

# Porphyry (philosopher)

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March 31, 2022

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# 1 Porphyry (philosopher)

Neoplatonist philosopher

## Porphyry of Tyre

*Porphyre Sophiste*, in a French 16th-century engraving

**Born** c. 234 AD  
Tyre, Roman Empire

**Died** 305 (aged 70–71)  
Rome, Roman Empire

**Notable work**

**Era** Ancient philosophy

**Region** Western philosophy

**School** Neoplatonism

**Main interests** Metaphysics, astrology

**Notable ideas** Porphyrian tree, criticism of Christianity, vegetarianism

**Porphyry of Tyre** (/ˈpɔːrfri/<sup>1</sup>; Greek<sup>2</sup>: Πορφύριος, *Porphýrios*; Arabic<sup>3</sup>: فرفوريوس, *Furfūriyūs*; c. 234 – c. 305 AD) was a Tyrian<sup>[1]</sup> Neoplatonic<sup>4</sup> philosopher born in Tyre<sup>5</sup>, Roman Syria<sup>6[2]</sup> during Roman rule<sup>7.[a]</sup> He edited and published *The Enneads*<sup>8</sup>, the only collection of the work of Plotinus<sup>9</sup>, his teacher. His commentary on Euclid<sup>10</sup>'s *Elements*<sup>11</sup> was used as a source by Pappus of Alexandria<sup>12.[3]</sup>

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- 1 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English>
  - 2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language)
  - 3 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language)
  - 4 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoplatonism>
  - 5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyre,\\_Lebanon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyre,_Lebanon)
  - 6 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Syria)
  - 7 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire)
  - 8 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Enneads](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Enneads)
  - 9 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plotinus>
  - 10 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euclid>
  - 11 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euclid%27s\\_Elements](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euclid%27s_Elements)
  - 12 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pappus\\_of\\_Alexandria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pappus_of_Alexandria)

He wrote original works in the Greek language on a wide variety of topics, ranging from music theory<sup>13</sup> to Homer<sup>14</sup> to vegetarianism.<sup>[b]</sup> His *Isagoge*<sup>15</sup>, or *Introduction*, an introduction to logic and philosophy,<sup>[c]</sup> was the standard textbook on logic<sup>16</sup> throughout the Middle Ages<sup>17</sup> in its Latin<sup>18</sup> and Arabic<sup>19</sup> translations.<sup>[4]</sup> Through works such as *Philosophy from Oracles* and *Against the Christians* (which was banned by Constantine the Great<sup>20</sup>),<sup>[5]</sup> he was involved in a controversy with early Christians<sup>21</sup>.<sup>[6]</sup>

## 1.1 Biography

The *Suda*<sup>22</sup> (a 10th-century Byzantine encyclopedia based on many sources now lost) reports that Porphyry was born in Phoenician<sup>23</sup> city of Tyre<sup>24</sup>.<sup>[7]</sup> His parents named him *Malchus* ("king" in the Semitic languages)<sup>[d]</sup> but his teacher in Athens<sup>25</sup>, Cassius Longinus<sup>26</sup>, gave him the name Porphyrius ("clad in purple"), possibly a reference to his Phoenician heritage, or a punning allusion to his name and the color of royal robes. Under Longinus he studied grammar<sup>27</sup> and rhetoric<sup>28</sup>.

In 262 he went to Rome<sup>29</sup>, attracted by the reputation of Plotinus<sup>30</sup>, and for six years devoted himself to the practice of Neoplatonism<sup>31</sup>, during which time he severely modified his diet. At one point he became suicidal.<sup>[8]</sup> On the advice of Plotinus he went to live in Sicily<sup>32</sup> for five years to recover his mental health. On returning to Rome, he lectured on philosophy<sup>33</sup> and completed an edition of the writings of Plotinus (who had died in the meantime) together with a biography of his teacher. Iamblichus<sup>34</sup> is mentioned in ancient Neoplatonic writings as his pupil, but this most likely means only that he was the dominant figure in the next generation of philosophers. The two men differed publicly on the issue of theurgy<sup>35</sup>.

In his later years, he married Marcella, a widow with seven children and an enthusiastic student of philosophy. Little more is known of his life, and the date of his death is uncertain.

