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The Theology of Iamblichus

[Sometime during the Neoplatonic period, 1970's]

The principal challenge to Greek Rationalism was the fact and practice of ancient Greek Religion. In order to fully appreciate the importance of this truth, one should be first of all reminded of the nature of the rationalism in question. A complete analysis of the complex phenomenon of Greek Λόγος cannot, of course, be presented here; it will suffice for the present purpose to emphasize its *objectivistic character* on the one hand, and its *vigorous, mathematical discipline* on the other. The history of Greek Rationalism can be seen as the interplay of these its two main features, now the one dominating to the relative detriment of the other, now both corroborating with varying degrees of success into sustained attempts to present a unified and adequately articulated picture of reality matching, so far as this is possible, its transcendent unity, multiple variation and overwhelming intricacy – now the two coexisting (without real in-depth influence on one another) in a kind of formal compromise. It will be our endeavour to analyze the development of ancient Greek speculation on κίνησις from the beginning to Aristotle in the context of the congruence or dissonant antithesis between these major driving forces and requirements. And, similarly, that double character of Greek Λόγος will substantially help us to understand Iamblichus' major position and significance in the History of Greek Thought.

Λόγος, for the Greek Mind, is πεφρατισμένος in reality – to use the pregnant Parmenidean expression. It is ingrained in reality. The serious danger for the Greek is not that Λόγος, as an autonomous organon dissociated from reality, may turn idle and generate fantasies and deceptions of its own; but rather the problem is that, elaborate and sophisticated though it may become, it cannot capture the entire spectrum of a reality which in fact baffles the wildest imagination. To span, in typically characteristic Greek fashion, the lapse of centuries, Simplicius gives the best undeliberate commentary on that most significant Parmenidean word. The Greek trusts his Reason; not out of a naïve abandon to what his mind tells him, but because he feels profoundly that his λόγος is attuned intrinsically to reality in all its wealth. Ultimately it is the *naturalness*, in the deepest sense, of the Greek which safeguards the operations of his reason, just as the same naturalness grants to him a moral eye pure and nonconventional simultaneously, and, what is more, a religion natural and sublime at once, not to speak of his manifestest achievement, the real idealism and ideal realism of his art. Form is the key to everything as revelation of being.

Seeing from its obverse side the same thing we can say that Greek λόγος is not subjectivistic; that the λόγος is ξυνός, is not a peculiarly Heracleitean attitude. It is the common conviction, conviction founded on the immediate experience of one's own absolute acceptance of reality as it is, of all Greek thought. It would be

interesting to pursue this line of approach into the reverse direction and inquire whether the excessive, almost morbid, preoccupation of the modern European Mind with epistemological, procedural and methodological questions is not due to an inner feeling of insecure foundation in total reality, and to a sentiment of guilt towards (part at least of) it.

However this may be I summarized the natural abandon of Greek Λόγος to reality by calling it *objectivistic*. But the safeguard of naturalness inherent in the Greek attitude as such is also supplemented by a different kind of guarantee. The two should work consonantly, and this is what they do when the operations of the λόγος are successful, and they do attain to what it is their function to generate, *reality reproduced*. But dissonances do actually occur, sharper or smoother as the case may be. The second guarantee I have in mind is what I may call the mathematical character of Greek thoughts. By this I do not mean a formal, mechanical borrowing of the mathematical procedure (there is no guarantee in them as such, as we can see from Spinoza's *Ethica*); but rather the satisfaction of two conditions, deeply mathematical: firstly that there must exist absolute connectedness between the various parts of the thought, thorough and complete coherence is a condition (necessary and, for mainstream Greek thought, sufficient as well) of truth, because consistence is the essence of reality; and secondly that everything should be transparent to Reason, the connections as well as the connected. By transparency to Reason I mean a quality according to which Reason is not positing anything which he cannot justify or see through it; the only irrational parameter permitted, is what the very Reason perceives as its own limits; which are the very limits of reality, of being. No given assumptions from high above or from down below, from irrational revelation or from equally irrational in effect ordinary thought and experience – are allowed to influence the course of reason, the structure and harmony and order of the logos of being. The two aforementioned conditions ask for a closed system of Truth perspicuously and absolutely interconnected in its structured cohesion, like a deductive system we might envision in modern terminology. The difference from that, is of course provided by the necessary “realistic” character of any Greek system, as contrasted to the merely formal, “typical” and mechanical constructions of modern axiomatic theory.

The intrinsic reality-orientated character of Greek Λόγος, and its required mathematical vigour, in harmonious combination, safeguard its non-subjectivistic status. We may say, in short, Greek λόγος is *ontological*. It is logos of being. It is not capable of setting aside too easily any form of reality – this is what the modern eye sees as a disadvantage or even defect by calling it *credulity* and, in the cases that we will be concerned in the sequel, *superstition*.

The Greek Spirit prefers, if you like, to have a rich picture of objective reality, than to shrink that reality into the basic elements of a machine in order to aggrandize itself and its own significance as a “transcendental” or “transcendent” Subject. The Greek Spirit feels happy in the wealth of reality, not in the morbid atmosphere of a subject cut off from reality, and brooding over its own predicament. The Greek Spirit, in short, believes that it gets its significance from coming into contact with cosmic and divine objectivity, not that it gives (in some utterly incomprehensible way) meaning (if possible) to it. Subjectivism (of the Cartesian Ego type, of the empirical self, of the transcendental Kantian subject, of the Hegelian Spirit, or of the existentialist selfessentialising nothing) is a Modern European predicament. Classical “naïve” thinking is totally free from it.

Being so constituted by its fundamental orientation towards objective reality, and so protected by its mathematical vigour, it simply cannot conveniently steer away from the problem posited by ancient religion – a religion, especially, essentially *ritualistic* and *mythological* – and also *mysteric*. The reality of *such* a religion was there, provocative and challenging. It was not possible for the Greek mind to simply set it aside or ignore it, as we are seeing the modern mind to do, particularly in our days. Greek λόγος had to *absorb* this reality. The history of the positive response of Greek λόγος to that reality has still to be written. For it can be shown that right from the beginning that reality influenced the movement of philosophical thought in individual thinkers and in schools.

I shall not attempt to draw here even the rudiments of that history. One thing must needs, nonetheless, be impressed: Philosophical thought although deeply influenced by religious feelings, attitudes and beliefs, was, so to speak, paying back for that powerful but subterranean influence by the *rationalization of mythology and the aetiology of cultus*: allegory was generated, and the various exegetical, often conflicting, interpretations of myths (one-to-one equivalences to physical and metaphysical theory) became the standard way to philosophically understand religion. And even though much was lost in this transaction; yet provided the religious *feeling* was still alive to offset the adverse effects of rationalization by infusing the products of this latter (sometimes unconsciously) with something of the real meaning to which it, as living feeling, bear testimony – the resulting dislocation was neither very severe, nor systematically pernicious.

The Stoic doctrine on the matter is an example of what I mean; so long, for example, as allegorizing Zeus as cosmic fire was not more of a naturalization of divinity than a divinization of an ultimate element of the world, the exercise in rational understanding of religion was, although still not capturing the whole of the reality it meant to reproduce, not very harmful. But even this much was not possible with regard to the other, and ultimately fundamental, moment of religion – *ritual*,

this rock bottom of ancient religiosity. Here rationalism was at a loss: it could not gratuitously downgrade a primeval observance considered to be of the utmost (indeed of crucial) importance, this is out of tune with ancient mentality; but it could neither easily incorporate it into itself. There were, of course, attempts to *rationalize* ritual; to explain it *symbolically*, and even suggestions to alter it if it did not conform to the demands of ordinary thought or common morality. The quality of such attempts varied and corresponded to the quality of the mythological interpretations. But the important point is that however successfully they might explain the symbolism of the religious act in the ritual, they could only very superficially analyze the significance of the act as *act*, as ceremonial worship, as τελετή; why one should *do* and perform, rather than *think* or *feel* that symbolism. This remained a mystery, which the pious among philosophers were prepared to accept even if they could not clearly and adequately understand¹; whereas some could even bring themselves to denigrate².

The inexplicability of the rite as such, of its mysterious nature and efficacy, was one of the two major issues which confronted philosophy in its attempt to “comprehend” religion. The other regarded the proper understanding of the nature of godhead, of the essence of divinity, as *implicitly revealed* in the worshipping consciousness, in religious awareness. Since divinity is manifested in worship for the ancient mind, the two problems are intricately connected. Thus a tendency to downgrade rite can be expected to go hand in hand with a tendency to give inferior status to the gods and daemons of traditional religion in which case the net result was to substitute “spiritual” worship in thought and emotion for the liturgy of religious Act on the one hand, and acceptance of philosophical principles as highest divinities on the other.

The best, and most significant in our context, example of this attitude is perhaps provided by Plotinus. We noticed his condescending (to say no more) attitude to the actual *ritual*. He restricted the sphere of the *occult* to the magic manipulation of powers residing *in* the World and related to its *material* constitution; the foundation of this magic was for him the Stoic *sympathy* of the World parts

¹ Following, say, Plutarch’s general advice.

² Plotinus was probably one of them. Porphyry, Περὶ τοῦ Πλωτίνου βίου, 10. 33-8 Henry et Schwyzer p. 17: φιλοθύτου δὲ γεγονότος τοῦ Ἀμελίου καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ κατὰ νομηνίαν καὶ τὰς ἑορτὰς ἐκπεριόντος καὶ ποτε ἀξιοῦντος τὸν Πλωτίνον σὺν αὐτῷ παραλαβεῖν ἔφη: “ἐκείνους δεῖ πρὸς ἐμὲ ἔρχεσθαι, οὐκ ἐμὲ πρὸς ἐκείνους”. Τοῦτο δὲ ἐκ ποίας διανοίας οὕτως ἐμεγαληγόρησεν, οὐτ’ αὐτοὶ συνεῖναι δεδυνήμεθα οὐτ’ αὐτὸν ἐρέσθαι ἐτολμήσαμεν. Plotinus did not mean to call the gods himself at his convenience in his home, as it were. For he was curious enough to go to the Temple of Isis in order to have his own daemon invoked by the Egyptian Priest. (Porphyry, op.cit., 10.15-33). His “sorcery” was a different thing. Cf. Enneads, V, 3, 17.28-38.

towards each other: whoever transcends this World by limiting himself to his purely psychical and intellectual self, is exempt from every occult influence. (Cf. the story of Olympius' magic exertions on Plotinus, and the deflection of the influences upon the perpetrator himself, Porphyry, *op.cit.* 10. 1 – 15). For he has reached the true philosophical principles of the world, in which alone true divinity, mostly unknown to the traditional religion, is to be found. The gods and daemons of that religion are relegated to the status of inworldly forces, in the main Stoically interpreted.

Such a type of view may appeal to the modern mind, may even claim Platonic precedence³, but it was really on the whole out of tune with ancient sensitivity. The aim of philosophy is to explain things as they are, not to explain away them, according to subjective fancy, into something which they are not⁴. Even the Epicureans ascribed to the traditional religious pantheon supreme transcendental position. The Stoics saw in the gods of the religion the most powerful forces weaving the fabric of the World. Aristotle may have opted for the astral analysis of religion, but his spheres represent the highest beings in perfect intelligible order according to his theory, immutable and absolutely exempt from the defects of the sublunary world, - in fact and the very names of the astronomical bodies refer to the gods of traditional worship. In the Platonic tradition there is indeed some complication, having ultimately its source in a certain ambiguity in Plato's himself position. I shall not enter here into a discussion of this most important topic. It may suffice that two relevant points should be emphasized: firstly, that Plato was deeply suspicious of the easy, physicalistic, rationalizations of divine matters⁵; and secondly that his profound religiosity⁶ is evident in the systematic religious colouring which he gives to his

³ Cf. *Timaeus*, 40d sqq. regarding the endocosmic existence of the gods of the genealogies, though the context there is astral.

⁴ Very characteristic, generalizing it, is what Plutarch has to say, *Quaest. Conviv.* V, 7, 1. The talk is about the evil eye and malign influence. And Mestrius Florus' argument is that we should not refuse to believe things solely because we have no plausible explanation of them: 680C-D ...ἔφη τὰ μὲν γινόμενα τῇ φήμῃ θαυμαστῶς βοηθεῖν. τῷ δ' αἰτίας ἀπορεῖν ἀπιστεῖσθαι τὴν ἱστορίαν οὐ δικαίως, ὅπου, μυρίων ἐμφανῆ τὴν οὐσίαν ἐχόντων, ὁ τῆς αἰτίας λόγος ἡμᾶς διαπέφευγεν. "ὅλως δ'" εἶπεν "ὁ ζητῶν ἐν ἐκάστῳ τὸ εὐλογον ἐκ πάντων ἀναιρεῖ τὸ θαυμάσιον. ὅπου γὰρ ὁ τῆς αἰτίας ἐπιλείπει λόγος, ἐκεῖθεν ἄρχεται τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν. ὥστε τρόπον τινὰ φιλοσοφίαν ἀναιροῦσιν οἱ τοῖς θαυμασίοις ἀπιστοῦντες. δεῖ δ'" ἔφη "τὸ μὲν διὰ τί γίγνεται τῷ λόγῳ μετιέναι, τὸ δ' ὅτι γίγνεται παρὰ τῆς ἱστορίας λαμβάνειν. ἱστορεῖται δὲ πολλὰ τοιαῦτα.

⁵ V. *Phaedrus*, 229b-e, *Republic*, 378d-e and *Timaeus*, 40d-e. For an informing and suggestive discussion of Plato's attitude to the mythical dimension of ancient Greek culture, v. G. Grote, *History of Greece*, part I, chapter xvi, vol. I pp. 362 ff. (ed. 1862). Cf. J. A. Stewart, *The Myths of Plato*, pp. 228-9 and the entire *Excursus on Allegory*, pp. 230-58.

⁶ In the true sense of the world, not in a faded, explained away, awry, anaemic substitute.

speculations⁷, and in the sheer weight of religion in his last testament, the Laws. Not to mention the strong Pythagorean and Orphic influences. In fact what I have called ambiguity in Plato is essentially nothing more than his refusal to separate what ought to be kept together and unified in imitation of the pristine undifferentiated oneness of thought and feeling in primitive religion: namely true, profound rationalism on the one hand and deep religious awareness of Man and the World on the other. In their happy conjugation these two elements mutually interact upon each other and are consequently transformed to religiously coloured Idealism the former, and to mysteric, arcane, “enthusiastic” religiosity the latter. This is the key to Plato’s enigma⁸.

⁷ This was clearly no mere poeticity – as an unbelieving age like ours tends to suppose – but true conviction; the very regularity of the phenomenon on the one hand, and the close correspondence in details between the form and substance of his formulations and their religious models on the other – not to speak of the sincerity of feeling – testify to that effect. His overall idealistic tendency should not baffle us.

