

What does Porphyry Mean by θεῶν πατήρ?

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INTRODUCTION: THE VIRTUES FROM PLATO TO PORPHYRY

Plato¹ was already building on a traditional doctrine when he set forth his doctrine of the four cardinal virtues,² wisdom (*sophia*) or prudence (*phronēsis*)³, courage (*andreia*), moderation/temperance (*sôphrosunê*), and justice (*diakaiosunê*). For Plato, the first three virtues correspond to the three parts of the soul: rational, choleric, and desiring respectively, which in turn are represented by the three social classes of the *Republic*: philosopher-kings, warriors/guardians, and artisans/workers. The fourth virtue, justice, encompasses the other three and represents that condition in which each accomplishes its proper function. It therefore corresponds to all three parts of the soul, and in the ideal state of the *Republic*, justice designates the condition in which all three classes work at fulfilling their own function, thereby ensuring the harmonious functioning of the entire *polis*.

The doctrine of the virtues went through a number of modifications in subsequent Greek philosophy, from Aristotle's complex amplification in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, through the Stoic adaptations that culminated in the thought of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, to Plotinus' systematizing discussion in *Ennead* I 2 (19). This article will concentrate on one aspect of the

1. Plato, *Republic* IV, 427eff; cf. *Protag.* 325a; 329c; *Rep.* 487a5; *Phaed.* 69b2; *Laws* I, 630–31; XII, 963.

2. See Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, trans. M. Chase (Cambridge, MA, 1998) 232ff.

3. Wisdom (*sophia*) is occasionally replaced by the Greek word *phronēsis*, traditionally translated as “prudence,” although its meaning in Plato is closer to “intelligence,” while in Aristotle its meaning becomes “practical intelligence.” In what follows I shall speak of “wisdom” or “prudence,” as though the two terms were interchangeable. Julia Annas (“Ancient Ethics and Modern Morality,” *Philosophical Perspectives*, vol. 6: *Ethics* [1992] 125 & n. 23) is, it seems to me, right to stress the importance of this traditional set of four virtues, but errs in translating *phronēsis* in Plato by “prudence.” This translation is the result of a Scholastic-inspired contamination of Platonic and Aristotelian ethics; see G.J. Dalcourt, “The Primary Cardinal Virtue: Wisdom or Prudence,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 63.3: 55–75.

form this doctrine assumed under Plotinus' student Porphyry,⁴ a form that was to be hugely influential on subsequent Neoplatonic ethical thought.⁵

In *Sentence 32*,⁶ the longest and most systematic of his 44 extant *Sentences*, Porphyry, following Plotinus, distinguishes the virtues of (1) the politician; (2) the person ascending towards contemplation, called the "theoretician"; (3) the perfect theoretician or "beholder"; and (4) the Intellect, purified from the soul.⁷ The political virtues consist in the moderation of the passions (*metriopatheia*), and concern the accomplishment of appropriate actions, as calculated by reason. Their goal is to enable the peaceful cohabitation of citizens within a community; in another formulation, Porphyry speaks of the goal of this stage as imposing a measure on the passions, with a view to activities in accordance with nature.⁸ At this initial stage, the four cardinal virtues play the roles assigned to them by Plato: *sophia* or wisdom is concerned with the rational faculty, courage (*andreia*) with the faculty of emotion or anger, temperance (*sôphrosunê*) with the obedient agreement of desire with reason, and justice (*diakaiosunê*) with the state where each of these faculties goes about its own business in law-like and obedient fashion.⁹ For Porphyry, therefore, at this initial stage, the most adequate ethical philosophy is Aristotelianism, or rather the development thereof in the Hellenistic Peripatos.¹⁰

At the second level, that of the person ascending or progressing towards contemplation, the virtues consist in abstaining from earthly things, and in interrupting the interaction of soul and body, with a view to enabling the intellect to begin its ascent towards the contemplation of what truly exists. These virtues are therefore called purifications (*katharseis*). Here,¹¹ wisdom consists

4. A French translation of and commentary on Porphyry's *Sentences* by L. Brisson *et al.* of the UPR 76 of the French CNRS is currently in press; it will also contain an English translation of the *Sentences* by J. Dillon. Although I participated in, contributed to, and learned much from this project, my views here do not necessarily correspond to those expressed in that publication.

5. On the posterity of this doctrine in Neoplatonism, see now the Introduction to *Marinus, Proclus ou Sur le bonheur*, texte établi, traduit et annoté par H.D. Saffrey et A.-Ph. Segonds, avec la collaboration de C. Luna (Paris, 2001) lxix–xcviii.

6. The following paragraphs owe a great deal to a paper by Luc Brisson: "The Doctrine of the Degrees of Virtues in the Neoplatonists: An Analysis of Porphyry's *Sentence 32*, its Antecedents and its Consequences," in D. Baltzly and H. Tarrant, eds., *Reading Plato in Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, in press).

7. Porphyry, *Sentence 32*, 22, 14–23, 3 Lamberz.

8. *Ibid.* 30, 6–8 Lamberz.

9. *Ibid.* 23, 4–12 Lamberz.

10. The appropriateness of Peripatetic doctrines for novice philosophers is a constant in Porphyry's thought; it explains why he established the *Categories*, with its emphasis on the reality and importance of the objects constituting the sensible world, as the starting-point of the beginner's philosophical curriculum.

11. Note that Porphyry changes the order of enumeration at this second stage: instead of the traditional-Platonic wisdom, courage, temperance, justice, here we have wisdom/prudence, temperance, courage, justice.

in ceasing to form opinions conjointly with the body, courage in the soul's lack of fear upon leaving the body;¹² temperance in no longer experiencing affects along with the body; and justice in the unopposed reign of reason and intellect.¹³ The Peripatetic goal of restraining the passions (*metriopatheia*) has now been superseded by the Stoic goal of their complete extirpation (*apatheia*).¹⁴ At this stage, which has as its prerequisite self-knowledge, or the awareness that one's fundamental identity is a noetic essence chained to an alien substance, the order of the day is detachment from the sensible, which seems to entail an absence of interest in social and political realities.

The third stage of virtues is characterized by the soul's functioning intellectually.¹⁵ Here, wisdom or prudence consists in the contemplation of the contents of the Intellect; courage in impassivity, since it assimilates itself to the objects of its contemplation, which are impassive; temperance in turning within, towards the Intellect; and justice in the fulfillment by each of its own function, governed by obedience to the Intellect and by activity directed towards the Intellect.¹⁶ At this level, now that the passions have been successfully extirpated, the soul gives itself over to pure contemplation of the noetic Forms; in this sense, we may say that Platonic philosophy emerges triumphant over both Aristotelianism and Stoicism, which precede it and pave its way.