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- 13 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music\\_theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_theory)
  - 14 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer>
  - 15 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isagoge>
  - 16 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logic>
  - 17 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle\\_Ages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages)
  - 18 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin>
  - 19 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic>
  - 20 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine\\_the\\_Great](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great)
  - 21 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Christianity)
  - 22 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suda>
  - 23 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenicia>
  - 24 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyre\\_\(Lebanon\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyre_(Lebanon))
  - 25 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens>
  - 26 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassius\\_Longinus\\_\(philosopher\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassius_Longinus_(philosopher))
  - 27 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammar>
  - 28 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetoric>
  - 29 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome>
  - 30 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plotinus>
  - 31 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoplatonism>
  - 32 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sicily>
  - 33 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy>
  - 34 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iamblichus>
  - 35 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theurgy>

## 1.2 Introduction (Isagoge)



**Figure 1** Imaginary debate between Averroes (1126–1198 AD) and Porphyry (234–c. 305 AD). Monfredo de Monte Imperiali *Liber de herbis*, 14th century.<sup>[9]</sup>

Porphyry is best known for his contributions to philosophy. Apart from writing the *Aids to the Study of the Intelligibles* (Ἀφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά; *Sententiae Ad Intelligibilia Ducentes*), a basic summary of Neoplatonism, he is especially appreciated for his *Introduction to Categories* (*Introductio in Praedicamenta* or *Isagoge et in Aristotelis Categoriarum commentarium*), a very short work often considered to be a commentary on Aristotle<sup>36</sup>'s *Categories*<sup>37</sup>, hence the title.<sup>[6]</sup> According to Barnes 2003<sup>38</sup>, however, the correct title is simply *Introduction* (Εἰσαγωγή *Isagoge*), and the book is an introduction not to the *Categories* in particular, but to *logic* in general, comprising as it does the theories of predication, definition, and proof. The Introduction describes how qualities attributed to things may be classified, famously breaking down the philosophical concept of substance into the five components *genus*, *species*, *difference*, *property*, *accident*.

As Porphyry's most influential contribution to philosophy, the *Introduction to Categories* incorporated Aristotle's logic into Neoplatonism, in particular the doctrine of the categories of being<sup>39</sup> interpreted in terms of entities (in later philosophy, "universal"<sup>40</sup>). Boethius<sup>41</sup>

36 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle>

37 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categories\\_\(Aristotle\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categories_(Aristotle))

38 #CITEREFBarnes2003

39 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category\\_of\\_being](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category_of_being)

40 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_\(metaphysics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_(metaphysics))

41 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boethius>

*Isagoge*, a Latin translation of Porphyry's "Introduction", became a standard medieval textbook in European schools and universities, which set the stage for medieval philosophical-theological developments of logic and the problem of universals. In medieval textbooks, the all-important *Arbor porphyriana*<sup>42</sup> ("Porphyrian Tree") illustrates his logical classification of substance. To this day, taxonomy benefits from concepts in Porphyry's Tree, in classifying living organisms (see cladistics<sup>43</sup>).

The *Introduction* was translated into Arabic by Abd-Allāh Ibn al-Muqaffa.<sup>44</sup> from a Syriac version. With the Arabicized name *Isāghūjī* (إيساغوجي) it long remained the standard introductory logic text in the Muslim world and influenced the study of theology, philosophy, grammar, and jurisprudence. Besides the adaptations and epitomes of this work, many independent works on logic by Muslim philosophers have been entitled *Isāghūjī*. Porphyry's discussion of *accident* sparked a long-running debate on the application of *accident* and *essence*.<sup>[10]</sup>

### 1.3 *Philosophy from Oracles (De Philosophia ex Oraculis Haurienda)*

Porphyry is also known as an opponent of Christianity<sup>45</sup> and defender of Paganism<sup>46</sup>; his precise contribution to the philosophical approach to traditional religion may be discovered in the fragments of *Philosophy from Oracles* (Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας; *De Philosophia ex Oraculis Haurienda*), which was originally three books in length. There is debate as to whether it was written in his youth (as Eunapius reports<sup>[8]</sup>) or closer in time to the persecutions of Christians under Diocletian<sup>47</sup> and Galerius<sup>48</sup>.<sup>[f]</sup>

