

UNIVERSITÄT SALZBURG  
Fachbereich Altertumswissenschaften  
Klassische Philologie und Wirkungsgeschichte der Antike

E i n l a d u n g

Montag, dem 14. Mai 2007, 18.30 Uhr, SR 0.18  
Klassische Philologie und Wirkungsgeschichte der Antike  
(Residenzplatz 1, Stiege I, Erdgeschoß)

**Prof. Dr. William FRANKE**  
(Vanderbilt University / Universität Salzburg)

*Porphyry and the Philosophical Criticism of Literature*

The poetic text (Homer's description of the cave near the harbor of Phorcys) serves as a lattice work for complex doctrinal expositions that are not in any way part of the experience of reading the poetry but part of the system of the universe that perhaps all sorts of search for wisdom, poetry and philosophy alike, were presumed to be striving after ultimately. The purpose is to illuminate the nature and mysteries of the universe. The poetic text encodes these mysteries. Its meaning is thus to be found in the objective order of knowledge embedded in the text and not just in a subjective experience of reading. Yet Lamberton, furthermore, brings out the way that in the hermeneutic tradition of Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer, projection of meaning in each new historical context by readers is constitutive of the text.

Already in Porphyry we have a philological attitude towards the text. From the very beginning of the tradition, however, it is interwoven with a philosophical approach that finds in the contradictions and difficulties of the literal sense an occasion and a need for going outside it. The text has hidden meanings requiring explanation in terms brought in from metaphysics or physics or ethics or religion—in any case from some other sphere than what is explicitly immanent within the text itself. The text is seen then as a vehicle in a search for truth of a far-reaching nature. It has its *telos* outside it and requires a philosophical interpretation to achieve its full significance. The question was hotly debated in antiquity.