The fourth kind of virtues is the paradigmatic.¹⁷ Here, wisdom is the fact that the Intellect knows; courage is identity and remaining independent through excess of power; temperance is [conversion or activity] towards [the Intellect],¹⁸ and justice the accomplishment by each of its proper task. With

12. On the fear, natural to every child, that the soul may simply blow away at death and cease to exist, see for instance Plato, *Phaedo* 77d.

13. Porphyry, *loc. cit.* 24, 1–25, 6 Lamberz.

14. The contrast between *metriopatheia* and *apatheia* is not, of course, original with Porphyry, but forms a part of Academic-Middle Platonic ethics since at least the time of Philo Judaeus; cf. *Legum allegoriarum* 3, 129; 132; 134. From Philo the idea passes into Christian thought in Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* II, 8, 39, 5; VI, 9, 74, 1–2; VI, 13, 105, 1) and Basil of Caesarea (*Enarratio in prophetam Isaiam* II, 86). See J. Dillon, "Metriopatheia and Apatheia: Some Reflections on a Controversy in Greek Ethics," in J. Anton and A. Preus, eds., *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2 (Albany, 1997) 508–17.

15. At this third stage, the order of enumeration is wisdom/prudence, justice, temperance, courage.

16. Porphyry, *loc. cit.* 27, 3–28, 5 Lamberz.

17. Here, Porphyry's enumeration, like his explanations of the individual virtues, seems to lose all traces of systematicity. The enumeration is preceded by definitions of intellect (*nous*), which is that in which the things that are like models (*paradeigmata*) are simultaneously situated, and knowledge or science (*epistēmē*), which is defined as intellection (*noēsi*). Finally, the usual virtues are listed in the order wisdom, temperance, justice, courage.

18. *To de pros auton hē sôphrosinē*, literally, "the towards-it is temperance." Either such extreme brachylogy is the sign of rapid composition and/or an unfinished state of composition, or else we must suppose a lacuna.

this level, which is lacking in his immediate source, Plotinus, Porphyry seems to go beyond even contemporary Platonism, in describing a set of virtues that no longer pertain to the soul, but to the intellect alone.

When he comes to recapitulate,¹⁹ Porphyry turns to terminological issues, indicating the epithets that may be applied to persons having reached each of the four stages. The person acting in accordance with the political virtues is called a sage (*spoudaios*); he who acts according to the purificatory virtues is either a demonic man or a good demon (*daimonios anthrōpos ē kai daimōn agathos*); the person acting according to the third type of virtues is a god (*theos*); finally, the person who acts in accordance with the paradigmatic virtues is the father of the gods (*theōn patēr*).

In this article, I'll concentrate on the interpretation of this last phrase. When the practitioner of the Neoplatonic virtues reaches the ultimate stage of the paradigmatic virtues, Porphyry tells us (p. 31, 8 Lamberz), he may rightly be called "Father of the gods" (θεῶν πατήρ). What can this strange assertion possibly mean?

SOME GRECO-ROMAN INTERPRETATIONS OF ZEUS

In Greek thought, at least since Homer, the father of the gods is, of course, Zeus.²⁰ But which Zeus? A scholiast on Aratus (*Scholia vetera in Aratum*, ed. J. Martin [Stuttgart: Teubner, 1974] Scholion 1, Vat. 191, line 69ff.) knows of people who interpret Zeus as the heavens (οὐρανός), the ether, or the air, in addition to the mythical Zeus (τὸν μυθικόν). These are Stoic views, as we learn from Philodemus' *De pietate*.²¹ Zeus could also be identified with the sun,²² whom the Emperor Julian (Πρὸς Ἡράκλειον § 22, 12) addresses as

19. Porphyry, *loc. cit.* 31, 4–8 Lamberz.

20. In the later systematization of Proclus (*In Crat.* CVII, 59, 6–7, Kronos is referred to as πατήρ πατέρων. He belongs to the class of intelligible gods (*In Crat.* CIX [59, 15]; CX [59, 28]). This implies that Kronos' son Zeus is assigned to the still lower level of the intellectual gods; so that Zeus is the expression of the demiurgic Intellect (*In Crat.* CXLV, 82, 28–29; *Theol. Plat.* V, 12–13; *In Tim.* I, 310, 3–319, 21). Cf. K. Verrycken, "La métaphysique d'Ammonius chez Zacharie de Mytilène," *Rev. Sc. Th.* 85 (2001): 245, citing R. Beutler, art. "Proklos," *RE* XXIII.1 (1957): col. 228–29.

21. Philodemus, *De pietate*, *PHerc.* 1428 IV 13–VII 12, quoted by Dirk Obbink, "Le livre I du *De natura deorum* de Cicéron et le *De pietate* de Philodème," in C. Auvray-Assayas and D. Delatte, eds., *Cicéron et Philodème*, *Études de Philosophie Ancienne* 12 (Paris, 2001) 210–11.

22. Karl Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie* (München, 1926) 353ff.; Willy Theiler (*Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* [Berlin, 1930] 79) thought Posidonius was the originator of this identification, but in fact it is attested already for Pherekydes in the sixth century BCE; cf. Test. 9, 46 D.-K. (= Johannes Lydus, *De mens* IV, 3). Cf. Achilles, *In Aratum* 37 Maaß; Julian, *Oratio* IV, 136; 136; 144; Macrobius, *Sat.* I, 23, 8. The conception becomes widespread in the religio-philosophical literature of Late Antiquity, for instance in the Orphic hymns, Greek Magical Papyri, and in post-Iamblican Neoplatonism; cf. Wolfgang Fauth, *Helios Magistos. Zur synkretistischen Theologie der Spätantike*, *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World*, vol. 125 (Leiden, 1995) xxxii, 2,

θεῶν πάτερ. Plato's depiction in the *Phaedrus* of Zeus as the "great leader in heaven ... driving a winged chariot"²³ at the head of a cortege of lesser gods²⁴ led some Platonic commentators to identify Zeus with the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*;²⁵ this was already the case for Xenocrates²⁶ in the generation following Plato. Finally, later Neoplatonism is familiar with a whole series or "order" of Zeuses. As I. Hadot has pointed out,²⁷ Proclus distinguishes a number of different Zeuses,²⁸ as does Hermias;²⁹ the doctrine thus goes back at least as far as Syrianus.³⁰

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANONYMUS STOBAEI

In an anonymous philosophical text preserved by Stobaeus and studied by John Dillon, we find a distinction between two Zeuses. One is explicitly the cosmic Zeus;³¹ it is this Zeus, according to the author, who is referred to at *Iliad* I, 423–25 as departing to feast with the Ethiopians, only to return to Olympus after twelve days. Yet there is another Zeus, this time alluded to by the Homeric verses *Il.* I, 498–99, where Thetis, when she arrives at Olympus,

p. 47, 155, 178. Porphyry appears to have systematized this identification in his lost work *On the sun*; see the reconstruction by Franz Altheim, *Aus Spätantike und Christentum* (Tübingen, 1951) 1–58.

