

Aristotle
in Byzantium

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Aristoteles Byzantinus: An Introduction

Mikonja Knežević

ἀλιευτικῶς, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀριστοτελικῶς
Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 23, 12

εἰ μή που τὸν παρ' ὑμῖν ἅγιον Ἀριστοτέλην ἡμῖν,
ὡς τρισκαιδέκατον ἀπόστολον, εἰσαγάγοιτε
καὶ τῶν θεοπνεύστων τὸν εἰδωλολάτρην προκρίνοιτε;
John of Damascus, *Contra Jacobitas* 10

ὁ τὰ Στάγειρα λαχὼν πατρίδα, καὶ τὴν ἑλληνίδα πᾶσαν
εἰς θαῦμα γλυκὴ τῆς αὐτοῦ σοφίας ἐπιστρέψας...
Photios of Constantinople, *Amphilochia* 77

ἐραστῆς γὰρ τέως διάπυρος Ἀριστοτέλους ὦν
καὶ τῶν ἐκείνου λόγων θερμὸς τις ἀκριβαστής...
Arethas of Caesarea, *Letter to Stephan*

πανταχοῦ τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ θείων λογίων
ὁ Χριστὸς συλλογίζεται ἀριστοτελικῶς
Eustratius of Nicaea

When Klaus Oehler, in his well-known article from 1964, pointed out that the “history of Aristotelianism in the Greek East up to the fall of Byzantium is a subject that, except for a few specialized enquiries, has received no scholarly attention,” he ascertained not only the falsity of the once established formula “Platonic East/Aristotelian West,”¹ but also suggested that there was a vast field of investigation concerning the presence of the Sta-

1. This procrustean scheme was already rejected by Basil Tatakis, *Byzantine Philosophy*, trans. N. Moutafakis, Indianapolis, Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett Publishing Co., Cambridge University Press 2001.

girate in the Eastern Roman Empire. More than a half century after Oehler's appreciation, which at the same time was a kind of appeal to scholars, it became clear that—although a great number of studies and (critical) editions on this subject appeared in the meantime—“complete study of Aristotle's influence on Byzantine thought” is far from finished.² This is primarily owing to the multitude of authors who were reading, commenting, adopting, critically reflecting on, or simply transcribing Aristotle's works in different periods of the “Byzantine millenium.” For, in contradistinction to the West, where the Stagirate was in a way rediscovered via Arabic translations, in the Eastern Roman Empire one can actually speak of a continuity of “Aristotelian studies”:³ More than a thousand manuscripts testify that Aristotle was among the most popular authors in Byzantium, along with the New Testament, the writings of John Chrysostom and those of John of Damascus.⁴ Needless to say, many manuscripts containing different types of commentaries, paraphrases, epitomai, synopses, or scholia on Aristotle's works are now lost,⁵ while many of those that have survived are still unpublished, and even less are they appreciated in scientific studies or monographs.

There were several lines of Aristotle's reception in the Eastern Roman Empire. These were in different manners intermingled and

2. Klaus Oehler, “Aristotle in Byzantium,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 5 (1964) 133–146: 133.
3. See Katerina Ierodiakonou, “Psellos' Paraphrasis on Aristotle's 'De interpretatione,’” in *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, 157–181: 157: “In the East, even after the sixth century, the tradition of commenting on Aristotle's treatises continues uninterrupted until the fifteenth century or even beyond the fall of Constantinople in 1453.”
4. Herbert Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band: Philosophie, Rhetorik, Epistolographie, Geschichtsschreibung, Geographie. Zweiter Band: Philologie, Profandichtung, Musik, Mathematik und Astronomie, Naturwissenschaften, Medizin, Kriegswissenschaft, Rechtsliteratur*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft XII, 5, 1–2 München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung 1978, 15.
5. For different types of commentaries on Aristotle's works in Byzantium, see Michele Trizio, “Reading and Commenting on Aristotle,” in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. Anthony Kaldellis, Niketas Sinioglou, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017, 397–412.

interrelated, contributing to what can be termed *Aristoteles Byzantinus*. In the most general outline, one can speak of an “indirect” influence of Aristotle on Byzantine authors, that is, one that took place via Neoplatonism, and of a “direct” influence, that is, one that concerns reading, commenting on, and adopting the original works and ideas of the Stagirite.⁶ Both of these influences are equally demanding as subjects of study and require investigation along various lines. These include: references to Aristotle, explicit or implicit, in the works on those Byzantine authors—mainly Christian theologians—who were not directly engaged in commenting Aristotle’s writings; the issue of whether their reception of Aristotle was based on their knowledge of his original works or on commentaries, doxographies, and other indirect sources; the critical appreciation of Aristotle’s philosophy, positive or negative, on the part of Byzantine authors, Holy Fathers included; the issue of what has been called the “Christianization of Aristotle’s logic”; the quantity and influence of various commentaries on Aristotle’s works both in Eastern and Western thought, and so on.⁷ Of course it is not our task here to discuss all of these issues, which have been the subjects of interesting and meticulous studies published in recent decades; our intention here is only to indicate, *grosso modo*, the main stations and topography of Aristotle’s reception within the realm of Eastern Roman Empire.

Let us start with the appreciation of Aristotle in the so-called “philosophy of the Church Fathers.” In early centuries, Aristotle was never a major focus of interest, being from time to time seen as the *fons et origo malorum*. In juxtaposition with Plato, who was occasionally favored as the philosopher who came very close to Christian faith,⁸ Aristotle was often treated with hostility and

6. Βασίλειος Ν. Τατάκης, *Θέματα χριστιανικής και βυζαντινής φιλοσοφίας*, Βιβλιοθήκη Ἀποστολικῆς Διακονίας 37, Ἀθήναι: Ἐκ τοῦ τυπογραφείου τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Διακονίας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος 1952, 152.

7. Cf. Γιώργος Ζωγραφίδης, «Ὁ Τατάκης καὶ ἡ Ἀριστοτελικὴ φιλοσοφία καὶ παράδοση», in: *Μνήμη Βασιλείου Ν. Τατάκη: Πρακτικά Β' Συμποσίου, Ἄνδρος 20-21 Σεπτεμβρίου 2003 - Ὁ Τατάκης καὶ ἡ ἀρχαία ἑλληνικὴ φιλοσοφία*, ἐπιμέλεια Λίνος Μπενάκης, Ἀνδριακὰ Χρονικὰ 37, Ἀθήνα 2005, 77-109: 90.

8. Let us once again recall the famous verses of John Mauropous, who prays to Christ to be a righteous judge to Plato and Plutarch, philosophers who came so close to Christian ethics. See P. de Lagarde, *Iohannis Euchaitorum*

dismissed as the author from whom the majority of heresies emerged.⁹ Starting from the second century, when the first actual engagement with Aristotle on part of Christian authors took place, some crucial points of disagreement between Aristotle’s philosophy and Christian revelation were pointed out. These were frequently mentioned in the critical literature, but let us repeat them here again: a) the denial of the operation of divine providence below the sphere of the moon,¹⁰ as expressed in Pseudo-Aristotle’s treatise *De mundo*, or again in the Stagirite’s lost treatise *De philosophia*;¹¹ b) the belief that εὐδαιμονία requires not only virtue, but also bodily and external goods such as health, prosperity, friendship, wealth, family, and so on;¹² c) the teaching on the nature of the human soul and on its mortality, which was ascribed widely to Aristotle in early Christian era but also in late Byzantine period;¹³ d) the doctrine of the eternity and noncreatedness of the world;¹⁴ and e) the doctrine of the fifth element.¹⁵ However, already from the second century, one can also notice—notably in the works of

Metropolitae quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt, Göttingen 1882, no. 43.1–5: “Ἐἴπερ τινὰς βούλοιο τῶν ἀλλοτρίων/τῆς σῆς ἀπειλῆς ἐξελέσθαι, Χριστέ μου,/Πλάτωνα καὶ Πλούταρχον ἐξέλοιο μοι/ἄμφω γὰρ εἰσι καὶ λόγον καὶ τὸν τρόπον/τοῖς σοῖς νόμοις ἔγγιστα προσεφυκότες...”.

9. See the classic study of André-Jean Festugière, *L'idéal religieux des Grecs et l'évangile*, Études bibliques, Paris: Libraire Lecoffre 1981, 220–263.
10. Tatiani, *Oratio adversus Graecos*, 2, PG 6, 808A; Origenis, *Contra Celsum* III, 75, PG 11, 1017BC.
11. A.-J. Festugière, *L'idéal religieux des Grecs et l'évangile*, Paris 1981, 223ff.
12. However, Aristotle didn’t consider fortune and external goods as constituents of happiness, but only as external conditions for it. See Κωνσταντῖνος Μποζίνης, «Οἱ τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ Περιπάτου φιλοσοφοῦντες: ἡ κριτική πρόσληψη τοῦ αριστοτελισμοῦ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀρχαία Ἐκκλησία», in: *Πρακτικά διεθνούς επιστημονικοῦ συνεδρίου «Ἀριστοτέλης καὶ Χριστιανισμός»*. *Proceedings of the International Conference “Aristotle and Christianity”*, (24–25 Νοεμβρίου 2016), Ἀθήνα: Ἐθνικὸ καὶ Καποδιστριακὸ Πανεπιστήμιο Ἀθηνῶν, Κοσμητεία Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς 2017, 81–95.
13. For example, Maximus the Confessor criticize the “futile effort” of Aristotle and Epicurus to deny the immortality of the soul (PG 91, 437B).
14. For references, see David Runia, “Festugiere revisited: Aristotle in the Greek Fathers,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 43, 1 (1989) 1–34: 5–13.
15. Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Epitome physica*, PG 142, 1216BC; Nemesius of Emesa, *De natura hominis* 5, PG 40, 625C. For a brief overview, see M. Trizio, “Reading and Commenting on Aristotle”, in: *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 397–412: 402–403.

Clement of Alexandria, (ca. 150–ca. 215)—something like a more positive attitude toward Aristotle.¹⁶ Namely, Clement is the first known Christian writer to discuss the Aristotelian doctrine of the categories along with some other key teachings from *Organon*, such as the definitions of synonym, homonym, and paronym, as well as the theory of demonstration, which he appropriates to suit his Christian worldview.¹⁷ Clement’s distinction of names, concepts, and things is ultimately derived from the *De interpretatione*, where Aristotle distinguishes between τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ, τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθήματα and τὰ πράγματα.¹⁸ Whether his source was Galen’s (129–ca.210/216) lost writing on demonstration¹⁹ or was Antiochus of Ascalon (ca. 125–ca. 68),²⁰ Clement’s “reflections are a valuable testimony of the reception of the Categories in the philosophy of the Imperial period and before the time of Alexander of Aphrodisias.”²¹ So, starting with Clement, Aristotle came to be seen not just as a villain, but also—occasionally, at least—as a philosopher who anticipated some of the true doctrines that Christians learned through revelation,²² such as monotheism or the identification of contemplation as the final goal of human life. These “twin tendencies” regarding Aristotelian philosophy be-

16. See Elizabeth Ann Clark, *Clement’s Use of Aristotle: The Aristotelian Contribution to Clement of Alexandria’s Refutation of Gnosticism*, New York, Toronto: E. Melten Press 1977.
17. Matyáš Havrda, “Categories in ‘Stromata’ VIII”, *Elenchos. Rivista di studi sul pensiero antico* 33, 2 (2012) 197–225.
18. W. Ernst, *De Clementis Alexandrini Stromatum libro VIII. qui fertur*, Göttingen 1910, 47.
19. Matyáš Havrda, “Galenus Christianus? The Doctrine of Demonstration in ‘Stromata’ VIII and the Question of its Source,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011) 343–375.
20. See Anna Zhyrkova, “Reconstructing Clement of Alexandria’s Doctrine of Categories”, in: *Conversations Platonic and Neoplatonic: Intellect, Soul and Nature. Papers from 6th annual conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies*, eds. John F. Finamore, Robert M. Berchman, Academia Philosophical Studies 39, Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag 2010, 145–154.
21. Matyáš Havrda, “Categories in ‘Stromata’ VIII”, *Elenchos. Rivista di studi sul pensiero antico* 33, 2 (2012) 197–225.
22. Cf. George Karamanolis, “Early Christian Philosophers on Aristotle”, in: *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. Andrea Falcon, Brill’s Companions to Classical Reception vol. 7, Leiden; Boston Brill 2016, 460–479: 461, 464–470.

