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Byzantine ARISTOTLE

"But it is your most lucid doctrine about the one God and your repugnance against the irrational polytheism that I now timely make the unique cause of the miracle that surrounds you (for I think that you are the only one among those philosophers, or the first among few, who has done that), since the divine logos along with the soul, which He, in dispensing the salvation of men, has received, was directly known by you."

(George Scholarios, Praise of Aristotle)

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EDITORIAL

Although the existence and the specificity of Byzantine Philosophy are widely recognized today, it is nonetheless true that we might still need a series of explorations in order to get closer to its ultimate importance, not only for the construction of Greek Patristic theology, but also for a deeper interpretation of Greek Philosophy as such. Most of the Byzantine philosophers are not just slavish interpreters of the latter, but also creative thinkers, sometimes even able to correct or transform the philosophical data.

In an attempt to engage with the modern understanding of such a fertile enterprise as Byzantine Philosophy, Analogia offers this first collection of distinguished essays written by promising experts of the younger generation, which comprise a good part of the essays received by the Journal once the invitation for a Byzantine Aristotle volume was extended to the academic community.

In her learned and accurate 'Themistius on "Prime Matter", Aristotle, and the "Unwritten Doctrines" ascribed to Plato', Elisa Coda pertinently shows that Themistius was inspired by a loose harmony between Aristotle's conception of matter and Plato's interplay of determination and indetermination, in order to explain 'prime matter' as the principle of indetermination—thus showing, once again, the philosophical creativity of the great commentator.

Pantelis Golitsis, in his highly documented 'Aristotelian attraction and repulsion in Byzantium', offers a brilliant short history of the reception of Aristotle in the Byzantine intellectual world. While rightly claiming that neither Aristotle nor Plato were ever received as an organic and indispensable part of doing theology, he nonetheless shows that ultimately, not only were Aristotle's Logic or Physics positively accepted, but even his metaphysical monotheism was highly praised by an intellectual of the status of Scholarios, and the philosopher's capability of instilling the right convictions about the knowledge of God in this world was acclaimed by an intellectual of the status of Pachymeres. Of course, this does not mean that the suspicions about his deeper theological convictions were ever silenced.

Melina Mouzala in her excellently elaborated 'Simplicius on the principal meaning of physis in Aristotle's Physics II. 1–3', which shows a deep familiarity with her research area, shows how original, multi-leveled, and fertile Simplicius' understanding of the Aristotelian physis is. I think that no student of the history of such an influential concept for the very articulation of theology and medieval thought in general, like that of physis, can afford not to read this article. Simplicius final understanding of physis as escate zoe, is utterly important for the history of both Christian Philosophy and Theology.

Sotiria Triantari, an expert in Byzantine rhetoric, in her 'Aristotle's Rhetoric in the Manuals of Byzantine Rhetoric' shows successfully to what extent—and despite some criticism by prominent Byzantine intellectuals—the Aristotelian Rhetorics,

along with the philosopher's theory of language, became the foremost source of inspiration for the Byzantines.

Ilias Vavouras, finally, in his insightful 'Visions of political philosophy in the "Commentary on Aristotle's Politics" by Michael of Ephesus', brilliantly shows how the Byzantine intellectual not only accepts, but also christianises the Aristotelian perspective, by closely connecting governance with virtue and especially justice.

– ***Nikolaos Loudovikos***, Senior Editor

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Themistius on 'Prime Matter', Aristotle, and the 'Unwritten Doctrines' ascribed to Plato

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On close inspection, Themistius' rephrasing of two passages in Physics IV 2, in which Aristotle compares Plato's *Timaeus* and the 'unwritten doctrines', suggests that he was guided in his understanding by a loose association with the account of Plato's Ideas in the *Metaphysics*. Themistius also interprets Aristotle's remarks about 'place' in *Timaeus* as pointing to the main feature of 'prime matter', namely indetermination.

I

Themistius[1] was a prominent figure in education and government in fourth century Constantinople, where he also ran his philosophical school.[2] He authored both rhetorical works (*Orationes*) and paraphrases of Aristotle's treatises[3] and was even in his lifetime considered a key personality in the philosophical education of the cultured

[1] General presentations of Themistius include, in chronological order: Robert B. Todd, 'Themistius', in *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum*, vol. VIII, eds Virginia Brown *et al.* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 57–102; Elisa Coda, 'Themistius, Arabic', in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 1260–66; Jacques Schamp, Robert B. Todd, and John Watt, 'Thémistios', in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques* VI, ed. R. Goulet (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2016), 850–900; Michael Schramm, 'Themistios (§ 40)', in *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie. Die Philosophie der Antike 5/1: Philosophie der Kaiserzeit und der Spätantike*, eds Christoph Riedweg, Christoph Horn, and Dietmar Wyrwa, (Basel: Schwabe, 2018), 410–427, 451–455 (bibliography).

[2] From about 345 CE, Themistius taught at Nicomedia; later on, at Constantinople: cf., *Or.* 31 and *Or.* 24, 302C–303A.

[3] According to some, Themistius also authored commentaries properly speaking: cf., Carlos Steel, 'Des commentaires d'Aristote par Thémistius?', *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 71 (1973): 669–80; against this hypothesis, cf., Henry J. Blumenthal, 'Photius on Themistius (Cod. 74): Did Themistius Write Commentaries on Aristotle?', *Hermes* 107 (1979): 168–82; John Vanderspoel, 'The Themistius' Collection of Commentaries on Plato and Aristotle', *Phoenix* 43 (1989): 162–4.

segment of the capital.[4] Themistius set for himself the task of explaining Aristotle,[5] offering an approach that has been presented as general enough[6] and ecumenical enough[7] to avoid the issue of a specific philosophical allegiance.[8]

Themistius was a careful reader not only of Alexander of Aphrodisias[9] but also of Plotinus.[10] It appears from several idiosyncratic elaborations scattered in his paraphrases that he combines Peripatetic and Neoplatonic readings of Aristotle's doctrines.[11] This is one of the most interesting and least studied aspects of his work, and

[4] There is a general consensus among scholars that the *paideia* advocated by Themistius is the real key to understanding his thought: cf., Glanville Downey, 'Education and Public Problems as Seen by Themistius', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 86 (1955): 291–307; Bruno Colpi, *Die Paideia des Themistios. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Bildung im vierten Jahrhundert nach Christus* (Frankfurt—Bern: Peter Lang, 1987); John Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court. Oratory, Civic Duty and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995); Robert J. Penella, 'Plato (and Others) in the Orations of Themistius', in Ryan C. Fowler, ed., *Plato in the Third Sophistic* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 145–61.

[5] Them., *In An. Post*., 1.2–2.4 Wallies; *In De an*., 1.1–5 Heinze.

[6] Todd, 'Themistius' quoted above n. 1: 68, recalls that 'Eduard Zeller (1814–1908) placed Themistius in a section on the Neoplatonic school after Iamblichus, with the evasive label of "eclectic". Dispute over Themistius' scholastic affiliation continues, and he defies easy categorization. His Aristotelian paraphrases are too austere to convey strong doctrinal commitments, while his orations inevitably exclude serious philosophical discussion'. According to the same scholar in his *Themistius On Aristotle Physics 1-3* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012), 3, 'Themistius was for the first part of his life a semi-professional teacher of philosophy with inherited wealth and a rather high-minded attitude to his calling, and therefore under no obligation to represent any particular viewpoint or to pursue his calling in response to social or institutional pressures. […] There are indeed traces of Platonism in the paraphrases, notably in linguistic borrowings which include Neoplatonic language in one particular area (his account of the intellect), but […] he also reproduces Aristotle's criticism of Plato without comment'.

[7] Richard Sorabji, ed., *Aristotle Re-Interpreted. New Findings on Seven Hundred Years of the Ancient Commentators* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 19–20: 'Themistius is more interested in harmonizing Plato and Aristotle than is speaking like a committed member of either school. […] In other cases Themistius disagreed with Aristotle […]. He never took the opportunity of making his life under the emperor Julian easier by indicating that he believed in the great power of theurgy up to a point. […] What Themistius does have in common with the philosophers whom we call Neoplatonists is that he wishes to harmonise Plato and Aristotle wherever possible. But that is not a sufficient condition for being a Neoplatonist: there were harmonisers before Neoplatonism, and Themistius prefers harmony but does not think it is his business to argue for harmony at length'.

[8] For a balanced assessment of the debate about Themistius' philosophical allegiance cf. Inna Kupreeva, 'Themistius', in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 397–416, at 405–6.

[9] See my 'Alexander of Aphrodisias in Themistius' Paraphrase of the *De Caelo*', *Studia graeco-arabica* 2 (2012): 355–71.

[10] Themistius echoes the Plotinian doctrines especially in his exegesis of Aristotle's *De Anima*. On some crucial points, such as the doctrine of soul as substance, his exegesis inspired by Plotinus was relevant also for Thomas Aquinas: cf., Elisa Coda, 'The Soul as "Harmony" in Late Antiquity and in the Latin Middle Ages. A Note on Thomas Aquinas as a Reader of Themistius' *In Libros De Anima Paraphrasis*', *Studia graeco-arabica* 7 (2017): 307–30.

[11] Cf., Shlomo Pines, 'Some Distinctive Metaphysical Conceptions in Themistius' Commentary on *Book Lambda* and their Place in the History of Philosophy', in *Aristoteles: Werk und Wirkung*, II, ed. Jürgen Wiesner (Berlin—New York: De Gruyter, 1987), 177–204, (repr.: *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*, III [Jerusalem—Leiden: The Magnes Press—Brill, 2000], 267–94); Elisa Coda, 'A Revised Aristotelian Theology. Themistius on the Soul of the Heavens and the Movement of the Heavenly Bodies', in *Réceptions de la théologie aristotélicienne. D'Aristote à Michel d'Ephèse*, eds Gweltaz Guyomarc'h, Fabienne Baghdassarian (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 207–38.

the cross-pollination of different sources in his understanding of Aristotle's tenets in *Metaphysics, De Anima, De Caelo,* and also in *Physics* becomes even more interesting considering that, in a paraphrase, the distinction between the doctrines of the main author—in our case, Aristotle—and that of the 'commentator' is predictably less evident than in a commentary sentence by sentence, where the authorial sentence and its exegesis are clearly distinct from one another.[12] In Themistius' paraphrases, the personal elaborations—at times in the form of digressions, but more often as explanatory sentences interspersed in the account of Aristotle's doctrines—occur within a context of general fidelity to the original wording. This plain and apparently non-committal stance made Themistius' paraphrases widespread among pagan, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish authors, not to mention the European Humanists.

This paper is devoted to a minor point in Themistius' exegesis of the *Physics*, but one which in my opinion effectively exemplifies his paraphrastic approach, with its didactical purposes, but also its flaws. In what follows, I will discuss Aristotle's reference to Plato's *ἄγραγα δόγματα* in *Physics* IV 2, 209 b 11–17 as it is understood in Themistius' paraphrase (pp. 106.18–23 and 107.24–27 Schenkl).[13]

II

Aristotle's notion of matter, set out as a result of his analysis of becoming (*Phys*. I, 7–9), is also involved in the account of place (*Phys*. IV 1–2). The analysis of 'place' opens with a series of *apories* (*Phys*. IV 1) and the criticism of the confused assumptions of those who identify place either with form or with matter (*Phys.* IV 2, 209 b 2–212 a 2). Aristotle also criticizes Plato's position (209 b 11–17; b 33–210 a 2).

A summary of *Phys*. IV 2, 209 b 1–17 will serve as the background to Aristotle's account of the Platonic position and of Themistius' understanding of both Plato and Aristotle. After a first passage where 'place' in the broader sense is distinguished from 'proper place' (*Phys*. IV 2, 209 a 31–b 1), and the latter is defined as 'the immediate envelope' (*τὸ πρῶτον περιέχον*, 209 b 1–2) of a thing, Aristotle mentions the twin possibility for 'place' to be either form or matter. Being a kind of limit (*ὁ τόπος […] πέρας τι ἂν εἴη*, 209 b 1–2), 'place' bounds each body as well as

[12] Todd, *Themistius On Aristotle Physics 1–3* quoted above n. 3: 2–3, describes Themistius' 'creation of a fluent sequence of thought in which the author impersonates Aristotle in order to display interconnections rather that self-consciously and often laboriously explain them […]'. As a result, Themistius' 'use of the first-person singular and plural can be ambiguous, since Themistius does not overtly distinguish himself from the author he is impersonating'.