⁸ Already given in clear terms by the Scholiast to *Phaedo*, B, ρο’ p. 123.3-11 Norvin: ὅτι οἱ μὲν τὴν φιλοσοφίαν προτιμῶσιν, ὡς Πορφύριος καὶ Πλωτῖνος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ φιλόσοφοι. οἱ δὲ τὴν ἱερατικὴν, ὡς Ἰάμβλιχος καὶ Συριανὸς καὶ Πρόκλος καὶ οἱ ἱερατικοὶ πάντες. ὁ δὲ Πλάτων τὰς ἐκατέρωθεν συνηγορίας ἐννοήσας πολλὰς οὐσας εἰς μίαν αὐτὰς συνήγαγεν ἀλήθειαν, τὸν φιλόσοφον βάρκχον ὀνομάζων. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ χωρίσας ἑαυτὸν τῆς γενέσεως εἰ τεθειή μέσος, εἰς ταῦτον ἄξει τῷ ἑτέρῳ τὸν ἕτερον. Πλὴν δηλὸς ἐστὶν τῷ βάρκχῳ σεμνύνων τὸν φιλόσοφον, ὡς θεῶ τὸν νοῦν ἢ τῷ ἀπορρήτῳ φωτὶ τὸ ρητὸν. Cf. 96.7-10. The emphasis on the hieratic art and science on the part of Iamblichus is also testified by his introducing the hieratic excellences as the top-most order of “virtues”: v. Scholia in *Phaedo* B, ρμβ’, p. 114.22-5 Norvin: ὅτι εἰσὶ καὶ αἱ ἱερατικαὶ ἀρεταὶ κατὰ τὸ θεοειδὲς ὑφιστάμεναι τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀντιπαρήκουσαι πάσαις ταῖς εἰρημέναις οὐσιώδεσιν οὐσαις, ἐνιαῖαι γε ὑπάρχουσαι. καὶ ταύτας δὲ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐνδείκνυται, οἱ δὲ περὶ Πρόκλον καὶ σαφέστερον. In ρμα’ Iamblichus is said to have introduced the paradigmatic virtues as well, i.e. excellences pertaining to the intelligible (as distinct from the intelligent) level. Perhaps Prophyry, *Sententiae*, c. 32, p. 28.6 sqq. followed probably him in the triple distinction καθαρτικαὶ - θεωρητικαὶ - παραδειγματικαὶ, corresponding respectively (a) to the soul purifying herself and severing, cutting herself up from the connection with this world, (b) the soul pure and separate functioning in accordance to Νοῦς, and (c) the noetic activity itself. Plotinus’ doctrine looks in effect much the same, except that he would not call “virtues” the archetypes of the virtues, as existing in Νοῦς, on the ground that an excellence is something belonging to something, and this differentiation between a thing and its property, be it essential, has no place on the level of Intelligence; cf. chapters 6 and 7 of his treatise *Περὶ ἀρετῶν* (I, 2) esp. 6.13 sqq. People are misled by this fact into supposing that the *Phaedo* scholiast is mistaken and the origin of the doctrine of paradigmatic virtues in Neoplatonism should be traced back to Plotinus. But there is, I submit, in reality a very significant divergence between the two views. Iamblichus does not hold that an entity of a certain order can actually “become” one of a higher (or lower for that matter) order – that soul can become in essence νοῦς (she can only act “like” νοῦς, subjugate herself to him completely in total abandon). Thus even where she acts noetically, soul does this not because she is transformed into pure intelligence, but because what is noetic *in her* gains the upper hand, so to speak, and controls her activities [cf. e.g. Proclus, *In*

Timaeum, vol. III, p. 334.3 Diehl]. Notice for instance the formulation of the Scholiast in B ρμα (p. 114.16-21 Norvin): ὅτι παραδειγματικαὶ ἀρεταὶ αἱ μηκέτι θεωρούσης τὸν νοῦν τῆς ψυχῆς, τὸ γὰρ θεωρεῖν σὺν ἀποστάσει γίνεται, ἀλλ’ ἤδη στάσης ἐν τῷ νοῦν εἶναι κατὰ μέθεξιν, ὃς ἐστὶ παραδείγμα πάντων. διὸ καὶ αὗται παραδειγματικαὶ ὅτι προηγουμένως αὐτοῦ εἰσὶν τοῦ νοῦ αἱ ἀρεταί. ταύτας δὲ προστίθησιν ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τοῖς περὶ ἀρετῶν. And similarly for the hieratic virtues, they refer to the divine element in the soul, B ρμβ, p. 114.22 κατὰ τὸ θεοειδὲς ὑφιστάμεναι τῆς ψυχῆς. Iamblichus interpreted accordingly the Platonic allegory in Phaedrus (247c – 249d); v. Hermeias, *Commentaria in Phaedrum*, λβ’ p.150.24 Counreur, on 247c: ὁ θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος κυβερνήτην τὸ ἐν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀκούει, ἡνίοχον δὲ τὸν νοῦν αὐτῆς. τὸ δὲ θεατῆ οὐχ ὅτι καθ’ ἑτερότητα ἐπιβάλλει τούτῳ τῷ νοητῷ ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἐνοῦται αὐτῷ καὶ οὕτως αὐτοῦ ἀπολάυει. Τοῦτο γὰρ δηλοῖ τὸν κυβερνήτην τελειότερόν τι τοῦ ἡνίοχου καὶ τῶν ἵππων. Τὸ γὰρ ἐν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐνοῦσθαι τοῖς θεοῖς πέφυκεν. Οὐδὲν δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἢ ἔνστασις εἴ τις λέγοι τὰν Πλάτωνα παρακατιόντα λέγειν ὅτι ἄτε οὖν θεοῦ διάνοια νῶ τε καὶ ἐπιστήμη ἀκήρατος τρεφομένη. Ρηθήσεται γὰρ πρὸς τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστον οἰκείως τρέφεται, καὶ ἡ διάνοια ἐπιστημονικῶς καὶ διανοητικῶς, καὶ ὁ νοῦς νοερώς καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῆς θείως. On the strength of the above interpretation, we can identify as Iamblichean §67 of Psellus’ *De Omnifaria Doctrina*. (Cf. also §§70, 71, 74). We see there that the theurgic virtue (= the supremely hieratic) is the ultimate excellence possible to the human soul, posited above theoretical virtue, the one arising from and consisting in the contemplation of the Intellect. Beyond these ultimate human achievements lie the paradeigmatic virtues, excellences of the noetic world, the intelligible order of being, and at the top, at the dark principle of everything, virtues supraessential, the glories of the gods themselves: (p. 44.5-11 Westerink) ... ἡ δὲ θεωρητικὴ, ἡ θεωροῦσα τὸν νοῦν. ἡ δὲ θεωρητικὴ, ἡ τὸ θεϊότατον ἡμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνεγείρουσα καὶ ἐνίζουσα τῷ θεῷ καὶ τὴν θείαν ἐνεργοῦσα μανίαν. Εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ ἐπέκεινα τούτων ἕτεραι ἀρεταί, αἱ μὲν οἰονεὶ παραδείγματα τῶν λοιπῶν ἀρετῶν, αἱ δὲ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν οὐσίαν. αἴτινες οὐ συμβεβηκότα εἰσὶν, ὥσπερ ἐπισυμβεβήκασι ἡμῖν αἱ λοιπαὶ ἀρεταί, ἀλλ’ οὐσίαι νοεραὶ καὶ ὑπεροῦσιοι. This is how we should also understand Marinus, *Vita Procli*, Ch. 3, sub initio – a clear Iamblichean influence on late Athenian Neoplatonism: πρῶτον δὴ οὖν κατὰ γέννη διελόμενοι τὰς ἀρετὰς εἰς τε φυσικὰς καὶ ἠθικὰς καὶ πολιτικὰς, καὶ ἔτι τὰς ὑπὲρ ταύτας, καθαρτικὰς τε καὶ θεωρητικὰς, καὶ τὰς οὕτω δὴ καλουμένας θεωρητικὰς, τὰς δὲ ἔτι ἀνωτέρω τούτων σιωπήσαντες, ὡς καὶ ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων ἤδη τεταγμένας etc. – The composite picture that emerges is this. Iamblichus produced the more accurate and sufficiently elaborate scheme, a ladder of virtues. Above the lower grades pertaining to man as found and acting in the material world and in connection with it, lie the cathartic, theoretical, noetic = paradeigmatic and hieratic virtues, levels of excellence achievable by the human soul by virtue of its pure psychic, intelligent and henadic moments in its composition. What perfection lies above does not pertain to the nature of soul and is thus no proper virtue. Iamblichus’ paradeigmatic virtues are in imitation of and by participation in the properly archetypal excellences and perfections belonging to the nous as such, not as psychic intelligence. Notice the formulations in the above quoted passage from the B Scholia to Phaedo (of Damascian affiliation): the Iamblichean “paradeigmatic” virtues are to be found in a soul that has taken its stable stand (στάσης) in its being nous by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν). They (those virtues) are said to be paradeigmatic because nous is the universal archetype, and its perfections of being are the paradeigmata of being, and so similarly its Paradeigmatic virtues are the archetypes of the “paradeigmatic” virtues that can be found in a soul that has been consolidated in its unvarying participation of nous (διὸ καὶ αὗται [the psychic paradeigmatic virtues] παραδειγματικαὶ ὅτι προηγουμένως αὐτοῦ εἰσὶν τοῦ νοῦ αἱ ἀρεταί). Thus it is that Iamblichus introduced such virtues in connection with man – this must be what the scholiast (from Damascius?) means to say. And this is

A great deal of analysis is of course required to show the adequacy of this solution to the fundamental problem of Plato's attitude towards religion; and much more will be needed to pursue the history of the Platonic tradition in these terms and from this point of view. But it is an absolute desideratum, that this should be done, and it will be highly illuminating. Equally illuminating it will be to study Presocratic philosophy in this perspective; the true situation will then emerge, and many supposed anti-religious standpoints will be understood in their true nature and natural context.

But however one may agree or disagree with the results of such an inquiry, this is indisputable: that Iamblichus presents us with the first known to us, major explicit case of elaborate *philosophical support for unreformed traditional religion* as such. And this is, on the general level, his chief contribution to the history of Greek philosophy. After him, this position becomes philosophical orthodoxy: that philosophy and religion are not at variance, that rational and mystic are not contradictory, that reason, if profound enough, can understand, after its proper fashion, religion, and therefore explain and justify it from the point of view of λόγος, without deforming and disfiguring it in the process in accordance with the requirements of a supposedly enlightened reformation: the light of reason is not hostile, not even neutral, not even independent from the divine splendor as manifested in traditional religion.

the point that Macrobius makes more clear in his Plotinian based account of the quadruple division of virtues, In somnium Scipionis, 1, 8, 5-10, v. esp. 1, 8, 10: quartae sunt quae in ipsa divina mente consistent, quam diximus νοῦν vocari, a quarum exemplo reliquae omnes per ordinem defluunt. Nam si rerum aliarum, multo magis virtutum ideas esse in mente credendum est. And he goes on to define those properly paradeigmatic virtues in the divine Mind: illic prudentia est mens ipsa divina, temperantia quod in se perpetua intentione conversa est, fortitudo quod semper idem est nec aliquando mutatur, iustitia quod perenni lege a sempiterna operas sui continuatione non flectitur. – Confusion started probably with porphyry, who undecided as usually and, deep down, rather inconsistent, or at least simplifying, calls those paradeigmatic archetypes in question “virtues”, although he correctly refers them to the Nous itself; he further, true to his intellectualistic bias, ascribes to them such an elevated position that he who would operate according to them would be father of Gods (p. 31.8). Naturally, since these “virtues” belong to the divine Nous! A Porphyrian formulatory confusion between highest improbability and categorial impossibility, that the Iamblican schemes are free from. --- On the other hand, finally, Olympiodorus, in typically “weak” late Alexandrian Neoplatonism, combines the implications of such a statement as the one just noticed with Iamblican stringent requirements, and comes up with a virtual identification of the paradeigmatic and theurgic excellences. (Commentaria In Phaedonem, VIII, 2-10, v. esp. p.46.7-17 Norvin. --- V. on the whole subject Απόστολος Πιεργῆς, Περί Τέλους, II, Ἀρετῆς Τελειότητος καὶ Ἀρετῆς Σωτηρίας, pp.69- 89, esp. the Table of Neoplatonic Ladders of Virtues appended at the end of the Chapter.

As I said above the two main issues that philosophy had to face in trying to comprehend religion without altering it were a genuine understanding of the significance of ritual as such, and an adequate analysis of the nature of divinity as revealed in the actual worship. I have emphasized already that the two issues are intricately interconnected, but I shall here proceed with a brief analysis of Iamblichus' handling of the latter one, in order to indicate the framework in which the study of *De Mysteriis* (addressed to the former issue) should be conducted. Unfortunately, we do not possess the theoretical works in which Iamblichus expounded his Theology – chief among which were the *Περὶ θεῶν* and his grandiose *Περὶ τῆς Χαλδαϊκῆς Τελεωπάτης Θεολογίας* – and to which the *De Mysteriis* is but the practical and paedagogic corollary. This loss has to be replaced by a close study of what Proclus and Damascius have to say about Iamblichus, especially since they represent the continuation of the Iamblichean tradition in Athens and late Athenian Neoplatonism.

In order for a philosophical theology to present an adequate analysis of the nature of divinity (according to the demands and needs of the religious awareness) in the context of a naturalistic religion, it must satisfy the following conditions:

1) It must safeguard the *divine transcendence*. This is an elementary constituent of all, however primitive, religious consciousness and feeling. The god is proximate to us, *is part of our world, only as a manifestation*; He or It keeps simultaneously aloof, in Its substantial existence, from Its “occurrence”, so to speak, in a particular spot, time or way. It is and It is not what we meet when we come across It. This feeling of God as absent even in Its very presence, of His awesome Hiddenness in the midst of Its never ceasing Self-Declaration, of His Concealment and Proclamation, I call the feeling of divine transcendence.

2) In a natural religion there are necessarily *many* gods. Gods are the sources of all cosmic energy, the elemental, archetypal forces that weave the fabric of the World. And just as such immensely powerful potencies are many in what we will call their natural aspect, so they are many in their divine essence, for the ancient religious consciousness.

3) Their multiplicity is not, however, disorderly or chaotic. It may confound and frustrate our weak intelligence when it tries to comprehend the gods' intricate interplay in the world – but behind the apparently inexplicable divine presence,

religious consciousness requires order, natural adjustment according to their several natures and characters. Since these, on the other hand, correspond to the elemental cosmic powers operating in World and Man, that order should possess the characteristic features of the organization of cosmic forces in the World-system. Now the relevant fundamental attributes of this organization of the cosmic domain are these two: that each power has a specific nature and a particular field of operations; and that some powers are subordinated in their character and activity to others. Thus similarly the pantheon of a natural religion tends to be organized according to these two principles; firstly, even though Gods are closely akin to each other in virtue of their common transcendence to everything worldly, they should *appropriate* to themselves a *particular field* of action, in which their divine peculiarity is to be exercised; and secondly some system of subordination is observed in their mutual arrangements. This requirement of subordination was very early projected in mythological thought resulting in divine genealogies, (where temporal succession expresses cosmic hierarchization and divine theogonies coincide with the cosmogony of reality); and later exhibited in philosophical garment as *hierarchization* and *derivation* of the latter from the former.

These then are the chief conditions to be satisfied by any philosophical theology which sets out to explain rationally the religious awareness of the Godhead in a natural religion, without deforming or altering it in any way to suit the impositions of an inadequately articulated reason. Iamblichus tackled the problem directly and firmly – at its foundation, as we shall see.

Damascius gives us in a passage from his work *De Primis Principiis* a concise and perspicacious account of Iamblichus' originality and peculiarity in his doctrine of Gods. Damascius is markedly philo-Iamblichean, as is evident from his works and explicitly noticed by Simplicius; who in his *Corollarium de Tempore* from the commentary in *Physics* (p. 795.11 sqq. Diels) observes: οί δε μετὰ Πρόκλον ἕως ἡμῶν σχεδόν τι πάντες οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ μόνον (sc. the question of the ontological status of time), ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασι τῷ Πρόκλῳ κατηκολούθησαν. Ἀσκληπιόδοτον ἐξαιρῶ λόγου τὸν ἄριστον τῶν Πρόκλου μαθητῶν καὶ Δαμάσκιον τὸν ἡμέτερον, ὧν ὁ μὲν δι' ἄκραν εὐφυίαν καινοτέροις ἔχαιρε δόγμασιν, ὁ δὲ Δαμάσκιος διὰ φιλοπονίαν (not of course φιλοφονίαν(!) as in the text; perhaps φιλοτιμία might be considered. But φιλοπονία gives good meaning:

Damascius did possess an earnestly industrious, even laborious quality in the examination of philosophical doctrines, nothing could escape his enormous capacity for dialectical reasoning) καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὰ Ἰαμβλίχου συμπάθειαν πολλοῖς οὐκ ὤκνει τῶν Πρόκλου δογμάτων ἐφιστάνειν⁹. This predilection for Iamblichean positions is well attested and explicitly manifested in such formulations on the part of Damascius as, for example, this one: αἰσχυναίμην δ' ἄν καὶ τὸν θεῖον Ἰάμβλιχον, εἴ τι περὶ ταῦτα καινοτομοίην, ἄνδρα τῶν θεῶν πραγμάτων ἄλλων τε καὶ τῶν νοερῶν ἄριστον ἐξηγητήν. δοκεῖ τοίνυν ἐμοίγε κατὰ ἵχνη τῆς ἐκείνου πολυθεάμενος γνώμης etc. (vol. I p. 291.23 sqq. Ruelle). It is precisely because of his high appreciation and attachment to Iamblichus, that the close study of Damascius' work reveals such a significant insight into Iamblichean thought – in general terms and in specific doctrines alike.

