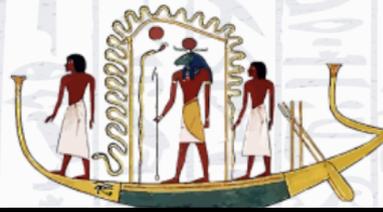


Between Athens & Alexandria
PLATONISM, 3rd-7th c. CE



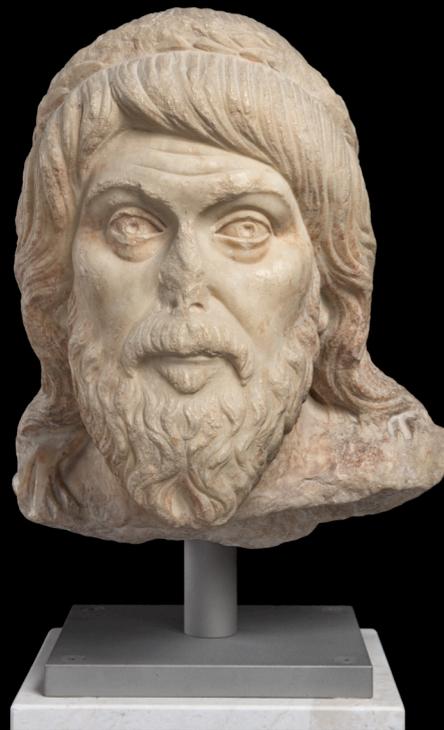
**INTELLECT AND SOUL
IN ATHENIAN NEOPLATONISM**

International Workshop

September 19, 2022

**Bibliotheca Alexandrina
Delegates Hall**

Al Azarilah WA Ash Shatebi, Bab Sharqui, Alexandria 21526





PROGRAMME

10:30 Welcome

Emad Khalil (BA-ACHS Director), **Mark Kyriakos** (BA-ACHS)
Irini-Fotini Viltanioti (University of Crete & IMS-FORTH)

SESSION I_Proclus on Plato's Myths: the Myth of Er and the Timaeus

- **11:00-12:00 John Finamore**
(The University of Iowa)

“The Constitution of the Soul and of the Universe in Proclus’ Essay on the Myth of Er”

Chair: Philippe Hoffmann
(École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris &
Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres)

- **12:00-13:00 Magdy El Kilany**
(University of Alexandria)

“Proclus on Plato’s Demiurge and Matter”

Chair: Konstantinos Spanoudakis
(Vice Rector, University of Crete)

13:00-14:30 VIP Guided Tour at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

14.30-15.30 Lunch

SESSION II_Time and Eternity: from Plotinus to Damascius

- **15:30-16:30 Irini-Fotini Viltanioti**
(University of Crete & IMS-FORTH)

“Temps et éternité de Porphyre à Proclus”

Chair: John Finamore
(University of Iowa)



- **16:30-17.30 Spyridon Rangos**
(University of Patras)

“Damascius on the *Sudden* (τὸ ἐξαίφνης) and the *Now* (τὸ νῦν).”

Chair: Hoda El Khouly
(University of Cairo)

17.30-17.45 Coffee Break

SESSION III_ Aristotle and the Chaldean Oracles in Athenian Neoplatonism

- **17:45-18.45 George Karamanolis**
(University of Vienna)

**“Simplicius on the *Timaeus*:
Explaining Plato in an Aristotelian Commentary (*In de Caelo*)”**

Chair: Magdy El Kilany
(University of Alexandria)

- **18.45-19.45 Philippe Hoffmann**
(École pratique des hautes études, Paris &
Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres)

“Triades chaldaïques dans la doctrine proclienne des intellects”

Chair: George Karamanolis
(University of Vienna)

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19. 45 – 20.15 Round Table Discussion

Chair: Spyridon Rangos
(University of Patras)

20.45 Dinner

ABSTRACTS / RÉSUMÉS

Magdy El Kilany *Proclus' on Plato's Demiurge and Matter*

This lecture will begin with a brief introduction about the most eminent philosophers of Neoplatonism in the School of Athens: Plutarch of Athens (350-430AD), Syrianus (437AD), Marinus (440AD), Isidorus (450-520AD), and Damascius (458-538AD). Proclus was the most prominent Neoplatonist and we are lucky to have some of his complete commentaries on Plato's writings.