[13] At variance with other Themistian paraphrases—most noticeably that of the *De Caelo*—this one is extant in Greek. First published in 1534 in Venice, in modern times it has been edited twice: *Themistii paraphrases Aristotelis librorum quae supersunt*, ed. Leonardus Spengel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1866), vol. I, 105–449; *Themistius In Aristotelis Physica paraphrasis*, ed. Heinrich Schenkl (Berlin: Reimer, 1900), *CAG* V.2. On the translation into Arabic cf., Coda, 'Themistius. Arabic' quoted above n. 1; on the Renaissance translations into Latin, as well as on the Humanist commentaries on this paraphrase, cf. Todd, 'Themistius' quoted above n. 1.

the quantity of matter comprised in its magnitude. Taken in this sense, 'place' might involve the form and shape of each body (*τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ μορφὴ ἑκάστου*, 209 b 3). If, on the other hand, one means by 'place' the inner dimensionality of the magnitude of a given body (*τὸ διάστημα τοῦ μέγεθος*, 209 b 6–7), one would rather say that it is matter (*ἡ ὕλη*, 209 b 7). Even though he does not argue his point here, Aristotle disagrees with both. This becomes clear shortly after, when he claims that it is easy to see why 'place' is neither form nor matter (211 b 6–212 a 6)—chiefly because these cannot be separated from the thing lest the thing be annihilated whereas 'place' can, as movement proves beyond any doubt. In considering the reasons that may suggest the overlap between 'place' and the thing's inner dimensionality,[14] Aristotle points to the indetermination that characterises matter as the feature that matter shares with place. Both matter and place are bound by limits. Imagine, says Aristotle, a sphere whose limits are taken away: only matter is left. Thus, place and matter have in common that they are determined by their boundaries. It was, Aristotle continues, because of this that Plato identified 'room' (*χώρα*) and 'matter':

> *διὸ καὶ Πλάτων τὴν ὕλην καὶ τὴν χώραν ταὐτό φησιν εἶναι ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ· τὸ γὰρ μεταληπτικὸν καὶ τὴν χώραν ἓν καὶ ταὐτόν. ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον ἐκεῖ τε λέγων τὸ μεταληπτικὸν καὶ ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἀγράφοις δόγμασιν, ὅμως τὸν τόπον καὶ τὴν χώραν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀπεφήνατο. λέγουσι μὲν γὰρ πάντες εἶναί τι τὸν τόπον, τί δ' ἐστίν, οὗτος μόνος ἐπεχείρησεν εἰπεῖν.*[15]

That is why Plato, too, says in the *Timaeus* that matter and space are the same thing (for 'the participative' and space are one and the same thing. Though he gave a different use to 'the participant' in what are called his 'unwritten doctrines' from that in the *Timaeus*, he still declares that place and space were the same thing. While everyone says that place is something, he alone tried to say what it is).[16]

[14] Wicksteed's rendition as 'room-occupancy' is clarifying: cf. Aristotle. *The Physics*, with an English Translation by Philip H. Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford in Two Volumes (London—New York: Heinemann—Putnam's Sons, 1929), 289.

[15] William D. Ross, *Aristotle's Physics. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936). Engl. trans. by Edward Hussey (*Aristotle's Physics, Book III and IV* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983]). David Keyt, 'Aristotle on Plato's Receptacle', *American Journal of Philology* 82 (1961): 291–300, compares this passage with others in the Aristotelian corpus, especially from the *De Gen. corr.*, reaching the conclusion (p. 294) that 'Aristotle's interpretation of Plato's receptacle is thus quite clear. On the one hand, the receptacle is void in the sense of extension or space; on the other, it is matter. Plato in the *Timaeus* does not use *ὕλη* in the Aristotelian sense nor does he use *κενόν* in the sense of extension or space. What, then, in the *Timaeus* does Aristotle base this interpretation on? (I am assuming here that his interpretation is not based upon private information.) The identification of the receptacle with matter rests upon Plato's use of the word "space" (*χώρα*) an "place" (*τόπος*) at *Timaeus* 52 (209 b 11–16, 214 a 13–14). The identification of the receptacle with matter rests upon Plato's use of the gold metaphor at *Timaeus* 50 A-B (*De Gen. corr*. 329 a 14–24)'.

[16] Arist. *Phys*. IV 2, 209 b 11–17 (trans. Hussey, 23).

The fact that Aristotle credits Plato with the identification of *ὕλη* and *χώρα*[17] and of these two with both *τόπος* and the *μεταληπτικόν*[18] has attracted much attention in both ancient and modern commentaries. While modern scholars wonder whether Aristotle misrepresented Plato's position and, if so, to what extent and for what purpose, the ancient commentators, in particular the Neoplatonic commentators, try their best to read into this passage some sort of agreement with Plato. In the relevant passage of his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, Simplicius offers an interpretation of the relationship between the Forms and the *χώρα* in *Timaeus* that, in his eyes, is apt to counter Aristotle's criticism. Then he lays emphasis on the fact that Aristotle, notwithstanding his disagreement with Plato, praises him as the only one to have provided an account of what 'place' is in reality: a concept, not something corporeal that sense-perception could grasp.[19]

In the passage above Aristotle incidentally alludes to a discrepancy between *Timaeus* and the 'unwritten doctrines'[20] about the name of Plato's receptive principle. This too has attracted scholarly attention, because shortly afterwards Aristotle provides the key to identifying the name, and by the same token the function, of the receptive principle in the 'unwritten doctrines'. At 209 b 33–210 a 2, he explains why he disagrees with Plato, saying that on the one hand the latter claims that the 'participant' is the 'place' of the Forms, but, on the other, Forms for him are not in

[17] According to Ross, *Aristotle's Physics*, 565, on the basis of *Timaeus* 51 A 4 – B 1 and 52 A 8, B 4 'it is correct to say that the *Timaeus* identifies *χώρα* and the *μεταληπτικόν*'. However, comparing this passage with *Phys*. IV 2, 209 b 33 – 210 a 2, he adds that 'Aristotle evidently assumes that *τὸ μεθεκτικόν* (= *τὸ μεταληπτικόν* of b 14) is in Plato's system receptive of the Forms and numbers, a misunderstanding of *Timaeus* 51 A 4 – B 1'. Luc Brisson, *Le même et l'autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée de Platon. Un commentaire systématique du Timée de Platon* (Paris : Éditions Klincksieck, 1974, reprint Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 1994), disagrees with Ross: see in particular p. 223 'une telle interprétation, où Aristote voit une contradiction par rapport aux affirmations selon lesquelles Platon dénie toute position spatiale aux formes intelligibles, se fonde sur une fausse identification des formes intelligibles avec les *mimêmata*'. While for Hussey, *Aristotle, Physics Books III and IV* (quoted above, n. 15): 105 Aristotle's report is 'rather careless', according to Keimpe Algra, *Concepts of Space in Greek Thought* (Leiden—New York—Köln: Brill, 1995) (Philosophia Antiqua, 95), 110–119, 'More than once Aristotle has been charged with gross ignorance or unfairness in his criticisms of the Platonic receptacle', but the passage under examination here, in Algra's opinion, 'clearly shows that Aristotle did not ascribe a concept of *corporeal* matter to Plato' (author's emphasis, p. 110).

[18] According to Brisson, *Le même et l'autre*: 221–3 'il est absurde d'identifier *ὕλη* et *χώρα*, comme le fait Aristote […] en identifiant *χώρα* et *ὕλη*, Aristote décrit le milieu spatial à l'aide d'un terme qui n'est pas platonicien et dont l'usage aurait pu difficilement être suggéré par le texte que nous venons de citer. Par ailleurs, une telle façon de procéder considère le milieu spatial de Platon comme une "matière première manquée"'.

[19] Cf., Simplicius, *In Phys*., 539–42 Diels.

[20] This is the only passage where Aristotle labels these doctrines as *ἄγραφα δόγματα*. The studies on this issue are countless, and here I limit myself to giving (in chronological order) the full bibliographical reference of the studies that will occur in the footnotes below: Léon Robin, *La théorie platonicienne des Idées et des Nombres d'après Aristote, étude historique et critique* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1908); Konrad Gaiser, *Platons ungeschriebene Lehre. Studien zur systematischen und geschichtlichen Begründung der Wissenschaften in der Platonischen Schule* (Stuttgart: Erns Klett Verlag, 1963) (henceforth: Gaiser); John Niemeyer Findlay, *Plato. The Written and Unwritten Doctrines* (London—New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974); Marie-Dominique Richard, *L'enseignement oral de Platon*, Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée (Paris: Cerf, 2005).

a place.[21] In this context, he repeats, insisting that this is a little digression from his main point, that Plato's labels for the receptive principle vary:

> *Πλάτωνι μέντοι λεκτέον, εἰ δεῖ παρεκβάντας εἰπεῖν, διὰ τί οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ τὰ εἴδη καὶ οἱ ἀριθμοί, εἴπερ τὸ μεθεκτικὸν ὁ τόπος, εἴτε τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τοῦ μικροῦ ὄντος τοῦ μεθεκτικοῦ εἴτε τῆς ὕλης, ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ γέγραφεν.*

If a parenthetic remark may be allowed, we should ask Plato why the Forms and numbers are not in place, if place is 'the participative', whether 'the participative' is the great and the small or whether it is the matter, as he writes in the *Timaeus*.[22]

Leaving aside the question of whether or not Aristotle's criticism misrepresents Plato's doctrine, lets us focus on the terminological point: while at 209 b 11–17 Aristotle limited himself to saying that, in the 'unwritten doctrines', Plato labelled the receptacle in a different way (*ἄλλον ... τρόπον*) compared with *Timaeus*, now he goes back to the main point, and specifies this different way. The name of the participative (*τὸ μεθεκτικόν* in this passage), or the receptacle (*τὸ μεταληπτικόν* in the aforementioned passage), given by Plato in his 'unwritten doctrines' is the Indefinite Dyad 'large-and-small'. This passage is beyond doubt linked to that quoted above[23] and as such it has been quoted time and again in the inventories of the accounts about the 'unwritten doctrines' by or attributed to Plato. However, it was P. Aubenque who called special attention to this couple of passages in his seminal article on the 'intelligible matter' in Aristotle and its roots in the discussions in the Early Academy. According to Aubenque, the reason why Aristotle saw a connection between the 'place' of *Timaeus* and the Indefinite Dyad of the doctrine of the principles lies in the fact that both are instances of the indetermination that, once determined by the

[21] The reference is to *Tim*., 52 A 8 – B 5: see above n. 16.

[22] Arist., *Phys*. IV 2, 209 b 33 – 210 a 2 (trans. Hussey, 23).

[23] Note however that Brisson—following the lead of the well-known warning by Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1944), who considered Aristotle's accounts about Plato's unwritten doctrines never unbiased—raises doubts about the reliability of Aristotle's account: cf., *Le même et l'autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée de Platon*: 223–4 'Et comment, après tout cela, comprendre *ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἀγράφοις δόγμασιν*? Trois remarques s'imposent. Premièrement, puisque cette citation est unique, on ne peut affirmer qu'Aristote se réfère "communément" à l'enseignement non-écrit de Platon. Bien plus, on ne peut même pas relier ces *ἄγραφα δόγματα* aux *περὶ φιλοσοφίας λεγόμενα* du De anima, ou au *περὶ τἀγαθοῦ* dont parle Aristoxène. Deuxièmement, Aristote ne semble pas considérer ces *ἄγραφα δόγματα* comme la source de la théorie des nombres idéaux; par ailleurs, dans cette perspective, il est très hasardeux d'affirmer que c'est précisément dans ces ἄγραφα δόγματα que Platon interprète le participant comme le grand et le petit *τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τοῦ μικροῦ ὄντος τοῦ μεθεκτικοῦ* (*Phys*., 209 b 13–14). En effet, nous n'avons ici aucune indication sûre nous permettant de soutenir cela. Troisièmement, il est beaucoup plus grave de postuler, dans les *ἄγραφα δόγματα*, une modification de la doctrine platonicienne du milieu spatial. Aristote ne parle en effet que d'un changement de termes en y affirmant que la nature ontologique du milieu spatial platonicien y demeure identique […]. On ne voit donc pas comment W.D. Ross peut trouver, dans ce passage de la Physique, la preuve d'une modification de la théorie platonicienne en ce qui concerne la nature ontologique du *μεθεκτικόν* ou du *μεταληπτικόν*'. Brisson refers for this to pp. 119–21 of Cherniss' *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*.

opposite principle of unity and definition, gives rise to the realities issued from this interaction. As Aubenque has it,

> Ce point est largement confirmé par les nombreux témoignages d'Aristote selon lesquels les doctrines non écrites affirmeraient l'existence de deux principes (*archai* ou *stoicheia*): l'Un d'une part, la Dyade indéfinie d'autre part, dont les termes sont souvent présentés comme étant le couple du Grand et du Petit ou de l'Excès et du Défaut.[24]

The twin passage in *Physics* is thus linked to the account of the doctrine of the principles in *Metaphysics* A and elicits a consistent account on Aristotle's part of the *ἄγραφα δόγματα*. All in all, for Aubenque, Aristotle in *Metaphysics* 'traduit dans son langage la doctrine platonicienne en disant que l'Un agit en tant qu'essence (A 2, 987 b 21–22) ou encore forme (A 6, 988 a 2–3) et que la Dyade indéfinie du Grand et du Petit agit comme matière ou cause matérielle (A 6, 988 a 10)'.[25] Following the same course of reasoning, in *Physics* he puts on equal footing the two labels for the principle of indetermination, which, although given other names in *Timaeus* and in the 'unwritten doctrines', performs the same role as the counterpart of the principle of determination. While in *Timaeus*, which deals with the visible world, indetermination is determined by the Forms and the outcome is visible beings, indetermination in the realm of principles is the Indefinite Dyad or 'intelligible matter', and the principle of its determination is the One; the Forms are the outcome of their interplay.

It is along these lines that the Neoplatonic commentators of Aristotle's *Physics* developed their own exegeses, as attested by Simplicius[26] and Philoponus.[27] They notoriously disagree with one another on many points, but for both of them Aristotle faithfully reports Plato's doctrine of the principles, which implies that, for both of them, Aristotle saw in Plato the interplay of a principle of determination and a receptacle that is determined at work as a general rule for the production of beings—be they intelligible beings or visible ones. It is time, now, to see how Themistius deals with this passage.

[24] Pierre Aubenque, 'La matière de l'intelligible. Sur deux allusions méconnues aux doctrines non écrites de Platon', *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* 172, no. 2 (1982): 307–20, particularly 311–16 and 314. The passage quoted, p. 314.

[25] Aubenque, 'La matière de l'intelligible', 314.

[26] Simplicius, In *Phys*. IV 2 (209 b 11), 545.9–12 Diels = fr. 54 B Gaiser = fr. 33 Findlay = fr. 7 Richard; cf. William D. Ross, *Aristotelis fragmenta selecta* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955): 112; *In Phys*. IV 2 (209 b 11), 545.23–25 Diels = lacking in Gaiser's collection = fr. 30 Findlay = fr. 8 Richard; cf. Ross, *ibid*. Cf. also Marwan Rashed, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d'Aristote (Livres IV – VIII). Les scholies byzantines. Édition, traduction et commentaire* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011) (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca et Byzantina. Quellen und Studien, 1): 187–8.

