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The Enneads

The Enneads (Greek: Ἐννεάδες), fully ***The Six Enneads***, is the collection of writings of Plotinus, edited and compiled by his student Porphyry (c. AD 270). Plotinus was a student of Ammonius Saccas and they were founders of Neoplatonism. His work, through Augustine of Hippo, the Cappadocian Fathers, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and several subsequent Christian and Muslim thinkers, has greatly influenced Western and Near-Eastern thought.

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Porphyry edited the writings of Plotinus in fifty-four treatises, which vary greatly in length and number of chapters, mostly because he split original texts and joined others together to match this very number. Then, he proceeded to set the fifty-four treatises in groups of nine (Greek. *ennea*) or *Enneads*. He also collected *The Enneads* into three volumes. The first volume contained the first three *Enneads* (I, II, III), the second volume has the *Fourth* (IV) and the *Fifth* (V) *Enneads*, and the last volume was devoted to the remaining *Enneads*. After correcting and naming each treatise, Porphyry wrote a biography of his master, *Life of Plotinus*, intended to be an Introduction to the *Enneads*.

Porphyry's edition does not follow the chronological order in which *Enneads* were written (see *Chronological Listing* below), but responds to a plan of study which leads the learner from subjects related to his own affairs to

subjects concerning the uttermost principles of the universe.

Although not exclusively, Porphyry tells us (Cf. *Life of Plotinus*, chapters.24-26) that the *First Ennead* deals with Human or ethical topics, the *Second and Third Enneads* are mostly devoted to cosmological subjects or physical reality, the *Fourth* concerns the Soul, the *Fifth* knowledge and intelligible reality, and finally the *Sixth* covers Being and what is above it, the One or first principle of all.

Citing the *Enneads*

Since the publishing of a modern critical edition of the Greek text by P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer (*Plotini Opera*. 3 volumes. Paris-Bruxelles, 1951-1973) and the revised one (*Plotini Opera*. 3 volumes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964-1984) there is an academic convention of citing the *Enneads* by first mentioning the number of *Ennead* (usually in Romans from I to VI), the number of treatise within each *Ennead* (in arabics from 1 to 9), the number of chapter (in arabics also), and the line(s) in one of the mentioned editions. These numbers are divided by periods, commas, or blank spaces.

E.g. For *Fourth Ennead* (IV), treatise number seven (7), chapter two (2), lines one to five (1-5), we write:

- IV.7.2.1-5

E.g. The following three mean *Third Ennead* (III), treatise number five (5), chapter nine (9), line eight (8):

- III, 5, 9, 8
- 3,5,9,8
- III 5 9 8

It is important to remark that some translations or editions do not include the line numbers according to P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer's edition. In addition to this, the chronological order of the treatises is numbered between brackets or parentheses, and given below.

E.g. For the previously given:

- IV.7 (2).2.1-5 since treatise IV.7 was the second written by Plotinus.
- III, 5 [50], 9, 8 since III.5 was the fiftieth written by Plotinus.

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The names of treatises may differ according to translation. The numbers in square brackets before the individual works refer to the chronological order they were written according to Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*.

First Ennead

- I.1 [53] - "What is the Living Being and What is Man?"
- I.2 [19] - "On Virtue"
- I.3 [20] - "On Dialectic [The Upward Way]."
- I.4 [46] - "On True Happiness (Well Being)"
- I.5 [36] - "On Whether Happiness (Well Being) Increases with Time."
- I.6 [1] - "On Beauty"
- I.7 [54] - "On the Primal Good and Secondary Forms of Good [Otherwise, 'On Happiness']"

- I.8 [51] - "On the Nature and Source of Evil"
- I.9 [16] - "On Dismissal"

Second Ennead

- II.1 [40] - "On Heaven"
- II.2 [14] - "On the Movement of Heaven"
- II.3 [52] - "Whether the Stars are Causes"
- II.4 [12] - "On Matter"
- II.5 [25] - "On Potentiality and Actuality."
- II.6 [17] - "On Quality or on Substance"
- II.7 [37] - "On Complete Transfusion"
- II.8 [35] - "On Sight or on how Distant Objects Appear Small."
- II.9 [33] - "Against Those That Affirm The Creator of the Kosmos and The Kosmos Itself to be Evil: [Generally Quoted as "Against the Gnostics"]."

Third Ennead

- III.1 [3] - "On Fate"
- III.2 [47] - "On Providence (1)."
- III.3 [48] - "On Providence (2)."
- III.4 [15] - "On our Allotted Guardian Spirit"
- III.5 [50] - "On Love"
- III.6 [26] - "On the Impassivity of the Unembodied"
- III.7 [45] - "On Eternity and Time"
- III.8 [30] - "On Nature, Contemplation and the One"
- III.9 [13] - "Detached Considerations"

Fourth Ennead

- IV.1 [21] - "On the Essence of the Soul (1)"
- IV.2 [4] - "On the Essence of the Soul (2)"
- IV.3 [27] - "On Problems of the Soul (1)"
- IV.4 [28] - "On Problems of the Soul (2)"
- IV.5 [29] - "On Problems of the Soul (3)" [Also known as, "On Sight"].
- IV.6 [41] - "On Sense-Perception and Memory"
- IV.7 [2] - "On the Immortality of the Soul"
- IV.8 [6] - "On the Soul's Descent into Body"
- IV.9 [8] - "Are All Souls One"