came especially visible later. From the fourth century on, Aristotle's dialectic and syllogistic methods continued nevertheless to be seen as a source for different heresies, whose bearers—especially Eunomius (335–393) and Aetius—were accused of λεπτολογία, τεχνολογία and δεινότης. But on the other hand Aristotle's subtle terminological classifications have also served as a necessary tool for Christian authors as well. So, while criticizing Eunomius's reading of *Categoriae*,²³ both Basil the Great (330–379) and Gregory of Nyssa (335–ca.395) made important use of the same work, particularly when it came to the field of Trinitarian theology²⁴. Aristotle's distinction between “primary substance” and “secondary substance,” or between individual and species, is sometimes taken as the basis for Gregory of Nyssa's own doctrine on three divine persons (πρόσωπα or ὑπόστασεις), which are considered particular beings sharing one general and common divine essence.²⁵ In this process, the concept of *ousia* was said to be “deeply rethought”: It referred no longer to the concrete individual reality but to the common essence.²⁶ Thus “a radically new conceptual framework was developed,” where *ousia* was associated with a set of common qualities while *hypostasis* was represented by specific properties, pointing, however, to the *schesis* which is of constitutive significance for the hypostatic being.²⁷ Gregory Nazianzen (ca.329–390) again criticizes Aristotle's limitation of divine providence, his proofs on mortality of human soul and the purely human dimension of his teaching (τὸ ἀνθρωπικὸν τῶν δογμάτων),²⁸

23. Basilii Magni, *Adversus Eunomium* I, 9, PG 29, 532–533.

24. See Michael Frede, “Les Catégories d'Aristote et les Pères de l'Église Grecs,” in: *Les Catégories et leur histoire*, textes édités par Otto Bruun, Lorenzo Corti, Bibliothèque d'histoire de la philosophie, Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin 2005, 135–173: 148–157.

25. See Lucian Turcescu, “Hypostasis (ὑπόστασις),” in: *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, eds. Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco, Giulio Maspero, trans. Seth Cherney, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae. Texts and Studies of Early Christian Life and Language* vol. 99, Boston, Leiden: Brill 2010, 403–407: 404.

26. Christophe Erismann, “Logic in Byzantium,” in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 362–380: 365–366.

27. Therefore, one should have restrictions as to the complete identity of *hypostasis* with Aristotle's *ousia prote*.

28. Gregorii Theologi, *Oratio* 27, 10, PG 36, 24C.

affirming that Christian Trinitarian doctrine should be expressed “in the way of fishermen, not of Aristotle” (that is to say, without unnecessary technicalities and sophistical deceptions). On the other hand, though, in his polemics against the Eunomians he also inclines to make use of the Stagirite’s doctrine—particularly his theory of different types of definition and predication²⁹—having probably been acquainted with some of Aristotle’s works firsthand. As a matter of fact, Aristotle’s *Categoriae*, which was enjoying a revival of interest in that time,³⁰ was becoming necessary reading for Christian authors and so to speak “the most harmless part of the *Corpus aristotelicum* insofar as the Faith is concerned.”³¹ Knowledge of Aristotle’s logical writings and relevant commentaries by philosophers such as Alexander of Aphrodisias or Porphyry was required of educated persons of that era. Sometimes the interpretation of certain passages of these works became an important part of Christian authors’ argumentation in their polemics with their adversaries. Such is for example Aristotle’s statement that *ousia* does not admit of degree, which appears over and again in Basil the Great,³² Gregory of Nyssa,³³ Cyril of Alexandria,³⁴ John of Damascus, Photi-

29. See Anna Usacheva, “Who Knows His Aristotle Better? Apropos of the Philosophical Polemics of Gregory Nazianzen Against the Eunomians,” in *Les polémiques religieuses du I^{er} au IV^e siècle de notre ère: hommage à Bernard Poudéron*, eds. Guillaume Bady, Diane Cuny, Paris: Les Éditions Beauchesne 2019), 407–420.

30. Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence, 2. The Way of Negation, Christian and Greek*, Bonn: Hanstein 1986, 131.

31. Leo J. Elders, “The Greek Christian Authors and Aristotle,” in *Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lawrence P. Schrenk, Washington: Catholic University of America Press 1994, 111–142: 133.

32. Basilius Magni, *Adversus Eunomium I*, 25, PG 29, 568C.

33. See Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium I*, 172–176, 180–181, in Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium I. An English Translation with Supporting Studies*, ed. Miguel Brugarolas, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* vol. 148, Leiden, Boston: Brill 2018, 104–105, 106.

34. For Cyril’s use of Aristotelian logic, see Hans van Loon, *The Diophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* vol. 96, Leiden, Boston: Brill 2009, 61–122 (for his use of Aristotle’s dictum that *ousia* does not admit of degree, 105–106); see also Ruth M. Siddals, “Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 38 (1987) 341–367.

us of Constantinople,³⁵ and Gregory Palamas.³⁶ Along with *Categoriae*, other works by Aristotle were read, commented on, criticized, or adapted during this time as well. For example, Basil the Great appears to be familiar with *Historia animalium* and *Meteorologica*;³⁷ Gregory of Nyssa adopted the Aristotelian doctrine of virtue as a mean between two vices,³⁸ using an argument considering the interdependence of body and soul (obviously relating on Aristotle's *De anima* and *Ethica Nicomachea*);³⁹ Nemesius of Emesa (ca.390) borrowed many insights from Aristotle's psychology in his *De natura hominis*, such as his considerations of "wish" (βούλησις), "choice" (προαίρεσις), and "deliberation" (βουλεύσις), having in that way prepared the ground for Maximus the Confessor's (580–662) original conception of *thelesis*;⁴⁰ and Didymus the Blind (ca.313–392) and Cyril of Alexandria (ca.376–444) also displayed knowledge of Aris-

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35. See Ch. Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 362–380: 370.
36. Gregorii Palamae, *Antirrhethici contra Acindynum* VI, 9, 21, in: Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγράμματα. Ἐκδίδονται ἐπιμελεῖα Π. Κ. Χρήστου. Τόμος Γ΄. Ἀντιρρητικοὶ πρὸς Ἀκίνδυνον. Προλογίζει Π. Κ. Χρήστου. Ἐκδίδουν Λ. Κοντογιάννης, Β. Φανουργάκης, Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος 1970, 399.4–5; *Contra Gregoram* IV, 52, in: Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγράμματα. Ἐκδίδονται ἐπιμελεῖα Π. Κ. Χρήστου. Τόμος Δ΄. Δογματικαὶ πραγματεῖαι καὶ ἐπιστολαὶ γραφεῖσαι κατὰ τὰ ἔτη 1348–1358. Προλογίζει Π. Κ. Χρήστου. Ἐκδίδουν Π. Κ. Χρήστου, Β. Δ. Φανουργάκης, Β. Σ. Ψευτογκᾶς, Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος 1988, 369.8–9.
37. As shown over a century ago by K. Müllenhoff, "Aristoteles bei Basilius von Caesarea", *Hermes* 2, 2 (1867) 252–258. See Leo J. Elders, "The Greek Christian Authors and Aristotle," in *Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. P. Schrenk, Washington: Catholic University of America Press 1994, 111–142: 134.
38. Gregorii Nysseni, *De virginitate* 8, PG 46, 353BC; *De vita Moysis* 2, PG 44, 420A.
39. See *De anima* A 3, 407, 12–16; B 1, 412A 26–27; Johannes Zachhuber, "Aristotle," in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, eds. L. F. Mateo-Seco, G. Maspero, trans. S. Cherney, Boston, Leiden 2010, 83.
40. On this, see Rene-Antoine Gauthier, "Saint Maxime le Confesseur et la psychologie de l'acte humain," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21 (1954) 51–100; Felix Heinzer, „Anmerkungen zum Willensbegriff Maximus' Confessors," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 28 (1981) 372–392; John D. Madden, "The Authenticity of Early Definitions of Will (thelēsis)," in *Maximus Confessor. Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980*, édités par Felix Heinzer et Christophe Schönborn, Paradosis. Études de littérature et de théologie ancienne 27, Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions Universitaires 1982, 61–79.

totle's logical terminology.⁴¹ During the Christological controversies between Chalcedonians and their Miaphysite opponents, when the debates on the nature of individuality and the relation between individuals and species were taking place, Aristotle was once again invoked in order to help clarify both sides' positions. So despite the fact that Aristotle and Aristotelianism were still closely associated with heresy, they "nevertheless exerted such a strong influence on speculative thought that none of the Fathers could quite escape it"⁴²—whether they were adopting and adapting some of Aristotle's concepts, or criticizing and rejecting them. But the truth of the matter is that this Aristotelianism, before it could be used to lay a foundation for a "Christian philosophy," had to be *transformed*—above all in the Neoplatonic schools of Athens and Alexandria.⁴³

This transformation took place in the works of several generations of authors, who either criticized Aristotle from the point of view of Platonic philosophy or tried to accomplish a reconciliation between Plato and Aristotle. As a matter of fact, these authors were commenting on different works by Aristotle, especially the logical ones, providing not only some amount of clarification of difficult passages in the writings of the "sphinx of Stagira," as the "Consul of Philosophers" Michael of Anchialos (†1178) called Aristotle in the twelfth century,⁴⁴ but also a new theories and "text-books" of philosophy in that era. The earliest notable commentaries of Aristotle's works originate from the second and third centuries AD. first of all thanks to the two remarkable figures in the history of the Aristotelianism: The one is Alexander of Aphro-

41. M. Frede, "Les Catégories d'Aristote et les Pères de l'Église Grecs," in *Les Catégories et leur histoire*, textes édités par O. Bruun, L. Corti, Paris 2005, 145–147.

42. K. Oehler, "Aristotle in Byzantium," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 5 (1964) 141.

43. D. Runia, "Festugiere revisited: Aristotle in the Greek Fathers," *Vigiliae Christianae* 43, 1 (1989) 1–34; 26; Mark Edwards, *Aristotle and Early Christian Thought*, Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity, London, New York: Routledge 2019; K. Oehler, "Aristotle in Byzantium," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 5 (1964) 135.

44. Cf. Robert Browning, "A New Source on Byzantine-Hungarian Relations in the Twelfth Century: The Inaugural Lecture of Michael ó τοῦ Ἀγχιάλου as Ὑπατος τῶν φιλοσόφων," *Balkan Studies* 2 (1961) 187–203: 190.105–107: «τῆ Σταγειρόθεν κελαινῆ Σφιγγί».

disias (ca. 200), who was characterized as “the greatest expositor and elaborator of Aristotle’s thought”; the other is Plotinus’s student and biographer, Porphyry (232–309). Porphyry, as “the first Platonist commentator on Aristotle,” opposed to his master’s rejection of the Aristotelian categorial scheme (Plotinus accepted only four of Aristotle’s ten categories even for the sensible world). He affirmed that *Categoriae* are introductory to the physical part of philosophy; they do not concern things but are only words that signify (sensible) things. Actually, this is “a work on semantics that investigates words that mean things.” His pupil Iamblichus (ca. 245–ca. 320), who sometimes is called “the second founder of Neoplatonism” and “a reforming prophet,” considered categories as if they referred not only to the sensible world, but also to the intelligible realm of Platonic forms, confirming with his “intellective theory” (νοερά θεωρία) the project of harmonization of Plato and Aristotle, whom he saw as compatible.⁴⁵ In his famous *Isagoge* Porphyry explains what *genus* (γένος), *differentia* (διαφορά), *species* (εἶδος), *proper* (ἴδιον), and *accident* (συμβεβηκός) are. He also discusses the ontological status of universals, that is, genera and species, offering three possible answers: πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν, ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς and ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς (before the many, in the many, after the many). This work not only promoted Aristotelian logic in Neoplatonic school, but it was also of decisive importance for following generations, both in the East and the West.⁴⁶ The attempt toward reconciliation of Platonism and Aristotelianism, which had different degrees and forms among various Neoplatonic commentators,⁴⁷ meant, among other things, that knowledge of “Aristotle’s logic and a wide selection of his other texts became a standard

45. On this, see: Jan Opsomer, “An Intellectual Perspective on Aristotle: Iamblichus the Divine”, in: *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. A. Falcon, Leiden, Boston 2016, 341–357.

46. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 25.

47. For this reconciliation on the part of Porphyry, who follows in that regard, as it appears, Ammonius/Hierocles philosophical program, see Riccardo Chiaradonna, “Porphyry and the Aristotelian Tradition,” in *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. A. Falcon, Leiden, Boston 2016, 321–340.

prerequisite for Platonic studies in the Neoplatonist schools.”⁴⁸ In other words, Aristotle was studied as the “Lesser Mysteries,” serving to introduce the “Greater Mysteries” of Plato. The study of Aristotle was supposed to help one’s ascent to God, and his logical works were some kind of starting point in that process. Porphyry’s *Isagoge* gave a necessary methodical basis, inspiring plenty of scholiasts and translators not only in Byzantium, but also in the West. Although Porphyry wrote exegeses on some other works of Aristotle, such as *De interpretatione*, *Analytica priora*, *Ethica Nicomachea*, *Physica*, and *Metaphysica*, after his time the main area becomes a study of Aristotle’s logic, which by its formalism managed to become a neutral basis for scientific coexistence and mutual understanding between pagans and Christians. Logic, in particular Aristotle’s syllogistic, “was taught extensively throughout the Byzantine era as a preparation for dealing with philosophical topics as well as with the doctrine of Holy Scripture.”⁴⁹ Since logic was a tool of philosophy, and not a doctrine, its use by Christians was strongly encouraged.⁵⁰

In the sixth century we have an example in Leontius of Byzantium (485–543), an author who was able to express the Christian faith in Aristotelian terms, remaining at the same time Orthodox. That is the reason why he has been seen as a beginner of “early Byzantine scholasticism.”⁵¹ Aristotelian categories and Porphyrian “predicables” in this period cut even deeper than before into theology, especially into Christology and Trinitarian doctrine. Some Aristotelian terms, mediated by Porphyry, such as γένος, εἶδος, διαφορά, ἴδιον and συμβεβηκός became very influential, while those already adopted into Christian theology, such as

48. Richard Sorabji, “The ancient commentators on Aristotle,” in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. Richard Sorabji, New York, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1990, 1–30: 2–5.

49. Katerina Ierodiakonou, Dominic O’Meara, “The Study of Byzantine Philosophy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon, Robin Cormack, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008, 711–720: 716.

50. Mossman Rouché, “A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology,” *Jahrbuch für Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980) 71–98: 72.

51. Brian E. Daley, “Boethius’ Theological Tracts and Early Byzantine Scholasticism,” *Mediaeval Studies* 46 (1984) 158–191.

οὐσία and φύσις, were additionally clarified.⁵² But these terms and concepts, as well known, being already transformed through the Neoplatonic school, were retransformed in order to answer the requests of a new “metaphysics”—the Christian one. Leontius, after the Cappadocian Fathers, was able to develop, on the basis of Chalcedonian assumptions, a new philosophy of *personal* being: He sought to establish the basic principles of what was called “metaphysics of person.”⁵³ So one can affirm that Byzantines were influenced by Aristotle—whether they read his works or only the commentaries—in an “exoteric” way since their “Aristotelianism” concerned the form, scientific truths, and ordinance of thought, but not the “metaphysical essence.” For their “metaphysical essence” in most cases remained Christian.⁵⁴ Be that as it may, in Leontius, John Philoponus, and John of Damascus we are facing what was termed as “Christian Aristotelianism.”⁵⁵ But as for late antique pagans, to whom logic had no purpose of its own, being a handmaiden of theology, so for the Christians too Aristotelian logic served primarily for opposing heresy and formulating Christian doctrine as well as providing a good explanatory model for the sensible world. In other words, as Aristotle was never regarded by either Christians or pagans as a guide to the spiritual life,⁵⁶ so his logic was treated just as a preliminary stage, from which one was supposed to direct himself to the understanding of the intelligible and divine.⁵⁷

52. K. Oehler, “Aristotle in Byzantium,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 5 (1964) 142.

53. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 45.

54. See B. N. Τατάκης, *Θέματα χριστιανικής και βυζαντινής φιλοσοφίας*, Ἀθήναι 1952, 163.

55. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 32.

56. David Bradshaw, “Aristotle in Byzantium: From John Damascene to Michael Psellos,” in *Πρακτικά διεθνούς επιστημονικού συνεδρίου «Αριστοτέλης και Χριστιανισμός»*. *Proceedings of the International Conference “Aristotle and Christianity,”* (24-25 Νοεμβρίου 2016), Αθήνα: Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Κοσμητεία Θεολογικής Σχολής 2017, 107–118: 107.

57. See Sten Ebbesen, “Western and Byzantine Approaches to Logic,” in *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction. Collected Essays of Sten Ebbesen, vol. I*, Ashgate Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Aldershot: Ashgate 2008, 129–136: 129.

The figure of John Philoponus (ca.490–ca.570) is important for several reasons. Along with his master Ammonius, he was one of the main representatives of the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria and “philosophically the most brilliant of all the commentators.”⁵⁸ He wrote various commentaries on Aristotle’s works, such are *Categoriae*, *Analytica priora*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *De anima*, *Physica*, *Meteorologica*, and others. And while Ammonius (ca.440–ca.520), Asclepius (†560/570), Simplicius (ca.490–ca.560), and Olympiodorus (ca.495–570) were pagans, John was undoubtedly Christian. The same holds true for the next generation, such as Olympiodorus’s pupils Elias and David.⁵⁹ But whether Christians or pagans, all of these Alexandrians belonged to a single school of thought, using a “traditional format and formulae.”⁶⁰ Already from the times before Philoponus, a more positive kind of attitude toward Aristotle and philosophy in general was adopted by Christians; this can be seen from the agreement between Athanasius II, the patriarch of Alexandria, and Ammonius, allowing Christian students to attend the latter’s lectures.⁶¹ Philoponus, who probably held a semi-official position in the school as editor of Ammonius’s lectures, was basically the first to openly introduce Aristotelian concepts and methodology into Christian theology, since for him “the teaching of the Church had to be proved by means of

58. R. Sorabji, “Introduction,” in *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200–600AD. A Sourcebook. vol. 3. Logic and Metaphysics*, ed. R. Sorabji, London 2012, 1–30: 10.

59. See L. G. Westerink, “The Alexandrian commentators and the introductions to their commentaries,” in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 325–348.

60. Linos G. Benakis, “Commentaries and Commentators on the Logical Works of Aristotle in Byzantium,” in Λ. Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα και μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Ἀθήνα 2002, 249–258: 249–250. Notably, even in the works of those members of Neoplatonic school of Alexandria who were Christians, many of the pagan views of their predecessors remained alive, such as, for example, the thesis on the eternity of the world.

61. See Gérard Verbeke, “Some Later Neoplatonic Views on Divine Creation and the Eternity of the World,” in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, ed. Dominic J. O’Meara, Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern, vol. 3, Norfolk, VA: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies 1982, 45–53: 46; R. Sorabji, “Introduction”, in: *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200–600AD. A Sourcebook. Vol. 3. Logic and Metaphysics*, ed. R. Sorabji, London 2012, 1–30: 21–25.

philosophical arguments.”⁶² This kind of approach led him later to the so-called “tritheism,” which is just another testimony that the acceptance of Aristotle’s *Categoriae* and Porphyry’s *Isagoge* led to varying results and was never unanimous in the works of Christian authors.⁶³ But John’s case is interesting for more than one reason: It could be just a coincidence, but a very interesting one, that in the same year of 529 when the Emperor Justinian closed philosophical schools in Athens, Philoponus wrote his important work *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, in which he, from the Christian point of view, opposed the thesis of the eternity of the world.⁶⁴ His second treatise on the same subject, *De aeternitate mundi contra Aristotelem*, was published later, between 530 and 534. So although he belonged to the Neoplatonic school and had started his career as an adherent of Ammonius, Philoponus—for whatever reason and regardless of the sincerity of his *Kehre* and “abjuration of his philosophical past”⁶⁵—represented a changing of metaphysical paradigms. For it was he who, by promoting the view that the physical world had a beginning, worked out a comprehensive alternative to Aristotelian physics and offered furthermore the most successful and accomplished arguments in defense of the Christian view against pagan cosmology.⁶⁶ This was a clear sign of a “growing self-certitude of Christians in philosophical studies”⁶⁷ at the same time as an “undramatic absorption of the Alexandrian chair by Christian professors” happened.⁶⁸ In other words, despite be-

62. Gustave Bardy, “Jean Philopon,” *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* VIII, 1 (1947) 831–839: 833.

63. Christophe Erismann, “The Trinity, Universals, and Particular Substances: Philoponus and Roscelin,” *Traditio* 53 (2008) 277–305: 277, 285.

64. See Henri-Dominique Saffrey, “Le chrétien Jean Philopon et la survivance de l’école d’Alexandrie au VI^e siècle,” *Revue des Études Grecques* 67 (1954) 396–410.

65. On this, see Koenraad Verrycken, “The development of Philoponus’ thought and its chronology,” in: *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 233–274.

66. However, the issue of eternity of the world was previously discussed by Aeneas of Gaza and Zacharios Scholasticos. See H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 28–29.

67. Leo J. Elders, “The Greek Christian Authors and Aristotle,” in *Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. P. Schrenk, Washington 1994, 111–142: 138.

68. R. Sorabji, “The ancient commentators on Aristotle,” in *Aristotle Trans-*

ing one of the main representatives of “Christian Aristotelianism” and “the man who personally bridged the gap between pagan and Christian scholasticism,”⁶⁹ Philoponus was more than ready to oppose the Stagirite. He would never accept Aristotle as the undisputed champion of the truth and—unlike Simplicius—he would never be ready to call him “divine” (θεῖος).⁷⁰

It goes without saying that the Emperor Justinian’s decree, closing the philosophical schools in Athens in 529, ushered in a huge crisis when it came to higher education, substantially diminishing philosophical engagement. However, it did not completely suspend philosophical inquiry, since Neoplatonic teaching continued in Alexandria for the rest of the sixth century. The same holds true for the political circumstances that took place in Eastern Roman Empire in the seventh century—above all, the Arab invasion and subsequent conquest of Alexandria. Although to a smaller degree in comparison with the “golden age” of late antiquity, philosophical activity continued through the composition of different “logical compendia.” The late sixth-century *Praeparatio* by Theodore of Raithu and the *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione verbi* are perfect examples of this trend, wherein Aristotelian logic was used—with more or less success⁷¹—to refute heretical doctrines and to express more precisely the Christian faith. In the seventh century we also testify to a certain number of “compendia” that were based on Aristotle’s *Categoriae* and Porphyry’s *Isagoge*. Some of these, representing “small and informal compositions” and “short introductions to logic,” were attributed to Maximus the Confessor.⁷² They contain

formed. *The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 15.

