



PORPHYRY OF TYRE
ON THEOLOGY
AND THEURGY

Texts & Translations of
Transcendence & Transformation

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Series Editors: Adam Bremer-McCollum & Charles M. Stang

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AND THEURGY

Fabien Muller

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Foreword: The *Nous* and the *Naos*: Reason and Ritual in the Third Century

This book, the second in the 4T series that Adam Bremer-McCollum and I founded and edit, includes the first English translations of two fragmentary texts by Porphyry of Tyre (c. 234-305): the *Letter to Anebo* and *Philosophy from Oracles*. Both present the reader with challenges, for several reasons. First, they are fragmentary, pieced together from quotations and paraphrases from other ancient authors, who are somewhere between ambivalent and hostile to Porphyry's views. Second, they both assume the reader's familiarity with ancient philosophy (especially Platonism), as well as Greek and in some cases Egyptian religion, at least as practiced in Porphyry's day. More specifically, in both texts Porphyry assumes his reader's knowledge of theurgy, a theory and practice of working with gods and other divine beings for the purposes of divination and salvation, derived from the *Chaldean Oracles* and embraced by some of Porphyry's philosophical contemporaries. Third, both texts are involved in polemics of some sort or another. The first, the *Letter to Anebo*, is itself polemical; it is Porphyry's critique of theurgy, addressed to the fictional "Anebo the Egyptian," but really aimed at Porphyry's rival Iamblichus of Chalcis (c. 245-325). Iamblichus was a great proponent of theurgy, and his enthusiasm drew Porphyry's fire; most of the fragments from the *Letter* survive as quotations and paraphrases in Iamblichus's heated response to Porphyry, conventionally known as *On the Mysteries*.¹ The second text, *Philosophy*

¹Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell, *Iamblichus: On the Mysteries*, Writings from the Greco-Roman World (Atlanta, 2003).

from *Oracles*, is not polemical in itself: It promotes theurgy and interprets oracles as delivering truths consistent with Platonism. But like the *Letter to Anebo*, the fragments of this text are preserved in polemical contexts, largely quotations and paraphrases from two Christian authors, Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-339) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430), who are, not surprisingly, scornful of Porphyry's position. Fourth and finally, perhaps the greatest difficulty is that Porphyry's two texts seem to contradict each other: The *Letter to Anebo* is sharply critical of theurgy, while *Philosophy from Oracles* promotes it. This contradiction has baffled ancient and modern interpreters. Fabien Muller's lucid introduction and commentary will help the reader navigate these difficulties, but not entirely overcome them. And that is how it should be. We should be wary of any interpretation that too quickly or neatly resolves persistent quandaries.



In the *Letter to Anebo*, Porphyry takes up two closely related topics: the hierarchy of divine beings (fr. 1-37) and the proper means and meaning of divination (fr. 38-110). The hierarchy of divine beings is a descending scale, with gods at the top, followed by daemons, heroes, and pure souls.² This is not what is under dispute between Porphyry and Anebo (Iamblichus). Rather, Porphyry questions how we can make rationally defensible distinctions among these divine beings. Such distinctions are of paramount importance because theurgy presumes to work differently with these different divine beings, and Porphyry is concerned that the theory and practice of theurgy is riven with contradictions and absurdities. In this regard he is critical of his own Platonist tradition, which he claims has too often proceeded “from speculation” and strayed from the truth (fr. 1). As Muller writes in his commentary, “Porphyry intends to present a critical philosophy of religion that requires coherent and justifiable ideas about gods and daemons.”³ What remains of the *Letter to Anebo* is just that, a *critical* philosophy of religion. The surviving fragments do not in its stead offer a *constructive*

²Although in fr. 30, Iamblichus speaks of “a god, an angel, an archangel, a daemon, some archon, or a soul.”

³See below, commentary to *Letter to Anebo*, fr. 1.

philosophy, or any proposal for a surer and better foundation for theology and theurgy.

The distinctions among the divine beings Porphyry discusses and critiques include whether they are more or less active or passive, intellectual or material; whether we can distinguish them according to their “accidents” (properties) or only their substance; whether the different beings have different kinds of bodies (e.g. ethereal, aerial, or earthly); whether the beings can be said to reside in or associate with certain places rather than others; whether they can be ranked in terms of purity, be it moral or material; whether they are visible or invisible, or otherwise distinguishable by essence, power, or activity; and whether they differ in the manner and mode of their presence (*parousia*) or appearance (*epiphaneia*). Iamblichus tries to answer all these questions and challenges in his response, *On the Mysteries*, but this is not the place to rehearse or assess his answers, because we are focused here on recovering and reconstructing Porphyry’s point of view. Even from the *Letter*’s fragmentary state, it is clear that Porphyry regards theurgy’s account of the hierarchy of divine beings as entailing problems that any philosopher committed to a reasoned approach to truth must call out.

The remaining fragments of the *Letter* (fr. 38–110) concern divination, or *mantikē*. Porphyry considers three broad kinds of divination: dreams, enthusiasm, and divine possession, all of which can yield knowledge of future events. He is hardly a thoroughgoing skeptic of divination; in fact, he concedes that prognostication is quite common. However, he favors naturalistic explanations for it and raises a skeptical eyebrow at the theurgists’ eager efforts. It just happens sometimes, he says, that when we sleep such foreknowledge comes to us. The same can happen through music and dance.

One gets the impression that Porphyry is skeptical of our efforts to cultivate or solicit this sort of event. Certainly we can’t control it. He never denies the existence of the divine hierarchy; on the contrary, he firmly believes in it, but he does not think that the divine beings predictably respond to our bidding. If they did, they would not be divine. He wonders whether gods appear “automatically” or “spontaneously” – an idea at which Iamblichus scoffs (fr. 53). He also wonders whether our soul is itself naturally capable of generating knowledge of future

events, writing, “it is the soul that speaks about these things and imagines them”; “...the soul’s passions are roused from small gleams”; and “small gleams rouse divine ideas in us” (fr. 54, 55). A gleam is unlikely to mean here the glimmer of light on water, a common feature of hydromancy; rather, a “gleam” (*aitʰugma*) is ethereal (from *aitʰēr*), suggesting that the soul itself, owing to its ethereal nature, naturally generates its own gleam or spark of this extraordinary knowledge. Notice that the soul “imagines” this, which means that imagination is the soul’s faculty of perception of realities beyond those available to our everyday sense perception or even our reason. Finally, Porphyry proposes a compromise of sorts, that the soul’s own gleam is the spontaneous spark, which is then kindled by a divine response. This is close to his earlier definition of enthusiasm, namely that “it consists of some kind of intellectual impulse” – *dianoia*, which is understood as natural to the soul – “accompanied by daemonic inspiration” (fr. 42). Iamblichus finds this final proposal of Porphyry’s to be “the most plausible” or “most true” of the three (fr. 56).

We should pause over the word daemonic (adj. *daimonios*) and daemon (noun *daimōn*, pl. *daimones*; and *daimonion*, pl. *daimonia*). Before they were “demonized” in early Christianity, *daimones* were understood to be intermediary divine beings, shuttling between humans and gods, between earth and ether. This idea is present in Plato, especially his account of Eros as a *daimōn*, and was developed in the century before Porphyry by such fellow Platonists as Apuleius and Maximus of Tyre.⁴ I imagine it is philosophers like these Porphyry has in mind when he chastens his predecessors for speculating too freely about the differences among divine beings.

When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, the words *daimōn* and *daimonion* were used to translate a range of Hebrew words for evil spirits; the New Testament follows suit and uses them to refer to evil spirits needing exorcism.⁵ By and large, Porphyry preserves the pre-Christian understanding of *daimones* as intermediary divine beings,

⁴See Andrei Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne: histoire de la notion de daimōn de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens* (Leiden, 2012); and Luc Brisson et al., eds., *Neoplatonic Demons and Angels* (Leiden, 2018).

⁵Matthew 8:31, Mark 5:12, Luke 8:29, and Revelation 16:14, 18:2.

greater than humans but inferior to the gods. Pagans and Christians use the same word, but it is precisely the pagan vs. Christian understanding of *daimōn* that is being worked out in such texts as the *Letter to Anebo* and *Philosophy from Oracles*. Muller translates *daimōn* and *daimonion* as “daemon” and “daemonic” – rightly, in my view – and I will follow suit.

Readers should be alive to the fact that Porphyry does not think all daemons are “demons” in the sense of malevolent beings. However, he *is* wary that divination can invite evil spirits or a “kind of treacherous nature, capable of assuming all forms, shifting and acting like gods, daemons, and the souls of the dead.” Such a “treacherous nature, capable of...appearing as something good or bad...can play mischievous tricks and come up with mockery and hindrances against those who pursue virtue, and it is full of delusion and delights in vapors and flattery” (fr. 69). Iamblichus dismisses this concern, confident that he knows how to discern “the one unsullied, sacred, and truly divine kind of divination” from its evil imposter (fr. 70). He groups Porphyry’s concern with “the opinions of the atheists...who think that all divination is brought to realization by the evil daemon.” Iamblichus is almost certainly referring to Christians here, “atheists” because they deny the gods and attribute all divination to the work of a singular evil demon, the devil or *diabolos*. Porphyry was certainly no fan of Christians (see below), so the fact that Iamblichus groups him with them is a provocation. But it may be that Christian discourse about demons has influenced Porphyry, such that he is cautious that evil spirits or malevolent beings (“demons”) might mimic gods or good daemons and mislead those engaged in divination.

Porphyry does believe that some daemons are malevolent, but there is no evidence to suggest that he believes there to be one evil “demon” presiding over other evil “demons” – that’s a Christian view that Iamblichus is attributing to Porphyry to discredit him. However, in these fragments Porphyry does affirm that we each have our own individual daemon, that this singular companion is “the one leader presiding” over all our other daemons, and “that the presidency over everything in us depends on one daemon.” So we each have a singular, presiding daemon, but it is benevolent, overseeing other daemons who

look after our body's "health, form, and condition" (fr. 98). The notion of a personal daemon goes back, of course, to Socrates's account in the *Apology* of his own familiar daemonic (*daimonion*) sign, which he says has accompanied him since childhood, and manifests only as a voice that says no and never yes. Porphyry has inherited centuries of philosophical reflection and speculation on Socrates's daemon, some of which he clearly thinks has gone too far.



Readers ancient and modern have been surprised moving from the *Letter to Anebo* to *Philosophy from Oracles*, in which Porphyry quotes contemporary oracles from several gods, principally Apollo and Hecate, but also Asclepius, Hermes, Serapis, and Pan. In these oracles, the gods speak in the first person and in verse. Porphyry insists, "I have neither added nor subtracted anything from the oracular thoughts," and "my aim was to preserve the pure meaning of the text" (fr. 1). It is striking that in *Philosophy from Oracles* Porphyry relies on some of the very distinctions among gods and other divine beings that he critiques in the *Letter to Anebo*. Furthermore, in *Philosophy* the gods recommend the sorts of material rituals and sacrifices that Porphyry scorns in the *Letter* – and with no objection from him. We rely almost entirely on Eusebius and Augustine for the fragments of *Philosophy from Oracles*, and they draw attention to these and other contradictions between the two texts. The contradictions allow them to discredit Porphyry as a philosopher: They clearly favor his critical views in the *Letter* and mock his gullible piety in *Philosophy*. Eusebius positions himself as the better philosopher: "Would it not be better for us to philosophize than to practice magic...given that we are capable of achieving happiness and a blessed life by observing virtue and philosophy?" (fr. 18). Eusebius reports that Porphyry labels his project "theosophy"; John Philoponus (c. 490–570) says that Porphyry's "practical theosophy" is no different from magic. Indeed, it is hard to distinguish this practical theosophy from the theurgy Porphyry critiques in his *Letter*.

What will also likely strike the reader new to *Philosophy from Oracles* is that the old gods comment directly on new religious realities,

especially the religion of the Hebrews and their wayward descendants the Christians. It seems that the gods were asked to comment on such topics: What did they think of the Hebrew people, of Jesus Christ, and of the Christians who followed him? It might surprise the reader that the old gods praise the Hebrew people and even Jesus Christ, even as they heap derision on Christians. Apollo, for example, acknowledges that the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Lydians, and “the men of the Hebrew nation” have taught “different ways of the blessed,” which Porphyry interprets to mean different paths “leading to the gods” (fr. 21, 22). Amid this celebration of pluralism, no mention is made of any tension between the Hebrews’ exclusive monotheism and Apollo’s inclusive henotheism. In another oracle, Apollo says that only the Assyrians (or Chaldeans) and the “admirable” Hebrews “have attained wisdom,” or understand the “heavens in plural number” (fr. 22).

This praise for the Hebrews almost always comes at the expense of Christians, or even Christ. Augustine quotes Porphyry: “Apollo recited these verses for somebody who had asked which god he should pray to in order to call his wife back from Christianity” (fr. 45). Apollo’s alleged answer is as follows:

It would be easier for you to write letters on water or to spread your light feathers to fly through the air than to call back your depraved, godless wife’s sense. Let her go on and persevere in her insane deception. Let her lament her dead god in her delusion, who was condemned by rightful judges and who was bound by fetters and put to the worst death on specious [charges].

Porphyry adds, “Here [Apollo] reveals the inveterate character of [the Christians’] opinion, arguing that the Jews revere God more than them.” Apollo is also asked “which one of the two, the word (or reason) or the law, is better,” and he answers, “to him who is truly God, the creator and king before all things, of whom heaven, earth, the sea, and the depth of hell are afraid and from whom the gods recoil in terror. [The gods’] Father is the law, held in great reverence by the Holy Hebrews” (fr. 46). According to Apollo, the Hebrews revere (the one)

God more than the Christians do; they are better monotheists, or at least better henotheists.

“Why,” Augustine asks, “does Porphyry extol the piety of the Hebrews – because they venerate the great and true god, even feared by the gods themselves – but draw on the oracles of his own gods to disparage Christians as supremely ignorant for claiming that this world is going to pass away?” (fr. 47). After all, the same Hebrew scriptures attest to God’s primacy over the gods and the passing away of the world. Porphyry’s inconsistency “makes him curse this point in the Christian faith,” but also makes him a rather poor philosopher. But the real issue at stake between “celebrated philosophers” such as Porphyry and “us” (Christians), Augustine insists, is the resurrection of the flesh, “which they reject as strongly as they can.” No matter, because between Porphyry’s time and Augustine’s the tide has turned in Christians’ favor: “the believers have become so numerous that only a few deniers are left” (fr. 49).

Apollo is quite critical of Christ – a “dead god” justly condemned and shamefully and publicly put to death. But the goddess Hecate, when asked, offers a slightly kinder assessment. Both Eusebius and Augustine preserve and comment on these important fragments (fr. 44-54), in which Porphyry recognizes that what he is going to report will surprise some readers. When asked whether Christ was a god, Hecate does not answer the question directly, but offers a cryptic response (fr. 50):

You know that the soul steps forward immortal, away from
the body;
But when it is cut off from wisdom, it wanders around
endlessly.
That soul is the soul of a man highly excelling in piety.

Hecate seems to have a nuanced view of Christ. He excels in piety, but his disembodied soul is somehow “cut off” from wisdom (we’re not told what exactly this means and neither Eusebius nor Augustine speculates). In any case, Porphyry explains, Christ is hardly alone in having his soul “honored with immortality.” Other pious people are similarly honored, but Christians ignorantly worship his immortal soul as if he were unique. So Porphyry acknowledges that the goddess

praises Christ as “most pious” but implicitly faults Christians for their ignorance of other equally pious and immortal souls. Hecate is not impressed with Christ’s having endured punishments, because it is only the body, not the soul, that suffers these feeble torments. Christ’s soul, like others’, went to the heavenly realm. “Thus,” she concludes, “don’t blaspheme against him, but commiserate the ignorance of humans.” (fr. 50). In sum, Hecate and Porphyry criticize Christians explicitly for worshipping Christ as if he were somehow uniquely pious and immortal, and implicitly for focusing on his bodily suffering and death as if that had any bearing on his soul.

But Augustine preserves more of Hecate’s oracle, in which she is even more critical of Christians *and* of Christ himself:

Fatally, what the other souls – which the Fates had not granted to receive the divine gifts nor to attain knowledge of immortal Zeus – received from [Christ’s] soul was to be engrossed in error. Hence, the gods hated them, because, although they were not destined to know God nor to receive the gods’ gifts, [Christ] fatally made them to be engrossed in error. (fr. 51)

Thus, according to the goddess, Christ is not simply the hapless victim of his ignorant followers; he actively misleads them. Augustine wonders, then: If Hecate admits that Christ excels in piety, did he mislead his followers voluntarily or involuntarily? If voluntarily, then how could he be just? If involuntarily, then how could he be blessed? Augustine then quotes Porphyry’s own fascinating explanation (fr. 47):

In a certain place there are very small terrestrial spirits that are subject to the power of evil daemons. From these, the wise men among the Hebrews – Jesus was one of them, as you have heard through Apollo’s oracles quoted above – from these most perverted daemons and from the lesser spirits, the Hebrews urged religious people to stay away and forbade them to spend time with them; instead, they should venerate the heavenly gods, and most of all, venerate God the Father. This is what even the gods teach,

and we have shown above that they order us to direct our mind to God and that they always command us to worship him. The uneducated and the corrupted natures, to whom Fate did not grant to receive divine gifts or to know Zeus immortal, did not listen to the gods or divine men – they have rejected all gods, venerating the forbidden daemons instead of loathing them.

In this remarkable passage, Porphyry suggests that it is Christians who are the real demoniacs. The Hebrew wisemen – among them Jesus – steered their flocks away from evil daemons and toward the heavenly gods and the one God. Porphyry presents the Hebrews as henotheists, worshipping the one God who sits over the many gods, who warn us against “small terrestrial spirits” and the perverted daemons who control them. What responsibility, though, does Christ bear for his disciples’ being engrossed in error? Porphyry does not say exactly. Is it that Christ attracted uneducated and corrupted followers who, despite his warnings, were destined to seek out evil daemons? Is it that he let them think he was uniquely pious and so immortal, fixating their attention on his singular person as opposed to the plurality of piety? Is it that his death called undue attention to his body and its allegedly salvific sufferings, such that evil daemons encouraged his followers to feed on his flesh and blood? Is it that he was too much of the earth and not enough of the heavens? In the end, Porphyry does not say, and so Hecate’s remark that Christ’s soul was “cut off from wisdom” hangs over him like a question mark, or a judge’s sentence.



Porphyry has much to say about daemons in his other writings that might shed further light on the *Letter to Anebo* and *Philosophy from Oracles*, and the question of how to reconcile the contradictions between them.⁶ In his *Life of Plotinus* (*Vita Plotini* [VP]), Porphyry tells us of an ill-fated effort to summon Plotinus’s daemon, an episode that E.R.

⁶This final section draws on Charles M. Stang, “The Doubled Self and the Worship of the Gods,” in Maren R. Niehoff and Joshua Levinson, eds., *Self, Self-Fashioning, and Individuality in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen, 2019), 149-168.

Dodds dubbed “a séance in the Iseum.”⁷ Porphyry tells us that an Egyptian priest came to Rome looking for an occasion to perform and to parade his wisdom. Knowing of Plotinus’s reputation, the priest asked if the philosopher wished to see him make manifest his “own companion spirit” or *daimōn*. Plotinus agreed, and the rite was performed in the Temple of Isis in Rome. It was not a daemon that answered the summons, however, but a god. How anyone managed to make that differentiation, Porphyry does not say. Perhaps it was the priest’s testimony alone, for he is reported to have said to Plotinus, “Blessed are you, who have a god (*t^heos*) for your spirit (*daimōn*) and not a companion of the subordinate order” (*VP* 10.23-25). In any case, since one of the other participants in the ritual brought the delicate conjuring to an abrupt end by strangling one of the birds he was holding, none of the assembled were able to put any question to the god made manifest. Nevertheless, Porphyry makes an important remark at the end of this anecdote: “[T]he companion of Plotinus was a spirit (*daimōn*) of the more god-like (*t^heioteron*) kind, and he continually kept the divine eye of his soul fixed on this companion” (*VP* 10.28-30).

Porphyry tells us that this experience at the Temple of Isis prompted Plotinus to pen an entire treatise on the topic of the various types of companion spirits, namely *Ennead* III.4, “On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit.” The treatise has nothing to do with the summoning of one’s own, or anyone else’s, personal daemon. Instead, it posits a sliding scale of daemons and explains how they relate to Plotinus’s three hypostases: Soul, Intellect, and the One.⁸ More relevant for our purposes, however, is Porphyry’s claim in his *Vita* that Plotinus “continually kept the divine eye of his soul fixed on this companion,” his daemon. Why is this relevant? Because straightaway Porphyry recounts another story, which is clearly meant to draw a lesson based on this claim. When Amelius, one of Plotinus’s other students, grew “ritualistic” or “fond of sacrifices” (*p^hilot^hutēs*) (*VP* 10.33), he asked Plotinus if he might accompany him on his rounds of the temples. Plotinus refused, saying, “[the gods] ought

⁷E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951), 289. All references to Porphyry’s *Life of Plotinus* and Plotinus’ *Enneads* are from A.H. Armstrong’s translation in the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1989).

⁸See Stang, *Our Divine Double* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016), 202-7.

to come to me, not I to them” (*VP* 10.35-36). No one, says Porphyry, really understood what Plotinus meant by this. Could he have meant that he is himself a temple in which the divine dwells? A temple to which not only the gods themselves, but his own students, should come? That the gods themselves might worship a higher god, the one god, the One, and that he is the very temple in which the many lower gods should worship?

In fact, Porphyry explores these ideas in his other writings, such as *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* and his *Letter to His Wife Marcella*. In Book I of *On Abstinence* he writes, “For the return is to one’s real self [*to ontōs heauton*], nothing else; and the joining is with one’s real self [*to ontōs heauton*], nothing else. And one’s real self is the intellect [*autos de ontōs ho nous*]” (I.29.12-15).⁹ Plotinus believed that one half of our intellect or *nous* never descends into embodiment, but eternally contemplates the intelligible Forms, the unchanging archetypes of which our world is the fleeting image. Porphyry follows Plotinus on this point, insisting that the undescended *nous* remains fixed in the intelligible heights, regardless of where our descended *nous* is on its journey of return: “The intellect is with itself, even if we are not with it” (I.39.3-4). Our descended *nous* may wander but it is nevertheless eternally anchored in the intelligible realm, the very home of our real self. In Book II, Porphyry draws out the ritual and sacrificial implications of this view. Unlike the Plotinus of the *Vita*, who refused to partake in sacrifices, Porphyry concedes that “we too shall sacrifice,” but adds that “we shall make, as is fitting, different sacrifices to different powers” (II.34.1-3). He goes on to specify the forms of sacrifice appropriate to the different divine powers, ranging from “the god who rules over all”; his offspring, the intelligible gods; the world-soul; other gods, including the fixed and wandering stars; and the multitude of invisible gods or daemons, some of whom are good and others evil. What is significant is that Porphyry seems to reinterpret Plotinus’s refusal as indicating an affirmation of a *higher* form of sacrifice, one befitting the god he worships: Porphyry’s “god who rules over the all,” or Plotinus’s

⁹I quote from Gillian Clark’s translation, *Porphyry: On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (Ithaca, 2000). For the Greek text, I rely on A. Nauck, ed., *Porphyrii philosophi Platonici opuscula selecta*, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1886).

“the One.” In any case, the form of sacrifice appropriate to this (One) god involves “nothing perceived by the senses, either by burning or in words” (II.3.4-5). Nor does speech of any kind befit this god: “But we shall worship him in pure silence and with pure thoughts about him. We must, then, be joined with and made like him, and must offer up our own uplifting as a holy sacrifice to the god, for it is both our hymn and our security” (II.3.4.8-13).

If in the *Vita* Plotinus refuses to perform the sacrificial circuit with his pious student, perhaps it is because he already performs sacrifices appropriate to the highest god, the One. His pure silence and pure thoughts are his offerings, as is his own conjunction, assimilation, and ascent to the divine. In Porphyry’s telling, Plotinus is not repudiating the logic of sacrifice as much as situating himself on its scale. Thus, in speaking of gods in the plural (“They ought to come to me, not I to them”), Plotinus is referring to the multitude of gods ranked *below* the One, the one “god who rules over the all.” Porphyry goes on to claim that the philosopher is the true high priest of this highest god. The philosopher has no need of animal sacrifices because he approaches his god “alone to the alone, by his own effort” (II.49.2-3). These words echo the last lines of Plotinus’ *Enneads*, as arranged by Porphyry himself: “This is the life of the gods and of godlike and blessed man, deliverance from the things of this world, a life which takes no delights in the things of this world, escape in solitude to the solitary” – or a “flight alone to the alone” (*phugē monou pros monon*) (6.9.11.49-51). For Porphyry, Plotinus is the philosopher-priest *par excellence*. While he refrains from spelling this out in the *Vita*, it becomes clear in his other writings that Porphyry reads Plotinus’ remark not as a refusal of sacrifice, but as a hint that he is already a priest of the highest god, already in “flight alone to the alone,” a solitary who stands apart from the crowd and its lower forms of worship.

Not that these lower forms of worship necessarily deserve disrespect. Priests of the lower “particular gods” are adept at performing rites, initiations, and purifications appropriate to those gods, and are also adept at creating cult-statues of those gods. Over and above all this, however, the philosopher-priest “is expert in the making of his [own] cult statue and in purifications and the other rites by which he is linked

to the god” (II.49.11-14). This, too, is an allusion to *Ennead* 1.6, “On Beauty,” where Plotinus bids us become sculptors of our selves:

Go back into yourself and look; and if you do not see yourself beautiful, then, just as someone making a statue which has to be beautiful cuts away here and polishes there and makes one part smooth and clears another till he has given his statue a beautiful face, so too you must cut away excess and straighten the crooked and clear the dark and make it bright, and never stop “working on your statue” till the divine glory of virtue shines out on you, till you see “self-mastery enthroned upon its holy seat.” (1.6.9.7-15).¹⁰

By alluding to his passage in the *Enneads*, Porphyry enlists the authority of Plotinus’s own writings for his argument that the philosopher-priest needn’t make offerings to cult-statues in temples because he has already made himself a cult statue in honor of his god. For Porphyry, the philosopher’s own *nous* is at once the temple, the statue, and the offering.

We find similar points articulated even more clearly in Porphyry’s *Letter to Marcella*. He begins by explaining to his much younger wife that his true self is not anything she can perceive by her senses but is rather a “colorless and formless essence...grasped by the mind (*di-anoia*) alone” (8.14).¹¹ She is the same mindful essence, possessing “di-

¹⁰The two embedded quotations in this passage are from Plato’s *Phaedrus*. The first quotation, “working on your statue,” is taken from Plato’s description of how “everyone chooses his love after his own fashion and from among those who are beautiful, and then treats the boy like his very own god, building him up and adorning him as an image” (252d7). The second quotation comes from a passage when the mad lover sees the face of a beautiful boy: “his memory is carried back to the real nature of Beauty, and he sees it again where it stands on the sacred pedestal next to Self-Control” (254b7). Both of these quotations are taken from Plato’s account of the charged, erotic tension between lover and beloved. By subsuming the horizontal double of lover and beloved, and all that comes with it (lust, struggle, restraint, cultivation, mirror reflections, images conforming to archetypes) into the self’s relationship to itself, Plotinus has essentially internalized the fragile and fraught dynamics of Platonic eros. Quotations are from Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff’s translation in John Cooper, ed., *Plato: The Complete Works* (Indianapolis, 1997).

¹¹I quote from Alice Zimmern’s translation, *Porphyry: Letter to His Wife Marcella* (Grand

vine characters within” herself, characters she needs only to remember how to read (9.10). This is what a teacher can do: he can remind her how to read her own interior inscription or he can sound a keynote that allows her to hear the music already playing in her (8). There is something “absurd,” he says, about her looking to him as a guide when “you have in yourself...a guide to all true good...a true leader, and all riches within your own power” (9.14,15). This interior guide is, in effect, her divine counterpart: her real self, the intellect or *nous*. Not only does Marcella already possess her true teacher, but all her own riches are “within her power.” The question of whether and how we can each ascend to and join with the highest god by virtue of our effort is precisely what is at stake between Porphyry and Iamblichus in their heated exchange. Both Plotinus and Porphyry are confident that return is within our own power, a confidence bolstered by their conviction that our descended *nous* has an undescended archetype anchored above – in other words, that our divine double is within us and above us and can be readily accessed. Iamblichus is not so confident.

Porphyry goes on to explain to Marcella that “the divine is present altogether everywhere” (11.1-2). Yet it is in the mind of the wise man that the divine is especially concentrated, “sanctified as its temple.” What was implicit, then, in *On Abstinence* is now explicit: the mind (*nous*) can become the temple (*naos*) to the highest god, the One. This is in fact the best way to honor the divine, to establish one’s mind as its temple. It is not harmful to venerate other altars, nor to neglect them. There is, it seems, little at stake in altars and material sacrifices, at least for the wise man or sage (*sophos*). But as we have seen, this refusal to sacrifice to the gods indicates a higher form of sacrifice: “when I exhort you to reverence the gods, [I mean] the godlike mind that remains stably fixed in its place that is united to God...But, as we said before, let your temple (*naos*) be the mind (*nous*) that is within you. This you must tend and adorn, that it may be a fitting dwelling for God” (19.1, 5-6, 8-10).

In his *Vita*, Porphyry appeals to Plotinus’s own philosophy to make

Rapids, 1986). For the Greek text, I rely on W. Pötscher, ed., *Πρὸς Μαρκέλλαν* (Leiden, 1969).

sense of certain remarkable episodes in his teacher's life, especially his encounter with the Egyptian priest at the Temple of Isis in Rome and his refusal to join his student Amelius in sacrificing to the gods. Porphyry continues to wrestle with Plotinus's refusal, however, and in some of his other writings we see him offering different interpretations. He introduces a scale or rank-order of piety, which allows him to interpret Plotinus's general refusal as a specific refusal of a lower form of sacrifice, one that Plotinus has presumably surpassed on his way to a silent reverence for the "god who rules over the all." This allows Porphyry to position Plotinus not as the enemy of traditional worship of the gods, but rather as its culmination. The philosopher does not leave the priesthood behind; on the contrary, he becomes the priest *par excellence*. In Porphyry's telling, the philosopher's own intellect becomes a temple to the highest god, the One. This allows Porphyry to endorse the traditional worship of the gods as scaled practices of piety; to affirm Plotinus's refusal to sacrifice in the temples by suggesting that he is beyond such lower forms of piety; to diffuse the tension between reason and ritual, between philosophy and traditional piety, by suggesting that they converge in the highest registers; and to sanctify a new temple, namely the temple of the individual intellect, as the premier site of worship. The *nous* is the highest *naos*.

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Fabien Muller
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I Introduction

I.1 General Introduction

This volume brings together two texts of the ancient philosopher Porphyry of Tyre (c. 234–305 CE): the *Letter to Anebo* and the *Philosophy from Oracles*. The question discussed in both texts is whether a virtuous and happy life – that is, a life determined by what Greek philosophers considered truth – is best attained through philosophy, religious practice, or a combination of both. While the original texts were written in Greek, those texts are now lost, which means that the only way for us to know what Porphyry said in them is to draw from other texts that quote them or refer to them indirectly.¹ The challenge posed by that loss is that the texts' original context is irrecoverable, forcing us to rely on second-hand accounts to reconstruct their arguments and logic. To some extent, we will never be able to obtain Porphyry's own answer to the questions that arise due to the incomplete state of the fragments.

¹Various editors and translators have attempted to reconstruct these texts based on references from other late ancient Latin and Greek texts, essentially writings of the philosopher Iamblichus and the Christian theologians Augustine and Eusebius of Caesarea. Thomas Gale, Porphyry's first editor, attempted to extract the *Letter to Anebo* text from Iamblichus's response and to present it as a coherent text in Gale, *De mysteriis liber* (1678). More recently, Sodano, *Lettera* (1958), and Faggin, *Lettera* (1954), reconstructed and translated the Letter into Italian. The most recent edition of the *Letter* is Saffrey & Segonds, *Lettre* (2012). As for the *Philosophy from Oracles*, Andrew Smith collected fragments from Eusebius and Augustine in Smith, *Fragmenta* (1993), thus providing a substitute for Gustav Wolff's 1856 edition, Wolff, *Reliquiae*. The *Philosophy* was translated into French by Feye and Thuysbaert in Kasteel (ed.), *Oracles et prophétie* (2011), 213–246, based on Wolff's edition. The most complete and thorough scholarly exploration of the *Philosophy* can be found in Muscolino's edition and Italian translation, *Filosofia rivelata* (2011), which serves as a basis for the author's 2013 PhD thesis. For further details on the editions used in the present volume, see §1.9 below.

We can, however, attempt to use the extant fragments and their connection to other texts as a roadmap to the debates in ancient philosophy and religion, discover how Porphyry positions himself in those debates, and more generally, identify what he has to say about the philosophical debates on the role of religion in human life. The goal of the present introduction, as well as of the translation and commentary, is to set up a basic framework for this approach.

I begin this introduction by looking at the historical origin of the questions that Porphyry addresses in the translated texts. Since these questions are connected to earlier layers of ancient Greek philosophy, it is useful to first identify some representative antecedents and reconstruct the way that Porphyry's philosophy builds on that of his predecessors. Second, I survey the environment of late ancient Neoplatonism, the philosophical tradition to which Porphyry belongs. Third, since Porphyry's most important influences come from Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, I outline the fundamentals of Plotinus's metaphysics as articulated in the *Enneads*, the texts that Porphyry himself compiled and edited. Finally, I offer a brief introduction to Porphyry's biography and to the larger framework of his philosophy. At the very end of this introduction, I briefly summarize the topics that Porphyry addresses in the two texts, but I leave the main discussion for the translation and commentary sections.

Among the many questions raised by scholarship on Porphyry, one requires particular attention: The two texts in this volume seem to arrive at different, partially irreconcilable conclusions. Porphyry suggests in the *Letter to Anebo* that religious practices such as divination and animal sacrifices are pointless. In the *Philosophy from Oracles*, however, he argues to the contrary, claiming that such practices are necessary for salvation. To explain this conflict, previous generations of scholars assumed that Porphyry wrote the *Philosophy from Oracles* early in his life, when he was young and superstitious, and the *Letter to Anebo* after he had converted to rationalism. This thesis has been rejected by more recent scholars and superseded by more complex models of explanation. I shall mention some of these models below, but I will not attempt to resolve the issue or presume to offer a conclusive explanation. In the

absence of the original texts, such an explanation will probably – as frustrating as this may be – remain impossible.²

The most important contemporary scholars writing on Porphyry include Michael B. Simmons, Andrew Smith, Aaron P. Johnson, Anne Sheppard, George Karamanolis, Kevin Corrigan, Giuseppe Muscolino, and most recently, Pier F. Beatrice.³ These scholars have engaged Porphyry's work from various perspectives. For example, Simmons focuses on the idea of salvation and thinks that Porphyry's main concern was to propose a soteriology complex enough to compete with that of Christian theology, which was gaining momentum and developing increasingly rich answers to the problems and tensions of human existence. In support of this thesis, he highlights the fact that Joseph Bidez, the first scholar to present Porphyry as a philosopher in his own right, also emphasized the central role of soteriology.⁴ Smith on the other hand reconstructs Porphyry's role in the history of Neoplatonism and sees in his work, in particular in his ideas on the soul, the beginning of a new chapter of Neoplatonic philosophy: post-Plotinian Neoplatonism. Beatrice's monumental work, extensively reviewed by Ilaria Ramelli,⁵ on whose work I will also draw, revisits the history of the transmission of Porphyry's texts and questions the standard assumption that the *Philosophy from Oracles*, the *Letter to Anebo*, the treatise *Against the Christians*, and other texts actually constitute separate writings. He argues that the latter texts were in reality part of the *Philosophy* that were detached from it by later authors. Beatrice advances a thesis similar to Simmons's, namely, that Porphyry accepts that salvation can be achieved through different paths, and that one of these paths includes theurgic and embodied practices, while the other one consists in philosophical reflection and contemplation.

While these approaches are viable and useful tools for understanding the history of ancient philosophy, I propose to focus – for the sake

²At the end of his monumental work on Porphyry, Pier F. Beatrice, too, doubts that a final resolution of the problem “is even possible,” Beatrice, *Philosophy of the Few*, 492.

³Smith, *Porphyry's Place*; Karamanolis & Sheppard (eds.), *Studies*; Johnson, *Religion and Identity*; Simmons, *Universal Salvation*; Beatrice, *Philosophy of the Few*.

⁴Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*.

⁵Ramelli, “Porphyry, Elitism.”

of making Porphyry accessible to the widest possible audience – on the tension between the philosophical pursuit of transcendence and concrete religious practice, as well as on the more general tension between philosophy and religion. This focus is more immediately approachable insofar as it relates to fundamental human aspirations such as the quest for universal truth, spiritual or religious insight, and happiness. Though religion and philosophy tend to address these aspirations in similar ways, they do it with different means and under different assumptions. Assessing Porphyry's perspective on these differences will not only allow us to understand history better, but also to explore a potential answer to a perennial philosophical quest.

One way to make sense of this issue and to understand Porphyry's answer is to think about religion and philosophy as two mutually permeable and translatable practices. Philosophers can translate religious approaches into their own language and practice and vice versa. This approach was developed by Aaron Johnson, one of the twenty-first century's greatest scholars of Porphyry, in his monumental monograph *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*. In a review of Johnson's book, Jaclyn Maxwell expresses her surprise that Johnson's conclusion about the tensions in Porphyry's work were not reached in earlier scholarship, despite its simplicity and clarity.⁶ Johnson's conclusion is that tensions arise only when we approach Porphyry's texts with strong assumptions about his intellectual identity. If we assume that he is a rationalist philosopher, we will have to dismiss the *Philosophy from Oracles* as an irrelevant *Jugendschrift*. If however we assume that he is fervently religious, the *Letter to Anebo* – and most of his other writings – appear unintelligible. Such disjunctive readings cannot succeed, Johnson argues. The only way to make sense of Porphyry's writing is to read it contextually, as if he were thinking with his reader and within the context of the topics he engages. Discussing oracles, he finds a meaning in them; discussing the problems of Anebo's allegedly Egyptian theology, he articulates objections and possible solutions; elaborating on Platonic principles, he sees no need to talk about religion at all. These are not philosophical contradictions but methodological choices, Johnson argues.

⁶Maxwell, "Review of: Johnson."

However, as elegant as Johnson's solution might seem, it does not abolish Porphyry's commitment to a hierarchical vision of the paths leading to truth and to the superiority of what Beatrice calls "the doctrines and methods of the rational philosophy."⁷ Porphyry does not dismiss religious practice, but he definitely does not see it as an equivalent alternative to "rational philosophy," either. The keynote of Porphyry's philosophy is undeniably rational and philosophical. What Johnson brilliantly shows is that such a keynote does not necessarily lead to exclusivism but may yield productive ways of dealing with other forms of aspirations to ultimate reality.

1.2 Ancient Philosophy & the Dilemma of Transcendence

In this section I want to take a step back and approach the problem of philosophy and religion in the context of ancient Greek thought. I offer a brief overview of various traditions that influenced the ways that ancient Greek philosophers theorized on that problem and build on these insights before proceeding to a more specific inquiry into Neoplatonism in the next section.

Ancient Greek philosophy presents a profound ambiguity. Greek philosophers across many historical periods and traditions agreed that to "try to live as well as one can" – to quote Socrates's famous confession in the *Gorgias* – one should make a habit of "practicing truth."⁸ From early on, Greek philosophers thought the goal of human life was to cultivate the means to pursue truth, and that happiness can be found only through such a pursuit.⁹ They did not think that this pursuit and the knowledge it generates were just one of many possible ways to attain

⁷Beatrice, *Philosophy of the Few*, 124.

⁸πειράσομαι τῷ ὄντι ὡς ἂν δύναμαι βέλτιστος ὦν ... ζῆν (Plat. *Gorg.* 526d6), τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀσκάων (Plat. *Gorg.* 526d5).

⁹We shall see below that Porphyry considers the power to lead a person to happiness as the distinctive criterion of genuine philosophy and theology, e.g. fr. 71(11), where he criticizes "those who have nothing coherent or trustworthy to say about happiness," (*περὶ δὲ εὐδαιμονίας οὐδὲν ἀσφαλὲς οὐδ' ἐχέγγυον [λέγουσιν]*).

happiness, but rather that they were something inscribed in human nature. The first statement in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* – that “by nature, all men desire knowledge”¹⁰ – may be read as a key idea spanning ancient traditions from early Platonism to late antiquity: Aspiring to the knowledge of truth is not a choice that one makes but a driving force inherent to the human mind – something that cannot be legitimately contested.

On the one hand, this agreement on the pursuit or practice of truth suggests a certain optimism regarding the human condition. Since the essence of the human being lies in its intellect, and since nothing could exist in contradiction to its essence, there must be an essential connection between human nature, knowledge, truth, and happiness. Or to put it differently: If the human being is predetermined to pursue knowledge of truth, there must be – putting aside the pessimistic possibility that human nature is fundamentally flawed in desiring the unattainable – a certain point at which truth itself responds to that pursuit. There must be a point at which knowledge and truth converge.

On the other hand, philosophers like Plato, Philo, and later Neoplatonists also agree that in its quest for ultimate truth, human intellect inevitably finds itself confronted with the realization that it remains separated from truth by an almost unbridgeable chasm. In fact, truth is not something the intellect could grasp with its ordinary tools. Some forms of truth can be discovered and articulated through discursive and conceptual means, such as empirical or scientific truth. But truth itself, or the highest form of truth – the truth of reality as a whole, as it subsists in and by itself – is not so easily identifiable. It withstands any single attempt to conceptualize it because it applies to all things at the same time, and it extends even beyond the realm of things – “beyond essence,” as Plato famously writes.¹¹ If it is the truth about everything it cannot be made identical to any singular thing, and consequently, no specific act of knowledge or cognition can ever attain it.

¹⁰ Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει. (Aristot. *Met.* 980a1)

¹¹ Plato describes the Good as “extending beyond substance by its primordially and power” (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας πρεσβεία καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος, Plato *Resp.* 509b8-9).

The very constitution of truth transcends any possible intentional act of understanding.

Philosophers attempted to account for the elusiveness of truth by incorporating various pathways for transcendence into their systems. Heraclitus, for example, found truth in the ever-changing, ungraspable principle of the logos, which changes its shape according to the modalities of one's approach. Plato thought of it in terms of a primordial principle conditioning reality and yet completely transcending it. In his eponymous dialogue, he has Parmenides attempt to describe that principle through a series of bewildering paradoxes. Aristotle sought it in the self-reflection of the divine mind, the thinking that is a "thinking of thinking"¹² – a notion with strong theological connotations that would shape, for example, medieval Christian philosophy. In the last period of ancient philosophy – a key moment in the development of Neoplatonism – the struggle to find absolute truth led to the development of a novel approach to philosophizing: the apophatic or negative method, which prefers to speak of God's truth in terms of what it is not, i.e., through negation. Late ancient philosophers such as Damascius and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite championed this method.

Thus, while ancient philosophers were quite optimistic about the ability of the human mind to attain truth, they were also aware that the last step toward that attainment is obscure and difficult. Human knowledge can with effort access almost any singular truth about the world and particular things. But when it attempts to access more foundational forms of truth, that is – the truth about reality as a whole or the source of truth itself – it loses its grip. Truth as such is a prerequisite for all individual truths, but as it is different from all these singular truths, it must necessarily remain hidden, caught in a paradoxical state of simultaneous presence and transcendence – or, to paraphrase Heraclitus in an allusion to the Oracle at Delphi, truth is neither expressed directly nor hidden altogether but makes itself known through signs.¹³ The gap between signs and the singular signified truth can never be

¹²νόησις νοήσεως, according to Aristotle's famous statement at *Met.* 1074b34.

¹³"The king who utters oracles at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals but gives signs."
(ὁ ἀναξ οὐδὲ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει, Heraclitus, fr. (Diels and Kranz) B93).

fully closed. This explains why, when ancient philosophers attempt to talk about ultimate forms of truth, they lapse into bewildering language, departing from the conventions of philosophical discourse and adopting religious or mythological language.

The ambiguity of ancient Greek philosophy is that in its quest for lucidity and argumentation, it ends up verging on religion. Here I understand religion as the non-rationalizable discourse and practices to achieve a higher state of reality or ultimate form of knowledge. Using codified language, carrying out purificatory or expurgatory rites to overcome certain human limitations, explaining the world through dynamic relations of supernatural forces – these are examples of such discourse and practices. If philosophical truth requires a suprarational approach and cannot be spelled out in ordinary language, it seems that some other kind of effort – religious effort – is needed to overcome the gap between the finitude of human knowledge and the absoluteness of truth.

The tension between discursive or rational practices and religion was not the manifestation of a certain zeitgeist or limited to a certain time but has characterized Greek philosophical thought throughout history.¹⁴ In their thinking and writing, Greek philosophers appear continuously haunted by the intuition that ultimately, their appeal to or knowledge of truth is rooted in something that escapes discursive assessment. I want to give just a few representative examples.

As early as the sixth century BCE, the above-mentioned Heraclitus compares God to a fire that “changes when it is combined with spices and named according to the pleasure each person finds in it.”¹⁵ He thinks concrete forms of truth are ever-shifting and that nothing can ever be said about truth itself in a subject-independent way. Ultimately, he finds truth in the dynamic principle of relation that determines

¹⁴In a paper on religion in ancient philosophy, Esteban Law makes the history of philosophy begin with the quest for an “absolutes Prinzip” and attributes this quest to the “philosophische Theologie” (Law, “Zur Tradition,” 106). He situates the beginning of this quest in the sixth century BCE, as I do above.

¹⁵ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός. ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ πῦρ, ὅπῳταν συμμιγῆ θνώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ’ ἡδονὴν ἐκάστου. (Heraclitus, fr. DK B67)

things with regard to their relation to other things, the principle he calls logos. To describe the logos, he uses obscure and occasionally poetic language. He intimates that it can be “named” (ὀνομάζονται) in various ways, according to the hypotheses one makes with respect to what it is, but that these names depend as much on the hypothetical choices one makes as on the logos itself.

While Plato relies on dialectical reasoning throughout his oeuvre, he attributes the origin of that reasoning to the gods. In his dialogue *Philebos*, he presents the gods as models of pure intellectual life – the kind of life that humans should seek to imitate in their own realm.¹⁶ Humans cannot realize this example to the full extent, however, because they are tied up with other conditions and existential limitations. In his explanation of the divine origins of dialectic, German philosopher Thomas Szlezák writes: “The mode of existence of the divine acts on the dialogue as a kind of conceptual threshold, through which the conditions that determine human existence can be more easily understood.”¹⁷ The gods are capable of contemplating the eternal forms of things and thus live an accomplished life, in the shadow of which human life unfolds. Intellectual tools and labor are required to imitate that which the gods possess by nature.

Plato’s dialogues abound in examples of how the limitations of human thought call for either an explanation transcending discursive or natural categories or some other kind of intervention from the gods. Diotima’s speech about the ascent to the divine in the *Symposion* (201d–212b), mythological narrations such as the myth of Er (*Politeia* 614b–621d) or the *Timaeus*’ “probable myth” of cosmic creation (as Szlezák translates τὸν εἰκότα μῦθον, 29d),¹⁸ and allegories using mythological images such as the soul chariot in the *Phaedrus* (245c–248e) blur the boundaries between the rational and the mythological language of religion. One of the most puzzling moments in Socrates’s life, as related by Plato, happens right before Socrates drinks from the cup of

¹⁶ Plat. *Phileb.* 55a6–8. See in particular Szlezák, *Schriflichkeit*, in particular 198.

¹⁷ “Die Seinsweise des Göttlichen spielt in den Dialog hinein als eine Art Grenzbegriff, von dem aus die Bedingungen, unter denen der Mensch steht, verständlicher werden.” Szlezák, *Schriflichkeit*, 198.

¹⁸ Szlezák, *Reading Plato*, 74.

hemlock: He reminds his friends that they should not forget to sacrifice a cock for Asclepius.¹⁹ Socrates's last injunction does not concern philosophy but religious duty.

The testimonies and fragments of Plato's successors suggest that the first generations of philosophers in Plato's Academy took these religious notes seriously. Speusippus engaged in a discussion around the first principles in their relation to God as intellect, beginning the long post-Platonic tradition of the theory of principles, which is inseparable from Platonic theology.²⁰ Xenocrates continued this tradition, considering the first principle to be a "Father" reigning in heaven and equating it with Zeus.²¹ Both Speusippus and Xenocrates played a seminal role in the solidification and development of the Platonic theory of principles, and although we know little about their philosophy, certain texts from Porphyry's time suggest that their influence extended into late antiquity.²² They contributed to making the association of the theory of principles with religious categories such as God, creation, and fatherhood a common practice among Platonic philosophers.

For another example of such an association from a Jewish context, about two centuries later, when Jewish thinkers in Alexandria such as Aristobulus and Philo began thinking about new ways to systematize Jewish theology, they identified the God of the Hebrew Bible with the first principle and presented biblical figures such as Moses – properly religious figures – as models of philosophical life.²³ Philo was the first thinker to see Moses, not only as a prophet who received teachings from God, but also as a philosopher who knew truth in the very way the Greeks had been seeking.²⁴ In Philo's interpretation, Moses

¹⁹Ω Κρίτων. ἔφη, τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ ὀφείλομεν ἀλεκτρύονα ἀλλὰ ἀπόδοτε καὶ μὴ ἀμελήσητε (Plat. *Phaed.* 118a7-8).

²⁰Speusippus's ideas were brilliantly synthesized by Christian Vassalo on the basis of a complex fragment, see Vassalo "Speusippus."

²¹See Xenocrates's fragment 213 on the first and second principles, taken from Aetius, in Isnardi Parente, *Senocrate*, 130-1, commented on by John Dillon, "Xenocrates," 71.

²²Philipp Merlan argues that Iamblichus could have known Speusippus's theory of different types of substances, see Merlan, *Platonism*, 96.

²³On the Platonic first principle in Philo, see Runia, "Plato's Timaeus."

²⁴Philo develops this theory in his *Life of Moses*, where he describes Moses as somebody who has "exhibits the doctrines of philosophy through his everyday works" (τὰ

establishes a model of philosophical knowledge that does not depend on discourse, dialectics, and reasoning, but rather on divine revelation and contemplation of the invisible principles of the world that lead to God.

With Philo and the first century CE begins a new chapter in the history of ancient philosophy in general and Platonism in particular. Based on Philo's spadework, religious traditions such as Judaism and Christianity began appropriating philosophical concepts even as Greek philosophers started developing a certain resilience against this very appropriation. From the second century on, Christianity developed its first systematic outlines of its core beliefs, in works such as Origen's *On Principles*, while Greek philosophers such as Celsus started specifically targeting those core systems. Since Neoplatonism, including in Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, may be understood in part as a reaction to that period of mingling and identity formation, I want to dedicate a separate section to that period, from the second century up until Porphyry's time.

1.3 Philosophy and Religion in Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism before Porphyry

In the history of philosophy, the first and second centuries are particularly significant because they connected to the emergence of a movement that historians of philosophy have come to call "Middle Platonism."²⁵ Middle Platonism is represented by philosophers such as, in the first century, the above-mentioned Philo of Alexandria, and, in the second century, Apuleius, Numenius, and the author of the *Chaldean*

φιλοσοφίας δόγματα διὰ τῶν καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἔργων ἐπεδείκνυτο, *Vit. Moy.* I 29.3-4 (ed. Cohn, *Opera*).

²⁵Middle Platonism, or Medioplatonism, derives its name from its position between the earlier tradition of the Platonic Academy and the Neoplatonic tradition beginning with Plotinus. For an overview of Medioplatonic thinkers and ideas see Ferrari, "Metafisica," and Bonazzi, *Concise History*.

Oracles, believed to be Julian the Theurgist. In this period, the interactions between various philosophical and religious traditions became increasingly complex and led to the construction of both narrower religious and philosophical identities and more specific categories to describe the differences and commonalities between those identities, such as daemons, theurgy, magic, and so forth. In this section, I want to give some examples of those categories and retrace the philosophical developments they spurred, up to those of Porphyry's teacher Plotinus.

In his treatise *On the God of Socrates* (*De deo socratis*), Apuleius presents the cosmos as a metaphysical construction without immanent boundaries, allowing humans and higher beings to communicate with one another. A key element in this boundless cosmos are the so-called "daemons" (*δαίμων*), intermediary beings that serve as mediators between gods and humans.²⁶ One of the characteristics of daemons is that, in contrast to gods, they are "personal" and closely connected to individual humans – a characteristic of great importance in Porphyry's thought, as we shall see below. Apuleius writes at length about Socrates's personal daemon and gives advice on the relation one should maintain to one's own daemon. Tying philosophical lifestyle and daemonic influences together, Apuleius shows that in second-century Middle Platonism, the vocabularies and concepts of philosophy and religion had become mutually permeable. For example, he describes the "impious masses" as "uninitiated in philosophy, empty of devotion, deprived of true reason, ignorant of religion," which suggests he considered "devotion" and "reason" complementary rather than conflictive.²⁷ Despite Apuleius's commitment to a hierarchical cosmology and theology, his vision of the cosmos is strangely continuous, as if the boundaries between what may be conceived as human and as divine were porous and allowed for various types of interaction.

²⁶The role of "daemons" in ancient literature and philosophy is notoriously difficult, which is why I choose to restrict myself to mentioning their position between gods and humans. The definitive account of daemons in the Platonic tradition is Andrei, *démonologie platonicienne*. In the context of ancient philosophy, daemons are instances of divine power associated with destiny and guidance, personal protection, and dispositions that are at the same time cosmic and human, like Eros. The notion of daemon challenges the boundary between the divine and the human realm.

²⁷The mass of *philosophiae* ... *imperitorum*, which is *vana sanctitudinis, priva verae rationis, inops religionis*, Apul. *de deo soc.* 3, 1 (ed. Jones, *Apologia*).

In the extant fragments of Numenius, another important second-century Middle Platonist, we can observe a similar move toward greater continuity between philosophy and religion. Numenius begins his great work *On the Good* by making it clear that his exposition of Platonic metaphysics is coherent not only with Plato and Pythagoras, but also with the dogma of religious traditions such as those of the Brahmins, the Jews, and the Magi (possibly the ministers of Zoroaster).²⁸ Among philosophers and religious figures endowed with special religious insight and wisdom, Numenius highlights Moses, the Jewish author of sacred scriptures.²⁹ Origen, the Christian philosopher, mentions that Numenius related a story about Jesus as a religious leader.³⁰ Numenius clearly sees continuities between revelatory and philosophical knowledge, and between the spheres of religion and philosophy. He understands his metaphysics to be grounded in the authority of revelatory sources rather than solely a product of reasoning.

The fact that these sources mostly belong to traditions outside of Greek civilization and culture manifests a preoccupation that would become, not only for later Platonic philosophers but also for modern-day interpreters, one of the hallmarks of late ancient Neoplatonism: the provenance of higher knowledge from “oriental” sources and revelations. The French philosopher Pierre Hadot thinks that previous generations of scholars tended to see this obsession “as a phase of decadence in Greek civilization, which was supposedly bastardized by contact with the Orient. There are many causes for this severe judgment. First is the classical prejudice which fixes a priori an ideal model of classical culture and decides that only Greece of the Presocratics, the tragic poets, and perhaps Plato deserves to be studied.”³¹

Some of the greatest scholars of ancient philosophy, such as Edouard des Places and Henri-Charles Puech,³² think that Numenius and the *Chaldean Oracles*, a mysterious collection of oracles composed at the

²⁸Βραχμῆνες καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Μάγοι καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι διέθεντο, Num. fr. 1 (ed. des Places, *Numenius*, 42.8-9). On the Magi see Beatrice, *Philosophy of the Few*, 34-45.

²⁹Num. fr. 9 (ed. des Places 51).

³⁰Num. fr. 10a (ed. des Places 52).

³¹He makes this statement about the beginnings of orientalism in Hellenistic times, Hadot, *Ancient Philosophy*, 92.

³²des Places, *Numenius*, 8 and 21-3, referring, among others, to Puech, “Numenius d’Apamée.”

same time, played a pivotal role for the introduction of these orientalist ideas in Greek philosophy. But what deserves particular attention about this phenomenon is less the “bastardization” of Greek philosophy through allegedly oriental ideas than the immanent ambivalence of Greek philosophy that it brings to the surface. Greek orientalism, as displayed by Numenius, does not testify to the influence of Jews, Egyptians, and Magi on Greek philosophy so much as to Greek philosophy’s growing desire to overcome its own rational framework – a “yearning for revelation,”³³ as Hans Lewy puts it, that made the Greeks look toward a world beyond their own, both real and imagined, and adopt a language they saw as reflective of divinely manifested, religious truth.

This also holds true, to a certain extent, for the *Chaldean Oracles*, “a collection of abstruse, hexameter verses” considered by later Neoplatonists to be “handed down by the gods’ (θεοπαράδοτα)”³⁴ and “as authoritative revelatory literature equal in importance only to Plato’s *Timaeus*.”³⁵ Porphyry refers to some of the *Chaldean Oracles*, in his *Philosophy from Oracles*, as direct, accurate descriptions of the structures and entities posited by Platonic metaphysics. For example, in his theological hymn (23), Porphyry mirrors a passage from the *Chaldean Oracles*.³⁶ Both texts employ typically Platonic ideas, such as a constellation of principles, among which the superior principle appears as the “Father” and the second as Intellect; the creation of the cosmos as a demiurgic act, corresponding to Plato’s *Timaeus*; and a metaphorical language shaped by analogies of light, darkness, strength, and hierarchies. With this mythological description of metaphysical ideas, combined with the orientalist derivation of the *Oracles* from an alleged Chaldean origin, Neoplatonism explores the possibilities of Plato’s gestures at the religious within the widened post-Hellenistic world.

In Plotinus, a third-century philosopher and perhaps the most important representative of the Neoplatonic tradition, we find the last Platonic attempt to balance metaphysical and religious terminologies

³³Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 8.

³⁴Majercik, *Chaldean Oracles*, 1.

³⁵Majercik, *Chaldean Oracles*, 2.

³⁶See Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 9–12.

and to maintain their intricacies and ambiguity without claiming that one is superior or reducible to the other. Plotinus goes back and forth between rigorous philosophical reasoning and mythological language but never claims that a certain idea fully exhausts itself in either idiom. He has a marked preference for conceptual and intellectual clarity, but many elements of his philosophy manifest, as different scholars have noted, a strong religious impetus and inspiration.³⁷ One of the most important and influential twentieth-century readings of Plotinus comes from a group of German and Italian scholars known as the Tübingen-Milan School, which claims that Plotinus pursues a mystical goal in which metaphysics and religious yearning coincide.³⁸

To take up just one of many examples, in his fifth Ennead, which contains some of the key passages on the three “hypostases” or principles – the highest hierarchy of Platonic metaphysics – he explains the “One” and the “Intellect,” i.e., the two superior principles, using concepts that oscillate between philosophical terminology and Greek mythemes. The Intellect is comparable to Cronos, who, “as the mysteries and myths enigmatically proclaim,”³⁹ devoured his children after they were born. The higher meaning of this mytheme is that the Intellect’s procreation is kept from falling into “matter,” which Neoplatonists traditionally consider a source of evil and corruption, and which is represented, according to Plotinus’s allegory, by Cronos’s wife Rhea. Plotinus calls this philosophical appropriation of a myth “enigma” (*αἴνιγμα*).

This passage raises the question: Does Plotinus here think of mythology as something that needs to be explained rationally, like a rid-

³⁷For example, when he talks about contemplation: Stróżyński, *Contemplation*, in particular 12-3, where he posits a continuum of religious interpretations from René Arnou to Emile Bréhier and other modern scholars.

³⁸Plotinus is presented as a mystic by Beierwaltes, “Plotins philosophische Mystik.” He pursues a similar aim in other works, for example *Denken des Einen* and *Das wahre Selbst*. I also want to point to the works of his student Jens Halfwassen, *Aufstieg zum Einen*, *Plotin und der Neuplatonismus*, and *Auf den Spuren des Einen*. Some of Halfwassen’s most important works were recently translated into English by Carl S. O’Brien: Halfwassen, *Plotinus, Neoplatonism*. I owe much of my reading of Plotinus’s philosophy and metaphysics to Beierwaltes and Halfwassen.

³⁹*ὡς τὰ μυστήρια καὶ οἱ μῦθοι οἱ περὶ θεῶν αἰνίττονται*, *Enn.* V 1 7.33.

dle, or as a kind of discourse that refers to a different level of reality, one unconstrained by rational requirements? The text seems to leave the question open to interpretation. Unlike Xenophanes, Plotinus does not call for a demythologization of philosophy. But unlike some of his disciples, such as Iamblichus, he also does not want philosophers to seek salvation in religious ceremonies, a position with which Porphyry shows a strong sympathy. The ambiguity of Plotinus's own stance seems to remain irreducible. But while Plotinus showed much restraint in maintaining this irreducibility, some of his disciples were less careful.

