



**Universität
Zürich** UZH

Seminar für Griechische und Lateinische Philologie

Einladung

zum Abendvortrag von

Prof. Dr. Polymnia Athanassiadi

Professor of Ancient History

an der National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

A Global Response to Crisis: Iamblichus' Religious Programme

im Rahmen des Kongresses "PHILOSOPHIA in der Konkurrenz von Schulen, Wissenschaften und Religionen"

(www.sglp.uzh.ch/veranstaltungen/conventus/philosophia.html)

Donnerstag, 16. Oktober 2014, 18:15 Uhr

Hörsaal KOL-F-117

Universität Zürich

Zentrum

Rämistrasse 71

Dozierende, Studierende und weitere Interessierte sind herzlich eingeladen.

Prof. Dr. Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Eigler

Prof. Dr. Christoph Riedweg

Abstract

Variously described as «an age of anxiety» and «an age of spirituality», the period between the late 2nd and the 6th/7th centuries owes these designations to the ways in which people reacted to «the third century crisis» and its aftermath. As a response to this situation, the Syrian Iamblichus elaborated an educational system for the elites which enriched the Platonic-Pythagorean tradition with elements from the Chaldaean revelation and the Hermetic way. In the late third and early fourth centuries, consecutive generations of future «guardians of the state» spent their formative years in Apamea pursuing this all-encompassing programme, in which the intellectual and the spiritual went hand in hand.

Iamblichus' reforms greatly influenced the course of Neoplatonism. Yet, despite the 'open' attitude of a number of his followers towards the man in the street, his heritage remained the preserve of a circumscribed elite, except for one brief moment, when it coincided with the social and religious policy of the Roman empire. In the 360s the Emperor Julian used the divine Iamblichus' model of the sage to create a priestly body with liturgical and pastoral functions.

Superimposed on the empire's administrative network, this clerical hierarchy was subject to the spiritual authority of the emperor in his role as pontifex maximus. A true caliph avant la lettre, Julian also preached, in a number of popular and learned writings, the Iamblichian version of theurgic Platonism to all and sundry.

Structured in two interlinked parts, this lecture will provide an analysis of Iamblichus' religious programme against the background of contemporary philosophy and religion, and will dwell on its practical application by the Emperor Julian.