Fifth Ennead

- V.1 [10] - "On the Three Primary Hypostases"
- V.2 [11] - "On the Origin and Order of the Beings following after the First"
- V.3 [49] - "On the Knowing Hypostases and That Which is Beyond"
- V.4 [7] - "How That Which is After the First comes from the First, and on the One."
- V.5 [32] - "That the Intellectual Beings are not Outside the Intellect, and on the Good"

- V.6 [24] - "On the Fact that That Which is Beyond Being Does not Think, and on What is the Primary and the Secondary Thinking Principle"
- V.7 [18] - "On whether There are Ideas of Particular Beings"
- V.8 [31] - "On the Intelligible Beauty."
- V.9 [5] - "On Intellect, the Forms, and Being"

Sixth Ennead

- VI.1 [42] - "On the Kinds of Being (1)"
- VI.2 [43] - "On the Kinds of Being (2)"
- VI.3 [44] - "On the Kinds of Being (3)"
- VI.4 [22] - "On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole (1)"
- VI.5 [23] - "On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole (2)"
- VI.6 [34] - "On Numbers"
- VI.7 [38] - "How the Multiplicity of Forms Came Into Being: and on the Good"
- VI.8 [39] - "On Free Will and the Will of the One"
- VI.9 [9] - "On the Good, or the One"

Plotinus' Original Chronological Order

- I.6, IV.7, III.1, IV.2, V.9, IV.8, V.4, IV.9, VI.9
- V.1, V.2, II.4, III.9, II.2, III.4, I.9, II.6, V.7
- I.2, I.3, IV.1, VI.4, VI.5, V.6, II.5, III.6, IV.3
- IV.4, IV.5, III.8, V.8, V.5, II.9, VI.6, II.8, I.5
- II.7, VI.7, VI.8, II.1, IV.6, VI.1, VI.2, VI.3, III.7
- I.4, III.2, III.3, V.3, III.5, I.8, II.3, I.1, I.7

Note on the Plotiniana Arabica or Arabic Plotinus

After the fall of Western Roman Empire and during the period of the Byzantine Empire, the authorship of some Plotinus' texts became clouded. Many passages of *Enneads* IV-VI, now known as *Plotiniana Arabica*, circulated among Islamic scholars (as Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi and Avicenna) under the name *The Theology of Aristotle* or quoted as "*Sayings of an old [wise] man*". The writings had a significant effect on Islamic philosophy, due to Islamic interest in Aristotle. A Latin version of the so-called *Theology* appeared in Europe in 1519. (Cf. O'MEARA, *An Introduction the Enneads*. Oxford: 1995, 111ff.)

Some editions, translations and tools

Contemporary scholars refer to the Plotinus' critical editions made by

- HENRY, P. and SCHWYZER, H. R. *Plotini Opera*. (*Editio maior* in 3 vols. including English translation of *Plotiniana Arabica* or *The Theology of Aristotle*) Bruxelles and Paris: Museum Lessianum, 1951-1973.
- HENRY, P. and SCHWYZER, H. R. *Plotini Opera*. (*Editio minor* in 3 vols.) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964-1982.

Useful tools for the study of the *Enneads* are

- SLEEMAN, J. H. and POLLET, G. *Lexikon Plotinianum*. Leyden: Brill, 1980.
- DUFOUR, R. *Plotinus. A Bibliography: 1950-2000*. Leyden: Brill, 2002.
- RADICE, R. and BOMBACIGNO, R. *Lexicon II: Plotinus*. (Includes a CD containing the entire Greek text) Milan: Biblia, 2004.

English


- ARMSTRONG, A.H. *Plotinus*. (7 vols. including Greek text of HENRY, P. and SCHWYZER a fronte) Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966-1988.
- ATKINSON, M. *Plotinus' Ennead V.1: On the Three Principal Hypostases* Oxford: OUP, 1983.
- BUSSANICH, J. *The One and its Relation to Intellect* (Translation and commentary of selected treatises). Leiden: Brill, 1988.
- FLEET, B. *III.6* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- VARIOUS. *The Enneads of Plotinus Series*. Edited by John M. Dillon and Andrew Smith. Parmenides Publishing. 2012–Ongoing.

References

See also

- Allegorical interpretations of Plato

External links

-  Works related to The Enneads at Wikisource
- *The Six Enneads* (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/plotinus/enneads.html>) (complete Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page translation) in PDF, HTML, Microsoft Word, Plain Text, Theological Markup Language (XML), and 'Palm Doc' versions.
- *The Six Enneads* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.html>) – Mackenna and Page translation divided into six sections in HTML.
- *The Enneads*, Greek text (<http://plotin.lotophages.org>) page scans of Kirchoff's edition.
- *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Plotinus* (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/p/plotinus.htm>)
- *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Plotinus* (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plotinus/>)
- *Plotinian Bibliography 2001-* (<http://rdufour.free.fr/BibPlotin/>) by Richard Dufour (French and English versions), continues his research presented in *Plotinus: a Bibliography 1950-2000*, referred above.
- *Links to Enneads, treatises, and chapters* (<http://john-uebersax.com/plato/enneads.htm>) in English, Greek, and French for quick reference.
- Ἐννεάδες (http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~Harsch/graeca/Chronologia/S_post03/Plotinos/plo_enn0.html) – The Henry and Schwyzer 1951 edition at Bibliotheca Augustiana.

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