Neoplatonism spans the period from Plotinus to the late sixth century, after the theocratic emperor Justinian ordered the Platonic Academy to be dissolved in 529. I want to focus on the period after Plotinus here, which begins with Porphyry and ends with Damascius, who died around 538. This post-Plotinian period is marked by a renewal of certain tendencies noted above in the context of Numenius and the *Chaldean Oracles*: the combination of philosophical discourse with religious revelation, a blurring of the lines between a philosophical lifestyle – the *bios philosophikos*⁴⁰ – and religious practice, and the promotion of a quest for the attainment of higher reality that depends not on one's own moral impulses, but on supernatural forces and events. The return of these tendencies brought twentieth-century scholars to lament, as Eric D. Dodds does in his *The Greeks and the Irrational*: “The Return of the Irrational was ... pretty complete.”⁴¹ But it is not the “return of the irrational” that characterizes this period so much as the fact that after Plotinus's death in 270, that return gave rise to divisions and antagonisms within the Platonic school. In fact, Greek philosophy, in its continuous dialogue with mythology, divine inspiration, and prophesying, had never been “pure” of non-rationalizable elements.

A concrete example will help demonstrate what's at stake in these divisions. The notion of “salvation” is, as Simmons argues, central to Neoplatonism. From Plato to Plotinus, philosophers insist that the

⁴⁰The lifestyle publicly practiced by philosophers in ancient Greece, determined by different social, political, and economic norms. Peter Scholz outlines these norms in “Bios philosophikos.”

⁴¹Dodds, *Irrational*, 253.

soul must seek to detach itself from the body through intellectual exercises such as contemplation if it wants to be liberated from the restrictions of finite existence. But in this new, post-Plotinian period of Neoplatonism, the focus shifts from those intellectual exercises to more explicitly religious practices and what the *Chaldean Oracles* call “theurgy.” To quote Dodds again, late ancient Neoplatonists insist “that the road to salvation is found not in reason but in ritual.”⁴² To liberate the soul, something other than philosophical reflection is needed.

One thinker who testifies to this shift is Proclus, a fifth-century philosopher who was perhaps the last herald of the Platonic tradition. Proclus is a systematic, rigorously logical thinker. In his *Elements of Theology*, for example, he reconstructs the genealogy of the principles of reality in a meticulously deductive and rational way. He holds “reason” and classical Platonic conceptual distinction (*diairesis*) in high esteem. Christian thinkers such as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite used Proclus as a source for both ideas and logical framework, and Hegel drew on Proclus’s dialectics to construct his own metaphysics, most notably in the *Science of Logic*. Proclus’s systematic thinking has had a lasting and almost uninterrupted influence on Western philosophy.

But Proclus also believes the realm in which philosophical thinking culminates – not only metaphysics, but also ethics and politics – to be religious.⁴³ This religious element presents two aspects. One concerns “words”⁴⁴ and may be considered a part of philosophy itself: namely, of what Aristotle calls “theological philosophy.”⁴⁵ This aspect largely corresponds to what the Platonic tradition practiced throughout ancient times, that is, a rational reflection on the divine nature of first causes, the principles of reality, and the orderly nature of the cosmos.⁴⁶ The other aspect, whose presence becomes salient in post-

⁴²Dodds, *Irrational*, 287.

⁴³Abbate, “Handlung und Wille,” 223.

⁴⁴Van den Berg, “Theurgy,” 224.

⁴⁵φιλοσοφία θεολογική, *Met.* 1026a18–9.

⁴⁶I want to point in particular to Werner Beierwaltes’s groundbreaking work on Proclus as a theologian and thinker of transcendence, see *Proklos* and *Procliana*. Beierwaltes sees a continuity between metaphysics and religion, at a systematic level, and between Plotinus, post-Plotinian Neoplatonism, medieval mysticism, and German idealism, at a historical level. See furthermore: Halfwassen, “Proklo.”

Plotinian Neoplatonism, concerns, not “words,” but a certain ritual “enacting” or “doing” (ἐργάζεσθαι). If insights into truth cannot be gained through reflection and reasoning alone, it seems only natural to engage with that truth in a different way – through ritual interaction. Neoplatonists followed the alleged author of the *Chaldean Oracles*, Julian the Theurgist, in calling this interaction “theurgy.”⁴⁷ In the Neoplatonist tradition from Porphyry to Proclus, theurgy is “any rite” susceptible of “assist[ing] the mediation between man and god,” including “prophecy and sacrifice.”⁴⁸ The goal of that ritual mediation is to help the soul achieve salvation. Proclus is one of the philosophers who, despite his logical rigor, attributes great importance to theurgy,⁴⁹ asserting that traditional philosophical methodology does not stand by itself and requires a complement.

This new focus on religious practice is not simply a result of philosophical inquiry. Late antiquity was characterized by a proliferation of religious and philosophical ideas, by the rise of Christianity, and by the political and cultural destabilization of the Roman Empire. Christianity in particular entered a phase of doctrinal consolidation and demographic growth. The questions raised by Christianity, most notably by its soteriology, scriptural hermeneutics, and moral aspects, were a major concern for pagan philosophers from the second century on. Although Christian thinkers such as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen drew many of their ideas from pagan sources, some of Christianity’s foundational ideas, such as incarnation and salvation through faith, conflicted with Greek philosophy. In the face of Christianity’s rise in popularity and the challenges it posed to pagan philosophers, these philosophers, and Neoplatonists in particular, had to revisit their own attitudes toward religion and religious practice.⁵⁰ While the rise of new religious forms in late antiquity certainly cannot

⁴⁷See Stang, “Chaldean Oracles,” in particular 2-3. The term “theurgy” is not explicitly used in the oracles.

⁴⁸Smith, “Further Thoughts,” 300.

⁴⁹Sheppard, “Proclus’ Attitude to Theurgy,” 219. Sheppard’s fine analysis of a key passage in Proclus shows that it is not immediately evident what Proclus means by theurgy, or what kind of activities he associates with the term.

⁵⁰On the tensions between Greek and Christian ideas at Porphyry’s time see in particular Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 52-91.

be reduced to merely a reaction to the rise of Christianity, there can be no doubt that the two traditions shaped each other in significant ways.⁵¹

Bringing together these elements – the general tension between philosophical theology and religious practice, the emergence of the more specific tension between theology and theurgy in post-Plotinian Neoplatonism, the Greek and pagan response to the rise of Christianity – we arrive at a picture of what constituted Porphyry’s intellectual and cultural context. Porphyry is, perhaps, the one philosopher in whose thought the tensions of late antiquity manifest in the most palpable and dramatic way: a student of Plotinus, a champion of the Greek tradition against Christianity, a key participant in the debate around theology and theurgy. He may be considered a mirror and a product of his time.

1.4 Porphyry of Tyre

As with many other ancient philosophers, we know relatively little about Porphyry’s life. Porphyry himself provides some details in the biography he wrote about his teacher Plotinus. The Greek rhetorician Eunapius of Sardis included a biography of Porphyry in his *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists* (Βίοι φιλοσόφων καὶ σοφιστῶν),⁵² but since what Eunapius writes is largely based on Porphyry’s biography of Plotinus, we are ultimately left with little reliable information. However, the two biographies do contain some noteworthy elements, which I shall return to in my analysis of Porphyry’s philosophy.

Porphyry was born in Tyre, a coastal city in Lebanon. His proper name is “Malchus” (Μάλκος), which means “king” in his native tongue, Aramaic, as he explains in his biography of Plotinus.⁵³ As Simmons shows in his book on Porphyry’s soteriology, Tyre’s historical context

⁵¹See Dzielska, “The Religious Panorama.” Dzielska thinks that the distinctive trait of late ancient pagan theology was that it tried to systematize a religion that had, before the rise of Christianity, mostly consisted in a form of orthopraxy.

⁵²Giangrande (ed.), *Vitae sophistarum*.

⁵³Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 17.6-10 (ed. Henry & Schwyzer, *Plotini opera*).

has been unduly disregarded by previous generations of scholars.⁵⁴ Tyre was a culturally, linguistically, and religiously rich town where pagan, Christian, Greek, and Asian influences came together – it was marked by “a convergence of eastern and western cultures.”⁵⁵ Simmons trusts Joseph Bidez,⁵⁶ the trailblazer of Porphyry studies whose work has had a lasting influence on scholarship throughout the twentieth century, in affirming that Porphyry was “very knowledgeable of the Orient and its culture, being well versed in the mysteries of Chaldea, Persia, and Egypt.”⁵⁷

While Tyre adopted Greek culture and education from the third century BCE on, as was the case for many other cities within the sphere of Greek expansion, it did not undergo a cultural reset or reshaping. Adopting cultural identities is not a process that necessarily suppresses existing identity markers – it cannot be reconstructed, as Johnson puts it, as a “narrative of clashing civilizations” or “monolithic cultural triumphalism.”⁵⁸ The impact of Hellenism on Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Anatolian cultures must rather be understood as a process of dialectical self-articulation in which local cultures interacted with the rising Greek culture without being absorbed by it. Based on the work of Ted Kaizer, Simmons uses the terms “foreign” and “indigenous” to discuss the Greek and local cultural forces in Tyre.⁵⁹ Interestingly though, Kaizer’s own point is not that these elements could be accurately conceptualized this way, but that the notions of “foreign” and “indigenous” are inherently problematic. In fact, what is seen as “foreign” may have a foreign origin but play an immanent – or “intrinsic,” as Kaizer says – role in its new cultural context. Foreign elements become part of the cultural environment into which they are transferred. They lose their properly “foreign” status, Kaizer argues.

Although Kaizer does not make this point with regard to philosophy, the cultural dialectic he describes can profitably be used to elu-

⁵⁴ Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 1-19.

⁵⁵ Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 5.

⁵⁶ Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*.

⁵⁷ Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 4.

⁵⁸ Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 2.

⁵⁹ Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 6. The paper is Kaizer, “Religious Identities,” 65.

cidate the context of late ancient Neoplatonism within which Porphyry constructed his philosophy. To previous generations of scholars, it seemed natural to assume that the resurgence of religious practice – in the form of theurgy – could only be the result of non-Greek “Asian” or “Oriental” influences. Religious rites performed for the salvation of the soul seemed incompatible with the Greek ideal of education and contemplation, those scholars thought. But such assumptions do not withstand historical and textual criticism. The influences that late ancient philosophers considered non-Greek were already shaped by their culture and expectations. To come back to an example discussed in the previous section, the *Chaldean Oracles* testify less to Chaldean influences than to the Greeks’ own religious aspirations. Similarly, Porphyry’s allusions to Egyptian and Hebrew wisdom are so closely molded by his ambition to accentuate the religious nature of Platonism that it is almost impossible to distinguish the genuine part played by non-Greek influences. In the context of late ancient Neoplatonism, the categories of the “foreign” and the “indigenous” lose their footing.

Porphyry received his early education in Athens, where his teacher was Longinus, a Greek rhetorician praised for his erudition and famously called by Eunapius a “living library and walking museum”⁶⁰ versed in “every kind of philosophy.”⁶¹ Some of Porphyry’s comments suggest that Longinus might have been something of a philosophical misfit: Porphyry relates that he was one of Plotinus’s most prominent critics and known for “having refuted virtually everything others have said.”⁶² In another passage, Porphyry quotes Plotinus as saying that Longinus was a “philologist, but by no means a philosopher”⁶³ – a statement whose implications will be readily grasped by philosophers, who, even in ancient times, seemed to face condescending looks from philologists. Irmgard Männlein-Robert calls for caution with this cliché, suggesting that the history of philosophy has treated Longinus unfairly. In reality, “the extant fragments and testimonies show

⁶⁰ βιβλιοθήκη τις ἦν ἐμψυχος καὶ περιπατοῦν μουσεῖον, Eunap. *Vit. soph.* IV 1.3.

⁶¹ φιλοσοφίας γε πᾶν εἶδος, Eunap. *Vit. soph.* IV 1.5.

⁶² τὰ τῶν ἄλλων σχεδὸν πάντα τῶν καθ’ αὐτὸν διελέξαντος, Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 20.1.

⁶³ φιλόλογος μὲν ... ὁ Λογγίνως, φιλόσοφος δὲ οὐδαμῶς, Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 14.19–20.

beyond any doubt that Longinus was a Platonist philosopher.”⁶⁴ But even if Longinus was a philosopher – and on top of that, a Platonist – Porphyry seems to have turned his back on him when he left Athens, which suggests that Longinus should not be regarded as a decisive and formative influence on Porphyry’s later work.⁶⁵

In 263, Porphyry travelled from Athens to Rome, where he became a student of Plotinus. Plotinus shaped Porphyry’s philosophy in a determinative way, as we shall see below in the analysis of the two philosophers’ metaphysics. According to his biography of Plotinus, particularly in the chapters on Plotinus’s writing (ch. 9) and conferences (ch. 13), Porphyry’s initial impression of Plotinus was not as enthusiastic as one might expect. Porphyry presents his teacher as an erratic speaker and as a philosopher who likes to think but cares little for style or arguments. He praises Plotinus’s speculative genius and highlights how enthusiastic he was about concepts and ideas, but also notes that he was less interested in bringing these concepts and ideas into a shape that would allow others to grasp them. Accordingly, he explains his own role as that of an archivist and scribe, helping his teacher materialize and organize his thoughts.

The tense dichotomy between the competing influences of philosophy and religion in Neoplatonism that we have been discussing permeates Porphyry’s description of his discipleship to Plotinus. He praises the way that Plotinus seems to be a pure organ of his intellect – “when he was speaking his intellect visibly illuminated his face”⁶⁶ – and spends the whole of chapter 10 narrating the visit of an Egyptian priest who, upon summoning a divinity, obtained the confirmation that Plotinus has a special gift, “something more than is accorded to other men.”⁶⁷ By suggesting that these two aspects belong together

⁶⁴Männlein-Robert, *Longin*, 61: “Aus den erhaltenen Fragmenten und Testimonien geht eindeutig hervor, daß Longin platonischer Philosoph war.”

⁶⁵Männlein-Robert details Longinus’s disappointment in Porphyry, *Longin*, 90-1. It seems that Porphyry’s ideas underwent a deep transformation when he became Plotinus’s student.

⁶⁶τοῦ νοῦ ἄκρι τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τὸ φῶς ἐπιλάμποντος, *Porph. Vit. Plot.* 13.6-7.

⁶⁷Ἦν γὰρ καὶ κατὰ γένεσιν πλέον τι ἔχων παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ὁ Πλωτῖνος, *Porph. Vit. Plot.* 10.14-5.

and complement each other, Porphyry offers a typical example of how late ancient Neoplatonic philosophers attempted to justify and redefine their own tradition. Neoplatonism is an intellectualist tradition that remains anchored in Plato's dialectical method and in the conviction that the realm of the intellect is more real than the world of ordinary experience. But intellectuality isn't self-sufficient or self-contained as a source of justification or in comparison to religious sources. Porphyry wants intellectuality to be divinely supported and confirmed, or at least, to not solely depend on brilliance or argumentative soundness.

The last stage of Porphyry's biography that I want to highlight is the period beginning with his return to Rome around 282. When he had started to show signs of mental fatigue and distress – possibly the most infamous episode in his life – Plotinus recommended that he travel abroad. Porphyry went to Sicily and possibly wrote,⁶⁸ among others, his famous tractate *Against the Christians* there. Upon his return to Rome he became a teacher, engaged in commentarial work on Plato and Aristotle, and completed the task to which he had dedicated a large portion of his life: compiling Plotinus's philosophical treatises, the *Enneads*. Most importantly, it is during this period that Porphyry taught Iamblichus,⁶⁹ a philosopher who would become not only one of the key representatives of late ancient Neoplatonism, but also Porphyry's rival in the debate around the path leading to knowledge of ultimate reality: that is, around philosophy and religion, theology and theurgy.

As we shall see below, especially in Porphyry's texts presented in this volume, Iamblichus promoted a particular brand of Neoplatonism. He thought of theurgy not only as a complement to philosophical thinking but also as the one path to ultimate reality. To the question of whether it is "thinking" that "creates a connection with the gods,"⁷⁰ Iamblichus gives a clear and unmistakable response: "the completion of unspeak-

⁶⁸A note in Eusebius's *Church History* (VI, 19, 2) may be interpreted as affirming that Porphyry wrote this tractate in Sicily. This interpretation has been challenged (but not refuted) in recent times: Morlet, "La datation."

⁶⁹Eunapius reports that Iamblichus first followed Anatolius and then Porphyry, see *Vit. soph.* 5, 1, 2.

⁷⁰ἢ ἔννοια συνάπτει τοῖς θεοῖς, Iamb. *de myst.* II 11 (ed. Saffrey & Segonds 72.1).

able rites transcending all thought, carried out in a way befitting the gods, and the power of secret symbols conceived by the gods realize the theurgical union.”⁷¹ That is, theurgical practice rather than thinking enables union with the divine. Iamblichus is convinced that no intellectual act (*νόησις*) can ever substitute for divine agency and that such agency can be solicited only through theurgy. With this vision of Neoplatonism, Iamblichus rises above the ambiguity that Plotinus had left unresolved and positions himself against his teacher Porphyry, whose attitude toward theurgy is more complex, as exemplified in the *Letter to Anebo* and the *Philosophy from Oracles*. Paradoxically, both Porphyry and Iamblichus understood their respective standpoints as continuations of the Platonic tradition and laid claim, in their respective ways to the “unspeakable union” (*ἄρρητος ἔνωσις*, *de myst.* V 26.15) with divine reality. Their visions of this union differ, but it is important that they both thought of their philosophy as coherent with the tradition they inherited.

Because our only source on how the relationship between Porphyry and Iamblichus evolved over time is Eunapius’s *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists*, it is almost impossible to determine the content of Porphyry’s original teaching, how Iamblichus’s thought took shape in response, and the moment the philosophers parted ways. Eunapius relates that when the rupture with Porphyry became inevitable, Iamblichus moved to Syria. We may thus assume that the *Letter to Anebo*, which testifies to the dispute between the two, belongs to the period either just before or just after Iamblichus’s departure.

As in the case of many other ancient philosophers, much of what Porphyry has written is lost. The texts translated in the present volume, the *Philosophy from Oracles* and the *Letter to Anebo*, are extant only in fragments. The same goes for other important texts, including *Against the Christians*, the *History of Philosophy* and the *Commentary on Aristotle’s Categories*. We have complete Greek texts of Porphyry’s defense of vegetarianism, *On Abstinence from Eating Animals*; his *Letter to Marcella*, his

⁷¹ ἢ τῶν ἔργων τῶν ἀρρήτων καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν νόησιν θεοπρεπῶς ἐνεργουμένων τελεσιουργία ἢ τε τῶν νοουμένων τοῖς θεοῖς μόνον συμβόλων ἀφθέγκτων δύναμις ἐντίθησι τὴν θεουργικὴν ἔνωσιν, Iamb. *de myst.* II 11 (ed. Saffrey & Segonds 72.5-8).

wife; his most influential work, a handbook of Aristotelian logic titled *Isagoge*; a *Commentary on Ptolemy's Harmonic*; and some minor works, such as the treatise *Ad Gaurum*, which considers embryos' endowment with souls. The largest part of Porphyry's main and systematic works, such as his commentaries on Aristotle and Plato and the treatise *On the First Principles* that Proclus mentions in his *Platonic Theology*,⁷² are completely lost, which makes it difficult to reconstruct the fundamentals of his metaphysics, the only clue by which his philosophy of religion could be judged. To know those fundamentals, we are left only with Porphyry's *Sentences*, a difficult and dense work that seems to recapitulate Plotinus's metaphysics.⁷³ Without a complete image of how Porphyry thought of ultimate reality, of the various ontological levels that structure reality, and of the constitution of the human soul and intellect, any attempt to approach the *Letter to Anebo* and the *Philosophy from Oracles* can proceed only through speculation.

To set up the analysis of these texts, I want to begin with an excursus on the fundamentals of Plotinus's metaphysics, show how Porphyry's extant writings draw on that metaphysics, and highlight some ideas in these writings that are characteristic of Porphyry's own metaphysics.

⁷²Πορφύριος δὲ αὖ μετὰ τοῦτον ἐν τῇ Περὶ ἀρχῶν πραγματείᾳ, Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 1 51.5 (eds. Saffrey & Westerink, *Théologie platonicienne*).

⁷³Another important theoretical work is the text discovered in a Syriac translation and published by Yury Arzhanov, *On Principles and Matter*. This text contains a survey of ancient theories of matter and principles, a series of philosophical definitions (ch. 29–67), and an interpretation of Plato's dialogue *Timaeus*. Arzhanov speculates that the text could be the same as the treatise *On (the First) Principles* to which Proclus refers. Similarly to the *Sentences*, some parts of the text are derived from Plotinus, for example the theorems on first matter (73). While this discovery will play a key role in the assessment of Porphyry's metaphysics, I propose to focus on the *Sentences* instead, firstly, because they can be more easily connected to Plotinus's metaphysics without giving rise to the problems of Syriac translation, and secondly, because the *Sentences* are more directly concerned with the human body and the question of salvation. However, Arzhanov's discovery will inevitably require scholars to reassess the relationship between Porphyry and other late ancient philosophers, in particular his teacher Longinus.

1.5 The Fundamentals of Neoplatonic Metaphysics

While the Platonic tradition may be seen as one of the most important philosophical movements of all times, it is paradoxically also infamously difficult to understand, as Richard T. Wallis notes.⁷⁴ Indeed, although a major part of the philosophical vocabulary used by Western philosophers from ancient to contemporary times – reason, intellect, nature, mind, and so forth – is derived from Plato or Platonic philosophers, approaching Neoplatonic metaphysics can be disconcerting for contemporary readers. Porphyry laments in his biography of Plotinus that his teacher was more concerned with ideas than with stating those ideas clearly. For contemporary readers, the challenge is similar and even more acute. The complexity and abstraction of Neoplatonism often obscure any direct answers to existential questions. Neoplatonic metaphysics seems to testify to a way of thinking completely different from ours. Wallis identifies the difficulty of the texts as well as the absence of popular literature as possible causes of this problem but optimistically affirms that the “cultural influence” Neoplatonism undoubtedly has “entitles it to very serious study,”⁷⁵ which will, at some point in the future, remedy its lack of intelligibility.

But I would argue that there are more profound reasons for the difficulties with Neoplatonism – reasons that have more to do with its core metaphysical claims than with its language. As we shall see in the case of Plotinus, Neoplatonists are skeptical about the reality of the visible world and consider the invisible world of intellectual beings to be more real. The development of philosophy and other domains of knowledge – natural science, history, ethnology, etc. – has brought about many challenges for such metaphysical claims, which seem to be incompatible with modern science and with the fact that other cultures speak differently about reality. These claims are further obscured by the fact that philosophy has come to assume a different function in the modern world than it had in ancient times. It would perhaps be

⁷⁴This paradox was identified by Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, ix.

⁷⁵Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, 177.

counterproductive and even suspect to continue promoting metaphysical claims about what reality really is when the world has changed so profoundly.

It is this skepticism about the perseverance of premodern metaphysical claims that brought modern philosophers such as Kant, Nietzsche, and Heidegger to proclaim that traditional metaphysics has been or should be “overcome.” The Platonic understanding of the world as an ontological construction of realms was deemed incompatible with modern assumptions based on science and empirical methodologies, which contributes to the perspective that Neoplatonic metaphysics is an exotic relic of premodern times. In that sense, and despite having had a determinative role in the course of philosophy in the West, as Wallis notes, the Platonic way of philosophizing has, as Thomas Aquinas observed more than 700 years ago, “fallen out of use among moderns.”⁷⁶

Explaining the metaphysics of Platonism to a contemporary audience thus constitutes a tour de force. The notions with which Platonism operates sound familiar, but their meanings are not. This is especially true of Neoplatonism in its Plotinian shape. Plotinus was one of the first to synthesize Aristotelian philosophy of the mind and Platonic metaphysics. This synthesis lies at the root of several historical philosophies, such as medieval scholasticism and Hegelian idealism. However, Plotinus’s use of those notions contrasts strongly with their use in contemporary philosophy. In my reconstruction of Plotinus’s philosophy below, I will highlight this contrast whenever there is a risk of misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

To understand the chief interests Neoplatonists pursue in their writings, it can be helpful to consider how Aristotle – a main source of the Neoplatonists – conceptualizes metaphysics in general. According to Aristotle, metaphysics “should contemplate the first principles and causes,”⁷⁷ “because it is through these and from these that the other things are known.”⁷⁸ Investigating first principles is like investigat-

⁷⁶ *apud modernos est inconsuetus*, Thomas Aquinas, *Div. nom.*, prooemium.

⁷⁷ *δεῖ γὰρ ταύτην τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν καὶ αἰτιῶν εἶναι θεωρητικὴν*, Aristot. *Met.* 982b9-10.

⁷⁸ *διὰ γὰρ ταῦτα καὶ ἐκ τούτων τᾶλλα γνωρίζεται*, Aristot. *Met.* 982b2-3.

ing the most fundamental elements of reality, and it is only through them that one can understand how the subsequent elements of reality come together. Several philosophers, including Porphyry and Damascius, wrote treatises on the question of the “first principles” (πρῶται ἀρχαί).

However, it is important not to misunderstand the notion of “principles” (ἀρχαί). Unlike in natural or empirical sciences, a Platonic principle is not simply a law or rule that has been observed in a regular and verifiable manner, and that one may thus assume to naturally apply to a certain category of things. According to Aristotle, a principle can be anything constitutive of, or fundamental to another thing: “It is common to all principles that they are the first thing from which something exists, or arises, or is known,”⁷⁹ he writes. So substance (οὐσία) itself can be a principle, insofar as anything that exists, does so by virtue of being constituted by substance. The same goes for nature (φύσις) and other such realities. Hence, a principle does not simply describe some kind of constantly observed fact or event, or a “law” undergirding that event. Rather, it is a specific reality that has a causal or constitutive power over another reality, much as – to use Aristotle’s own examples in *Metaphysics* 1013a – the heart or brain as the principle of animal life.

Similarly to how the heart and brain are constitutive of an animal because they ground and maintain the whole organism, Neoplatonists think reality as such is grounded and constituted by principles. Plotinus is an important example here, not only because he was Porphyry’s teacher, but also because his exposition of the principles can be considered the definitive form of Neoplatonist metaphysics, i.e., the system in which Middle Platonism culminated and which set a point of reference for later Neoplatonism. With Plotinus we may first ask: Fundamentally, what do things need to be to maintain themselves in existence? They need to be, in a primordial and most general sense, this or that specific thing, existing as a substantial unity, distinct from other things. The first principle can only be a principle that allows

⁷⁹ πᾶσῶν μὲν οὖν κοινὸν τῶν ἀρχῶν τὸ πρῶτον εἶναι ὅθεν ἢ ἔστιν ἢ γίγνεται ἢ γινώσκειται, Aristot. *Met.* 1013a17-19.

things to exist in the most general sense. According to Plotinus, this principle is the “One” (τὸ ἓν). Since having an identity as this or that thing is even more general than “being” as such – for “being” itself is, in a way, a “thing” with a distinct identity, i.e., “being” – the “One” is so fundamental that it is “beyond being”⁸⁰ itself. The “One” is the ultimate principle because it is foundational for all things that could possibly exist. It is impossible to even think that anything exists without implying that that thing is grounded in the One.⁸¹

However, when we affirm that something has a certain “identity,” “nature,” or “essence” – or whatever term we may use to characterize a thing – we are not exactly talking about an individual thing, but we are instead looking at that thing through the lens of a general characteristic that it shares with many other things. Any statement, representation, or reference to any specific thing is a reference to an “idea” or form that applies not only to that specific thing but that relates it to an existential model. When we say: “This thing is x,” we subsume that thing in a general model that determines the existence of other things, relating its individual existence to a form from which that existence is derived. Not only that: These forms are not isolated constructions but subsist within a realm of relations; they are related to one another. The element in which they are interconnected and subsist as realities is the element of “ideality” – and this is what Plotinus understands as the second principle, the Intellect (νοῦς). The Intellect is the unity of all ideas or forms. And since everything that exists does so either as an idea or as a specification of an idea, reaching down all the way to matter, the Intellect must be seen as identical with all existence. As Plotinus puts it, “the Intellect is everything.”⁸² In its quality of being a principle of all existence, the Intellect is an image of the One and follows from it.⁸³ But since the ideas that constitute the Intellect exist, the Intellect does not reach beyond being. Rather, it is being, or, as Plotinus says, in a manner reminiscent of the pre-Socratic

⁸⁰ ἐπέκεινα ὄντος, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 10.2.

⁸¹ For the reconstruction of the first principle, see in particular Gerson, *Plotinus*, 3-15.

⁸² ὁ δὲ νοῦς πάντα, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 4.21.

⁸³ Εἰκόνα δὲ ἐκείνου λέγομεν εἶναι τὸν νοῦν, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 7.2

philosopher Parmenides: “Being and thinking are the same.”⁸⁴ Hence, the Intellect has its place underneath the One, which transcends being.

The world does not simply consist of ideas, though. The corporeal world is made up of individual things, whose shape depends on the ideas in the Intellect, but whose singularity comes from their embeddedness in matter. The two elements explaining this process of ideal embedding are the “Soul” (*ψυχή*) – which is the third principle – and Nature. The Soul is the principle of life. Anything that lives does so on the basis of the Soul as principle, similarly to how anything that exists as this or that specific thing does so on the basis of the One. According to Plotinus, the Soul is constituted of two parts or aspects (*Enn.* III 8 5): One part is always contemplating the ideas of the Intellect, turned upwards; the other part translates that contemplation into a generative principle that determines and shapes nature. Plotinus calls this second part “Reason” (*λόγος*, *Enn.* III 8 3). In Nature, ideas and matter come together and become a living cycle of creation, causation, and mutual influence. Soul, as the third principle, is the guiding and creative element governing Nature.

One of the most interesting aspects of Plotinus’s metaphysics is that he sees these three principles as connected by “contemplation” (*θεωρία*), as he explains in the eighth book of his third Ennead. While this aspect is certainly one of the most original and remarkable features of his philosophy, it is also notoriously difficult to understand. In Plotinus’s system, contemplation may be situated at the level of the relationship between an intellectual act and its object, or between intentionality and content. Since the Intellect is not just an organ of the human mind but a cosmic principle, contemplation is not simply a mental activity taking place in the human mind, either. Rather, it must be seen as a fundamental ontological and cosmic dynamic that affects the very way the world is structured. The Intellect contemplates its own unity as an image of the One; the Soul contemplates the ideas of the Intellect; Nature contemplates the Soul’s creative principles. At each step, contemplation allows the lower principle to become active and yield a certain product based on the content of its contemplation

⁸⁴ *τὰν τὸν τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ νοεῖν*, Plot. *Enn.* III 8 8.9.

of the higher principle. The whole system of principles, Nature, and the world, thus constitutes a system of “contemplative derivation”⁸⁵ in which reality is constituted by a flow of intellectual activity, descending from the Intellect’s contemplation of the One, and returning from the living world to the One.

Plotinus’s theory of principles and contemplation offers a striking example for the difficulties facing contemporary readers of Neoplatonic texts. Neoplatonic terms like “intellect” and “reason” sound familiar, but their meaning in Neoplatonic language is almost contrary to their common use today. In Neoplatonism, “intellect” and “reason” are not simply faculties of the mind or elements of human nature. Rather, they possess such a degree of reality that the world we assume to be real must be thought of as deriving from them. When Plotinus describes contemplation and the ideas contained in the Intellect, he is not retracing the functioning of our mind but the very structure of reality.

Building on this theory of principles, Neoplatonic anthropology considers intellect – with a lowercase “i,” to designate the human intellect – to be the essence of the human being. The intellect is the organ that allows a person to ascend from the lower, material realm of reality to the higher realm of ideality. Neoplatonism may be called “intellectualist”⁸⁶ in the sense that it postulates that human life can come to fruition or attain its full realization only if it conforms to the contemplative activity of the intellect. But this positive vision of the intellect entails a negative consequence for the body: If the intellect is most real, the body must lack reality to the same degree, so that its sole function is to serve as a tool or support for the intellect. And in fact, Plotinus and other Neoplatonists explicitly assume this consequence. Take for example Plotinus’s comments on how the soul “creates” a body for itself and mistakenly places its own substance in that body: “Desiring itself, the soul creates an image of itself that doesn’t really exist, and thus steps on emptiness and loses its determination. And the image is formless and completely obscure, for it is without reason, without any

⁸⁵O’Meara, *Plotinus*, 76.

⁸⁶I take the term from Griffin, “Aristotelian Dialectic,” 176.

thought, fallen away from being.”⁸⁷ He represents the body as a diminished image of the soul. The body and the material world in general are derived from the One and thus participate in its perfection, and in this sense, Plotinus’s philosophy must be distinguished from philosophies that present the body as inherently evil, such as the versions of Gnosticism that he describes in texts such as *Enn.* II 9. But the body has no autonomy and is capable of no positive output, since that which it is constituted of – matter – has no inherent reality or productive power.

Plotinus’s emphasis on the role of the intellect closely shapes his vision of philosophical practice. The Neoplatonic imperative of contemplation calls the philosopher not to embrace the natural world, but to seek to distinguish the intellectual paradigms by which it is determined. The natural world has nothing to say on its own and must, if it is to reveal its immanent truth, be stripped of its materiality and embodiedness: “Not only the body circumscribing it [sc. the soul] and the body’s sea-swell must hush, but everything that surrounds it. The earth must hush, the sea, the air, the great sky – they must hush.”⁸⁸ Just below this passage, Plotinus compares the material world to a “dark cloud,”⁸⁹ a “dead body,”⁹⁰ a “shadow of matter,”⁹¹ that “which the gods abhor”⁹² and which can be illuminated only through the light of the soul. In contemplation, every visible or perceptible aspect of the world must be sublated,⁹³ and it is only in this “silence” of the world that actual reality can be grasped.

⁸⁷ πρὸς αὐτὴν γὰρ βουλομένη τὸ μετ’ αὐτὴν ποιεῖ εἶδωλον αὐτῆς, τὸ μὴ ὄν, οἷον κενεμβατοῦσα καὶ ἀοριστοτέρα γινομένη· καὶ τούτου τὸ εἶδωλον τὸ ἀόριστον πάντη σκοτεινόν· ἄλογον γὰρ καὶ ἀνόητον πάντη καὶ πολὺ τοῦ ὄντος ἀποστατοῦν, Plot. *Enn.* III 9 3.10-14.

⁸⁸ Ἦσυχον δὲ αὐτῇ ἔστω μὴ μόνον τὸ περικείμενον σῶμα καὶ ὁ τοῦ σώματος κλύδων, ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶν τὸ περιέχον· ἦσυχος μὲν γῆ, ἦσυχος δὲ θάλασσα καὶ ἄηρ καὶ αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀμείνων, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 2.14-17.

⁸⁹ σκοτεινὸν νέφος, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 2.20.

⁹⁰ σῶμα νεκρόν, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 2.26.

⁹¹ σκότος ὕλης, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 2.26.

⁹² ὁ στυγέουσιν οἱ θεοί, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 2.27.

⁹³ Sublated through what Stróżynski calls, in his explanation of the metaphor of Lynceus’s ability to see through matter, the “contemplative ability to see the Forms through their images” (*Contemplation*, 308).

Contemplation reverses the process through which the individual soul assumes a body. However, Plotinian Neoplatonism and later Neoplatonism notably differ on the details of this process. Plotinus has a positive vision of this reversal, insofar as he does not see any barriers between the individual soul, the Intellect, and the One. He states that “there is nothing in between [the One and the Intellect], as there is nothing between the Soul and the Intellect.”⁹⁴ Plotinus’s anthropology is optimistic: It does not posit any intermediaries or boundaries between the effort to ascend to the One and the One itself. The One is immediately present to our intellectual constitution and epistemic faculties. “Through something within us of this sort, we are fixed on [God], we coexist with him and are attached to him – for as we tend there, we find ourselves founded [on him],”⁹⁵ Plotinus cryptically writes. Human life is contingent on divine life and there is no “between” the two. This vision differs from later Neoplatonism. With Iamblichus, Proclus, and other supporters of theurgy, Plotinus’s resistance against intermediate levels and mediation between the One and the individual soul is ultimately abandoned. Iamblichus, for example, thinks that “intermediate”⁹⁶ beings are necessary to fill the gap between lower and higher classes. Proclus stresses that one must strive to achieve “knowledge of all the orders of gods,”⁹⁷ and not just some vague intuition of the One. On this point, there is a strong contrast between Plotinus’s Neoplatonism and post-Plotinian Neoplatonism.

The paradoxical simultaneity of the One’s ineffable nature and of its proximity to the soul is a final point of interest in Plotinus. This paradox lies at the root of Plotinus’s oscillation between philosophical language, which serves to describe the One’s transcendence and to clarify its metaphysical function, and religious or mystical language, which connects the transcendence of the one to certain essential traits

⁹⁴μεταξὺ οὐδέν, ὡς οὐδὲ ψυχῆς καὶ νοῦ, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 6.49.

⁹⁵Τῷ γὰρ τοιούτῳ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐφαπτόμεθα καὶ σύνεσμεν καὶ ἀνηρτήμεθα· ἐνδρύμεθα δὲ οἱ ἂν συννεύωμεν ἐκεῖ, Plot. *Enn.* V 1 11.13–15.

⁹⁶Iamblichus elaborates on “the intermediate classes” of beings in *de myst.* I, 6 (P 19.6–20.14=S 14.14–15.21).

⁹⁷ἢ γνώσις τῶν εἰῶν τάξεων πασῶν, Procl. in *Tim.* 211.9 (ed. Diehl, in *Platonis Timaeum*). Radek Chlub refers to this passage: Chlub, *Proclus*, 61.

or dispositions of the soul. In pursuing these two perspectives, Plotinus's writing presents an undeniable richness and depth, but it also often appears faltering or hesitant. On the one hand, Plotinus commits to philosophical clarity and conceptual rigor. On the other hand, he seems to be aware that clarity is possible only as long as one does not attempt to justify the ultimate conditions of that rigor. For example, in one paragraph he makes rigorous arguments for the necessity of relating the natural world to the One, while in the next, he describes the One as a certain divinity or mythological entity. He leaves his readers to determine which of the linguistic registers – philosophy or the mythological language of religion – should be given priority.

Take, for example, the early treatise *Enn.* VI 9, in which Plotinus offers an overview of his theory of principles. The work ends with a long, literary excursus on the ascent to the One, using religious terms. Plotinus begins the treatise by justifying why certain things should “not be divulged to those not initiated in the mysteries.”⁹⁸ The “wise priest”⁹⁹ alone can enter the temple and achieve “the true vision of the sanctuary.”¹⁰⁰ The priest knows that images and statues can only be appreciated as tentative means to ascend to higher contemplation. He transcends these means and achieves the paradoxical vision of the invisible. Plotinus thus concludes his corpus on a deeply religious note: that of a practitioner who, having abandoned everything visible, makes his way in solitude to approach the One – the “escape of the solitary to the solitary.”¹⁰¹

Despite the austere and simple beauty of this text, Plotinus's stance remains ambiguous. The One is at the same time close to the human soul and utterly transcendent; its subsistence is philosophically evident, but that evidence reaches only to a certain point; human beings are capable of penetrating into the sanctuary of reality but to do so, they must leave behind some of the constitutive elements of its existence – the body, the soul's desire for embodiment, the yearning for belonging with nature. These tensions pervade Plotinus's work, and his reserva-

⁹⁸ *μη ἐκφέρειν εἰς μὴ μεμνημένους*, Plot. *Enn.* VI 9 11.2.

⁹⁹ *σοφὸς ... ἱερεὺς*, Plot. *Enn.* VI 9 11.28.

¹⁰⁰ *ἀληθινὴν ... τοῦ ἀδύτου τὴν θέαν*, Plot. *Enn.* VI 9 11.29–30.

¹⁰¹ *φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνου*, Plot. *Enn.* VI 9 11.51.

tions against resolving them possibly explain part of the attraction his thought has exerted over generations of philosophers.

The *Enneads*' final treatise and its emphasis on the necessity of initiatory experience offer a useful starting point for approaching Porphyry's post-Plotinian Neoplatonism. Porphyry's extant writings are essentially concerned with questions of religion (*Letter to Anebo, Philosophy from Oracles, Against the Christians*),¹⁰² hermeneutics (*Homeric Questions, Caves of the Nymphs*),¹⁰³ logic (*Isagoge*)¹⁰⁴ and philosophical ethics (*On Abstinence, Letter to Marcella*).¹⁰⁵ He is also interested in the relation between reflection on higher reality through philosophical theology and ceremonial interaction with the gods through theurgy. But in exploring this relation, he departs from Plotinus's paradigm. In fact, Porphyry is one of the first Neoplatonic philosophers to suggest there is a way to systematize theology and theurgy into a unified framework, either by prioritizing one of the two, or by allocating them to different "paths" corresponding to different intellectual constitutions and different types of people.

Porphyry's metaphysical system is, as far as we can judge from his extant writings, structurally and conceptually similar to Plotinus's.¹⁰⁶ The first principles are the One and the Intellect. Like Plotinus, Porphyry thinks that the Intellect is the principle of identity that makes it possible for things to exist according to certain paradigmatic forms. But "the Intellect is many things, and before the many, there must be the One."¹⁰⁷ The Intellect "thinks the thoughts not as being one, but

¹⁰²The most recent edition is Becker (ed.), *Porphyrios*.

¹⁰³Schlunk (ed.), *Homeric Questions*, Dorandi (ed.), *L'Antre des nymphes*.

¹⁰⁴Barnes, *Porphyry*.

¹⁰⁵Bouffartigue, Patillon, Segonds & Brisson (eds.), *De l'abstinence; des Places, Vie de Pythagore*.

¹⁰⁶One of the most comprehensive overviews of Porphyry's metaphysics can be found in Marie Goulet-Cazé's introduction to the newest edition of the *Sentences*, "Le système philosophique." Below, I follow Goulet-Cazé's accent on the distinction between the material and the intellectual world in the *Sentences*: "Le principe fondamental que suit Porphyre, énoncé dès la première sentence, est celui d'une distinction très nette entre le monde incorporel et le monde corporel." (31) This accent is not representative for all of Porphyry's writing but useful to compare the fundamental structures of Porphyry's system to those in Plotinus.

¹⁰⁷πολλὰ ... ἐστὺν ὁ νοῦς πρὸ δὲ τῶν πολλῶν ἀνάγκη εἶναι τὸ ἕν, Porph. *Sent.*

as [being] many, and not as being different from itself.”¹⁰⁸ Hence, the principle of the Intellect’s unity does not lie in itself. It must be sought in that which by itself is a unity, the One.

Since “the Intellect is an indivisible substance”¹⁰⁹ it cannot be connected or attributed to material things. To function as the formal principle of material things, the Intellect requires an intermediary principle capable of relating incorporeal forms to the corporeal world. This is the function of the third principle, the Soul: “The Soul is the intermediary between the indivisible and the divisible substance surrounding bodies.”¹¹⁰ Here it is important to observe Porphyry’s terms exactly. Porphyry is, as we shall see below, particularly concerned with bodies and their – predominantly negative – relation to ultimate reality. When Porphyry speaks of the “divisible substance” the Soul imparts to bodies, he does not place that substance “in” but “around” the bodies (*περὶ τὰ σώματα*). In fact, Porphyry explicitly states that incorporeal substance “does not mingle with bodies”¹¹¹ and that the only way for that substance to determine bodies is by instilling “tendencies” within them. “The tendency,” then, “establishes a secondary power connected to the bodies,” he writes.¹¹² It is only at this minimal level of interconnectedness that the Soul acts upon the body without being acted upon by the body in return. This construction is highly complex and, in the absence of Porphyry’s systematic texts, remains obscure. But it unmistakably reveals Porphyry’s ambition to maintain the separation of the three superior principles from the material world. The One acts as the Intellect’s principle of unity, the Intellect translates unity into the manifoldness of individual form, and the Soul establishes “tendencies” in material things. But there remains a gap between the principles and the bodily reality to which the soul attaches itself.

43.1-2 (ed. Lamberz).

¹⁰⁸ νοεῖ γὰρ αἰεὶ τὰ νοήματα οὐχ ἐν ὄντα, ἀλλὰ πολλὰ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλα ὄντα παρ’ ἐκείνον, Porph. *Sent.* 43.2-3.

¹⁰⁹ ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἀμέριστος οὐσία, Porph. *Sent.* 5.2.

¹¹⁰ Ἡ μὲν ψυχὴ τῆς ἀμερίστου καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ σώματα μεριστῆς οὐσίας μέσον τι, Porph. *Sent.* 5.1-2.

¹¹¹ οὐδὲ συγκίρνεται τοῖς σώμασι, Porph. *Sent.* 4.2.

¹¹² ἡ γὰρ ῥοπή δευτέραν τινα δύναμιν ὑπέστησε προσεχῆ τοῖς σώμασιν, Porph. *Sent.* 4.4-5.

The separation of the individual soul from the body constitutes one of the most notable differences between Porphyry and Plotinus. Not that there is a difference in the degree to which the two philosophers see the body as something that requires taming and overcoming. But they think about the modalities of that taming in different ways. As discussed above, Plotinus's vision of the body is strongly impacted by his marked intellectualism. The body appears as an impediment to the soul's freedom, insofar as its inherent tendency is to impede the soul's natural ascent to the Intellect. That ascent is fueled by the part of the soul that always "remains in the noetic realm,"¹¹³ as opposed to its lower aspect, which is directed toward nature and bodily existence. When the soul prioritizes its bodily aspects, it can be trapped in a state of boundedness or entanglement in the natural world. "Without the body," Plotinus writes, "[the soul] has control over herself, is free, and stands outside of cosmic causality. When it inhabits a body, it loses control, because it is placed in an order alongside other things."¹¹⁴ When it connects with bodily nature, the soul receives the body's impulses and thus finds itself deprived of the freedom it obtains from its connection with the Intellect. Accordingly, Plotinus supports Plato's injunction to separate (*χωρίζειν*, *Enn.* V I 10.25) the soul from the body; "not in a local sense" (*οὐ τόπω*, *Enn.* V I 10.25) but "by not following its inclination toward imagination or the alienating state of embodiment."¹¹⁵ Separating the soul from the body "locally" would not lead to any positive result because the body is the product and expression of the soul¹¹⁶ – cutting it away is not a possibility. So, the essen-

¹¹³τὸ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ μένον, *Plot. Enn.* V I 10.23.

¹¹⁴Ἄνευ μὲν οὖν σώματος ὅσα κυριωτάτη τε αὐτῆς καὶ ἐλευθέρα καὶ κοσμικῆς αἰτίας ἔξω· ἐνεχθείσα δὲ εἰς σῶμα οὐκέτι πάντα κυρία, ὡς ἂν μεθ' ἐτέρων ταχθείσα, *Plot. Enn.* III I 8.9-11.

¹¹⁵τῇ μὴ νεύσει καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις καὶ τῇ ἀλλοτριότητι τῇ πρὸς τὸ σῶμα, *Plot. Enn.* V I 10.27-8.

¹¹⁶In his treatise *Ad Gaurum*, Porphyry explains that for an individual soul to become the soul of a certain body, two elements come into play: the father's nature, which is connected to the lower aspect of his soul, and the new living being's own nature. In his discussion of the process of generation, Porphyry essentially engages with the concept of the parents' souls and does not mention the Soul as a principle. See the introduction in Wilberding, *To Gaurus*, 7-30.

tial question for Plotinus is how the body can be turned into a tool to ground the soul's contemplation in the innermost, material part of the cosmos.

Porphyry agrees with Plotinus's starting point but then goes even further, insisting on the body's lack of ontological consistency. For Porphyry, the body is not a real impediment to the Soul. Rather, the body's existence is so inconsistent that it cannot even impede the Soul's functions: "it lies [before the incorporeal] like a non-being."¹¹⁷ Like Plotinus, Porphyry considers the body to depend on the Soul, but not vice versa: "Nature has bound the body to the Soul, but the Soul binds itself to the body."¹¹⁸ But since the existence of the body is so elusive, the way the soul "binds itself" to the body remains unimaginable, too: "The Soul's junction with the body takes place through an ineffable extension."¹¹⁹ Rather than attempting to dissolve this ineffable connection, one should aim to bring the body into an "accomplished" state, so that "it is elevated toward the soul, which is intelligible."¹²⁰ There, at the point "farthest away from the body,"¹²¹ dwells the real self.

But the difference between Porphyry and Plotinus is not just a conceptual distinction. Porphyry seems haunted by the question of bodily existence. He places it at the heart of his philosophy, estimating that the question of the return of the individual, embodied soul to the One depends on the constitution and nature of the body. In his biography of Plotinus, he remarks that one of the turning points in their relationship concerned this topic: "During three days, I, Porphyry, kept asking him about the soul's union with the body."¹²² This preoccu-

¹¹⁷ ὡς μὴ ὄν [τῶ ἀσώματῳ] κέεται, *Porphy. Sent.* 27.4.

¹¹⁸ ἔδησε δὲ φύσις μὲν σῶμα ἐν ψυχῇ, ψυχὴ δὲ ἑαυτὴν ἐν σώματι, *Porphy. Sent.* 9.2-3.

¹¹⁹ δι' ἐκτάσεως ὄν ἀρρήτου τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἢ εἰς σῶμα σύνερξίς, *Porphy. Sent.* 28.6-7. Johnson analyzes the difficult sentences 27-29 in "Bodily Images." He notes that with respect to certain notions such as place and the difference between souls in themselves and souls in relation to bodies, Porphyry's statements in this text contrast with Plotinus's use of the notions.

¹²⁰ τέλειον γὰρ ὄν ἀνήκται πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν νοερὰν οὖσαν, *Porphy. Sent.* 30.3-4.

¹²¹ ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ πλείστον ἀφεστηκῶς τοῦ σώματος, *Porphy. ad Marc.* 8.12.

¹²² Τριῶν γοῦν ἡμερῶν ἐμοῦ Πορφυρίου ἐρωτήσαντος, πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ σύνεστι τῷ

pation with the body also explains Porphyry's interest in the relation between philosophy and religion, or theology and theurgy. In fact, religious practice and especially theurgy are enacted by embodied selves. Practitioners perform divination, sacrifices, and invocations through their bodies. These practices are methods for bodily beings to transcend their constitution and aspire to higher reality. It is by exploring the way Porphyry frames these religious and theurgical practices that we find his answer to the question raised at the beginning of this introduction – the overarching question of the gap between finite and absolute reality and the theological or theurgical methods we can use to bridge that gap. How does Porphyry conceive the union between the individual soul and ultimate reality? Does this union require bodily ritual enactments – theurgy – or merely intellectual practice?

Porphyry answers: On its ascent the individual soul must inevitably pass through disembodiment. But this passage allows for two distinct approaches. One of these approaches, presented in the *Letter to Marcella* and the *Letter to Anebo*, is intellectualist in the sense that it requires a purely philosophical detachment of the intellect from the body, achieved through contemplative practice. The other approach, discussed in the *Philosophy from Oracles*, seeks to incorporate the concrete realities of human life – the body, cultural and religious tradition, and sensations and experiences – in the process of disembodiment and use them as anagogical symbols that help practitioners turn their attention to the realm of intellectual existence. With this compromise, Porphyry departs from Plotinus's uniform intellectualism but also rejects Iamblichus's theurgical exclusivism.

The *Letter to Marcella* is a useful reference to explore the first, intellectualist approach, because it was written in Porphyry's maturity, it starts with concrete ethical guidelines rather than with speculation, and its easy language makes it a much less esoteric reading than, for example, the *Sentences*. (Kathleen O'Brien Wicker considers it a manual for philosophical novices that contains the Platonic doctrine in a "simplified form.")¹²³ One of the difficulties of the text is that it is so

σώματι, Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 13.10-11

¹²³O'Brien Wicker, *To Marcella*, 20. Simmons agrees with her, *Universal Salvation*, 117.

interwoven with Pythagorean, Platonic, Epicurean, and Stoic maxims that one cannot always distinguish Porphyry's own stance.¹²⁴ But the overall narrative of the *Letter* is remarkably coherent and appealing, which makes it a valuable entry point into Porphyry's conception of the philosophical life.

The *Letter's* basic teaching is that philosophical perfection is achieved by containing the passionate and irrational impulses of bodily existence. Porphyry presents that containment as a movement away from embodied being and from matter. "To the degree that one desires the body and the things belonging to the body," he writes, "to that degree one is ignorant about God and conceals the visions that one could have of him."¹²⁵ And "to the degree that one gives up clinging to the body, to that degree one comes closer to God."¹²⁶ Like Plotinus, Porphyry thinks that while the soul's superior aspect connects it to the intellect, the body connects it with matter, and, through matter, to "true non-being"¹²⁷ and the "evasion from being."¹²⁸ By following the body's impulses, the soul shifts from being – which, as we saw with Plotinus, is identical with the intellect – to non-being. Porphyry's theology thus presents itself as a description of the choice between the soul's ascent to being and truth and its descent into non-being and falsity.

Choosing the ascent to being requires the practice of what Porphyry calls the "cutting away of the body,"¹²⁹ or "mastering of the body."¹³⁰ Porphyry thinks that to master one's body, one needs to "be free"¹³¹ from influences that could recenter the soul on the body. The

¹²⁴Most of these texts stem, as Helene Whittaker sums up the scholarship of Bidez, Chadwick, Pötscher, and des Places, from a Pythagorean collection also used by Sextus for his own collection – but Porphyry has not used Sextus's collection. See Whittaker, "Purpose," 153 no. 11.

¹²⁵ὡς ἐφ' ὅσον τις τὸ σῶμα ποθεῖ καὶ τὰ τοῦ σώματος σύμφυλα, ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἀγνοεῖ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἐνοράσεως ἐαυτὸν ἀπεσκοπίσει, Porph. *ad Marc.* 13.6-8 (ed. Pötscher, Πρὸς Μαρκέλλαν).

¹²⁶ὄσω τῆς τοῦ σώματος προσπαθείας ἀφίσταται, τοσοῦτῳ μέτρῳ τῷ θείῳ πελάζει, Porph. *ad Marc.* 32.10-11

¹²⁷ἀληθινὸν μὴ ὄν, Porph. *Sent.* 20.5.

¹²⁸ἔλλειψις παντὸς τοῦ ὄντος, Porph. *Sent.* 20.11.

¹²⁹ἔσο τὸ ὄλον σῶμα ἀποκόπτειν, Porph. *ad Marc.* 34.2-3.

¹³⁰ἄρχειν τοῦ σώματος, Porph. *ad Marc.* 34.1.

¹³¹εἶναι ἐλεύθερον, Porph. *ad Marc.* 34.6.

soul is free when its intentionality remains directed exclusively toward the intellect, allowing it, as Porphyry says in his *Life of Pythagoras*, to rise “to the contemplation of the things eternal, similar to it, incorporeal, and remaining eternally identical to themselves.”¹³² As we shall see in the *Letter to Anebo*, this contemplative element is also central to Porphyry’s eudaemonism. Only contemplation can yield true happiness, and happiness is the distinctive sign of genuine philosophy. Porphyry relates about Pythagoras that he “led people to the contemplation of the things that really exist and made them happy thereby.”¹³³

The final goal of the practice of freedom and contemplation is to intellectualize the human person; that is, to draw all the soul’s powers back into the intellect and make it relinquish everything that relates to life in nature and the body. The intellectualization of the soul is the way to become “inspired by God”¹³⁴ and a mirror in which God sees himself.¹³⁵ By turning human existence into a mirror of divine nature, the intellect becomes a soteriological hub where the soul and God, human and divine reality, come together.

1.6 The Letter to Anebo

In a sense, Porphyry’s philosophical and theological system presents a high degree of simplicity. It seeks to establish a rational basis for the human quest to “learn the truth.”¹³⁶ Its emphasis on the intellect and rationality entails, on Porphyry’s part, a certain partiality to systematic coherence. Porphyry wants the structure and concepts of theology to reflect the primacy and superior character of the intellect. This tendency also determines the argument of the *Letter to Anebo*.

The *Letter* is addressed to an imagined Egyptian interlocutor called Anebo or, in other versions, Abamon. The fact that Iamblichus replies

¹³² πρὸς τὴν τῶν αἰδίων καὶ ὁμοφύλων αὐτῶ ἄσωμάτων ἀεὶ καὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἐχόντων θέαν, Porph. *Vit. Pyth.* 46.7–8 (ed. Nauck, *opuscula selecta*).

¹³³ δι’ ὧν ἀντεισάγων τὴν τῶν ὄντως ὄντων θέαν μακαρίου ἀπετέλει, Porph. *Vit. Pyth.* 48.7–8.

¹³⁴ ἀπὸ θεοῦ ὀρμώμενος, Porph. *ad Marc.* 11.12–13.

¹³⁵ ἐνοπτρίζεσθαι πέφυκεν, Porph. *ad Marc.* 13.1–2.

¹³⁶ μαθεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, Porph. *ad Aneb.* fr. 1.

to the letter indicates that the interlocutor could, according to Beatrice, either be Iamblichus's literary persona or an Egyptian follower of his philosophy.¹³⁷ Porphyry portrays his correspondent as an anti-intellectualist. The correspondent does not think that intellectual activity constitutes the basis for the soul's return to God. He rather sees that basis in theurgy, which he understands as the practice of divinatory and sacrificial ceremonies supported by a theological system of divine hierarchies and mythological narratives. It is through the mediation of the gods that the ascent of the soul becomes possible. Theurgy, not philosophical reflection and contemplation, paves the way to God.

Porphyry wonders: Even assuming that there is a plurality of gods, how can his Egyptian interlocutor posit that there are differences in dignity among the gods; that certain gods are associated with certain types of embodiment; and that the gods present a degree of passivity that subjects them to the invocations and prayers of human beings? If higher reality transcends ordinary reality by virtue of its incorporeality, how can there be distinctions, bodies, and passivity in that reality? These are the questions determining Porphyry's writing in the *Letter*.

To begin with, a philosopher might wonder why there is a plurality of gods at all, rather than just one God identical to the first principle. This question requires a shift in perspective and allows us to come back to Johnson's proposal to approach Porphyry's theology not only as a self-constituted system but also as a "vertical theological translation"¹³⁸ serving to make existing religion philosophically meaningful. Greek religion historically predates philosophical speculation. Reappropriating religion, philosophers attempted to provide a philosophical explanation for religious concepts such as divine hierarchies, relations, and so forth. In this sense, Porphyry, too, may be interpreted as engaging in a "sustained activity of transferring the knowledge about the gods expressed in various media (especially literary and iconographic) into a Platonic philosophical system," as Johnson writes.¹³⁹ He does not make a new religion emerge from his system but appropriates the religion of his time.

¹³⁷Beatrice, *Philosophy of the Few*, 133.

¹³⁸Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 55.

¹³⁹Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 55.

Johnson's approach provides a key to understanding not only the premises of Porphyry's theology, but also the reason Porphyry did not see these premises as conflicting. On the one hand, Porphyry wants to give traditional religion a philosophical grounding. On the other, religion is driven by dynamics that are not naturally consistent with philosophical logic. Johnson explains that therefore we should not expect Porphyry to infer religion from philosophy as if the latter were the basis from which the former is derived. Rather, we are "catching Porphyry in the act of translation:"¹⁴⁰ He transfers religious aspirations into the context of Neoplatonic metaphysics and explains them through philosophical means. The *Letter to Anebo* and *Philosophy from Oracles*, are traces of this translational work.

Porphyry considers a philosophical explanation of religious ideas or practices successful when it manages to avoid contradictions and inconsistencies. But this is not the case, Porphyry argues in the *Letter*, for the opinions of Anebo, who assumes there is a hierarchy of gods who pertain to different classes, for example aerial, terrestrial, and aquatic. Porphyry tries to understand the principle of this differentiation: Are the gods different through accidental characteristics, through their degree or type of embodiment, or through their movements? Any of these assumptions leads to unacceptable consequences. For example, they would erase the impermeability of the separation between bodily and intellectual reality, which is one of Porphyry's core ideas. Porphyry confesses to perplexity in the face of Anebo's reasoning.

But the major flaw that Porphyry finds in Anebo's theology does not concern the nature of the gods, but the relation between gods and humans. In fact, if gods respond to rites and ceremonies, their very being must present an inclination or openness to human invocations. They must, in Porphyry's language, be "subject to passivity" (ἐμπασθησῶς): That is, it must be possible for them to be constrained or urged to perform orders. Porphyry thinks his is an absurd assumption. The gods are intellectual beings. Intellectuality is equivalent to pure activity, and activity excludes passivity. How could intellectual beings be urged to become passive and obey orders issued from a lower realm of reality?

¹⁴⁰Johnson, *Religion and Identity*, 57.

Not only that: The rituals humans are expected to perform for the gods are often imbued with profanity. Porphyry mentions the use of sculpted male genitalia as well as obscene language by Egyptian priests. He does not fully develop this argument in the fragments, but he seems intuitively opposed to the association of the divine with the obscene. This deserves particular attention because obscenities play a major though fundamentally different role in the *Philosophy from Oracles*.