The lecture deals with the Demiurge (ὁ δημιουργός) and Matter as the two main principles in the creation of the world in Plato's natural philosophy. It discusses the extent to which Proclus succeeded in commenting on these two principles as well as the extent to which he was Platonic when commenting on the *Timaeus*, expatiating on the main axes of the dialogue. The lecture deals with how and why Proclus discusses various problems in detail and with his account of the main axes of the dialogue and of these two principles in particular. Though it was supposed that Christianity as a heavenly religion could solve several current philosophical issues, particularly the issue of the creation of the world, Proclus followed pagan rites. He is portrayed in Marinus' *Life of Proclus* (28-29) as an experienced practitioner of theurgy. No wonder then that Proclus adopted Hellenic culture and became the most eminent Platonic philosopher nearly eight centuries after Plato.

In this talk, I will try also to shed light on the roots of the concepts of the Demiurge (ὁ δημιουργός) and the Chaos (τό χάος) in Presocratic philosophy and on their extended influence on Post-Aristotelean philosophy.

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John Finamore *The Constitution of the Soul and of the Universe in Proclus' Essay on the Myth of Er*

In the opening of his commentary to the Myth of Er in the *Republic* (*In Remp.* II.85-101), Proclus sets out to show a correspondence between the arrangement ("constitution," *politeia*) of the human soul with its three parts to that of the entire universe. As in the *Timaeus* (90c6-d7), the best arrangement of the human soul mirrors that of the heavens. In the course of the essay, he uses various features of the Platonic myth to create a chain from just above the pinnacle of the Cosmos:

1. The Monad (Necessity) and the Triad (The three Fates)
2. The Sirens
3. The planetary gods
4. Angels and daemons
5. The three judges of the Underworld
6. The judges in Tartarus

Proclus' purpose in creating this chain is to show how the Intellect's necessary ordering of the cosmos leads to the divine guidance (including rewards and punishments) of the human soul. The divinities in the chain seek to encourage and/or restore the soul's harmony so that our human psychic constitution mirrors that of the cosmos to the greatest extent possible. The purpose behind

the Myth of Er is to forge within the human being an orderly constitution in harmony with the order of the cosmos.

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Philippe Hoffmann_ *Triades chaldaïques dans la doctrine proclienne des intellects*

Les livres *IV* et *V* de la *Théologie Platonicienne* de Proclus exposent la structure des intellects « intelligibles et intellectifs » (νοητοὶ καὶ νοεοὶ) et des intellects proprement « intellectifs » (νοεοὶ) qui constituent, respectivement, une triade et une hebdomade. Le principe de la *sumphônia* de Platon et des *Oracles Chaldaïques*, formalisé par Syrianus, permet de faire coïncider la triade « intelligible et intellectuelle » avec une triade inspirée par les *Oracles* – celle des *Iynges/ἰνγγες*, des *Assembleurs/συννοχεῖς* et des *Téléтарques* –, et à reconnaître au sein de l’hebdomade « intellectuelle », dans une triade « paternelle » (Cronos, Rhéa, Zeus), l’équivalent de la triade chaldaïque ἄπαξ ἐπέκεινα, Hécate, δις ἐπέκεινα. La lecture parallèle des traités de Michel Psellos (*Op. Phil.*, II, 39-41 O’Meara), qui doivent dépendre du commentaire perdu de Proclus sur les *Oracles*, fait apparaître le rôle que l’interprétation des *Oracles* a dû jouer dans la doctrine proclienne des intellects.

Chaldean Triads in Proclus’ Doctrine of Intellects

In Books *IV* and *V* of the *Platonic Theology*, Proclus discusses the structure of “intelligible and intellectual” (νοητοὶ καὶ νοεοὶ) intellects and of properly “intellectual” (νοεοὶ) intellects, which constitute a triad and a hebdomad respectively. Given the principle of *sumphonia* between Plato and the *Chaldean Oracles*, systematised by Syrianus, it is possible to establish a correspondence between the “intelligible and intellectual” triad and the Chaldean triad “*Iynges/ἰνγγες*, Connectors/*συννοχεῖς*, Teletarchs”. It is also possible to identify the “paternal” triad “Cronus, Rhea, Zeus”, situated within the “intellectual” hebdomad, as being the equivalent of the Chaldean triad “ἄπαξ ἐπέκεινα, Hécate, δις ἐπέκεινα”. The role that the interpretation of the *Oracles* must have played in Proclus’ doctrine of intellects is also attested by Michael Psellus’ treatises (*Op. Phil.*, II, 39-41 O’Meara), which are most probably indebted to Proclus’ commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*, now lost.

