

lifestyle behaviors that have intensified a spreading culture war in the United States. Political parties, religious bodies, age groups, and even geographical regions have become polarized over these issues. Anyone who wants to track the direction of the United States at this millennial divide must attend to this unsavory issue.

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[P. MESSBARGER]

PORPHYRIAN TREE

A porphyrian tree is a diagrammatic representation of the relationship of GENUS, SPECIES, and individual in the category of SUBSTANCE. Based on a passage of the *Isagoge* of PORPHYRY, it became common in logic texts of the Middle Ages and was called the *scala predicamentalis* (κλίμαξ). In its usual form, the predicamental line of the supreme genus, substance, is subdivided into its subjective parts by the specific differences given in the left-hand column. These divide the genus and constitute the species. In treating rational animal as a genus, Porphyry followed the Stoics, who posited the existence of another kind of rational being, eternal in time, with a body of a tenuous airlike matter. This type of division could be pursued in any of the CATEGORIES OF BEING.

See Also: PREDICABLES.

[W. BAUMGAERTNER]

PORPHYRY

Neoplatonic philosopher greatly influencing the development of philosophical and theological thought at the close of antiquity; b. Tyre, 234; d. Rome?, after 301. At Athens, in 254, he became a pupil and constant friend of the Platonist Longinus Cassius. In 263 he went to Rome to join the school of PLOTINUS, whose teaching led him astray from the outset. Yet he was not slow in becoming one of the most important members of this school. Five years later, possibly as a result of his intellectual labors, he fell victim to neurasthenia and contemplated suicide. Under advice from Plotinus, who discerned his difficulty, he went to Marsala (Lilybaeum) in Sicily. After Plotinus's death (270), he returned to Rome, became head of the school, and married Marcella, the widow of a philosopher.

Porphyry wrote an immense opus, comprising almost 70 treatises; only fragments of this work remain. It

is not quite correct to hold, as many do, that Porphyry was content merely with popularizing Plotinus's teaching. Besides the edition of the *Enneads*, the only Plotinian thought in Porphyry's writings is that in the *Sententiae ad intellegibilia ducentes*, whose title J. Bidez has rendered "Treasury of thoughts for a soul wishing to arrive at the intelligible" (*Vie* 106). Here Porphyry reproduces complete sentences from Plotinus but often adds his own reflections. One can detect that, while seeking to systematize Plotinus, Porphyry distorts his thought, notably as regards the distinction of virtues into political, purificatory, contemplative, and paradigmatic (*Sent.* 32). Although he proposed to make a résumé of Plotinus (*Enn.* 1.2), Porphyry actually presented a quite different teaching. Yet this distinction among the virtues prevailed throughout the Middle Ages.

Generally, Porphyry seems not to have understood Plotinus perfectly, notably as regards the latter's teaching concerning the transcendence of the One in relation to the intelligible world. He seems instead to have remained partially faithful to the traditional Platonism of Longinus. When Plotinus violently criticized the Aristotelian teaching in the *Categories*, Porphyry wrote a commentary on this treatise and actually refuted Plotinus's objections. His *Isagoge*, a sort of introduction to Aristotle's *Organon*, systematizes the teaching on the PREDICABLES. By asking whether GENUS and SPECIES are realities subsistent in themselves or mere conceptions of the mind, Porphyry proposed the problem of UNIVERSALS to the Middle Ages. Moreover, he commented upon many dialogues of Plato, especially the *Timaeus* (traces of this commentary are found in CALCIDIUS, MACROBIUS, and PROCLUS) and the *Parmenides* (14 pages of this have been recently identified in a palimpsest at Turin). Porphyry identifies the first One, corresponding to the first hypostasis in the *Parmenides*, with the act of being, and the second One, corresponding to the second hypostasis with the subject receiving being. This distinction, found also in MARIUS VICTORINUS, was used by BOETHIUS in his *De hebdomadibus* and was eventually formulated in the Middle Ages as the difference between EXISTENCE (*esse*) and what exists (*quod est*).

Porphyry was much preoccupied throughout his life with moral and religious questions concerning the salvation of the soul and spiritual cult. Bidez maintains that his thought on this subject underwent an evolution. Before his encounter with Plotinus, he had written a work titled "Philosophy Drawn from the Oracles," a collection of oracles gleaned from various centers of cult. Here Porphyry professes a strong belief in the most uncouth superstitions and practices of paganism. He attacks Christianity, while admitting that Christ could have been a superior man. After meeting Plotinus, however, he dis-