But Porphyry does not take exception to invocations only. He also charges that whatever explanation one offers for divination or any other kind of ritual foretelling through divine inspiration conflicts with the philosophically established properties of divine nature. For example, if the gods caused divination directly, they would have to interact with embodied sacrificial elements such as barley or animal entrails, which they cannot, because of their intellectual and incorporeal constitution. However, if a prophet's soul is stirred by a psychological impulse, that leaves much of the actual divination to the human soul and psychology – so much that one would have to see it as a product of the embodied human mind rather than as a divine message. This objection is particularly interesting because it attests to the relevance of Porphyry's thought to modern concerns. Today, we are inclined to respond to claims of supernatural insight with a dose of skepticism and to point to altered mental states, psychological affections, pathologies, and so forth as possible causes of visions. Porphyry is sensitive to these issues because of his conviction that philosophy should be free from the possibility of human error or influence. If philosophy is to lead the way to knowledge and happiness, it cannot allow for the possibility of flawed perception or thought.

Though Iamblichus dismisses these objections in his response (fr. 61–62), his own argument, which draws from the consequences of divination and invocations, appears less convincing. Iamblichus points out that someone's resolutions changing because of a ceremony, for example, proves there is a certain efficacy to the performed ritual. But this argument is a *petitio principii*: It posits the fact that it intends to prove, assuming that the change of resolution is actually the result of the performed ritual. Rather than supporting Iamblichus's objection,

the argument exposes it as magic thinking. Iamblichus furthermore insists that the difference between pathological mental manifestations and divine visions is that pathologies reveal nothing true or real – but how can one see the difference between reality and imagination if divination has no rational or verifiable component?

Under the assumption that divine visions are actually the consequence of rituals, Porphyry asks, what could the role of the divine or daemonic intervention be? If something is accomplished supernaturally, the causes can only be coming from outside the soul. But if these causes depend on rituals involving certain objects, how could they be derived from the gods? Divination can only be the result of daemonic interventions, because daemons are “deceptive by nature” and not intent on the good. They are attracted by the material elements of sacrifice and therefore obey human commands – but they do not do so on the grounds of virtue or purity of character, as gods would, but simply because of their inclination to matter and inferior ontological realms. Hence, the very idea of divination as a product of the gods is flawed.

Porphyry’s argument is noteworthy because it historically engendered two types of reactions. To Greek philosophers from Heraclitus to Plato to Iamblichus, it seemed natural to admit the existence of daemons, a type of being that acts as an “intermediary between the gods and the world, ensur[ing] the government of the sublunary world.”¹⁴¹ The vast majority of Neoplatonic philosophers accept the existence of gods and daemons. Christian readers such as Eusebius of Caesarea and Augustine on the other hand take offense at this idea and insist that Porphyry mentions daemons only as a concession to his readers. While it is unlikely that Porphyry practiced this kind of pedagogical concession, the Christian reaction is interesting insofar as it prefigures Johnson’s translation approach. Like Johnson, Eusebius

¹⁴¹Brisson, “What is a Demon,” 96. See also Greenbaum, “Daimon, Birth, and the Stars,” as well as Timotin, *La démonologie*, in particular 13–36, where Timotin discusses the various meanings and connotations of the notion of “daemon.” He explains that the notion participates in a semantic and historical network that makes it impossible to pin its meaning to a single meaning. The daemon is a singular and common divine power; it is personal and impersonal; it is beneficial and vindictive, and so forth. Daemons are so embedded in Greek religious, cultural, and philosophical thinking that it took a new religion – Christianity – to pinpoint them as a problem.

and Augustine situate Porphyry in an environment that required that he communicate with different audiences in different ways. It would be naïve to assume that Porphyry was sympathetic to Christian monotheism, but assuming that he indeed makes specific concessions to his readers is a plausible hypothesis.

Another contradiction Porphyry finds in theurgy is the discrepancy between the expectations concerning priests and officiants on the one hand, and the materials used for sacrifice and divination on the other. Priests are prohibited from touching corpses, from consuming meat, and from other engagements considered sacrilegious, but the rites carried out to appeal to the gods involve precisely these things. A contradiction arises between religious precepts and divine attributes: Humans are kept from certain engagements, but gods can be invoked only through these very engagements.

The one idea spanning these objections, and perhaps Porphyry's most important point, concerns the role that Anebo's theology plays for the goal of human life, which Porphyry situates – backed by the Greek tradition – in happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*). If a religious or philosophical teaching does not show “the way to happiness,”¹⁴² then it is pursued in vain (*μάτην*). On this point, the *Letter to Anebo* is outspoken and clear, as are Porphyry's ethical and spiritual texts, such as the *Letter to Marcella*: Any idea that does not serve the goal of human life does not deserve philosophical support or promotion. Based on this axiom, Porphyry rejects the appeal to the foretelling of future events or to daemonic forces capable of providing goods such as money or slaves. He does not see in these goods anything of value or relevance to human life. Therefore, a theology built on the attainment of those goods cannot be considered valuable or meaningful.

In Porphyry's arguments against Anebo's presuppositions about divination, invocation of gods and daemons, and religious practice in general, the main driving force lies in the quest for philosophical coherence. To return once again to Johnson's approach, one could say Porphyry considers the theological model he is criticizing an improper “translation.” The translation fails because it entails inappro-

¹⁴² τὴν εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν ὁδόν, fr. 109.

priate philosophical consequences, such as, for example, the passivity of divine being, the existence of corporeal yet supernatural powers, and the orientation of human life toward inconsistent goals. In his response to Porphyry, Iamblichus attempts to remediate these consequences, but Porphyry's critique and his constant appeals to standards of coherence and argumentation aren't easily dispatched.

1.7 *Philosophy from Oracles*

While one could consider the *Letter to Anebo* a translation of religion into philosophy "from above," insofar as it analyzes and criticizes Anebo's religious claims from the standpoint of philosophical rationality, the remaining fragments of the *Philosophy from Oracles* (Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λόγιων φιλοσοφίας) tackle the question from the opposite perspective: that is, from within religious practice and theurgy.¹⁴³ In the *Philosophy*, Porphyry asks how practitioners may engage theurgical and other religious practices in accordance with both the immanent ritual logic of those practices and with philosophical rationality. Using Johnson's language, one could perhaps see the text as a "verticalization" from below. Porphyry uncovers the immanent rationality of embodied theurgical practices and their relation to the other levels of the vertical progression toward the highest principle.

As in the letter, Porphyry's focus in the *Philosophy* lies in the conditions under which the soul can ascend to divine reality. But in the *Philosophy*, he connects the discussion of those conditions to the world of gods, mythological narratives, symbols, and relations. In his discussion of these elements, Porphyry's immanent perspective makes it appear as if he were promoting the very practices he criticizes in the

¹⁴³To keep this outline of the standpoint developed in the *Philosophy from Oracles* as concise as possible, I do not engage the question of how this text relates to Porphyry's other writings. Beatrice (*Philosophy of the Few*, 492-496) argues that the *Philosophy* was originally a much larger text, called *The Philosophy according to the Chaldean Oracles*, consisting in fifteen books and comprising, among others, the treatise *Against the Christians*. Johnson (*Religion and Identity*, 25) is critical of such attempts and sees the religious aim of the *Philosophy* as different from anti-Christian polemics.

Letter to Anebo. This is one of the central issues in scholarship on Porphyry's philosophy of religion: The *Letter to Anebo* and the *Philosophy from Oracles* seem to contradict each other in such central matters that, as Simmons puts it, "there is very little about the work on which scholars agree."¹⁴⁴

Porphyry begins his treatise (fr. 1) by appealing, with a stereotypical Platonic expression, to those "who strive after truth" (τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὠδίναντες), "contemplation" (πρὸς τε τὴν θεωρίαν) and the "purification of life" (κάθαρσιν τοῦ βίου). These expressions are among the typical aspirations pursued by ancient Greek philosophers, including the Neoplatonists. These aspirations, which I briefly outlined in section 1.2, on the central questions of Greek philosophy, are both practical and theoretical, bringing together the quest for truth and the desire to live in accordance with that truth.

In spelling out these aspects, the *Philosophy* proceeds differently from the *Letter to Anebo*. Porphyry begins by describing the esoteric nature of theology and religious practices. The meaning of the "mysteries," that is, the traditional Greek ceremonies involving ritual objects and animal sacrifice, should not be divulged to the uninitiated. This contrasts strongly with the universalist argument of the *Letter to Anebo*, in which Porphyry appeals to the standard of human happiness or a universal norm governing human existence as such. In the *Philosophy* he warns his interlocutor against letting any of the explanations trickle out of the sphere of initiated practitioners. These explanations are "most unspeakable" (ἀρρητότερα) and the gods have carefully concealed them through enigmas (δι' αἰνιγμάτων).

Throughout the treatise, Porphyry interprets various oracles involving traditional Greek mythologemes and motives, and some of these interpretations openly contradict the claims made in the *Letter to Anebo*. For example, he affirms – in Eusebius's biased words – that "some of the good daemons"¹⁴⁵ (which could simply be gods) delight in music, displays of eroticism, war, and other such human activities. In the *Letter*, Porphyry denies that gods show any interest in such things, be-

¹⁴⁴Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 32.

¹⁴⁵τινας τῶν ἀγαθῶν τούτων δαιμόνων, fr. 6.

cause it would contradict their constitution. He furthermore criticizes oracles in which the gods are represented as incurring the same bodily sensations as humans, such as the labor pains of the goddess Artemis.

These contradictions are not the result of modern misunderstandings. Our main source for the fragments of the *Philosophy* is Eusebius of Caesarea. In relating Porphyry's philosophy of religion, Eusebius notes (fr. 12) that Porphyry rejects the idea that bloody sacrifices please the gods and concludes that beings expecting such ceremonies can only be daemons. But in the *Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry relates an oracle (fr. 12) in which Apollo himself asks for sacrifices. Not only that: Apollo affirms connections between the sacrifices and the nature of the invoked gods, as if the gods were substantially connected to material elements such as water, fire, and so on. This is the very idea that Porphyry exposes as untenable in the *Letter to Anebo*. Eusebius's perplexity about this tension proves that long before the twentieth century, Porphyry's readers were confused about his convictions.

This confusion becomes strongest when Porphyry lets the gods themselves describe the details of the rituals by which they can be invoked. We find, for example, Hecate describing how her statue should be made with rue, lizards, myrrh, and other ingredients. Eusebius is scandalized by these instructions and wonders how gods could ever want to engage such lowly objects. In the *Philosophy from Oracles* Porphyry also cultivates an orientalist language strongly reminiscent of the *Chaldean Oracles* and Numenius, thus mirroring the Hellenistic tendency identified by Hadot and announcing the shift of Neoplatonism to religion.¹⁴⁶ In different oracles, including for example fr. 21 and 22, Porphyry praises the Phoenicians, Assyrians, and Hebrews for their insights into truth. There is a common trait between this appraisal of supposedly oriental knowledge and the starting point of the *Letter to Anebo*, insofar as the *Letter* also begins with Porphyry lamenting the Greeks' lack of insight into truth. But the *Philosophy* goes even further, justifying this orientalism not only with personal observations, but also with the authority of Apollo and other gods. It is as if Greek religion tried to overcome itself and turn into an imagined "East."

¹⁴⁶Hadot, *Ancient Philosophy*, 92.

Importantly, the contradiction between the *Letter* and the *Philosophy* extends only to a certain point. In fact, in the most crucial fragments, which are the texts in which Porphyry explains the philosophical foundation of his theology, his statements are coherent with the *Letter* and also with theoretical and ethical writings such as the *Sentences* and the *Letter to Marcella*. Porphyry writes, in a central fragment and perhaps one of the most important passages of the *Philosophy from Oracles*, uncovering a continuity between this text and his other writings: “Turn your intellect toward God the king, don’t busy yourself with insignificant spirits on earth.” (fr. 23). In another passage in the same fragment, Porphyry cites a long oracle containing the germs of a full monotheistic theology. He addresses the “Father” of the gods who governs the human and divine worlds and is seated in a transcendent realm, where he exists as an intellect. While this theological poem fully conforms to Neoplatonic metaphysics, it contrasts strongly with the other, more theurgical oracles to which Eusebius refers. The presence of this oracle in Porphyry’s text suggests that the tension between the *Philosophy* and *Letter* should not be exaggerated. Something connects these two texts.

Further traces of this connection can be found in Porphyry’s oracles on the afterlife of the soul upon the death of the body. The *Philosophy* gives rise to the impression that, due to the theurgical involvement of the body in ceremonies as well as to the bodily distinctions between gods, Porphyry postulates a relation between the body and the soul different from the one described, for example in the *Letter to Marcella*. In fr. 50 however, Porphyry clarifies that the soul “steps away from the body” (μετὰ σῶμα προβαίνει) and is liberated from the suffering incurred by the body in the material world. His soteriology does not posit that the material body participates in the afterlife, despite its involvement in theurgical practice. This creates a further continuity with the *Letter to Anebo*, suggesting that the two texts reflect a coherent and homogenous soteriology.

Ultimately, one must also consider Porphyry’s strong and repeated emphasis on symbolic networks within rituals as a hint to the anabatic character of ritual symbolism. Whenever figures or images are used for ceremonies, Porphyry relates them to divine attributes: For example, in the *Philosophy*, three-colored wax is a symbol of Hecate. And

while in that text Porphyry doesn't advocate allegorism in the same way as Eusebius (fr. 18) would like him to, he does establish conceptual relations between ritual objects and the spiritual or divine realms connected with them. Porphyrian theurgy is not distinctively "embodied": Rather, it promotes the idea of theurgy as participating in a logic of ritual symbolism and leading the practitioner from the lower realms of reality to the higher ones.¹⁴⁷

1.8 Conclusion: Who was Porphyry?

This brings us back to the initial question of how philosophy and religion relate to each other according to Porphyry: that is, whether intellectual work or religious practice helps the soul return to its divine origin. We have now seen that the *Letter to Anebo* and *Philosophy from Oracles* present differences in their respective answers to this question, but it also seems that the metaphysics and soteriology underpinning these answers present a high degree of continuity. So, is there a way to understand these two texts as two articulations of the same answer to the question of philosophy and religion?

The above reading of these texts has revealed that simplistic explanations based either on Porphyry's alleged rationalism or religious zeal do not do justice to the complexity of the texts' context. We do not know when the *Letter* or the *Philosophy* were written, what these texts originally looked like, to whom they were addressed, or how Porphyry wanted his readers to approach them. Furthermore, our only sources for these questions – mostly Christian writers – are biased by these authors' negative vision of what they consider to be magic or idol worship. In the absence of concrete historical data, there is no way to articulate or justify a simple answer to the questions raised by Porphyry's philosophy of religion. Bidez's conclusion that the *Philosophy from Oracles* is a failed attempt at doing philosophy – "The exegete [Porphyry] tries to be a philosopher but fails,"¹⁴⁸ he writes – is untenable.

¹⁴⁷This is also suggested by Sara I. Johnston's representation of theurgy as centered on the "ascent" (*ἀναγωγή*) of the soul to the divine, see Johnston, *Hekate Soteira*, 89, also quoted by Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 50.

¹⁴⁸Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, 18: "L'exégète veut faire oeuvre de 'philosophe' mais n'y réussit pas."

On the other hand, neither Simmons's nor Johnson's attempts to articulate an answer on the basis of a gradual, hierarchical vision of theology can be seen as conclusive. Simmons's hypothesis that theurgy constitutes one of the three paths to salvation and Johnson's suggestion that Porphyry translates the elements he finds in various religious and cultural settings into philosophy are plausible explanations for what Porphyry could have held as true, but they are not sufficient to explain the theoretical tension between philosophy and religion. Smith is aware of this difficulty, as one can infer from his conclusion, supported by Simmons: "Porphyry raised but did not solve the problem of the relationship of philosophy to religion."¹⁴⁹ Porphyry has managed to show how a person can adhere simultaneously to Platonic metaphysics and traditional religious practice, but he doesn't convincingly show why the superiority of the philosophical lifestyle he promotes in the *Letter to Marcella* isn't the only responsible lifestyle, or why a person who practices that lifestyle shouldn't consider rituals such as divination and sacrifices as provisional and inferior.

This is not an abstract problem but an issue that fundamentally influences our reading of Porphyry. The two sides of Porphyry's argument are not equally convincing, and no scholar could claim in good faith that they are. Even if we assume that the *Philosophy from Oracles* is not a text from Porphyry's youth and that it should be taken seriously, it is difficult to treat Porphyry's theological interpretation of flatulence as a supernatural manifestation the same way as one would treat the *Letter to Anebo's* statements about happiness as the goal of human life. From a philosophical perspective, and by the standards of virtue or happiness, a manual to fabricate a statue of a god with churned lizards and herbs does not have the same status as a call to live virtuously and to obey reason. While it is indisputable that scholars of ancient philosophy should guard against rationalist and other anachronistic biases, the problem here is more basic. Porphyry's two discourses pertain to different genres – one dealing with the questions that ancient Greek philosophy considers as ultimate – such as happiness and truth, and the other one with possible explanations of a given religious tradition. These genres

¹⁴⁹Smith, "Porphyry," 1227, quoted by Simmons, *Universal Salvation*, 212.

manifest different forms of philosophical consistency and practicability. It would be irresponsible to posit that these genres, which pursue different interests, give equally satisfying responses.

Is there a responsible answer to the question of philosophy and religion in Porphyry? One possibility would be to admit – in addition to the three soteriological paths proposed by Simmons and to Johnson’s “translation” approach – a distinction between historiography and theory. That is to say: One could distinguish between views acceptable to a fourth-century Phoenician philosopher and views satisfying to modern philosophical metrics. Historically speaking, Porphyry was neither a rationalist nor a religious extremist. Such clear-cut ideological convictions would not have been possible in a historical period in which vocabularies and ideas were largely shared. For example, Christian theologians insisted on the uniqueness of their confessed faith, but even the core elements of this faith bear the traces of Greek philosophy. More generally, late ancient religions – pagan, Christian, Jewish – drew from the same metaphysical foundations. Even Porphyry struggles to explain why he disapproves of Christianity’s soteriological narrative.¹⁵⁰ Porphyry’s religious and philosophical identity cannot be described according to the categories that previous generations of scholars liked to uphold.

From a systematic perspective, the situation is different. Looking at the texts translated in this volume, it is difficult to treat both sides of Porphyry’s argument equally. Porphyry’s writing and ideas are strongest when he raises doubts about traditional religious practices and tries to deconstruct their surface to find a more viable and universal path to a philosophical life. The *Letter to Anebo*, the *Letter to Marcella*, the *Sentences*, and the *Life of Plotinus* are Porphyry’s most remarkable writings, precisely because of their universalist and philosophical approach. One could say that while the historical Porphyry is a “translator” in Johnson’s sense, incorporating religion into philosophy, Porphyry’s first language is philosophy, and philosophy – as practiced in the *Letter to*

¹⁵⁰At fr. 50, Porphyry affirms that Christ ascended into heaven. On the deeper issues of Porphyry’s opposition to Christians, see Edwards, “Porphyry and the Christians,” den Boer, “A Pagan Historian,” Smith, “Response to Christianity,” Digeser, “Lactantius.”

Anebo, the *Letter to Marcella*, and the *Sentences* – is the discipline in which his arguments come across as most convincing and coherent.

Perhaps an analogy from the history of theology and philosophy helps to clarify this argument. From the third and fourth century CE on, Christian thinkers such as Basil of Caesarea and Ambrose of Milan explored ways to systematize religious practices such as communion, marriage, and penance: practices – or “sacraments,” as they are called in certain Western Christian churches – considered by Christians to carry soteriological significance. In medieval Latin scholasticism, thinkers such as Petrus Lombardus and Thomas Aquinas built on the efforts of those ancient thinkers to establish “sacramental” theology as a central domain of theological inquiry, in which questions regarding the sacraments were systematically connected to other elements of the Christian faith.¹⁵¹ Notably, medieval theologians did not see their work on systematic philosophy on the one hand and liturgical or sacramental questions on the other as mutually exclusive; or, to put it differently, they would not have seen their efforts to provide metaphysical explanations for the structure of the cosmos and their explanation of religious practices as conflicting. Projecting this tension into their thought may attest to our dichotomic perspective more than to their own understanding.

The parallelism is corroborated by the fact that the Christian notion of “sacrament” has its roots in the Greek notion of “mysteries.” To give a few examples from both traditions, the traditional title given to Iamblichus’s response to Porphyry is *On the Egyptian Mysteries* (*Περὶ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων μυστηρίων*). Some testimonies referring to Porphyry also use the language of “mysteries.” Eusebius calls Porphyry “initiate of the mysteries” (*μύστης*),¹⁵² and Firmicus Maternus sees in him a “defender of the mysteries” (*defensor sacrorum*).¹⁵³ In connection with Christian religion, Cyril of Jerusalem wrote *Mystagogical Cate-*

¹⁵¹Among the immense number of works on sacramental theology, I want to restrict myself to just one recent example, which features dedicated chapters on these thinkers: Holcomb & Johnson (eds.), *Christian Theologies*.

¹⁵²*Phil. orac.* fr. 18.

¹⁵³*Phil. orac.* fr. 4.

cheses (Κατηχήσεις μυσταγωγικαί) on the sacraments,¹⁵⁴ Ambrose wrote the treatise *De mysteriis*, and the Christian philosopher and theologian Maximus Confessor wrote an explanation of the sacraments titled *Mystagogy* (Μυσταγωγία), in which he explains the philosophical meaning of Christian practices and dogmas such as the church, the confession of faith, and the Our Father.¹⁵⁵

Without overstretching the comparison, one could see these parallels as evidence that rational methodologies are not naturally opposed to, or exclusive of, the religious logic of sacraments or mysteries. The comparison does not attenuate the tensions between Porphyry's two texts and would certainly have been met with opposition by late antique thinkers such as Augustine, who would have maintained a strong distinction between Christian and pagan mysteries, but it at least supports the thesis that philosophers throughout premodern times were open to practicing "translation" from philosophy into religious practice and vice versa.

In sum: According to philosophical standards, the "rational" way of philosophy and the "theurgical" way of religion are "mutually exclusive," as Beatrice claims.¹⁵⁶ Porphyry sympathizes with Plotinus's rationalist tendency and argues that philosophical perfection is attained by those who "devote their lives to practicing the virtue of rational philosophy."¹⁵⁷ But this sympathy does not make Porphyry an exclusivist or a rationalist: first, because he is part of a philosophical tradition that maintained the irreducible transcendence of the first principle, and second, because his cultural and religious environment exhibited no ambition to overcome religious practices such as theurgy. And so, Porphyry saw religion as something to be incorporated and "translated," but not as something that could be discarded or treated as useless.

The different approaches to this "paraconsistent" vision – Johnson's translation, Simmons's three ways, Beatrice's moderate rationalism – are all admissible, to a degree. However, a contemporary reader of Porphyry must accept the fact that there is no ultimate explanation

¹⁵⁴Piédagnel, *Cyrille de Jérusalem*.

¹⁵⁵Boudignon (ed.), *Maximus Confessor: Mystagogia*.

¹⁵⁶Beatrice, *Philosophy of the Few*, 72.

¹⁵⁷Beatrice, *Philosophy of the Few*, 72.

for the discrepancy between the texts. The surviving fragments of the *Letter to Anebo* and the *Philosophy from Oracles* are scattered pieces of a lost mosaic that offer a glimpse into the philosophical convictions of a fourth-century Phoenician thinker.

1.9 Note on the Original Texts and the Translation

The guideline of the present translation is to make the texts accessible to audiences interested in ancient philosophy and religion in a manner similar to, for example, Hans van Kasteel's edited volume *Oracles et Prophétie*, which contains a French translation of the *Philosophy from Oracles*.¹⁵⁸ While this entails certain restrictions on scholarly tools and ambitions, it will perhaps help make Porphyry's contribution to fundamental philosophical questions visible outside of specialized circles.

The selection, arrangement, and edition of the Greek and Latin texts in this volume are based on different resources. The texts are presented here without critical apparatus, which readers can consult in the editions referenced below. I have included only a few of Saffrey's and Segond's additions and corrections, marking them in the Greek texts accordingly.

Iamblichus, Augustine, and Eusebius of Caesarea refer to the *Letter to Anebo* indirectly, often paraphrasing Porphyry's text. To avoid confusion between the different text layers and authors, I indicate the respective speaker or addressee in each fragment. This may appear redundant in some cases, but it will allow readers to refer to individual passages without analyzing the previous and following fragments.

1.9.1 Fragment selection and order

Letter to Anebo: This volume follows the arrangement of Henri-Dominique Saffrey & Alain-Philippe Segonds,¹⁵⁹ the most recent of the

¹⁵⁸Van Kasteel (ed.), *Oracles et Prophétie*, 213–246.

¹⁵⁹Saffrey & Segonds, *Porphyre*.

four modern editions of the text.¹⁶⁰ The reference to the corresponding fragments in their edition is marked “SS” in the footnotes. The reason for relying on Saffrey & Segonds is that the editors refrain from attempting to reconstruct the text of the *Letter* as a coherent text, which is, in the present state of research, not possible. It would not be helpful for interested audiences to be given the impression that what they are reading is a uniform text written by its presumed author. I therefore follow Saffrey’s & Segond’s fragment-based approach and fill the gaps between the fragments with suggestions in the commentary.

Philosophy from Oracles: The selection and order of the fragments is based on Andrew Smith’s edition,¹⁶¹ which replaces Gustav Wolff’s older edition.¹⁶² The reference to Smith’s fragment numbers is marked “S” in the footnotes. Giuseppe Muscolino published a new edition accompanied by an Italian translation, based on his plan for his 2013 PhD thesis at the University of Macerata.¹⁶³ Muscolino’s two studies are by far the most exhaustive, complete, and thorough investigation into the *Philosophy from Oracles* to date. In his PhD thesis, he argues that in order to understand Porphyry’s text better, “it is necessary to pose some premises that not only help to clarify the political, economic, social and doctrinal context in the best possible way – that is, the context in which the passage of the oracular work was inserted – but also highlight the work within which the fragment is cited, called cover-text, since it covers the original text alongside extraneous elements, which must be analyzed in order to achieve a better exegesis.”¹⁶⁴ While I agree that a better exegesis can be achieved only through a careful contextual analysis, this exegesis will speak to academic audiences more than

¹⁶⁰Saffrey & Segonds, *Porphyre*, cx-cxi. The editions are Faggin, *Lettera*; Sordano, *Lettera*; and Muscolino, *Filosofia rivelata*, 327-401.

¹⁶¹Smith, *Fragmenta*, 351-407.

¹⁶²Wolff, *Reliquiae*.

¹⁶³Muscolino, *Filosofia rivelata* and *Porfirio*.

¹⁶⁴Muscolino, *Porfirio*, 184: “... è necessario fare alcune premesse che oltre ad aiutare a chiarire nel migliore dei modi l’ambito politico, economico, sociale e dottrinale, cioè il contesto nel quale il brano dell’opera oracolare è stato inserito, mettano in risalto anche l’opera all’interno della quale il frammento viene citato, chiamata cover-text o testo coperto, giacché essa copre il testo originale con elementi estranei, che vanno analizzati al fine di una migliore esegesi.”

to other readers. Since the present translation pursues didactic and philosophical rather than historical and philological goals, I chose to rely on Smith's narrower and more focused selection, nevertheless acknowledging that Muscolino's work remains the definitive reference for anybody interested in a careful historical and philological analysis.

1.9.2 Greek and Latin texts

Letter to Anebo: The text of Saffrey & Segonds's 2012 edition of the *Letter to Anebo* partly anticipates their edition of Iamblichus's response to Porphyry, which was published one year after the *Letter*.¹⁶⁵ In order to incorporate this new edition, I have updated Saffrey & Segonds's edition of the *Letter* with the new edition of Iamblichus's text, eliminating inconsistencies and errors such as, e.g., the Roman letters on p. 2.8 and 2.10 in the *Letter*. To facilitate cross-references and references to other scholarship, I include the references to Parthey's edition of Iamblichus's *De mysteriis*, which Saffrey & Segonds also include in their edition of the *Letter*. For the other relevant texts by ancient authors, I follow the most recent editions.¹⁶⁶

Philosophy from Oracles: I follow the editions used by Smith.¹⁶⁷ The page numbers of Augustine's *De civitate dei* correspond to the 1955 edition.

¹⁶⁵Saffrey & Segonds, *Jamblique*.

¹⁶⁶These mostly correspond to the editions used by Saffrey & Segonds: Dombart & Kalb, *Civitate dei*; Mras, *Praeparatio evangelica*; O'Meara, *Michaelis Pselli*; Josephus Christianus, *Hypomnesticon*, with the exception of Riedweg, *Kyrrill*.

¹⁶⁷Mras, *Praeparatio evangelica*, Dombart & Kalb, *Civitate dei*; Reichardt, *Johannis Philoponi*; Erbse, *Fragmente*; Ziegler, *Iuli Firmici Materni*; Wehrich, *Consensu evangelistarum*; and Heikel, *Demonstratio evangelica*.

2 *Letter to Anebo*

2.1 Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation

- FR. 1 Ἄρξομαι δὲ τῆς πρὸς σὲ φιλίας ἀπὸ θεῶν καὶ δαιμόνων ἀγαθῶν τῶν τε τούτοις συγγενῶν φιλοσοφημάτων, περὶ ὧν εἴρηται μὲν πλείστα καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλήνων φιλοσόφοις, εἴρηται δὲ ἐκ στοχασμοῦ τὸ πλεόν τὰς ἀρχὰς ἔχοντα τῆς πίστεως.
- FR. 2 Ἀληθεύουσι δὲ μᾶλλον οἱ λέγοντες ἀταλαίπωρον εἶναι παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλήσι τῆς ἀληθείας τὴν ζήτησιν, μάλιστα δὲ ἐν τῇ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ δόξῃ πλανᾶσθαι αὐτούς. Εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ ταῦτα λέγοντες οὐχ ἡμέτεροι, ἀλλὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἱ δοκιμότεροι, εἴτις ἐντετύχηκε καὶ οἷς ἔγραψεν ὁ Πορφύριος πρὸς Ἀνεβῶ τὸν Αἰγύπτιον, ‘παρ’ ἐκείνου λοιπὸν ἐπιζητῶ μαθεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἐπειδὴ παρὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀπέγνων.’
- FR. 3 Φῆς τοίνυν πρῶτον διδόναι εἶναι θεούς.
- FR. 4 Ὁ δὲ αὐτός ἐστί μοι λόγος πρὸς σὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν συνεπομένων θεοῖς κρειπτόνων γενῶν, δαιμόνων φημί καὶ ἡρώων καὶ ψυχῶν ἀχράντων.
- FR. 5 Ἄ δ’ ἐπιζητεῖς ιδιώματα τίνα ἐστὶν ἐκάστω τῶν κρειπτόνων γενῶν, οἷς κεχώρισται ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων.
- FR. 6 Πρόσκειται δὲ δὴ αὐτόθι καὶ τὸ τῶν δραστικῶν ἢ παθητικῶν κινήσεων, ἥκιστα προσήκουσαν ἔχον διαίρεσιν εἰς διαφορὰν τῶν κρειπτόνων γενῶν.

2.1 Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation

“I [Porphyry] shall let the gods mark the beginning of our friendship, as well as the good daemons, and the philosophical theories connected with them. While Greek philosophers have often talked about this, most of what they have said draws its probative principles from speculation.” FR. 1

Those who say that the Greeks are rather careless in their quest for truth, and especially that their opinion about the divine is misguided, are right. It isn't people on our own side who claim this but the most esteemed among the Greeks. One reads, for example, in Porphyry's letter to Anebo the Egyptian: “I now seek to learn the truth from him, having renounced learning it from the Greeks.” FR. 2

Your [Porphyry's] first statement is that you admit that there are gods. FR. 3

I [Iamblichus] shall present a similar argument to you, about “the superior classes [of beings] that come next after the gods”: that is, about the daemons, the heroes, and the pure souls. FR. 4

You [Porphyry] ask what are the characteristics of each of the superior classes by which they are distinct from each other. FR. 5

Here, we also find the passage about the active and passive movements, which provides a distinction that is not appropriate at all for differentiating the superior classes. FR. 6

- FR. 7 Ἐπι τοῖνυν ἀλλοτρίως αὐτῶν κάκεινο τὸ ἦ τῶν παρεπο-
μένων προστίθεται.
- FR. 8 Καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ τέλει τῆς ἐρωτήσεως συμφύρεις τὴν κατὰ
φύσιν διάκρισιν τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐρώτημα ἐπιζητεῖ πῶς ταῖς ἐνερ-
γείαις καὶ ταῖς φυσικαῖς κινήσεσι καὶ τοῖς παρεπομένοις αἰ
οὐσίαι γνωρίζονται. 25
- FR. 9 Τὸ τέλος ἀποδώσεις τῇ ἀποκρίσει περὶ ὧν ἐπεζήτησας θείων
τε καὶ δαιμονίων καὶ ἥρωικῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἰδιωμά-
των.
- FR. 10 Οὐ μέντοι τὴν ὑπὸ σοῦ διάκρισιν ὑποτευνομένην αὐτῶν προ-
σιέμεθα, ἥτις τὴν πρὸς τὰ διαφέροντα σώματα κατάταξιν, οἷον
θεῶν μὲν πρὸς τὰ αἰθέρια, δαιμόνων δὲ πρὸς τὰ ἀέρια, ψυχῶν
δὲ τῶν περὶ γῆν πρὸς τὰ γήινα, τὴν αἰτίαν εἶναι φησι τῆς νυνὶ
ζητουμένης διαστάσεως. 30
- FR. 11 Τίθημι δὴ οὖν ἐρωτῶντά σε οὐ κάκεινο τὸ ἀπόρημα, διὰ τί,
ἐν οὐρανῷ κατοικούντων τῶν θεῶν μόνως, χθονίων καὶ ὑπο-
χθονίων εἰσὶ παρὰ τοῖς θεουργικοῖς κλήσεσι; 35
- FR. 12 Πῶς ἐνύδριοι τινες λέγονται καὶ ἀέριοι, τόπους τε διειλήχα-
σιν ἄλλοι ἄλλους, καὶ σωμάτων μοίρας διεκκληρώσαντο κατὰ
περιγραφὴν, καίτοι δύναμιν ἄπειρον ἔχοντες καὶ ἀμέριστον καὶ
ἀπερίληπτον, πῶς τε αὐτῶν ἔσται ἡ ἔνωσις πρὸς ἀλλήλους,
μερῶν μερισταῖς περιγραφαῖς διειργομένων, καὶ καθ' ἑτερό-
τητα τῶν τόπων καὶ τῶν ὑποκειμένων σωμάτων διειλημμέ-
νων; 40
- FR. 13 Μετὰ ταύτην δὲ αὐθις ὑποτείνας σαυτῷ διαίρεσιν ἑτέραν τῇ 45

33 πρὸς τὰ γήινα, τὴν] add. SS

2.1 *Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation*

Apart from this, there is also [Porphyry's] inappropriate addition: FR. 7
“or of the accidents.”

And at the end of your [Porphyry's] inquiry, you mess up the natural FR. 8
distinction. Indeed, the question you are pursuing is how substances
are known through their activities, their natural movements, and their
accidents.

You [Porphyry] will obtain the final answer to the question about FR. 9
the characteristics that you were looking for: those of the gods, dae-
mons, heroes, and those in the souls.

We [Iamblichus] don't accept the distinction that you are proposing, FR. 10
according to which the affiliation of the different types of bodies – such
as that of the ethereal bodies with the gods, that of the aerial bodies
with the daemons, and that of the terrestrial bodies with the souls on
earth – acts as the cause of the differentiation that is presently being
investigated.

I assume that you [Porphyry] are asking (and that is your difficulty) FR. 11
why, if the gods are residing only in heaven, there are invocations to
terrestrial and subterrestrial gods in theurgical texts.

Why are some said to be aquatic or aerial; why are some of them FR. 12
allotted certain places and others other places; how were they allocated
individually in corporeal portions although the power that they possess
is unlimited, without parts, and incomprehensible; how can they be
united to one another when their parts are separated from one another
by fragmenting limits, and when the bodies they possess are split up
according to different locations?

After this you [Porphyry] propose for yourself another distinction: FR. 13

τοῦ ἐμπαθοῦς καὶ ἀπαθοῦς διαφορᾷ χωρίζεις τῶν κρειπτόνων τὰς οὐσίας.

FR. 14 Ταῦτα εἰπὼν πάλιν ἀπορεῖ πρὸς τὸν Αἰγύπτιον λέγων· Ἐὶ δὲ οἱ μὲν ἀπαθεῖς, οἱ δὲ ἐμπαθεῖς, οἷς διὰ τούτων φαλλοῦς φασιν ἐστάναι καὶ ποιεῖσθαι αἰσχρορρημοσύνας, μάταιοι αἱ θεῶν κλήσεις ἔσονται, προσκλήσεις αὐτῶν ἐπαγγελλόμεναι καὶ μήνιδος ἐξιλάσεις καὶ ἐκθύσεις, καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον αἱ λεγόμεναι ἀνάγκαι θεῶν. ἀκήλητον γὰρ καὶ ἀβίαστον καὶ ἀκατανάγκαστον τὸ ἀπαθές.¹ 50

FR. 15 Προσποιεῖται δὲ καὶ ἐτέρωθι τῶν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου τινὰ ψευδοπροφητῶν, ἤγουν ἱερέων, διερωτᾶν βούλεσθαι τὰς αἰτίας, καὶ ἀναμανθάνειν ἀξιούν τῆς τῶν δαιμόνων δυστροπίας τὸ ἀπηνές, ὡδὶ δὴ λέγων Πῶς ἐμπαθεῖς αὐτοὺς οἱ θεόσοφοι παριστώσι, καὶ χαίρειν αἰσχρορρημοσύναις, καὶ ἑτέροις τισὶ τοιούτοις κακοῖς; Ὁ δὲ τῆς ἐνούσης αὐτοῖς φαυλότητος τὴν διαφορὰν ἀφηγεῖται, λέγων.¹ 60

FR. 16 Πῶς οὖν πρὸς ἐμπαθεῖς αὐτοὺς πολλὰ δρᾶται ἐν ταῖς ἱερουργίαις;

FR. 17 Ἄλλ' αἱ κλήσεις, φησὶν, ὡς πρὸς ἐμπαθεῖς τοὺς θεοὺς γίνονται, ὥστε οὐχ οἱ δαίμονες μόνον εἰσὶν ἐμπαθεῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ θεοί. 65

FR. 18 Μετὰ δὲ ταύτην ἐπ' ἄλλην μεταβαίνει ἀντιδιαίρεσιν θεῶν πρὸς δαίμονας. Λέγει γὰρ θεοὺς εἶναι νόας καθαρούς, ὡς ἐν ὑποθέσει προτείων τὴν δόξαν ἢ ὡς τισιν ἀρέσκουσαν αὐτὴν ἀφηγοῦμενος, νοῦ δὲ μετόχους ψυχικοὺς ὄντας τοὺς δαίμονας ἀπολογιζόμενος. 70

¹Fr. 69 below follows here.

You separate the substances of the superior realities according to the difference of what is subject to passivity and what is not.

Having said this, he [Porphyry] replies again to the Egyptian: “If some gods are not subject to passivity and others are, to which, as it is said, *ithyphalli* are presented by those [priests] and obscenities are expressed, the invocations to the gods will be vain, the calls for help, the atonements against their anger, the sacrifices, and, to an even higher degree, the so-called coercions of the gods – for that which is not subject to passivity cannot be invoked, constrained, or coerced.” FR. 14

And in another passage he [Porphyry] pretends that he wants to ask one of the Egyptians’ pseudo-prophets – or rather, priests – and expects to learn the causes and the cruelty of the daemons’ misbehavior. He says the following: “How can the theologians present them as subject to passivity, and as rejoicing in obscenities and in other such bad things?” And then he goes over to talk about the peculiarity of the badness that characterizes them, saying ...² FR. 15

Why is it that in the sacred ceremonies, many rites are performed for them as subject to passivity? FR. 16

But the invocations, they say, are presented to the gods as subject to passivity, so that it is not only the daemons that are subject to passivity but even the gods. FR. 17

After this, you [Porphyry] go over to another dichotomy between gods and daemons. For you claim that gods are pure intellects – expressing this opinion as a hypothesis or bringing it up as something admitted by some – and you argue that the daemons participate in the intellect because they have souls. FR. 18

²Fr. 69 below follows here.

2 Letter to Anebo

FR. 19 Ἐπι γὰρ μάλλον ἀκλήτους καὶ ἀμυγείς αἰσθητοῖς εἰπὼν εἶναι τοὺς καθαροὺς νόας ἀπορεῖς εἰ δεῖ πρὸς αὐτοὺς εὐχεσθαι.

FR. 20 Εἰ δέ σοι ἄπιστον εἶναι καταφαίνεται πῶς φωνῆς ἀκούει τὸ ἀσώματον καὶ ὡς αἰσθήσεως προσδεήσεται καὶ δὴ ὧτων τὰ λεγόμενα ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς. 75

FR. 21 Ἄλλ' αἰ λιτανεῖαι, ὡς φῆς, ἀλλότριαί εἰσι προσφέρεσθαι πρὸς τὴν τοῦ νοῦ καθαρότητα.

FR. 22 Ἄλλὰ τὰ προσαγόμενα, φησίν, ὡς πρὸς αἰσθητικούς καὶ ψυχικούς προσάγεται. 80

FR. 23 Ἐχεται δὲ ταύτης ἐν τοῖς σοῖς γράμμασιν ἢ σώματι καὶ ἀσωματία θεοὺς δαιμόνων χωρίζουσα·

et si corpore et incorporalitate dii a daemonibus distinguuntur

FR. 24 Μεταλάβωμεν οὖν ἀντὶ ταύτης ἅπερ ἠπόρησας πρὸς τὴν παροῦσαν δόξαν. Πῶς γὰρ δὴ ἥλιός τε καὶ σελήνη κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον καὶ οἱ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐμφανεῖς ἔσονται θεοί, εἰ ἀσώματοί εἰσι μόνως οἱ θεοί; 85

quo modo deos esse estimandum sit solem et lunam et uisibilia caetera in caelo, quae corpora esse non dubitat

FR. 25 ἢ δ' ἐξῆς ἐπιζήτησις ἢ σὴ διαπορεῖ, πῶς αὐτῶν οἱ μὲν εἰσιν ἀγαθοποιοί, οἱ δὲ κακοποιοί. 90

et si dii sunt, quo modo alii benefici alii malefici esse dicantur

2.1 *Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation*

You [Porphyry] furthermore mention doubts about whether, if pure intellects are inaccessible to invocations and do not mingle with sensible things, one should pray to them. FR. 19

And if it seems unbelievable to you [Porphyry] that the incorporeal can hear one's voice, and that despite its lack of sense-perception and even ears, it can hear what we say in our prayers. FR. 20

But as you [Porphyry] say, it is not appropriate for the petitions to be presented to the purity of the mind. FR. 21

But it is said that the offerings are brought as though to beings endowed with senses and a soul. FR. 22

Next in your [Porphyry's] text comes the distinction of gods and daemons by virtue of their embodiment and bodilessness. FR. 23

And if the gods are different from the daemons by virtue of embodiment and bodilessness.

Instead, let's take up the difficulties that you [Porphyry] raised on the present notion. How can the sun and the moon, according to your argument, and the other visible [things] in the sky be gods, if the gods are essentially incorporeal? FR. 24

How could one think that the sun, the moon, and the other visible [things] in the sky, of which he [Porphyry] has no doubt that they are bodies, are gods?

Your following question raises the difficulty of why some of them are beneficent and others maleficent. FR. 25

And if the [heavenly bodies] are gods, why are some of them said

- FR. 26 Ἰθι δὴ οὖν κάκεινο ἀποκρινώμεθα, τί τὸ συνάπτον ἐστὶ πρὸς τοῖς ἀσωμάτοις θεοῖς τοὺς ἔχοντας σῶμα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ;
et quo modo incorporalibus, cum sint corporei, coniungantur? 95
- FR. 27 Ἀπορεῖς γὰρ δὴ τί τὸ διακρίνόν ἐστι τοὺς δαίμονας ἀπὸ τῶν ἐμφανῶν καὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν θεῶν, ἀφανεῖς μὲν, συνημμένων δὲ τῶν ἐμφανῶν θεῶν τοῖς ἀφανέσιν;
- FR. 28 Ἦν δὲ σὺ ἀναιρεῖ διαίρεσιν τὴν τοῦ ἐμπαθοῦς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπα- 100
θοῦς ἴσως μὲν ἂν τις παραιτήσαιο, ὡς οὐδετέρῳ τῶν κρει-
τόνων γενῶν ἐφαρμόζουσιν, δι' ἧς ἐμπροσθεν εἰρήκαμεν αἰτίας·
καὶ μὴν διὰ τοῦτό γε αὐτὴν ἀνατρέπειν ἄξιον, διότι ἐξήλεγκται
ἐκ τῶν πρὸς θεοὺς ὡς ἀπαθεῖς ὄντας δρωμένων.
- FR. 29 Δεῖ δὲ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο προσποδειχθῆναί σοι, δαίμων ἤρωος καὶ 105
ψυχῆς τίτιν κατ' οὐσίαν διαφέρει ἢ κατὰ δύναμιν ἢ ἐνέργειαν;
- FR. 30 Ἐπιζητεῖς γὰρ τί τὸ γνῶρισμα θεοῦ παρουσίας ἢ ἀγγέλου ἢ 110
ἀρχαγγέλου ἢ δαίμονος ἢ τινος ἄρχοντος ἢ ψυχῆς.
- FR. 31 Καὶ οὕτως ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἐκάστων τάξιν καὶ ἢ ἀπ' 110
αὐτῶν δόσις οἰκείως διακέκριται, συγγενῇ τε εἴληφε τὴν ὄλην
ἀπόκρισιν περὶ ὧν ἐν ταῖς ἐπιφανείαις αὐτῶν ἐπεζήτησας. Το-
σαῦτα δὴ οὖν ἡμῖν καὶ περὶ τούτων εἰρήσθω.

93 πρὸς] del. SS

103 πρὸς θεοῦς] add. SS

to be beneficent and others maleficent?

Let us, then, also give an answer to this: What is it that connects the corporeal gods in heaven to the incorporeal gods? FR. 26

And how could they [the corporeal gods, i.e., the heavenly bodies] be connected to the incorporeal, since they are corporeal?

You [Porphyry] raise the difficulty of how to distinguish the daemons from the visible and the invisible gods, seeing that they [the daemons] are invisible and that the visible gods are connected to the invisible gods. FR. 27

The distinction you [Porphyry] affirm between that which is subject to passivity and that which isn't, should be rejected because it suits neither of the two superior classes of beings, for the reasons stated above. In addition, your distinction deserves to be rejected because it is debunked by the rituals performed to the gods as exempt from passivity. FR. 28

Also, you [Porphyry] have to demonstrate how a daemon differs from a hero or a soul, either according to its essence, its power, or its activity. FR. 29

Because you [Porphyry] are seeking how the presence of a god, an angel, an archangel, a daemon, some archon, or a soul is recognizable. FR. 30

And so, we [Iamblichus] have properly explained what the members of each of these orders give, according to their proper order, and have taken up the response that is akin to all that you have asked about their manifestations. Those are the things that we had to say about these matters. FR. 31

- FR. 32 Ἄ δ' αὐτὸς ἡμῶν συνεισφέρεις εἰς τὴν περὶ τούτων διάγνωσιν, εἴτε ὡς οἰκείαν γνώμην ἀποφαινόμενος εἴτε ὡς παρ' ἄλλων ἀκούσας, οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθὴ οὐδ' ὀρθῶς λεγόμενα. Λέγεις μὲν γὰρ τὸ περιαιτολογεῖν καὶ τὸ ποιὸν φάντασμα φαντάζειν κοινὸν εἶναι θεοῖς καὶ δαίμοσι καὶ τοῖς κρείττοσι γένεσιν ἅπασιν. 115
- FR. 33 Πότε οὖν συμβαίνει τὸ λεγόμενον ὑπὸ σοῦ ἀπατηλόν, τὸ τῆς περιαιτολογίας;
- FR. 34 Ὅ δὲ νῦν λέγεις, ὡς κοινόν ἐστι τὸ τῆς εἰδωλοποιίας καὶ τῆς περιαιτολογίας θεῶν καὶ δαιμόνων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, συμφύρει πάντα τὰ τῶν κρειπτόνων γένη ἐν ἀλλήλοις. 120
- FR. 35 Εἰ γὰρ τὰ ἀποπίπτοντα ἔργα τῆς αὐτοφανοῦς δείξεως τοιαῦτά ἐστιν οἷα σὺ λέγεις ἀλαζονικὰ καὶ ψευδῆ ...
- FR. 36 Τὰ δ' ἐφεξῆς ἐν οἷς τὴν περὶ τούτων ἄνοιαν καὶ ἀπάτην ἀνοσιουργίαν καὶ ἀκαθαρσίαν νενόμκας προτρέπεις τε ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀληθῆ περὶ αὐτῶν παράδοσιν, ἔχει μὲν οὐδεμίαν ἀμφισβήτησιν, ἀλλ' ὁμολογεῖται παρὰ πᾶσιν ὡσαύτως. 125
- FR. 37 Τῆς δ' αὐτῆς ἔχεται τούτοις δυνάμεως κάκεῖνα ἐν οἷς ὅσιον καὶ ὠφέλιμον εἶναι νενόμκας τὴν περὶ θεῶν ἐπιστήμην, καὶ τὸ μὲν τῆς ἀνοίας τῆς περὶ τῶν τιμῶν καὶ καλῶν σκότος καλεῖς, φῶς δὲ τὸ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐμπλήσαι τίθεσαι πάντων κακῶν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δι' ἀμαθίαν καὶ τόλμαν, τὸ δ' αἴτιον ἡγή πάντων ἀγαθῶν. 130
- FR. 38 Πρῶτον τοίνυν ἀπαιτεῖς διαρθρωθῆναι σοι τί τὸ γιγνόμενόν ἐστιν ἐν τῇ τοῦ μέλλοντος προγνώσει. 135
- FR. 39 Περὶ δὴ τῆς καθ' ὕπνον μαντικῆς λέγεις ταῦτα, ὅτι δὴ καθεύ-

2.1 *Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation*

With regard to the findings about these things that you [Porphyry] bring forward to us – be they your personal opinions or something that you have heard from others – they are not true, nor are they well said. For you say that lauding oneself and bringing about some phantasmagoric apparition is common to the gods, the daemons, and all superior genera of beings. FR. 32

When is it that this deception, as you [Porphyry] call it, this self-praise, happens? FR. 33

And what you [Porphyry] are now saying, that fabricating fake apparitions and lauding oneself is common to gods and daemons and the others, messes up all genera of superior beings. FR. 34

Because, if the failed results of this self-evident proof are such as you [Porphyry] described them, boastful and deceitful ... FR. 35

What you [Porphyry] say next, stating that ignorance and deception are unholy and impure, and calling us to profess the truth about these things – that does not arouse any contestation, but is admitted by everybody in the same way. FR. 36

The other things that you [Porphyry] say have the same meaning, when you affirm that the knowledge about the gods is sacred and most helpful, and call the ignorance about what is honorable and beautiful obscurity and the knowledge thereof light, and posit the former as filling humans with vices because of their lack of education and audacity, and the latter as the cause of all goods. FR. 37

The first thing that you [Porphyry] ask is for someone to explain to you what it is that takes place in the foreknowledge about the future. FR. 38

Regarding divination in sleep, this is what you [Porphyry] say: When FR. 39

δοντες δι' ὀνείρων τοῖς μέλλουσι πολλάκις ἐπιβάλλομεν οὐκ ἐν ἐκστάσει μὲν γιγνόμενοι πολυκινήτω — ἤσυχον γὰρ κείται τὸ σῶμα — , αὐτοῖς μέντοι γε ὡς ὕπαρ οὐκέτι παρακολουθοῦντες.

FR. 40 Οὐ μὴν οἷ γε θεόπεμποι καλούμενοι ὄνειροι τοῦτον γίνονται τὸν τρόπον ὄνπερ σὺ λέγεις· 140

FR. 41 Φῆς δὲ δὴ ὡς ἐπιβάλλουσι καὶ δι' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ θεοφορίας πολλοὶ τῷ μέλλοντι, ἐργηγορότες μὲν, ὡς ἐνεργεῖν καὶ κατ' αἴσθησιν, αὐτοῖς δὲ πάλιν οὐ παρακολουθοῦντες ἢ οὔτι γε ὡς πρότερον παρακολουθοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς. 145

FR. 42 Χρὴ γινῶναι καὶ τίς ὁ ἐνθουσιασμός ἐστι καὶ ὅπως γίνεταί. Φορὰ μὲν οὖν τῆς διανοίας μετὰ δαιμονίας ἐπιπνοίας ψευδῶς δοξάζεται.

FR. 43 Ἄ δὲ λέγεις ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐστὶ ταῦτα ὡς τῶν ἐξισταμένων ἔνιοί τινες αὐλῶν ἀκούοντες ἢ κυμβάλων ἢ τυμπάνων ἢ τινος μέλους ἐνθουσιῶσιν, ὡς οἷ τε κορυβαντιζόμενοι καὶ οἱ τῷ Σαβαζίῳ κάτοχοι καὶ οἱ μητρίζοντες ... 150

FR. 44 Τὸ μὲν οὖν κινητικὸν τι καὶ παθητικὸν εἶναι τὴν μουσικὴν, καὶ τὸ τῶν αὐλῶν ἐμποιεῖν ἢ ἰατρεύειν τὰ πάθη τῆς παρατροπῆς, καὶ τὸ μεθιστάναι τὰς τοῦ σώματος κράσεις ἢ διαθέσεις τὴν μουσικὴν, καὶ τὸ ἄλλοις μὲν μέλεσιν ἀναβακχεύεσθαι ἄλλοις δ' ἀποπαύεσθαι τῆς βακχείας, καὶ πῶς αἱ τούτων διαφοραὶ πρὸς τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκάστας διαθέσεις προσαρμόττουσι, καὶ ὅτι τὸ ἄστατον καὶ ἀκατάστατον μέλος πρὸς τὰς ἐκστάσεις οἰκείον, οἷα δὴ ἐστὶ τὰ Ὀλύμπου, καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα λέγεται, πάντα ἀλλοτριῶς μοι δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι πρὸς τὸν ἐνθουσιασμόν. Φυσικά τε γάρ ἐστι καὶ ἀνθρώπινα καὶ τέχνης ἡμετέρας ἔργα τὸ δὲ θεῖον ἐν αὐτοῖς οὐδ' ὅπωςτιοῦν διαφαίνεται. 155 160

FR. 45 Περὶ οὗ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀποφαίνει οἱ δὲ ὕδωρ πίνοντες, καθάπερ ὁ

we sleep, we often find out about future things in our dream, not as being in some kind of agitated ecstasy (for the body is resting) but as in a trance having lost our self-consciousness.

However, the dreams that are called “sent by the gods” do not happen in the way that you [Porphyry] are describing. FR. 40

You [Porphyry] also say that many apprehend the future through inspiration and divine possession. They are awake, even enough to be involved in perception, but they aren’t conscious of themselves, or at least, not in the same way as they were conscious of themselves before. FR. 41

One must understand what inspiration is and how it takes place. It is wrongly assumed that it consists of some kind of intellectual impulse accompanied by daemonic inspiration. FR. 42

What you [Porphyry] say then is: Some of those who are ecstatic, hearing the flutes, cymbals, drums, or some melodies, become inspired, like those who carry out Corybantic rites, those who are possessed by Sabazios, and those who revere the Mother of the gods ... FR. 43

That music is moving and emotive, that [the sound of] flutes instills or heals passions productive of confusion, that music changes the temperaments of the body and its moods, that some melodies give rise to Bacchic frenzy while others make it stop, that the differences between those [melodies] are pitched to each specific mood of the soul, and that an unstable and restless melody tends to produce ecstasy, like those of Olympos, and the other claims – it seems to me [Iamblichus] that these things have nothing to do with inspiration. For they are natural, human, and the results of our own art. There is nothing divine manifesting through them at all. FR. 44

About these things, you [Porphyry] affirm the following: Some FR. 45

ἐν Κολοφῶνι ἱερεὺς τοῦ Κλαρίου, οἱ δὲ στομίοις παρακαθήμε- 165
νοι, ὡς αἱ ἐν Δελφοῖς θεσπίζουσαι, οἱ δ' ἐξ ὑδάτων ἀτμιζόμενοι,
καθάπερ αἱ ἐν Βραγχιδαῖς προφήτιδες.

FR. 46 Περὶ οὗ λέγεις ταῦτα οἱ δ' ἐπὶ χαρακτήρων στάντες ὡς οἱ
πληρούμενοι ἀπὸ εἰσκρίσεων.

FR. 47 Περὶ δ' ἄλλου γένους μαντικῆς λέγεις ταῦτα ἄλλοι παρα- 170
κολουθοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς κατὰ τὰ ἄλλα, κατὰ τὸ φανταστικὸν
θειάζουσιν, οἱ μὲν σκότος συνεργὸν λαβόντες, οἱ δὲ καταπό-
σεις τινῶν, οἱ δ' ἐπωδὰς καὶ συστάσεις καὶ οἱ μὲν δι' ὕδατος
φαντάζονται οἱ δ' ἐν τοίχῳ, οἱ δ' ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ ἀέρι, οἱ δ' ἐν ἡλίῳ
ἢ ἄλλῳ τιῶν τῶν κατ' οὐρανόν. 175

FR. 48 Λέγεις δὲ καὶ περὶ τούτου τοιαῦτα οἱ δ' ἤδη καὶ διὰ σπλάγ-
χνων καὶ δι' ὀρνίθων καὶ δι' ἀστέρων τέχνην συνεστήσαντο τῆς
θήρας τοῦ μέλλοντος. Εἰσὶ μὲν καὶ ἄλλαι πλείονες τέχναι τοια-
ῦται, πλὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐταί γε ἀποχρῶσιν ἐνδείξασθαι πᾶν τὸ
τεχνικὸν εἶδος τῆς μαντικῆς. 180

FR. 49 "Ὅσαι εἰσὶ μαντεῖαι παρ' Ἑλλεσιν. Ἀστρονομική· γενεθλιακή·
ὄνειροσκοπική· οἰωνιστική· συμβολική· ἀστρική· ἢ διὰ κλή-
ρων· ἢ δι' ἀστραγάλων· ἢ δι' ἐμπύρων· ἢ διὰ λαχῶν· θυ-
τική ζῶων· ὠοσκοπική· ἢ διὰ τεράτων· ἢ κατ' ἐνθυσίασιν· ἢ
κατ' εἰσκρισίν τινος ἐπινοίας· ἢ διὰ κληδόνων· [διὰ τινος ἐπι- 185
πνοίας·] ἢ διὰ φήμης· ἢ διὰ πανικοῦ κινήματος· ἢ διὰ μορφο-
σκοπίας· ἢ διὰ χειροσκοπίας· ἢ διὰ πιττακίων ὑπὸ σφραγίδα
πιπτόντων· ἢ διὰ κοσκίνου· ἢ διὰ λεκάνης μαγικῆς· ἢ ἐν φιάλῃ·
ἢ διὰ κλήσεως αὐτοπτικῆς· ἢ διὰ ψυχοπομπίας· ἢ διὰ τῶν ζυ-

185-186 [διὰ τινος ἐπιπνοίας·] secl. SS

drink water, like the priest of Apollo Clarius at Colophon, others sit down at the mouths [of a river], like those who prophesy at Delphi, and other again draw mists from the waters, like the Branchidian prophetesses.