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George Karamanolis_ *Simplicius on the Timaeus: Explaining Plato in an Aristotelian Commentary (In de Caelo)*

Simplicius’ commentary on Aristotle’s *De caelo* is full with references to the *Timaeus*. Simplicius not only makes references to the *Timaeus* while commenting on Aristotle’s *De caelo*, but he often makes long digressions, in which he goes into explaining how we should understand the *Timaeus*. We find one such digression in 103.1-107.24, in which Simplicius sets out to show that Aristotle’s criticism of the eternity of the world in *Timaeus* despite its created nature does not apply. Simplicius argues that Plato is aware of the logical law that all generated entities are corruptible but in the *Timaeus*, he claims, the world is dependent on the divine and the indestructibility of the world results from the world’s dependence on it (cf. *In DC* 106.25-107.6, 300.14-25). At the end of the digression Simplicius explains why the literal interpretation of the *Timaeus* should be resisted. Simplicius has two aims here: first, to harmonize Aristotle with Plato and, second, to oppose Philoponus’ interpretation of

the *Timaeus*. In my paper I will look at Simplicius' exegesis of the *Timaeus* in his commentary of Aristotle's *De caelo*, especially with regard to the eternity question and the role of the world soul in the world's coming into being (see e.g. 80.7-81.3). I will argue that Simplicius exhibits a strategy that can be detected in all of his commentaries on Aristotle, namely that his interpretation of Aristotle crucially involves also an interpretation of a relevant part of Plato.

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Spyridon Rangos_ *Damascius on the Sudden (τὸ ἐξαίφνης) and the Now (τὸ νῦν)*

Damascius' understanding of the Platonic notions of the Sudden (τὸ ἐξαίφνης) and the Now (τὸ νῦν) occurs in the context of his commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*. His view is that the Platonic Now is not the present moment qua boundary between the past and the future, as Proclus had suggested, but an indivisible stretch of time. As a result of this novel idea, one might expect that the Platonic Sudden would be treated as the limit between any two such nows. Damascius, however, does not explicitly say so. He, rather, approaches the Sudden not as a temporal but as a psychic notion. The Sudden is what holds the individual human soul together, and also the persisting element of it through the adventures of reincarnation. The paper explores the reasons that led Damascius to such a conception of the human soul in its relation to time and eternity.

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Irini-Fotini Viltanioti_ *Temps et éternité de Porphyre à Proclus*

Plotin définit l'éternité (αἰών) comme la vie de l'Intellect et le temps (χρόνος) – « image mobile de l'éternité » (Pl. *Ti.* 37 d) – comme la vie de l'Âme (*Ennéades* III 7). Dans le néoplatonisme plus tardif, le temps et l'éternité deviennent des entités indépendantes dont participent l'Âme et l'Intellect respectivement. On a souvent souligné l'écart entre la doctrine de Plotin et celles de ses successeurs fondées sur la notion de "participation" (μετοχή). Dans cet exposé, j'aimerais plutôt me centrer sur l'aspect de la continuité, en soutenant la thèse selon laquelle la relecture de la doctrine plotinienne par Porphyre, relecture que nous ne connaissons que par des fragments jusqu'ici peu étudiés, aurait préparé les développements plus tardifs, notamment par Proclus. Les sources préservées, à savoir (i) un fragment du *Commentaire sur le Timée* (fr. 78 Sodano), (ii) un fragment littéral de *l'Histoire philosophique* cité par Cyril d'Alexandrie (fr. 223 Smith), (iii) le résumé proclien des analyses de Porphyre dans le traité perdu *Sur les principes*, (fr. 232 Smith), et (iv) la *Sentence 44*, témoignent en faveur de cette hypothèse, en laissant, par ailleurs, entrevoir le rôle joué par la structure triadique dans la doctrine porphyrienne, probablement sous l'influence des *Oracles Chaldaïques*.

