Porphyry Malchus Encyclopedia Article

Porphyry Malchus

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Syrian philosopher noted for his mathematical commentaries. A student and close associate of Plotinus (205-270), the founder of Neoplatonism, Porphyry tried to bring together the ideas of Plato (427-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). His commentary on the latter's *Categories* influenced the development of logic, while his writing on the *Elements* of Euclid (c. 325-c. 250 B.C.) apparently provided Pappus (fl. c. 320) with a principal source. Porphyry also wrote a biography of Pythagoras (c. 580-c. 500 B.C.) Among his students was Iamblichus (fl. c. 320), who took a very different, and less scientific, approach to mathematics than his teacher.