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Introduction

The Author, His Times, and His Work

Porphyry (ca. 232–ca. 304), from Tyre in Phoenicia, was one of the most important representatives of early Neoplatonism. Because our basic source of information about his life is the *VP* itself, there is no need to expand on that theme here.¹ It is enough to remark that before he went to Rome and Plotinus' school there, he spent some time in Athens, where he studied with the mathematician Demetrius, the grammarian Apollonius, perhaps the rhetor Minucianus, and—most important—with the philologist and philosopher Longinus, with whom he maintained long-lasting and warm relations. But it is obvious that the most significant and definitive influence on him was that of Plotinus. He remained in his school in Rome for about five years (263–68) and quickly came to play an important role within it. By his own account, Porphyry was assigned by P., among other things, the editing and publishing of his writings, a task that Porphyry would accomplish with great success, but also with notable delay, as the edition appeared thirty years after the death of his teacher. After a psychological crisis, Porphyry left Rome, only a little before P.'s death, and settled in Lilybaeum in Sicily. The evidence suggests that from there he journeyed to North Africa and to his homeland, Phoenicia, before returning again to the imperial capital, probably during the reign of Aurelian.² We know precious little about his life after this return. It is reasonable to suppose that it was during this period that he was most active as writer and teacher, but it is debatable whether he succeeded P. as leader of the philosophical school in Rome—if there even existed a school in which such a succession could take place. Late in life he married Marcella, the widow of a friend and mother of seven children. There are good reasons to suspect that he took part in the preparations for the Great Persecution of the Christians, and it appears that he died before Diocletian's abdication in May 305.³

The history of the tumultuous time in which P. and Porphyry lived, and which more recent historians usually term the “Third-Century Crisis,” cannot be presented here, even in brief.⁴ Suffice it to say that in the period of one hundred years between the birth of P. and the death of Porphyry, there reigned some thirty emperors, among whom—if we exclude the members of the tetrarchy, all of whom died after 304—only two, Septimius Severus and Claudius II, died a natural death. For a very summary picture of the

¹ Some additional information is contained in the *Vitae sophistarum et philosophorum* of Eunapius of Sardis (*VS*). Among more recent research, besides the classic study of Bidez 1913, see also Beutler 1953, 275.66–278.35; Smith 1987, 719–22; and appendix C below.

² This may explain the expression “he established himself (*gegonōs*) under Aurelian” used in the *Suda*, s.v. Porphyry. See also appendix C.

³ “He was living until the time of the Emperor Diocletian”: *Suda*, loc. cit.

⁴ It is clear at least that Porphyry's contemporaries had a pronounced sense of crisis and general upheaval: “Everything is being moved and, so to speak, transferred in another land, while the exercise of power is shifting as if in a violent storm or earthquake. It is like a ship ready to sink being carried to the edge of the world,” as the situation is described by the anonymous author of the oration *To the King*, a panegyric for the emperor Philip the Arab, which is preserved among the works of Aelius Aristides (*Or.* XXXV 14 = [Ael. Arist.] II, 256.21–24); in addition, see Alföldi 1974, 89–111.

4 Introduction to the *VP*

political and cultural setting for this period, readers may refer to the chronological table following the “System of Dating” section below.

Porphyry was a multifaceted and prolific writer. The primary features of his work are exceptionally wide-ranging knowledge combined with a sensitivity characteristic of his era, which causes him to oscillate between scholarly sobriety and the occasionally melodramatic sentimentality of the “torch-bearer.”⁵ He was concerned about the broader dissemination of Neoplatonic philosophy, with the result that some of his works possess a marked popularizing and introductory character.⁶ This fact has earned him the dubious reputation of a *vulgarisateur*, especially because his great works of systematic philosophy and his philosophical commentaries have been lost.⁷ He also wrote on historical themes, religion, philology, grammar, astrology, music theory, and other subjects. These writings bear witness to a very broad competence in all the areas of study that would soon constitute the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* of medieval education.

The Composition and Character of the *VP*

As appears from its title and final phrases, the *VP* was written as an introduction to the edition of the *Enneads*, P.’s complete written work, organized by Porphyry in a systematic manner according to themes. To judge by a reference Porphyry apparently makes to his own age (23.13–14), this work must have been composed during the period between the summer of 299 and the summer of 301. The phraseology at 26.37–40 gives one to understand that during this period the editorial work on the *Enneads* had not yet been completed, but cannot have been much further delayed, making it possible for us to say that the entire work was published in about 300–301.

The result is a work of exceptional importance, the like of which has not been preserved from antiquity: the presentation of the life of a great philosopher written by a close friend and disciple, who was also an unusually learned philologist with notable experience as a historian, and a determination to undertake his subject with completeness and—to the extent that the spirit of his age allowed—sobriety. But in order to ap-

⁵ See Eunapius, *VS* IV 2.2–3, 9.11–19; and Eus. *HE* VI 19.9. Cf. the famous oracle of Pythian Apollo (No. 474 Parke-Wormell) related by David *Prol.* 4, 92.3–5: “About . . . Porphyry and Iamblichus the Pythia said: ‘The Syrian is divinely inspired, the Phoenician is deeply learned.’ By the deeply learned Phoenician she means Porphyry . . . by the divinely inspired Syrian she means Iamblichus.”

⁶ Such works include, for example, (a) the *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*, which presents in a simple and brief manner subjects often derived from the *Enneads*; (b) the famous *Isagoge*, the best known and most commented upon of his writings, which—contrary to what is usually thought—is not an introduction to Aristotle’s *Categoriae* but rather a simplified presentation of the conceptual armory of the *Topica*, as a preparation for the study of the (Aristotelian) theory of the categories; (c) the short commentary on the *Categoriae* “by question and answer”; (d) his letter *ad Marcellam*; et al.

⁷ Such as, e.g., his massive commentaries on Aristotle’s *Categoriae* (*Ad Gedaliū*), *De interpretatione*, and *Physica*; on the *Parmenides*, the *Sophist*, and the *Timaeus* of Plato; the *De silua* (in six books); the *On the Soul against Boethus* (in five books); and, of course, the monumental *Contra Christianos* (in fifteen books), about which in 448 a special edict of Theodosius II and Valentinian III was required in order that “everything written by Porphyry, who was driven by his rage against the pious religion of the Christians, found by whomever, should be consigned to the flames” (*CIC, Codex Iustinianus* I 1.3).

precipitate properly its contents, as well as its omissions, we must bear in mind its place in the entire undertaking of the publication of the *Enneads*. We will then understand why, for example—even though it would not be fair to call this work a “hagiography”—only the positive aspects of P.’s personality are emphasized, and in particular those which pertain either directly or indirectly to his teaching activity;⁸ why stress is laid on the circumstances surrounding P.’s various writings and the order and manner in which they were produced; why Porphyry foregrounded so prominently his own role as instigator of, and confidant in, his teacher’s intellectual production; and finally, why there is such a preoccupation with contemporary opinions of P.’s books, where the modern reader would prefer fuller and more substantial information about subjects such as Ammonius, P.’s adventures in Mesopotamia, the story of Platonopolis, the development of the relationship between P. and Amelius, the economic and social arrangements during the period when he was living and teaching in Rome, and so forth.⁹ Porphyry’s purpose is not historical, nor is it purely biographical. First and foremost it is introductory—he is primarily concerned to prepare readers and to entice them toward the text of the *Enneads*.

The Organization and Sources of the *VP*

The organization of the *VP* is quite clear, straightforward, and at the same time revealing of the preferences and interests of its author. It can be presented in outline as follows (the arabic numerals are the numbers of the chapters):

- I. Prologue: The philosophical and physical death of P.
 - 1 His shame of being in a body
 - 2 His illness and death
- II. Narration of P.’s life
 - 3 His youth until his establishment in Rome
 - P.’s writing activity
 - 4 The first period
 - 5 The second period
 - 6 The third period
 - P.’s circle

⁸ Neither is it “The Gospel of Plotinus according to Porphyry,” as Jerphagnon 1990, 43 (unfoundedly, in my opinion) refers to it.

⁹ John Dillon in his introduction to MacKenna 1991, lxxxiv, is particularly concerned with these omissions, which can be arranged into three categories: (a) the events about which Porphyry is ignorant, for example, those in P.’s youth; (b) facts that he considers to be well known, such as the social conditions in which P. lived; (c) episodes “over which he might wish to draw a discreet veil.” I believe that at least as far as categories (b) and (c) are concerned, the fact that Porphyry is focusing on information that illuminates the contents of the *Enneads* directly is of decisive importance. It is for this reason, for example, that he lets the story of Platonopolis pass with scarcely a reference, because, as is well known, political philosophy is almost entirely absent from the *Enneads*.

On the other hand, Cox 1983, 143, introduces the view that the primary purpose of the *VP* was “the creation of a school tradition [that] also entailed, of course, the creation of a revered founder.” I do not think that either the work’s contents or any other evidence indicates that Porphyry had such intentions: see also Goulet-Cazé 1982, 246–48; and the more recent speculations of Saffrey 1992, 53–57.

6 Introduction to the *VP*

7	The students
8	<i>Digression:</i> How P. composed his works
9	Women and children
	Stories about the school
10	Olympius
	The invocation at the Iseum
	Amelius' love of sacrificing
11	The necklace of Chione
	Polemon
	Porphyry's melancholy
12	P.'s relations with the imperial couple and Platonopolis
13	<i>Transition:</i> How P. taught
	III. P.'s intellectual presence
	His relations with the other philosophers
14	Earlier thinkers
	Longinus
	Origen
15	Porphyry
16	The Gnostics
17	Numenius
	Amelius' <i>Letter</i>
18	Comments on the <i>Letter</i>
	External assessments
19	Longinus
	The <i>Letter</i> to Porphyry
20	Comments on the <i>Letter</i>
	The <i>On the End</i>
21	Comments on the <i>On the End</i>
22	The oracle of Apollo
23	Comments on the oracle
	IV. The arrangement and publication of the <i>Enneads</i>
24	The first volume
25	The second volume
26	The third volume
	The administration of the publication

It is evident even from this outline that Porphyry collected a sequence of documents at the end of the biographical part of the *VP* (17–23), where he presents them unaltered but also extensively annotated by himself. Nevertheless, other sections of the work also obviously depend on evidence whose sources Porphyry only sometimes divulges. We know, for example, that the description of P.'s illness and death (2.11–31) depends on Eustochius (see 2.12, 23, and 29), that the information relating to his youth (3.1–35) comes from P. himself (see 3.1), and that Amelius is the source for everything concerned with his first years of teaching in Rome (3.35–43; see 3.37–38) and the oracle of Apollo

(22.8–63; see 22.8–9). But we can also deduce that the description of the incident with Olympius derives from P. himself (10.1–13; see my comments *ad loc.*); while Amelius is the source for the testimonies about the portrait of P. (1.4–19; see my comments at 1.14–17), the invocation at the Iseum (10.15–33; see my comments at 10.31) and perhaps also the episodes surrounding Chione’s necklace (11.2–8), “Platonopolis” (12.3–12), and the appearance of Origen at P.’s seminar (14.20–25). We should consider the remaining material to be derived from Porphyry’s own personal experience during the five years he spent at his teacher’s side.

