustine, *City of God* (= *civ. Dei*) x.9: “Denique animam rationalem sive, quod magis

While the nature and function of good demons are similarly described by many Platonic thinkers, and appear in many scholarly treatments of Neoplatonism and its representatives, evil demons in Neoplatonic thought, it seems to me, receive less academic attention. In his explanation of how demons become maleficent, Porphyry diverges from Plato's account of what appear only to be good demons in the *Symposium*. According to Porphyry, the maleficent demons are attracted to the corporeal realm and all such impediments to the ascent of the soul. The virtuousness or viciousness of a demon depends upon its relation to the *pneuma*, or soul-vehicle, upon which its soul rests. This "breath" acts as the demonic body, or vehicle of the demonic soul. Plato, in *Timaeus* 43a, claims that this *pneumatic* body of the soul is "in a state of perpetual influx and efflux," and Porphyry follows Plato, agreeing that "the *pneuma*, insofar as it is corporeal, is passible and corruptible."²² While Porphyry maintains that the *pneuma* of the demon is corporeal, the demon is "not surrounded by a solid body," that is, the demon's soul is not *in* a body.²³ However, the demonic soul has this connection to a material entity. Further, because the *pneuma* is material, "it remains for a long time, but it is not eternal."²⁴ All physical things are wont to separate into the parts they comprise, and the *pneuma* is no exception.

Porphyry vividly illustrates the corporeality of the *pneuma* in a passage discussing the evil demon's desire for sacrifices. He claims that evil demons "rejoice in libations, and the savour of sacrifices, through which their *pneumatic* vehicle is fattened; for this vehicle lives through vapors and exhalations, and the life of it is various through various exhalations. It is likewise corroborated by the savour of blood and flesh."²⁵ The airy vehicle, like any other body,

amat dicere, intellectualem, in sua posse dicit evadere, etiamsi quod eius spiritale est nulla theurgica fuerit arte purgatum [...]" Plotinus, in *Ennead* v.3.9, distinguishes between three parts of the soul: the perceptive, the ratiocinative, and the intuitive, in that ascending order. Wiesen (1968–2003) notes here on pp. 288–289 that Augustine is perhaps referring to Porphyry's lost treatise, *On the Ascent of the Soul*, which, he claims, follows the division of Plotinus. On the possible identity of the Porphyrian work that Augustine knows as the *de regressu animae* with Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, see O'Meara (1959) and (1969).

22 *De Abs.* 2.39.2.

23 Thus its ability to remain invisible to the senses. See *De Abs.* 2.39. The relation between the human soul and body might not be so different. It is debated in Neoplatonic thought how the soul and body are related, whether the soul is in the body, or whether it animates or controls a body from 'afar.' See, for example, Porphyry's *Sententiae Ad Intelligibilia Ducentes: Sent.* 28, 29, and 32.

24 *De Abs.* 2.39.

25 *De Abs.* 2.42.

needs sustenance and is fed by that which is like it. Thus we see that although not as substantial as a rock or body of flesh, this breath, or *pneumatic* vehicle, is material and physical. Indeed, Porphyry's explanation of the operation of sacrifices, why the demons desire them, and why they work is premised on the very corporeal nature of the soul vehicle itself.

Porphyry grounds both the virtue and constancy of the good demons and the viciousness and passibility of evil demons in both the nature of the *pneuma* and the ability of the demon's soul to master it. First, concerning the nature of the *pneuma*, "The pneumatic substance [...] of good daemons, possesses symmetry, in the same manner as the bodies of the visible Gods; but the spirit of malefic daemons is deprived of symmetry, and in consequence of its abounding in passivity, they are distributed about the terrestrial region."²⁶ Here, Porphyry not only links the moral character of the demon to the nature of the *pneuma*, but also uses it to explain its location in the cosmos, uniting like with like.²⁷ Thus, the evil demons are affected by their material connection to their bodies.

Second, the demon's soul also has a role to play in its relation to its *pneuma*. The good demons, Porphyry claims, "control [it] according to reason," (χρᾶτοῦσι δὲ αὐτο κατὰ λόγον) whereas the evil demons are its slaves.²⁸ The evil demons are thus bound by their passions and appetites: "the souls which do not control the *pneuma* adjacent to them, but are mostly controlled by it, are for that very reason too much carried away, when the angers and appetites of the *pneuma* lead to impulse."²⁹ Here the passions of the *pneuma* control the soul, calling to

26 *De Abs.* 2.39.

27 There is evidence therefore that Porphyry adheres at least to the spatial aspect of what I will later call the 'spatio-material principle,' which in the *Letter to Anebo* is proposed only hypothetically as the "general opinion," and not explicitly said to be Porphyry's own view. On 'material demons,' see also *De Abs.* 2.46.

28 *De Abs.* 2.38.2. The distinction between the demonologies of Apuleius and Porphyry is qualitative, not merely linguistic. Porphyry is aware of the confusion that arises when different names are applied to the same gods. Discussing the difference between gods and the angels, Porphyry asks, "Why then do we argue about a name? Are we to take it as a difference about semantics? For the goddess the Greeks call Athene, the Romans call Minerva, and the Egyptians Cypris, and the Thracians call her by some other name. Thus, by these different names nothing is annulled concerning the significance of the gods. The difference is not vast whether one calls them gods or angels." *Macarius Magnes* fr. 207 Apokritikos, 4.21 (Berchman, 2005).

29 *De Abs.* 2.38.4. Porphyry's discussion of the demonic soul's relation to the *pneumatic* vehicle is similar in character to how he understands the human soul to become embodied. See *Sent.* 7: "a soul binds itself to body through directing its attention towards the

mind Plato's image of the charioteer in the *Phaedrus*. It is unclear whether 1) the power of the demon to control the *pneuma* is a function of the symmetry (or lack thereof) of the *pneuma* (whereby the soul of the good demon happens to enjoy a symmetrical vehicle, and the soul of the evil demon is helpless to alter the corrupt material conditions of its vehicle), or 2) the symmetry of the *pneuma* is a result of the demon's ability to control it (whereby the good demon shapes and preserves the desirable nature of the *pneuma*, while the wayward demonic soul similarly corrupts its physical vehicle), or 3) both variables influence one another simultaneously. It seems that in the very least, the evil demonic soul (like the soul of the wicked human) is affected by the particular nature of the body: that is, the lower negatively affects the higher. This thesis is contrary to Neoplatonic thought in general, and is the very criticism that Iamblichus will marshal against Porphyry's position, as we shall see. Nevertheless, we see here the importance of the nature of the *pneuma* for Porphyry's demonology, and how he explains the ontological and moral character of demons, good as well as evil, by an appeal to this corporeal body, which has a capacity to affect the demonic soul.

Because the evil demons are slaves to the passions, rather than their masters, they thereby have an opposite effect on the world than that brought about by the good demons. As Habermehl notes, demonology goes hand in hand with theodicy insofar as the free will of demons takes evil out of the hands and responsibility of the gods:

Demonology enabled philosophers to account for the imperfections in the workings of the world. The problem posed by the presence of evil in the world seemed less pressing if responsibility for it could be ascribed to a lesser divine agency. In the final analysis, demonology, particularly its separation of good and evil demons, was theodicy.³⁰

Porphyry says of the maleficent demons that "their character is wholly violent and deceptive and lacking the supervision of the greater divine power, so they usually make sudden intense onslaughts, like ambushes, sometimes trying to remain hidden and sometimes using force."³¹ He blames many instances of evil

affections which derive from it, and is freed from it, in turn, through (the achievement of) impassibility." (Dillon's translation in Brisson, 2005).

30 Habermehl (1996), 135.

31 *De Abs.* 2.39.3. According to the *Corpus Hermeticum*, "[daemons] are also the authors of the disturbances upon earth, and work manifold trouble both for cities and nations collectively and for individual men. For they mold our souls into another shape, and pull them

in the world on the direct actions of the evil demons who think and act in ways contrary to the cosmic order:

They themselves rejoice in everything that is likewise inconsistent and incompatible [...] they profit from our lack of sense, winning over the masses because they inflame people's appetites with lust and longing for wealth and power and pleasure, and also with empty ambition from which arises civil conflicts and wars and kindred events.³²

The maleficent demons encourage human beings to seek out and satisfy their lusts and desires, which they too hold in common. In this way, they are responsible for separating man from the divine as they too are separated. Porphyry attributes the evil nature of certain demons to their relation to the material world: they desire material things, draw pleasure from matter, and are negatively affected by the material *pneuma*. That is, demonic ontology is invoked in order to explain the nature and activity of evil demons.

In the *Letter to Anebo*, Porphyry sets forth general assumptions about the nature of demons, but he does not explicitly claim them to be his own. In fact, the whole letter conveys a tone of rationalism, skepticism, reductionism, and psychologism. However, many of the positions he raises as the "general views of certain people" regarding popular demonology are in agreement with what he himself affirms in *De Abstinencia*. At the forefront is the distinction between good and evil demons. Indeed, Porphyry begins the letter by invoking in particular the "good demons" (δαίμόνων ἀγαθῶν).³³ As for evil demons, he claims that there are those who believe that there is a faction of evil demons who deceive mortals by claiming to be gods or beneficent demons, who, though they can be forced into servitude by mortals, seek to corrupt them:

... there is a class of beings whose special function is to hear prayers, creatures by nature deceitful, capable of adopting any form, versatile, assuming the semblance of gods, demons and the ghosts of dead men; and it is this class of being that performs all these acts that appear to us to be good or perverted. But where really good things are in question, they render no assistance. On the contrary, they are not even aware of such goodness. No,

away to themselves, being seated in our nerves and marrow and veins, and arteries, and penetrating even to our inmost organs" (*Corpus Hermeticum* 16. Cf. *De Abs.* 2.40.1). Again, Porphyry seems to be drawing upon an established tradition.

32 *De Abs.* 2.40.3. See also *De Abs.* 2.40.1. Cf. Lewy (1978), footnote 2, p. 259.

33 See Porphyry, *Letter to Anebo*, ed. Saffrey—Segonds, fr. 1.

they win men over to evil ways, accuse them falsely, and sometimes put obstacles in the path of persistent seekers after virtue. Full of presumption and arrogance, they take pleasure in the odour of sacrifice and are an easy prey to flattery.³⁴

This text from the *Letter to Anebo* is basically a summary of the main demonological sections of the *De Abstinencia*, wherein again the evil demons appear as impediments toward the salvation of the human soul.

Also, while Porphyry does not claim the views to be his own, there are multiple places in the *Letter* where Porphyry refers to ‘aerial,’ ‘physical,’ and ‘corporeal’ demons. The existence of such beings is consistent with his explicit claims in his *De Abstinencia*, wherein he is clear that there are good and evil demons, and the latter are vicious because of their relation to the corporeal *pneuma*; they are affected and overcome by its inconstancy, and they have the power to assault, influence, and deceive humanity.

Iamblichean Demonology: The Critique of the Spatio-Material Principle

When reading the *De Mysteriis* with a view to understanding Iamblichus’s demonology, the reader is often left wishing that Iamblichus had said more.³⁵ Much of what Iamblichus provides by way of describing ontologically the distinctions between the levels of the intelligible hierarchy regards specifically the extreme poles of the higher genera of beings: gods and souls. He informs the reader that he will treat only the extremities, and by doing so, expects that the natures of the intermediaries, that is, demons and heroes, will be clarified, since these latter “serve to fill out the indivisible mutuality of the two extremes.”³⁶ Often Iamblichus does speak specifically of the intermediary classes, and in general, one can apply what Iamblichus says inclusively about the “higher genera” to all four classes. However, not all of his claims are consistent, especially those concerning evil demons.³⁷

34 Ibid., fr. 62 [= Augustine, *Civ. Dei* x, 11]. The English translation is from Wiesen (1968).

35 On Iamblichean demonology generally, see Timotin (2012), 141–146, 215–228, 309–317, Shaw (1995), and Lewy (1978), especially 273–309.

36 *De Mysteriis* (= *De Myst.*) 1.6.

37 Attempting to avoid the contradictions between what Iamblichus says about the ‘greater kinds’ and demons (or heroes, for that matter) by claiming that Iamblichus is not talking about demons when he discusses the higher genera together, but rather, is focusing on the

Iamblichus attempts to correct the doctrine concerning the intelligible hierarchy of beings raised by Porphyry in the *Letter*, concerning, in particular, what I will call the 'spatio-material principle' and the account of evil demons that relies upon it. Porphyry writes,

[...] the cause of the distinction now being investigated is the assignment of these entities to different bodies, for example that of the gods to aethereal bodies, that of daemons to aerial ones, and that of souls to earthly bodies.³⁸

Porphyry is referring here, without explicitly claiming to hold it himself, to a doctrine, evident in Plato's *Epinomis* and Apuleius's *De Deo Socratis*, which maintains that the cosmos is spatially divided according to the hierarchy of the elements, earth at the nadir and ether at the acme.³⁹ The doctrine places creatures within this cosmic schema according to the dominant element in their bodily composition so that their bodies are cognate with the elemental level of the hierarchy in which they reside: humans, with their earthly bodies reside in the lowest level of earth, while demons, possessing aerial bodies dwell in the

gods alone, is not a tenable position. Not only is this view contrary to his explicitly stated method, whereby the reader should be able to apply the claims about the 'higher genera' to all classes, but further, there are a number of passages in the text where Iamblichus is clear that when he is writing about the 'higher genera,' he is including demons, heroes, and souls. For example, he writes, "And I make the same argument to you also as regards the superior classes of being which follow upon the gods, I mean the daemons and heroes and pure souls for in respect of them also one should always assume one definite account of their essence, and reject the indeterminacy and instability characteristic of the human condition [...]" (*De Myst.* 1.3). See also *De Myst.* 1.5 and 1.6, where Iamblichus again reiterates that the 'divine classes' comprise four groups (gods, demons, heroes, and pure souls). Each subclass has its own characteristics, but Iamblichus is generally very clear when he means to point these out in distinction from what he writes about the higher classes together, as a group.

38 Porphyry, *Letter to Anebo*, ed. Saffrey—Segonds, fr. 9 [= Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 1 8]. The English translation is from Clark et al. (2003).

39 See, for example, Plato, *Symp.* 202e, *Tim.* 32 ff., and *Epin.* 984 ff., as well as Apuleius's *De Deo Socratis* (= *Soc.*) 1 ff. Habermehl (1996) notes, "The foundation of Apuleius' theory, as in fact of all demonology, is the notion of a hierarchical partition of the cosmos and, accordingly, of the 'rational beings' (*animalia praecipua*) within it. With its explanation the text commences. The world is structured in space (*loci dispositio*), but also in quality ('dignity' in Apuleian terminology: *naturae dignitas*)" (118). Augustine also addresses the doctrine in Book 8 of the *City of God*.

higher realm of air, and so on.⁴⁰ As Apuleius explains, “the inhabitants’ nature conforms with the nature of the region.”⁴¹

Iamblichus spurns the spatio-material principle according to which the cosmos comprises distinct locales, or places of residence, for the various levels of intelligible beings, the material composition of which also contributes to their ontological nature. Andrei Timotin has outlined Iamblichus’s problems with this view and groups his rebuttals into three claims: i) incorporeal natures are not able to be confined in space and are separate from bodies, ii) incorporeality is more noble than corporeality and, thus, is not affected by the latter, and iii) the principle presumes a misconception of how demons and gods are actually present throughout the cosmos and engaged in theurgic ritual.⁴²

To take Plato’s famous claim that “God with man does not mix” in a spatial sense, in order to preserve the gods from being contaminated by contact with the physical world, is, for Iamblichus, to misunderstand how the intelligible hierarchy is divided. Iamblichus contends that banishing the gods from the physical world sets the human realm apart from divinity and exacerbates the difficulties of bridging the Platonic *chorismos*.⁴³ Rather than being due to any limitation of divine agency, the division of the emanative power of the gods is a function of the physical world itself: “[...] the world as a whole, spatially divided as it is, brings about division throughout itself of the single, indivisible light of the gods.”⁴⁴ Where there is limitation, the lower order limits itself in relation to what is higher. However, while the physical world establishes its own divided relation to the gods, the gods themselves are ever-present, whole, and undivided throughout the cosmos. Indeed, it is the higher order that produces the very lower order itself, and so in no way should it be barred from attending to it.⁴⁵ The intermediary classes of higher beings communicate the

40 Origen also claims that demons have aerial bodies. See, for example, *De Princ.* 1.7.4.

41 *Soc.* 9.

42 See Timotin (2012), 142 ff.

43 See *De Myst.* 1.8: “in fact none of this is valid. For neither is it the case that the gods are confined to certain parts of the cosmos, nor is the earthly realm devoid of them. On the contrary, it is true of the superior beings in it that, even as they are not contained by anything, so they contain everything within themselves; and earthly things, possessing their being in virtue of the totalities of the gods, whenever they come to be ready for participation in the divine, straight away find the gods pre-existing in it prior to their own proper essence.” Note here that Iamblichus begins writing about the gods in particular, but then also claims that the same is true of all the ‘superior beings,’ that is, demons, heroes, and pure souls.

44 *De Myst.* 1.9.

45 See *De Myst.* 1.8.

power of the gods throughout the whole of the cosmos and bind it together, ensuring between all things a perpetual communion.⁴⁶

Iamblichus also considers the spatio-material principle to be unworthy of the higher classes of being.⁴⁷ Because he applies the typical Platonic rule that the lower cannot affect the higher, which Porphyry seems to break in his explanation of demonic malevolence, Iamblichus sees no way in which divine beings can be affected either by a body or by the matter of a particular spatial locale. Regardless of whether or not the higher beings are embodied or related to bodies in some other way, “there is no question of their sharing in the changes to which bodies are subject”—they emphatically do not.⁴⁸ Iamblichus contends that a principle that would divide superior beings among, and compartmentalize them within, the material divisions of the cosmos and apply to them characteristics of the matter in which they dwell is simply wrong. Because spatial location and quantitative division do not apply to non-material entities, Iamblichus considers Porphyry’s “whole method of division false, and this effort to ferret out distinctive properties is absurd, and the confining of the gods to a particular location does not properly reflect the totality of their essence or potency.”⁴⁹ Whether or not this position expressed in the *Letter* is Porphyry’s own view is, as we have seen, unclear. Iamblichus says that Porphyry does not claim that all the details of this position are his own, yet nevertheless, we have seen that Porphyry explains the malevolence of certain demons with reference to their relation to their material bodies insofar as they are affected by matter.

46 See *De Myst.* 1.5: “These classes of being, then, 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. They constitute the best possible blending and proportionate mixture for everything, contriving in pretty well equal measure a progression from the superior to the lesser, and a re-ascent from the inferior to the prior. They implant order and measure into the participation descending from the better and the receptivity engendered in less perfect beings, and make all things amenable and concordant with all others, as they receive from the gods on high the causal principles of all these things.” See also Iamblichus, *De Anima* VIII.40, where Iamblichus seems to agree with “The more ancient authorities [who] maintain that [...] the visible gods (especially the Sun), the invisible demiurgic causes, and all the superior classes, by which I mean heroes, daemons, angels and gods, [...] themselves preside over the whole system.” Again, Iamblichus includes demons, heroes, and angels along with the gods within the superior classes.

47 See *De Myst.* 1.8.

48 *De Myst.* 1.8. Note too that the same applies to the other superior classes as well, as is evident from the texts cited.

49 *De Myst.* 1.8.

Iamblichus's emphatic rejection of this element of the spatio-material principle will create problems for how we are to understand evil demons within his account. The explanatory apparatus has been excised, and nothing is put in its place.⁵⁰

Iamblican Demonology: The Demonic Body

Let us look at how Iamblichus applies this general criticism to the particular question of the demonic body, remembering that Porphyry relied upon the corporeal *pneuma* to account for the passibility and malevolence of evil demons. Upon close inspection of the text, it is actually unclear whether or not Iamblichus thinks that demons have bodies. Having listed all the possibilities regarding demonic embodiment or a demon's soul's relation to a body, and having put all the options on the table, Iamblichus withholds his own opinion:

For neither point is clearly defined whether they [i.e., demons] are to be regarded as possessing bodies, or being mounted upon them, or enveloping them, or making use of them, or just as being the same as a body. But perhaps one should not examine this distinction too closely; for you [Porphyry] are not proposing it as your own view, but are stating it as the opinion of others.⁵¹

Because of Iamblichus's routinely oblique method of dealing with demons in the *De Mysteriis*, the reader seeking to clarify his demonology here, typically, is left unsatisfied. It is crucial to note here that in this passage, Iamblichus says nothing about his own position on demonic embodiment. He claims, rather, that the view Porphyry proposes (that demons have bodies), which, again, is not explicitly purported to be Porphyry's own stance, but the opinions of some, can be interpreted in many ways. Iamblichus lists five possibilities here, but neither explores nor endorses any of them. Iamblichus's own position on the

50 One cannot expect any text to answer all the questions a reader might have about it, and thus Iamblichus might not be faulted for not providing an account of evil demons specifically in the *De Mysteriis*. Nevertheless, we shall see that what he does provide is inconsistent on various levels.

51 *De Myst.* 1.16. See also Iamblichus *De Anima* VI.33. While Porphyry does not explicitly endorse the views proposed in the *Letter*, we nevertheless have seen that Porphyry does appeal to material *pneuma* and therefore a material component of the demonic substance in his demonology in the *De Abstinencia*.

demonic body, I believe, is ultimately unsettled; however, by looking at other texts within the work, we can glean more about Iamblichus's position, though conflicts emerge.

At issue here is the extent to which, if at all, embodiment or contact with a body and matter can affect the higher classes of being, including demons, whether or not they have bodies.⁵² Iamblichus is open to the possibility that the higher beings "if in fact they were corporeal either in the way of being states of bodies, or as being enmattered forms, or in any other such way, then they could perhaps associate themselves with the various changes of bodies."⁵³ That is to say, if the higher genera were akin to human beings in possessing a body, then perhaps they too, like the human composite of soul and body, could be affected by the states of the body, suffer passions, and ultimately be sundered.⁵⁴ Iamblichus mentions the views of others who assert that demons, like humans, are embodied souls, but he explicitly concludes that "the genera of superior entities are not even present in bodies, but rule them from outside; so there is no question of their sharing in the changes to which bodies are subject."⁵⁵ That is, the superior beings (including demons) exist prior to, are separate from, and are not mixed with bodies.⁵⁶ Therefore, they cannot be affected by embodiment, or by any relation they might have either to a body or to the material divisions of the cosmos generally: they do not "assimilate themselves to the nature of their receptacle."⁵⁷ So far we can deduce that demons

52 Clarke et al. (2003) write, "The point of differentiation here is the degree of contact involved. Similarly, in the case of the heavenly bodies, it remained a point of controversy in Platonism whether they were souls inhabiting fiery bodies, or simply mounted upon them" (63, footnote 93).

53 *De Myst.* I.8.

54 The Aristotelian influence is evident here, whereby in the composite of body and soul, that is, the enmattered form, body and soul are defined through one another. The soul is the form of a particular type of organised material body, and the organised material body is actualised and made to be what it is by its form. The contention over the interpretation of this position aside, as Aristotle says in the *De Anima*, it is a pointless question to ask whether or not the soul can exist without the body. Iamblichus says in his *De Anima* that "Individual souls [...] attach themselves to bodies, fall under the control of bodies, and come to dwell in bodies that are already overcome by the nature of the Universe" (*De Anima* VI.28).

55 *De Myst.* I.8.

56 *De Myst.* I.8.

57 *De Myst.* I.8. See also *De Myst.* p. 35. See also *De Mysteriis* I.8: "And how would that which is not locally present to bodies be distinguished by bodily locations, and that which is not constricted by the particular circumscriptions of subjects to be contained individually by the various parts of the cosmos?" See too Finamore (1985), 32 ff.

are neither enmattered forms, nor are they locally present to bodies. Neither are they materially confined to the matter of the various strata of the cosmos.

Iamblichus makes one interesting reference to the “daemons of the air” (τῶν ἀρίων [...] δαιμόνων). One might think here that there is something of Porphyry in this phrase, but Iamblichus seems to be referring to the area of a particular class of demons’ rule, and not to its material composition or spatial location or limitation. Unlike the gods, demons have partial rather than universal power, and Iamblichus maintains that the demons can govern a particular area of the cosmos without being subject to the spatial limits and material influence of that district; their administrative domain has nothing to do with their essence, nature, or composition.⁵⁸ Thus, against Porphyry’s suggestion in the *Letter to Anebo* (and what he might be understood to assert in *De Abstinencia*), Iamblichus holds that nothing can be gleaned of demonic ontology by investigating the nature of the air that demons are said to inhabit and out of which their bodies might be believed to be fashioned. Finally, Iamblichus expresses elsewhere that the essence of demons is eternal and incorporeal, and thus, unaffected by bodies, whatever the demonic essence’s relation to corporeality or locality of administration might be.⁵⁹ He writes, “I declare, then, that the class of daemons is multiplied in unity, and undergoes mixture without contamination ...”⁶⁰ Contra Porphyry, for Iamblichus, the demons are unaffected by the lower, whether it be matter, or any other lower principle.⁶¹

Iamblichus holds, however, like Porphyry, that demons do have a *pneumatic* vehicle. He says that the *pneumatic* spirits of demons and heroes (τὰ δαιμόνια δὲ καὶ τὰ ἡρωϊκὰ αὐτοπτικά πνεύματα) appear in direct visions.⁶² According

58 In fact, when defining demons, Iamblichus points to their partial power as the essential distinction between them and the gods. See Dillon (2009), 50 ff.

59 Discussing whether or not theurgic ritual is meant to affect the passions of demons, Iamblichus writes, “One would not [...] agree that some part of our ritual is directed towards the gods or daemons, which are the subjects of our cult as subject to passions; for that essence which is in itself eternal and incorporeal cannot itself admit any alteration emanating from bodies” (*De Myst.* 1.11).

60 *De Myst.* 1.6.

61 As we shall see, this claim will become problematic later in the text when evil demons are introduced.

62 *De Myst.* 11.3. For a detailed list describing how demons appear locally, see the whole of 11.3. Iamblichus says that demons appear 1) uniform; 2) frightening; 3) in different forms at different times; 4) changeable in form; 5) in tumult and disorder; 6) possessing beauty in form; 7) arranged in proportions determining their essence; 8) swifter than they actually are; 9) divided and unequal regarding light; 10) obscure in images and visions; 11) glowing with smouldering fire that appears divided. It is unclear exactly what all these descriptions

to Finamore, all the higher genera have such vehicles, but the relationship between the *pneuma* and the soul differs for each kind.⁶³ However, whereas Porphyry determines the character of demons by their ability to control the soul vehicle, not only does nothing of the sort appear in the *De Mysteriis*, but what Iamblichus has said about the nature of demons thus far precludes this possibility. In any case, as Finamore has pointed out, Iamblichus fundamentally “disagreed with Porphyry” on the nature of the *pneuma*.⁶⁴

Whether demons, according to Iamblichus, ought to be regarded as:

- 1) possessing bodies, or
- 2) being mounted upon bodies, or
- 3) enveloping bodies, or
- 4) making use of bodies, or
- 5) just as being the same as a body,

Iamblichus asserts that they, like all the divine classes, are utterly unaffected by the body or by corporeality.⁶⁵ Despite demonic invulnerability to bodily and material inconstancy, Iamblichus will maintain, however, that there are evil demons. As we shall see, he paints himself into a kind of corner. Whatever the origin and account of evil demons, he has sealed off one avenue of explanation by denying a demon's proclivity for passion due either to its body or to its relation to corporeality—the cause advanced by Porphyry.⁶⁶ In fact, Iamblichus flatly denies that demons suffer at all.⁶⁷

actually mean, but one is tempted to think that Iamblichus is writing from experience here, attempting to put into words visions that resist such linguistic description.

63 See Finamore (1985), 36, ff. See also Iamblichus, *De Anima* VII.38.

64 Finamore (1985), 11.

65 I suspect that, given Iamblichus's account of the passibility of humans (because they are composites of soul and material, fleshy bodies, and thus, suffer qua body and composite, not qua soul), it is reasonable that one can rule out option number one as being possible for the demon. The demon cannot here be an enmattered form, unless it actualised some body, unlike that of a human, which was immune to passibility. Otherwise, either the human also will not suffer passions because its soul qua soul is beyond them (which is not the case, since humans suffer qua composite), or demons will similarly suffer qua composite or body because of their embodiment in something lower than their essence (which Iamblichus explicitly says does not happen).

66 See also *Sent.* 7.

67 *De Myst.* I.10.

Iamblichean Demonology: Demonic Impassibility and Agency

While he is unclear about how, or even if, demons are related to a body, Iamblichus is nevertheless explicit that demons remain impassable to them and to the materiality of the divisions of the cosmos through which they execute their assignments. Iamblichus asserts that “in fact none of the superior classes is subject to passions.”⁶⁸ Indeed, the superior classes transcend the very distinction between passibility and impassibility:

It is rather because they completely transcend the distinction between passible and impassible, because they do not even possess a nature that is susceptible to passion, and because they are endowed by their essence with inflexible firmness, that I postulate impassibility and inflexibility in respect to all of them.⁶⁹

According to the logic here, the higher classes are impassible, not because they resist the passions, but because they are beyond the very possibility of suffering passions. As Dillon notes, “To none of the *κρείττονα γένη*, [Iamblichus] maintains, can either of those terms [passionate and dispassionate] be properly applied; they are above such distinctions.”⁷⁰

Nor is the impassivity of the soul dependent upon any act that could potentially fail to actualise this impassibility. The very nature of the soul is to transcend passions: it cannot even suffer them potentially.⁷¹ Rather, it is the body that participates in soul that suffers passions; for Iamblichus, only bodies and composites are capable of undergoing such changes. Even the embodied soul does not suffer *qua* soul, but rather, it suffers *qua* body or *qua* composite: “the soul in itself is unchangeable, as being superior in its essence to passion.”⁷²

Iamblichus also explicitly refers to the impassibility of demons in particular. If even souls do not, *qua* soul, suffer passions, then this is even truer for those beings that are superior:

68 *De Myst.* I.10.

69 *De Myst.* I.10.

70 Dillon (2009), 49. Again, as usual, demons are included among the higher genera.

71 See *De Myst.* I.10. Strangely, however, in the *De Anima*, Iamblichus does maintain that there are (perhaps, human) souls that are passionate even before they are embodied: “As to those [souls], on the other hand, who are sated with desires and full of passions, it is with passions that they first encounter bodies” (*De Anima*, VI.30).

72 *De Myst.* I.10.

Since, then, we have shown in the case of the lowest class of the superior beings, that is, the soul, that it is impossible that it have any part in experiencing passion, how can one attribute any such participation to daemons and heroes, who are eternal, and constantly in attendance upon the gods, and who themselves preserve, on the same terms, an image of the administration of the gods, do not cease to maintain the divine order, and never depart from it?⁷³

Elsewhere Iamblichus clearly states that “the demons are also impassible, and so are all those of the superior classes who follow along with them.”⁷⁴ Finally, to cite another passage, Iamblichus writes, the genera of superior entities “give from themselves to bodies everything in the way of goodness that bodies can receive, while they themselves accept nothing from bodies.”⁷⁵ Iamblichus is clear that whatever relation a demon, or any member of the classes of superior genera, might have to anything below it, it remains unaffected by it.

Thus far, Iamblichus has struck down two of Porphyry’s ontological arguments explaining the malevolence of evil demons by asserting that a) the material location of the cosmos over which demons preside says nothing of their ontological nature in general, the nature of their bodies or *pneuma*, or their relation to matter in particular, and b) because demons are impassible and unaffected by any relation to matter, the viciousness of evil demons cannot be explained by passions, a loss of control, or the negative effects of any kind of relation to the lower order.

Iamblichus expands the duties of demons beyond the Platonic transmitting activity detailed in the *Symposium*. In general, demonic activity, according to Iamblichus, remains, nevertheless, good and benevolent. According to Dillon, “Generally, daemons are revealed as active principles of the gods.”⁷⁶ Clarke et al. here note that “Iamblichus divides the tribe of demons below the moon into three classes: those nearest the earth are punitive, those in the air are purificatory, and those in the zone of the moon itself are concerned with salvation.”⁷⁷ Summarising their essential mediative role between and within the genera of higher beings, John Finamore adds that,

73 *De Myst.* 1.10.

74 *De Myst.* 1.10.

75 *De Myst.* 1.8.

76 Dillon (2009), 50.

77 *De Myst.*, p. 97. On the classes of demons in Iamblichus, see also Shaw (1995), 140.

Demons are not primary but subservient to the gods and make the gods' Good evident. Both demons and heroes complete the bond between gods and souls, making a single continuity from the highest to the lowest. They carry both the procession from the gods to souls and ascent from souls to gods, and make all things agreeable and harmonious for all by receiving the causes of all things from the gods.⁷⁸

There is no malevolence indicated or implied in demonic activity thus far.

