

## UNITY OF THOUGHT AND WRITING: *ENN.* 6.6 AND PORPHYRY'S ARRANGEMENT OF THE *ENNEADS*

In *Vita Plotini* 24.11–14, Porphyry's statement, 'So I, as I had fifty-four treatises of Plotinus, divided them into six sets of nine (Enneads) – it gave me pleasure to find the perfection of the number six along with the nines',<sup>1</sup> has garnered many slighting remarks in the pages of Neoplatonic scholarship. Armstrong criticises Porphyry for taking 'a most unfortunate liberty' in creating 'an extremely unsystematic presentation of a systematic philosophy',<sup>2</sup> Gerson finds the arrangement to be 'a seriously disruptive division',<sup>3</sup> and O'Meara dismisses it as 'wholly artificial and sometimes misleading'.<sup>4</sup> Consequently scholars suggest two alternative organisations of the *Enneads*. The first reconstructs the conceptual unity of certain treatises, such as *Die Großschrift* (*Enn.* 3.8, 5.8, 5.5, 2.9), which Porphyry disperses throughout the collection.<sup>5</sup> The second reads the treatises in Porphyry's chronological order (listed in *VP* 4–6) in an attempt to show the development of Plotinus' philosophy itself.<sup>6</sup>

While the *communis opinio* of Porphyry's arrangement stems from our analytically trained perception of how philosophical writing should be organised, I think we must also try to understand his work within the context of both Plotinus' thought and the Neopythagorean fashion of the time. Porphyry's arrangement does not simply embellish Plotinus' corpus like the Muses' ennead, crowning the nine books of Herodotus' *Histories*:<sup>7</sup> as a student of Plotinus and a former member of the Neopythagorean school, Porphyry would have understood his task to be editing and arranging his master's works in an order complying with the tenets of the philosophy being presented. This study, therefore, will examine Porphyry's arrangement of the *Enneads* in relation to Plotinus' concepts of multiplicity and number (presented in *Enn.* 6.6) and the late Neopythagorean thought of *The Theology of Arithmetic*. Furthermore, I suggest that Aristotle's silence about the hexad and the ennead in *Met. A* and *M* grants the arrangement a programmatic significance for Neopythagorean number symbolism.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The translations are taken from A.H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, 7 vols. (Cambridge and London, 1966–88). The Greek text is according to P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer, *Plotini Opera*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1964–83).

<sup>2</sup> Respectively A.H. Armstrong, 'Plotinus', in id., *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1967), 217 and (n. 1), vol. 1, viii.

<sup>3</sup> L.P. Gerson, *Plotinus* (London and New York, 1994), xiv.

<sup>4</sup> D.J. O'Meara, *Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads* (Oxford, 1993), 10.

<sup>5</sup> Argued by Armstrong (n. 2), 217; O'Meara (n. 4), 8–10; Gerson (n. 3), xiv; J.M. Dillon, 'Plotinus at work on Platonism', *G&R* 39.2 (1992), 189–204, esp. 191. D. Roloff, *Plotin: Die Großschrift III,8–V,8–V,5–II,9* (Berlin, 1970), disregards Porphyry's arrangement and writes a commentary on the treatises as a whole. Also followed by V. Cilento, *Paideia Antigonistica* (Florence, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> O'Meara (n. 4), 9–10. For the opposite 'anti-developmental' position, see Armstrong (n. 2), 218, followed by Gerson (n. 3), xvii.

<sup>7</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia* 744B, however, sees a deeper significance in the Muses' number.

<sup>8</sup> The omission is more apparent on W. Burkert's list in *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, trans. E.L. Minar, Jr. (Cambridge, MA, 1972), 466–7, based on Aristotle and Alexander's commentary on Aristotle's text.