[27] Philoponus, *In Phys*. (IV 2, 209 b 3), 521.9–15 Vitelli = fr. 54B Gaiser = fr. 32 Findlay = fr. 5 Richard; cf. Ross, *Aristotelis fragmenta selecta*: 112; *In Phys*. (IV 2, 209 b 13), 515.29–32 Vitelli = fr. 4 Richard, and cf. Ross, *ibid*.: 111.

III

As we have just seen, at 209 b 11–17 Aristotle points to Plato's different accounts of the 'participant' in *Timaeus* and in the 'unwritten doctrines' (*ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον ἐκεῖ τε λέγων τὸ μεταληπτικὸν καὶ ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἀγράφοις δόγμασιν*). This sentence is remarkably transformed by Themistius, notwithstanding the fact that his paraphrase of this passage is prima facie a literal quotation, merely made redundant by the repetition of some expressions. In order to highlight this point, the words taken literally from Aristotle are underlined.

In Phys. 106.18–23 Schenkl

> *Πλάτων τὴν ὕλην καὶ τὴν χώραν ταὐτόν φησιν εἶναι ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ· τὸ γὰρ μεταλαμβάνον τῶν εἰδῶν (ὅπερ ὕλη) καὶ τὴν χώραν (ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος) ταὐτὰ λέγει. καίτοι τὴν ὕλην ἄλλως μὲν ἐν Τιμαίῳ φησὶ δέχεσθαι τὰ εἴδη, ἄλλως δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἀγράφοις δόγμασιν· ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ κατὰ μέθεξιν, ἐν τοῖς ἀγράφοις δὲ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν. ἀλλ' ὅμως, ὅπερ εἶπον, δόξειεν ἂν ταὐτὸν ἀποφαίνεσθαι ὕλην καὶ τόπον· λέγουσι μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντες εἶναί τι τὸν τόπον, τί δ' ἐστὶν μόνος οὗτος ἐπεχείρησεν ἀποδοῦναι· ἀλλ' ἔοικε μεταφορικῶς κεχρῆσθαι τῷ ὀνόματι· οὐδὲν γὰρ διασαφεῖ περαιτέρω.*

Plato actually says in the *Timaeus* that matter and space are identical: i.e., he speaks of the participant in forms (namely matter) and of space (namely place) as identical. Yet in the *Timaeus* and in the unwritten doctrines he says that matter receives the forms in different ways: by participation (*methexis*) in the *Timaeus*, by assimilation (*homoiōsis*) in the unwritten works. But still, as I said, he would seem to be claiming that matter and place are identical. For while everyone was saying that place was something, he alone tried to explain what it was. (But he seems to have used the term metaphorically, for he offers no further clarification).[28]

As I have previously mentioned, at first sight the passage seems to follow closely in Aristotle's footsteps, but an alarming shift in meaning appears at closer inspection. According to Themistius, Aristotle is pointing here to two ways in which matter for Plato receives the forms: *τὴν ὕλην ἄλλως μὲν ἐν Τιμαίῳ φησὶ δέχεσθαι τὰ εἴδη, ἄλλως δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἀγράφοις δόγμασιν*. However, this is far from being true; as we have just seen, Aristotle is speaking of the different names of the receptacle and by no means of two different ways of reception. This means that a reader of Themistius with no access to Aristotle's genuine passage would get the impression that Aristotle's claim is that Plato had two different doctrines about participation, one expressed

[28] *Themistius. On Aristotle's Physics 4* translated by Robert B. Todd (Bristol: Bloomsbury, 2003) (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle), 21. In his note on this passage (78, n. 53), Todd comments as follows on Themistius' *μεταφορικῶς*: 'A doxographical report (Aetius I.19.1, at Dox. Gr. 317) of Plato's theory of place has a similar reference to the metaphorical use of terminology'. In what follows I will suggest a different explanation: see below p. 13 and n. 32. The term *μεταφορικῶς* is also found in Alexander (see Alexander *apud* Simpl., *In Phys.*, 540.22–23, ed. Diels) possible source of Themistius.

in *Timaeus* and another one in the 'unwritten doctrines'. Themistius goes on to illustrate 'Aristotle's' clause *ἄλλως μὲν […] ἄλλως δέ*—in itself a faithful rendition of the genuine *ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον*—by means of a distinction, totally absent in Aristotle's passage, between receiving the forms (1) by participation (*κατὰ μέθεξιν*), and (2) by assimilation (*καθ' ὁμοίωσιν*). He specifies, this time following in Aristotle's footsteps, that way (1) features in *Timaeus* and way (2) features in the 'unwritten doctrines'. The non-Aristotelian words that crop up in Themistius' rephrasing lead the reader to believe that 'Aristotle' detected two ways for the receptacle to receive the Forms.

Themistius' passage is included in the various collections of testimonies about Plato's *ἄγραφα δόγματα* from Gaiser onwards.[29] Truth be told, the passage had attracted attention even before, but Eduard Zeller was sceptical about it and saw in these words a mere conjecture on Themistius' part.[30] On the contrary, according to L. Robin[31] and K. Gaiser[32] the report is genuine and the doctrine here stated can be traced back to Plato, even though it remains unclear what kind of difference one may see between *κατὰ μέθεξιν* and *καθ' ὁμοίωσιν*, because Robin and Gaiser's accounts do not explain why on earth *καθ' ὁμοίωσιν* should point to the 'stärker formale, logisch-exakte, mathematisierende Darstellungsmethode' of the 'esoteric' doctrines.

No further light is shed by Themistius' paraphrase of the second item in Aristotle's comparison between *Timaeus* and the *ἄγραφα δόγματα*. Indeed, accounting for *Phys*. IV 2, 209 b 33–210 a 2 he does not further elaborate about the two alleged ways of participation:

In Phys., 107.13–16 Schenkl

> *Πλάτων δὲ εἰ σφόδρα βούλεται τὴν ὕλην ποιεῖν τόπον, ὅρα αὐτὸν καὶ τὰς ἰδέας ἐν τόπῳ λέγειν καὶ τοὺς εἰδητικοὺς ἀριθμούς· καὶ γὰρ τούτοις ὑποτίθησι τὴν*

[29] Cf. fr. 54B Gaiser = fr. 34 Findlay = fr. 3 Richard.

[30] Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*, quoted above, n. 21, 166–167, n. 95, quotes with approval Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, (Tübingen: Fues, 1856), vol. II 1, 439, n. 2. Following the lead of Zeller's scepticism, Cherniss remarks that there is no difference between *μέθεξις* and *ὁμοίωσις*. Todd, *Themistius. On Aristotle's Physics 4*, 78, n. 52 follows Cherniss's opinion: 'This distinction would seem to be entirely Themistius' own conjecture; it has no corroboratory evidence in earlier literature. See Cherniss, 166 with n. 95'.

[31] Léon Robin, *La théorie platonicienne des Idées et des Nombres d'après Aristote*: 423, n. 334: 'D'autre part, l'assertion de Them., I 259, 22–25 Spgl. […] que Platon aurait dit dans le *Timée* que la matière reçoit les Idées *κατὰ μέθεξιν*, et dans ses expositions orales, *καθ' ὁμοίωσιν*, ce serait, d'après Zeller II 1, 439, 2 (449), une simple conjecture, soit de Them., soit de quelque autre. Il n'est pas impossible cependant que cette conjecture eût quelque rapport avec la doctrine suivant laquelle le rôle du principe formel est d'égaliser, ou d'assimiler en quelque sorte, les termes inégaux qui constituent le principe matériel'.

[32] Gaiser, *Platons ungeschriebene Lehre*, 535, concurs with Robin: 'Auch die Angabe des Themistius (Nr. 54 B'), Platon habe in der Schule die Verbindung zwischen den Ideen und dem Körperlich-Ausgedehnten speziell als *ὁμοίωσις* erklärt, weist auf die stärker formale, logisch-exakte, mathematisierende Darstellungsmethode im esoterischen Bereich. Es braucht sich also nicht um eine von Themistius selbst stammende Vermutung zu handeln […]. Im besonderen ist an die Anwendung der mathematischen Proportionenlehre auf die Ontologie zu denken'.

ὕλην, ὥσπερ ἔφην, ἣν ποτὲ μὲν τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρόν, ποτὲ δὲ τὸ μεθεκτικὸν ὀνομάζει.

As for Plato, if he really intends to make matter place, then observe that he says that both the forms and the eidetic numbers are in a place. In fact, as I said, he posits matter as underlying these, and this he sometimes names 'the great and the small', at other times 'the participative'.[33]

Although interesting from a different point of view—on which more later—this passage does not shed light on the puzzling distinction that Themistius' 'Aristotle' singled out in Plato between receiving the Forms (1) *κατὰ μέθεξιν* and (2) *καθ' ὁμοίωσιν*. The fact that in Plato's dialogues *ὁμοίωσις* and *μέθεξις* are often used synonymously[34] not only does not explain Themistius' claim, but creates further confusion, because on this count it is even more difficult to explain what the *difference* between way (1) and way (2) might be.

My guess is that Themistius, puzzled by the elliptical sentence of 209 b 11–17, where Aristotle limits himself to an allusive *ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον*, had recourse to another Aristotelian passage, this time from *Metaphysics*: the famous claim that what the Pythagoreans called *μίμησις* is labelled *μέθεξις* by Plato.[35] The relationship is only vague because there is obviously no mention of the Pythagoreans in the passage of *Physics*; however, in both places (and for different purposes) Aristotle highlights that a change in terminology does not change the substance of the doctrine. In *Metaphysics* he claims that speaking in terms of *μίμησις* or of *μέθεξις* means to make use of metaphors, and in *Physics* he asserts that whatever the name of the recipient principle, the difficulty remains that it is unclear whether or not for Plato the Forms are 'in' the recipient principle as if they were in a 'place'. Be that as it may, the passage of the *Metaphysics* that I believe Themistius had in mind provides a satisfactory explanation for his remark that, according to Aristotle, Plato expresses himself *μεταφορικῶς*.[36]

[33] Todd, *Themistius. On Aristotle's Physics 4*, 22 modified.

[34] The most eloquent passage is *Parmenides* 132 D 1–4: *τὰ μὲν εἴδη ταῦτα ὥσπερ παραδείγματα ἑστάναι ἐν τῇ φύσει, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα τούτοις ἐοικέναι καὶ εἶναι ὁμοιώματα, καὶ ἡ μέθεξις αὕτη τοῖς ἄλλοις γίγνεσθαι τῶν εἰδῶν οὐκ ἄλλη τις ἢ εἰκασθῆναι αὐτοῖς*. See also 133 D 1: *ὁμοιώματα*, and Phaedrus 250 A 6: *τι τῶν ἐκεῖ ὁμοίωμα* and 250 B 3: *ἐν τοῖς τῇδε ὁμοιώμασιν*.

[35] *Metaphysics* A 6, 987 b 7–14: 'Things of this other sort, then, he called Ideas, and sensible things, he said, were all named after these, and in virtue of a relation to these; for the many existed by participation in the Ideas that have the same name as they. Only the name "participation" was new (*τὴν δὲ μέθεξιν τοὔνομα μόνον μετέβαλεν*); for the Pythagoreans say that things exist by "imitation" (*μιμήσει*) of numbers, and Plato says they exist by participation, changing the name (*Πλάτων δὲ μεθέξει, τοὔνομα μεταβαλών*). But what the participation or the imitation of the Forms could be they left an open question', trans. Ross, and *Metaphysics* A 9, 991 a 19–22: 'But, further, all other things cannot come from the Forms in any of the usual senses of "from". And to say that they are patterns and the other things share in them is to use empty words and poetical metaphors (*καὶ μεταφορὰς λέγειν ποιητικάς*)', trans. Ross.

[36] See above, n. 25.

