

DIVINE MANTĪKE: THE FUSION OF IAMBlichus' RELIGIOUS SCHEMA WITH CICERO'S *EXEMPLA**

The explicitly, religious dimension in Cicero's philosophical interpretation of perpetual glory, conceptualized as astral immortality is fundamental for the dialogue between Elder Africanus and Publius Cornelius Scipio in *The Dream of Scipio*.¹ While functioning as invaluable testimony for the exploration of two forms of divination, dreams and astrology, the work incorporates the perception that they function as sources of truth providing knowledge of the structure of the cosmos and cosmic operations discernable from the movement and character of celestial objects which are identified as the divine. The early stages of the conversation between king Messinissa and Publius Cornelius Scipio are crucial in preparing the discourse for its description of the dream of the latter. Within the short space of 10.9 and 10.10 reference is made to dreams and astrology establishing their contribution to the foregoing discussion on astral immortality.

1. The worship of heavenly objects in the Roman east in late antiquity, especially the sun, out of which originated the concept of astral immortality.

2. Publius Cornelius Scipio's own reflections, that the topic of the conversation prior to falling asleep, Elder Africanus, is probably the reason for his dream.

3. The exceptional valour and virtue of Elder Africanus, the adopted grandfather of Scipio and conqueror of Hannibal who sets the *exemplum* of one who had acquired astral immortality.

Composed in the late 3rd century A.D. as an explicit response to the queries of divination in Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo*, Iamblichus' exposition, *On the Mysteries* written under the pseudonym of the Egyptian priest Abammon is a defense of polytheistic forms of worship including divination and theurgy.² It concentrates

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1. Cicero, *Dream of Scipio* in *On the Good life*, tr. E.V. Rieu, Penguin, UK, 1972.

2. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, tr. E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon, J.P. Hershbell (eds.) (2003). All quotations and translations are from this edition unless otherwise stated.

most emphatically on what causes *mantike* or prophecy, its character and principles and exists to date an invaluable source of late antique magic and theurgy. Despite the chronological lapse between the composition of Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* and Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries* there survives an identifiable textual consonance between the two works which can be categorically classified as structural, conceptual and phenomenal. The focus of the present investigation is Iamblichus' description of the role of divine *mantike* within his religious *schema* which apparently finds a striking *exemplum* in Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*.

Structural

The structural affinity of Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries* and Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* is obvious. Both works are primarily dialogic conversations. As a vehicle employed to detect the most probable solution for issues that demand serious attention to the literary genre, dialogue, has already received Cicero's attention in the past (*Tusculan Discussions*, 5.11). The dialogic conversation within *On the Mysteries* fulfills the function of reducing the lamentable gap between conflicting opinions of Porphyry and Iamblichus as well as that of Scipio and Elder Africanus in *Dream of Scipio*. The explicit dialogue between Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo* and Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries* is on the philosophical basis of pagan forms of worship of which the greater part consists of divination. *On the Mysteries* is an explicit response to Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo*. The *Letter to Anebo* comprises of Porphyry's sceptical and dubious comments on theurgy and divination and it has a reputation of "an epistle which launched a vicious attack on theurgy, more than likely aimed specifically at Iamblichus and his beliefs."³ The work reflects the customary Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition of dialogic discourse as well as the Neoplatonist genre of "Problems and Solutions", a method of philosophical exegesis common in later Platonic writings.⁴ Such perspectives permit Porphyry a greater degree of scope and grounds to call into question his own doubts about a so called sacred tradition of thought, the Egyptian, which Iamblichus had so energetically absorbed into his philosophical conceptions. (*On the Mysteries*, 277.9-

3. E.C. Clarke (2003), "Introduction", in E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon and J.P. Hersbell (eds) (2003), Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, p. xxii. See also E.R. Dodds (1951), *Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley, New York, p. 287.