I. PORPHYRY AND THE *ENNEADS*

Porphyry's interest in collecting Plotinus' treatises continues the Hellenistic and Roman tradition whereby the works of Plato and Aristotle were organised by their successors – Albinus, Dercyllides, Thrasyllus, Theon of Smyrna and Andronicus, to name a few.<sup>9</sup> While all of them organised the collections at least a century after the death of Plato and Aristotle, Porphyry knew Plotinus personally. He not only collected and edited his master's treatises, but, unlike his predecessors, encouraged him to write them. Regardless of Porphyry's motives, his close association with Plotinus suggests that we should give more credit to his editorial work than we have done.<sup>10</sup>

In the beginning of *VP*, Porphyry declares Plotinus' approval of his editorial role:<sup>11</sup> 'I myself, Porphyry of Tyre, was one of Plotinus's closest friends, and he entrusted to me the editing of his writings' (*VP* 7.49–51). Considering Porphyry's aspirations to be regarded as Plotinus' intellectual heir,<sup>12</sup> we should suspect that he would use more than sheer numerical elegance in his task, especially as his flagship role as the editor of the *Enneads* was the key to his self-promotion. Towards the end of *VP*, Porphyry once again justifies his editorial authority:

He [Plotinus] himself entrusted me with the arrangement and editing of his books (τὴν διάταξιν καὶ τὴν διόρθωσιν τῶν βιβλίων ποιεῖσθαι ἡμῖν ἐπέτρεψεν), and I promised him in his lifetime and gave undertakings to our other friends that I would carry out this task. So first of all I did not think it right to leave the books in confusion in order of time as they were issued (πρῶτον μὲν τὰ βιβλία οὐ κατὰ χρόνον ἐᾶσαι φύρδην ἐκδεδομένα ἐδικαίωσα). I followed the example of Apollodorus of Athens, who collected the works of Epicharmus the comedian into ten volumes, and Andronicus the Peripatetic, who classified the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus according to subject, bringing together the discussions of related topics. (*VP* 24.2–11)<sup>13</sup>

Taken at face-value, this statement confirms Porphyry's motivation and ambition. He perceives his work on the *Enneads* as a natural continuation of the Hellenistic and Roman publishing trend. The collections of Plato's dialogues were constantly

<sup>9</sup> On the Platonists, H. Tarrant, *Thrasyllan Platonism* (Ithaca and London, 1993), 1–103. On Andronicus, J. Barnes, 'Roman Aristotle', in J. Barnes and M. Griffin (edd.), *Philosophia Togata II. Plato and Aristotle at Rome* (Oxford, 1997), 1–69 and R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), 264 and 273.

<sup>10</sup> According to *VP* 4–6, Plotinus, at a more advanced age, began to write the tractates in September of 253 and stopped only at his death in 270. On the chronology of Plotinus' writing, see Dillon (n. 5), 191. On Porphyry's edition, see M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, 'L'Édition Porphyrienne des *Ennéades*. État de la question', in L. Brisson, M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, R. Goulet, D. O'Brien (edd.), *Porphyry: La Vie de Plotin*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1982), 280–7 and 294–307.

<sup>11</sup> Gerson (n. 3), xiv: 'We should note first of all that probably owing to Plotinus' foresight in choosing an editor, especially one as able as Porphyry, we possess everything that Plotinus wrote...Among the ancient Greek philosophers, the only other one we can say this about is Plato.'

<sup>12</sup> Porphyry most likely intentionally omits the names of Plotinus' well-known pupils, Amelius and Eustochius, here. Eunapius does not mention Porphyry's edition in his *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists*. R.J. Penella, 'Greek philosophers and sophists in the fourth century A.D. Studies in Eunapius of Sardis', in *ARCA* 28 (Melksham, Wiltshire, 1990), 40.

<sup>13</sup> Both Barnes and Blumenthal note the importance of Porphyry's remark recognising Andronicus' contribution to the collection of Aristotle's works, later overshadowed by Alexander of Aphrodisias. Barnes (n. 9), 37–9; H.J. Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity: Interpretations of De Anima* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), 8, n. 6. Pfeiffer (n. 9), 264 and 273, also documents the two scholars' editorship with Porphyry's testimony in *VP*.

organised after Plato's death. But the *corpus Aristotelicum* had a less fortunate fate. After many vagaries, a number of Aristotle's texts fell into the possession of Andronicus, who unified them thematically. The references to Andronicus and Apollodorus help us understand better how Porphyry himself perceives his work, in what state he receives the treatises, and what exactly he does to them. Porphyry organises the tractates thematically in Andronicus' fashion and divides them in a significant number of volumes *qua* Apollodorus.<sup>14</sup> In his mind, he does not compare his work to the standard work of Plato's editors, who edited already established collections, but to the work of the editors who made collections from scratch.