23. Plato, *Phaedrus* 246e 4–5. The translation is that of J. Dillon, "An Unknown Platonist on God," in ΕΝΩΣΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΙΑ = *Unione e amicitia, Omaggio a Francesco Romano* (Catania, 2002) 239, whose interpretation I follow here.

24. Who in turn were identified with the "younger gods" of the *Timaeus*, as well as with the cosmic or planetary gods; cf. J. Dillon, *loc. cit.*

25. The emperor Julian (*Hymn to King Helios*, 144A) speaks of Zeus' δημιουργική δύναμις; yet for him Zeus, as one among many δημιουργικοί θεοί, is a mere aspect of the real demiurge, Helios. Cf. F. Altheim, *op. cit.* 19. More precisely, whereas in the *Hymn to King Helios*, Helios the Demiurge reigns over the noetic or intermediate world and is thus subject to Aion or the One, who reigns as the intelligible sun over the noetic world, Julian elsewhere (for instance in *Against the Galileans*) uses a simplified two-level scheme, where the Demiurge is a powerful noetic being; cf. J.F. Finamore, "ΘΕΟΙ ΘΕΩΝ. An Iamblichian Doctrine in Julian's *Against the Galileans*," *TAPhA* 118 (1988): 399.

26. Xenocrates, fr. 68 Heinze = fr. 188 Isnardi Parente, quoted by J. Dillon, *op. cit.* 240.

27. Ilsetraut Hadot, *Studies on the Neoplatonist Hierocles*, trans. M. Chase (Philadelphia, 2004) 59 & nn. 212–13: "For Syrianus and Proclus, the demiurge of the *Timaeus* is the fifth in the series of kings, and the third of the fathers ..."; cf. *In Tim.* vol. I, 311, 25ff.; vol. III, 208, 5ff. Diehl.

28. Proclus, *In Tim.* III, 190, 19ff. Diehl, distinguishes between ὁ δημιουργός Ζεὺς, ὁ πρῶτος τῆς Κρονίας τριάδος, ὁ ἀπόλυτος, and ὁ οὐράνιος, who in turn is divided into ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀπλανοῦς and ὁ ἐν τῇ θατέρου περιόδῳ. Elsewhere (*In Tim.* III, 230, 23–25), Proclus can speak of the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* as intermediate between the noetic god and the "many demiurges"; cf. J. Finamore, *op. cit.* 399 & n. 22.

29. Hermias, *In Phaedrum* 136, 17; 142, 10 Couvreur.

30. According to Proclus, Syrianus ascribed to Zeus the demiurge the status of "fifth king" in his *Orphic Lessons*; cf. *In Tim.* I, 314, 28–I, 315, 2, cited by I. Hadot, *op. cit.* 59 n. 212.

31. Johannes Stobaeus, *Eclogae* I, 1, §28, 36: Περὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὸν κόσμον Διὸς ταυτὶ λέλεχται·

comes upon “the far-sounding son of Kronos seated apart / from the others.” As Dillon points out, our text gives us no indication as to the identity of this other Zeus, except to point out that he is separate from the other gods.³² Pointing to parallels in Plotinus,³³ Dillon affirms that “... in Platonist terms, he [i.e., the second Zeus] can only be the World Soul.”

This identification is, of course, quite possible. Yet one is left to wonder whether the equation Zeus = the World Soul is really the only interpretative possibility. After all, as Dillon points out, in at least two other philosophical interpretations of the Homeric verses cited by Stobaeus’ anonymous author, Zeus is identified not with the World Soul, but with the Demiurgic Intellect. Proclus, commenting on *Iliad* I, 423ff. in his *Commentary on the Republic*³⁴ writes as follows:

For it is obvious to everyone who has delved even moderately into such a theory that the greatest of the gods must be said to be nourished from above, from the intelligibles, he who is going to a feast and a banquet, and to convert towards his own principles, and to be filled by those transcendent and uniform goods. For it is there that the Ethiopians reside, illuminated by divine light, and the primary Ocean, flowing from the noetic Source, and fulfillment is thence, both for the Demiurgic Intellect and for all the gods who depend on it.

If this Zeus can be called “transcendent,”³⁵ it is only in relation to the other gods, for he is clearly situated below the intelligibles, by which he is nourished from above. For Proclus, who claims to be interpreting the *Chaldaean Oracles*, the Zeus who is equivalent to the Demiurgic Intellect is one of the three Sources (πηγαί), together with Kronos and Rhea-Hecate.³⁶ Kronos, who is the transcendent First Intellect or “Once-Beyond” (ἄπαξ ἐπέκεινα), charges his son Zeus—the secondary Intellect or “Twice-Beyond” (δὶς ἐπέκεινα) with the creation of the sensible world.³⁷ As he contemplates

32. ἐτέρου λεγομένου Διὸς τοῦ κεχωρισμένου τῶν θεῶν.

33. V 1, 7, 34ff.; V 5, 3, 21ff. Yet Dillon himself remarks (*loc. cit.* 243 n. 14) that Plotinus also sometimes (III 5, 8, 4ff.; IV 4, 10, 1ff.) denies this identification.

34. I, 167, 1ff. Kroll: παντὶ γούν τοῦτο καταφανές τῷ καὶ μετρίως τῆς τοιαύτης θεωρίας ἐπισθημένῳ, ὅτι τὸν μέγιστον τῶν θεῶν ἀνωθεν ἐκ τῶν νοητῶν τρέφεσθαι ῥητέον ἐπὶ δαίτα καὶ θοῖνην ἴοντα καὶ πρὸς τὰς οἰκείας ἀρχάς ἐπιστρέφειν καὶ ἅπ’ ἐκείνων πληρούσθαι τῶν ἐξηρημένων καὶ ἐνοσιδῶν ἀγαθῶν. ἐκεῖ τοίνυν καὶ οἱ Αἰθιοπες οἱ τῷ θεῷ φωτὶ καταλαμπόμενοι καὶ ὁ πρῶτιστος Ὀκεανὸς ὁ τῆς νοητῆς πηγῆς ἀπορρέων, καὶ ἡ πλήρωσις ἐκείθεν τῷ τε δημιουργικῷ νῶ καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐξηρητημένοις αὐτοῦ θεοῖς.