4. This literary genre was fairly common in Neoplatonism. Porphyry himself had written *Questions on Homer* and *A collection of Questions on Rhetoric and Miscellaneous Questions*; Damascius, the last head of the Academy, composed a work, *Problems and Solution on First Principles*; cf. E.C. Clarke (2003), "Introduction" in E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon and J.P.Hersbell (eds), Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*.

278.8). The methodology reflected within the dialogic conversation moves Iamblichus to respond to Porphyry's critique in terms of his own assessment of the Greek intellectuals who ignore the sacred character of divination:

At the present time I think the reason everything has fallen into a state of decay – both in our words and prayers – is because they are continually being changed by the endless innovations and lawlessness of the Greeks. For the Greeks by nature are followers of the latest trends and are eager to be carried off in any direction possessing no stability in themselves⁵ (259.5-14).

With such an assessment Iamblichus plunges into his defense of divine *mantike* raising several central questions: what exactly was the role of divination in theurgic ritual (100.8-9 and 100.13 – 101.3), could it be justified philosophically (7.11 – 8.5), what causes divine inspiration to occur (179.4-8) and can it be classified? (3.3-13). The defense proves to be most convincing on the grounds that it is put across through the medium of question and answer. By means of a lively dialogue Cicero seeks to maintain the value of the Graeco-Roman astral tradition in terms of political virtue (14, 14 – 16, 16). The substance of his political doctrines are reflected through his virtual representation of such reputed Romans like Elder Africanus and Publius Cornelius Scipio whose achievements can not only be crystallized in the history of Roman history but also be applied for the accomplishment of Cicero's main objective. It is through the medium of dialogue that Cicero presupposes his reflection on a number of central issues like the above. The dexterity, depth and simplicity of their tone reflect their relation to the theme of the embodied discussion, astral immortality. They can conveniently be applied for Cicero's *exemplum* which appears obvious when a brisk reply is provided for a simple question. On one occasion Scipio asks: "What is this sound, so strong and so sweet which fills my ears?" To which Elder Africanus replies: "That is the music of the spheres." (*Dream of Scipio*, 18, 18).

The efficacy of a short response to an equally short question is more profoundly felt than a descriptive response. It does not simply intensify the meaning of

5. See also Damascius, *Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, 11.1.172, ed. and tr. Westerink (1977): 'To some philosophy is primary as to Porphyry and Plotinus and a great many other philosophers, to others hieratic practice as to Iamblichus, Syrianus Proclus and the hieratic school generally'. See also Cicero, *Republic*, 1.2, tr. C.K. Keyes (1928), Harvard University Press; Paul Freidlander (1958), *Plato: An Introduction*, London, Kegan Paul, pp. 155-170).

the lines but also provides scope for more serious reflection which eventually leads Scipio to become conscious of his corporeal vanity and nothingness (14,14; 18,19).

Elder Africanus' task of enlightening Scipio, of what was hitherto unknown, is rendered in simple terms through the methodological device postulated within the question and answer form. His demonstration turns out to be more effective when he proceeds to offer a lengthy description of the high and low notes of the heavenly sphere and their harmonious reflection depending on their sound and speed. (18,18 – 18,19). Such description does in no way confine the discussion to a limited area but moves it along interesting lines in such a manner as to enhance the apparent value of dialogic discourse.

Based on this predominant methodology – question and answer form or an explicit response to an inquiry – inherited from the intellectual Aristotelian culture Iamblichus' discussion of divination draws attention to the Aristotelian theories of causation.⁶ Syllogistic reasoning of the causal phenomena accordingly, depends on four Aristotelian causes – the material or what a thing is made of, the formal or what kind of thing it is, efficient or what made it and final or its purpose or goal. With the goal of natural philosophy being to recognize the key principles and character of natural substances and further to understand their causes Iamblichus applies this philosophical tradition of thought into his religious *schema*, a *schema* that involves an age old tradition stemming from such near eastern cultures as the Egyptian and the Babylonian which contains the potential to revive the soul's divine origin (277.9 – 278.8). The application of the doctrines of this tradition into his religious *schema* through the means of question and answer form provides him ample scope to examine its degrees of applicability so that he could move Porphyry from his impoverished concepts to those that are more convincing. The process can be viewed as an advent to the exploration of the typology of divination through the medium of Aristotelian theories of causation (100.6-7; 135.1-2). It legitimizes that only divine *mantike*, as utilized within theurgy and nothing else, can free human life from the bonds of fate and destiny (289.3-5). Inspired divination is the level of vision and insight ideally attained or realized by the theurgist when performing theurgic ritual:

For in such a fashion arises at the same time, both infallible truth in oracles and perfect virtue in souls. With both of these ascent to the intelligible fire is granted to the theurgists a process which indeed

6. See Sara Rappe (2000), *Reading Neoplatonism*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 174-176.

must be proposed as the goal of all foreknowledge and every theurgic operation.⁷ (179.4-8)

This level of inspired divination allows the theurgist to conjoin himself to the celestial realm and to see all things within the cosmos from a divine perspective by “participating in the intellections of the gods” (289.3-5). This perspective is superior in comparison with divination which uses human skill to interpret divine prophecy, which apparently confines the operant to be seriously entangled in a web of deceit, passion, and insincerity, since it is not united from the outset with its own cause. Inspired divination provides scope for an intimate union between the human soul and the higher causal order, and eliminates the object-subject relationship inherent in human knowledge (1.9.7).⁸

The dialogic conversation between Scipio and Elder Africanus eventually eliminates this subject-object relation and provides scope for the virtuous soul’s fusion with the starry entities (25,27). The elimination is done through the medium of the dream of Scipio. The dream is introduced by Cicero, though as a fantasy and to some extent a technical device, formulating an imaginary contextual framework for the *Dream of Scipio*. Dream divination is perfected, in relation to the Iamblichaeen *schema* since it gradually approaches a climax, within which the fusion of the subject and the object is possible.⁹ As long as the soul is in a fragmented state it does not have access to its own origin (14,14). Cicero places Scipio in an ideal state of consciousness and that is in an intermediary state between sleeping and waking. This is a state of consciousness devoid of any corporeal bondage, fate, and time. In this pure state Scipio receives *mantike* in its most perfect form through the daemon-like figure of Elder Africanus who derives divine wisdom from an original source conceptualized as the supreme God (12,12).

The structural affinity between *Dream of Scipio* and *On the Mysteries* appears most predominant when Iamblichus assumes the guise of a coordinator defending polytheism while at the same time instructing Porphyry. In this guise

7. Cf. Grey Shaw (1995), *Theurgy and the Soul: the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, Pennsylvania, pp. 231-32, 236.

8. See also how Iamblichus observes that men have an “innate cognition” and that the human soul must conjoin itself to the gods on the same terms not employing conjecture or any form of syllogistic reasoning.

9. For the significance of dreams as a form of divination see P. Athanassiadi (1993), “Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus”, *JRS* 83, pp. 115-130, and (1992), “Philosophers and oracles: Shifts of authority in late Paganism”, *Byzantium* 62, pp. 45-62; T. Barton (1994), *Ancient Astrology*, London and New York, Routledge, pp. 40-50.

he resembles Elder Africanus. Iamblichus fuses two traditions of thought – the Greek and the Egyptian. Cicero is no less sympathetic with eastern sources defending astral immortality. He not only revives these traditions in his dialogic conversation but also applies the existential religious knowledge in the Roman east for his purpose of instructing Scipio.