Since Plotinus' writings grew naturally but sporadically from his lectures over a period of seventeen years, the treatises obviously needed editing and organisation. The phrase *κατὰ χρόνους ἔᾶσαι φύρδην* (VP 24.5–6) not only denotes the disorderly condition in which Porphyry receives the treatises but also the condition which prompts Plotinus to ask his disciple to publish them in *διάταξις* and *διόρθωσις* (VP 24.2). Armstrong, remarking that *διόρθωσις* 'need imply no more than the correction of the spelling and supply of punctuation', does not comment on the connotations of *διάταξις*, despite the word order in which the latter immediately precedes the former.<sup>15</sup> The combined use of the two terms and the orthographic meaning of *διόρθωσις* suggest that we should interpret *διάταξις* to mean, specifically, arranging the treatises.<sup>16</sup>

At first glance, Porphyry's organisation of the treatises from the easiest to the most difficult topics does not directly reflect the division of philosophy into ethics, physics and logic that governs Plato's collections. Albinus' organisation adapts this tripartite division and further divides Plato's works into five subtypes of peirastic, maientic, hyphegetic, logical, and anatreptic dialogues. Thrasyllus' division, followed later by Theon of Smyrna, groups the dialogues into tetralogies following the pattern of three tragedies and a satyr play.<sup>17</sup> Edwards recognises that Porphyry's arrangement moves in a similar direction but sees stronger kinship with the division of body, soul and spirit, found in Origin's *First Principles* (4.2.4).<sup>18</sup> As we will see later, his conjecture is all the more convincing in that it captures the anagogical path on which the treatises unfold the essence of Plotinus' universe,<sup>19</sup> because Porphyry believes that his editorship is central to the teaching, promotion, and preservation of Plotinus' philosophy.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Barnes (n. 9), 37–8.

<sup>15</sup> According to Armstrong (n. 2, 1967), 217, there is 'no reason to suppose that Porphyry did not do his work as editor conscientiously and accurately'. But he also judges that 'Porphyry did no more than correct the spelling, etc., of his master's carelessly written and unrevised manuscripts.'

<sup>16</sup> Leopardi translates them as *ordo* and *emendatio* in C. Moreschini (ed.), *Porphyrii de Vita Plotini et Ordine Librorum Eius* (Florence, 1982).

<sup>17</sup> Tarrant (n. 9), 41 and 89–107.

<sup>18</sup> M. Edwards, *Neoplatonic Saints. The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus by their Students* (Liverpool, 2000), 51, n. 309.

<sup>19</sup> Below, p. 283–5.

<sup>20</sup> Eustochius (c. 270) published another edition of the *Enneads*, quoted by Eusebius in *PE*. But all extant manuscripts of the *Enneads* transmit the treatises according to Porphyry's edition. P. Henry, *Recherches sur la 'Préparation Évangélique' d'Eusèbe et l'édition perdue des œuvres de Plotin publiée par Eustochius* (Paris, 1935), H.-R. Schwyzer, 'Plotinos', in *Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie*, vol. 41 (München, 1951), cols. 488–90, and Goulet-Cazé, 'L'édition d'Eustochius', in *Porphyry: La Vie de Plotin* (n. 10), 287–94; for a concordance of the two editions, see P. Henry, *États du texte de Plotin* (Paris, 1937).

II. *ENN.* 6.6

Why should we look next into Plotinus' concepts of multiplicity and number for a possible answer to Porphyry's arrangement? Because the two concepts are the foundation of Plotinus' understanding of the composition of the universe and the building blocks of the intelligible realm and the sensible world. If we are to concern ourselves with studying the ordering of a multitude of treatises into a whole, then focussing on Plotinus' signature view of the universe as one-in-many seems to be a promising start.