And about this, you [Porphyry] say: Some are standing on signs, as if they were full of [the inspiration or a spirit] that enters them. FR. 46

About another kind of divination, you [Porphyry] say this: Some people are unconscious of themselves in other ways, but divinely possessed with regard to their imagination. Some of these use darkness to assist them, others use drugs, others use enchantments and rites of conjunction. In turn, some make images by means of water, others of walls, others of the air below the sky, others again of the sun or of some other heavenly [body]. FR. 47

You [Porphyry] say this about that subject: Some have come up with the art of chasing the future by means of innards, birds, and stars. There are many more arts like this, but these should be enough to show what the entire art of divination looks like. FR. 48

How many types of divination there are among the Greeks: astrology, horoscopy, interpretation of dreams, augury, symbology, through the stars, by drawing lots, divination by casting bones, throwing things into the fire, casting lots, animal sacrifice, examining eggs, prodigies, inspiration, inflowing inspiration, omen, [some inspiration,] rumors, a movement of panic, observing forms, palm reading, sealed tablets, sieves, magical basins, what is in bowls, face-to-face invocations, soul-guiding, statues carried on carts, flutes, [symbols,] cymbals, drums or any other musical instrument; some [practice divination] through FR. 49

γοφορουμένων ἀγαλμάτων· ἢ δι' αὐλων· [ἢ διὰ συμβόλων·] ἢ 190
 διὰ κυμβάλων· ἢ διὰ τυμπάνων καὶ ὄργανου παντὸς μουσικοῦ.
 Οἱ διὰ Σαβαζίου· οἱ μητριζόντες· ἄλλοι κατὰ τὸ φανταστικὸν
 θειάουσιν· ἄλλοι σκότος συνεργὸν λαμβάνοντες· ἄλλοι κατα-
 πόσεις· οἱ δὲ ἐπωδὰς καὶ συστάσεις· ἄλλοι εἰς ὕδωρ φαντάζο-
 νται· οἱ δὲ ἐν τοίχῳ· οἱ δὲ ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ ἀέρι· ἄλλοι ἐν ἡλίῳ καὶ ἐν 195
 τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς κατ' οὐρανὸν ἄστροις· οἱ δὲ διὰ σπλάγχχνων· οἱ
 δὲ δι' ὀρνίθων· οἱ δὲ δι' ἀλφίτων· ἄλλοι διὰ τῆς φυσικῆς παρα-
 τηρήσεως φθανούσης ἐπὶ ζώων παραλλαγὰς ἢ φυτῶν· οἱ δὲ δι'
 ἀριθμῶν· οἱ δὲ διὰ τῆς φυσιογνωμονικῆς. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐπιβολὴ
 ἐνθουσιαστικῆ καὶ ἐπιβολὴ θεοφορίας. 200

Χρηστήρια δὲ διαβόητα παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐστί· τὰ ἐν τοῖς να-
 οῖς βαιτύλια· διὰ λίθων ἐν τοῖς στοιχείοις προσρασόντων ἐν
 Αἰγύπτῳ· τὸ βυθὶ ὄργανόν τι τρίγωνον ἐναρμόνιον ᾧ χρῶνται
 οἱ ἱεροψάλται ἐν τοῖς κώμοις πληκτριζόμενοι ἕξ ἄκαρ· αἱ τῆς
 ἐστίας παρθένοι ἱερουργούσαι λέγουσι καὶ αὐταὶ τὸ μέλλον ἀσβέ- 205
 στῶ πυρὶ τεκμαιρόμεναι· οἳ τε παρὰ τῷ Διονυσίῳ διὰ κορυβα-
 ντείων κορυβαντιζόμενοι. Ἐν δὲ Κολοφωνίῳ ἱερεὺς τοῦ Κλα-
 ρίου ὕδωρ πίνων ἔλεγεν ἐκάστῳ περὶ οὗ καὶ ἀφίκτο· ἐν Δελ-
 φοῖς δὲ θεσπίζουσιν αἱ γυναῖκες [ἐν] τοῖς στομίοις τοῦ ὕδατος
 παρακαθήμεναι καὶ ἐν Βραγχίδαις πάλιν ἕξ ὑδάτων ἀτμιζόμε- 210
 ναι χρησιμολογοῦσιν· ἐπὶ χαρακτήρων δὲ στάντες πληροῦνται
 τῶν ἀπ' εἰσκρίσεων ἔν τισι ναοῖς τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος. Ἡ δὲ Πυθία
 ἐπὶ τοῦ τρίποδος ἀσχημόνως ἐπικαθημένη διὰ τῶν γυναικείων
 μορίων τὰς μαντικὰς εἰσκρίσεις ὑποδέχεται. Πολλὰ δὲ ἐν πλεί-
 οσι ναοῖς καὶ διὰ καλπίδων καὶ ψήφον ἐφορώντος καὶ ἀπὸ βι- 215
 βλίου τὸν χρησμὸν ἀναγνώσκοντος. Καὶ καθὼς Πορφύριος ἐν
 τῇ πρὸς Ἀνέβοντά φησιν ἐπιστολῇ· πολλοῖς γὰρ ἀγύρτης καὶ
 τῷ κεχηνότι τῆς προσδοκίας ὑμῶν ἐπιθέμενος.

190 [ἢ διὰ συμβόλων·] secl. SS
 202 ἐν] del. SS

Sabazios, by invoking the mother of the gods; others again are divinely inspired in their imagination; others use darkness as a support; others drugs; others sacred chants and rites of conjunction; others make images in water, others on a wall, others in the air beneath the sky, others in the sun and other stars in the sky; some [practice divination] through innards, some through birds, barley, by the natural observation anticipating the changes of animals and plants, through numbers and physiognomy. There is also apprehension through inspiration and apprehension through divine possession.

Famous oracles among these are: the *baityilia* in the temples, through rocks thrown at letters, in Egypt [speculative translation]; the *byni*, a triangular instrument with six strings used by ceremonial singers in their revels, played with a plectrum; the virgins of the hearth who perform sacred rites also say they find tokens of the future through a fire that is never extinguished; and those who, in Dionysus's sanctuary, perform Corybantic rites and enter Corybantic states. In Colophon, the priest of Apollo Clarius would drink water and tell each person about the things for which they came to him. In Delphi, the women sit at the mouths of water and prophesy, and among the Branchidae, they draw the mists of the waters and pronounce oracles. [Others] stand on characters and are filled with the inflows, in certain temples of Apollo. Pythia sits on a three-legged [stool] in an indecent manner and receives divinatory inflows through her female parts. Many things [are practiced] in most of the temples: by observing a pitcher or a rock, or by reading an oracle from a book. And as Porphyry says in his letter to Anebo: "Most often it's an impostor who sets to work on the eagerness of your expectation."

- FR. 50 Ζητεῖς δὲ τὸ λοιπὸν περὶ τοῦ τρόπου τῆς μαντείας τίς τέ ἐστι καὶ ὁποῖος, ὃν ἤδη μὲν ἡμεῖς κοινῇ τε καὶ κατ' ἰδίαν ἐξηγησάμεθα, σὺ δὲ πρῶτον μὲν ἀποφαίνῃ γνώμην τῶν μάντεων, ὡς πάντες διὰ θεῶν ἢ δαιμόνων φασὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος τυγχάνειν τῆς προγνώσεως, οὐδὲ οἷόν τε ἄλλους εἰδέναι αὐτὸ ἢ μόνους τοὺς τῶν ἐσομένων κυρίους. Ἔπειτα ἀπορεῖς εἰ ἄχρι τοσούτου κατάγεται εἰς ὑπηρεσίαν ἀνθρώπων τὸ θεῖον ὡς μὴ ὀκνεῖν τινὰς καὶ ἀλφιτομάνταις εἶναι. 220
- FR. 51 Ἄγων ... ἕτερος ... ὃν ἐπάγεις εὐθὺς περὶ τῶν αἰτίων τῆς μαντικῆς, εἰ θεὸς ἢ ἄγγελος ἢ δαίμων ἢ ὅστισούν πάρεστι ταῖς ἐπιφανείαις ἢ μαντεῖαις ἢ ταῖς ὁποιασοῦν ἱεραῖς ἐνεργείαις. 225
- FR. 52 Οὐ μὴν ἔτι γε δίδομεν ὃ σὺ προσέρριψας ὡς ὁμολογούμενον, ὅτι δι' ἡμῶν ἐλκόμενος ἀνάγκαις ταῖς τῆς κλήσεως ταῦτα ἐπιτελεῖ. 230
- FR. 53 Γελῶ δ' ἔγωγε καὶ τοῦτο ἀκούων, ὡς αὐτόματός τισιν ὁ θεὸς πάρεστιν ἤτοι διὰ γενέσεως περίοδον ἢ δι' ἄλλας αἰτίας. 235
- FR. 54 Εὐλόγως ἂν τὴν δευτέραν παρὰ σοὶ τιθεμένην αἰτιολογίαν περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀποδεξαίμεθα ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ ταῦτα λέγει τε καὶ φαντάζεται, καὶ ἔστι ταύτης πάθη ἐκ μικρῶν αἰθυγμάτων ἐγειρόμενα. 240
- FR. 55 Πρότερον μὲν οὖν μικρὰ αἰθύγματα ἀνεγείρειν ἐνόμιζόν τινες καὶ θεῖα ἐν ἡμῖν εἶδη. 240
- FR. 56 Μήποτε οὖν ὁ τρίτον προσέθηκάς ἐστιν ἀληθέστερον, ὡς ἄρα μικτόν τι γίνυται ὑποστάσεως εἶδος ἐξ ἡμῶν τε τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἕξωθεν θείας ἐπιπνοίας. 240

2.1 *Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation*

You [Porphyry] then inquire about the nature and mode by which divination works, which I have already explained in general and in detail. You first relate the opinion of the diviners, who all claim to possess foreknowledge of the future through gods and daemons, that nobody apart from the masters of the things to be can know the future. And then you raise the difficulty of whether the divine humbles itself to serve humanity, so that some even permit divination through barley. FR. 50

Another struggle regarding the causes of divination that you [Porphyry] bring up right away is whether there is a god, or an angel, or a daemon, or anything of this kind, present in the manifestations or in the divinations or in any of the sacred workings. FR. 51

We [Iamblichus] do not agree to what you bring up, as if there was a consensus about it, namely, that [a god] who is drawn down by the coercion in our invocation accomplishes these things. FR. 52

It makes me laugh when I hear [Porphyry say] that the god presents himself automatically, either through some periodic generation or through other causes. FR. 53

Is it reasonable for us to accept the second causal explanation that you propose about these things? Namely, that it is the soul that speaks about these things and imagines them, and that the soul's passions are roused from small gleams. FR. 54

Some think that small gleams rouse divine ideas in us. FR. 55

Maybe your [Porphyry's] third proposal is the most plausible one: namely, that some kind of mixed substantial form emerges from our soul and some exterior, divine inspiration. FR. 56

- FR. 57 *Λέγεις τοίνυν ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ γενῶ δύναμιν φανταστικὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος διὰ τοιούτων κινήματων, ἢ τὰ προσαγόμενα ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης ὑφίστησι διὰ τῶν ἐνουσῶν δυνάμεων δαίμονας, καὶ μάλιστα ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ζώων εἰλημμένη.* 245
- FR. 58 *Αἰ δ' ἐπὶ τῆδε ἐπιστάσεις ἀνάγονται μὲν εὐθὺς ὡς διστάζουσαι περὶ τοῦ τρόπου τῆςμαντείας, προϊούσαι δ' ἀνατρέπειν αὐτὴν παντελῶς ἐπιχειροῦσιν. Διελώμεθα οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸν λόγον πρὸς ἀμφοτέρα ταῦτα, ἀρξώμεθα δὲ διαλύειν πρῶτον τὰ πρότερα. Κατὰ γὰρ τοὺς ὕπνους μηδὲν πραγματευσάμενοι ἐνίστε τῷ μέλλοντι ἐπιβάλλομεν, ὕπαρ δὲ καὶ πραγματευσάμενοι πολλάκις οὐκ ἐπιβάλλομεν.* 250
- FR. 59 *Ἐν δὲ τοῖς μετὰ ταῦτα πειρώμενος τὸν τρόπον διερμηνεύειν τῆςμαντικῆς, ἀναιρεῖς αὐτὴν παντάπασι. Εἰ γὰρ πάθος ψυχῆς αἴτιον αὐτῆς καθίσταται κτλ.* 255
- FR. 60 *Σκεψώμεθα δὴ καὶ τὰ τεκμήριά σου τῆς τοιαύτης δόξης. Τὸ μὲν δὴ καταλαμβάνεσθαι τὰς αἰσθήσεις πρὸς τὸ ἐναντίον τείνει ἢ οἶον σὺ λέγεις γνώρισμα γὰρ ἔστι τοῦ μηδὲν φάντασμα ἀνθρώπειον τηνικαῦτα ἀνακινεῖσθαι. Οἱ δὲ προσερχθέντες ἄτμοι πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἔχουσι τὴν συγγένειαν, οὐ πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ ἐποπτεύοντος. Αἱ τε ἐπικλήσεις οὐκ ἐπιπνοίας τῆς διανοίας ἀνεγείρουσιν ἢ σωματικὰ πάθη ἐν τῷ δεχομένῳ ἄγνωστοι γὰρ εἰσι παντελῶς καὶ ἀπόρρητοι, μόνῳ δὲ τῷ θεῷ γνωρίμως λέγονται ὃν ἐπικαλοῦνται. Τὸ δ' εἶναι μὴ πάντας ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἀπλοστέρους καὶ νέους ἐπιτηδειότερους δηλοῖ τοῦτο, ὡς εἰς καταδοχὴν τῷ ἕξωθεν ἐπεισιόντι καὶ κατέχοντι πνεύματι οἱ τοιοῦτοὶ εἰσιν ἐτοιμότεροι. Ἐκ δὴ τούτων οὐ καλῶς τοπάζει πάθος εἶναι τὸν ἐθουσιασμόν· συμβαίνει γὰρ ἀπὸ γε τούτων τῶν σημείων ἕξωθεν αὐτὸν ὡς ἐπίπνοιαν ἐπιρρεῖν.* 260
265
270

253 ὕπαρ δὲ] add. SS

Then you [Porphyry] say that the soul produces the power to imagine the future through such movements, or that material offerings bring about daemons through their innate powers, particularly the material taken from animals. FR. 57

The following observations are brought up [by Porphyry] to cast doubt on the method of divination, and, going further, they try to subvert it altogether. Let us then also divide this topic according to these two matters. We shall first solve the first one: When we sleep, we sometimes apprehend the future without any efforts, whereas, when we make such efforts in a waking state, we often do not apprehend it. FR. 58

But then, when you [Porphyry] attempt to define the mode of divination, you destroy it completely. Because if a passion of the soul is established as its cause etc. FR. 59

Let us then also look at the evidence for your [Porphyry's] opinion. The fact that the senses are overtaken suggests the opposite of what you say, because it is a sign that no human imagination whatsoever is aroused. The vapor of the offerings is related to the god and not to the soul of the initiate. The invocations do not give rise to inspirations of the mind or to bodily passions in the person who receives [the divination], because they are unintelligible and unspeakable and spoken in a manner intelligible only to the god who is invoked. And the fact that not everyone but especially the more simple-minded and younger ones are fitter [for inspiration] shows that they are readier to receive the spirit coming from the outside and possessing them. On this basis, you inappropriately speculate that inspiration is some kind of passion, because it streams in through these signs, from the outside, like an insufflation. FR. 60

After this, he [Porphyry] tumbles from divine derangement into FR. 61

- FR. 61 Τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀπὸ τῆς ἐνθέου παραφορᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν ἔκστα-
σιν τῆς διανοίας τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ἀποπίπτει, τὴν τε ἐν τοῖς
νοσήμασι συμπύπτουσαν μανίαν παραλόγως αἰτιάν εἶναι φησι
τῆς μαντικῆς, χολῆς γὰρ πλεονασμοῖς, ὡς ἔστιν εἰκάσαι, τῆς 275
μελαίνης καὶ μέθης παρατροπαῖς καὶ τῇ λύσση τῇ ἀπὸ τῶν
λυσσώντων κυνῶν συμβαινούση τὸν ἐνθουσιασμόν ἀπεικάζει.
- FR. 62 Ὡστ' ἐὰν εἴπῃς θείαν παραφοράν, ἄφελε πάσας εὐθὺς τὰς
ἀνθρωπίνας παρατροπάς, καὶ ἐὰν νῆψιν αὐτοῖς ἱερατικὴν ἀπο-
δῶς, μηκέτι σκοπεῖ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην νῆψιν ὡς οὖσαν ἐκείνη 280
παραπλησίαν. Πάντως δὲ τὰς κατὰ τὰ νοσήματα τοῦ σώμα-
τος οἷον ὑποχύσεις καὶ τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν νοσημάτων κινουμένας
φαντασίας μὴ παράβαλλε ταῖς θείαις φαντασίαις τί γὰρ δὴ
κοινὸν αὐταὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔχουσιν; Μηδ' αὖ τὰς ἀμφιβόλους
καταστάσεις, οἷον μεταξὺ νήψεως τε καὶ ἐκστάσεως, παρα- 285
θῆς ποτε ταῖς ὀρισμέναις κατὰ μίαν ἐνέργειαν ἱερατικαῖς τῶν
θεῶν ὄψεσιν. Ἀλλὰ μηδὲ ταῖς ἀπὸ τῆς γοητείας τεχνικῶς κατα-
σκευαζομέναις φαντασίαις παράβαλλε τὰς ἐναργεστάτας θεω-
ρίας τῶν θεῶν οὔτε γὰρ ἐνέργειαν οὔτε οὐσίαν τῶν ὀρωμένων
οὔτε ἀλήθειαν αὐταὶ ἔχουσιν, ἄχρι δὲ τοῦ δοκεῖν φαντάσματα 290
ψιλὰ προτείνουσιν.
- FR. 63 Οὐδὲ γὰρ τοῦτο λέγειν δεῖ, ὡς καὶ φύσις καὶ τέχνη καὶ ἡ συ-
μπάθεια τῶν ὡς ἐν ἐνὶ ζώῳ τῷ παντὶ μερῶν προδηλώσεις ἔχει
τινῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλα, οὐδ' ὅτι τὰ σώματα οὕτω κατεσκευάσται,
ὡς εἶναι προσημασίαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐτέρων εἰς τὰ ἕτερα. 295
- FR. 64 Φέρεις δὲ καὶ σὺ τούτου δείγματα ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων ἐναργῆ
τὸ γὰρ λίθους καὶ βοτάνας φέρειν τοὺς καλουμένους, δεσμῆν
τε ἱερούς τινας δεσμοὺς καὶ λύειν τούτους, τὰ τε κεκλεισμένα
ἀνοίγειν καὶ τὰς προαιρέσεις μεταβάλλειν τῶν ὑποδεχομένων,
ὥστε ἐκ φαύλων σπουδαίας ἀπεργάζεσθαι, πάντα δὲ ταῦτα 300

the pathological ecstasy of the mind, making the nonsensical claim that the mania by which one is affected in sickness is the cause of divination. For you align enthusiasm with the excesses of black bile (since it resembles it), with the aberrations of drunkenness, and with the rage spread by rabid dogs.

When you [Porphyry] speak of divine derangement, cast aside all human errors right away. And when you put forward priestly sobriety, don't take human sobriety into consideration, as if it were close to the former kind. Don't compare divine imaginations to the sort of effusions affecting the body in sickness, or to the imaginations caused by diseases. For what do they have in common with each other? Also, do not liken the intermediary states situated between sobriety and ecstasy to the sacred visions of the gods, that are determined by one activity. But also, don't confuse the imaginations fabricated with magic art with the most lucid contemplations of the gods, because they don't have the activity, substance or truth of what is seen and only offer mere apparitions, which are, at best, appearances.

FR. 62

And one mustn't say that nature, art and the sympathy between the parts of one living being, so to speak, allow for prognostications of some things by others, nor that bodies are constructed in such a way that they allow for mutual prognostics.

FR. 63

You [Porphyry], too, bring up clear evidence drawn from the ceremonies. For when they [the gods] are invoked, they bring along stones and herbs, they bond sacred bonds and dissolve them, open what is shut and change the resolutions of those who accept them, so as to bring about earnest ones from mean ones – all this signifies that inspiration comes from outside.

FR. 64

ἔξωθεν τὴν ἐπίπνοιαν γίνεσθαι διασημαίνει.

et potius uenire extrinsecus conicit, eo quod lapidibus et herbis adhibitis et alligent quosdam, et aperient clausa ostia, vel aliquid eius modi mirabiliter operentur.

FR. 65 Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ὀλίγον ἔμπροσθεν ἡμῖν διηκρίβωται ὃ δὲ προ- 305
τείνεις ὡς οὐδαμῶς ἀπόβλητον τὸ εἶναι γεννητικούς τῶν δρα-
στικῶν εἰδώλων ...

FR. 66 Ἄλλὰ παρατηροῦσιν οὗτοι, φησί, τὴν τῶν οὐρανίων φοράν,
καὶ λέγουσι τίνος τῶν κατ' οὐρανὸν μετὰ τίνος ἢ τίνων πολεύ- 310
οντος ἔσται ψευδῆ τὰ μαντεία ἢ ἀληθῆ, καὶ τὰ δρώμενα ἀργὰ
ἢ ἀπαγγελτικά ἢ ἀποτελεστικά.

FR. 67, 60A Ἄ γάρ ἐστι παντάπασι εὐμετάβλητα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν
κινήσεων παντοίως μετατρέπεται ὥστε ἀργὰ ἢ χρηματιστικά
ἢ ἐπαγγελτικά ἢ ἐπιτελεστικά ἢ ἄλλοτε ἄλλοῖα ἀποτελεῖσθαι,
πῶς ἔνεστι ταῦτα καὶ μικρᾶς τινος μετέχειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς θείας 315
δυνάμεως;

FR. 68 Ἄμέλει καὶ σὺ τοσοῦτο συγχωρεῖς, μηδένα θεὸν ἢ δαίμονα
λέγων ὑπ' αὐτῶν καθέλκεσθαι.

FR. 69 Ἐπι τοῖνυν καὶ ταύτης ἐστὶ φαυλοτέρα τῶν ἱεροπρεπῶν δρω-
μένων ἐξήγησις ἢ γένος τι ἀπατηλῆς φύσεως παντόμορφόν τε 320
καὶ πολύτροπον αἰτιωμένη τῆς μαντείας ὑποκρινόμενον θεοὺς
καὶ δαίμονας καὶ ψυχὰς τῶν τεθηγκότων ... Οἷς οὐδὲν ἐμπό-
διον γίνεται ἀπὸ τῶν κακῶν πνευμάτων, οὐδ' εἰς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς
ἀγαθὰ κώλυμα οὐδέ τις τῦφος ἢ θωπεία ἢ ἀτμῶν ἀπόλαυσις
ἢ βίας ἰσχύς παρενοχλεῖ. 325

Οἱ δὲ εἶναι μὲν τίθενται ἔξωθεν τὸ ὑπήκοον γένος ἀπατη-

2.1 *Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation*

Rather, he [Porphyry] thinks, they come from the outside, because [these people] use stones and herbs to bind together certain people, open closed doors, and work other such wonders.

This, too, we examined earlier on. But what you [Porphyry] put forward as something that shouldn't be cast aside, namely, that there are people capable of producing animated statues ... FR. 65

But it is said that they [the diviners] observe the revolution of the heavens and explain whether the divinations will be false or true (depending on which one of the heavenly bodies is revolving with one or several other ones) and whether the rituals will be vain, or annunciatory, or productive. FR. 66

For the things that are in every way easily changed and that are variously altered in their course by external movements so as to end up ineffective, or prophetic, or auspicious, or perfective, or ever-changing – how would these things participate even in the smallest portion of divine power? FR. 67

In any case, you [Porphyry], too, concede that no god or daemon is dragged down by these things. FR. 68

There is an interpretation of the sacred rites that is even worse, imputing divination to a kind of treacherous nature capable of assuming all forms, shifting and acting like gods, daemons, and the souls of the dead ... The evil spirits can in no way impede or keep the theurgists away from the goods of the soul. No delusion, no flattery, no enjoyment from vapors, no brute strength can cause trouble in this matter. FR. 69

Others assume that there is, coming from the outside, a subordinate kind of treacherous nature capable of assuming all forms, shifting

λῆς φύσεως, παντόμορφόν τε καὶ πολύτροπον, ὑποκρινόμενον
καὶ θεοὺς καὶ δαίμονας καὶ ψυχὰς τεθηγκότων καὶ διὰ τούτων
πάντα δρᾶσθαι τῶν δοκούντων ἢ ἀγαθῶν εἶναι ἢ κακῶν. Ἐπεὶ
εἰς τὰ γε ὄντως ἀγαθὰ, ἅπερ εἶναι κατὰ ψυχὴν, μηδὲν καθά- 330
παξ συμβαλέσθαι δύνασθαι, μηδὲ εἰδέναι ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ κακο-
σχολεύεσθαι καὶ τρωθάζειν καὶ ἐμποδίζειν πολλάκις τοῖς ἀρετὴν
ἀσκουμένοις πλήρεις τε εἶναι τύφου, καὶ χαίρειν ἀτμοῖς καὶ
θωπείαις.

Unde dicit alios opinari esse quoddam genus, cui exaudire sit pro- 335
prium, natura fallax, omniforme, multimodum, simulans deos et dae-
mones et animas defunctorum, et hoc esse quod efficiat haec omnia
quae uidentur bona esse uel prava; caeterum circa ea quae uere bona
sunt nihil opitulari, imo uero ista nec nosse, sed et male conciliare,
et insimulare atque impedire nonnunquam uirtutis sedulos sectatores, 340
et plenum esse temeritatis et fastus, gaudere nidoribus, adulationibus
capi.

FR. 70 Ἐν οὖν τούτῳ ἐστὶ τὸ ἄχραντον καὶ ἱερατικὸν θεῖόν τε ὡς
ἀληθῶς γένος τῆς μαντείας καὶ τούτο οὐχ, ὡς σὺ λέγεις, διαι-
τητοῦ δεῖται ἢ ἐμοῦ ἢ ἄλλου τινός, ἢ' αὐτὸ ἐκ πολλῶν προ- 345
κρίνω.

FR. 71 Μάτην οὖν ἐπεισάγεις τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀθέων δόξαν, ὡς ἄρα
τὴν πᾶσαν μαντείαν ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ δαίμονος ἡγοῦνται ἐπι-
τελείσθαι.

FR. 72 (1) Πάνυ δέ με θράπτει, πῶς ὡς κρείττους παρακαλούμε- 350
νοι ἐπιτάττονται ὡς χείρους, καὶ δίκαιον εἶναι ἀξιοῦντες τὸν
θεράποντα τὰ ἄδικα αὐτοὶ κελευσθέντες δρᾶν ὑπομένουσιν καὶ
καθαρῶ μὲν μὴ ὄντι ἐξ ἀφροδισίων οὐκ ἂν καλοῦντι ὑπακούσαιεν,

and acting like gods, daemons, and the souls of the dead, and thus, of appearing as something good or bad. It cannot engage with real goods in any way, because these goods depend on the soul; nor can it know them. But it can play mischievous tricks and come up with mockery and hindrances against those who pursue virtue, and it is full of delusion and delights in vapors and flattery.

And this is why he [Porphyry] claims that others believe that there is a type of being that is obedient, deceptive by nature, capable of assuming all forms and performing various acts, that imitates gods, daemons, and the souls of the dead; and [he thinks that] it is this type of being that is responsible for all those things that seem good or bad. Furthermore, they [those beings] do not contribute to bringing about anything really good and they do not even know what it is. Instead, they give bad advice and make reproaches and sometimes hinder those who are eager to attain virtue. They are full of audacity and arrogance, they rejoice in the sacrificial fumes and are captivated by flatteries.

This is the one unsullied, sacred, and truly divine kind of divination. And contrary to what you claim, I [Iamblichus] don't need an arbitrator – be it me or someone else – to know that I should choose that [kind of divination].

FR. 70

You [Porphyry] are thus bringing up the opinions of the atheists in vain, who think that all divination is brought to realization by the evil daemon.

FR. 71

I am deeply worried that, while they [the gods] are invoked as superior beings, they take orders like inferiors and that, all while expecting their followers to be just, they willingly commit unjust acts at one's command. And although they wouldn't give heed to the invocations of someone who is impure because of his sexual life, they do not hesi-

FR. 72

αὐτοὶ δὲ ἄγειν εἰς παράνομα ἀφροδίσια τοὺς τυχόντας οὐκ
 ὀκνοῦσιν. (2) καὶ ἀπὸ ἐμφύχων μὲν ἀποχῆς κελεύουσιν δεῖν εἶναι 355
 τοὺς ὑποφήτας, ἵνα μὴ τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων ἀτμοῖς χραίνω-
 νται (αὐτοὶ δὲ ἀτμοῖς τοῖς ἀπὸ θυσῶν μάλιστα δελεάζονται),
 καὶ νεκροῦ μὲν ἀθιγῆ δεῖν εἶναι τὸν ἐπόπτην, διὰ νεκρῶν δὲ τὰ
 πολλὰ ζῶων αἱ θεαγωγίαι ἐκτελοῦνται. (3) πολλῶ δὲ τούτων 360
 ἀλογώτερον τὸ μὴ δαίμονι, εἰ τύχοι, ἢ ψυχῇ τεθνηκότος, αὐτῶ
 δὲ τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἡλίῳ ἢ Σελήνῃ ἢ τινι τῶν κατ' οὐρανὸν ἄν-
 θρωπον τῷ τυχόντι ὑποχείριον ἀπειλὰς προσφέροντα ἐκφο-
 βεῖν, ψευδόμενον ἢ ἐκεῖνοι ἀληθεύσωσι. (4) τὸ γὰρ λέγειν ὅτι
 τὸν οὐρανὸν προσαράξει καὶ τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς Ἰσιδος ἐκφανεῖ 365
 καὶ τὸ ἐν Ἀβύδῳ ἀπόρρητον δείξει καὶ τὴν βᾶριν στήσει καὶ
 τὰ μέλη τοῦ Ὀσίριδος διασκεδάσει τῷ Τυφῶνι, τίνα οὐχ ὑπερ-
 βολὴν ἐμπληξίας μὲν τῷ ἀπειλοῦντι ἂ μῆτε οἶδεν μῆτε δύνα-
 ται, καταλείπει, ταπεινότητος δὲ τοῖς δεδοικόσιν οὕτως κενὸν
 φόβον καὶ πλάσματα, ὡς κομιδῇ παῖδες ἀνόητοι; (5) καίτοι καὶ 370
 Χαϊρήμων ὁ ἱερογραμματεὺς ἀναγράφει ταῦτα, ὡς καὶ παρ'
 Αἰγυπτίοις θρυλούμενα, καὶ ταῦτά φασιν εἶναι καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα
 βιαστικώτατα. (6) αὐταὶ δὲ αἱ εὐχαὶ τίνα ἔχουσιν λόγον, τὸν
 ἐξ ἰλῦος ἀναφανέντα λέγουσαι καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ λωτῶ καθήμενον καὶ
 ἐπὶ πλοίου ναυτιλλόμενον καὶ καθ' ὥραν τὰς μορφὰς ἀμείβοντα 375
 καὶ κατὰ ζώδιον μετασχηματιζόμενον; οὕτω γὰρ φασιν αὐτο-
 πτεῖσθαι, ἀγνοοῦντες ὅτι τὸ ἴδιον πάθος τῆς αὐτῶν φαντα-
 σίας ἐκείνῳ περιάπτουσιν. (7) εἰ δὲ συμβολικῶς λέγεται ταῦτα,
 τῶν ἐκείνου δυνάμεων ὄντα σύμβολα, τὴν ἐρμηνεῖαν τῶν συμ-
 βόλων εἰπάτωσαν. δηλον γὰρ ὡς εἰ τοῦ ἡλίου ἦν τὸ πάθος,
 καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς ἐκλείψεσιν, πᾶσιν ἂν ὥφθη ταῦτόν τοῖς εἰς 380
 αὐτὸν ἀτειζοῦσιν. (8) τί δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄσημα βούλεται ὀνόματα
 καὶ τῶν ἀσήμων τὰ βάρβαρα πρὸ τῶν ἐκάστῳ οἰκείων; εἰ
 γὰρ πρὸς τὸ σημαϊνόμενον ἀφορᾷ τὸ ἀκοῦον, αὐτάρκης ἢ αὐτῇ
 μένουσα ἔννοια δηλῶσαι, κἂν ὅποιοι οὖν ὑπάρχη τοῦνομα. (9)
 οὐ γάρ που καὶ ὁ καλούμενος Αἰγύπτιος ἦν τῷ γενεῖ· εἰ δὲ 385
 καὶ Αἰγύπτιος, ἀλλ' οὐ τί γε Αἰγυπτία χρώμενος φωνῇ οὐδ'

tate to bring random people to commit unlawful sexual acts. (2) And they demand that the interpreters of their oracles practice abstinence from meat, so that they are not tainted by the vapors from the bodies [of sacrificial victims], while they themselves are very much enticed by the vapors of the sacrifices. Furthermore, they want the initiate to never touch a corpse, while most conjurations of the gods are carried out by means of dead animals. (3) Even more unreasonably, any random person can use threats to scare into subjection not just some daemon or soul of the dead, but the Sun King himself, or the Moon, or some other heavenly body; lying, so that they can be truthful. (4) To say that one would shatter the sky, bring the secrets of Isis to light, reveal Abydos's mystery, bring the bark to a halt, scatter the limbs of Osiris for Typhon – doesn't it surpass every excess of stupidity on the part of the person making such threats without understanding them or being able to realize them, and every excess of lowness on the part of those who give in to such vain fears and fantasies, like mindless children? (5) Nonetheless, the sacred scribe Chaeremon chronicles those [injunctions], as they are frequently recounted among the Egyptians and it is said that they hold a powerful sway [over the gods]. (6) And what sense do these prayers have, that proclaim he has arisen from mud, is seated on a lotus, navigates a boat, alternates between forms according to the season, changes his shape to match the sign of the Zodiac? They [the Egyptian diviners] say they have seen him themselves, not knowing that what they see is the particular stimulation coming from their own imagination, projected onto that [the sun]. (7) But if all this is said symbolically, as symbols of its [the sun's] powers, they must tell us their interpretation of these symbols. Evidently, if it were something that affects the sun, as during an eclipse, it would be visible to all eyes looking at it. (8) And what is meant by the meaningless names and the barbaric sounds of the names, that replace those familiar to a person? For when the listener pays attention to the signified, the thought, which stays the same, is sufficient as a reference to [the signified thing], independent of the name. (9) For the invoked [god] is not born Egyp-

ἀνθρωπεία ὅλως χρώμενος. ἡ γὰρ γοήτων ἦν ταῦτα πάντα
 τεχνάσματα καὶ προκαλύμματα διὰ τῶν ἐπιφημιζομένων τῷ
 θεῷ τῶν περὶ ἡμᾶς γινομένων παθῶν, ἡ λελήθαμεν ἐναντίας
 ἐννοίας ἔχοντες περὶ τοῦ θείου ἢ αὐτὸ τῷ ὄντι διάκειται. (10) 390
 Ταῦτα εἰπὼν πάλιν ἀπορεῖ πρὸς τὸν Αἰγύπτιον λέγων· εἰ δὲ
 οἱ μὲν ἀπαθεῖς, οἱ δὲ ἐμπαθεῖς, οἷς διὰ τούτων φαλλοὺς φα-
 σιν εἶσθαι καὶ ποιεῖσθαι αἰσχρορρημοσύνας, μάταιοι αἱ θε-
 ῶν κλήσεις ἔσονται, προσκλήσεις αὐτῶν ἐπαγγελόμενοι καὶ
 μήνιδος ἐξιλάσεις καὶ ἐκθύσεις, καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον αἱ λεγόμεναι 395
 ἀνάγκαι θεῶν. ἀκήλητον γὰρ καὶ ἀβίαστον καὶ ἀκατανάγκα-
 στον τὸ ἀπαθές. (11) Καὶ πάλιν ἐξῆς ἐπιλέγει· Μάτην αὐτοῖς
 ἡ σοφία ἐξήσκηται, περὶ δραπέτου εὐρέσεως ἡ χωρίου ὠνῆς ἡ
 γάμου, εἰ τύχοι, ἡ ἐμπορίας τὸν θεῖον νοῦν ἐνοχλήσασι. εἰ δ' οὐ
 παρῆται μὲν, οἱ δὲ συνόντες περὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων τάληθέστατα 400
 λέγουσιν, περὶ δὲ εὐδαιμονίας οὐδὲν ἀσφαλές οὐδ' ἐχέγγυον, οὐκ
 ἦσαν ἄρα οὔτε θεοὶ οὔτε ἀγαθοὶ δαίμονες, ἀλλ' ἡ ἐκεῖνος ὁ λε-
 γόμενος πλάνος.”

FR. 73

A. Melius sapuit iste Porphyrius, cum ad Anebontem scripsit Ae-
 gyptium, ubi consulenti similis et quaerenti et prodit artes sacrilegas 405
 et euertit. B. Et ibi quidem omnes daemones reprobatur, quos dicit ob
 imprudentiam trahere humidum uaporem C. et ideo non in aethere,
 sed in aere esse sub luna atque in ipso lunae globo; D. uerum tamen
 non audet omnes fallacias et malitias et ineptias, quibus merito move-
 tur, omnibus daemonibus dare. Quosdam namque benignos daemones 410
 more appellat aliorum, cum omnes generaliter imprudentes esse fatea-
 tur. E. Miratur autem quod non solum dii alliciantur victimis, sed
 etiam compellantur atque cogantur facere quod homines volunt; F. et

390 ἡ] ἡ leg. SS

tian, and if he were, he would still not use the Egyptian language, nor would he use any human language at all. Either all these things are magic artifices and obfuscations that come from what we ascribe to the divine, depending on our sensations; or [the divine] escapes our notice completely, because our thoughts about it are so opposed to its actual nature. (10) Having said this, he [Porphyry] replies again to the Egyptian: “If some gods are not subject to passivity and others are, to which, as it is said, *ithyphalli* are presented by those [priests] and obscenities are expressed, the invocations to the gods will be vain, the calls for help, the atonements against their anger, the sacrifices, and, to an even higher degree, the so-called coercions of the gods – for that which is not subject to passivity cannot be invoked, constrained, or coerced. (11) And he [Porphyry] then adds: They practice wisdom in vain, if they disturb divine intelligence to find a slave who escaped, to buy some field, for a marriage, or simply for business. But if this doesn’t matter to them, and if its [wisdom’s] followers, speak most truly about other things, but have nothing coherent or reliable to say about happiness, then [their invocations] were neither to gods nor good daemons but to the one called “deceiver.”

A. This Porphyry knows better. Writing to Anebo the Egyptian, he pretends that he is inquiring and raising questions, although he is overturning and subverting the sacrilegious techniques. B. He rejects all daemons, stating that they drag along humid vapors due to their ignorance and reside, C. not in the ether, but in the air under the moon and in the sphere of the moon. D. Admittedly, he does not dare to attribute all deceptions, wickedness, and absurdities – by which he is rightfully scandalized – to all daemons. Following the practice of others, he calls some daemons benign but admits that generally, they are all ignorant. E. He is surprised that the gods are not only enticed by sacrificial victims but are even urged and compelled to do what humans

FR. 73

si corpore et incorporalitate dii a daemonibus distinguuntur, quo modo
deos esse existimandum sit solem et lunam et visibilia cetera in caelo, 415
quae corpora esse non dubitat; G. et si dii sunt, quo modo alii benefici,
alii malefici esse dicantur; H. et quo modo incorporalibus, cum sint
corporei, coniungantur. I. Quaerit etiam veluti dubitans, utrum in div-
inantibus et quaedam mira facientibus animae sint passiones an aliqui
spiritus extrinsecus veniant, per quos haec valeant; et potius venire 420
extrinsecus conicit, eo quod lapidibus et herbis adhibitis et alligent
quosdam, et aperiant clausa ostia, vel aliquid eius modi mirabiliter op-
erentur. J. Unde dicit alios opinari esse quoddam genus, cui exaudire
sit proprium, natura fallax, omniforme, multimodum, simulans deos et
daemones et animas defunctorum, et hoc esse quod efficiat haec om- 425
nia quae videntur bona esse vel praua; ceterum circa ea, quae vere bona
sunt, nihil opitulari, immo vero ista nec nosse, sed et male conciliare
et insimulare atque inpedire nonnumquam virtutis sedulos sectatores,
et plenum esse temeritatis et fastus, gaudere nidoribus, adulationibus
capi, K. et cetera, quae de hoc genere fallacium malignorumque spiri- 430
tuum, qui extrinsecus in animam veniunt humanosque sensus sopitos
vigilantesque deludunt, non tamquam sibi persuasa confirmat, sed tam
tenuiter suspicatur aut dubitat, ut haec alios asserat opinari.

L. Difficile quippe fuit tanto philosopho cunctam diabolicam soci-
etatem vel nosse vel fidenter arguere, quam quaelibet anicula Chris- 435
tiana nec cunctatur esse, et liberrime detestatur. Nisi forte iste et ip-
sum, ad quem scribit, Anebontem tamquam talium sacrorum praeclaris-

want. F. And if it is by virtue of the body and bodilessness that gods differ from daemons, how could one think that the sun, the moon and the other indisputably corporeal things in the sky are gods? G. And if they are gods, how can some be considered beneficent and others maleficent? H. And how can they be connected, as corporeal beings, with incorporeal beings? I. Pretending to be uncertain, he [Porphyry] asks whether diviners and thaumaturges are capable of performing such acts because of way that their soul is affected or because of spirits coming from the outside through which their [rituals] are efficacious. He contends instead that they must come from outside because they use stones and herbs to bind people together, to open closed doors, and to perform other such miraculous deeds. J. And this is why he claims that others believe there is a type of being that is obedient, deceptive by nature, capable of assuming all forms and performing various acts, that imitates gods, daemons, and the souls of the dead; and [he thinks that] it is this type of being that is responsible for all those things that seem good or bad. Furthermore, [they believe that] they do not contribute to bringing about anything really good and they do not even know what it is. Instead, they give bad advice and make reproaches and sometimes hinder those who are eager to attain virtue. They are full of audacity and arrogance, they rejoice in the sacrificial fumes and are captivated by flatteries. K. He does not validate these and the other aspects of this type of deceptive, malicious spirit that penetrates the soul from outside and that deludes people whose senses are asleep or awake, as if he were persuaded by them, but he raises subtle suspicions and doubts against them, so much that he declares it is others who think these things.

L. It must have been difficult for a philosopher of this rank to understand such diabolic society or to oppose it arduously – a society that any old little Christian woman would have rejected and hated wholeheartedly. It could be the case that he is afraid of offending Anebo, to whom he is writing as if he were a most illustrious priest of such ven-

simum antistitem et alios talium operum tamquam divinatorum et ad
deos colendos pertinentium admiratores verecundatur offendere. M.
Sequitur tamen et ea velut inquirendo commemorat, quae sobrie con- 440
siderata tribui non possunt nisi malignis et fallacibus potestatibus. Quærit
enim cur tamquam melioribus inuocatis quasi peioribus imperetur, ut
iniusta praecepta hominis exsequantur; N. cur adtractatum re Veneria
non exaudiant inprecantem, cum ipsi ad incestos quosque concubi- 445
tus quoslibet ducere non morentur; O. cur animantibus suos antistites
oportere abstinere denuntient, ne uaporibus profecto corporeis pollu-
antur, ipsi vero et aliis uaporibus inliciantur et nidoribus hostiarum,
P. cumque a cadaveris contactu prohibeatur inspector, plerumque illa
cadaveribus celebrentur; Q. quid sit, quod non daemone vel alicui an- 450
imae defuncti, sed ipsi soli et lunae aut cuicumque caelestium homo
vicio cuiuslibet obnoxius intendit minas eosque territat falso, ut eis ex-
torqueat veritatem. Nam et caelum se concludere comminatur et cetera
similia homini impossibilia, ut illi dii tamquam insipientissimi pueri
falsis et ridiculis comminationibus territi quod imperatur efficiant. R.
Dicit etiam scripsisse Chaeremonem quendam, talium sacrorum vel 455
potius sacrilegiorum peritum, ea, quae apud Aegyptios sunt celebrata
rumoribus vel de Iside vel de Osiri marito eius, maximam vim habere
cogendi deos, ut faciant imperata, quando ille, qui carminibus cogit,
ea se prodere vel euertere comminatur, ubi se etiam Osiridis mem-
bra dissipaturum terribiliter dicit, si facere iussa neglexerint. S. Haec 460
atque huius modi uana et insana hominem diis minari, nec quibusli-
bet, sed ipsis caelestibus et siderea luce fulgentibus, nec sine effectu,
sed violenta potestate cogentem atque his terroribus ad facienda quae
voluerit perducentem, merito Porphyrius admiratur; T. immo uero sub
specie mirantis et causas rerum talium requirentis dat intellegi illos 465
haec agere spiritus, quorum genus superius sub aliorum opinacione de-
scripsit, non, ut ipse posuit, natura, sed vicio fallaces, qui simulant deos
et animas defunctorum, daemones autem non, ut ait ipse, simulant, sed
plane sunt. U. Et quod ei videtur herbis et lapidibus et animantibus
et sonis certis quibusdam ac vocibus et figurationibus atque figmen- 470

erable rites, and the admirers of seemingly divine arts dedicated to the adoration of the gods. M. But he continues and, under the pretense of investigating them, he brings up things that can only be attributed, under close scrutiny, to malicious and deceptive powers. He asks why higher beings are invoked and ordered to carry out the unjust orders of a human person as if they were inferior; N. why they do not obey a person sullied by sexual acts who beseeches them, while they don't hesitate to lead people to impure sexual unions of any kind whatsoever; O. why they require their priests to abstain from living beings – no doubt to avoid being sullied by the vapors of the bodies – while being enticed by other vapors and smells of burnt offerings; P. why celebrations usually involve cadavers although it is forbidden for the initiate to touch cadavers; Q. why a person indulging in any vice whatsoever is capable of intimidating not some daemon or the soul of a deceased, but the sun, the moon, or some other heavenly being with false threats, so as to extort the truth from them. They [the priests] furthermore threaten to make the sky collapse and other things that are impossible for humans, scaring the gods with false and ridiculous menaces like mindless children and making them execute the orders they receive. R. He says that Chaeremon, an expert of these sacred – or should I rather say sacrilegious – rites, writes about the well-known celebrations that are held for Isis or for her husband Osiris that they have great power to capture the gods and make them execute orders, when the person who uses incantations threatens them with revealing or subverting [those celebrations] and affirms that he will disperse Osiris's limbs if they fail to carry out the orders. S. Porphyry is rightfully surprised that a man can bring forward such vain and insane threats against the gods – not just any gods, but against the celestial ones, who emit the sidereal light; and not in vain but coercing them with great violence and terrorizing them to bring them to execute his wishes. T. But he [Porphyry] pretends to examine and inquire about the causes of such things, allowing one to think that they are caused by the spirits whose kind he has described above, with

tis, quibusdam etiam observatis in caeli conversione motibus siderum fabricari in terra ab hominibus potestates idoneas variis effectibus exsequendis, totum hoc ad eosdem ipsos daemones pertinet ludificatores animarum sibi subditarum et voluptaria sibi ludibria de hominum erroribus exhibentes. V. Aut ergo re vera dubitans et inquirens ista Porphyrius ea tamen commemorat, quibus conuincantur et redarguantur, nec ad eas potestates, quae nobis ad beatam vitam capessendam favent, sed ad deceptores daemones pertinere monstrentur; aut, ut meliora de philosopho suspicemur, eo modo voluit hominem Aegyptium talibus erroribus deditum et aliqua magna se scire opinantem non superba quasi auctoritate doctoris offendere, nec aperte adversantis altercatione turbare, sed quasi quaerentis et discere cupientis humilitate ad ea cogitanda convertere et quam sint contemnenda vel etiam devitanda monstrare.

W. Denique prope ad epistolae finem petit se ab eo doceri, quae sit ad beatitudinem via ex Aegyptia sapientia. X. Ceterum illos, quibus conversatio cum diis ad hoc esset, ut ob inveniendum fugitivum vel praedium comparandum, aut propter nuptias vel mercaturam vel quid huius modi mentem divinam inquietarent, frustra eos videri dicit coluisse sapientiam; Y. illa etiam ipsa numina, cum quibus conversarentur, etsi de ceteris rebus vera praedicerent, tamen quoniam de beatitudine nihil cautum nec satis idoneum monerent, nec deos illos esse nec benignos daemones, sed aut illum, qui dicitur fallax, aut humanum omne commentum.

reference to other authors' opinions. These spirits, that imitate gods and the souls of the deceased, are not, as he notes, deceptive by nature but by corruption, and they don't imitate daemons, as he says, but are daemons. U. And when he considers that humans can create powers capable of achieving various effects with herbs, stones, animals, distinctive sounds and words, fabricated images, and by observing the movements of the celestial bodies in the revolution of the heavens – all this pertains to those same daemons that subdue souls and mess with them, joyfully turning human mistakes into a laughingstock. V. Or else, Porphyry is actually raising doubts and questions, mentioning only the things in which he can find errors and to which he can object, showing that these things don't help us attain beatitude but clearly pertain to the deceptive daemons. Or else, aiming to make us think more highly of the philosopher, he wanted to avoid offending the Egyptian man who had fallen into such errors and thought he had some great knowledge, using the unpretentious authority of a learned man; and not disturb him by having an open debate with an opponent. Instead, he presents himself as someone who inquires with humility and wants to know more, trying to lead him to worthwhile ideas and bring him away from condemnable or devious ideas.

W. Then, at the end of the letter, he asks to be taught the way to beatitude based on Egyptian wisdom. X. He thinks that they cultivate wisdom in vain who converse with the gods to find a fugitive or to buy an estate, or for a wedding or a trade, or who bother the divine intellect for other such things. Y. And even if their divine interlocutors make correct claims about other things, if those divinities have nothing wise or helpful to say, they cannot be gods or good daemons. They can only be either the daemon they call “deceitful,” or a fabrication of the human mind.

I [Iamblichus] am deeply worried that, while they [the gods] are

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τάττονται ὡς χείρους.

Λέγε δὴ οὖν ὅ τι δὴ πάννυ με θράττει, πῶς ὡς κρείττονες παρακαλούμενοι ἐπιτάττονται ὡς χείρονες.

Quaerit enim cur tamquam melioribus inuocatis quasi peioribus imperetur

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FR. 75 καὶ δίκαιον εἶναι ἀξιούντες τὸν θεράποντα τὰ ἄδικα αὐτοὶ κελευσθέντες δρᾶν ὑπομένουσιν.

Τί οὖν δὴ λέγομεν περὶ τῆς μετὰ ταύτην ἐπιζητήσεως· τί δίκαιον δῆποτε μὲν ἀξιούσι τὸν θεραπεύοντα εἶναι οἱ καλούμενοι, αὐτοὶ δὲ τὰ ἄδικα κελεύομενοι δρᾶν ὑπομένουσιν;

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ut iniusta praecepta hominis exsequantur

FR. 76 καὶ καθαρῶ μὲν μὴ ὄντι ἐξ ἀφροδισίων καλοῦντι οὐχ ὑπακούουσιν, αὐτοὶ δὲ ἄγειν εἰς παράνομα ἀφροδίσια τοὺς τυχόντας οὐκ ὀκνοῦσιν.

Ἐρωτᾶς δὴ καὶ ἅμα ἀπορεῖς μετὰ τοῦτο, ὡς μὴ καθαρῶ μὲν ὄντι ἐξ ἀφροδισίων οὐκ ἂν καλοῦντι ὑπακούσαιεν, αὐτοὶ δὲ ἄγειν εἰς παράνομα ἀφροδίσια τοὺς τυχόντας οὐκ ὀκνοῦσιν.

510

cur adtrectatum re Veneria non exaudiant inprecantem, cum ipsi ad incestos quosque concubitus quoslibet ducere non morentur

FR. 77 Ὅ τοίνυν πάντων, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, ἀνθρώπων τῶν τε ἐν παιδείᾳ διατριβόντων καὶ τῶν ἀπειροτέρων τῆς ἐν λόγοις μελέτης κοινόν ἐστὶ ζήτημα, ἀπορεῖς κατὰ τὸ συνεχές, τὸ περὶ θυσιῶν

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invoked as superior beings, they take orders like inferiors.

He [Porphyry] says: It worries me deeply that those invoked as superior take orders as if they were inferior.

He [Porphyry] asks why, as they are invoked as higher beings, they are being controlled as if they were inferior ...

All while expecting their follower to be just, they willingly commit unjust acts at one's command. FR. 75

And what do we say about the next question of why the invoked expect their follower to be just, while they themselves willingly commit unjust acts at one's command?

... so as to carry out the unjust orders of a human ...

And although they wouldn't give heed to the invocations of someone who is impure because of his sexual life, they do not hesitate to bring random people to commit unlawful sexual acts. FR. 76

You then raise another question, asking next why they wouldn't give heed to the invocations of someone who is impure because of his sexual life, they willingly bring random people to commit unlawful sexual acts.

... why they don't give heed to a person sullied by sexual acts who beseeches them, even if they themselves don't hesitate to lead people to impure sexual unions ...

Next, you raise a question that concerns something common to practically all humans, both those who spend time cultivating themselves and those inexperienced in intellectual practices: the question FR. 77

λέγω· τίνα ἔχουσι χρείαν ἢ δύναμιν ἐν τῷ παντὶ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖς, τίνος τε ἔνεκα λόγου προσφόρως μὲν τοῖς τιμωμένοις ὠφελίμως δὲ τοῖς τὰ δῶρα προσάγουσιν ἐπιτελοῦνται. Πρό- 520
σεστι δὲ δὴ αὐτόθι καὶ ἄλλη τις ἐναντίωσις ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ τοῦς ὑποφήτας ἀπέχεσθαι δεῖν ἐμφύχων, ἵνα μὴ οἱ θεοὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ ζώων ἀτμοῖς χραίνωνται ἐναντίον γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο τῷ αὐτοῦς τοῖς ἀπὸ ζώων ἀτμοῖς μάλιστα δελεάζεσθαι.

καὶ ἀπὸ ἐμφύχων μὲν ἀποχῆς κελεύουσιν δεῖν τοὺς ὑπο- 525
φήτας, ἵνα μὴ τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων ἀτμοῖς χραίνωνται (αὐτοὶ δὲ ἀτμοῖς τοῖς ἀπὸ θυσιῶν μάλιστα δελεάζονται).

cur animantibus suos antistites oportere abstinere denuntiant, ne uaporibus profecto corporeis pollutantur, ipsi vero et aliis uaporibus inliciantur et nidoribus hostiarum 530

FR. 78 Ὁ δὲ μείζον ἐρώτημα καὶ περὶ μειζόνων πυνθάνη, πῶς ἄν σοι δυνήθειην δυσβάτου καὶ μακρᾶς δεόμενον διερμηνεύσεως ἀποκρίνασθαι διὰ βραχέων καὶ ἱκανῶς;

FR. 79 Πολὸν γὰρ ταῦτα ἀληθέστερά ἐστι καὶ μᾶλλον τῆς τῶν θεῶν οὐσίας καὶ δυνάμεως τυγχάνει ἢ ὁ σὺ καθυπονοεῖς, ὡς ἀτμοῖς 535
θυσιῶν τοῖς ἀπὸ ζώων μάλιστα δελεάζονται.

αὐτοὶ δὲ ἀτμοῖς τοῖς ἀπὸ θυσιῶν μάλιστα δελεάζονται

et aliis uaporibus ... et nidoribus hostiarum

FR. 80 Ἐμοὶ καιρὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐξῆς ἀπορίαν ὧν σὺ προτείνεις μετα- 540
βαίνειν. Τί γὰρ δήποτε, ὡς ὁ σὸς λόγος, νεκροῦ μὲν ἀναφῆ δεῖν

of sacrifices. What is their use or power with regard to the “All” and the gods, and why are these offerings presented as applicable to those they celebrate while also providing benefits to the ones making the offerings? There is another contradiction here: namely, that the priests have to abstain from living creatures so that the gods are not tainted by the vapors of animals – but then, on the contrary, they are especially enticed by the vapors from living beings.

And they demand that the interpreters of their oracles practice abstinence from meat, so that they are not tainted by the vapors of the sacrifices, while they themselves are very much enticed by the vapors of the sacrifices.

... why they proclaim that they want their priests to abstain from living beings – probably to avoid being sullied by the vapors of the bodies – but they themselves take pleasure in other vapors and smells of burnt offerings ...

This is a vast question, and you [Porphry] are inquiring about vast things. How could I answer you briefly and sufficiently, when the answer requires a difficult and long investigation?

FR. 78

This is much truer and befits the essence and power of the gods more than what you [Porphry] assume when you say that they are enticed by the vapors coming from animal sacrifices.

FR. 79

They themselves are very much enticed by the vapors of the sacrifices.

... and by other vapors and odors of sacrifices ...

Now is the time for me [Iamblichus] to go over to the next difficulty that you propose. Why in the world would an initiate, you say, need to

FR. 80

εἶναι τὸν ἐπόπτην, διὰ δὲ νεκρῶν ζώων τὰ πολλὰ αἱ θεαγωγίαι ἐπιτελοῦνται;

καὶ νεκροῦ μὲν ἀθιγῆ δεῖν εἶναι τὸν ἐπόπτην, διὰ νεκρῶν δὲ ζώων αἱ θεαγωγίαι ἐκτελοῦνται.

cumque a cadaueris contact prohibeatur inspector, plerumque illa cadaueribus celebrentur 545

FR. 81 οὐχ, ὡς σὺ νομίζεις, πρὸς ἥλιον ἢ σελήνην ἢ τινα τῶν κατ' οὐρανὸν ἐπανατείνονται οἱ ἄνθρωποι.

πολλῶ δὲ τούτων ἀλογώτερον τὸ μὴ δαίμονι, εἰ τύχοι, ἢ ψυχῇ τεθηγκότος, αὐτῷ δὲ τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἡλίῳ ἢ Σελήνῃ ἢ τινι τῶν κατ' οὐρανὸν ἄνθρωπον τῷ τυχόντι ὑποχείριον ἀπειλὰς προσφέροντα ἐκφοβεῖν, ψευδόμενον ἕν' ἐκείνοι ἀληθεύσωσι. 550

quid sit, quod non daemone vel alicui animae defuncti, sed ipsi soli et lunae aut cuicumque caelestium homo vitio cuilibet obnoxius intendit minas eosque territat falso, ut eis extorqueat veritatem. 555

FR. 82 Αὐτὸ δὲ καθ' ἑαυτὸ τὸ διὰ τῶν ἱερῶν ζώων, ὡσπερ τῶν ἱεράκων, ὅπως ἐπιτελεῖται μαντικὸν διερμηνεύοντες, θεοὺς μὲν οὐδέποτε φαμεν παραγίγνεσθαι τῇ χρήσει τῶν κηδευθέντων οὕτω σωμαίων

FR. 83 Ὅπερ ἔχει μὲν, ὡς καὶ σὺ αὐτὸς λέγεις, βιαστικὰς ἀπειλὰς, μερίζεται δὲ περὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἀπειλῶν πολυμερῶς ἢ γὰρ τὸν οὐρανὸν προσαράξειν ἢ τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς Ἰσιδος ἐκφανεῖν ἢ τὸ ἐν Ἀβύδῳ ἀπόρρητον δείξειν ἢ στήσειν τὴν βάρην ἢ τὰ μέλη τοῦ Ὀσίριδος διασκεδάσειν τῷ Τυφῶνι ἢ ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον ἀπειλεῖ ποιήσειν. 560 565

be pure from any contact with a corpse, while most of the conjurations of the gods are carried out by means of dead animals?

They want the initiate to never touch a corpse, while most conjurations of the gods are carried out by means of dead animals.

... why celebrations involve cadavers although it is forbidden, for the egypt, to touch cadavers ...

It is not, as you think, to the sun, the moon, or to other heavenly bodies that humans extend [their prayers].

FR. 81

Even more unreasonably, any random person can use threats to scare into subjection not just some daemon or soul of the dead, but the Sun King himself, or the Moon, or some other heavenly body; lying, so that they can be truthful.

... why a human person intending to harm someone intimidates the sun, the moon, or some other heavenly being with false threats, so as to extort the truth from them, instead of a daemon or the soul of a deceased.

As for our examination in itself of how divination with sacred animals such as hawks is accomplished, we [Iamblichus] affirm that the gods never attend the use of bodies treated in such a way.

FR. 82

As for the violent threats, as you [Porphyry] say, the vast number of them present the following divisions, according to their various types: to shatter the sky, or bring the secrets of Isis to light, or reveal Abydos's mysteries, bring the barque to a halt, scatter the limbs of Osiris for Typhon, or to threaten to do some other thing.

FR. 83

τὸ γὰρ λέγειν ὅτι τὸν οὐρανὸν προσαράξει καὶ τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς Ἰσιδος ἐκφανεῖ καὶ τὸ ἐν Ἀβύδῳ ἀπόρρητον δείξει καὶ τὴν βᾶριν στησει καὶ τὰ μέλη τοῦ Ὀσίριδος διασκεδάσει τῷ Τυφῶνι, τίνα οὐχ ὑπερβολὴν ἐμπληξίας μὲν τῷ ἀπειλοῦντι ἂ μῆτε οἶδεν μῆτε δύναται, καταλείπει, ταπεινότητος δὲ τοῖς δε- 570
δοικόσιν οὕτως κενὸν φόβον καὶ πλάσματα, ὡς κομιδῇ παῖδες ἀνόητοι; καίτοι καὶ Χαϊρήμων ὁ ἱερογραμματεὺς ἀναγράφει ταῦτα, ὡς καὶ παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις θρυλούμενα, καὶ ταῦτά φασιν εἶναι καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα βιαστικώτατα.

Nam et caelum se collidere comminatur et cetera similia homini 575
impossibilia, ut illi dii tamquam insipientissimi pueri falsis et ridiculis
comminationibus territi quod imperatur efficiant. Dicit etiam scrip-
sisse Chaeremonem quendam, talium sacrorum vel potius sacrilegio-
rum peritum, ea, quae apud Aegyptios sunt celebrata rumoribus vel de
Iside vel de Osiri marito eius, maximam vim habere cogendi deos, ut 580
faciant imperata, quando ille, qui carminibus cogit, ea se prodere vel
euertere comminatur, ubi se etiam Osiridis membra dissipaturum ter-
ribiliter dicit, si facere iussa neglexerint. Haec atque huius modi uana
et insana hominem diis minari, nec quibuslibet, sed ipsis caelestibus et
siderea luce fulgentibus, nec sine effectu, sed violenta potestate cogen- 585
tem atque his terroribus ad facienda quae voluerit perducentem, merito
Porphyrius admiratur;

FR. 84

Ἄκουε δὴ οὖν καὶ σὺ κατὰ τὸν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων νοῦν τὴν τῶν 590
συμβόλων νοερὰν διερμήνευσιν, ἀφείδεις μὲν τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς φαντα-
σίας καὶ τῆς ἀκοῆς εἶδωλον αὐτῶν τῶν συμβολικῶν, ἐπὶ δὲ τὴν
νοερὰν ἀλήθειαν ἑαυτὸν ἐπαναγαγών.