Conceptual

The integration of dream divination and astrology, a conceptual affinity between *The Dream of Scipio* and *On the Mysteries* throws substantial light on the concept of astral immortality. The dream of Scipio as a foundational *techne* is designed to advocate astral knowledge. It is metaphorically a prophecy dispensed from an elevated soul residing in its rightful abode, the starry realm. Elevated on account of exceptional virtue – political virtue, a virtue most applicable for outstanding *mos maiores* like Paulinus and Elder Africanus. Cicero's sympathy with the type of statesmen who is ideal for the governance of the commonwealth relates to his restoration of a Republican constitution (*Republic*, 1.8; 1.28, 1.39; 3.4-6). As the focus of investigation confines to the virtue embodied in patriotism Cicero shifts to emphasize the role of *mos maiores* in terms of prophecy. Discussion with and association of such *mos maiores* is denied to those living on earth entombed in corporeality, except of course in a revelation or a visionary dream. As such Scipio's dream is an embodiment of two crucial conceptions – conception of the daimon and astral immortality which assumes the appearance of a fascinating *exemplum* reflecting the parallel description in *On the Mysteries*. It is interesting to note how Cicero reconciles the two conceptions in terms of the advise of Elder Africanus which range as follows: insignificance of Scipio's domain (10.10; 18,19; 20,21; 22,24), Scipio's future (10,10; 11.11), the Pythagorean and Orphic conception of human disorientation (12,12-14; 24,26), the character of heavenly life (12,12; 16,16), the geographical dimension of the heavenly circuit (16.16; 17,17; 18,19), the glory of a brave existence (18,19; 20,21; 22, 24).

The key importance of the dream of Scipio is that it is being revealed by an ancestor. Ancestors and their heritage were central in Roman culture and society. The common practice to refer to historical *exempla* of ones forbearers plays an important role in Cicero's endeavor to transmit the dream through an ancestor of Scipio. The colossal figure of Elder Africanus assumes several guises: elevated soul, deified entity, guide to Scipio, a daimon inspired by the supreme God's demiurgic character and essence to convey a fraction of His wisdom thus a bridging the two widely apart realms – human and divine or martial and immaterial. In this guise he has a prediction for Scipio – of his career, future of Rome that be-

nefits from it and foreknowledge of his untimely death. (10,10 – 11,11) This prediction falls into the category of inspired divination corresponding to Cicero's classification of divination in *De Divinatione*: "There are two kinds of divination: The first depends on art the other on nature."¹⁰ (11 xi. 27, LVIII)

The classification accords with Iamblichus' distinction of divination human and inspired.¹¹ Inspired divination transcends the human interpretation of divine symbols and signs. Dreams that fall under the category of inspired divination contain divine *mantike*. These dreams occur simultaneously during transitional states of sleeping and waking and vice versa when a voice is heard offering guidance and prediction. An intelligible or incorporeal spirit encircles the sleeper and this spirit is not perceptible to the naked eye but to a unique kind of consciousness and awareness (103.7; 104.1-2). This is the ideal state of consciousness to receive divine prophecy and the daimon is an ideal medium through which divine prophecy could be revealed. Detached from the claims of generation the soul is free to contemplate the divine; the truth; the ultimate essence of the cosmos. Iamblichus notes that at this juncture the intellect produces an even more perfect divination when it unites with its apportioned lot of life and intellectual activity to the universals:

If however it refer accounts of things happening to their causes, that is to the gods it receives from them a power and knowledge embracing things that were and will be and takes a view of all time and surveys events happening in time and it participates in their order care and appropriate movement. (107.11 – 108.3)

Iamblichus' description is that of one's personal daimon whose guidance of the soul is most emphatic in his religious *schema* (273,2-9). It finds a striking parallel in Cicero's *exempla* of Elder Africanus who dispenses *mantike* from the highest realm of the cosmos. (16.16)

Cicero's *exemplum* of political virtue as predominant for astral immortality is a conceptual affinity in keeping with Iamblichus' religious *schema* within which is an illustration of astral knowledge for the soul's subsequent union with divine sources of wisdom. While Iamblichus traces the influential character of *theourgia* (2.6 – 3.3) Cicero maintains that "Justice and devotion is what leads to heaven and to the company of those who have completed their lives in the world"

10. *De divinatione*, 11 xi. 27, tr. W. S. Falconer (1923), Loeb ed.