Time and Eternity from Porphyry to Proclus

Plotinus identifies eternity (αἰών) with the life of Intellect and time (χρόνος) – "the moving image of eternity" (Pl. *Ti.* 37 d) – with the life of Soul. From Iamblichus onwards, Time and Eternity become independent entities in which Soul and Intellect respectively participate. The criticism of Plotinus' views by later Neoplatonists has often been the subject of scholarly discussions. In this talk, I will focus on Porphyry's role in the transition from Plotinus' to later Neoplatonic views on Time and Eternity and to Proclus' views more especially. I will argue that Porphyry's account of time and eternity, to which Iamblichus is probably also indebted, sets the background of Proclus'

developments. The extant evidence, namely (i) a fragment from the Porphyry's *Commentary on the Timaeus* (fr. 78 Sodano), (ii) a *verbatim* quotation drawn from the *Philosophical History* and preserved by Cyril of Alexandria (Porph. fr. 223 Smith); (iii) Proclus' summary of Porphyry's views exposed in *On principles* (Porph. fr. 232 Smith), and, (iv) *Sententia* 44, supports this hypothesis, while also pointing to the cardinal place of the triad in Porphyry's doctrine of time and eternity, probably under the influence of the *Chaldean Oracles*.

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BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES / NOTICES BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

Hoda El Khouly (Ph.D. University of Athens, 1997) is a Professor of Greek Philosophy at the University of Cairo. She has been Head of the Department of Philosophy since 2017. From 2014 to 2017, she was Head of the Center for Philosophical Research. Her research focuses on ancient Greek philosophy (Presocratics, Plato, Hellenistic philosophy, Hermeticism), philosophy of civilization, and philosophy of education. She is the author of *Plato's Symposium* (in Arabic), 2007; *Ancient Greek Philosophy from 6th to 4th century BC (From Thales to Plato)*, 2012; *Hellenistic and Roman School of Philosophy* (in Arabic), 2014; *Heraclitus, Fragments. Translation and Commentary*, 2013. Additionally, Professor Hoda El Khouly has published more than fifteen papers on Greek philosophy and its Arabic reception. She is Vice-President of the Greek-Egyptian League, a Commander of the Order of the Lion of Alexandria, and a Member of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Culture.

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Magdy El Kilany is a Professor of Greek and Roman Thought at the University of Alexandria and a Member of the Alexandria Center for Hellenistic Studies of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. He was Head of the Department of Greco-Roman Archaeology and Classical Studies from 2010-2013 and 2016-2017. He has conducted research at the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London. From 1996 to 2002 he taught at the Faculty of Education for Girls in Ahsa in Saudi Arabia. Professor Kilany's research focuses on ancient Greek and Roman philosophy. Professor Kilany is the author of *Greek Philosophy (From Thales to Plato); Aristotle; Philosophical Schools in the Hellenistic Period; History and Mythology in Plato's Dialogues* (Alexandria University Award for Scientific Research, 2016); *Philo Alexandrinus Between Philosophy and Religion*. Additionally, he has translated *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (eds. C. Rowe and M. Schofield) into Arabic.

*

John Finamore (Ph.D. Rutgers University, 1983) is a Professor Emeritus of Classics at The University of Iowa, where he taught from 1983 to 2022. He was Chair from 2002-2007 and 2012-2018. He has taught courses in Greek and Roman Philosophy, Greek, and Latin. He conducts research in the area of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, especially the philosophy of the late Empire. Professor Finamore is the author of *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul* (1985), *Iamblichus' De Anima: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (with J. M. Dillon, 2002), and co-editor (with E. Perl) of *Platonic Interpretations* (Bream, Lydney, 2019) and (with C. Manolea and S. Wear) *Studies*

in *Hermias' Commentary on Plato's Phaedrus* (Leiden 2019). John Finamore is editor of *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, co-editor of the book series *Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition*, which is published by Brill, and U. S. President of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies.