The two concepts are discussed throughout the *Enneads*, but *Ennead* 6.6 is specifically devoted to them. Porphyry lists the treatise with the title *ΠΕΡΙ ΑΡΙΘΜΩΝ* and makes it the fifty-first treatise in his arrangement<sup>21</sup>, thus placing it among the most difficult topics for discussion pertinent to the One. On Porphyry's chronological list (*VP* 5), it is the thirty-fourth treatise immediately succeeding the *Großschrift* dealing with the core of Plotinus' metaphysics. Characteristically, given his aporetic method of examination, the treatise opens with a question which itself defines multiplicity: 'Is multiplicity a separation from the One (τὸ πλῆθος ἀπόστασις τοῦ ἐνός)...and are we evil when we are multiplicity?' (*Enn.* 6.6.1.1–3)<sup>22</sup> Considering the strong Platonic and Neopythagorean views on the subject, Plotinus' answer is not surprising.<sup>23</sup> The 'separation from the One' is an ontologically deteriorating act in which 'a thing is multiple when, unable to tend to itself, it pours out and is extended in scattering; and when it is utterly deprived of the one in its outpouring it becomes multiplicity' (*Enn.* 6.6.1.4–7).<sup>24</sup> If we compare the fragmented nature of multiplicity to the absolute unity of the One, πλῆθος is everything other than the One. In fact, πλῆθος is the universe. But, breaking the Pythagorean tradition that views multiplicity as complete evil, Plotinus ameliorates multiplicity's lack of absolute ontological unity by explaining that the universe does not expand searching for anything else but itself (*Enn.* 6.6.1.10–14).<sup>25</sup> As a result, this desire turns multiplicity inward (τὸ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνδὸν ἦν, *Enn.* 6.1.16), connects it, albeit faintly (ἀμυδρῶς, *Enn.* 6.6.18.24), with the One and thus preserves it from 'complete separation from the One' (ἀπόστασις παντελής, *Enn.* 6.6.1.1–2), that is, infinity and non-existence. This inward desire induces order and correspondence in multiplicity 'because what needed ordered beauty was many' (ὅτι πολὺ τὸ δεόμενον κόσμου, *Enn.* 6.6.1.25–28) and creates κόσμος. From the intelligible beings to their material images, order arranges multiplicity into a one-in-many universe.

From Porphyry's editorial point of view, if the *Enneads* are going to present Plotinus' view of the universe, regardless of whether Plotinus cares or not, they can do so only if they are published as a multitude of treatises, organised in a way which demonstrates their unity. For Porphyry, to induce κόσμος in the presentation of the

<sup>21</sup> Edwards (n. 18), 52, n. 312: 'The late position of this treatise justifies the numerological interests of the life [*VP*].'

<sup>22</sup> Armstrong's translation modified.

<sup>23</sup> A. Alexandrakis, 'Neopythagorizing influences on Plotinus' mystical notion of numbers', *Philosophical Inquiry* 20.1–2 (1998), 101–10.

<sup>24</sup> In the foundation of Plotinus' ἀπόστασις is Numenius' idea of the First God as 'stability' (στάσις, fr. 15, Des Places). The antithesis between στάσις and ἀπόστασις in Numenius and Plotinus characterises the ontological instability of multiplicity.

<sup>25</sup> For the outward and inward stages of separation, see J. Bertier, L. Brisson, A. Charles-Saget, J. Pépin, H.-D. Saffrey, A.-Ph. Segonds (edd.), *Plotin. Traité Sur les nombres (Ennéade VI.6 [34])* (Paris, 1980), 32.

treatises is to arrange them in a way which ‘inwardly’, through introspection, reveals to the reader the essence of Plotinus’ universe. If we consider each *Ennead* as a whole, we find that the first *Ennead* includes works on the spiritual nature of man; the second *Ennead* deals with physical matter; the third explains how the physical world relates to the intelligible realm; the fourth discusses the sensible and intelligible nature of soul; the fifth espouses Intellect as an intermediary between Soul and the One; and the sixth *Ennead* culminates in the discussion of the most difficult concepts pertinent to the intelligible realm, including that of number, and the One itself.<sup>26</sup> This thematic arrangement moves inward from the sense-perceptible multiplicity through the hypostases of Soul and Intellect to culminate in the subject of the One.<sup>27</sup> It turns the multiplicity of the *Enneads* inward towards their most central topic.