69. Sten Ebbesen, “Greek and Latin Medieval Logic,” *Cahiers de l’Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin* 66 (1996) 67–95: 68.
70. See Pantelis Golitsis, “Simplicius and Philoponus on the Authority of Aristotle,” in *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. A. Falcon, Leiden, Boston 2016, 419–438.
71. See Dirk Krausmüller, “Aristotelianism and the Disintegration of the Late Antique Theological Discourse,” in *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity. The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition between Rome and Baghdad*, eds. Josef Lössl, John W. Watt, Farnham: Ashgate 2011, 151–164.
72. On the logical tools used by Maximus the Confessor, see: Melchisedec Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2007, 13–34. I also refer to the paper of

collections of definitions that “transformed the formal, inaccessible lectures of the Alexandrian Aristotelians into easily digestible lists and summaries, which both preserved and transmitted the elements of classical logic, while making the tools of orderly argument available to the dogmatist.”⁷³

Having these compendia in mind, along with the enigmatic figure of Stephanus Philosopher, who as οἰκουμενικὸς διδάσκαλος supposedly taught in Constantinople⁷⁴ and even produced scholia on several of Aristotle’s works, *Categoriae* included, one can more easily understand the appearance of John of Damascus (ca.675–749).⁷⁵ His *Dialectica* is an offspring of Neoplatonic commentaries of Aristotle on one side and earlier patristic reception of Aristotelian logic on the other. As a matter of fact, *Dialectica*, being compiled from many earlier works,⁷⁶ represents “the final stage of the patristic logical tradition”⁷⁷ and “the most extensive case of Aristotelian influence in theology during the middle Byzantine period.”⁷⁸ Being a first part of the Damascene’s *The Fountain of Knowledge*, it contains standard definitions, drawn largely from

Torstein Theodor Tollefsen, “St Maximus the Confessor and Alexandrian Logic—some Observations”, in *Philoponus–Philotheos. Essays in Honor of Professor Bogoljub Šijaković on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, edited by Mikonja Knežević, in collaboration with Rade Kisić and Dušan Krcunović, Belgrade: Gnomon (forthcoming in 2021).

73. See: Mossman Rouché, “Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century,” *Jahrbuch für Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 23 (1974) 61–76: 67.
74. Mossman Rouché, “Stephanus the Philosopher and Ps. Elias: a case of mistaken identity,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 36 (2012) 120–138, raised some suspicions as to whether the appointment of Stephanus ever took place; however, there is still evidence that indicates the presence of a foreign philosopher in Constantinople in the seventh century.
75. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 30, 48; See Mossman Rouché, “The Definitions of Philosophy and a New Fragment of Stephanus the Philosopher,” *Jahrbuch für Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 40 (1990) 107–128.
76. Mossman Rouché, “A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology,” *Jahrbuch für Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980) 71–98: 82.
77. Ch. Erismann, “Logic in Byzantium,” in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 362–380: 367.
78. David Bradshaw, “The Presence of Aristotle in Byzantine Theology,” in: *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 381–396: 392.

Porphiry and Ammonius, of different Aristotelian terms: the five predicables, the ten categories, nature, form, habit, privation, motion, univocal, equivocal, heteronym, paronym, and so on. But along with these terms, John introduces some eminently Christian concepts, such as “hypostasis” or “person,” while also presenting some of the aforementioned Aristotelian terms in a transformed shape. The Damascene concentrates his ontology around the term *hypostasis*, since all other entities, such as universals, essential properties, and accidental properties depend on *hypostasis*. In this way, with the Damascene we are witnessing a kind of “rethinking of Aristotle’s categorical ontology,” but also a “personalization of the ancient notion of energy.”⁷⁹ Although without originality, *Dialectica* is not just a repetition of certain Aristotelian passages and definitions: the “Damascene’s Aristotelianism” does not imply that the “Aquinas of the East”⁸⁰ adopts Aristotle uncritically or even claims his authority. Even in his *De fide orthodoxa* John uses some Aristotelian views, such as cosmological or teleological argument, but all the same he rejects the possibility of talking intelligibly about God by using “Aristotelian and geometric syllogisms.”⁸¹ Interestingly, John does not use his knowledge of Aristotelian logic in the context of the iconoclastic controversy, that is, while defending the images.⁸² But this will change with Theodore the Studite (759–826) and Nikephoros of Constantinople (ca.758–828): Nikephoros was familiar with different aspects of Aristotelian logic, such as categories, definition theory, syllogistics, proof

79. Hildegard Schaefer, „Die Christianisierung der Aristotelischen Logik in der Byzantinischen Theologie repräsentiert durch Johannes von Damaskus († ca. 750) und Gregor Palamas († ca. 1359)“, *Θεολογία* 33, 1 (1962) 1–21. – As stated by Christophe Erismann, “A World of Hypostases. John of Damascus’ Rethinking of Aristotle’s Categorical Ontology”, *Studia Patristica* L (2011) 269–287: 271–272, “John comes at the end of three theoretical evolutions: 1) the progressive acceptance of Aristotelian logic by Greek Christian authors, 2) the relevance of logic to theology, c) a syncretism inherited from Neoplatonism.”

80. Johannes M. Hoeck, „Johannes v. Damaskus (Damascenus)“, *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 5 (1960) 1023–1026: 1025 (“Aquinat des Ostens”).

81. See George Zografidis, “Aristotle and John of Damascus: The ‘First Unmoved Mover’ and God-Creator,” in *Aristotle on Metaphysics*, eds. Theresa Pentzopoulou-Valalas, Stylianos Dimopoulos, Thessaloniki 1999, 201–221: 220.

82. Thalia Anagnostopoulos, “Aristotle and Byzantine Iconoclasm,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013) 763–790: 768.

theory, sophisms, paralogisms, polysyllogisms, and argumentation theory,⁸³ using them widely to defend his iconophile position.

True, this was the time of a certain “break” but not of a “real disruption” when it came to philosophical studies. The “poverty” of these centuries—a poverty that produced authors such as Theodore of Raithu, John of Damascus, Nikephoros of Constantinople and Theodore the Studite—“concealed a slow ripening which was to produce its harvest in the ninth century.”⁸⁴ With the activity of Leo the Philosopher, who taught Aristotelian logic at the imperial school at the Magnaura in Constantinople, we have the appearance of a cultural renewal, one that Paul Lemerle named the “first Byzantine Renaissance.” This was the time when Byzantine authors returned to the original texts of Plato and Aristotle. Patriarch Photius of Constantinople (810–891), whose high level of education was recognized even among his adversaries—such as, for example, Niketas David—succeeded in making a conjunction with the “outside paideia,” that is to say, in bringing together the science of Hellas and the Christian vision of life.⁸⁵ From his famous *Bibliotheca*—a collection of 279 books that the patriarch read and presented in a short form⁸⁶—we gain information, summaries and sometimes excerpts of some works that are now lost. This holds

83. See Th. Anagnostopoulos, “Aristotle and Byzantine Iconoclasm,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013) 763–790; Christophe Erismann, “Venerating likeness: Byzantine iconophile thinkers on Aristotelian Relatives and their simultaneity,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24, 3 (2016) 405–425; Oksana Yu. Goncharko, Dmitry N. Goncharko, “A Byzantine Logician’s ‘Image’ within the Second Iconoclastic Controversy. Nikephoros of Constantinople,” *Scrinium* 13 (2017) 291–308.

84. Paul Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme Byzantin. Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au X^e siècle*, Bibliothèque Byzantine, Études 6, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1971, 74.

85. Βασίλειος Τατάκης, *Μελετήματα Χριστιανικής φιλοσοφίας*, Ἀθήνα: Ἀστήρ 1967, 103.

86. The name *Bibliotheca* originates from the sixteenth, while that of *Μυριόβιβλος* dates from the fourteenth century. The original title of this work by Photius seems to be *Ἀπογραφή καὶ συναρίθμησις τῶν ἀνεγνωσμένων ἡμῖν βιβλίων ὧν εἰς κεφαλαιώδη διάγνωσιν ὁ ἡγαπημένος ἡμῶν ἀδελφὸς Ταράσιος ἐξητήσατο· ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα εἴκοσι δεόντων ἔφ’ ἐνὶ τριακόςια*. See P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme Byzantin. Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au X^e siècle*, Paris 1971, 189, 186.

true especially for secular authors—twenty historians are known to us exclusively via the *Bibliotheca*—and their rare works that were not widely known at the time. For example, much of our knowledge about Hieroclus, a Neoplatonic from the fifth century, we owe to this collection (cod. 214, 251).⁸⁷ In Photius’s work we can also see a reflection of a revival of interest in logic, which was common in both East and West in the ninth century. Once again the prominent place among Aristotle’s works is occupied by his *Organon*, and this trend was to continue till the end of Eastern Roman Empire: This collection of Aristotle’s works on logic is actually “represented by more than one hundred copies written from the tenth to the sixteenth century.”⁸⁸ In his *Amphilochia*, written between 867 and 877 as a set of epistles dealing with different philosophical and theological topics, Photius—following Porphyry, Ammonius and John of Damascus—gives a synopsis of Aristotle’s *Categoriae* (questions 137–147). This is a rich and difficult text, probably coming from the full-length commentary on the topic, since Photius himself often points out that some of the issues mentioned in the synopsis there is more detailed discussion in another of his works.⁸⁹ In question 77 Photius discusses the concepts of genera and species, opposing them to the Platonic theory of forms. Elsewhere he draws on Aristotle in many ways; particularly interesting in this regard is his dealing with the issue of divine omnipresence (question 75).⁹⁰ Most probably, Photius wrote a commentary on *Metaphysics*, but unfortunately it did not survive.⁹¹ He always kept his

87. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 19.

88. Sofia Kotzabassi, “Aristotle’s ‘Organon’ and Its Byzantine Commentators,” *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 64, 1 (2002) 51–62: 52.

89. See Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*. vol. 5: *Amphilochiorum pars altera*, recensuit L. G. Westerink, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Leipzig: Teubner 1986, qu. 138.104; qu. 114; qu. 141.22–23; qu. 146.35–36.

90. D. Bradshaw, “The Presence of Aristotle in Byzantine Theology,” in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 381–396: 394.

91. Linos G. Benakis, “Commentaries and Commentators on the Works of Aristotle (except the Logical ones) in Byzantium,” in: Λίνος Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα και μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Ἀθήνα: Παρουσία 2002, 259–268: 259.

mind open to philosophical insights, but preserved his own point of view: for example, he criticized the Aristotelian concept of *ousia* by extending and reformulating basic Aristotelian distinctions⁹² Photius's (selective and modified) Aristotelianism served "as a corrective tool and as a valuable philosophical procedure to underscore the fundamentals of orthodox faith," but also as an "acceptable descriptive ontology of natural orders".⁹³

Zacharias of Chalcedon and Arethas of Caesarea (860–939) continued in the same direction as Photius. Arethas's philosophical and philological engagement was of huge importance for preservation and transmission of classical philosophy, since he committed himself to transcribing the original works of Plato and Aristotle. Especially important is his work on Plato's writings. Apart from his philological work, Arethas wrote some philosophical commentaries and glosses where he discusses Platonic theory of ideas, Aristotle's *Categoriae*, and Porphyry's *Isagoge*. He shows great knowledge of Neoplatonic commentaries of late antiquity, particularly those from the Alexandrian school.⁹⁴ His scholia on the *Categoriae*—which cover only until chapter 4b, 17–18—are preserved in a single manuscript, *Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus* 35.⁹⁵ His focus is a Platonizing one, which is obvious from his reference to participation, from his discussion on the distinction between the first and second substance, as well as from his reference to the divine substance.

Another impulse toward philosophical studies, including the Aristotelian ones, was given by Michael Psellos (1018–1078) in the eleventh century. As ὑπατος τῶν φιλοσόφων, Psellos directed

92. Linos Benakis, „Aus der Geschichte der christlichen Gottesbegriff: Die Problematik bei Photios († 893), dem Begründer des ersten byzantinischen Humanismus,“ in Λ. Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα και μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Ἀθήνα 2002, 315–324.

93. John Anton, “The Aristotelianism of Photius's Philosophical Theology,” in *Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. P. Schrenk, Washington: Catholic University of America Press 1994, 158–183: 164.

94. For references, see Katerina Ierodiakonou, “The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's ‘Categories’,” *Synthesis philosophica* 39, 1 (2005) 7–31: 16–17.

