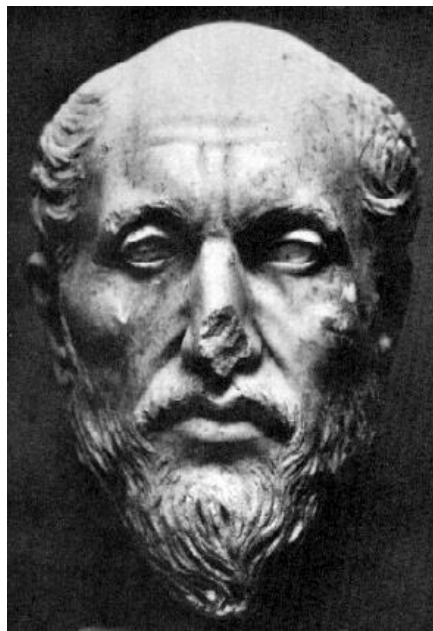




# The presence of Plotinus: the self, contemplation, and spiritual exercise in the *Enneads*



16-18 June 2021 (online)

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## THE SUBJECT OF THE CONFERENCE

In the center of “The School of Athens”, a famous fresco by Raphael, we can see Plato and Aristotle, the two philosophers who may have been indeed the greatest thinkers of antiquity. However, the scholarly endeavor of the last century has demonstrated with increasing consistency that Plotinus – although his name and legacy is not so popular – could well stand next to them, especially so, because he attempted to synthesize the views of those great masters of the past. His presence in the Western philosophy was, perhaps, a more silent one, but also very influential. Since Late Antiquity, Christian, Jewish and Muslim philosophers were inspired by him as well as Renaissance Platonists and German Idealists. In year 2020, 1750 years had passed by since Plotinus died in a Campanian villa during what seemed to be the last wave of an ancient pandemic, usually called the “Cyprian plague”. Or, as he saw it, since his final ascent from “the divine in us to the divine in the All”. The conference was planned for the year 2020 to celebrate Plotinus’ presence in the Western tradition, but had to be postponed for obvious reasons.

One of the topics which has recently attracted a lot of scholarly attention is Plotinus’ view of the self. It seems original, interesting and refreshing in the midst of our “culture of narcissism”, where we tend to be preoccupied more than ever by concepts such as the self, self-realization, identity, and individualism. What we would like to discuss, however, is not only Plotinus’ philosophical view of the self, but the connections between his concept of the self and the practical dimension of his philosophy, famously described by Pierre Hadot as “spiritual exercise” and “the way of life”. During the three days of our online meeting, we will explore the connections between Plotinus’ view of the self, its contemplative knowledge of the divine realities, which is the goal of philosophical life, and the practical methods of arriving at this knowledge and at the transformation of the self.

Those interested in attending the conference remotely, please, contact Mateusz Stróżyński for further details (email address: [monosautos@gmail.com](mailto:monosautos@gmail.com)).

# PROGRAM

## Day 1: The self

Wednesday, 16 June 2021

Session Chair: Mateusz Stróżyński

- 14h30 (CEST)                      **Opening of the conference**
- 15h00                                **Keynote lecture**  
*The demiurgic Intellect and individual intellects in Plotinus*  
Lloyd Gerson (University of Toronto)
- 16h30                                Break
- 17h00                                *Plotinus: the self as the logos of the particularized soul*  
Siobhan Doyle (University College Dublin)
- 18h00                                *The self as potential for self-consciousness and independence*  
Yady Oren (University of Jerusalem)

## Day 2 : Contemplation

Thursday, 17 June 2021

Session Chair: Maria Marcinkowska-Rosót

- 15h00                                **Keynote lecture**  
*Beginning to resemble the ground on which you walk: Ennead V.8.10.30*  
Sara Ahbel-Rappe (University of Michigan)
- 16h30                                Break
- 17h00                                *The dimmest intellection: Nature's creation and awareness in Plotinus*  
Ágoston Guba (Gyula Moravcsik Institute, RCH, ELKH.)
- 18h00                                *Beauty and spiritual exercises in the ascent towards God in Plotinus*  
Luciana Gabriela Santoprete (Laboratoire d'Études sur les Monothéismes, CNRS)

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# Day 3: Spiritual Exercise

Friday, 18 June 2021

Session Chair: Krystyna Bartol

- 15h00            **Keynote lecture**  
*Rhetoric, philosophy, and spiritual exercise in Plotinus*  
Christian Tornau (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg)
- 16h30            Break
- 17h00            *Everywhere and nowhere: the textual indeterminacy of the undescended soul in Plotinus as performative anagogic writing*  
Nicholas Banner (Independent)
- 18h00            *Imagination and spiritual exercise in Plotinus*  
Mateusz Stróżyński (Adam Mickiewicz University)
- 19h00            **Closing remarks**