Whether or not Porphyry was the pagan philosopher opponent in Lactantius<sup>49</sup> *Divine Institutes*, written at the time of the persecutions, has long been discussed. The fragments of the *Philosophy from Oracles* are only quoted by Christians, especially Eusebius<sup>50</sup>, Theodoret<sup>51</sup>, Augustine<sup>52</sup>, and John Philoponus<sup>53</sup>. The fragments contain oracles identifying proper sacrificial procedure, the nature of astrological<sup>54</sup> fate, and other topics relevant for Greek and Roman religion in the third century. Whether this work contradicts his treatise defending vegetarianism<sup>55</sup>, which also warned the philosopher to avoid animal sacrifice, is disputed among scholars.<sup>[12]</sup>

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42 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbor\\_porphyrina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbor_porphyrina)

43 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cladistics>

44 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd-All%C4%81h\\_Ibn\\_al-Muqaffa%CA%BF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd-All%C4%81h_Ibn_al-Muqaffa%CA%BF)

45 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity>

46 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paganism>

47 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocletian>

48 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galerius>

49 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lactantius>

50 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius\\_of\\_Caesarea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius_of_Caesarea)

51 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodoret>

52 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine>

53 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Philoponus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Philoponus)

54 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrological>

55 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegetarianism>



## 1.4 *Against the Christians (Adversus Christianos)*

Main article: *Against the Christians*<sup>56</sup> See also: *Celsus*<sup>57</sup>



**Figure 2** Porphyry, a detail of the *Tree of Jesse*, 1535, Sucevița Monastery.

During his retirement in Sicily<sup>58</sup>, Porphyry wrote *Against the Christians* (Κατὰ Χριστιανῶν; *Adversus Christianos*) which consisted of fifteen books. Some thirty Christian apologists,

<sup>56</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Against\\_the\\_Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Against_the_Christians)

<sup>57</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celsus>

<sup>58</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sicily>

such as Methodius<sup>59</sup>, Eusebius<sup>60</sup>, Apollinaris<sup>61</sup>, Augustine<sup>62</sup>, Jerome<sup>63</sup>, etc., responded to his challenge. In fact, everything known about Porphyry's arguments is found in these refutations, largely because Theodosius II<sup>64</sup> ordered every copy burned<sup>65</sup> in AD 435 and again in 448.<sup>[13][14][15]</sup>

Augustine<sup>66</sup> and the 5th-century ecclesiastical historian Socrates of Constantinople<sup>67</sup>, assert that Porphyry was once a Christian.<sup>[16]</sup>

## 1.5 Other subjects

Porphyry was opposed to the theurgy<sup>68</sup> of his disciple Iamblichus<sup>69</sup>. Much of Iamblichus' mysteries is dedicated to the defense of mystic theurgic divine possession against the critiques of Porphyry. French philosopher Pierre Hadot<sup>70</sup> maintains that for Porphyry, spiritual exercises are an essential part of spiritual development.<sup>[17]</sup>

Porphyry was, like Pythagoras<sup>71</sup>, an advocate of vegetarianism<sup>72</sup> on spiritual and ethical grounds. These two philosophers are perhaps the most famous vegetarians of classical antiquity. He wrote the *On Abstinence from Animal Food*<sup>73</sup> (Περὶ ἀποχρῆς ἐμψύχων; *De Abstinence ab Esu Animalium*), advocating against the consumption of animals, and he is cited with approval in vegetarian literature up to the present day.

Porphyry also wrote widely on music theory<sup>74</sup>,<sup>[18]</sup> astrology<sup>75</sup>, religion, and philosophy. He produced a *History of Philosophy* (*Philosophos historia*) with *vitae*<sup>76</sup> of philosophers that included a life of his teacher, Plotinus. His life of Plato from book iv exists only in quotes by Cyril of Alexandria<sup>77</sup>.<sup>[8]</sup> His book *Vita Pythagorae* on the life of Pythagoras<sup>78</sup> is not to be confused with the book of the same name by Iamblichus<sup>79</sup>. His commentary on Ptolemy's *Harmonics*<sup>80</sup><sup>[19]</sup> (*Eis ta Harmonika Ptolemaiou hypomnēma*) is an important source for the history of ancient harmonic theory.