Iamblichus also contends that demons play a crucial role in cosmogenesis.⁷⁹ In fact, in the beginning of Book 2 of *De Mysteriis*, he defines demons in terms of this very function.⁸⁰ Specifically, Iamblichus assigns "to daemons productive powers that oversee nature and the bond uniting souls to bodies."⁸¹ Demonic activity is opposed to that of angels, which "do no more than loosen the bonds of matter, whereas daemons draw down the soul towards nature."⁸² The demon not only oversees the movement, but is in fact responsible for ferrying the soul into the material realm. He writes, "[the advent] of daemons weighs down the body, and afflicts it with diseases, and drags the soul down to the realm of nature, and does not remove from bodies their innate sense-perceptions, detains here in this region those who are hastening towards the divine fire, and does not free them from the chains of fate."⁸³ In this particular role, one begins to sense a negativity in demonic agency, which is rather at odds with what Iamblichus has said so far about the benevolence of demons.

Given the positive assessment of demons thus far, the reader might begin to feel a little perplexed at this point. The soul's desire for and contact with matter has typically been understood negatively going back to the Orphic and Pythagorean influences upon Plato, evident in dialogues like the *Phaedo* wherein philosophy herself becomes the practise of dying.⁸⁴ These anticosmic

78 Finamore (1985), 45–46.

79 See Shaw (1995), 40 ff.

80 *De Myst.* II.1: "By 'daemons' I mean the generative and creative powers of the gods in the furthest extremity of their emanations and in its last stages of division."

81 *De Myst.* II.1.

82 *De Myst.* II.4.

83 *De Myst.* II.6. See also Shaw (1995), 40. Further, he writes, "daimons were the personified powers of matter, entities whose centrifugal influence on souls was encountered and turned around in theurgic rituals" Shaw 40. See also Shaw (1995), 131–133.

84 Plato, *Phaedo* 64a. See Dodds (1968), 138, 146–147. Further, both the Orphics and the Pythagoreans considered that "the body is the prisonhouse of the soul; that vegetarianism is an essential rule of life; and that the unpleasant consequences of sin, both in this world

tendencies are evident throughout the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions. One knows from Plotinus, though the matter is debated, that *tolma* is the cause of the fall of the soul and its movement towards matter.⁸⁵ Iamblichus also says that genesis is the cause of human suffering, since “evils attach themselves to [the soul] because of generation.”⁸⁶ He calls these maladies the “woes of generation” (τῶν ἐν τῇ γενέσει συμφορῶν), in which the demons are complicit.⁸⁷

The demons are the cosmic forces responsible for overseeing and maintaining the soul's negative bond to the material world. Iamblichus writes, “But the soul that tends downward drags in its train signs of chains and punishments, is weighed down by concretions of material spirits, and held fast by the disorderly inequalities of matter, and is seen submitting itself to the authority of daemons concerned with generation.”⁸⁸ Elsewhere Iamblichus is even more specific about the demon's active role in the process, whereby the demon does not just oversee the process, but further, is responsible for dragging the soul into the material realm.⁸⁹ Shaw explains that,

In the *De Mysteriis* daimons were portrayed both as agents of the Demiurge and as powers that defiled the soul by tying it to matter. This ambivalence was due to their centrifugal activity: in being agents of the Demiurge in the ‘procession’ of the gods, it was their task to exteriorize specific aspects of the divine, and in disseminating the divine presence into matter daimons also led the attention of particular souls into a centrifugal and extroverted attitude. This was what bound them to their bodies and caused them to suffer.⁹⁰

and in the next, can be washed away by ritual means.” (Ibid., 149) On the notion that σῶμα = σῆμα (body equals tomb), cf. Ibid. 148, and the helpful endnote 87 on pp. 169–170. See also Armstrong (1959), 6 ff. Proclus agreed that the origin of this idea lies with Orpheus but that Pythagoras independently discovered the same doctrine: “what Orpheus delivered mystically through arcane narrations, this Pythagoras learned when he celebrated orgies in the Thracian Libethra, being initiated by Aglaophemus in the mystic wisdom which Orpheus derived from his mother Calliope, in the mountain Pangaeus” (qtd. in Taylor (1824), vii).

85 On this see Madjumdar (2005). See also Narbonne (2007 a) and (2007 b).

86 *De Myst.* I.11. See Finamore (1985), 50–53.

87 *De Myst.* I.11.

88 *De Myst.* II.7.

89 See *De Myst.* II.6.

90 Shaw (1995), 40. See also Shaw (1995), 131–133.

Again, this demonic function seems to be at odds with the general benevolence of Iamblichus's characterization of the demons.

However, as negative as this sounds, one might interpret this species of demonic activity in a positive light. Generative activity, perhaps, accords with the necessity of emanation within the cosmos. Finamore and Dillon note that in his *De Anima* as well, Iamblichus follows Plato's *Timaeus* by arguing that "there is a certain necessity to the descent and the order through which the souls are brought to generation."⁹¹ Even if the human's suffering is a result of his attachment to matter, generation itself and the demonic role in its procession are not evil *qua* evil. Demonic activity initially sounds detrimental, but again, this is an essential role that needs to be played in the process of emanation. Demons need not be considered wicked because of their particular allotment.

However, things grow curiouiser. Although Iamblichus explicitly states that demons are impassible, his position on the impassibility of explicitly *evil* demons is obscure. Distinguishing the demons from the Gods, Iamblichus writes "it is attachment to generative nature, and necessarily suffering division because of that, that bestows an inferior rank upon demons."⁹² And further, "The gods, then, are removed from those powers which incline towards generation; demons, on the other hand, are not entirely uncontaminated by these."⁹³ Though demons are not explicitly said to be evil because of this contamination, one now wonders exactly what Iamblichus means here, and how far he in fact is from Porphyry's position on the relation between the demon's soul and the *pneuma*. As Finamore explains, echoing Iamblichus's language, "Demons, therefore, are enmeshed in matter [...] Demons and other inferior souls, therefore, become contaminated by matter."⁹⁴ Can one become contaminated without being affected? Is the lower here negatively affecting the higher? Are demons as unassailable as Iamblichus has previously stated? What exactly is this contamination, and is it enough to corrupt a demon, which heretofore has been portrayed as explicitly incorruptible?

91 Finamore and Dillon (2002), 16.

92 *De Myst.* 1.20.

93 *De Myst.* 1.20.

94 Finamore (1985), 50, 51.

Iamblichean Demonology: Evil Demons, Evil Spirits

On occasion, Iamblichus explicitly writes of that which is both “τὸ κακὸν καὶ δαιμόνιον” (evil and demonic).⁹⁵ It has been shown that much of Iamblichus’s understanding of the existence, nature, and role of demons stems from Chaldaean demonology. Hans Lewy writes, for example, “Iamblichus sets forth in his work *On the Mysteries* (III, 3,1) a theory concerning the nature and activity of the evil demons, which, according to his own statement, derives from the ‘Chaldaean prophets.’”⁹⁶ However, the “demonistic dualism” between good and evil spirits which, in fact, grounds the Chaldaean “beliefs, feelings, and mode of conduct,” is in fundamental tension with Iamblichean demonology on a number of fronts.⁹⁷ As Timotin has pointed out, “il s’agit bien de cette doctrine dualiste adoptée, dans la tradition platonicienne, par Plutarque, dans le *De E delphico* et le *De Iside*, et par Porphyre, et qui contredit sur un nombre de points la doctrine théologique du *De mysteriis*.”⁹⁸

In Book 2 of *De Mysteriis*, one finds the first explicit mention of “evil demons,” who, instead of just performing ordained roles in the process of cosmic generation and carrying out various and just punishments, appear to be engaged in malicious activities. Writing about divine visions, Iamblichus describes what accompanies the appearances of the various levels of intelligible beings. He notes that “good daemons [present] for contemplation their own productions, and the goods which they bestow.”⁹⁹ He also refers to the “punitive demons,” who display their respective forms of punishment.¹⁰⁰ In a footnote, Emma Clarke et al. highlight this reference to punitive demons as the “first mention of evil demons in the *De Mysteriis*,” and list two other places where evil demons are discussed, though by my count there are at least five in total, among a number of allusions as well.¹⁰¹ However, Clarke’s footnote marker should perhaps be pushed further along in the sentence, for it is not entirely clear whether the punitive activity of demons is actually evil, or rather, like their generative

95 *De Myst.* III.31. On evil demons in Iamblichus, see H. Seng’s paper in the present volume, Timotin (2012), 225–228, and Lewy (1978), 273–309.

96 Lewy (1978), 273.

97 Lewy (1978), 267, 279.

98 Timotin (2012), 226. See also Timotin (2012), 225–228.

99 *De Myst.* II.7.

100 *De Myst.* II.7.

101 Clarke et al. (2003) list *De Myst.* III.31.178 and X.7.293, but see also III.31.176, III.31.180, IX.7.282, and II.10 generally.

function, necessary and beneficial.¹⁰² In the Christian tradition, even Satan can be put to good use as an instrument of God's divine justice. The term translated as 'punitive' here is from "τιμωρέω": 'to help' or 'aid,' as well as 'to take vengeance upon.' Further, when discussing the descent of souls into bodies in the *De Anima*, Iamblichus suggests that despite the fact that "the soul that comes down here for punishment and judgement seems somehow to be dragged and forced," it is nevertheless for its own good, that is, for the purpose of purification.¹⁰³ The punitive function could be seen as entirely just, necessary, and even cathartic.

The attempt to maintain what Iamblichus has said to this point about the benevolence and impassibility of demons and the higher genera becomes more difficult, however, as Iamblichus continues in this same sentence, to claim that "the other demons who are wicked in whatsoever way [appear] surrounded by harmful beasts, greedy for blood and savage."¹⁰⁴ The term translated as "wicked" is "πονηρός": 'toilsome,' 'grievous,' or just plain 'bad,' and is used a number of times in the text. Also in the sentence appear the words "θηρίον" ('savage,' or 'wild'), "βλαβερός" ('hurtful,' or 'noxious'), and "αίμοβόρος" ('blood-sucking')—terms one might more readily associate with Count Dracula than with benevolent divinities. This sudden appearance of such demons should not sit well with the reader who has been paying attention to Iamblichus's claims so far concerning demonic nature generally.

It grows stranger, too. Like Augustine, who believes that evil demons attach themselves to vicious people whom they find like themselves, Iamblichus claims:

[Those who are guilty of crime], as they are excluded from association with undefiled spirits because of these pollutions, [...] thus attach themselves to evil spirits, and, being filled by them with the most evil inspiration, they become evil and unholy, gorged with licentious pleasures, full of vice, eager for habits foreign to the gods, and, to sum up, they become akin to the wicked daemons to whom they have become attached.¹⁰⁵

102 *De Myst.* 11.7.

103 Iamblichus, *De Anima* VI.29. See also Finamore and Dillon (2002), 16–17, 190–194.

104 *De Myst.* 11.7.

105 *De Myst.* 111.3. Note here that Iamblichus practically identifies the "evil spirits" with the "wicked demons." Porphyry too makes a similar connection: "But now, since every sensible body is attended with an efflux of material daemons, hence, together with the impurity produced from flesh and blood, the power which is friendly to, and familiar with, this impurity, is at the same time present through similitude and alliance" (*De Abs.* 2.46). On

There is an intimate association between sorcerers, evil demons and spirits, licentiousness, and the impurities of matter: in each other, they all recognise something like themselves.¹⁰⁶ As the evil demon attaches itself to the vicious human, so too does the nefarious human secure himself to the demon.¹⁰⁷

If, as Iamblichus writes, those “who associate with daemons who are deceitful and causes of licentiousness are obviously in conflict with the theurgists,” then there must in fact be deceitful demons who share these similar characteristics and desires with the vicious sorcerers with whom they collaborate.¹⁰⁸ Iamblichus does not deny that these collusions transpire or that such activity is efficacious. Rather, he seeks to dissociate theurgy from these demonic covenants, since evil demons “are in no case assigned an administrative [or theurgical] role.”¹⁰⁹ If, however, evil demons are (akin to the sorcerers who invoke them) explicitly “full of passion” (παθῶν μεστοί), and Dillon is right to point out that one of the Porphyrian heresies that Iamblichus tries to correct is the attempt to “introduce a distinction between those [demons] which are subject to passions (ἐμπαθές) and those which are not (ἀπαθές),” then Iamblichus is simply begging the question in favour of Porphyry.¹¹⁰ He draws the very same distinction between evil and passionate versus good and impassible demons

Augustine, see, for example, *Confessions* 10.36(59) and his accounts of Julian the Apostate (*civ. Dei* 5.21) and Numa Pompilius (*civ. Dei*. 7.34 ff.).

106 See too *De Myst.* III.31: “These, then, being full of passion and evil, draw evil spirits to themselves because of kinship, and are excited by them toward every vice, and so growing together, just like some kind of circle joining beginning to end, they render in like manner an equal exchange.” In the same section in which Iamblichus mentions these “evil spirits” (τοῖς κακοῖς πνεύμασι) to whom vicious people become attached, he also makes multiple references to “evil demons” (πονηροῖς δαίμοσι, for example) to which such people also annex themselves. It seems as though Iamblichus is drawing a connection between, or perhaps even identifying these “evil spirits” with “evil demons.” He draws a similar connection in *De Myst.* III.31, mentioning both evil demons and evil spirits in the same paragraph in the same context in the same role.

107 Lewy (1978) writes, concerning Iamblichus's own adoption of certain Chaldaean demonological principles, “If, moreover, [the impious] are prevented by some taint from holding intercourse with pure spirits, they come in contact with evil demons, whom they begin to resemble, filled as they are under their influence with sacrilegious thoughts and lusts” (274).

108 *De Myst.* III.31. On the deceitful nature of evil demons, see also *De Myst.* II.10. On Porphyry's warnings against sorcery and collusions with evil demons see *De Abst.* 2.43 ff.

109 *De Myst.* IX.7. Here there is a clear division between good and evil demons. Demons have been said to have administrative roles, yet evil demons do not.

110 *De Myst.* III.31; Dillon (2009), 49.

for which he condemns Porphyry for deducing. Either evil demons are impassible and sorcerers do not interact with them (yet Iamblichus claims that they do), or evil demons are passible, thus negating Iamblichus's earlier and explicit and numerous claims that demons are impassible (thereby siding with Porphyry).

Iamblichus is also explicit that evil demons have no administrative function to play in the guiding of the cosmos. Thus, he too, like Porphyry, distinguishes between good demons and evil demons according to their activity. He writes concerning Porphyry's letter, "You also set up an opposition between them, as of good against evil, whereas in fact evil daemons are in no case assigned an administrative role, nor are they set over against the good on a footing of equality."¹¹¹ Clarke et al. note, referring to the lack of an administrative role, that, "Here, again, 'Abamon' is concerned not to reject but rather to 'purify' the beliefs in vulgar magic, in this case that there are evil as well as good spirits related to all bodily parts and functions. He wishes to downgrade the evil spirits to the rank of 'spoilors,' or incidental entities."¹¹² If it is true that evil demons have no administrative or theurgical roles, then perhaps we must read the roles of generation and punishment in a positive light, as not referring to evil demons, since clearly there we have i) demons ii) with clear administrative roles. Thus, although Iamblichus speaks of "good demons," I suggest that when he speaks of demons without qualification, it is to the good variety that he generally refers. Nevertheless, since evil demons exist, it becomes unclear how much of what Iamblichus says about demons without qualification applies also to evil demons.

Conclusion

The following summarises what Iamblichus says about 1) the higher genera of divine beings, 2) demons generally, and 3) evil demons specifically:

- 1) The genera of higher beings generally (including demons)
 - are incorporeal and separable from bodies and matter;
 - are more noble than and unaffected by materiality;
 - are not susceptible to or affected by spatial locality;

¹¹¹ *De Myst.* IX.7.

¹¹² *De Myst.* IX.7.

- rule bodies from outside and do not share in bodily changes;
 - are not susceptible to passions (transcend the distinction between possible and impassible).
- 2) Demons generally
- are unaffected by any relation to a body (however construed);
 - have partial power;
 - have *pneumatic* vehicles;
 - are impassible;
 - oversee generation within the cosmos, binding souls to bodies;
 - have a punitive function;
 - are ‘somewhat’ contaminated by matter.¹¹³
- 3) Evil demons specifically
- are wicked, savage, noxious, and bloodthirsty;
 - vicious and licentious;
 - deceitful;
 - cause licentiousness in humans;
 - attach to and lead to ruin humans who engage them through sorcery;
 - have absolutely no administrative role in the cosmos.

None of these specific characteristics of evil demons is compatible with what Iamblichus has said about the higher genera collectively and demons generally, which, nevertheless are the genera under which one assumes evil demons to be a species. Since we have shown the conflict in certain instances in the *De Mysteriis* between what is said of the higher genera and demons simpliciter, and what is said of evil demons, we must be careful when applying what is true of demons generally to evil demons specifically. Thus, although Iamblichus speaks of “good demons” too, I suggest that when he discusses demons without qualification, it is to the good variety that he generally refers. While some scholars have noted these tensions, as we have seen, in the scholarship on Iamblichus that mentions his demonology, one generally finds explanations of the demon’s roles in generation and theurgy, but the distinction that Iamblichus makes between good and evil demons and the resulting textual conflicts are often passed over. We cannot speak of ‘demons’ in Iamblichus without qualification,

113 See *De Myst.* 1.20. Here it is unclear when Iamblichus writes that demons “are not entirely uncontaminated by” “those powers which incline towards generation,” whether he means that inclining towards these powers is the contamination itself, or that inclining towards these powers leads to other contaminations. If it is the latter, then there is a tension even within his claims about demons generally, insofar as the assertion seems incompatible with the position that demons generally are impassible and remain unaffected by matter.

or without at least making this distinction between the good and the evil, recognizing that whatever one says about the former, the same might not apply to the latter.

It seems as though there should be nothing that is demonic which is also evil within Iamblichus's view of the cosmos, given his description of the nature of the higher genera. Indeed, according to Finamore, "the point of these numerous [divine] entities is to fill the encosmic realm with beings helpful to humans," not harmful.¹¹⁴ If evil demons are a part of Iamblichus's cosmos, which they explicitly are, then what are they doing there? How did they get that way? How, given what is said about demons in general above, could there even be evil demons? What place in the hierarchy do they hold? Does Iamblichus simply inherit them from the tradition? Does his personal experience confirm, in his view, their existence? Dillon says that Iamblichus delves into speculation about evil demons more than he needs to, but can we entertain the possibility that Iamblichus is speaking from experience?¹¹⁵ Would Iamblichus have written very different things about evil demons were they the explicit subject of a treatise?

Regardless, the origin, nature, and function of evil demons in Iamblichus's thought all require an account. Porphyry's entire explanation of evil demons has been excised based on Iamblichus's criticism of the spatio-material principle and on what he says about the relation between the essence of the higher classes and any relation they might have to a body, whatever, if any, that might be. Because Iamblichus repudiates Porphyry's demonic ontology and further, denies that demons could be affected by a material body, he needs other ways to account for evil demons. Then, we need an account of why, for Iamblichus, other than the spatio-material principle or an appeal to the effects of matter on the soul, some demons are evil. Iamblichus denies demonic passibility to maintain demonic dignity, their procession from the gods, and the respectability of the theurgical rites that align the practitioner to their succours. However, in doing so, he raises a number of other questions that need to be addressed.

To show that this is an important area of study calling for more scholarly attention, one need only point to where Iamblichus apparently, and perhaps most fundamentally, agrees with Porphyry about the dangers that arise when one remains ignorant of the true natures of divine beings. Iamblichus writes,

114 Finamore (1985), 34.

115 See Dillon (2009), 51.

Your next remarks, in which you [i.e. Porphyry] express the view that “ignorance and deception about these matters contribute to impiety and impurity,” and in which you exhort us toward true traditional teaching, admit of no dispute, but may be agreed on alike by all.¹¹⁶

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Proclus' Critique of Plotinus' Demonology

Andrei Timotin

Νοῦς as a *Daimon* (*Timaeus* 90a–c)

In *Timaeus*, Plato describes the constitution of the human soul by making a distinction between its immortal part, which is the work of the Demiurge, and its mortal ones, which are the result of the work of his co-operators.¹ The mortal soul is composed of two parts, θυμός (70b–c) and ἐπιθυμία (70b), while the immortal one, νοῦς (41c–d), the divine part of the soul, is composed, like the soul of the world, of a mixture of two elements, the circles of the “same” and the “other”; it is animated by a circular movement, which reproduces the revolution (περίοδος) of the soul of the world and its physical manifestation, the circular movement (περιφορά) of the stars.² Νοῦς is compared to a *daimon* allotted to each one of us:

As concerning the most sovereign form of soul in us we must conceive that heaven has given it to each man as a *daimon*, that part which we say dwells in the summit of our body and lifts us from earth towards our celestial affinity, like a plant whose roots are not in earth, but in the heavens.³

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The individual *daimon* that Plato compares with the immortal part of the soul is to be confused neither with Socrates' “daemoniac sign”, nor with the *daimon* attached to the soul at birth, a traditional belief that Plato modified in the myth of Er.⁴ According to this myth, at the moment of their rebirth, the souls choose their future earthly destiny according to their conduct in their previous

1 Plato, *Timaeus* 34a–44d and 69d–73b. For a clear account of *Timaeus*' psychology, see Brisson (2019), 415–465. On the mortal parts of the soul, see also Brisson (2011).

2 Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 47b–c and 69c–d. See Sedley (1997), 329–330.

3 Plato, *Timaeus* 90a: τὸ δὲ δὴ περὶ τοῦ κυριωτάτου παρ' ἡμῖν ψυχῆς εἶδους διανοεῖσθαι δεῖ τῆδε, ὡς ἄρα αὐτὸ δαίμονα θεὸς ἐκάστῳ δέδωκεν, τοῦτο ὃ δὴ φαμεν οἰκεῖν μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπ' ἄκρῳ τῷ σώματι, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ συγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἴρειν ὡς ὄντας φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλὰ οὐράνιον, ὀρθότατα λέγοντες. Cf. *ibid.* 90c. On the image of man as heavenly plant in later sources (e.g. Plutarch, *Amatorius*, 757E), see Aubriot (2001).

4 Plato, *Republic* x, 617d–e and 620d–e; cf. *Phaedo* 107d. On this belief before Plato, see Timotin (2012), 23–24.

lives, and the expression of this choice is their *daimon*, which does not protect the soul, but only fulfills the relentless destiny that the soul has already chosen.

The *daimon* in *Timaeus* has a different nature and function. It is located inside the soul, being identified with its upper part, which is immortal and divine. It represents, at the same time, an ideal status to which the human soul aspires in so far as it tends to escape the state of servitude and disequilibrium to which it is held by its mortal parts, by restoring the right proportion between the circles of the “same” and the “other” and by reproducing the circular movement of the soul of the world. Through the natural exercise of $\nu\omicron\hat{\omicron}\varsigma$, the human soul tends to be gradually reabsorbed into the soul of the world through a process that culminates in the termination of its cycle of reincarnations. It is thus only after death that the human soul can really become a *daimon*, although it can be described thus, by synecdoche, already from its earthly life, as in *Cratylus* (398c), wherein man who exercises the divine part of his soul is called *daimon* already in his lifetime.⁵

On the basis of the prejudice that any contradiction or divergence in Plato's dialogues is only apparent and hides a deeper doctrinal unity, the Middle-Platonists have tried to harmonise the $\nu\omicron\hat{\omicron}\varsigma$ -*daimon* with the other daemonic figures in Plato's dialogues and in particular with Socrates' “daemonic sign”.⁶ This exegetical approach developed under the sign of a lasting tension between the external (as in *Republic* and *Phaedo*) or internal (as in *Timaeus* and *Cratylus*) aspects of the personal *daimon*.

Plotinus' Demonology

The harmonisation of the two aspects of the personal *daimon* is also the subject of one of Plotinus' *Enneads* (III 4). Plotinus is not interested, however, unlike his Middle-Platonic predecessors, in the topic of Socrates' *daimon*. The innovative perspective from which Plotinus interpreted the Platonic demonological texts, and above all *Timaeus* 90a–c, will have a significant impact on Late

5 Plato, *Cratylus* 398c. See Robin (³1964), 111, for the relationship between this passage and *Timaeus* 90a. On the possible Pythagoric origins of this idea, see Detienne (1963), 62–67, and, more cautiously, Timotin (2012), 32–34.

6 See especially Plutarch, *De genio Socratis*, Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*, and Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 8 and 9. On Middle-Platonic demonology, see recently Timotin (2012), 86–141, 164–208, 244–286, and (2015), with previous bibliography; Finamore (2014); Fletcher (2015).

Neoplatonists and especially on Proclus, who will criticise, as we will see, Plotinus' demonology. Before examining the Late Neoplatonic criticism of this particular aspect of Plotinus' thought, it is appropriate first to describe briefly the Plotinian approach.⁷

Ennead III 4 begins with a summary of the Plotinian conception of the soul (§ 1), and then goes on to study the human soul and its various powers⁸ in order to establish a correspondence between the different kinds of life, according to the predominance in the soul of one of its powers, and the different kinds of reincarnation⁹ (§ 2). The next chapter deals with the kind of life corresponding to the quality of *daimon*, scil. the *daimon* that one becomes after death (*Cratylus* 398 c), and defines the relation between this *daimon* and the one that we have as a companion (§ 3). The last three chapters deal with the relationship between the human soul and the soul of the world (§ 4), the choice of the *daimon* by the soul (*Republic* 617 d–e, 620d–e) (§ 5) and the definition of the wise in relation to the *daimon* (§ 6).

Only the third chapter will occupy us here. In attempting to harmonise three different Platonic notions, the *daimon* that one becomes after death (*Cratylus* 398c), the *daimon* equated with the νοῦς (*Timaeus* 90a–c), and the one that the soul chooses before reincarnating (*Republic* 617d–e, 620d–e; *Phaedo* 107d), Plotinus draws here a distinction between two kinds of *daimones*: the *daimon* that one can become after death and in some way already is from the time of his earthly life, and the *daimon* allotted to each man during his life. The first kind, which corresponds to the definition of a *daimon* in *Cratylus* and *Timaeus*, is equated with the divine part of the soul which guides it during its earthly life and which will continue to guide it after death. The second one, which corresponds to the personal *daimon* of *Republic* and *Phaedo*, designates, according to Plotinus, a level of reality immediately superior to that which is active in the soul: the Intellect, if the rational principle prevails in the soul, or its rational part, if the sensitive part prevails:

—Who, then, becomes a *daimon*?—He who was one here too.—And who a god?—Certainly he who was one here. For what worked in a man leads him (after death), since it was his ruler and guide here too.—Is this, then,

7 On Plotinus' demonology, see Rist (1963); Aubry (2008), 264–268; Timotin (2012), 286–300, and Thomas Vidart's contribution in this volume.

8 On the Plotinian doctrine of the powers of the soul, see Blumenthal (1971), 20–44; Szlezák (2000); Blumenthal—Dillon (2015).

9 Plato, *Republic* 614b–621b, *Phaedo* 81e–82c, 107 d, and 113 a. On Plotinus' interpretation of the Platonic doctrine of reincarnation, see Rich (1957); Laurent (1999).

“the *daimon* to whom it was allotted while he lived” [*Phaedo* 107d]?—No, but that which is before the working principle; for this presides inactive over the man, but that which comes after it acts. If the working principle is that by which we have sense-perception, the *daimon* is the rational principle (τὸ λογικόν); but if we live by the rational principle, the *daimon* is what is above this, presiding inactive and giving its consent to the principle which works. So it is rightly said that “we shall choose” [*Republic* 617e]. For we choose the principle which stands above us according to our choice of life.¹⁰

The first kind of *daimon* is the result of an adaptation of *Cratylus*' theory of the wise-*daimon*, aiming to bring it into harmony with *Timaeus*' notion of νοῦς-*daimon*. The wise man becomes a *daimon* after death since he already was one during his lifetime insofar as he lets himself be guided by his νοῦς, which, according to the *Timaeus*, is a kind of *daimon*. This exegetical montage is fairly transparent and raises no particular problems of interpretation.

The second kind of *daimon*, on the other hand, is the result of a more innovative reading of Plato's demonological texts. The idea that the *daimon* stands “inactive” above the soul is no doubt an echo of *Republic* 620e, a passage where the *daimon* that the soul chooses before reincarnating is presented as an entity that “ensures the fulfillment of their choices” without actively intervening in the lives of men, whose destiny is sealed from birth by the choice that has been made before. This theory has, in Plato's philosophy, the role of preserving individual responsibility in a polemical context in relation to traditional notions of destiny and *daimon*, illustrated in particular in tragedy and lyric poetry.¹¹

The idea that this *daimon* is on an ontological level immediately superior to that of the active part in the soul is not, however, the product of an exegesis of Plato's demonological text. Plotinus' doctrinal innovation can be well explained by the Plotinian doctrine of the undescended soul, according to

10 Plotinus, *Enn.* III, 4 [15], 3.1–9 (trans. Armstrong): Τίς οὖν δαίμων; ὁ καὶ ἐνταῦθα. Τίς δὲ θεός; ἢ ὁ ἐνταῦθα. Τὸ γὰρ ἐνεργήσαν τοῦτο ἕκαστον ἀγει, ἅτε καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἠγούμενον. Ἄρ' οὖν τοῦτο ἐστὶν ὁ δαίμων, ὅσπερ ζῶντα εἰλήχει [*Phaed.* 107d]; “Ἡ οὖ, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ. τοῦτο γὰρ ἐφέστηκεν ἀργούν, ἐνεργεῖ δὲ τὸ μετ' αὐτόν. Καὶ εἰ μὲν τὸ ἐνεργούν ἢ αἰσθητικοί, καὶ ὁ δαίμων τὸ λογικόν. εἰ δὲ κατὰ τὸ λογικόν ζῶμεν, ὁ δαίμων τὸ ὑπὲρ τοῦτο ἐφροστώς ἀργός συγχωρῶν τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ. Ὁρθῶς οὖν λέγεται ἢ ἡμᾶς αἰρήσασθαι [*Rep.* 617e]. Τὸν γὰρ ὑπερκείμενον κατὰ τὴν ζωὴν αἰρούμεθα. For the quotations from the *Enneads*, I follow the standard edition of P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzler, *Plotini Opera*, 3 vols, Oxford, 1964–1982 (*editio minor*).

11 See Timotin (2012), 61–62.

which there is a part of the soul that always remains in the intelligible world without descending into the world below.¹²

According to a famous definition of *Ennead* III 4, “the soul is many things, and all things, both the things above and the things below down to the limits of all life, and we are each one of us an intelligible universe, making contact with this lower world by the powers of soul below, but with the intelligible world by its powers above and the powers of the universe; and we remain with all the rest of our intelligible part above, but by its ultimate fringe we are tied to the world below.”¹³ This part of the soul which stands in the intelligible world and which one’s soul most often ignores is a kind of inactive *daimon*, residing above the part that is active in the soul. This *daimon* is, therefore, at the same time inside and outside the soul. The exteriority or interiority of the levels of reality is, in fact, a matter of perception.¹⁴ A higher level of reality is thus external insofar as we do not perceive it, but it is “ours” insofar as our soul is a reality that goes beyond the level of perception, being in a certain sense wider than “ourselves”.¹⁵

12 See, e.g., Plotinus, *Enn.* IV 8 [6], 8; V 1 [10], 10. Cf. Szlezák (2000). On the critical reception of this theory in Late Neoplatonism, see Steel (1978), 45–51; Dillon (2005) and (2013a); Opsomer (2006); Taormina (2012).

13 Plotinus, *Enn.* III, 4 [15], 3.21–25 (trans. Armstrong): “Ἔστι γὰρ καὶ πολλὰ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ πάντα καὶ τὰ ἄνω καὶ τὰ κάτω αὐῷ μέχρι πάσης ζωῆς, καὶ ἔσμεν ἕκαστος κόσμος νοητός, τοῖς μὲν κάτω συνάπτοντες τῷδε, τοῖς δὲ ἄνω καὶ τοῖς κόσμου τῷ νοητῷ, καὶ μένομεν τῷ μὲν ἄλλω παντὶ νοητῷ ἄνω, τῷ δὲ ἐσχάτῳ αὐτοῦ πεπεδήμεθα τῷ κάτω.

14 *Ibid.* V 1 [10], 12.1–10: Πῶς οὖν ἔχοντες τὰ τηλικαῦτα οὐκ ἀντιλαμβάνομεθα, ἀλλ’ ἀργοῦμεν ταῖς τοιαύταις ἐνεργείαις τὰ πολλὰ, οἱ δὲ οὐδ’ ὅλως ἐνεργοῦσιν; Ἐκεῖνα μὲν ἔστιν ἐν ταῖς αὐτῶν ἐνεργείαις αἰεὶ, νοῦς καὶ τὸ πρὸ νοῦ αἰεὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ, καὶ ψυχὴ δέ—τὸ ἀεικίνητον—οὕτως. Οὐ γὰρ πᾶν, δ’ ἐν ψυχῇ, ἤδη αἰσθητόν, ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται εἰς ἡμᾶς, ὅταν εἰς αἴσθησιν ἵη. ὅταν δὲ ἐνεργῶν ἕκαστον μὴ μεταδιδῷ τῷ αἰσθανομένῳ, οὕτω δι’ ὅλης ψυχῆς ἐλήλυθεν. Οὕτω οὖν γινώσκομεν ἅτε μετὰ τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ ὄντες καὶ οὐ μῶριον ψυχῆς ἀλλ’ ἢ ἅπασα ψυχὴ ὄντες. “Why then, when we have such great possessions, do we not consciously grasp them, but are mostly inactive in these ways, and some of us are never active at all?—They are always occupied in their own activities, Intellect and that which is before Intellect, always in itself, and soul, which is in this sense ‘ever-moving’. For not everything which is in the soul is immediately perceptible, but it reaches us when it enters into perception; but when a particular active power does not give a share in its activity to the perceiving power, that activity has not yet pervaded the whole soul. We do not therefore yet know it, since we are accompanied by the perceptive power and are not a part of soul but the whole soul.”