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Philippe Hoffmann (Doctorat de III^e Cycle en Études Grecques, Université de Paris IV, 1981), a Knight of the French National Order of Merit, a Commander of the Order of Academic Palms, and a Full Member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, is a Hellenist specialising in Late Antique and Byzantine philosophical and religious thought, with a focus on Neoplatonism. His research interests also include Greek paleography and codicology. He has been Director of the Laboratoire d'études sur les monothéismes (LEM, UMR 8584, EPHE-CNRS-Paris IV-Université de Saint-Étienne), President, then Dean, of the Department of Religious Studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE), Deputy Director of the CNRS Group SOURCEM, and Director of the EPHE research cluster (LabEx) HASTEC. Main publications : 1994. "Damascius", in *DPhA*, éd. R. Goulet – 2011. "Erôs, Alètheia, Pistis et Elpis. Tétrade chaldaïque, triade néoplatonicienne (Fr. 46 des Places, p. 26 Kroll)", in *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel*, eds. H. Seng and M. Tardieu – 2014. "Science théologique et foi selon le Commentaire de Simplicius au *De caelo* d'Aristote", in *De l'Antiquité tardive au Moyen Âge*, eds. E. Coda et C. Martini Bonadeo – 2014. "Φάος et τόπος. Le fragment 51 des Places (p. 28 Kroll) des *Oracles Chaldaïques* selon Proclus et Simplicius (Corollarium de loco)", in *Oracles chaldaïques: Fragments et philosophie*, eds. A. Lecerf, L. Saudelli, and H. Seng – 2016. "La philosophie grecque sur les bords de l'Oxus : un réexamen du papyrus d'Aï Khanoum", in *La Grèce dans les profondeurs de l'Asie*, 2ds. J. Jouanna, V. Schiltz, and M. Zink – 2016. "Le rituel théurgique de l'ensevelissement et le *Phèdre* de Platon. À propos de Proclus, *Théologie Platonicienne*, IV, 9", in *Gnose et Manichéisme. Entre les oasis d'Égypte et la Route de la Soie*, eds. A. Van den Kerchove and L. G. Soares Santoprete – 2020. *Théories et pratiques de la prière à la fin de l'Antiquité* (co-edited with A. Timotin).

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George Karamanolis (DPhil Oxon, 2001) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Vienna. Professor Karamanolis specializes in Ancient Philosophy, where his main areas of research are Later Ancient Philosophy and Hellenistic Philosophy, while maintaining research interests also in Byzantine and Renaissance Philosophy. He is the author of *Philodemus, The Epigrams: The Poetry of an Epicurean* (2004), *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry* (Oxford University Press, 2006 ; revised pbk edition 2013), *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (Routledge 2013; 2nd edition 2021) and co-editor of *Studies on Porphyry* (with A. Sheppard), *The Aporetic Tradition in Ancient Philosophy* (with V. Politis), and *Pseudo-Aristotle, De Mundo (On the Cosmos)* (with P. Gregoric). Professor Karamanolis has also recently published a Modern Greek translation with commentary of Cicero's *De finibus* (with E. Mitousi). Additionally, he is the author of more than forty papers on various topics in Ancient and Byzantine Philosophy.

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Spyridon Rangos (Ph.D. Cantab, 1995) is a Professor of Ancient Greek Literature and Philosophy at the University of Patras, where he teaches courses in Ancient Greek Philosophy (with a focus on Plato and on Aristotle) and Ancient Greek Literature (historiography, drama). He conducts research

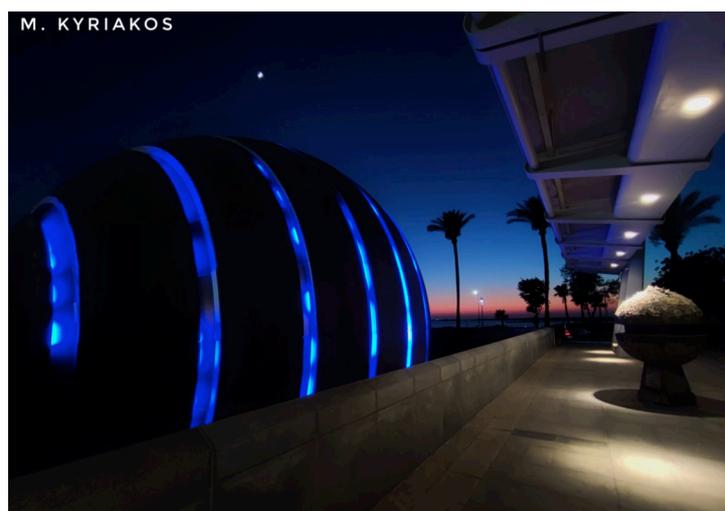
in the areas of ancient Greek philosophy (with a focus on Metaphysics), especially Presocratic Philosophy, Classical Philosophy, and Neoplatonism, as well as of ancient Greek religion. He is the author of four books, including a forthcoming translation with commentary of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Books E, Z, H, and Θ, as well more than fifty papers on Empedocles, the Derveni Papyrus, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Proclus among others.