The Damascian passage referred to belongs to a section of *De Primis Principiis* where the issue of (in Proclean formulation) imparticipable and participated multiplicity dependent on a principle is examined (chapters 100-110), in the context of a general discussion concerning procession in the realm of first principles. The primal and fundamental question regarding that issue is whether there exists at all around such given principles a multiplicity of self-subsistent entities (αὐτοτελεῖ) or whether on the contrary there is only the principle and its radiations or illuminations (ἐλλάμψεις) in some subordinate field of entities which participate in that principle; vol. I, p. 258.6-8: ὅπερ οὖν λέγω πολλάκις, ἐπιζητεῖ ὁ λόγος περὶ ἐκάστου ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ ὑπὸ ἐκάστην ἀρχικὴν μονάδα λεγομένου τετάχθαι, πότερον αὐτοτελεῖς ἐστίν, ἢ μόνον κατ' ἐλλάμψιν πληθυσόμενος. Thus, for instance, there is a Νοῦς as principle of all intelligence; are there many self-subsistent minds as well, existing not independently but in themselves and “outside” that principal Mind, and also ontologically prior to all souls and all their noetic activities – or is it rather that the

⁹ Damascius, speaking of his preceptor and predecessor Isidorus, implies that he would consider Iamblichus second only to Plato: v. *Vita Isidori*, 33: αὐταῖς γε ταῖς Πλάτωνος ἀκηράτοις ἐννοίαις οὐ κατὰ τὰς συνήθειας τῶν πολλῶν φιλοσόφων ἐπιβολὰς ἐνεφύετο, μετὰ δέ γε Πλάτωνα καὶ ταῖς θαυμασταῖς Ἰαμβλίχου περινοίαις. Notice here the subtle distinction ἐν-νοία / περί-νοία. The views of Iamblichus' obstactors are indicated in the sequel by Damascius, 34: ὅτι οὐκ ὀλίγους τῶν φιλοσοφούντων ὀρῶμεν καὶ ἀκούομεν, τοὺς μὲν ἄβατον εἶναι τὸν Ἰάμβλιχον οἰομένους, τοὺς δὲ αὐθάδει μεγαληγορία λόγωντὸ πλέον ἢ ἀληθεία πραγμάτων ἐπαιρούμενον. -- That Iamblichus was second in time only to Plato is Emperor Julian's opinion – clearly reflecting the prevailing new in the philosophical circles of Asia Minor at least; *Oratio In Regem Solem* 146A (Spanheim): οἶδα μὲν οὖν καὶ Πλάτωνα τὸν μέγαν καὶ μετὰ τοῦτον ἄνδρα τοῖς χρόνοις οὐτὶ μὴν τῇ φύσει καταδεέστερον (τὸν Χαλκιδέα φημί, τὸν Ἰάμβλιχον). This was probably Isidorus' and Damascius' opinion more or less, as well. – A different attitude is illustrated by Macrobius, In *Somnium Scipionis*, 1, 27, 5: sed Plotinus inter philosophiae professors cum Platone princeps etc. The question of later Neoplatonism was Plotinus or Iamblichus?

only multiplicity of minds is the one which exists in the illuminated souls as so many illuminations of these souls by the universal Mind? (v. Vol. I, p. 257.5 sqq.). The same problem reappears with every admitted and acknowledged principle of reality (v. Vol. I, p. 256.22-257.2). Illumination (ἔλλαμψις) is here used, of course, in a metaphysical sense¹⁰.

In this context, and after formulating the same problem with regard to οὐσία (p. 257.19-20), Damascius proceeds thus: τί δεῖ πολλά λέγειν ὅτε καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς οὕτως ὑποτίθενται τοὺς πολλοὺς οἱ πρὸ Ἰαμβλίχου σχεδόν τι πάντες φιλόσοφοι, ἓνα μὲν εἶναι τὸν ὑπερούσιον θεὸν λέγοντες, τοὺς ἄλλους οὐσιώδεις εἶναι ταῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἐλλάμψεσιν ἐκθεουμένους, καὶ εἶναι τὸ τῶν ὑπερουσίων πλήθος ἐνάδων οὐκ αὐτοτελῶν ὑποστάσεων, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἐλλαμπομένων ἀπὸ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ καὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνδιδομένων θεώσεων. Thus Iamblichus *was the first to postulate a supraessential, self-subsistent, multiplicity of gods*. Previously, even the philosophers who had acknowledged a *supraessential* self-subsistent God as Ultimate Principle of everything had conceived of the many gods as *beings* divine, as beings which have received, in a certain sense, *divinization* (καὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνδιδομένων θεώσεων), in which case the godhead, strictly speaking, *resides* in the substantial beings and *consists* not in them as essential beings, but in the divinising radiance in them which proceeds out of the only both self-subsistent and supraessential God¹¹.

Before proceeding with the detailed analysis and appreciation of the Iamblichean position, let us give an example, by way of contrast, of what Damascius opposes it to. The best case of a philosopher who on the one hand has conceived the supreme God as supraessential and supraintellectual, but yet has not drawn all the necessary inferences from the fundamental distinction and co-implication between unity and being, is, of course, Plotinus. And we can nicely illustrate through his views what Damascius means by his formulation of Pre-Iamblichean theology in this respect. In *Enneads* V, 8, 9 Plotinus enjoins us to conceive an imaginary sphere in which the whole world of sense is to be included, everything being luminous and transparent (so as not to hinder the view of anything else), while preserving its own identity, finite circumscription and character. Then he requires of us to conceive another sphere similar to the former one but without space, time and matter; θεὸν δὲ καλέσας τὸν πεποιηκότα ἧς ἔχεις (sc. the creator of the former sphere of the physical world) τὸ φάντασμα εὖξαι ἐλθεῖν. ὁ δὲ ἦκοι τὸν αὐτοῦ κόσμον φέρων

¹⁰ It is that which comes or radiates out of something, and does not exist in itself, but in something else which receives the radiation.—For a metaphysical examination of the entire nexus v. my treatise on “Things and Predication”.

¹¹ The formulation in Damascius depends, naturally, on the clear-cut and sharp distinction between ἓν and ὄν with all its extremely important implications, which was originally utilized in a systematic and crucial way by Iamblichus himself, as we shall see.

μετὲ πάντων τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ θεῶν εἷς ὢν καὶ πάντες, καὶ ἕκαστος πάντες συνόντες εἰς ἓν, καὶ ταῖς μὲν δυνάμεσιν ἄλλοι, τῇ δὲ μιᾷ ἐκείνῃ τῇ πολλῇ πάντες εἷς, μᾶλλον δὲ ὁ εἷς πάντες. Οὐ γὰρ ἐπιλείπει αὐτὸς, ἦν πάντες ἐκείνοι γένωνται. ὁμοῦ δὲ εἰσι καὶ ἕκαστος χωρὶς αὐτῷ ἐν στάσει ἀδιαστάτῳ οὐ μορφὴν αἰσθητὴν οὐδεμίαν ἔχων - etc. (II. 13-21). This is the Νοῦς and its articulation as Intelligible World¹²; and this being the World of true being for Plotinus, it is clear that the gods concerned are far from being supraessential. In fact gods are explicitly said to have their divinity consisting in their noetic subsistence; V, 8, 3, 18-23: σεμνοὶ μὲν γὰρ πάντες θεοὶ καὶ καλοὶ καὶ τὸ κάλλος αὐτῶν ἀμήχανον. ἀλλὰ τί ἐστι δι' ὃ τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν; ἢ νοῦς, καὶ ὅτι μᾶλλον νοῦς ἐνεργῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, ὥστε ὁραῖσθαι. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ ὅτι αὐτῶν καλὰ τὰ σώματα.. καὶ γὰρ οἷς ἔστι σώματα, οὐ τοῦτό ἐστιν αὐτοῖς τὸ εἶναι θεοῖς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν νοῦν καὶ οὗτοι θεοί. In fact gods are generated by the act of primal Intelligence; VI, 9, 9, 17-19: τὸ δὲ ἐκεῖ ζῆν ἐνέργεια μὲν νοῦ. ἐνέργεια δὲ καὶ γεννᾶ θεοὺς ἐν ἡσυχῳ τῇ πρὸς ἐκείνο ἐπαφῇ, γεννᾶ δὲ κάλλος, γεννᾶ δικαιοσύνην, ἀρετὴν γεννᾶ. They are the supreme Intelligences; VI, 7, 9, 20-22: Διόπερ τῶν νοήσεων αἱ μὲν θεοί, αἱ δὲ δευτέρων τι γένος, ἐν ᾧ τὸ λογικὸν ἐπίκλην ἐνταῦθα, ἐξῆς δ' ἀπὸ τούτων τὸ ἄλογον κληθέν. It is almost a difference in gradation which separates gods, from rational souls and them from the irrational ones. The intelligible gods are an offspring of the purest, primal Mind; V, 1, 7, 27-30: ταύτης τοι γενεᾶς ὁ νοῦς οὗτος. ἄξιον δὲ νοῦ τοῦ καθαρῶτατου μὴ ἄλλοθεν ἢ ἐκ

¹² For the intelligible *gods* as luminous parts of the whole Νοῦς (which is the ἐκεῖ οὐρανός), cf. V, 8, 3, 30 – 4, 44. Even the celestial gods *contemplate* eternally, without involvement in anything lower, what exists in the intelligible heaven: V, 8, 3, 27-30. – Proclus (*Theologia Platonica*, IV p. 188.20 Portus) states that the heaven of the famous Phaedrus passage is, according to Plotinus, the intelligible domain, and this is fully supported by the above passages (cf. also V, 8, 10 *sub in.*, where, by the way, it is made obvious that Zeus and the other gods are for Plotinus celestial gods of and *in this* World). But in IV p. 215.18 sqq. he refers to the view of Theodorus of Asine, according to which οὐρανός is the absolutely first principle and the Platonic subcelestial arch (ὑπουράνιος ἀψίς) is the proximate subsistence to the ultimate one. And there we read: ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίνης φιλόσοφος, τῷ Πλωτίνῳ πειθόμενος, τὸ προσεχῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρρήτου προελθὸν ὑπουράνιον ἀψίδα προσείρηκεν etc. This seems to contradict the former, and true, account of Plotinus' position. I believe Proclus has in mind something like this: the ὑπουράνιος ἀψίς is the προσεχῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρρήτου προελθὸν as the first moment of that "movement" which constitutes the Νοῦς according to Plotinus; it is the otherness which has to be turned towards the One in order to take shape, form and light as Intelligence and Intelligible. This may well be visualized as the *lowermost*, so to speak, extremity of Νοῦς. I accept that this interpretation is difficult in view of what immediately proceeds in Proclus, p. 215.13 sqq.: ὅτι δὴ καὶ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν οἱ κλεινότατοι, τὴν ὑπουράνιον ταύτην ἀψίδα θεῖαν διακόσμησιν ὑπὸ τῷ οὐρανῷ τεταγμένην ὑπονόησαντες, οἱ μὲν εὐθύς μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον αὐτὴν ταύτην ἠξίωσαν, οὐρανὸν τὸ πρῶτον εἰπόντες. οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλατέει των νοητῶν ἐκάτερον τάπτουσιν. But this may refer to Theodorus exclusively. Otherwise, we should rather emend Πλωτίνῳ, or add <οὐ> τῷ Πλωτίνῳ πειθόμενος, which however seems to lack any obvious point in the context.

τῆς πρώτης ἀρχῆς φῦναι, γενόμενον δὲ ἤδη τὰ ὄντα πάντα σὺν αὐτῷ γεννηῖσαι, πᾶν μὲν τὸ τῶν ιδεῶν κάλλος, πάντας δὲ θεοὺς νοητούς. The encosmic gods are created by λόγος, not by νοῦς, let alone by the supraessential first principle; III, 2, 11, 6-9: οὕτως οὐδ' ὁ λόγος πάντα θεοὺς εἰργάζετο, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν θεοὺς, τὰ δὲ δαίμονας, δευτέραν φύσιν, εἶτα ἀνθρώπους καὶ ζῶα ἐφεξῆς, οὐ φθόνῳ, ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ποικιλίαν νοερὰν ἔχοντι. As a compendium of the order of gods according to Plotinus the following passage from his attack upon Gnostics and Christians may suffice; II, 9, 9, 30-39: (goodness prevails in this world in all its orders, and more so in the higher ones, so there are best men and good daemons), πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον θεοὺς τοὺς τε ἐν τῷδε ὄντας κάκει βλέποντας, πάντων δὲ μάλιστα τὸν ἡγεμόνα τοῦδε τοῦ παντός, ψυχὴν μακαριωτάτην. ἐντεῦθεν διέ ἤδη καὶ τοὺς νοητούς ὑμνεῖν θεοὺς, ἐφ' ἅπασι δὲ ἤδη τὸν μέγαν τὸν ἐκεῖ βασιλέα καὶ ἐν τῷ πλήθει μάλιστα τῶν θεῶν τὸ μέγα αὐτοῦ ἐνδεικνυμένους. Οὐ γὰρ τὸ συστῆλαι εἰς ἓν, ἀλλὰ τὸ δεῖξαι πολὺ τὸ θεῖον, ὅσον ἔδειξεν αὐτός, τοῦτό ἐστι δύναμιν θεοῦ εἰδόντων, ὅταν μένων ὅς ἐστι πολλοὺς ποιῆ πάντας εἰς αὐτὸν ἀνηρημένους καὶ δι' ἐκεῖνον καὶ παρ' ἐκείνου ὄντας. There are many encosmic gods, the supreme leader of the world, and Intelligible gods – but no one supraessential and self-subsistent except the One.

This sort of Henotheism, this is the type of theory (and a very advanced one from the Neoplatonic point of view) which is contrasted to the Iamblichean view by Damascius. Iamblichus was the first to posit a *multiplicity* of entities *both* supraessential (beyond being) *and* self-subsistent – these are the true Gods. In this way, the two beforementioned foremost requirements of the religious consciousness are satisfied in a drastic way. But before commenting on this fact, let it be made clear, how singular Iamblichus' position is.

There has lately occurred some discussion concerning the system of *Henads* in Athenian Neoplatonism with regard to whether Iamblichus did or did not inaugurate the entire conception¹³; and the tendency is to deny the ascription of that doctrine to Iamblichus, interpreting the numerous testimonies to the contrary on the part of later Neoplatonists as simply cases of utilizing their own technical language and conceptual apparatus in order to describe the views of their predecessors¹⁴. But the question is not one of terminology; it is a question par excellence of doctrinal content. Did or did not Iamblichus posit many (a number, in the Neoplatonic

¹³ Cf. e.g. Introduction, chapitre I, vol. III of the Budè ed. of Proclus' *Theologia Platonica*.

¹⁴ Aristotle, in his treatment of the Presocratic philosophers, is a good example of such an attitude, which, no doubt was prevalent and indeed very common among the Greeks; it is another question whether it is so misleading as it is usually taken to be.

terminology, of) self-subsistent unities *beyond* being, whether he called them *ἐνάδες* or not? To this question the answer cannot but be affirmative.

The *explicit* testimony of Damascius, is multifariously supported. Two points should be first of all clarified in this respect. (1) Did Iamblichus make a clear-cut distinction between *ἔν* and *ὄν*, between oneness and being?¹⁵ And (2), Did he apply it in connection to the divine transcendence over being for *all* gods? Is it, in other words, for him the (supra)essential character of godhead?