15 Strictly speaking, there is nothing in Plotinus that could be “external” to the soul, for the intelligible realities “are present also in ourselves” (παρ’ ἡμῖν ταῦτα εἶναι, *ibid.* V 1 [10], 10.6). On the relationship between perception and identity, see *ibid.* I 1 [53], 11, and the commentary of Aubry (2004), 45–49 and 208–214. Cf. also Hadot (1963), 25–39; Blumenthal (1971), 109–111.

According to this view, there is a level of soul to which we do not have permanent access, a level deeper than the ordinary consciousness on which common personal identity is based. The Plotinian *daimon* designates precisely this different, usually ignored level of consciousness and an alternative point of reference for personal identity.

Proclus' Critique of Plotinus' Demonology

Plotinian demonology has found few defenders in Late Neoplatonism, although it had considerable influence. Before Proclus, who undertook a systematic criticism of Plotinus' theory, the latter was also rejected by Iamblichus and Hermias. Starting from Iamblichus, in fact, the philosophical reflection on the position and function of the *daimones* took a different turn in relation to the previous Platonic tradition. A line of thought based on the exegesis of *Timaeus* 90a–c and *Cratylus* 398c thus gives way to a different demonological reflection, based on passages such as *Phaedrus* 246e and especially *Symposium* 202d–203a,¹⁶ according to which the daemonic class, intermediate between human and divine, is superior to human souls and subordinate to the class of gods. This theory, authorized by other Platonic texts, like *Phaedo* 107d and *Republic* 617d–e, assigns to the personal *daimon* the status of a divine being distinct from and superior to the class of human souls.

In the frame of his polemic with Porphyry, Iamblichus criticised the theory, inspired mainly by *Timaeus* 90a–c, according to which the upper part of the soul can be equated with a *daimon*. This theory, illustrated in *Ennead* III 4 (cf. § 3.1–5 and 6.1–5), was apparently also accepted by Porphyry in his *Letter to Anebo*:¹⁷

Then, leaving aside these questions, you [*scil.* Porphyry] slide off into philosophy, and in the process subvert the whole basis of the doctrine of the personal *daimon*. For if [*scil.* *daimon*] is merely a part of the soul (μέρος ...

16 It is worth reminding that *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* are read as “theological” dialogues in Late Neoplatonism, an exegetical practice based on the reading order of Plato's dialogues systematised by Iamblichus; see Festugière (1969); Dunn (1976). The importance of *Timaeus*' theological reading in the Middle-Platonic demonology was first emphasized by Donini (1990), 37–39.

17 This is in fact rather common place in post-Plotinian Neoplatonism. Cf. also Julian, *On royalty*, 68d–69a; *Against the Cynics* 196d, 197b; Themistius xxxiii 365d–366a. For a list of relevant texts, see Puiggali (1982), 304–305, and (1984), 109–110.

τῆς ψυχῆς), as for instance the intellectual part (τὸ νοερόν), and that person is “happy” (εὐδαίμων) who has intellect (νοῦς) in a sound state, there will no longer be any need to postulate any other order, greater or daemonic, to preside over the human order as its superior.¹⁸

Iamblichus opposes in this passage the philosophical approach to the theurgical one, the theurgist being credited with a thorough knowledge of the divine about which the philosopher can only express a δόξα lacking theological rigor.¹⁹ In this context, the philosophical view on the personal *daimon* is identified with the theory according to which the latter could be equated with a part of the soul, and especially with its intellective part (τὸ νοερόν). This theory is also related to the wordplay δαίμων—εὐδαιμονία (cf. *Cratylus* 398c).²⁰ To this philosophical δόξα on the personal *daimon*, Iamblichus opposes a theological demonology based on *Phaedrus* 246e and mainly on *Symposium* 202d–203a, which firmly distinguishes the daemonic τάξις from the class of human souls.²¹

Hermias, in his *Phaedrus* commentary, also criticises the theory of *daimon*–νοῦς, perhaps under the influence of Iamblichus’ commentary. In a context dealing with the nature of Socrates’ *daimon*, he thus refutes the idea that the latter could be equated with a part of the soul (μόριον τῆς ψυχῆς), on the basis of a rather common remark, that the soul always tends to accomplish something and cannot, therefore, be limited to an inhibitory activity such as that attributed by Plato to Socrates’ *daimon*:

18 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* IX 8, 282.5–9 Parthey = 209.3–9 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf (trans. Clarke—Dillon—Hershbell): “Ἐπειτα τούτων ἀποστάς ἐπὶ μὲν τὴν φιλόσοφον ἀπολισθάνεις δόξαν, ἀνατρέπεις δὲ τὴν ὅλην περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου δαίμονος ὑπόθεσιν. Εἰ γὰρ μέρος ἐστὶ τῆς ψυχῆς, οἷον τὸ νοερόν, καὶ οὗτός ἐστιν εὐδαίμων ὁ τὸν νοῦν ἔχων ἔμφρονα, οὐκέτι ἐστὶν ἕτερα τάξις οὐδεμία κρείττων ἢ δαιμόνιος, ἐπιβεβηκυῖα τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ὡς ὑπερέχουσα. On Iamblichus’ views on the personal *daimon*, see Dillon (2001); Timotin (2012), 309–318.

19 A fine example of Iamblichus’ views on the relation between philosophy and theurgy. Cf. *ibid.* II II, p. 97.1–9 P. = 73.8–16 S.–S.–L. On the latter passage, see Saffrey (1981), 160 [= (1990), 40].

20 Cf. Xenocrates, fr. 236–238 Isnardi Parente. On this wordplay in Middle-Platonism and Stoicism, see Mikalson (2002).

21 The idea that the personal *daimon* is a divine being distinct from the soul is also supported by Sallustius, *On the gods and the universe* 20, p. 34.26–28 Nock: Αἱ δὲ μετεμψυχώσεις εἰ μὲν εἰς λογικὰ γέγοντο, αὐτὸ τοῦτο ψυχαὶ γίνονται τῶν σωμάτων, εἰ δὲ εἰς ἄλογα, ἔξωθεν ἔπονται, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡμῖν οἱ εἰληχότες ἡμᾶς δαίμονες [*Phaedo* 107d]. “If transmigration of a soul happens into a rational creature, the soul becomes precisely that body’s soul, if into an unreasoning creature, the soul accompanies it from outside as our guardian *daimon* accompany us” (trans. Nock).

The fact that Socrates' *daimonion* is neither a part of the soul nor the philosophy itself, as many have believed, is mentioned in many passages, and is evidently also asserted here. "The accustomed daemonic sign has set me free,' and I have heard 'a voice from there,' which always", he says, "turns me away (from doing something)". Philosophy, on the other hand, often turns towards something, and the part of the soul strives to do it. So, that this is not Socrates' *daimonion* is manifestly stated. [...]²²

Proclus develops this criticism mainly in his *Commentary on the Alcibiades I*.²³ His more elaborate view is deployed in three stages: (1) first, the theory that equates νοῦς or the rational soul with a *daimon* is refuted on the basis of arguments borrowed from Diotima's speech and from *Alcibiades I*; (2) secondly, the difference between Plato's demonological accounts in *Timaeus* 90a–c and *Symposium* 202d–203a is explained by the distinction between three kinds of *daimones*: "the *daimon* by essential nature" (ὁ τῆ οὐσίᾳ δαίμων), "by analogy" (κατὰ ἀναλογία), and "by relationship" (κατὰ σχέσιν);²⁴ 3) thirdly, Proclus refutes, on the basis of this distinction, Plotinus' theory according to which the *daimon* is "what lies immediately superior to the motive force of our life" (τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργούντος).

(1) Should we be correct in putting forward this opinion, no one would accept the view of those who make the rational soul (λογικὴ ψυχή) our *daimon*; for *daimon* is different from man, as both Diotima observes when she places the *daimones* midway between gods and men [*Symposium*, 202dd–e] and Socrates points out by contrasting the spiritual with the human (for he says "no human cause, but a certain daemonic opposition")

22 Hermias, *Commentary on the Phaedrus I*, p. 70.3–10 Lucarini—Moreschini: Περὶ δὲ τοῦ δαιμονίου Σωκράτους, ὅτι μὲν οὔτε μόνιον τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστὶν οὔτε ἡ φιλοσοφία αὐτή, ὡς τινες ἀθήθησαν, πολλάκις μὲν εἴρηται, ἐναργῶς δὲ λέγεται παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐνταῦθα. «Τὸ εἰωθὸς σημεῖόν μοι ἐγένετο δαιμόνιον καὶ τίνα φωνὴν ἤκουσα αὐτόθεν, ὃ ἀεὶ, φησὶν, ἀποτρέπει». φιλοσοφία δὲ καὶ ἐπιτρέπει πολλάκις, καὶ τὸ μόνιον τῆς ψυχῆς ἐφίεται τοῦτο ποιεῖν. "Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ταῦτα οὐκ ἐστὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον Σωκράτους, ἐναργῶς λέγεται [...].

23 On Proclus' demonology in his commentaries on the *Timaeus*, the *Republic*, and the *Alcibiades I*, see Timotin (2012), 153–158, 228–237 and 311–317; Dillon (2013b); Addey (2014). See also Luc Brisson's second contribution in this volume.

24 Olympiodorus (*Commentary on the Alcibiades I*, 15.5–16.6, p. 13 Westerink) makes a similar distinction between different kinds of *daimones* but, like A.-Ph. Segonds showed, relatively incoherent because of the misunderstanding of the theory of Proclus; see Segonds (1986), 163. On Olympiodorus' *Commentary on the Alcibiades I*, see also Renaud (2014).

[*Alcibiades* 103a], but man is a soul using a body, as will be shown. *Daimon*, then, is not the same as the rational soul.²⁵

(2) However, this too is clear, that Plato himself in the *Timaeus* says that reason has come to dwell in us as *daimon* of the living organism [*Timaeus* 90a–c]; but this is true only as far as analogy will go, since what is *daimon* by essential nature, by analogy and by relationship, differs in each case.

(3) Often what lies immediately superior (προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον), and has been assigned the position of a *daimon* as regards its inferior, people are accustomed actually to call a *daimon*; as indeed in the writings of Orpheus [*Orph. fr.* 155 Kern], Zeus, I think, says to his own father Kronos; “Raise up our race, O glorious spirit.” Plato himself in the *Timaeus* called the gods who immediately regulate birth “*daimones*”; “but to speak of the rest of the *daimones* and to ascertain their origin is beyond us” [*Timaeus* 40d]. Now the *daimon* by analogy is such, i.e. it makes immediate provision for each individual, whether it be a god or one of those beings stationed beneath the gods.²⁶

Proclus’ strategy thus has a double aspect. He first delineates a clear separation between the psychic and daemonic classes based mainly on *Symposium* 202d–203a. Then he uses the distinction between *daimones* “by essential nature” and “by analogy”, which not only allows him to account for *Timaeus* 90a–c, but also to refute the Plotinian theory of the *daimon* as τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργούντος.

25 Proclus, *Commentary on the Alcibiades I*, p. 73.10–18 Creuzer/Segonds (Trans. O’Neill): Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς λέγομεν, οὐδεὶς ἂν ἀποδέξαιτο τοὺς τὴν λογικὴν ψυχὴν τὴν ἡμετέραν δαίμονα ποιοῦντας. ὁ μὲν γὰρ δαίμων ἕτερος ἀνθρώπου, καθάπερ ἢ τε Διοτίμα λέγει μέσους τιθεμένη τοὺς δαίμονας θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης ἐνδείκνυται ἀντιδιαστέλλων τῷ ἀνθρωπιῶ τὸ δαιμόνιον («οὐκ ἀνθρώπειον», γὰρ φησὶ «τὸ αἴτιον, ἀλλὰ τι δαιμόνιον ἐναντίωμα»), ὁ δὲ ἀνθρωπος ψυχὴ ἐστὶ σώματι χρωμένη, ὡς δειχθήσεται. οὐκ ἄρα ὁ δαίμων ὁ αὐτὸς ἐστὶ τῇ λογικῇ ψυχῇ.

26 Ibid. p. 73.19–74.11: καίτοι καὶ τοῦτο φανερόν, ὅτι καὶ ὁ Πλάτων αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ δαίμονα φησὶ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῦ ζώου κατὰ φύσιν τὸν λόγον, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μέχρι τῆς ἀναλογίας μόνον ἀληθές. ἄλλος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ τῇ οὐσίᾳ δαίμων, ἄλλος ὁ κατὰ ἀναλογίαν δαίμων, ἄλλος ὁ κατὰ σχέσιν δαίμων. πολλαχοῦ γὰρ τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον ἐν δαίμονος τάξει πρὸς τὸ καταδεέστερον τεταγμένον δαίμονα καλεῖν εἰώθησιν. ὡσπερ δὴ καὶ παρὰ τῷ Ὀρφεὶ λέγει που πρὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα τὸν Κρόνον ὁ Ζεὺς. «ὄρθου δ’ ἡμετέραν γενεήν, ἀριδείκετε δαίμον» [*Orph. fr.* 155]. καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐν Τιμαίῳ δαίμονα ἐκάλεσε τοὺς προσεχῶς διακοσμοῦντας τὴν γένεσιν θεοῦς. «περὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων δαιμόνων εἰπεῖν καὶ γινῶναι τὴν γένεσιν μείζον ἢ καθ’ ἡμᾶς» [*Tim.* 40d]. ὁ μὲν δὴ κατὰ ἀναλογίαν δαίμων τοιοῦτός ἐστιν, ὁ προσεχῶς ἐκάστου προνοῶν, κἂν θεὸς ἢ κἂν τῶν μετὰ θεοῦς τεταγμένων.

The Theory of Daimon-Noûs

It is remarkable in Proclus' strategy that, in support of the refutation of the equation, 'personal *daimon* = νοῦς (ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ)', he connects the *Symposium's* notion of *daimon*–μεταξὺ with the topic of Socrates' *daimon* through a reference to *Alcibiades* 103a. The topic of Socrates' *daimon* is the result of an exegetical deformation of the notion of "daemonic sign" (δαιμόνιον σημεῖον) recurring in Plato's dialogues,²⁷ aiming to harmonise it with the other Platonic figures of the personal *daimon*. Proclus' strategy is far from being impartial, for the *daimon*–νοῦς notion plays an essential part in the Middle-Platonic debate on the nature of Socrates' *daimon*. By bringing Socrates' *daimon* closer to *Symposium's* *daimon*–μεταξὺ, Proclus thus seems to have aimed to disconnect the topic of Socrates' *daimon* from its traditional relationship with the topic of the *daimon*–νοῦς by placing it in a different context, governed by the interpretation of *Symposium's* demonological passage.

The distinction between the personal *daimon* and νοῦς is also highlighted by Proclus in relation to the distinction between the intellectual and daemonic classes:

Further, those who equate the individual intellect (νοῦς) with the *daimon* of man seem to me badly to confuse the specific character of intellect with the substantial reality of *daimon*. For all the *daimones* subsist on the level of souls and are secondary to the divine souls; but the rank of intellect is other than that of souls and they have received neither the same essential nature nor faculty nor activity.²⁸

This passage supposes Proclus' distinction between the three kinds of souls—divine, enjoying perpetual intellection (inferior to the divine souls) and subject to change (from intelligence to unintelligence)²⁹—, in which the second

27 See Plato, *Apology* 31d and 40a–b; *Euthyphro* 3b; *Alcibiades* 103a and 105d; *Euthydemus* 272e; *Phaedrus* 242b, etc. On the "daemonic sign" in the Platonic dialogues, see recently Timotin (2012), 52–60, with previous bibliography.

28 Proclus, *Commentary on the Alcibiades* 1, p. 76.20–24 Creuzer/Segonds (Trans. O'Neill): Καὶ μὴν καὶ ὅσοι τὸν νοῦν τὸν μερικὸν εἰς ταῦτὸν ἄγουσι τῷ λαχόντι δαίμονι τὸν ἀνθρώπων οὐ καλῶς δοκοῦσί μοι συγγεῖν τὴν νοερὰν ιδιότητα πρὸς τὴν δαιμονίαν ὑπαρξίν. ἅπαντες γὰρ οἱ δαίμονες ἐν τῷ πλάτει τῶν ψυχῶν ὑφειστήκασι καὶ δεύτεροι τῶν θείων εἰσι ψυχῶν. ἄλλη δὲ ἡ νοερὰ τάξις τῆς ψυχικῆς καὶ οὔτε οὐσίαν ἔλαχον τὴν αὐτὴν οὔτε δύναμιν οὔτε ἐνέργειαν.

29 Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 184: Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἢ θεία ἐστίν, ἢ μεταβάλλουσα ἀπὸ νοῦ εἰς ἄνοιαν, ἢ μεταξὺ τούτων αἰεὶ μὲν νοοῦσα, καταδεεστέρα δὲ τῶν θείων ψυχῶν. "Every soul is either divine, or subject to change from intelligence to unintelligence, or else intermediate between

element is to be related to the class of *daimones*, also subdivided into angels, *daimones*, and heroes.³⁰ This intermediate class of souls, which can be qualified as “daemonic”, participates intellectually in the divine intellect,³¹ since the intellective is by definition different from the daemonic class. For this reason, the personal *daimon* cannot be equated with νοῦς.

This point established, Proclus had nevertheless to account for *Timaeus* 90a–c, a passage wherein Plato literally equates them. Proclus thus distinguishes the *daimones* “by essential nature” from those “by analogy”, to which the name of *daimones* is only analogically applied. To the latter kind belongs precisely that kind of *daimon* that Plato had analogically equated with νοῦς. The latter would, on the contrary, be “by essential nature” distinct from the daemonic class.

The Theory of Daimon as τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργούντος

The distinction between the varieties of *daimones* also allows Proclus to account for Plotinus’ distinction (*Enn.* III 4) between the *daimon* equated with the part of the soul which guides us during life and the *daimon* that “lies immediately superior to the motive force of our life” (τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργούντος).

Proclus contests the relevance of Plotinus’ distinction between these two kinds of *daimones* insofar as they are understood as *daimones* “by essential nature”; they would be only *daimones* “by analogy”, i.e. they would not designate an autonomous class of divine beings, but rather, a function that can be fulfilled by several kinds of divine beings (*daimones* or gods):

But not even if some should lay aside the rational soul and assert that *daimon* is what is active in the soul (τὸ ἐνεργοῦν ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς), e.g. reason (λόγος) in those that live according to reason, temper (τὸ θυμικόν) in the mettlesome, nor again if some should posit what lies immediately superior to the motive force of our life (τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργούντος), e.g. reason (λόγος) in the case of the mettlesome and temper

these orders enjoying perpetual intellection although inferior to the divine souls” (trans. E.R. Dodds). On this distinction, see Dodds (1933), 160 note *ad locum* and 294–296.

30 On the series, ‘angels, *daimones*, heroes’ in Neoplatonism, see Timotin (2012), 154–155, and Helmut Seng’s contribution in this volume.

31 Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 183: Πᾶς νοῦς μετεχόμενος μὲν, νοερός δὲ μόνον ὢν, μετέχεται ὑπὸ ψυχῶν οὔτε θείων οὔτε νοῦ καὶ ἀνοίας ἐν μεταβολῇ γινομένων. “Every intelligence which is participated but purely intellectual is participated by souls which are neither divine nor yet subject to the alternative of intelligence and unintelligence” (trans. Dodds).

(θυμός) in the case of those who live according to sense desire (κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν), not even these seem to me to get at the truth of the matter. For in the first place to make *daimones* parts of souls (μόρια τῶν ψυχῶν) is excessively to admire the life of men and take no account of Socrates in the *Republic* [469a–b] when he ranks the race of heroes and men after gods and *daimones* [...].³²

There is no doubt that this passage is inspired by Plotinus' account in *Ennead* III 4 (§ 3, lines 1–8). Proclus' first argument, according to which the personal *daimon* is equated with τὸ ἐνεργοῦν ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς, corresponds to the first Plotinian kind of *daimon*, equated with the upper and divine part of the soul which guides us during life (§ 3, lines 1–3), while the second argument, according to which the *daimon* is equated with τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργούντος, corresponds literally to the definition of the *daimon* given by Plotinus in § 3, lines 3–8.

It is important to note, however, that Proclus' presentation of both arguments is far from being faithful to the letter of the Plotinian text. As regards the first kind of *daimon*, Plotinus merely reformulates the Platonic interpretation of the Hesiodic myth of the races in *Cratylus* 398c, according to which the one who has always exercised the best part of himself during his life becomes after death a *daimon*. This affirmation can in no way lead to the idea that the one who has exercised a part of himself other than the best can become posthumously a *daimon*, as Proclus asserts. His interpretation of Plotinus' text is, of course, not impartial, for it evidently tends to reduce the *daimon* to *any* part of the soul in order to facilitate the refutation of the Plotinian definition.

That the true significance of the Plotinian text was, however, obvious to Proclus is shown by his interpretation of *Cratylus* 398c³³ and *Republic* 468e–469b,

32 Proclus, *Commentary on the Alcibiades I*, p. 75.14–25 Creuzer/Segonds (trans. O'Neill): 'Ἄλλ' οὐδὲ εἴ τινες τῆς λογικῆς ψυχῆς ἀποστάντες δαίμονα λέγοιεν εἶναι τὸ ἐνεργοῦν ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς, οἷον ἐν μὲν τοῖς ζῶσι κατὰ λόγον τὸν λόγον, ἐν δὲ τοῖς θυμοειδέσι τὸ θυμικόν, ἢ εἴ τινες αὐτὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργούντος τίθενται τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν, οἷον τῶν θυμοειδῶν τὸν λόγον καὶ τῶν κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν ζώντων τὸν θυμόν, οὐδὲ οὐτοί μοι δοκοῦσι στοχάζεσθαι τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἀληθείας. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τὸ τοὺς δαίμονας μόρια τῶν ψυχῶν ποιεῖν πάνυ θαυμαζόντων ἐστὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ζωὴν καὶ οὐδαμοῦ προσποιουμένων τὸν ἐν Πολιτεῖᾳ Σωκράτην, μετὰ θεοὺς καὶ δαίμονας τάττοντα τὸ τε ἡρωϊκὸν καὶ τὸ ἀνθρώπειον γένος [...].

33 *Ibid.*, p. 70.3–9: οὐκ ἄρα ἀποδεξόμεθα τῶν λεγόντων ψυχᾶς ἀνθρώπων εἶναι τοὺς δαίμονας μεταβαλούσας τὸν τῆδε βίον. οὐ γὰρ δεῖ τὸ κατὰ σχέσιν δαιμόνιον εἰς ταῦτόν ἄγειν τῷ κατ' οὐσίαν οὐδὲ τὴν αἰδίον μεσότητα τῶν ἐγκοσμίων πάντων ἐκ τῆς μεταβαλλούσης ἑαυτὴν πολυειδῶς ὑφιστάμεναι ζωῆς. ἔστηκε γὰρ αἰεὶ ὡσαύτως ἡ δαιμονία φρουρὰ συνέχουσα τὰ ἄλλα. "We shall not, then,

passages concerning human souls becoming *daimones* after leaving this world. These souls would not be *daimones* “by essential nature”, but “by relation” (κατὰ σχέσηιν), so called, according to Proclus, because of their “likeness to the class of *daimones*”, their actions here below being “too wonderful to be human.”³⁴ One can then ask why Proclus did not interpret Plotinus’ text corresponding to the first argument from the same perspective if its refutation was indeed so easy. The most probable explanation is that Proclus has chosen to connect the two equations, *daimon* = τὸ ἐνεργούν ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς and *daimon* = τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος, to facilitate their refutation. If Proclus thus interprets τὸ ἐνεργούν ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς as referring to *any* part of the soul, it is precisely because he also interprets τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος as designating *any* part of the soul among its two active parts, νοῦς and θυμός.

Underlying Proclus’ interpretation of two Plotinian passages is the idea that Plotinus equates demons with parts of souls (μέρια τῶν ψυχῶν), an idea that distorts the meaning of Plotinus’ text in two ways. On the one hand, Proclus ignores one of the two examples that Plotinus gives as equivalent realities for τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος, i.e. τὸ ὑπὲρ τοῦτο (scil. τὸ λογικόν) ἔφεστὼς ἀργός (the Intellect or the One), retaining only the individual νοῦς, no doubt because it could be conceived as a part of the soul; on the other hand, Proclus adds θυμός along with νοῦς, which Plotinus does not mention in this context, for, according to Plotinus’ view, *daimon* can only be a reality at least equivalent to the rational part of the soul. If Proclus has slightly distorted the meaning of Plotinus’ text to facilitate his task, it must be said at the same time that the Plotinian text, by its lack of clarity, could legitimate such an interpretation.

admit the opinion of those [cf. *Crat.* 398c] who assert that the *daimones* are souls of men who have exchanged their life here: we must not account what is daemonic by relation the same as what is daemonic by essential nature nor constitute the everlasting medium of all the intramundane from a life that undergoes many changes of form. For the daemonic guard that holds together the universe has ever stood the same.” (Trans. O’Neill).

34 Ibid., p. 74.12–17: ὁ δὲ κατὰ σχέσιν δαίμων λέγοιτο ἂν ὁ δι’ ὁμοιότητος τῆς πρὸς τὸ δαιμόνιον γένος θαυμασιωτέρας ἢ κατ’ ἄνθρωπον ἐνεργείας προβεβλημένος καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ζωὴν ὄλην ἐξάψας τῶν δαιμόνων (οὕτω γὰρ οἶμαι καὶ ὁ ἐν Πολιτείᾳ Σωκράτης δαίμονας ἐκάλεσε τοὺς εἰς βεβιωκότας καὶ εἰς ἀμείνω λήξιν μεταστάντας καὶ τόπον ἀγιώτερον). “But the *daimon* by relation would be termed one who through likeness to the class of *daimones* exercised activities too wonderful to be human and made his whole life dependent on the *daimones* (in this way I think that Socrates in the *Republic* [468e–469b] called those who had led a good life and ‘removed to a better lot and holier place,’ *daimones*).”

However, the difference between the respective views of Plotinus and Proclus on the personal *daimon* is considerable, and it could be surprising that Proclus used this biased and rather easy means of refutation, whereas the dissimilarities between the two views are substantial and concern the very core of Plotinus' psychology. Plotinian demonology is closely related, as we have seen, to Plotinus' theory of the undescended soul, a theory firmly contested by the Late Neoplatonists, among others, particularly by Proclus. The clearest expression of his position is perhaps the last sentence of the *Elements of Theology*: "Every particular soul, when it descends into temporal process, descends entire: there is not a part of it which remains above and a part which descends."³⁵

Plotinus' idea according to which the personal *daimon* can be located in different positions according to the prevalent power in the soul is based precisely on this fundamental indeterminacy of the soul, which covers all levels of the reality. Challenging this idea would necessarily have led to the refutation of the notion of a "*daimon* over the intellect" (ὑπὲρ νοῦν δαίμων, Plotinus III 4 [15], 6.5). If the soul descends entirely, it would be impossible that τὸ προσεχῶς ὑπερκείμενον be located "over the intellect", and there would be no need to forcibly reduce the Plotinian *daimon* to a part of the soul. It is rather strange that Proclus did not choose this more accessible and logical approach to refute the Plotinian view.

A reason for that could be that Proclus has simply followed, as elsewhere, Iamblichus' exegesis, but other elements of his interpretation of Plotinian demonology differ from the exegesis of his predecessor. To refute, for instance, Plotinus' idea that the soul can have more than one *daimon* during one lifetime by changing its guiding principle,³⁶ Proclus relies solely on the authority of *Phaedo* 107d:

The changes of life will introduce many kinds of variation in the [guardian] *daimones*, since the money-loving way of life often changes to the ambitious, this to the life of correct opinion, and this to the life of scientific knowledge; hence *daimones* will also vary, since the operative portion of the soul (τὸ ἐνεργούν μόριον) varies. Whether therefore this itself is *daimon* or what precedes it in rank, the *daimones* will change along with

35 Proclus, *Elements of theology* 211 (trans. E.R. Dodds): Πάσα μερική ψυχή κατιοῦσα εἰς γένεσιν ὅλη κάτεισι, καὶ οὐ τὸ μὲν αὐτῆς ἄνω μένει, τὸ δὲ κάτεισιν. Cf. also Proclus, *Commentary on the Timaeus*, III, p. 245.19–246.28 Kroll. For further references, see Saffrey (1984), 165 [= (1990), 55].

36 Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* III 4 [15], 3.18–20; cf. *ibid.* III 5 [50], 7.32–33. The same idea is attested in Hermias, *Commentary on the Phaedrus*, I, p. 74.4–13 Lucarini—Moreschini.

the change in man's way of life and within one lifetime the same man will have many *daimones*, which is absolutely impossible; for a soul never changes the guardianship of the *daimon* during one lifetime, but he who acts as helmsman to us is the same from birth until the journey before the judges, as Socrates observes in the *Phaedo* [107d].³⁷

On the contrary, in his refutation of the same idea, Iamblichus quotes no specific Platonic text and relies on a different argument, according to which the unity of the individual demands a unitary cause that is appointed to him:

You make mention, then, after this of another approach to the question of the personal *daimon*, one which directs worship towards it either as a double entity, or even as a triple one. But this whole approach is totally misguided. To divide the causal principles which preside over us, and not to bring them together into one, is quite false, and errs against the unity that prevails over all things. [...] No, the personal *daimon* that presides over each one of us is one, and one should not conceive of it as being common or the same for all men, nor yet common, but attached in a particular way to each individual.³⁸

Under these conditions, the reason for the exegetical strategy adopted by Proclus in criticising Plotinus' demonological theory probably has to be searched for elsewhere.

37 Proclus, *Commentary on the Alcibiades I*, p. 76.7–19 Creuzer/Segonds (trans. O'Neill): αἱ τῶν ζωῶν μεταβολαὶ καὶ τῶν δαιμόνων εἰσάξουσι [τάς] πολυειδεῖς ἐξαλλαγάς, ὁ γὰρ φιλοχρήματος μεταπίπτει πολλάκις εἰς φιλότιμον βίον καὶ οὗτος εἰς ὀρθοδοξαστικὸν καὶ οὗτος εἰς ἐπιστήμονα. καὶ δαίμων τοίνυν ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔσται, καὶ γὰρ τὸ ἐνεργοῦν μόριον ἄλλοτε ἄλλο ἐστίν. εἴτε οὖν αὐτὸ δαίμων ἐστίν εἴτε τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ τεταγμένον, ὁμοῦ τῇ μεταβολῇ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς καὶ οἱ δαίμονες μεταβαλοῦσι καὶ ἐν ἐνὶ βίῳ πολλοὺς ἔξει δαίμονας ὁ αὐτός, ὃ δὴ πάντων ἐστὶν ἀδυνατώτατον. οὐδέποτε γὰρ ψυχὴ μεταβάλλει καθ' ἓνα βίον τὴν τοῦ δαίμονος προστασίαν, ἀλλ' ὁ αὐτός ἐστὶν ἐκ γενετῆς μέχρι τῆς πρὸς τοὺς δικαστὰς πορείας ὁ κυβερνῶν ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ καὶ τοῦτο φησὶν ὁ ἐν Φαίδωνι Σωκράτης.

38 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, IX 9, p. 283.1–14 Parthey = 209.14–210.5 Saffrey—Segonds—Lecerf (trans. Clarke, Dillon, Hershbell): Μνημονεύεις τοίνυν μετὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἄλλης πραγματείας περὶ τὸν ἴδιον δαίμονα, τῆς μὲν ὡς πρὸς δύο τῆς δὲ ὡς πρὸς τρεῖς ποιουμένης τὴν θεραπείαν. Αὕτη δ' ἐστὶ πάσα διημαρτημένη. Τὸ γὰρ διαιρεῖν ἀλλὰ μὴ εἰς ἓν ἀνάγειν τὰ ἐφεστηκότα ἡμῖν αἴτια ψευδὸς ἐστὶ, καὶ διαμαρτάνει τῆς ἐν πάσῃ ἐπικρατούσης ἐνώσεως. [...] εἷς μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ καθ' ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ὁ οἰκεῖος προστάτης δαίμων, κοινὸν δὲ ἢ τὸν αὐτὸν πάντων ἀνθρώπων οὐ δεῖ αὐτὸν ὑπολαμβάνειν, οὐδ' αὖ κοινὸν μὲν ἰδίως δὲ ἐκάστῳ συνόντα. Cf. *ibid.* IX 7, p. 281.14–16 P. = 208.20–22 S.—S.—L.