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- 59 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methodius\\_of\\_Olympus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methodius_of_Olympus)
  - 60 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius>
  - 61 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollinaris\\_of\\_Ravenna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollinaris_of_Ravenna)
  - 62 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine\\_of\\_Hippo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo)
  - 63 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome>
  - 64 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodosius\\_II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodosius_II)
  - 65 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_burning#Christian\\_book\\_burnings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_burning#Christian_book_burnings)
  - 66 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine\\_of\\_Hippo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo)
  - 67 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socrates\\_of\\_Constantinople](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socrates_of_Constantinople)
  - 68 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theurgy>
  - 69 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iamblichus>
  - 70 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre\\_Hadot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Hadot)
  - 71 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythagoras>
  - 72 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegetarianism>
  - 73 [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=On\\_Abstinence\\_from\\_Animal\\_Food&action=edit&redlink=1](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=On_Abstinence_from_Animal_Food&action=edit&redlink=1)
  - 74 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music\\_theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_theory)
  - 75 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrology>
  - 76 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biography>
  - 77 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyril\\_of\\_Alexandria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyril_of_Alexandria)
  - 78 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythagoras>
  - 79 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iamblichus>
  - 80 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemy#Music>

Porphry also wrote about Homer<sup>81</sup>. Apart from several lost texts known only from quotations by other authors, two texts survive at least in large parts: the *Homerian Questions* (*Homēriká zētēmata*, largely a philological comment on the Iliad and Odyssey) and *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey*<sup>82</sup> (*Peri tou en Odysseia tōn nymphōn antrou*).

## 1.6 Extant works

- *Life of Plotinus*. Editions: Luc Brisson, *La Vie de Plotin*. Histoire de l'antiquité classique 6 & 16, Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin: 1986–1992, 2 vols; A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968, pp. 2–84. Translation: *Neoplatonic Saints: The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus*. Translated Texts for Historians 35 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).
- *Life of Pythagoras*. Edition: E. des Places, *Vie de Pythagore, Lettre à Marcella*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982.
- Introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*<sup>83</sup> (*Isagoge*). Translations: E. Warren, *Isagoge*, Mediaeval Sources in Translation 16, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1975; J. Barnes, *Porphry's Introduction*. Translation of the 'Isagoge' with a Commentary, Oxford, 2003; Steven K. Strange, *Porphry. On Aristotle's Categories*, Ithaca, New York, 1992; Octavius Freire Owen, *The Organon or Logical Treatises of Aristotle with the Introduction of Porphry*. Bohn's Classical Library 11–12, London: G. Bell, 1908–1910, 2 vols; Paul Vincent Spade, *Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals: Porphry, Boethius, Abelard, Duns Scotus, Ockham*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- Introduction to the *Tetrabiblos*<sup>84</sup> of Ptolemy. Editions: Stefan Weinstock, in: Franz Cumont (ed.), *Catalogus Codicum astrologorum Graecorum*, (Brussels, 1940): V.4, 187–228; *Kommentar zur Harmonielehre des Ptolemaios* Ingemar Düring. ed. (Göteborg: Elanders, 1932). Translation: James Herschel Holden, *Porphry the Philosopher, Introduction to the Tetrabiblos and Serapio of Alexandria, Astrological Definitions*, Tempe, Az.: A.F.A., Inc., 2009.
- *Against the Christians* (*Contra Christianos*). Editions: A. Ramos Jurado, J. Ritoré Ponce, A. Carmona Vázquez, I. Rodríguez Moreno, J. Ortolá Salas, J. M. Zamora Calvo (eds), *Contra los Cristianos: Recopilación de Fragmentos, Traducción, Introducción y Notas* – (Cádiz: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Cádiz 2006); Adolf von Harnack<sup>85</sup>, *Porphryus, "Gegen die Christen," 15 Bücher: Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate*. Abhandlungen der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Jahrgang 1916: philosoph.-hist. Klasse: Nr. 1 (Berlin: 1916). Translations: R. M. Berchman, *Porphry Against the Christians*, Ancient Mediterranean and Medieval Texts and Contexts 1, Leiden: Brill, 2005; R. Joseph Hoffmann, *Porphry's Against the Christians: The Literary Remains*, Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1994.
- Commentary on Plato's Timaeus. Edition: A. R. Sodano, *Porphry in Platonis Timaeum commentarium fragmenta*, Napoli: 1964.
- *Homeric Questions*. Edition: *The Homeric Questions: a Bilingual Edition* – Lang Classical Studies 2, R. R. Schlunk, trans. (Frankfurt-am-Main: Lang, 1993).

