
This volume is a collection of papers presented at the first international conference ever devoted exclusively to Iamblichus, which was held at the University of Liverpool on 23rd to 26th September 1990. It is dedicated to the memory of the eminent Neoplatonic scholar L.G. Westerink, who passed away just as the organisation of the conference began.

In an introductory chapter (*Introduction: Iamblichus in 1990*, 1-4) the editors explain the scope of the enterprise: the rehabilitation of Iamblichus whose importance in the tradition of Neoplatonic philosophy has long been underestimated, the attention of the scholars having been distracted by his religious and soteriological concerns. In spite of the problems caused by the fact that so much of his work has been lost, the contributors have fully succeeded in demonstrating that Iamblichus is indeed a serious philosopher. The complexity of Iamblichus' thought can be appreciated in the wide variety of topics dealt with in the different papers.

Half of the papers in this volume are concerned with Iamblichus' thoughts and philosophical concepts as perceived in the works of contemporary and later philosophers. The survival of his work in Priscian's *Metaphrasis* of Theophrastus' *De anima* is studied by Pamela M. Huby (*Priscian of Lydia as Evidence for Iamblichus*, 5-13). Carlos Steel provides us with a new text edition of Proclus, *In Parmenidem* 743.25-746.40 and discusses Iamblichus' influence on Proclus' theory on the nature of the soul (*L'Ame: Modèle et Image*, 14-29). Daniela P. Taormina (*Le δυνάμεις dell'anima. Psychologia ed etica in Giamblico*, 30-47) explores Iamblichus' contribution to the concept of the soul in the medieval Latin philosophers. John Dillon (*Iamblichus and*
Henads Again, 48-45) in a follow up of his article in Phronesis XVII (1972), Iamblichus on Light and the Transparent, 55-64) argues that ‘Iamblichus’ theory of light represents a compromise between the Platonic and the Aristotelian theories and influenced Proclus’ unique theory’. (55). Syrianus’ debt to Iamblichus is dealt with by Loredana Cardullo (Giamblico nel ‘Commentario alla metafisica’ di Siriano, 173-200).

Several papers are concerned with the interweaving of religion and philosophy in Iamblichus’ major extant works. Theurgy and theology, the role of reason, the limitations of reason and of the human individual are the topics dealt with by Andrew Smith (Iamblichus’ Views on the Relationship of Philosophy to Religion in De Mysteriis, 74-86). Francesco Romano (Il vocabolario della ‘natura’ nel De Mysteriis di Giamblico, 87-100) studies the exceedingly rich and complex vocabulary in the semantic field of $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ and concludes that $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ was perceived by Iamblichus as a primary principle or ‘fourth hypostasis’, after the One, the Intellect and the Soul. Annick Charles-Saget (La théurgie, nouvelle figure de l’ergon dans la vie philosophique, 107-115) in an attempt to define the ritual known as ‘theurgy’ and its relationship to magic and philosophy, analyzes the interaction of both components of the word, $\theta\epsilon\omicron\omicron$ and $\epsilon\rho\gamma\omicron\nu$. Gregory Shaw (The Geometry of Grace: a Pythagorean Approach to Theurgy, 116-137) focuses on the theme of the soul’s self-alienation. Anne Shephard (Iamblichus on Inspiration: De Mysteriis 3. 4-8, 138-143) comments on the treatment of prophetic inspiration in De Mysteriis 3.4-8. Henri-Dominique Saffrey (Les livres IV à VII du De Mysteriis de Iamblique relus avec la Lettre de Porphyre à Anébon, 144-158) establishes that De Mysteriis should be read as a reply to Porphyry’s Letter to Anebo offering a solution to Porphyry’s apparent contradictions.

The political implications of Iamblichus’ philosophy are addressed by Dominic J. O’Meara (Aspects of Political Philosophy in Iamblicus, 65-73). Mark J. Edwards (Two Images of Pythagoras: Iamblichus and Porphyry, 159-172) comparing Porphyry’s Life of Pythagoras and Iamblichus’ On the
Pythagorean Life shows how Iamblichus modelled the image of Pythagoras beyond his sources, stripping him of his divinity but revealing him as a man of divine capacities.

The indices and the select bibliography at the end of the volume are very useful. Essential additions include J. Dillon and J. Hershbell (edd. and trr.) Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life. Text, Translation and Notes, (Atlanta: Scholars Press 1991), and H. Doerrie (ed.); De Jamblique à Proclus (Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique 2; Geneva: Fondation Hardt 1974).

The papers, although unequal in style and approach, are all stimulating. They make it quite clear that Iamblichus’ works are far from superficial and philosophically worthless, as they were judged in the past. It is to be hoped that a second conference on Iamblichus will take place in the near future, bringing further progress in our understanding of his positive contribution to the development of Neoplatonism and Neopythagoreanism. The publication of a complete collection of fragments and testimonia of his lost writings, which is still lacking, would offer a helpful tool in the difficult task of disentangling Iamblichus’ thoughts from those of his successors.

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