In my opinion, his choice not to mention the doctrine of the undescended soul in the refutation of the Plotinian views on the personal *daimon* shows, very probably, that his goal was precisely to avoid understanding the personal *daimon* on the basis of a theory of the soul, as does Plotinus. By assigning to the personal *daimon*, following Iamblichus, the status of a distinct class of beings, superior to the human soul and inferior to the gods, Proclus has modified the theological framework of Plotinus' theory, following the essential change introduced by Iamblichus in the reading and interpretation programme of Plato's dialogues, by substituting the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* for the *Timaeus* as theological dialogues *par excellence*. This could explain why Diotima's speech is placed at the core of the refutation of Plotinus' demonology and why the equation $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ -*daimon* in *Timaeus* 90a-c, a passage which enjoyed considerable authority in the Middle-Platonic tradition, was interpreted by Proclus only as a mere analogy without theological value.

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The Angels in Proclus: Messengers of the Gods

Luc Brisson*

It is fashionable to say that Neoplatonism neglects the sensible world to devote itself to the construction of a gigantic metaphysical edifice, as extravagant as it is useless. However, this philosophical venture can be understood differently, as an attempt to account for the fact that our world, in which everything changes continually, exhibits enough permanence and regularity for one to be able to think about, talk about, and act within it. In that complex network, the angels play a role at the level of the Soul which depends on the Intelligible, fashioned by the Henads which manifest the One, filling the gap between the Intelligible and bodies. In this domain, the souls that are associated with a body have the role of administering it, whether they are divine souls, intellectual souls, souls of angels, demons, and heroes, or human souls. These classes of souls are found in the interpretation of the central myth of Plato's *Phaedrus*. As messengers of the gods, angels are the paradigmatic intermediaries between gods and human beings; they manifest the divine excellence, and enable human souls to rise back up toward their origin.

Beyond everything, there is the First, separated from all else, the One, evoked in the second book of the *Platonic Theology*. The One produces units that are similar to It, that is, the Henads. The Henads, or 'the whole number of gods', are described in the first part (chapters 1–6) of the third book of the *Platonic Theology* and in propositions 113–165 of the *Elements of Theology*. The Henads comprise 14 orders of gods, a number that corresponds to the conclusions of the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*.¹ From the two principles of limit and the unlimited, comes an inferior class of gods, that of the Intelligible. The participation of the Intelligible in the Henads is a participation of similarity, as is the case for all the rest.²

The domain of the Intelligible, described in the second part of the third book, in the fourth book, and in the fifth book of the *Platonic Theology*, and in propositions 166–183 of the *Elements of Theology*, is the result of a combination of limit and unlimited. This domain includes three triads, each of

* I would like to thank Michael Chase for translating this article into English.

1 Proclus, *Platonic Theology* III 1, 6.7–12; cf. *ibid.* I 11, 47.1–55.9, more specifically 53.2–6.

2 On the Henads, see Saffrey—Westerink (1978); Chlup (2012), 119–136; Van Riel (2017).

which contains three other triads, which are distributed according to being, life (power), and intellect (activity); each of these elements predominates in this precise order. The intelligible gods (*Plat. Theol.* 111 7–28), which correspond to being, have within them, in a hidden way, the primordial causes of all that follows. Then there comes a triad of intelligible-intellective gods (*Plat. Theol.* IV): they have as their essence life, which proceeds from being, with the power that corresponds to it; the fourth book of the *Platonic Theology* describes this class of gods, which provides the link between the intelligible and the intellective. Finally, there are the intellective gods described in the fifth book of the *Platonic Theology*, who are organized into a hebdomad (*Plat. Theol.* v 1–4). They include: 1) the triad of parents (*Theol. Plat.* v 5–32): Kronos, or the pure intellect; Rheia, or the intellective life; and Zeus, or the demiurgic intellect; 2) the triad of immaculate gods (*Plat. Theol.* v 33–35), to whom the intellect, which is protected by them, owes its ability to remain identical and similar to itself; and 3) the monad (*Plat. Theol.* v 37), which maintains all these intellective gods separate from the domain of the soul. The intellective gods, who depend on the gods above them, and dominate the lower gods, have the goal of producing all the intellects and divine beings that depend on them, and of converting them toward the intelligible.³

Then comes the domain of the Soul, which includes three triads: the hypercosmic gods, the hypercosmic-encosmic gods, and the encosmic gods.⁴ This domain is described in book VI of the *Platonic Theology*, which, however, deals only with the first triad, and in the last section of the *Elements of Theology* (propositions 184–211). At this level, souls are distributed among hypercosmic souls (outside the world), hypercosmic-encosmic souls (outside the world and in the world), and encosmic souls (in the world). The first of these, which are divine, are not associated with a body in the world; the second are, but remain divine, whereas the third, which are located within the world, are merely followers, permanent or occasional, of the divine souls.

The Hypercosmic Souls

The hypercosmic souls form the first triad, described in the sixth book of the *Platonic Theology*. They come immediately after the intelligible realm, from which they are separated by the seventh divinity, the separative monad. The

3 See d'Hoine (2017).

4 See Finamore—Kutash (2017).

hypercosmic souls are the leader-gods of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, that is, the assimilative gods that produce sympathy and communion among all beings. Assimilation has two aspects: procession and conversion. There are twelve of these gods, which contain four triads. In the first, the paternal or demiurgic triad (*Plat. Theol.* VI 6), we find the three sons of Kronos (the first of the intellectual gods); these are Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades (*Plat. Theol.* VI 11). Then comes the koric triad (*Plat. Theol.* VI 11), named after Korê (= Persephone), who, coming after her mother Demeter, fills everything that follows with life. For Orpheus, it is made up of Artemis, Persephone, and Athena; for the *Chaldaean Oracles*, of Hecate, the Soul, and Virtue; and for Plato, of Artemis, who is at the summit, Persephone, the vivifying power, and Athena, a divine intellect. The third triad, the elevating triad, is the triad of Apollo, identified with the sun (*Plat. Theol.* VI. 12), which is linked to the demiurge. It is in the demiurge that one finds the source of the intelligibles, the source of souls, and the source of the sun, which fills all things with light. Finally comes the corybantic triad of the immaculate or guardian gods (*Plat. Theol.* VI 13), who are the guardians of the demiurge, and maintain difference within similarity.

The Hypercosmic-Encosmic Souls, or Gods Separated from the World

The second triad, that of the souls separated from the world, are the hypercosmic-encosmic souls, which provide the link between the hypercosmic and encosmic orders (*Plat. Theol.* VI 15). These gods ensure order in the world, and they make the beings from this world rise toward the intelligible (*Plat. Theol.* VI 16). These are the twelve gods of the *Phaedrus* (*Plat. Theol.* VI 19), distributed into four triads (*Plat. Theol.* VI 22). The demiurgic triad includes Zeus, who takes care of all things, Poseidon, who governs the world of souls, and Hephaestus, who fashions stars and bodies. The guardian triad is made up of Hestia, who keeps souls identical and immaculate, Athena, who keeps lives inflexible, and Ares, who makes power shine upon bodies. The vivifying triad includes Demeter, who engenders life in the world, Hera, who makes the classes of souls proceed forth, and Artemis, who perfects the imperfection of nature. Finally, we must mention the elevating triad of Hermes, who dispenses philosophy and leads souls toward the Good, Aphrodite, who inspires love and familiarizes souls with the Beautiful, and Apollo, who directs all things by the art of the Muses and attracts them toward the intellectual light. With this class of gods the *Platonic Theology* ends.

The Souls within the World

It is in proposition 185 of the *Elements of Theology* that we find the tripartition of encosmic souls, which are not described in the *Platonic Theology*:

All divine souls are gods upon the psychic level; all those which participate the intellectual intellect are perpetually attendant upon gods; all those which admit of change are at certain times attendant upon gods.

For if some souls have the divine light illuminating them from above, while others have perpetual intellection, and others again participate this perfection at certain times (prop. 184), then the first order occupies a station in the psychic series analogous to that of gods; the second, having an intellectual activity at all times, is at all times in the company of gods, and is linked to the divine souls, bearing its relation to them which the intellectual has to the divine; and those which enjoy intermittent intellection are intermittently in the company of gods, being unable perpetually and without change to participate intellect or perpetually to consort with the divine souls—for that which shares in intelligence only at certain times has no means to be conjoined perpetually with the god.⁵

The classes of souls that are present in the world derive from an exegesis of a passage of the central myth of the *Phaedrus* (246e–247e), which describes the procession which, following Zeus and ten other gods of the pantheon, rises up to the heavens to contemplate the intelligible forms on the outside envelope of the sphere of the world.⁶

Now Zeus, the great commander in heaven, drives his winged chariot first in the procession, looking after everything and putting all things in order. Following him is an army of gods and demons arranged in eleven sections. Hestia is the only one who remains at the home of the gods; all the rest of the twelve are lined up in formation, each god in command of the unit to which he is assigned. Inside heaven are many wonderful places from which to look and many aisles which the blessed gods take up and back, each seeing to his own work, while anyone who is able and wishes to do so follows along, since jealousy has no place in the god's chorus. When they go to feast at the banquet they have a steep climb to the higher at

5 Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 185 (trans. Dodds modified).

6 For Proclus' description of the procession of the gods, see Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* VI 4, p. 24.21–25.14; *In Tim.* I, p. 269.21ff., p. 369.26–29 Diehl.

the rim of heaven; on this slope the gods' chariots move easily, since they are balanced and well under control, but the other chariots barely make it. The heaviness of the bad horse drags its charioteer toward the earth and weighs him down if he has failed to train it well, and this causes the most extreme toil and struggle that a soul will face.⁷

Proclus follows Syrianus⁸ in the allegorical interpretation of this myth.⁹ Each god is followed by an escort of angels, demons, heroes, and human souls, all mounted on chariots drawn by two horses. Proclus interprets this passage as follows:

For the agencies that order the life of souls in the world of generation are other than those that bring them into contact with the gods and fill them with divine blessings; these we ordinarily call divine demons. The occupation of horsemanship is a fitting symbol of their activity, in that they look after secondary matters, holding nature together by serving as front-runners or bodyguards or followers of the gods. For they are in a way charioteers, and in them there are 'horses', as there are among the gods.¹⁰ This is in Plato's mind when he says that Antiphon¹¹ takes after the grandfather for whom he is named. For above the demons are the angels, and they are, so to speak, fathers of the demons, and the gods their forefathers, bearing the same names, since demons are often addressed as gods, on the demonic level—but this is an homonymous designation derived from the demons' participation in the gods' nature.¹²

The hierarchy is clear—gods, angels, demons—and is analogous to the genealogical order: grandfather, father, son: the angels may be considered as the fathers of the demons, and the gods as their grandfathers. Two kinds of demons are distinguished: the divine demons, the highest ones who are the closest to

7 Plato, *Phaedrus* 246e–247b (trans. Nehamas and Woodruff).

8 See Hermias, *In Phaedr.* 127.8ff. Couvreur.

9 See Brisson (2009).

10 The ἐν in καὶ γὰρ ἡνίοχοί τινές εἰσι καὶ ἐν τούτοις ἵπποι, καθὰ δὲ καὶ ἐν θεοῖς must be translated correctly. The gods, angels, demons, and heroes have a soul which must be described as a driver with two horses, like the souls of human beings. On the horses and drivers of the gods, see Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* IV 15, p. 46.14–22.

11 According to this order of succession: Antiphon (grandfather), Pyrilampus (father), the second husband of Plato's mother, Antiphon (junior), Plato's half-brother, traditionally named after his grandfather.

12 Proclus, *In Parm.* I, p. 674.13–24 Steel = 673.18–33 Luna-Segonds (trans. Morrow-Dillon).

the gods,¹³ and those who take care of souls in the world of becoming.¹⁴ The highest demons form the advance guard of the gods, escort them as body-guards,¹⁵ and follow them.

The Divine Souls

First of all, one finds the divine souls, that is, the gods who are in the world. The divine souls in the world are all attached to the hypercosmic or unparticipated soul, which is outside the world (*Elem. Theol.* prop. 164), and which corresponds to the hypostasis Soul in Plotinus, that is, to the soul as such, before any particularization associated with a vehicle.

The divine souls that are in the world possess a divine intellect, and the body to which they are attached cannot be destroyed. There are two kinds of divine souls: those that are above the moon and those that are below it. In the first group, we find the soul of the world (*In Tim.* II, p. 290.3–23 Diehl), on the one hand as a totality, and on the other as parts, that is, the circle of the Same, which carries the fixed stars, and the circles of the Other, which carry the planets, considered as the masters of the world. In the second group, we find the traditional gods, who circulate beneath the moon, and must also be taken into account.¹⁶

The Intellectual Souls

The intellectual souls are not divine, but follow the gods eternally (*Elem. Theol.* 175, 184, 185). Their hierarchy includes three classes: angels, which correspond to being, demons, which correspond to power, and heroes, which correspond to activity (*In Tim.* I, p. 256.13–30 Diehl). Moreover, they are dependent on the higher gods. Angels are linked to the Intelligible gods; demons to the Intelligible-Intellectual gods; heroes to the intellectual gods. In addition, these three groups are linked to the gods associated with the hypostasis Soul: the hypercosmic gods, the hypercosmic-encosmic gods, and the encosmic gods (*In Tim.* III, p. 165.3–166.30 Diehl). Thus, there is a continuum from the Intelligible down to human souls.

In Proclus, there are numerous references to these classes of souls, viz. the angels, demons, and heroes, who form the procession¹⁷ that follows each of the

13 Proclus, *In Alc.*, p. 61.3–11 and 158.15–17 Segonds; *In Tim.* III, p. 109.18–22 Diehl.

14 See below, the section on the demons.

15 Note the image in which some demons are “lance-bearers” (δoruφοροῦσιν); see Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 262.16–17 Diehl.

16 Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 255.10–26 Diehl; see Plato, *Timaeus* 40e.

17 This procession includes the gods, the demons, the heroes, and the human souls: Proclus, *In Tim.* II, p. 112.19–25 Diehl; *ibid.* III, p. 109.14–110.22.

twelve gods. This procession, which is hierarchical (*In Tim.* III, p. 196.30–197.5 Diehl), makes its rounds around the Earth (*ibid.*, p. 140.28–33, 164.22 and 166.3). All are associated with two gods: Okeanos (*ibid.*, p. 178.18–29)¹⁸ and Eros (*In Alc.*, p. 32.4 Segonds),¹⁹ who provide them with their powers.

The Angels

The angels depend directly on the gods (*In Tim.* III, p. 223.22–24 Diehl), for whom they act as messengers. They interpret and transmit the gods' plans to the inferior entities, and in the first instance to the demons, whom they command:

What, indeed, are the angels, other than those who reveal the intentions of other beings? And what are those who, on the one hand, serve the gods, and on the other hand direct the demons, if not the angels? What is more, the name “angel” is not foreign to Greece, and does not come from the Barbarian Theosophy alone, but Plato too, in the *Cratylus* (407e–408b), says that Hermes and Iris are “angels” of the gods, and he openly declares that their name was derived from *eírein*, “to speak”.²⁰

The angels are situated between the gods, whose messages they bear, and the demons, whom they guide. They take the name of the gods they follow, and they even borrow the gods' vehicles—that is, they assume their appearance or ‘body’—as is shown not only in the Greek myths but also in the *Chaldaean Oracles* (abbreviated *CO*):

Indeed, they (the initiations²¹ of the Barbarians²²) say that the angels who depend on the gods rejoice eminently to be invoked by the same names as the gods, that they put on the “vehicles” of the leaders of their series,

18 In Greek traditional mythology, Okeanos is represented as a river of water encircling the earth on a horizontal plane.

19 With the endnotes by Alain Segonds. On Eros, see Hoffmann (2011).

20 Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 255.18–24 Kroll.

21 The initiation (τελετή) was a religious ceremony modelled after the Eleusinian Mysteries. This ceremony enabled a person to pass from a profane state to a life devoted to one or more divinities. Initiation was individual. It consisted of two degrees: the preliminaries at the “Lesser mysteries,” and initiation properly so called, on the occasion of the “Greater mysteries.” The initiate, described as a μύστης, was guided by the μυσταγωγός. The highest degree was the ἐποπτεία, that is, the vision of the sacred objects.

22 Probably the Chaldaeans. See W. Kroll (1894), p. 58.

that they show themselves to the theurgists in the place of their leaders. If, then, when Athena, Hera, Hephaestus wage war down here below in *genesis*, and likewise Leto, Artemis, the river Xanthus (*Il.* xx 67–74), we refer them to other classes, to secondary classes that are contiguous to partial and material things, one ought not to be surprised, since there is a commonality of names.²³

In another context, Proclus evokes the angels associated with Ares, the god of war:

For instance, whereas the series of the Arian ones, by its immaculate and divinizing powers, on the one hand extirpates matter, and on the other hand raises up souls through the intermediary of the angels who remove material life, and of their leader, who gives the signal for the cutting, as the oracle has said (*CO* 179)—for there is a certain “leader of cutting” among the angels who separate matter from the souls (εἶναι γὰρ τινα τμήσεως ἀγὸν τῶν ἐκτεμνόντων τὴν ὕλην ἀπὸ τῶν ψυχῶν ἀγγέλων)—Arian demons perversely imitate their series ...²⁴

The last lines of this passage evoke the punishing demons, who, disguising themselves as Ares, the god of war, promote violent death and murder, whereas under the guidance of the angels, who are their leaders, their function is to strip, through initiations, the souls of the stains (κηλίδας) attached to life in matter,²⁵ in order to make them rise back up to the place whence they have come. The angels allow the human soul to separate itself from matter, washing away the stains that depend on generation (*In Tim.* I, p. 155.30–31 and 221.30–31 Diehl; see also *In Crat.*, p. 71.17–18 Pasquali), and matter (*In Tim.* I, p. 38.2–3 Diehl). The vocabulary of cutting or removal no doubt refers to the *Chaldaean Oracles* (fragments 1, 4 and 22,3 des Places). By so doing, they promote the human soul’s rise back up toward the Father (*Phil. Chald.* I, 206.6–13 des Places).

The Messengers of the Gods

The term ἄγγελος, here translated by “angel”, means “messenger” in ordinary language. Sensation is the messenger of the intellect (*In Tim.* I 251.18–20, see

23 Proclus, *In Remp.* I, p. 91.21–92.4 Kroll.

24 Ibid. II, p. 296.5–12.

25 See *CO* 122, 123 des Places, and Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 300.16–19 Kroll. The telestic life is the one that is devoted to initiation.

Enn. v 3, 3.44–45). Speech is the messenger of the inner speech, that is thought (*In Tim.* I 194.1–2, 341.11–13; III 104.29–31). Personages, both gods and human beings, are also described as “angels.” In Greek mythology, Hermes and Iris, who are gods, are described as “angels,” because they are charged with bearing the messages of the gods (*In Remp.* II, p. 255.18–24 Kroll). In the myth of the *Protagoras*, moreover, Zeus sends Hermes to bring restraint and justice to mankind;²⁶ what is more, the Theologians²⁷ describe the planet Hermes as “messenger of the gods” (*In Tim.* II, p. 269.23–25 Diehl). Nemesis, who is an ancient divinity, is described as an “angel,” for she is the messenger of Dikè (*In Alc.*, p. 103.5 Segonds).²⁸ In the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*, Solon is the messenger for the myth of Atlantis (*In Tim.* I, p. 92.14–17 Diehl, lemma 21d7–8), which he has heard from Egyptian priests. In the *Parmenides*, Pythodorus reports the encounter between Parmenides and Socrates (*In Parm.* I, p. 662.19–20 Steel = 662.25–26 Luna-Segonds; 685.10–14 Steel = 685.14–18 Luna-Segonds; 692.5–11 Steel = 692.11–15 Luna-Segonds). The same naturally holds true of Antiphon, who is Plato’s half-brother (*In Parm.* I, p. 674.19–24 Steel = 674.21–33 Luna-Segonds). Yet two figures who appear in the final myth of the *Republic* deserve our attention: Er and the prophet of Lachesis.

Er

The souls of angels are worthy of seeing the souls of the gods and the periodic journeys of human souls, which are invisible by nature. They can therefore be assimilated to the epopts, those who, having reached the last degree of initiation into the Mysteries, have seen the sacred objects, and who, acting as priests directing the initiation, can communicate them to human beings. In the myth that concludes the *Republic*, Er’s soul is assimilated to an angel who has been initiated by the universe itself. As such, he is superior to the priests who have only a partial soul, and who, therefore, is able to reveal the hidden truth of the universe:

In this particular case, then, the Universe initiated (ἐτέλει μὲν τὸ πᾶν) the soul of this Er at the appropriate times, such a blessed initiation being due to this soul in justice; therefore, initiated into this vision by the Universe, this soul was raised to an angelic rank. In fact, it is to this class that the initiates down here below belong.

26 See Proclus, *In Alc.*, p. 187.17–188.3 Segonds and *Theol. Plat.* v 24, p. 88.21.

27 It is impossible to know who they are.

28 See Plato, *Laws* v, 728c2.

Whoever is truly hieratic

shines like an angel living in power,

as the Oracle says (*CO* 137, cf. 138 des Places)

He therefore becomes, on the one hand, he to whom the invisible things are shown, and, on the other, the messenger to visible beings.²⁹

The context is that of the Mysteries. The quotation from the *Chaldaean Oracles* describes, in general terms, the theurgist, who is endowed with the power that is the domain of angels, and of Er in particular. Er has seen the structure of the Universe and the journey of souls, and gives an account of them to mankind. He is therefore an angel, messenger of the gods to mankind, messenger of mankind to the gods.³⁰

Er is able to describe the celestial revolutions, and the spindle in the lap of Necessity, through which all the circular motions continue their revolutions:

The spindle itself turned on the lap of Necessity. And up above on each of the rims of the circles stood a Siren, who accompanied its revolution, uttering a single sound, one single note. And the concord of the eight notes produced a simple harmony. And there were three other beings sitting at equal distances from one another each on a throne. There were the Fates, the daughters of Necessity: Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos. They were dressed in white, with garlands on their heads, and they sang to the music of the Sirens. Lachesis sang of the past, Clotho of the present, and Atropos of the future. With her right hand, Clotho touched the outer circumference of the spindle and helped turn, but left off doing so from time to time; Atropos did the same to the inner ones; and Lachesis helped both motions in turn, one with the one hand, and one with the other.³¹

On the upper part of each circle there was a Siren, each of which emitted a unique sound, and in a circle sat the three Fates (*Moirai*), daughters of

29 Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 154.14–20 Kroll. On *CO* 137, see H. Seng in this volume.

30 Ibid. II, p. 97.4, 110.20, 117.22, 120.1, 121.12, 20, 23, 123.17, 124.10, 125.17, 153.2 [lemma *Rep.* x 614d1–3], 188.18, 280.18, 304.28, 327.3, 328.16, 21, 330.5, 342.1, 346.13, 353.19.

31 Plato, *Republic* x, 616b–617b. Proclus offers an allegorical interpretation on the myth or Er in the Essay XVI of his commentary on the *Republic* dedicated to Marinus, and at the end of the *Platonic Theology* (VI 23). Necessity (*Anagke*) is an intellective monad, and the Fates (*Moirai*) are a hypercosmic-encosmic triad.

Necessity. In the course of this narration, Er describes the three Fates who preside over mankind's destiny, spinning their fate: Lachesis concerns herself with the past, Clotho with the present, and Atropos with the future. Er sees these divinities as if they were earthly women:

This, too, the gods have said to the theurgists (πρὸς τοὺς θεουργούς):
Although we are incorporeal (ἀσωμάτων γὰρ ὄντων),

Bodies have been attached to our self-revealed apparitions because of you (= the theurgists) (CO 142, see also 101)

Indeed, it is because bodies participate in them that the incorporeals show themselves in a bodily form, making themselves seen spatially (διαστατῶς) in the ether (ἐν τῷ αἰθέρι). If, then, this is the way in which the divine beings are seen face to face (αὐτοπτέεται) by the theurgists (θεουργοίς), no one should be surprised that the messenger of these visions (τῶν θεαμάτων τούτων ἄγγελος = Er), as was natural for a partial soul (ψυχὴν μερικὴν) making use of representation (φαντασίᾳ χρωμένην) and having within it the faculty of perceiving bodies (ἔτι σώματος ἔννοιαν ἔχουσαν), grasped the incorporeals in this way, and had seen corporeally, in the aspect of an ethereal body, the forms of existence of the incorporeals, that is, instead of the divine, immaterial life, white tunics, that is, the Fates dressed in white; instead of the immutable, fixed stability of the divine, the Fates seated; instead of the distinctive property of the Fates with regard to the other gods, particularized contours, situated in a place. For visible features are the symbol of invisible powers, the symbol of formless entities. All this, then, as I have said, is familiar, thanks to the hieratic operations, to whomever is not entirely ignorant of these things.³²

This passage allows us to understand the context in which the Chaldaean rites took place. The person in possession of the hieratic art, that is, the priest who knows the operations that concern the sacred beings—or the theurgist, that is, the priest who knows how to act on the gods—is able to see the gods, who are incorporeal beings, as if they were corporeal beings. It is because of their participation in bodies that the gods, who are incorporeal, appear with dimensions in the ether. Since the theurgists are men endowed with a partial soul, which is connected to an earthly body, they can only grasp the gods, who are manifest

32 Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 242.8–27 Kroll. On CO 142, see H. Seng in this volume.

spatially in the ether, by the faculty of representation, whose starting-point is sensation. This is how Er sees the Fates.

All the details of this are rendered more explicitly in the *Platonic Theology* (VI 23, 108.5–109.17), particularly the fact that the Fates are dressed in white tunics. This is because the visible is a symbol of the invisible. This Greek term, of which the English word “symbol” is merely a transliteration, and which is composed etymologically from a nominal derivative of the verb βάλω “to throw, place energetically” and the prefix σύν, “together”, designates, in its primary meaning, an object cut into two pieces, the reunification of which constitutes a sign of recognition. In a secondary sense, any object or message capable of a double level of interpretation can be described as a “symbol”: whereas the deepest level is reserved for a small number of initiates, the superficial level remains accessible to anyone.

From vision, we move on to the sense of hearing. Er hears the Fates, as he hears the Sirens:

Let no one think it impossible, when the Fates (Moirai) sing intellectually, that their thoughts make a sensible impression on Er and his companions, that noiseless motion ends up as noise, that the life that does not strike the ear should be represented by a striking in the ear and move from intellectual consciousness to apprehension by hearing. For as the knowable object is, so is knowledge: if the former is intelligible, the latter is intellection; if the former is audible, the latter is hearing; and when the intelligible has become something audible that is a reflection of it, intellection has also become hearing, and Er heard what he previously intelligised. All this, however, as I have said, is illuminated from our hieratic art. It must merely be added that the angels hear the gods in one way, the demons in another; and human souls in yet another way. Some hear the intellectual gods intellectually, the others in the mode of reason, the others in a sensible mode, each species receiving the knowledge of the gods and the operation that proceeds from the gods to it according to the measures of its own receptivity.³³

All this refers to the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Er was initiated by the Universe itself. As an “epopt,” he has seen the invisible realities, and as an initiate, he is able to manifest what he has seen to those who are in the midst of visible reality.

33 *In Remp.* II, p. 243.7–22.

The Prophet

The prophet of Lachesis is an angelic demon, whose proclamation he sets forth as her spokesman:

When moreover, the prophet said that the proclamation he is to reveal to the souls is that of Lachesis, he very clearly attributed to himself an angelic rank with regard to Lachesis. For since he is reporting the words of someone else, he is above all, I suppose, the “angel” of that being whose words he makes known. Thus, he has indicated, in a word, what kind he is, that is, a member of the class of the angels of Destiny, the distributor of lots, revealer of types of existence, overseer of the demons to whom we have been assigned.³⁴

This prophet is an angel associated with Lachesis, who is responsible for the distribution of the lots containing the demons that each soul will choose.³⁵

Our demon is an angel and a prophet, and can therefore escape Fatality:

It is said, then, that the demon is something that belongs properly to each individual, and that Fortune is the pilot that governs the life of each person. That the demon, on the one hand, is one of those whom the Theologians call “angelic demons” (ἀγγελικῶν δαιμόνων), I have said above.³⁶ This is why the prophet (προφήτης) made him preside over the souls, that prophet whom we have shown³⁷ is an angel (ἄγγελον). With regard to this Fortune (τὴν δὲ τύχην ταύτην), it is not correct to say that it is a goddess, since it corresponds to the demon, but one must at any rate say that it is demonic, and that it is distinct from the demon insofar as one supervises inner motions, the other those that move toward the outside.³⁸

In the *Timaeus* (90a), the demon who is assigned to us, and who corresponds to a choice of life, is identified with the intellect. Proclus describes him as an “angelic demon,” for he presides over the movements of the soul, while fortune, which Proclus refuses to describe as a goddess, for she is at the level of a demon, presides over the movements of the body. The personal demon can be described as a prophet, for he is the spokesman of the gods. Some angels

34 Ibid. II, p. 270.4–13; cf. p. 288.7–9 (= *Rep.* x, 619b).

35 In reference to *Timaeus*, 90a.

36 Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 255.30 and 271.23 Kroll.

37 Ibid. II, p. 270.4–13.

38 Ibid. II, p. 298.12–21.

dissolve material bodies, whereas others preside over the descent of souls into bodies (*In Remp.* II, p. 52.26–28 Kroll). Insofar as the angel enables the separation of the soul from its immaterial substrate, it allows that soul to escape fortune or fatality, which is already associated with the world of bodies in the *Timaeus*. The angel reveals the hidden goodness of the gods, and it washes the souls of their stains (*In Crat.* 128, p. 75.14–19 Pasquali). His role is thus that of a priest.

The Priests

We can therefore understand why the priests are assimilated to angels (*In Crat.* 121, p. 71.17–21 Pasquali). The priest is the intermediary between god and mankind; he is their messenger, and therefore their angel. The priest is an initiator, who has heard and seen the gods. As an initiator, that is, as a master of initiation, he can invoke what he has seen and heard. Indeed, there are even rites that allow the gods to be evoked:

Well, then, not only have we said above (204.25) what must be understood by Anankê, but we have testifying in our favor, the hieratic art, which has transmitted to us an invocation, to see that most powerful goddess face-to-face (αὐτοπτικὴν κλήσιν),³⁹ and taught us how she must be approached when she is seen (πῶς ὀφθείσῃ προσιέναι). In fact, it is in a more extraordinary way than when one approaches the other gods, if it is true that Petosiris,⁴⁰ who indicates it in his work, is a sure respondent for anyone, he who has had contact with all kinds of classes of gods and angels.⁴¹

The theurgists, who are masters of the hieratic art, that is, the knowledge of the rites that enable one to enter into relations with the gods, know an invocation that allows one to see the divinity face to face and enter into relation with it. This is why they are considered as angels who enable the soul to rise back up toward its source:

39 In the term αὐτοψία, used only three times in Proclus (*In Remp.* II, p. 124.4 Kroll, *In Alc.*, p. 92.7 and 188.13–15 Segonds, see also the end note), an allusion to a theurgical ritual can be detected: the invocations (κλήσεις) enable apparitions (αὐτοψίαι). See also Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 41.3–4 Diehl.

40 Petosiris, called Ânkhfenkhonsou, is “one of the five great” (*djw wr*) priests of Thoth at Hermopolis. He rose through the various degrees of the priesthood in the service of Sekhmet, Khnoum, Amon Rê and Hathor. Proclus associates him with Hathor in *In Remp.* II, p. 59.3 Kroll. A work was attributed to him (see Festugière 2014).

41 Proclus, *In Remp.* II, p. 344.26–345.4 Kroll.

And that there occurs in us, through the action of the higher beings, a knowledge of realities, the apparitions of the gods and their instructions show it sufficiently. Some reveal to souls the order of all things, others show the way to the journey toward the intelligible, and light the elevating fires (CO 190).⁴²

The *πράγματα* are the higher realities, that is, the intelligible. The apparitions are associated with instructions (*In Tim.* III, p. 247.28 Diehl) that were apparently given in a written work (*Υφηγητικοί*, *ibid.* III, p. 124.33), and fulfilled the two objectives mentioned above: to provide an understanding of the order of things, and to ensure the soul's rise toward its source.

We can therefore understand why Julian Senior asks the demiurge for an archangelic soul for his son:

His father, when about to engender him, asked that being who contains the universe for an archangelic soul for the being of his son. After he engendered him, he commended him to all the gods and to the soul of Plato, who lives in the company of Apollo and Hermes. By questioning this soul by a hieratic art, he consulted him on whatever question he wished.⁴³

In fact, the hieratic art is theurgy,⁴⁴ which is attached to the theurgical virtues practiced by Proclus, as we can see from the *Life of Proclus* (§ 26–33):

But since, as I have said, following his studies of these theologies, he had acquired the theurgical virtue, even greater and more perfect, since he had not limited himself to the contemplative virtue, and no longer lived according to only one of the two specific properties of the divine beings, by contenting himself with exercising an intellectual activity⁴⁵ and tending toward the higher beings, henceforth he began to exercise a pre-intellective activity with regard to the lower beings, in a more divine manner, not only according to the political manner we mentioned above. Indeed, he made use of the conjurings (*ταῖς συστάσεσι*) proper to the Chaldeans, of their prayers for intercession (*ταῖς ἐντυχίαις*) and of their divine and ineffable magic wheels (*τοῖς θείοις καὶ ἀφθέγκτοις στροφάλοις*). In fact,

42 Proclus, *In Alc.*, p. 188.13–18 Segonds.

43 *Aurea Catena* 217 (Sathas 546).