95. For critical edition, see *Arethas of Caesarea's Scholia on Porphyry's 'Isagoge' and Aristotle's 'Categories' (Codex Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus 35)*. A Critical Edition by Michael Share, *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi – Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina* 1, Athens-Paris-Bruxelles: Academy of Athens, J. Vrin, Ed. Ousia 1994.

the school of philosophy in Constantinople until 1054. One of his theses was that ancient Greek philosophers were deceived when it came to the theological issues, but on the other hand, he also thought that they identified the essence of the nature as it was created by God. So Christians are supposed to take the scientific method from Greek philosophers, without contesting the truths of the Christian religion, since the human mind “is capable of grasping truth through reason as well as through revelation.”⁹⁶ In other words, Psellos considered that logical reasoning did not conflict with Christian doctrine. Moreover, the logical syllogism was to him a necessary tool for theology as well.⁹⁷ Psellos wrote a paraphrase on several works of Aristotle, such as *De interpretatione*,⁹⁸ *Prior Analytics*, and probably *Categories*.⁹⁹ Also, he wrote “a complete commentary in the manner of the ancient commentaries on the *Physics*.”¹⁰⁰ Psellos drew from Aristotle also when he discussed issues such as virtues, the relationship of the soul to the body, the composition of the heavens, and the eternity of the cosmos. However, he did not hesitate to make strong criticisms of Aristotle whenever he wanted to stress the priority of Christian doctrine.

We also find reflections on Aristotle in John Italos (ca. 1025–1082), who has been characterized by Anna Comnena as a person who was better at interpreting Aristotle’s logic than anyone else. He wrote different treatises and commentaries on Aristotle, such as a commentary on the *Topics* (Ἰωάννου ὑπάτου καὶ διδασκάλου

96. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 50.
97. Ch. Erismann, “Logic in Byzantium,” in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 374.
98. See: K. Ierodiakonou, “Psellos’ Paraphrasis on Aristotle’s ‘De interpretatione’”, in: *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, edited by K. Ierodiakonou, Oxford 2002, 157–181.
99. See K. Ierodiakonou, “The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle’s ‘Categories’,” *Synthesis philosophica* 39, 1 (2005) 10–11.
100. Linos G. Benakis, “Commentaries and Commentators on the Logical Works of Aristotle in Byzantium,” in Α. Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα καὶ μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Ἀθήνα 2002, 251; Michael Psellos, *Kommentar zur Physik des Aristoteles. Editio princeps. Einleitung, Text, Indices* von Linos G. Benakis, *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi – Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina* 5, Ἀθήνα: Ἀκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν, Κέντρον Ἑρεῦνης τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς καὶ Λατινικῆς Γραμματείας 2008.

τῶν φιλοσόφων Ἰταλοῦ ἔκδοσις εἰς τὸ β' τῶν τοπικῶν)¹⁰¹, then two treatises on dialectics and Aristotelian syllogisms, and the *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, a collection of answers to ninety-three philosophical questions.¹⁰² John addressed the problem of universals,¹⁰³ often referring to Aristotle and Porphyry, criticized the Aristotelian thesis on the eternity of the world,¹⁰⁴ and more.

If it is true that “the philosophical revival inaugurated by Psellos led to an increase in the direct reading of Aristotle’s works beyond the logical corpus, opening a further channel through which Aristotle remained present to the Byzantine world,”¹⁰⁵ then the figures of Eustratius of Nicaea (ca.1050/1060–ca.1120) and Michael of Ephesus should not surprise us. With these two authors we testify to a real flourishing of Aristotelianism in Byzantium. Sponsored by Anna Comnena (1083–1153), they started a project of compiling and working on commentaries on Aristotle’s works, especially those which had not yet been commented on or which had received less attention in late antiquity.¹⁰⁶ Eustratius, John Italos’ disciple, had a strong belief that Aristotle’s syllogistic could be of great value in theological matters, asserting even that Christ himself applied Aristotelian syllogisms.¹⁰⁷ It is impressive how often he uses hypothetical syllogisms and Aristotle in general, while

101. Sofia Kotzabassi, *Byzantinische Kommentatoren der aristotelischen Topik Johannes Italos und Leon Magentinos*, Ἐταιρεία Βυζαντινῶν Ἐρευνῶν 17, Θεσσαλονίκη: Ἐκδόσεις Βάνιας 1999.

102. Cf. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 33–34. Joannes Italos, *Quaestiones quodlibetales*. Ἀπορία καὶ λύσεις, ed. P. Joannou, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 4, Ettal: Buch-Kunstverlag 1956.

103. Katerina Ierodiakonou, “John Italos on Universals,” *Documenti e Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 18 (2007) 231–247.

104. See András Kraft, István Perczel, “John Italos on the eternity of the world. A new critical edition of Quaestio 71 with translation and commentary,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 111, 3 (2018) 659–720.

105. D. Bradshaw, “The Presence of Aristotle in Byzantine Theology,” in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 396.

106. See the well-known study of Robert Browning, “An unpublished funeral oration on Anna Comnena,” in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 393–406.

107. Pierre Joannou, “Eustrate de Nicée. Trois pièces inédites de son process (1117),” *Revue des études byzantines* 10 (1952) 24–34: 34.

references to the Holy Fathers come in his writings only in the second place. The sayings of various authorities, those of Fathers included, served him not as undisputed truth, but at best as starting points for dialectical discussions—in other words, Eustratius relied primarily on formal syllogistic reasoning for solving doubtful problems.¹⁰⁸ As “undoubtedly one of the most profound experts of Aristotelian philosophy” and “the most productive scholiast on Aristotle,” he wrote commentaries on *Ethica Nicomachea* and *Analytica posteriora*¹⁰⁹ as well as a treatise on Aristotle’s *Meteorologica*. Eustratius gives profound analysis and interpretation of basic philosophical concepts and theses of the Stagirite, giving some original solutions and views.¹¹⁰ Like many Byzantine authors, he also discusses the problem of *universalia*.¹¹¹ On the other hand, his collaborator Michael of Ephesus manifests his Aristotelianism in many ways. He gives an explanation of difficult places in the Stagirite, making wide use of his other works while commenting on one specific topic. In doing so, Michael, although using Neoplatonic philosophical language, does not try to conform Aristotle to Neoplatonic metaphysics or *vice versa*. As we learn from George Tornikes’s funeral oration for Anna Comnena, “the wise man from

108. H. P. F. Mercken, “The Greek commentators on Aristotle’s ‘Ethics,’” in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 407–443: 412.

109. *Eustratii in Analyticorum posteriorum librum secundum commentarium*, edidit Michael Hayduck, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, voluminis XXI, consilio et auctoritate Academiae litterarum regiae Borussicae, Berolini: Typis et impensis Georgii Reimeri MCMVII.

110. Λίνος Γ. Μπενάκης, «Τρεῖς βυζαντινοὶ φιλόσοφοι ἀπὸ τῆν Νικαία. Εὐστράτιος Νικαίας, Νικηφόρος Βλεμμύδης, Θεοδώρος Β΄ Λασκάρης», in Λ. Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινὴ φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα καὶ μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Ἀθήνα 2002, 513–522: 514–515.

111. On this subject, see Perikles-Petros Joannou, „Die Definition des Seins bei Eustratios von Nikaia: Die Universalienlehre in der byzantinischen Theologie im 11. Jahrhundert,“ *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 47 (1954) 358–368. For critics of Joannou’s view, according to which Eustratios was the first Byzantine nominalist, see Katerina Ierodiakonou, “Metaphysics in the Byzantine Tradition: Eustratios of Nicaea on Universals,” *Quaestio* 5 (2005) 67–82; David Jenkins, “Eustratios of Nicaea’s ‘Definition of Being’ Revisited,” in *Medieval Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics*, eds. Charles Barber, David Jenkins, *Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* 101, Leiden, Boston: Brill 2009, 111–130.

Ephesus”—namely, Michael—blamed Anna for his blindness, since “he spent sleepless nights over commentaries on Aristotle at her command, whence came the damage done to his eyes by candles through desiccation.”¹¹² Indeed, no matter when exactly he started his work as a commentator—whether before Anna contacted him, that is, during the time he was a philosophy professor at the Academy founded by Constantine IX Monomachus, or, again, at Anna’s initiative—“the wise man from Ephesus” was very productive in this regard. He wrote different commentaries not only on the logical works of Aristotle, such are *Analytica priora et posteriora*, *Topica*, *De Interpretatione* and *Sophistici Elenchi*, but also on some books of *Metaphysica* as well as extant commentaries on *Parva naturalia* and on some books of *Ethica Nicomachea*. He did not hesitate to commit himself also to those less known works of Aristotle, including his zoological treatises *De partibus animalium*, *De animalium motione*, *De incessu animalium*¹¹³ and *De generatione animalium*. It is very possible that Michael, along with Eustratius and some unknown third scholiast, worked together on scholia on *Ethica Nicomachea*, which could explain the fact that Eustratius wrote scholia on books 1 and 6, while Michael wrote scholia on books 5, 9 and 10.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, his commentaries on *Physica*, *Rhetorica* and *De caelo* are lost. What is of significance is that until Michael of Ephesus we lacked a commentaries on the biological and zoological works of Aristotle. Later, George Pachymeres (1242–1310) would also give his own commentaries on these subjects. More important is the fact that Michael wrote “a series of glossae and short scholia to the *Politics* of Aristotle after the centuries’ long com-

112. R. Browning, “An unpublished funeral oration on Anna Comnena,” in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 393–406: 406.

113. *Aristotle and Michael of Ephesus on the Movement and Progression of Animals*, translated, with Introduction and Notes by Anthony Preus, *Studien und Materialien zur Geschichte der Philosophie* 22, Hildesheim, New York: Georg Olms Verlag 1981.

114. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 34; *Eustratii et Michaelis et anonyma in Ethica Nicomachea commentaria*, edidit Gustavus Heylbut, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, volumen XX, consilio et auctoritate Academiae litterarum regiae Borussicae, Berolini: Typis et impensis Georgii Reimeri MDCCCLXXXII.

mentators' silence about this particular work."¹¹⁵ These scholia sometimes contain very personal remarks and some kind of fictive dialogue of Byzantine philosopher with the Stagirite.¹¹⁶ Michael's commentary on the *Politica* has a cultural-historical significance: It testifies that this work of Aristotle, which became accessible to the West only in the thirteenth century, was known to the Byzantines already a century earlier, being commented on and discussed from "a truly respectable interpreter of Aristotle."¹¹⁷ However, while Eustratius inclines toward traditional "harmony" between Plato and Aristotle, Michael "reverts to the Aristotelian tradition represented by Alexander of Aphrodisias":¹¹⁸ Aristotle is for him the authority in all philosophical matters.¹¹⁹ No wonder, then, that his commentary on the *Sophistici Elenchi* was wrongly attributed to Alexander.¹²⁰ Eustratius's commentary had an influence on Theodore Prodromos's (ca. 1100–ca. 1170) extensive commentary on

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115. George Arabatzis, "Nicephoros Blemmydes's 'Imperial Statue': Aristotelian Politics as Kingship Morality in Byzantium," *Mediaevistik. Internationale Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Mittelalterforschung* 27 (2014) 99–118: 100. This was firstly indicated by Otto Immisch; see *Aristotelis Politica*, post Fr. Susemihlium recognovit Otto Immisch, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Lipsiae: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1909, xvii–xxi, 293–327. See also: *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium from Justinian to the last Paleologus*. Passages from Byzantine writers and documents translated with an Introduction and Notes by Ernest Barker, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1957.
116. See Linos Benakis, "Commentaries and Commentators on the Works of Aristotle (except the Logical ones) in Byzantium," in Λίνος Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα και μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Αθήνα 2002, 262; «Αγνοήθηκε στο Βυζάντιο ή πολιτική φιλοσοφία του 'Αριστοτέλους;», in Λ. Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα και μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Αθήνα 2002, 505–511.
117. Karl Praechter, "Review of the 'Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca'," in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 31–54: 51–53.
118. R. Sorabji, "The ancient commentators on Aristotle," in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 3.
119. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band*, München 1978, 35.
120. *Alexandri quod fertur in Aristotelis Sophisticos elenchus commentarium*, edidit Maximilianus Wallies, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, voluminis II, pars III, consilio et auctoritate Academiae litterarum regiae Borussiae, Berolini: Typis et impensis Georgii Reimeri MDCCCLXXXVIII.