81 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer>

82 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On\\_the\\_Cave\\_of\\_the\\_Nymphs\\_in\\_the\\_Odyssey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Cave_of_the_Nymphs_in_the_Odyssey)

83 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categories\\_\(Aristotle\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categories_(Aristotle))

84 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetrabiblos>

85 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolf\\_von\\_Harnack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolf_von_Harnack)

- *On the caves of the nymphs (De antro nympharum)*. Edition: *The Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey. A revised text with translation* by Seminar Classics 609, State University of New York at Buffalo, Arethusa Monograph 1 (Buffalo: Dept. of Classics, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1969). Translation: Robert Lamberton, *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, Barrytown, N. Y.: Station Hill Press, 1983.
- *On the abstinence of eating animals (De abstinencia ab esu animalium)*. Edition: Jean Bouffartigue, M. Patillon, and Alain-Philippe Segonds, edd., 3 vols., Budé (Paris, 1979–1995). Translation: Gilliam Clark, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- *On philosophy from oracles (De Philosophia ex oraculis haurienda)*. Edition: G. Wolff, Berlin: 1856; Porphyrii Philosophi fragmenta, ed. by Andrew Smith, Stuttgart and Leipzig, Teubner 1993.
- *Aids to the Study of the Intelligibles (Sententiae ad Intelligibilia Ducentes)*. Edition: E. Lamberz, Leipzig: Teubner, 1975. Translation: K. Guthrie, *Launching-Points to the Realm of Mind*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988.
- *Letter to Marcella*. Edition: Kathleen O'Brien Wicker, *Porphyry, the Philosopher, to Marcella: Text and Translation with Introduction and Notes*, Text and Translations 28; Graeco-Roman Religion Series 10 (Atlanata: Scholars Press, 1987); *Pros Markellan Griechischer Text*, herausgegeben, übersetzt, eingeleitet und erklärt von W. Pötscher (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969). Translation: Alice Zimmern<sup>86</sup>, *Porphyry's Letter to His Wife Marcella Concerning the Life of Philosophy and the Ascent to the Gods*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989.
- *Letter to Anebo (Epistula ad Anebonem)*. Edition: A. R. Sodano, Naples: L'arte Tipografia: 1958.

## 1.7 Lost works

- *Ad Gedalium*, a lost commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* in seven books.<sup>[20]</sup> The *testimonia* are published in Andrew Smith (ed.), *Porphyrius, Porphyrii Philosophi fragmenta. Fragmenta Arabica David Wasserstein interpretante*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993.
- *A Treatise concerning the Secret Doctrines of the Philosophers*. Mentioned by Eunapius according to John Toland in "Clidophorus, or of the Exoteric and Esoteric Philosophy." Eunapius says that Porphyry "commended the medicine of perspicuity, and tasting it by experience, wrote "A Treatise concerning the Secret Doctrines of the Philosophers", which they involv'd in obscurity, as in the Fables of the Poets, but which he brought to light."<sup>[21]</sup>

## 1.8 Works of uncertain attribution

- *Ad Gaurum* (of uncertain attribution).<sup>[22]</sup> Edition: K. Kalbfleisch. *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaft. phil.-hist. kl.* (1895): 33-62<sup>87</sup>. Translation: J. Wilberding, *To Gaurus On How Embryos are Ensouled, and On What is in our Power*

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<sup>86</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice\\_Zimmern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Zimmern)

<sup>87</sup> <https://archive.org/details/dieneuplatonisc00galegoog>

- . *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* Series, R. Sorabji (ed.), Bristol: Classical Press, 2011.
- #6 and #9 in *Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici Greci e Latini III: Commentari* – (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1995) may or may not be by Porphyry.