44 Proclus, *On the Hieratic Art*, p. 150.24–151.5 Bidez.

45 That is a providential activity (*πρόνοια*).

he had received all this from Asclepigeneia, daughter of Plutarch, who had also taught him the vocal utterances (τὰς ἐκφωνήσεις), as well as all the other practices (τὴν ἄλλην χρῆσιν).⁴⁶

Proclus is the paradigmatic angel. He is not content to contemplate the intelligible with his intellect and to teach, but he intervenes in the realm of the sensible by means of the hieratic art of the theurgists which was transmitted to him by Aclepigeneia, the daughter of Plutarch of Athens, and which came from Nestorius. He is thus the mediator par excellence. In the continuation of this chapter, Marinus enumerates a series of miracles that result from Proclus' theurgical activity.

Finally, it should be noted that the angels have command over several demons:

Linked with the divine lots are those of angels and demons, with a more varied distribution, since a single divine lot is inclusive of several angelic lots, and of even more demonic ones—as each angel also governs more demons, and every angelic lot has more demonic lots relating to it. For what the *unity* is among gods, this *a number* is among angels, and what each number is among the latter, this among demons is a *tribe* corresponding to each.⁴⁷

In short, the more one descends along the scale of souls, the more their number increases.

Archangels and Archons

At both extremities of the class of the angels, Porphyry and Iamblichus wanted to add the archangels and the archons, perhaps under the influence of the *Chaldean Oracles*. To Porphyry's question: "For you ask, 'what is the sign of the presence of a god, an angel, an archangel, a demon, or of some archon or a soul?'"⁴⁸ Iamblichus specifies the mode of apparition of each of these beings, re-establishing the hierarchy of archangel and angel.

46 Marinus, *Life of Proclus*, § 28, 1–13.

47 Proclus, *In Tim.* I, p. 137.7–15 Diehl, trans. Tarrant modified.

48 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* II 3, p. 70.8–11 Parthey = p. 52.20–53.2 Saffrey—Segonds (= Porphyry, *Letter to Anebo* 70 Saffrey—Segonds). On the archons for the Gnostics, see the contribution of M. Scopello in this volume. On Iamblichus, see S. O'Neill's contribution in this volume.

The archangels are a higher species of angel; they are close to the divine principles. This is why Julian Senior asks the demiurge for an archangelic soul for his son (see *infra*, p. 223). The archons, also called “masters of the world” (κοσμοκράτορες),⁴⁹ are added for the first time here by Porphyry. According to Iamblichus, they are of two kinds: those who govern the sublunary elements (*De myst.*, p. 53.14–16 Saffrey—Segonds) and those who preside over matter (*ibid.*, p. 61.7). In the first book of the *Timaeus*, Proclus shows that he knows these distinctions, for he evokes the analogies made by Porphyry and Iamblichus with the functional groups that are taken into consideration in the myth of Atlantis. However, he does not take into account either the archangels “which are turned towards the gods whose messengers they are” (*In Tim.* I, p. 152.14 Diehl), perhaps because, as Iamblichus himself admits, he considers that they “were never considered worthy of mention by Plato” (*ibid.* I, p. 152.30); the same must hold true for the archons. Moreover, the archons as “masters of the world” (κοσμοκράτορες) are, in Proclus, the equivalent of the highest class of the divine souls.⁵⁰

The Demons

The demons maintain the order of the world and ensure the connection of the whole with itself (*In Crat.* 128, p. 75.19–25 Pasquali). And since there are six levels of the whole: the divinity, the intellect, the rational soul, the irrational soul, form, and matter, there will be six classes of demons.⁵¹ Because they participate to the highest degree in the Intellect, and hence in the divine (*Elem. Theol.* 112), the most venerable demons are described as “divine” because of their similarity to the gods who precede them, and particularly to the One (*In Alc.*, p. 71.4–11 Segonds).⁵² Those who belong to the second class and participate in the Intellect preside over the rise and descent of souls, and transmit to the lower beings all that comes from the gods (*ibid.*, p. 71.11–15; cf. *Republic* X 614a–621d). The third class distributes among lower beings the productions of the divine souls (*In Alc.*, p. 71.15–72.1). The fourth class ensures the transmission of the powers of the intelligible to the beings subject to generation and corruption, by breathing

49 The κοσμοκράτορες play an important role in the *Chaldaean oracles*; see Seng (2009).

50 They are associated with the seven planets (*In Remp.* II, p. 17.5–7, 220.25–221.1 Kroll), associated with time ἀποκαταστάσις: an ideal revolution which, according to the ancient philosophers, brings the stars back to a specific point, taken to be the initial point. These are the seven planets (*In Tim.* I, p. 101.2 Diehl).

51 Olympiodorus, *In Alc.*, p. 17.10–19.10 Westerink. On the demons in Syrianus and Proclus, see Timotin (2012), 141–161, 228–237 and 311–317.

52 See *supra*, p. 226.

“life, order, and reason” into them (ibid., p. 72.1–4).⁵³ The fifth class, described as “corporiform,” makes eternal bodies compatible with perishable bodies (ibid., p. 72.5–10).⁵⁴ Finally, the sixth class presides over the transfer of power from celestial matter toward the matter down here below (ibid., p. 72.10–14).⁵⁵ These last two classes may comprise the irrational demons (*In Tim.* III, p. 157.27–158.13 Kroll), fashioned by the demiurge’s assistants, which Proclus borrows from the theurgists (CO 88, 149, 215, 223).

The Heroes

In the *Commentary on the Cratylus*, we find the following summary:

Now, of the classes of being inferior to the gods, which always follow them, but at the same time assist in the making of all things in the cosmos from the highest all the way down to the lowest, some are revelatory of unity, others are conveyors of power and still others call forth knowledge of the gods and of intellectual essence. Those who are expert in theology call some of these angelic, because they are established according to the very essence of the gods and make the uniform aspect of their nature concordant with subsequent entities. On that account, the angelic class is boniform, in that it reveals the occult goodness of the gods.

They call others demonic because they bind together (συνδέοντα) the median aspect of the universe, divide the divine power and lead it forth all the way to the lowest level of things. For to divide is to “sunder” (δαίσαι). This genus is polyvalent and manifold, with the result that it embraces as its lowest class even the material demons that lead souls down [into the realm of generation], and proceeds to the most particular and materially connected form of activity.

They call others heroic (ἥρωικά) because they raise (αἴροντα) human souls on high and elevate them through love (δι’ ἔρωτος). They are also guides of intellectual life, both magnificent and magnanimous, and in general they are allotted the order of reversion, of providential care and

53 There are, therefore, demiurgic powers among the recent gods, by which they give form to what is created; vivifying powers, by which they produce life of the second rank; perfective powers, by means of which they complete what is missing in genesis; and many other powers, whose description transcends our feeble concepts (*In Tim.* III, p. 312.21–25 Diehl).

54 Olympiodorus calls this class of demons εἰδητικοί or εἰδικοί, but it corresponds to the σωματικοί in Damascius (*In Phaed.* I § 478.5 or II § 95.5 Westerink).

55 See Olympiodorus, *In Alc.* 19.8–10 Westerink. On these demons, see H. Seng in this volume.

kinship with the divine Intellect, to which they cause secondary entities to revert. Thus, the heroic have been allotted this name because they are able to “raise” (αἴρειν) and extend souls toward the gods.⁵⁶

The function of the heroes is to convert and to raise up human souls:

... and a magnificent army of heroes, previously repressing all the disorder arising from matter, keeping together the divine vehicles and the partial ones (= those of human souls) which revolve about these, and purifying the latter and assimilating them to the former ...⁵⁷

Because they stay at the lowest level of the intellectual souls, heroes play an important role in connection with human souls.

The Human Souls

The human souls follow the gods only intermittently:

For the form of life originating from on high, pervades so far to the last attendants (τελευταίων ὀπαδῶν) and establishes a similitude with the leading god (εἰς ὁμοίωτητά πρὸς τὸν ἡγούμενον θεόν). For about every god there are more partial gods, (θεοὶ μερικώτεροι), angelic orders, unfolding divine light; demons proceeding together with, or being the guards, or attendants of the god, and a magnificent army of heroes, previously repressing all the disorder arising from matter, connecting the divine vehicles, and purifying the partial vehicles which revolve about these, assimilating the latter to the former, and a choir of undefiled souls, resplendent with purity, and a multitude of other souls, at one time elevating the head of the charioteer to the intelligible, and at another, co-arranging themselves with the mundane powers of the gods. And of these, some are distributed about one, but others about another power of their leading god. On this account also, in solar souls, some are suspended from the Paeonian, others from the demiurgic, and others from the elevating power of the god.⁵⁸ In other gods likewise, all the souls which are the attendants of the same divinity, have not the same order, but some are distributed about different powers of the god, and others participate more nearly, or more remotely,

56 Proclus, *In Crat.* 128, p. 75.9–76.4 Pasquali (trans. Duvick modified).

57 Proclus, *In Tim.* 111, p. 262.17–21 Diehl (trans. Runia and Share).

58 A reference to the third triad of the encosmic souls, the triad of Apollo (see *supra*, p. 211).

of the same power. For in the gods themselves, unification precedes multitude, and sameness which is unique, precedes the difference resulting from separate powers.⁵⁹

In other words, the souls, all of which are associated with one or another of the celestial bodies, in which they are first implanted (see *Timaeus* 41d8–e2), manifest the powers attached to these celestial bodies, but to different degrees. They also manifest other powers, which accrue to them from various divinities.

Similarity and Conversion

All these classes are linked to one another through similarity, which plays an essential role in procession and conversion. At all levels, the higher members of a lower class are similar to the lower limits of the higher class. This is what makes sympathy possible, that is, the communion or participation of all beings among themselves. The chain of beings descends from the top to the bottom of the universe, until the last ones, which, for their part, can rise back up (see *Theol. Plat.* VI 3, 13.22–14.17). Proposition 140 of the *Elements of Theology* gives a good explanation of this phenomenon:

All the powers of the gods, taking their origin above and proceeding through the appropriate intermediaries, descend even to the last existents and the terrestrial regions. [...] And hence it is that even in these appear reflections of the first principles, and there is sympathy between all things, the derivative pre-existing in the primal, the primal reflected in the derivative—for we saw that all characters have three modes of existence, in their causes, substantially, and by participation.⁶⁰

In short, from top to bottom, the same powers are exerted, with decreasing intensity. We also find this idea in the *Commentary on the Timaeus* (*In Tim.* III, p. 262.12–263.5 Diehl, cited *supra*, p. xx), considered this time from the viewpoint of souls in the world. The gods who lead this procession transmit a way of life to those who are part of their retinue. They are accompanied, first, by particular gods, who are lower gods, because they are farther from unity, and hence difficult to define. The angels, for their part, are considered as mirrors of the gods. The demons form the advance guard of the procession: they are the bodyguards or servants of the gods. In conformity with their popular

59 Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 262.12–263.5 (trans. Runia and Share).

60 Proclus, *Elem. Theol.* prop. 140 (trans. Dodds); cf. prop. 65.

representation as civilizers, the heroes, presented as an army, master the disorder that comes from matter, maintaining the coherence of the procession of divine and human vehicles. They have a purifying function. Last come the souls, of which two groups are distinguished: those who devote themselves to the contemplation of the intelligible, and those whose contemplation is intermittent, with their intellect—that is, the charioteer of the *Phaedrus*—raising his head toward the intelligible, or casting his gaze toward the world. Even within the world, the power proper to each god manifests itself in each soul, and hence in every living being, every plant, and even every stone. All things are connected to each other by a link of assimilation and of sympathy. This explains the efficacy of the theurgical rites.

According to this interpretation of the central myth in the *Phaedrus*, angels are, for Proclus following Syrianus, the messengers of the gods. Such is the role of divine personages as Hermes and Iris, as well as mythical characters such as Er and the prophet of Lachesis in the eschatological myth that concludes the *Republic*. How, in our world, can one ensure genuine communication between gods and human beings? By invoking, through the skill of priests, the troops of angels and demons who allow human beings to see the gods and to hear them, who fix their destiny, and who transmit their prayers said during rituals. This explains why angels play such an important role in the theurgical rituals.

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Ontology, Henadology, Angelology

The Neoplatonic Roots of Angelic Hierarchy

Ghislain Casas

Separate Substances

The last and unfinished treatise on angels written by Thomas Aquinas begins with a survey of Plato's opinions about intermediary beings, or separate substances, as medieval thinkers would put it, in which, following the Platonists, he seems to identify all that stands between the first principle and the sensible world with what Christian theologians call angels:

In this way, therefore, between us and the highest God, it is clear that they posited four orders, namely, that of the secondary gods, that of the separate intellects, that of the heavenly souls, and that of the good or wicked demons. If all these things were true, then all these intermediate orders would be called by us "angels", for Sacred Scripture refers to the demons themselves as angels. The souls themselves of the heavenly bodies, on the assumption that these are animated, should also be numbered among the angels, as Augustine determines in the *Enchiridion*.¹

All the distinctions between different types of separate substances—secondary gods, separate intellects, heavenly souls, demons—Thomas might have drawn from Proclus. We know from his commentary on the *Liber de causis* that he was well acquainted with the latter's ideas. Although the Neoplatonic elements are combined, in Thomas' thought, with peripatetic elements, one can easily recognize in this fourfold presentation the Proclian division of the divine beings: henads, intelligences, souls, demons.² Whereas they constitute, for the Neoplatonic philosopher, different levels of reality, they all come down—"if all these things were true"—to one in Thomas' reinterpretation: angels.

1 Thomas Aquinas, *Tractatus de substantiis separatis*, ch. 1, 7 Lescoe.

2 Compare with the following division: "In evidence of this we should realize that, according to the Platonists, a fourfold order is found in things. The first is the order of the gods, i.e., of the ideal forms, which have among themselves an order corresponding to the order of the universality of forms, as was said before. Beneath this order is the order of separate intellects. Beneath that is the order of souls. Again, beneath that is the order of bodies." *Commentary on the Book of Causes*, prop. 19 (trans. Guagliardo, Hess and Taylor, p. 117).

It is not surprising that a Christian theologian would want to identify all of the pagan divine or semi-divine intermediary beings with angels, but one should nevertheless ask what the precise meaning of this identification is. To what extent can one say that an angel is the same thing as what Plato calls an Idea or a Form, what Proclus calls a henad, and what pagans call *δαίμονες*? Since those three are not precisely the same thing, one might understand that the theologian is trying here to reduce the whole Neoplatonic scale of divine beings to the angelic figure, thus neutralizing the various degrees of divinity with a bold opposition between the divine and the angels. The rest of the treatise will indeed refute the Platonic opinion in detail. Then, what theology calls 'angels' corresponds to what ancient philosophers mistook for all kinds of divine beings, secondary gods, heavenly souls, etc. By giving one name to different types of beings, the theologian brings a whole variety under one category.

There is yet another way of looking at the problem. Let us suppose that the theologian does not know what an angel is exactly, and that he poses the question to the ancient philosophers. The philosopher, e.g. Plato or Proclus, might answer: if what you call an 'angel' is an intermediary being between the divine and human kind, it could be a great range of different things, depending on what function it has been assigned, on what nature it is endowed with, and on what level of being it is situated. It could be either a secondary god, generating the different kinds of beings under the first principle of all, or a heavenly soul, animating and moving the heavenly bodies, or yet a demon, assisting the divine providence at its furthest and lowest level. Then the theologian would have to refine his idea of what an angel is, and to determine among the wide range of possibilities offered by the philosopher which ones are compatible with Christian doctrine and which ones are not. He would thus build his own angelology on the ground of philosophical ideas, to the extent that they conform to theological requisites.

This fictitious dialogue may well represent the historical situation in which Christian angelology was constituted. Since, on the one hand, the biblical text did not provide that much information about angels, and since, on the other hand, Platonic philosophy had filled the space separating the divine and men with a great variety of intermediary beings, theologians, if they wanted to provide their doctrine on angels with a thorough conceptual frame, could hardly escape a confrontation with Platonism. It is not by chance that two of the most elaborate angelologies, that of Philo of Alexandria and that of ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, are deeply rooted, respectively, in Middle Platonism and in Neoplatonism.³

3 See Dillon (1983); Sheldon-Williams (1972).

Whereas the 13th century theologian thinks he is reinterpreting and correcting ancient philosophy in terms of angelology, modern scholars know quite well that Christian angelology owes its philosophical core to pagan doctrines. It has long been pointed out that the very structure of the angelic hierarchy, which influenced almost every field of medieval culture, from theology to politics and art, was set by ps.-Dionysius on the model of Proclian metaphysics and theology.⁴ Although on a certain level, ps.-Dionysius and Thomas Aquinas seem to be doing the same thing, i.e., identifying angels and platonic intermediary beings, the two moves do not have the same meaning. Thomas is reinterpreting and criticizing Platonic philosophy from the standpoint of angelology, whereas ps.-Dionysius is using Neoplatonism to formulate his own angelology. It appears then, in broad outline, that Thomas criticizes Proclus from the standpoint of a Dionysian angelology that was originally inspired by Proclian philosophy.

The scope of this paper is to examine, from the standpoint of this problem, to what extent Dionysian angelology is rooted in Neoplatonism. To rephrase Thomas Aquinas: what kind of Platonic intermediary beings are angels the Christian version of? Secondary gods, intelligences, heavenly souls, or demons? The intermediary world depicted in late Platonism cannot be identified completely with the angelic hierarchy because intermediary beings differ from one another more than one angel could differ from another angel. An intelligible form and a demon are not of the same kind. This difficulty first appears in Philo of Alexandria, who seems to identify angels with many different elements of the Platonic intermediary realm, despite the theoretical difficulties raised by this move. One cannot understand Dionysian angelology and its complex relation to Neoplatonism if one ignores the inner-tensions of Philonian angelology that arise out of his reinterpretation of Platonism. Whereas in Philo, angels indistinctly appear at the ontological level of forms, at the theological level of providence and at the cosmological level of demons, they are, for ps.-Dionysius, members of a hierarchy, which is neither an ontological structure nor a cosmic order, but a practical organization of powers and activities. The question of power is not absent from Philo's angelology—quite the contrary—but it remains combined with other questions and scarcely appears in its proper light. Only in the Dionysian theory of hierarchy does one find a proper definition of the angelic power. We would like to show how the difference between Philo and ps.-Dionysius may be linked to the evolution of late Platonism, and more precisely, how Neoplatonic henadology might have laid the ground for the idea of hierarchy.

4 See Roques (1954).

Words

For Philo, as for almost every theologian, angels are nothing else but messengers. This is of course what the very word ‘angel,’ in Hebrew (*mal’akh*) as in Greek (ἄγγελος), means. At a very literal level, Philo uses the word ἄγγελος to name any kind of messenger, from the organs, which are messengers providing information from the senses about colours, forms, and sounds,⁵ to Joseph, who plays the role of a messenger who interprets Pharaoh’s dreams.⁶ Such a use of the word ἄγγελος would be irrelevant for our purpose if Philo did not interpret the function of angels from the same perspective.⁷ Angels are not only divine messengers through which God addresses Abraham or Jacob,⁸ but they are identified with the very word (λόγος) of God itself.⁹ If messengers bear an angelic function, it is because angels are nothing but words.

There is a close but ambiguous link between angelology and Philo’s theory of the Logos. Between the transcendent God and the sensible world stands an intermediary hypostasis which Philo calls Logos. It is the agent of creation. Should a man desire to use words in a more simple and direct way, he would say that the world discerned only by the intellect is nothing else than the Word of God when He was already engaged in the act of creation.¹⁰

Three realities are posited as equivalent: the intelligible world (νοητός κόσμος), the divine Word (θεοῦ λόγος), and the act of creation (κόσμοποιούντος). The idea of an intelligible world comes from Plato—although the expression does not appear in the Platonic texts—and refers to the totality of ideas that the Demiurge uses as intelligible paradigms for the creation of the sensible world in the *Timaeus*.¹¹ Platonic ideas thus become divine ideas, that is, the thoughts of God about the world he creates. The Philonian identification of the intelligible world with the divine Word certainly comes from the biblical leitmotif found in Genesis: “And God said (καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός).” The act of creation is literally a speech act. Indeed, ideas or words should not be taken as static elements, but rather as active powers, in order to understand how forms are imparted to matter. In his reinterpretation of the Aristotelian theory of fourfold causality,

5 See Philo, *De Somniis*, I, 27.

6 See Philo, *De Iosepho*, 94.

7 On the link between angels and communication, see Decharneux (1994), 25–28.

8 See Philo, *De Somniis*, I 195–196.

9 See Philo, *De Somniis*, I 240; *De Confusione Linguarum*, 205; *De Cherubim*, 35; *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres*, 145.

10 Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, 24 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, I, 21).

11 See Wolfson (1962), 226–228.

Philo considers the divine Word as the instrument (ἐργαλεῖον, ὄργανον) or that through which (τὸ δι' οὗ) the creation of the world is accomplished.¹² On a further level still, Philo even distinguishes between the intelligible λόγος and the immanent λόγος¹³—a notion of stoic origin—that bonds the universe together “like a Vocal between voiceless elements of speech, that the universe may send forth a harmony like that of a masterpiece of literature.”¹⁴ The λόγος, then, is also the instrument of divine providence.

The Logos may then be understood as that which enables both divine transcendence and divine creation and government of the world.¹⁵ This is precisely what the linguistic dimension of the λόγος as word manifests:

There is a point, too, in the reason-seat being doubled, for the rational principle is twofold as well in the universe as in human nature. In the universe we find it in one form dealing with the incorporeal and archetypal ideas from which the intelligible world was framed, and in another with the visible objects which are the copies and likenesses of those ideas and out of which this sensible world was produced. With man, in one form it resides within, in the other it passes out from in utterance. The former is like a spring, and is the source from which the latter, the spoken, flows. The inward is located in the dominant mind, the outward in the tongue and mouth and the rest of the vocal organism.¹⁶

The λόγος is twofold (διττός) both from a cosmological and from an anthropological point of view. More than comparing macrocosm and microcosm, Philo's point here is to reinterpret the Platonic distinction between the intelligible (νοητός) and the sensible (αἰσθητός) world in linguistic terms in order to match the Stoic distinction between inner (ἐνδιάθετος) and outer (προφορικός) speech. Therefore, what would remain a static ontological and cosmological opposition appears more like a shift, or even an emanative process, as if the world was flowing (ρέων) like spoken words from a source (πηγή). The world, and even the ideas to the extent that they differ from divine thinking, derive from the divine mind and are externalized in the form of λόγοι.

12 See Philo, *De Cherubim*, xxxv 125–127. On the instrumentality of the λόγος, see Wolfson (1962), 261–282.

13 On the immanent λόγος, see *ibid.*, 325–332.

14 Philo, *De Plantatione*, 10 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, III, 217).

15 On this question, see Radice (2009).

16 Philo, *De Vita Mosis*, II 127 (trans. Colson, in *Philo*, VI, 511).

The comparison thus shows two things. First, divine relation to the world extends from providence to creation under the form of a λόγος—both idea and word—that is progressively externalized and materialized. Second, the idea of a divine λόγος should be taken literally as a theory of language and of the linguistic production of the world.¹⁷ Since angels are said to be divine λόγοι, how are we to understand their linguistic nature? Moreover, what does this tell us about their place and function in the universe?

The link between angel and word exposed by Philo takes the form of a chiasm. On the one hand, the angel is presented as the primal divine word:

To His Word, His chief messenger [τῷ δὲ ἀρχαγγέλῳ], highest in age and honour, the Father of all has given the special prerogative, to stand on the border and separate the creature from the Creator.¹⁸

On the other hand, conversely, it is the Word that is presented as the first and the oldest of all the angels:

But if there be any as yet unfit to be called a Son of god, let him press to take his place under God's First-born, the Word, who holds the eldership among the angels, their ruler as it were (ὡς ἂν ἀρχάγγελον).¹⁹

At the center of this chiasm lies the figure of the archangel (ἀρχάγγελον), who is the most ancient discourse (πρεσβύτατος λόγος), whereas the Word (λόγος) is the most ancient among the angels (τον αγγέλων πρεσβύτατον), as if it were an archangel (ὡς ἂν ἀρχάγγελον), or, as if angel and λόγος coincided primitively, under the form of the first-born (πρωτόγονον), the archangel.²⁰ This means not only that the angel is a word and messenger, but also, conversely, that the divine Word bears, in the beginning, an angelic form. Hence the following metaphysical claim: the original mode of existence of language is the angel.

We might understand this idea following what Philo says about the divine Word in the process of creation.

God spake and it was done—no interval between the two—or it might suggest a truer view to say that His word was deed. Now even amongst us

17 On this parallel, see Robertson (2008), 10–14.

18 Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres*, 205 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, IV, 385).

19 Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum*, 145 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, IV, 89).

20 On the link between Philo and the Johannine theory of the Logos, among many, see Decharneux (2011).

mortals there is nothing swifter than word, for the outrush of the parts of speech leaves behind the hearer's understanding of them.²¹

In the biblical narrative, what God said should be was immediately created. There was not even the smallest time interval (μεταξύ) between the word and the thing. Hence a formula that might recall J.L. Austin: word is act (ὁ λόγος ἔργον ἦν). Speaking comes down to doing or acting. Even in the case of human language, Philo argues that the swiftness (ρόμε) of speech goes faster than its understanding (κατάληψις), as if meaning were only a slow motion effect, the only thing that could be grasped at an almost infinite speed. The divine Word does not *mean* anything so much as it merely *does* something, or even, as it *is* something. The divine λόγοι are the ideas of things, not in the sense of their abstract intelligible meaning, but rather in the sense of the active powers that make them what they are. The ideas (ιδέαι) are powers apprehended not in their essence (κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν), but through images of their activities (ἀπεικόνισμα τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἐνεργείας).²² Here, angelology might come into play: angels are λόγοι considered not qua intelligible, but qua active; they are the very words of the divine in so far as words are primal powers and activities. All the angelic hustle is nothing but the enactment and the dramatization of the divine Word. In that sense, angelology is a theory of the performativity of the divine Logos.²³

This rather speculative development leaves us with many questions. How precisely do angels contribute to the creation of the world and to divine providence? Do these two activities take place on the same level? At what level do angels stand in the intermediary space of the Logos: that of Platonic ideas, that of Stoic λόγοι σπερματικοί, that of Middle Platonic δαίμονες? One must look further into the Philonian definition of the angel.

Demons and Heroes

It has long been noticed that Philo identified the biblical angels with what Greek philosophers called δαίμονες and ἥρωες.

It is Moses' custom to give the name of angels to those whom other philosophers call demons (or spirits), souls that is which fly and hover in

21 Philo, *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, 65 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, II, 143).

22 See Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus*, I 47–49.

23 On angelology and the performativity of the λόγος, in a more political scope, see E. Coccia, "Introduzione", III, 3, in Agamben—Coccia (2009), 321–322.

the air. And let no one suppose that what is here said is a myth. [...] So if you realize that souls and demons and angels are but different names for the same one underlying object, you will cast from you that most grievous burden, the fear of demons or superstition.²⁴

From a physiological point of view, these beings fall under the category of soul (*ψυχή*). Some souls, such as those of human beings, are embodied because they have fallen into matter, but those who remain in the air (*ἐν ἀέρι*), which is their natural element, and do not attach themselves to any kind of body, are what philosophers call demons (*δαίμονες*) and Moses angels (*ἄγγελοι*). Philo gives a philosophical and naturalistic interpretation of the biblical figure of the angel: it is defined by the notion of soul as an incorporeal being and located in a specific region of the cosmos characterized by the element of air.

For the universe must be filled through and through with life, and each of its primary elementary divisions contains the forms of life which are akin and suited to it. The earth has the creatures of the land, the sea and the rivers those that live in water, fire the fire-born, which are said to be found especially in Macedonia, and heaven has the stars. For the stars are souls divine and without blemish throughout, and therefore as each of them is mind in its purest form, they move in the line most akin to mind—the circle.

And so the other element, the air, must needs be filled with living beings, though indeed they are invisible to us, since even the air itself is not visible to our senses. Yet the fact that our powers of vision are incapable of any perception of the forms of these souls is no reason why we should doubt that there are souls in the air, but they must be apprehended by the mind, that like may be discerned by like.²⁵

This is a cosmological deduction of the existence of the angels: since all the regions of the world, corresponding to the different elements, are inhabited by different forms of life—terrestrial animals on the earth, fish in the waters, stars in the heavens, etc.—then the air must also contain its own type of beings, although one might not be able to see them with the naked eye. What can only be thought of, but not properly perceived, must be a spiritual being such as a soul. Souls, and therefore angels or demons, are the inhabitants of the air.

24 Philo, *De Gigantibus*, 6–16 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, II, 448–453).

25 Id., 449–451.

There is thus a cosmological necessity for the existence of the angels: they fill a space that would remain empty if they did not exist. In that sense, Philo holds to the Platonic and Middle Platonic tradition of demonology, which, from the *Epinomis* to Chalcidius, integrates the demonic form of life in the larger scale of beings that inhabit the cosmic continuum.²⁶ The use of philosophy, or the natural sciences, prevents the exegete from myth (μῦθος) and superstition (δαιμονία).²⁷ Indeed, by identifying the biblical ἄγγελος with the greek δαίμων, he provides a proper philosophical and cosmological definition of the angel.

If angels, from a physiological point of view, are the same as souls and demons, why are they not called by the same name? Is it only a question of tradition and cultural background?

These are called ‘demons’ by the other philosophers, but the sacred record is wont to call them ‘angels’ or messengers, employing an apter title, for they both convey the biddings of the Father to His children and report the children’s need to their Father.²⁸

The same arguments runs for the heroes:

These are the purest spirits of all, whom Greek philosophers call heroes, but whom Moses, employing a well-chosen name, entitles “angels”, for they go on embassies bearing tidings from the great Ruler to His subjects of the boons which He sends them, and reporting to the Monarch what His subjects are in need of.²⁹

It appears that “angel” (ἄγγελος) is the name of a function: that of announcing (διαγγέλλειν). In Philo’s treatise *On Dreams*, Jacob’s ladder (Gn 28, 12) symbolizes the air that angels climb up and down like a stairway (κλίμαξ) connecting heaven and earth, in order to bring divine orders (ἐπιτελεύσεις) down to humans and human needs (χρείαι) up to the divine. Angels are messengers, agents of communication, intermediaries between the divine and human kind. It is often said that the Greek word ἄγγελος means both “messenger” and “angel”,

26 For the precise cosmological argument, see Philo, *De Gigantibus*, 7–11; *De Somniis*, 134–139; *De Plantatione*, 11–14. On the link between Philo and the Platonic tradition, see Dillon (1983), 197–200; Timotin (2012), 100–112.

27 On the meaning of these remarks in the precise exegetical context, see Nikiprowetsky (1996).

28 Philo, *De Somniis*, 141 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, v, 373).

29 Philo, *De Plantatione*, 14 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, III, 221).

but nothing can really account for this double meaning in the Greek language. In the Septuagint, the word ἄγγελος translates the Hebrew word *mal'akh*, which means exactly the same thing: messenger. From a linguistic point of view, in the two languages that Philo was concerned with, there is no difference between an angel and a messenger. When Philo says that ἄγγελος is a better (εὐθύβολος, προσφύεστερος) name than δαίμων or ἥρως, which all designate incorporeal souls, he only means that the former indicates something about the function and the activity of the soul that the two others do not. Already in Plato's *Symposium* (202e), the *daimōn* is defined as an intermediary (μεταξύ), interpreting and transmitting (ἐρμηνεύων καὶ διαπορθμεύων) things between men and gods. The difference between angel and demon, then, is not even one of function, but only of name. One shouldn't even say that the word ἄγγελος acquired a specific meaning in the biblical and theological context: the idea of a divine messenger was already that of the Platonic *daimōn*. The word ἄγγελος is simply more precise.

The paradox here lies in the fact that Philo, although he borrows from the Greek philosophers their definition of the angelic nature—that of an incorporeal soul inhabiting in the air—and restages its cosmological background, he seems more interested in the function of the angels. The superiority of the biblical term consists in naming more precisely the function of messenger, which is only the generic name of a wide range of official activity.

They are consecrated and devoted to the service of the Father and Creator whose wont it is to employ them as ministers and helpers, to have charge and care of mortal man.³⁰

And again in a more political manner,

Others there are of perfect purity and excellence, gifted with a higher and diviner temper, that have never felt any craving after the things of earth, but are viceroys of the Ruler of the universe, ears and eyes, so to speak, of the great king, beholding and hearing all things.³¹

Angels are viceroys or lieutenants (ὑπαρχοί), ears (ἄκοαί) and eyes (ὄψεις), ministers (διάκονοι), servants (ὑπερέται), that is to say, all kinds of governors, subordinates, officials, etc. Philo uses the topos of the Great Ruler (Βασιλεύς)—the

30 Philo, *De Gigantibus*, 12 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, 450).

31 Philo, *De Somniis*, 140 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, v, 373).

king of Persia—to describe the heavenly and angelic court. The image of the Persian Kingdom and of its great administrative system is commonly used in Greek philosophy to depict the divine providence. The *De Mundo* makes thorough use of it in order to explain how God, by the use of his power (δύναμις), may exercise his providence in the world without intermingling with the world.³² Whereas the *De Mundo* places a strong cosmological emphasis on the idea of providence—which is linked to the rotation of the heavenly spheres, in an Aristotelian fashion—Philo seems to embrace more fully and more literally the political dimension of the image.³³ The angels are not performing a cosmological task so much as they are accomplishing political tasks for men.

