IAMBLICHUS ON THE SOUL

J. F. FINAMORE, J. M. DILLON: *Iamblichus:* De anima. Text, Translation, and Commentary. (Philosophia Antiqua 92.) Pp. xii + 299. Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 2002. Cased, €89, US$104. ISBN: 90-04-12510-8.

Iamblichus played a crucial rôle in the development of Neoplatonism after Plotinus. His reputation for taking Neoplatonism away from philosophy towards wonder-working and irrationality is largely due to his main surviving work, the *De mysteriis*, and the account of his activities offered by Eunapius. In fact, I. was a much more complex figure who had an enormous influence on both the substance and the style of subsequent philosophy. Finamore and Dillon have both played an important part in the rehabilitation of I., which has been under way at least since the publication of D.'s edition of the fragments of I.'s commentaries on Plato in 1973. Now they have produced a splendid edition of the surviving fragments of I.'s *De anima*, in which I. set out his distinctive psychological views: the doctrine of the soul as a mean between Intellect and Nature, necessarily involved in both intellectual and bodily activities; the division of human souls into three classes, including pure souls which descend into the cosmos freely in order to help their fellows; and his view of the afterlife. The volume contains a brief introduction, a Greek text (taken from Wachsmuth's edition of Stobaeus, with a few changes), an English translation and a very full philosophical commentary. An appendix contains text, translation and commentary of the passages relating to I.'s *De anima* found in ps.-Simplicius' commentary on the *De anima* and in Priscian's *Metaphrasis* of Theophrastus.

In the introduction, after an account of I.'s life and works which is abbreviated from D.'s account in *ANRW* II 36:2 (Berlin and New York, 1987), pp.868–909, F. & D. explain that I.'s *De anima* was not a commentary but an independent treatise in which I. attacked what he regarded as mistaken views of the soul and set out his own view. They also tackle the question of the authorship of the commentary on the *De anima* ascribed to Simplicius, which has been much debated since Steel and Boissier argued in 1972 that this commentary was in fact the work of Priscian. F.& D. hold what seems to me to be the very reasonable position that this commentary is not by Simplicius but cannot be shown to be by Priscian either; they suggest that the common ground, and the differences, between the commentary and Priscian's *Metaphrasis* are to be explained by 'two authors following a common source, Iamblichus, but articulating different aspects of his doctrine' (p. 23). The introduction concludes with a note on manuscripts, editions and translations and a list of changes made by F. & D. to the Greek texts as given in Wachsmuth's edition of Stobaeus and the *CIAG* editions of ps.-Simplicius and Priscian.

Many of the fragments offer I.'s presentation and criticism of the views of earlier philosophers. We can learn a good deal from this about I.'s own approach to his predecessors and the arguments within the Platonist tradition. F. & D.'s commentary includes careful discussion of matters such as where I.'s information comes from and how fair he is to previous philosophers. (See, for example, pp. 133–9, commenting on §23.) Those interested primarily in I.'s own views will find them in §7, §§18–20 (the nature and acts of the soul, respectively), §§28–30 (the descent of the soul and different classes of soul), and §§39–53 (life after death). Here the commentary elucidates and discusses I.'s views very helpfully. Since much of our understanding of I. comes from the surviving work of his successors, the commentary also includes a good deal of

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useful comparative material drawn from later philosophers such as Proclus and Damascius.

The appendix offers a fresh translation and discussion of passages which have received a certain amount of recent study, both in the debate over the authorship of ps.-Simplicius and with the translation of part of the text by J. O. Urmson in the Duckworth series of translations of the Aristotelian commentators (London, 1995). Passage C offers 'the clearest account of I.'s idiosyncratic view of the soul' (p. 254). Passages F and G contain important evidence for I.'s view of imagination, while passages H and I, on light and the transparent, relate to Aristotle's use of the notion of the transparent in his account of perception in *DA* 2.7.418a26–419b3.

All in all, this edition makes I.'s *De anima* accessible as perhaps never before. In so doing, it makes an enormous contribution to our understanding of views of the soul in later Greek philosophy.

Royal Holloway, University of London ANNE SHEPPARD

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HIMERIUS MADE ACCESSIBLE

H. VÖLKER: *Himerios: Reden und Fragmente*. Einführung, Übersetzung und Kommentar. (Serta Graeca: Beiträge zur Erforschung griechischer Texte 17.) Pp. x + 420, pls. Wiesbaden: Dr Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2003. Cased, €69. ISBN: 3-89500-337-9.

When German *Altertumswissenschaft* blossomed before 1933, schoolteachers contributed to that success in an important way: they translated ancient texts and made them accessible to a wider readership. Harald Völker may be seen as a scion of this tradition. A retired schoolteacher, he has prepared a commented translation of Himerius, which will be useful also to specialists.

Himerius, the fourth-century rhetorician, has received some attention recently,[1] but still much less than Themistius or Libanius, who were his contemporaries and partially his rivals. After growing up in Prusa, Himerius went to Athens to study rhetoric. He taught at Constantinople and at Athens, leading a quiet life for most of the time. Once he had to enter into a rhetorical competition with Libanius in Nicomedia, which was won by the latter. Later, Julian called Himerius to his court; after some years of travelling, he returned to Athens in about 369, again to teach. He is last mentioned in 383.

Himerius was an abundantly fertile author. Seventy-four speeches are known, the bulk of them in fragments. There survive a certain number of other fragments which cannot be connected to single works, yet more must have been lost. The speeches seem to say nothing with many words; they contain very little precise information on the level of *histoire événementielle*. Nevertheless, their interest is not restricted to philologists who are willing to appreciate the style and the richness of metaphor. From the point of view of the ancient historian, several texts are important, namely those

[1]Most important is T. D. Barnes, 'Himerius and the Fourth Century', *CPh* 82 (1987), 206–25, whose prosopographical remarks V. sometimes receives with caution, but does not supersede.

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