

Between Athens & Alexandria

Platonism, 3rd-7th c. CE



METAPHYSICS IN EARLY NEOPLATONISM I: PORPHYRY ON SOUL



Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina
Main Building, Third Floating Room

18-19 September 2023



Monday, September 18

9.45-10.00 Welcome

Gelina Harlaftis (IMS-FORTH Director & University of Crete)

Emad Khalil (BA-ACHS Head of Research & Alexandria University)

- **Session 1: Porphyry, Christian and Arabic**

10.00-11.00 **Mark Edwards** (University of Oxford, Christ Church)

Porphyry and the Fortunate Fall of Souls

Chair: Tiziano Dorandi (CNRS, Centre J. Pépin)

11.00-12.00 **Hussein Soliman** (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Manuscript Center)

Porphyry's Soul Intellection in the Arabic Tradition

Chair: Constantinos Macris (CNRS, LEM)

12.00-14:00 Guided Tour of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

14.00-15.00 Lunch Break

- **Session 2: Porphyry, from Middle-Platonism to Iamblichus**

15.00-16.00 **Irini-Fotini Viltanioti** (University of Crete & IMS-FORTH)

Porphyry on Soul's Parts

Chair: Federico Maria Petrucci (University of Turin)

16.00-16.30 Coffee / Tea Break

16.30-17.30 **Federico Maria Petrucci** (University of Turin)

The Fragments on Soul in Porphyry's In Timaeum and Porphyry's Role in the History of Platonist Exegesis

Chair: Hussein Soliman (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Manuscript Center)

17.30-18.30 **Constantinos Macris** (CNRS, LEM)

Some Porphyrian Doctrines on the Soul Discussed in Iamblichus' De anima

Chair: Mark Edwards (University of Oxford, Christ Church)

20.00 Dinner



Tuesday, September 19

- **Session 3: Porphyry's treatise *Περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων***

I. Greek Text

10:00-11.00 **Tiziano Dorandi** (CNRS, Centre J. Pépin)

La nouvelle édition du Περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων de Porphyre

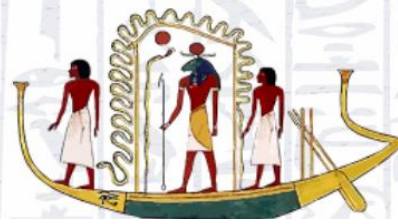
Chair: Irini-Fotini Viltanioti (University of Crete & IMS-FORTH)

II. English Translation and Commentary

	ed.		ed. Dorandi	
	Smith			
11.00-12.00	251F	pp. 1-2	Mark Edwards (University of Oxford, Christ Church)	
12.00-13.00	252F	p. 2	Federico Maria Petrucci (University of Turin)	
13.00-14.00	Break			
14.00-15.30	253F	pp. 2-5	Irini-Fotini Viltanioti (University of Crete & IMS-FORTH)	
15.30-16.00	Coffee / Tea Break			
16.00-17.00	254F	p. 6	Mark Edwards (University of Oxford, Christ Church)	
	255F	-		
17.00	Concluding remarks			

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This workshop examines aspects of Porphyry's psychology. From a famous passage of the *Life of Plotinus* (13, 10-11), we gather that problems on soul were of special interest to Porphyry, who famously spent three days asking his teacher questions about soul's presence to body. Porphyry's views on soul, the third so-called "Hypostasis", are contained in the *Sententiae* but also in other works most of which survive in fragments drawn mainly from Stobaeus, Nemesius of Emesa, St Augustine, and Eusebius of Caesarea. Relevant works include, for instance, *Περὶ ψυχῆς πρὸς Βόηθον ε'* (fr. 241-250 Smith), *Περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων* (fr. 251-255 Smith), and *Σύμμικτα ζητήματα* (fr. 256-263 Smith).

Focusing on the surviving evidence, we are interested in questions concerning soul's relationship to Intellect but also soul's own divine nature, the distinction between higher or rational and lower or irrational soul as well as soul's connection with, and separation from, body.

- In what sense is soul in Intellect and still distinct from it?
- How can soul, an incorporeal entity, be present to body? When does soul connect with body, at birth or in advance of it? What is the role of the astral body (πνεῦμα or ὄχημα)?
- In what sense(s) can soul, an indivisible entity, be said to have parts? What is the relationship between soul's parts and soul's powers?
- Does Porphyry distinguish between a necessary and a voluntary descent of soul, like Plotinus?
- What is life and what is death in the case of the immortal soul? What is soul's fate after physical death? Does Porphyry deny, unlike Plotinus, transmigration of human souls into animals?
- How does the harmonisation of Plato and Aristotle form the framework of Porphyry's views on soul?
- To what extent is middle-Platonism present in Porphyry's psychology? How do later, Ancient and Byzantine, Neoplatonists approach Porphyry's views on soul? What additional information can we gain from the Arabic sources?

By shedding new light on Porphyry's views on soul, we aim at taking a departure from the traditional view that tends to see Porphyry as a learned spokesperson of Plotinus rather than as an original metaphysician. To that aim, the workshop will be partly devoted to *Περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων* (fr. 251-255 Smith), a treatise that has not been systematically studied by now. Following Andrew Smith's Teubner edition of Porphyry's fragments and Tiziano Dorandi's forthcoming edition of Stobaeus, we will provide a translation and commentary of this neglected work in which Porphyry investigates the problem of soul's divisibility and offers a Platonic interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of soul's powers.

Pictures:

Head of a male statue (Porphyry of Tyre?), c. 270-290 CE, EAM 581 © Acropolis Museum, 2022, photo: Socratis Mavrommatis Theodoros Stamos (1922-1997), *Egypt* (1949), Oil on canvas, 25 x 107 cm, Athens, National Gallery, Inv. Number Π.4777 © 2015 National Gallery-Alexandros Soutsos Museum-Evripidis Koutlidis Foundation