There is, too, in the air a sacred company of unbodied souls, commonly called angels in the inspired pages, who wait upon these heavenly powers. So the whole army composed of the several contingents, each marshalled in their proper ranks, have as their business to serve and minister to the word of the Captain who thus marshalled them, and to follow His leadership as right and the law of service demand. For it must not be that God's soldiers should ever be guilty of desertion from the ranks.³⁴

Angels form an army (στρατός, στρατεύμα) of heavenly powers. Even more than the political, the military metaphor places strong emphasis on the notion of order (τάξις, ταξιαρχεῖν) and of structure, as if the angels were ordained and structured by their very duties and functions. More than a servant (ὑπερέτης, θεραπευτής) the angel is a soldier (στράτευμα), which means that he is bound by law (θεσμός) to the orders of his captain (ἡγεμών) and cannot (οὐ θέμις) escape or disobey them. In the soldier, the threshold between nature and function tends to get blurred.³⁵ The coincidence between the angel and his duty is so perfect that it may best be called a soldier, even more than a messenger. Angelology raises the question of power (δύναμις) in a political sense.

32 See *De Mundo*, 6, ed. and trans. Furley.

33 On that point, see Peterson (2011), 72–76.

34 Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum*, 174 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, IV, 105).

35 On the theme of the soldier, see E. Coccia, “Introduzione”, III, 3, in Agamben—Coccia (2009), 321–322.

Powers

What exactly are the divine powers? If God remains absolutely transcendent and unknowable, one might say that his powers (*δυνάμεις*) are the manifestations of the divine in the world. As we have seen, even the powers remain unknowable in their essence. They are manifested in their operations.

Philo distinguishes many types of divine powers, which may nevertheless be subsumed under two main categories. In his treatise on *The Cherubim*, commenting upon Gn. 3, 24 he makes the following distinction:

The voice told me that while God is indeed one, His highest and chiefest powers are two, even goodness and sovereignty. Through His goodness He begat all that is, through His sovereignty He rules what He has begotten. And in the midst between the two there is a third which unites them, Reason, for it is through reason that God is both ruler and good. Of these two potencies sovereignty and goodness the Cherubim are symbols, as the fiery sword is the symbol of reason.³⁶

The two main powers are goodness (*ἀγαθότης*) and sovereignty (*ἐξουσία*). Although the distinction should not jeopardize the divine unity in which it is rooted, it indicates a division between creation (*γεννηκέναι*) and government (*ἀρχεῖν*). The two powers are not strictly parallel: God created through goodness, but rules creation through sovereignty. In other words, sovereignty presupposes goodness so far as it is exercised over what has been created. From a logical point of view, the creative power comes before the ruling power. This may be why the Logos is considered as a third power which unites the first two. In the Logos, creation comes from an order, and orders are immediately followed by substantial effects. Philo draws a correspondence between those two dimensions and the two names of God: *Θεός* and *Κύριος*.

Rather, as anyone who has approached nearest to the truth would say, the central place is held by the Father of the Universe, Who in the sacred scriptures is called He that is as His proper name, while on either side of Him are the senior potencies, the nearest to Him, the creative and the kingly. The title of the former is God, since it made and ordered the All; the title of the latter is Lord, since it is the fundamental right of the maker to rule and control what he has brought into being.³⁷

36 Philo, *De Cherubim*, 27–28 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, II, 25).

37 Philo, *De Abrahamo*, 121 (trans. Colson, in *Philo*, VI, 63). See also *De Plantatione*, 86.

The principal (κύριος) name of God is 'He that is' (ὁ ὢν), as in Ex. 3, 14. The names 'God' (θεός) and 'Lord' (κύριος) both refer to the most venerable (περσβύταται) divine powers.³⁸ These are, then, divine attributes, which are united both in the transcendent divine oneness and in the divine Word.

How are angels, who are, on a secondary level, both δυνάμεις and λόγοι, related to these two powers? Do they partake in both? One might assume, from the explicitly political perspective adopted by Philo on angelology, that angels are the instruments of the ruling or sovereign power. The frequent image of the Great Ruler (Βασιλεύς) and of his royal court presents angels as ministers, lieutenants, messengers, soldiers, helpers, servants, etc., that is to say, as agents of the royal government. The question is thus: should one consider the political vocabulary and images used by Philo as metaphors of other types of phenomena—e.g. metaphysical or cosmological—or as literal statements about the exercise of power, that is, from a practical and political point of view? What is angelic power?

Let us recall that the interpretation of the Cherubim in terms of power comes after a cosmological interpretation, according to which the two cherubs respectively symbolize the sphere of the fixed stars and its movement from east to west, and the seven spheres containing the planets and their movements from west to east. The Cherubim, which might be identified as types of angels, are thus both a cosmological symbol and a theological symbol—though Philo considers the second interpretation better. The move from the first interpretation to the second could be seen as an implicit statement on the angelic function: angels, under the form of the Cherubim, are more akin to the divine powers than to the planetary movements.³⁹ Besides the cosmological paradigm—one that reminds of the *Timaeus*—lies a theological paradigm: the world is governed by superior powers, divine and angelic.⁴⁰ The question is also that of the relation between the angelic power and the world. In what sense do angels govern the world?

It has been argued that the angelic activity was strictly directed towards men.⁴¹ It is implied in *De Gigantibus* 12, and clearly stated in *De Somniis*, 142:

38 On the question of the divine names and its rabbinic context, see Dahl—Segal (1978).

39 On the link between angels and stars, see Philo, *De Gigantibus*, 7–8.

40 See Decharneux (1994), 67–78 on the limits of cosmology, and 89–93 on the other meanings of the Cherubim in Philo.

41 See Wolfson (1962), 372–374.

In accordance with this they are represented by the lawgiver as ascending and descending: not that God, who is already present in all directions, needs informants, but that it was a boon to us in our sad case to avail ourselves of the services of “words” acting on our behalf as mediators, so great is our awe and shuddering dread of the universal Monarch and the exceeding might of His sovereignty. It was our attainment of a conception of this that once made us address to one of those mediators the entreaty: “Speak thou to us, and let not God speak to us, lest haply we die” (Ex. xx. 19). For should He, without employing ministers, hold out to us with His own hand, I do not say chastisements, but even benefits unmixed and exceeding great, we are incapable of receiving them.⁴²

Whereas angels are often described as intermediaries between the divine and men, Philo explains that God does not need informants (μηγύσοντα), since he is omnipresent, but that their only function is to prevent men from a direct contact with the divine. Divine might (κράτος) largely exceeds human capacities, but even if it were for benefits (εὐεργεσία), men would not be able to receive them. One might see in the opposition between the punitive and the beneficent another version of the two powers—goodness and sovereignty. Here, the angelic λόγοι bear the function of mediators (μεσίται, διαιτηταί), that is, intercessors acting for the divine on man’s behalf. In that perspective, angels are not needed to fill in the metaphysical or cosmological gap between the divine and human kind, but to accomplish a political task, that of intervening among men on behalf of God, and of interceding by God on behalf of men.

One might draw from that last point that angels represent, among divine powers, a specific kind that only deals with human affairs, but not with the creation of things or the laws of nature. If there are two main powers, a creative and a sovereign one, and that sovereignty applies to the created, then angels could be considered as the instruments of the ruling power—the viceroys, lieutenants, and ministers—that do not meddle with the creation of things, but only with their administration. More precisely, their task is to govern human kind. In that perspective, the angel appears as the purest form of sovereignty (ἐξουσία): whereas in God, the creative and the ruling power are co-originary—in the prologue to his treatise *On the Creation of the World*, Philo writes that “the world is in harmony with the Law, and the Law with the world”⁴³—and

42 Philo, *De Somniis*, 142–143 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, v, 373).

43 Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, 1, op. Cit., 7. On the idea of cosmopolitics in Philo, see Carlier (2008), 313–369.

united in the Logos in spite of their difference, it is only in the angel that political power is manifested as such. Angelology is thus a theory of government.⁴⁴

Of course, things are not that simple, and Philo seems to say the exact opposite in the treatise *On the Confusion of Tongues*, just before he provides the image of angels as an army.

Now we must first lay down that no existing thing is of equal honour to God and that there is only one sovereign and ruler and king, who alone may direct and dispose of all things. For the lines:

It is not well that many lords should rule;
Be there but one, one king,

could be said with more justice of the world and of God than of cities and men. For being one it must needs have one maker and father and master.⁴⁵

Philo quotes the famous Homeric verses that Aristotle used in *Metaphysics* Λ 10, 1076a to establish the unicity of the first principle. Aristotle used a political argument to carry out a metaphysical argument. Here, Philo takes it one step further and claims that the argument is even truer on a cosmological and metaphysical level. The only one sovereign (ἄρχων), ruler (ἡγεμόν) and king (βασιλεύς) is God. Only God can be said to govern (πρυτανεύειν, διοικεῖν) things. Philo totally subverts the semantics of the terms he uses: all the political vocabulary, when applied to human matters, proves to be metaphorical. The true meaning of political language is not political, but cosmological and metaphysical. What is said about cities and men would be better said about the world and God.

More surprisingly, Philo goes on to say that the powers surrounding the divine, even the powers of chastisement (κολαστήριοι), which may be linked to the ruling power, partake in the creation of things.

Let us consider what these are. God is one, but He has around Him numberless Potencies, which all assist and protect created being, and among them are included the powers of chastisement. Now chastisement

44 On that point, yet not from a strictly Philonian perspective, see E. Coccia, "Introduzione", 11, 1–2, in *Agamben—Coccia* (2009), 304–307.

45 Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum*, 170 (trans. Colson and Whitaker, in *Philo*, IV, 103).

is not a thing of harm or mischief, but a preventive and correction for sin. Through these Potencies the incorporeal and intelligible world was framed, the archetype of this phenomenal world, that being a system of invisible forms, as this is of visible material bodies.⁴⁶

And later on, after he has mentioned the angelic armies, which are waiting upon the powers, he adds:

Now the King may fitly hold converse with his powers and employ them to serve in matters which should not be consummated by God alone. It is true indeed that the Father of All has no need of aught, so that He should require the co-operation of others, if He wills some creative work, yet seeing what was fitting to Himself and the world which was coming into being, He allowed His subject powers to have the fashioning of some things, though He did not give them sovereign and independent knowledge for completion of the task, lest aught of what was coming into being should be miscreated.⁴⁷

Powers and angels are assistants in the creation of the world, not because of a divine need, but because it is fitting (*πρέπον*) for them and for the world. This is why Gn. 1:26 says: "Let us make man in our own image and likeness."⁴⁸

Our point is not to show a contradiction in Philo, but rather to try to distinguish and highlight different tendencies in his angelology, which are not always very clear. There is evidently a political perspective, but it remains strongly linked to cosmological and metaphysical dimensions. Hence, the rich Philonian political vocabulary seems partly literal and partly metaphorical. On the one hand, angelology is merged in Platonic cosmology and metaphysics, and angels are synonyms with *λόγοι* and *δαίμονες*. On the other hand, angelology brings a political twist to the reflections on power and providence, which extracts them from their traditional cosmological and metaphysical context. Only by following this thread can one understand the specificity of Christian angelology.

46 Ibid., 103–105.

47 Ibid., 105–107.

48 On that verse, see also Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, 72–76.

Hierarchy

Even more explicitly than Philo, ps.-Dionysius considered angelology as a theory of power.⁴⁹ In order to account for angelic order and activity, he coined the term *ἱεραρχία*, which literally means ‘sacred power’. One only gets a partial understanding of the Dionysian concept if one reduces it to the modern idea of hierarchy, i.e., the vertical ranking of multiple elements in an ordered structure. Obviously, *ἱεραρχία* corresponds to such an organizational scheme, but the originality of the Dionysian concept lies elsewhere: in the definition of sacred power (*ἱερά ἀρχή*). The ambiguity of the term *ἀρχή* induces an interpretative choice in its translation. Strangely enough, whereas all the medieval commentators understood *ἱεραρχία* as ‘sacred power’ or ‘sacred government’ (*sacer principatus*),⁵⁰ modern scholars tend to think of it as a ‘sacred principle.’ This apparently more neutral understanding actually implies a rather metaphysical interpretation of the concept.⁵¹ The divergence between both interpretations precisely has something to do with the role played by Neoplatonism in Dionysian thought.

Ps.-Dionysius himself provides a technical definition of the term he created, in the third chapter of the *Celestial Hierarchy*:

In my opinion a hierarchy is a sacred order, a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine. And it is uplifted to the imitation of God in proportion to the enlightenments divinely given to it. The beauty of God—so simple, so good, so much the source of perfection—is completely uncontaminated by dissimilarity. It reaches out to grant every being, according to merit, a share of light and then through a divine sacrament, in harmony and in peace, it bestows on each of those being perfected its own form.⁵²

The definition of hierarchy comprises three elements: order (*τάξις*), knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*), activity (*ἐνέργεια*). That hierarchy is not only an order, but also a form of knowledge and of activity, does not simply mean that hierarchical order comprises sciences and activities. All three are intertwined in a single form of

49 See Agamben (2011), 144–166.

50 On the medieval commentaries, see Luscombe (1980), (2008).

51 See Roques (1954); Hathy (1969); Mahoney (2000); Perl (2007), 65–82. For the opposite point of view, see E. Coccia’s remarks in Agamben—Coccia (2009), 455–478.

52 Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, III 1, 164D, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Luibheid, 153–154.

power which links what one can know and do to the rank one occupies and, conversely, the rank one occupies to one's theoretical and practical capacities. Order does not constitute the ontological background of the sciences and activities, but as "sacred order" (τάξις ἱερά), it is coextensive with the sacramental operations. There is, properly speaking, no such thing as a hierarchy of being, since "hierarchy" precisely means an order of knowledge and activity, i.e., a practical order, not an ontological one. If the divine represents the final cause of hierarchy, one might say that order, science, and activity are respectively like their formal, material, and efficient causes.

This very abstract model is embodied by the well-known angelic hierarchies—from angels and archangels to cherubim and seraphim—and by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The aim of hierarchy is the imitation of God, which is thus realized in the sacred liturgy and in the general organization of the Church, both angelic and human. The concept of hierarchy does not aim at the metaphysical structure of the world-order, but describes the functioning of power in the Church. Hence, it was strongly politicized by the medieval theologico-political tradition. Ps.-Dionysius himself does not use a political vocabulary to talk about hierarchy and clearly does not build a proper political theory.⁵³ Yet the concept of hierarchy is a concept of power that can easily be understood in a political way and that has, at least, clearly nothing to do with metaphysics.

The term ἐνέργεια plays a crucial part in the Dionysian definition of hierarchy, since it indicates a shift from the sphere of being to that of operations. Hierarchy is a divine imitation because it provides the practical rules for the imitation of the divine, i.e., the rules according to which the sacraments should be administered.

The divinity first purifies those minds which it reaches and then illuminates them. Following on their illumination it perfects them in a perfect conformity to God. This being so, it is clear that the hierarchy, as an image of the divine, is divided into distinctive orders and powers in order to reveal that the activities of the divinity are preeminent for the utter holiness and purity, permanence and distinctiveness of their orders.⁵⁴

53 On the political dimension of Dionysian ecclesiology, see O'Meara (2003), 159–170; Stock (2008), 110–132.

54 Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, v I, 7, 508 D–509 A, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Luibheid, 239.

The three main hierarchical operations—purification (κάθαρσις), illumination (ἐλλαμπσις), perfection (τελείωσις)—constitute an ordered image of the divine (ἱεραρχικὴ τῶν θείων εἰκῶν) and of the divine activities (θεαρχικὰς ἐνεργείας). Hierarchy is thus an image. The division into different ranks and different operations is the very imitation of the divine operations, which are revealed and represented by the hierarchy itself by its very structure and functioning. Sacred power (ἱεραρχία) is the image of divine power (θεαρχία).

Hierarchy follows a law of imitation that links all of its members together and unites them to the divine, by the repetition, at each level, of the divine operations. More precisely, it is a Neoplatonic law of mediation, which medieval thinkers eventually named *lex divinitatis*, but which originally comes from Neoplatonism.⁵⁵

Let me make myself clearer by means of appropriate examples, more apparent to us, I mean, even if they all fall short of the absolutely divine transcendence. The rays of the sun pass easily through the front line of matter since it is more translucent than all the others. The real light of the sun lights up its own beams more resplendently through that section of matter. But as it encounters more opaque matter, it appears dimmer and more diffused, because this matter is less suited to the passage of the outpouring of light. This unsuitability becomes progressively greater until finally it halts completely the journey of light. Similarly, the heat of fire passes more easily into those entities which are good conductors, more receptive and in fact quite like it. But when its burning activity comes up against resistant or even opposing entities, it becomes ineffective or leaves only a very slight trace of itself. This is fully seen when fire moves through those things properly disposed to it, and then comes to things not akin to it, as when something on fire first happens to affect things which can be ignited and then through them either water or something else not easily ignited is proportionately heated.

Following that same harmonious law which operates throughout nature, the wonderful source of all visible and invisible order and harmony supernaturally pours out in splendid revelations to the superior beings the full and initial brilliance of his astounding light, and successive beings in their turn receive their share of the divine beam, through the mediation of their superiors. The beings who are first to know God and who,

55 On the medieval *lex divinitatis*, see Hankey (1992); Luscombe (1976). On Proclus, see *Elements of Theology*, prop. 148.

more than others, desire the divine virtue have been deemed worthy to become the prime workers of the power and activity which imitate God, as far as possible.⁵⁶

At first glance, ps.-Dionysius seems to be formulating a Neoplatonic law of mediation in rather simple terms. As natural elements, such as light or fire, progress through more akin elements to others, in the same way, the divine light passes through the superior beings onto the inferior ones. One easily recognizes here a structure similar to that described by Proclus in proposition 148 of the *Elements of Theology*: “Every divine order has an internal unity of three-fold origin, from its highest, its mean, and its last term.”⁵⁷ It should, however, be noticed here that ps.-Dionysius is not talking about causality or participation in a metaphysical way,⁵⁸ but about the transmission of divine light, i.e., knowledge and science. Only on a superficial level does it seem that hierarchical mediation is a law of nature. Natural propagation of light or heat does work through mean-terms. But what is the exact meaning of the comparison? It is only an example used for the purpose of clarity, the inadequacy of which is underlined by ps.-Dionysius. First of all, the natural harmonious proportion (τῆς φυσικῆς εὐταξίας λόγον) needs to be understood supernaturally (ὑπερφυσῶς). This does not simply mean that divine light is something transcendent, but literally that it does not circulate following natural laws. There may be an analogy between nature and hierarchy, but what is at stake here is the transmission of knowledge and operations: the first to know God (ἐπιγινούσαι πρώται θεόν) become the prime operators of the divine powers and operations (πρωτοουργοὶ γενέσθαι τῆς θεομιμητοῦ δυνάμεως καὶ ἐνεργείας). The diffusion of divine light determines an order of knowledge and operations: not the natural order of elements and substances more or less akin to one another, but the hierarchical order between superior and inferior elements that partake in various degrees of knowledge and action. The whole hierarchical ordering of first, intermediary, and last ranks is not so much an ontological fact than a *modus operandi* of sacred power.

This is precisely why one reads in *Is.* 6:6–7 that a Seraph purified the prophet’s lips with some burning coal. Although it seems to contradict the hierarchical law that a superior angel might purify a human being, one should rather understand that the Seraph’s action is mediated by a lower angel. How is that possible?

56 Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, XIII 3, 301A–301C, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Luijbeid, 177–178.

57 Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 148, trans. Dodds, 131.

58 On this point, see Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 23, 65, and 67.

Hence it is not out of place to say that it was a seraphim who purified the theologian. God purifies all beings insofar as he is himself the cause of every purification. Or rather, if I may use a more familiar example, there is our own hierarch. Through his deacons and his priests he brings purification and light. But he himself is said to purify and to illuminate, since those orders ordained by him attribute to him the sacred activities in which they themselves engage. So, in like fashion, the angel who sacredly worked out the purification of the theologian attributed his own purifying understanding and power first to God, as the Cause, and then to the seraphim, as the initial hierarch.⁵⁹

If inferior members of the hierarchy partake in divine light by the intermediary of superior members, the process might be seen in the opposite way also: hierarchical operations carried through by the lower ranks can be attributed to superior ranks, since they are the first to operate. This upward logic of vicarious action (each lower rank attributes its action to the superior rank) is the reverse of the downward logic of imitation (each lower rank imitates the action of the superior rank). The purificatory act of the angel can thus be brought back to the seraph. However, this logic does not go straight up to the divine. It is not a simple step-by-step logic. The angel attributes its own science and power (ἐπιστήμην καὶ δύναμιν) to God as cause (ὡς αἴτιον) and to the seraph as prime minister (ὡς πρωτοργόν ἱεράρχην). What enables the angel to act on behalf of the seraph is not the fact that the seraph is the cause of the act, but that the seraph is the prime operator or minister. There is therefore, at the top or at the root of hierarchy, a division between causality and agency. Whereas God is, from a metaphysical point of view, the cause of every thing, and thus of every act, hierarchy is concerned with actions from a practical point of view. The point is not to say that the angel is the last and lowest cause of the operation, but that this operation was performed by the angel in the name of or on behalf of the seraph, i.e., as part of a hierarchical process by which it was authorized, so to say. From a hierarchical point of view, angelic operations are not metaphysical facts but official acts. This means that hierarchy constitutes a sphere wherein beings are not linked to one another following the rules of causality and participation, but through practical and official relations of power. In other words, hierarchy is not natural, but institutional.⁶⁰

59 Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, XIII 4, 305 C–305 D, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Luijckheid, 181.

60 The distinction between divine power and sacred power can be read in the perspective of Agamben's distinction between theology and economy. See Agamben (2011).

It has long been noticed that the structure of the Dionysian angelic hierarchy was similar to that of the Proclian system of divine triads; hence the idea that the angelic hierarchy reflected the Neoplatonic hierarchical conception of the world.⁶¹ One should, however, distinguish the Dionysian technical concept of ἱεραρχία from its modern counterpart. When one talks about hierarchy in Neoplatonism, one uses the term in its modern signification—that of a vertical order—but nowhere does the term ἱεραρχία appear in the Neoplatonic corpus. This is the root of a misunderstanding concerning the link between ps.-Dionysius and its Neoplatonic sources: since Neoplatonic metaphysics are hierarchical, in a modern sense, and since the Dionysian philosophical framework is drawn from Neoplatonism, it seems likely to say that the concept of ἱεραρχία is of Neoplatonic origin. We tried to show, on the contrary, that it was a concept of power and not of being, and that it could not therefore reflect Neoplatonic metaphysics. The problem is thus to understand how and why the concept of hierarchy does parallel Proclian triadic structures without being, however, a metaphysical concept. It seems unlikely that ps.-Dionysius would have borrowed patterns from Proclus only on a formal and superficial level.

The first thing to notice is that what angelic hierarchies reflect is precisely the order of divine classes exposed by Proclus in the *Platonic Theology* and not what scholars usually call the Neoplatonic hierarchical reality. The order according to which angels are ranked has nothing to do with the emanative or causal order of the Neoplatonic hypostases (One, Intellect, Soul, etc). This means that ps.-Dionysius modelled the angelic hierarchies on the orders of gods, or henads, to put it in the Proclian technical way, following a theological pattern and not a metaphysical one. Moreover, he borrowed a polytheistic model explaining how the multiplicity of gods is ordered under the primal god which is the One. Despite all the differences between Christian and pagan religion, there are obvious similarities between this theological problem and the question of the relation between the angels and God. Therefore, the link between henadology and angelology should be questioned.

Divine Names

If we take a step from angelology to theology, we are faced with another side of ps.-Dionysius' reading of the Neoplatonists. The treatise *On the divine names* might in fact be read as a refutation of Neoplatonic metaphysics and

61 See O'Meara (1975), 1–18.

henadology. We should thus examine ps.-Dionysius' criticism in order to grasp the meaning of his ambivalent attitude towards Neoplatonism—i.e., building angelic hierarchies on a Proclian scheme on the one hand and undermining henadology on the other.

Set out roughly, the Platonic theory of forms assumes that the essence of something corresponds to the intelligible form of that thing—this form being a real entity and not a mere concept of the thing. The form is the thing *in itself*. The late Neoplatonists, starting from Iamblichus and Proclus, gave to this ontology a strong theological twist. Plotinus had already given a strong sense of verticality to ontology by distinguishing from top down the One, the Intellect, and the Soul as three different hypostases. His followers took a step further and structured the realm of being into many subordinate ranks that were eventually linked to divine classes. They merged traditional elements of polytheism with Platonic metaphysics to build up a proper 'Platonic theology,' in which one might say forms became gods. A key operator in this process is the theory of henads.⁶² From a theological point of view, henads are gods, but from a metaphysical point of view, they are principles that stand between the One and the level of being, as a mediation between unity and the ordered multiplicity of beings. Henadology fills a gap between henology and ontology, which means that henadology is nothing else but the theologization of ontology.

The whole purpose of the Dionysian theory of divine names is to untie the Neoplatonic knot of metaphysics and theology that turns the theory of forms into a religious system. Ps.-Dionysius matches the different categories of beings with divine names drawn from the biblical text in order to reduce every ontological category to its divine origin.

The strategy becomes clear if we look at the Dionysian remarks on the notion of 'exemplar' or 'paradigm,' which is clearly borrowed from philosophy, and criticized from the point of view of Christian theology.

We give the name of 'exemplar' to those principles which pre-exist as a unity in God and which produce the essences of things. Theology calls them predefining, divine and good acts of will which determine and create things and in accordance with which the Transcendent One pre-defined and brought into being everything that is.

Now it may well be that Clement, the philosopher, uses the term 'exemplar' in relation to the more important things among beings but his discourse does not proceed according to the proper, perfect, and simple

62 On the theory of henads, see Mesyats (2012); Saffrey—Westerink (1978), IX–LXXVII.

naming. Even if we were to concede all this to him, we would still be obliged to remember the scriptural statement, “I did not show these things to you, so that you might follow after them.” That is, through the knowledge we have, which is geared to our faculties, we may be uplifted as far as possible to the Cause of everything.⁶³

The argument is based on a play on the words παράδειγμα (exemplar, paradigm) and παραδείκνυμι (to show), enabled by the quote from Hos. 13: 4 (LXX). One might call paradigms (παράδειγμα) the principles that pre-exist in God and according to which he creates things, but God did not show (παρέδειξα) them to us so that we might go after them. In other words, what matters is not the principles according to which creation was made, but the very origin of creation, which is the creator. As ps.-Dionysius puts it elsewhere, philosophers have often mistaken the creature for the creator, in the same way, though in a more sophisticated manner, as the crowds who worship idols do.⁶⁴ Philosophy, the knowledge of being, in order to grasp the true nature of its object, should go beyond being.

At that point, a Neoplatonist could still agree. Is not the purpose of henadology precisely to bring ontology to a higher level: to manifest its divine structure in the form of henadic classes? Whereas for a Neoplatonist such as Proclus, henadology represents a shift from philosophy to theology, ps.-Dionysius seems to be arguing that it is only a divinization of philosophy. Where does the difference lie? In that philosophers identify ontological categories as divine realities, when they are only ‘divine names.’

I do not think of the Good as one thing, Being as another, Life and Wisdom as yet other, and I do not claim that there are numerous causes and different Godheads, all differently ranked, superior and inferior, and all producing different effects. No. But I hold that there is one God for all these good processions and that he is the possessor of the divine names of which I speak and that the first name tells of the universal Providence of the one God, while the other names reveal general or specific ways in which he acts providentially.⁶⁵

63 Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, v 8–9, 824 C–825 A, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Luibheid, 102.

64 Pseudo-Dionysius, *Letter Seven*, 2, 1080 A–1080 B, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Luibheid, 267.

65 Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, v 2, 816 C–817 A, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Luibheid, 97.

From Plotinus to Proclus, the triad Being (ὄν)—Life (ζωή)—Intellect (νοῦς) constitutes, under the first principle which is the Good, the first order of principles that structure the intelligible realm.⁶⁶ Ps.-Dionysius reinterprets them as divine names—Good, Being, Life, Wisdom—which manifest the divine providence at different levels of universality or particularity. He is thus rephrasing henadology, in order to reduce the autonomy and self-consistency of these principles and to merge them in the unique process of divine providence. This means that the difference between them is not substantial, but modal. Terms such as ‘good,’ ‘being,’ or ‘life’ do not refer to different realities or deities, but to the very same thing at different degrees of universality. The error of Neoplatonism consists in seeing them as proper principles and in bestowing a real causal power upon them—as appears in prop. 101 of the *Elements of Theology*⁶⁷—when the origin of being, life, and intellect is neither the form of Being nor the form of Life, nor that of Intellect, but the one and only God.

Obviously, Dionysian criticism stands in monotheistic opposition to polytheism. There cannot be multiple principles and causes of beings. This may be why ps.-Dionysius does not take seriously the claims of henadology. Instead of considering the shift from forms to henads as a passage above ontology, he interprets it as a reduction of divinity to the categories of being. The Dionysian solution, instead of deifying the Platonic forms, turns them into divine names, i.e., ways of naming God from the point of view of divine providence. There may be many divine names because they only correspond to different levels of providence.

On a philosophical level, this still leaves us with a difficulty. How are we to account for the difference between being, life, and intellect? Even if they correspond to various degrees of the same divine providence, they must still have a minimum formal feature that makes them what they are. In order to solve this problem, Ps.-Dionysius, in a very dense passage, tries to explain what the term ‘itself’ (αὐτό) means.

The absolute being underlying individual manifestations of being as their cause is not a divine or an angelic being, for only transcendent being itself can be the source, the being, and the cause of the being of beings. [...] ‘Being itself,’ ‘life itself,’ ‘divinity itself,’ are names signifying source, divinity, and cause, and these are applied to the one transcendent cause and source beyond source of all things. But we use the same terms in

66 On the triad being—life—intellect, see Hadot (1960), (1978).

67 Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 101, trans. Dodds, 91 (and notes, 252–253).

a derivative fashion and we apply them to the provident acts of power which come forth from that God in whom nothing at all participates. I am talking here of being itself, of life itself, of divinity itself which shapes things in a way that each creature, according to capacity, has his share of these. From the fact of such sharing come the qualities and the names 'existing,' 'living,' 'possessed by divinity,' and suchlike.⁶⁸

The whole problem is to account for the essence of things, without positing different principles, which will eventually be mistaken for divine or angelic beings—as it is the case in Neoplatonism. Hence the question about the meaning of the prefix *αὐτο*: what are being itself (*αὐτοεἶναι*) and life itself (*αὐτοζωή*)? The Dionysian answer is double. From the point of view of principality (*ἀρχικῶς*) and causality (*αἰτιατικῶς*), *αὐτο* refers to the divine, which is the unique cause of everything. From the point of view of participation (*μεθεκτικῶς*), *αὐτο* refers to the process of providence and participation. This equivocation does not refer to two different realities, but to two complementary perspectives on the same reality. Causality and participation are two sides of the same process. Nevertheless, beings do not participate directly and equally in the first cause. Each receives a share of the divine, which remains as such absolutely transcendent. Things 'themselves,' such as being or life, are thus providential powers, i.e., various degrees of providence reflecting various participative capacities. Being itself and life itself are only the acts of participation by which things receive their share of the divine providence.⁶⁹

It seems here that the Dionysian argument reaches, beyond Neoplatonic henadology, the very Platonic theory of forms. It says indeed that from the fact of sharing, things are and are said to be (*καὶ ἐστὶ καὶ λέγεται*) 'existing,' 'living,' etc. This is precisely the predicative structure of Platonic ontology: something is and is said to be A by participating the form of A. Here, things are and are said to be what they are by participating in divine providence, rather than in specific forms or essences. What Platonists call forms, which Neoplatonists mistake for gods under the name of henad, are in fact divine names, i.e. degrees of providence and participation. Whether ps.-Dionysius maintains the existence of forms on an ontological level or not might come down to a question of interpretation, but it is quite clear that such forms do not play a strong part in the

68 Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, XI 6, 953 C–956 A, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Luibheid, 124–125.

69 On the Dionysian notion of analogy, see Lossky (1930). On the link with the medieval theory of analogy, see O'Rourke (1992).

Dionysian theological comprehension of the world. In a sense, the fact they might be enhanced as gods shows that they are overestimated already in the philosophical understanding of reality.