Ἴλὸν ... ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀνεφάνη ... ἐπὶ λωτῷ καθέζεσθαι ... Ὁ δ'
ἐπὶ πλοίου ναντιλλόμενος ... τὸ σχηματίζεσθαι μὲν κατὰ ζώδιον

To say that one would shatter the sky, bring the secrets of Isis to light, reveal Abydos's mystery, bring the barque to a halt, scatter the limbs of Osiris for Typhon – doesn't it surpass every excess of stupidity on the part of the person making such threats without understanding them or being able to realize them, and every excess of lowness on the part of those who give in to such vain fears and fantasies, like mindless children? Nonetheless, the sacred scribe Chaeremon chronicles those [injunctions], as they are frequently recounted among the Egyptians, and it is said that they hold a powerful sway [over the gods].

They [the Egyptian diviners] furthermore threaten to make the sky collapse and other things that are impossible for humans, so as to scare the gods with false and ridiculous menaces, like mindless children, and make them execute the orders they receive. He says that Chaeremon, an expert of these sacred – or should I rather say sacrilegious – rites, writes about the celebrations that are commonly held for Isis or for her husband Osiris that they have great power to capture the gods and to make them execute orders, when the person who uses incantations threatens them of revealing or subverting [those celebrations] and affirms that he will disperse Osiris's limbs if they fail to carry out the orders. Porphyry is right to be surprised that a man can bring forward such vain and insane threats against the gods – not just any gods, but against the celestial, who emit the sidereal light, and not inefficaciously, but coercing them with great violence and terrorizing them to bring them to execute his orders.

You [Porphyry], too, hear now about the Egyptian way of interpreting symbols intellectually, leaving aside the image of the symbols that come from imagination and rumor, and raising yourself to the intellectual truth.

FR. 84

... mud ... he appeared from [the corporeal things mud symbolizes]
seated on a lotus ... he navigates a boat ... assuming forms according

καὶ τὰς μορφὰς ἀμείβειν καθ' ὥραν

Ἄλλ' ἐπεὶ τὰ δεχόμενα ἄλλα ἀλλαχοῦ περὶ τὴν ἀμέριστον 595
δόσιν τοῦ θεοῦ φέρεται, καὶ αὐτὰ δέχεται πολυειδεῖς δυνάμεις
ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου κατὰ τὰς οἰκείας ἑαυτῶν φορὰς, διὰ τοῦτο βού-
λεται μὲν ἢ συμβολικὴ διδαχὴ διὰ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν δοθέντων
τὸν ἕνα θεὸν ἐμφαίνειν, καὶ διὰ τῶν πολυτρόπων δυνάμεων τὴν
μίαν αὐτοῦ παριστάνει δυνάμιν (διὸ καὶ φησιν αὐτὸν ἕνα εἶναι 600
καὶ τὸν αὐτόν), τὰς δὲ διαμείβεις τῆς μορφῆς καὶ τοὺς με-
τασχηματισμοὺς ἐν τοῖς δεχομένοις ὑποτίθεται (διόπερ κατὰ
ζώδιον καὶ καθ' ὥραν μεταβάλλεσθαι αὐτὸν φησιν), ὡς ἐκεί-
νων διαποικιλλομένων περὶ τὸν θεὸν κατὰ τὰς πολλὰς αὐτοῦ
ὑποδοχάς. 605

αὐταὶ δὲ αἱ εὐχαὶ τίνα ἔχουσιν λόγον, τὸν ἐξ ἰλῦος ἀναφα-
νέντα λέγουσαι καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ λωτῷ καθήμενον καὶ ἐπὶ πλοίου
ναυτιλλόμενον καὶ καθ' ὥραν τὰς μορφὰς ἀμείβοντα καὶ κατὰ
ζώδιον μετασχηματιζόμενον; οὕτω γὰρ φασιν αὐτοπτέισθαι,
ἀγνοοῦντες ὅτι τὸ ἴδιον πάθος τῆς αὐτῶν φαντασίας ἐκείνῳ 610
περιάπτουσιν. εἰ δὲ συμβολικῶς λέγεται ταῦτα, τῶν ἐκείνου δυ-
νάμεων ὄντα σύμβολα, τὴν ἐρμηνείαν τῶν συμβόλων εἰπάτω-
σαν. δῆλον γὰρ ὡς εἰ τοῦ ἡλίου ἦν τὸ πάθος, καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς
ἐκλείψεσιν, πᾶσιν ἂν ὤφθη ταῦτόν τοις εἰς αὐτὸν ἀτενίζουσιν.

FR. 85 διὸ καὶ φησιν αὐτὸν ἕνα εἶναι καὶ τὸν αὐτόν 615

FR. 86 Τί γὰρ βούλεται τὰ ἄσημα ὀνόματα ... Ἄλλὰ διὰ τί τῶν ση-
μαντικῶν τὰ βάρβαρα πρὸ τῶν ἐκάστῳ οἰκείων προτιμῶμεν;

Ἄλλ' ὁ ἀκούων, φῆς, πρὸς τὰ σημαινόμενα ἀφορᾶ, ὥστε
αὐτάρκης ἢ αὐτὴ μένουσα ἔννοια, κἄν ὅποιοι οὖν ὑπάρχη το-
ῦνομα ... 620

to the sign of the zodiac and changing shape according to the hour.

But as those who receive the indivisible gift from the god each receive it in a different way and are gifted the manifold powers of the sun in accordance with their inherent dispositions, the symbolic teaching aims therefore to manifest the one god through a multiplicity of gifts and establish his one power through a multitude of powers. This is why he is said to be one and the same. Changing shape and assuming forms is something he does for the sake of those who receive – and this is why he says that it [the sun] changes according to the sign of the zodiac and the hour – as they [those powers] form a variegated plurality according to the many ways that the god is received.

And what sense do these prayers have, that proclaim he has arisen from mud, is seated on a lotus, navigates a boat, alternates between forms according to the season, changes his shape to match the sign of the Zodiac? They say they have seen him themselves, not knowing that what they see is the particular stimulation coming from their own imagination, projected onto that [the sun]. But if all this is said symbolically, as symbols of its [the sun's] powers, they must tell us their interpretation of these symbols. Evidently, if it were something that affects the sun, as during an eclipse, it would be visible to all eyes looking at it.

This is why he says he is one and the same.

FR. 85

What is the point of those meaningless names? Why do we prefer barbaric designations to those familiar to a person?

FR. 86

You say that a person who hears pays attention to the signified, so that the thought, standing by itself, is sufficient, no matter what the name is ...

... ἢ ὡς Αἰγύπτιος ἢ αἰγυπτία φωνῆ χρώμενός ἐστιν ὁ κα-
λούμενος

Τί δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄσημα βούλεται ὀνόματα καὶ τῶν ἀσήμων τὰ
βάρβαρα πρὸ τῶν ἐκάστω οἰκείων; εἰ γὰρ πρὸς τὸ σημαυνόμε-
νον ἀφορᾷ τὸ ἀκοῦον, αὐτάρκης ἢ αὐτὴ μένουσα ἔννοια δη-
λῶσαι, καὶ ὅποιον οὖν ὑπάρχη τοῦνομα. οὐ γάρ που καὶ ὁ κα-
λούμενος Αἰγύπτιος ἦν τῷ γένει· εἰ δὲ καὶ Αἰγύπτιος, ἀλλ' οὐ τί
γε Αἰγυπτία χρώμενος φωνῆ οὐδ' ἀνθρωπεῖα ὅλως χρώμενος.

625

FR. 87

Οὐδ' αὖ γοήτων ἐστὶ ταῦτα πάντα τεχνάσματα ... ἀλλ' οὐδὲ
προκαλύμματα ταῦτα διὰ τῶν ἐπιφημιζομένων τῷ θεῷ τῶν
περὶ ἡμᾶς γίνεταί παθῶν ... οὐδ' ἐναντίας ποιούμεθα περὶ τοῦ
θεοῦ τὰς ἐννοίας ἢ αὐτὸ τῷ ὄντι διάκειται ἀλλ' ἥπερ ἔχει φύ-
σεως, καὶ ὡς τετυχήκασι τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἀληθείας οἱ πρῶτοι
καταστησάμενοι τοὺς νόμους τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀγιστείας, οὕτως ἐν
αὐτοῖς ἐμμένομεν

630

635

ἢ γὰρ γοήτων ἦν ταῦτα πάντα τεχνάσματα καὶ προκαλύμ-
ματα διὰ τῶν ἐπιφημιζομένων τῷ θεῷ τῶν περὶ ἡμᾶς γινο-
μένων παθῶν, ἢ λελήθαμεν ἐναντίας ἐννοίας ἔχοντες περὶ τοῦ
θεοῦ ἢ αὐτὸ τῷ ὄντι διάκειται.

FR. 88

Τούτων δὲ ἀποστάς, ὡς φῆς, βούλει σοι δηλωθῆναι τί τὸ
πρῶτον αἴτιον ἡγοῦνται εἶναι Αἰγύπτιοι, πότερον νοῦν ἢ ὑπὲρ
νοῦν; καὶ μόνον ἢ μετ' ἄλλου ἢ ἄλλων; καὶ πότερον ἀσώματον
ἢ σωματικόν; καὶ εἰ τῷ δημιουργῷ τὰ αὐτὰ ἢ πρὸ τοῦ δημιουρ-
γοῦ; καὶ εἰ ἐξ ἑνὸς τὰ πάντα ἢ ἐκ πολλῶν; καὶ εἰ ὕλην ἴσασις ἢ
σώματα ποιά πρῶτα; καὶ ἀγέννητον ὕλην ἢ γεννητήν;

640

645

... that the invoked is either Egyptian or using the Egyptian language.

And what is meant by the meaningless names and the barbaric sounds of the names, that replace those familiar to a person? For when the listener pays attention to the signified, the thought, which stays the same, is sufficient as a reference to [the signified thing], independent of the name. For the invoked [god] is not born Egyptian, and if he were, he would still not use the Egyptian language, nor would he use any human language at all.

All these things are neither magic artifices, nor disguises for our passions by means of attributions to the divine. And we do not establish ideas about the divine that contradict its inherent dispositions. We remain within the laws of the sacred rituals determined by those who first discovered its [the divine] truth, and in accordance with its actual nature.

FR. 87

Either all these things are magic artifices and obfuscations that come from what we ascribe to the divine, depending on our sensations; or [the divine] escapes our notice completely, because our thoughts about it are so opposed to its actual nature.

Moving on from these things, you [Porphyry] say that you want to be taught what the Egyptians think about the first cause, whether it is an intellect or beyond any intellect, whether it is alone or accompanied by one or several other beings, whether it is incorporeal or corporeal, whether these [causes] are inherent to the demiurge or exist before him, whether all things come from the One or from the Many, and whether they know matter or primordial, qualified bodies, and [whether] it is uncreated matter or just created matter.

FR. 88

FR. 89 Διευκρινηθέντων δὴ οὖν τούτων οὕτως, καὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς συγ-
γραμμάσιν οἷς λέγεις περιτετυχηκέναι σαφῆς ἐστὶν ἡ διάλυσις.

FR. 90 Χαιρήμων δὲ καὶ οὔτινες ἄλλοι τῶν περὶ τὸν κόσμον ἄπτο-
νται πρώτων αἰτίων, τὰς τελευταίας ἀρχὰς ἐξηγοῦνται ὅσοι
τε τοὺς πλανήτας καὶ τὸν ζωδιακὸν τοὺς τε δεκανοὺς καὶ ὠρο- 650
σκόπους καὶ τοὺς λεγομένους κραταιοὺς καὶ ἡγεμόνας παρα-
διδόασι, τὰς μεριστὰς τῶν ἀρχῶν διανομὰς ἀναφαίνουσιν. Τά
τε ἐν τοῖς Σαλμεσχινακοῖς μέρος τι βραχύτατον περιέχει τῶν
ἐρμαιϊκῶν διατάξεων καὶ τὰ περὶ ἀστέρων ἢ φάσεων ἢ κρύ-
ψεων ἢ σελήνης αὐξήσεων ἢ μειώσεων ἐν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις εἶχε 655
τὴν παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις αἰτιολογίαν ...

προπάτορά τε τῶν ἐν γενέσει δημιουργὸν προτάττουσι, καὶ
τὴν πρὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ζωτικὴν δύναμιν
γιγνώσκουσι ... Λέγεις τοίνυν ὡς Αἰγυπτίων οἱ πλείους καὶ
τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἀστέρων ἀνήψαν κινήσεως Οὐκέτι 660
δὴ οὖν, ὃ σὺ ἀπορεῖς, δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις ἀνάγκης, ἦν εἰμαρμένην
καλοῦμεν, ἐνδέδεται πάντα ... Οὐδ' αὖ τοῖς θεοῖς τὴν εἰμαρμέ-
νην ἀνήψαμεν, οὗς ὡς λυτῆρας τῆς εἰμαρμένης ἔν τε ἱεροῖς καὶ
ξοάνοις θεραπεύομεν.

Χαιρήμων μὲν γὰρ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι οὐδ' ἄλλο τι πρὸ τῶν ὀρω- 665
μένων κόσμων ἡγοῦνται, ἐν ἀρχῆς λόγῳ τιθέμενοι τοὺς Αἰγυ-
πτίων, οὐδ' ἄλλους θεοὺς πλὴν τῶν πλανητῶν λεγομένων καὶ
τῶν συμπληρούντων τὸν ζωδιακὸν καὶ ὅσοι τούτοις παρα-
νατέλλουσιν, τὰς τε εἰς τοὺς δεκανοὺς τομὰς καὶ τοὺς ὠρο- 670
σκόπους καὶ τοὺς λεγομένους κραταιοὺς ἡγεμόνας, ὧν καὶ τὰ
ὀνόματα ἐν τοῖς Ἀλμενιχιακοῖς φέρεται καὶ θεραπείαι παθῶν
καὶ ἀνατολαὶ καὶ δύσεις καὶ μελλόντων σημειώσεις. ἑώρα γὰρ
τοὺς τὸν ἥλιον δημιουργὸν φαμένους καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν Ὅσιριν
καὶ τὴν Ἴσιω καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἱερατικοὺς μύθους ἢ εἰς τοὺς

Once we have thus analyzed these matters, the solution to those that you [Porphyry] claim to have found in the texts will also be clear.

FR. 89

Chaeremon and the others who have sought the first causes of the world have expounded only the lowest causes. And those who teach about the planets, zodiac signs, decans, and horoscopes, and those whom they call powerful and leaders, uncover only fragmentary divisions of the principles. What is written in the *Salmeschinica* contain only a small fraction of the hermetic ordinances ... Among the causal analyses of the Egyptians, the appearances and disappearances of the stars and the waxing and waning of the moon take the last rank.

FR. 90

They [Chaeremon and the others] presupposed that there is a forefather of generated things who acts as a demiurge, and they assume a life-giving power before heaven and in heaven. You [Porphyry] say that most of the Egyptians make our self-determination depend on the movement of the stars. Against the difficulty that you raise, it is not by the inextricable links of necessity – which we call fate – that all things are bound. And we don't make fate depend on the gods that we venerate through temples and statues as liberators of fate.

Charaemon and the others don't think that anything else exists before the visible world. They posit [the gods of the] Egyptians in the first rank and don't admit any other gods than those called planets, those constituting the zodiac and those that rise with them, the decans' divisions, the horoscope, those called powerful leaders, those whose names have been passed on through the Almanacs along with the cures of sicknesses, the rising and setting of the sun and the prediction of the future. For he saw that those who claim that the sun is the demiurge also twist the story of Osiris and Iris and all sacred myths to point to the stars, the appearances, disappearances and risings that they

ἀστέρας καὶ τὰς τούτων φάνσεις καὶ κρύψεις καὶ ἐπιτολὰς 675
 ἐλιπτομένους ἢ εἰς τὰς τῆς σελήνης αὐξήσεις καὶ μειώσεις ἢ
 εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἡλίου πορείαν ἢ τό γε νυκτερινὸν ἡμισφαίριον ἢ τὸ
 ἡμερινὸν ἢ τὸν γε ποταμόν, καὶ ὅλως πάντα εἰς τὰ φυσικὰ καὶ
 οὐδὲν εἰς ἀσωμάτους καὶ ζώσας οὐσίας ἐρμηνεύοντας. ὦν οἱ 680
 πλείους καὶ τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἀστέρων ἀνήψαν κινήσεως,
 οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις Ἀνάγκης, ἣν Εἰμαρμένην λέγου-
 σιν, πάντα καταδήσαντες καὶ πάντα τούτοις ἀνάψαντες τοῖς
 θεοῖς, οὓς ὡς λυτῆρας τῆς Εἰμαρμένης μόνους ἔν τε ἱεροῖς καὶ
 ξοάνοις καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις θεραπεύουσιν.

FR. 91 Οἷόν τέ ἐστι διὰ τῶν πολεόντων θεῶν λύειν ἑαυτόν, καὶ τοὺς 685
 αὐτοὺς ἡγεῖσθαι μοιρηγέτας καὶ δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις τοὺς βίους δε-
 σμεύοντας;

FR. 92 "Ὡστε οὐδ' ὅπερ ἐκ τῶν Ὀμηρικῶν σὺ παρέθηκας, τὸ στρε- 685
 πτοὺς εἶναι τοὺς θεοὺς, ὅσιόν ἐστι φθέγγεσθαι.

FR. 93 Οὐκ ὀρθῶς σὺ κατανευμάμενος ἔν τι βραχυτάτον τὸ τοῦ οἰκο- 690
 δεσπότητος μόριον, περὶ αὐτὸ τὰς ζητήσεις ἐποιήσω. Καὶ ἐντα-
 ῦθα πάλιν ἀφέμενος τοῦ προκειμένου καὶ τοῦ διερευνησασθαι
 πῶς μὲν ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης αὐτὸν δίδωσι, κατὰ τίνα δὲ ἀτοπίαν
 ἢ ἀπόρροϊαν ἢ ζωὴν ἢ δύναμιν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καθήκει, 695
 περὶ γενεθλιαλογίας ποιῆ τὸν λόγον, εἴτε ὑφέστηκεν εἴτε μή,
 καὶ περὶ εὐρέσεως τοῦ οἰκοδεσπότητος, εἴτε ἀδύνατός ἐστιν εἴτε
 δυνατή;

FR. 94 Φῆς γὰρ διὴ ὡς οὗτος ἦν ἄρα εὐδαίμων ὅστις μαθὼν τὸ σχῆμα 700
 τῆς αὐτοῦ γενέσεως τὰ εἰμαρμένα ἐκθύσαιτο γνοὺς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ
 δαίμονα.

FR. 95 Ἄλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν, εἰ καὶ ψευδῶς εἴρηται, ὅμως οὐκ ἔχει γέ 700
 τινα ἀλλοτριότητα, τὰ δ' ἐφεξῆς περὶ τῆς τῶν κανόνων δια-

undergo, interpreting them with reference to the waxing and waning of the moon, to the course of the sun, or the dome of night or of day, or the [Nile] River and thus reduce all things to nature and nothing to incorporeal and living substances. Most of them make what comes from us depend on the movement of the stars and tie all things by the inextricable fetters of necessity, which they call fate. They make all this depend on the gods, which they venerate through temples and sculptures and other things as the only liberators from fate.

How could it possible to free oneself through the orbiting gods, while also considering them as lords of fate and as those who bind lives with inextricable fetters? FR. 91

What you [Porphyry] quote from the Homeric poems, that the gods can be swayed, is an irreverent thing to say. FR. 92

It is not fair, on your [Porphyry's] part, to isolate a very small element – the master of the house [the dominant planet] – and to focus your questions on it. And here you just move away from the subject and from finding out how the master of the house imparts [a person's natal daemon] and how a singular event, emanation, life, or power comes down from it to us. Instead, you make your argument all about astrology, whether it exists or not, and about the discovery of the dominating planet, whether it is possible or not. FR. 93

You [Porphyry] say that he is happy who, having learned the astral aspect of his own birth, has recognized his own personal daemon and averted his own fate by sacrifices. FR. 94

Even if those things have been said mistakenly, they are not entirely irrelevant. However, the following difficulties concerning the enumer- FR. 95

ριθμήσεως καὶ περὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης τῆς γενεθλιαλογικῆς ἀπο-
ρηθέντα, ὡς εἰσιν ἀκατάληπτοι, οὐδεμίαν ἔχουσι πρὸς τὸ προ-
κείμενον ἀμφισβήτησιν. Εἴτε γὰρ γνώριμοι εἴτε ἀκατάληπτοί 705
εἰσιν αἶδε αἱ τέχναι, ὅμως ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄστρον ἀπόρροια ἀπονέ-
μει τὸν δαίμονα, ἂν τε ἡμεῖς γιννώσκωμεν ἂν τε μὴ δύναται δὲ
ἢ θεία μαντικὴ διδάσκειν ἡμᾶς περὶ τῶν ἄστρον κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ
ἀληθέστατον, καὶ οὐ πάντως δεόμεθα τῆς τῶν κανόνων δια-
ριθμήσεως ἢ τῆς μαθηματικῆς τέχνης. 710

FR. 96 οὐ καλῶς μοι δοκεῖς τὸ ἀδύνατον εἰς γνώσῃ τῆς μαθηματι-
κῆς ἐπιστήμης συλλογιζέσθαι, διότι πολλὴ διαφωνία περὶ αὐτὴν
γέγονεν, ἢ ὅτι ὁ Χαιρήμων ἢ ἄλλος τις πρὸς αὐτὴν ἀντείρηκεν.

FR. 97 Φῆς γὰρ δὴ κατὰ τὸ σὸν γράμμα τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ὡς ἢ τοῦ
οἰκοδεσπότη τῆς γενέσεως λήψις, ἢ τῶν οἰκοδεσποτούντων 715
εἰ πλείους εἶεν ἑνός, σχεδὸν καὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς ὁμολογεῖται εἶναι
ἀκατάληπτος, ἀφ' οὗ δὴ φασιν ἐνεῖναι τὸν οἰκεῖον καταμαθεῖν
δαίμονα.

FR. 98 Ἄπο δὴ τούτων ῥαδίως ἀποκρινοῦμαί σοι καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐφεξῆς
ἑρώτημα. Οὐ γάρ τις τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν μέρους, πάντων δ' ἅπαξ 720
ἀπλῶς ἡγείται, διήκει τε ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἀρχήν, ὥσπερ
ἀφ' ὅλων τῶν ἐν τῷ παντὶ διατάξεων ἀπονεύμεται. Καὶ γὰρ
ὅπερ σὺ παρατίθεσαι τεκμήριον τὸ περὶ τῶν κατὰ μέρη τοῦ
σώματος ἐφεστηκότων δαιμόνων ὑγείας καὶ τοῦ εἶδους καὶ τῆς
ἕξεως τῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ὄντων συνοχέων καὶ ἑνός τοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσι 725
κοινῶς ἐπιβεβηκότος προστάτου, τοῦτο ποιοῦ δείγμα τῆς εἰς
ἓνα δαίμονα πάντων τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀνηκούσης προστασίας.

FR. 99 Μὴ τοίνυν διαίρει τὸν μὲν σώματος τὸν δὲ ψυχῆς τὸν δὲ νοῦ
δαίμονα. Καὶ γὰρ ἄτοπον εἰ τὸ μὲν ζῶον ἓν ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ ἐφεστη-
κῶς αὐτῷ δαίμων πολυειδής. 730

FR. 100 Ποιεῖς δὲ καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐναντίωσι τῶν μὲν ὡς ἀγαθῶν τῶν

ation of the astrological tables and the knowledge of horoscopes – namely, that these matters are unverifiable – pose no difficulty in the present context. Whether these techniques are intelligible or unverifiable, it is the emanation of the stars that provides a daemon, independently of our knowledge thereof. The gods' divination can teach us about the stars in the most truthful way, and we do not need the enumeration of tables or astrology at all.

I think that your appeal to the impossibility of astrological knowledge on the ground of there being dissensions about it or of Chaere-mon or others contradicting it, is unfair. FR. 96

You say in the text of your [Porphyry's] letter that they [the astrologists] are close to admitting that grasping the planet dominating generation (or the dominating planets, if there are more than one) is impossible, and yet they uphold that it is through them that one can learn about one's own daemon. FR. 97

On this basis, I [Iamblichus] can also easily give you an answer to the following question. He [the personal daemon] does not direct any particular part of our being but quite simply all parts simultaneously, and he directs the very principle of our self-determination, as he is allotted based on all orders of beings that constitute the whole. And you, too, make an argument about the daemons presiding over the parts of the body, that maintain its health, form, and condition, and about the one leader presiding over them all together, thus showing that the presidency over everything in us depends on one daemon. FR. 98

Do not distinguish between the daemon of the body, that of the soul, and that of the mind. It would be absurd if the living being were one thing while the presiding daemon had different forms. FR. 99

You [Porphyry] also assume an opposition between the good and FR. 100

δὲ ὡς φαύλων, οὐδαμοῦ τῶν κακῶν ἡγεμονικὴν ἐχόντων λήξιν
οὐδὲ ἰσαξίως ἀντιδιαιρουμένων τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς.

FR. 101 Ἐπειτα τούτων ἀποστάς ἐπὶ μὲν τὴν φιλόσοφον ἀπολισθά-
νεις δόξαν, ἀνατρέπεις δὲ τὴν ὅλην περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου δαίμονος 735
ὑπόθεσιν. Εἰ γὰρ μέρος ἐστὶ τῆς ψυχῆς, οἷον τὸ νοερόν, καὶ
οὗτός ἐστιν εὐδαίμων ὁ τὸν νοῦν ἔχων ἔμφρονα, οὐκέτι ἐστὶν
ἐτέρα τάξις οὐδεμία κρείττων [ἢ δαιμόνιος], ἐπιβεβηκυῖα τῆς
ἀνθρωπίνης ὡς ὑπερέχουσα.

FR. 102 Μνημονεύεις τοῖνυν μετὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἄλλης πραγματείας περὶ 740
τὸν ἴδιον δαίμονα, τῆς μὲν ὡς πρὸς δύο τῆς δὲ ὡς πρὸς τρεῖς
ποιουμένης τὴν θεραπείαν ... Διὰ τί οὖν κοινῇ κλήσει καλεῖται
ὑπὸ πάντων;

FR. 103 Λείπεται δὲ τελευταῖος ὁ περὶ εὐδαιμονίας λόγος, περὶ οὗ 745
σὺ ποικίλως ἐπέζητησας, τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ἐπιστάσεις ὑποτείνων
ἔπειτα ἀπορῶν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα διαπυθανόμενος. Θέντες οὖν
ἕκαστα τῶν σῶν ἡπερ αὐτὰ προήγαγες, ἀποκρινόμεθά σοι
πρὸς αὐτὰ συμμέτρως. Ἐπέστησας γὰρ μήποτε ἄλλη τις λαν-
θάνη οὐσα ἢ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν ὁδός.

Denique prope ad epistulae finem petit se ab eo doceri, quae sit ad
beatitudinem via ex Aegyptia sapientia. 750

FR. 104 Μάτην οὖν διαπορεῖς ὡς οὐ δεῖ πρὸς δόξας ἀνθρωπίνης βλέ-
πειν. Τίς γὰρ σχολὴ τῷ πρὸς τοῖς θεοῖς τὴν διάνοιαν ἔχοντι
κάτω βλέπειν εἰς ἀνθρώπων ἐπαίνους;

FR. 105 Ἄλλ' οὐδὲ τὸ ἐπὶ τούτῳ πρὸς ἔπος ἐπαπορεῖς, ὡς ἢ ψυχὴ ἐκ 755
τοῦ τυχόντος ἀναπλάττει μεγάλα.

738 [ἢ δαιμόνιος]] secl. SS

bad [daemons], although the bad ones never have a leading role and aren't opposed, as if they had the same dignity, to the good ones.

Moving away from this, you [Porphyry] next slip into philosophical considerations and mess up the whole theory of the personal daemon. For if he is a part of the soul, like the intellectual part, and if one attains happiness by having a prudent mind, then there will be no order better than the daemonic one to transcend the human order through its superiority.

FR. 101

You [Porphyry] then mention another problem about the personal daemon. Some people venerate the daemon as two, some as three ... Why does everybody use the same invocation to invoke him?

FR. 102

One last matter remains: that of happiness, which you [Porphyry] have examined in many different ways, beginning with observations, then raising difficulties, and after that, making it an interrogation. We shall now set up each of the points as you brought up and give you an appropriate answer. [First,] you observe that we might have overlooked some other path to happiness.

FR. 103

Then, at the end of the letter, he [Porphyry] asks to be taught the way to beatitude based on Egyptian wisdom.

Your [Porphyry's] claim that one should not aim for human reputation is vain. How would one keeping his thoughts focused on the gods find leisure to seek human praise down here?

FR. 104

The difficulty that you [Porphyry] raise next, that is, that the soul can conceive great things spontaneously, is not relevant.

FR. 105

- FR. 106 Ἄλλ' οὐδὲ ὅσα ὡς ἀγύρτας καὶ ἀλαζόνας διασύρουσί τινας τοὺς τῶν θεῶν θεραπευτάς, οἷς καὶ σὺ παραπλήσια εἴρηκας, οὐδὲν οὐδὲ ταῦτα ἄπτεται τῆς ἀληθινῆς θεολογίας τε καὶ θεουργίας. 760
- FR. 107 Βούλομαι δὴ τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἐπιδραμεῖν, ὅσα διαβάλλων τὴν θείαν πρόγνωσιν ἄλλας τινὰς μεθόδους αὐτῇ παραβάλλεις, περὶ τὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος προμήνυσιν διατριβούσας. Ἐμοὶ γάρ, οὔτε εἴ τις ἐκ φύσεως ἐπιτηδειότης εἰς σημασίαν τοῦ ἐσομένου παραγίγνεται, ὥσπερ ἢ τοῖς ζώοις τῶν σεισμῶν ἢ τῶν ἀνέμων ἢ τῶν χειμῶνων συμπίπτει πρόγνωσις, τίμιος εἶναι δοκεῖ (κατ' αἰσθήσεως γὰρ ὀξύτητα ἢ κατὰ συμπάθειαν ἢ κατ' ἄλλην τινὰ φυσικῶν δυνάμεων συγκίνησιν ἢ τοιαύτη ἔμφυτος συνέπεται μαντεία, οὐδὲν ἔχουσα σεμνὸν καὶ ὑπερφυές) οὔτε εἴ τις κατὰ λογισμὸν ἀνθρώπων ἢ τεχνικὴν παρατήρησιν ἀπὸ σημείων τεκμηριούται ἐκεῖνα ὧν ἐστὶ τὰ σημεία δηλωτικά (ὡς ἀπὸ συστολῆς ἢ φρίκης τὸν μέλλοντα πυρετὸν προγιγνώσκουσιν οἱ ἰατροί), οὐδὲν οὐδὲ οὗτός μοι δοκεῖ τίμιον ἔχειν καὶ ἀγαθόν. 765 770
- FR. 108 Οὐ τοίνυν προορῶσι μὲν, ὡς σὺ τοπάξεις, οἱ ταύτην ἔχοντες τὴν μαντικὴν, οὐ μὴν εἰσιν εὐδαίμονες ἀγαθοειδῆς γὰρ ἐστὶ πᾶσα ἡ θεία πρόγνωσις οὐδὲ προορῶσι μὲν τὰ μέλλοντα, χρῆσθαι δὲ αὐτοῖς καλῶς οὐκ ἐπίστανται. 775
- FR. 109 Βέλτιον οὖν, ὅπερ ἀπαιτεῖς παρ' ἡμῶν, τὴν εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν ὁδὸν ἐπιδειξαί σοι, καὶ ἐν τίνι κείται ἡ αὐτῆς οὐσία. 780
- Denique prope ad epistulae finem petit se ab eo doceri, quae sit ad beatitudinem via ex Aegyptia sapientia.
- FR. 110 Οὐκ ἄρα παρέται τοῦτο τὸ μέρος τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις, ὃ σὺ ὑπονοεῖς, ἀλλὰ θεοπρεπῶς παρεδόθη οὐδὲ περὶ σμικρῶν οἱ θεουρ-

Some call the ministers of the gods impostors and braggarts, and you [Porphyry] say something similar. But this just doesn't apply to real theology or theurgy in any way. FR. 106

Next, I [Iamblichus] also want to run through your other objections to divine foreknowledge and your attempt to compare it to other methods that concern the prediction of the future. For even if there is some natural ability to predict things that are yet to come, such as the foreknowledge among animals of earthquakes, or winds, or thunderstorms among animals, that leaves me unimpressed. Such an innate form of divination is the result of [the animals'] sensory acuity, affinity, or some other concurrent movement of natural forces, but it doesn't have anything sacred or supernatural. And if someone uses human reasoning or technical observations to infer from certain signs certain things indicated by those signs (as when physicians can foresee an impending fever through contractions or shivering), that doesn't impress me either or seem good. FR. 107

Your [Porphyry's] guess that those who practice this divination see the future without achieving happiness is not true. All divine foreknowledge is good by definition. Nor is it the case that they see the future but don't know how to make good use of it. FR. 108

It's better if we show you [Porphyry] the way to happiness, as you asked from us, and where its essence lies. FR. 109

Then, at the end of the letter, he [Porphyry] asks to be taught the way to beatitude based on Egyptian wisdom.

The Egyptians have not just passed over this part, as you think, but they have handed it down in a way befitting the divine. And the FR. 110

γοὶ τὸν θεῖον νοῦν ἐνοχλοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν εἰς ψυχῆς κάθαρ- 785
σιν καὶ ἀπόλυσιν καὶ σωτηρίαν ἀνηκόντων οὐδὲ χαλεπὰ μὲν
διαμελετῶσιν οὗτοι ἄχρηστα δὲ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἀλλὰ τοῖνα-
ντίον τὰ τῇ ψυχῇ πάντων ὠφελιμώτατα

Παρά μὲν γὰρ ἡμῖν λογομαχία τίς ἐστὶ πολλή, ἅτε ἐξ ἀνθρω-
πίνων λογισμῶν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ εἰκαζομένου· οἷς δὲ μεμηχάνηται 790
ἢ πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον συνουσία, εἰ παρεῖται τὸ μέρος τοῦτο εἰς
ἐξέτασιν, μάτην αὐτοῖς ἢ σοφία ἐξήσκηται ... Μάτην αὐτοῖς
ἢ σοφία ἐξήσκηται, περὶ δραπέτου εὐρέσεως ἢ χωρίου ὠνῆς ἢ
γάμου, εἰ τύχοι, ἢ ἐμπορίας τὸν θεῖον νοῦν ἐνοχλήσασι. εἰ δ' οὐ
παρεῖται μὲν, οἱ δὲ συνόντες περὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων τάληθέστατα 795
λέγουσιν, περὶ δὲ εὐδαιμονίας οὐδὲν ἀσφαλές οὐδ' ἐχέγγυον, οὐκ
ἦσαν ἄρα οὔτε θεοὶ οὔτε ἀγαθοὶ δαίμονες, ἀλλ' ἢ ἐκεῖνος ὁ λε-
γόμενος πλάνος.

Ceterum illos, quibus conversatio cum diis ad hoc esset, ut ob in-
veniendum fugitivum vel praedium comparandum, aut propter nuptias 800
vel mercaturam vel quid huius modi mentem divinam inquietarent,
frustra eos videri dicit coluisse sapientiam; illa etiam ipsa numina, cum
quibus conversarentur, etsi de ceteris rebus vera praedicerent, tamen
quoniam de beatitudine nihil cautum nec satis idoneum monerent,
nec deos illos esse nec benignos daemones, sed aut illum, qui dicitur 805
fallax, aut humanum omne commentum.

theurgists do not bother the divine intellect for insignificant reasons but for what's expedient for the purification, liberation, and salvation of the soul. They don't keep themselves busy with things that are difficult but of no avail to humans but on the contrary, with things that are most beneficial to the soul.

There are many disputes among us because people use human reasoning to speculate about the Good. If those who have contrived a union with higher reality have neglected seeking out that part [of theology], then their practice of wisdom is vain ... They practice wisdom in vain if they disturb divine intelligence to find an escaped slave, to buy some field, for a marriage, or perhaps for some business. But if they don't neglect them, and if its [wisdom's] followers say the truth about all other things while having nothing coherent or trustworthy to say about happiness, then they were [inspired] neither by gods nor daemons but by him whom they call deceiver.

As for those who converse with the gods to find a fugitive or to buy a lot, or for a wedding or a trade, or who bother the divine intellect for other such things, he thinks that those people cultivate wisdom in vain. And even if those divinities with which they converse make correct claims about other things, if those divinities have nothing wise or helpful to say, they cannot be gods or good daemons. They can only be either him whom they call deceitful, or a fabrication of the human mind.

2.2 Sources of the Fragments

fr.	SS	
1	SS 1	Eus praep evang XIV 10, 1 (Mras I 286.14-17)
2	SS 1a	Psell Phil Min Opusc 43, Schol ad Tract Herm I, 18 (O'Meara 155.8-14)
3	SS 2	Iam myst I, 3 (Parthey 7.12=Saffrey 5.13)
4	SS 3	Iam myst I, 3 (P 8.14-9.1=S 6.12-15)
5	SS 4	Iam myst I, 4 (P 10.12-13=S 6.12-15)
6	SS 5	Iam myst I, 4 (P 11.16- 12.1=S 8.21-24)
7	SS 6	Iam myst I, 4 (P 12.14-15=S 9.11-12)
8	SS 7	Iam myst I, 4 (P 13.8-11=S 9.24-10.4)
9	SS 8	Iam myst I, 5 (P 18.4-6=S 13.16-19)
10	SS 9	Iam myst I, 8 (P 23.9-13=S 17.17-23)
11	SS 10	Iam myst I, 9 (P 29.17- 30.1=S 22.17-21)
12	SS 11	Iam myst I, 9 (P 30.3-9=S 22.23-23.9)
13	SS 12	Iam myst I, 10 (P 33.12- 14=S 25.19-22)
14	SS 13	Eus praep evang V 10 (244.5-10)
15	SS 13a	CyrAlex c Julian IV, 14.1-4 (Riedweg)

2.2 Sources of the Fragments

16	SS 14	Iam myst I 11 (P 37.3-4=S 28.9-10)	
17	SS 15	Iam myst I 12 (P 40.14- 16=S 30.23-31.2)	
18	SS 16	Iam myst I 15 (P 45.8-12=S 34.12-17)	
19	SS 17	Iam myst I 15 (P 46.9-11=S 35.7-10)	
20	SS 18	Iam myst I 15 (P 46.15-18=S 35.15-18)	
21	SS 19	Iam myst I 15 (P 47.11-12=S 36.5-7)	
22	SS 20	Iam myst I 15 (P 48.13-14=S 36.27-28)	
23	SS 21	Iam praep evang I 16 (P 49.10-11=S 37.16-18)	Aug civ dei X 11.12-15 (73F)
24	SS 22	Iam myst I 17 (P 50.13-16=S 38.12-16)	Aug civ dei X 11.12-15 (73F)
25	SS 23	Iam myst I 18 (P 52.17- 53.1=S 40.6-8)	Aug civ dei X 11.15-16 (73G)
26	SS 24	Iam myst I 19 (P 57.4-6=S 43.4-6)	Aug civ dei X 11.16-17 (73H)
27	SS 25	Iam myst I 20 (P 61.11-14=S 46.11-14)	
28	SS 26	Iam myst I 21 (P 64.13- 65.1=S 48.19-49.1)	
29	SS 27	Iam myst II 1 (P 67.1-3=S 50.9-12)	
30	SS 28a	Iam myst II 3 (P 70.8-10=S 52.21-53.2)	
31	SS 28b	Iam myst II 10 (P 90.3-5=S 67.24-68.3)	
32	SS 29	Iam myst II 10 (P 90.9-11=S 68.4-10)	
33	SS 29a	Iam myst II 10 (P 91.7-8=S 68.25-26)	

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- 34 SS 29b *Iam myst II 10* (P 95.1-3=S
71.21-23)
- 35 SS 30 *Iam myst II 10* (P 92.11-
12=S 69.20-21)
- 36 SS 31 *Iam myst II 11* (P 95.15-
96.2=S 72.10-15)
- 37 SS 32 *Iam myst II 11* (P 98.18-
99.6=S 74.20-27)
- 38 SS 33 *Iam myst III 1* (P 99.11-
12=S 75.7-9)
- 39 SS 34 *Iam myst III 2* (P 102.14-
103.2=S 77.12-18)
- 40 SS 35 *Iam myst III 2* (P 103.8-9=S
77.25-78.1)
- 41 SS 36 *Iam myst III 4* (P 109.4-
9=S 82.5-11)
- 42 SS 37 *Iam myst III 9* (P 114.6-7=S
85.25-86.2)
- 43 SS 38 *Iam myst III 9* (P 117.13-
16=S 88.14-20)
- 44 SS 38a *Iam myst III 9* (P 118.3-
14=S 88.23-89.9)
- 45 SS 39 *Iam III 11* (P 123.12-124.1=S
92.21-26)
- 46 SS 40 *Iam III 13* (P 129.14-15=S
97.6-8)
- 47 SS 41 *Iam III 14* (P 132.3-8=S
98.24-99.6)
- 48 SS 42 *Iam III 15* (P 135.4-8=S
101.5-11)
- 49 SS 43 *Joseph of Tiberias, Hy-*
pomnesticon 143 (PG 106
160D-163B)³

³Including, as indicated, Saffrey & Segond's emendations but excluding the numbering.

2.2 Sources of the Fragments

50	SS 44	Iam myst III 17 (P 139.5-13=S 104.11-22)	
51	SS 45	Iam III 18 (P 143.14-17=S 107.21-108.1)	
52	SS 46	Iam III 18 (P 145.5-7=S 109.3-6)	
53	SS 47	Iam myst III 19 (P 146.12-14=S 110.3-6)	
54	SS 48	Iam myst III 20 (P 148.1-3=S 111.1-5)	
55	SS 49	Iam myst III 21 (P 150.18-151.1=S 113.10-12)	
56	SS 50	Iam myst III 21 (P 150.3-5=S 112.19-22)	
57	SS 51	Iam III 22 (P 152.6-10=S 114.11-17)	
58	SS 52	Iam III 23 (P 155.1-7=S 116.11-19)	
59	SS 53	Iam III 24 (P 156.5-6=S 117.8-11)	
60	SS 54	Iam myst III (P 157.5-158.2=S 118.3-21)	
61	SS 55	Iam myst III (P 158.3-10=S 118.22-119.5)	
62	SS 56	Iam myst III (P 160.5-14=S 120.14-121.7)	
63	SS 57	Iam myst III 27 (P 164.5-9=S 123.11-16)	
64	SS 58	Iam myst III 27 (P 166.14-167.1=S 125.3-11)	Aug 73I
65	SS 59	Iam myst III 28 (P 167.10-11=S 125.18-21)	
66	SS 60	Iam myst III (P 173.8-11=S 130.5-10)	
67	SS 60a	Iam myst III 30 (P. 173.16-174.5=S 130.16-21)	

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68	SS 61	Iam III 30 (P 175.7-9=S 131.14-16)	
69	SS 62	Iam III 31 (P 175.14-176.1, 178.11-14=S 131.22-27, 133.24-27) CyrAlx Con- tra Julianem IV 14.7-15 (Riedweg)	Aug 73J
70	SS 63	Iam III 31 (P 178.16-19=S 134.4-8)	
71	SS 63a	Iam III 31 (P 179.12-14=S 134.20-22)	
72	SS 64	Eus praep evang V 10, 1-11 (Mras I 242.15-244.16)	
73	SS 65	Aug civ dei X 11.1-103 (Dombart-Kalb I, 284.1- 286.103)	
74	SS 66	Eus praep evang V 7, 3 (Mras I 235.2-3) Iam myst IV 1 (P 181.2-3=S 135.15-17)	Aug 73M
75	SS 67	Eus praep evang V 7, 3 and 10, 1 (Mras I 235.3-4 and 242.16-17) Iam myst IV 4 (P 186.6-9=S 139.11-15)	Aug 73M
76	SS 68	Eus praep evang V 7, 3 and V 10, 1 (Mras I 235.5-7 and 242.17-19) Iam myst IV 11 (P 195.1-4=S 146.3-7)	Aug 73N
77	SS 69	Iam myst V 1 (P 199.5-15=S 149.5-17) Eus praep evang V 10, 2 (Mras I 242.19-21)	Aug 73O
78	SS 70	Iam myst V 5 (P 205.15- 17=S 153.20-23)	
79	SS 71	Iam myst V 10 (P 212.2-3=S 158.8-11) Eus praep evang V 10, 2 (Mras I 242.20-21)	Aug 73O

2.2 Sources of the Fragments

80	SS 72	Iam myst VI 1 (P 241.2-5=S 179.9-13) Eus V 10, 2 (Mras I 242.21-243.1)	Aug 73P
81	SS 73	Iam myst VI 5 (P 246.3-5=S 183.1-4) Eus praep evang V 10, 3 (Mras I 243.1-4)	Aug 73Q
82	SS 74	Iam myst VI 3 (P 243.2-3=S 180.22-26)	
83	SS 75	Iam myst VI 5 (P 245.11-246.2=S 182.19-26) Eus praep evang V 10, 4-5 (Mras I 243.5-11)	Aug 73QRS
84	SS 76	Iam myst VII 2 (P 250.12-253.10, 250.16, 251.12, 251.17, 252.10-11, 253.9-10, 253.13-254.10=S 186.4-8, 186.9, 186.23-24, 187.2, 187.14, 188.7-9, 188.12-25) Eus praep evang V 10, 6-7 (Mras I 243.11-18)	
85	SS 76a	Iam VII 3 (P 253.19-254.1=S 188.19-20)	
86	SS 77	Iam myst VII 4 (P 254.14, 256.3-5, 257.1-3, 258.2-3=S 189.9-10, 190.102-11, S 190.26-191.2, S 191.21-22) Eus praep evang V 10, 8 (243.17-244.1)	
87	SS 78	Iam myst VII 5 (P 258.6-18=S 191.26-192.13) Eus praep evang V 10, 9 (Mras I 244.1-4)	
88	SS 79	Iam myst VIII 1 (P 260.3-9=S 193.8-17)	
89	SS 80	Iam myst VIII 4 (P 265.11-13=S 196.20-22)	

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- 90 SS 81 Iam myst VIII 4 and 6-7
(P 265.16-266.10, 268.14-
269.19=S 196.26-197.12,
197.17-20, 198.22-24,
199.13-15, 199.18-21) Eus
praep evang III 4, 1
(116.12-117.6)
- 91 SS 81a Iam myst VIII 8 (P 271.1-
3=S 200.1-3)
- 92 SS 82 Iam myst VIII 8 (P 271.17-
272.1=S 201.6-8)
- 93 SS 83 Iam myst IX 2 (P 273.17-
274.8=S 202.18-203.4)
- 94 SS 84 Iam myst IX 3 (P 275.1-3=S
203.15-18)
- 95 SS 85 Iam myst IX 3 (P 276.8-
18=S 204.15-27)
- 96 SS 86 Iam myst IX 4 (P 277.1-5=S
205.2-6)
- 97 SS 87 Iam IX 4 (P 278.15-19=S
206.10-16)
- 98 SS 88 Iam myst IX 7 (P 281.4-
15=S 208.6-18)
- 99 SS 89 Iam myst IX 7 (P 281.14-
17=S 208.18-21)
- 100 SS 90 Iam myst IX 7 (P 282.2-5=S
208.25-209.2)
- 101 SS 91 Iam myst IX 8 (282.6-11=S
209.3-9)
- 102 SS 92 Iam myst IX 9 (283.1-3 and
12=S 209.14-17 and 210.9-
10)
- 103 SS 93 Iam myst X 1 (P 285.9- Aug 73W
286.3=S 211.13-20)
- 104 SS 94 Iam myst X 2 (P 286.12-
16=S 212.4-7)

2.2 Sources of the Fragments

105	SS 95	Iam myst X 2 (P 286.15-16=S 212.8-10)	
106	SS 96	Iam myst X 2 (P 287.6-9=S 212.17-21)	
107	SS 97	Iam myst X 3 (P 287.15-288.11=S 213.3-19)	
108	SS 98	Iam myst X 4 (P 289.8-12=S 214.7-12)	
109	SS 99	Iam myst X 5 (P 290.7-9=S 214.26-29)	Aug 73W
110	SS 100	Iam myst X 7 (P. 293.5-6=S 217.1-9) Eus praep evang XIV 10, 2 (Mras I 286.19-22) and V 10, 11 (244.12-16)	Aug 73XY

3 *Philosophy from Oracles*

3.1 Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation

FR. 1

μάλιστα γὰρ φιλοσόφων οὗτος τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς δοκεῖ καὶ δαίμο-
 σιν καὶ οἷς φησι θεοῖς ὠμιληκῆναι ὑπὲρ τε τούτων πρεσβε-
 ῦσαι καὶ πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν ἀκριβέστερον διηρευνη-
 κῆναι. οὗτος τοιγαροῦν ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψεν “Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων
 φιλοσοφίας” συναγωγὴν ἐποίησατο χρησμῶν τοῦ τε Ἄπόλ- 5
 λωνος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν θεῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν δαιμόνων, οὓς
 καὶ μάλιστα ἐκλεξάμενος ἑαυτῶ ἠγήσατο ἱκανοὺς εἶναι εἰς τε
 ἀποδείξιν τῆς τῶν θεολογουμένων ἀρετῆς εἰς τε προτροπὴν
 ἧς αὐτῶ φίλον ὀνομάζειν θεοσοφίας. ἐκ δὲ τούτων τοιγαροῦν
 τῶν ἐγκριθέντων καὶ μνήμης ἀξιωθέντων λογίων διακρίναι κα- 10
 λὸν τοὺς χρησμολόγους καὶ σκέψασθαι ποίας ποτὲ ὄντες τυγ-
 χάνουσι δυνάμεως. πρῶτον δὲ θεασώμεθα ὅπως τῆς γραφῆς
 ὁ δηλωθεὶς ἀνὴρ ἀρχόμενος ἢ μὴν ἀληθεύειν ἐπόμνυται λέγων
 οὕτως· “Βέβαιος δὲ καὶ μόνιμος ὁ ἐντεύθην ὡς ἂν ἐκ μόνου
 βεβαίου τὰς ἐλπίδας τοῦ σωθῆναι ἀρνυτόμενος· οἷς δὲ καὶ με- 15
 ταδώσεις μηδὲν ὑφαιρούμενος. ἐπεὶ καὶ γὰρ τοὺς θεοὺς μαρτύρο-
 μαι ὡς οὐδὲν οὔτε προστέθεικα οὔτε ἀφείλον τῶν χρησθέντων
 νοημάτων, εἰ μὴ πον λέξιν ἡμαρτημένην διώρθωσα ἢ πρὸς τὸ
 σαφέστερον μεταβέβληκα ἢ τὸ μέτρον ἐλλείπον ἀνεπλήρωσα
 ἢ τι τῶν μὴ πρὸς τὴν πρόθεσιν συντεινόντων διέγραψα, ὡς 20
 τόν γε νοῦν ἀκραιφνή τῶν ῥηθέντων διετήρησα, εὐλαβούμενος
 τὴν ἐκ τούτων ἀσέβειαν μᾶλλον ἢ τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἱεροσυλίας τιμω-
 ρὸν ἐπομένην δίκην. ἔξει δὲ ἡ παρούσα συναγωγὴ πολλῶν μὲν
 τῶν κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν δογμάτων ἀναγραφῆν, ὡς οἱ θεοὶ τάλη-
 θῆς ἔχειν ἐθέσπισαν· ἐπ’ ὀλίγον δὲ καὶ τῆς χρηστικῆς ἀψόμεθα 25
 πραγματείας, ἣτις πρὸς τε τὴν θεωρίαν ὀνήσει καὶ τὴν ἄλλην
 κάθαρσιν τοῦ βίου. ἦν δ’ ἔχει ὠφέλειαν ἢ συναγωγὴ, μάλιστα

3.1 Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation

Among the philosophers of our time, there seems to be none so familiar with daemons and what he calls gods than this one [Porphyry], who has served as their ambassador and who has much more examined their activity most meticulously. In his book titled *Philosophy from Oracles*, he brings together a collection of oracles concerning Apollo, other gods as well as good daemons, which he chose for himself considering them sufficient to prove the excellence of his theological theses and to support what he likes to call “theosophy.” On the basis of these selected oracles that he deems worthy of being remembered, it is right to investigate the soothsayers and find out what kind of power they have. Let us first see how the aforementioned man begins his book by swearing that he will tell the truth, stating: “Firm and steadfast is he who draws his hope for salvation from this as from the sole certainty there is. It is with such people that you shall share [these oracles] without diminishing them. I call the gods to witness that I have neither added nor subtracted anything from the oracular thoughts. The most I did was to amend corrupted expressions, introduce clarifications, complete an incomplete verse, or drop what didn’t contribute anything to the purpose. My aim was to preserve the pure meaning of the text, guarding the sacrilege of changing something more than the punishment for stealing from the gods. What follows here is a collection containing a record of various philosophical dogmas, of which the gods have decreed that they are true. For a little, we will touch on useful material for contemplation and to purify one’s life. The usefulness of this collection will be especially known by those who, in their labor to find truth, have prayed for a revelation from the gods to find relief from their anxiety through the trustworthy teaching of [the gods] who speak.”

FR. 1

εἴσονται ὅσοι περ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὠδίναντες ἠϋξαντό ποτε τῆς ἐκ θεῶν ἐπιφανείας τυχόντες ἀνάπαισιν λαβεῖν τῆς ἀπορίας διὰ τὴν τῶν λεγόντων ἀξιόπιστον διδασκαλίαν.”

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FR. 2 Τοιούτοις χρησάμενος προοιμίῳ μαρτύρεται καὶ προπαραγγέλλει μὴ εἰς πολλοὺς ἐκφῆναι τὰ λεχθησόμενα, λέγων οὕτως· “Σὺ δ’ εἶπερ τι καὶ ταῦτα πειρῶ μὴ δημοσιεύειν μηδ’ ἄχρι καὶ τῶν βεβήλων ρίπτειν αὐτὰ δόξης ἕνεκα ἢ κέρδους ἢ τινος ἄλλης οὐκ εὐαγοῦς κολακείας. κίνδυνος γὰρ οὐ σοὶ μόνον τὰς ἐντολὰς παραβαίνοντι ταύτας, ἀλλὰ καὶ μοὶ ῥαδίως πιστεύσαντι τῷ στέγειν παρ’ ἑαυτῷ μὴ δυναμένῳ τὰς εὐποιίας. δοτέον δὴ τοῖς τὸν βίον ἐνστησαμένοις πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς σωτηρίαν.”

35

FR. 3 Καὶ μεθ’ ἕτερα ἐπιλέγει· “Ταῦτά μοι ὡς ἀρρήτων ἀρρητότερα κρύπτειν· οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ θεοὶ φανερώς περὶ αὐτῶν ἐθέσπισαν, ἀλλὰ δι’ αἰνιγμάτων.”

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FR. 4 Sed in ipso simulacro sicut in ceteris ex assiduis sacrificiis immundi daemonum spiritus colliguntur. nihil enim operantur victimae et cruor ex assidua pecorum caede profusus, nisi ut daemonum substantia, qui diaboli procreatione generantur, ex isto sanguine nutriatur. nam ita esse Porphyrius, defensor sacrorum, hostis dei, veritatis inimicus, sceleratarum artium magister, manifestis nobis probationibus prodidit. in libris enim quos appellat *Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας* maiestatem eius praedicans de infirmitate confessus est. in primis enim librorum partibus, id est in ipsis auspiciis, positus dixit: “Serapis vocatus et intra corpus hominis conlatus talia respondit.” dicant nunc mihi perditii homines: qui potior est, qui vocat et imperat et includit, an qui vocatur et paret et, cum venerit in suspicientis hominis corpore, potestate iubentis includitur? gratias agimus, Porphyri, libris tuis; deorum tuorum nobis substantiam prodidisti. didicimus per te quatenus dii tui hominibus iubentibus serviant. Serapis tuus ab homine vocatur

45

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Following these introductory statements he goes over to invocations, ordering that the things he is going to say shall not be divulged to the many. He then says the following: “And you, exert yourself to not divulge these things publicly nor to throw them out to the uninitiated for the sake of reputation, profit, or some ill-omened form of flattery. There would be a danger, not only for you in transgressing the ordinances, but also for me, as I have offered my trust too easily, incapable of concealing the beneficence. It should be given to those who devote their life to the salvation of their soul.”

FR. 2

And then he adds the following: “Keep these things hidden – they are most unspeakable. For the gods haven’t proclaimed them openly but enigmatically.”

FR. 3

It is through unceasing sacrifices that the impure spirits of daemons are brought to gather in this very image and in others. The victims and the blood flowing from the incessant slaughtering of animals do not accomplish anything, except that this blood nourishes the substance of the daemons who are born from the devil’s procreation. Now, it was Porphyry the defender of the mysteries, fiend of God, enemy of truth, master of the wicked arts, who transmitted this for us to openly approve. In the book that he calls *Philosophy from Oracles* he proclaims his [Serapis’s] greatness but also admits his weakness. For in the first parts of the book, i.e., at the very beginning, he says: “Serapis was invoked and brought into the body of a man and answered this.” Now, let the fallen men tell me: Who is more powerful – he who invokes, commands, and imprisons, or he who is invoked, obeys, and, as he comes into the body of a man who had raised his thoughts to him, is imprisoned by the power of that suppliant? We thank you, Porphyry,

FR. 4

et venit, et cum venerit statim iussus includitur, et loquendi necessitas nolenti forsitan imperatur.

FR. 5

Γράφει δὲ ταῦτα ὁ δεδηλωμένος ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψεν “Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας,” ἔνθα μαρτύρεται μὴ τὰ ἀπόρρητα τῶν θεῶν ἐκφαίνειν, ἐπομνύμενός τε αὐτὸς καὶ παραγγέλλων κρύπτειν καὶ μὴ εἰς πολλοὺς ἐκφέρειν τὰ λεχθησόμενα. τίνα δὲ ἦν τὰ τοιαῦτα; τὸν Πᾶνα Διονύσου φησὶ θεράποντα εἶναι, τοῦτον δὲ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὄντα δαιμόνων ἐπιφανέντα ποτὲ τοῖς κατ’ ἀγρὸν γεωπονοῦσιν. τί χρῆν ἀγαθὸν ὄντα παρασχεῖν ἢ πάντως ἀγαθοῦ τινος παρουσίαν τοῖς τῆς θεοφανείας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ κατηξιωμένοι; ἄρ’ οὖν ὑπῆρξεν ἀγαθόν τι τοῖς θεαταῖς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος, ἢ κακὸν εἰλήχασιν δαίμονα ἔργω τῆς πείρας ἡσθημένοι; φησὶν γοῦν ὁ θαυμάσιος μάρτυς τοῦς τῆς ἀγαθῆς ταύτης θέας ἡξιωμένους ἄθροον θάνατον ὑπομείναι λέγων ὧδε· “Ἦδη δὲ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις οἱ μὲν θεράποντές τινων ἀνεδείχθησαν, ὡς ὁ Πᾶν τοῦ Διονύσου· δεδήλωκεν δὲ τοῦτο ὁ ἐν Βραγχίδασι Ἀπόλλων διὰ τούτων· ἐννέα γὰρ εὐρέθησαν ἀποθανόντες· πυνθανομένων οὖν τῶν τὸν ἀγρὸν οἰκούντων τὴν αἰτίαν ἔχρησεν ὁ θεός·

χρυσόκερας βλοσυροῖο Διονύσου θεράπων Πᾶν βαίνων ὑλήεντα κατ’ οὔρεα χειρὶ κραταιῇ
 ῥάβδον ἔχεν, ἑτέρη δὲ λιγὴ πνεύουσαν ἔμαρπτε
 σύριγγα γλαφυρήν, Νύμφησι δὲ θυμὸν ἔθελγεν·
 ὄξυ δὲ συρίξας μέλος ἀνέρας ἐποίησεν
 ὑλοτόμους πάντας, θάμβος δ’ ἔχεν εἰσορόωντας
 δαίμονος ὀρνυμένου κρυερὸν δέμας οἰστρήεντος.
 καὶ νύ κε πάντας ἔμαριψε τέλος κρυεροῦ θανάτοιο,
 εἰ μὴ οἱ κότον αἰνὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἔχουσα
 Ἄρτεμις ἀγροτέρη παῦσεν μένεος κρατεροῖο,

for your book, because you have exposed the essence of your gods to us. You have taught us to what extent your gods serve the humans who supplicate them. Your Serapis is invoked by a human person and appears – and when he arrives on command he is imprisoned, and maybe even coerced to speak against his will.