35. J. Dillon, *op. cit.* 243.

36. See above, n. 20.

37. *Hapax* and *dis epekeina* are, of course, expressions deriving from the *Chaldaean Oracles*; see below, and Luc Brisson (“Kronos, Summit of the Intellective Hebdomad in Proclus’ Interpretation of the *Chaldaean Oracles*,” *Mélanges C. Steel*, G. Van Riel and C. Macé, eds., *Platonic Ideas and Concept Formation in Ancient and Medieval Thought* [Leuven, 2004] 191–210),

the intelligible, Zeus fashions the sensible universe; and this is why he is called “father of gods and men.”³⁸

An earlier text, *On the life and poetry of Homer*, interprets the second of our two Homeric passages in a similar way.³⁹ If Thetis finds Zeus sitting alone and apart from the other gods, it is because

This isolation and this failure to mingle with the other gods, but to rejoice in frequenting and relating to himself, remaining still and constantly setting the All in order, presents the nature of the intelligible god; for he [sc. Homer] knows that the god *who oversees and manages the All, is Intellect* [my emphasis].

It thus seems that the interpretation of the “Other” Zeus in our anonymous text as the World Soul is perhaps not quite as necessary as J. Dillon claims. The evidence we have already seen, and that which I will adduce in what follows shows, I believe, that it is equally and perhaps more likely that he is to be identified with the Demiurgic Intellect, as he was in the *Chaldaean Oracles*.⁴⁰ Dillon attributes the anonymous text preserved by Stobaeus to a second-century Middle Platonist; but if we bear in mind that Heeren already attributed this text to Porphyry, we may be led to wonder whether this is not, after all, the most plausible possibility.

It is not the primary purpose of this paper to argue that Porphyry is indeed the author of the anonymous text preserved by Stobaeus. Yet the characteristics Dillon points out in the *Anonymous*—a theology comprising a primary god who is also a demiurge; a set of encosmic gods who serve the Demiurge; citation of a Neopythagorean author, use of Homer to buttress Plato—seem not at all incompatible with the Tyrian’s thought. Dillon cites two grounds for eliminating Porphyry as a possible author. First, the style of the anonymous is “much more simple [sc. than that of Porphyry],” and “there is no suggestion of Neoplatonic metaphysical elaboration about this piece” (*loc. cit.* 238). Yet is there really such a thing as a single, uniform Porphyrian style, identical throughout, say, his *Homeric Questions, Sentences, Isagoge, and the* (Neopythagoreanizing) *On abstinence and Life of Pythagoras*? Similarly, the lack of metaphysical elaboration can be paralleled from a number of authentic Porphyrian works; suffice it to mention the minor *Commentary on the Categories*, the *On statues*, the *Letter to Anebo*, and above all the fragmentary *On the Styx*,

citing Proclus, *In Crat.* 57, 4–19, with *Chaldaean Oracles* fr. 5 des Places.

38. L. Brisson, *loc. cit.* citing Proclus, *In Tim.* I 318.17–18 with *Chaldaean Oracles* fr. 94 des Places.

39. Pseudo-Plutarch, *De vita et poeseos Homeri* 1243–1247: ἡ γὰρ μόνωσις αὐτῆ καὶ τὸ μὴ καταμιγνύειν τοῖς ἄλλοις θεοῖς ἑαυτὸν ἀλλὰ χαίρειν ἑαυτῷ συνόντα καὶ χρώμενον, ἠουχίαν ἄγοντι καὶ αἰεὶ διακοσμοῦντι τὰ πάντα, τὴν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεοῦ φύσιν παρίστησιν. οἶδε δὲ ὅτι νοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς ὁ πάντα ἐπιστάμενος καὶ διέπων τὸ πᾶν.

40. See Brisson, *op. cit.* § 1.2, “Zeus, the demiurgic Intellect.”

where Porphyry, like Stobaeus' anonymous author, reconciles allegorical Homeric and Platonic exegesis. In Neoplatonism, style is dictated by context; that is, primarily by the work's literary genre and the audience and/or group of students to whom it is directed. Where, as in the present case, we know nothing whatsoever about the context of a work, mere stylistic criteria may be misleading when we attempt to establish authorship.

Finally, there is an additional series of philosophical interpretations of *Iliad* I, 423 which has been overlooked by Dillon. In the theological excursus of Macrobius' *Saturnalia* (I, 17–23), where Vettius Praetextatus attempts to prove that all the gods of Greek, Roman and Egyptian antiquity are identical with the Sun, the Homeric verses *Iliad* I, 423–25 are quoted (in Greek!) to prove that Zeus is the same as the Sun.⁴¹ But a number of scholars have argued convincingly that Macrobius' main source for his theological exposition is none other than Porphyry.⁴²

PORPHYRY ON ZEUS

Let us now consider Porphyry's views on the identity of Zeus. In the preserved fragments of the *Περὶ Στυγός* (fr. 377, 454, 84–89 Smith), Porphyry speaks of the “cosmic gods ... whom he [sc. Homer] called ‘gods’ according to ancient custom, according to him there is a great *daimôn*, whom he calls “Zeus,” and he reigns, as it were, over those who arrive as far as the heavens ...” Thus, probably following the Phaedrus passage mentioned above, Porphyry knows of a Zeus who is in fact not a god but a *daimôn*, and who appears to be situated at the borderline between the sensible and intelligible worlds, reigning over sensible realities. Might this demonic Zeus have something to do with Porphyry's *patêr theôn*?

In his Commentary on the *Timaeus*, Porphyry explained the difference between *πατήρ* and *ποιητής* as follows: the Father is he who generates the All from himself, whereas the Creator takes over matter from elsewhere.⁴³

41. Macrobius, *Sat.* I, 23. Cf. *idem*, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* II, 10sq.

42. Suggested by Joséphe Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre, le philosophe néo-platonicien, avec les fragments des traités PERI AGALMATWN et DE REGRESSU ANIMAE* (Gand, 1913), this hypothesis was defended in detail by F. Altheim, *op cit.*, who argued that Macrobius' source was Porphyry's lost work *On the Sun*, and by Pierre Courcelle, *Les Lettres grecques en Occident, de Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris, 1948²). More recently, the thesis of Porphyry as Macrobius' source has been accepted by P. Mastandrea, *Un Neoplatonico Latino, Cornelio Labeone; testimonianza e frammenti*, *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain*, 77 (Leiden, 1979), and J. Flamant, *Macrobe et le néoplatonisme latin à la fin du IV^e siècle*, *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain*, 78 (Leiden, 1979). Flamant argues that Macrobius used three separate treatises by Porphyry: *On images*, *On divine names*, and *On the Sun*.