The Dionysian attitude towards henadology is thus double. From a theological point of view, henadology represents a deification of ontology and thus needs to be refuted as such. However, angelology is modelled on the triadic structure laid out in Proclian henadology. All the more so, ps.-Dionysius goes as far as talking about 'angelic henads'.⁷⁰ How are we then to understand the Dionysian strategy? Our hypothesis is that angelology borrows schemes from henadology because it is not ontology. As we tried to show, angelology has nothing to do with ontology. What does it have to do with henadology? On a superficial level, one might look at angelology as a Christian version of polytheism. The concept of the angel is what enables the theologians to reinterpret the many gods of pagan religions in a monotheistic perspective. In this case, Dionysian angelology could stand as a Christian version of henadology. We have argued, however, that henadology was the object of Dionysian criticism because it represented a theologization of ontology. How could it be linked to angelology? Precisely to the extent that it is separated from ontology. The theory of divine names is a refutation of henadology inasmuch as it relies on the Platonic theory of forms—the key argument being the confusion between creature and creator. Yet nothing prevents ps.-Dionysius from reinterpreting henadology in a non-ontological manner. There would be two sides of the same strategy: on the one hand, disconnecting henadology from ontology, and on the other hand, reinterpreting henadology as angelology.

One thing should be noted though: the Neoplatonists themselves claim that henadology differs from ontology.⁷¹ Ps.-Dionysius does not take this claim seriously in his theology, but he does in his angelology, as if he were saying, on one side, that henadology was nothing but a misinterpretation of Platonic ontology, but that, on the other side, as if he were providing an example of a non-ontological interpretation of henadology. Strangely enough, this ambivalence recalls exegetical debates that take place in modern scholarship on Neoplatonism. The Dionysian reading of Proclus, despite of all its polemical bias, casts light on doctrinal subtleties of the theory of henads. Historically, he might well be the first reader of Proclus to have understood the originality of henadology.

70 See Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine names*, VIII 5, 892 D, and comments by Sheldon-Williams (1972).

71 See Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 114–115.

Henads

Henadology may be one of the most difficult doctrines of late Neoplatonism. It takes part in a larger attempt to rationalize traditional pagan religion and might be characterized, in that scope, as a philosophical theory of polytheism. There are many links between henadology and religious beliefs or practices, but the core of the doctrine remains highly conceptual.⁷² The main difficulty comes from the fact that it is neither henology nor ontology. Henads seem to be situated midway between the One and being.⁷³

Whereas scholars have often argued that henads constituted a device to fill in the gap between the One and being—especially in Proclus—in order to explain how the multiplicity of forms comes out of the first principle by way of continuity, more recent studies have been focusing on the specificity of the henadic realm itself.⁷⁴ To put it roughly, it has been argued that henadology could not be reduced to a form of super-ontology. The shortcomings of traditional interpretations of henadology come from the fact that they remain based on ontological schemes, whereas henads should be considered from a theological perspective, in which they appear as individual gods and not as universal forms. This methodological indication is given by Proclus himself, in the *Commentary on the Parmenides*:

It is the same to say ‘henad’ as to say ‘first principle,’ if in fact the first principle is in all cases the most unificatory element. So anyone who is talking about the One in any respect would then be discoursing about first principles, and it would then make no difference whether one said that the thesis of the dialogue was about first principles or about the One. Those men of old, too, decided to term incorporeal essence as a whole ‘One,’ and the corporeal and in general the divisible, ‘Others’; so that in whatever sense you took the One, you would not deviate from the contemplation of incorporeal substances and the ruling henads; for all the henads are in each other and are united with each other, and their unity is far greater than the community and sameness among beings. In these too there is compounding of Forms, and likeness and friendship and participation in one another; but the unity of those former entities, inasmuch as it is a unity of henads, is far more unitary and ineffable and unsurpassable; for

72 On the link between henadology and religion, especially with theurgy, see Smith (1974), 100–141; Guérard (1982); Chlup (2012), 127–136 and 168–184.

73 On this difficulty, see Gersh (2014), 92–97.

74 See Butler (2005), (2008a).

they are all in all of them, which is not the case with the Forms. These are participated in by each other, but they are not all in all. And yet, in spite of this degree of unity in that realm, how marvellous and unmixed is their purity, and the individuality of each of them is a much more perfect thing than the otherness of the Forms, preserving as it does unmixed all the divine entities and their proper powers distinct, with the result that there is a distinction between the more general and more particular, between those associated with Continuance, with Progression and with Return, between those concerned with generation, with induction to the higher, and with demiurgic administration, and in general the particular characteristics are preserved of those gods who are respectively cohesive, complete, demiurgic, assimilative, or any of the other characteristics of theirs which our tradition celebrates.⁷⁵

It appears clearly that the henadic manifold and the realm of forms do not follow the same principles. Whereas forms are compounded through likeness and participation, henads are ‘all in all.’ Forms are distinguished from one another by their otherness (ἑτέροτης)—one might recall the ontology elaborated by Plato in the *Sophist*, whereby the great kinds differ through their participation in otherness. Ontology comes down to relations of participation between forms that are reciprocally determined. On the contrary, henads are only characterized by their individuality (ιδιότης). What makes a henad a henad is neither its participation in the One nor its difference from another henad, but its own unicity and individuality. Such an individual characteristic cannot be defined in terms of form and essence, but refers to the divine features celebrated in the religious tradition. In consequence, henads do not quite form a whole (πλήθος) unified under a single monad, but rather a set (ἄριθμός) in which all are in all.⁷⁶ This does not mean the merging of all henads in the One, but, on the contrary, the assumption of pure unicity of each and every henad. Each henad is the One. Otherwise, we would be interpreting henadology with the categories of ontology.⁷⁷

This raises a question: how are henads distinguished from one another? Proclus says that “there is a distinction between the more general and the more particular” and goes on to list all kinds of different gods—cohesive, complete, demiurgic, assimilative, etc. Since there is no direct knowledge of the divine,

75 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, VI, 1048 (trans. Morrow and Dillon, 407).

76 See Proclus, *Elements of theology*, prop. 113: “The whole number (ἄριθμός) of the gods has the character of unity (ἐνιαίος ἔστιν)” (trans. Dodds, 101).

77 This closely follows Butler's very close reading of Proclian henadology. See Butler (2005).

one can only infer the differences between the henads and the distinctions between their powers (*δυνάμεις*). Greater or lesser universality corresponds to more or less power.

For the god who causes more numerous effects is nearer to the universal cause; he that causes fewer, more remote (prop. 60). And the cause of more numerous effects is more universal; the cause of fewer, more specific (ibid.). Each is a henad, but the former has the greater potency (prop. 61). The more universal gods generate the more specific, not by division (since they are henads) nor by alteration (since they are unmoved), nor yet being multiplied by way of relation (since they transcend all relation), but generating from themselves through superfluity of potency (prop. 27) derivative emanations which are less than the prior gods.⁷⁸

Power (*δύναμις*) is measured by the degree of universality, i.e., the capacity to generate more or fewer effects. It is, then, from its power that the particular rank of a henad—its position with respect to the One and to other henads—may be inferred. A henad is thus manifest in the degree of its power and the number of its effects. This means that it is only from the point of view of secondary beings that we may distinguish the henads from one another.

Whereas, then, there exists there both indescribable unity and yet the distinctness of each characteristic (for all the henads are in all, and yet each is distinct), we gain knowledge of their unity and their distinctness from things secondary to them and dependent upon them. For in the case of the visible gods we discern a difference between the soul of the sun and that of the earth, seeing that their visible bodies have a large degree of variety in their essence and their faculties and their rank in the universe. So then, even as we take our start from sense-perception in acquiring understanding of the differentiation of incorporeal essences, so it is on the basis of the variation in incorporeal essences that we cognise the unmixed distinctness of the primal, supra-essential henads and the particular characteristics of each.⁷⁹

As the example of the sun and the earth show, the difference between their souls is drawn from the perception of their bodies. By analogy, Proclus argues

78 Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 126 (trans. Dodds, 113).

79 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, VI, 1048–1049 (trans. Morrow and Dillon, 407–408).

that in the same way as we draw conclusions about incorporeal essences from sense-perceptions, we can infer the characteristics of the supra-essential henads on the basis of the variation of incorporeal essences. The knowledge of higher realities relies on the possibility of ascending from the inferior to the superior level—from the sensible to the intelligible, from being to the henadic manifold.

There is yet a little bit more to the argument. Despite the analogy drawn by Proclus, the shift from forms to henads is not exactly the same as that between sensible and intelligible. Whereas the realm of bodies and the realm of souls might be considered parallel, such is not quite the case with forms and henads. Henadology is not a super-ontology, and henads are not the forms of forms. Therefore, when Proclus says that henads are only known by the distinctions between essences, he is not making a simple epistemological claim: he is not saying that henads are known in secondary beings, just as causes are known in their effects. On the contrary, he is dealing with the fact that the principles of being are radically different from beings. Ontology cannot mirror henadology. Knowing henads on the basis of secondary beings thus means something else than projecting ontic differences onto the henadic manifold.

The concept of power is key to understanding the ordering of henads. Henads are only distinguished by their power. Since the henads produce secondary beings by superfluity of potency (διὰ δυνάμεως περισυσίαν), what ontic distinctions reflect are not the henads themselves, but the potencies through which henadic characters (ιδιότητες) are manifested. In other words, what appears at the ontic level as a formal structure only exists potentially at the henadic level. Order between henads takes the form of a distribution of power. This is the reason why one should not consider the henadic manifold as just a more transcendent kind of intelligible world.⁸⁰ There is, however, a strong connection between both.

For if for every real-existent there is a henad and for every henad a real-existent, one existent only participating one henad only (prop. 135), it is evident that the order of real-existents reflects its prior and corresponds in its sequence with the order of henads, so that the more universal existents are united by their nature to the more universal henads and the more particular to the more particular.⁸¹

80 For such an interpretation, see Saffrey—Westerink (1978). See E.P. Butler's criticism of that interpretation in Butler (2003), 394–405.

81 Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 136 (trans. Dodds, 121).

When Proclus says, in the core of prop. 136, “as existent to existent, so is henad to divine henad,” he does not aim at a structural homology. This apparent similitude only vanishes if one takes seriously the idea that henads are distinguished by their power, i. e., by that through which they produce being. Instead of positing henads between the One and being, one should rather posit power between henads and beings.⁸² If the same structure were present at the henadic and at the ontic levels, henads would stand as an artificial device used by Proclus to fill in the gap between the One and being, but they could not help to explain how we shift from one to the other. As difficult as it seems, it is only by considering the effective production of being by the henads that one might bridge the gap between henology and ontology. This means considering henads as divine powers that order reality.

The procession of all things existent and all cosmic orders of existents extends as far as do the orders of gods.

For in producing themselves the gods produced the existents, and without the gods nothing could come into being and attain to measure and order; since it is by the gods' power that all things reach completeness, and it is from the gods that they receive order and measure.⁸³

It appears that the very act of standing into being (*ὑποσθῆναι*) consists in having measure and order (*μέτρου καὶ τάξεως τυχεῖν*). If the order of reality follows that of the gods, it is because the gods order reality through their power. Things are produced and ordered at the same time.⁸⁴ What we call the order of the gods (*τῶν θεῶν διατάξεις*) is thus the potential order of being—the order of reality as it is effectively produced in the divine exercise of power. In that sense, not only is *δύναμις* prior to *ousia*, but also *τάξις*. The whole order of reality might then be posited in the gods, not because henads and beings follow the same structure, but because that order is somehow anticipated in the henadic power.⁸⁵

For each henad has a multiplicity dependent upon it, in one case intelligible, in another intelligible-and-intellectual, another intellectual simply,

82 On the distinction between *ὑπαρξίς* and *δύναμις*, see Proclus, *Platonic Theology*, III 24, and Butler (2005), 90–92; (2008a), 98–100; (2008b).

83 Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 144 (trans. Dodds, 127).

84 On the distinction between being and form, linked to the henadic distinction between paternal (*τὸ πατρικόν*) and demiurgic (*τὸ δημιουργικόν*), see Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 157.

85 On that point, see MacIsaac (2007), 146–153; Chlup (2012), 121–124.

and within this one having an unparticipated multiplicity, another a participated one, and within this latter one having a supracosmic one and another an intracosmic. And thus far extends the procession of the henads.⁸⁶

The triadic system that structures reality comes first with the henads, as an order corresponding to their potential differences. Before beings themselves come to existence, their orders (τάξεις) exist in the henadic form, not as an ontic structure but as effective powers of ordering. Although the *Elements of Theology* exposes the system in its abstract form, and the *Platonic Theology* unfolds the whole order of the gods, this may best be seen in the commentary on the *Parmenides*. Proclus' hermeneutical key, which consists in reading the negations of the first hypothesis as productive of the affirmations of the second hypothesis, perfectly shows how the One, by means of henadic potencies, produces the multiplicity of being. If the first hypothesis is about the absolutely transcendent One, the second is about the henads.

The whole second hypothesis, therefore, he says, reveals to us a multiplicity of autonomous henads, on which are dependent the entities about which the second hypothesis teaches us, revealing to us in its terms all their specific characteristics in turn. If this is true, we must examine each of the conclusions to see to which of the divine orders it is appropriate, and thus make division of the second hypothesis "limb by limb" (*Phaedr.* 265e).⁸⁷

If negations apply to the One, affirmations do not simply correspond to being. The One which is linked to being is the henad: each henad is the imparticipable monad of a class of beings, and the whole series of predicates attributed to the One in the second hypothesis reveals the multiplicity of henads, i.e., the divine orders. Proclus' reading of the *Parmenides* does not induce the order of henads on the basis of the order of beings, but rather tries to deduce the order of reality from the One and from the henadic powers. His reading of the second hypothesis only makes sense if it is coupled to the first hypothesis: if affirmations are interpreted as products of the negations. Only then can one understand the production of reality as its very ordering.

86 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, VI, 1049 (trans. Morrow and Dillon, 408).

87 Ibid. VI, 1062–1063 (trans., 418).

So then we say that the negations for this reason are productive of those which are going to be examined in the Second; for as many as the primal entity generates in the First, so many are produced in the Second and proceed forth in their proper order, and in this way there becomes manifest the structured realm of the gods, taking its origin from the transcendent henad.⁸⁸

More than the second hypothesis, it is the shift from the first hypothesis to the second that shows how the production of reality begins with that of its order. Before it produces all kinds of beings, the One engenders the structured realm of the gods (τὸν διάκοσμον τῶν θεῶν). This is not simply to say that henads come first before being, but that henads stand for the very order following which being emerges. When it is positively asserted—in the second hypothesis—order is already linked to the different kinds of beings, but when it appears at the level of the One—in the first hypothesis—it can only be accounted for negatively. Only in the transition from the first to the second hypothesis, from negations to affirmations, does order appear in its purest form—that of power.

In that perspective, henadology might be read as a theory of order. It seems to us that this is precisely the way in which ps.-Dionysius read it.⁸⁹ Yet the only way for him to adapt it to the Christian doctrine was to turn it into angelology. From a theological point of view, a multiplicity of gods was not acceptable: hence the Dionysian criticism of henadology as a form of deified ontology. Nevertheless, the structure or order (τάξις) unfolded in Proclian henadology was still available. Once it had been cleared of pagan connotations, under the form of angelology, it offered a perfect model for hierarchy, i.e., for a theory of power as τάξις.

Neoplatonism, of course, is not the only source of Dionysian thinking, and one might want to find other influences as well. In the scope of angelology, however, it turns out to be decisive and casts light upon major doctrinal issues. Whereas in Philo, angelology fluctuates between ontology (angels as λόγοι), cosmology (angels as δαίμονες and ἥρωες) and political theology (angels as δυνάμεις), it seems quite clear that for ps.-Dionysius angelology has nothing to do with ontology or cosmology, but takes the form of a practical theory of hierarchy. We may assume that what made ps.-Dionysius choose between the possibilities expounded in Philo, and therefore solve the inner difficulties of Philonian angelology, was the major turn in Platonic metaphysics represented by

88 Ibid. VI, 1077 (trans., 429).

89 For a different view of ps.-Dionysius' reading of henadology, see Lankila (2014).

late Neoplatonism. The distinction between henadology and ontology enables one to make a clear division between the question of being (οὐσία) and that of order (τάξις). More precisely, the distinction enables one to conceive order in a non-ontological frame and therefore to distinguish angelology from its Platonic metaphysical and cosmological background. The Neoplatonic roots of hierarchy are to be found neither in Neoplatonic angelology,⁹⁰ nor in Neoplatonic ontology, but in henadology.

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Dionysius the Areopagite on Angels

Self-Constitution versus Constituting Gifts

Marilena Vlad

In this paper I discuss Dionysius' views on how the Godhead constitutes the first intelligible beings, i.e. the angels, what it means for angels to receive the constitutive gift of their own being, and whether or not they can renounce it. I start with a short exposition of Proclus' perspective, for whom intelligible beings are capable of self-constitution, which guarantees their self-sufficiency and allows them to determine their own manner of being. The goal of my analysis is to prove that, though they do not have the capacity of self-constitution, angels in Dionysius' perspective receive from God, together with the gift of their constitution, the ability to act freely. I also intend to show that these gifts are not contingent, but constitutive—hence, they cannot be deposed—; nonetheless, they do not limit or constrain the receiver to be or to act in a determined manner.

Proclus on Self-Constitution

How does the first principle constitute being, and what does it mean for beings to be constituted? In the history of Neoplatonic thought, this question is linked to the idea of self-constitution, which was used in order to clarify two things: on the one hand, that the first principle and cause of all things cannot be itself constituted by something prior to it, and, on the other hand, that the things produced by the first principle cannot be simple contingent effects, but must have a certain degree of self-sufficiency. Plotinus argues the first claim. We cannot indefinitely move from a constituting cause to another, prior cause, but rather, there must be a first causeless principle. This implies that the first principle must be self-constituted: “if his will comes from himself and is the same thing as his existence, then in this way he will have brought himself into existence (αὐτὸς ἂν οὕτως ὑποστήσας ἂν εἴη αὐτόν); so that he is not what he happened to be but what he himself willed.”¹

1 Plotinus, *Enneads* VI 8 [39] 13,55–59 (trans. Armstrong).

Proclus does not maintain Plotinus' view, but understands self-constitution differently, noticing that it implies a certain duality and inner process, which cannot be applied to the absolute One, but rather to the level of being. He identifies three types of causes: the One, which is above self-constitution and is the universal cause of all things; the henads, which determine things in their diversity and are more specific causes, but are also situated above self-constitution; self-constituted beings (αὐθυπόστατον), like Intellect and the soul.² Further, we can only speak about things that are caused by something external and, hence, distinct from themselves.³ The self-constituted beings are “produced (παράγόμενα), indeed, but generated self-productively (αὐτογόνως) from their own causes” (i.e. from the henads); moreover, the self-constituted beings are “also productive of other things.”⁴

Proclus uses self-constitution in order to make sense of the structure of the world, which starts from a single, unitary principle, but then develops towards plurality. Self-constitution answers at least three possible problems. First, it avoids the consequence that intelligible being be transformed into a mere contingent effect of the henads. If intelligible being is simply produced by a prior cause, it risks having no freedom of manifestation. Or, as self-constituted, the intelligible being determines its own manner of being. Second, it shows how the One, as a unique principle, can account for a multiplicity of determinations and distinctions inside being, without becoming affected by plurality. Thus, the One is the cause of the existence of all things, as well as of their unity, while their differences come from their own manner of acting and of determining themselves as self-constituted beings.⁵ Third, self-constitution distinguishes between things that are simply caused by another—and thus, simple effects of causes that surpass them altogether—and things that, though caused by the one and simple cause of all, are also a result of their own willful and self-aware causation. Otherwise, reality would simply be made up of things that are unaware of their own cause and also of the being that they received. Thus,

2 On self-constitution, see Whittaker (1974). See also Riggs (2015), on how soul unitarily constitutes itself.

3 What is not self-constituted is either subordinate and caused by the self-constituted, or superior to the self-constituted. See Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* 786.11–16.

4 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* 1151.8–18 (trans. Morrow and Dillon).

5 In this sense, MacIsaac (2007) notices: “Then it becomes clear that the determination of any given *taxis* is due to itself, not to its cause. Of course it is due to its cause that we can say a *taxis* is an image *of its cause*, but with the very strong sense that *what it is*—its manner of being an image—is due to itself. This is what Proclus means by the doctrine of self-sufficiency/self-constitution/self-motion” (p. 166).

self-constitution is the very condition of knowledge. Without self-constitution, nothing can know itself, or anything else. To know is to be able to revert to itself, which depends on the possibility of proceeding from itself and of being in itself. Without this inner process of both proceeding and reverting to itself, no knowledge and no consciousness would be possible. In this sense, in Proclus' perspective, self-constitution goes hand in hand with self-reversion and self-knowledge.⁶

Dionysius and the All-Constituting One-God

When we turn to Dionysius the Areopagite, we notice that there is no trace of self-constituted (*αὐθυπόστατον*) being. This might be surprising, given the fact that Proclus' influence upon Dionysius has been proven to be undeniable.⁷ It is true that Proclus' treatise on *The Existence of Evil* does not approach this topic, though this treatise is commonly thought to be the most influential upon Dionysius.⁸ Yet, this topic is important in Proclus' worldview, since it guarantees that the intelligible being—as well as the soul—be an intellective being, knowing itself and determining its own inner activity.⁹

Dionysius, however, does not avail of self-constitution. He does not speak about it at any level: either at the level of the One, like Plotinus, or after the One, as does Proclus. What is even more striking is that he explicitly suggests that, beside the absolute One, which is God, the only principle of every existing thing, there cannot be any other cause. The One-God is the absolute cause of all things and also the cause that effectively makes things exist as such, giving each one its particular manner of being, without passing through the mediation of the henads.¹⁰ No other level of reality can be the cause of any other being, nor

6 Cf. Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 17, 42 and 83. See also Steel (1998), who shows that “la conversion vers soi est en même temps une constitution de soi-même” (p. 163) and that “la véritable conversion vers soi n’est pas un simple mouvement d’introspection [...], mais un processus ontologique. L’auto-conversion définit l’essence même de l’âme, en tant qu’être automoteur (prop. 17)” (p. 167). See also Gerson (1997).

7 Cf. Koch (1895); Stiglmayr (1895); Saffrey (1990), (2000).

8 Cf. Steel (1997).

9 Maclsaac (2007) notices: “the determination which *Nous* gives rise to is self-constitution itself, i.e. receiving one’s good through self-reversion, and the determination which Soul gives rise to is a secondary sort of self-constitution, i.e. temporal self-reversion” (p. 159).

10 Sheldon-Williams (1972) shows the radical difference between Dionysius and Proclus regarding the henads: “The word ‘henad’ is hardly ever used at all, and only once with

of itself. In what follows, we will analyze what it means for the One to constitute things. We discuss how Dionysius solves this problem without recourse to self-constituted entities. Afterwards, we will discuss how this manner of constitution is enacted in the case of the angels, which, in Dionysius' perspective, are the first to receive existence from God. We will see that, though they do not constitute themselves, angels are not simple contingent effects of the One.

God is "the One, the Superunknowable, the Transcendent, Goodness-itself, that is, the Triadic Unity."¹¹ This One is the "Cause of all existence",¹² the "one single, universal cause"¹³ of all,¹⁴ which produces every being.¹⁵ As such, the One is described as *ὑποστάτης*, i.e. as that which gives reality to each and every thing: "He is 'all in all', as scripture affirms, and certainly he is to be praised as being for all things the creator (*πάντων ὑποστάτης*) and originator."¹⁶ And yet, this manner of constituting all things raises a problem, because the One seems to constitute all things and at the same time *be* all the things that he constitutes. However, this view risks suggesting that the One constitutes itself, because it constitutes what it *is*.

For Dionysius, the One-God is constitutive (*ὑποστάτης*) of every level of reality: from being, to life, intellection, and wisdom. Yet, he constitutes these layers of reality because he *is* every one of them, in a causal manner. Thus, the One is "the being" (*ὁ ὄν*), but it also constitutes the fact of being (*τοῦ εἶναι* [...])

reference to the angels. Elsewhere it always expresses the Divine Unity as distinguished, explicitly or implicitly, from the Trinity. Therefore, the word is never, with one exception, found in the plural. This contrasts startlingly with the usage not only of Proclus but also of Syrianus and Iamblichus. [...] Secondly, Proclus draws a distinction between the term *henad* and *monad*, reserving the latter for the unparticipated cause which is found at the beginning of every chain of causes, whereas for the ps.-Dionysius, as for Syrianus and Theon and also for Plato himself, [...] the terms are synonymous; for instance, he speaks of the Thearchy as *monas ... kai henas trisupostatos*." (p. 69).

11 Dionysius, *Divine Names* I 5, p. 116.8–9. Throughout this article we cite, with minor modifications, Colm Luibheid's translation (Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, Paulist Press, New York, 1987), unless otherwise indicated. We also use the Greek text: *Corpus Dionysiacum I*, ed. Beate Regina Suchla and *Corpus Dionysiacum II*, ed. G. Heil and A.M. Ritter, Berlin, New York, 1990–1991.

12 *DN.* I 1, p. 109.15: αἴτιον μὲν τοῦ εἶναι πᾶσιν.

13 See for instance *DN.* IX 4, p. 210.6: μίαν καὶ ἐνικλήν [...] αἰτίαν. See also *DN.* I 3, p. 111.12: "cause and principle of all" (*πάντων ἐστὶν αἰτία καὶ ἀρχή*).

14 In the *Elements of Theology* II, 1, Proclus also speaks about a unique cause from which all things proceed. Yet, for Proclus, different levels of reality depend on different *henads*.

15 *DN.* II 11, p. 136.2: παράγει τὰς ἄλλας οὐσίας.

16 *DN.* I 7, pp. 119.13–120.1.

ὑποστάτις) as well as every manner of being.¹⁷ The One is the “divine life” (ἡ θεία ζωή), but it also constitutes life-itself,¹⁸ as well as every form of life. As “wisdom-itself” and “divine wisdom”, the One constitutes the reality of all wisdom.¹⁹ This divine wisdom is the constitutive cause “of Wisdom-itself, of mind, of reason, and of all sense perception.”²⁰ Ultimately, the One is constitutive of every thing and of every aspect of being: of resemblance-itself,²¹ of equality-itself,²² of peace-itself.²³ God constitutes being-itself, life-itself, etc. and also those who receive these, participating in them.²⁴

Whereas in Proclus’ view, the actual causation of distinct types of reality would be the task of the henads, for Dionysius, different manners of being are constituted directly by the One, which is the cause of all.²⁵ Yet, how are we to understand being-itself, life-itself and all similar concepts? Dionysius sees them as the causes of existing things. Thus, for instance, being-itself is described as the cause of the being of all things.²⁶ The same thing can be inferred about the rest of them: life-itself, power-itself, etc. Dionysius says that these have “an absolute and primary existence derived ultimately from God.”²⁷ Yet, none of these should be understood as a “different divinity” (ἄλλην θεότητα), i.e. different from the One: “the absolute being underlying individual manifestations of being as their cause is not a divine or an angelic being [...] Nor have we to do with some other life-producing divinity distinct from that

17 *DN*. V 4, p. 182.18–20: “The God ‘who is’ transcends everything by virtue of his power. He is the substantive Cause and maker of being, subsistence, of existence, of substance, and of nature” (Ὁ ὢν ὅλου τοῦ εἶναι κατὰ δύναμιν ὑπερούσιός ἐστιν ὑποστάτις αἰτία καὶ δημιουργός ὄντος, ὑπάρξεως, ὑποστάσεως, οὐσίας, φύσεως).

18 *DN*. VI 1, p. 191.2–3: “so now I say that the divine Life beyond life is the giver and creator of life-itself (τῆς αὐτοζωῆς ἐστὶν [...] ὑποστατική).”

19 *DN*. VII 1, p. 193.5–7: “let us give praise to the good and eternal Life for being wise, for being the principle of wisdom, the subsistence of all wisdom” (ὡς σοφὴν καὶ ὡς αὐτοσοφίαν ὑμνῶμεν, μᾶλλον δὲ ὡς πάσης σοφίας ὑποστατικὴν). See also *DN*. VII 1, p. 194.20–195.2.

20 *DN*. VII 2, p. 196.1–2: σοφίας αὐτῆς καὶ πάσης καὶ νοῦ παντός καὶ λόγου καὶ αἰσθήσεως πάσης ἢ θεία σοφία καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ αἰτία καὶ ὑποστάτις.

21 *DN*. IX 1, p. 208.3–4: τῆς αὐτομοιότητος ὑποστάτης. See also *DN*. XI 6, p. 212.7.

22 *DN*. IX 10, p. 214.2: τῆς αὐτοϊσότητος ὑποστάτην.

23 *DN*. XI 2, p. 218.18–19: τῆς αὐτοειρήνης καὶ τῆς ὄλης καὶ τῆς καθ’ ἕκαστόν ἐστιν ὑποστάτις.

24 *DN*. XI 6, p. 223.1–3.

25 See G. Casas’s contribution in the present volume, who shows that Dionysius does not accept the existence of henads, but “reinterprets them as divine names” (p. 255).

26 *DN*. XI 6, p. 222.6–7: τὸ αὐτοεἶναι τοῦ εἶναι τὰ ὄντα πάντα αἰτίαν.

27 *DN*. XI 6, p. 222.3–4: ὅσα ἀπολύτως καὶ ἀρχηγικῶς εἶναι καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ πρῶτως ὑφεστηκένα.

supra-divine life which is the originating Cause [...] of life-itself.”²⁸ Moreover, Dionysius explicitly detaches himself from those who affirm the existence of “those originating and creative beings and substances which men describe as certain gods or creators of the world.”²⁹ This indication seems to match the manner in which Proclus describes the henads, as divinities, or gods.³⁰ Yet, Dionysius denies that such distinct divinities could exist. For him, being-itself, life-itself and all the like are nothing but God himself, or, to put it differently, only God himself is each of these: being-itself, life-itself, etc.

Yet, as Dionysius reckons, he deliberately engages in a certain ambiguity, referring to God sometimes as life-itself (or being-itself, wisdom-itself, etc.), while at other times, he refers to God as being constitutive of these. In this sense, he invokes Timothy’s objection, formulated in a letter: “why I sometimes call God ‘life-itself’ (αὐτοζωή) and sometimes ‘constitutive of life-itself’ (τῆς αὐτοζωῆς ὑποστάτην).”³¹ Though there seems to be circularity in Dionysius’ perspective, he maintains that there is no contradiction between these two manners of referring to God:³² “The former names are derived from beings, especially the primary beings, and they are given to God because he is the cause of all beings. The latter names are put up because he is transcendently superior to everything, including the primary beings.”³³

This, however, does not seem to solve the problem, or to distinguish clearly “life-itself” from its producer. On the contrary, it makes it even more complicated: God transcends life-itself, yet he also constitutes life-itself, he *is* life-itself, and produces everything that participates in life. Still, this explanation suggests a process through which the transcendent God comes to be the cause of everything. Let us consider the rest of the passage, wherein Dionysius tries to explain what life-itself, being-itself, and all the rest are:

28 DN. XI 6, p. 222.6–10.

29 DN. XI 6, p. 222.10–12: οὔτε, συνελόντα εἰπεῖν, ἀρχικὰς τῶν ὄντων καὶ δημιουργικὰς οὐσίας καὶ ὑποστάσεις, ἅς τινες καὶ θεοὺς τῶν ὄντων καὶ δημιουργοὺς αὐτοσχεδιάσαντες ἀπεστομάτισαν.

30 Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 114.1–2.

31 DN. XI 6, p. 221.15–16 (trans. Luibheid modified).

32 DN. XI 6, p. 221.18–20.

33 DN. XI 6, pp. 221.20–222.2. Referring to this passage, Gersh (2014) notices that: “The same thesis also permits the identification of the three terms “unparticipated” (*amethekton*), “participated” (*metechomenon*, *metochē*), and “participating” (*metechon*)—a structure which introduces a doubling into the Platonic Forms—with the transcendent, mediating transcendent and non-transcendent, and non-transcendent term respectively” (p. 87).

In a principal, divine and causal manner, being-itself (αὐτοεἶναι), life-itself (αὐτοζωή), and divinity-itself (αὐτοθεότητα) is the unique [...] principle and cause of all; yet, in a participative manner, these are the providential powers given from the unparticipated God, namely: substantiation-itself (αὐτοουσίωσις), enlivening-itself (αὐτοζώωσις), and deification-itself (αὐτοθέωσις); participating in these—each in its proper manner—beings are and are said to be existing and living and deified (ἔνθεα) and such-like. This is why the good is first called constitutive of these [...], then of those who participate in them [...] Some of our sacred teachers say that the super-good and super-divine is constitutive of goodness-itself and of divinity [itself], saying that goodness-itself and divinity are gifts—granting good and divinity—coming forth from God.³⁴

From this passage, we get two apparently contradictory claims about the One-God, which constitutes being-itself, life-itself, goodness-itself, and divinity-itself. On the one hand, goodness-itself, being-itself, and divinity-itself are described as God's "gifts". On the other hand, however, they are described as being the very principle and cause of all things: the One-God. Thus, God seems to be identical with his own "gifts", though, at the same time, he constitutes these "gifts".

Does this imply that God constitutes himself in a certain manner? If so, could we invoke Plotinian self-constitution, or rather Proclus' interpretation of it? It definitely does not have anything to do with Proclus' interpretation of self-constitution, since Dionysius does not refer to the intellect, but to the absolute One itself. On a closer look, it is also obvious that we are not dealing with Plotinus' idea of self-constitution, since Dionysius does not suggest that God constitutes himself directly. Rather, in a two-step dialectic, God constitutes his gifts, but he also *is* what he constitutes.