Next, if we, too, follow inward the organisation of Plotinus’ universe, we will discover that number brings order and beauty to the disunited multiplicity and builds correspondence into the structure of the universe. Contrary to Aristotle and in support of Plato, Plotinus explains that there are two kinds of number: the substantial number (οὐσιώδης ἀριθμός) as an underlying principle of existence of every being (Absolute Being, Intellect, the Complete Living Being, all beings, Soul);<sup>28</sup> and the monadic number (μοναδικὸς ἀριθμός) as the copy of the substantial number, which enumerates individual units (*Enn.* 6.6.9.34–35). The former determines the number of all intelligible beings and limits the monadic number of their enmattered copies.<sup>29</sup>

According to Plotinus, ‘the beings have their foundation in [number], and their source and root and principle’ (*Enn.* 6.6.9.38–9), and the substantial number ‘gives birth to multiplicity itself’ (ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν τὸ πλῆθος, *Enn.* 6.6.9.27).<sup>30</sup> It arranges all intelligible beings in a corresponding unity in which the Absolute Being is unified number (ἀριθμὸς ἡνωμένος, *Enn.* 6.6.9.29), Intellect is ‘number moving in itself’ (ἀριθμὸς ἐν ἑαυτῷ κινούμενος, *Enn.* 6.6.9.30–1), the beings are number which has unfolded (τὰ δὲ ὄντα ἐξεληλιγμένους, *Enn.* 6.6.9.30), and the Complete Living Being is ‘comprising number’ (τὸ δε ζῶν ἀριθμὸς περιέχων, *Enn.* 6.6.9.31). Weaving the structure of the intelligible realm, substantial number unfolds and enfolds all intelligible beings from the Absolute Being to all beings through the Complete Living Being. It arranges, according to number, the multiplicity of that which has separated from the One, into κόσμος.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> This progression does not follow the tripartite division of the Platonic corpus. The part dealing with logic is replaced by metaphysics and spirituality. See above, p. 279. O’Meara (n. 4), 9 describes it as ‘a path for the ascent of the soul of the reader, going from the first steps to the ultimate goal of Plotinian philosophy’.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. E. Bréhier, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, trans. J. Thomas (Chicago and London, 1958), 30: ‘The style of Plotinus is one of the most beautiful we have because it always expresses the movement of a living thought.’

<sup>28</sup> The substantial number is the underlying principle of existence of the intelligible beings, because number is conceived ‘itself by itself’ (*Enn.* 6.6.4.10), exists in the intelligible realm as ‘power of number’ (ἡ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ δύναμις, *Enn.* 6.6.9.26), and is the actual activity of being (ἡ ἐνέργεια, *Enn.* 6.6.9.28).

<sup>29</sup> This does not mean that the individual number of the material copy of something is limited to the substantial number, but that the overall number of material things is limited to the number of the intelligible beings.

<sup>30</sup> *Enn.* 6.6.3.2: ὁ γὰρ ὑφέστηκε καὶ ἔστιν, ἀριθμῷ κατείληπται ἡδὲ; *Enn.* 6.6.10.1: ἐστὼς ὅν τὸ ὄν ἐν πλῆθει ἀριθμός.

<sup>31</sup> *Enn.* 6.6.9.27–8: ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ ἢ ἡ ἐνέργεια ἐνέργεια ὁ ἀριθμὸς ἔσται.

Given Plotinus' understanding of the composition of the universe, the meaning of Porphyry's arrangement of the *Enneads* emerges as a multiplicity, ordered by number. Just as the substantial number organises the intelligible realm as many-in-one, so does its material image, the monadic number, arrange the multiplicity of the treatises into κόσμος, which is turned inward towards its intelligible essence. If the treatises were going to present Plotinus' complete view of how the universe was organised, then they could do so only if they recreated its organisation. By ordering the tractates into six *Enneads*, the monadic number, as all material things, conveys, yet 'faintly', the organisation of Plotinus' universe.

### III. 'SIX ALONG WITH THE NINES'

Recent scholarship on the non-discursive nature of Neoplatonic thinking has demonstrated that 'the language of Neoplatonism is the language of symbols'.<sup>32</sup> While the relation between text and symbol is more apparent in the later Neoplatonic tradition, Porphyry's contribution to this tradition will remain inevitably opaque due to the paucity of evidence in his extant works. Nevertheless, being a 'Plotinian Platonist',<sup>33</sup> Porphyry is intimately familiar with the works of his contemporary Neopythagoreans. In his lengthy quotation of Longinus' letter in *VP* 20–1, he mentions not a few, but all the names of the 'Neopythagorean underground',<sup>34</sup> – Cronius, Moderatus, Thrasyllus, Numenius, and Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plotinus himself (*VP* 3).<sup>35</sup> With this entourage in mind, the question of Porphyry's arrangement of Plotinus' works must be related to the traditional Pythagorean and Neopythagorean numeric symbolism.<sup>36</sup>