The aforementioned author writes the following in his book entitled *Philosophy from Oracles*, where he protests that the secrets of the gods mustn't be divulged, swears and orders that what he is going to say must be hidden from the many. What are these things? He says that Pan was Dionysos's minister and that, as one of the good daemons, he once appeared to farmhands working in a field. In his goodness, what could he give them and what could the revelation of something thoroughly good offer those deemed worthy of experiencing the divine revelation of the good [daemon]? Did something good happen to the spectators of this good daemon, or did they obtain a bad daemon, learning this through experience? Well, our wonderful witness says that those who were deemed worthy of this good vision were put to death all at once. He says: "As in other cases, some appear as ministers of others, as Pan is the minister of Dionysos. Apollo has shown this in the sanctuary of Didyma the following way. Nine were found dead, and when the country-dwellers asked for the cause, the god proclaimed:

FR. 5

Pan with the golden horns, minister of Dionysos the terrible,
Strode across the sylvan mountains, holding in his mighty hand
A staff and in his other hand a shrill sounding,
Polished pipe, with which he enticed the Nymphs' desire.
But the sharp song of the pipe terrified all the
Lumbermen, and the onlookers were struck with terror,
As the raging daemon rose, by his chilling appearance.
A gruesome death would have caught hold of them all.
If Artemis the Huntress, who had kept a dire grudge in her
heart,

ἦν καὶ χρῆ λίσσεσθ', ἵνα σοι γίγνητ' ἔπαρωγός.”

85

ἀκήκοας οἶα τοῦ δαίμονος, οὐ φησιν ἀγαθοῦ, τό τε σχῆμα
καὶ τὰς πράξεις ὁ ἐν Βραγχίδαῖς ἐδίδαξεν Ἀπόλλων.

FR. 6

θέα δὴ καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν τὰ γενναῖα κατορθώματα, ὧν δὴ
ἔνεκα τὴν οὐράνιον ἀπολελειπότες διατριβὴν τὴν σὺν ἀνθρώποις
ἀντικατηλλάξαντο. πάντως δὴπου χρῆν αὐτοὺς σωφροσύνης 90
κατάρχειν καὶ τὰ λυσιτελῆ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑπο-
τίθεσθαι. οἱ δὲ τούτων μὲν οὐδέν· ἄκουε δὲ οἶα ἐκφαίνει ὁ τὰ
ἀρρητότερα τῶν ἀρρήτων διηρευνηκῶς καὶ τῶν ἀπορρήτων
ἀξιωθεὶς τῆς γνώσεως. Τοτὲ μὲν οὖν τινας τῶν ἀγαθῶν τούτων 95
δαιμόνων φησὶν ἐρωτικαῖς ἠδυπαθείαις ὑπηρετεῖσθαι, τοτὲ δὲ
ἑτέροισι τυμπάνοις καὶ αὐλοῖς καὶ θηλειῶν πατάγοις χαίρειν,
ἄλλοι δ' αὖ πάλιν μάχαις καὶ πολέμοις ἀγάλλεσθαι, καὶ κυ-
νηγεσίῳ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν καὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ γῆς καρποῖς τὴν Δηώ·
θρηνεῖν δὲ τὸν Ὅσιριν εἰσέτι νῦν τὴν Ἴσιν καὶ τὸν Ἀπόλλω 100
μαντεύεσθαι. τοιαῦται ὧν φασιν ἀγαθῶν δαιμόνων αἱ εἰς ἀν-
θρώπους ὠφέλεια. δέχου δὲ καὶ τούτων τὰς ἀποδείξεις·

“Οὐδὲν ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖς ποτε διὰ μάταιον
οὐδ' ἀκράαντον ἔλεξε σοφοῖς Ἑκάτη θεοφῆταις,
ἀλλ' ἀπὸ παγκρατέριοιο νόου πατρόθεν κατιοῦσα
αἰὲν ἀληθείη σελαγίζεται, ἀμφὶ δὲ μῆτις 105
ἔμπεδος ἀρρήκτοισι μένει λογίοις βεβουῖα.
δεσμῶ δ' οὖν κλήϊζε· θεῖον γὰρ ἄγεις με τοσῆνδε,
ὅσση ψυχῶσαι πανυπέρτατον ἤρκεσα κόσμον.

καὶ μήποτε διὰ τοῦτο τρίμορφος τριμερῆς τε καὶ ἡ ψυχῆ·

Hadn't left off her fierce anger.
It is her whom you must propitiate if you want her as ally."

Now you have heard about the appearance of that daemon that they call "good" and about his deeds, which Apollo disclosed in Dydimia.

Look also at the noble successes of the other [daemons], for the sake of which they gave up their life in heaven, trading it for a life among humans. Evidently, they should have been a source of prudence and offered support and aid to the humans – but they didn't. Hear what kind of things were revealed to him who had gone after the most secret of secrets and who was deemed worthy of receiving knowledge of unutterable things. He affirms that some of these good daemons have been defeated by erotic pleasure; others find great joy in drums, flutes, and women's chattering, and others again rejoice in battle and war, and Artemis in hunting, and Demeter in the fruits of the earth. He also affirms that Osiris still laments Isis and that Apollo gives oracles. Such is the assistance that the daemons whom they call good can provide to humans. See now the proofs for this:

FR. 6

"Never among the immortal gods has a proclamation by the
divine
Hecate remained futile or unfulfilled for the wise interpreters of
oracles;
but descending from her father, the all-powerful intellect,
she is ever shining with the light of truth, while around her feet
wisdom remains firmly grounded, with unbreakable words.
Bind me with fetters: for else I would be raptured by a divinity
So powerful as to ensoul even the most remote parts of the
world.

And perhaps this is why the soul has three forms and parts, com-

ταύτης δὲ τὸ μὲν θυμοειδές, τὸ δὲ ἐπιθυμητικόν, ὅθεν καὶ πρὸς
τὰ ἐρωτικά καλεῖται.” 110

FR. 7 ἐν δὲ τῇ προλεχθείσῃ πραγματεία τῆς Ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας
προστίθῃσι τοῖς εἰρημένους λέγων ὧδε·

“Καὶ μὴν ὅ τι ἐκάστῳ ἐπιτέτακται καὶ τί καὶ τίνι αὐτῶν,
δεδηλώκασιν, ὥσπερ ὁ Διδυμαῖος διὰ τούτων (ἦν δ’ ἡ πεῦσις εἰ
δεῖ ὁμόσαι τῷ ἐπάγοντι τὸν ὄρκον).” 115

μητέρι μὲν μακάρων μέλεται Τιτηνίδι Ῥεῖη
αὐλοῖ καὶ τυπάνων πάταγοι καὶ θῆλυς ὄμιλος·
Παλλάδι δ’ εὐπήληκι μῦθοι καὶ δῆρις Ἐννοῦς·
καὶ βαλῖαις σκυλάκεσσι βαθυσκοπέλους ἀνὰ πρῶνας 120
θήρας ὀρειονόμους ἐλάαν Δητωῖδι κούρη·
Ἥρη δ’ εὐκελάδω μαλακῇ χύσις ἡέρος ὕγρης·
λήγία δ’ εὐαλδῆ κομέειν σταχυητρόφα Διοῖ·
Ἴσιδι δ’ αὖ Φαρίη, γονίμοις παρὰ χεύμασι Νείλου,
μαστεύειν οἴστρουσιν ἐὼν πόσιν ἀβρὸν Ὅσιριν.” 125

FR. 8 ἄκουε γοῦν ὅπως ὁ Ἀπόλλων αὐτὸς περὶ ἑαυτοῦ διδάσκει
ἕμνον, ὃν εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐξέδωκεν, ὁμολογῶν ἐν Δήλῳ τῇ νήσῳ ὑπὸ
Δητοῦς γεγενῆσθαι, καὶ πάλιν ὁ Ἀσκληπιὸς ἐν Τρίκκῃ, ὡς καὶ
Ἑρμῆς τετέχθαι ὁμολογῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Μαιίας. γράφει δὲ ὁ Πορ-
φύριος καὶ ταῦτα ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψε Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσο- 130
φίας, ἔνθα καὶ τῶν χρησμῶν ἐμνημόνευσεν ὧδέ πως ἐχόντων·

“ὦ μέγα πᾶσιν χάρμα βροτοῖσιν
ἀπὸ σᾶς ἱερῶν ματέρος ἀγνᾶς
προθορῶν τοκετῶν.”

prising an irascible and an appetitive part (which is also why she is invoked for erotic ends).”

In the aforementioned discussion of the *Philosophy from Oracles*, he adds the following to his elaborations, saying: FR. 7

“And they have shown what is prescribed to each of them and how it applies to each individually, as in the following case, concerning Apollo at Didyma (the question was whether one should swear to someone asking for an oath):

The mother of the blessed, the Titan-born Reia, cares for
Flutes and the beating of drums and crowds of women;
Pallas with the beautiful helmet cares for battles and Enyo’s
strife;

Along the forelands with high cliffs, with her dappled dogs,
Artemis born from Leto goes after the roaming animals;
The moist air diffuses tenderly for Hera with the fair voice;
The luxuriant crops, yielding abundant corn, wave to Demeter;
Along the fertile stream of the Nile, Isis from Pharos
Passionately seeks her husband, the handsome Osiris.”

Hear, then, how Apollo teaches us a hymn about himself, that he composed for himself, narrating how he was born from Artemis on the island Delos, and how Asclepius was born in Tricca; and Hermes, he affirms, was born from Maia. This is also what Porphyry writes in his *Philosophy from Oracles*, where he recalls the following oracles: FR. 8

“Ah, great delight to all mortals,
Springing forth from your pure mother’s
Sacred parturition.”

FR. 9 οἷς ἐπιλέγει·

135

“Ἄλλ’ ὅτε Λατῶ
ὠδὶς ἱερὰ λάζυτο πᾶσαν,
ὀροθνομένων διδύμων τοκετῶν
ἐνδοθι σηκῶν,
ἴστατο μὲν γαί , ἴστατο δ ἀήρ,
πάγνυτο νᾶσος, πάγνυτο κῦμα·
ἀνὰ δ ἐξέθορες, μάντι Λυκωρεῦ,
τοξότα Φοῖβε,
κατὰ χρησμολάλων βασιλεῦ τριπόδων.”

140

FR. 10 καὶ ὁ Ἄσκληπιὸς πάλιν περὶ ἑαυτοῦ·

145

“Τρίκκης ἐξ ἱερῆς ἦκω θεὸς, ὃν ποτε μήτηρ
Φοῖβω ὑπενηθείσα κνεῖ σοφίης βασιλῆα,
ἴδριν ἱστορίας Ἄσκληπιόν· ἀλλὰ τί πεύθῃ;”

FR. 11 ὁ δ’ Ἑρμῆς φησιν·

150

“ὄς δ’ ἐγώ, ὃν καλέεις, Ζηνὸς καὶ Μαιάδος υἱός,
Ἑρμείας προβέβηκα, λιπῶν ἀστραῖον ἄνακτα.”

FR. 12 ὁ δὲ οὖν προδηλωθεὶς ἀνὴρ ἐν αὐτοῖς οἷς ἐπέγραψεν “Περὶ
τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας” χρησμοὺς τίθησι τοῦ Ἀπόλλω-
νος, τὰς διὰ ζώων θυσίας ἐργάζεσθαι παρακελευομένου καὶ μὴ
μόνοις δαίμοσιν μηδὲ μόναις ταῖς περιγείοις δυνάμεσιν, ἀλλὰ
καὶ ταῖς αἰθερίοις καὶ οὐρανίοις ζωοθυτεῖν. ἐν ἑτέροις δ’ ὁ αὐτὸς
δαίμονας, ἀλλ’ οὐ θεοὺς εἶναι ὁμολογῶν ἅπαντας, οἷς Ἕλληνες
τὰς δι’ αἱμάτων καὶ ζώων ἀλόγων σφαγῆς ἐπετέλουσαν θυσίας,

155

He adds:

FR. 9

“But when Leto
Was overcome by labor pain,
Caused by the twin parturition
[Of the infants] within her womb,
The earth stood still, and the sky stood still,
The island froze, the streams froze,
And you sprang forth, prophet Lycorus,
Phoebus, archer,
King of the soothsayers seated on tripods.”

And Asclepius says about himself:

FR. 10

“I have as a god come from holy Tricca. My mother gave birth to
me
In wedlock with Phoebus. I am the king of wisdom,
Experienced in the art of healing, Asclepius. But why do you
ask?”

“And Hermes speaks:

FR. 11

I am whom you called, son of Zeus and Maia,
I, Hermes, have departed from the heavenly king and come
forth.”

In the book that he wrote entitled *On Philosophy from Oracles*, the man mentioned above relates the oracles of Apollo, who does not only command animal sacrifices for daemons and worldly powers but also requires living sacrifices for the ethereal and heavenly beings. In another book [the *Letter to Anebo*], the same author affirms that the beings to which the Greeks offer bloody sacrifices, killing living, brute animals, are not gods but daemons, and that offering sacrifices to the gods

FR. 12

μη χρῆναι μηδὲ ὅσιον εἶναι θεοῖς ζωοθυτεῖν φησίν. ἄκουε τοιγα-
ροῦν τῶν πρώτων αὐτοῦ φωνῶν, δι' ὧν τὰ περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων 160
φιλοσοφίας συνάγων, πῶς ὁ Ἀπόλλων χρῆναι θεραπεύειν τοὺς
θεοὺς διδάσκει. ὁ καὶ παρατίθεται γράφων ὧδε·

“Ἀκολούθως μετὰ τὰ ρηθέντα περὶ εὐσεβείας, ἃ περὶ τῆς θε-
ραπείας αὐτῶν ἔχρησαν ἀναγράφοιμεν ἄν, ὧν ἐκ μέρους κὰν 165
τοῖς περὶ εὐσεβείας φθάσαντες παρατεθείκαμεν. Ἔστι δὲ ὁ χρη-
σμός τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος, ἅμα καὶ διαίρεσιν τῆς τῶν θεῶν πε-
ριέχων τάξεως·

Ἐργάζεο, φίλε, τήνδε θεόσδοτον ἐς τρίβον ἐλθῶν,
μηδ' ἐπιλήθεο τῶν μακάρων, θυσίας ἐναγίζων
πῆ μὲν ἐπιχθονίοις, πῆ δ' οὐρανίοις, ποτὲ δ' αἴθρης 170
αὐτοῖσιν βασιλεῦσι καὶ ἥερος ὑδροπόροιο,
ἠδὲ θαλασσαίοις καὶ ὑποχθονίοισιν ἅπασι·
πάντα γὰρ ἐνδέδεται φύσεως μεστώμασι τῶνδε.
ζῶων δ' ὡς θέμις ἐστὶ τελευτῆσαι καθαγισμοὺς
ἀείσω (δέλτοις δὲ χαράσσετε χρησμὸν ἐμείο) 175
τοῖς μὲν ἐπιχθονίοις, τοῖς δ' οὐρανίοισι θεοῖσι.
φαιδρὰ μὲν οὐρανίοις, χθονίοις δ' ἐναλίγκια χροίῃ.
τῶν χθονίων διάειρε τριχῆ θυσίας ἐναγίζων,
νερτερίων κατάθαπτε, καὶ εἰς βόθρον αἷματ' ἴαλλε·
χευὲ μέλι Νύμφαισι Διωνύσοιό τε δῶρα· 180
ὅσσοι δ' ἀμφὶς γῆν πωτώμενοι αἰὲν ἔασι,
τοῖς δὲ, φόνου πλήσας πάντη πυριπληθέα βωμόν,
ἐν πυρὶ βάλλε δέμας θύσας ζῶοιο πετεινοῦ,
καὶ μέλι φυράσας Δηωίῳ ἀλφίτω ἔνθεο
ἀτμούς τε λιβάνοιο, καὶ οὐλοχύτας ἐπίβαλλε. 185
εὐτε δ' ἐπὶ ψαμάθοισιν ἴης, γλαυκὴν ἄλα χεύας
κὰκ κεφαλῆς θυσίαζε, καὶ εἰς βαθὺν κῦμα θαλάσσης
ζῶων ὄλον προῖαλλε. τελευτήσας τάδε πάντα
ἐς πλατὺν ἡερίων χορὸν ἔρχεο οὐρανίωνων.

is not holy. Listen to the first passages of his text, where he synthesizes his philosophy from oracles, teaching us what kind of devotion to the gods Apollo requires. He presents this in the following way, writing:

“Following the foregoing account of religion, we will now examine what kind of devotion they [the gods] ask for in their oracles. We have already partially explained this in the context of religion. Here is an oracle of Apollo, including a distinction between the order of gods:

Give heed to this, my friend, as you walk on this god-given path,
Do not forget about the blessed ones, offering sacrifices
To those on the earth and to those in heaven – to the very rulers
Of the ether and the cloudy air,
To those oceanic and to all those dwelling under the earth:
For all of nature is full of their presence.

I will now sing about the way that one should offer animal
sacrifices

(Engrave my oracle on a writing tablet!)

To the gods on earth and to those in heaven:

Bright ones for those in heaven, resembling earth to those on
earth.

For those on earth, split up sacrifices in three ways:

Bury [the victim] underground and shed its blood into a pit.

For the Nymphs, pour out honey and the Dionysian offerings.

To those that are always flying above the earth

Entirely cover their fire-clad altar with gore,

Throw the cadaver of the bird that you have sacrificed into the
fire.

Churn barley, sanctified by Demeter, with honey,

Add the vapors of incense, and sprinkle barley on it.

If you go to the sands of the seashore, pour the green seawater

ἀστραίοις δῆπειτα καὶ αἰθερίοις ἐπὶ πᾶσιν
 αἷμα μὲν ἐκ λαιμῶν κρουνώμασιν ἀμφὶ θηλὰς
 λιμνάζειν, τὰ δὲ γυῖα θεοῖς ἐν δαιτὶ πονεῖσθαι.
 ἄκρα μὲν Ἥφαιστῷ δόμεναι, τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ πάσασθαι,
 ἀτμοῖσιν λαροῖσιν ἐνιπλήσαντες ἅπαντα
 ἤερα ῥευσταλέον· ἐπὶ δ' εὐχὰς πέμπετε τοῖσδε.”

190

195

FR. 13

Καὶ μετ' ὀλίγα ἐπεξηγείται τὸν χρησμὸν ἐρμηνεύων ὧδε·
 “Αἱ δὲ θυσίαι ἔχουσι τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον κατὰ τὴν προρρηθε-
 ῖσαν διαίρεσιν τῶν θεῶν ἐκδεδομένοι. ὄντων γὰρ ὑποχθονίων
 καὶ ἐπιχθονίων θεῶν καὶ τῶν μὲν ὑποχθονίων καὶ νερτερίων
 καλουμένων, τῶν δ' ἐπιχθονίων καὶ χθονίων κληθέντων θεῶν,
 κοινῶς μὲν τούτοις ἱερεῖα τετράποδα μέλανα ἄγειν παρακε-
 λεύεται, περὶ δὲ τὸν τρόπον τῆς θυσίας ἐξαλλάττει· τοῖς μὲν
 γὰρ ἐπιχθονίοις σφάττειν ἐπὶ βωμῶν, τοῖς δ' ὑποχθονίοις ἐπὶ
 βόθρων παρακελεύεται καὶ μέντοι καταθάπτει τούτοις θύσα-
 ντας τὰ σώματα. ὅτι γὰρ κοινὰ τούτων καὶ τὰ τετράποδα,
 αὐτὸς ἐρωτηθεὶς ἐπήγαγεν·

200

205

ξυνὰ πέλει χθονίων καὶ ὑποχθονίων τάδε μούνων
 τετράποδα· χθονίοις ἀρνῶν νεοπηγέα γυῖα.

τοῖς δὲ ἀερίοις πτηνὰ θύειν παρακελεύεται ὀλοκαυτοῦντας
 καὶ τὸ αἷμα ἐπὶ τῶν βωμῶν περιάγοντας· τοῖς δὲ θαλασσίοις
 πτηνὰ μὲν, ζῶντα δὲ ἀφιέναι εἰς τὰ κύματα, μέλανα τὴν χροάν

210

Over the head as you offer your sacrifice, and into the deep-sea
waves
Immerse the whole animal. Having completed all these
sacrifices,
Walk the vast heavenly space of the celestial beings.
Then, for all the astral and ethereal beings
Let the blood gush from the throats and flow around the body
parts
Into pools and dress the limbs as a feast for the gods.
Offer the extremities to the fire and sprinkle the rest [on the
altar].
Saturate with sweet vapors throughout
The streaming air and send your prayers up to them [the gods].”

And just after this, he interprets the oracle, explaining: “This is the way that sacrifices are carried out, according to the distinction of the gods established above. For there are subterranean and earthly gods, and the subterranean are called ‘underground’ and those who are on the earth are called ‘earthly’ gods. What is common to the classes is that it is required to offer black quadrupeds as a sacrifice to them. But the ways that the sacrifice is carried out differ: To those on earth one sacrifices on an altar, while for the subterranean it is required to have pits and to bury the corpses one has sacrificed. That quadrupeds are common to all types, the consulted oracle proclaims:

FR. 13

Quadrupeds are common to earthly as well as subterranean
beings alone.
To the former, the limbs of a young lamb [one should offer].

For the heavenly beings, it is required to sacrifice birds and, as one burns them entire, to cover the altar with their blood; and birds, too, for those of the sea. They should be black, and one should plunge

ὄντα. φησὶ γάρ· τοῖς δὲ θεοῖς τὰ πετεινά, θαλασσαίοις δὲ κε-
 λαινά, πᾶσιν μὲν λέγων τοῖς θεοῖς πλὴν τῶν χθονίων τὰ πε-
 τεινά, μόνους δὲ τοῖς θαλασσίοις τὰ κελαινά, οὐκοῦν τοῖς ἄλλοις
 λευκά. τοῖς δ' οὐρανίοις τε καὶ αἰθερίοις τὰ ἄκρα τῶν ἱερείων 215
 λευκῶν ὄντων ἀφιερῶν, τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ μέρη ἐσθίειν· ἐκ μόνων
 γὰρ τούτων βρωτέον σοι, ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων μὴ. οὐς δὲ εἴρη-
 κεν ἐν τῇ διαιρέσει οὐρανίους, τούτους ἐνταῦθα ἀστραίους. ἄρ'
 οὖν δεήσει ἐξηγήσασθαι τῶν θυσιῶν τὰ σύμβολα τῷ εὐσυνέτῳ
 δήλα; τετράποδα μὲν γὰρ τοῖς χθονίοις καὶ χερσαῖα· τῷ γὰρ 220
 ὁμοίῳ χαίρει τὸ ὅμοιον. χθόνιον δὲ τὸ πρόβατον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο
 Δήμητρι φίλον, καὶ ἐν οὐρανῷ τὴν ἔκφανσιν ἐκ τῆς γῆς τῶν
 καρπῶν μεθ' ἡλίου λοχεύει. μέλανα δέ· τοιαύτη γὰρ ἡ γῆ φύσει
 σκοτεινὴ. τρία δέ· τοῦ γὰρ σωματικοῦ καὶ γεώδους τὰ τρία
 σύμβολον. τοῖς μὲν οὖν ἐπιχθονίοις ἄνω ἐπὶ βωμῶν δεῖ θῆσαι, 225
 ἐπὶ γὰρ τῆς γῆς ἀναστρέφονται οὗτοι· τοῖς δ' ὑποχθονίοις ἐν
 βόθρῳ καὶ ἐν ταφῇ, ἔνθα διατρίβουσιν· τὰ πτηνὰ δὲ τοῖς ἄλ-
 λοις, ὅτι πάντα θεῖ. καὶ γὰρ τὸ ὕδωρ ἀεικίνητον τῆς θαλάσσης,
 μέλαν δέ· διὸ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἱερεῖα πρόσφορα. τοῖς δὲ αἰερίοις
 λευκά· πεφώτισται γὰρ καὶ ὁ ἀήρ φύσεως ὧν διαφανοῦς. οὐρα- 230
 νίοις δὲ καὶ αἰθερίοις τὰ ἐπὶ τῶν ζώων κουφότερα, ἅπερ ἐστὶν
 ἄκρα. οἷς κοινωκεῖν τῆς θυσίας δεῖ· δοτῆρες γὰρ οὗτοι ἀγαθῶν,
 οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι τῶν κακῶν κωλυτῆρες.” Τοιαῦτα μὲν τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς
 ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ θεοσόφου.

FR. 14

ὁ δὴ οὖν αὐτὸς ἐν τῇ δηλωθείσῃ τῶν λογίων συναγωγῇ τα- 235
 ῦτα λέγει πρὸς λέξιν· “Οὐ μόνον δὲ τὴν πολιτείαν αὐτῶν αὐτοὶ
 μεμνηνύκασιν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ εἰρημένα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τίσι χαίρουσι
 καὶ κρατοῦνται ὑπηγόρευσαν, καὶ μὴν καὶ τίσιν ἀναγκάζονται
 τίνα τε δεῖ θῆναι καὶ ἐκ ποίας ἡμέρας ἐκτρέπεσθαι τό τε σχῆμα 240
 τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ποταπὸν δεῖ ποιεῖν αὐτοὶ τε ποίοις σχήμα-
 σιν φαίνονται ἔν τε ποίοις διατρίβουσιν τόποις· καὶ ὅλως ἐν
 οὐδέν ἐστιν ὃ μὴ παρ' αὐτῶν μαθόντες ἄνθρωποι οὕτως αὐτοὺς
 ἐτίμησαν. πολλῶν δ' ὄντων ἃ τούτων ἐστὶ παραστατικά, ὀλίγα

them into the sea alive. It is said: The birds are for the gods, black ones for those of the sea, birds for all gods but the earthly ones, black ones only for those of the sea, white ones, by consequence, for the others. One must leave the extremities of these white victims to the heavenly and ethereal beings, while the other parts are to be eaten. You should only eat from those and not from the rest. Those that he has called heavenly in his distinction he calls 'astral' here. Now, do we have to interpret the sacrificial symbols, although they are evident to any intelligent person? Quadrupeds are for the beings of the earth and land, for like delights in like. Cattle are earthly and therefore dear to Demeter, who produces light in heaven and, with the sun, fruits on the earth. 'Black': because the earth is dark by nature. 'Three': because the three is a symbol of the corporeal and earth-born. One must sacrifice on an altar for those on earth because they roam about on earth; for the subterranean ones, in a pit and grave, where they wander about; for the others, birds, because everything runs. The ever-flowing water of the sea is black, hence the sacred offerings must be black, too; and those for the aerial beings must be white, because air shines, being transparent by nature. The extremities, being the lightest parts of animals, are for heavenly and ethereal beings. One must take part in the sacrificial victims because they are bringers of goods, while the others just prevent bad things." That is what can be found in the *Philosophy from Oracles* of the wonderful, divine sage.

And then, in the collection of oracles mentioned above, he adds the following word for word: "They have not only revealed their way of life to us as well as the other things that we have mentioned. They have also explained in what things they delight, how they can be conquered, how they can be coerced, what kind of sacrifice they require, which days one should avoid [sacrificing], how one should carve statues of them, in what shape they appear, and where they live. There's nothing among the things humans have learned from them that doesn't honor them. Among the many arguments for these things, we'll only put forward a

FR. 14

ἐκ τῶν πολλῶν παραθησόμεθα, ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτυρον τὸν λόγον καταλείπωμεν.”

245

FR. 15

“Ὅτι δὲ καὶ τὰ ἀγάλματα αὐτοὶ ὑπέθεντο πῶς χρῆ ποιεῖν καὶ ἐκ ποίας ὕλης, δηλώσει τὰ τῆς Ἐκάτης ἔχοντα τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον·

ἀλλὰ τέλει ξόανον, κεκαθαρμένον ὥς σε διδάξω·
πηγάνου ἐξ ἀγρίοιο δέμας ποίει ἢδ' ἐπικόσμι
ζώοισιν λεπτοῖσι, κατοικιδίοις σκαλαβώταις·
σμίρνης καὶ στύρακος λιβάνοιό τε μίγματα τρίψας
σὺν κείνοις ζώοισι καὶ αἰθριάσας ὑπὸ μῆνην
αὔξουσιν, τέλει αὐτὸς ἐπευχόμενος τήνδ' εὐχήν.

250

Εἴτ' ἐξέδωκεν εὐχήν ἐδίδαξέν τε πόσους ληπτέον σκαλαβώτας·

255

ὅσαι μορφαί μοι τόσσοις ζώοις σε κελεύω
καὶ σφόδρα ταῦτα τελεῖν, δάφνης δέ μοι αὐτογενέθλου
οἴκου ἐμοῦ χώρημα ποιεῖν· καὶ ἀγάλματι πολλὸν
κείνω ἐπευχόμενος δι' ὕπνων ἐμέ τοι ἀναθρήσεις.
καὶ πάλιν ἄλλοτε ἄγαλμα αὐτῆς ἐξέδωκε τοιοῦτον.”

260

FR. 16

“Καὶ περὶ τῶν σχημάτων ὅπως φαντάζονται αὐτοὶ μεμνη-
νύκασιν, ἀφ' ὧν καὶ τὰ ἀγάλματα οὕτω καθιδρύνθη. λέγει γοῦν
ὁ Σάραπις ἰδὼν τὸν Πᾶνα περὶ ἑαυτοῦ·

φαιδρῆ μὲν κατὰ δῶμα θεοῦ καταλάμπεται ἀνγῆ·
ἦλθε γάρ, ἦντεβόλησε θεὸς μέγας· εἶδεν ἐμεῖο
κάρτος ἀμαιμάκετον, λαμπηδόνα φλογμοτύραννον,
βόστρυχον ἐκ κεφαλῆς νεάτης χαροποῖσι μετώποις

265

few, so as to not make the idea appear unjustified.”

“Hecate explains in this way how they [the gods] have determined how their statues should be manufactured and what material should be used:

FR. 15

Carve a statue in a pure way, as I will teach you:
With wild rue make its body and adorn it with
Small animals, domestic lizards.
Churn myrrh, storax, and incense into a mixture
With those animals and go outside, under the crescent
Moon, to complete this rite by praying the following prayer:

And then she puts forth the prayer and teaches how many small lizards one should use:

I order you to use the number of animals corresponding to my
[threefold] form
And to complete this rite exactly. With sweet bay sprung from
itself
Make my home a dwelling place for me. And if to that statue
You pray frequently, you will be able to see me in your dreams.
And on a different occasion, she revealed another such statue.”

“And they [the gods] have revealed what they think one should imagine them as, and it is on that basis that the statues are manufactured. Serapis, seeing Pan, says the following about himself:

FR. 16

The god's bright light has illuminated the dwelling:
For the great god has come to meet me. He saw my
Irresistible power, the rays of my light, stronger than flames of
fire,

ἀμφὶς ἱαινόμενον πλοχμοῖς θ' ἱεροῖσι γενείου.

Καὶ ὁ Πᾶν ὕμνον περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἐκδιδούς ἐδίδαξεν λέγων οὕτως·

εὐχομαι βροτὸς γεγῶς

270

Πανὶ συμφύτῳ θεῶ,

δισσοκέρατι, δισσόποδι,

τραγοσκελεί, τρυφῶντι”

καὶ τὰ ἀκόλουθα.

FR. 17

καὶ τῆς Ἑκάτης δὲ ταῦτα περὶ αὐτῆς λεγούσης τέθεται·

275

“ἤδη μοι σύ γε πάντα ποιεῖ· ξόανον δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ
μορφὴ μοι πέλεται Δημήτερος ἀγλαοκάρπου,
εἴμασι παλλεύκοις, περὶ ποσσὶ δὲ χρυσοπέδιλος·
ἀμφὶ δὲ τῇ ζώνῃ δολιχοὶ προθέουσι δράκοντες,
ἴχνεσιν ἀχράντοισιν ἐφερπύζοντες, ἄνωθεν
αὐτῆς ἐκ κεφαλῆς ἀρτώμενοι ἐς πόδας ἄκρους,
σπειρηδὸν περὶ πᾶσαν ἐλισσόμενοι κατὰ κόσμον.

280

ὕλη δέ, φησίν,

ἢ Παρίοιο λίθου, ἢ εὐξέστου ἐλέφαντος.”

FR. 18

Ὁ δ' αὐτὸς καὶ ταῦτα παρατίθησιν·

285

“Ἔστι δὲ σύμβολα μὲν τῆς Ἑκάτης κηρὸς τρίχρωμος, ἐκ
λευκοῦ καὶ μέλανος καὶ ἐρυθροῦ συνεστώς, ἔχων τύπον Ἑκάτης
φερούσης μάστιγα καὶ λαμπάδα καὶ ξίφος, περὶ ἣν εἰλείσθω
δράκων· Οὐρανοῦ δὲ ἀστέρες οἱ θαλάττιοι πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν πε-

The curls of my hair unfurl from the top of my head unto
My lustrous brows and onto the sacred strands of my beard.

And Pan teaches us a hymn about himself, saying:

I, who was born mortal, pray to
Pan, born a god,
Two-horned, cloven-footed,
Goat-shanked, lascivious.”

And so forth.

And he quotes the following statements that Hecate made about herself: FR. 17

“Put all this into execution: my statue should
Resemble Demeter, giver of good fruits,
White-robed, with golden sandals on her feet.
Long serpents creep around the belt,
Crawling stealthily, leaving only pure traces, hanging
From my head to the tip of my feet,
Adorning me, turning hither and thither in coils.

As for the material, she states:

Marble from Paros, or polished ivory.”

And then the same author adds: FR. 18

“The symbols of Hecate are a three-colored wax statue, composed of white, black, and red, bearing a whip, a torch, and a sword, and a serpent around it. Those of Ouranos are the sea-stars that are nailed on the doors. These are the things that the gods themselves revealed

πατταλευμένοι. ταῦτα γὰρ οἱ θεοὶ αὐτοὶ μεμηνύκασι διὰ τούτων· 290
λέγει δὲ ὁ Πάν·

τούσδε δ' αὖ ἐλαύνετε,
κηρὸν ἐν πυρὸς μένει
θέντες αἰόλου χροός·
λευκὸς ἔστω καὶ μέλας 295
καὶ τὸ πῦρ φασεφόρον
ἄνθρακος πεφλεγμένου,
δείμα νερτέρων κυνῶν,
γλύμμα δεινὸν Ἐκάτης·
λαμπὰς ἔστω πρὸς χέρας 300
καὶ ξίφος τὸ ποίνυμον
καὶ δράκων περισταλῆς
ἄμμασι Κόρην κρατῶν,
δεινὸν ἀμφὶ κρᾶτα θεῖς,
αἰόλη τε κλεῖς ὀμοῦ 305
καὶ τὸ δαμόνων κράτος
μάστιγος ψόφος πολύς.”

Διὰ τούτων καὶ τῶν τούτοις ὁμοίων ὁ γενναῖος Ἑλλήνων
φιλόσοφος, ὁ θαυμαστὸς θεολόγος, ὁ τῶν ἀπορρήτων μύστης,
τὴν ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίαν ὡς ἀπόρρητα θεῶν περιέχουσαν 310
λόγια παραφαίνει, ἀντικρυσ τῆς πονηρᾶς καὶ δαιμονικῆς ἀλη-
θῶς δυνάμεως ἐξαγορεύων τὰς κατ' ἀνθρώπων ἐνέδρας. τί γὰρ
ἂν γένοιτο βιωφελές ἀνθρώποις ἐκ τῆς κακοτέχνου γοητείας;
τί δ' ἂν ἔχοι θεοφιλές ἢ τῶν ἀψύχων ξοάνων περιεργία; ποίας
δ' εἰκῶν γένοιτ' ἂν ἐνθέου δυνάμεως ἢ τῶν τοιῶνδε σχημάτων 315
μόρφωσις; τί δ' οὐ μᾶλλον φιλοσοφεῖν περὶ ἡμᾶς ἢ μαγεύειν καὶ
τὰ ἀπειρημένα διώκειν συμβουλεύειν ἐχρῆν, τοῦ κατ' ἀρετὴν
καὶ φιλοσοφίαν τρόπου πρὸς εὐδαίμονα καὶ μακάριον αὐτάρ-
κους τυγχάνοντος βίον;

FR. 19 ὁ δὲ ἐπιτείνων τὸν οἰκείον ἔλεγχον προστίθησι τοῖς εἰρη- 320

in the [oracles]. Pan says:

Drive them away,
Place wax in the flames of fire
With speckled colors:
It should be white and black,
And the light-bringing fire
Should be like igneous charcoal
That scares the hellhounds away,
The terrifying figure of Hecate.
It should bear a torch in its hands
And a punishing sword,
And a coiling serpent should
Tame the maid with its knots,
Restraining the terrifying head
Like a glittering fetter.
And, like its power over daemons,
The whip should snap violently.”

Through these and similar ideas, this illustrious Greek philosopher, this admirable theologian, this initiate of the mysteries, reveals the philosophy from oracles containing the secret sayings about the gods. And yet, he betrays the evil and truly daemonic power's attempts to trick humans. For what benefit could humans draw from these corrupt, magic artifices? How could this engagement with soulless statues please the gods? What kind of divine power could the shapes of these figures represent? Would it not be better for us to philosophize than to practice magic and to recommend going after prohibited things, given that we are capable of achieving happiness and a blessed life by observing virtue and philosophy?

As if refuting himself, he [Porphyry] adds the following to his pre-

FR. 19

μένοις καὶ ταῦτα·

“Ὅτι δὲ φιλοῦσι τὰ σύμβολα τῶν χαρακτήρων, ἢ Ἑκάτη παραβάλλουσα πρὸς ἃ φιλοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μεμύηκε διὰ τούτων·

τίς βροτὸς οὐ πεπόθηκε χαρακτήρας ὀπάσασθαι
χαλκοῦ καὶ χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου αἰγλήεντος;
τίς δὲ τὰδ' οὐ φιλείει τῶν δὴ καθύπερθεν ἐφεστῶς,
εἰς ἓν ἀχειρόμενος εἴρων πολυμοιρέα φωτῶν;

325

Ὅν μόνον δ' ὅτι φίλοι οἱ χαρακτήρες δεδήλωκεν, ἀλλ' ὅτι καί, ὅπερ ἔφαμεν, αὐτοὶ περιγράφονται καὶ εἰσιν οἶον ἐν ἱερῷ χωρίῳ τῇ ὑποκειμένη εἰκόνι· οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀχεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γῆς ἱεράς ἐδυνήθησαν· ἱερά δὲ ἡ εἰκόνα φέρουσα θεοῦ, ἧς ἀρθείσης λέλυται τὸ κρατοῦν ἐπὶ γῆς τὸ θεῖον.”

330

Διὰ δὴ τούτων ἀπάντων ἡγοῦμαι σαφῶς ἐληλέγχθαι ὡς ἄρα περίγειοί τινες καὶ φιλοπαθεῖς δαίμονες ἤλωσαν αὐτῶν ὄντες οἱ θεοί· διό μοι δοκῶ σῶφρονι λογισμῷ τὴν ἀποστροφὴν αὐτῶν πεποιῆσθαι. ὀρᾶς γοῦν ὡς κρατεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐν τισὶ γῆς χωρίοις τοὺς κατὰ μαγείαν φασὶ τύπους καὶ τοὺς τοιούσδε χαρακτήρας.

335

FR. 20

ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐξῆς τούτοις ἄκουε οἷα ὁ αὐτὸς συγγραφεὺς περὶ τοῦ ἐκλελοιπέναι αὐτῶν τὰ βοώμενα χρηστήρια ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς τίθησι τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον·

340

“Ἀμφὶ δὲ Πυθῶ καὶ Κλαρίην, μαντεύματα Φοῖβου,
αὐδήσει φάτις ἡμετέρη θεμιτώδεσιν ὀμφαῖς.
μυρία μὲν γαίης μαντήια θέσκελα νῶτα
ἐβλύσθη πηγαί τε καὶ ἄσθματα δινήεντα·

vious statements:

“In these words Hecate has revealed that they [the gods] like symbolic images and she compares this to what humans like:

What mortal wouldn't want to be offered images
Of brass and gold and radiant silver?
How could one not like those, if he cares for the things from
above
And gathers them into one, proclaiming the many destinies of
men?

This does not only suggest that such images are dear [to the gods], but also that, as we have said, they let the representation contain them like a sacred enclosure. They cannot be brought to earth but can only be brought to a sacred ground; and it is sacred when it bears the image of a god. And when it is taken away, the element containing the divine on earth dissolves.”

I think all this clearly proves that the passionate, earthly daemons have been caught pretending to be gods. It seems to me that it is a wise reasoning that has made us turn away from them. You can see how they can be enclosed in some space by the power of magic effigies and other such representations.

Following this, hear now how, in the same text, the same author says the renowned oracles have been abandoned. He states the following:

FR. 20

“Regarding Pytho and Claros – where Phoebus has prophesied –
Oracular voices will make our speech be heard.
Thousands of god-given oracles used to gush forth on the
surface of the earth,

καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄψ χθονίοισιν ὑπαὶ κόλποισιν ἔδεκτο
 αὐτῇ γαῖα χανοῦσα, τὰ δ' ὤλεσε μυρίας αἰών.
 μούνω δ' Ἡελίω φαεσιμβρότῳ εἰσέτ' ἔασιν
 ἐν Διδύμων γνάλοισ Μυκαλήϊον ἔνθεον ὕδωρ
 Πυθῶνός τ' ἀνὰ πέζαν ὑπαὶ Παρνασίον αἶπος
 καὶ κραναῇ Κλαρίῃ, τρηχὺ στόμα φοιβάδος ὀμφῆς. 345
 350

Νικαεῦσι δὲ χρῶν ἔφη·

Πυθῶον δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀναρρῶσαι λάλον ὀμφήν·
 ἤδη γὰρ δολιχοῖσιν ἀμανρωθεῖσα χρόνοισι
 βέβληται κληΐδας ἀμαντεύτοιο σιωπῆς.
 ῥέξατε δ' ὡς ἔθος ἐστὶ θεόπροπα θύματα Φοίβω.” 355

FR. 21

Ὁ δὲ Πορφύριος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς Ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας
 αὐτὸν εἰσάγει τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θεὸν τῷ Ἑβραίων γένει μετὰ τῶν ἄλ-
 λων τῶν ἐπὶ συνέσει βωμένων ἔθνων σοφίαν ἐπιμαρτυροῦντα.
 λέγει δὲ ὁ παρ' αὐτῷ Ἀπόλλων δι' οὗ ἐκτίθεται χρησιμοῦ τάδε·
 ἐκκειμένων δέ, ἔτι περὶ τῶν θυσιῶν ἐπάγει οἷς προσέχειν δεῖ,
 ἄτε μεστοῖς οὔσι πάσης θεοσοφίας· 360

“αἰπεινὴ μὲν ὁδὸς μακάρων τρηχεῖά τε πολλόν,
 χαλκοδέτοις τὰ πρῶτα διοιγομένη πυλεῶσιν·
 ἀτραπιτοὶ δὲ ἔασιν ἀθέσφατοι ἐγγεγαυαίαι,
 ἅς πρῶτοι μερόπων ἐπ' ἀπείρονα πρῆξιν ἔφηναν 365
 οἱ τὸ καλὸν πίνοντες ὕδωρ Νειλώτιδος αἴης·
 πολλὰς καὶ Φοίνικες ὁδοὺς μακάρων ἐδάησαν,
 Ἀσσύριοι Λυδοὶ τε καὶ Ἑβραίων γένος ἀνδρῶν.”

FR. 22

οἷς ὁ συγγραφεὺς ἐπιλέγει·

3.1 Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation

From fountains, from whirling breezes:
And some of these have sunk into the earthen womb,
The gaping earth, some have come to an end in the centuries
 going by.
The sun alone, light of the mortals, still has
The divine waters of Mycale, in the vales of Didyma,
Along the banks of Pytho, under the Parnassus Mountain
And rugged Claros, that rough mouth of Phoebus's voice.

To the people of Nicaea, he gave the following oracle, saying:

The [oracle of] Pytho can't recover its babbling speech
Made dim by the long time passing by,
It has thrown the fetters of the silent failure of prophesy around
 itself.
Offer prophetic sacrifices, as you are used to, for Phoebus!"

In the first book of his *Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry brings up his own god and bears witness to the wisdom of the Hebrew people, together with the other nations celebrated for their intelligence. His Apollo, who has pronounced this oracle, says the following about it – and one must pay attention to these indications on sacrifice, which he adds to the previous proposals, because they are full of divine wisdom:

FR. 21

“Lofty is the way of the blessed ones, and very rough.
First, the bronze gates open,
But the paths remain unutterable.
The first mortals who have talked about this profound matter
Now drink the good water on the banks of the Nile.
The Phoenicians have taught the different ways of the blessed,
And the Assyrians, the Lydians, and the men of the Hebrew
 nation.”

And the author adds:

FR. 22

“ ... Ἀκήκοας πόσος πόνος, ἦν ὑπὲρ σώματός τις τὰ καθάρ- 370
σια θύση, οὐχ ὅτι τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν σωτηρίαν ἐξεύροι; ... Χαλ-
κόμετος γὰρ ἢ πρὸς θεοὺς ὁδὸς αἰπεινή τε καὶ τραχεῖα, ἧς
πολλὰς ἀτραποὺς βάρβαροι μὲν ἐξεύρον, Ἕλληνες δὲ ἐπλα-
νήθησαν, οἱ δὲ κρατοῦντες ἤδη καὶ διέφθειραν· τὴν δὲ εὔρεσιν 375
Αἰγυπτίοις ὁ θεὸς ἐμαρτύρησε Φοῖνιξί τε καὶ Χαλδαίοις (Ἀσ-
σύριοι γὰρ οὗτοι) Λυδοῖς τε καὶ Ἑβραίοις. ἔτι πρὸς τούτοις καὶ
ἐν ἐτέρῳ χρησμῷ φησιν ὁ Ἀπόλλων·

μοῦνοι Χαλδαῖοι σοφίην λάχον ἠδ' ἄρ' Ἑβραῖοι,
αὐτογένεθλον ἄνακτα σεβαζόμενοι θεὸν ἀγνώως.

Καὶ πάλιν ἐρωτηθεῖς, τίμη λόγῳ πολλοὺς λέγουσιν οὐρανοῦς, 380
ἔχρησε τάδε·

εἷς ἐν παντὶ πέλει κόσμου κύκλος, ἀλλὰ σὺν ἐπτά
ζώναισιν πεφόρηται ἐς ἀστερόεντα κέλευθα,
ἃς δὴ Χαλδαῖοι καὶ ἀριζήλωτοι Ἑβραῖοι
οὐρανίας ὀνόμησαν, ἐς ἐβδόματον δρόμον ἔρπειν.” 385

FR. 23

“Ὅτι Πορφύριος ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ βιβλίῳ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλο-
σοφίας αὐτοῦ παρατίθεται χρησμὸν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀθανά-
του ἔχοντα οὕτως·

Ἀθανάτων ἄρρητε πατήρ, αἰώνιε, μύστα,
κόσμων ἀμφιδρόμων ἐποχούμενε δέσποτα νώτοις 390
αἰθερίοις, ἀλκῆς ἵνα σοι μένος ἐστήρικται
πάντ' ἐπιδερκομένῳ καὶ ἀκούοντ' οὔασι καλοῖς,
κλύθι τεῶν παιδῶν, οὓς ἤροσας αὐτὸς ἐν ὥραις.
σὴ γὰρ ὑπὲρ κόσμον τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα
χρυσῇ ὑπέρκειται πολλῇ αἰώνιος ἀλκή, 395

“Have you heard of the great efforts needed to purify the body through sacrifice, not to speak of those needed for the redemption of the soul? The path leading to the gods has bronze gates: It is lofty and rough. The barbarians have discovered many paths, whereas the Greeks wandered astray and those who presently constrain [the gods] have also corrupted it [the path of the gods]. The god attributes the discovery to the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Chaldeans (these are the Assyrians), the Lydians and the Hebrews. In addition to this, Apollo says in another oracle:

Only the Chaldeans and the Hebrew people have attained
wisdom,
Venerating God purely, as a king born from himself.

And again, when he was asked why they speak about the heavens in plural number, he gave the following oracle:

The circle of the cosmos is one in everything, but with seven
Zones it revolves on sparkling paths,
And this is what the Chaldeans and admirable Hebrews
Called heavens, moving about on its sevenfold course.”

In the second book of his *Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry proposes the following oracle about the immortal God:

FR. 23

“Ineffable Father of the immortals, eternal one, teacher of
mysteries,
Master, you ride the heavenly backs of the revolving worlds,
Where your bold strength has established itself
As you oversee all things and listen with fair ears.
Give ear to your children that you have sown in due season!
Beyond the universe and the glittering heaven

ἦς ὑπερηώρησαι ὀρίνων φωτὶ σεαυτόν,
ἀενάοις ὀχετοῖσι τιθηνῶν νοῦν ἀτάλαντον,
ὅς ῥα κυεῖ τόδε πᾶν, τεκνούμενος ἄφθιτον ὕλην,
ἦς γένεσις δεδόκηται, ὅτε σφε τύποισιν ἔδησας.
ἔνθεν ἐπεισεῖουσι γοναὶ ἀγίων μὲν ἀνάκτων
ἀμφὶ σέ, παντόκρατορ βασιλεύτατε καὶ μόνε θνητῶν
ἀθανάτων τε πάτερ μακάρων· αἱ δ' εἰσὶν ἄτερθεν,
ἐκ σέο μὲν γεγαυῖαι, ὑπ' ἀγγελίῃσι δ' ἕκαστα
πρεσβυγενεὶ διάγουσι νόω καὶ κάρτεϊ τῷ σῶ.
πρὸς δ' ἔτι καὶ τρίτον ἄλλο γένος ποιήσας ἀνάκτων,
οἳ ῥ' ἕκασ ἡμαρ ἄγουσιν ἀνυμνεῖοντες ἀοιδαῖς
βουλόμενόν σ' ἐθέλοντες, ἀοιδιάουσι δ' ἐσῶδε.

400

405

ὅτι τρεῖς τάξεις ἀγγέλων ὁ χρησμὸς οὗτος δηλοῖ· τῶν αἰὶ τῷ
θεῷ παρεστώτων, τῶν χωριζομένων αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς ἀγγελίας
καὶ διακονίας τινὰς ἀποστελλομένων, καὶ τῶν φερόντων αἰὶ
τὸν αὐτοῦ θρόνον. τοῦτο 'οἳ σε καθ' ἡμαρ ἄγουσιν' τουτέστι
διηνεκῶς φέρουσι τὸ δὲ 'ἀοιδιάουσι δ' ἐσῶδέ' ἀντὶ τοῦ 'ἄδουσι
ἕως νῦν'. εἶτα ἐπάγει ὁ χρησμὸς τάδε

410

Τύνη δ' ἐσσι πατὴρ καὶ μητέρος ἀγλαὸν εἶδος
καὶ τεκέων τέρεν ἄνθος, ἐν εἶδεσιν εἶδος ὑπάρχων
καὶ ψυχὴ καὶ πνεῦμα καὶ ἀρμονίη καὶ ἀριθμὸς.

415

δηλοῖ δὲ διὰ τούτων, ὅτι καὶ πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς φιλοστορ-
γίαν ἐνδείκνυται περὶ ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς καὶ ὅτι συγκαταβαίνει διὰ
φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ γίνεται καὶ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὡσεὶ θεοῦ

Lies, in transcendence, your immense, eternal, golden might,
Above which you maintain yourself, causing a stir with your
light,
With ever-flowing streams nourishing the poised intellect,
Which gives birth to everything by engendering imperishable
matter
Whose production has raised conjectures since you bound it
with symbols.
From there, the races of the holy kings flow in
Around you, almighty, superior and sole Sovereign of the
mortals
And Father of the blessed immortals. They are separate from you
But were born from you. Sent by you, they
Govern each thing with your primordial intellect and power.
Furthermore, you have created another, third race of kings
That, from far off, lead the day and praise you through songs
And, wanting to carry out your will, sing hither.”

This oracle shows that there are three orders of angels: those that always attend to God, those that are separate from him and that are sent out as messengers and servants, and those that are always carrying his throne. The verse “who lead you everyday” means “always carry you.” “Sing hither” stands for “sing until now.” The oracle continues:

“You are the father and the shining form of the mother,
And the tender flower of the children. You are the form among
forms,
The soul, the spirit, harmony, and number.”

These things show that the god displays fatherly and motherly affection toward us, and that he condescends to us because of his love for humans. And he himself becomes human, and like a child or a creature

τέκνον ἤτοι δημιούργημα.

420

FR. 24 "Ὅτι [...] κατὰ τὸν Πορφύριον τοιόνδε χρησμὸν ἐξήνεγκε

Νοῦν τεὸν εἰς βασιλῆα θεὸν τρέπε, μηδ' ἐπὶ γαίης
πνεύμασι μικροτέροισιν ὁμίλει τοῦτό σοι εἶπον.

FR. 25 τίς τε ἢ προεστῶσα αὐτῶν δύναμις τυγχάνει, ὁ αὐτὸς πάλιν
διασαφήσει, τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν ποιηρῶν δαιμόνων λέγων εἶναι
τὸν Σάραπιν καὶ τὴν Ἑκάτην (ἢ δὲ θεία γραφή τὸν Βεελζε-
βούλ).

425

ἄκουε δὲ ὅπως καὶ περὶ τούτου γράφει ἐν τοῖς "Περὶ τῆς ἐκ
λογίων φιλοσοφίας."

"Τοὺς δὲ ποιηροὺς δαίμονας οὐκ εἰκῆ ὑπὸ τὸν Σάραπιν ὑπο-
πτεύομεν οὐδ' ἐκ τῶν συμβόλων μόνον ἀναπεισθέντες, ἀλλ' ὅτι
τὰ μελίγματα καὶ τὰ τούτων ἀποτρόπαια πρὸς τὸν Πλούτωνα
γίνεται, ὡς ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ ἐδείκνυμεν. ὁ αὐτὸς δὲ τῷ Πλούτῳ
ὁ θεὸς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μάλιστα δαιμόνων ἄρχων καὶ σύμβολα
διδούς πρὸς τὴν τούτων ἔλασιν. οὗτος γοῦν καὶ τοῖς ἰκέταις
ἐδήλωσεν ὡς πᾶσι ζώοις ὁμοιούμενοι προσίασιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις·
ὅθεν καὶ παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις καὶ παρὰ Φοίνιξι καὶ ὅλως παρὰ
τοῖς τὰ θεία σοφοῖς ἱμάντες ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἐπιρρήσσονται καὶ
ζῶα προσουδίζεταί πρὸ τῆς θρησκείας τῶν θεῶν, ἐξελαυνόντων
τῶν ἱερέων τούτους διὰ τοῦ δοῦναι πνεῦμα ἢ αἷμα ζώων καὶ
διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἀέρος πληγῆς, ἵνα τούτων ἀπελθόντων παρου-
σία τοῦ θεοῦ γένηται. καὶ οἶκος δὲ πᾶς μεστὸς καὶ διὰ το-
ῦτο προκαθαίρουσιν καὶ ἐκβάλλουσι τούτους, ὅταν θεὸν κα-
τακαλῶσιν· καὶ τὰ σώματα τοῖννυ μεστὰ ἀπὸ τούτων· καὶ
γὰρ μάλιστα ταῖς ποιαῖς τροφαῖς χαίρουσιν. σιτουμένων γὰρ

430

435

440

445

of God.

According to Porphyry, [...] has brought forward this oracle:

FR. 24

“Turn your intellect toward God the king and do not busy
yourself
With insignificant spirits on earth. That is what I have to tell
you.”

The same [author] is now going to clarify what kind of power directs them [the daemons] and explain that the rulers of the evil daemons are Serapis and Hecate (whereas the divine Scripture says that it is Beelzebul).

FR. 25

Listen to what he says about this in the *Philosophy from Oracles*:

“It is not without a reason that we suspect Serapis of leading the evil daemons, and we do not just assume it on the basis of symbolism but because all propitiations and the averting of danger happen through Pluto, as we have shown in the first book. And the god [Serapis] is the same as Pluto, which is why he rules over the daemons and offers signs to drive them away. And it is he who has explained to his devotees how [daemons] turn into all animals and approach humans. This is why Egyptians, Phoenicians, and generally all those expert in divine matters rip up leather straps and smash animals against the ground before venerating the gods. The priests drive those [daemons] away by presenting the spirit or the blood of animals, or by striking the air [with their hands] to make them go away and let the gods manifest. And a house is all full of daemons, which is why they purify it and expel those [daemons] before invoking a god. And the bodies are also full of them because they delight in certain foods. When we eat, they approach us and cling to the body, and this is why we use purifications: not chiefly

ἡμῶν προσίασι καὶ προσιζάνουσι τῷ σώματι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αἱ ἀγνείαι, οὐ διὰ τοὺς θεοὺς προηγουμένως, ἀλλ' ἔν' οὗτοι ἀποστῶσιν. μάλιστα δὲ αἵματι χαίρουσι καὶ ταῖς ἀκαθαρσίαις καὶ ἀπολαύουσι τούτων εἰσδύνοντες τοῖς χρωμένοις. ὅλως γὰρ ἢ ἐπίτασις τῆς πρὸς τι ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ἢ τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ὀρέξεως ὀρμηὶ ἀλλαχόθεν οὐ σφοδρύνεται ἢ ἐκ τῆς τούτων παρουσίας· οἱ καὶ εἰς ἀσήμους φθόγγους καὶ φύσας ἀναγκάζουσι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐμπίπτειν διὰ τῆς συναπολαύσεως τῆς μετ' αὐτῶν γιγνομένης. ὅπου γὰρ πνεύματος πλείονος ὀλκή, ἢ τῆς γαστρὸς ἐξ ἠδυναθείας πεπρησμένης ἢ τῆς προθυμίας δι' ἠδονῆς ἐπίτασιν ἐκφυσώσης καὶ πολὺ τὸ ἐξωθεν σπώσης, ἐκεῖ παρουσία τῶν τοιούτων πνευμάτων σοι δηλούσθω. ἄχρι τούτων τολμᾷ φύσις ἀνθρώπου εὐρίσκειν τὰς περὶ αὐτῆς συνεστῶσας παγίδας· καὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅταν εἰσκριθῆ, πολυπλασιάζεται τὸ πνεῦμα.”

Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν περὶ τῶν ποιηρῶν δαιμόνων, ὧν φησιν ἄρχοντα εἶναι τὸν Σάραπιν.

FR. 26 καὶ τὴν Ἑκάτην δὲ τούτων ἄρχει ὁ αὐτὸς διδάσκει λέγων οὕτως·

“Μήποτε οὗτοί εἰσιν ὧν ἄρχει ὁ Σάραπις καὶ τούτων σύμβολον ὁ τρίκρανος κύων, τουτέστιν ὁ ἐν τοῖς τρισὶ στοιχείοις, ὕδατι, γῆ, ἀέρι, ποιηρὸς δαίμων; οὗς καταπαύσει ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἔχων ὑπὸ χεῖρα. ἄρχει δ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ Ἑκάτη ὡς συνεχέουσα τὸ τρίστοιχον.”

FR. 27 Καὶ πάλιν φησίν·

“Ἐπι παραθείς ἐν χρηστήριον, ὅπερ αὐτῇ ἡ Ἑκάτη πεποιή-
ται, καταπαύσω τὸν περὶ ταύτης λόγον·

ἢδ' ἐγὼ εἰμι κόρη πολυφάσματος, οὐρανόφοιτος,

for the sake of the gods but for those [daemons] to stay away. They delight in blood and impurities and find joy therein, entering those who use those. The vehement desire for a certain thing and the impulse of a craving spirit are intensified by nothing else than their presence. They are the ones who force humans to make meaningless sounds and exhalations through their participation in the pleasure found in those acts. For when there is an inflow of excessive spirit, or when one's belly burns with pleasure, or when desire has inflated it with the impulse of pleasure, drawing much [air] from outside, then it should be evident that such daemons are present. Human nature can go as far as this to find the traps surrounding it, because when the god penetrates [the human medium], the spirit is amplified immensely."

These are the things concerning the evil daemons, whose ruler, he says, is Serapis.

The same author teaches that Hecate rules over them [the daemons], saying:

FR. 26

"Aren't these the ones over which Serapis rules, and whose symbol is the three-headed dog, which is the evil daemon in the three elements, water, earth, and air? The god has them in his hand and keeps them in check. And Hecate, containing the three elements, rules over them."

He furthermore says:

FR. 27

"There is one more oracle pronounced by Hecate herself that I want to bring forward before I conclude the discussion about her:

I am the virgin of many forms, sky-soaring,

ταυρώπις, τρικάρημος, ἀπηνής, χρυσοβέλεμος,
Φοίβη ἀπειρολεχής, φαεσίμβροτος Εἰλείθυια,
τριστοίχου φύσεως συνθήματα τρισσὰ φέρουσα·
αἰθέρι μὲν πυρόεσσι ἐειδομένη εἰδώλοις,
ἡέρα δ' ἀργεννοῖσι τροχάσμασι ἀμφικάθημαι·
γαῖα δ' ἐμῶν σκυλάκων δνοφερὸν γένος ἡνιοχεύει.”