God constitutes goodness-itself, being-itself, life-itself, etc. These are his gifts. He makes them exist because he transcends them, but he also *is* all these because he is the cause of everything. This means that, in a certain way, God, who transcends everything, also constitutes himself as gift. He gives as a gift what he is as transcendent principle, as God and as cause (ἀρχικῶς μὲν καὶ θεϊκῶς καὶ αἰτιατικῶς).

How is this possible and how can this apparent contradiction be surmounted? The answer lies in the status of the "gift". Actually, what God gives is not a determined gift, limited in itself and limiting and determining the receiver. God

34 DN. XI 6, pp. 222.13–223.7 (my trans.).

does not produce something *else*, something different from himself. What is produced as a result of this constitution is rather a *power* to give. God gives the *giving*; his gifts consist in the power of imparting the gift of any possible type of reality. Thus, for instance, goodness-itself is described as a “good-granting gift” (ἀγαθοποιὸν ... δωρεάν). This means that the gift consists not in a limited and determined good, but in the power of the goodness to grant what it is, and to be received as such.

Moreover, all these gifts (which are identical with God) are also described as God’s “providential powers” and they are called: substantiation-itself (ἀυτοουσίωσιν), enlivening-itself (ἀυτοζώωσιν), and deification-itself (ἀυτοθέωσιν). Each of these gifts links three aspects: the giver (the One-God), the gift (being-itself, life-itself, etc.), and the receiving (substantiation-itself, enlivening-itself, etc.). Being-itself and substantiation-itself are two necessary sides of one same gift: the gift of being also implies the power of “substantiation” or of rendering being. God constitutes being-itself and substantiation-itself, then those that participate in these. Thus, all things participate in the providential powers given by God. While God remains unparticipated—because he is these “... -itself” in a causal and divine manner—, things participate not in the giver, but in the gifts, which consist in the power of rendering a certain manner of existing.

For Dionysius, constitution means giving, in the sense that the Godhead, despite its transcendence, is not static and objective, but rather dynamic, and to give is its proper manner of manifestation. The Godhead manifests through this dynamic, in which it gives itself as a super-good, constituting itself as gift. More precisely, what God constitutes it not a certain thing, exterior to himself, but rather the very gift, i.e. himself as a gift, himself as giving himself. He constitutes himself, not because he gives existence to himself, but in the sense that he makes of himself a gift, thus imparting to all things what he is in a causal manner. He constitutes himself not in the sense that he was not already existent prior to this, but in the sense that the transcendent makes of himself a gift, thus causing everything to be. Producing all things does not imply going out of himself and involving himself with plurality (a problem which made Proclus interpose the henads between the One and beings). Each and every thing can exist because God gives them existence, and it gives existence through being himself the gift of all things, or through constituting himself as gift to every thing.

There is a nuanced distinction between giver and giving in Dionysius’ perspective. God is not simply the giver, i.e. the source, the cause, which gives what it does not have, as in Plotinus’ perspective.³⁵ Rather, God is both the giver and

35 Plotinus, *Enneads* v 3 [49] 15.36–41. See also v 3 [49] 14.18–19; v 5 [32] 6.1–11: the One is the principle of being, because it is not itself being, but above it.

the gift. God constitutes the gift in himself, and in this way, he constitutes the different layers of reality by constituting himself as the gift of each of these layers. He constitutes himself not objectively (which would imply a distinction between the agent and the effect of the constitution), but modally: God as giver is also God as gift. It is in this sense that Dionysius maintains that there is no contradiction in saying that God is both the cause of life-itself and also the life-itself.

This is not to say that God causes himself as if he would be dual (as in Proclus' warning about self-constitution), but that God constitutes the gift which he himself is and which is primarily and causally in himself. There is no role distribution, like in Proclus' view: on the one hand, the transcendent One, and then the henads, which produce but are not produced, followed by intellect and soul, which are constituted and self-constituted. Rather, for Dionysius, all these distinct "roles" implicated in Proclus' perspective are linked together in the sole act of giving, in which God constitutes all the gifts (being-itself, life-itself, etc.) with which he identifies himself, as well as the things which are constituted through receiving these gifts.³⁶

This active and productive sense of the gift is also underlined by the match between the gift and the receiver: the gift (for instance the divinization) is described as being given to those who are becoming godlike; this shows how the gift links the giver with all existing things, for which *to be* is to receive the gift. The gift is not independent of its giver, or of its receiver. Thus, constituting the gifts that he himself is in a causal manner, God also constitutes everything, because the beings correspond to these gifts and consist in receiving these gifts. Thus, God reaches all that exists. He is: "[...] enlightenment of the illuminated. Source of perfection for those being made perfect, source of divinity for those being deified [...] It is the Life of the living, the being of the beings, it is the Source and the Cause of all life and of all being, for out of its goodness it commands all things to be and it keeps them going."³⁷ Just as there is nothing external to God, which would be produced as an independent gift, likewise, there is no independent receiver outside the gift, which would lay hold of the gift, but the gift is the very substance and nature of the receiver, because the gift makes the receiver be what it is. The receiver is in the gift, as a disposition to receive it.

36 DN. XI 6, p. 223.1–3: Διὸ καὶ πρῶτον αὐτῶν ὁ ἀγαθὸς ὑποστάτης λέγεται εἶναι, εἶτα τῶν ὄλων αὐτῶν, εἶτα τῶν μερικῶν αὐτῶν, εἶτα τῶν ὄλων αὐτῶν μετεχόντων, εἶτα τῶν μερικῶς αὐτῶν μετεχόντων.

37 DN. I 3, p. 111.17–112.6.

Constitution of the Angels

But how does this “constitution” affect the things after the One? What does it mean for them to be constituted only by the One, rather than self-constituted? For Proclus, the first kind of being constituted after the One was the divine intellect, which also constituted itself, i.e. its own manner of being. For Dionysius, there is no divine intellect distinct from the One. After the One-God, the first distinct manner of being is that of the angels.³⁸ Angels are described as super-heavenly beings,³⁹ as super-heavenly intellects,⁴⁰ supreme intellects,⁴¹ and “formless intellects,”⁴² as super-heavenly lives,⁴³ and as supra-celestial powers.⁴⁴ The One, in its turn, is situated beyond the super-heavenly lights of the intellects.⁴⁵ It is from the One that angels receive being,⁴⁶ intelligible light⁴⁷ and life,⁴⁸ while the One is called “being”, “life”, “intellect”, and “light” as cause and giver of all of these.

How exactly are angels created, and how do they receive their being? The One-God knows the angels before their existence and thus brings them into being,⁴⁹ giving them not only their simple fact of being, but also all their specific intellectual movements.⁵⁰ Angels are produced through an extension of the goodness of the One-God. More precisely, they are produced through the rays of goodness of the Good, extending into all existing things, though firmly remaining in itself.⁵¹ Through these rays exist “all intelligible and intelligent

38 We refer to angels in the broad sense, which includes all the orders of the intelligible beings (see Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy* V, p. 25.20–23), and not just to the last and lowest order of them.

39 Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy* VI 1, p. 26.1: τῶν ὑπερουρανίων οὐσιῶν.

40 *DN.* I 4, p. 115.3–4: τῶν ὑπερουρανίων νοῶν. See also *CH.* I 3, p. 9.12; *CH.* VI 1, p. 26.5.

41 *CH.* VII 2, p. 28.19: τῶν ὑπερτάτων νοῶν. See also *CH.* XIII 4, p. 47.19.

42 *CH.* II 1, p. 10.10: τῶν ἀσχηματίστων νοῶν.

43 *DN.* VI 2, p. 191.11: ὑπερουρανίαις ζωαίς.

44 *DN.* II 8, p. 132.7: ὑπερουρανίαις δυνάμεσιν.

45 *DN.* II 4, p. 128.3–7.

46 *DN.* V 8, p. 186.4–6.

47 *DN.* IV 5, p. 149.11–12.

48 *DN.* VI 1, p. 190.5–6. See also *DN.* VI 2, p. 191.11–12: “Over the living heavenly lives it bestows their immaterial, divine, and unchangeable immortality.”

49 *DN.* VII 2, p. 196.14–15: πρὶν ἀγγέλους γενέσθαι εἰδῶς καὶ παράγων ἀγγέλους.

50 *DN.* VIII 4, p. 201.22–202.2: “Certainly it is from this that there emerge the godlike powers of the ranks of angels. It is from here that they derive the immutability of what they are and their perpetual movements of intellect (τὰς νοεράς [...] ἀεικινήσιος) and immortality.”

51 *CH.* I 2, p. 8.7–8: μένει τε ἔνδον ἑαυτῆς ἀραρότως ἐν ἀκινήτῳ ταυτότητι μονίμως πεπηγυῖα.

beings” (ὕπεστησαν αἱ νοηταὶ καὶ νοεραὶ πᾶσαι), they have “undiminished lives” and think “in a super-mundane way” (ὡς νόες ὑπερκοσμίως νοοῦσι).⁵² Thus, each of the three aspects characterizing angels as intelligible being (i.e. being, life, and thinking) is dependent on the rays of goodness, is received from them, and works and acts through them. In everything they do, angels do not act on their own, but as manifestations of the Good and of its rays of goodness. Everything they are and every manner in which they manifest is directly received from God’s goodness. They come from it, remain in it, and tend to revert to it. They receive their remaining (τὴν μονήν), as well as their being (τὸ εἶναι) from God’s goodness (ἐκ τῆς ἀγαθότητος), for which they also yearn (αὐτῆς ἐφιέμεναι).⁵³

Angels have the form of the Good, they are imprinted with the model of the good, and they consist in manifesting the good: “from it [i.e. from the goodness], they have the being and the well-being and they are imprinted with its model, as far as possible, and have the form of the good (ἀγαθοειδεῖς εἰσι) and they communicate with those below them.”⁵⁴ For them, it is the same thing to be, to be good, to receive the form of the good, and to manifest the good. The gift they receive—i.e. the form of the good—does not consist in anything else than in giving the good, communicating it, manifesting it. Thus, angels receive the gift of the Good, i.e. the form of the good, which requires them to manifest the Good and to reveal the hidden goodness of the Good: “From this Source it was given [as a gift: ἐδωρήθη] to them to exemplify the Good, to manifest that hidden goodness in themselves, to be, so to speak, the angelic messengers of the divine source, to reflect the light glowing in the inner sanctuary.”⁵⁵

As such, angels are what they manifest; they are, in the form of the gift, what God is as cause and as giver:

If the angel, which has the form of the Good (ἀγαθοειδής), announces the divine goodness and is—by participation and in a second degree—what the announced one is causally and originally, then the angel is an image of God and a manifestation of the invisible light, an untouched, transparent, unbroken, unblemished, and blameless mirror, entirely receiving, so to speak, the beauty of the divine form of the archetypal good

52 *DN. IV 1*, p. 144.6–12: “These rays are responsible for all intelligible and intelligent beings, for every power and every activity. Such beings owe their presence and their uneclipsed and undiminished lives to these rays, owe them their purification from corruption [...]. They owe them too their immunity [...] to all that goes with change.”

53 *DN. IV 1*, p. 144.12–14.

54 *DN. IV 1*, p. 144.14–16 (my trans.).

55 *DN. IV 2*, p. 145.6–9.

and which, as far as it can, purely enlightens in itself the goodness of the silence in the sanctuary.⁵⁶

Angels consist in this manifestation and transmission of the divine goodness that they receive from God.

Do angels also present a character of self-constitution, self-reversion or self-knowledge, as the highest beings in Proclus' perspective? This does not seem to be the case. In fact, they are dependent upon their principle in as much as their being is concerned and also with regard to their specific activity, knowledge, and movement.⁵⁷ Thus, for Proclus, to be self-constituted means to "derive its existence from itself (τὴν οὐσίαν ἄν παρ' ἑαυτοῦ ἔχει)" and hence, to be "the source of its own well-being, [...] the source of its own being and responsible for its own existence as a substance (τῆς ἑαυτοῦ κύριον ὑποστάσεως)."⁵⁸ On the contrary, Dionysius insists on showing that the being of the angels comes from the One-God, as cause of all things.⁵⁹ Not only the first and higher angelic order, but eventually all things have their "being and well-being" (τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ εὖ εἶναι) "from it and in it" (πρὸς αὐτῆς καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ),⁶⁰ i.e. from the One-God and in him, while for Proclus, intelligible being has its being and its well-being from itself and also exists in itself.⁶¹

With regard to their knowledge capacity,⁶² angels are still dependent on their principle.⁶³ For Proclus, self-constitution is also essentially an act of

56 *DN. IV 22*, p. 169.20–170.5 (my trans.).

57 Thus, for instance, the "divine intellects" (οἱ θεῖοι νόες) providentially move towards subordinate things in a straight line. And yet, this movement is never simply a straight one, but always combines with the circular movement, which angels are constantly engaged in, since their principal act is that of uniting themselves with the illuminations of the Good (*DN. IV 8*). In this sense, the name of the seraphim indicates this everlasting movement, spinning around the divinity. *CH. VII 1*, p. 27.14–16.

58 Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 43, 3–7 (trans. Dodds). See Steel (1998): "L'auto-constituant signifie la capacité qu'a l'être de procéder de lui-même" (p. 172).

59 *DN. V 8*, p. 186.1–2: "from this same universal Cause come those intelligent and intelligible beings, the godlike angels."

60 *DN. V 8*, p. 186.9–10.

61 Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 41, 2: πᾶν δὲ τὸ ἐν ἑαυτῷ ὄν αὐτοῦπρόστατόν ἐστι.

62 See Roques (1954), ch. v, III: "La science dans la hiérarchie celeste", 154–166.

63 The fact that angels are produced by their principle is preceded by an act of knowledge. Yet, the knowledge preceding angels' substantiation is not their own self-knowledge, but rather the pre-knowledge which the One-God has of them and of all other beings: "Before there are angels he has knowledge of angels and he brings them into being" (*DN. VII 2*, p. 196.14–16).

self-knowledge.⁶⁴ For Dionysius, knowledge is constitutive for angels: they consist precisely in the intelligible light and in the wisdom that they receive from the One-God. Nevertheless, this is not self-knowledge, but a capacity to reflect the One-God. Thus, for instance, the name of the cherubim is explained as being a special indication of their capacity of knowing. Yet, this knowing capacity is not one that revolves in itself, as an ability of a knower to turn to itself and to know itself, in an identity of the known with the knower.⁶⁵ On the contrary, it is “the power to know and to see God, to receive the greatest gifts of his light, to contemplate the divine splendor in primordial power, to be filled with the gifts that bring wisdom and to share these generously with subordinates.”⁶⁶

In a paradoxical manner, angels know what they are, but this knowledge does not turn them towards themselves. Thus, the cherub’s nature consists (as the name indicates) in knowing God, in receiving his light and wisdom. Accordingly, the cherub knows what it is itself: i.e. this light that comes as a gift of God and that constitutes it. Yet, this is never simply the light of the cherub, so that it could know it as such, and know itself accordingly. Rather, this light (which constitutes the cherub and also explains its name) remains a gift, just as the cherub itself is never an isolated being, but a gift of God. As such, the cherub’s knowledge never turns to itself, but remains a constant knowledge of the giver and of a given light, as well as of a received light. In knowing this light, which constitutes it, the cherub knows God.

The angelic knowledge is not an intellectual knowledge of intelligible things, but rather a direct receiving of the light shed by the One-God. Thus, the angelic hierarchies “are ‘contemplative’ (θεωρητικῶς) too, not because they contemplate symbols of the senses or the mind, or because they are uplifted to God by way of a composite contemplation of sacred writings, but rather, because they are full of a superior light beyond any knowledge and because they are filled with a transcendent and triply luminous contemplation of the one who is the cause and the source of all beauty.”⁶⁷ Moreover, it is the One-God himself that renders angels capable of knowledge and initiates them in the highest divine knowledge: “As those who are the first around God and who are hierarchically

64 For Proclus (*Elements of Theology* 42 and 83), self-knowledge implies self-constitution.

65 This is how Proclus explains intellective knowledge: see for instance Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 83.4–7: “knower and known are here one, and its cognition has itself as object [...] and it is self-reversible since in it the subject knows itself” (trans. Dodds).

66 CH. VII 1, p. 28.2–6.

67 CH. VII 2, p. 29.5–8.

directed in a supreme way, they are initiated into the understandable explanations of the divine works by the very source of perfection.”⁶⁸

Furthermore, intelligible beings are not characterized by self-reversion in the sense in which Proclus understands this.⁶⁹ For Dionysius, intelligible, angelic beings are characterized by “the power to be raised upward in an ever-returning movement, and the capacity unflinchingly to turn (εἰλεῖσθαι) about oneself while protecting one’s own special powers (τῶν οἰκειῶν οὔσας φρουρητικὰς δυνάμεων).”⁷⁰ While they are constantly engaged in the return to God, their activity which is directed to themselves is not self-determining and self-constituting, but rather an activity in which they concentrate on themselves in order to protect this specific power of being “raised upward”. Yet, angels are not giving themselves these powers, which they protect while turning to themselves, but they receive them from God,⁷¹ who also “renews all their intellectual powers.”⁷²

Even loving oneself is not a genuine movement of self-reversion, but it is still a manner of loving and desiring the Good: “because of it and for its sake [i.e. for the sake of the Good], [...] each of them loves oneself in a cohesive manner.”⁷³ This “cohesion” (συνοχή) itself is presented as a gift coming from God’s goodness,⁷⁴ whereas for Proclus, the intelligible being was capable of giving itself its own cohesion.⁷⁵

Does this mean that angels—which are Godlike (θεοειδής), directly created by the One-God and which remain so close and similar to their cause—are completely dependent on their cause? If so, do they lack any inner capacity to determine themselves, and thereby risk becoming mere contingent entities derived from their cause? And if not, how does Dionysius solve the problem raised by Proclus in the 40th proposition of the *Elements of Theology*, i.e. the problem regarding self-sufficiency? How can angels be both dependent on their cause and yet, at the same time, be fully capable of acting according to their own wills, though they are not self-constituted and self-reverting? The answer

68 CH. VII 2, p. 29.19–24.

69 See Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 15–17. Cf. Steel (1998), especially 167–169.

70 CH. XV 1, p. 51.16–18 (trans. Luibheid modified).

71 See for instance DN. VIII 4, p. 201.22: “it is from this [i.e. from the Power beyond being] that there emerge the godlike powers of the ranks of angels”.

72 DN. IV 6, p. 150.4: τὰς νοερὰς αὐτῶν ὅλας ἀνανεάζουσα δυνάμεις (trans. Luibheid modified).

73 DN. IV 10, p. 155.9–11: δι’ αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα [...] ἐρώσι [...] καὶ αὐτὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστα συνεκτικῶς (my trans.).

74 DN. IV 1, p. 144.13.

75 Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 44, 11: ἑαυτοῦ εἶναι καὶ ὑφ’ ἑαυτοῦ συνέχεσθαι καὶ τελειοῦσθαι.

lies in the nature of the gifts received from the Good, as well as in the manner in which angels use these gifts.

Angels are the first intellects that receive the gifts of the Good: the form of the Good, being, life, thinking, etc. Yet, these gifts are not a manner of determining the angels, imposing on them a certain manner of being. On the contrary, they are actually able to give angels the freedom to search for their own good.

What intellects (and angelic intellects, too) receive from the Good as gift is not something already determined and limited, which would also limit their being, but it is rather the power to search for the good, to desire it and thus, to receive the good, according to the height of their desire. The gift is never just a simple effect of the giver's will to give, but it is also an effect of the receiver's will to receive. Thus, angels receive from God the form of the Good, but at the same time they are described as wanting to have the form of the Good and to "model their intellects on him"⁷⁶ while "forever marching towards the heights."⁷⁷ The form of the Good received as gift also engages the receiver in a constant search for the Good.⁷⁸ The Good raises the "sacred intellects," which, in their turn, "raise firmly [...] upward in the direction of the ray which enlightens them and, with a love matching the illuminations granted them, they take flight."⁷⁹

Not just the good itself, but every other particular gift is received in this circular and reactive manner, producing in the receiver the desire for that particular gift. Thus, for instance, "the Good is described as the light of the mind because it illuminates the mind of every supra-celestial being with the light of the mind [...] At first it deals out the light in small amounts and then, as the wish and the longing for light begin to grow (*μᾶλλον ἐφιειμένων*), it gives more and more of itself."⁸⁰ Intellects receive and reflect the divine light (manifesting it and being its messengers) only in as much as they desire the light. They receive the light in the form of a capacity to want the light. Thus, the gift consists firstly in the capacity to desire the gift.

Just as God, which pre-exists, wants to give himself as gift, and thus, what he gives is not a determined and limited gift, but rather, first and foremost, is this disposition of giving, so too, the intellects, which receive the gift, receive first

76 *CH. IV 2*, p. 21.3–5.

77 *CH. IV 2*, p. 21.7–9.

78 Perl (2010) notices that, for Dionysius "reversion, no less than procession, is the very being of all things, and each thing's mode of reversion is its proper mode of being. All things are, then, only in and by desiring God, the Good, in the ways proper to them" (p. 775). See also Perl (2008), 41.

79 *DN. I 2*, pp. 110.18–111.2 (trans. Luibheid modified).

80 *DN. IV 5*, p. 149.10–18.

of all a disposition of receiving. To be, for them, consists in a capacity (given by the Good) to want the Good, which, in its turn, consists in this giving, and not in something limited and determined.

The same thing can be said about knowledge, which is received by angels not as already complete and thus inevitably limited, but rather as an ability to pursue knowledge. Angels do not possess divine knowledge once and for all. Rather, they desire and rise towards the divine illuminations in a cautious manner (εὐλαβῶς ἐφίενται): “The very first of the heavenly beings, those who are so very superior to the others, are nevertheless quite like those of more intermediate status when it comes to desiring enlightenment concerning the Godhead. [...] They begin by exchanging queries among themselves, thus showing their eagerness to learn and their desire to know how God operates.”⁸¹ It is not a knowledge already determined and possessed as complete, but rather an ability to receive knowledge, which angels are called to exercise and to fulfill without ever leaving this pious caution (εὐλάβεια). This shows that angels know not through their own power, but through the initiation transmitted by God. All other gifts received from God present this circular aspect and this involvement of the receiver, who needs to want the gift in order to be able to receive it.

Moreover, there is yet another aspect proving that the gift does not limit the receivers (i.e. the angels), but rather frees them to find and enact their own wills and desires. Thus, the gift is not just a relation between God as giver and the angels as receivers, but it always implies further transmission. The angel is not simply the keeper of the gift, but communicates it, thereby becoming a giver and an agent of the giving.⁸²

Angels “have the form of the good (ἀγαθοειδεῖς εἰσι) and they communicate with those below them, as requires the divine law of the gifts from the Good (ἐκ τἀγαθοῦ [...] δώρων) which pass through them.”⁸³ In other words, to receive the gift of the good and to have the form of the good means to be like the Good, which consists in bestowing this gift of goodness. Just like the Good, the angels have the power to act as bestowers of good. Their manner of being consists precisely in this initiative of transmitting the good. This “divine law of the gifts from the Good” does not restrict the receiver and does not limit it to a certain content of good received. On the contrary, this law prescribes that the receiver

81 CH. VII 3, p. 30.11–17.

82 This transmission is not a unidirectional process, but it implies a form of reciprocity and cooperation between the angelic ranks. As G. Casas notices, in the present volume (p. 251), “hierarchical operations carried through by the lower ranks can be attributed to superior ranks”.

83 DN. IV 1, p. 144.14–17 (my trans.).

be itself a giver and thus, that the giver also act freely, both searching for the good and bestowing it.

Nonetheless, angels are not compelled to bestow the good, and thus, their manner of being is not restricted to accomplishing this action. On the contrary, they are constantly depicted as wanting and desiring the good, as well as desiring to bestow the good. If they act in a providential manner towards inferior beings, bestowing the good unto them, it is because they essentially desire the Good: “the superior providentially loves the subordinate [...] and all are stirred to do and to will whatever it is they do and will because of the yearning for the Beautiful and the Good.”⁸⁴

The gift specific to angels is not limited, consisting in a certain manner of being. Rather, it is an unlimited gift, which consists in desiring the Good (τὴν ἀνελάττωτον ἔφεσιν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ) and also in desiring to be so (i.e. to be a being desiring the Good) (ἐφείσης αὐτοῖς τὸ δύνασθαι καὶ εἶναι ταῦτα καὶ ἐφείσθαι ἀεὶ εἶναι).⁸⁵ In a circular manner, the gift from the Good consists in “the identity and the height of the desire for the Good” (αἱ περὶ τὴν ἔφεσιν τὰγαθοῦ ταυτότητες καὶ ἀκρότητες).⁸⁶ This very identity of their desire for the Good also comes from God’s goodness. The Good gives angels the power to desire the good and to be able to desire it eternally. The angels desire to desire ceaselessly their own existence, which, in its turn, consists in desiring the Good. They do not desire a particular gift from the Good, but they desire the very desire for the Good. The gift thus opens in its receiver an unlimited desire for it, or, more precisely, the gift consists in this unlimited desire itself.

Being God’s image, angels have the initiative of transmitting the good, and they manifest as “providential” towards the inferior.⁸⁷ They do this as God’s co-workers (Θεοῦ συνεργόν),⁸⁸ and they do this precisely through the rays of the Good, which give them the power to do so.⁸⁹ Thus, every aspect of the

84 *DN.* IV 10, p. 155.10–13 (trans. Luibheid modified).

85 *DN.* VIII 4, p. 202.2–5: “Their stability and their ceaseless desire for the Good come from that infinitely good Power which itself bestows on them their own power and existence, inspiring in them the ceaseless desire for existence, giving them the very power to long for unending power” (τὴν ἀνελάττωτον ἔφεσιν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ πρὸς τῆς ἀπειραγάθου δυνάμεως εὐλήφασιν αὐτῆς ἐφείσης αὐτοῖς τὸ δύνασθαι καὶ εἶναι ταῦτα καὶ ἐφείσθαι ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ δύνασθαι ἐφείσθαι τοῦ ἀεὶ δύνασθαι).

86 *DN.* IV 2, p. 145.1–2 (my trans.).

87 *DN.* IV 2, p. 144.18–21.

88 *CH.* III 2, p. 18.16. See also *CH.* III 3, p. 19.22 and *CH.* VII 4, p. 13.31.

89 *DN.* IV 1, p. 144.6–12: “Through these rays exist all the intelligible and intellectual beings, [...] They enlighten the reasonings of beings, and they pass on what they know to their own kind” (trans. Luibheid modified).

gift received by angels (goodness, intelligible light, being, power, etc.) presents a certain circularity, implying that the gift is not simply received, but that the receiver willingly desires the gift and also transmits it for the sake of the Good. Thus, for Dionysius, though angels are not described as constituting themselves—as in Proclus' perspective on intelligible and intellectual beings—, angels have a specific manner of manifesting their own will, their own power and desire for what they are and for what they do, so that the gift of their being does not turn them into simple effects of the Good, but rather into God's co-workers of the good.

Can Angels Give Up the Gift?

And yet, once they receive the gifts from the Good, angels can no longer lose them, nor can these gifts diminish in them. Dionysius insists that to be is to be good and thus, existence depends on the gift of goodness from the One-God. One cannot give up the gift, because without it nothing can subsist in any form whatsoever.⁹⁰ Does this mean that these gifts (which consist in the power to search for the good and also to bestow it) limit angels or their will in any way, compelling them to act in a certain way? The answer is no. Since the gifts are not determined, but rather consist in an ability to search for the Good, angels cannot depose these constitutive gifts, but they can choose not to enact them. This is the case for angels who have "lapsed from the angelic condition of longing for the Good,"⁹¹ who have chosen not to search for the good and not to transmit it further. This shows that the gift is in no way limiting or compelling the receiver to act according to the Good.

What exactly does it mean for the angels to refuse to act according to the Good? Fallen angels still have the gifts they received from the Good and they have them entirely.⁹² Yet, they no longer see these gifts and they no longer want to see the Good, but rather refrain from activating their power of seeing the Good. More precisely, demons do not see these gifts, because "they have

90 See for instance *DN. IV 20*, p. 166.9–11: "All beings, to the extent that they exist, are good and come from the Good."

91 *DN. IV 18*, p. 162.11.

92 *DN. IV 23*, p. 172.2–4: "And that complete goodness bestowed on them has not been altered. No. What has happened is that they have fallen away from the complete goodness granted to them, and I would claim that the angelic gifts bestowed on them have never been changed inherently, that in fact they are brilliantly complete."

suspended their own powers of seeing the good (*ἀπομύσαντες ἑαυτῶν τὰς ἀγαθοπτικὰς δυνάμεις*).⁹³

This proves that the form of the Good is not a determinate one, limiting and forcing the receiver to act in a certain way, but rather, it implies reactivity: as an effect of its own will, the receiver can enter into a relationship with the cause and react to it, wanting it, searching for it. On the contrary, fallen angels no longer enter into this circular relationship with the Good, though they have the power to do so. They no longer react to the Good; accordingly, they receive no more of the ever-intensifying gifts of the Good.

They even suspend their power to see the gifts from the Good that lay in themselves. They do not suspend the gift itself (because this gift allows them to exist), but they suspend their power to identify this good and to act accordingly. This means that the gift they have received from the Good is somehow restricted to themselves: they only have it in as much as they exist, but the gift is no longer active. They suspend their will to increase this gift through actively engaging with the Good: "In as much as they are, they are from the Good, are good and desire the beautiful and the Good, by desiring to exist, to live, and to think. They are called evil because of the deprivation, the abandonment, the rejection of the virtues which are appropriate to them. And they are evil to the extent that they are not, and insofar as they wish for evil they wish for what is not really there."⁹⁴ The evil in them is not a simple privation of good, but rather a privation of the wish and desire for the good; it is a wish that no longer wants to desire the good and being, but which, even as such, still manifests as a wish, wishing for what is not.

What is striking here is that, if fallen angels can cease to want the gift of the Good, they do so on the basis of their essential goodness, which remains constitutive. They can refuse to follow the Good through the power given to them by the Good (the power of being, living, and thinking). Accordingly, they refrain from searching for the Good, while they continue somehow to want the good, since they still want to be, to live, and to think as such, i.e. as deprived of the form of the Good and as not actively searching for the Good.

Thus, in as much as they no longer want the Good, and in as much as they refrain from wanting it, they still want it, because they still lead this life of refraining from wanting the Good. This means that they cannot exist outside the Good. Yet, not wanting the Good does not imply not existing. It means they can activate their will of not wanting the Good, and they can live their lives

93 *DN. IV 23*, p. 172.5–6 (my trans.).

94 *DN. IV 23*, p. 172.7–10 (trans. Luibheid modified).

accordingly, because they are, and they are from the Good. This is why they can be and not be at the same time: they are, in as much as they are from the Good, but they are not, in as much as they do not want to be according to the Good. Similarly, they are said to be intellects, coming from the divine wisdom, but also abandonment of wisdom.⁹⁵ As intellects, they tend towards wisdom, because they still think. Yet, they do not know and they do not want this Good which is the source of all wisdom. They no longer search for wisdom intentionally, nor desire it. However, this proves their freedom to choose: essentially, they cannot choose not to be intellects, and thus, they cannot choose not to tend to wisdom. Still, in a conscious manner, they can choose not to want wisdom and not to search for it, and thus, not to receive it. Thus, though they exist through the Good, they choose to manifest as falling away from the Good.⁹⁶

Unlike Proclus, for whom the falling away from the good was possible only at the levels below intellect (in the irrational souls or in bodies), Dionysius conceives this possibility at any level, starting with the intelligible realm and with angels,⁹⁷ because the good is a gift that is not imposed on the receiver, but which the receiver can choose to want, or to refuse. For Proclus, the self-constituted intellect is the cause of its own good and the source of its well-being,⁹⁸ therefore, it cannot fall from the good. On the contrary, for Dionysius, receiving the good depends on the desire to act according to the good and to shine forth the good. Thus, for Proclus, angels (and demons and heroes) cannot be touched by evil, because “how could we still call the angels messengers of the gods, if evil were present in them in whatever way.”⁹⁹ For Dionysius, however, this very privation of good proves the greatness of the Good, because “even the things that resist it owe their being and their capacity for resistance to its power.”¹⁰⁰

Through self-constitution, intellects in Proclus’ perspective can determine their manner of being. For the angelic intellects in Dionysius’ view, however, to be constituted by the One-Good implies reactivity: angels can determine themselves in the sense of wanting and choosing to receive the gift of the Good.

95 DN. VII 2, p. 195,18–20: “and even the intellect of demons, to the extent that it is intellect, comes from it [i.e. from Wisdom], though we could more accurately describe this as falling away from wisdom” (trans. Luibheid modified).

96 Cf. Schäfer (2006), 147: “The ‘whence’ of evil is to be identified in the spontaneity, i.e. in the self-actuating and self-accountable will.”

97 Cf. Steel (1997), especially 101–102.

98 Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 43.

99 Proclus, *On the Existence of Evil* 14, 4–5 (trans. Opsomer and Steel).

100 DN. IV 20, p. 166.8.

Ultimately, this implies that they can also refrain from wanting the Good and, thus, no longer determine themselves as receivers of the Good. Though not self-constituted, angels are not simple effects of the One-God, but they are powers capable of searching for and of transmitting the good, as well as of deliberately renouncing these activities.¹⁰¹

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