the second book of Aristotle's *Posterior analytics*,¹²¹ while his commentary on books 1 and 6 of *Ethica Nicomachea* had its reception in the works of the fourteenth-century Byzantine scholar Nikephoros Gregoras (ca.1295–1360),¹²² then Barlaam of Calabria (1290–1348), and probably in George Pachymere's own commentary on the same work. But this influence was not confined to the Byzantine realm. Once the commentaries on *Ethica Nichomachea* were produced by Eustratius and Michael, they were translated by Robert Grosseteste (ca.1175–1253) in his complete Latin version of Aristotle's text.¹²³ In this way the two Byzantine commentators considerably influenced Western philosophers,¹²⁴ particularly Albert the Great (ca.1200–1280), Bonaventure (1221–1274), and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274).¹²⁵ This is, among other things, visible when it comes to the theory and division of the virtues concerning the

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121. Michel Cacouros, *Le commentaire de Théodore Prodrome au second livre des 'Analytiques Postérieurs' d'Aristote: le texte (editio princeps et tradition manuscrite), suivi de l'étude du commentaire de Prodrome, I-II*, diss., Paris: Université Paris-IV-Sorbonne 1992. Theodore also wrote a short treatise *On the Great and the Small*; see Paul Tannery, "Théodore Prodrome sur le grand et le petit," *Annuaire des Études Grecques* 21 (1887) 111–119.
122. Cf. Michele Trizio, "On the Byzantine fortune of Eustratios of Nicaea's commentary on Books I and VI of the 'Nicomachean Ethics'", in: *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*, edited by Börje Bydén, Katerina Ierodiakonou, Papers and Monographs from the Norwegian Institute at Athens, Series 4, Volume 1, Athens: The Norwegian Institute at Athens 2012, 119–224.
123. *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (†1253). Volume I: Eustratius on Book I and the Anonymous Scholia on Books II, III, and IV*. Critical Edition with an Introductory Study by H. P. F. Mercken, Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum 6, 1, Leiden: Brill 1973; *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste Bishop of Lincoln (†1253). Volume III: The Anonymous Commentator on Book VII. Aspasius on Book VIII. Michael of Ephesus on Books IX and X*. Critical Edition with an Introductory Study by H. P. F. Mercken, Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum 6, 3, Leuven: Leuven University Press 1991.
124. On this, see Michele Trizio, "From Anna Komnene to Dante. The Byzantine Roots of Western Debates on Aristotle's 'Nicomachean Ethics'," in *Dante and the Greeks*, ed. J. M. Ziolkowski, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Humanities, Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection 2014, 105–140.
125. See H. P. F. Mercken, "The Greek commentators on Aristotle's 'Ethics'," in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 407–443: 441–443.

status of prudence. In other words, Eustratius's commentary "not only constituted an authority for Grosseteste's notule on the text, for Albert the Great's two early commentaries, the *Super Ethica* and the *Ethica paraphrase*, and thereby for Aquinas' *Sententiae libri Ethicorum*, but significantly provided a preparation for interpreting the account of virtue in *EN*, as well as its overall program, in the light of the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue, and of virtue as divinization of the individual."¹²⁶ And while Anna Comnena described him as "skilled in the sacred and the profane sciences, more confident in dialectics than those who frequent the Stoa and the Academy" (ἀνὴρ τὰ τε θεῖα σοφὸς καὶ τὰ θύραθεν, αὐχῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς διαλέξεσιν μᾶλλον ἢ οἱ περὶ τὴν Στοᾶν καὶ τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν ἐνδιατρίβοντες), in the West Eustratius was mostly known simply as *the Commentator*. On the other hand, Michael of Ephesus seems to be personally acquainted with James of Venice, who translated into Latin not only some works of Aristotle, but also Philoponus's commentary on *Analytica posteriora* and Michael of Ephesus's own commentary on *Sophistici elenchi*.¹²⁷

After the Fourth Crusade and the fall of the City in 1204, the intensity and quality of philosophical engagement was significantly lower, but the continuity of the philosophical tradition could be found in the Empire of Nicaea. This was particularly a case with Nicephoros Blemmydes's (1197–1272) teaching and his handbooks of logic and physics. His Εἰσαγωγικῆς ἐπιτομῆς βιβλίον πρῶτον, περὶ λογικῆς contains forty chapters in which the summary of Porphyry's *Isagoge* is given, followed by a paraphrase and summary of Aristotle's *Organon*. According to Benakis, this was "the most circulated compendium of Logic during the whole Byzantine era."¹²⁸ Blemmydes was convinced that the study of logic is the best means

126. Erik Eliasson, "Eustratius of Nicaea as a source for the Neoplatonist notion of levels of virtue in the Early Latin commentators on the Nicomachean Ethics," in *Virtue Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Andreas Hellerstedt, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2018, 37–57.

127. Sten Ebbesen, "Greek and Latin Medieval Logic," *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin* 66 (1996) 67–95: 73–74.

128. Linos G. Benakis, "Commentaries and Commentators on the Logical Works of Aristotle in Byzantium," in Λ. Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα καὶ μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Ἀθήνα 2002, 254.

to approach truth and, consequently, to approach God, since God, in his worldview, is identified with the truth.¹²⁹ In his Εἰσαγωγικῆς ἐπιτομῆς βιβλίον δεύτερον, περὶ φυσικῆς Nicephoros offers a profound analysis of some issues that concern logic and physics, such as space and time, different physical phenomena, and so on. In some of his other works, such as *Imperial Statue*, one can discern that Aristotle's political philosophy was known not only to Michael of Ephesus but also to other Byzantine philosophers.¹³⁰ George Pachymeres (1242–ca. 1310) will later write a paraphrase of almost the entire Aristotelian corpus in his extensive “encyclopaedic” work under the title Σχεδιάσμα περὶ τῆς φιλοσοφίας τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους or simply Φιλοσοφία, which contains twelve books, forty-seven titles and 238 chapters. Each of the books is devoted to specific Aristotelian text, starting from the best-known—in the first place the Stagirite's logical works—and moving on to lesser-known or even spurious works. Sophonias, again, wrote the scholia on *Categoriae*, *Prior Analytics*, *Parva naturalia*, as well as on *De anima* and *Sophistici Elenchi*.¹³¹ Theodore Metochites (1270–1332), as one of the most famous scholars of this period, wrote scholia on different works by Aristotle, such as *Physica*, *De anima*, *De caelo*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *Parva naturalia*, *De animalium motione*, and others. One of his aims was to make easier the reading and study of difficult passages in Aristotle's works. In his work Ὑπομνηματισμοὶ καὶ στοιχειώσεις γνωμικαὶ Metochites makes an appraisal of Aristotle, giving him a special place in the history of philosophy. The echo of this view of Metochites will be present also in his student Gregory Palamas, who considered Aristotle the most prominent of all ancient Greek philosophers, even though he accused him at the same time of *kakotechnia* (τῆς δὲ τῶν κατὰ

129. Ch. Erismann, “Logic in Byzantium,” in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniossoglou, Cambridge 2017, 378.

130. Cf. George Arabatzis, “Nicephoros Blemmydes's ‘Imperial Statue’: Aristotelian Politics as Kingship Morality in Byzantium,” *Mediaevistik. Internationale Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Mittelalterforschung* 27 (2014) 99–118.

131. *Sophonias in libros Aristotelis De anima paraphrasis. Anonymi in Aristotelis Sophisticos elenchos paraphrasis*, edidit Michael Hayduck, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, voluminis XXIII, pars I–II, consilio et auctoritate Academiae litterarum regiae Borussicae, Berolini: Typis et impensis Georgii Reimeri MDCCCLXXXIII–MDCCCLXXXIV.

φιλοσοφίαν μαθημάτων γνώσεως καὶ ἡ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους παντὸς μᾶλλον ἐξίκετο ψυχῇ, ὃν κακότεχνον οἱ θεηγόροι προσεῖπον).¹³²

During the fourteenth century Aristotle was once again included in the theological dispute. Namely, in the first phase of the so-called hesychast controversy, the question of the possibility of the application of demonstrative syllogism in theological matters was one of the main issues in the dispute. Showing considerable knowledge of Aristotle's works, Barlaam of Calabria considered that, when it came to the *filioque*, demonstrative syllogisms were not possible: In theological matters syllogisms can at best be the dialectical ones. However, he considered Aristotle's logic an indispensable tool for any intellectual activity, theology included, applying Aristotle's categories only to the realm of the sensible, since the realm of the intelligible surpasses human words. Gregory Palamas (1296–1357), on the other side, on the question of the *filioque*, advocated the application of apodictic syllogism, taking as ἀξιώματα the sayings of Scripture and the Holy Fathers, first among them Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite.¹³³ He advocated the application of demonstrative syllogisms in theological matters, since without them one can be easily lead to relativism. Elsewhere, Palamas shows considerable knowledge of Aristotle's works, such as *Categoriae*, *Analytics posteriora*, *De anima*, *De caelo*, including *Metaphysics*, which he mentions one time by name. From his biographer, Philotheos Kokkinos, we find out that Palamas studied the entire corpus of Aristotle's works and that from an early age he impressed people with his competence in logic, which he was taught by Theodore Metochites. Actually, he explicitly speaks of ten categories, while the argumentation

132. Gregory Palamas, *Triads* 2, 1, 7, in: Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγράμματα. Ἐκδίδονται ἐπιμελεία Π. Κ. Χρήστου. Τόμος Α΄. Λόγοι ἀποδεικτικοί. Ἀντεπιγραφαί. Ἐπιστολαὶ πρὸς Βαρλαάμ καὶ Ἀκίνδυνον. Ὑπὲρ ἡσυχάζοντων. Ἐκδίδουν Β. Bobrinsky, Π. Παπαευαγγέλου, I. Meyendorff, Π. Χρήστου, Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος 1962, ²1988, 471.14–15.

133. On this issue, see Stamatios D. Gerogiorgakis, "The Controversy between Barlaam of Calabria and Gregory Palamas on Demonstrative and Dialectical Syllogisms Revisited," *Philotheos. International Journal for Philosophy and Theology* 10 (2010) 157–169; for other studies, see Mikonja Knežević, *Gregory Palamas (1296–1357): Bibliography*, Belgrade: Institute for Theological Studies 2012, 120–121.

he uses to defend the doctrine on the difference between essence and energies in God also unveils his knowledge of Aristotle's logical writings. He applies three of ten categories to God, but these were "rethought" and adapted in a process of "christianization of Aristotle's logic."¹³⁴ And while Barlaam of Calabria and Gregory Palamas accepted, openly or covertly, the value of Aristotelian philosophy, primarily Aristotelian logic, Nikephoros Gregoras could be marked as one of the representatives of an "anti-logical movement in Byzantium."¹³⁵ His work *Florentios* was characterized as "philosophically probably the most important anti-Aristotelian manifesto written in Byzantium."¹³⁶ Gregoras openly regarded logic as useless because the knowledge one gains through it concerns not real things, but only sensible objects, which are only images of reality.¹³⁷ Aristotelian syllogisms, therefore, cannot help us in reaching the transcendental reality, to which only theology can bring us.

But the fourteenth century brought something completely new when it came to the tradition of commenting on Aristotle in Byzantium: It was the increasing presence of Latin authors' works, especially those on Aristotelian logic and method. Due to political circumstances, Byzantine and Latin scholars had more opportunity to get know better one another's intellectual accomplishments. So we have a series of Latin authors translat-

134. On this see Christoph Erismann, "St. Gregory Palamas and Aristotle's 'Categories'," in *Triune God: Incomprehensible but Knowable - The Philosophical and Theological Significance of St Gregory Palamas for Contemporary Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Constantinos Athanasopoulos, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2015, 132-141.

135. Katerina Ierodiakonou, "The Anti-Logical Movement in the Fourteenth Century," in *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, ed. K. Ierodiakonou, Oxford 2002, 219-236: 221-224.