475

Οἷς ἐπιλέγει ὁ συγγραφεὺς σαφῶς, τίνες οἱ σκύλακες· ὅτι οἱ
πονηροὶ δαίμονες, περὶ ὧν ἄρτι πεπαύμεθα λέγοντες. Τοσαῦτα
μὲν δὴ καὶ ταῦτα. περὶ δὲ τοῦ δαίμονος εἶναι πονηροὺς ἀλη-
θῶς, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἀγαθὸν ἐπαγομένους τοὺς παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς
θεολογουμένους φέρε ἔτι μᾶλλον διὰ πλειόνων κρατύνωμεν.

480

FR. 28

ὁ δὲ θεὸς αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἀπόλλων (πάλιν γὰρ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτον
παραβλητέον καὶ δεικτέον ὅσον τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λείπεται λογισμοῦ)
προστάττει τῷ πονηρῷ δαίμονι θύειν, οὐκ ἄλλως ἢ δηλαδὴ
φίλος ὧν αὐτῶ· κακῶ δὲ τὸ ὅμοιον φίλον. τούτου δὲ μάρτυς
ὁ καὶ πρόσθεν ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψεν “Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσο-
φίας” ὡδε ἱστορῶν πρὸς λέξιν·

485

490

“Σπεύδοντας γοῦν τοῦ προφήτου αὐτοπτῆσαι τὸ θεῖον καὶ
ἐπειγομένους ὁ Ἀπόλλων ἀδύνατον ἔφη τὸ τοιοῦτο πρὶν λύτρα
τῷ πονηρῷ δαίμονι δοῦναι. Λέγει δὲ οὕτως·

λύτρα δίδου γαίης πατρίης οἰκήτορι σεμνῷ,
πρῶτα χοάς, μετέπειτα πυρὴν ἢδ' αἶμα κελαινὸν
οἴνου παμμέλανός τ' οἴων θ' ἄμα λευκὰ ρέεθρα.

495

καὶ σαφέστερον εἶπεν περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν·

οἶνον καὶ γάλα βάλλε καὶ ὕδατος ἀγλαὸν εἶδος
καὶ ξύλα καρπὸν ἔχοντα διογνήτων ἀκυλαίων·

Bull-faced, three-headed, rough, and my arrows are gold.
I am Phoebe the unwedded, Ilithyia who brings light to the
mortals,
I bear the three ciphers of the three elements of nature:
In the ether I make myself visible through fiery reflections,
I ride through the air on a white chariot,
My hounds' dark race is leading the earth."

The author clarifies what kind of hounds these are: They are the evil daemons mentioned in our previous conclusion. That is what he has to say. We, however, insist with even greater vehemence that the daemons are truly evil and that, even if most people theorize about them as gods, they do not bring about anything good.

Their god Apollo (one must see him as comparable to humans and show to what degree he lacks right thinking) orders offering sacrifices to the evil daemon, and it is evident that there is no other explanation than that he is friendly to him. Evil likes what is akin to it. The author of the *Philosophy from Oracles* bears witness to this, relating it in the following words:

FR. 28

"The expounder of the oracles strove eagerly to see with his own eyes the divine, but Apollo revealed that such a thing is impossible, unless one pays ransom to the evil daemon. He says:

Pay ransom to the sacred inhabitant of your ancestral land,
Firstly libations, then fire and the dark blood of the
Black wine, and white streams of the ewes' milk.

And in the same context, he states with even greater clarity:

Spill wine, milk, and beautiful water,
And fruit-bearing branches of the evergreen oak, sprung from

σπλάγχνα δὲ κατθέμενος λιπαροῖς ἅμα νάμασι σπένδε.

500

μετὰ ποίας δὲ εὐχῆς, ἐρωτηθεὶς ἤρξατο μὲν, οὐ μὴν ἐπλήρω-
σεν, οὕτως εἰπών·

δαῖμον ἀλιτρονόων ψυχῶν διάδημα λελογχῶς,
ἡριῶν ὑπένερθε μυχῶν χθονίων τ' ἐφύπερθεν.”

FR. 29

“Ἐμφαίνουσι δὲ πολλαχοῦ οἱ θεοὶ καὶ ἃ προλέγουσι προση-
μαίνοντες τῷ ἑκάστου γινώσκειν τὴν τῆς γενέσεως σύστασιν,
ὥστ' εἶναι αὐτοὺς, εἰ χρὴ οὕτω φάναι, ἄκρους τε μάγους καὶ
ἄκρους γενεθλιαλόγους.”

505

Καὶ πάλιν ἐν χρησμοῖς ἔφη τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα εἰπεῖν·

“Κλήζειν Ἑρμείην ἠδ' Ἥλιον κατὰ ταυτὰ
ἡμέρη Ἥελίου, Μήνην δ' ὅτε τῆσδε παρείη,
ἠδὲ Κρόνον καὶ Ῥεάν ἠδ' ἐξείης Ἀφροδίτην
κλήσεσιν ἀφθέγκτοις, ἃς εὔρε μάγων ὄχ' ἄριστος,
τῆς ἑπταφθόγου βασιλεύς, ὃν πάντες ἴσασιν·

510

“Ὅσάνην λέγεις' εἰπόντων ἐπήγαγε·

515

καὶ σφόδρα· καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον αἰὲ θεὸν ἐπτάκι φωνεῖν.”

FR. 30

διὸ Πορφύριος ὁ περὶ πᾶσαν ἀγυρτίαν ἐσπουδακῶς ἐν τῷ
δευτέρῳ λόγῳ τοῦ περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας συντάγμα-
τος ἐμφαίνειν μὲν ἐν τοῖς χρησμοῖς φησι τοὺς θεοὺς, ὅτι, ὅσα
ἂν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις προλέγωσι, τὴν τῆς γενέσεως γινώσκοντες
σύστασιν λέγουσιν, ὡς εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἄκρους γενεθλιαλόγους·

520

Zeus,
Lay down entrails and pour out streaming libations on them.

And as he was asked what kind of prayer one should use, he gave the following answer, without finishing it:

The crown of wicked-minded souls has fallen to the lot of the
daemon,
The one beneath the depths of the sky and above the earth.”

“The gods often reveal that when they proclaim something that they foresaw, they do so on the ground of their knowledge of the conditions of a person’s birth. One could say that they are outstanding magicians and horoscope readers.”

FR. 29

And he attributes the following to Apollo in his oracles:

“Hermes and the Sun should be invoked in the same manner
On the day of the Sun, and the Moon when its day has come,
As well as Cronos, and Rhea, and next Aphrodite,
Using the voiceless invocations that the greatest magician has
found,
The king of the [lyre] with seven chords, whom everyone knows.

And as they said: ‘Do you mean Ostanos?’ he added:

Indeed. One must always cry to a god seven times.”

In the second book of his *Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry – who is always keen on imposture – says that in their oracles, the gods reveal that when they foretell something to humans, they speak from the knowledge of the conditions of their birth, since they are outstanding casters of horoscopes.

FR. 30

FR. 31 τούτων δὲ ἔλεγχος αὐτὸς ἐκείνος ὁ τῶν δαιμόνων προήγορος ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψε “Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας” ὧδε λέγων πρὸς λέξιν·

“Ἄ γὰρ λέγουσιν οἱ θεοί, εἶπερ τὰ μεμοιραμένα γνώσκοντες λέγουσιν, ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἄστρων φορᾶς δηλοῦσιν, καὶ τοῦτο σχεδὸν πάντες ἐξέφηναν οἱ ἀψευδεῖς τῶν θεῶν.” 525

FR. 32 Εἶτα βλέπων πολλὴν καὶ παρ’ ἀνθρώποις ἀποτυχίαν αὐτῆς καὶ ἐν θεοῖς οὖσαν, τὴν ἀκριβῆ τῆς φορᾶς τῶν ἄστρων γνῶσιν καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτων συμβάσεις ἀκαταλήπτους οὐ μόνον ἀνθρώποις εἶναί φησιν ἀλλὰ καὶ δαιμόνων τισὶ καὶ θεῶν, μᾶλλον δὲ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς, ὡς διεξιῶν ταῦτα δείκνυσι. 530

FR. 33 Εἶθ’ ἐξῆς ὑποβάς φησιν·

“Ἐρωτηθεὶς ὁ Ἀπόλλων τί τέξεται ἡ γυνή, ἐκ τῶν ἄστρων εἶπεν ὅτι θῆλυ, ἐκ τοῦ σπορίμου ἐπιγνοῦς χρόνου. λέγει δὲ οὕτως·” 535

ἐκφύεται γαίηθεν ὀδῶν, ὅθι λείμακες ὄμβρου
δυσοσύνη κατέμαρψαν ὄλον πόμα μητέρος αὐτῆς,
ἔνδον ὀρινομένης χρόνον ἄρκιον, οὐ τι δὲ κοῦρον,
ἀλλὰ κόρην· Φοίβη γὰρ εὐσκοπος ἤροσεν ἀγνήν
Κύπριν, ἐπειγομένην θῆλυν γόνον, ὦ φίλε, σείο. 540

ἰδὸν καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ σπορίμου, ὅτι σελήνη ἐπὶ Ἀφροδίτην ἐφέρετο, εἶπεν ὅτι θῆλυ γεννηθήσεται. Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐκεῖθεν προλέγουσιν. ἐπάκουσον γάρ·

ἡ μάλα μιν κακὸς ἰὸς ἐνὶ στέρνοισι δαμάζει,

As for the proof of these things, the advocate of the daemons tells us the following word for word in his book *Philosophy from Oracles*:

FR. 31

“For what the gods proclaim when they talk about the things that they know to be determined by destiny, they reveal them through the movement of the stars, and this is what nearly all truthful gods declare.”

Recognizing that much of the misfortune present among gods also affects humans, he says that the exact knowledge of the movement of the stars and the consequences resulting therefrom are ungraspable not only to humans but also to some of the daemons and gods, or even to all of them, as he will show further on.

FR. 32

A little further on he says:

FR. 33

“When Apollo was asked what the woman would give birth to, he observed the time of conception and inferred from the stars that it would be a girl. He said:

She is born from the paths of the earth, where the rain-thirsty
meadows
Have absorbed the whole draught of the mother,
Who, when enough time had passed, was stirring inside, but it
wasn't
For a boy but for a girl. For the watchful Phoebe had sown the
pure
Cypris, who had been eager to give birth to your girl, oh friend.

You can see how he announced the birth of a girl because the conception took place when the Moon joined Venus. Illness is also foretold that way. Listen to this:

Foul poison subdued the chest,

πνεύμονος ἀλγινόεσσαν ὑπερβλύζων κακότητα”

545

FR. 34 καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς, οἷς ἐπιλέγει·

“Ταῦτα δὲ Μοιράων νόος ἤγαγεν, ἡδὲ κελαινὴν
εἰς ἔρων ἐστήριξε κακηπελίησι δαμάζειν,
ὑψιπόλοιο Κρόνοιο κακὴν ὑπ’ ἀταρπὸν ἰόντος.”

FR. 35 καὶ μεθ’ ἕτερα·

550

“Ἀλλὰ σε μόρσιμον ἡμᾶρ ἀναπλήσαι βιότοιο
ἀλγινόεις βροτολοιγὸς ἐπισπέρχων Κρόνω ἄντα
σπεύσατο, σῆς δὲ θέμιλον ἀπὸ φρενὸς ἤιστωσε·
τοῦνεκα καὶ πατέρος θεοειδέος ἱερὸν ἦτορ
φενγέμεναι κακοεργὸν ἐπηπείλησεν Ἄρηα.”

555

ταῦτα μὲν ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐκ θείας αὐτῶν δυνάμεως μαντεύονται,
ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἄστρον ἐπιτηρήσεως κατὰ τοὺς τῶν μαθηματικῶν λόγους,
ὡς μηδὲν ἐν τούτῳ διαφέρειν ἀνθρώπων μηδέ τι κρεῖττον καὶ
φύσεως θειότερας ἔργον ἐπιδείκνυσθαι. θέα δὲ ὡς καὶ τὸ ἐφ’
ἡμῶν ἀναιροῦσιν, οὐ μόνον τὰ ἐκτὸς καὶ τὰ οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν τῆ τῶν
ἄστρον ἀνατιθέντες φορᾶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας προαιρέσεις.

560

FR. 36 “Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Ἀπόλλων περί τινος, ἅμα καὶ τὴν περὶ στρα-
τιῶν προθυμίαν ἀφηγούμενος πόθεν αὐτῷ γίνεται, ἔφη·

Ἄρεα κραιπνὸν ἔχει γενεθλήμιον, ὅς μιν ὀρίνει
οὐδέ ἐ ταρχύσει· Ζηνὸς γὰρ ἐπέχραε βουλή,
ἢ οἱ κῦδος ἄρειον ἀπ’ Ἄρεος εὐθὺς ὀρέξει.

565

καὶ πάλιν ἐπ’ ἄλλου·

And made painful distress gush over the lungs.”

And then he adds:

FR. 34

“This is what the purpose of the Fates brought along,
As through evil plight they whipped up a dark strife,
When Saturn, soaring high, went down the way of ill.”

And a little further:

FR. 35

“To make you complete that day of your life’s demise
That grievous bane of men [Mars] hastily sprung in front of
Saturn and shattered the substance of your expectations.
This is why the sacred heart of your divine father
Had cautioned you to flee ill-witted Mars.”

This shows that they [the gods] don’t prophesy through their divine power but through the observation of the stars according to astrological rules. In this regard, they are not different from humans, and what they do doesn’t present anything greater and belonging to a more divine nature. And see how they take away our freedom, making not only the things outside of us and independent of us depend on the course of the stars, but even our own intentions.

“This is what Apollo says about someone, explaining where his eagerness to fight in war comes from:

FR. 36

The swift Mars was in charge of his birth, who bestirs him
And won’t allow him to be buried. This is the will that Zeus
decreed,
Who will immediately give him military glory on Mars’s part.

And in another oracle:

εὐχαίτης ἐπίκειται Κρόνος, στρυγεροῖσι δὲ κέντροις
ἀλγύνει παιδὸς ταλαοῦ δυσπέμφελον αἰῶ.”

FR. 37 καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν εἶρηκε τούτου· “πᾶν γάρ” φησί “τὸ κατιὸν εἰς 570
γῆν, ὅτε κάτεισι, ὑποπίπτει τῇ φορᾷ τῶν κρατούντων θεῶν,
τουτέστι τῇ κινήσει τῶν ἄστρον, ὥστε καὶ αὐτοὺς τοὺς κα-
τιόντας θεοὺς ὑπὸ τὰς μοίρας εἶναι κατίασι δὲ καὶ κάτω χρη-
σμοδοῦσιν ἅπαντες, ὅπου καὶ τὰ χρηστήρια αὐτῶν ἴδρυται καὶ 575
τὰ ἀγάλματα. οὗτοι δὲ εἰσιν οἱ ἀπὸ Κρόνου καὶ Ἰρέας καὶ οἱ ἐξ
αὐτῶν ἅπαντες.”

FR. 38 εἰς τοσοῦτον δὲ τὴν εἰμαρμένην οἱ γενναῖοι θεοὶ πεφρίκασιν 580
ὡς ὁμολογεῖν μηδὲ κεραυνουμένοις αὐτῶν τοῖς ἱεροῖς δύνασθαι
ἐπαμύνειν. πολλὴ ἄρα γένοιτ’ ἂν ἐλπίς ἀνθρώποις εὐχομένοις
τυχεῖν βοηθείας παρὰ τῶν μηδὲ σφίσι αὐτοῖς ἐπαρήγειν δυ-
νατῶν. τί δὲ χρὴ λοιπὸν εὐσεβεῖν καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς προσκυνεῖν 580
καὶ θεραπεύειν, μηδὲν οἴους τε καθόλου μηδὲ ἑαυτοῖς ἐπαρκεῖν;
ἄκουε δ’ οὖν ἅ φησιν ὁ χρησμός·

“Οὔτω καὶ ναῶν μοῖραι καὶ ἱερῶν, καὶ αὐτοῦ γε τοῦ Ἀπόλ-
λωνος τὸ ἱερὸν μεμοίρατο κεραυνωθῆναι, ὡς φησιν” 585

ὦ ζαθέης γεγαῶτες Ἐριχθονίῳ γενέθλης,
ἔτλητ’ ἐλθέμεναι καὶ ἐμὴν ἐρεεινέμεν ὀμφήν,
ὀππόθι δηωθῆ περικαλλέος ἔδρανα σηκοῦ.
κλύτε δαφνηρεφέων μυχάτων ἄπο θέσκελον ὀμφήν. 590
εὐτ’ ἂν ἄνω πνεύοντες ὑπὲρριοι κελάδοντες
τρίβωνται πατάγοισιν ἐναντία δηριόωντες
(κρυμὸς δ’ αὖ περὶ κόσμον ἀπείρονα νήνεμος ἔσται)
μηδὲ διεξερύγησιν ἔχη κεκακωμένος αἰθῆρ,
αἰθαλόεις περὶ γαῖαν, ὅπη τύχην, ἔκπεσε πυρσός·
τὸν μὲν δὴ θῆρές τε κατ’ οὔρεα δειμαίνοντες 595

3.1 *Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation*

Saturn with beautiful hair presses upon him and with loathsome
pangs
He distresses the wretched child's rough life."

The reason, he says, is the following: "Everything that descends to earth is, when it descends, subjected to the circuit of the gods' dominance, which is the movement of the star – for the gods themselves are subjected to the Fates, when they descend. They all descend and give oracles at their designated place, where their statues stand. This concerns the children of Cronos [Saturn] and Rhea and all those sprung from them."

FR. 37

The noble gods dread destiny so much that they admit to being incapable of preventing their temples from being hit by thunderbolts. Humans would indeed need to cherish tremendous hopes if they asked those for help who can't even help themselves! Why should one practice piety, prostrate themselves before the gods and venerate them, when they can't care for themselves at all? Listen to what that the oracle says:

FR. 38

"The same goes for the destiny of the sanctuaries and temples, and even Apollo's temple was destined to be hit by thunderbolts, as it says:

Offspring of the divine race of Erichthonius:
You dared to come and ask me to speak out
On how it came to be that the beautiful precinct's abode was
ravaged.

Listen now to the divine voice from the laurel-clad lairs!
When the winds above roar high up in the air,
Clashing, rattling as they wrangle between themselves,
(windless frost will cover the immensity of the world)
And the troubled ether cannot release itself,
A blazing torch, as it happens, falls to the earth:

φεύγουσιν πυμάτοις ὑπὸ κεύθεσιν οὐδὲ μένουσιν
 εἰσιδέειν ὄσσοισι καταβάσιον Διὸς ἔγχος.
 τοῦ μὲν καὶ νηοὶ μακάρων καὶ δένδρεα μακρὰ
 ἡλιβάτων τ' ὀρέων κορυφαὶ νῆές τ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ
 δάμνανται ζαπύροις πωτήμασιν ἐμπελάοντος·
 καὶ δ' αὐτὴ πληγείσα Ποσειδάωνος ἐταίρη
 πολλάκις ἠχῆσσο' ἀναχάζεται Ἀμφιτρίτη.
 ὑμεῖς οὖν καὶ ἄτλητον ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἄλγος ἔχοντες,
 τέτλατε Μοιράων ἀμετάτροπα δῆνεα θυμῶ·
 ταῖσι γὰρ Οὐρανίδαο Διὸς κατένευσε κάρηνον,
 ὅττι κε δὴ νήσωσι μένειν ἀσάλευτον ἀτράκτοις.
 αἶσα γὰρ ἦν δολιχοῖσι χρόνοις περικαλλέα σηκὸν
 πυρσῶν αἰώρησι διυπετέεσσι δαμῆναι.”

600

605

FR. 39

ὁ δ' ἔμπαλιν ὄρα διὰ τίνων φησὶ τὰ τῆς εἰμαρμένης λύεσθαι·

“Δεηθέντος γὰρ τινος καταδέξασθαι θεόν, εἰπὼν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι
 ἀνεπιτήδειός ἐστι διὰ τὸ ὑπὸ φύσεως καταδεδέσθαι, καὶ διὰ
 τοῦτο ἀποτροπιασμοὺς ὑπαγορεύσας ἐπάγει·

610

ρίπη δαιμονίη γὰρ ἀλείψ' ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀλκή
 σαῖσι γοναῖς, ἄς χρή σε φυγεῖν τοῖαισι μαγείαις.

δι' ὧν καὶ σαφῶς δεδήλωται ὅτι ἡ μαγεία ἐν τῷ λύειν τὰ τῆς
 εἰμαρμένης παρὰ θεῶν ἐδόθη εἰς τὸ ὅπως οὖν ταύτην παρα-
 τρέπειν.”

615

Ταῦτά σοι ὁ Πορφύριος, οὐκ ἐγώ. ὁ τοίνυν μαγείαις παραι-
 νῶν λύειν τὰ τῆς εἰμαρμένης πῶς αὐτὸς θεὸς ὧν τὰ πεπραμμένα
 κατὰ τοῦ ἰδίου ναοῦ κεραυνῶ πιμπραμένου μὴ ἔλυσεν; ὁ δὲ δὴ
 μαγεύειν, ἀλλὰ μὴ φιλοσοφεῖν παρορμῶν, πῶς οὐκ ἂν εἶη δῆλος

620

The wild beasts retreat to the mountains in anguish,
They flee to the hindmost hideouts, not waiting
To see with their eyes Zeus's shaft falling down.
The temples of the blessed ones, the large trees,
The crest of the steep mountains, the ships on the sea,
Are subdued by the flames of its flight, as it draws nearer.
Poseidon's wife herself was struck,
Amphitrite, and she often draws back, roaring intensely.
You, then – even if your soul is unbearably distressed,
Let your heart bear up under the Fates' unchangeable counsels.
For Heavenly Zeus gave them a sign with his head, nodding to
 them,
That whatever their spindles spun out would remain unshaken.
It was fate that, after a long time, made the beautiful precinct
Give in to the fiery agitations that Zeus himself stirred up.”

See in what way he thinks the knots of destiny can be undone:

FR. 39

“The god told someone who had asked to receive him that he was unfit because he was tied down by the bonds of nature. And this is why he suggests expiatory sacrifices [to avert destiny], saying:

A daemonic force has fettered and spread over
Your ancestors: you must escape through magic.

Which shows clearly that the gods introduced magic to undo the knots of destiny for the purpose of somehow diverting it.”

That is what Porphyry says, not me. But if he [Apollo] recommends using magic to undo the knots of destiny, how could he, as a god, not prevent the fated lightning from igniting his own temple? Commending magic but not philosophy, how could it not become evident what

ὁποῖος ὢν τυγχάνει τὸν τρόπον;

FR. 40 ἐπὶ πᾶσι τούτοις καὶ ψεύδεσθαι τοὺς θεοὺς ὁ αὐτὸς ὁμολογεῖ·

“Ἄλλ’ ἤδη καὶ τὴν γνώσιν τῆς φορᾶς τὴν ἀκριβῆ καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτων συμβάσεις ἀκατάληπτον εἶναι ἀνθρώποις, καὶ οὐ μόνον 625 τούτοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τισι τῶν δαιμονίων· ὅθεν καὶ ψεύδονται περὶ πολλῶν ἐρωτηθέντες.”

FR. 41 τούτοις οὖν ἅπασιν ὡς καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὴν τε πρακτικὴν θεοσοφίαν – οὕτω τὴν μαγείαν καλῶν – χαλεπὴν εἰς ἐγχείρησιν 630 εἶναι φησι καὶ τὴν φορὰν τὴν ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἄστρον καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτων συμβάσεις ἀκατάληπτους, διὸ καὶ ψεύδεσθαι περὶ πολλῶν ἐρωτηθέντας, καὶ πολλὰ τούτων εἰς πίστιν ἐκ τῶν χρησμών παρατίθεται λόγια.

FR. 42 Τούτοις αὖθις ἐπιλέγει·

“Καὶ τὸ περιέχον ἀναγκάζον ψευδῆ γίνεσθαι τὰ μαντεῖα, οὐ τοὺς παρόντας ἐκόντας προστιθέναι τὸ ψεῦδος. πολλάκις 635 γοῦν προλέγουσιν ὅτι ψεύσονται· οἱ δὲ μένουσι καὶ λέγειν ἀναγκάζουσι διὰ τὴν ἀμαθίαν. εἶπε γοῦν ὁ Ἀπόλλων ποτέ, τοιαύτης οὔσης τῆς καταστάσεως, ὡς ἐδείξαμεν, πονηρᾶς τοῦ περιέχοντος· 640

κλεῖε βίην κάρτος τε λόγων· ψευδηγόρα λέξω.

καὶ ὅτι ταῦτα ἀληθῆ ἐστὶν ἅπερ ἔφαμεν, δηλώσει τὰ λόγια. ἔφη γοῦν τις κληθεὶς τῶν θεῶν·

σήμερον οὐκ ἐπέοικε λέγειν ἄστρον ὁδὸν ἱρήν·
ἔδρανα μαντοσύνης γὰρ ἐν ἄστροσι νῦν πεπέδηται.” 645

kind of being he is?

In addition to all this, he [Porphyry] admits that the gods beguile: FR. 40

“And the exact knowledge of the movement [of the stars] and the consequences thereof remain ungraspable to humans – and not just to them but even to some of the daemons. This is why they frequently lie when they are consulted.”

For all these [gods] as well as for humans, “practical theosophy” (which is what he [Porphyry] calls magic) is difficult to master, he says, and the exact movement of the stars and the consequences thereof remain ungraspable, which is why they [the gods] frequently lie when they are consulted. He compares many of their sayings to a faith that comes from oracles. FR. 41

And to this, again, he adds: FR. 42

“The atmosphere also makes the oracles turn out false – the attendants do not willingly introduce falsehood. They [the gods] often give warnings that they will lie. But they [the attendants] insist and force them to speak because of their ignorance. Apollo, on an occasion where the weather in the atmosphere was bad, as described above, said:

Block up the strength and vigor of your words: I will tell lies.

The oracles will show that what we are saying is true. One of the invoked gods says, in fact:

It is not befitting to speak about the sacred path of the stars
today,
For the abode of prophecy is shackled among the stars.”

καὶ ἐπιλέγει·

“Πέφηνεν ἄρα πόθεν πολλάκις τὸ ψεῦδος συνίσταται.”

FR. 43

Ἐἶτα καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ ψεύδεσθαι αὐτοὺς μαντευομένους ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ παρέθετο. “παρὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀμαθίαν τῶν καλούντων” φησί “βιαζόμενοι ὑπ’ αὐτῶν οἱ θεοὶ παρὰ μοῖραν διὰ τὴν βίαν τῶν ἐπανάγκων ἄκοντες λέγειν τι τῶν ἡγνομένων αὐτοῖς συνελαιύνονται” κἀντεῦθεν ψευδῆ τὰ μαντεῖα γίνεσθαι. “πολλάκις δέ” φησὶν “καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο προλέγουσιν, ὅτι ψεύσονται εἶπεν γοῦν ὁ Ἀπόλλων ποτὲ τῆς περιστάσεως τοῦ περιέχοντος πονηρᾶς οὔσης, ὡς ἐδείξαμεν – καὶ αὐτὸ γὰρ τοῦτο τὸ λέγειν τι τῶν ἐσομένων ἢ εἰδέναι αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῆς φορᾶς τῶν ἄστρον ἔχουσιν – ἐν τοιαύτῃ οὖν πονηρᾷ περιστάσει τοῦ περιέχοντος εἰπεῖν τι βιαζόμενος ὁ Ἀπόλλων οὕτως εἶρηκε·

650

655

λῦε βίην κάρτος τε λόγων, ψευδηγόρα λέξω.

καὶ ἄλλος δέ τις’ φησί ‘κληθεῖς τῶν θεῶν ἔφη·

660

Σήμερον οὐκ ἐπέοικε λέγειν ἄστρον ὁδὸν ἱρήν·
Ἐδρανα μαντοσύνης γὰρ ἐν ἄστρασι νῦν πεπέδηται.”

FR. 44

“ἢ τε Ἐκάτη κληθεῖσα ἐν τοιαύτῃ καταστάσει τοῦ περιέχοντός φησιν·

Οὐ λαλέω, κλείσω δὲ πύλας δολιχοῖο φάρυγγος·
υκτὸς γὰρ κέντροις ἀχρειοτάτοις προσελαύνει
Τιτηνὶς κερόεσσα θεῆ κακὸν Ἄρη ἰδοῦσα.

665

Καὶ πάλιν” φησί “τινῶν εἰπόντων, εἰ καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ θεοὶ ὑπὸ τὴν εἰμαρμένην εἰσὶν, ὅτι φυλάττονται ταῦτα, ἐπήγαγε·

And he adds:

“It has become clear how falsehood frequently arises.”

In the third book, he exposes the reasons that the givers of oracles lie. “The ignorance of the suppliants forces the gods, contrary to Fate and because of the impetuousness of those who coerce them, and drives them to speak against their own will about things they don’t know, and this is how the oracles become delusive. They [the gods] often forewarn that they are going to lie. This is also what Apollo once said when the weather in the atmosphere was bad, as we have shown (and they are able to speak about future events or know them only through the movement of the stars). When the weather in the atmosphere was bad while he was being coerced, Apollo said this:

FR. 43

Undo the strength and vigor of your words: I will tell lies.

And another one of the gods, having been invoked, said this:

It is not befitting to speak about the sacred path of the stars
today,
For the abode of prophecy is shackled among the stars.”

“Hecate, being invoked when the weather in the atmosphere was like this, said:

FR. 44

I shall not speak – I will close the doors of the abyssal throat.
The titanic [moon] rides along night’s elusive stations,
The horned goddess, as she looks toward wicked Mars.

And again,” he says, “when certain people were claiming that the gods are affected by Fate, they fear its outcome, Hecate adds in re-

Λυέσθω φύσεως δεσμῶν, ἵνα σοῖσι πίθωμαι.
ᾠ κραδίη, τί λέληκας, ἀναλκείησι τυπέισα;
Οὐ ποθέεις μαθέειν, ὅ σε μὴ θέμις ᾧδ' ἐρεείνεις;
Στῆτε πόθου· παύσασθε βίης τυτθοί περ ἑόντες.”

670

καὶ ἕτερα πολλὰ τοιαῦτα Πορφύριος παρατίθεται τὴν τε βίαν τῶν καλούντων ἀνθρώπων ἐκτραγωδῶν καὶ τῶν βιαζομένων θεῶν τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς συμπίπτουσιν ἐκ τῆς συμπλοκῆς τῶν ἀστρῶν ἄγνοιαν, ὡς καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν θεῶν ὑποκειμένων τῇ γενεθλιαλογία καὶ ταῖς μοίραις καὶ ὡς ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων τοῖς ἐπανάγκοις κατίασι βιαζόμενοι, ὡς καὶ αὐτὴν ποτε τὴν Ἑκάτην δυσανασχετοῦσαν εἰπεῖν πρὸς τὸν ἐπαναγκάζοντα·

675

680

“Τίπτε μ' αἰεὶ θείοντος ἀπ' αἰθέρος ᾧδε χατίζων
Θειοδάμοις Ἑκάτην με θεὴν ἐκάλεσσας ἀνάγκαις;”

Ἐγὼ δὲ ταῦτα ἐκ πολλῶν παρεθέμην ὀλίγα πρὸς ἔλεγχον τοῦ μηδὲ τέχνην τὴν γενεθλιαλογίαν ὑπάρχειν.

FR. 45

Postremo ipse est Deus, quem doctissimus philosophorum, quamvis Christianorum acerrimus inimicus, etiam per eorum oracula, quos deos putat, deum magnum Porphyrius confitetur. Nam in libris, quos ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας appellat, in quibus exequitur atque conscribit rerum ad philosophiam pertinentium velut divina responsa, ut ipsa verba eius, quem ad modum ex Graeca lingua in Latinam interpretata sunt, ponam: “Interroganti, inquit, quem deum placando reuocare possit uxorem suam a Christianismo, haec ait versibus Apollo.” Deinde verba velut Apollinis ista sunt: “Forte magis poteris in aqua inpressis litteris

685

690

sponse:

The bonds of nature shall be loosened, so that I may trust you.
Oh, heart, why do you cry out, beaten by cowardice?
Why would you want to know what you are not allowed to ask?
Abstain from desire, put an end to this impetuousness, you
small ones!”

Putting these and many other similar things forward, Porphyry tragically exposes both the insistence of the suppliant humans and the ignorance of the coerced gods regarding the events inferred from the combination of the stars, based on the fact that, on the one hand, even the gods are subjected to astrology and Fate, and that on the other hand, they are coerced by humans and come down under their compulsion. That is how it once came to be that Hecate herself, bearing it ill, told someone who was coercing her:

“Why in your need do you call me down here from the
ever-flowing ether,
Me, divine Hecate, with forces capable of coercing gods?”

I [Philoponus] have selected these few points among many others to prove that practicing astrology is not a real art.

At last, this is the very God that the most learned of the philosophers – although he is the most bitter enemy of the Christians – Porphyry confesses to be a great god, on the ground of the oracles of those that he considers gods. In the books that he titled *Philosophy from Oracles* he describes and lists allegedly divine answers on matters belonging to philosophy. I quote his very words, translated from the Greek language into Latin: “Apollo recited these verses for someone who had asked which god he should pray to in order to call his wife back from Christianity.” The alleged words coming from Apollo are these: “It

FR. 45

3 *Philosophy from Oracles*

scribere aut adinflans leues pinnas per aera avis volare, quam pollutae reuoces impiae uxoris sensum. Pergat quo modo uult inanibus fallaciis 695
perseuerans et lamentari fallaciis mortuum Deum cantans, quem iudicibus recta sentientibus perditum pessima in speciosis ferro vincta mors interfecit.” Deinde post hos versus Apollinis, qui non stante metro Latine interpretati sunt, subiunxit atque ait: “In his quidem inremediabile sententiae eorum manifestavit dicens, quoniam Iudaei suscipiunt 700
Deum magis quam isti.”

FR. 46 Item ad ea, quae interrogavit Apollinem, quid melius, uerbum siue ratio an lex: “Respondit, inquit, uersibus haec dicens.” Ac deinde subicit Apollinis uersus, in quibus et isti sunt, ut quantum satis est inde decerpam: “In Deum uero, inquit, generatorem et in regem ante omnia, 705
quem tremit et caelum et terra atque mare et infernorum abdita et ipsa numina perhorrescunt; quorum lex est Pater, quem ualde sancti honorant Hebraei.”

FR. 47 Quid est quod Porphyrius, cum pietatem laudet Hebraeorum, qua magnus et uerus et ipsis numinibus terribilis ab eis colitur Deus, Christianos ob hoc arguit maximae stultitiae etiam ex oraculis deorum suorum, quod istum mundum dicunt esse peritum? Ecce in litteris pietatis Hebraeorum dicitur Deo, quem confitente tanto philosopho etiam ipsa numina perhorrescunt: Opera manuum tuarum sunt caeli, ipsi peribunt. Numquid quando caeli peribunt, mundus, cuius idem caeli superior pars est et tutior, non peribit? Si haec sententia Ioui displicet, cuius, ut scribit iste philosophus, uelut grauioris auctoritatis oraculo in Christianorum credulitate culpatur: cur non similiter sapientiam tamquam stultitiam culpatur Hebraeorum, in quorum libris piissimis inuenitur? Porro si in illa sapientia, quae Porphyrio tam multum placet, 710
ut eam deorum quoque suorum uocibus praedicet, legitur caelos esse 715
720

would be easier for you to write letters on water or to spread your light feathers to fly through the air than to call back your depraved, godless wife's sense. Let her go on and persevere in her insane deception. Let her lament her dead god in her delusion, who was condemned by right-ful judges and who was bound by fetters and put to the worst death on specious [charges]." Then after these verses of Apollo, that are rendered in Latin prose here, he [Porphyry] adds this and says: "Here he reveals the inveterate character of their [the Christians'] opinion, arguing that the Jews revere God more than them."

Likewise, regarding the question presented to Apollo about which one of the two, the word (or reason) or the law, is better: "He answered," [Porphyry] says, "proclaiming this in verse." And then [Porphyry] cites these verses of Apollo, among which we find the following, that I quote as being sufficient for our purposes here: "To him who is truly God," he says, "the creator and king before all things, of whom heaven, earth, the sea, and the depth of hell are afraid and from whom the gods recoil in terror. Their Father is the law, held in great reverence by the holy Hebrews."

FR. 46

Why does Porphyry extol the piety of the Hebrews – because they venerate the great and true God, even feared by the gods themselves – but draw on the oracles of his own gods to disparage Christians as supremely ignorant for claiming that this world is going to pass away? The religious scriptures of the Hebrews state about the very God from whom this great philosopher acknowledges that even the gods recoil in terror: "The heavens are the work of your hands, and they will pass away." Now, when the heavens pass away, will the world, whose superior and secure part the heavens are, not pass away? If Zeus takes issue with this perspective, whose oracle as though from a weightier authority, as asserted by Porphyry, could possibly compromise the credibility of Christians? Why doesn't he likewise accuse the wise Hebrews, in whose most pious books this is found, of ignorance? Furthermore, if

FR. 47

3 *Philosophy from Oracles*

perituros: cur usque adeo uana est ista fallacia, ut in fide Christianorum uel inter cetera uel prae ceteris hoc detestentur, quod in ea periturus creditur mundus, quo utique nisi pereunte caeli perire non possunt?

FR. 48 Idem quippe Deus utraque promisit, utraque uentura esse praedixit, quem perhorrescunt numina paganorum, etiam teste Porphyrio, nobilissimo philosopho paganorum. 725

FR. 49 Verum de animi bonis, quibus post hanc uitam beatissimus perfruetur, non a nobis dissentiunt philosophi nobiles: de carnis resurrectione contendunt, hanc quantum possunt negant. Sed credentes multi negantes paucissimos reliquerunt et ad Christum, qui hoc quod istis uidetur absurdum in sua resurrectione monstrauit, fideli corde conuersi sunt, docti et indocti, sapientes mundi et insipientes. Hoc enim credidit mundus, quod praedixit Deus, qui etiam hoc praedixit, quod hanc rem mundus fuerat crediturus. Neque enim Petri maleficiis ea cum laude credentium tanto ante praenuntiare compulsus est. Ille est enim Deus, quem (sicut iam dixi aliquotiens, nec commonere me piget) confitente Porphyrio atque id oraculis deorum suorum probare cupiente ipsa numina perhorrescunt; quem sic laudauit, ut eum et Deum patrem et regem uocaret. 730
735
740

FR. 50 ἐν οἷς ἐπέγραψε “Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας” ἐν τρίτῳ συγγράμματι τέθεται, ὧδέ πως ἱστορῶν κατὰ λέξιν· “Παράδοξον ἴσως δόξειεν ἂν τισιν εἶναι τὸ μέλλον λέγεσθαι ὑφ’ ἡμῶν. τὸν γὰρ Χριστὸν οἱ θεοὶ εὐσεβέστατον ἀπεφάνησαν καὶ ἀθάνατον γεγονότα, εὐφήμως τε αὐτοῦ μνημονεύουσι.” καὶ ὑπο- 745

3.1 Greek and Latin Fragments and English Translation

Porphyry likes their wisdom so much that he proclaims it through the words of his own gods, why is it that, as it is said that the heavens will pass away, his vain deception makes him curse this point in the Christian faith – along with other ones or even more than them – because they believe that the earth will pass away (and without this, the heavens couldn't pass away either)?

It is the same God from whom the pagan gods recoil in terror who promised and predicted that both things would happen. Porphyry, the most illustrious of the pagan philosophers, testifies to this.

FR. 48

Truly, the celebrated philosophers don't disagree with us about the goods that the soul enjoys after this life, when it achieves blessedness. What they fight against is the resurrection of the flesh, which they reject as strongly as they can. But the believers have become so numerous that only a few deniers are left, and they have converted with a faithful heart to Christ, who through his resurrection has proven what they thought to be absurd, with a faithful heart – the educated and uneducated, the wise of this world and the foolish. The world believed what God had predicted, and what he had predicted was that the world would believe it. And it was not by any of Peter's magic tricks, accompanied by the praise of those who believed him, that God was brought to make an announcement so long in advance. For he is the God from whom – I have already said this elsewhere, and I will never be tired of pointing it out – even the gods recoil in terror, as Porphyry admits and wants to prove through the oracles of his gods. He praises him so much that he calls him God the father and king.

FR. 49

In the third book of his treatise *Philosophy from Oracles*, he advances this, offering an account in the following words: “What I am going to say may contradict some people's expectations. The gods have declared that Christ is most pious and that he has become immortal, and they think of him auspiciously.” And moving on, he adds: “They asked

FR. 50

βὰς ἐπιλέγει “περὶ γοῦν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐρωτησάντων εἰ ἔστι θεὸς φησὶν·

“Ὅτι μὲν ἀθανάτη ψυχὴ μετὰ σῶμα προβαίνει
γινώσκεις, σοφίης δὲ τετμημένη αἰὲν ἀλάται·
ἀνέρος εὐσεβίῃ προφερεστάτου ἐστὶν ἐκείνη ψυχὴ·

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εὐσεβέστατον ἄρα ἔφη αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, καθάπερ
καὶ τῶν ἄλλων εὐσεβῶν, μετὰ θάνατον ἀπαθανατισθῆναι, ἣν
σέβει ἀγνοοῦντας τοὺς Χριστιανούς. ἐπερωτησάντων δὲ διὰ
τί ἐκολάσθη ἔχρησεν·

Σῶμα μὲν ἀδρανέσιν βασάνοις αἰεὶ προβέβληται·
ψυχὴ δ’ εὐσεβέων εἰς οὐράνιον πέδον ἵζει,”

755

καὶ ἐπιλέγει μετὰ τὸν χρησμὸν ἐξῆς “αὐτὸς οὖν εὐσεβῆς καὶ
εἰς οὐρανοὺς, ὥσπερ οἱ εὐσεβεῖς, χωρήσας. ὥστε τοῦτον μὲν οὐ
βλασφημήσεις, ἐλεήσεις δὲ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὴν ἄνοιαν.”

FR. 51

Dicit etiam bona philosophus iste de Christo, quasi oblitus illius, de
qua paulo ante locuti sumus, contumeliae suae, aut quasi in somnis dii
eius maledixerint Christo et euigilantes eum bonum esse cognouerint
digneque laudauerint. Denique tamquam mirabile aliquid atque in-
credibile prolaturus: “Praeter opinionem, inquit, profecto quibusdam
uideatur esse quod dicturi sumus. Christum enim dii piissimum pro-
nuntiauerunt et immortalem factum et cum bona praedicatione eius
meminerunt; Christianos uero pollutos, inquit, et contaminatos et er-
rore implicatos esse dicunt et multis talibus aduersus eos blasphemiis
utuntur.” Deinde subicit uelut oracula deorum blasphemantium Chris-
tianos et post haec: “De Christo autem, inquit, interrogantibus si est
Deus, ait Hecate: Quoniam quidem immortalis anima post corpus ut

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770

whether Christ was a god, and [Hecate] said:

You know that the soul steps forward immortal, away from the
body;
But when it is cut off from wisdom, it wanders around endlessly.
That soul is the soul of a man highly excelling in piety.

Here she says that he is most pious and that his soul, like the souls of others, was immortalized after death – the soul that the ignorant Christians worship. When they asked her why he was punished, she responded with this oracle:

The body is always exposed to torments that are impotent [with regard to the soul], But the soul of the pious ones goes to the heavenly realm.”

And following this oracle he next adds: “Hence, he was pious and went to the heavens, like the other pious ones. Thus, don’t blaspheme against him, commiserate the ignorance of humans instead.”

But this philosopher speaks positively about Christ, as if he had forgotten his reproaches that we have discussed just now; or as if his gods, speaking ill of Christ when they are asleep, acknowledged that he is good when they are awake and praised him accordingly. For he states, as though he were about to proclaim something wonderful and unbelievable: “What we are about to say will certainly appear unexpected to some. The gods have declared Christ to be most pious and to have become immortal, and they think of him auspiciously. But they state that Christians are polluted, contaminated, and involved in error,” he says, “and they express many other such blasphemies against them.” Then he presents alleged oracles of the gods blaspheming against Christians, and after this he adds: “When Hecate was asked if Christ is a god, she

FR. 51

incedit, nosti; a sapientia autem abscessa semper errat. Viri pietate praesantissimi est illa anima; hanc colunt aliena a se ueritate.” Deinde post uerba huius quasi oraculi sua ipse contexens: “Piissimum igitur uirum, inquit, eum dixit et eius animam, sicut et aliorum piorum, post obitum immortalitate dignatam et hanc colere Christianos ignorantes.” “Interrogantibus autem, inquit: Cur ergo damnatus est? oraculo respondit dea: Corpus quidem debilitantibus tormentis semper oppositum est; anima autem piorum caelesti sedi insidet. Illa uero anima aliis animabus fataliter dedit, quibus fata non adnuerunt deorum dona obtinere neque habere Iouis immortalis agnitionem, errore implicari. Propterea ergo diis exosi, quia, quibus fato non fuit nosse Deum nec dona ab diis accipere, his fataliter dedit iste errore implicari. Ipse uero pius et in caelum, sicut pii, concessit. Itaque hunc quidem non blasphemabis, misereberis autem hominum dementiam, ex eo in eis facile praeceptisque periculum.”

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FR. 52 Non enim te decepisset, quem uestra, ut tu ipse scribis, oracula sanctum immortalemque confessa sunt.

FR. 53 Quidam philosophi eorum, sicut in libris suis Porphyrius Siculus prodidit, consuluerunt deos suos quid de Christo responderent, illi autem oraculis suis Christum laudare compulsi sunt.

790

FR. 54 Sane Christum laudans uel Porphyrius uel Hecate, cum dicat eum ipsum fataliter dedisse Christianis, ut implicarentur errore, causas tamen eiusdem, sicut putat, pandit erroris. Quas antequam ex uerbis eius exponam, prius quaero, si fataliter dedit Christus Christianis erroris implicationem, utrum uolens an nolens dederit. Si uolens, quo modo iustus? Si nolens, quo modo beatus? Sed iam causas ipsius audiamus

795

replied: ‘You know that the soul goes forth immortal once it has left the body. It always wanders around, separated from wisdom. That soul is the soul of a man highly excelling in piety. Those who are alienated from truth venerate it.’” After the words of this alleged oracle, he connects his own words with them: “She says that this is a most pious man and that his soul, like those of other pious people, was honored with immortality after his death, and that it is this soul that ignorant Christians venerate. When they asked her: ‘Why was he condemned?’, the goddess answered through an oracle: ‘The body is always subjected to crippling torment, but the soul of the pious ones settles in a heavenly home. Fatally, what the other souls – to which the Fates had not granted to receive the divine gifts nor to attain knowledge of immortal Zeus – received from that soul was to be engrossed in error. Hence, the gods hated them, because, although they were not destined to know God nor to receive the gods’ gifts, he [Christ] fatally allowed them to be engrossed in error. But that he is truly pious and in heaven, like the pious ones, one should admit. So, you shouldn’t blaspheme against him but rather feel pity for the stupidity of humans, who, because of him, are prone to that dangerous peril.’”

He would not have deceived you, for your oracles have acknowledged him as holy and immortal, as you yourself write. FR. 52

Some of their philosophers, as Porphyry from Sicily puts forward in his books, asked the gods to give a response about Christ. These [gods], however, were forced to praise Christ in their oracles. FR. 53

Indeed, when Porphyry (or Hecate) praises Christ but asserts that he himself allowed Christians to be fatally engrossed in error, he thinks that he reveals the causes of this error. But before I establish this through his words, I first want to ask whether Christ has acted voluntarily or involuntarily when he allowed Christians to be fatally engrossed in error. If he did so voluntarily, how could he be just? If he FR. 54

erroris. “Sunt, inquit, spiritus terreni minimi loco quodam malorum daemonum potestati subiecti. Ab his sapientes Hebraeorum (quorum unus iste etiam Iesus fuit, sicut audisti diuina Apollinis, qua e superius dicta sunt) — ab his ergo Hebraei daemonibus pessimis et minoribus spiritibus uetabant religiosos et ipsis uacare prohibebant; uenerari autem magis caelestes deos, amplius autem uenerari Deum Patrem. Hoc autem, inquit, et dii praecipunt et in superioribus ostendimus, quem ad modum animum aduertere ad Deum monent et illum colere ubique imperant. Verum indocti et impiae naturae, quibus uere fatum non concessit ab diis dona obtinere neque habere Iouis immortalis notionem, non audientes et deos et diuinos uiros deos quidem omnes recusauerunt, prohibitos autem daemones et hos non odisse, sed reuereri. Deum autem simulantes colere, ea sola, per quae Deus adoratur, non agunt. Nam Deus quidem, utpote omnium Pater, nullius indiget; sed nobis est bene, cum eum per iustitiam et castitatem aliasque uirtutes adoramus, ipsam uitam precem ad ipsum facientes per imitationem et inquisitionem de ipso. Inquisitio enim purgat, inquit; imitatio deificat affectionem ad ipsum operando.”

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FR. 55

ἐπίσκεψαι δὲ πότερά σοι θείας εἶναι δοκεῖ φύσεως ἢ φαύλης
καὶ μοχθηροτάτης τὰ ἐξῆς ἐπιλεγόμενα·

Λέγει δ' οὖν ὁ αὐτός·

“Ὅρθως καὶ τοῦτο ὁ Ῥόδιος Πυθαγόρας ἀπεφήνατο, ὅτι οὐχ ἡδονται οἱ κληζόμενοι ἐπὶ ταῖς παρουσίαις θεοί, ἀνάγκη δέ τινι ἀκολουθίας συρόμενοι παραγίνονται, καὶ οἱ μὲν μᾶλλον, οἱ δὲ ἥττον. τινὲς δὲ καὶ ἔθος ὥσπερ ποιησάμενοι τῆς ἑαυτῶν παρουσίας εὐμαρέστερον φοιτῶσι, καὶ μάλιστα ἐὰν καὶ φύσει ἀγαθοὶ τυγχάνωσιν· οἱ δὲ καὶ ἔθος ἔχωσιν τοῦ παραγίνεσθαι, βλάβην

820

did so involuntarily, how could he be blessed? But let us hear about the causes of the error itself. “In a certain place there are very small terrestrial spirits that are subject to the power of evil daemons. From these, the wise men among the Hebrews – Jesus was one of them, as you have heard through Apollo’s oracles quoted above – from these most perverted daemons and from the lesser spirits, the Hebrews urged religious people to stay away and forbade them to spend time with them; instead, they should venerate the heavenly gods, and most of all, venerate God the Father. This is what even the gods teach,” he says, “and we have shown above that they order us to direct our mind to God and that they always command us to worship him. The uneducated and the corrupted natures, to whom Fate did not grant to receive divine gifts or to know Zeus immortal, did not listen to the gods or divine men – they have rejected all gods, venerating the forbidden daemons instead of loathing them. They pretend to worship God but do not carry out the rites through which God is adored. For God is the Father of all things, and as such, he does not lack anything. But for us it is good to adore him through justice, chastity, and other virtues, transforming life into a prayer for him, imitating him and studying him. For studying him purifies,” he says, “and imitating him divinizes by creating a disposition toward him.”

See whether the following text appears to relate to divine nature, or to a bad and even wretched one.

FR. 55

The same author says:

“Pythagoras from Rhodes was right when he affirmed that the gods do not like being called to manifest themselves. And when they do so, it is because they are dragged down and constrained to follow and manifest themselves, some of them more, some of them less. Some of them have become used to manifesting themselves and come more easily, even more so when they happen to be good by nature. Others

τινὰ προθυμοῦνται ποιεῖν, καὶ μάλιστα ἐὰν ἀμελέστερόν τις
δοκῇ ἀναστρέφεσθαι ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν. τοῦ γὰρ Πυθαγόρου
ταῦτ' εἰρηκότος παρετήρησα ἐκ τῶν λογίων ὡς ἀληθές ἐστιν τὸ
εἰρημένον. πάντες γὰρ δι' ἀνάγκην φασὶν ἀφίχθαι, οὐχ ἀπλῶς
δέ, ἀλλ' οἶον, εἰ χρὴ οὕτω φάναι, πειθανάγκην. εἴρηται δ' ἐν τοῖς
ἔμπροσθεν ἐκεῖνα τὰ τῆς Ἑκάτης, δι' ὧν φησιν ἐπιφαίνειν·

825

830

ἡέριον μετὰ φέγγος ἀπείριτον ἀστεροπληθές
ἄχραντον πολὺ δῶμα θεοῦ λίπον ἢδ' ἐπιβαίνω
γαίης ζωοτρόφοιο τεῆς ὑποθημοσύνησι
πειθοῖ τ' ἀρρήτων ἐπέων, οἷς δὴ φρένα τέρπειν
ἀθανάτων ἐδάη θνητὸς βροτός.

835

καὶ πάλιν·

ἦλυθον εἰσαΐουσα τεῆς πολυφράδμονος εὐχῆς,
ἦν θνητῶν φύσις εὖρε θεῶν ὑποθημοσύνησιν.

καὶ ἔτι σαφέστερον·

τίπτε μ' αἰεὶ θεϊόντος ἀπ' αἰθέρος ὦδε χατιζῶν
θειοδάμοις Ἑκάτην με θεῖν ἐκάλεσσας ἀνάγκαις;

840

καὶ ἐξῆς·

τοὺς μὲν ἀπορρήτοις ἐρύων ἴγξι ἀπ' αἰθρης
ρήιδίως ἀέκοντας ἐπὶ χθόνα διὰν ἄγεσθαι,
τοὺς δὲ μέσους μεσάτοισιν ἐπεμβεβαῶτας ἀήταις
νόσφι πυρὸς θεϊοιο, πανομφέας ὥσπερ ὀνείρους,
εἰσκρίνεις μερόπεσσι, ἀεϊκέα δαίμονας ἔρδων.

845

have become used to it, too, but they are eager to cause harm, in particular when someone attends to ritual actions carelessly. Pythagoras has affirmed this, and I found it to be true by virtue of the oracles. Everybody says that they come down under constraint, not in a simple way but, so to speak, through a constraint disguised as persuasion. In the above oracles, Hecate says the following about how they appear:

After dawn – celestial, boundless, full of stars –
I leave God's pure abode and step forward
Onto the earth that nourishes its animals, through your
directives
And persuaded by your ineffable words, by virtue of which a
mortal man
Brings delight to the mind of the immortal ones.

And furthermore:

I have come upon hearing your eloquent prayer
That mortal nature has discovered through divine directives.

And even more clearly:

What is the need that from the ever-flowing ether
Made you invoke me, divine Hecate, through constraints that
bind even gods?

And then:

Some, you drag down from heaven with secret prayers,
Easily bringing them down, against their will, to the excellent
earth;
Others, from the middle realm you cause to come down on
midmost winds,

καὶ πάλιν·

ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν καθύπερθε μετήγοροι οὐρανίωνες
σπερχόμενοι κούφαισι μεθ' Ἀρπυίασι φέρονται·
ρίμφα δὲ θειοδάμοισιν ἐπημύσαντες ἀνάγκαις
εἰς χθόν' ἐπειγομένως Δηώϊον αἴσσουσιν,
θνητοῖς ἐσσομένων ὑποφήτορες.

850

καὶ πάλιν ἄλλος ἀναγκαζόμενος ἔφη·

κλυθί μευ οὐκ ἐθέλοντος, ἐπεὶ μ' ἐπέδησας ἀνάγκη.”

855

FR. 56

Ἐπὶ τούτοις πάλιν ὁ συγγραφεὺς φησιν·

“Ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐπανάγκους ἑαυτῶν ἐκδιδόασιν, ὡς δηλώσει ὁ ἀπὸ
τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐκδοθεὶς περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπάναγκος.

λέγεται δὲ οὕτως·

οὔνομ' ἀναγκαίης τόδε καρτερόν ἤδ' ἔτι βριθύ.

860

καὶ ἐπήγαγεν·

μόλε δ' ἐσσυμένως τοισίδε μύθοις,
οὓς ἀπ' ἐμείο κραδίης ἀνάγω,
ἱεροῖσι τύποισι
συνθλιβομένου πυρὸς ἀγνοῦ.
τολμᾶ δὲ φύσις ταῦτα προφαίνειν

865

Far away from the divine fire, like divinatory dreams,
And to penetrate humans, treating those daemons in unseemly
fashion.

And again:

But the heavenly inhabitants of the sky above
Bustle about among the nimble harpies.
Swiftly, they bend down to the constraints that bind even gods,
Leaping down hastily to Demeter's earth,
To expound the future to the mortal ones.

And another [god] said, as he was being constrained:

Listen to me, against my will, since you've bound me through
necessity."

To this, the author furthermore adds:

FR. 56

"They also disclose [oracles] capable of constraining [the gods] themselves, like Apollo, who discloses [an oracle] by which he was bound.

He says:

Powerful and heavy is the name 'necessity.'

And he adds:

Come, excited by these words
That I have brought up from my heart
Through sacred formulas
From a dense, holy fire.
Nature dares to reveal these things

τῆς σῆς γενέθλης, ἄμβροτε Παιάν.”

FR. 57 καὶ πάλιν ὁ Ἀπόλλων·

“ῥεῦμα τὸ Φοιβείης ἀπονεύμενον ὑψίθην αἴγλης
πνοιῇ ὑπὸ λιγυρῇ κεκαλυμμένον ἡέρος ἀγνοῦ,
θελγόμενον μολπαῖσι καὶ ἄρρητοις ἐπέεσσιν
κάππεσεν ἀμφὶ κάρηνον ἀμωμήτοιο δοχῆος
λεπταλέων ὑμένων· μαλακὸν δ’ ἐνέπλησε χιτῶνα,
ἀμβολάδην διὰ γαστρὸς ἀνεσσύμενον παλίνορσον·
αὐλοῦ δ’ ἐκ βροτέοιο φίλην ἔτεκνώσατο φωνήν.”

870

875

Τούτοις ὁ συγγραφεὺς ἐπιλέγει·

“Τούτων οὔτε σαφέστερα οὔτε θεϊκώτερα καὶ φυσικώτερα
γένοιτ’ ἄν. Πνεῦμα γὰρ τὸ κατιὸν καὶ ἀπόρροια ἐκ τῆς ἐπου-
ρανίου δυνάμεως εἰς ὄργανικὸν σῶμα καὶ ἔμφυχον εἰσελθοῦσα,
βάσει χρωμένη τῇ ψυχῇ, διὰ τοῦ σώματος ὡς ὄργανου φωνὴν
ἀποδίδωσιν.”

880

FR. 58 Ἄλλ’ ὅτι μὲν ἀναγκάζονται, ἱκανὰ καὶ ταῦτα παραστήσαι.
ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἀξιοῦσιν ἀπολυθῆναι, ὡς οὐκ ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς τῆς ἀναχω-
ρήσεως κειμένης, μάθοις ἂν ἐκ τούτων·

“Ὅτι δὲ σπεύδουσιν ἀναχωρεῖν οἱ κληθέντες θεοί, δηλώσει
τὰ τοιαῦτα, λεγόντων·

885

λύετε λοιπὸν ἄνακτα, βροτὸς θεὸν οὐκέτι χωρεῖ.

καὶ πάλιν·

τίπτ’ ἐπιδευόμενοι δηρὸν βροτὸν αἰκίζεσθε;

καὶ πάλιν·

890

About your birth, immortal Paean.”

And again, Apollo:

FR. 57

“Apollo’s light flows down, inclining from above,
Enshrouded in the clear wind of the pure air,
Enchanted by songs and secret words.
It crowns the pure recipient’s head,
His delicate meninges; it fills the soft coating [of his organs],
Bubbling forwards and backwards it rushes through his belly,
And from a mortal flute it produces a dear sound.”

The author adds:

“Nothing can be clearer, more divine, and closer to nature than this. The spirit comes down and an emanation from the celestial power enters the instrumental, animate body. It uses the soul as a support and produces a sound through the body as through an instrument.”

That should be sufficient to establish that they are being constrained. Now, from the following you will learn that they furthermore want to be freed, since they are not free to release themselves:

FR. 58

“These oracles show that the invoked gods are eager to be released. They speak:

Now, release the king. The mortal no longer contains the god.

And again:

Why do you keep on tormenting a mortal, indigent ones?

And again:

ἔρπε καὶ ὀτραλέως ἐπιέρχαιο, τόνδε σαώσας.

καὶ πῶς ἀπολύειν αὐτοὺς χρή, αὐτὸς διδάξει λέγων·

παύειο δῆ, περίφρων, ὀάρων, ἀνάπαιε δὲ φῶτα,
θάμνων ἐκλύων πολὶὸν τύπον ἠδ' ἀπὸ γυίων
Νειλαίην ὀθόνην χερσὶ στιβαρῶς ἀπαιείρας.

895

καὶ τὴν ἀπόλυσιν εἶπεν·

ὕψιπρωρον αἶρε ταρσόν, ἴσχε βάζιν ἐκ μυχῶν,”

καὶ τὰ τούτοις ἐπιλελεγμένα. οἷς ἐπιφέρει·

“καὶ βραδυνόντων ἀπολύσαι φησίν·

σινδόνος ἀμπέτασον νεφέλην λῦσόν τε δοχῆα.

900

καὶ πάλιν ἄλλοτε ἀπόλυσιν ἔδωκεν τοιαύτην·

Ναιιάδες Νύμφαι, Μούσαις μίγα λύετε Φοῖβον
ἄδουσαι θείαις ἑκατηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα.