(1) The Iamblichean system of the uppermost, very first, principles is clearly drawn by Damascius in his *De Primis Principiis*. As he states in the extended intricate discussion of the Iamblichean position in the third section of his great work (chapters 42-54), Iamblichus was the only one¹⁶ to posit above the Intelligible Realm (*νοητόν*) *two* (and not merely the usual *one*) principles; vol. I, ch. 43, p. 86.3-6 Ruelle: *μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐκεῖνο προβαλλόμεθα εἰς ἐπίσκεψιν, πότερον δύο εἰσὶν αἱ πρῶται ἀρχαὶ πρὸ τῆς νοητῆς πρώτης τριάδος, ἥτε πάντη ἄρρητος καὶ ἡ ἀσύντακτος πρὸς τὴν τριάδα, καθᾶπερ ἠξίωσεν ὁ μέγας Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τῷ ΚΗῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς Χαλδαϊκῆς τελειοτάτης θεολογίας, ἥ ὡς οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν μετ' αὐτὸν ἐδοκίμασαν, μετὰ τὴν ἄρρητον αἰτίαν καὶ μίαν, εἶναι τὴν πρώτην τριάδα τῶν νοητῶν; ἥ καὶ ταύτης ὑποβησόμεθα τῆς ὑποθέσεως, κατὰ δὲ τὸν Πορφύριον ἐροῦμεν τὴν μίαν τῶν πάντων ἀρχὴν εἶναι τὸν πατέρα τῆς νοητῆς τριάδος;* These two Iamblichean principles are, first the *πάντη ἄρρητος* (absolutely Unspeakable) and second the *ἀσύντακτος πρὸς τὰ νοητά* (Uncoordinated to the Intelligible realm). Damascius presents the arguments in favour of the Iamblichean position in pp. 86.19-89.5¹⁷. Very likely the substance of this argumentation *is* Iamblichean as well; in fact according to 94.22-24, the last (at least) piece of reasoning (88.16 – 89.5) must be ascribed directly to Iamblichus even in its details: *ταῦτα μὲν οὖν καὶ ὕστερον αὐτίκα δὴ μάλα*

¹⁵ The distinction was explicitly drawn by Plato, both in his written works and unwritten doctrines. Since Plotinus, in any case, it could not but do, and it did, play an ever-increasing role in the philosophical speculations of the Neoplatonists.

¹⁶ V. Vol. I, ch. 45, p. 89.6-9: *Ἄρα οὖν οὕτω θετέον δύο τὰς ἐπέκεινα τῶν νοητῶν τριάδων ἀρχάς, καὶ ὅλως εἰπεῖν, τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων, ὡς ἠξίωσεν ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος, ὅσον ἐμέ γε εἰδέναί, μόνος ἀξιώσας τόγε τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν ἀπάντων, ἢ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν ἀκολουθητέον τοῖς μετ' αὐτόν;* The structure of the Intelligible world according to Iamblichus will be explained below. Notice that these two principles are *ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων*, since they are before the first intelligible order itself. – Damascius will follow the rest of the Neoplatonists disagreeing, for once, with Iamblichus, but not with a note of respect and awful reserve: p. 89.9-11: *τὸ μὲν οὖν ἀληθέστατον θεὸς ἂν εἰδείη περὶ τῶν τηλικούτων. εἰ δὲ χρῆ τά γε ἐμοὶ δοκοῦντα εἰπεῖν, οὐ μοι δοκεῖ ταῦτα ἐχυρὰ εἶναι πρὸς τὴν προκειμένην ἀπόδειξιν.*

¹⁷ Damascius' criticism of the arguments is given in 89.10-95.12. His positive substantiation of the common position that only one principle subsists before the first intelligible triad begins at 95.12 and continues to 100.13.

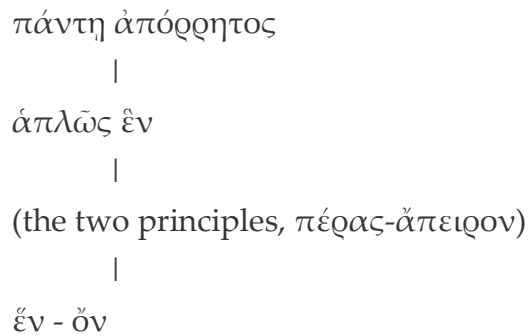
διαρθρώσωμεν ὡς οἶόν τε ἔστιν, νῦν δὲ ἀπλῶς πρὸς τὰ τελευταῖα τῶν ὑπὸ Ἰαμβλίχου ἐπιχειρηθέντων ἐκεῖνο λέγομεν etc.¹⁸ By clear implication the rest of the preceding argumentation is virtually verbally Iamblichean as well. In any case much more can be elicited from Damascius' discussion of these matters (as of numerous others) concerning the Iamblichean system; this is however not the appropriate place to do that. It may suffice here to notice that the main consideration in Iamblichus' thought in positing his two pro-ontic and supra-intelligible principles was the following: for reasons similar to those exposed by Damascius in the first section of his work (chapters 1 to 24) he must have denied of the absolutely First Principle not only being and intelligibility, but everything conceivable, even its being a first or a principle, an origin or a case. Then he must have seen reality being organized in pairs of opposites, the most fundamental of which was identified as being (in Pythagorean and Platonic fashion) the one between *πέρας* and *ἄπειρον*, unity (the One) and indeterminate duality, or fatherhood and potency, to put the same thing into Pythagorean, Platonic and Chaldaic formulation respectively. But such an antithesis necessitated for him the subsistence of a principle of oneness distinct both (on the lower side) from that unity and oneness to which the principle of multiplicity provides a valid opposition and polar opposite on the one hand, and (on the upper side) from the absolutely unspeakable and inconceivable principle on the other; this is what Damascius brings out very strongly in his elaborate discussions of the third section of his work¹⁹.

¹⁸ That in 87.16-7 Damascius presents an argument *on behalf* of the Iamblichean position (πολλῶ δὲ χρῆσεται τις ὑπὲρ Ἰαμβλίχου καὶ τῷ προορηθέντι λόγῳ etc.) need not count against that direct ascription (one might have provocatively thought e.g. of changing the ὑπὸ of the above-quoted 94.23 to ὑπέρ), since it refers apparently only to the argument in 87.16-24. And even this incorporates the tendency to describe the second Principle as *Μονάς* – which tendency is Iamblichean as we shall see. Damascius connects this expression with *μένειν* in a typical piece of Platonic philosophical etymology, and this may be *his* contribution to the formulation there. – However, being aware of the Neoplatonic attitude to these matters, we must assume that, speaking generally, the arguments are inherent in Iamblichus' position and more or less utilized by him, though the arrangement and exact formulation may in places be Damascian. Compare for instance, with reference to the very argument we are considering here (the last one, 88.16 - 89.5), 101.21-23: τοιαῦτα γὰρ ἔλεγε καὶ ὁ τὴν Ἰαμβλίχου πρεσβεύων ἀρχὴν μέσσην τιθεμένην τῶν τε δυεῖν (that is, of the two principles of everything, first two members of the first intelligible triad) καὶ τῆς ἀρρήτου παντελῶς. ἔτι δὲ προσετίθει etc. (Cf. 101.28-102.2: ἅμα γὰρ ὁ λόγος οὗτος ἡξίου καὶ τῆ Ἰαμβλίχου ὑποθέσει συνηγορεῖν καὶ τῆ ὀπωσοῦν ἀντιδιαίρει τῶν δυεῖν ἀρχῶν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τόδε ἂν τις εἴποι τούτοις ἀκόλουθον etc.). What all this shows is the occasional Damascian elaboration of Iamblichus' arguments and positions – something very straightforward and natural, easily also discernible.

¹⁹ The whole issue is well illustrated, e.g. in 98.12-99.7, where Proclus is criticized (he is the *τις* of 98.12 and 20), for having in effect identified the *πάντη ἀπόρητον* with the One: this is where he in fact diverges from Iamblichus' positions – and this must be the meaning of 99.1-3: εἰ τοίνυν ταῦτα καὶ τὰ

We can now properly understand the definitive statement in 103.6-10: καὶ γὰρ ἡ μία ἀρχὴ πρὸ τῶν δυεῖν. αὕτη μὲν οὖν τὸ ἀπλῶς ἔν, ὃ μέσον ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος τίθεται τῶν δύο ἀρχῶν καὶ τῆς παντάπασιν ἀπορρήτου ἐκείνης, αἱ δὲ δύο πέρας φέρε καὶ ἄπειρον, ἧ καὶ εἰ βούλεται τις, ἔν καὶ πολλά, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀντικείμενον ἔν τοῖς πολλοῖς, οὐ τὸ πρὸ ἀμφοῖν καὶ ἀναντίθετον. The absolutely first principle is παντάπασιν ἀπόρρητος; next comes τὸ ἀπλῶς ἔν²⁰, and then the two constitutive principles of the *Intelligible order*, i.e. of *being* – πέρας and ἄπειρον. That the νοητόν is the realm in question, will appear in one moment; it is meanwhile called ἔν-ὄν in contrast, naturally, to τὸ ἀπλῶς ἔν: it is not the Ἐν-simpliciter, but the One-Being, v. 101.13-15: δεῖν οὖν ... προϋποτιθέσθαι τὰς αἰτίας καὶ τοῦ Ἐνὸς ὄντος καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ δυαδικῆς φύσεως τῶν στοιχείων. εἶναι τοίνυν τὴν δυάδα τῶν ἀρχῶν προδηρημένην τῆς εἰρημένης δυάδος αἰτίαν, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ πρὸ τῆς δυάδος ἔν, ὅπερ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος τίθεται πρὸ ἀμφοῖν τοῦ ὄντος Ἐνὸς αἴτιον προϋπάρχειν (οἱ προϋπάρχον).

We have thus, so far, the following scheme of succession for Iamblichus according to Damascius:



But it should immediately be observed that however much Iamblichus used the formula ἔν-ὄν in this connection (the formula was, in any case, portentously available in the second hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*, and Plotinus had already employed it for his own purposes), it appears even from Damascius that his favourite term in this connection was τὸ νοητόν. Thus 145.6-9: πῶς δ' ἄλλως ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος τὸ νοητόν ἐξηγούμενος περὶ τὸ ἔν αὐτό φησιν ὑποστῆναι καὶ ἀνεκφοίτητον εἶναι τοῦ ἑνός; ἢ συννοῶν καὶ αὐτὸς ὃ λέγομεν ἠνωμένον τε καὶ ἔν ὄν, ὡς οὐπω μὲν τῷ

τοιαῦτά τις ὑπολογιζόμενος, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τῆς Ἰαμβλίχου δόξης ἐξιστάμενος, τὸ ἔν ὑποτιθεῖτο μίαν εἶναι ἀρχὴν πρὸ τῶν δυεῖν, ἀπαντησόμεθα πρὸς αὐτὸν etc. If, that is, ἐξιστάμενος is the true reading. But ἐπιστάμενος, the reading of an inferior manuscript, gives a tolerable sense either: in arguing from the polarity of πέρας-ἄπειρον to the necessity of a One which will transcend that ultimate opposition he is treading along the footsteps of Iamblichus. However the first must be the intended meaning.

²⁰ As Proclus says, *In Parmenidem*, 1068.19 Cousin, ἐπέκεινα καὶ τοῦ Ἐνὸς τὸ πρόωπιστον according to Iamblichus – for the Iamblichean position is examined there.

ὄντι ὄν, οὐδ' ἔτι μέντοι ἔν, διὰ μέσον δὲ ἀμφοῖν τεταγμένον. The νοητόν for Iamblichus was subsisting “round” the One (the ἀπλῶς ἔν, of course) having-not-really-left it but being in the process of leaving it ; thus it is not still Pure One, but not *yet* Pure Being either. It was something between the two – but again not as a kind of mixture of the two, as Damascius makes clear immediately below; 145.10-14: πρὸς δὲ τούτοις μετὰ τὸ ἔν ὄν τὴν οὐσίαν ἀντιδιῖστησι τῷ ἐνί, διακρίνας ἄμφω κατὰ τὴν ἀκρότητα τῶν νοερῶν (at the second level below νοητά), ὅπου καὶ τὴν θείαν ἑτερότητα συνεξέφηνεν. ὥστε τὰ πρὸ τούτων οὐκ ἦν διορίσαι ὡς τὸ μὲν αὐτῶν ἔν, τὸ δὲ ὄν ὑποκείμενον τῷ ἐνί, ἀλλ' ἔν ὄν τὸ συναμφοτέρον, οὐχ ὡς μίγμα ἐξ ἑκατέρου, ἀλλ' ὡς μέσον ἀμφοῖν καὶ οἶον προποδισμὸς εἰς τὸ ὄν τοῦ ἐνός. Iamblichus thus did not distinguish and contrapose οὐσία and ἔν in the νοητόν; for this distinction “appears” for the first time on the level of the ἀκρότης τῶν νοερῶν – uppermost pinnacle of the noetic world – which is below the intelligible (νοητόν) world and at a second remove from it ²¹.

²¹ What follows in Damascius is an interpretation in effect of Plato's *Parmenides* 142d-e, but evidently fits the Iamblichean position.

The same doctrine is to be found consistently elsewhere as well²². The crucial point is that for Iamblichus the νοητόν, in being distinguished from the ἓν in the process of procession, refused, so to speak, to remain away from it and separate itself from the one, but stayed attached to it, “freezed” as it were around it thus checking its further ontological procession and existential dispersion; 255.24-256.5: εἴ δὲ καὶ τοῦτό τις ἐννοήσειεν ὃ φησιν ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος, ὅτι περὶ τὸ ἓν ὑπέστη τὸ νοητόν καὶ τὰγαθῶ συμπέφυκε καὶ τῇ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο ροπῇ τῆς ὅλης φύσεως οἶον ἐπάγη, σαφὲς ὅτι σὺν ἐκείνῳ μένει καὶ ἀδιάκριτον καὶ ἀπρόοδον εἰς τὸ ἐκτός. Εἴπερ δὲ ἄρα καὶ ὁπωσοῦν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τινα ἄκραν ἔμφασιν ὑποβάσεως ἐπεδείξατο, καὶ ταύτην οὐκ ἀριθμῶ οὐδὲ πλήθει διακριθεῖσαν οὐδὲ μὴν ἑτερότητι, ἀλλ’ ὃ φησι πάλιν ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος, ἢ ἐκεῖ τριάς οὐκ εἰσὶ τρεῖς μονάδες, οὐδὲ ἐπεγένετο τρισὶ μονάσιν, ἀλλ’ ἔστι μόνον αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος τὸ ἐπιγινόμενον ταῖς μονάσιν. Μᾶλλον δὲ ρητέον, οὐδὲ τὸ εἶδος, οὐπω γὰρ εἶδος ἐκεῖνο, οὐδὲ οἶον στοιχεῖον, οὐδὲν γὰρ τούτων ἐκεῖ, ἀλλὰ μόνον αὐτὸ τὸ τῆς τριάδος ἓν, καὶ ἓν οὐ τὸ διωρισμένον πρὸς οὐσίαν, ἀλλ’ ὃ πρὸ ἀμφοῖν εἶναι λέγομεν ἡνωμένον. Thus, this νοητόν transcends

²² 147.22-148.1: ὅθεν καὶ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ μένειν τὸ νοητόν ἀπεφήνατο, ὅτι μᾶλλον ἡνωται πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ κατ’ αὐτὸ εἰδοποιεῖται ἢ κατὰ τὸ ὄν. Ἀμέλει οὐδὲ διώρισταί τι ἐν αὐτῷ, οὐκ οὐσία, οὐ νοητόν, οὐκ ἄλλο οὐδὲν, ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, ἐν τῷ πάντα εἶναι κατὰ συναίρεσιν. τοῦτο δὲ αὐτο[θ] ἔστι καὶ τὸ ὄντως νοητόν:

πάντ’ ἐστι γὰρ, ἀλλὰ νοητῶς,

φησὶ τὸ λόγιον (from the Chaldaean Oracles). Συνάγει γὰρ εἰς ἓν πάσας ἡμῶν τὰς νοήσεις καὶ ποιεῖ μίαν συνειλημμένην ἐκ πασῶν παντελῆ καὶ ἀδιάκριτον καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡνωμένην νόησιν, οἶαν τοῦ νοητοῦ ἐκείνου τὴν νόησιν εἶναι βούλεται ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος. And then, immediately following up, about the later “occurrence” of the division between οὐσία and ἓν in the uppermost level of the intelligent order of reality, 148.4-9: εἰ δὲ ἐν ἄλλοις ἐνδείκνυται οὐσίαν εἶναι τὴν ἀκρότητα τῶν νοερῶν ἢ ὁ Πλάτων ἢ ὅστισοῦν τῶν θείων ἀνδρῶν, οὐδὲν ἄτοπον. ἢ γὰρ καθαρὰ οὐσία καὶ κατὰ Ἰάμβλιχον ἐν τῇδε ἀνεφάνη τῇ τάξει, εἴη δ’ ἂν αὕτη ἢ νοερὰ ἀκρότης οὐσία νοερὰ οὐσα, τοῦτο δ’ ἔστι διωρισμένη καθ’ αὐτήν, καὶ τῷ ἐνὶ ὑπεστρομένη ὡς ἑτέρα ἑτέρῳ κατὰ τὴν ἐκεῖ ἀναφανείσαν οὐσιώδη καὶ ἐνιαίαν ἑτερότητα. – Cf. also 127.12-13: ὅτι δὲ ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ καὶ περὶ τὸ ἓν τὸ νοητόν οὐσιώται, πολλαχοῦ κηρύττει καὶ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος. ὡς δὲ τὸ ἓν οὐ τοδὶ τὸ διωρισμένον, οὐδὲ ᾧ ἐπιβάλλει τις ἐννοια ἡμετέρα ὡς τινὶ τῶν πάντων, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἐνδειξιν τὴν ἀπὸ [corrected from ἀνὰ codex primarius; ἄνω E Ruelle] τούτου εἰς τὸ πρὸ πάντων ἡμᾶς ἀνάγουσα καὶ ὃ ἔστι πάντων μιὰ ἀπλή φύσις, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὸ ἀπ’ ἐκείνου καὶ περὶ ἐκεῖνο συνιστάμενον καὶ ὄν οὐδὲν ἔστι τῶν πολλῶν, οὐδέ τινι ἡνωμένον, οὐδὲ ὃ ἔστι κατὰ τὸ εἶναι μόνον ὁρώμενον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἐνδειξιν, καὶ τοῦτο τὴν ὁμοῦ πάντα συνηρηκυῖαν καὶ πάντα αὐτοταθεῖσαν (sic codex primaries. The sense is that the intelligible one being is called being indicatively, in that it is the conflation in one simplicity of everything, an oneness that has selfstretched (αὐτοταθεῖσαν from αὐτοτείνω) itself to comprehend in a singularly unified way everything. Failing to understand the Damascian coinage, the inferior mss. have αὐτοθαθεῖσαν or αὐτοπαθεῖσαν or αὐτοταχθεῖσαν. Closer to the required sense is Kopp’s suggestion αὐτοπαθοῦσαν] πρὸ πάντων γε τῶν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ διακρινομένων, ὡς εἴρηται πολλάκις. Καὶ <ὡς> ὄν [Ruelle, pro ὄν, which if correct should be interpreted as ὄν <τρόπον>, Kopp] τοῖνυν ὄντα καλοῦμεν τὰ πάντα, οὕτως ὄν ἐκεῖνο πρὸ πάντων.

the distinction between ἔν and οὐσία. Cf. also 151.5-10: εἰ δὲ... τὴν τρίτην ἀρχὴν ὡς ἠνωμένην κατὰ τὸ ὄν ἐτίθεμεν καὶ τοῦτο διπτὸν ἐποιοῦμεν, τὸ μὲν οὐσιῶδες τὸ δὲ ἐνιαῖον, ἀλλὰ νῦν εἰς τὸ ἔν πρὸ ἀμφοῖν τὰ δύο συμπτύξαντες καὶ κατωτέρω τοῦ νοητοῦ τὰ διωρισμένα δύο τάξαντες, τῷ τε Πλάτωνι σύμφωνα λέγειν ἐδόξαμεν καὶ τῷ νοητῷ καὶ πάντα ἠνωμένῳ καὶ περὶ τὰγαθὸν συνεσπειραμένον, κατὰ τὸν Ἰάμβλιχον τὰ σεμνότατα τῶν νοημάτων ἀνατεθείκαμεν. Pure οὐσία appears, as was said above, further down, at the summit of the νοερά. (Described also by Damascius as the summit of Ζωή, e.g. 293.17-294.4; esp. 293.19-20; 27; where see the rationale. But the realm of Ζωή being the realm of νοητὰ καὶ νοερά, it comes to the same thing, in the sense that οὐσία is manifested after the domain of the intelligible one-being).

The νοητόν is not defined in its peculiarity of subsistence by οὐσία, by true being which has been distinguished from the unity and oneness which grants to it subsistence – or if one wishes to express himself in a way which associates οὐσία with the νοητόν (following a venerable indeed tradition starting with Parmenides), he should be careful to observe that this ἀπλῶς οὐσία should be construed as transcending that distinction. Iamblichus ascribed to this νοητόν a unity second only to that of the Ἐν-simpliciter (the πάντα ἀπόρρητον, precisely by virtue of its total dissociation from everything that comes “after” it, is not even considered as an oneness) – and explicitly argued against Porphyry that one should not introduce into the νοητόν any distinction, not even the primal one between oneness and being, ἔν and ὄν²³.

It should be recalled here, that despite its being tied up to the One in its proximate vicinity, so to speak, and therefore despite its extremely Unitarian character, the νοητόν does involve the first trace of multiplicity. Iamblichus ingeniously tries to convey some notion of such multiplicity preceding any

²³ V. 291.23-292.11: αἰσχυναίμην δ' ἄν καὶ τὸν θεῖον Ἰάμβλιχον εἶ τι περὶ ταῦτα (i.e. concerning the articulation and hierarchies of the first orders of reality) καινοτομοίην, ἄνδρα τῶν θείων πραγμάτων ἄλλων τε καὶ τῶν νοερῶν ἄριστον ἐξηγητήν. δοκεῖ τοίνυν ἐμοίγε, κατὰ ἰχνη τῆς ἐκείνου πολυθεάμονος γνώμης, τὸν μὲν νοητὸν κόσμον ὑποτίθεσθαι τὸν ἠνωμένον ἐκεῖνον βυθόν, οὐκ ὄντως οὔσαν οὐσίαν περιέχοντα, τὴν διωρισμένην πρὸς τὸ ὀχούμενον ἔν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀπλῶς οὐσίαν, καὶ οὔτε ἐνιαῖαν οὔτε μικτήν, ἀλλὰ μόνον οὐσίαν μίαν πρὸ ἐκατέρως. εἴ τις οὖν θεῶν, ἢ εἴ τις ἀνδρῶν, ἐν οὐσίᾳ τὸν νοητὸν ὑπεστήσατο κόσμον, ἐν τῇ ἠνωμένῃ ταύτῃ, πᾶς ἀκουέτω, συνομολογῶν μὲν τοῖς εἰποῦσι κατὰ τοσοῦτον, διακαθαίρων δὲ τὴν οὐσίαν εἰς τὴν ἀπλῶς ἐκείνην καὶ ἠνωμένην καὶ παντελῶς ἀδιάκριτον. καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ πάντες οἱ ταῦτα λέγοντες ἐν τῇ πάντων ἀδιακρίτῳ ἐνώσει τὸν νοητὸν ὑπέθεντο, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀμφισβητεῖ περὶ τούτου, καὶ μάρτυς ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος δευτέραν τῷ νοητῷ μετὰ τὴν μίαν τῶν ὄλων ἀρχὴν (this one principle of everything which enjoys supreme and absolute oneness is not the ultimate Unspeakable Subsistence, but the One which is the one-everything) παρεχόμενος ἔνωσιν, καὶ περὶ τὸ ἔν ὑφεστάναι αὐτὸ πανταχοῦ διατεινόμενος, καὶ πρὸς τὸν Πορφυρίτην (i.e. Porphyry) πολλὰς τοιαύτας ἀντιρροήσεις ποιούμενος.

distinction, even the primal one between oneness and being. Thus Damascius, 255.27-256.2 in the above quoted passage. Cf. 299.26-27: τίς οὖν αὕτη ἡ τριάς (sc. ἡ τοῦ νοητοῦ); οὐ τρεῖς μονάδες, ὡς φησιν ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος, ἀλλὰ μόνον τὸ εἶδος ἄϋλον ἄνευ τῶν μονάδων ὀρώμενον. οὐ μέντοι οὐδὲ τὸ εἶδος (τίς γὰρ ἄν εἶη περιγραφὴ ἐν τῷ ἡνωμένῳ;) ἀλλὰ τὸ ἓν αὐτό, ὅπερ ἄνθος ἐστὶ τοῦ εἶδους. ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῦτο τὸ ἓν, ὃ πέφυκεν ἐπανθεῖν ἐνὶ τῶν εἰδῶν, οἷον τῇ τριάδι, οὐδέ γε ὃ πᾶσιν ὁμοῦ τοῖς εἶδεσιν. τοῦ γὰρ διακεκριμένου ἑνὸς τοῦτο ἐστίν, ὥστε οὐδὲ ὃ τοῦ διακρινομένου ἐστὶν εἶη ἄν τῆς ἀδιακριτοῦ τριάδος τὸ ἓν. ἀλλὰ σημαίνει πάλιν ἡ τριάς τοῦ ἡνωμένου τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὸ μέσον καὶ τὴν τελευτήν, ἀλλ' ἡνωμένα καὶ ταῦτα.

This first trace of a distinction without distinction Iamblichus expressed by the triad through which Plato asks us to approach the ἀγαθόν in *Philebus*²⁴: σύμμετρον-ἀληθές-καλόν; he naturally found in oneness the essence and substantiating character of goodness – following unimpeachable Platonic tradition. Thus Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, III (p. 43.19-44.5 Westerink, Budé): ἐνταῦθα τοίνυν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ μικτῷ (Iamblichus and Damascius would not call “mixed” the intelligible one-being, unless in the sense carefully circumscribed above) τὰ τρία ταῦτα πέφηνε τὸ σύμμετρον, τὸ ἀληθές, τὸ καλόν. καὶ τὸ μὲν σύμμετρον τοῦ ἓν εἶναι τὸ ὄν αἴτιον τῷ μικτῷ, τὸ δὲ ἀληθές τοῦ ὄντως εἶναι, τὸ δὲ καλὸν τοῦ νοητὸν εἶναι. νοητὸν ἄρα καὶ ὄντως ὄν καὶ ἐνοειδέστατον (better than the ἐνοειδέστερον of the mss) τὸ πρώτως ὄν (again not strictly for Iamblichus and Damascius, since the first pure being appears further down in the ontological order of presupposition and derivation). καὶ συνῆπται μὲν ὁ νοῦς πρὸς αὐτὸ κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ καλὸν οἰκειώσιν, μετέχει δὲ ἕκαστα (so with Saffrey and Westerink, or ἕκαστον, in place of the transmitted ἕκαστος) τοῦ εἶναι διότι τῷ ὄντι (or ὄντως, better than the mss. τοῦ ὄντος; cf. v. 23) ἐστὶν ὄν, ἀκρότατον δὲ ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐκεῖνο διότι τῷ ἀγαθῷ συνήνεται. ταύτας (rather than the ms. ταῦτα) δὴ μοι δοκεῖ τὰς τρεῖς τοῦ ὄντος αἰτίας καὶ ὁ θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος κατιδὼν ἐν τρισὶ τούτοις, ἀφορίζει τὸ νοητὸν συμμετρία καὶ ἀληθεία καὶ κάλλει, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τοὺς νοητοὺς θεοὺς ἐκφαίνειν ἐν τῇ Πλατωνικῇ Θεολογίᾳ.²⁵ Cf. also p. 48.25-29.1: ὃ δὴ καὶ τὸν θεῖον Ἰάμβλιχον λέγειν ἀνέπεισεν ὡς ἄρα τὸ νοητὸν πᾶν ἐν τρισὶ τούτοις ὁ Πλάτων ἀφορίζει.²⁶

²⁴ ἐν προθύροις εἶναι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, *Philebus* 64C; cf. 64A-65A.

²⁵ The implication as to the ontic character of the first μικτόν (Proclus' favourite expression for the ἓν-ὄν) contrasts well to the Damascian insistences above; once more Damascius is more philo-Iamblichean. Yet caution is needed: v. vol. I, p. 54.14-15 (Westerink, ed. Budé): (with reference to the hypotheses in the Platonic *Parmenides*) ἐν μὲν τοῖς τρισὶ τοῖς πρώτοις συμπεράσμασιν ἀδιάκριτον μένει τοῦ ὄντος τὸ ἓν etc. Proclus emphasizes the insistence of Iamblichus on a “later” ontological appearance of being, further away from the One. More specifically, the articulation of being, the highest forms of being, supreme ideas, the genera of being, are manifested at the end of the intelligent

It should be born in mind that such a distinction and multiplicity as this one between the three monads of intelligibility is, as Iamblichus said, the mere form, so to speak, of distinguishedness and multiplicity without its actuality. Not even the form of it, but rather its unified principle. True eidetic distinction and multiplicity, even in its most abstract and general form, namely as categorial distinction of the highest γένη τοῦ ὄντος and the consequent entire articulation of being, “appears” and manifests itself as subsistence only at the very end of the World of Intelligence,

order. V. I, 11, vol. I p. 52.3-9: ... ὁ θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τῇ Περί θεῶν πραγματεία τοὺς τὰ γένη τοῦ ὄντος ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ἀποτίθεμένους ἠτιάσατο. καὶ γὰρ τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ποικιλίαν πορρωτέρω βεβλήσθαι τοῦ ἑνός. ποῦ τοίνυν ταῦτα πρῶτως ὑποτίθεσθαι προσήκει διδάσκων ἐπήνεγκε: πρὸς γὰρ τῷ τέλει τῆς νοεράς τάξεως ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκεῖ θεῶν ταῦτα παράγεται.

²⁶ Cf. further *Anonymous Commentaria in Philebum*, 243 (p. 115, Westerink, who ascribes the work to Damascius): ὅτι καὶ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος τὰς τρεῖς μονάδας φησὶν ἀπὸ τὰγαθοῦ προελθούσας κοσμησαὶ τὸν νοῦν. ἄδηλον δὲ ὅποιον νοῦν, πότερον τὸν μετὰ τὴν ζωὴν ἢ τὸν ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ νοῦν πατρικὸν ὑμνούμενον. ἔνιοι γὰρ οὐ τοῦτον, ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνον ἤκουσαν. καὶ μὴν ἐν τοῖς Ὀρφικοῖς ἐν τῷ μυθευμένῳ ὡς τὰς τρεῖς ἐκφανῆναι μονάδας φησὶν. The subject of φησὶν is the lecturer and author of these commentaria, whose notes as taken down probably by a pupil are presented in the actual Commentaria. He may be Damascius. The congruence of Orphic tradition with Platonism and the Chaldaean Oracles is characteristic for the Iamblichean – Damascian school. The Orphic Egg corresponds symbolically to the Chaldaean Intelligence of the Father, and this with the Nous of the Noetic order, the third moment of the first intelligible triad. Iamblichus held, as we know, this position. Hence the ambivalence in the above quoted passage is strange and suspicious. Unless, the point is that the three monads (symmetry, truth, beauty) appear in unity in the intelligible order, and this unity being differentiated in the intermediate order articulates the world of being in the intelligent order. (The Plotinian position as to these μονάδες, esp. beauty, (V, 9, 2, 24-27) is much simpler: nous in itself is beauty: καὶ πότερον δὴ ἐνταῦθα δεῖ στήναι ὡς πρῶτον, ἢ καὶ νοῦ ἐπέκεινα δεῖ ἵεναι, νοῦς δὲ προέστηκε μὲν ἀρχῆς τῆς πρώτης ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὡσπερ ἐν προθύροις τὰγαθοῦ ἀπαγγέλλων ἐν αὐτῷ (sc. τῷ νῷ) τὰ πάντα, ὡσπερ ἐκεῖνου τύπος μᾶλλον ἐν πλήθει ἐκεῖνου πάντη μένοντος ἐν ἐνί. The Good as supremest principle and then the second one, the Nous as a single hypostasis without the elaboration of the complex theory of procession). – In Proclus *Commentaria in Parmenidem*, 1090.13-25 (Cousin²) the view exposed must be Iamblichus’. The question is about which multiplicity is negated of the One in the First Hypothesis of the Platonic *Parmenides* (137C); after a simpler view (1089.21-30), the Plotinian one is introduced (ἄλλοι δ’ ἔτι σεμνότεροι τούτων 1089.30 sqq.), and then the Iamblichean significantly by the formula: ἄλλοι τοίνυν καὶ τούτων (sc. τοῦ Πλωτίνου) ἐνθεαστικώτεροι. The νοηταὶ μονάδες are, I think, the three mentioned above, which generate, at a lower level, that of the intelligent order, the entire variety of the “noeric” world, the intellectual order, which is ideal being in all its articulation. – Damascius, *de Primis Principiis*, vol. I, pp.305.25-306.2 Ruelle: τοιγαροῦν καὶ Σωκράτης ἐν τῷ Φιλήβῳ πρὸς τὸ ἐν ἐκεῖνο μὴ δυνηθεὶς ἀντωπῆσαι, διὰ τριάδος αὐτὸ παρεδήλωσεν τῆς ἐν προθύροις αὐτοῦ τεταγμένης, ὡς φησι, πάντως ὅτι ἠνωμένῳ κατιδῶν μαρμαίρουσαν τὴν τριάδα κατὰ τὴν μίαν αὐγὴν τῆς ἐνάδος. ὅλως δὲ ὡς τὰ ἄλλα καὶ τὴν τριάδα κατὰ ἔνδειξιν ἐκεῖ ἀνάγομεν. Both the doctrine and its expression is definitively Iamblichean because of the formulation πάντως ὅτι ἠνωμένῳ ... τῆς ἐνάδος (cf. the above quoted passages 255.27 sqq. and 299.26-7). Notice also the characteristic κατὰ ἔνδειξιν. And the style is typically Iamblichean: μαρμαίρουσαν, αὐγὴν τῆς ἐνάδος.