43. Porphyry, *In Tim.* apud Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 300, 1–2. Proclus himself distinguished between the “Father,” who reigns over noetic, noeric, hypercosmic, and encosmic beings; the “Father and Creator,” who reigns over noeric, hypercosmic and encosmic beings; the “Creator and Father,” responsible for hypercosmic and encosmic beings; and finally the “Creator,” who

In the *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*, Porphyry endorses the Orphic view of the nature of Zeus, according to whom “*Zeus is the world Intellect*, who created all that the world has within it.”⁴⁴ After quoting the well-known Orphic description of Zeus,⁴⁵ Porphyry remarks that “*Zeus, then, is the entire world, a living being of living beings and a god of gods. He is Zeus in so far as he is Intellect*, from which he brings forth all things, and he creates by means of his thoughts” (my emphasis).⁴⁶ As he moves on to discuss the iconography of depictions of Zeus, Porphyry repeatedly emphasizes that Zeus is the demiurgic Intellect.⁴⁷ The Tyrian expresses the same view in his Homeric exegesis: when explaining the name of Ganymedes, he writes that “*Ganymedes serves Zeus alone, for Zeus is the first Intellect*” (my emphasis).⁴⁸ The identification of Zeus with νοῦς, which Greek tradition first attributed to Anaxagoras,⁴⁹ was, as we have seen, to be taken up by the later Neoplatonists, such as Proclus.⁵⁰

THE TESTIMONY OF DAMASCIUS

An additional interpretative possibility is offered by a text from Damascius’ *De principiis*. At 241, 5ff. Ruelle, Damascius speaks of a σειρά of divinities,⁵¹ all of whom are named Zeus. According to late Neoplatonic theology, the universal Zeus produces both (a) a series of divinities named Zeus,⁵² each

reigns only over encosmic beings. The Demiurge of Plato’s *Timaeus* corresponds to the third of these rulers, the “*Creator and Father*.” Cf. J.F. Finamore, *op. cit.* 394 n. 3; I. Hadot, *op. cit.* 59 n. 213, citing Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 311, 25ff.; III, 208, 5ff. Diehl.

44. τὸν γὰρ Δία τὸν νοῦν τοῦ κόσμου ὑπολαμβάνοντες, ὅς τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδημιούργησεν ἔχων τὸν κόσμον, fr. 354, p. 411, 5–7 Smith = Eusebius, *PE* 3, 9, 1.

45. Fr. 168 Kern.

46. *Ibid.* p. 413, 42–44 Smith: Ζεὺς οὖν ὁ πᾶς κόσμος, ζῶων ἐκ ζῶων καὶ θεὸς ἐκ θεῶν· Ζεὺς δὲ καθὼς νοῦς, ἀφ’ οὗ προφέρει πάντα καὶ δημιουργεῖ τοῖς νοήμασιν.

47. *Ibid.* 49–50: ... τοῦ τὸ δείκλον πεποιήκασιν, ὅτι νοῦς ἦν καθ’ ὃν ἐδημιούργει καὶ λόγοις σπερματικοῖς ἀπετέλει τὰ πάντα; *ibid.* p. 414, 58: βασιλεὺς γὰρ τοῦ κόσμου ὁ δημιουργικὸς νοῦς·

48. Γανυμήδης δὲ ὑπηρετεῖ μόνῳ τῷ Δίῳ, ὅτι ὁ μὲν Ζεὺς ὁ πρῶτός ἐστι νοῦς, Porphyry, *Quaestionum Homericarum ad Iliadem pertinentium reliquiae* Book 4, section 2, 25–26 ed. Schrader (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880).

49. Cf. fr. 20c Diels/Kranz.

50. νοῦς δὲ καὶ ὁ μέγιστος Ζεὺς, βασιλικὴν μὲν ἔχων ψυχὴν, βασιλικὸν δὲ νοῦν, ὡς ὁ ἐν τῷ Φιλήβῳ Σωκράτης. Proclus, *Platonic Theology* V, 15, 18–20 Saffrey/Westerink.

51. On the doctrine of the σειρά, as developed by Iamblichus and Proclus, see the following note.

52. Damascius speaks of this series as “the entire chorus of Zeusian gods” (τὸν ἅπαντα χορὸν τῶν διῶν θεῶν, 236, 17–18 R). Cf. *ibid.* 236, 26: “In accordance with his own particular characteristic, Zeus produces a synonymous series ...” (ὁ Ζεὺς κατὰ μὲν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ιδιότητα παράγει συνώνυμὸν τινα σειράν). This doctrine of the σειρά, already sketched in Iamblichus (cf. B. Nasemann, *Theurgie u. Philosophie in Iamblichs De Mysteriis*, Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Bd.11 [Stuttgart, 1991] 135ff.), is fully developed in Proclus, for whom, in the

of whom reigns over a different “horizontal” level of reality; this is procession or emanation “in depth” (κατὰ βάθος, Damascius, *loc. cit.* 237, 18) or “according to existence” (κατὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν, Damascius, *loc. cit.* 239, 6); and (b) all the other gods, in a kind of “vertical” process of emanation. Slightly earlier on (237, 11–13), speaking of emanation that takes place by means of the totality of the producer, Damascius had given the example of “the universal demiurge, who, among the Chaldaeans, proceeds sevenfold,”⁵³ for each of them is sung of as being “dyadically beyond” (ὡς ὁ ἐπταχῆ προΐων ὅλος δημιουργὸς παρὰ τοῖς Χαλδαίοις, δις γὰρ ἕκαστος ἐπέκεινα ἀνυμνεῖται). This must mean that in each of the seven Chaldaean worlds—the *empurion*, three ethereal worlds, the sphere of the fixed stars, the sphere of the planets, and the sublunar world—there is a demiurge who can be called both Zeus and δις ἐπέκεινα.

ZEUS IN CHALDAEAN THOUGHT

In Chaldaean thought, we thus find the identification Zeus—demiurge—δις ἐπέκεινα. A bit farther on in the *De principiis*, Damascius confirms that for the theurges—that is to say, the Chaldaeans—the seven demiurges characterized as δις ἐπέκεινα are all synonymous with the universal Zeus.⁵⁴ Damascius

words of L. Fladerer (*Johannes Philoponos De opificio mundi. Spätantikes Sprachdenken und christliche Exegese*, Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Bd.135 [Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1999] 116 n. 170): “Der Name Apollon bezeichnet den Gott Apollon als Führer der σειρά, kann aber auch für einen untergeordneten Dämon dieser Reihe stehen.”