11. See also Plato, *Phaedrus*, 224 D 2-6, tr. H.N. Fowler (1982), Loeb ed.; G. Luck (1985), *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in Greek and Roman Worlds*, Baltimore, London and MA, pp. 231, 271.

(14,14 – 16,16). Obviously Cicero provides an *exemplum* that is far above the limitations of human imagination. The assumption that human life is vain and empty (14,14; 18,19) and that human glory is short lived (18,19; 20,21; 22,24) throws light on that conviction that all that is related to corporeality is insignificant and all that is related to the earth and human life is of no value and bears absolutely no relation to eternity (18,19). But Cicero draws on the Pythagorean and Orphic conception of the eternity and divinity of the soul (24,26; 25,27). Accordingly, the heaven as the ideal abode of the elevated soul deserves the attention of such elevated souls like elder Africanus (21,23; 22,24; 25,27).

In political virtue alone there survives access to the soul's ascent to starry heights. In an attempt to convince Scipio it is Elder Africans who address as follows: Instead let Virtue herself by her own unaided allurements summon you to glory that is genuine and real. (22,24)

Cicero's initial task is to restore the supremacy of political virtue. The personification of 'virtue' enlivens Cicero's defense of political virtue and transcends the limitations of virtue as a concept enshrining the possibility of astral immortality. Perpetual glory surpasses the type of glory to which Scipio is subject to at present. This is explained in terms of the extent of the earth which is comparatively smaller than the domain of the celestial region (16,16; 19,19; 20,21 – 21,23).

In spite of being grounded in such a small domain Scipio is assured that, virtues like patriotic love and valor contain a lasting promise far superior to what he had known hitherto:

Every man who has preserved or helped his country or has made its greatness even greater is reserved a special place in heaven where he may enjoy an eternal life of happiness for all things that are done on earth nothing is more acceptable to the supreme God who rules the whole universe than those gatherings and assemblages of men who are bound together by law, the communications which are known as States. (12,12)

The Republican virtues on which Cicero seems to be engrossed with in the *Dream of Scipio* reflects his assumption that no form of constitution lasts too long. His theological views are conceptually on par with Iamblichus' religious *schema*.¹²

12. See J. Powell and J. Patterson (2004), *Cicero the Advocate*, Oxford University Press, pp. 200-400. See also how Cicero notes the decline of any form of human constitution: *Republic*, 1.68.

A second conceptual affinity between Iamblichus and Cicero is found in their agreement on the Orphic and Pythagorean doctrine of the soul's divinity.¹³ Elder Africanus tries to convince Scipio about his divine origin on several occasions: "Understand you are god" and "You have a god's capacity" (24.26).

Astral immortality is engendered by the soul's eventual ascent, not on account of ritualistic phenomena, so obvious in the religious *schema* of Iamblichus, but on patriotic excellence. Cicero commits himself to clarify: "a soul devoted to such pursuits will find it easiest of all to soar upwards to this place which is its proper habitation and home." (25.27)

According to Iamblichus theurgic ritual creates a level of receptivity appropriate to contemplate *mantike* in its purest form more fundamentally for the theurgist than for the common charlatan (*On the Mysteries* 41.1-9). Divination encompass the entire circuit of the divine realm which reflects the divine procession through which human beings traveled with the gods before descending to the world of generation.¹⁴ It is *theourgia* and nothing else that reduces the apparent gulf between the generated world and the world of the intelligibles (*op.cit.* 253.2-6; 51.9-10; 51.13-52.3). Recent scholarship attests the purpose of the symbolic art of astrology in terms of Iamblichus' Neoplatonic legacy to conceptualize the soul's eventual ascent to the starry realm by directing the soul towards deification and to make it fully conscious of its own soul in the cosmos.¹⁵ Anjela Voss addresses the central issue of astrology by maintaining that "through using his free will the man who observes the heavens and elects the appropriate time to act is already ruling the stars".¹⁶ Quoting Marsilio Ficino she states that "with celestial virtue (man) ascends the heavens and measures them with super celestial intelligence he transcends the heavens".¹⁷ Such reflections legitimize Iamblichus' theological regulation of the fact that man could eventually align himself with the noetic entities occupying the celestial domain provided that he cultivates the kind of virtue and sense that surpass the material (*On the Mysteries* 107.11 – 198.3). It transcends the accepted norms of virtue within human limitations. The consensus between Iamblichus and Cicero are thus crucial because both men,