καὶ πάλιν ἄλλοτέ φησιν·

λύσατέ μοι στεφάνους καὶ μεν πόδας ὕδατι λευκῶ
ῥάνατε καὶ γραμμὰς ἀπαλείψατε, καὶ κε μόλομι.
χειρὸς δεξιτερῆς δάφνης κλάδον ἄρατε χερσὶν
ψήχετέ τ' ὀφθαλμοὺς διδύμους ρῖνάς τε προσώπου·
ἄρατε φῶτα γαίηθεν ἀναστήσαντες, ἑταῖροι.”

905

Οἷς ἐπιλέγει ὁ συγγραφεύς·

910

Come, approach here quickly, as you have saved that one.

He himself [the god] will teach us how they should be freed, saying:

Stop talking, bethink, and give that mortal some rest.

Release the white statue from the clusters [of laurel] and from
its limbs

Remove the thin Egyptian cloth with strong hands.

And he explains the release:

Raise the high-rimmed basket, hold back the oracles from the
depths.”

And the following text. To which he adds:

“And in the case that the release is being delayed, it is said:

Deploy a cloud of cloth and release the recipient [of the oracle].

And in a different passage he talks about the release as follows:

Naiads, Nymphs: join the divine Muses to free Phoebus,

Apollo who shoots his arrows far, with your songs.

And in a different passage he says:

Undo my crown, sprinkle clear water

On my feet and erase the letters, so that I can leave.

Seize with your hands the bough of sweet bay in my right hand,

Rub my two eyes and the nostrils in my face.

Stand back and let the men rise from the earth, comrades.”

The author adds:

“Τὰς γραμμὰς τοίνυν παρακελεύεται ἀπαλείφειν, ἵνα ἀπέλθῃ· ταύτας γὰρ κρατεῖν καὶ μέντοι καὶ τὸ ἄλλο σχῆμα τῆς ἐνδύσεως, διὰ τὸ φέρειν εἰκονίσματα τῶν κεκλημένων θεῶν.”

... εἰ γὰρ δὴ ἀβίαστον καὶ ἀκατανάγκαστον καὶ πάντων κρείττον τὴν φύσιν ἀπαθὲς ὄν καὶ ἐλεύθερον τὸ θεῖον, πῶς ἂν εἶεν θεοὶ οἱ μαγγανείαις ταῖς διὰ τοιῶνδε σχημάτων καὶ γραμμῶν καὶ τύπων στεφάνοις τε καὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ γῆς ἄνθεσι καὶ τισιν ἄλλαις ἀσήμεσι καὶ βαρβάροις ἡχαῖς τε καὶ φωναῖς κηλούμενοι καὶ τοῖς τυχοῦσιν ἀνθρώποις χειρούμενοι καὶ ὡσπερὶ δεσμοῖς καταδουλούμενοι, ὥστε μηδὲ τὴν αὐτεξούσιον καὶ προαιρετικὴν σῶζειν ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς δύναμιν;

“He commands that the letters should be erased so that he can leave. For they have special power, and of course the appearance of the clothes as well, because they bear the images of the invoked gods.”

... If the divine – which cannot be overpowered or constrained – is stronger than anything else, impassible by nature and free, how could they be gods who can be charmed by means of illusory appearances, letters, and figures, of crowns made with the flowers of the earth, and of other impious and barbaric noises and words, who can furthermore be subdued by any given person and who, so to speak, can be bound with fetters without being able to retain their power of self-determination and the pursuit of their own purposes, be gods?

3.2 Sources of the Fragments

fr.	S		
1	S 303F	Eus praep evang IV 6, 2-7, 2 (Mras I 176.14-177.17)	
2	S 304F	Eus praep evang IV 7, 2-8, 1 (Mras I 177.18-178.6) ¹	
3	S 305F	Eus praep evang IV 8, 2 (Mras I 178.7-9)	
4	S 306F		Firmicus Maternus de errore profan relig XIII 4-5 (Ziegler 33.1-21)
5	S 307F	Eus praep evang V 5, 7-6, 2 (Mras I 232.15-233.19)	
6	S 308F	Eus praep evang V 6, 2-7, 2 (Mras I 233.19-234.20)	
7	S 309F	Eus praep evang V 7, 4-5 (Mras I 235.9-236.2)	
8	S 310F	Eus praep evang III 14, 3-4 (Mras I 152.7-15)	
9	S 311F	Eus praep evang III 14, 5 (Mras I 152.16-153.4)	
10	S 312F	Eus praep evang III 14, 6 (Mras I 153.5-8)	
11	S 313F	Eus praep evang III 14, 7 (Mras I 153.9-11)	
12	S 314F	Eus praep evang IV 8, 4-9, 2 (Mras I 178.13-180.15)	
13	S 315F	Eus praep evang IV 9, 3-7 (Mras I 180.6-181.23)	

¹Cf. Porph *de regr* 302 F, 8-9 *viam animae liberandae*.

3.2 Sources of the Fragments

- 14 S 316F Eus praep evang V 10, 13-11,
1 (Mras I 245.6-17)
- 15 S 317F Eus praep evang V 12, 1-2
(Mras I 245.20-246.12)
- 16 S 318F Eus praep evang V 13, 1-2
(Mras I 246.14-247.6)
- 17 S 319F Eus praep evang V 13, 3-4
(Mras I 247.6-16)
- 18 S 320F Eus praep evang V 14, 2-3
(Mras I 248.9-249.19)
- 19 S 321F Eus praep evang V 14, 4-15,
4 (Mras I 249.26-250.16)
- 20 S 322F Eus praep evang V, 15-16, 1
(Mras I 251.4-23)
- 21 S 323F Eus praep evang IX 10, 1-2
(Mras I 495.12-496.8)
- 22 S 324F Eus praep evang IX 10, 3-5
(Mras I 496.8-20) and XIV
10, 5 (Mras II 287.14-15)
- 23 S 325F *Fragmente griechischer
Theosophien* (Erbse) 173.17-
174.22
- 24 S 325aF *Fragmente griechischer
Theosophien* (Erbse) 174.23-
25
- 25 S 326F Eus praep evang IV 22, 15-
23, 6 (Mras I 213.13-215.2)
- 26 S 327F Eus praep evang IV 23, 6
(Mras I 215.2-6)
- 27 S 328F Eus praep evang IV 23, 7-9
(Mras I 215.7-21)
- 28 S 329F Eus praep evang IV 19,
8-20, 1 (Mras I 206.21-
207.15)
- 29 S 330F Eus praep evang V 14, 1
(Mras I 247.17-248.8)

3 *Philosophy from Oracles*

- 30 S 330aF Philop op mundi IV, 20
(Reichardt 200.2-7)
- 31 S 331F Eus praep evang VI 1, 1
(Mras 293.18-294.5)
- 32 S 332F Philop op mundi IV, 20
(Reichardt 200.7-13)
- 33 S 333F Eus praep evang VI 1, 2-3
(Mras I 294.6-18)
- 34 S 334F Eus praep evang VI 1, 4
(Mras I 294.19-22)
- 35 S 335F Eus praep evang VI 1, 5-7
(Mras I 295.1-12)
- 36 S 336F Eus praep evang VI 2, 1
(Mras I 295.15-22)
- 37 S 337F Philop op mundi IV, 20
(Reinhardt 200.13-20)
- 38 S 338F Eus praep evang VI 2, 2-3,
1 (Mras I 295.23-297.8)
- 39 S 339F Eus praep evang VI 3, 5-4,
3 (Mras I 298.7-20)
- 40 S 340F Eus praep evang VI 4, 3-5,
1 (Mras I 298.20-25)
- 41 S 340aF Philop op mundi IV, 20
(Reinhardt 200.20-26)
- 42 S 341F Eus praep evang VI 5, 2-4
(Mras I 299.1-13)
- 43 S 341aF Philop op mundi IV, 20
(Reichardt 201.1-17)
- 44 S 342F Philop op mundi IV, 20
(Reichardt 201.18-202.16)
- 45 S 343F Aug civ XIX
22.17-23.17
(Dombart-
Kalb II
690.17a-17b)

3.2 Sources of the Fragments

46	S 344F		Aug civ XIX 23.30-37 (Dombart- Kalb II 691.30-37)
47	S 344aF.		Aug civ XX 24.8-26 (Dombart- Kalb II 744.8-26)
48	S 344bF		Aug civ XXII 3.22-25 (Dombart- Kalb II 809.22-25)
49	S 344cF		Aug civ XXII 25.1-15 (Dombart- Kalb II 852.1-15)
50	S 345F.	Eus dem evang III 6, 39-7, 2 (Heikel 140.1-19)	
51	S 345aF.		Aug civ XIX 23.43-73 (Dombart- Kalb II 691.43- 692.73)
52	S 345bF		Aug civ X 27.37-39 (Dombart- Kalb I 444,31-32)

3 *Philosophy from Oracles*

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|----|---------|--|--|
| 53 | S 345cF | | Aug de cons
evang I 15, 23
(PL 34, 1052;
Wehrich
22.3-6) |
| 54 | S 346F | | Aug civ XIX
23.107-133
(Dombart-
Kalb II
693.107-133) |
| 55 | S 347F | Eus praep evang V 8, 1-8, 7
(Mras I 236.10-238.11) | |
| 56 | S 348F | Eus praep evang V 8, 8-10
(Mras I 238.12-22) | |
| 57 | S 349F | Eus praep evang V 8, 11-12
(Mras I 239.1-13) | |
| 58 | S 350F | Eus praep evang V 8, 13-
9 ,9; 9, 12 (Mras I 239.14-
241.4; 241.14-20) | |

4 Greek and Latin Glossaries

Note: The following glossary is not exhaustive. It provides the most common translation of recurring, philosophically significant, or otherwise noteworthy terms. Since each term occurs with different meanings and connotations in the texts, the meaning given here is general.

4.1 Greek-English Glossary

α Α

ἀγαθοειδής having the appearance of the “good” (in a Platonic sense, cf. *Resp.* 509a3)

ἀγαθοποιός beneficent

ἀγαθός good

ἄγαλμα, τό statue

ἄγγελος, ὁ messenger

ἀγέννητος uncreated

ἄγνοια, ἡ ignorance

ἄγνωστος unknown

ἀγύρτης impostor

ἀγυρτεία, ἡ imposture

ἀεκίνητος ever-moving

ἀήρ, ἡ/ὁ air

αἴθρη, ἡ clear sky

αἴθυγμα, τό roar

αἷμα, τό blood

αἰσθητός perceptible

αἰσχρορρημοσύνη, ἡ obscenity

αἰτία, ἡ cause

4 Greek and Latin Glossaries

αἰτιολογία, ἡ	explanation
ἀκαθαρσία, ἡ	impurity
ἀκήλητος	undisturbed
ἄκρος	highest
ἀλαζονικός	boastful
ἀληθής	true
ἀληθεύω	speak truth
ἀλιτρόνοος	wicked-minded
ἀλύτος	unbreakable
ἄλφιτον, τό	barley
ἀμάρτυρος	unproven
ἀμιγής	pure
ἀμφίβολος	doubtful
ἀνάγκη, ἡ	necessity
ἀναγράφω	record
ἀναιρέω	destroy
ἄναξ, ὁ	lord
ἄνθρωπος, ὁ	human being, person
ἄνοια, ἡ	folly
ἀνοσιουργία, ἡ	impiety
ἀπαγγελτικός	declarative
ἀπαθής	unaffected
ἀπατηλός	deceptive
ἀπηνής	harsh
ἄπιστος	unbelieving
ἀποκρίνομαι	answer
ἀπόλαυσις, ἡ	enjoyment
ἀπόλυσις, ἡ	release
ἀποπίπτω	fall off
ἀπόρημα, τό	puzzle
ἀπόρρητος	secret
ἀπόρροια, ἡ	emanation
ἀποτελεσματικός	effective
ἀποτρόπαιος	dreadful
ἀποχρῶ	suffice
ἀρετή, ἡ	virtue

ἄρχομαι begin
ἀρχάγγελος, ὁ archangel
ἀσέβεια, ἡ impiety
ἀστήρ, ὁ star
ἀσχημὸς ugly
ἀσωματία, ἡ incorporeality
ἀσώματος bodiless
ἀτμίζω steam
ἀτμός, ὁ vapor
αὔξις, ἡ growth
αὐτάρκης self-sufficient
αὐτόματος spontaneous
ἀφανής invisible
ἄχραντος immaculate

β Β

βακχεία, τὰ bacchanalia
βαρβαρός foreigner
βάρος, τό weight
βασιλεύω reign
βέβαιος firm
βία, ἡ force
βιαστικός violent
βλασφημία, ἡ blasphemy
βοτάνη, ἡ herb
βρώσιμος edible
βωμός, ὁ altar

γ Γ

γάμος, ὁ marriage
γενέθλιος natal
γένεσις, ἡ origin
γενναῖος noble

γεννήτωρ, ὁ begetter
γένος, τό kind
γνώμη, ἡ opinion
γνωρίζω recognize
γνώρισμα, τό mark
γνώσις, ἡ knowledge
γράμμα, τό letter

δ Δ

δαίμων, ὁ spirit
δείξις, ἡ demonstration
δεκανός, ὁ leader
δέω bind
δεσμός, ὁ bond
δεσπότης, ὁ master
δημιουργός, ὁ craftsman
δημοσιεύω publish
διάγνωσις, ἡ diagnosis
διάδημα, τό diadem
διάκρισις, ἡ discernment
διάλυσις, ἡ dissolution
διαπορεύομαι travel
διαρθρώνω articulate
διαριθμέω enumerate
διασύρω disgrace
διαφορά, ἡ difference
διαφωνία, ἡ disagreement
διδάσκω teach
διερευνάω investigate
δράκων, ὁ dragon
δραπετεύω escape
δραστηκός active
δράω act
δύναμις, ἡ power
δυστροπία, ἡ stubbornness

€ Ε

ἐγρηγορέω	awaken
ἔθος, τό	custom
εἶδος, τό	form
εἰδωλοποιία, ἡ	idolatry
εἶμα, τό	garment
ἐκχύω	pour
ἐκφοβέω	terrify
ἐκφυσάω	breathe out
ἐλεέω	pity
Ἕλλην, -ηνος, ὁ	Greek
ἐμπαθής	passionate
ἐμπληξία, ἡ	intensity
ἐνεργέω	operate
ἐνθείος	divine
ἐνθουσιασμός, ὁ	inspiration
ἐντολή, ἡ	commandment
ἔνωσις, ἡ	union
ἐξαλλάσσω	release
ἐξηγέομαι	interpret
ἐξιλάσσω	appease
ἐπιζητέω	seek
ἐπιθυμητικόν	appetitive
ἐπιθυμία, ἡ	desire
ἐπιστάσις, ἡ	attention
ἐπιστήμη, ἡ	knowledge
ἐπιστολή, ἡ	letter
ἐπιτήρησις, ἡ	observation
ἐπιφάνεια, ἡ	appearance
ἐπιχθόνιος	earthly
ἐπυμνύω	invoke
ἐποπτεύω	oversee
ἐπουράνιος	heavenly
ἐρμηνεία, ἡ	interpretation
ἐρυθρός	red

ἐρώτησις, ἡ question
ἐρωτικός erotic
ἕτερότης, ἡ otherness
εὐδαίμων fortunate
εὐλόγως reasonably
εὕρισκω find
εὐσεβής devout
εὐσυνέτος intelligent
εὐχομαι pray

ζ Ζ

ζωδιακός zodiacal
ζωοθυτεύω sacrifice (an animal)

η Η

ἡγεμών, ὁ leader
ἥλιος, ὁ sun
ἡμισφαίριον, τό hemisphere
ἥρως, ὁ hero
ἥσυχος quiet

θ Θ

θαλασσίος marine
θαυμαστός marvelous
θειότερος more divine
θεολογία, ἡ theology
θεόπεμπτος god-sent
θεό(σ)δοτος god-given
θεοσοφία, ἡ divine wisdom
θεόσοφος divinely wise
θειουργία, ἡ theurgy
θεοφανεία, ἡ theophany
θεοφορία, ἡ divine possession

θεσπίζω ordain
θεός, ὁ God
θυμοειδής spirited
θωπεία, ἡ flattery

ι Ι

ιδίωμα, τό peculiarity
ιέραξ, ὁ hawk
ιєρατικός priestly
ιєρεύς, ὁ priest
ιєρογραμματεύς, ὁ scribe
ιєροπρεπής reverent
ιєροσυλία, ἡ sacrilege
ιєρουργία, ἡ priesthood
ιλύς, ἡ mud
ίςχυς, ἡ strength
ἴχνος, τό trace

κ Κ

καθαρός pure
καθεύδω sleep
κακός evil
κακοποιός, ὁ evildoer
κακοσχολεύομαι mock
κάρτος, τό might
καταδουλόω enslave
καταδοχή, ἡ acceptance
καταθάπτω bury
καταπόσις, ἡ drug
κάτοχος, ὁ possessed person
κελαινός dark
κεραυνός, ὁ thunderbolt
χαίνω gape
κηδεύω bury

4 Greek and Latin Glossaries

κίνησις, ἡ motion
κλήσις, ἡ calling
κοινωνέω share
κολακεία, ἡ flattery
κομιδή, ἡ care
κορυβαντίζω perform Corybantic rites
κραταίος mighty
κρυπτός hidden
κρύπτω conceal
κώλυμα, τό hindrance

λ Λ

λαιμός, ὁ throat
λαμπάς, ἡ torch
λαμπηδών, ἡ gleam
λήψις, ἡ reception
λίβανος, ὁ incense
λίθος, ὁ stone
λιτανεία, ἡ supplication
λόγος, ὁ reason, thought
λύω loosen
λύσσω rage
λύτρον, τό ransom
λωτός, ὁ lotus

μ Μ

μαγανεία, ἡ sorcery
μανθάνω learn
μακάριος blessed
μανία, ἡ madness
μαντικός prophetic
μαρτυρέω testify
μάρτυς, ὁ witness
μάστιγα, ἡ lash

μείγμα, τό mixture
μείωσις, ἡ diminution
μέλας black
μέλι, τό honey
μέλος, τό melody, tune
μοιράζω divide
μέρος, τό part
μεταδίδωμι impart
μεταξύ between
μετασηματίζω transform
μήνη, ἡ moon
μητρίζω be possessed by the Mother of the Gods
μικτός mixed
μοιρηγέτης, ὁ fate-giver
μόνιμος permanent
μουσικός musical
μύστης, ὁ initiate of the Elusinian mysteries

ν Ν

ναός, ὁ temple
ναυτίλλομαι sail
νήσος, ἡ island
νήφω be sober
νοῦς, ὁ mind
νοερός intellectual
νόσημα, τό disease

ξ Ξ

ξόανον, τό idol

ο Ο

οἰκεῖος familiar
όλοκαυτώ immolate
όμολογέω confess
όμνύω swear
όμφή, ή oracle
όνειρος, ό dream
όρεξις, ή appetite
όρθός upright
όρκος, ό oath
όρνις, ή/ό bird
όσιος holy
ούρανός heaven
όψις, ή vision

π Π

παγίς, -ίδος, ή snare
πάθος, τό affection, suffering
παντόμορφος multiform
παραιτέομαι refuse
παρακολουθέω follow
παραπλήσιος similar
παρασχέω provide
παρατηρέω observe
παραφορά, ή delusion
παρουσία, ή presence
περιαντολογία, ή boasting
περίγειος terrestrial
περιγραφή, ή description
πεύσις, ή inquiry
πίστις, ή faith
πλάνη, ή error
πλάσμα, τό image

πλεονασμός, ὁ redundancy
πλοῖον, τό ship
πολυμερῶς diversely
πολύτροπος versatile
πορεύομαι go
πραγματεία, ἡ matter, problem
πραγματεύομαι engage
πρόβατον, τό sheep
προκάλυμμα, τό veil
πρόπατρος, ὁ forefather
προσρίπτω throw down
προσημασία, ἡ prognostic
πρόσκλησις, ἡ invitation
προτείνω propose
πτηνός winged

ρ Ρ

ῥαδίος easy

σ Σ

σιτοῦμαι eat
σκοτεινός dark
σκότος, ὁ darkness
σοφία, ἡ wisdom
σπλάγχνον, τό entrails
σπουδαῖος earnest
στοχασμός, ὁ conjecture
στρεπτός twisted
σύγγραμμα, τό treatise
συμβολικός symbolic
συμπίπτω affect, befall
συναγωγή, ἡ assembly
συνάπτω connect
σύριγξ, -ιγγος, ἡ pipe

σφαγή, ἡ slaughter
σχῆμα, τό form
σώζω save
σῶμα, τό body
σωτηρία, ἡ salvation
σωφροσύνη, ἡ prudence

τ Τ

τάξις, ἡ order
ταπεινότης, ἡ humility
τεκμήριον, τό proof, sign
τελευταῖος last
τετράποδον, τό quadruped
τεχνάσμα, τό device
τέχνη, ἡ art
τοπάζω guess
τρίπους, ό tripod
τρίστοιχος containing three elements
τύφος, ό smoke
τωθάζω mock

υ Υ

ύγροπόρος moisture-bearing
ύδωρ, τό water
ύλη, ἡ matter
ύμνος, ό hymn
ύπαίθριος in the air below the sky
ύπαρ awake
ύπερβολή, ἡ excess
ύπήκοος obedient
ύπνος, ό sleep
ύποχθόνιος subterranean
ύποχύσις, ἡ overflow

φ Φ

φάντασμα, τό vision, dream
φάσις, ἡ speech
φαιλότης, ἡ wickedness
φάυλος wicked
φθόγγος, ὁ sound
φιλοσόφημα, τό philosophical theory
φιλόσοφος, ὁ philosopher
φόβος, ὁ fear
φυράω mix
φωνή, ἡ voice

χ Χ

χαρακτήρ, ὁ character
χολή, ἡ bile
χορός, ὁ dance
χρηματιστικός relating to oracles
χρησμολογῶ prophesy
χρησμός, ὁ oracle
χωρίζω separate
χώρα, ἡ land

ψ Ψ

ψυχικός psychic
ψυχή, ἡ soul

ω Ω

ώδίνη, ἡ birth pangs
ώμλέω converse
ώνή, ἡ purchase
ώροσκόπος horoscope

4.2 Latin-English Glossary

a A

abstineo refrain
acer, sup. *acerrimus* sharp
adbibeo (*adbibitus*) apply
adtrecto (*adtrectatus*) handle
adulatio, f. flattery
aer, m. air
aether, m. ether
affectio, f. affection
alligo tie
anima, f. soul
antistes, m. priest
aperio open
ars, f. skill
auctoritas, f. authority
audeo dare

b B

beatitudo, f. blessedness
benignus kind
bonus good
bonum, n. goodness, good (as noun)

c C

cadaver, n. corpse
caedes, f. killing
caedo kill, slay
caro, *carnis*, f. flesh
castitas, f. chastity
cautus cautious
clausus closed

colo worship
comminatio, f. threat
concilio unite
concupitus sexual intercourse
confirmo corroborate
confiteor agree
conicio guess
coniungo join
consulto deliberate
contemno despise; *contemnendus* to be despised
conuersatio, f. way of life
corpus, n. body
credulitas, f. credulity
cruor, m. blood

d D

daemon, m. spirit, daemon
decerpo pluck, select
defunctus deceased
devito avoid; *devitandus* to be avoided
diabolicus devilish
disco learn
dissipo scatter
distinguo distinguish
divino practice divination, foresee
doctus, sup. *doctissimus* learned
dubito doubt

e E

epistula, f. letter
euerto overturn
euigilo be wakeful
exaudio answer
exsequor follow

4 Greek and Latin Glossaries

existimo suppose
exosus hated
extrinsecus from outside

f F

fallacia, f. deception
fallax deceitful
fastus, -us, m. pride
fidelis faithful
figmentum, n. fiction
figuratio, f. shaping
fugitivus fugitive
fulgeo be resplendent

g G

gaudeo rejoice
genus, n. kind, type
globus, m. sphere
gravis troublesome, serious

h H

herba, f. herb
hostia, f. sacrificial victim
humidus damp

i I

idoneus suitable
immundus impure
incestus unchaste
incorporeitas, f. incorporeality
ineptia, f. foolishness
immortalis immortal

inpedio hinder
inpreco beseech
inprudens imprudent
inprudencia, f. imprudence
inquisitio, f. investigation
inremediabilis incurable
insimulo accuse
insipiens foolish
inspector, m. observer
intellectus intellect
invenio find
iubeo order

I L

lamentor lament
lapis, -idis, m. stone
levis light
liber free
littera, f. letter (of the alphabet)
ludibrium, n. mockery
ludificator, m. mocker
luna, f. moon

m M

maiestas, f. majesty
malignus wicked
malitia, f. wickedness
membrum, n. limb
mercatura, f. commerce
merito deservedly
mirabiliter wonderfully
miror be astonished at
moror delay
multimodum in many ways

n N

nidor, -oris, m. smell
nosco know
numen a god, divine will

o O

obliviscor forget
obnoxius liable
omniformis of every form
opitulator help
ostendo show
ostium, n. entrance

p P

paganus pagan
pecus, -oris, n. cattle
perditus lost
perfruo enjoy fully
perborresco shudder at
persuadeo convince
pietas, f. piety
pius pious
pinna, f. feather, wing
polluor defile
praedium, n. farm
pravus depraved
procreatio, f. procreation
profusus lavish
prolaturus about to bring forth
proprius one's own

q Q

quaero seek

r R

ratio, f. reason

recuso refuse

redarguo refute

reprobo reject

responsum, n. answer

resurrectio, f. resurrection

ridiculus laughable

rumor, -oris, m. gossip

s S

sacrificium, n. sacrifice

sacrilega, f. sacrilegious act

sacrilegium, f. sacrilege

sacer sacred

sapientia, f. wisdom

sapio be wise

scribo write

sectator, m. follower

sedulus diligent

sidereus starry

simulacrum, n. idol

simulo feign

societas, f. alliance

sopitus asleep

speciosus beautiful

spiritus, -us, m. spirit, mind

stultitia, f. foolishness

substantia, f. substance

suspicio suspect

suspicio look up to

t T

temeritas, f. rashness
terribiliter terribly
terrigo frighten

u U, v V

vapor, -*oris*, m. vapor, steam
versus, *us*, m. verse
victima, f. victim
vigilo be vigilant
voluptas, f. pleasure, delight
utrum whether
uxor, -*oris*, f. wife

5 Commentary

5.1 *Letter to Anebo*

Porphry begins his letter by committing to a tradition that posits gods and “good daemons” and to philosophical methodology. At the same time, he distances himself from what he perceives as an improper practice of that methodology among Greek philosophers. He accuses the Greeks of drawing from speculation (ἐκ στοχασμοῦ) rather than from demonstration and justification. The *Letter to Anebo* is a response to this insufficiency. Porphyry intends to present a critical philosophy of religion that requires coherent and justifiable ideas about gods and daemons.

FR. 1

Psellus relates Porphyry’s thought to two central topics in Greek philosophy: truth (ἀληθεία) and the divine (θεῖον). Paradoxically, Porphyry is disappointed by the opinions Greek philosophy has brought about. This comes as a surprise insofar as his own philosophy is part of the Platonic tradition and the larger context of Greek philosophy. It is all the more surprising considering that Porphyry will be defending the Greek tradition of metaphysics against the allegedly Egyptian theology of his correspondent. Beatrice objects to the hypothesis expressed by Saffrey & Segonds that Porphyry is using irony here.¹ He estimates that Porphyry rather follows “a precise pedagogical agenda” against “a fanatic practitioner of theurgic rituals.”² By being critical even of Greek metaphysics, Porphyry forestalls suspicions on the part of his correspondent about his commitments. He starts, Beatrice thinks, without presuppositions.

FR. 2

¹Beatrice, *Against the Christians*, 122–3.

²Beatrice, *Against the Christians*, 124.

FR. 4 Porphyry lists the classes of superior beings in between gods and men: daemons, heroes, and pure souls. He refers here to a classic typology in Neoplatonism, inspired by Plato³ and rooted in older mythological accounts. While it is evident that he does not consider the association of these beings with a certain type of body as a determining factor for their position inside the hierarchy, there seems to be no consensus among Neoplatonists on what this factor could be, apart from various degrees of intellectual constitution and absence of defilement. Andrei Timotin discusses Porphyry's critique of the distinction and Iamblichus's answer in his *Démonologie platonicienne*. Brisson and Greenbaum also investigate criteria for a distinction between the superior beings.⁴

FR. 5 The question in this and the following fragment concerns the rationality of the hierarchy. What are the distinctions among the classes of beings? To which ontological order or dimension do these distinctions belong? How can the distinctions be justified philosophically? Examples of such distinctions and hierarchies can be found in Porphyry's own writings, for example *Sent.* 39,⁵ which detail the process through which the soul attaches itself to an earthly body and becomes weighed down by "moisture" (*ὕγρότης*) down.

FR. 6 One distinction is that between "active and passive movements" (*τῶν δραστηκῶν ἢ παθητικῶν κινήσεων*). If gods are intellects, they must be fully active, because intellectuality is equivalent to actuality. The intellect contains the forms of things, and forms are the active element in the constitution of things. Matter or corporeality accounts for passivity, and as such, it is characteristic for the lower realms of reality. If, according to this model, gods are capable only of activity, that would lead to inadmissible consequences for practices such as invocations and prayers, as Porphyry will show below. If daemons were passive, they would be drawn down to the lowest realms of reality. The

³E.g. *Cratylus* 397d.

⁴Brisson, O'Neill, Timotin (eds.), *Neoplatonic Demons*, with the papers by Brisson (86-101) and Greenbaum (102-139).

⁵In particular l. 25-30, ed. Lamberz.

categories of activity and passivity thus lead to contradictions, which brings Iamblichus to accuse Porphyry of using inadequate concepts.

“Accidents” are opposed to substance. To determine the nature of a certain thing, one must look at its substance. Looking at accidents instead can’t reveal anything about the thing in question. This also holds true for the classes of superior beings. Accidents cannot provide a basis for their classification. FR. 7

The “natural order” (*τὴν κατὰ φύσιν διάκρισιν*) for Iamblichus would be to begin the philosophical inquiry into divine being with substances and their characteristics, not with their activities, movements, and accidents. These are secondary and depend on substance. FR. 8

Porphyry’s other approach to the distinctions between the superior beings is based on the association between gods and corresponding bodily realities, such as the association of ethereal gods with ethereal beings on earth. Porphyry elaborates on this distinction, e.g., in his *Sent.* 28–29, where he describes how God, intellect, soul, and body relate to one another. Iamblichus rejects this distinction because it would – as in the foregoing passages – lead to the gods being determined by something that does not participate in their substance (given that, as superior beings, they cannot be substantially determined by the lower, finite realms of reality). FR. 9

Porphyry asks why, if the gods reside in heaven, that is, if they uniformly pertain to the highest ontological realm, one finds invocations referring to gods associated with the earth. “Your difficulty” (*οὐδὲ κακῆ-ἴνο*): Saffrey & Segonds follow Gale for this emendation.⁶ FR. 11

These are Porphyry’s objections to the association of gods with bodies. If such an association existed, gods would reside in certain places, associate themselves with certain spatiotemporal events and things, and remain fragmented and unable to create unions between them. These are inadmissible consequences. FR. 12

⁶Saffrey & Segonds, *Porphyre*, 6, fr. 10.

FR. 13-17

Porphyry returns to the distinction between passivity and activity. In these fragments,⁷ Porphyry brings two threads together. Porphyry uses one thread to expose the absurdity and sacrilegious character of ritual invocations that involve genitalia, obscenities, and other things considered indecent (such as *ithyphalli*, i.e., erect male genitalia). While we do not have any texts detailing “ritual obscenity,” we do know that obscenity played a role in the Thesmophoria, a festival honoring Demeter, in which, according to Lucian, women carried around sculpted genitalia and used obscene language.⁸ The other thread is the more systematic objection to the possibility of addressing invocations to beings that aren’t open to invocations because their substance is not susceptible to passivity.

FR. 16

For this fragment, we have Iamblichus’s corresponding formulations: “You separate the essences of the superior beings according to the distinction between being subject to passivity and not being subject to it.” “Erection of phalli.” “Expression of obscenities.” “Invocations.” “Calls for help.” “Atonements against their anger.” “Sacrifices.” “The so-called coercions of the gods.” “Cannot be invoked, subject to passivity, or coerced.”⁹

FR. 18

Iamblichus points to a further criterion proposed by Porphyry to distinguish between gods and other classes of superior beings. According to Middle- and Neoplatonic metaphysics, divine being is intellectual. But daemons also seem to participate in the intellect, by virtue of being endowed with souls. Hence, intellectuality is not a clear-cut criterion for distinguishing between the two classes. Iamblichus offers only a partial image of the possible distinctions between gods and daemons

⁷Fr. 15 is followed by fr. 69, second paragraph, below.

⁸See Rosen, Malika & Charalampos, “Aischrology,” in particular 26-28.

⁹Iamblichus, *de myst* I, 10-14 (P 33.11-45.7): τῇ τοῦ ἐμπαθοῦς καὶ ἀπαθοῦς διαφορᾷ χωρίζεις τῶν κρειττόνων τὰς οὐσίας (S 25.20-21), τὴν μὲν τῶν φαλλῶν στάσιν (S 29.14), τὰς δ’ αἰσχρορρημοσύνας (S 29.19-20), αἱ κλήσεις (S 30.23), αἱ προσκλήσεις (S 32.3), αἱ τῆς μίμηδος ἐξιλάσεις (S 32.16), Αἱ δ’ ἐκθύσεις (S 33.6), αἱ λεγόμεναι θεῶν ἀνάγκαι (S 33.22), ἀκήλητον καὶ ἀπαθές καὶ ἀβίαστον (S 34.8-9).

(which Brisson attempts to disentangle¹⁰), but he seems to reject Porphyry's proposal entirely.

Iamblichus returns to the topic of the gods and their intellectual constitution. According to Porphyry, this constitution excludes passivity. If they cannot be "moved" by invocations and prayers, why should one implore them? Imploring the gods implies that their constitution presents certain dispositions to hear and respond to the supplications, such as senses, perception, language, and so forth. These implications are inadmissible if gods are entirely separate from the dimensions in which those dispositions exist.

FR. 19-22

Porphyry has already established that the attribution of physical dimensions to various types of superior beings leads to absurdities. Now he considers the possibility that the distinction between different classes of those beings is rooted in their degree of embodiment: gods as bodiless and daemons as partly embodied.

FR. 23

Among the ancient theological theorems of Greek religion, the idea that planets are gods plays a central role. For example, Aristotle discusses it in one of the central texts of ancient Greek theology, ch. 8 of *Metaphysics* Λ.¹¹ Evidently, if planets are embodied gods, embodiment and bodilessness cannot be maintained as criteria to distinguish the various classes of superior beings.

FR. 24

"Beneficent" and "maleficent" (*ἀγαθοποιοί, κακοποιοί*) refer to the effects astrologically attributed to the influence of the planets as gods.

FR. 25

"Connected" (*συνάπτον*) in an abstract sense, i.e., belonging to the same class of beings. If there are embodied gods in the sky and purely intellectual gods beyond that, how can these two types of gods be in the same category? Their degree of embodiment points to a substantial distinction.

FR. 26

¹⁰Brisson, "Demons," 90-99.

¹¹On this text see Pantelis Golitsis's recent paper "How Many Gods."

- FR. 27 Porphyry asks for an explanation of how, under the assumption that planets are visible gods connected to invisible gods, one could make a distinction between daemons and gods. If both daemons (good and evil daemons, as Porphyry explains in his treatise *On Abstinence* 2, 39) and gods are invisible – and even the visible gods are connected to the invisible ones – then visibility and invisibility simply cannot constitute reliable criteria to distinguish gods from daemons.
- FR. 28 Iamblichus presents an interesting argument. Porphyry’s earlier objection was that applying the categories of activity and passivity leads to contradictions within divine being. Now, Iamblichus seems to affirm that while gods are not subject to passivity, they still accept offerings. As a justification, he simply points to the fact that this is what ceremonial practices (*δρωμένων*) imply, suggesting that their mere existence sufficiently proves that they aren’t pointless. An uncharitable reader could accuse Iamblichus of fundamentalism or traditionalism, because he uses a *petitio principii* to justify his most fundamental assumptions. He does not accept that contradictions have a bearing on religious practice. He affirms that the mere continuity of a traditional practice justifies or validates the ideas implied in that practice. This argument is obviously problematic, but it is important to note that Iamblichus accepts it without resolving Porphyry’s objection.
- FR. 29 Saffrey & Segonds question the addressee of this statement (16). It seems likely that it is Porphyry who raises doubts about the distinction.
- FR. 30 Porphyry must initially have asked about a method to differentiate superior beings through their presence or manifestation.
- FR. 32-36 In their apparitions, gods and daemons can present themselves in a laudable or deceitful shape. It seems that in the lost parts of his letter, Porphyry pointed out contradictions in the attribution of categories such as “laudable” and “deceitful” to gods and daemons. Iamblichus again emphasizes that these contradictions are not inherent to divine being. They constitute the “failed results” (*ἀποπίπτοντα ἔργα*) of ceremonial invocations, which means that the root of their failure does

not lie in the essence of the invoked beings but in the way that they are invoked.

Porphry has established that true theology is good, that ignorance of the beautiful causes darkness and vices, and that knowledge causes goodness. Iamblichus seems to relate these affirmations to the practice of invoking gods, with the consequences mentioned in the previous fragments. FR. 37

Here begins a new discussion: divination, that is, the foretelling of future events through ritual practices. FR. 38

Porphry concedes that the future can be foretold in dreams, but not through some kind of extraordinary mental or somatic state. FR. 39

In response to Porphry's skepticism about supernatural forms of foretelling, Iamblichus specifies that there are dreams "sent by the gods" (*θεόπεμπτοι*) and that these dreams don't resemble the dreams Porphry mentioned. FR. 40

Having discussed divinatory dreams, Porphry goes over to "inspiration" (*ἐνθουσιασμός*, lit. "enthusiasm") and "divine possession" (*θεοφορία*), which he sees as the other means of divination. The specific modality of these modes of cognition are that they involve perception without a normal state of self-consciousness. FR. 41

Porphry begins with the notion of inspiration. Iamblichus finds Porphry's proposed definition unsatisfying and reductive. FR. 42

Iamblichus brings up Porphry's examples of enthusiasm. Corybantic rites are celebrations involving ecstatic dance. They owe their prominence in Platonism to Plato's dialogues.¹² The cult of Sabazios – FR. 43

¹²See Wasmuth, "The Corybantic Rites," Ustinova, *Divine Mania*.

a foreign god about whose origin we know little – involves a wedding-like ritual with snakes and a procession.¹³ The “Mother of the Gods” causing possession is Cybele, a Phrygian goddess.¹⁴

FR. 44 Again, Iamblichus accuses Porphyry of naturalizing divine manifestations and of not observing the distinctive nature of such manifestations. The musical ecstasy that Porphyry describes has nothing to do with divine enthusiasm, Iamblichus argues. Olympus, whom Porphyry seems to have mentioned in the original text, is a seventh-century BCE Phrygian composer, known for his formative role in music.

FR. 46 “Standing on signs” (ἐπὶ χαρακτήρων στάντες) is an allusion to a form of divination based on written signs. Giuseppe Muscolino says about this divination: “Before proceeding to the invocation of the spirit, the medium stands inside some symbols that have a particular relevance with the spirit who is to be invoked; these can be figures, letters of the alphabet, or names.”¹⁵

FR. 48 Saffrey & Segonds think this fragment marks the beginning of a chapter they call “divination technique,”¹⁶ which addresses forms of divination that do not depend on modified mental states but rather on certain ceremonial enactments and techniques. The examples Porphyry mentions are haruspicy, i.e. inspecting animal entrails, ornithomancy, i.e. divination through birds, and horoscopy, i.e. observing the movements of the stars.

FR. 49 This fragment is included on the basis of Saffrey’s & Segonds’s suggestion.¹⁷ *Baitylia*, or more commonly *baetyls*, are oracular stones. The word is of non-Greek origin.¹⁸ “Through rocks thrown at elements” (διὰ λίθων ἐν τοῖς στοιχείοις προσρασόντων): William E. Klingshirn thinks that the “elements” here are written “letters.”¹⁹

¹³See Fellmann, “Der Sabazios-Kult.”

¹⁴See the excellent introduction by Vassileva, “Cult of Kybele.”

¹⁵Muscolino, “The Double Aspect”, 96.

¹⁶Saffrey & Segonds, *Porphyre*, 42 and 25.

¹⁷Saffrey & Segonds, *Porphyre*, 26-29.

¹⁸See Marinatos, “Meta-mythology.”

¹⁹Klingshirn, “Instruments of Lot Divination,” 73.

“The virgins of the hearth” (αἱ τῆς ἐστίας παρθένοι): the Vestal Virgins. “Apollo Clarius” (Κλαρίου): Apollo venerated in the sanctuary of Claros. “Among the Branchidae” (ἐν Βραγχίδαις): “The Branchidae, members of a clan descended from Branchus, were the priests in charge of the oracular shrine of Apollo at Didyma, some ten miles south of the city of Miletus ... Oracular responses were given by a priestess esconced [sic] above a sacred spring, and they were interpreted by the priests.”²⁰ “Pythia” (Πυθία): the high priestess of Apollo’s temple at Delphi.

Iamblichus takes issue with the contradiction between divine manifestations and causality. Gods cannot be subjected to ordinary causality, for that would restrict divine spontaneity. Their manifestation is necessarily independent of natural occurrences such as planetary revolutions, etc.

FR. 53

“From small gleams” (ἐκ μικρῶν αἰθρυγμάτων): Porphyry makes another attempt to explain divination through naturalization. Divination could initially arise from a small divine impulse, a “gleam” or “sparkle,” and the soul builds on that impulse to develop and unfold it.

FR. 54-55

Porphyry proposes some kind of compromise between naturalist and supernaturalist interpretations, presenting divination as a “mixed” (μικτόν) product of the soul and divine inspiration.

FR. 56

This fragment explores further explanations for divination, based on the two previous assumptions: that the soul acts as a cause, and that sacrificial offerings, i.e. matter, solicits a supernatural intervention.

FR. 57

The last sentence of this fragment expresses Porphyry’s doubt about divination through dreams. He does admit that one can foresee future events in dreams (e.g., the good daemons give warnings about bad

FR. 58

²⁰Hammond, “The Branchidae,” 339.

daemons in dreams²¹) but rejects the idea that such forecasting could be achieved through theurgical tools.

FR. 60 Iamblichus reviews Porphyry's naturalistic objections against divination through divine inspiration. Instead of inferring natural causes, Iamblichus explains that ecstasy is free from human activity, that sacrificial vapors appeal to divine reality and not to the human mind, that invocation formulas are directed at gods and not diviners, and that the frequency of divination among young people shows that their freedom from presuppositions makes them receptive. In sum: Everything Porphyry sees as an objection against divination is actually an argument in its favor.

FR. 61-62 These fragments contain some of Porphyry's most remarkable ideas. Iamblichus struggles to maintain the supernatural character of divine knowledge or inspiration. Porphyry brings him to admit that the only difference between the divine quality of that knowledge and the aberrant, erroneous character of visions caused by sickness etc. is that these visions don't have "the energy, substance or truth" (*οὔτε ἐνέργειαν οὔτε οὐσίαν ... οὔτε ἀλήθειαν*) of divine revelation. But how can substance or truth be ascertained in the absence of any further criteria? Porphyry exposes Iamblichus as a religious fideist or fundamentalist. He looks for rational criteria to differentiate truth and erroneous, human imagination, but Iamblichus fails to give an appropriate answer.

FR. 64 Iamblichus claims that Porphyry's statements imply that he affirms the efficacy of certain ceremonies. Saffrey & Segonds note the difference between the two texts: Iamblichus states that it is the gods who bring along stones etc., while in Augustine, it is the diviners who bring along such things.²² They think that Augustine might be a better source than Iamblichus in this case.

FR. 67-68 Iamblichus seems to amplify Porphyry's objection to show that he disagrees with its premises. If divination and astrology were connected

²¹*De abst.* II, 41, 3.

²²Saffrey & Segonds, *Porphyre*, 35, fr. 58).

to each other, that would mean that the gods depend on mechanical causality, which is inadmissible.

Porphry brings up the possibility that divination is caused by an evil force that appears as superior beings – i.e. gods, daemons, heroes, etc. – and that manipulates the theurgist’s soul. Iamblichus affirms that theurgists are stronger than any such force and that the “divine” kind of divination is found in their practice.

FR. 69-71

“Epopt (*εποπτῆς*): “One who has visions,” the superior grade in the Greek mysteries, above the grade of the *mystēs* (μύστης, “initiate of the mysteries”).²³ “Abydos’s mystery” (Ἀβύδω ἀπόρρητον): The celebrations of the mysteries in the Egyptian city Abydos. These celebrations involve syncretistic, Greek and Egyptian religious practices and ideas. We know about these through authors such as Plutarch and through archeological findings.²⁴ “Bring the bark to a halt” (τῆν βάρη στήσει): The bark called *neshmet*, used by the god Osiris in the mysteries at Abydos.²⁵

FR. 72

“The practice ... of others” (*more ... aliorum*): In his reconstruction of the *Letter to Anebo*, Augustine attempts to make Porphyry’s ideas correspond with Christian expectations. Porphyry’s acceptance of daemons and other supernatural beings poses a threat to these expectations. Augustine tries to navigate the text by explaining that Porphyry makes these concessions only to allow his pagan readers to understand what he means and that he does not really commit to any of the problematic assumptions these concessions entail.

FR. 73

Iamblichus relates Porphyry’s doubt about the double use of sacrifices: On the one hand, they honor the gods, and on the other, they are beneficial to the people performing them. Porphyry seems to suggest that the first function of sacrifices, to honor the gods, is only a pretext.

FR. 77

²³See Dowden, “Grades.”

²⁴See Richter, “Plutarch on Isis” and Spiegel, *Götter von Abydos*.

²⁵See Lavier, “Les mystères d’Osiris,” and Froom, “Ritual Function.”

- FR. 87 Again, Porphyry pushes his Egyptian interlocutor to elaborate on the rationale behind his supernatural allegations – and Iamblichus once again gives an unsatisfying response. He appeals to a “truth” (ἀληθεία) found and maintained through “the laws of the sacred rituals” (τοὺς νόμους τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀγιστείας). But this is obviously *ipse dixit*. There is no more philosophical value in the attribution of a certain supernatural fact to a supernatural authority or revelation than in that fact itself. Porphyry here touches on the gravitational center of the discussion. He is asking for a certain type of justification, but Iamblichus does not seem to be ready to respond to his expectation.
- FR. 88 Porphyry here inquires about the metaphysical underpinnings of Egyptian theology. The elements mentioned here – the first cause, the intellect, the demiurge, the One – are all typical elements of Platonic philosophy (see the introduction to this volume).
- FR. 90 “Chaeremon”: Chaeremon of Alexandria, a first-century Egyptian historian, astrologist, and priest. This passage is one of the most important sources for reconstructing Chaeremon’s teaching. “Salmeschinica”: “a kind of Egyptian astrological calendar.”²⁶ “Decans”: the ten subdivisions of a sign of the zodiac.
- FR. 91 This is Iamblichus pointing out a contradiction between Porphyry’s assumption that one can achieve freedom with the help of the gods and the assumption that one cannot loosen what the gods have bound with fetters.
- FR. 93 This passage deals with the notion of a “dominant planet” (οἰκοδεσπότης, lit. “lord of the house”). Dorian G. Greenbaum outlines Porphyry’s use of this notion as follows: “Porphyry, like many in his cultural milieu, believed in a personal guiding daimon who aids and encourages its human being toward virtuous behaviour, even as that daimon ratifies, administers and fulfils the choice of life made by the soul prior to incarnation. Building upon ideas drawn from Plato (especially the Myth of Er), Porphyry relates this personal daimon to the

²⁶Van der Horst, *Chaeremon*, 55.

astrological technique of finding an *oikodespotēs*, or house-master, of the birthchart. The planet designated as the *oikodespotēs* of the nativity imparts the spirit of the personal daimon (usually called *οἰκεῖος δαίμων* or *ἴδιος δαίμων*) which goes with the soul when it becomes attached to a body at birth. In his *Letter to Anebo* (14a-d, 15a-b), Porphyry takes up the idea of finding the *oikodespotēs* of the nativity in order to ascertain a personal daimon.”²⁷ Karin Alt provides a helpful overview of Porphyry’s daemonology in “Man and Daimones”²⁸ (though her claim that the *Letter to Anebo* is an early work is problematic and should be taken with a grain of salt²⁹).

“Happy ... his own personal daemon” (*εὐδαίμων ... τὸν ἑαυτοῦ δαίμονα*): Porphyry plays on the similarity between the words “daemon” and “happy” (*eudaimon*). FR. 94

Porphyry exposed the contradictions inherent to horoscopes and astrology, finding that these things don’t provide useful knowledge about one’s daemon. Iamblichus objects that while these techniques aren’t necessarily accurate, divination remains infallible. FR. 95

Porphyry makes two points: that there are daemons presiding over the parts of the bodies and that there is a presiding daemon that governs the other daemons. Iamblichus’s objection or conclusion is not exactly clear. FR. 98

Porphyry incorporates the personal daemon into the human constitution. Iamblichus objects that if that were the case, the order of daemons would no longer be superior to the human order. FR. 101

In this fragment Iamblichus dismisses Porphyry’s worry that the phenomena produced by divination could in reality be mental delusions. FR. 105

²⁷Greenbaum, *The Daimon*, 236.

²⁸Alt, “Man and Daimones,” in particular 79-84.

²⁹Alt, “Man and Daimones,” in particular 79.

FR. 106 Porphry once more raises doubts about the presumptions of diviners claiming that they have special, supernatural access to divine knowledge. He asks: Could those diviners not be “impostors and braggarts,” pretending that they interact with the gods, while they in fact play with illusions and mystifications? Iamblichus’s underwhelming response is simply that the issue doesn’t affect “true theology and theurgy” (τῆς ἀληθινῆς θεολογίας τε καὶ θεουργίας). But then, what is the criterion for “truth,” if not verifiability? It seems that Iamblichus fails to properly address Porphyry’s objection, instead resorting to a mere supernatural claim.

FR. 110 Porphry’s final point – and perhaps the key claim of his letter – is that happiness is the criterion by which one can distinguish genuine insights into truth from false ones. Theurgists don’t contribute anything to our knowledge of truth or to happiness by performing sacrifices, or through divination or other practices. Their aim is to enrich practitioners materially and temporarily, which is the opposite of what Neoplatonic philosophy wants to achieve. It is not surprising that Christian authors such as Eusebius and Augustine endorse Porphyry’s criticism. They also see theurgists as charlatans who entice people with false, material promises. Of course, Iamblichus rejects this accusation, maintaining that the final goal of theurgy is to liberate the soul and that Porphyry’s objection is reductionist.

5.2 *Philosophy from Oracles*

FR. 1 From the start, Porphyry positions himself differently in the *Philosophy from Oracles* than in the *Letter to Anebo*. In the *Philosophy*, he presents an interpretation of oracular and theurgical texts, assuming that these texts are of revelatory character and that they convey the truth about divine existence, cosmic structures, and other such fundamental topics. This assumption about the truthful character of the texts, and in particular Porphyry’s injunction to “pray” for a “revelation,” seemingly contradict the statements made in the *Letter to Anebo*, where Porphyry finds that many theurgical practices ultimately contradict philosophi-

cal logic. But the fragments of the *Philosophy* suggest that the situation is in reality more complex. Porphyry's aim here is to uncover the immanent logic of oracles and theurgical instructions and to interpret them through the lens of a philosophical hermeneutic. This interpretation may be read as consonant with Porphyry's "verticalizing" (Johnson) project and need not be opposed to the more critical approach of the *Letter*. We must also note that most of the fragments of the *Philosophy from Oracles* come from Eusebius, a Christian author deeply suspicious of theurgy. There is a certain bias in Eusebius's references – a more negative bias than the one we find, for example, in Augustine's sympathetic references to the *Letter*.

In this fragment we find evidence that the *Philosophy from Oracles* could be coherent with the *Letter to Anebo*. The "trustworthy teaching" (ἀξιόπιστον διδασκαλίαν) contained in the former text has the "salvation of the soul" (τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς σωτηρίαν) as a goal. While the *Letter* mostly articulates that goal in terms of happiness, the two texts concur in situating the finality of human life in some kind of dissolution of the shackles of finite existence. The emphasis that the *Philosophy* places on salvation is one of the key elements that has brought scholars such as Michael B. Simmons to interpret Porphyry's philosophy of religion as a soteriology.

FR. 2

Pan is customarily associated with Dionysos: "The Pan-Dionysus dyad myth was popular in much of the Mediterranean as of the middle of the fifth and the fourth century BCE and, above all, in Roman times, until the end of the ancient world, albeit less represented in cults."³⁰ Pan is a god of nature, often associated with pastoral, bucolic attributes. "All-powerful intellect" (παγκρατέριοι νόου): a key element of Platonic metaphysics.³¹ "The irascible part" and "the appetitive part" (τὸ θυμοειδές, τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν): Plato divides the soul into "rational" (λογιστικόν), "irascible," and "appetitive" parts, which represent the soul's reasonable, spirited, and desirous aspects, respectively.

FR. 5

³⁰Del Olmo, "Dionysus in Arkadia," 12.

³¹See the Introduction, §1.5.

FR. 18 In his argument against Porphyry, Eusebius stresses the seemingly unbridgeable gap between these unphilosophical instructions to manufacture a wax statue for Hecate on the one hand, and the *Letter to Anebo's* call, on the other hand, to practice philosophy and seek happiness. However, we should take care not to simply project this tension into Porphyry's thought. It is true that Porphyry here offers contrary quite philosophical instructions for a happy and virtuous life. However, some hints in this fragment point, if not to the kind of allegorical interpretation of mythology that Eusebius would like to hear, then at least to a symbolic understanding of rituals. For example, Porphyry explains the components of the wax figure as "symbols" (σύμβολα), indicating that the figure is part of a relational and hierarchical cosmos in which physical elements point to beings existing beyond the physical world. Porphyry's theurgy does not take place within a single-layered world but in a complex cosmos determined by ascending and descending, hierarchical dynamics. The *Philosophy from Oracles* describes these dynamics in a manner that harmonizes with the hierarchical tendencies of Neoplatonic metaphysics.

FR. 20 "Pytho": the oracle of Delphi, pronounced by Pythia in the temple of Apollo. "Claros": the oracular sanctuary of Apollo Clarius (named so after this sanctuary) on the coast of Asia Minor. "Phoebus": another name of Apollo. "From Mycale" (Μυκαλήϊον): Mycale is a mountain range in Ionia, also in Asia Minor, close to Miletus and Priene. "Didyma" (Διδύμων): Ionian city close to Miletus, housing a sanctuary of Apollo. "Parnassus" (Παρνάσιον αἶπος): a mountain range bordering Delphi (Pytho).

FR. 21-22 This fragment offers a striking example of orientalist influences both on pagan Neoplatonic and Christian theology. Porphyry quotes an oracle in which Apollo himself attests to the wisdom of the "Hebrew nation," suggesting that what he imagined as "oriental" wisdom had a distinct and special access to original knowledge. Of course, it is unclear whether this attribution has any historical reality. Rather than indicating an appeal to a Hebrew source, Porphyry here betrays the Greek expectation to find the source of truth beyond the horizon of

Greek culture. This orientalist view of Hebrew culture posed no conflict to Eusebius, a Christian theologian for whom the Hebrew Bible had revelatory character. On the contrary, this text serves as a rare and valuable instance in which pagan and Christian philosophical traditions appear to converge naturally around a shared vision of ancient, non-Greek wisdom.

This fragment may be one of the most important extant passages of the *Philosophy*. It contains the central and representative elements of Neoplatonic metaphysics: the mention of a first principle located in transcendence, beyond anything language or concepts could express, and connotated with monotheistic ideas; the notion of “production” and of something that resembles an emanatory outflow of secondary beings; a separate position for “matter”; a hierarchical structure between these elements, bringing them together in a metaphysical cosmos; and the centrality of the “Intellect,” which acts as a governing principle in that cosmos. This oracle shows that notions we typically consider separate, such as religion, philosophy, mythology, and theurgy, were closely interconnected in late ancient philosophical texts. There is no clear separation between religious and metaphysical theories or between a theoretical, descriptive perspective and invocational, religious agency.

FR. 23

Serapis is a syncretistic, Hellenistic-Egyptian god identified in late antiquity with the Greek god of the underworld Pluto.³²

FR. 25

Hecate here identifies herself with her grandmother Phoebe, one of the six Titanesses born to Gaia and Ouranos, and with Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth born to Zeus and Hera.

FR. 27

“Ostanes”: legendary Persian mage, known for his practice of divination, necromancy, and other magical arts.³³

FR. 29

³²See Stambaugh, *Sarapis*, in particular the chapter, “Sarapis and Pluto,” 27–35.

³³See Smith, “Ostanes,” Käppel, “Ostanes,” Bidez & Cumont, *Les Mages*, vol. 1, 165–212; vol. 2, 265–356.

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- FR. 33 “Cypris”: Aphrodite, named so because she was born on Cyprus. “Phoebe”: Artemis, the goddess of the Moon. The mythological narrative reflects the meeting of the Moon (Artemis) and Venus (Aphrodite), from whose position in the sky Apollo derives the gender of the newborn.
- FR. 34 “Saturn”: the planet of the god of time, Saturn, or, in Greek, Cronos.
- FR. 35 “Mars”: the planet of the war god Mars, or, in Greek, Ares.
- FR. 38 “Erichthonius”: legendary king of Athens. This oracle contains a small theodicy. The lyrical subject asks how temples dedicated to the gods can be destroyed, if the gods control the whole universe. Apollo’s response is that Zeus gives his approval to the Fates and that the destiny spun out by them cannot be altered, not even by the gods. The temple destroyed by thunder was destined to be destroyed, Apollo states.
- FR. 44 “Wicked Mars”: the planet associated with the war god Ares (Mars), see. fr. 35.
- FR. 47 Augustine here makes an interesting observation on the philosophy of religion that Porphyry seems to support on the basis of oracular sources. The foregoing oracles (323-324) have given voice to Apollo praising Hebrew wisdom for its insights into divine nature. Porphyry endorses this praise. In response, Augustine finds it odd that Porphyry is partial to Hebrew wisdom on the one hand but does not accept Christian appeals to that wisdom on the other hand. Augustine suggests that Porphyry’s lack of sympathy for Christians and sympathy for Hebrews could be less rational than Porphyry makes it seem.
- FR. 50-51 “Fatally, what the other souls received ... ”: This oracle expresses the concern of pagan philosophers and practitioners regarding Christianity’s resemblance to their own soteriology. If Christians believe that Christ suffered death and that his soul ascended to heaven, do they not assume a form of salvation compatible with the Platonic and Gnostic ascent of the soul to divine reality? And if that is the case, where does

the error of Christians begin? Hecate argues that Christians focus on the return of a single soul to God, instead of focusing on divine reality itself. They confuse a soteriological epiphenomenon with the main soteriological narrative.

Porphyry continues to elaborate on the distinction between pagan and Christian theology. According to him, Christ warned his disciples against daemons and urged them to venerate God the Father. But Christians turned away from God and became corrupted. It is important that Porphyry seems to agree with a remarkably large part of Christian theology. It seems his only disagreement concerns the practice of the Christian religion as directed to Christ instead of God. Many of the elements he mentions in this fragment, such as purification and imitation, are not only coherent with Christian theology but also part of it.

FR. 54

On the gods acting under the constraint (*ἀνάγκη*) of human invocations see Timotin.³⁴ Interestingly, Iamblichus presents himself as a defender of divine “constraints” in his response to Porphyry’s *Letter*. Timotin argues that Iamblichus reinterprets the notion of constraint in order to avoid contradictions: “Iamblichus does not understand *ἀνάγκη* as a constraint that the suppliant imposes on the gods, but as the necessary and providential arrangement of things. The theurgist gains insights into this arrangement through prayer.”³⁵

FR. 55-57

“Paean” (*Παιάν*): Apollo in his role as healer.

FR. 56

“Release the white statue ... ” (*θάμνων ἐκλύων πολιδὸν τύπον*): This oracle describes the ritual uncovering of a statue representing a divinity. Muscolino describes the function of the statue as a place for the divinity to dwell while it proclaims an oracle.³⁶ Once the oracle has

FR. 58

³⁴Timotin, “Contrainte et persuasion.”

³⁵Timotin, *Démonologie*, 165: “De même, l’*ἀνάγκη* ne désigne plus, chez Jamblique, la contrainte que l’orant exerce sur les dieux, mais l’ordre nécessaire et providentiel des choses auquel le théurge est conduit à s’identifier par la pratique de la prière.”

³⁶Muscolino, “The Double Aspect of Theurgic Ritual,” 56.

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come to an end, the divinity must be dismissed by divesting the statue. “Erase the letters” (γραμμὰς ἀπαλείψατε): the letters or characters used for divinatory and oracular purposes. Porphyry also mentions such letters in the *Letter to Anebo* (e.g. fr. 43).

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