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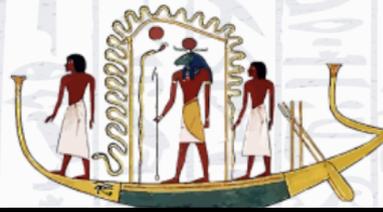
Konstantinos Spanoudakis (Ph.D. University of St Andrews, 1997) is a Professor of Ancient Greek Literature at the University of Crete. Since 2016 he serves as Vice Rector of the University of Crete. His research focuses on Hellenistic Poetry, Greek Imperial Poetry, Late Antique Poetry, Greek Prose Style, Greek Scholarship, and Early Christian Literature. He is the author of *Philitas of Cos* (Mnemosyne Supplements 229, Brill, 2002) and of *Nonnus of Panopolis: Paraphrasis of the Gospel of St. John 11* (Oxford University Press, 2014; Academy of Athens Award in Classical Studies, 2015) as well as the co-author of *Greek Poetry of Late Antiquity: an Anthology* (in Modern Greek, with N. Litinas, Kallipos 2015). Professor Spanoudakis has edited *Alexandrine Muse* (in Greek, with F. Manakidou, Gutenberg, 2008) and *Nonnus in Context* (TCSV 24, De Gruyter, 2014). Additionally, he has published more than forty articles and reviews on various topics in ancient Greek literature.

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Irini-Fotini Viltanioti (Doctorat en Philosophie, Universitas Libera Bruxellensis, 2010) is an Associate Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the University of Crete and a Research Associate at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies-Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas (IMS-FORTH), where she is the Principal Investigator the Research Project "Between Athens & Alexandria. Platonism, 3rd-7th c. CE" (<http://athens-alexandria.ims.forth.gr/>) supported by the A. S. Onassis Foundation. Her research focuses on Neoplatonism, Early Greek Philosophy, and the Pythagorean Tradition. She is the author of *L'harmonie des Sirènes du pythagorisme ancien à Platon* (De Gruyter, 2015; Eugène Goblet d'Alviella Prize of the Royal Academy of Belgium, 2016) as well as co-editor of *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity* (with A. Marmodoro; Oxford University Press, 2017) and of *Logic and Exegesis: The Logical Reconstruction of Arguments in the Greek Commentary Tradition* (with J. Opsomer and P. d'Hoine; *History of Philosophy & Logical Analysis* 24, 2021). Additionally, she has published more than twenty papers on various topics in ancient Greek philosophy and literature.



Between Athens & Alexandria *PLATONISM, 3rd-7th c. CE*



The Alexandria Center for Hellenistic Studies of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (ACHS-BA) and the Institute for Mediterranean Studies of the Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas (IMS-FORTH) co-organise the workshop *Intellect and Soul in Athenian Neoplatonism / Intellect et âme dans le néoplatonisme athénien*. Focusing on Athenian Neoplatonism, the workshop explores the evolution of Neoplatonic metaphysics from 3rd century Alexandria to 6th century Athens.

We are interested in questions such as:

- How does the multiplicity of Being derive from the First Principle ?
- What is the role of the various aspects of Soul ? How does soul relate to body ?
- What is Time and what is Eternity ? Is the cosmos eternal or has it been created ?
- How does metaphysical speculation inform and/or reflect other aspects of Neoplatonic thought ?

Investigating these and other relevant questions, we intend to juxtapose Plotinus' views with the teachings of some of the last representatives of the Athenian School.

Organisers:

Irini-Fotini Viltanioti (University of Crete & IMS-FORTH)

Mark Kyriakos (ACHS-BA)

Aya Samir (ACHS-BA)

Picture: Portrait of a Philosopher (Plutarch of Athens?), 5th c. CE. © Athens, Acropolis Museum, inv. 1313. Photo: Giannis Koulelis, 2018.