Once he had explained the puzzling *ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον* of 209 b 13–14 in a way that is loosely inspired by *Metaphysics* A 1, 987 b 9–14, Themistius proceeded in his exposition of the rest of Chapter 2 of Book 4 of *Physics*. At 209 b 35–210 a 1, the name of the receptacle in the 'unwritten doctrines', namely *τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρόν*, did not induce him to go back and correct his interpretation of the previous passage. This means that he was not dissatisfied with his explanation in terms of its distinction between ways (1) and (2), even when he had at his disposal a better solution for accounting for *ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον* (209 b 13–14). In this sense, I agree with those scholars who saw in Themistius' rephrasing of 209 b 11–17 a mere conjecture, and in this sense I think that this is a good example of the flaws of the paraphrastic method, which may produce a potentially serious distortion of the authorial tenets, as in this case. However, I am not sure that Themistius' conjecture is philosophically opaque. If read in connection with his rephrasing of 209 b 33–210 a 2, it may partially shed light on his understanding of 'prime matter'. What for Aristotle was a polemical remark against Plato—namely the doctrine of a receptacle of the Forms, whatever the name, once stated that the Forms are *not* in a place—becomes in Themistius' rephrasing the Aristotelian account of Plato's views about *participation*.[37]

Aristotle ***Phys*. IV 2, 209** **b 33 -210 a 2**	**Themistius** ***In Phys*.** **107.13-16 Schenkl**
Πλάτωνι μέντοι λεκτέον, εἰ δεῖ παρεκβάντας εἰπεῖν, διὰ τί οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ τὰ εἴδη καὶ οἱ ἀριθμοί, εἴπερ τὸ μεθεκτικὸν ὁ τόπος, εἴτε τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τοῦ μικροῦ ὄντος τοῦ μεθεκτικοῦ εἴτε τῆς ὕλης, ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ γέγραφεν.	*Πλάτων δὲ εἰ σφόδρα βούλεται τὴν ὕλην ποιεῖν τόπον, ὅρα αὐτὸν καὶ τὰς ἰδέας ἐν τόπῳ λέγειν καὶ τοὺς εἰδητικοὺς ἀριθμούς· καὶ γὰρ τούτοις ὑποτίθησι τὴν ὕλην, ὥσπερ ἔφην, ἣν ποτὲ μὲν τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρόν, ποτὲ δὲ τὸ μεθεκτικὸν ὀνομάζει.*

[37] As it has been pointed out by Schenkl's apparatus ad loc., Themistius' source is Alexander: see Alexander's apud Simplicius, *In Phys*., 546.13–16 Diels: *ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος καίτοι συννοήσας, ὅτι εἴδη λέγει τὰς ἰδέας νῦν Ἀριστοτέλης, ὅμως ἀναγκάζεσθαι νομίζει τὸν Πλάτωνα ἐν τόπῳ λέγειν τὰς ἰδέας, καίτοι ἀύλος αὐτὰς λέγοντα, ἐπειδὴ τόπον καὶ χώραν τῶν ἑνύλων εἰδῶν εἶπε τὴν ὕλην.*

If a parenthetic remark may be allowed, we should ask Plato why the Forms and numbers are not in place, if place is 'the participative', whether 'the participative' is the great and the small or whether it is the matter, as he writes in the *Timaeus*[38]

As for Plato, if he really intends to make matter place, then observe that he says that both the forms and the eidetic numbers are in a place. In fact, as I said, he posits matter as underlying these, and this he sometimes names 'the great and the small', at other times 'the capacity for participation'[39]

The absence of the twin clause *διὰ τί οὐκ – εἴπερ* that forms the backbone of Aristotle's *criticism* of Plato makes the 'Aristotle' rephrased by Themistius simply assert that for Plato both the Forms and the eidetic numbers are *indeed* in a 'place'. If one is ready to interpret the 'room' of *Timaeus* as if it were Aristotle's matter, a principle of indetermination appears both in Plato and in Aristotle as the prerequisite of reality. In Plato, according to this narrative, the receptacle of the determination that is produced by the presence of the Forms produces physical entities in the case of *Timaeus*, and another determining principle not named here transforms the indeterminacy of the 'great and small' into the eidetic numbers in the case of the 'unwritten doctrines'. Following Themistius' account, 'prime matter' as the principle of indetermination would be, as a last resort, not so different a concept. This is not meant to say that Themistius deliberately removed the explicit criticism from Aristotle's sentence of 209 b 33–210 a 2. I am simply suggesting that his rephrasing was guided by the idea of a loose harmony between Aristotle's conception of matter and 'Plato's' interplay of determination and indetermination that paves the way to the concept of a 'prime matter' waiting for boundaries and shape in order to become a body.[40]

[38] Trans. Hussey, 23.

[39] Trans. Todd, 2.

[40] For the evolution of the notion of 'prime matter' as unqualified substratum possessing only three-dimensionality and suited to receive all forms the reference work is Frans A. J. de Haas, *John Philoponus' New Definition of Prime Matter. Aspects of its Background in Neoplatonism and the Ancient Commentary Tradition* (Leiden – New York – Köln: Brill, 1997) (Philosophia Antiqua, 69). De Haas also lists Themistius among the commentators of Aristotle's Physics who contributed to shaping the idea that 'the statement that "the extension of the magnitude *ὁρίζεται*" amounts to the statement that the extension of the magnitude (which is apparently in itself indefinite, and which is called matter) is made definite by its limits. In this case "matter and *τὸ ἀόριστον*" may refer straight away to extensionality indefinite as to size' (p. 58). In the same vein, see also the remark of Keimpe Algra – Johannes van Ophuijsen, Philoponus: *On Aristotle's Physics 4.1-5*, (London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2012) (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle), p. 2: "Philopoonus often refers to Themistius, he sometimes takes over his readings of Aristotle's text, and he includes extensive paraphrasing quotations from his work, e.g. in his discussion of Aristotle's rather obscure arguments against the conception of place as a three-dimensional extension (*in Phys*. 550.9-551.20)".

Aristotelian attraction and repulsion in Byzantium

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The present article provides an overview of Aristotle's fate in Byzantium from the eighth to the fifteenth century. In opposition to accounts that consider Byzantine philosophy either as a mere continuation of Greek philosophy or as neutrally disposed towards it, the article argues that the reception of Aristotle's philosophy in Byzantium (like the reception of Plato's philosophy) oscillated between enthusiastic approval and vehement rejection: some Byzantines argued in favour even of Aristotle's theology, assessed as admirably monotheistic, whereas others associated Aristotelian science with heresy and Thomism. The article discusses these two extreme positions in conjunction with the moderate assessment of the Stagirite in Byzantium, which focused on his logic and on topics of his physics in accordance with Byzantine eclecticism.

Just as it happened in the Latin West, so it also happened in the Byzantine East: Aristotle was always omnipresent either in a positive or in a negative way; his philosophy was either admired and espoused or downgraded and dismissed. Contrary, however, to the intellectual concerns of their Western peers, whose interpretation of Aristotle was largely shaped by the Arabic tradition (most importantly, through the commentaries of Avicenna and Averroes), in which philosophy appeared free from religious concerns, the Byzantine philosophers did not usually argue about how to interpret Aristotle's philosophy. Instead they mostly argued about its use and its overall value. To take a prominent example, the claim for the unity and singularity of the human intellect, which came to be known as Averroism in the Latin West in the thirteenth century, was rejected by Thomas Aquinas precisely as a false interpretation of Aristotle's noetics; indeed, Averroes himself and the Averroists at the University of Paris put forward the doctrine of the singular human intellect as an accurate interpretation of the passive intellect, which Aristotle discusses in his treatise *On the Soul* III 4–5. There is no doubt, of course, that Thomas was committed to rejecting Averroism for the benefit of the Christian doctrine on the immortality of the individual soul. But what matters for my present purpose is that he did so through what he put forth as a correct interpretation of Aristotle's text. Thomas had also battled against the so-called 'doctrine of the double truth', usually associated with Boethius of Dacia and Siger of Brabant, that is, the doctrine which separates the

truth instilled into the Christian soul by the religious faith from the truth attained by the philosopher through philosophical reasoning. Consistency of thought required Thomas to show that Aristotle's philosophy sided anew with Christianity on the nature of the human intellect. The Thomasian synthesis of Aristotle's philosophy and Christian doctrine succeeded in making Aristotle the most important figure for Latin philosophy, rivalled by no other philosopher until the emergence of Platonist or syncretistic philosophy in the Italian Renaissance. No similar concerns ever arose in the Byzantine East.[1]

I. Some preliminary remarks on Byzantine philosophy and spirituality

The Byzantines, in short, espoused the doctrine of the single truth, which was the truth of Orthodox Christianity. Of course, they did not ignore or neglect philosophy. They studied, for instance, Aristotle's treatises in order to acquire the best knowledge of what can be known through philosophy.[2] Nonetheless, they believed that the highest that man can experience and know in this life could not be known through reason and taught by philosophy. Thus, they had no great interest in seriously debating the meaning or interpretation of a particular Aristotelian doctrine or passage. According to them, not only could the ancient exegetical tradition (including its criticisms against Aristotle) illuminate them sufficiently on most of these topics but also sometimes, and surely with regard to the most important matters, philosophy could lead someone astray. The philosophers of antiquity themselves were a proof of that last point. They were convinced that God or the gods, in other words the first principle(s) of the universe, could be revealed by reason. For the Hellenes, this rational knowledge constituted wisdom and could be taught through the highest branch of philosophy, say, Platonic dialectics or Aristotelian

[1] It is true that, in the early fourteenth century, Theodore Metochites said in his so-called *Miscellanies* that it is impossible to know whether Aristotle believed in the mortality or in the immortality of the individual human soul (see *Theodore Metochites on Ancient Authors and Philosophy. Semeioseis gnomikai* 1–26 & 71, ed. Karin Hult, 3, 6, 5–7). But Metochites did not substantiate his view, nor was he interested in discussing any of Aristotle's relevant texts (he simply repeats his usual contention that Aristotle had recourse to his usual obscurity out of vanity and ignorance). In a more substantial manner, two philosophers of the fifteenth century, John Argyropoulos and George Amiroutzes dealt with Averroism in two separate treatises. Nevertheless, they did so within the tradition of Scholasticism (Argyropoulos wrote his *Quaestio utrum intellectus humanus sit perpetuus* in Latin) and can hardly contradict our verdict. See John Monfasani, 'The Averroism of John Argyropoulos and His *Quaestio utrum intellectus humanis sit perpetuus*', in John Monfasani, *Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy: Studies on Humanism and Philosophy in the 15th Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 157–208; John Monfasani, *George Amiroutzes. The Philosopher and His Tractates* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011).

[2] This is readily exemplified in the Byzantine lists of commentaries on Aristotle, which constitute a sort of bibliography for the study of Aristotle's philosophy. For the contents of these lists see Hermann Usener, 'Interpreten des Aristoteles', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 20 (1865): 133–36; Michael Hayduck, *Stephani in librum Aristotelis De interpretatione commentarium* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1885), v; Paul Wendland, *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis in librum Aristotelis De sensu commentarium* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1901), xvii.

theology or first philosophy. The Byzantines, however, were convinced that it was God himself who annulled Hellenic (and Judaic) wisdom; the Apostle Paul taught it: God is not revealed by reason but has revealed himself through Christ.[3]

This Pauline, Christocentric view of wisdom created a gap in the Byzantine soul between (divine) truth and (human) knowledge, so that the Greek philosophers, who pretended to have known the divine, were doomed to be considered as 'the first heresiarchs'.[4] Still, not every part of Hellenic philosophy could err. The fifth century ecclesiastical author Socrates Scholasticus granted to Paul acquaintance with the teachings of the Hellenes; he claimed that, although neither Christ nor the Apostles espoused the Greek *paideia*, they nevertheless did not expel it.[5] A new stance towards Hellenic philosophy started to develop and gradually became predominant throughout the Byzantine era: eclecticism.[6]

Byzantine eclecticism towards philosophy can be traced back to the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215). Clement, who was a Christian convert and thus well-versed in Hellenic 'wisdom', was the first to promote 'eclecticism' (*τὸ ἐκλεκτικόν*) as the right stance to be taken by the Christian student towards Hellenic philosophy as a whole:

> By 'philosophy' I do not mean the Stoic, or the Platonic, or the Epicurean, or the Aristotelian [philosophy], but whatever has been well said by each of those schools, which teaches justice along with a science pervaded by piety — this eclectic whole is what I call philosophy. But whatever these schools have cut away from human reasonings and reminted [as divine], this I would never call divine.[7]

In the last sentence, Clement actually cuts off human reasoning and philosophy from the divine truth which can be revealed only through religious faith and can be

[3] Cf. 1 Cor 1: 21–24: *οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου; ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν θεόν, εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας. ἐπειδὴ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν καὶ Ἕλληνες σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον, Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον ἔθνεσιν δὲ μωρίαν, αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς κλητοῖς, Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν, Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν.*

[4] Cf. *Synodicon Orthodoxiae*, 204 Gouillard: *οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφοὶ καὶ πρῶτοι τῶν αἱρεσιαρχῶν.*

[5] Cf. Socrates Scholasticus, Historia Ecclesiastica, 211.5–212.15 Hansen. See Pantelis Golitsis, 'Είναι η φιλοσοφία στο Βυζάντιο αντι-βυζαντινή;', Deukalion 28 (2011): 50–74.

[6] Eclecticism, which has been internally associated by Eduard Zeller (1814–1908) to the development of Hellenic philosophy at some stage (most notably, through the eclectic Platonism of Antiochus of Ascalon), is a category that stems substantially from the Christian approach to philosophy; it is therefore not internal but external to it. Zeller, in his turn, was indebted to Johann Jakob Brucker (1696–1770), who used the term 'eclecticism' chiefly for describing the philosophy of Ammonius Saccas. Brucker borrowed the term from Diogenes Laertius, who uses it for the school of Potamo of Alexandria.