All the sources Porphyry uses are the best we could hope for. But their trustworthiness necessarily varies in relation to the idiosyncrasy of each author. It is the elegant and loquacious Amelius who most reasonably incurs our suspicion that he elaborated his materials in a novel-like manner, but we should not overlook the probable effect on his own testimony of Eustochius’ rather naive admiration for P.

The System of Dating

Much ink has been spilt over the chronological data Porphyry provides in considerable abundance at various points in the *VP*.¹⁰ For that reason, it is somewhat disheartening that one of the most recent studies on the subject concludes with a reference to “the hope for a new investigation of the chronological system of the *Life of Plotinus*.”¹¹ I shall not attempt here to engage in the details of this complex problem. But because I am not in complete agreement with any of the views thus far espoused, a brief review of the problem is necessary.

Porphyry gives us three forms of time reckoning: (a) absolute dates, based on the corresponding regnal year; (b) dates tied to either P.’s or Porphyry’s age; (c) calculations of the length of time intervening between two events.

(a) For the first type, a substantial number of dating systems have been proposed—as well as various combinations of these systems—on the basis of which it is possible to calculate the regnal years in such a way as to correlate them with contemporary evidence from other historical sources. But both the manner in which Porphyry chooses to express himself (usually with the general phrase “the *n*th year of the reign of *x*”) and the improbability that in the introduction of such an ambitious endeavor as the publication of the *Enneads* Porphyry would employ a geographically restricted calendar—such as the Egyptian,¹² or Syro-Macedonian—or some specialized system of his own invention¹³ strongly suggests, in my opinion, the *dies imperii* as the starting point. That is to say, Porphyry’s system employed a year that began with the ascension to the throne of

¹⁰ The most significant scholarly studies on this subject are the following: Oppermann 1929 (mainly the second part, titled “Die Chronologie in Porphyrios’ *Vita Plotini*”); Boyd 1937, 241–57; Igal 1972a; Barnes 1976b, 65–70; Goulet 1982b, 187–227; Edwards 2000, 117–19. For a catalogue of all the chronological material contained in the *VP*, see Igal, *op. cit.* 11–13.

¹¹ Goulet, *op. cit.* 227.

¹² This possibility has attracted the favor of quite a few scholars, among them Oppermann and Barnes.

¹³ Such as the very complicated combination of the Julian calendar and a system of antedating and post-dating that Goulet introduces. The latter’s observation that “everything is as if Porphyry presupposes that his

the emperor of the day. All scholars agree that this is the most obvious solution. However, all but Boyd eventually reject it because of difficulties that emerge from attempts to link this dating system with information relayed in the *VP*. Nevertheless, after the most recent findings concerning the death of Claudius Gothicus (about which see my comments at 2.29–31), a careful investigation reveals that all the difficulties derive from the acceptance of P's date of birth according to Porphyry's calculations. In my commentary on 2.34–37, I question the accuracy of Porphyry's calculations and attempt to identify the reason for the error. If my estimation is correct, then P. was born not in the thirteenth, but the twelfth year of Septimius Severus' reign (April 204–5). In this way, all the remaining dates in the *VP* fall into line, if interpreted in accordance with a system based on the *dies imperii*, as mentioned above. That this is correct is affirmed by a glance at the chronological table below, in which appear all the dates and their equivalents in the Julian calendar.

(b) The dates based on the ages of either P. or Porphyry are, as a rule, linked to those of the first category and provide the opportunity to cross-check and verify information. In most instances ages are expressed by inclusive reckoning and refer to the as-yet-uncompleted current year of the age of the person in question (usually with a phrase such as “in his *x*th year”). In three cases, however (2.29–30, 3.23–24, and 4.8–9), exclusive reckoning is used, registering completed years of age: the first of these occasions refers to P's age at the time of his death, as mentioned earlier. For the other two, there is no reason to suppose, as do many scholars, that Porphyry confuses exclusive with inclusive reckoning.¹⁴ The somewhat indefinite reference to P's age at 4.6–8 allows us, as I argue in my comments *ad loc.*, to accept without any problem that the date is determined according to exclusive reckoning.

(c) Finally, scholarly opinion also differs with regard to the precise meaning of the expression *holōn etōn*, which we encounter at various points in the *VP*, referring to some (usually large) time span (see 3.20, 34, 41, and 9.20). If, as seems more reasonable at first sight, we consider that it refers to full years, then certain problems arise with the dating of events. The most significant refers to the length of time Amelius spent with P. (3.38–42): the third year of Philip's reign began in March 246, and the first year of Claudius' ended in August 269. It is impossible for twenty-four full years to fit between these dates, and it is worth noting that even translators who in other cases follow the interpretation referred to above (such as, e.g., MacKenna, Harder, and Armstrong) are forced at this point to abandon that system. Boyd 1937, 252n.34, already argued that the phrase means “in all,” and that consequently it is not necessary for the years to be complete. Igal 1972a, 86, advanced serious objections to this but was forced to take refuge in the desperate solution that Porphyry did not write what he meant (see also nn. 22, 24, and 50 in his translation). Goulet 1982b, 206–7, returns to Boyd's view but without supporting it with new arguments.

reader has in front of him a chronicle, or at least tables where each regnal year corresponds to some definite chronology” (op. cit. 206) demonstrates sufficiently that his efforts have finished up *ad absurdum*.

¹⁴ Goulet in particular devotes a great deal of space to arguing this view. Igal, on the other hand, believes that Porphyry maintains the distinction.

However, in my opinion, there is a fragment of Porphyry (apud Proclus *In Ti.* I, 63.29) that justifies Boyd's view. There it is recounted that the Platonist Origen developed an argument over the course of three days (*triōn holōn hēmerōn*): obviously, it is not meant that his lecture lasted three full twenty-four-hour periods, nor—as Igal 1972a, n. 41, would understand it—three days without interruption, but that from the beginning of the argumentation to its completion more than two days had passed, while the emphasis is on the fact that it was an exceptionally long period of time. I believe that we should understand the phrase in the *VP* in a similar fashion: the period when P. did not write lasted ten “whole” years (3.34), that is, more than nine years, namely, from the second half of 244 until (at most) September 254; Amelius was with P. for twenty-four “whole” years (3.41), from 246 until 269; and P. himself sojourned in Rome, without making any enemies, for twenty-six “whole” years (9.20), from the second half of 244 until the first half of 270. For the period when P. studied with Ammonius (3.20), we cannot cross-check our information, which anyway does not derive from Porphyry, but from P. himself.

The other chronological calculations present no particular problems, and they all fit easily into the chronological table that follows below.¹⁵

We may conclude that Porphyry's dating in the *VP* is, generally speaking, accurate; it follows consistently a system that was widely accepted in his day and one that corresponds to what we would expect from an experienced chronographer and historian, especially in a work as important as this was for him and one that he clearly made constant efforts to substantiate as best as was possible.

Chronological Table

The purpose of the following table is to present in outline form all of the chronological data contained in the *VP* and to fit them into the Julian calendar, indicating at the same time—and, naturally, in a very summary fashion—the environment in which P. and Porphyry lived. In the first column appears the year, according to the Julian calendar, in which the events referred to in the other columns took place. In the second column are recorded the emperors who ascended to the imperial throne in that period, with the exception of a few whose reign was exceptionally short-lived, and who are mentioned instead in the last column. In the third and fourth columns, respectively, are given the dates Porphyry records and, on the basis of the *dies imperii* system, their corresponding dates in the Julian calendar. In the fifth column is given the age P. had reached at the time of the events noted in the other columns. In most cases, information about P.'s age is again derived from Porphyry. The dated events from P.'s life are contained in the sixth column, while the seventh presents various parallel occurrences in contemporary political and cultural life. Such a brief presentation cannot possibly aspire to completeness; but, in any case, an attempt was made to include events that illuminate—however remotely or even indirectly—the personalities and activities of the first two Neoplatonists.¹⁶

¹⁵ On 5.1–5, which presents a problem on account of Porphyry's attempt to put greater emphasis on the period of time he spent with P., see my comments *ad loc.*

¹⁶ The indications 1/2 and 2/2 refer to the first and the second half of a year, respectively.

Chronological Table

CE (Julian calendar)	Emperors	Porphyry's chronological data			Biographical details of Plotinus	Parallel events
		Year according to imperial reign	Year according to Julian calendar	Plotinus' age		
	Septimius Severus (from April 193)					Origen directs (from 203) the Christian <i>Didaskaleion</i> of Alexandria.
204					(ca. July) Birth of Plotinus	
		13th of Severus	April 205/6			
208						Tertullian, <i>Adversus Marcionem</i> .
211	(February) Geta and Caracalla					d. Septimius Severus.
211–12				7	Episode with the nurse.	
212	Caracalla					(February) d. Geta. d. Papinian. <i>Constitutio Antoniniana</i> .
215						Caracalla's massacres in Alexandria. Persecution of Peripatetics. Flight of Origen. d. Clement of Alexandria.
216						(April) b. Mani.
217	(April) Macrinus					d. Caracalla. Callistus, bishop of Rome.
218	(May) Elagabalus					(June) d. Macrinus.
220	(March) Alexander Severus					d. Elagabalus. (ca.) Alcibiades preaches in Rome the teaching of Elchasai.
222						d. Bardaisan.