13. On Cirero's civic ideals and the overall political environment of the time in which he wrote see E. Fantham (2004), *The Roman World of Cicero's De Oratore*, Oxford University Press. See Geoffrey Cornelius (2004), *Moment of Astrology*, Bournemouth; I thank Dr. Garry Phillipson (Kent, UK) for introducing this work to me and enlightening me in this area.

14. This idea is emphatic in *Laws*, 1.30.

15. A. Voss (2003), *Father, Time and Orpheus*, Oxford, Abzu press, p. 152.

16. *op. cit.* p. 152.

17. *op. cit.* p. 142.

in so far as the two works in question are concerned, interpret the gradation of celestial presence encompassed within the planetary framework as varied manifestations of the divine. Knowledge of astral bodies or the art of astrology is a medium through which the operant could obtain access to divine wisdom. Voss refers to the Ficinian notion of the significance of Saturn in relation to this endeavor: In the inmost recesses of the Platonic Academy he writes philosophers will “come to know their Saturn, contemplating the secrets of the heavens”.¹⁸

What Ficino tries to convince Giovanni Cavalacanti, a friend to whom he writes, is that despite the odd and serious character of Saturn there remains a hidden gift, pregnant with spirituality, intellectual creativity of negation.¹⁹ Elder Africanus merely mentions Saturn but still his persuasive tone is obviously designed to convince Scipio of the superiority of the astral bodies which contain the promise of astral immortality: “But can you not understand that the earth is totally insignificant? Contemplate these heavenly, regions instead! Scorn what is mortal”. (*Dream of Scipio* 18,19).

The lines echo Circe’s sympathy for perpetual glory which stems from nothing else but patriotic valor. By discarding mortal dispositions Scipio is persuaded to contemplate the cosmic order – the zodiac, the constellations and the entire starry circuit through divine *mantike* dispensed to him in its purest form.²⁰

Phenomenal

In close relation to the textual affinities between the *Dream of Scipio* and *On the Mysteries* is the phenomenon of music and light. Cicero’s theological speculations in terms of planetary movements is most obvious in his description of the phenomena of music:

The intervals between them although differing in length are all reassured according to a fixed scheme of proportions and this arrangement produces a melodious blend emerges a varied harmony. For it cannot be that these vast movements should take place in silence and nature

18. On the creative power of Saturn see A. Voss (2007), *Melancholy Humour*, Cambridge Scholars Press, pp. 151-165.

19. In Sri Lanka Saturn is usually maleficent in terms of its destructive nature; Buddhist rituals are performed to minimize its evil influence.

20. Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Life*, tr. G. Clark (1989), vol. 8, 15.65.3. See *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 37; 146, tr. Ruth Majercik (1989), *The Chaldaean Oracles: Text, Translation and Commentary*, Leiden, Brill. See also S.I. Johnston (1990), *Hekate Sotera: A Study of Hecates Roles in the Chaldaean Oracles and Related Literature*, pp. 101, 108.

has ordained that the spheres utter music those at the summit giving forth high sounds, where as the sounds of those beneath are low and deep. (*Dream of Scipio* 18,18)