## 1.9 Editions and translations of multiple works

- Translations of several fragments are contained in Appendix 1 of *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre* by Aaron Johnson (Cambridge, 2013).
- *Select Works of Porphyry*. Translated by T. Taylor (Guildford, 1994). Contains *Abstinence from Eating Animal Food*, the *Sententiae* and the *Cave of the Nymphs*.
- Fragments: Andrew Smith, *Stvtgardiae et Lipsiae*: B. G. Tevbneri, 1993.
- *Opuscula selecta* Augustus Nauck, ed. (Lipsiae: B. G. Tevbneri, 1886) (online at archive.org<sup>88</sup>).

## 1.10 See also

- Basilides of Tyre<sup>89</sup>
- Macarius Magnes<sup>90</sup> – his work *Apocriticus* contains a series of excerpts from Porphyry's *Against the Christians*

## 1.11 References

### 1.11.1 Footnotes

1. For Porphyry's dates, place of birth and philosophical school, see Barker 2003<sup>91</sup>, pp. 1226–1227. Sarton 1936<sup>92</sup>, pp. 429–430 identifies Transjordanian as Porphyry's place of birth.
2. For a comprehensive list see Beutler (1894–1980); Guthrie 1988<sup>93</sup>, p. 91 provides another list
3. Barnes 2003<sup>94</sup>, p. xv clarifies that the *Isagoge* "[was] not an *Introduction to the Categories*, rather "[since it was] an introduction to the study of logic, [it] was... an introduction to philosophy--and hence accidentally an introduction to the *Categories*."
4. For connotations of West Semitic *M-L-K*, see Moloch<sup>95</sup> and Malik<sup>96</sup>; compare theophoric names<sup>97</sup> like Abimelech<sup>98</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> <https://archive.org/details/porphyriiphilos00naucgoog>

<sup>89</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilides\\_of\\_Tyre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilides_of_Tyre)

<sup>90</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macarius\\_Magnes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macarius_Magnes)

<sup>91</sup> #CITEREFBarker2003

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<sup>93</sup> #CITEREFGuthrie1988

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<sup>95</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moloch>

<sup>96</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malik>

<sup>97</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophory>

<sup>98</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abimelech>

5. Barnes 2003<sup>99</sup>, p. xiv outlines the history of the opinion that Porphyry meant for his *Isagoge* to be an introductory work to the *Categories*.
6. The Christian apologist Eusebius<sup>100</sup> states that "some Greek" might say "How can these people be thought worthy of forbearance? They have not only turned away from those who from earliest time have been thought of as divine among all Greeks and barbarians... but by emperors, law-givers and philosophers— all of a given mind... And to what sort of penalties might they not be subjected who... are fugitives from the things of their Fathers?" This material, once thought to be part of *Against the Christians*, but reassigned by Wilken 1979<sup>101</sup> to *Philosophy from Oracles*, is quoted in Digeser 1998<sup>102</sup>, p. 129. However, it may not have been by Porphyry at all.<sup>[11]</sup>
7. Notopoulos 1940<sup>103</sup>, pp. 284–293 attempted a reconstruction from Apuleius' use of it.

### 1.11.2 Citations

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2. SCHOTT, JEREMY M. (2013-04-23). *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity*<sup>105</sup>. UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS. ISBN<sup>106</sup> 978-0-8122-0346-2<sup>107</sup>.
3. O'CONNOR, JOHN J.<sup>108</sup>; ROBERTSON, EDMUND F.<sup>109</sup>, "PORPHYRY MALCHUS"<sup>110</sup>, *MacTutor History of Mathematics archive*<sup>111</sup>, UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS<sup>112</sup>
4. Barnes 2003<sup>113</sup>, p. ix.
5. Clarke 1989<sup>114</sup>, p. 9.
6. Digeser 1998<sup>115</sup>.
7. Suda<sup>116</sup>, Porphyry<sup>117</sup>

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## 1.13 External links

Library resources<sup>189</sup> about  
**Porphyry**

- Online books<sup>190</sup>
- Resources in your library<sup>191</sup>
- Resources in other libraries<sup>192</sup>

**By Porphyry**

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## Ancient Greek and Hellenistic mathematics (Euclidean geometry)

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