there generated by the appropriate gods; in fact Iamblichus explicitly condemned those who would posit the γένη τοῦ ὄντος in the Intelligible World on the ground that their very multiplicity and variegation argues for their greater distance, so to speak, from the absolute One; v. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, Vol. I p. 52.2-9 (Westerink): Ἐκ τρίτων...παράγεται (v. the passage quoted in n. 25). In Book V, p. 313.13 (Portus), we must accordingly correct νοητῶν to νοερῶν, reading καὶ ὁ τε θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος ὀρθῶς που φησιν ἐν τῷ πέρατι τῶν νοερῶν (not νοητῶν) θεῶν ἐκφαίνεσθαι τὰ γένη... τοῦ ὄντος etc. Since the Demiurge is the chief god at the end of the νοερά διακόσμησις (in so far as the νοεροὶ πατέρες are concerned [V. Proclus *Commentaria in Timaeum*, Vol. I p. 308.19 sqq. Diehl: περὶ γὰρ... γράφων (sc. ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος) μετὰ... δημιουργῷ τάξι. My addition <νοητῶν καὶ> must be considered certain (cf. 309.16); hence Iamblichus did also postulate (whether in the same formula is immaterial) an order of hypostases between the Νοητόν and the Νοερὸν διάκοσμον. (This is consonant to his fully developed distinction between ὄν-ζωή-νοῦς, cf. Proclus *In Timaeum*, Vol. III p. 47.8-11). What follows in Proclus is easily recognizable, by its peculiar additive style, as Iamblichean (308.23-309.7): τρεῖς γὰρ εἶναι... κρίνειν, etc.]), we should expect that he must be associated with the γένη τοῦ ὄντος, and indeed this is what we are told by Damascius in his *Commentariade Primis Principiis in Platonis Parmenidem*, vol. II p. 149.25-28 Ruelle: Δεύτερον δὲ (sc. ἀναγκαῖον ζητῆσαι), εἰ ἐν τῷ δημιουργῷ τὰ γένη τοῦ ὄντος ἴδρυνται, ὡς ἡξίου ὁ μέγας Ἰάμβλιχος, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ὁ τούτου ὀπαδὸς Συριανός, ὡς νῦν ἱστορεῖ καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ καθηγεμόνι συνέπεσθαι ὁμολογῶν, καίτοι ἄλλοθι πολλαχοῦ καὶ ἐν τοῖς πρὸ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ ταῦτα τιθέμενος²⁷. (The αὐτός is Proclus, who, we are told, here follows as he admits his Master although he in fact disagreed with him in other works²⁸). Similarly Proclus, *In Timaeum*, Vol. I, p. 336.17 sqq. confirms the fact (though he naturally accepts it only with reservations): ὥστε

²⁷ For Syrianus as genuine Iamblichean v. Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, (*Photius* 36 + *Suda s.v. Συριανός*, IV 479.2 Adler): Ἰσίδωρος ὁ φιλόσοφος, ὡς φησι Δαμάσκιος, ... τῶν μὲν παλαιάτατα φιλοσοφησάντων Πυθαγόραν καὶ Πλάτωνα θειάζει, ... προσεῖχε δὲ τὸν νοῦν ἐς τὰ μάλιστα μετὰ Πλάτωνα τῷ Ἰαμβλίχῳ καὶ τοῖς Ἰαμβλίχου φίλοις δὴ καὶ ὀπαδοῖς, ὧν ἄριστον εἶναι δισχυρίζετο τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πολίτην Συριανόν, τὸν Πρόκλου διδάσκαλον. Proclus himself acknowledges the fact, *Commentaria in Timaeum*, vol. III, 174.13ff (Diehl).

²⁸ Since the standard opinion of Proclus, as expressed par excellence in his *Theologia Platonica*, is much the same an effect as the one advocated by Damascius in his reply to this ἀπορία (151.22-152.6), we must suppose that Proclus followed Syrianus and Iamblichus in his *Commentaria* on the second hypothesis of Parmenides, now lost. The νῦν (= in this place) of 149.26 means this virtually certain. Another proof, if proof was needed, that Proclus did write a complete comm. on Parmenides – more in any case than we do know posses. – As to Damascius' accusation, we must in fairness notice that Proclus explicitly wanted to bridge the difference between the two positions; cf., e.g., *Th. Pl.*, Book V p. 313.2 (Portus) to the end of chapter 30.

καὶ ὁ τὸν Δημιουργὸν λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ παράδειγμα περιέχειν ἔστιν ὅπη φησὶν ὀρθῶς, καθάπερ ὁ θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος διατάσσεται, etc.²⁹ We further possess a fragment from Iamblichus' commentary in *Timaeum* preserved by Proclus in his *Commentaria in Timaeum*, vol. I p. 307.19-25, which runs as follows: τὴν ὄντως οὐσίαν καὶ τῶν γιγνομένων ἀρχὴν καὶ τὰ νοητὰ τοῦ κόσμου παραδείγματα, ὃν γε καλοῦμεν νοητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ὅσας αἰτίας προὔρχειν τιθέμεθα τῶν ἐν τῇ φύσει πάντων, ταῦτα πάντα ὁ νῦν ζητούμενος θεὸς δημιουργὸς ἐν ἐνὶ συλλαβῶν ὑφ' ἑαυτὸν ἔχει. The Demiurge keeps together in unity under him the entire world of Platonic ideas: the ὄντως οὐσία, the intelligible exemplary of the things in this world, the sources and causes of all natural phenomena. The problem that Proclus envisages with regard to this passage is one of his own making. (He even thinks that Iamblichus agreed on that crucial issue with Plotinus! Clearly, as is reported, Proclus' commentary on *Timaeus* is a youthful work). He wonders whether Iamblichus wishes to maintain that the entire spectrum of hypostases between the One and this World is the intelligible realm identical with the Demiurge; he is misled into thinking of this possibility by Iamblichus' expressions ὄντως οὐσία, νοητὰ παραδείγματα, νοητὸς κόσμος, which, for Proclus, signify the domain of the Intelligible just after the One. Thus his only way out of *his* difficulty is to suppose that Iamblichus merely expresses himself somehow loosely (cf. 308.17-19) and really means that, since everything is in anything in its own mode, the νοητὰ are in a certain mode in the νοερός Δημιουργός (307.25 sqq.). – But there is no problem in reality; Iamblichus means by νοητὰ here ordinary Platonic Ideas, the whole realm of *true being* (ὄντως οὐσία) *in all its articulations*. For him this ontic determinateness and distinctness “appears”, as we have seen, very “late” in the ladder of reality – just by the Demiurge.

As we saw, the primal distinction, the bifurcation of the unitary and “homogeneous” (in the Parmenidean Presocratic sense) world of one-being into being and unity (unity unifying being and being unified by unity), takes place at the summit of the νοερόν, consequently upon, and “after”, the νοητόν. This first being, in its distinctness from the oneness which unifies it and constitutes it as a something (= a not-Nothing), is called καθαρὰ οὐσία (Damascius, *de Primis Principiis*, Vol. I,

²⁹ Cf. also *ibid.* p. 431.23 sqq.: μέσος δὲ ἀμφοῖν (sc. Ἀττικοῦ καὶ Πορφυρίου) ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος, συνάπτων καὶ ἐνίζων τῷ δημιουργῷ τὸ παράδειγμα διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν τὴν τοῦ νοῦ πρὸς τὸ νοητόν. The νοητόν here must be the νοητόν which the νοῦς actually νοεῖ, the correlative νοητόν to the Intellect, not the transcendent νοητόν which, as we saw, does not even possess pure being, let alone its explicit eidetic articulation, but is beyond it. Proclus apparently confuses the issue, syncretistically conflating Iamblichus and Plotinus, a mark of the youthful origin of his work on the *Timaeus*.

p. 148.6) or by implication ὄντως οὐσα οὐσία (ibid. p. 291.26)³⁰. The νοητόν is beyond such bifurcation, as Damascius explicitly maintains; vol. I, p. 108.23-109.1: (there is no distinction and differentiation there, not even the ultimate one between existence, power of existence and intellection of power (ὑπαρξίς καὶ δύναμις τῆς ὑπάρξεως καὶ νόησις τῆς δυνάμεως), not the fundamental one between (ontological) cause and effect) οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀκρότητι τῶν νοητῶν οὐδὲ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἠξίωσεν εἶναι διωρισμένην ἀρχήν. μία γὰρ ἡ νοητὴ συνέχεια πάντων τῶν τοιούτων, οὐδὲ συνέχεια ἢ ἀντικειμένη τῷ διορισμῷ. πάλιν γὰρ ἂν εἴη διαίρεσις ἄλλη πρὸ ἀμφοῖν, καὶ ἔτι πρὸ πάντων ἔνωσις ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς <ἦτις> ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ περὶ τὸ ἓν οἶον πέπηγεν. The ἀκρότης τῶν νοητῶν is here probably the lowermost grade of the Intelligible realm. Notice also the already quoted Iamblichian formulation about the “freezing” of the νοητόν in its entirety round the One. Iamblichus even interpreted the two products of the division of the ἐν-ὄν in the second hypothesis of the Platonic *Parmenides*, as being each ἐν-ὄν again, not the one ἐν and the other ὄν. Damascius elaborates the point *De Primis Principiis in Parmenidem*, Vol. II p. 53.28-54.6, especially 54.4-6: οὕτω καὶ ὁ μέγας Ἰάμβλιχος

³⁰ V. the already quoted crucial passages p. 148.4-9 and pp. 291.23-292.11. – The Iamblichean doctrine (which Proclus testifies) that the πρῶτιστον ὄν is the ἀεὶ ὄν does not, I think, really relate to the same thing. The main relevant Proclean testimony is as follows; *In Timaeum*, Vol. I, p. 230.5-8: ἀλλ’ ὁ θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος ἐμβριθῶς διαμάχεται τῷ λόγῳ, τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν κρεῖττον καὶ τῶν γενῶν τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τῶν ιδεῶν ἀποφαινόμενος καὶ ἐπ’ ἄκρῳ τῆς νοητῆς οὐσίας ιδρύων αὐτὸ πρῶτως μετέχον τοῦ ἑνός. The νοητὴ οὐσία here refers to the entire breadth of the suprap psychic world (thus including the relatively lower realms of Life and Intellect) as is clear from the immediately preceding use of the expression νοητὸς κόσμος (230.4) to cover everything suprap psychic including the divine Intellect (cf. also p. 229.11sq.). The ἄκρον τῆς νοητῆς οὐσίας is consequently the uppermost summit of the suprasensible domains – just “below” the One, as is evident from the following discussion (p. 230.8 sq.), v. especially 230.31-231.9. (Proclus criticism of the view is based on the distinction between πρῶτιστον ὄν as the ἐν-ὄν on the one hand and ἀεὶ ὄν on the other; v. 231.9 sq.). It follows that the Iamblichean ἀεὶ ὄν is precisely his νοητόν, and that the formulation πρῶτως μετέχον τοῦ ἑνός is not to be construed in the Damascian sense of a distinct pure being participating in the One, but rather as the Proclean way of signifying a first self-cancelling differentiation from the One (which does not as yet amount to the separation of pure being from oneness) – a differentiation to a certain extent annulling itself in that the differentiated refuses, so to speak, to proceed further away from its source and freezes round it. – This interpretation is supported by the two other Proclean testimonies. Thus, in *In Timaeum*, 232.5 sq., Proclus maintains that the ἀεὶ ὄν covers the entire domain from αὐτοόν downwards to the μερικὸς νοῦς, ἀλλ’ οὐχί... ὡς Ἰάμβλιχος ἔλεγεν, οἶον... τοῦ ὄντος. Proclus clearly takes the ἀκρότατον τῶν ὄντων to be his ἐν-ὄν i.e. the first subsistence after the One and the dual principles of πέρας and ἄπειρον. And in p. 308.12-13: πῶς δὲ... ἐλέγομεν (sc. according to Iamblichus). – The ὅπερ ὄν to which the παράδειγμα of the World is identified by Iamblichus (as Proclus says, *In Timaeum*, Vol. I p. 321.26-30) is certainly “lower” than both the πρῶτιστον ὄν and the καθαρὰ οὐσία – it must be the world of Ideas associated to the Demiurgic Νοῦς (cf. *In Timaeum*, vol. I, p. 336.17 and 327.25; also Damascius, vol. II p. 149.25, and what has been said above).

ἐνόησεν τὸ ἔν ὄν ἐν μέρει ἐκάτερον, κατὰ τὸ πάντη ἡνωμένον καὶ ἀδιάκριτον τῆς νοητῆς γεννήσεως. [Cf. also vol. I, p. 145.6-9;15-23. The opposition to the φιλόσοφοι (Syrianus and Proclus are mainly intended) is more clear in p. 144.24-27: οὕτως ἄρα καὶ τὸ ἔν ὄν οὐ σύνθετόν τι οὐδὲ δύο αὐτά, τὸ μὲν ἡγούμενον τὸ δὲ ἐπόμενον, ὡς οἱ φιλόσοφοι ἐξηγοῦνται, ἀλλὰ μία φύσις ἀμφοῖν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ <τε> ἐνός καὶ τοῦ [τε] ὄντος, ἤδη μὲν χαλάσασα τῆς τοῦ ἐνός ἀπλότητος, οὕτω δὲ προβαλλομένη τὸ τοῦ ὄντος συναίρεμα]. Iamblichus therefore steadfastly refused to accept any actual bifurcation of the νοητόν into being and unity distinct from each other. Indeed, probably in consonance to this, he distinguished clearly between εἶναι (associated evidently to being as such) and ὑπάρχειν (reserved naturally to refer to the existence of a pre-being hypostasis, of the ante-being cause of being); v. Damascius, *De Primis Principiis*, vol. I, p. 132.12-18: ἄρα οὖν ἄλλο παρὰ τὸ εἶναι τὸ ὑπάρχειν, ὡς δοκοῦσι ποιεῖν οἱ φιλόσοφοι, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἄλλοθί τε πολλαχοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ περὶ Θεῶν; ἢ τὸ μὲν εἶναι τῆς οὐσίας παρωνυμία, ἢ δὲ οὐσία, κἄν τὴν πρὸ δυνάμεως λάβης καὶ ἐνεργείας, ἐκ τριῶν συνουσίωται ιδιωμάτων, τοῦ ὑποστατικοῦ, ὃ καὶ ὑπάρχειν καλοῦμεν, καὶ ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ εἶναι, τοῦ δυναμικοῦ, ὅπερ τὸ γονομόν ἐστι υἷς ὑπάρξεως, τοῦ ἐνεργητικοῦ, ὅπερ ἤδη πρὸς τὰ ἐκτὸς ἀποτείνεται [καὶ] τὴν ἑαυτοῦ χρείαν ἐπιδεικνύμενον etc³¹.

I shall refrain from pursuing the matter further since it is not my purpose to reconstruct here the Iamblichean theory of First Principles in its details. Enough has been said to make clear that the distinction between ἔν and ὄν played a cardinal role in his system – indeed this is the most fundamental and primal distinction that is made in reality or can be made in thought. Furthermore, the highest principles transcend the domain of this distinction, each remaining in an unperturbed, though graduated, oneness to itself and unity with each other.

2) And thus we come to the second main point. That being so, did the all-important distinction played an essential role in Iamblichus' account of the divine nature?