2.2.4	Ardashir, shah of Persia.		
2.2.5	(ca.) d. Hermogenes. (ca.) Heliodorus, <i>Aethiopia</i> .		
2.2.9	Second term of Dio Cassius as Roman consul.		
2.3.1	Heracles patriarch of Alexandria. Origen in Caesarea in Palestine. Julius Africanus, <i>Kestoi</i> .	27	($\frac{1}{2}$ /2) Turn to philosophy. In the school of Ammonius Saccas.
2.3.2	Origen meets the queen-mother Julia Mammæa in Antioch.		
2.3.2–3.3	Birth of Porphyry. (ca.) Tomb of the Aurelii on the Viale Manzoni. (ca.) Hippolytus, <i>Refutatio</i> . (ca.) Philostratus, <i>Vitæ Sophistarum</i> .		
2.3.5	d. Alexander Severus. Persecution of the Christians. Pontianus and Hippolytus exiled to Sardinia. Origen, <i>Protrepticus</i> . (ca.) d. Aelian.	(March) Maximinus Thrax	
2.3.7	Persians take possession of Mesopotamia.		
2.3.8	Gordian I and II claim the throne. (May) d. Maximinus. Brief reign of Pupienus and Balbinus. Censorinus, <i>De die natali</i> .	(July) Gordian III	
2.4.0	(April) Shapur I coregent with Ardashir. (April) Mani's second vision and beginning of his mission. (ca.) Birth of Iamblichus.		
2.4.1	Timesitheus <i>praefectus praetorio</i> and de facto ruler.		

Chronological Table (continued)					
CE (Julian calendar)	Emperors	Porphyry's chronological data			Parallel events
		Year according to imperial reign	Year according to Julian calendar	Plotinus' age	
242–43				38	Gordian's campaign against the Persians.
243					d. Ardashir. Shapur "King of Kings." (October) d. Timesitheus.
244	(March) Philip the Arab	1st of Philip	March 244/5	40	(2/2) Settled in Rome. d. Gordian. Peace with Persia.
245					(ca.) [Aelius Aeristides], <i>To the King</i> .
246		3rd of Philip	March 246/7	42	(1/2) Amelius in Plotinus' school.
248					(April) Thousandth anniversary of the foundation of Rome celebrated. Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i> . Dionysius, patriarch of Alexandria.
249	(June) Decius				(September) d. Philip. (ca.) Porphyry meets Origen in Caesarea.
250					Persecution of the Christians. d. Fabianus of Rome. Gothic invasions. (ca.) Philostratus the Younger, <i>Imagines</i> .
251	(June) Trebonianus Gallus				(March) Cornelius, bishop of Rome. d. Decius. b. St. Anthony.
252					Plague appears in Alexandria.
253	(July) Aemilianus (September) Valerian and his son Gallienus				d. Gallus. d. Aemilianus. d. Origen. d. Cornelius.

254	1st of Gallienus	September 253/4	49–50	Begins writing.	Invasions by Goths and Marcomanni. (ca.) Porphyry, <i>De philosophia ex oraculis</i> .
256					Persians at Antioch. (ca.) b. Calcidius.
257					Persecution of Christians. <i>Passio S. Perpetuae</i> .
258					(September) d. Cyprian.
259					(July) Dionysius I, bishop of Rome.
260	Gallienus sole emperor				(June) Shapur captures Valerian. Galerian issues edict to halt the Persecution; another edict debars senators from the ranks of the army. Coups d'état by Postumus, Ingenuus, Regalianus, and Macritani. (ca.) b. Arius.
261					Shapur founds Jundeshapur. Odenathus, <i>Dux Orientis</i> . Rebellion of Aemilianus in Alexandria.
263	10th of Gallienus	September 262/3	58	(June) Arrival of Porphyry.	(ca.) b. Eusebius of Caesarea. (September) <i>Decemalia</i> of Gallienus. Plague strikes Rome.
			59	Dispute between Porphyry and Amelius.	
264					(September) Gallienus visits Athens.
265					d. Dionysius of Alexandria.
266					Sabinillus consul (together with Gallienus)
267					Heruls repelled at Piraeus by Dexippus. d. Odenathus. (ca.) Mathematician Diophantus active in Alexandria.

Chronological Table <i>(continued)</i>					
CE (Julian calendar)	Emperors	Porphyry's chronological data			Parallel events
		Year according to imperial reign	Year according to Julian calendar	Plotinus' age	
268	(August) Claudius II	15th of Gallienus	September 267/ August 268	63	New Gothic invasions. Synod of Antioch condemns Paul of Samosata as heretic. d. Gallienus.
269		1st of Claudius	August 268/9	64	(ca.) Longinus moves to Palmyra.
270		2nd of Claudius	August 269/70	65	(February) Zenobias forces take possession of Alexandria.
	(September) Aurelian, after assassinating Quintillus, is crowned emperor			66	Claudius dies of the plague at Sirmium.
271					d. Shapur I.
272					Aurelian captures Palmyra. Revolt of Firmus in Alexandria.
273					d. Longinus; (February) b. Constantine the Great.
274					Aurelian dedicates a great temple to Sol Invictus.
275	(April) Tacitus				d. Aurelian.

276	Florianus, Probus	d. Tacitus. b. Prohaeresius.
277		d. Mani.
280		(ca.) Peregrinus' sarcophagus with representations of philosophers (Rome, Museo Torlonia).
282	Carus	d. Probus.
283	(July) Carinus and Numerian	d. Carus.
285	Diocletian	d. Carinus. (ca.) b. Pappus of Alexandria. (ca.) Alexander of Lycopolis, <i>Contra Manichaei opiniones</i> .
293		Establishment of the tetrarchy
295		b. Athanasius the Great.
299		Arch of Galerius in Thessalonica. (ca.) Arnobius, <i>Adu. nationes</i> .
300		(ca.) Composition of <i>VP</i> and publication of the <i>Enneads</i> .
301		Price edict of Diocletian.
302		(March) Diocletian's edict against the Manichaeans.
303		(February) The Great Persecution begins in Nicomedia.
304		(ca.) d. Porphyry. Lactantius, <i>De opificio Dei</i> .





Other Testimonies concerning the Life of Plotinus

Approximately thirty-five years after the publication of the *Enneads* and the *VP*, a Sicilian aristocrat, Iulius Firmicus Maternus, wrote an astrological encyclopedia in eight books, titled *Mathesis*. The first of these books contains a defense of astrology written in the fanatical and pompous rhetorical style that the same author would employ, a few years later and after his conversion to Christianity, in order to blast *errorem profanarum religionum*. The motif of all-powerful Fate plays a central role in his defense, and he offers Plotinus as an example of the manifestation of astrological power, as the latter had dared (primarily in his treatise “On Whether the Stars Are Causes,” II 3 [52]¹⁷) to doubt it. Fate’s vengeance took the form of a terrible illness that struck P. relentlessly and eventually brought him down. As perhaps one might expect, Firmicus included in his account a hair-raising description of the symptoms of the illness from which P. finally died and this—as is natural—has since then particularly attracted the interest of students of P.’s life.

Unfortunately, the entire passage in Firmicus contains so many inaccuracies—which are obviously due to misunderstandings of the account in the *VP*—that current scholarship denies it any credibility whatsoever.¹⁸ Nevertheless, I have decided to include it here as appendix A, if for no other reason than at least to provide a point of comparison from which we can better appreciate Porphyry’s sobriety.

The material we can draw from the *Vitae sophistarum et philosophorum* (*VS* III–IV) of the historian Eunapius of Sardis (ca. 345–ca. 420) is also minimal. The relevant passage reveals that this student of the Neoplatonist Chrysanthius did not appear to discern any difference between philosophers like P. and Porphyry and the rhetors who competed to win over the public by demonstrations before large audiences. As he himself states and as is apparent anyway from what he says, Eunapius derives his information from his reading of works by Porphyry—primarily, of course, the *VP*. Consequently, the only substantial new piece of evidence he offers with regard to the life of P. is his striking reference to P.’s place of birth (on which see my comments at 1.3–4). On his romantic rendition of the story about Porphyry’s melancholy, see my comments at 11.11–15.

The only other testimonies related to the life of P. come from the *Suda* (s.v. Plotinus) and from the Metabyzantine *Iōnia* of Pseudo-Eudocia (s.v. *peri tou Plōtinou*). The former adds only the utterly baseless information that “[h]is body was also afflicted by the sacred illness. He also wrote other things” (that is, besides the *Enneads*),¹⁹ while the latter contributes practically nothing.²⁰

¹⁷ But see also *VP* 15.21–26, and my comments ad loc.

¹⁸ The most obvious errors are: (a) The assertion (16) that P. settled permanently in Campania because of his health, while we know from Porphyry that he used to go there sporadically (*VP* 7.22–23), perhaps during his holidays, and that he retired there only during the last months of his life when he was forced to by the deplorable state of his health (op. cit. 2.17–20). (b) The hint that P., just before his death, changed his views on the influence of the stars (21–22; cf. 19). However, treatise II 3 [52], which addresses the question *ex professo*, belongs to the group of treatises written only a few months before P.’s death (see *VP* 6.16–20) and does not provide evidence for any sort of change in his views—unless, of course, Firmicus has in mind at this point P.’s last words (*VP* 2.26–27), which would represent a grotesque misinterpretation of them (see my comments at 2.9–15).

¹⁹ For a somewhat more positive estimation of the *Suda* article, see Henry 1937b, 158–62.

²⁰ The reference to P.’s homeland, which records that “some say he was a Lycopitan from Lyco in the

Commentary

1.1. ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς γεγονώς: The expression suggests some chronological distance, which is natural, as the *VP* was composed nearly thirty years after P.'s death (see 23.13–14). But, at the same time, Porphyry's wording presents him as a contemporary of P. and in many cases an eyewitness to the events. Cf. 3.44, 16.1, 20.1, 3, 11, 17, and Fraser 1972, 2:708n.96.

1.1–2. ἐώκει . . . εἴη: That P. “seemed ashamed of being in the body” is Porphyry's impression, a view that does not necessarily correspond precisely to his teacher's theoretical position. See Ferwerda 1980, 120–21. Cf. the extreme form that such a conception could take, as, for example, in the case of Saint Anthony: Athanasius *VAnton.* 45.