Each planet has a music proper to it. Knowledge of their rhythm, tune and content is a medium through which Elder Africanus dispenses *mantike*. In terms of the textual affinities between *Dream of Scipio* and *On the Mysteries* the phenomenon of music is a predominant factor contributing to the polytheistic conceptualization of the cosmos. The sound of music is caused by planetary revolutions (*On the Mysteries* 118.13 – 119.3). Iamblichus draws on the Pythagorean and Chaldaean description of music or harmony of the spheres as connected with the creation and function of the cosmic soul identified with Hecate in the *Chaldaean Oracles*. The intangible spirit, not visually perceptible, but whose presence is felt during transitional stages to sleep and waking and vice versa makes a ‘*whooshing sound*’ when entering the soul of the operant (104.1-2). This sound resembles the description of Ideas “rushing forth” from the Paternal intellect in to the comb of Hecate (*Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 37). In his discussion of the operation of musical rituals of Cybele and Sabazios Iamblichus asserts that sounds and tunes are consecrated to each planetary god and that kinship is properly assigned to them in accordance with their proper orders, powers and motion of the universe. (118.13 – 119.3).

According to Cicero, being alert to the planetary sounds, is vital for the patriotic soul’s search for its lost divine identity. He resorts to the fact that,

Clever men, by imitating these musical effects with their stringed instruments and voice have given themselves the possibility of eventually returning to this place who during their earthly lives have devoted their outstanding talents to heavenly activities. (18,18)

The major reason why humankind cannot hear the sounds of the planets is the following: “the ears of mankind are filled with this music all the time. But they have become completely deaf to its melody”. (18,18) Cicero explains this more fully in terms of an analogy. The sound of the Nile is so loud and the light of the sun is so bright to the human eye. This is why “the mighty music of the spheres created by the immeasurably fast rotations of the whole universe cannot be apprehended by the human ears nay more than you can look at the light of the sun which is so intense it blots out your power of vision altogether”. (18,19)

Planetary sounds are inaudible to the human ear. They can only be apprehend-

ed through prolonged and serious, modes of contemplation of divine *mantike*. *Mantike* is both the *schema* of Iamblichus and Cicero figures as a medium through which human disorientation can be reduced. Knowledge of cosmic music and its varied rhythms is invaluable for this reduction (18,18). The *exemplum* provided by Cicero to the Iamblichean description is all the more crucial for its acknowledgement.

With Cicero's focus on the abstract conception of the possibility of analyzing the soul and its states of contemplation of the divine in terms of musical or mathematical structures in 18, 18 his debt to the Stoics who derive much of their musico - mathematical knowledge from Plato is noticeable. His description of the value of studying heavenly bodies with eyes perceiving the cosmic order and becoming an active part of it closely resembles *Timaeus* 44 d – 45 a; 47 d-e even through Cicero's account in *Dream of Scipio* does not give an extensive account of the role of hearing and music for the elevated soul. This could most probably relate to his hasty writings between the period of 45 and 44 B.C. It is also probable that Cicero did refer to Diogenes of Babylon whose departure from Stoic orthodoxy in his views of music has a claim that music can play an ethical role.

The “strong” and “sweet” sound of the planets resulting from motion in 17,17 – 18,18 then, following the line of Plato and the Stoics, are inextricably linked with the following assumption of Cicero: planetary patterns and order distill a music proper. This abstract conception can be apprehended in physical terms – calm, solid, soft, relaxed. They demonstrate degrees of tension. Knowledge of each degree of tension reflects stages of the soul's ascent to the starry realm.

Iamblichus examines the theurgic value of the soul's inborn desire for this ascent in terms of its initial reference in *Phaedrus*, 250-252; *Symposium*, 210-211 and the *Chaldaen Oracles*, fr. 43. His examination is contextualized within the framework of his religious *schema* within which is identified the power of the music of the spheres. This identification intensifies the soul's desire to become familiarized and apprehend the specific sound of each planet and finally to be participating in the demiurgy of the cosmos. (*On the Mysteries* 42,4-6). Iamblichus' explanation of forms of *mantike*, dreams and astrology is reflected in Cicero's *exemplum* of the dream of Scipio.