One should expect an affirmative answer anyway, since in the context of Greek Philosophy, Theory of First Principles and Theology coincide. And the expectation is definitely confirmed by Iamblichus himself in his *De Mysteriis*. The

³¹ That Iamblichus employed the distinction in his *Περὶ Θεῶν* must be significant; as we shall see he identified *divinity with oneness*.

work is itself applied Theology, and it has a specific polemic character; thus we should not expect to find in it the Iamblichean higher Theology fully elaborated and argued. But fortunately we possess a very characteristic passage, I, 19, 59.15-60.8: Ἐπὶ δέ γε τῶν θεῶν ἐν τῇ ἐνώσει πάντων ἐστὶν ἡ τάξις, τὰ τε πρῶτα καὶ δευτέρα αὐτῶν γένη καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὰ φυόμενα πολλὰ ἐν ἐνὶ τὰ ὅλα συνυφέστηκε, τό τε πᾶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐστὶ τὸ ἓν, ἀρχή τε καὶ μέσα καὶ τέλη κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν συνυπάρχει. ὡστ' ἐπὶ γε τούτων οὐδὲ χρῆ ζῆτεῖν πόθεν τὸ ἓν ἅπασιν ἐφήκει. αὐτὸ γὰρ ὃ τί ποτέ ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸ εἶναι, τοῦτο αὐτῶν ὑπάρχει τὸ ἓν. καὶ τὰ μὲν δευτέρα μένει κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ τῶν πρώτων, τὰ δὲ πρῶτα δίδωσι τοῖς δευτέροις τὴν ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ἐνωσιν, πάντα δ' ἐν ἀλλήλοις κοινωνίαν ἔχει τῆς ἀδιαλύτου συμπλοκῆς. What more conclusive could we wish than the formula (as advanced as late Athenian Neoplatonism): αὐτὸ γὰρ ὃ τί ποτέ ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸ εἶναι, τοῦτο αὐτῶν ὑπάρχει τὸ ἓν. *The very nature and peculiar character of divinity consists in oneness*³². Whether Iamblichus called the gods ἐνάδες accordingly or not is immaterial. It is logical that he referred to them in this way; but in any case he did introduce, as we saw, the doctrine of divine henads, *in essence if not in name*.

In fact it is this very doctrine which provides the philosophical foundation for Iamblichus' unique interpretation of the first hypothesis of *Parmenides* as being about *gods* no less than about the Supreme God³³. Proclus, in criticizing this view, gives an

³² Cf. I, 8, 27.13-15: καὶ τὸ μὲν ὄντως ὄν καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὸ ἀσώματον πανταχοῦ ἐστὶν ὅπουπερ ἄν βούληται, τὸ δὲ θεῖον καὶ πάντα ὑπερέχον, εἰ ὑπερέχεται ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ ὅλου κόσμου τελειότητος καὶ ὡς ἐν μέρει τινὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ περιείληπται, ἐλαττοῦται ἄρα καὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα μεγέθους. θεῖον is clearly above the ὄντως ὄν and καθ' ἑαυτὸ ἀσώματον.

³³ This supreme god of the first Parmenidean hypothesis is the One, not counting, of course, the πάντη ἀπόρητος ἀρχή. That this last Ultimate Principle is to be left out of the class of hypostases referred to in the Parmenidean hypotheses is also the view of Damascius; v. *De Primis Principiis*, vol. I, p. 37.26-38.10 (cf. also p. 7.15-8.5). – For evidence concerning Iamblichus' view v. Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 1054.37-1055.2 (Cousin): οἱ δὲ μετὰ τούτους (Proclus has already distinguished two general plans of interpretation for the sequence of the Platonic hypotheses in *Parmenides*, (1) 1052.31-1053.37 and (2) 1053.37-1054.37; now he starts describing a third way) κατ' ἄλλον τρόπον εισάγοντες τὰ ὄντα (in two mss. the view there mentioned is ascribed to Iamblichus, and this is rendered certain by a number of confirmations on the part of Damascius for specific points), τὴν μὲν πρώτην (sc. hypothesis) λέγοντες εἶναι περὶ θεοῦ καὶ θεῶν (οὐ γὰρ μόνον περὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ πασῶν τῶν θείων ἐνάδων αὐτὴν ποιεῖσθαι τὸν λόγον etc. There is a lacuna unfortunately at the end of the passage, to be supplied by something like: ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ πασῶν τῶν θείων ἐνάδων αὐτὴν ποιεῖσθαι τὸν λόγον <καὶ ἰδίᾳ περὶ τῶν> νοητῶν <θεῶν· τὴν δὲ δευτέραν περὶ παντός τοῦ νοεροῦ πλάτους> τὴν δὲ τρίτην etc. *For the first part of my addition* v. Proclus *Theologia Platonica*, Book III, 23 (p. 82.4-22 Westerink, ed. Budé), where it is implied that Iamblichus claimed that the negations in the first hypothesis apply to God and Gods in general, that is to the common superessential divinity of Gods, whereas the negated attributes refer to the intelligible gods in particular, i.e. the gods specifically associated to the Intelligible realm. Through the negation of attributes pertaining to the specifically Intelligible implicit multiplicity (the highest realm next to the One), the absolute transcendence of the

account of it which confirms what has been said above concerning the henadic nature of gods according to Iamblichus (confirms not merely as to the words, but regarding the fundamental requirements of the Iamblichean system as well) *In Parm.* 1066.16-28: Ἀνάγκη τοίνυν... τῶν οὐσιῶν (the passage quoted in the preceding note).

All Gods, and not only the Supreme Divine Principle, are thus beyond being – they are the first existences, all supraessential. In this way, their absolute transcendence, in all their multiplicity, is radically safeguarded. Consequently, they occupy the first rank of hypostatical reality, superior to even pure being, let alone to intelligences, ideas, souls or things of this World. This satisfies in a drastic and fundamental way the two former requirements of the ancient religious consciousness, as above analysed: *divine transcendence* and *divine multiplicity*.

But there was another crucial condition which ought to be fulfilled, in order for the system to naturally satisfy the religious reality without falsifying it. Gods

One is expressed. That the intelligible multiplicity is denied of the One in the First Hypothesis was in fact Iamblichus' view, as Proclus says *In Parmenidem*, 1090.13-25; but I suspect the correctness of the Proclean presentation in the passage from *Th. Pl.* above quoted. Probably the νοητοὶ θεοὶ there meant refer to the intelligible multiplicity "appearing for the first time" *within* the last grade of the Intelligible realm, the νοηταὶ μονάδες mentioned in the latter passage from *In Parm.* (See what has been said about them before). Or still better, what is meant is the first multitude which appears just after the Intelligible world, at the uppermost summit of the Intellective Realm (in fact, as the first order of the Intelligible-Intellective World. - Proclus did have the tendency to occassionally misrepresent Iamblichus (cf. the above given example about the Demiurge). - Damascius was a much better receiver of Iamblichean orthodoxy, as has been already noticed. In any case these νοηταὶ μονάδες can be described (in view of the non-separation of being and unity in the Intelligible Realm) as inferior intelligible gods. Cf. further on the same subject, very clearly, *In Parmenidem*, 1066.16 sqq.: ἀνάγκη τοίνυν, εἴπερ μόνον καὶ ἅπαν τὸ θεῖον ὑπὲρ οὐσίαν ἐστίν, ἢ περὶ τοῦ πρώτου θεοῦ μόνον εἶναι τὸν παρόντα λόγον (sc. the first hypothesis), ὅς δὴ μόνος ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ οὐσίαν, ἢ περὶ πάντων θεῶν καὶ τῶν μετ' ἐκεῖνον, ὥσπερ ἀξιούσι τινες τῶν ἡμῖν αἰδοίων (sc. Iamblichus in particular!). ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πᾶς θεός, καθὸ θεός, ἐνάς ἐστι (τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ πάσης οὐσίας ἐκθεωτικόν, τὸ ἓν) – διὰ δὲ τοῦτο συνάπτειν ἀξιούσι τῇ περὶ θεοῦ τοῦ πρώτου θεωρίᾳ τὴν περὶ θεῶν ἀπάντων ὑφήγησιν. πάντες γὰρ εἰσιν ἐνάδες ὑπερούσιοι, καὶ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ὄντων ὑπερανέχουσαι, καὶ ἀκρότητες τῶν οὐσιῶν. There follows then Proclus' objection to the Iamblichean position, based on the distinction between the absolute One on the one hand, and the many participated henads on the other, the ἐνάδες which by being participated confer existence on the various orders of substantive reality. – As to the *second part of my addition* (following Cousin), v. Proclus *in Parm.* 1055.20-21; and also *Th. Pl.*, Book I, 11, p. 52.15-6 (the disjunction – ἐπὶ πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν πλάτος ἢ νοερόν – may well refer to the fact that, according to Proclus, if the negated attributes refer to the νοητὸν πλήθος in the first hypothesis, then the same must refer to the νοερόν πλάτος in the second one, v. *Th. Pl.*, Book III, 23, p. 82.17-22 – an already referred to passage). Concerning the Iamblichean view, that God *and Gods* are treated in the first hypothesis, see Proclus' criticism in *In Parm.* 1064.21-1065.1; 1066.16-1071.8. Cf. also *In Parm.* Book VII, p. 36.8-18.

must possess peculiarities of their own, a specific character as well as a divine hypostasis. Of course such a distinction in the case of the henadic gods between hypostatic existence and its hypostatic character inadmissible in view of their eminent unity; it is not that they exist *and* exhibit a particular nature as well – to say the least, a character is a *forma essendi*, and being has not as yet been segregated from oneness in Gods as we saw. Rather their very *unitary existence* must be conceived as being *modified* in each case in a way which corresponds to the being–peculiarities of the things over which they severally preside – constituting, preserving and perfecting them.

To this religious requirement Iamblichus answers with an elaborate doctrine concerning the *Orders of Gods*. Their distinctions correspond to the divisions of substantial reality – in fact the Gods of a certain order prefigure in an absolutely unitary way the peculiarities of the order of beings which they produce. Thus we can only epistemologically conceive of the divine orders following the clues provided by the articulations of the essential reality (the reality of things or beings), whereas in reality and truth the procession of things follow the hidden, implicit differentiations of divinity. The hidden prefigures in unity what is manifest in the articulations of all being-determinations. The gods is the cause of the associated field of reality in each case.

I shall not attempt here to reconstruct Iamblichus' system of divine orders from the existing, scanty information concerning it. What will be done is rather (a) to give what I believe the main divisions were, (b) to exemplify in a few instances the highly elaborate character of the system, and (c) to explain why does Proclus ascribe to his teacher Syrianus the highly articulate interpretation of the Second Parmenidean hypothesis as illustrating the entire divine procession from the One down to the lowermost orders of Gods.

(a) The succession of principles at the uppermost side of reality has already been given:

πάντη ἀπόρρητος
|
ἀπλῶς ἐν
|
νοητόν

This νοητόν is the principle “frozen around the One” as Iamblichus, we saw, put it. But below it there was another νοητόν, if we so wish to call it, reachable by “noeric” (νοερά), intellectual activity of the highest and most unified order, and thus itself somehow “noetic”, intelligent, in nature: this is what the Athenian Neoplatonists called νοητόν-νοερόν, intelligible-noetic (“noeric”) realm, and posited

between absolute intelligibles and pure intelligences³⁴. After it the World of

³⁴ Very briefly, some evidence for the postulation of this hypostasis on the part of Iamblichus is the following. Sallustius, his follower, in the compendium *Περὶ θεῶν καὶ κόσμου*, has the division of gods, VI, 1: τῶν δὲ θεῶν οἱ μὲν εἰσιν ἐγκόσμιοι, οἱ δὲ ὑπερκόσμιοι. ἐγκοσμίους δὲ λέγω αὐτοὺς τοὺς τὸν Κόσμον ποιοῦντας θεοὺς. τῶν δὲ ὑπερκοσμίων οἱ μὲν οὐσίας ποιοῦσι [θεῶν] (I athetize τῶν θεῶν – probably it came from a marginal gloss on ὑπερκοσμίων, to which it must be connected if kept in the text by way of hyperbaton), οἱ δὲ νοῦν, οἱ δὲ ψυχάς. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τρεῖς ἔχουσι τάξεις καὶ πάσας ἐν τοῖς περὶ τούτων λόγοις ἔστιν εὐρεῖν. The οὐσία here is the καθαρὰ οὐσία, as we saw, is “after” the Intelligible domain strictly speaking. And this is what Proclus calls νοητὴ οὐσία *In Parmenidem*, 1067.6-7. (In any case it corresponds to what was above called *pure οὐσία*). The Proclean passage is the immediate sequel to the one quoted in extensor above, n. 33. Proclus here purports to discover an inherent contradiction in Iamblichus’ position concerning the interpretation of the first hypothesis. He begins by invoking Iamblichus’ agreement to what he will say, 1066.33: εἰ δὲ τὸ μὲν πρότιστον ἔν, ὡς δοκεῖ που καὶ αὐτοῖς (sc. Iamblichus as is evident by the context, v. n. 33) μάλιστα, πάντων μόνως ἐστι, καὶ ἀσύντακτον πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα πάντα, καὶ ἀμέθεκτον φασὶν αὐτὸ ἀρπᾶσαν πρὸς τῶν ὄλων, καὶ ἄγνωστον τοῖς πᾶσιν ἐξηρημένον. And then he describes the Iamblichean position regarding the ἐνάδες other than the Supreme One, in these terms; 1067.4 sqq.: ἐκάστη δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ἐνάδων μεθεκτὴ πῶς ἐστι καὶ οὐ μόνον ἐνάς ἀλλὰ καὶ πλήθους οικείου μετέχουσα (in the loose sense in which the participated participates in the participating), καὶ οὐσίας ἢ νοητῆς ἢ νοεῶς ἢ ψυχικῆς ἢ καὶ σωματικῆς –μέχρι γὰρ τεύτης πρόεισιν ἢ μέθεξις. (Then follows the statement of the inconsistency which he thinks he discovers in the Iamblichean position). This νοητόν, therefore, must be what one may call second or lesser νοητόν. – Concerning the likelihood of the existence of two νοητά in Iamblichus, I may adduce the following evidence. The νοητόν properly so called (at least at its highest grade for Damascius, but Iamblichus insisted on the eminently unified character of the entire νοητόν, so we should probably apply the following remarks to the whole of it as such) was for Iamblichus beyond the reach of νοῦς; Damascius, *De Primis Principiis*, vol. I p. 151.18-22: ὅτι μὲν τοίνυν οὔτε δόξη, οὔτε διανοία, οὔτε νῶ τῶ ψυχικῶ, οὔτε νοήσει μετὰ λόγου περιληπτόν, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ τῆ τοῦ νοῦ παντελεῖ περιωπῆ, οὔτε τῶ ἄνθει τοῦ νοῦ αἰρετόν, οὔτε ἐπιβολῆ ὄλων, οὔτε κατὰ ἐπέρευσιν ὠρισμένην, οὔτε κατὰ περίληψιν, οὔτε τινὰ τοιοῦτον τρόπον ἐκεῖνο γνωστόν, συγχωρητέον ταῦτα τῶ μεγάλῳ Ἰαμβλίχῳ. Damascius then proceeds to inquire, about this νοητόν, whether it is at all γνωστόν (albeit by an absolutely unified supra-noetic intellection), or completely ἄγνωστον. He suggests that Iamblichus appears at times to be inclined towards either alternative, though he really believes that this appearance has to do with our inadequacy at comprehending the actual Iamblichean thought (152.2-5). The question is thoroughly pursued in the sequel, and is approached from various angles, before finding its highly elaborate and typically Damascian solution. In the course of the discussion, Damascius repeats in more definite terms the apparent discrepancy of the Iamblichean positions concerning this matter; 154.7 sqq.: χωρὶς δὲ τούτων καὶ οἱ θεοὶ (sc. the Chaldaean Oracles, as being the revelation of gods themselves) γινώσκεισθαι τὸ νοητόν ἀποφαίνονται σαφῶς, οὐ μόνον λέγοντες νοεῖσθαι καὶ νοεῖν (in itself; cf. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, Book IV p. 179.9 (Portus): ὅσα νοοῦντα νοεῖται κατὰ τὸ Λόγιον) - ἤδη μὲν ταῦτα καὶ ἄλλως ἐξηγοῦνται οἱ φιλόσοφοι, τὸ νοητόν προκεῖσθαι τῶ νῶ λέγοντες, οὐχ ὡς γνωστόν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐφετόν, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου πληροῦσθαι τὸν νοῦν λέγοντες, οὐ γνώσεως, ἀλλ’ οὐσίας καὶ τῆς ὅλης καὶ νοητῆς τελειότητος· οὕτω γὰρ πολλαχοῦ καὶ ὁ Ἰαμβλίχος καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτὸν ἀξιοῦσιν. (These philosophers after Iamblichus principally are Syrianus and Proclus. – That νοητόν therefore,

according to this acceptance, does not give γνῶσιν and νόησιν to the subordinate entities but being and intelligible perfection. Thus it is not the intelligible of an intelligence). οὐκ ἀεὶ δὲ οὕτως, ἀλλ' ἐν ἄλλοις καὶ τὴν γνῶσιν ἐν τῷ νοητῷ καὶ περὶ αὐτὸ καταλείπουσιν, ὡς ἐν τοῖς Χαλδαϊκοῖς ὁμολογουμένως ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος (in his voluminous Commentaries on the Chaldaean Theology, cf. p. 86.5-6). The magnificent Fragment 1 (ed. Des Places) of the Chaldaean Oracles is then invoked, in support of the knowledgeable after a certain fashion of the νοητόν.