[7] Clement, *Stromata*, I, 7, 37, 6 Früchtel/Stählin/Treu: *φιλοσοφίαν δὲ οὐ τὴν Στωϊκὴν λέγω οὐδὲ τὴν Πλατωνικὴν ἢ τὴν Ἐπικούρειόν τε καὶ Ἀριστοτελικήν, ἀλλ' ὅσα εἴρηται παρ' ἑκάστῃ τῶν αἱρέσεων τούτων καλῶς, δικαιοσύνην μετὰ εὐσεβοῦς ἐπιστήμης ἐκδιδάσκοντα, τοῦτο σύμπαν τὸ ἐκλεκτικὸν φιλοσοφίαν φημί. ὅσα δὲ ἀνθρωπίνων λογισμῶν ἀποτεμόμενοι παρεχάραξαν, ταῦτα οὐκ ἄν ποτε θεῖα εἴποιμ' ἄν.*

discursively known only through the Holy Scriptures. Clement's verdict constitutes an early expression of the kind of mild anti-Hellenic spirit that became prevalent throughout the patristic and Byzantine philosophical literature. A harsh but sharp expression of this spirit can be seen in the following passage of Gregory Palamas (1296–1357), who was canonised by the Orthodox Church in 1368, that is, during the patriarchate of his disciple Philotheos Kokkinos:

> In the case of the secular wisdom, you must first kill the serpent, in other words, overcome the pride that arises from this philosophy. How difficult that is! 'The arrogance of philosophy has nothing in common with humility', as the saying goes. Having overcome it, then, you must separate and cast away the head and tail, for these things are evil in the highest degree. By the head, I mean manifestly wrong opinions concerning things intelligible and divine and primordial; and by the tail, the fabulous stories concerning created things. As to what lies in between the head and tail, that is, discourses on nature, you must separate out useless ideas by means of the faculties of examination and inspection possessed by the soul, just as pharmacists purify the flesh of serpents with fire and water. Even if you do all this, and make good use of what has been properly set aside, how much trouble and circumspection will be required for the task! Nonetheless, if you put to good use that part of the profane wisdom which has been well excised, no harm can result, for it will naturally have become an instrument for good. But even so, it cannot in the strict sense be called a gift of God and a spiritual thing, for it pertains to the order of nature and is not sent from on high.[8]

Of the dead body of Hellenic knowledge, theology (the head) and mythology (the tail) are those parts that must be cut off. Christian thinkers like Palamas did not see human wisdom as the intellectual content of that part of the human soul (i.e., the intellect) that actively participates in the divine, as was the case in the Orphico-Pythagorean tradition developed philosophically by Plato and Aristotle; rather, they saw it as a cosmic (quasi-)wisdom about the natural world. In Palamas' words, this

[8] Gregory Palamas, *Pro hesychastis*, I, 1, 21.3–21 Meyendorff: *Ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς θύραθεν σοφίας, δεῖ μὲν πρῶτον τὸν ὄφιν ἀποκτεῖναι, καθελόντα σε τὸ παρ' αὐτῆς προσγενόμενόν σοι φύσημα· πόσης δὲ τοῦτο δυσχερείας· «Ταπεινώσει» γάρ φασιν «ἔκφυλον τὸ τῆς φιλοσοφίας φρύαγμα». Καθελόντα δ' ὅμως, ἔπειτα διελεῖν καὶ διαρρῆψαι κεφαλήν τε καὶ οὐράν, ὡς ἄκρα καὶ ἄκρατα κακά, τὴν περὶ τῶν νοερῶν καὶ θείων καὶ ἀρχῶν δηλαδὴ σαφῶς πεπλανημένην δόξαν καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς κτίσμασι μυθολογίαν. Τὸ δὲ μεταξύ, τοὺς περὶ φύσεως τουτέστι λόγους, ὡς οἱ φαρμακοποιοὶ πυρὶ καὶ ὕδατι τὰς τῶν ὄφεων σάρκας ἀποκαθαίρουσιν ἕψοντες, οὕτω σὲ τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐξεταστικῷ καὶ θεωρητικῷ τῶν βλαβερῶν διακρῖναι νοημάτων. Οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ταῦθ' ἅπαντα ποιήσεις καὶ καλῶς χρήσῃ τῷ καλῶς διακριθέντι, ὅσον δὲ καὶ τοῦτ' ἔργον καὶ ὅσης δεῖται διακρίσεως· ὅμως εἰ καὶ καλῶς χρήσῃ τῷ καλῶς ἀπειλημμένῳ μορίῳ τῆς ἔξωθεν σοφίας, κακὸν μὲν οὐκ ἄν εἴη τοῦτο, καὶ γὰρ ὄργανον πέφυκε γίνεσθαι πρός τι καλόν. Ἀλλ' οὐδ' οὕτως ἂν κληθείη Θεοῦ κυρίως δῶρον καὶ πνευματικόν, ἅτε φυσικὸν καὶ μὴ ἄνωθεν καταπεμφθέν*. Translation by Nicholas Gendle in *Gregory Palamas. The Triads*, ed. John Meyendorff, trans. Nicholas Gendle (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1983).

was the 'middle part' of the dead Hellenic body, which needed to be sanctioned in accordance with the sayings and teachings of the holy men and theologians of Christianity. It could be usefully handled for some good purpose but it had nothing good *per se*; philosophy does not come from above and is no gift from God, as Palamas asserts, tacitly contradicting Plato.[9]

Despite the claims of the Hellenes, with whom the early heresies and later the rational theology of the Roman Catholic Church were associated, for the Byzantines a human being cannot know God in *statu viae*.[10] On the contrary, the highest that a human being can achieve in this life is to live a life in Christ, that is, to imitate Christ, who was by now the object of 'true' (i.e., Christian) philosophy. 'Christ is the wisdom of God', as Paul says, and since philosophy is the love of wisdom, true philosophy is the love of Christ; this love is instantiated for the first time in Christ's disciples.[11] It is a pertinent feature of Byzantine spirituality that the truth about God, in other words knowledge of God's essence, remains out of the reach of the human mind.[12] The Hellenic quest for absolute knowledge turned out to be vain. In as late as in the fifteenth century, an anti-Thomist writer, namely Demetrios Chrysoloras (c. 1360–post 1440), praises the *μωροί* to whom Paul refers (i.e., the simple Christians) to the detriment of the wise:

> Therefore, several [fathers of the Church] have shown that the cosmic wisdom can be by no means cause of knowledge of God; nor is it true that those who

[9] Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 47b1–2: [...] *φιλοσοφίας γένος, οὗ μεῖζον ἀγαθὸν οὔτ' ἦλθεν οὔτε ἥξει ποτὲ τῷ θνητῷ γένει δωρηθὲν ἐκ θεῶν*. Palamas also contradicts indirectly George Pachymeres (1242–after 1309), who tacitly quotes the *Timaeus* in the proem of his *Philosophia*.

[10] Cf. 1 Tim 6: 15–16: *ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων, ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν, φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον, ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται.*

[11] Cf. Neilos of Ancyra, 'Ascetic Discourse' (*Λόγος ἀσκητικός* — PG 79:720A). Emulation of the life of Christ is what gave rise to Christian asceticism. It is worth noting that in Byzantine literature the word *φιλόσοφος* frequently refers to monks, as is famously the case in Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, IV 34 Renauld: 'By the word "philosophers" I do not here mean those who investigate the natures of beings and seek the principles of the universe and who neglect the principles of their own salvation. I mean those who despise the world and live in the company of supernatural beings' (translation by Kaldellis). See the classical study by Franz Dölger, 'Zur Bedeutung von φιλόσοφος und φιλοσοφία in byzantinischer Zeit', in Franz Dölger, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt. Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Buch-Kunstverlag Ettal, 1953), 197–208, as well as Anthony Kaldellis, 'Byzantine philosophy inside and out: Orthodoxy and dissidence in counterpoint', in *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*, eds Börje Bydén and Katerina Ierodiakonou (Athens: Publications from the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 2012), 129–51, who nevertheless thinks that Psellos is being sarcastic (despite the fact that Psellos himself became a monk later in his life).

[12] The claim of achieving union with God, made by Athonite monks in the fourteenth century and developed into the so-called Hesychast controversy, initially seemed to compromise the Pauline view and was polemised as unacceptable novelty by Byzantine conservative thinkers, such as Nikephoros Gregoras. Gregory Palamas, however, argued in favour of the experience of the monks by claiming that the monks claimed to have *sensed* (that is, not known) in prayer and with their spiritual senses affected by the Holy Spirit, the ineffable light, which was identical to the light of transfiguration seen by Christ on mount Tabor; this was the uncreated energy of God, which saints could 'see', and not God's 'invisible' uncreated essence. On the 'spiritual senses' see Marcus Plested, 'The spiritual senses, monastic and theological', in *Knowing Bodies, Passionate Souls*, eds Susan Ashbrook Harvey and Margaret Mullet (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2017), 301–12.

> stand away from knowledge are not willing to believe in God. Quite on the contrary, [what is true is] that the simple-minded people are faithful to god, whereas the wise [i.e., the philosophers] are, for the most part, unbelieving.[13]

In line with several anti-Latin Byzantine authors, Chrysoloras echoes here the words of Paul: 'God made the wisdom of this world look foolish' and 'because in God's wisdom the world failed to know God through wisdom, God chose to save all who believe through the simple-mindedness of preaching'.[14] For Chrysoloras and the common Byzantine sentiment, Thomas was too much a philosopher to be truly seen as a Christian 'living in Christ'.[15] An anonymous author of the eighth century praises St John Psichaita because he neglected the mathematical sciences and 'left lying on the dunghill the propositions and the syllogisms and the sophisms as webs of spiders'.[16] As these terms actually reproduce the 'governing goal' (the *σκοπός*, in the jargon of the ancient commentators) of certain treatises by Aristotle, it was actually Aristotle's books *On the Interpretation, Analytics (Prior and Posterior)* and *Sophistical Refutation*s that St John Psichaita threw to the dunghill.

Against such a background, Byzantine philosophers (as distinguished from Byzantine theologians) had primarily the role of rehabilitating Hellenic philosophy or wisdom by sorting out and arguing for those Hellenic doctrines that provided correct and useful knowledge within the Christian worldview. Although in the passage quoted earlier Clement of Alexandria mentions all four sects that were re-established in Athens by the emperor Marcus Aurelius in the second century AD, the Epicureans and the Stoics, having jeered at Paul,[17] exempted themselves quite early from the patristic and Byzantine 'canon'. The part of Hellenic philosophy that finally found its way into Byzantium was mostly Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy, chiefly in the shape that was given to them by the Neoplatonic Schools of the fifth, sixth and early seventh centuries. We may say that, from the eighth up to the fifteenth century, the main task of a Byzantine philosopher was to scrupulously examine (late) ancient philosophy from an eclectic point of view. Indeed, this

[13] Demetrios Chrysoloras, *Dialogus evertens librum Demetrii Cydonii contra beatum Nilum Cabasilam Thessalonicensem* (cod. *Laurentianus plut*. 12.5, f. 13r6–10, quoted by Vasos Pasiourtides 'Theological Encounters and Cultural Identity in Late Byzantium: Demetrios Chrysoloras' Unpublished Fictitious Dialogue Refuting Demetrios Kydones' Defence of Thomas Aquinas', in *Knotenpunkt Byzanz. Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen*, eds Andreas Speer and Philipp Steinkrüger (Berlin: Walter de Guyter, 2012), 431–38: *Πολλοῖς οὐκοῦν δέδεικται, ὡς οὐδαμῶς ἡ τοῦ κόσμου σοφία γνώσεως αἴτιον περὶ τὸν Θεὸν γίνεται· οὐδ' ὅσοι πόρρω τῆς ἐπιστήμης πιστεύειν οὐκ ἐθέλουσι τῷ Θεῷ· τοὐναντίον δὲ μᾶλλον, ὡς οἱ μὲν ἰδιῶται πιστοὶ Θεῷ, σοφοὶ δὲ τὸ πλέον ἄπιστοι*.

[14] Quoted above, n. 3.

[15] Cf. the title of a prominent fourteenth century work on Byzantine spirituality, *Περὶ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς*, by Nikolaos Cabasilas Chamaetos.

[16] Cf. Paul Van den Ven, 'La vie grecque de Saint Jean le Psichaite, confesseur sous le règne de Léon l'Arménien', *Le Muséon* 21 (1902): 109.15–19: *Τὰς δὲ προτάσεις καὶ τοὺς συλλογισμοὺς καὶ τὰ σοφίσματα ὡς ἀραχνῶν ὄντα ὑφάσματα τοῖς ἐπὶ κοπρίας κειμένοις παρῆκεν. Ἀστρονομίας δὲ καὶ γεωμετρίας καὶ ἀριθμητικῆς κατεφρόνησεν ὡς ἀνυπάρκτων ὄντων*.

[17] Cf. *Acta Apostolorum* 17:18–32.

program was announced in a way by St John of Damascus in the beginning of the eighth century. In his *Fount of Knowledge*, which was to become authoritative, he says:

> First of all, I shall set forth the best contributions of the wise men of the Hellenes, because I know that whatever there is of good has been given to men from above by God, since 'every best giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights' (James 1:17). If, however, there is anything that is contrary to the truth, then it is 'a dark invention of the deceit of Satan and a fiction of the mind of an evil spirit', as the eminent theologian Gregory once said (*Sermon* 39, 3).[18]

St John of Damascus secured that the fundamentals of Aristotelian logic, as codified by Porphyry and later Neoplatonist commentators, find a place in his *Fount of Knowledge*; they form the introductory 'philosophic chapters' (*φιλόσοφα κεφάλαια*), which John considered a prerequisite for clarifying theological notions (such as 'nature', 'substance', and 'hypostasis') and, thus, for refuting the arguments of the heretics in the second part of the work ('On Heresies'; the third part offers 'An accurate account of the Orthodox faith').

In general, Byzantine philosophical eclecticism took the form of commending the study of Aristotle's logic and of the major part of Aristotle's physics for secular use; this meant that these disciplines should not interfere with the contents of Christian revelation. In virtue of this eclecticism, Aristotle's correlated physical doctrines on the existence of a fifth element and the eternity of the world, as well as his theology and metaphysics (including his treatise *On the Soul*), which deny (i) the existence of a creator god, (ii) the divine providence towards individual human beings and (iii) the immortality of the individual human soul, were repudiated.[19] The high imperial official Theodore Metochites (1270–1332), who has been praised by various Byzantinists for his rather innovative literary style, actually espouses a very conservative view, when he isolates Aristotle's logic and physics as the sole domains of Aristotle's philosophy that are worth studying.[20]

If studying and excerpting Aristotle's logic and physics was the mainstream and moderate way of dealing with Aristotle in Byzantium, there must also have been the

[18] John of Damascus, *The Fount of Knowledge*, proem, 43–48 Kotter: *Καὶ πρότερον μὲν τῶν παρ᾽Ἕλλησι σοφῶν τὰ κάλλιστα παραθήσομαι εἰδώς, ὡς, εἴ τι μὲν ἀγαθόν, ἄνωθεν παρὰ θεοῦ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δεδώρηται, ἐπειδὴ «πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον ἄνωθέν ἐστι καταβαῖνον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων». Εἴ τι δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀντίπαλον, τῆς σατανικῆς πλάνης «εὕρημα σκοτεινὸν καὶ διανοίας ἀνάπλασμα κακοδαίμονος», ὡς ὁ πολὺς ἐν θεολογίᾳ Ἰρηγόριος.*

[19] On this, see the excellent overview and discussion provided by Börje Bydén, '"No prince of perfection": Byzantine anti-Aristotelianism from the patristic period to Pletho', in *Power and Subversion in Byzantium*, eds Dimiter Angelov and Michael Saxby (London: Ashgate, 2013), 147–76.