The later Neoplatonic and Neopythagorean tradition elucidates what Porphyry might have implied by his notorious perfect ratio of six and nine. Despite the scarcity of original Pythagorean writings, we can still trace the development of the Pythagorean numerical canon from Philolaus to Proclus. In this continuous span, Aristotle, of course, first attempts to systemise the circulating Pythagorean views on the metamathematical and metaphysical correspondence between numbers and the universe. Although Aristotle's work on the Pythagoreans is lost, he discusses Pythagorean numerical symbolism at considerable length throughout *Metaphysics* books *A* and *M*. With the help of Alexander's commentary on Aristotle's text, Burkert reconstructs Aristotle's list in which the monad is νοῦς and οὐσία, the dyad is δόξα, the triad symbolises a whole with a beginning, middle and end, the tetrad is justice, the pentad is marriage, the hebdomad is opportunity, and the decad is the perfect number.<sup>37</sup> The symbolism of each number on this list is not our concern now; I mention the entire list to point out that there are three obvious omissions, two of

<sup>32</sup> S. Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius* (Cambridge, 2000), 117.

<sup>33</sup> J. Barnes, *Porphyry: Introduction, Translated with an Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford, 2003), xii.

<sup>34</sup> To use Dillon's quip: J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, NY, 1996<sup>2</sup>), 341–83.

<sup>35</sup> L. Brisson, 'Prosopographie', in *Porphyry: La Vie de Plotin*, vol. 1 (n. 10), 56–113.

<sup>36</sup> Burkert, (n. 8), 465–82, argues that the mystical notion of numbers as holding some transcendent truths about the universe does not originate with, but is articulated most eloquently by, Orpheus and Pythagoras.

<sup>37</sup> In his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Alexander clarifies Aristotle's text by matching the Pythagorean numbers to Aristotle's descriptions. For a complete discussion, see Burkert *ibid.*, 466–7.

which are of a primary concern for us. Aristotle not only omits the hexad, the ogdoad, and the ennead from the list but does not even mention them anywhere in his works, not even in the *Metaphysics*.<sup>38</sup> No matter what the actual reasons for Aristotle's conspicuous lacuna are, we have no reason to think that Aristotle omits them intentionally. Most likely the three numbers were not a part of the mainstream Pythagorean numerology yet. This is confirmed by *Theol. Ar.* 74.10, which unreasonably attributes to Philolaus the derivative sequence of numbers and the idea that the hexad represents ensoulment (ἐμψυχώσεις, *D.-K.* A.12.3).<sup>39</sup>

In fact, ever since Plato crafted the cosmogonical role of soul in the *Timaeus*, the concept constantly gained popularity in Middle Platonic and Neopythagorean circles. While Philo of Alexandria places the hexad in the foundation of universal order, Moderatus of Gades calls it 'a marriage' and 'Aphrodite'.<sup>40</sup> The *Theology of Arithmetic* explains these allegories better by defining the hexad as 'the first perfect number' (*Theol. Ar.* 33.2), which 'arises out of the first even and first odd numbers, male and female' (*Theol. Ar.* 33.5–6), and by which 'the universe is ensouled and harmonised' (κατ' αὐτὴν ἐμψυχώσθαι καὶ καθηρμόσθαι τὸν κόσμον, *Theol. Ar.* 33.22–3).<sup>41</sup> The hexad is the first perfect number, because it is a result of the sum or multiplication of the first three numbers (1+2+3 or 1x2x3) and symbolises the harmonious unity of the primary opposites of male and female.<sup>42</sup> It also ascribes to soul the animation of the universe brought together as 'wholeness of limbs' (*Theol. Ar.* 36.31).<sup>43</sup> The hexad is κόσμος because 'the universe, like 6, is often seen as composed of opposites in harmony, and the summation of the word "universe" is 600' (καὶ γὰρ ὁ κόσμος, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ 6, ἐξ ἐναντίων πολλάκις ὥφθη συνεστῶς καθ' ἁρμονίαν, καὶ ἡ συναρίθμησις τοῦ κόσμου ὀνόματος ἑξακόσια ἔστιν, *Theol. Ar.* 37.8–12). As a perfect number, the hexad symbolises order of multiplicity and harmony of opposites.