1.3–4. οὔτε . . . πατρίδος: As a matter of fact, we do not possess firm information about P.'s origin. Porphyry, perhaps out of respect for his teacher's wishes (see Courcelle 1953, 233 and 238–39), does not mention anything relating to his background. The conceit with which Eunapius, *VS* III 1.1, 5.18–20 reveals that P. was an Egyptian and that his hometown was called Lyko makes this information somewhat suspect (on this toponym, cf. Palladius *Hist. mon.* I 1,9). It is difficult to divine the source of this information. Nevertheless, it appears to be confirmed by the title of Porphyry's *Isagoge* as transmitted in most manuscripts, as well as in two commentators on the work: *Eisagōgē of Porphyry the Phoenician, the pupil of Plotinus the Lykopolitan* (*CAG* IV 1.1–2. Cf. David *In Porph. Isag.* 91.24–25, [Elias] *In Porph. Isag.* 27.3; see also *Suda*, s.v. Plotinus). Exactly which *Lukopolis* (thus in *Porph. Isag.*, David and the *Suda*; Eunapius has *Lukō*; [Elias], *Lukos*) was meant cannot be verified; however, the most probable guess is the one in upper Egypt, near the banks of the Nile, at the modern settlement of Asiut. In any case, that P. was an Egyptian we could conjecture even without the above testimony (or that of Proclus *TP* I 1, 6.19–20, where he is referred to as an Egyptian), simply from the fact that he studied in Alexandria (3.8) and that his circle included many Alexandrians, such as Eustochius, Serapion, Olympios, Origen, and perhaps Zethos and Castrius Firmus. P. himself refers once to the “Egyptian wisemen” (*Enn.* V 8.6.1–7) but displays the usual ignorance of the real meaning of hieroglyphic writing that was characteristic of its Greek-speaking students and “exegetes” since as far back as the Ptolemaic period. Somewhat later (V 8.10.26–29), we may possibly discern a hint of the impression made on him in his youth by the sight of the local inhabitants (perhaps hermits?) of upper Egypt, whitened by the sun and dust, when he watched them descending from the heights where they lived. For a description of the environment in which it is likely that P. grew up, see Zucker 1950, 3–20.

All indications suggest that P.'s family was well off and enjoyed a prominent social position. P.'s education was purely Greek. He had a nurse from an early age and went to a schoolmaster (*grammatodidaskalos*; 3.3); later he had the leisure to begin his studies at

Lycopolite nome of Egypt,” seems to be derived from a source related to pseudo-Elias: on this, see my comments at 1.3–4. The information that “he lived in Rome for 27 years” conflicts with the period of time Porphyry gives, *VP* 11.20–21.

age twenty-seven (3.6–7) and to prolong them until he was thirty-eight years old (3.19–21). He was in the entourage of the emperor Gordian III (3.17–19) and clearly had no difficulty entering the highest circles of Roman society (see, e.g., 7.29–32, 9.1–22, 11.2–8, and 12.1–2). Even though he did not seem to possess a personal fortune (given that he was put up in the houses of friends), he knew how to manage substantial estates (9.5–16) and had some experience in handling complicated legal matters (9.21).

His name, without constituting a clue to his origin (see Zucker 1950, 11; and Schwyzler 1951, 477.15–25), may point—primarily thanks to the ending “-inos”—in the direction of a family Romanized even before the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 CE, probably during the reign of Trajan and his consort Plotina.

Plotinus’ refusal to speak about his origins may have had philosophical motives (cf. Epict. *Diss.* I 9.1–6; and Greg. Thaum. *In Orig.* 6; [Eudoc.] *Iōnia* 363, discerns Porphyry’s implied explanation: “considering that it (his native land) is above”; cf. *Enn.* I 6.8.16–27). However, we cannot exclude the possibility that P., in an atmosphere of intense social rivalries, had other reasons besides those Porphyry advances to conceal his background. If his family ties to senatorial circles of eastern origins were as intimate as it is allowed to appear, that fact would not, of course, have been deemed advantageous in Rome under the Pannonian military rulers.

1.6. Ἀμέλιον: See below, 7.2–3.

1.7. φέρειν . . . περιτέθεικεν: That the body is an image (*eidōlon*) of the soul is a view already expounded in Plato (*Leg.* XII 959b2–4, where it involves the reversal of an older, Homeric idea; see, e.g., *Il.* 23.104 and *Od.* 11.83—a notion according to which it is the soul that, after death, is characterized as an image). Clearly, it had acquired special significance in the context of Hellenistic physiognomy (see, e.g., Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 1, 85). For P., nature (*physis*) makes the body organic (*Enn.* IV 4.20.22–25) in the sense that it projects onto the body an image of itself, which, together with the body, forms the “animal” (*zōion*: I 1.8.15–23, IV 3.10.38–40, IV 4.16.40–45), that is, the living organism (I 1.11.12–15). This other man has “wound himself around us” (VI 4.14.24) and is not our real self, but a copy and an image (*eikōn*) of our real self (VI 3.15.29–33). The portrait artist who attempts to imitate this figure can only create something even lower, “a kind of still lesser man” (VI 7.5.16). This disparaging view of mimetic art no doubt draws its inspiration from the tenth book of Plato’s *Republic* (see 596e5–598d5 and 603a10–b5) and had broad repercussions during the early Christian period (see, e.g., *Acta Ioannis* 29, 166.12–167.5). This does not, however, exhaust P.’s aesthetic views. Cf., above all, *Enn.* V 8.1 and Rich 1960, 233–39.

Porphyry does not seem to share entirely his teacher’s objections: “for if someone makes an image of a friend, he does not think that this friend is in that image, or that the limbs of his body are confined in the parts of the drawing, but that the esteem he has for the friend is revealed through the image” (*C. Christ.* fr. 76.18–21). On this, see Cox 1983, 108–10. Of course, Barnes 1973, 428–30, has expressed doubts about the attribution of all the fragments of Porphyry derived from Macarius. However, I believe that this particular fragment at least contains authentic material from some work of the Neoplatonist.

1.9. ὥς . . . ἔργων: This ironic twist may have Epicurean practice as its target. Cf. Cic. *Fin.* V 1.3, Plin. *HN* XXXV 5, Origen *C. Cels.* VII 66 = Epicurus fr. 390.

1.11–12. Καρτέριον . . . ζωγράφον: The only information we possess about this painter Carterius is that contained in the present chapter of the *VP*.

1.13–14. ἐξῆν . . . συνουσίας: Porphyry uses three terms to describe P's gatherings with his students: meetings (*sunousiai*—here and at 3.46; 5.6; 13.1; 14.10, 21; 16.10; 18.7; cf. 3.34), lectures (*diatribai*—3.34, 36; 18.9), and conversations (*homiliai*—3.1; 5.5; 8.12, 14, 19). Those in the third category were undoubtedly informal conversations within a narrow circle of pupils among whom more personal confidences could take place (see 3.1 ff.). It is more difficult to define the differences between the other two. Most likely, the term *diatribai* refers to the lessons in which the teacher's doctrines are laid out, while the term *sunousiai* alludes to the more general activities of the school, which would include readings (14.10–14), discussions (5.5, 14.16), questions (13.9–16), and criticism (16.10). But it would be misleading if we rendered all these simply as “gatherings.” It is certain that the school met at a clearly defined place (see Goulet-Cazé 1982, 241–42) and time (see 5.4), perhaps also on a regular, organized basis (see Goulet-Cazé 1982, 242–57). Rendering them as “seminars,” even if anachronistic, seems to me to reflect more fully their function and alludes to the influence of this pedagogical practice in the development of comparable educational institutions during the Middle Ages. It is perhaps worth noting here that we do not encounter the Peripatetic term *akroasis* (“listening”) in the context of P's teaching activities (but cf. 3.9, 26 and 15.11).

That the meetings were open to whomever wished to attend—a practice that, at times, exposed it to unexpected (14.20–25) or even unpleasant (13.12–17) visitors—is a strong indication that they did not include any type of secret precepts (see Fowden 1977, 372) and that participation in the school was free of charge.

1.14–17. τὰς ἐκ τοῦ ὁρᾶν . . . τὸ ἵχνος: This somewhat overwrought and pretentiously Stoicizing description of what would, in fact, have been a rather simple operation may perhaps echo the affected manner (cf. 17.16–44 and 20.76–80) of Amelius, on whose testimony Porphyry appears to be basing himself here. In this case, it is most likely that the incident occurred before Porphyry's arrival in Rome in the summer of 263.

1.18–19. εἰκόνα . . . ὁμοιοτάτην: Various conjectures have been made in recent years about whether the portrait of Plotinus has survived in the form of some figural monument. See appendix B.

2.1. κωλικῇ δὲ νόσῳ: The manuscripts attest equally well the readings *kōlikēi* (“of the bowels”) and *koiliakēi* (“of the belly”) (see Henry 1934a, 28n.3; and Schwyzler 1951, 475 ll. 4–7). However, *kōlikēi* is a specialist medical term (whereas this is not the case with *koiliakēi*, which could refer to any ailment of the digestive tract; see Puschmann 1878–79, 1:220–21), and, consequently, is the *lectio difficilior* (see Oppermann 1929, 26). As treatment for diseases of the bowels, doctors in antiquity often advised clysters, purga-

tives, and antidotes derived from wild beasts. For references, see Oppermann, *op. cit.*, 25 and n. 5.

2.2. τοῦ πρεσβύτου: We have here an indication that the “disease of the bowels” appeared (or at least intensified significantly) toward the end of P’s life. But it is not immediately clear whether it was at all connected with the illness that ultimately led to his death.

2.3–4. θηριακάς ἀντιδότους: The term is used here to mean a drug prepared with, among other things, ingredients extracted from wild animals. See Galen’s special treatises on the subject (in vol. XIV of Kühn’s edition, 210–310) and Watson 1966. Galen informs us that during the course of a sojourn in Rome, he discovered that antidotes prepared from wild animals were extremely popular: “Many of the wealthiest people in Rome take the drug during each new moon . . . not in order to avert the illness that afflicts them, but so that they remain immune to all illness, and it seems to work” (*De ther.* XIV 298). It was employed particularly as a therapy for ailments of the bowel: see Oppermann, *op. cit.* 25, and Alex. Trall. *Therapeutica* VIII 2, 2:357.

2.4–5. μηδὲ . . . λέγων: Abstinence from all forms of animal food appears to have been the established practice in Plotinus’ circle—a practice no doubt indebted to the Pythagorean tradition. Porphyry composed an entire treatise in four books in defense of vegetarianism, the *De abstinence*. However, the *Enneads* are silent on this theme. See Bouffartigue and Patillon 1977, 1:xxi–xxiii.