[20] Cf. Metochites, *Semeioseis gnomikai*, 11 ('On Aristotle and his fame in natural science and logic') and 12 ('Further on Aristotle and his natural science and logic').

extremes. Two Palaeologian philosophers, namely George Pachymeres (1242– after 1310) and George Scholarios (1403–1472), the first Patriarch of Constantinople under Ottoman rule (as Gennadios II), were the leading figures of an extremely positive assessment of Aristotle, presented as a monotheist who was closer to Christianity than any other pre-Christian thinker (and, indeed, than several Christian thinkers). At the other extreme, which is paradigmatically instantiated in the fideism of Theodore Metochites' pupil Nikephoros Gregoras (c. 1295–1359/61), Aristotle's physics was rejected as providing insecure knowledge (by the very nature of its subject-matter),[21] whereas Aristotle's logic was deemed able to secure only a vain exhibitionism, associated with the superficiality of Latin scholasticism. Gregoras' anti-Latinism was shared by the second and third generation of pro-Hesychast thinkers, who developed the teachings of Gregory Palamas and explicitly related Aristotle's syllogistic theory to Thomism and Latin heresy.

II. Aristotle's philosophy excerpted: logic and physics

Insofar as they did not interfere with the revealed truths of Christianity, the dialectical skills acquired through the study of Aristotle's *Organon* were highly estimated in the Byzantine court. Together with predictions of eclipses and other calculations of astronomical phenomena, dialectical battles in the emperor's presence are frequently mentioned in Byzantine narratives. Two examples may suffice. Anna Komnene, daughter of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118), recounts how the 'consul of the philosophers' (that is, the imperial teacher of philosophy and sciences in Byzantium) John Italos, before being condemned by the ecclesiastical synod as a Platonist in 1082, had enjoyed a great reputation in the palace under the rule of Michael VII Doukas (1067–1078) thanks to his impressive command of dialectics.[22] The monk Nikephoros Blemmydes published his *Introductory Epitome* (*Εἰσαγωγικὴ ἐπιτομή*) in two books — 'On Logic' (*περὶ λογικῆς*) and 'On Physics' (*περὶ φυσικῆς*) — at the instigation of the emperor of Nicaea John III Doukas Vatatzes (1222–1254).[23] In his autobiography, Blemmydes relates that he managed to make a great impression on the emperor by beating the 'consul of the philosophers and the greatest among logicians (*τῶν φιλοσόφων ὕπατος καὶ μέγας ἐν λογισταῖς*)' Demetrios Karykes in logical argument.[24]

The large number of commentaries and compendia on the *Organon* produced by the Byzantines themselves illustrates the major role that logic played within Byzantine higher education. The text most widely used and copied was probably

[21] See Ιωάννης Α. Δημητρακόπουλος, *Νικολάου Καβάσιλα κατὰ Πύρρωνος. Πλατωνικὸς φιλοσκεπτικισμὸς καὶ ἀριστοτελικὸς ἀντισκεπτικισμὸς στη βυζαντινή διανόηση του 14ου αιώνα* (Αθήνα: Παρουσία, 2004), 84–109.

[22] Cf. Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, V, 8, 3–4.

[23] See the proem of the work, § 5 (PG 142:689C).

[24] Cf. Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Curriculum vitae*, I, 2, 8 Munitiz.

Leon Magentenos' commentary,[25] composed in the twelfth century and enriched with additional scholia by Neophytos Prodromenos and John Chortasmenos, who taught at the monastery of Prodromou Petra in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.[26] Even philosophers who, as we shall see, expanded Byzantium's philosophic horizon beyond logic, such as Michael Psellos, Eustratius (metropolitan) of Nicaea,[27] George Pachymeres and George Scholarios, dealt extensively with the *Organon*: Psellos composed influential paraphrases on the *On the Interpretation* and the *Prior Analytics*, as well as various synopses of several parts of the *Organon*;[28] Eustratius produced an exegetical commentary on the second book of the *Posterior Analytics*;[29] Pachymeres composed a synopsis of the *Organon* as the first book of his compendium *Philosophia* (which deals with Aristotle's philosophy in twelve books) and produced a (still unedited) full-blown commentary on all six treatises of the *Organon*;[30] Scholarios, who was very well versed into the method and contents of Scholasticism, integrated Latin sources in his prolegomena to Aristotle's logic.[31]

By contrast to the study of logic, the study of physics does not seem to have belonged to the 'canon' of Byzantine philosophy before the eleventh century. Rather, it seems to have attracted the isolated interest of some top scholars, such as the one who is responsible for the production of probably the most important manuscript of Aristotle in Byzantium, namely the *Parisinus graecus* 1853 (codex E). This anonymous scholar of the late ninth-early tenth century, designated in the secondary literature as E^2,[32] made several scholia in the margins of the text of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Meteorology*. Most of them are taken from Philoponus' respective commentaries but at least one of them seems to be his original contribution; commenting on Aristotle's sentence 'that in which the principle of motion originates for all things

[25] See Nikolaos Agiotis, *Leon Magentenos. Commentary on Prior Analytics (Book II). Critical Edition with Introduction and English Translation* (Berlin: Walter de Guyter, forthcoming).

[26] See Michel Cacouros, 'Jean Chortasmenos, katholikos didaskalos, annotateur du Corpus logicum dû à Néophytos Prodromenos', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 52 (1998): 185–225.

[27] Eustratius and Michael of Ephesus produced a joint line-by-line commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* at the instigation of Anna Komnene. They formed the so-called 'intellectual circle' of Anna Komnene, whose activity was to produce commentaries on those treatises of Aristotle for which there existed no commentaries; see Robert Browning, 'An unpublished funeral oration on Anna Comnena', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 188 (1962): 1–12.

[28] See the opuscula numbered from 5 to 15 in Psellos' *Philosophica minora*, vol. I: *Opuscula logica, physica, allegorica, alia*, ed. John M. Duffy (Leipzig: Teubner, 1992). On Psellos' paraphrases on the *Organon* 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), 157–81.

[29] Ed. Michael Hayduck (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1907).

[30] See Eleni Pappa, 'Die Kommentare des Georgios Pachymeres zum Organon', in *Lesarten. Festschrift für Athanasios Kambylis*, eds Ioannis Vassis, Gunther S. Henrich and Diether Reinsch (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 198–210.

[31] *Γεωργίου τοῦ Σχολαρίου προλεγόμενα εἰς τὴν Λογικὴν καὶ εἰς τὴν Πορφυρίου Εἰσαγωγήν, ἐκ διαφόρων συλλεγέντων βιβλίων, μετὰ ἰδίων ἐπιστάσεων* (*Oeuvres complètes de Georges Gennadios Scholarios*, eds Martin Jugie, Louis Petit, and Xenophon A. Siderides, vol. II [Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1936], 7–113).

[32] To my mind, this scholar was probably a pupil of Leo the Philosopher (or the Mathematician).

should be considered to be the first cause',[33] E[2] sums up, in a concise and clear manner that illustrates his level of philosophical understanding, the way in which, according to Aristotle, the separate, self-existent *νοῦς* moves the different spheres that constitute the universe:

> Here [Aristotle] means the separate [= self-existent] intelligence; for this is the cause of the existence of the sensible world. Indeed, it moves immediately the celestial bodies, in particular those which are most proximate to it by nature, that is, the sphere of the fixed stars; and secondarily with regard to it, [it moves] the spheres that [the sphere of the fixed stars] contains; and, finally, [it moves] those that are in generation. Indeed, each [sphere] is moved by the separate intelligence in accordance with its own nature.[34]

Nevertheless, it is indicative of the lack of interest in Aristotle's physics during the ninth and tenth centuries that in the title of a compendium conceived for teaching purposes and dated to 1007, which reads *Συνοπτικὸν σύνταγμα φιλοσοφίας καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων μαθημάτων*, 'philosophy' simply means 'logic'.[35] A systematic study of Aristotle's physics (where 'Aristotle's' is meant in a large sense so as to include the ancient exegetical tradition) seems to have been inaugurated with the consul of the philosophers (possibly an imperial office that was created especially for him) Michael Psellos (1018–1078 or 1096). Psellos, proud of his own accomplishments in the teaching of philosophy, relates in his *Chronographia* that the philosophical teaching he himself had received was restricted to 'certain simple words and propositions', that is, to Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation*.[36] Psellos composed short treatises on several topics from Aristotle's *Meteorology*[37] and, more importantly, he famously proclaimed that the Hellenes 'came to know nature as it has been created by God; therefore, we should draw our theory about natural things from there'.[38]

[33] Aristotle, *Meteorology*, I 2, 339a23–24: *ὅθεν γὰρ ἡ τῆς κινήσεως ἀρχὴ πᾶσιν, ἐκείνην αἰτίαν νομιστέον πρώτην.*

[34] *Parisinus gr.* 1853, f. 129v, in *margine exteriore*: *Ἐνταῦθα τὸν νοῦν αἰνίττεται τὸν χωριστόν· οὗτος γὰρ αἴτιός ἐστι τῆς ὑποστάσεως τοῦ κόσμου του αἰσθητοῦ· προσεχῶς μὲν γὰρ κινεῖ τὰ οὐράνια, καὶ τούτων τὰ προσεχέστερα τῇ φύσει, οἷον τὴν ἀπλανῆ, καὶ ταύτης δευτέρως τὰς ἐχομένας ταύτῃ σφαίρας, καὶ ὑστέρως τὰς ἐν γενέσει· ἑκάστη γὰρ ὡς ἔχει φύσεως οὕτως καὶ κινεῖται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.*

[35] This work, which is attributed to a certain Gregorios Aneponymus in some catalogue entries, is widely known as the Anonymous Heiberg after the name of the Danish scholar who produced its edition: *Anonymi logica et quadrivium cum scholiis antiqui*s, ed. Johan Ludvig Heiberg (Copenhagen, 1929). On this work, see Sten Ebbesen, *Commentators and Commentaries on Aristotle's Sophistici Elenchi. A Study of Post-Aristotelian Ancient and Medieval Writings on Fallacies* (Leyde: Brill, 1981), vol. I, 262–63.

[36] Cf. Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, I, 6, 37 Renauld. See also Michael Psellos, *Oratoria minora*, 8, lin. 154–159 Littlewood, where Psellos boasts to his pupils that he was the first in Byzantium to reveal 'the entire *νοῦς* of Aristotle' and to teach 'separately (*ἰδίᾳ*) [Aristotle's] theories on nature and his treatise on the first substances'; the latter reference may be to book *Lambda* of the *Metaphysics*.

[37] See the opuscula numbered from 16 to 31 in Psellos' *Philosophica minora*, vol. I: *Opuscula logica, physica, allegorica, alia*, ed. John M. Duffy (Leipzig: Teubner, 1992).

[38] Cf. Michael Psellos, *Oratoria minora*, 24, lin. 70–79 Littlewood: *Ἔγωγ' οὖν ὑμᾶς βούλομαι ἀποτρόφους*

Ancient physics was thus put on the track of the Byzantine philosophical curriculum. It is again indicative that, a couple of decades later, the consul of the philosophers Theodore of Smyrna, produced an *Ἐπιτομὴ τῶν ὅσα περὶ φύσεως καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν ἀρχῶν τοῖς παλαιοῖς διείληπται* (*An Epitome of all considerations of the ancients with regard to nature and the natural principles*); this is basically a compendium of Aristotle's *Physics* I–IV, *On the Heavens* and *On the Generation and Corruption*.[39] I have already mentioned Blemmydes' *Introductory Epitome* from the middle of the thirteenth century, which comprises, in typically eclectic manner,[40] topics from both logic and physics. Blemmydes' pupil George Akropolites (1217–1282), who later assumed the restoration of higher education in the recovered Constantinople, is also known to have taught logic and physics.[41] George Pachymeres, who was probably a pupil of Akropolites, wrote a full-blown commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*.[42] Belonging to the next generation of scholars, Theodore Metochites wrote a paraphrasis on all natural treatises by Aristotle (*Εἰς πάντα τὰ φυσικὰ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους*), including the treatise *On the Soul* and all the biological and zoological treatises.[43] It is worth noting that, when it comes to Aristotle's first philosophy, Metochites expresses his great disappointment and regrets the fact that the previous generations of scribes and scholars preserved the *Metaphysics* for posterity.[44]

μὲν εἶναι τῶν κοινῶν ἐθῶν, τροφίμους δὲ ταῖς ἐπιστήμαις, καὶ νῦν μὲν τῶν νοημάτων ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, νῦν δὲ τὴν γλῶτταν ἀνακαθαίρειν καὶ περὶ τὴν περιβολὴν τοῦ λόγου πονεῖν, εἰδέναι τε ὡς ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ σοφία, περὶ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θείου διαμαρτάνουσα καὶ τὸ θεολογικὸν μέρος οὐκ ἀναμάρτητον ἔχουσα, τὴν φύσιν οὕτως ἐγνώρισεν ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ πλάστης ἐποίησε. χρὴ οὖν ἡμᾶς ἐκεῖθεν μὲν ἔχειν τὴν περὶ ταῦτα θεωρίαν, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς ἡμετέρας σοφίας τὸν τύπον γινώσκειν καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ τὸ μὲν γράμμα ἐπιθραύειν ὥσπερ ἔλυτρον, τὸ δὲ κεκρυμμένον πνεῦμα ὥσπερ μαργαρίτας ἀναχωννύειν. On this passage, see also below, n. 54 and 55.