If we view Porphyry's arrangement of the treatises according to the Neopythagorean hexad, the organisation of the *Enneads* by the number 6 overtly corresponds to the organising role Soul plays in the composition of the universe. Plotinus does not mention the hexad anywhere in the *Enneads*. Nevertheless, when he explains that substantial number is the underlying principle of every intelligible being in *Enn.* 6.6, he states that, if soul is substance, then, soul is number too (ἀριθμὸς ἄρα ἡ ψυχὴ, εἴπερ οὐσία, *Enn.* 6.6.16.45).<sup>44</sup> Soul, as number, is the primary underlying

<sup>38</sup> With the exception of the hexad, mentioned twice as a payment of six drachmas in *Oec.* 1347a.34 and 1353a.18 (Bekker).

<sup>39</sup> *Ti.* 43b.2–5. C.A. Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton. Pythagorean and Presocratic* (Cambridge, 1993), 356–9.

<sup>40</sup> *de Op. Mundi* 89.1 (Reimer): ὁ σύμπας κόσμος ἐτελειώθη κατὰ τὴν ἑξάδος ἀριθμοῦ τελείου φύσιν; Moderatus, *FPhGr.* fr. 3.5: ἐπωνόμαζεν...τὴν ἑξάδα Γάμον καὶ Ἀφροδίτην.

<sup>41</sup> R. Waterfield's translation, *The Theology of Arithmetic* (Grand Rapids, 1988); Greek according to V. de Falco, [*Iamblichus*]: *Theologumena Arithmeticae*, U. Klein rev. (Leipzig, 1975). On perfect numbers, see Arist. *Cael.* A1.268.a9; Euclid, *Elementa* 7.22 (Heiberg); Theon of Smyrna, *Expos.* p. 74, 4–21 (Dupuis); Nicom. *Ar.* 1.16, p. 39, 4–47 (Hoche); Iambl. *de vita Pyth.* 152 (Deubner).

<sup>42</sup> *Theol. Ar.* 34.14–15: τὰς μὲν πρώτας αὐτῇ τῇ ἑξάδι α' β' γ'; *Theol. Ar.* 36.23–7: Πρώτη γὰρ ἡ ἑξὰς πυθμενικωτάτη περιέσχεν ἀριθμητικὴν μεσότητα: ...τὴν πρωτίστην δέχουτο ἔμβασαν καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ εἰδοποιήσιν.

<sup>43</sup> Later in the same text, we find the etymology of the hexad from ἕξις ζωτική meaning 'the living condition' or ensoulment (*Theol. Ar.* 64.3).

<sup>44</sup> Xenocr., fr. 60 (Heinze): Ξενοκράτης δὲ λέγων τὴν ψυχὴν ἀριθμὸν ἑαυτὸν κινουῦντα αὐτοκίνητον αὐτὴν ἔλεγεν; also reported by Arist. *Met.* A5.985b30. Plotinus on the number of the soul, *Enn.* 5.1.5.9, 6.2.22.21, 6.5.9.14, 6.6.16.45. Cf. *Theol. Ar.* 33.22–3.

principle that orders the multiplicity of the universe. For Plotinus, as for Moderatus earlier, Soul is also Aphrodite (*ψυχὴ ... Ἀφροδίτη μὲν ἔστι*, *Enn.* 3.5.9.33). Since a part of Soul remains in the intelligible realm and a part of it descends into the sensible world, Soul unites the material world with its intelligible paradigm by bringing order and correspondence to the universe, and because of this, Plotinus concludes that every soul is Aphrodite (*ἔστι πᾶσα ψυχὴ Ἀφροδίτη*, *Enn.* 6.9.9.31).<sup>45</sup> For him, as for the Neopythagoreans, Soul is order, number, and the intermediary between the visible and invisible realms. But he does not compile a list of the Pythagorean numerical canon in the *Enneads* as this is neither in accord with his interests nor with his style. His primary goal is to explain the role of the substantial number in the intelligible realm and not the role of its material monadic image. Thus, we should not expect that he would refer explicitly to Soul as the hexad in *Enn.* 6.6, or elsewhere.

For Porphyry, things are different. He not only comes from a strong Neopythagorean background, like Plotinus, but also is responding to the revival of Pythagorean numerical symbolism in later Neoplatonism and Neopythagoreanism. Porphyry's arrangement of the treatises into six groups embodies non-discursively Plotinus' understanding that Soul arranges that which has separated from the One into a one-in-many universe. He animates, to use Neopythagorean language, the multiplicity of the treatises to recreate the organic wholeness of Plotinus' universe.