53. For M.-C. Galpérine, *Damascius, Des premiers principes, apories et résolutions*, Introd., notes et trad. du grec par M.-C. Galpérine (Paris, 1987) 517 & n. 52, the procession in question is that of the Intellective Hebdomad, which consists of Kronos, Rhea, Zeus as the demiurgic Intellect, then the three Chaldaean divinities called “the Implacable Ones,” and a seventh divinity called “he-who-has-girded-himself-a-belt.” Yet this interpretation cannot be right. Clearly, if the universal demiurge proceeds or emanates seven times, and if each of these seven manifestations is celebrated as the Chaldaean δις ἐπέκεινα, then each of these seven manifestations must be both a demiurge and a δις ἐπέκεινα. We thus have to do, not with the emanation or production by Zeus of the seven Intellective gods, but with the production by the demiurgic Zeus of seven other demiurgic Zeuses, each of whom reigns over a separate level of reality or “world.” According to Psellus (ἔκθεσις κεφαλαιώδης καὶ σύντομος τῶν παρὰ Χαλδαίους δογμάτων, in *Opuscula psychologica, theologica, daemonologica* (= *Michaelis Pselli Philosophica minora* vol. II, Leipzig: Teubner, 1989, 146, 9ff. O’Meara), the Chaldaeans hold that there are seven of these: the *empurion*, followed by three ethereal worlds, then three material worlds: that of the fixed stars, the last of which is the sublunar world, called *chthonian*.

54. οἱ καὶ προέρχονται παντελεῖς, καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ συνωνυμοῦντες, ὡς οἱ <ζ> δις ἐπέκεινα δημιουργοὶ παρὰ τοῖς θεουργοῖς. M.-Cl. Galpérine construes the text as meaning that the seven Zeus / δις ἐπέκεινα / δημιουργοί; are synonymous with the universal Intellect, *op. cit.* 522. The Greek text could conceivably bear this interpretation, but it seems more likely that that to which the seven demiurgic Zeus δις ἐπέκεινα are synonymous is the universal Intellect. Combès-Westerink (vol. III, 36) translate “eux qui précèdent ... en étant ... synonymes avec le tout [du producteur]”; this is equivalent to my interpretation, since the producer in this case is the universal Zeus.

goes on to add that “each Zeus is the father of all the gods,... for the dyadically beyond is everywhere entire.”⁵⁵ In other words, each of the seven Chaldaean *Zeus-demiurgoi* can legitimately be called not only “the dyadically transcendent,” but also “Father of the gods” (θεῶν πατήρ).

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHANNES LYDUS

For the Chaldaeans, the mythico-religious figure known as the δῖς ἐπέκεινα was equivalent to the demiurgic Second Intellect, a conception also found in the Pythagoreanizing Middle Platonist Numenius.⁵⁶ Porphyry was generally known to sympathize with the views both of the *Chaldaean Oracles* and of Numenius, but on this particular point we have additional evidence concerning Porphyry’s views on the identity of the Chaldaean δῖς ἐπέκεινα. In Book IV of his *De mensibus*, Johannes Lydus writes as follows:

Porphyry, however, in his *Commentary on the Oracles*, considers that the “Dyadically transcendent”—that is, the demiurge of all things—is the one honored by the Jews; he whom the Chaldaeans theologize as coming second after the “Once transcendent,” that is, the Good.⁵⁷

Porphyry, then, clearly held, at least at one stage of his philosophical career, that the Chaldaean δῖς ἐπέκεινα, who could be identified with Zeus, was the demiurge or creator of the (sensible) world.

55. πᾶς γὰρ Ζεὺς πάντων θεῶν πατήρ ... ὁ μὲν γὰρ δῖς ἐπέκεινα πανταχοῦ ὅλος. Here, I think, the translation of M.-C. Galpérine is to be preferred: “Tout Zeus est le père de tous les dieux ... car le au-delà sous un mode dyadique est tout entier partout,” which seems clearly preferable to that of Westerink/Combès: “c’est tout entier que Zeus est le père de tous les dieux ... en effet, le ‘Deux fois au-delà’ est tout entier en tous.”

56. Cf. H. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy. Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*, Publications de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, Recherches d’Archéologie, de Philologie et d’Histoire 13 [Cairo, 1956]; nouvelle édition par Michel Tardieu (Paris, 1978) 318ff., with notes.

57. Johannes Lydus, *De mensibus* IV, 110, 18–25 Wünsch = Porphyry, fr. 365, p. 437–38 Smith: ὁ μὲντοι Πορφύριος ἐν τῷ ὑπομνήματι τῶν λογίων τὸν δῖς ἐπέκεινα τουτέστι τὸν τῶν ὄλων δημιουργὸν τὸν παρὰ Ἰουδαίων τιμώμενον εἶναι ἀξιῶ, ὃν ὁ Χαλδαίος δευτερον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπαξ ἐπέκεινα, τουτέστι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, θεολογεῖ.

THE DEMIURGE IN PORPHYRY: SOUL OR INTELLECT?

In a densely argued paper, Werner Deuse has argued that in Porphyry's philosophy, the demiurge or world-creative principle is consistently not the World Soul, but the $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, or intellect.⁵⁸ Among a wealth of other evidence, he cites a fragment from Book IV of Porphyry's *Philosophical History*, preserved by Cyril of Jerusalem:

The highest god, he says, is the Good, and after him comes the second god, the demiurge⁵⁹

... the intellect ...whom they call the second god, and immediate demiurge of the world⁶⁰

THE TESTIMONY OF SYNESIUS

Most scholars agree that Synesius, the fourth-century bishop of Ptolemais, reflects Porphyrian philosophy in his *De insomniis*. In this first chapter of this work, Synesius discusses his interpretation of Zeus, and since this passage has been mistranslated and therefore misunderstood in some recent scholarship, it seems worthwhile to reproduce the Greek text here, together with my translation.

58. Werner Deuse, "Der Demiurg bei Porphyrios und Jamblich," in C. Zintzen, ed., *Die Philosophie des Neuplatonismus*, Wege der Forschung 436 (Darmstadt, 1977). Deuse shows convincingly that the handful of testimonies in Proclus, according to which Porphyry held the Soul to be the demiurge, are retro-projections on the part of Proclus. For Plotinus, by contrast, although the $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ is called "demiurge" (*Enn.* III 9, 1; V 1, 8; V 9, 3), the task of creating the universe is entrusted to the World Soul (IV 3, 10; V 9, 3).