2.5–7. λουτροῦ . . . οἰκίας: As Harder also observes, *loutron* here refers to the public baths, “places of entertainment, debauchery and pleasure,” as Hadot 1963, 112, describes them. Cf. Lucian *Nigr.* 34 and Clem. Al. *Paed.* III 9, 46.1–48.3. The Pythagoreans in particular avoided frequenting such places: see, e.g., Apoll. Tyan. *Ep.* 43; Philostr. *VApoll.* I 16; Iambl. *VPyth.* 18.83, 48.18. Cf. Burkert 1972, 199. Certainly many baths were believed to be frequented by evil spirits: see Bonner 1932, 203–8; Hopfner 1974, §195; and [Psellus] *De oper. daem.* 21.2, 849b8. Porphyry in his treatise *De philosophia ex oraculis haurienda* describes how he himself had exorcised from a bath one such evil spirit whose name was *Kausathas* (see Eun. *VS* IV 1.12, 9.2–3). This name may be Syrian in origin, as Wolff 1856, 152, and Bidez 1913, 15n.1 would have it; but a Greek etymology (from *kaunē sathē*) is not out of the question, in which case the name reveals the sexual character of the fear that inspired the superstition.

On the other hand, P. did not, as it seems, neglect bodily health entirely. Cf. *Enn.* I 4.14.21–26.

2.7. τοῦ λοιμοῦ ἐπιβρίσαντος: This epidemic originated in Egypt (or—according to John of Antioch fr. 151, 598b and Zonaras *Chron.* XII 21, 590.1—in Ethiopia) at the beginning of the 250s and spread across nearly all the empire, consuming in its path almost half the population of Alexandria and hundreds of thousands of other cities’ inhabitants, including the emperor Claudius II himself, who succumbed in Sirmium in the same year

P. passed away. For our sources on this ghastly scourge, see Alföldi 1939, 228n.1, to which could be added the dramatic description of the plague by Pontius *De uita S. Cypriani* IX, PL III, 1489b–c. Porphyry’s use of the definite article makes indisputable the above identification of the plague.

2.9–15. τοῦ κυνάγχου . . . ἐλκωθήναι: Porphyry’s description of the illness is rivaled by the much more dramatic and impressive description contained in Firmicus Maternus’ astrological treatise, *Mathesis*, I 7.20–21, 24.8–23; see below, appendix A. However, Henry 1934a, 25–43, demonstrated that the latter is simply a rhetorical elaboration of the former and, consequently, utterly devoid of historical value. Therefore, since Firmicus’ account formed the basis of Oppermann’s conclusions in 1929, 12–18, with regard to the nature of the disease, these conclusions should be understood to have been entirely overturned. Oppermann had concluded that P.’s disease was *elephantiasis Graecorum*, a type of leprosy that does not relate to the illness known today as elephantiasis (*elephantiasis Arabum*). Similarly questionable—if not even more so—are Gillet’s conclusions (1934, 45), which diagnose the illness as pulmonary tuberculosis. In my opinion, any future inquiry into this issue should not exclude the possibility that the illness was linked to the plague.

In any case, it is worth noting that all of the symptoms mentioned by Porphyry are to be found also in Thucydides’ famous description of the plague that struck Athens during the Peloponnesian War (II 49). Cf: “hoarsenes” ~ Thuc. 3.5, “blurred vision” ~ 2.1–2 and 8.3–5, “ulcerated hands and feet” ~ 5.14 and 8.3; even for the abandonment of the afflicted, cf. Thuc. II 51.5. These parallels may, of course, be coincidental, but they do cause us to wonder to what extent Porphyry based his account on Eustochius’ (presumably) scientific report, and to what extent his account is colored by rhetorical *topoi* for such subject matter.

For “sore throat” (*kunanchos*), see Puschmann 1878, 1:179–83; and Oppermann 1929, 8–9.

For Eustochius, see below, 7.8–12.

2.16. ἐκτρεπομένων . . . τῶν φίλων: Cf. the way in which Dionysius of Alexandria describes how the pagans of Alexandria abandoned the victims of the plague without help: “Even those who were in the first stages of the disease they thrust away, and fled from their dearest. They would even cast them in the roads half-dead, and treat the unburied as vile refuse, in their attempts to avoid the spreading and contagion of the death-plague” (Eus. *HE* VII 22.10).

2.17. ἀπὸ στόματος . . . ἔχειν: The kiss between teacher and pupil was an established Roman tradition (Harder), though the manner in which Judas betrayed his teacher indicates that it had a wider coinage. Cf. also the Hermetic ritual kiss mentioned in NHC VI 6, 57.26 and VI 7, 65.4.

2.18–23. εἰς δὲ τὴν Καμπανίαν . . . εἶχε: For Zethus and Castricius, see below, 7.17–29. Zethus’ estate was located six miles north of Miturnae (modern Minturno) (7.23), by

way of the Via Appia, while Eustochius lived at Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli, a bit outside Naples) at a distance of about forty miles.

2.25–27. εἰπὼν . . . θεῖον: Although the gist of these *ultima uerba* is, generally speaking, easily comprehensible and consistent with P.'s basic philosophical position (perhaps, indeed, they echo *Theaetetus* 176a8–b2, a passage so fundamental for Plotinian ethics), the problems presented by the manuscript tradition at this particular point have provoked extensive discussion. The most important contributions to this discussion have been those of Henry 1953, Harder ad loc., Igal 1972b, Schwyzer 1976a, and D'Ancona 2002.

To start with, Henry argues (at 121) that the first phrase, “I have been waiting a long time for you,” acquires meaning only if the second phrase contains an exhortation—the spiritual legacy of the teacher to his students, via Eustochius. This argument seems to me definitely to exclude the older interpretation, which Harder among others espoused, according to which the subject of “to try” (*peirasthai*) is P. himself. In this case, de Strycker's emendation (*peirasthe*) is rendered necessary (Schwyzer, 95). The phrase “the god in us” is genuinely Plotinian: see *Enn.* V 1.11.4–7, V 8.10.43, VI 5.1.3; cf., furthermore, the Hermetic *Asclepius* 6, 302.5–7; Iambl. *VPyth.* 33.240, 129.1; and *Zostrianus* = NHC VIII 1, 130.19. In addition, the expression “the god” (*ton theon*), which is derived from a different textual tradition (see Henry 1953, 119) is preferable to “the divine” (*to theion*), as otherwise we have a superfluous repetition of the phrase, completely inappropriate to the circumstances in which it was pronounced (for such an interchange of the expressions “god” and “divine,” cf., e.g., the *Acta Apostolorum* 17.29–30). I believe that the imperative “try” (*peirasthe*) makes Schwyzer's choice, 90–91, of “to us” (*hēmin*) instead of “to you” (*humin*) impossible (see also the objections of Henry, 126n.1). As he himself admits (89–90; see also Henry, 126–28), Synesius (*Ep.* 139, 725.5–10), scarcely a century after the composition of the *VP*, read “to you,” and although, as Harder remarks, the term *hēmeis* may have an almost technical meaning in P., nonetheless, in the context of an oral admonition, the second person is, I think, unavoidable.

On the other hand, the phrase “the divine in the All” acquires a striking pantheistic resonance if, with all previous interpreters, we take “the All” to mean the Universe (as it does in the *Enneads* as a rule: see Igal, 455n.63). For this reason, and with passages such as *Enn.* VI 5.12.13–19 in mind, I think Armstrong is right to prefer a rendering that does not commit us quite as fully to this direction.

So much for the interpretation of the incident as Porphyry relays it to us. And for its historical accuracy, we can do little else but concur with Schwyzer's view, 96–97 (see also Schwyzer 1986, 551): *Se non è vero, è ben trovato!*

2.27–28. δράκοντος . . . ὑποδεδυκότος: If, at this point, Eustochius' account is at all credible, then we possess here a clue to the time of P.'s death that, until now, has passed unnoticed: the snake's appearance rules out the possibility that it occurred in the winter or early spring (as, e.g., Igal 1972a, 66, believes).

However, for the Alexandrian doctor, the event clearly had another meaning that was related either to the belief in the snake-shaped Egyptian god Agathodaimon that was widespread at that time (*Knep̄h*: see Bréhier, ad loc.; and Ganschinietz 1918, 49; see

also id. 1919, 38–54; cf. Plut. *Amat.* 12, 755e), or to the symbolic, “hieroglyphic” representation of the “entrance,” that is, the setting of a star, according to the newer Ptolemaic system of ideograms (see John Tzetzes *Exeg. in Il.* I 97, 11; and Iversen 1961, 47). Even Giordano Bruno relates that, when he was an infant (ca. 1548) in his native Nola, not far from where P. died, there appeared from a crack in the wall of his house an enormous snake, “which looked extraordinarily archaic,” a sign of his heroic destiny (see *Sigillus sigillorum* in *Opere latine* II (ii), 184–85, quoted by Yates 1964, 339).

2.29–31. ἔτη γεγονώς, . . . πληρουμένου: We have here a piece of well-dated historical evidence. The information that on the day of his death P. had lived sixty-six years comes from Eustochius and is adopted unreservedly by Porphyry. One suspects that this knowledge derived from a confession by P. himself to his trustworthy doctor, perhaps just before his death.

However, a certain obscurity surrounding the precise dating of the reign of Claudius II has for years elicited uncertainty also with reference to the date of P.’s death. Because the first issue has been solved thanks to the publication of a sequence of papyri (*POxy* 2892–2940) by J. R. Rea in 1972, we now know that Claudius ascended the throne at the end of August or beginning of September 268 and died at the end of August 270. See Barnes 1976b, 66–67. Consequently, P. must have died a little before (*plēroumenou*) the end of August 270—that is to say, in August or, at the earliest, in July 270.

2.31–33. ἐγὼ μὲν . . . Πώμη: Porphyry had already left on his voyage (2.11) in the fifteenth year of Gallienus’ reign (6.1–3), after the event described below (11.11–19). Amelius departed for Syria via Phoenicia (19.20–32) in the first year of Claudius’ reign (3.40–41). He finished up in Apamea, where we lose trace of him. From the fact that the *Suda* (s.v. Amelius) calls him an Apamean and that his adopted son was an Apamean (see 3.47–48), we may conclude that he settled and perhaps established a school in the hometown of Numenius, whom he so greatly admired (3.44–45). Indeed, it is probable that somewhat later Iamblichus’ star burned bright in this school, the remains of which (including mosaics depicting Socrates and the six other “sages,” as well as allegorical representations from the *Odyssey*) have been discovered there beneath a Christian church; see Balty 1974, 276–77. With regard to Castricius, we can only conjecture that during this disturbed period his political involvements (see 7.28–29) kept him in Rome.

2.34–37. ἀναψηφίζουσι . . . πίπτει: What we have here is a calculation—and Porphyry, as the author of a *Chronicle*, among other things, should have been experienced at this job. Nevertheless, this calculation leads us face to face with serious difficulties. Septimius Severus ascended the throne in April 193, so the thirteenth year of his reign is April 205/6 (as long as we base our reckoning on the *dies imperii*; but even if we employ the Egyptian calendar, we arrive at 29 August 204 / 28 August 205, and the problem remains, *pace* Edwards 2000, 118). However, from April 205 to August 270 lapse sixty-five and not sixty-six years. Where, then, is the error?