ἔστιν γὰρ τι νοητόν, ὃ χρή σε νοεῖν νόου ἄνθει.
 ἦν γὰρ ἐπεγκλίνης σὸν νοῦν κάκεινο νοήσης
 ὡς τι νοῶν, οὐ κείνο νοήσεις. ἔστι γὰρ ἀλκῆς
 ἀμφιφαοῦς δύναμις νοεραῖς στράπτουσα τομαῖσιν.
 Οὐ δὴ χρή σφοδρότητι νοεῖν τὸ νοητόν ἐκεῖνο
 ἀλλὰ νόου ταναοῦ ταναῆ φλογὶ πάντα μετρούση
 πλην τὸ νοητόν ἐκεῖνο. χρεὼ δὴ τοῦτο νοῆσαι
 οὐκ ἀτενώς, ἀλλ' ἀγνὸν ἀπόστροφον ὄμμα φέροντα
 σῆς ψυχῆς τεῖναι κενεὸν νόον εἰς τὸ νοητόν,
 ὄφρα μάθης τὸ νοητόν, ἐπεὶ νόου ἔξω ὑπάρχει.

And indeed we can produce explicit evidence from Damascius that Iamblichus admitted a unique and very special kind of approach to, and contact, with the νοητόν, when the Intellect combines all its νοήσεις into one unitary, basic, root-νόησις capable of somehow reaching out towards the νοητόν; v. *de primis principiis*, vol. I, p. 273.17-21: τὸ μὲν οὖν ἀληθὲς ὧδε ἔχειν πείθομαι παντὸς μᾶλλον, καὶ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος πολλαχοῦ πολὺς ἀναγκάζων ἡμῖν τὰς πολλὰς νοήσεις οἷον εἰς ἓν κέντρον συνερείδασθαι, καὶ τὴν περιφορὰν κέντρον ποιεῖν, καὶ οὕτω προσιέναι τῷ ἠνωμένῳ καὶ νοητῷ ἠνωμένως καὶ νοητῶς μιᾷ μεγάλῃ νοήσει καὶ ἀδιακρίτῳ καὶ νοητῇ. Similarly, but also contrastedly, vol. I, p. 147.22-148.3: ὅθεν καὶ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ μένειν τὸ νοητόν ἀπεφήνατο, ὅτι μᾶλλον ἠνωταὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ εἰδοποιεῖται ἢ κατὰ τὸ ὄν. ἀμέλει οὐδὲ διώρισται τι ἐν αὐτῷ, οὐκ οὐσία, οὐ νοητόν οὐκ ἄλλο οὐδέν, ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, ἐν τῷ πάντα εἶναι κατὰ συναίρεσιν, τοῦτο δὲ αὐτοῦ ἔστι καὶ τὸ ὄντως νοητόν (sc. that it is πάντα after the intelligible fashion).

πάντ' ἔστι γὰρ, ἀλλὰ νοητῶς,

φησὶ τὸ λόγιον. συνάγει (sc. τὸ νοητόν) γὰρ εἰς ἓν πάσας ἡμῶν τὰς νοήσεις καὶ ποιεῖ μιᾶν συνειλημμένην ἐκ πασῶν παντελῆ καὶ ἀδιάκριτον καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἠνωμένην νόησιν, οἶαν τοῦ νοητοῦ ἐκείνου τὴν νόησιν εἶναι βούλεται ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος (that is, the νοητόν acts on our νοῦς by conferring upon it "intelligible perfection" – to use the above quoted expression – something similar to, but far from identical with its own proper intellection). Finally, cf. also p. 109.10-15: καταχρώμεθα δὲ ὅμως τοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἐπ' ἐκείνων, οὐκ ἔχοντες ἀξίας ἐκείνων ἐπωνυμίας (the general principle). οὐδὲ γὰρ νοήσεις ἔχομεν τοιαύτας. Οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὰ τὰ νοήματα ληπτὰ ταῖς νοήσεσιν ἔστι ταῖς ἡμετέραις. οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῖς τοῦ νοῦ περιωπαῖς νοεῖται τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ νοητοῦ κατὰ τὸν Ἰάμβλιχον – ἀλλὰ συμπύξαι δεῖ καὶ τὸν νοῦν τὰς οικείας νοήσεις εἰς τὸ νοητόν, εἰ μέλλοι συνηρημένος ὢν ἐπιβάλλειν καὶ ὁπωσοῦν τῷ πάντῃ συνηρημένῳ. –

But the conflict is, as Damascius himself intimated, more apparent than real. (V. *De primis Principiis*, vol. I, p. 148.10-1, regarding the very issue we are considering: πολλὰ μέντοι ἀντιλέγειν δοκοῦντες εὐόικαμεν περὶ ὀνόματος μόνον ποιεῖσθαι τὴν διαμάχην). For the above quoted Chaldaean Oracle probably refers to the νοητὸς νοῦς at most – it is the ἐνέργεια of the πατρικὴ δύναμις, as is indicated by vv. 3-4.

----- ἔστι γὰρ ἀλκῆς

Intelligence comes (νοερόν), then the psychic realm and finally the bodily reality of material existence (κόσμος σωματικός). Schematically put:

καθαρά οὐσία (perhaps a δεύτερον νοητόν)
|
νοῦς
|
ψυχή
|
σῶμα

(b) Of course this schema would only give the basic framework of reality. Iamblichus did not stop there; he further articulated this structure according to the exigencies of higher Λόγος and the demands of the religious consciousness. Thus, for instance, he postulated three “fathers” in the noeric (νοερόν) domain; we are fortunate to have one actual fragment of his concerning them (it is not recognized by Diehl as such, but the style is absolutely unmistakeable). The passage is referred to above, and is in Proclus, *In Timaeum*, vol. I, p. 308.19 sqq: περὶ γὰρ τῆς ἐν Τιμαίῳ τοῦ Διὸς Δημηγορίας γράφων (sc. ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος) μετὰ τὰς νοητὰς τριάδας καὶ τὰς τῶν

ἀμφιφαοὺς δύναντις νοεραῖς στράπτουσα τομαῖσιν

[νοεραὶ τομαί refer of course to the properly intellective and intellectual activity. It is naturally against the context as well as the doctrine in question to take these lines as referring to human mind (with Kroll p. 11 n. 1), as Festugière saw (*La Révélation d' Hermès Trismégiste*, tom. IV, p. 133 n. 2)]. Ἀμφιφαῖς is usually (and especially from the cultic point of view) connected with Hecate (with the two torches on either side of her), and thus related to an even lower stratum of reality. The use in Fr. 158 (ἀμφιφάοντα) and Fr. 163 (ἀμφικνεφής in the later passage) (ed. de Places) does not imply the highest suprasensible domain specifically, quite the contrary. It is thus possible and indeed probable that the νοητόν meant in the given Oracle is not pure intelligibility, but highest Intelligence which is intelligible to proper intellects by supreme intellection and an Intelligible order which intellects by attenuated intelligibility. We have already referred to Proclus, *Th. Pl.*, Book IV, ὅσα νοοῦντα νοεῖται κατὰ τὸ λόγιον; cf. also Fr. 77 of the Chaldaean Oracles:

αἶ γε (sc. the magic ἵγγες) νοοῦμεναι <ἐκ> πατρόθεν νοέουσι καὶ αὐταί,
βουλαῖς ἀφθέγκτοις κινούμεναι ὥστε νοῆσαι.

Iamblichus probably means such a distinct realm of reality when he says in *De Mysteriis*, VIII, 3, 263.3-6: τούτου δὲ (τοῦ νοός) τὸ ἐν-ἀμερῆς καὶ ὁ φησι (sc. Hermes Trismegistos, Iamblichus is interpreting the Egyptian mysteries) πρῶτον μαίευμα προτάττει, ὃν καὶ Εἰκτῶν ἐπονομάζει, ἐν ᾧ δὴ τὸ πρῶτον ἐστὶ νοοῦν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον νοητόν (as distinguished moments in identity), ὃ δὴ καὶ διὰ σιγῆς μόνης θεραπεύεται. – I should suggest that the relative comprehensibility of νοητόν refers to this realm rather than to pure and absolute Intelligibility which, for Iamblichus, is solidly frozen around the One. We might then suggest the identity of this realm with pure οὐσία, which, as we have seen, lies just outside the strict νοητόν. But the whole subject needs, and deserves, much more and detailed study.

<νοητῶν καὶ>³⁵ νοερῶν θεῶν τρεῖς τριάδας, ἐν τῇ νοερᾷ ἑβδομάδι τὴν τρίτην ἐν τοῖς πατράσιν ἀπονέμει τῷ δημιουργῷ τάξιν· τρεῖς γὰρ εἶναι θεοὺς τούτους καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Πυθαγορείοις ὑμνημένους, «οἱ (sc. οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι) τοῦ μὲν ἑνὸς νοῦ (sc. the first and highest mind)», φησί, (sc. ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος), «καὶ τὰς μονάδας ὅλας ἐν ἑαυτῷ περιέχοντος τὸ ἀπλοῦν καὶ ἀδιαίρετον καὶ ἀγαθοειδές καὶ μένον ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ συνηνωμένον τοῖς νοητοῖς καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα γνωρίσματα τῆς ὑπεροχῆς παραδεδώκασι, τοῦ δὲ μέσου (sc. πατρὸς νοεροῦ) καὶ τὴν συμπλήρωσιν συνάγοντος τῶν τριῶν τὸ γόνιμον τῶν θεῶν καὶ τὸ συναγαγὸν τῶν τριῶν καὶ τὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας ἀποπληρωτικὸν καὶ τὸ τῆς θείας ζωῆς γεννητικὸν καὶ τὸ προῖον πάντη καὶ τὸ ἀγαθουργὸν κάλλιστα δείγματα λέγουσι, τοῦ δὲ τρίτου καὶ δημιουργοῦντος τὰ ὅλα (this is the Δημιουργικὸς Νοῦς) τὰς μονίμους προόδους καὶ τὰς τῶν αἰτίων ὄλων ποιήσεις καὶ συνοχάς, τὰς τε ἀφωρισμένας ὅλας τοῖς εἶδεσιν αἰτίας καὶ τὰς προϋούσας πάσας δημιουργίας καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις, τεκμήρια κάλλιστα ἀναδιδάσκουσι».

I shall, as I said, give only a few examples in order to make clear the highly articulated theory of Gods introduced by Iamblichus. (The Athenian Preplatonists assumed such speculation from him). So he acknowledged μερικὴν πηγὴν τῶν ἀμειλίκτων θεῶν (Damascius, *De Pr. Princ.*, vol. I, p. 241.26-7: οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἀμειλίκτων πηγὴν μερικὴν ἐγκαταριθμεῖ ταῖς μερικαῖς πηγαῖς ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος, ὥσπερ ταῖς ὄλαις). His general principle is that every order and function of reality is coordinated to a corresponding divine principle as its source, cause and sustaining factor. He even coordinated particular συμπεράσματα in the Parmenidean hypotheses to specific orders of gods, like the συνοχεῖς and τελετάρχαι (taken probably from the Chaldaean Oracles), v. Damascius, vol. II p. 200.16; 216.11. For a typical doctrine concerning intricate divine orders see Proclus, *In Timaeum*, vol. III p. 197.12 sqq. Such examples may suffice for our present point.

(c) One word may be finally said concerning the question, why then does Proclus explicitly mention Syrianus as the originator of the view that in the Second Parmenidean hypothesis the particular συμπεράσματα correspond, in their orderly succession, to specific orders of Gods – the view of the κατ' ἄρθρα διαίρεσις of the second hypothesis in correlation to divine hierarchies and theogonies (v. *Theologia Platonica*, Book I, pp. 41 sqq. Westerink, Budé ed.; cf. *In Parmenidem*, 1061.23 sqq.; 1063.4 sqq.; cf. Damascius, *de primis principiis in Platonis Parmenidem*, vol. II, 259.8 sqq., where Syrianus is said to have advocated a similar approach even for the third hypothesis). The inference from what has been said is clear, and the solution to this

³⁵ The addition is necessary. Diehl omits to mention it.

problem is very simple. Proclus means exactly what he says: not that Syrianus was the first to philosophise in detail about complicated divine orders, but the first to correlate them, one to one, to the particular succession of results in the Parmenidean second hypothesis.

Iamblichus, we conclude, was the first to try to satisfy *systematically* the third, as well, of the above mentioned basic requirements of ancient religious consciousness. The various orders of Gods – henads philosophically speaking – proceed out of the Supreme Oneness and follow (or rather cause) the procession of reality to the very lowest grade. So there are even sensible gods with body (θεοὶ σωματικοί), gods immanent in this world. But all gods transcend being in another fundamental sense, for all gods are exceedingly unified to one another, and divinity is beyond being, godhead is above thinghood³⁶. We can see how the first religious requirement is meant in a wonderfully coherent and profound way.

³⁶ The best analysis of their unity in their very diversity (diversity not merely on the same level, but in a highly articulated *seiraic* structure of subordination) is given by Iamblichus himself in *De Mysteriis*, I, 19. I have quoted above from this chapter p. 59.15 sqq. Cf. also there 57.16-58.8; the question is about the divinity of the bodily gods and their relation to the supreme intelligible godhead. Says Iamblichus: λέγω δὴ οὖν ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν νοητῶν θείων παραδειγμάτων καὶ περὶ αὐτὰ ἀπογεννᾶται τὰ ἐμφανῆ τῶν θεῶν ἀγάλματα, γενόμενά τε παντελῶς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἴδρυνται, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ ἀνήκουσαν ἔχει τὴν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀποτελεσθεῖσαν εἰκόνα, ἑτέρως τε τὰ αὐτὰ ἄλλην διακόσμησιν δεδημιούργηται, συνεχῆ τέ ἐστι τὰ τῆδε πρὸς ἐκεῖνα κατὰ μίαν ἔνωσιν, καὶ τὰ μὲν παρόντα θεῖα νοερὰ εἶδη τοῖς ὀρωμένοις σώμασι τῶν θεῶν χωριστῶς αὐτῶν προὔπαρχει, τὰ δ' ἄμικτα καὶ ὑπερουράνια αὐτῶν νοητὰ παραδείγματα μένει καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἐν ὁμοῦ πάντα κατὰ τὴν διαιωνίαν αὐτῶν ὑπερβολήν. Typically Iamblichean thought and expression! And in conclusion at the end of the marvelous chapter, 60.15-61.4: καὶ τοῦτο τῆς τῶν θεῶν αἰτίας καὶ διακοσμήσεώς ἐστιν ἐξαίρετον, διόπερ ἄνωθεν μέχρι τοῦ τέλους τῆς θείας τάξεως ἡ αὐτὴ διήκει πάντων ἔνωσις – οὐ (I correct from εἰ) δὴ τοῦτο ἄξιον ἀμφισβητεῖν, τούναντίον γὰρ ἂν ἦν θαυμαστόν, εἰ μὴ οὕτως εἶχεν. Καὶ περὶ μὲν τῆς συναφῆς τῶν αἰσθητῶν θεῶν ἰδρυμένων πρὸς τοὺς νοητοὺς θεοὺς τοσαῦτα εἰρήσθω.