Light is a phenomena related to the psychological consciousness of divine presence ascribed to dreams by both Iamblichus and Cicero. Cicero refers several times to the “bright illumination of the starry realm” in 10,10; 16,16; 17,17. Scipio's dream is seen within a flash of resplendent light. Cicero's description of the exceptional brightness of the starry realm finds a striking parallel with *On*

the Mysteries when Iamblichus utilizes the terminology of divine illumination in this discussion of *mantike*, applicable to divine dreams and oracles. He describes of the Pythia being “illuminated by the ray of divine fire [...] whenever she is found on the seat of the god she is in harmony with the divine unwavering oracular power” (*On the Mysteries* 126.4 – 127.3). Intended to move Porphyry from his confusion regarding the value of divination Iamblichus continues to stress in favor of the illumination descended upon the corporeal realm in the form of divine dreams.

[...] when a light shines brightly and peacefully not only is the sight of the eye possessed but closed after previously being quite open. And the other senses are awake and consciously aware of how the gods shine forth in the light and with a clear understanding they both hear what they say and know what they do. (104.4-10).

The prominence of light, in relation to prophetic revelation which both Cicero and Iamblichus observe has much in common with the chief epiphanies within the *Chaldaean Oracles* who are eternally fiery and brilliant and whose absorption of celestial luminosity is predominantly in favor of the Iamblichaeon and Ciceronian perception of eternal illumination. E.R. Dodds, though suspicious of Neoplatonic theurgy is of the opinion that this brilliance owes something to the fire cult in primitive Egyptian lore.

Direct influence of the Chaldaean oracular tradition on Iamblichus is more profound than it is on Cicero for the latter delves into a deeper study of their apparent significance in defending his political purpose. Iamblichus proceeds to discuss that the vision of the personal daimon is encapsulated in a brilliant light. Drenched in this luminosity the personal daimon chooses to address and instruct the operant of his fate and the measures that might be taken to either minimize evil or maximize merit at a time when the intellect is free from earthly disposition and that is in a state of viewing a dream (*On the Mysteries* 106.9 – 107.4).

Iamblichus opines that the human intellect produces an even more perfect *mantike* when it unites with its apportioned lot of life (126.1-3). This claim demonstrates figuratively the conceptualization of *anagogic* union, which is the main concern of the *mantis* or theurgist. The divine gift of prophecy emanated in the form of a dream embodied in a ray of light reduces the apparent gulf between himself and the causal plane (106.9 – 107.4).

References to light in the *Dream of Scipio* are numerous. Cicero notes the beauty of the starry region (10,10; 16,16). Incidentally it is “from here in heaven that

the rulers and preservers of those states once came and it is to here that they eventually return” (12,12). Considerable light is thrown on the luminosity of the starry realm that the lines are indicative of Cicero’s sympathy with Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines of the ascent of the soul to the aethereal realm. The stars are lighted from the rays of the sun which is also the largest star and “the prince, lord and ruler of all the other worlds, the mind and guiding principle of the entire universe, so gigantic in size that everything, everywhere, is pervaded and drenched by his light” (17,17). Each planet is related to the sun in terms of its superior light. Just before his description of “the blazing Sun” Cicero notes the “brilliant light of Jupiter” and then the “red-star”, Mars. He then proceeds to mention Venus and Mercury as attending the sun while “the lowest sphere of all contains the Moon which takes its light as it revolves from the rays of the sun” (17,17). This description is testimony of the Ciceronian conviction of the individual brightness and luminosity of planets while at the same time it justifies the fact that the original source of light, the sun, stands above all other noetic entities or planetary gods where brilliance and radiance of light is concerned.

The effect and quality of the light distilled from the sun differs according to the position of the planets. Accordingly Cicero examines that those planets on higher plains are a speedier in motion and give out high tones of music than those in the lower realms (18,18). The description of motion and sound resembles that of light. Varied energies are transmitted in the form of light or revelations from the ontological realm. The ascent of the purified human soul on account of its patriotism in Cicero and of rituals in Iamblichus depends on the levels of ascendancy through concentric spheres to the summit, the Supreme God. This key theological doctrine is shared by both Cicero and Iamblichus on which depends, to a large extent, their phenomenal affinity.