136. Michele Trizio, "Reading and Commenting on Aristotle," in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniosoglou, Cambridge 2017, 397-412: 403.

137. See Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhethika I. Einleitung*, Textausgabe, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen von Hans-Veit Beyer, Wiener byzantinistische Studien 12, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Kommission für Byzantinistik. Institut für Byzantinistik der Universität Wien, Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1976, I: 2.3.281.1-14.

ed into Greek, such as Boethius,¹³⁸ Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and others. The Latin influence is particularly obvious in Georgios Scholarios (ca.1400–ca.1473), a pupil of John Chortasmenos (ca.1370–1439), who himself produced an introduction to *Organon* and proved himself as one of the most devoted Aristotelians of late Byzantium. Scholarios, the first patriarch of Constantinople after its capture by the Turks, regarded Aristotle as the greatest of philosophers and thought his philosophy compatible with Christianity.¹³⁹ He wrote commentaries on *Ars Vetus*, that is, on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categoriae* and *De interpretatione*. As a matter of fact, Scholarios's commentaries "constitute the longest Byzantine commentaries on these particular logical treatises of Aristotle."¹⁴⁰ He also wrote scholia (Διαιρέσεις κεφαλαιώδεις) to the first five books of Aristotle's *Physics*, as well as commentaries or paraphrases on some other works of Aristotle, such as *De caelo et mundo*, *De anima*, *Parva naturalia*, *Meteorologica*.¹⁴¹ He has even trans-

138. Ἀννιτίου Μαλλίου Σεβηρίνου Βοηθοῦ Βίβλος Περί Παραμυθίας τῆς Φιλοσοφίας. *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii De Consolatione Philosophiae. Traduction grecque de Maxime Planude. Édition critique du texte grec avec une Introduction, le texte latin, les scholies et les index par Manolis Papathomopoulos, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi – Βυζαντινοὶ φιλόσοφοι – Philosophi Byzantini 9, Ἀθήναι: Ἀκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν, Paris: J. Vrin, Bruxelles: Éditions Ousia 1999; Boethius, *De topicis differentiis καὶ οἱ βυζαντινὲς μεταφράσεις τῶν Μανουὴλ Ὀλοβόλου καὶ Προχόρου Κυδῶνη. Παράρτημα κείμενο: Eine Pachtymeres-Weiterbearbeitung der Holobolos Übersetzung. Εἰσαγωγή καὶ κριτικὴ ἔκδοση τῶν κειμένων ὑπὸ Δημητρίου Ζ. Νικήτα. Boethius' De topicis differentiis und die byzantinische Rezeption dieses Werkes. Einleitung und textkritische Ausgabe von Dimitrios Z. Nikitas, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi – Βυζαντινοὶ φιλόσοφοι – Philosophi Byzantini 5, Ἀθήναι: Ἀκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν 1990.**
139. John A. Demetracopoulos, "George Scholarios (Gennadios II)," in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund, Dordrecht: Springer Science 2011, 397–399. For references in this regard, see George Karamanolis, "Plethon and Scholarios on Aristotle," in *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, 253–282.
140. Katerina Ierodiakonou, "The Western Influence on Late Byzantine Aristotelian Commentaries," in *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204–1500*, eds. Martin Hinterberger, Chris Schabel, Bibliotheca 11, Leuven, Paris, Walpole, MA: Peeters 2011, 373–383: 374.
141. See L. Benakis, "Commentaries and Commentators on the Works of Aristotle (except the Logical ones) in Byzantium," in Λίνος Γ. Μπενάκης, *Βυζαντινὴ*

lated some works of Thomas Aquinas, such as his commentaries and scholia on the *Sophistici Elenchi*, *Analytica posteriora*, and *De anima*. In 1443 Scholarios wrote a treatise *Contra Plethonis ignorantiam de Aristotele* in order to defend Aristotelian philosophy against Plethon's attacks, contained in the treatise *Περὶ ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται* (*De differentiis*), where Plethon made objection to the obscurity of Aristotle when it came to the issue of immortality of the soul. In commenting on Aristotle, Scholarios resorted primarily to medieval Latin commentators, but also to the ancient Greek and Byzantine ones, such as Theophrastus, Alexander, Porphyry, Syrianus, Ammonius, Simplicius, Themistius, and Psellos. Sometimes he incorporated his translation of the Latin authors' commentaries into his own commentaries; such is the case with Radulphus Brito (1270–1321) and his *Quaestiones super Artem Veterem*¹⁴² or, again, with Thomas Aquinas's commentary on *De interpretatione*.¹⁴³ In any case, Scholarios considered Latin authors creative, not only in regard to their method, but also with regard to their content. This innovative approach, which consisted in a systematic combination of Greek and Latin sources, was “the important difference which distinguishes him from the other Byzantine commentators.”¹⁴⁴ Be that as it may, in Scholarios we find some kind of synthesis of two ways of Aristotle's reception by Christian authors: the one of the East and the other of the West. These were characterized by different approaches, methodologies, and epistemic qualities, intermingling and converging from

φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα καὶ μελέτες. *Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Ἀθήνα 2002, 266.

142. Sten Ebbesen, Jan Pinborg, “Gennadios and Western Scholasticism. Radulphus Brito's ‘Ars Vetus’ in Greek Translation,” *Classica et Mediaevalia* 33 (1981–1982) 263–319.
143. See John A. Demetracopoulos, “Georgios Gennadios II-Scholarios' ‘Florilegium Thomisticum’. His Early Abridgment of Various Chapters and ‘Quaestiones’ of Thomas Aquinas' ‘Summae’ and his Anti-Plethonism”, *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 69, 1 (2002) 117–171; Idem, “Georgios Scholarios – Gennadios II's ‘Florilegium Thomisticum II (De fato)’ and its Anti-Plethonic Tenor,” *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 74, 2 (2007) 301–376.
144. K. Ierodiakonou, “The Western Influence on Late Byzantine Aristotelian Commentaries,” in *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204–1500*, eds. M. Hinterberger, Ch. Schabel, Leuven, Paris, Walpole, MA 2011, 373–383: 381.

time to time, but altogether testifying to the fact that the “sphinx of Stagira” was an unavoidable figure in medieval philosophy on both sides of the Christian *oikoumene*.

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In modern scholarship there have been several crucial projects dedicated to Aristotle’s influence in the Middle Ages, including his reception in Byzantine Empire. The first of those projects, entitled *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, was conducted under the auspices of the Berlin Academy; promoted by Eduard Zeller and directed by Hermann Diels, it comprised most of the surviving Aristotelian commentaries up to the sixth century, including authors such as Alexander of Aphrodisia, Porphyry, Dexippus, Simplicius, Olympiodorus, John Philoponus, Elias, but also a few of the works of the later Byzantine authors, such as Sophonias and Michael of Ephesus.¹⁴⁵ The second project gave more credit to the authors from the late Byzantine period, since they had been left out of the *Berlin corpus*: it was titled *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi – Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina*, and, being sponsored by the Academy of Athens, it comprised authors such as Michael Psellos, Arethas of Caesarea, George Pachymeres, and others. Last but not least, the project under the patronage of Richard Sorabji, having the title *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle*, included till now 111 volumes containing the works of medieval commentators of Aristotle in English translation. It should also be mentioned that Sorabji edited two remarkable volumes on the subject: *Aristotle Transformed* and *Aristotle Re-interpreted*,¹⁴⁶ which comprised more than thirty-five relevant studies on the reception of Aristotle in Byzantium. Along with these projects, individual engagement of younger scholars has significantly improved our knowledge of how Byzantine philosophers read, commented on, or criticized Aristotle, thus making an impact not only on Eastern thought, but moreover on some of the main representatives of Western philosophical thought.

145. For the list of the edited volumes in this series, see R. Sorabji, “The ancient commentators on Aristotle,” in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, New York, Ithaca 1990, 27–30.

146. *Aristotle Re-Interpreted. New Findings on Seven Hundred Years of the Ancient Commentators*, ed. Richard Sorabji, London, New York: Bloomsbury 2016.

The present volume represents a small contribution to our knowledge of *Aristoteles Byzantinus*. It is a kind of continuation of the volume I edited five years ago,¹⁴⁷ which—containing itself a few chapters on the reception of Aristotle and Aristotelianism in Byzantium¹⁴⁸—was supposed to indicate different ways in which Byzantine philosophy reveals itself to us. Neither that volume nor the one before us has the tendency to exhaust its subject; both of them are meant only to be something like a new impulse toward the investigation of (sometimes even today neglected) Byzantine philosophy. The works published in this volume cover various periods of Christian thought when Aristotle’s thought was commented on, adopted, or criticized—starting from Origen of Alexandria in the third century and going up to Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth. The first of this volume’s papers, coming from the well-known scholar Ilaria Ramelli, discusses the reception of Aristotle and of some Aristotelian authors in Origen, and to a lesser extent in Eusebius, Methodius and Gregory of Nyssa. Ramelli states that Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, while using a number of Aristotelian elements, were very critical toward Aristotelian philosophy: especially toward Aristotelian theses on immortality of the soul, fifth element and denial of divine providence on earth, which were some kind of indicator of an “atheistic or nearly atheistic position.” Their attitude towards Aristotle was, as Ramelli states, dictated by their own Christian Platonism, which is understandable, due to the fact that in that era we had to do with a mix-

147. Mikonja Knežević ed., *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, Contemporary Christian thought series 32, Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press 2015. For critical overviews of this volume, see Matthieu Cassin, *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 100, 3 (2016) 509–510; Nedžib M. Prašević, *Filozofija & društvo* XXVII, 1 (2016) 273–276; Arthur Rosemary, *Journal of Theological Studies* 67, 2 (2016) 827–829; Μανώλης Β. Περάκης, *Ελληνική φιλοσοφική επιθεώρηση* 98 (2016) 117–122.

148. See Slobodan Žunjić, “John Damascene’s ‘Dialectic’ as a Bond between Philosophical Tradition and Theology” (227–270); Scott Ables, “John of Damascus on Genus and Species” (271–287); Ivan Christov, “Neoplatonic Elements in the Writings of Patriarch Photius” (289–309); Smilen Markov, “‘Relation’ as Marker of Historicity in Byzantine Philosophy” (311–323); Constantinos Athanasopoulos, “Demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) and its Problems for St Gregory Palamas: Some neglected Aristotelian Aspects of St Gregory Palamas’ Philosophy and Theology” (361–373).

ture of Platonic and Aristotelian worldviews. Ramelli affirms that Origen had a quite good knowledge of Aristotle and Aristotelian theories and concepts; one of them is hylomorphism, which is discussed thoroughly in her paper.

The attitude of Gregory of Nyssa towards Aristotle is further analyzed in Dmitry Biriukov's contribution, which addresses the problem of universals in the work of the great Cappadocian. Biriukov expresses a critical viewpoint against some modern authors' readings of Gregory's treatise *Ad Ablabium. On not Three Gods*, such as Richard Cross and Johannes Zachhuber. Zachhuber, namely, attempted to prove that Gregory manifested his understanding of nature in a collective sense of universals when discussing the notion of the total monad (he correlated this idea with the concept of the "whole man" in Alexander of Aphrodisias). Cross, on the other hand, rejected this interpretation, arguing that Gregory's views are consistent with the understanding of universals in an immanent sense. Biriukov believes that the specific philosophical doctrine developed by Gregory of Nyssa is based on the tradition of Aristotle's *Categoriae* and the Neoplatonic commentaries on this treatise. In developing his theory of the general and particular Gregory was influenced by Porphyry's *Isagoge*; his concept of "monad" actually represents Porphyry's concept of "common man." However, this does not mean that Gregory and Porphyry advocate an "ontological" reading of individual-species relation; Gregory's treatises *Ad Ablabium* and *Letter 38* actually "combine epistemological, ontological, and logical discourses."