The numerical symbolism of the ennead is Neopythagorean too. Later Neoplatonists call the ennead 'the greatest of numbers within the decad and an unsurpassable limit' (*μέγιστον τῶν ἐντὸς δεκάδος ἀριθμῶν καὶ πέρας ἀνυπερβλήτων*, *Theol. Ar.* 56.24–5). The limiting characteristic of the ennead is most suitable for enclosing the number of the individual treatises within itself. While the hexad represents the formation of number and order (*τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ εἰδοποίησιν*, *Theol. Ar.* 36.27), the ennead 'marks the end of the formation of specific identities' (*ὀρίζει γοῦν τὴν εἰδοποίησιν*, *Theol. Ar.* 56.25). As the hexad, like Soul, organises the groups of the treatises in the body of the collection, the ennead limits the number of treatises within each group to the last original number.<sup>46</sup> As the ennead 'brings numbers together and makes them play in concert' (*Theol. Ar.* 57.21–4), so does the ennead bring together the multiplicity of the treatises and turns them inward to its source.<sup>47</sup> While the hexad inscribes the cosmogonical role of soul on the *Enneads*, the ennead symbolises the completion of the universe. This is why the treatises are not organised in nine groups of six but in six groups of nine. The enneads of the treatises, circumscribed and thus animated by the hexad of the soul, enclose everything on the subject of the universe from beginning to end.<sup>48</sup> There is nothing more to be said about it outside of Plotinus' exegesis and outside of the number of the *Enneads*, homonymy intended. In the arrangement of the *Enneads*, Porphyry reflects

<sup>45</sup> Explicating Plato's myth of the birth of Eros and Aphrodite (*Symp.* 203B), he distinguishes two types of Aphrodite: the heavenly Aphrodite (*Ἀφροδίτη οὐρανία*) as the Soul, always remaining in the intelligible realm, and the vulgar Aphrodite (*Ἀφροδίτη πάνδημος*) as the soul, descending into the material world (*Enn.* 6.9.9.29–30).

<sup>46</sup> *Theol. Ar.* 57.7–8: 'There is a natural progression up to it, but after it there is repetition' (*μέχρι μὲν γὰρ αὐτῆς φυσικὴ πρόβασις, μετὰ δ' αὐτὴν παλιμπετής*).

<sup>47</sup> Porphyry embeds the etymology of the ennead as 'if it were the "henad" of everything within it, by derivation from the "one"' (*ἐννέας μὲν κέκληται οἷον εἰς ἑνὸς ἢ πάντα ἐντὸς αὐτῆς κατὰ παρωνυμίαν τοῦ ἑν*, *Theol. Ar.* 57.4–5) by placing the treatise, devoted to the One (*τὸ ἓν*), last in his arrangement.

<sup>48</sup> In Armstrong's words, *Enn.* 6.6 explains 'how the reality proceeds in due order from its source, the One or Good, and how the human spirit may find its way back to that source'.



the growing importance of the hexad and the ennead before their formal canonisation in the *Theology of Arithmetic*.<sup>49</sup>

Porphry fuses Plotinus' philosophy with Neopythagorean numerical symbolism to reveal the central organising theme of Plotinus' universe. His arrangement of the treatises encrypts numerically the perfect unity of Plotinus' universe, for which *Ennead* 6.6 provides the conceptual blueprint. Plotinus' concept of *κόσμος* as 'multiplicity ordered by number' is the reason that Porphyry enjoys the perfection of the mathematical ratio of six-times-nine. The *Enneads*, like the universe, unfold outward into multiplicity, while Porphyry's arrangement, in turn, enfolds the treatises inward to create an image of the universe according to Plotinus. Porphyry's arrangement of the *Enneads* in six groups of nines, therefore, is not 'arbitrary' but mandatory for understanding the universe of Plotinus' thought.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> With the exception of Plutarch (see n. 7), the philosophical meaning of the ennead is not discussed until Syrianus, in *Metaph.* 134.14 (Kroll) and especially Proclus, in *R.* vol. 2, 237.19 (Kroll), in *Cra.* 176.62 (Pasquali), in *Ti.*, vol. 2.127.4 (Diehl).

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