[39] On this work, recently edited by Linos Benakis (Αθήνα: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 2013), see Michele Trizio, 'Ancient physics in the mid-Byzantine period: the Epitome of Theodore of Smyrna Consul of the Philosophers under Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118)', *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 54 (2012): 77–99.

[40] In line with St John of Damascus' *Philosophic chapters*, but this time extending Byzantine eclecticism into physics, Blemmydes included in his *Epitome*, as he himself says in his *Autobiography*, 'those topics that are not remote from usefulness' (Blemmydes, *Curriculum vitae*, II, 75.8 Munitiz: *ὅσα μὴ πόρρω τοῦ χρησίμου*). These topics are excerpted exclusively from the ancient exegetical tradition on Aristotle's *Organon* and physics (*Physics, On Generation and Corruption, Meteorology, On the Heavens*), whereas some fundamental doctrines of Aristotle on natural philosophy, namely his doctrines on the eternity of the world and the existence of the fifth element, are not excerpted in the *Epitome physica* (in the last chapters, Blemmydes relies on Philoponus' *On the eternity of the world against Proclus*); see Wolfgang Lackner, 'Zum Lehrbuch der Physik des Nikephoros Blemmydes', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 4 (1972): 157–69; Pantelis Golitsis, 'Nicéphore Blemmyde lecteur du Commentaire de Simplicius à la *Physique* d'Aristote', in *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*, ed. Cristina D'Ancona Costa (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 243–56.

[41] According to George of Cyprus' testimony, Akropolites taught Aristotle's logic and physics, as well as 'theology in the manner of Plato' (*Πλάτωνα θεολογοῦντα*); see Pantelis Golitsis, 'Georges Pachymère comme didascale. Essai pour une reconstitution de sa carrière et de son enseignement philosophique', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 58 (2008): 53–68, at 61–62. The reference to Plato seems to be rather to the (Neo)Platonic tradition, exploited for explicating difficult passages of the Fathers.

[42] See Pantelis Golitsis, 'Un commentaire perpétuel de Georges Pachymère à la *Physique* d'Aristote, faussement attribué à Michel Psellos', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 100 (2007): 637–76.

[43] An *editio princeps* of Metochites' paraphrase is being prepared by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences (*Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca et Byzantina*).

[44] Cf. Metochites, *Semeioseis gnomikai*, 21 ('On Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Hermogenes' book *On the Method of Force*'). Metochites' rejection of the *Metaphysics* as useless may be read also as downgrading

Thus, it may strike one as strange that, in his *Florentius or On Wisdom*, Nikephoros Gregoras downplays the philosophical knowledge of his opponent Barlaam (c.1290–1348), a monk from Calabria, by claiming that 'the wisdom […] he drew from Italy was not 'various and total' but restricted to Aristotle's philosophy, namely his physics and his syllogistic theory, because this is the philosophy that is mostly studied by the Latins and the Italians who reside there'.[45] The study of philosophy during the empire of Nicaea and in the early Palaeologian era did not exceed the contents that Gregoras pejoratively ascribed to the philosophical knowledge of the Italians. And even if things got progressively better, Gregoras' master Metochites explicitly repudiated the study of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Nonetheless, *Florentius* is a Platonically inspired dialogue and, as the quotation from the *Philebus* implies (30b, *πᾶσαν καὶ παντοίαν σοφίαν*), Gregoras wished to exalt, in line with his master,[46] his acquaintance with Plato's philosophy, which was unknown to the Westerners. We should bear in mind, however, that the study of Plato and the Neoplatonic tradition was revived in Constantinople only a couple of decades earlier to a great extent thanks to the teaching, copying and writings of George Pachymeres.[47] It is indicative of the philosophical climate that reigned in the generation before Pachymeres that Akropolites hints at Blemmydes' lack of acquaintance with Plato and the Neoplatonists; he complains that his master was unable to provide him with a correct interpretation of a difficult sentence by Gregory of Nazianzus, which he discovered by himself thanks to his personal study of 'the most divine Plato and the muse-taken Proclus and the inspired men Iamblichus and Plotinus'.[48] Akropolites may in his turn have influenced Pachymeres.

We may, therefore, say that Aristotle's logic and physics, read along with the elucidations and criticisms of the ancient exegetical tradition, were at the core of the philosophical activity in Byzantium. What differentiates the work of the Byzantine commentators from the work of their ancient predecessors is basically not the content but the form: the Byzantines privileged the form of synopsis and, to a lesser extent, the form of paraphrasis rather than the line-by-line exegesis, which was the main form of commentary in the ancient and medieval (Arabic and Latin) exegetical tradition. This was due, of course, to the fact that the form of synopsis or compendi-

the activity of previous Byzantine philosophers such as Michael of Ephesus and George Pachymeres, who wrote full-blown commentaries on Aristotle's treatise.

[45] Nikephoros Gregoras, *Florentius*, lin. 352–57: *τὴν δὲ 'σοφίαν' οὐκ ἐκ Καλαβρίας, ἀλλ' ἐς τὰ βαθύτερα τῆς Ἰταλίας ἰόντα ἀρύσασθαι, καὶ ταύτην οὐ 'παντοίαν καὶ πᾶσαν' ἀλλὰ μόνην τὴν Ἀριστοτέλους, ὅση περὶ τὰ φυσικὰ γίνεται καὶ ὅση περὶ συλλογισμούς, ἐπειδὴ καὶ αὕτη γε ἐς τὰ μάλιστα τοῖς ἐκεῖ Λατίνοις τε καὶ Ἰταλιώταις σπουδάζεται.*

[46] In several of his *Semeiôseis gnômikai* (3, 5, 10, 13, 25), Metochites speaks very favourably of Plato, especially when it comes to comparing Plato with Aristotle.

[47] On Pachymeres' philosophical manuscripts see Pantelis Golitsis, 'Copistes, élèves et érudits: la production de manuscrits philosophiques autour de Georges Pachymère', in *The Legacy of Bernard de Montfaucon: Three Hundred Years of Studies on Greek Handwriting*, eds Antonio Bravo García, Inmaculada Pérez Martín, and Juan Signes Codoñer (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 157–70.

[48] Cf. Georgios Akropolites, *Opera* ('In Gregorii Nazianzeni sententias'), 71.1–13 Wirth.

um was better adapted to the needs of Byzantine higher education. Indeed, Byzantine higher education did not aim at training professional philosophers or scholars but at educating the Byzantine aristocracy, from which high church and state officials traditionally came; the compendia enabled such students to have a quick acquaintance with Aristotle's logic and, in some cases, Aristotle's physics. But it was also the most appropriate form for doing philosophy eclectically, as Byzantium wanted it.

III. Aristotle's logic as a source of earlier and later heresies

Although the study and use of logic was not commended by divinely inspired (*θεόπνευστοι*) men, that is, the apostles and the saints, the dialectical skills that are associated with it were important for Byzantine church politics. Of course, in line with the doctrine of the single truth, granting truth to logic while clarifying Christological or triadological matters was prohibited; the use of syllogisms in theology was readily condemned in Byzantium. In as early as in the work of St John of Damascus (who, as said, included notions of logic in the first part of his *Fount of Knowledge*), the heretical Jacobites (as the monophysites in Syria were called) were dismissed because they admitted Aristotle among the saints and theologised with him, as if Aristotle was the thirteenth apostle.[49] John explicitly associates Aristotle's syllogistic theory with the heresy of the Aetians and the 'Unlikes' (*anhomoioi*, because for them the Son is completely 'unlike' the Father; they are identical to the Eunomians), a development of Arianism:

> These 'Unlikes' and the Aetians totally alienate Christ and the Holy Spirit from God the Father, maintaining strongly that Christ is created, and they say that Christ does not even have a resemblance [with God the Father]. They want to describe [the nature of] God with Aristotelian syllogisms and syllogistic diagrams and [to show] through such [syllogistic] moods that Christ cannot be from God.[50]

Nevertheless, some hundred years later, the Patriarch Photius (810–893) spoke of 'those who go after the truth using logical methods',[51] and Psellos, who appears once more on the scene of Byzantine philosophy as an important figure, clearly in-

[49] Cf. John of Damascus, *Contra Jacobitas*, 10 Kotter: *Οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτο φλήναφος καὶ διανοίας ἀνάπλασμα κακοδαίμονος, δαιμόνων εὕρημα σκοτεινὸν καὶ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς τερθρείας τεράτευμα; Τίς τοῦτο τῶν θεοφόρων εἴρηκε πώποτε, εἰ μή που τὸν παρ' ὑμῖν ἅγιον Ἀριστοτέλην ἡμῖν ὡς τρισκαιδέκατον ἀπόστολον εἰσαγάγοιτε καὶ τῶν θεοπνεύστων τὸν εἰδωλολάτρην προκρίνοιτε;*

[50] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, 76 Kotter: *Οὗτοι οἱ Ἀνόμοιοι καὶ οἱ Ἀετιανοὶ παντάπασι Χριστὸν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα ἀπαλλοτριοῦσι θεοῦ πατρός, κτιστὸν αὐτὸν διαβεβαιούμενοι, καὶ οὐδὲ ὁμοιότητά τινα ἔχειν λέγουσιν. Ἐκ συλλογισμῶν Ἀριστοτελικῶν καὶ γεωμετρικῶν τὸν θεὸν παριστᾶν βούλονται, καὶ Χριστὸν δῆθεν μὴ δύνασθαι εἶναι ἐκ θεοῦ διὰ τοιούτων τρόπων.*

[51] Photius, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, Epist. 290, 68–69 Laourdas/Westerink: *τῶν ταῖς λογικαῖς μεθόδους ἰχνευόντων τὸ ἀληθές.*

augurated a neutral stance towards the use of logic in theology—and neutrality, in this context, is tantamount to positivity. In a letter to his friend and jurist John Xiphilinos, Psellos claims that the syllogistic theory is by no means a doctrine alien to the Church and openly speaks in favour of those who try to rationally understand the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers of the Church:

> Insofar as syllogisms are concerned, I have not yet come to despise their figure – I wish I could despise them, so that I could see our Lord in [His] figure and not in riddles![52] Syllogising, my brother, is neither a dogma alien to the Church nor an incredible position of those who philosophise [viz. as opposed to the divine discourses] but is only an instrument of truth and a discovery of a thing that is sought. And if someone, [reasoning] in a more logical manner [than we do], does not wish to espouse the right reason, nor does he wish to eat solid food but to drink only milk, as the Corinthian does, should we, who do hard work in the precision and explanation of the [divine] discourses, be proscribed?[53]

Psellos insinuates that logical reasoning is indispensable for those who wish to acquire an *understanding* of the deeper meaning of the Scriptures. Whereas the ancient philosophical texts have no authority in theological matters (they cannot teach the 'truth', i.e., the mystery of Trinity),[54] they do offer the tools for clarifying the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Church Fathers (most of all, the sermons of Gregory of Nazianzus), which are for Psellos authoritative allegorical or allusive

[52] A tacit reference to Paul (1 Cor 13:12: *βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι*).

[53] Michael Psellos, *Ad Ioannem Xiphilinum Epistula*, lin. 109–118 Criscuolo: *Τὰ δὲ τῶν συλλογισμῶν, εἴδους νῦν μὲν οὔπω καταπεφρόνηκα—γένοιτο δέ μοι καταφρονῆσαι, ὥστε ἐν εἴδει ὁρᾶν ἀλλὰ μὴ δι' αἰνιγμάτων τὸν Κύριον! τὸ γὰρ συλλογίζεσθαι, ἀδελφέ, οὔτε δόγμα ἐστὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀλλότριον οὔτε θέσις τις τῶν κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν παράδοξος, ἀλλ' ἤ μόνον ὄργανον ἀληθείας καὶ ζητουμένου πράγματος εὕρεσις. εἰ δέ τις μὴ βούλοιτο λογικώτερον τῷ ὀρθοτόμῳ προσιέναι λόγῳ μηδὲ τροφὴν ἐσθίειν στερράν, ἀλλ' ἤ μόνον γαλακτοποτεῖν οἷα Κορίνθιος, διὰ ταῦτα ἐν γραφαῖς ἡμεῖς οἱ ταλαιπωροῦντες ἐν τοῖς ἠκριβωμένοις λόγοις ἐσόμεθα;* This is a fine example of Psellos' high prose, in which ambiguity of meaning is combined with hidden references to Christian and secular literature (Aeschines, Hippocratic corpus).

[54] Psellos actually condemned Hellenic theology as aberrant in content in its major part (cf. Theologica, VII, 53–54 Gautier: *οὐ γὰρ πᾶσα Ἑλληνὶς δόξα διαβέβληται πρὸς ἡμῶν, τινὲς δὲ καὶ συνεργοὶ τοῦ ἡμετέρου τυγχάνουσι δόγματος*) and as erroneous in method in some cases (*ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ σοφία, περὶ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θείου διαμαρτάνουσα καὶ τὸ θεολογικὸν μέρος οὐκ ἀναμάρτητον ἔχουσα*, quoted above, n. 37); therefore, he commended the study of Hellenic theology with caution as a method for going deeper into the understanding of (and not for modelling the faith to) Christian doctrine. Psellos' rehabilitation of Hellenic philosophy *within* Byzantine Christianity is extremely important. The reader who nevertheless is in search of 'Byzantine crypto-pagans' may read several studies by Kaldellis and Siniossoglou, e.g., Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), *passim*, and Niketas Siniossoglou, 'Από την ορθότητα των ονομάτων στην ορθότητα των δογμάτων: το πρόβλημα με την βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία', *Deukalion* 27 (2010): 45–70.

texts: 'we should break their letter like the nacre and extract their hidden spirit like the pearl', as he elsewhere says.[55]

Psellos did not actually make use of syllogisms for that purpose; rather, he appealed to Proclus and Neoplatonist metaphysics to acquire a better understanding of the thought of the Fathers. John Italos, however, who succeeded Psellos in the office of the consul of the philosophers, tacitly refuted St John of Damascus' view that there cannot be two uncreated principles,[56] and Italos' pupil Eustratius of Nicaea ventured to prove the two natures in Christ against the claims of the Armenians (who were monophysites) through 'rational, natural and theological argumentations'.[57] Echoing Psellos with a more vivid voice, Eustratius famously claimed that throughout the gospels Christ makes use of Aristotelian syllogisms.[58] Both Italos and Eustratius were accused of heresy and were respectively condemned, with the emperor's approval, by the ecclesiastical synods of 1082 and 1117.[59] By the end of his reign, Alexios I had restored the traditional Byzantine stance towards philosophy and logic.