The next two papers discuss various aspects of thought of John Philoponus, probably the most interesting philosophical figure of Byzantine world. Maria Varlamova investigates some of Philoponus's arguments found in his *Against Proclus On the Eternity of the World*, comparing his conception of matter with that of Aristotle. Philoponus and Aristotle both agree that matter cannot be generated out of matter. Moreover, both understand matter in terms of a substrate, which stays unchanged in a sequence of generations and corruptions of particular things. However, they disagree when it comes to the "eternal" status of matter: Aristotle states that first matter is not generated or corrupted at all, while Philoponus takes the position that the immutability of the first sub-

strate in a sequence of generations does not mean that substrate should be ingenerated and imperishable by nature. Furthermore, he states that the very fact that matter cannot come to be out of matter means that it is generated out of nothing. Philoponus, as Varlamova states, “provides a new perspective on the nature of prime matter: he denies the existence of some formless source and instead proposes to look at a three-dimensional extension or body without qualities not as the second but as the first substrate. This view is held in the context of proving temporal finitude of the world. Prime matter defined through three-dimensionality ceases to be something formless and incomprehensible, while acquiring its own quiddity.” In other words, Philoponus “substitutes prime matter with three-dimensionality”, and so the three-dimensionality becomes “a constitutive element of all corporeal beings (since all bodies possess extension in three dimensions).”

Sebastian Mateiescu’s paper offers a meticulous analysis of Philoponus’s (anti-Chalcedonian) interpretation of the *differentia*. This concept was a basic notion in Aristotelian logic, in which the procedure of defining something involved the addition of the right specific difference to the common genus. However, the importance of this notion became “crucial” with the Neoplatonic commentators, who considered *differentia* as a “completer of being.” The result was that it has been further understood either as a “substantial quality” or as a “part” of substance. Following this second line of interpretation, Philoponus, importing Aristotelianism into the Christological debates, considers Christ as a whole made of two parts—namely, human and divine natures—whose substantial difference after the union is only notional and not real. This resulted in “an anti-Chalcedonian portrayal of Christ as being one individual nature that cannot be further submitted to any attempt at counting its components as two.” In order to better grasp the significance and implications of Philoponus’s understanding of *differentia* Mateiescu compares it with that of Maximus the Confessor. In contrast to Philoponus, Maximus favors the interpretation of *differentia* as “substantial quality”: actually, he defines it as “essential motion” caused by God. This means that *differentia* as “motion” is “the hallmark of ‘existence’ in Maximus the Confessor”, which is the reason why Maximus “is able to claim

that differentia is ontologically preserved even after the union of the divine and the human natures in Christ.”

Maximus the Confessor and his relation with different aspects of Aristotelian philosophy is the subject of the following three papers in this volume. Grigory Benevich endeavors to establish Aristotle’s influence on John Cassian and Maximus the Confessor in the realm of their practical philosophy, that is, in the realm of ethics. His analysis concerns primarily Aristotle’s notion of the *μεσότης*, that is, the understanding of a virtue as the “mean” between “excess” and “deficiency.” Benevich points out that both authors used the structure of Aristotle’s discourse regarding the “mean,” albeit in a modified form: the difference consists in the application of this concept, which in the case of two Christian authors took place within the context of ascetic monastic life and Christian life in general. John Cassian, in Benevich’s view, combines the doctrine of the “mean” with the “tripartite anthropology and creatively develops it for his doctrine of ascetic life,” while Maximus the Confessor “embeds it into a wider perspective of his Christian mystagogy, and ultimately into his doctrine of deification in which there will be neither ascetic struggle, nor any duality of ‘right’ and ‘left’.” Vladimir Cvetković in his paper addresses different problems of the application of the Porphyrian tree to Maximus’s work. One of them concerns the difference between Aristotelian and Neoplatonic understanding of the participation of lower degrees into the higher degree of beings, while the other concerns the relationship between genera and species, on the one hand, and divine providence on the other hand. Polemicizing with some important figures of modern Maximian scholarship, Cvetković proposes a new scheme of genera and species divisions, which is, as he states, more consistent with Maximus’s work. This new scheme “proposes a unification or an overcoming of differences between lower levels of being (species) not on the higher level of being (genera), but at the same level of being (species) through middle terms.” By this new schema present in Maximus’s work, we are facing, according to Cvetković, some kind of “rethinking of Aristotelian logic.” Finally, the third of papers in this volume dedicated to Maximus’s possible debt to Aristotelian philosophy endeavors to recognize some connections between teleological considerations of the two authors’ systems; as a matter

of fact, Dionysios Skliris finds “a certain tension in the thought of Maximus the Confessor, due to the fact that he wanted to synthesize a teleological and metaphysical approach with a Christian faith founded on eschatology of the resurrection.” This resulted in what the author of this ambitious article calls “Biblical Aristotelianism” or “eschatological teleology”; Maximus, therefore, criticizes some aspects of Aristotle’s philosophy, such as “the independent eternity of substance,” while he at the same time “integrates in his metaphysical worldview other dimensions of Aristotelian metaphysics, such as the passage from potential to actualization.”

In an interesting paper on Nicephorus I of Constantinople, Christophe Erismann addresses some aspects of Aristotelianism present in the context of the Iconoclastic controversy. Erismann states that some of Nicephorus’s works, such as his *Antirrhetici*, are “full of logic,” since he uses different concepts from Aristotle’s *Categoriae* in order to elaborate his understanding of images. The most notable among these are the concept of relatives (πρός τι), the concept of homonyms, and the distinction between substance and accident. Moreover, judging by the report that one finds in the *Vita* conducted by Ignatius the Deacon, and analyzing also Nicephorus’s works, one can notice that “Nicephorus’s usage of Aristotelian logic goes beyond the *Categories* as he frequently uses syllogisms in his argumentation.” So, in a lengthy section of his third *Antirrheticus* Nicephorus formulates ten arguments in order to prove that the icon of Christ is more precious and venerable than the cross. After pointing to Nicephorus’s education in logic and highlighting the importance of the question of the cross in the time of iconoclasm, Erismann discusses three of these ten syllogisms. It appears that Nicephorus’s intention was not to use scriptural and patristic quotes, but to build logically structured arguments, which reveals how important Aristotle’s logic was in this period of theological reasoning as well.

The next two papers concern one of the most interesting philosophical figures of late Byzantium: Michael of Ephesus. The first of them comes from George Arabatzis, an author of several significant articles dedicated to Michael and some important monographs on Byzantine philosophy. In the present paper Arabatzis discusses the relation between *paideia* and *episteme* in Aristot-

le and Michael of Ephesus. The educated/cultivated man is not, according to Michael, disposed to know all the theorems of science but only the principles of that science and only some of its theorems, while the scientist is predisposed to know all the theorems of science. The second paper on Michael of Ephesus, written by Irina Deretić, addresses his exegesis of Aristotle's thought on friendship, which is a subject that actually was not treated till now in modern scholarship. Deretić discusses how Michael understood Aristotle's main ideas on friendship in terms of self-love, underlying that he not only provided an elucidation of the Book IX of *Nicomachean Ethics*, but also gave a critical interpretation of the Stagirite's account of *philia*. In the process of commenting of Aristotle's text, Michael reveals his own thought on irrationality, which had a serious implication on his account of selfhood. Deretić also gives an analysis of the active character of *eudaimonia* in Michael of Ephesus, of the connection between *eudaimonia* and friendship and, finally, of the relation between *philia* and theoretical life. Michael makes distinction between two kinds of *eudaimonia*: theoretical and political, which is not present in Aristotle. In his treatment of Aristotle's notion of contemplation, Michael was under the influence of Neoplatonism and related reflections of the Holy Fathers. The contemplation, as a self-referential cognitive activity, is given "the highest epistemic status." Both Arabatzis and Deretić concur that Michael promote a form of intellectualism of the good, being not only a scholiast, but also an original thinker who reads Aristotle's text critically, improving sometimes Aristotle's arguments either by elaborating on them or by discovering what their hidden implications might be. This means that "Michael's reading of Aristotle is not only an elucidation of his words, but also a fruitful contribution to the better understanding of the philosophical problems posed by Stagirite, which at times can be different than what Aristotle might have thought"; in Arabatzis's words, Michael "was one of the more original intellectuals as regards the topics of his work," a man who by his analyses and interpretations well transcends our usual ideas—and (negative) prejudices—of a mediocre Byzantine scholar.

Finally, the last paper in this volume, written by Christos Terezis and Lydia Petridou, investigates in general terms some Ar-

istotelian presuppositions of the thought of Gregory Palamas. This concerns the question of theological methodology and the possibility of the usage of the apodictic syllogism in theological matters, which was the subject of the dispute in the initial stage of the Hesychast controversy.

It has recently been noticed that there is a myriad of ways in which Aristotelian influence entered Byzantine thought. The papers collected in this volume testify to only a few of these “myriad of ways,” adding—through various approaches and methodologies—some (important) points on the (still far from complete) portrayal of *Aristoteles Byzantinus*. In different ways and with different degree of success they shed more light at some crucial points of the reception of Aristotle in Byzantine world, confirming that the presence of Stagirite was remarkable, even in those authors who were saying that one should philosophize “in the way of fishermen, not of Aristotle.”¹⁴⁹ However, in Byzantium Aristotle was never considered as the “thirteenth apostle”¹⁵⁰ neither was he ever given “unconditional approval”; he was often criticized, “both from the standpoint of pure philosophical inquiry and/or from that of his compatibility with Christian doctrine.”¹⁵¹ This means that from the very beginnings of commenting on Aristotle in Byzantium we are actually facing in many ways an “Aristotle transformed”; in certain cases this transformation of Aristotle in the works of Byzantine thinkers “was so substantial that it may not be unreasonable to consider such works as attempts in, or steps towards, substituting and even transcending the Aristotelian text.”¹⁵² All of these facts point out the importance of studying of *Aristoteles Byzantinus*, particularly under the light of the fact that there remains a tremendous amount of unedited or little-studied material in this regard. One part of this “material”

149. Gregorii Theologi, *Oratio* 23, 12, PG 35, 1164C.

150. John of Damascus, *Contra Jacobitas* 10, PG 94, 1441A.

151. M. Trizio, “Reading and Commenting on Aristotle”, in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. A. Kaldellis, N. Siniossoglou, Cambridge 2017, 397–412: 400.

152. Katerina Ierodiakonou, “The Byzantine Commentator’s Task: Transmitting, Transforming or Transcending Aristotle’s Text,” in *Knotenpunkt Byzanz. Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen*, hrsg. von A. Speer, Ph. Steinkrüger, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 36, Berlin: De Gruyter 2012, 199–209: 199.

undoubtedly would be the impact of *Aristoteles Byzantinus* on what could be termed as *Aristoteles Slavicus*: first of all, through mediaeval Slavic translations of Aristotelian treatises such as Theodore of Raithu's *Praeparatio*, John of Damascus's *Dialectica*¹⁵³ or anti-Latin treatises of Barlaam of Calabria and Gregory Palamas.¹⁵⁴

In the very end, I would like to express my gratitude to those who helped in shaping this book. First of all, thanks are due to Maxim Vasiljević, Bishop of the Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, who showed readiness to publish this volume with Sebastian Press. Special thanks I also owe to Fr. Herman Middleton and Jeffrey Gifford who improved the linguistic aspect of the texts contained here, as well as to Dr. Filip Ivanović, Director of the Centre for Hellenic Studies (Montenegro), who showed great eagerness to support this project. The typesetting and technical preparation was done by Balša Šijaković; last but not least, I am deeply grateful for the patience and diligence to my colleagues and friends who published their research results in this volume, which, due to some objective circumstances, is published much later than it was supposed to.

153. On this see Slobodan Žunjić, *Logic and Theology. Dialectica of John of Damascus in Byzantine and Serbian Philosophy*, Beograd: Otačnik 2012 (in Serbian).

154. Yannis Kakridis, Lora Taseva, *Gegen die Lateiner Traktate von Gregorios Palamas und Barlaam von Kalabrien in kirchenslavischer Übersetzung*, Weiher, Freiburg i. Br. Hubert & Co. 2014.