Many scholars have occupied themselves with the problem and have proposed a considerable number of solutions. See, e.g., Oppermann 1929, 39–40; Boyd 1937, 242–

25 and 248–51; Schwyzer 1951, 473.30–50, 474.46–64, and 1978, 313.68–314.28; Igal 1972a, 59–75; and Goulet 1982b, 208–10. But the simplest solution was touched on by Goulet, who did not, however, follow up on it: the error seems to be the result of a misunderstanding between Eustochius and Porphyry. As Goulet, 209, rightly observed, following Carter 1967, 51–57, the participle *gegonōs* does not necessarily mean that we are dealing with a fully completed year of age; cf., e.g., Plutarch *Caesar* 69.1, 740c. Consequently, it is likely that Eustochius gave P.’s age (correctly) as sixty-six fully completed years, whereas Porphyry understood the expression in the sense adopted by Plutarch in the above example, that is, that Plotinus was in the sixty-sixth year of his life.

Based on this theory, our conclusion is that P. must have been born between September 203 and August 204.

2.37–40. οὔτε . . . ἡξίου: We must be careful not to associate the information Porphyry provides us here with what he says above, at 1.3–4. Here, the reason for P.’s silence is not shame regarding the body, but a modesty that made him shun self-advertisement. Cf. P.’s own description of his contribution to philosophy at V 1.8.10–14. We do not, consequently, have reason to suppose (as do, e.g., Oppermann 1929, 54; and Rist 1967b, 3) that Plotinus concealed his age or date of birth from those around him because he believed the latter to be a lamentable or contemptible event. He simply avoided, for particular reasons, revealing any clear-cut date. See also Igal 1972a, 31.

Nevertheless, there are signs that Porphyry knew more or less when his teacher’s birthday was. See my comments below at 4.6–8.

2.40–43. καίπερ . . . ἀναγνώναι: The birthdays of Socrates and Plato were traditionally placed on the sixth and seventh of Thargelion (that is, toward the end of May), corresponding to the birthday feasts of Artemis and of Apollo of Delos. See Riginos 1976, 15–17. Ample evidence shows that the birthdays were celebrated in Athens with dinners hosted by the local representatives of Platonist philosophy. During these events, speeches were declaimed (as, e.g., the *Perideipnon* of Speusippus and the *Encomium* of Clearchus; see Diog. Laert. III 2 = Speus. fr. 1, and Procl. *In Remp.* I, 69.23–70.7); discussions took place (see Plut. *Quaest. conu.* VIII 1–2, 717a–720c; and Porph. *Philologos Akroasis* apud Eus. *PE* X 3.1); and poems were recited (as perhaps Antagoras’ *On Eros* = *Coll. Al.* 120; see also below 15.1–6). See also Marinus *Proclus* 23.15–17, and the anonymous *Prolegomena philosophiae Platonicae* 6.16–18. Twelve hundred years later in Florence, Lorenzo dei Medici attempted to revive this tradition (see Marsilio Ficino *In Platonis Conuiuuium* I.1, 136).

That P. maintained this custom shows to what degree he was concerned to situate himself in the Platonic tradition.

3.1–2. Ἄ μέντοι . . . τοιαῦτα: What follows (2–35) is founded on autobiographical confidences by P. The same is probably true for the episode with Olympius (10.1–13). Oppermann 1929, 54, has already observed that at 3.17 there is a syntactical switch to indirect speech. But this is not enough reason to convince me of Harder’s suggestion that

from this point onward, Porphyry's source is Amelius. See Igal 1972a, 29–30, 34, and 38–41.

3.2–6. *προσφοιτᾶν . . . αἰδεσθέντα*: This episode is certainly of interest from a psycho-historical point of view (on this, see Dodds 1965, 91n.2; and cf. Zaehner 1957, 150; we encounter this attachment to the breast in the similarly peculiar story narrated in the anonymous *Vita Secundi philosophi* 70.5–6), but it is difficult to comprehend what might have been P's reason for relating the story, and, indeed, on many occasions. The most plausible explanation is perhaps that of Harder (see also Hadot 1963, 196n.1), who suggests that Plotinus used it as an example in the course of his development of some philosophical view: cf., e.g., *Enn.* I 2.6.3–4, III 1.7.18–19, and III 2.10.7. But Porphyry claims that P. related these stories during private conversations, not, that is, while teaching. So perhaps, as Courcelle 1954, 234; and Igal 1972a, 33, argue, the episode was recounted as symptomatic of a “first conversion” to a more philosophical way of life through shame; or perhaps P. attributed some symbolic meaning to it. Milk, as something associated with the Milky Way, was considered by some to be the soul's first nourishment during its descent from heaven, or during its return thence after death: see, e.g., Clem. Al. *Strom.* V 8, 48.8; Numenius fr. 32.8–9 = Porph. *De antr. nymph.* 28. For this reason, it was also a symbol of a transcendent, paradisaic condition: see Alline 1912, 99–107; and cf. Clem. Al. *Paed.* III 12, 101.3; Greg. Nyss. *In Cant.* I 3, 33.12–35.14; *Gospel of Thomas* = NHC II 2, 37.20–23; also Tran Tam Tinh 1973, *passim*. It may be that P's persistence was understood as a first impulse to ascend to his beloved homeland, or as Mephistopheles was to say to Faust's disciple, “*an der Weisheit Brūsten*.” Cf. also my comments at 22.48.

As for the expression “a little pest” (*atēron*), although we find almost the exact expression in a fragment of Democritus (B 279 DK), it seems rather too poetic, to my mind, to have come from the lips of a simple Egyptian nurse; perhaps the original expression was *asēron* (disgusting) and was transformed in the telling—quite possibly owing to P's defective articulation (see 13.2–5).

3.6–13. *εἰκοστὸν δὲ . . . ἐζήτουν*: What P. did until he was twenty-seven we simply do not know. In any case, a conversion to philosophy at such a mature age is not unheard of—Zeno of Citium, for example, turned to philosophy when he was already in his thirties (Diog. Laert. VII 2). Anyhow, nothing suggests that P's inquiries in Alexandria lasted very long (see Igal 1972a, 91–92).

Literature of the Greco-Roman period is replete with similar stories of anxious quests for the philosophical path amidst the labyrinth of different schools and of the final discovery of the ideal spiritual guide, an event often accompanied by a conversion of a religious character. Cf., e.g., Vett. Val. IV 11, 162.32–163.17; see Nock 1933, 107–21, 255–71; and MacMullen 1984, 68–73.

According to Eunapius, *VS* VII 2.12, Julian later echoed the same expression “this is the man I was looking for”—but in a much more insulting manner—when he abandoned his teacher Eusebius of Myndus, in order to sit at the feet of Maximus of Ephesus.

P's teacher Ammonius is one of the most attractive and mysterious figures in the history of philosophy. Our information about him, however, is minimal and sometimes contradictory. The evidence for Ammonius is gathered in the form of testimonia in Schwyzer's fundamental work, *Ammonios Sakkas*, Opladen 1983 (to which, perhaps, can be added a scholium, probably based on Theodoret, which comes from a Vatican codex; see Busse 1891 = *CAG* 4.3, xxv). For an extensive, but not complete, bibliography, see Schroeder 1987a, 522–26; and see also Theiler 1966, 1–45; Baltes 1985, 323–32.

The cognomen *Sakkas* is not handed down by Porphyry. We encounter it for the first time in Ammianus Marcellinus (second half of the fourth century), where the pertinence of the reference to Ammonius (XXII 16.16 = test. 10 Schwyzer) has (wrongly, in my opinion) been called into question (see Schwyzer 1983, 81–82). However, the sequence of words *et Saccas Ammonius Plotini magister* corresponds precisely to that employed in the same passage for the other celebrated Alexandrians who were active at Bruchium (cf. chiefly *Chalcenterus* . . . *Didymus, multiplicis scientiae copia* [Bentley: *copti* MSS] *memorabilis*). But what does *Sakkas* mean? That Ammonius previously carried sacks of wheat (Theodoret *Graec. aff. cur.* 6.60, 169.11–12 = test. 18; *Suda*, s.v. Plotinus = test. 22)? That he was a Buddhist monk (Sakya-Muni: see Seeberg 1942, 136–70)? That he wore a characteristic type of *tribōn*? (*sakkos*, Lat. *cilicium*; see Lagerbeck 1957, 68)? Or, finally, that he wore an especially thick philosopher's beard (see LSJ, s.v. *sakkos* III)? The third proposal seems the most persuasive, if, nonetheless, hypothetical.

From what we can know, it seems that Ammonius wrote nothing. And after Schwyzer's devastating critique of the evidence, very few things can be said with certainty about his teaching. Indeed, what can be said differentiates him from P. with regard to crucial points of his teaching, as, for example, on the question of the One's transubstantiality: see Baltes 1985, 328–30.

We know of at least six other students of Ammonius: the Platonist Origen and Erennius (3.24–27), Theodosius (7.18), Longinus (20.36–38), Olympius (10.1–2), and Antoninus (Procl. *In Ti.* II 154.9). The view that the Christian Origen and the future patriarch of Alexandria, Heraclas, should be counted among Ammonius' students ought finally to be abandoned, despite its long and renowned history. The teacher of the Christian Origen, and perhaps also of Heraclas, was another Ammonius, author of what was probably an anti-Marcionite treatise, *On the Accord between Moses and Jesus* (see Eus. *HE* VI 19.10 = test. 8); see Dörrie 1955a, 468–71 = 1976, 352–54. This mistaken view derives from an error made by Porphyry, who evidently thought that the Ammonius about whom, as a child, he had heard the Christian Origen speak, was none other than Ammonius Saccas (*C. Christ.* fr. 39 = Eus. *HE* VI 19.5–7 = test. 7).