59. Porphyry, *Hist. phil.* fr. 16: εἶναι δὲ τὸν μὲν ἀνωτάτω θεὸν τὰγαθόν, μετ' αὐτὸν δὲ καὶ δεύτερον τὸν δημιουργόν

60. $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$... ὃν δὲ καὶ δεύτερον ὀνομάζουσι θεὸν καὶ προσεχὴ τοῦ κόσμου δημιουργόν.

	Synesius, <i>De insomniis</i> I, 131C–D, 145 Terzaghi = Migne PG 1284
<p>εἰ δέ τις ὑφ' ἑτέρων ἐπῶν ἀναπίθεται τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τοῦ Διὸς χειρῶν ἰσχὺν εἶναι λογιζέσθαι, ὅτι, φησί,</p> <p>... βίη δ' ὄγε φέρτερος ἦεν,</p> <p>οὗτος φορτικῶς ὠμίλησε τῇ ποιήσει, καὶ ἀνήκοός ἐστι τῆς κατ' αὐτὴν φιλοσοφίας, τοὺς θεοὺς οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ νοῦς λεγούσης. ταύτη τοι προσπερονᾷ πάνιν τῷ κατ' ἀλκὴν περιείναι, τὸ καὶ γενεῇ πρότερος, τὸν Δία νοῦν λέγων ἀρχεγονώτερον· νοῦ δὲ ἰσχὺς τί ἂν ἄλλο ἢ φρόνησις εἴη...</p> <p>καὶ ὅστις οὖν θεὸς ὧν ἄρχειν ἀξιούται θεῶν, νοῦς ὧν, σοφίας περιουσίᾳ κρατεῖ, ὥστε καὶ τὸ βίη δ' ὄγε φέρτερος εἰς ταυτὸ ἡμῖν τῷ πλείονα οἶδεν ἀνακάμπει καὶ περιίσταται. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ σοφὸς οἰκέιος θεῶ, ὅτι πειράται σύνεγγυς εἶναι τῇ γνώσει, καὶ πραγματεύεται περὶ νόησιν, ἣ τὸ θεῖον οὐσίωται.</p>	<p>If, however, one is persuaded by other verses to consider that the hegemony of Zeus is one of brute strength, because, as [Homer] says</p> <p>... but he indeed was the strongest⁶¹</p> <p>then his contact with poetry has been that of a Philistine, and he is deaf to its philosophy, <i>which declares that the gods are nothing other than intellect</i>. Again, to the fact that [Zeus] is superior in might he connects the fact that he is also first in birth, declaring that <i>Zeus is the originary Intellect</i>.⁶² And what else could strength of intellect⁶³ be than intelligence? Indeed, whichever god is considered to rule over other gods, since he is intellect,⁶⁴ reigns by excess of wisdom, so that [Homer's phrase] “but he indeed was the strongest” amounts to saying and winds up as “he knows more things.” This is why the sage is proper to god, because he tries to be near to him in knowledge, and he concerns himself with intellection, in which divinity has its essence.</p>

61. Homer, *Odyssey* 18, 234.

62. J. Bregman, *Synesius of Cyrene, Philosopher-bishop*, Transform. of the class. heritage 2 [Berkeley, 1982] 146) translates “meaning that Zeus has greater primacy with respect to Nous,” thus apparently construing νοῦν as an accusative of respect. This is clearly wrong. Antonio Garzya (*Opere di Sinesio di Cirene: Epistole, Operette, Inni*, a cura di A.G., Coll. Classici greci, Autori della tarda antichità [Torino, 1989] 557) construes the phrase correctly: “che Zeus è la mente primigenia”; as does Davide Susanetti (*Sinesio di Cirene: I sogni, introd., trad. e commento di D.S.*, Studi e commenti, 10 [Bari, 1992] 47): “che Zeus è intelletto di più antica nascita,” and already Augustine Fitzgerald (*The Essays and Hymns of Synesius of Cyrene, including the Address to the Emperor Arcadius and the Political Speeches*, trans. with Introduction and Notes by A.F., 2 vols [Oxford/London, 1930] II, 327): “... Zeus is an elder-born intelligence.”

63. Bregman, *op. cit.*: “And what else is strength of *mind*, but wisdom?”

64. Bregman, *op. cit.*: “since he is a *noetic being*.” Again, Fitzgerald, Garzya, and Susanetti have understood correctly, by translating respectively: “in that he is mind”; “poiché è mente”; and “dal momento che è intelletto.”

Thus, when correctly understood,⁶⁵ this passage from Synesius states what we have already seen in Porphyry repeatedly: Zeus is the $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, or Intellect.

THE TESTIMONY OF AUGUSTINE

An additional piece of evidence may be adduced, although its interpretation is delicate. In his *De civitate dei*, Augustine cites a passage from Porphyry's *De regressu animae*, in which the Tyrian philosopher reported that an Oracle maintained that "The principles can purify."⁶⁶ Augustine then attempts to figure out what Porphyry might mean by these "principles."

Yet we know what principles he, as a Platonist, is talking about. He means God the Father and God the Son, whom he calls in Greek "paternal intellect" or "paternal Mind"; of the Holy Spirit, however, he either says nothing or at least nothing openly, although who else he might be saying is between the other two, I cannot understand.

Clearly, Augustine had before him a Porphyrian text, probably in Latin translation, which gave the following series of principles:

Porphyry	Augustine's interpretation
pater?	Deus Pater
medium	?
paternus intellectus/paterna mens	Deus Filius

Whether Augustine's mystification regarding Porphyry's second, intermediary principle is genuine or not, modern scholarship has tended to agree that the principle in question is Hecate, in her role as Chaldaean equivalent of the vivifying World Soul. This would allow us to restore Porphyry's original triad of principles as Father, Hecate, paternal intellect, or in Greek: Πατήρ, Ἑκάτη, πατρικός νοῦς.

THE TESTIMONY OF PSELLUS

In his writings on Chaldaean theology and philosophy, Michael Psellus,⁶⁷ probably following Proclus, frequently mentions the Chaldaean series

65. Bregman's treatment of the same Greek term $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ is indicative of his confusion: he simply transliterates the Greek term twice as "Nous," and on two other occasions he translates the same Greek term $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ by two different English terms: "mind" and "noetic being." In fact, all four occurrences of the same Greek term denote the same English equivalent "intellect."

