



BRITISH  
ACADEMY

*for the humanities and social sciences*

## **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 introduce the Greek origins of Neoplatonism 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: The One and the Self in Neoplatonism  
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: Ziad Elmarsafy, King's College London
- 13.30 Neoplatonist Concepts in 13<sup>th</sup> Century Arabic Mystical Poetry  
Stefan Sperl, SOAS, University of London
- 14.15 « Let us fly from the forms of beauty to the Creator of all beauty » : Neo-Platonic themes in the poetic works of 'Abderrhamân Jâmî  
Leili Anvar, INALCO, Paris
- 15.00 *Refreshments*
- 15.30 *Nostro intelletto si profonda tanto. Paradiso, l 8 and its Philosophical Background*  
Cristina 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*

Friday, 10 November 2017

- 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 Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid
- 10.30 *Refreshments*

- 11.00 Karaites Poems about the Nature of the Soul from the Muslim East, Byzantium and Eastern Europe  
Joachim Yeshaya, University of Leuven
- 11.45 Ottoman Poetry: Where the Neoplatonic Dissolves into an Emotional Script for Life.  
Walter Andrews, University of Washington - Paper to be presented by Mehmet Kalpaklı, Bilkent University, Ankara
- 12.30 *Lunch*
- Session Four: Neoplatonism and Gender Identity in Early Modern Love Lyric**  
To illustrate and compare relevant examples of 16<sup>th</sup> century Turkish, Italian, English and Spanish verse  
Chair: Peter Robinson, University of Reading
- 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*
- 15.30 Italian Neoplatonism and Sixteenth-Century English Verse  
John Roe, University of York
- 16.15 Negotiating Difference: Neoplatonism and the Discourse of Desire in the Early Modern Spanish Love Lyric  
Julian Weiss, King's College, University of London
- 17.00 *Close of second day*
- 19.30 'Songs of Songs'\*  
Poetic triptych with voices, songs and music based on texts in Hebrew, Castilian and Persian, performed by Leili Anvar, Frédéric Ferney, Renaud Garcia-Fons and Solea Garcia-Fons.  
Venue: Brunei Gallery, SOAS. Free entrance for conference delegates.
- \*Sponsored by the Iran Heritage Foundation and the AHRC Project *Language Acts and Worldmaking*

Saturday, 11 November 2017

***(Please note that this third day is being held at SOAS and that separate registration is required)\****

- 9.30                      *Registration*
- 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, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London
- 10.00                      Poetry and Ishraqi Illuminationism among the Esoteric Zoroastrians of Mughal India  
Carl W Ernst, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- 10.45                      Neoplatonic and Sufi Approaches to Beauty: The Cases of Plotinus and Rūzbihān Baqlī  
Kazuyo Murata, King's College, University of London
- 11.30                      *Refreshments*
- 12.00                      The Christian Neoplatonism of Francisco de Aldana in the *Carta para Arias Montano*  
Terence O'Reilly, University College, Cork
- 12.45                      La erótica del infinito: Neoplatonismo, Cábala y Sufismo en la obra de José Ángel Valente  
Claudio Rodríguez Fer, University of Santiago de Compostela
- 13.30                      *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
- 14.30                      Neoplatonist Relics in Modern Persian Poetry  
Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, University of Maryland
- 15.15                      The New Image of the Beloved in the Old Mirror: Reflections of Neoplatonic Tradition in Modern Turkish Poetry  
Mehmet Kalpaklı & Neslihan Demirkol, Bilkent University, Ankara and Ankara Social Sciences University
- 16.00                      *Refreshments*
- 16.30                      Neoplatonist Echoes in Modern Arabic Poetry: The Case of Muhammad Afifi Matar  
Ferial Ghazoul, The American University in Cairo

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

18.00 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

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