Ammonius must undoubtedly have been a remarkable personality, who attracted students with a wide range of temperaments. In his teaching, Ammonius seems to have employed a method completely different from that of his contemporary philosophers, and one which had an immediate effect on his audience. (That Ammonius' method diverged from the usual can be understood from the fact that Hierocles, *Prou. et Fat.* apud Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 214, 172a4 = test. 12, characterizes Ammonius as “God-instructed”—in other words, an autodidact. An inscription from Olbia on the Black Sea calls down blessings on a contemporary of Ammonius for the “incomparable innate philosophy”

that he possessed; on this, see Nock 1940, 308, and cf. Bickerman 1938–39, 372–73. Cf. also below, 14.15–16; for the audience response, see Baltes 1985, 330, and 1984, 207; and also Dillon 1987a, 333). Nonetheless, he was anything but a celebrity. Ammonius was not counted among those with the most prominent reputations, and P. had to be led to him by a friend (see Goulet-Cazé 1982, 235n.1). Of the many explanations that may be given for this, there are some that may not have been accorded sufficient attention: one of the few reliable pieces of information we have about his teaching is that “he revealed that the teachings of Plato and of Aristotle were in agreement on the most important and necessary doctrines” (test. 12 = Hier. *Prou. et Fat.* apud Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 214, 172a7–9. See also test. 15 = op. cit., cod. 251, 461a24–39). This indicates that Ammonius must have studied Aristotelian philosophy at least as much as Platonic. But we know that during the period of Caracalla’s brutalities in Alexandria, the “Aristotelian philosophers” were under severe persecution: see Dio Cass. 78.7.3. It was only many years later that Anatolius undertook to reestablish the “Aristotelian succession at Alexandria”: see Eus. *HE* VII 32.6. It is not inconceivable, then, that Ammonius was to be found on the fringes of Alexandrian philosophical life not on the grounds of his supposed Pythagorean mysticism (see Dörrie 1955a, 446–48 = 1976, 331–32), but because of his “heretical” Aristotelianism: see also my comments at 13.15–17.

3.15–17. *ὥς καὶ . . . κατορθουμένης*: *Ex Oriente lux!* The seductive attraction of the Orient was intense among the Greeks since the age of Pythagoras, Herodotus, Democritus, and Eudoxus, but also of Posidonius and Plutarch. Especially during the early Christian period, oriental mystery religions, as well as prophets or wisemen, such as Julian the Chaldaean and his son, Julian the Theurgist, Elchasai, Bardaisan, and many others contributed to the triumph of the idea of the East as the home and source of all wisdom. Then-current “histories of philosophy” had sometimes claimed that philosophy sprang from the barbarians: see, e.g., Diog. Laert. I 1–2; and Lucian *Fug.* 6–8. In this context, it is not peculiar if Plotinus showed an interest in becoming acquainted with the “philosophy” of the oriental peoples, perhaps in its more practical manifestations (that is to say, “barbarian customs”), as the phrase “[the philosophy] practiced (*epitēdeuomenēs*) by them” gives us to understand. Indeed, according to one version (Apul. *De Plat.* I 3, 186), even Plato himself had an adventure similar to his own. Numenius had already named the “peoples of renown” (*ta ethnē ta eudokimounta*) as well-springs of the doctrines of Pythagoras and Plato (fr. 1a = Eus. *PE* IX 7.1; on this see Waszink 1965, 45–48); cf. Paus. IV 32.4. Somewhat later, Porphyry would many times look back to the wisdom of the Indians (*De Styge* fr. 376F apud Stob. *Ecl.* I 3.96, 66.24–70.13; *Abst.* IV 17.1–18.3; *De reg. an.* fr. 302F = Aug. *De ciu. D.* X 32) and the Persians (*De antr. nymph.* 6, 8.13–23; *Abst.* IV 16) in order to rally support for his philosophical positions. Cf. Festugière 1944–54, 1:19–44; Andresen 1955, 258n.40; Dihle 1964, 60–69.

Whatever P.’s connection with the Orient may have been, these lines in the *VP* have sparked the imagination of scholars, with the result that a rather extensive bibliography exists on the possible influences, relations, and even simply parallels between Indian (primarily) and Persian philosophy and that of P. I supply here a few representative titles:

- Armstrong, A. Hilary. 1936. "Plotinus and India." *CQ* 30:22–28. Repr. in Armstrong 1979.
- Armstrong, A. Hilary, and Ravi Ravindra. 1977. "The Dimensions of the Self: Bhuddi in the Bhagavad-Gita and Psyche in Plotinus." *Religious Studies* 15:327–47.
- Bréhier, Émile. 1958. *The Philosophy of Plotinus*. Trans. Joseph Thomas. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 118–31.
- García Bazán, Francisco. 1982. *Neoplatonismo y Vedānta: La doctrina de la materia en Plotino y Shāṅkara*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Depalma.
- Harris, R. Baine, ed. 1982. *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought*. Norfolk, Va.: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies.
- Lacombe, Olivier. 1950–51. "Note sur Plotin et la pensée indienne." *AEHE* 5th section:1–20.
- Marrucchi, Piero. 1938. "Influssi indiani nella filosofia di Plotino?" In *Atti del XIX Congresso internazionale degli Orientalisti, Roma, 23–29 settembre 1935–XIII*, 390–94. Rome: Tipografia del Senato.
- Müller, Hermann Friedrich. 1914. "Orientalisches bei Plotinos?" *Hermes* 49:70–89.
- Philonenko, Marc. 1989. "La philosophie de Plotin et la Gnose mandéenne." *CRAI*: 18–27.
- Przyluski, Jean. 1933. "Mani et Plotin." *BAB* 19:322–26.
- . 1936. "Les trois hypostases dans l'Inde et à Alexandrie." In *Mélanges Franz Cumont*, 925–33. Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles.
- Schlette, Heinz Robert. 1962. "Indisches bei Plotin." In *Einsicht und Glaube: Gottlieb Söhngen zum 70. Geburtstag am 21. Mai 1962*, ed. Joseph Ratzinger and Heinrich Fries, 171–92. Freiburg: Herder.
- Staal, Frits. 1961. *Advaita and Neoplatonism*. Madras: University of Madras.
- Wendell, Th. 1940. "Plotinus, a Link between East and West." *Calcutta Review* 74:125–53.

With regard to all of this, three things should be underlined: (a) The motive that impelled P. to accompany Gordian's campaign has perhaps been embellished—the best way to become familiar with the wisdom of the Persians, etc., is clearly not by participating in a campaign against them. (b) Porphyry makes it clear that, in the end, P. did not manage to reach his destination. (c) Up until now, it has not been proven that there is some element in P.'s philosophy that cannot be explained as a development of views derived from earlier Greek philosophical tradition. See also Schwyzer 1951, 580.43–581.25.

3.17–19. Γορδιανού . . . συνεισφέρει: Gordian III was of aristocratic lineage, claiming descent from the Gracchi. His grandfather, Gordian I, after spending many years as pro-consul of Africa, had been promoted at the age of eighty to the position of Augustus by Egyptian landowners who were dissatisfied with the heavy taxation of Maximinus. The promotion was also safeguarded, with the help of the then young Valerian, by the support of the Roman Senate: see Zos. *Hist.* I 14.1. Gordian I, "beloved by the Africans as

no other proconsul ever had been before” (*amatus ab Afris ita ut nemo antea proconsulum*; SHA *Gord.* 5.5, trans. D. Magie), is said to have been a man of exceptional learning, who “passed his days with Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Vergil” (*cum Platone semper, cum Aristotele, cum Tullio, cum Vergilio ceterisque ueteribus agens*; op. cit. 7.1), and to whom Philostratus had dedicated his *Vitae Sophistarum*. Powers similar to those who elevated Gordian I also supported his grandson as Caesar and, a little later, as emperor, at the age of just thirteen.

In the spring of 242, Gordian III opened the double doors of the temple of Janus in Rome, thus proclaiming the beginning of a great campaign *contra Persas* (op. cit. 26.3). Only just before, he had taken care to secure the support of a preeminently Greek goddess, Athena Promachos—she who had aided the Athenians in repelling the same foes at Marathon about 730 years earlier—by organizing games in her honor. See Robert 1970, 11–17. At that time, the man who actually wielded power was Gordian’s father-in-law, Timesitheus, an *eques* who, according to the *Historia Augusta*, could pen his own correspondence in Greek (SHA *Gord.* 25.6). But after his death, his successor as *praefectus praetorio*, Philip the Arab, did not hesitate to kill the young emperor and assume the purple himself (March 244; related to this, see Lorient 1975, 757–77).

P. was apparently a witness to these events. He joined Gordian’s army (for the meaning of *stratopedon*, “expeditionary force,” here, see Igal 1982–98, 1:12n.19) at some rather early stage of the campaign, as is suggested by the phrases “was preparing to march against the Persians” and “joined in (*suneisēiei*)” (Igal’s view is in agreement with this: 1972a, 35–36). Clearly his presence there indicates that P. was well acquainted with members of the imperial entourage, a fact that probably placed him in an awkward position once the situation changed (see 3.22 and Harder 1960b, 280–82).

Certain seekers after significant historical coincidences have maintained that Mani, preacher of the most developed Gnostic system of the age, was in the rival camp, as a member of the Persian king Shapur’s entourage: see, e.g., Puech 1938, 20–21, but also Igal 1982–98, 1:13. However, the explicit reference by Alexander of Lycopolis, *C. Manich.* 2, 4.20 to the name Valerian ought to urge them to abandon this idea, as did later Puech himself, 1978, 61n.1.

3.19–21. ἔτος . . . συνεσχόλασε: The reckoning of P.’s age here appears to be the work of Porphyry. By contrast, the period of eleven years, as well as P.’s age when he turned to philosophy (3.6–7), were revealed, as far as the evidence shows, by the master himself. The calculation is correct ($27 + 11 = 38$) if P. went to Ammonius’ school in the second half of 231 and left it at the end of 242, or the beginning of 243. Cf. Igal 1972a, 39–41. Additionally, the presence of the word *gar*, which indicates the logical relationship between the information and the calculation, is justified only if, when P. left Alexandria, Ammonius was still living, or had just recently died.