66. *Denique eodem oraculo expressum principia posse purgare*, Augustine, *cin. dei* X, 23, 484, 11–12 Hoffmann (CSEL vol. 40 [Prague/Leipzig/Vienna, 1899]) = Porphyry, *De regressu*, fr. 284, 320–21 Smith.

67. *Opuscula psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in D.J. O'Meara, ed., *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora* vol. II, 146, 18; 149, 14ff.; 151, 24; *Opuscula* 23, 39–40 *Opusc.* 23a, 13–14.

ἄπαξ ἐπέκεινα, Ἐκάτη, δις ἐπέκεινα. This results in the following equivalences:

Porphyry	Chaldaean
Πατήρ	ἄπαξ ἐπέκεινα
Ἐκάτη	Ἐκάτη
πατρικός νοῦς	δις ἐπέκεινα

BACK TO *SENTENCE* 32

It thus seems as though Porphyry established an equivalence between the following religio-philosophical figures: Zeus, δις ἐπέκεινα, Demiurge, πατρικός νοῦς. If this is the case, when Porphyry states in his *Sentence* 32 that the person who functions in accordance with the paradigmatic virtues is called a “Father of the gods,” he may have these equivalences in mind. To become father of the gods, then, according to this interpretation, is to become Zeus, but this in turn is to become a Demiurge and/or a δις ἐπέκεινα. All these expressions, however, are equivalent to saying that the person in question has become consubstantial with the πατρικός νοῦς. That such was one of the goals of Porphyry’s philosophy is confirmed by another fragment of the *De regressu*, transmitted by Augustine:

You [that is, as the context makes clear, Porphyry and his followers], to be sure, attribute so much to the intellectual soul, which is at any rate a human soul, that you say it may become consubstantial to that paternal Intellect, which we declare to be the Son of God.⁶⁸

To have assimilated oneself, and to be able to function according to the paradigmatic virtues is, as Porphyry makes clear in *Sentence* 32, to have become wholly Intellect, and to have become one with the realm of intelligible Forms which, in Platonic philosophy since Plotinus, are identical with the Intellect. Yet since this domain of the νοῦς is identical with Zeus in his demiurgic aspect, as well as with the Chaldaean δις ἐπέκεινα, the person who functions henceforth according to the paradigmatic virtues may equally well be called Zeus, and hence, like Zeus, he may be said to have become “father of the gods” (θεῶν πατήρ). If this interpretation is correct, however, it still remains an open question with which Zeus such a person is to be identified, for as we have seen, there are no less than seven Zeus-demiurge-δις ἐπέκεινα according to Chaldaean thought. It might be argued that the distinction between various homonymous divinities existing

68. Augustin, *cin dei* X, 29 = Porphyry, *De regressu*, fr. 297, 339, 10–13 Smith: “*Vos certe tantum tribuitis animae intellectuali, quae anima utique humana est, ut eam consubstantialem paternae illi menti quem dei filium confitemini fieri posse dicatis.*”

at different levels of reality may be characteristic of late Neoplatonism, but cannot be attributed to a thinker as early as Porphyry. However, another testimony from Johannes Lydus seems to indicate otherwise:

<p>ὅτι οἱ μὲν φυσικοὶ τὴν Ἑστίαν βούλονται τὴν γῆν εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐστάναι, οἱ δὲ θεολόγοι ταύτην εἶναι βούλονται τὴν λεγομένην ὀντότητα ... ὁ δὲ Πορφύριος μετὰ τὴν νοητὴν Ἑστίαν ἥτοι ὀντότητα βούλεται καὶ τὴν ἔφορον τῆς γῆς—χθόνα δὲ αὐτὴν καλοῦσι—ὁμωνύμως ἐκείνης Ἑστίαν εἶναι, λέγει δὲ οὕτω· ἡ καὶ τὸ μὲν ἡγεμονικὸν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως Ἑστία κέκληται, ἥς ἀγάλμα παρθενικὸν ἐφ’ ἑστίας ἴδρυται· καθ’ ὃ δὲ γόνιμος ἢ δύναμις, σημαίνουσιν αὐτὴν γυναικὸς εἶδει προμάστου.</p>	<p>The natural philosophers will have it that Hestia is the earth, deriving her name from “to stand still” (<i>to hestanaí</i>); but the theologians will have it that she is what is called “essentiality” (<i>ontotés</i>) ... Porphyry, however, will have it that after the intelligible Hestia, or essentiality, the overseer of earth—they call her Earth (<i>Khthón</i>)—is also Hestia, in a manner homonymous to the intelligible one. He says the following: “and the directing force of divine power has been called Hestia, whose virginal image is established at the hearth. Yet in so far as this power is generative, they signify her in the form of a woman with prominent breasts.”</p>
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In his interpretation of this fragment of Porphyry,⁶⁹ Lydus thus understands Porphyry as claiming that there are at least two Hestias: one, intelligible, who can be identified as “essentiality”;⁷⁰ the other, who comes “after” (μετά), is the goddess of traditional mythology, and her cult-statue is interpreted according to the typical Stoicizing nature-allegory practiced by Apollodorus. Besides establishing the probability that Porphyry knew of at least two homonymous levels of divinity, this passage raises a number of interesting questions. First, might Porphyry, in the course of his exegesis of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, have adopted the Chaldaean belief of seven levels of manifestation for each divinity, one for each of the Chaldaean worlds? Second, Porphyry’s work *On Images* has, since Bidez, been universally taken as an early work, written before the superstitious Tyrian came into contact with the purifying rationalism of the philosophy of Plotinus. Yet what if Lydus’ interpretation is correct? Perhaps Porphyry had explained, in some lost portion of his work, that the traditional, allegorical interpretations he was to give in the *On Images* referred only to the lower, earthly manifestation

69. Lydus, *De mens.* IV, 94, p. 138, 18–139, 5 Wünsch = Porphyry, fr. 357, pp. 415–16 Smith.

70. I borrow this translation of ὀντότης from Pierre Hadot, *Porphyry et Victorinus*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1968) I, 384–85.

of each divinity, and did not exclude deeper, more “metaphysical” interpretations on another level, such as that of Hestia as “essentiality”? There would then be no reason to attribute *On Images* to an early, “pre-philosophical” stage in Porphyry’s thought, and our entire picture would have to be thoroughly revised. Yet for this hypothesis to be verified would require a new translation and thorough study of Porphyry’s *On Images*.⁷¹

71. On a very preliminary level, we can say that the *On Images*, which has been understood as a sober description of habitual cult-images, may very well be, at least on one level, a description of astrological amulets, aimed at the theurgico-magical manipulation of astral influences.