Faces of the Infinite: Neoplatonism and Poetics at the Confluence of Africa, Asia and Europe

Venues: The British Academy, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH
         9 & 10 November 2017
         SOAS, University of London
         11 November 2017

Convenors:
Professor Stefan Sperl, SOAS, University of London
Professor Trevor Dadson FBA, Queen Mary University of London
Dr Yorgos Dedes, SOAS, University of London

Thursday, 9 November 2017

09.00       Registration and refreshments

Session One: From Greek Beginnings to Arabic and Hebrew
To examine the beginnings of Neoplatonist poetics in Greek and its
emergence in Arabic and Hebrew
Chairs: Stefan Sperl, SOAS, University of London and Trevor Dadson, Queen
Mary, University of London

09.15       Introduction: Background, Scope and Aim of Conference

09.40       Keynote Address
Richard Taylor, Marquette University

10.30       Refreshments
11.00 Are Neoplatonists Neoplatonic in their Poetics?  
Alexander Matthew Key, Stanford University

11.45 Andalusian Hebrew Poems on the Soul and their Afterlife  
Adena Tanenbaum, Ohio State University

12.30 Lunch

**Session Two: The Ascent of the Soul**
To compare and contrast the portrayal of the soul’s ascent in texts of different linguistic and religious provenance  
Chair: James Montgomery, University of Cambridge (tbc)

13.30 Neoplatonist Concepts in 13th Century Arabic Mystical Poetry  
Stefan Sperl, SOAS, University of London

14.15 Neoplatonism in Attar’s Conference of the Birds  
Leila Anvar, INALCO, Paris

15.00 Refreshments

15.30 *Nostro intelletto si profonda tanto*. Paradiso, I 8 and its Philosophical Background  
Christina d’Ancona, University of Pisa

16.15 The Ascent of the Soul: Neo-Platonic Themes in the Literature of the Golden Age of Spain  
Colin Thompson, University of Oxford

17.00 Close of first day
**Session Three: from Late Antiquity to Byzantium and the Ottoman World**
To illustrate continuity and change in the poetic reception of Platonist concepts in the Eastern Mediterranean from Late Antiquity to Ottoman times
Chair: James Binns, University of York

09.00  Hymn of the Pearl and Chaldaean Oracles: Platonism on the Border between Monism and Dualism, Imperial Centuries and Late Antiquity, Greek and Syriac
Johannes Niehoff-Panagiotidis, Freie Universität Berlin

09.45  Neoplatonism and Poetics in Late Antique and Byzantine Literature
David Hernández de la Fuente, Universidad Nacitonal de Educación a Distancia, Madrid

10.30  *Refreshments*

11.00  ‘A Soul, Splendid by the Glory of God’: Karaite Poems about the Nature of the Soul from the Muslim East and Byzantium
Joachim Yeshaya, University of Leuven

11.45  Ottoman Poetry: Where the Neoplatonic Dissolves into an Emotional Script for Life.
Walter Andrews, University of Washington (tbc)

12.30  *Lunch*

**Session Four: Neoplatonism and Gender Identity in Early Modern Love Lyric**
To illustrate and compare relevant examples of 16th century Italian, Spanish and English verse
Chair: tbc

13.30  Neoplatonic Discourse and Ottoman Women Poets: Negotiation, Legitimation and Subversion
Didem Havlioğlu, Duke University

14.15  Beyond the Courts: Neoplatonism in Sixteenth-Century Italian Poetic Culture
Abigail Brundin, University of Cambridge

15.00  *Refreshments*
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<td>15.30</td>
<td>Italian Neoplatonism and Sixteenth-Century English Verse</td>
<td>John Roe, University of York</td>
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Saturday, 11 November 2017
(Please note that this third day is being held at SOAS and that separate registration is required)

**Session Five: Neoplatonist Poetics and Mysticism in Spain and the Indo-Persian world**
To examine mystical concepts of possible Neoplatonist provenance in the works of major poets writing in Persian and Spanish
Chair: Alessandro Cancian, Ismaili Institute, London

09.00  Poetry and Ishraqi Illuminationism among the Esoteric Zoroastrians of Mughal India
       Carl W Ernst, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

09.45  Neoplatonic and Sufi Approaches to Beauty: The Cases of Plotinus and Rūzbihān Baqlī
       Kazuyo Murata, King’s College, University of London

10.30  Refreshments

11.00  The Christian Neoplatonism of Francisco de Aldana in the *Carta para Arias Montano*
       Terence O’Reilly, University College, Cork

11.45  La erótica del infinito: Neoplatonismo, Cábala y Sufismo en la obra de José Ángel Valente
       Claudio Rodríguez Fer, University of Santiago de Compostela

12.30  Lunch

**Session Six: Modern Echoes in Persian, Turkish, Arabic and Greek**
To illustrate the persistence of Neoplatonic themes in selected examples of modern poetry
Chair: Yorgos Dedes, SOAS, University of London

13.30  Neoplatonist Relics in Modern Persian Poetry
       Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, University of Maryland

14.15  The New Image of the Beloved in the Old Mirror: Reflections of Neoplatonic Tradition in Modern Turkish Poetry
       Mehmet Kalpakli & Neslihan Demirkol, Bilkent University Istanbul and Ankara Social University

15.00  Refreshments
15.30 Neoplatonist Echoes in Modern Arabic Poetry: The Case of Ahmad Matar
Feryal Ghazoul, The American University in Cairo

16.15 Neo-Platonists in Modern Greek Poetry
David Ricks, King’s College, University of London

17.00 Conclusion and Summing Up
Stefan Sperl, SOAS, University of London, Trevor Dadson FBA, Queen Mary
University of London and Yorgos Dedes, SOAS, University of London