3.21. περὶ τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν: The murder of Gordian seems to have taken place near the camp of Circesium in a region named Zaitha where, later, Ammianus Marcellinus (XXIII 5.7) saw his grave monument (cf. SHA *Gord.* 34.2; and Eutropius *Breuiarium* IX 2.3) a little way outside Dura (see the map in the introduction to this section). Lorient

1975, 772–73, makes a worthy attempt to support the view that the young emperor was killed in battle by the enemy, basing his argument on the version found in the trilingual victory inscription of the Persian king, known as the *Res Gestae Diui Saporis*. This text corresponds in places with the description of the incident recorded by Zonaras in his *Chronicon* (XII 17, 580.9–14). However, (a) the inscription, although it overflows with the barbaric boasting of Shapur, says only that “inside the boundaries of Assyria in Mesichise there was a great face-to-face battle and Gordian Caesar was killed” (see Ensslin 1949, 92 and 95–96), without specifying whether the final deed was done by a Persian hand; and (b) Zonaras’ account is obviously confused, because, apart from everything else, he associates the incident with the death of Gordian II, and not with that of Gordian III, about whom he relays, a bit further on, op. cit. XII 18, 582.6–13, the generally accepted version that pins the blame on a conspiracy. In addition, (c) the “propagandist” author of the panegyric *To the King* is hardly credible when he says about Philip that “nor at the beginning of his rule did he require any murder” ([Ael. Arist.] II 255.3), while his eagerness to support the notion that the gods “assigned to others deeds of madness and folly” (op. cit. 255.9–10) is somewhat suspect: for Gordian’s murderers to have required “madness” and “folly,” they need to have been other than his natural enemies, the Persians. It is, then, my opinion that even if some sort of battle did take place at Mšyk (Pirisabora), we do not possess enough evidence to abandon the view that the death of Philip’s predecessor was due to conspiracy on the part of his companions, as the *Sibylline Oracles* also “prophesy” (Anon. *Orac. Sibyll.* XIII 19–20, 204):

he will fall in the ranks, smitten by
gleaming iron because of jealousy and
moreover betrayed by a companion. (trans. D. Potter)

See also Pohlsander 1980, 464–65.

3.22. *μόλις φεύγων . . . διεσώθη*: Even if the emperor was indeed killed in a coup d’état, or, at least, as part of some conspiracy, still the risk P. ran and his flight to Antioch are explicable only if he had close ties to Gordian’s regime. See Oost 1958, 106–7.

3.23–24. *Φίλιππου . . . ἄνεισιν*: From the start, Philip took an interest in cultivating good relations with the senate and made haste to return (before 23 July 244) to Rome in order to stabilize his position (see Ensslin 1939, 88). Porphyry appears to mean that P. reached the city after Philip. Therefore, he must have arrived during the second half of 244, when—as his biographer records—he was still forty years old.

But why Rome? No important philosophical movement thrived in the imperial capital, in contrast with the situation at Alexandria and at Athens. To this query I can propose the following answers:

(a) Perhaps in Alexandria the shadow of Ammonius was too great for a young philosopher with his own independent thought and personal ambitions. Furthermore, all signs suggest that Ammonius had died in the meantime, and that the Platonist Origen had succeeded him in his school. That, at least, is the most likely conclusion to be derived from the fact that Longinus claims to have studied with Ammonius and Origen

(continued...)

Index of Passages Cited

With Their Abbreviations and Modern Editors

- Ach. = Achilles [Tatius]
Intr. Arat. = *Introductio in Aratum* (P. Maass) 5,
34.26–29: 266; 14, 41.13–22: 282
- Ach. Tat. = Achilles Tatius
Leuc. et Clit. = *Leucippe et Clitophon* I 4.4: 515; V
13.4: 547; 16.7: 550; VIII 5.7: 550
- Acta*: see Apocrypha
- Adrastus
apud Theon Sm. 128.5–129.9: 459; 148.13–22:
474; 149.10–150.18: 445
- Aelian = Claudius Aelianus
NA = *De natura animalium* I 28: 500
VH = *Varia historia* (M. Diltz) XII 15: 626
[Ael. Arist.] = pseudo-Aelius Aristides
Or. = *Orationes* (B. Keil) XXXV 8: 32; 14: 3n
- Aen. Gaz. = Aeneas Gazaetus
Theophr. = *Theophrastus* (M. Colonna) 51, 45.4–
9: 91
- Aesch. = Aeschylus
Ag. = *Agamemnon* 913: 419
Eum. = *Eumenides* 658–66: 326
Pers. = *Persae* 601: 482n
Supp. = *Supplices* 521: 517; 574–84: 578n
- ?Aesch. = Aeschylus?
PV = *Prometheus vincetus* 59: 527
- “Aëtius”
De placitis reliquiae (H. Diels in *Dox. Gr.*)
228.4–6: 217; 307.21–308.2: 255; 308.4–
9: 305n; 308a6: 237; 308.17–18: 303;
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- Agathon
fr. = *Fragmenta* (A. Nauck) 29: 515
- Albinus
Is. = *Isagoge* (C. F. Hermann) 5, 149.28–29: 41,
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- “Alcinous”
Didasc. = *Didascalicus* (J. Whittaker) 2: 191,
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- Emped. = Empedocles
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- Ennius
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- Ephr. Syr. = Ephraim Syrus
Ref. Bard. = *Prose Refutation of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan* (C. W. Mitchell, A. A. Bevan, and F. C. Burkitt) xv: 361; xix–xx: 354n, 360
- Epict. = Epictetus
Diss. = *Dissertationes ab Arriano Digestae* (H. Schenkl) I 4.18–21: 183; 6.1–22: 443n; 6.13–18: 179; 9.1–6: 20; 14.12–14: 484n, 485; 25.21: 208; 28.14: 176; 28.26: 176; 29.29: 243; II 1.1: 404; 1.15–19: 179, 467; 1.19–20: 178; 5.18.20: 468; 8.11–14: 484n; 11.13–18: 600; 17.7–13: 600; 18.22–28: 455; 26.3: 179; III 2.5: 179; 26.19: 159; 26.28: 455; IV 1.127: 459; 7.31: 177; 7.32: 179
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- Eucl. = Euclid
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- Eudemus
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- [Eudoc.] = pseudo-Eudocia
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- Eudorus
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- Eudoxus = Eudoxus of Cnidus
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- Eun. = Eunapius
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- Eur. = Euripides
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232; 563; 348; II 1; 432
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Phil. Hist. = *Historiae Philosophiae* (H. Diels in
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Gem. = Pompeius Geminus
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Greg. Nyss. = Gregory of Nyssa
In Cant. = *In Canticum Canticorum* (H. Langer-
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Greg. Thaum. = Gregorius Thaumaturgus of
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Helioid. = Heliodorus

Aeth. = *Aethiopica* I 2.9: 211; 18.4: 542; 26.4: 488; II 29.5: 241n; III 5.4–5: 199, 515; V 2.7: 488; VII 7.2: 208; IX 1.5: 241

Hephaest. = Hephaestion

Apot. = *Apotelesmatica* (D. Pingree) II 10.23–27: 38; 18.69–71: 429

Heraclid. Pont. = Heraclides Ponticus

fr. = *Fragmenta* (F. Wehrli) 6: 44; 87: 621n; 88: 621n

Heraclit. = Heraclitus of Ephesus

apud Arist., *Mete.* II 2, 354b33: 258
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Heraclit. = Heraclitus Homericus

All. = *Allegoriae = Quaestiones Homeraeae* (F. Buffière) 33.1: 130

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Hermod. = Hermodorus

fr. = *Fragmenta* (M. Isnardi Parente) 7: 224n, 320, 325, 557

Hermog. = Hermogenes

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Herod. = Herodotus

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Heron of Alexandria

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Hes. = Hesiod

Cat. = *Catalogus mulierum = Catalogue of Women* (R. Merkelbach—M. L. West) fr. 204.55–63: 478

Op. = *Opera et Dies = Works and Days* 109–26: 83, 301; 115: 84; 122–23: 50, 84, 483n; 255: 524

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fr. = *Fragmenta* (R. Merkelbach—M. L. West) 198.2: 84; 217.1: 80

Hier. = Hierocles of Alexandria

In CA = *In Carmen Aureum* (F. W. Koehler) 13.6: 121; 13.9–15: 215; 26.7: 82; 60.21–23: 111; 83.24–27: 215; 113.1: 82

Prou. et Fat. = *De prouidentia et fato* (apud Phot.

Bibl.) cod. 214, 172a4: 28; 172a5: 34; 172a7–9: 29; 173a34–38: 83; 173a39–40: 34; cod. 251, 461a24–39: 29; 461a28–30: 34; 461a36–38: 61; 466b7: 488

Hier. = Hierocles the Stoic

El. Eth. = *Elementa Ethica* (G. Bastianini—A. Long in *CPFI* I**) II 1–3: 128, 632; III 52–56: 128; IV 5–13: 541, 549; IV 6–8: 349; IV 10–22: 115, 182; IV 39–52: 106; IV 49–53: 120

[Hippoc.] = pseudo-Hippocrates

Genit. = *De genitura* II 3: 423

Nat. pueri = *De natura pueri* (É. Littré) VII 498: 261

Nutr. = *De nutrimento* 23: 293

Vict. = *De victus ratione* 35: 432

Hippol. = Hippolytus

C. haer. Noeti = *Contra haeresin Noeti* (R. Butterworth) 10.4.4, 11.1.3: 265

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- Od.* = *Odyssey* 1.33 ff.: 391; 1.155: 78; 2.230: 85;
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- [Hom.] = pseudo-Homer
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- Iambl. = Iamblichus
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- Iren. = Irenaeus
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- Isocr. = Isocrates
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- Jerome
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- Joannes Galenus
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- John
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- John of Antioch
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- Justin = Justin Martyr
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- [Justin] = pseudo-Justin Martyr
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- Lact. = Lactantius
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- Libanius
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- Luke
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- LXX = Old Testament, Septuagint version
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- [Lys.] = pseudo-Lysias
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- Macrobius = Macrobius
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fr. = *Fragments* (R. Heinze) 1: 90; 5: 416n; 15: 264, 482; 18: 482; 23: 522; 24, 57: 482; 60: 542; 67: 535; 81: 80, 484n
- Xenophanes
DK fr. B7: 127; B15, 17: 523; B25: 260; B26: 590
- Xenophon
Ap. = *Apologia Socratis* 12–13: 485n
Cyr. = *Cyropaedia* I 6.6: 460; V 1.16: 515
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Symp. = *Symposium* 8.9–10: 512
- Zon. = Zonaras
Chron. = *Chronicon* (M. Pinder) XII 17: 32; 18: 32; 21: 22; 25: 54
- Zoroaster
fr. = *Fragments* (Bidez and Cumont 1938) O12, O13: 65
- Zos. Alch. = Zosimus Alchemicus Panopolitanus
Lett. Omega = *Peri tou ô stoicheiou* = *On the Letter Omega* (M. Winand-Mertens) 8.75–79: 141; 10.98–103: 504n; 10.101: 66; 11.106–7: 208; 18.188: 327
Tel. apoch. = *Teleutaia apochē* (M. Berthelot—C.-É. Ruelle in *CAlchGr* 2) 8, 244.17–245.7: 53, 214–15
- Zos. Hist. = Zosimus Historicus
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