In the subsequent course of history, however, the Byzantines were compelled to conduct various debates with the Latin Church. Mastery of logic was necessary for defeating the opponent and, what is more, for defeating the opponent with the opponent's weapon. As the politics vis-à-vis the Roman Catholic Church was becoming all the more crucial for the destiny of the empire, the need for able dialecticians became urgent in Byzantium. The most notable case is perhaps Barlaam. This Calabrian monk, who had acquired a command of Aristotle's logic in Italy, made a name for himself in Byzantium by being more knowledgeable in logic and dialectics than any of his contemporary Constantinopolitan dialecticians and philosophers. Barlaam acted as the emperor's representative in the discussions with the representatives of the Pope John XXII about the union of the Churches, which were held in Constantinople in 1333–1334. In his subsequently published twenty-one treatises *Against the Latins*,[60] Barlaam opposed the ignorance of the Dominican

[55] *τὸ μὲν γράμμα ἐπιθραύειν ὥσπερ ἔλυτρον, τὸ δὲ κεκρυμμένον πνεῦμα ὥσπερ μαργαρίτας ἀναχωννύειν* (quoted above, n. 38).

[56] See John Italos, *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, § 54: *Εἰ δύο εἰσὶν ἀρχαὶ ἀγένητοι*, which tacitly refers to John of Damascus' *Expositio fidei*, § 93.

[57] See the characteristic title of one of his orations (published by Ανδρόνικος Δημητρακόπουλος, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Leipzig, 1866 [reprinted Hildesheim 1965]), vol. I, I, 7: *Τοῦ αὐτοῦ Εὐστρατίου ἔλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τῶν λεγόντων μίαν φύσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐκ λογικῶν καὶ φυσικῶν καὶ θεολογικῶν ἐπιχειρήσεων, ἐξ ὧν δείκνυται ἀναγκαίως ἐκ δύο φύσεων εἶναι τὸν σωτῆρα Χριστόν μου.*

[58] See Anthony C. Lloyd, 'The Aristotelianism of Eustratius of Nicaea', in *Aristoteles. Werk und Wirkung: Paul Moraux gewidmet*, ed. Jürgen Wiesner (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), vol. II, 341–51.

[59] On Italos see Lowell Clucas, *The Trial of John Italos and the Crisis of Intellectual Values in Byzantium in the Eleventh Century* (Wien: Institut für Byzantinistik, Neugriechische Philologie und Byzantinische Kunstgeschichte, 1981). On Eustratius, cf. *Synodicon Orthodoxiae*, lin. 388–390 Gouillard: *Τὰ εὑρεθέντα ἀλλότρια τῶν ὀρθῶν δογμάτων τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐν τοῖς γραφεῖσι κατὰ Ἀρμενίων δυσὶ λόγοις παρὰ Εὐστρατίου τοῦ γεγονότος μητροπολίτου Νικαίας τὰ καὶ ἀναθεματισθέντα, ἀνάθεμα.*

[60] Antonis Fyrigos, *Barlaam Calabro opere contro i latini: Introduzione, storia dei testi, edizione critica,*

friars, who relied on Aristotle's apodeictic syllogism in order to prove veridical theses in Trinitarian theology. According to him, religious truths are revealed by faith and thus provide us with premisses on which only dialectical syllogisms can be built; for these are not apodeictic premisses, to which dialecticians are rationally compelled to consent, but dialectical premisses, that is, beliefs. An Orthodox and a Roman Catholic start from premisses that they do not share (e.g., on the question of the *filioque*); therefore, they cannot reach an agreement about the procession of the Holy Spirit.

As Barlaam's anti-Latin stance was solidly Byzantine, it may seem to be an irony of history that a theologian who was to become a leading figure for the late Byzantine and post-Byzantine Orthodoxy, namely St Gregory Palamas, defended the use of apodeictic syllogisms in theology, wishing to 'demonstrate' that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father. In his epistles to Barlaam, whom he accused of *latinophronia* (Barlaam later converted to the Roman Catholic Church), Palamas claimed that religious truths are not dialectical but apodeictic; for they are revealed by God, and God is the only immutable being on which true demonstrative science, as opposed to opinion, can be founded. This seems to be an attitude close to the fideism of Metochites and Gregoras but without pessimism and with less philosophical vigour.[61] Be that as it may, once the Palamite distinction between God's essence and (uncreated) energies (or the Tabor light) was established and sanctioned, the use of Aristotelian syllogisms to disprove this distinction was prohibited by the Church. Despite the fact that within their anti-Latin polemics both Barlaam and Gregoras had condemned the use of Aristotle's syllogistic theory in theology,[62] they themselves were condemned because they turned the weapon of logic not against the enemy but against a friend, namely the pious Athonite monk, who represented the traditional Byzantine spirituality, and the Palamite theologian, who undertook to defend him. For surely, only the truly pious (*εὐσεβής*) monk would experience in this world, through his prayer and his self-transformation, a union with God's uncreated energy – not the scholastic nor the philosopher.

Fideism became all the more dominant in fourteenth century Byzantine society. Among the next generation of philosopher-theologians, Prochoros Kydones (c. 1330–1369/71), a former Athonite monk who together with his brother Demetrios translated in Greek the major works of Thomas Aquinas, felt the need 'to defend myself against those who accuse the use of syllogism as an unacceptable perturba-

traduzione e indici (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1998).

[61] By such reasoning, Palamas seemed to confuse types of reasoning (those based on intuitive irrefutable truths and those based on shared beliefs as the religious dogmas are) with the types of beings (created or uncreated) to which they apply; see Antonis Fyrigos, 'Gregorio Palamas e il "palamismo"', *Eastern Theological Journal* 2 (2015): 205–41, at 207–11.

[62] See Antonis Fyrigos, 'Barlaam Calabro e la Rinascenza italiana', *Il Veltro* 31 (1987): 395–403; B. Bydén, 'The criticism of Aristotle in Nikephoros Gregoras' *Florentius*', in *Δῶρον ῥοδοποίκιλον. Studies in Honour of Jan Olof Rosenqvist*, eds Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, Jan Heldt, and Denis Michael Searby (Uppsala, 2012), 107–22.

tion of theology. I believe that every truth [that is, the religious truth too] is either a beginning of a syllogism or a syllogism'.[63] By defending the validity of rational theology, Kydones was seen as espousing a Thomistic principle and as substituting the Holy Scriptures with Aristotelian syllogistic, as it had happened in early heresies; he was condemned as heretical by the ecclesiastical synod of 1368. Let me quote the latter's verdict:

> And going on with his writing, [Kydones] puts in between the following chapter titles: 'That the intellective energy of God is the essence of God'; 'That the intellective power of God is the essence of God'; 'That the wisdom of God is the essence of God'; 'That the truth of God is the essence of God'; 'That the will of God is the essence of God'.[64] And *he proves all these not from the divine scriptures, nor by putting forward the sayings of the Saints, but through his own reasonings and using the Aristotelian syllogisms allegedly as proofs*. And when he speaks about God – or, to say it better, when he battles against God – speaking about the most divine light that shone from Christ on the Mount, he puts the following title: 'That the Tabor light is created'; […] and he proves this through many syllogisms of Aristotle, and he says and syllogizes many blasphematory and impious things.[65]

The triumph of Palamism in the fourteenth century did not only bring about the condemnation of Byzantine Thomists but also the condemnation of Aristotle *tout court*, who was henceforth considered as an ally of the Latins. By the time the Ferrara-Florence council was summoned during 1438–1439 with the purpose of reuniting the Roman Catholic and the Byzantine Orthodox Churches, George Gemistos, alias Pletho, compared Aristotle to Plato (in his so-called *De differentiis*) only to downgrade the former, claiming chiefly that Plato is higher-minded than Aristotle and closer to Christianity, despite the claims to the contrary by Averroes and his followers.[66] This was a claim directed also against the preference

[63] Prochorus Cydones, *De significatione syllogismi*, lin. 1–4 Tinnefeld: *Ἀπολογητέον δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἐγκαλοῦντας τὴν τοῦ συλλογισμοῦ χρῆσιν ὡς τίνα θεολογίας χρασμὸν ἀπαράδεκτον· οἶμαι γὰρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἀλήθεια ἢ ἀρχὴ συλλογισμοῦ ἐστὶν ἢ συλλογισμός*. The last sentence echoes exhaustive divisions frequently used by Aristotle.

[64] Kydones' chapter titles derive from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 73; see Christos Triantafyllopoulos, 'The Thomist basis of Prochoros Kydones' anti-Palamite treatise "De essentia et operatione Dei" ', in *Knotenpunkt Byzanz*, eds Andreas Speer and Philipp Steinkrüger, 411–30, at 424.

[65] *Tome against the monk Prochoros Kydones*, lin. 236–54 Rigo: *Μεταξὺ δὲ προϊὼν ἐπιγραφὰς τίθησι τοῖς κεφαλαίοις τοιαύτας· Ὅτι ἡ νοερὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνέργειά ἐστιν ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ. Ὅτι ἡ νοερὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ δύναμίς ἐστιν ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ. Ὅτι ἡ σοφία του Θεοῦ ἐστιν ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ . Ὅτι ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστιν ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ. Ὅτι ἡ του Θεοῦ θέλησίς ἐστιν ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ταῦτα ἀποδείκνυσιν οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν, οὐ ῥητὰ προφέρων ἁγίων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἰδίοις λογισμοῖς καὶ ταῖς ἀποδείξεσι χρώμενος δῆθεν τοῖς ἀριστοτελικοῖς συλλογισμοῖς. Περὶ δὲ τοῦ λάμψαντος ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῷ ὄρει θειοτάτου φωτὸς θεολογῶν, μᾶλλον δὲ θεομαχῶν, ἐπιγραφὴν μὲν τίθησιν· Ὅτι τὸ ἐν Θαβορίῳ φῶς κτιστόν·* [...] *καὶ τοῦτο διὰ πολλῶν ἀποδείκνυσι τῶν τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους συλλογισμῶν, καὶ πολλὰ ἕτερα βλάσφημα καὶ δυσσεβῆ λέγει καὶ συλλογίζεται*.

[66] Cf. Pletho, *On Aristotle's Departures from Plato*, lin. 3–8 Bydén: *Οἱ μὲν ἡμῶν παλαιότεροι καὶ Ἑλλήνων*

of the western Scholastics. Although Pletho is notorious for his radical thinking on political matters, his anti-Aristotelianism was traditionally Byzantine. There is again something of a historical irony in the fact that Aristotle was vindicated by Pletho's 'conservative' opponent George Scholarios, who is unique in his admiration of Scholastic philosophy and his defence of the Palamite distinction between divine essence and energies.[67] At the same time, Scholarios associated the hierarchically ordered Platonic hypostases of the Good, the Intelligence and the Soul with the early Christian heresies with regard to Trinity.[68]

It may not be due merely to a rhetorical exaggeration that, in his dedicatory letter to the despot of Mystra, Constantine Palaiologos (who later became the last emperor of Byzantium), with which he prefaces his *Prolegomena to Logic*, Scholarios complains that very few people in Constantinople in his time were apt to understand Aristotelian philosophy and logic.[69] Scholarios established his own school in Constantinople with the wish to revive Aristotle in fifteenth century Byzantium thanks to his thorough acquaintance with the texts and commentaries of scholasticism. Such a revival would be compatible with the ancient veneration of Aristotle in spite of Pletho's claim to the contrary:

> Pletho claims that the oldest among the Greek and Roman philosophers preferred Plato to Aristotle. None of them, however, preferred Plato to such extent as to oppose against Aristotle his own treatise. On the contrary, they explained with much labor the sciences which Aristotle marvelously found and determined for all the genera of being, considering that they act for the benefit of themselves and of mankind, and acknowledging that only Aristotle is and will be worthy of being the leader in philosophy for all people.[70]

καὶ Ῥωμαίων Πλάτωνα Ἀριστοτέλους πολλῷ τῷ μέσῳ προετίμων· τῶν δὲ νῦν, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν πρὸς ἑσπέραν, οἱ πολλοὶ ἅτε ἐκείνων σοφώτεροι οἰόμενοι γεγονέναι, Ἀριστοτέλη πρὸ Πλάτωνος θαυμάζουσιν, Ἀβερόῃ τινὶ Ἄραβι πειθόμενοι μόνον Ἀριστοτέλη φάσκοντι τέλεόν τι τῆς φύσεως ἐς σοφίαν ἔργον ἀποτετελέσθαι.

[67] It is indicative of Scholarios' open-mindedness and curious spirit that he sought to find allies of Palamite theology in John Duns Scotus and his followers; see Christiaan W. Kappes, 'The Latin sources of the Palamite theology of George-Gennadius Scholarius', *Nicolaus* 40 (2013): 71–114; Pantelis Golitsis, '*ἐσέντζια, ὀντότης, οὐσία*: George Scholarios' philosophical understanding of Thomas Aquinas' *De ente et essentia* and his use of Armandus de Bellovisu's commentary', in *Never the Twain Shall Meet: Latins and Greeks Learning from Each Other in Byzantium*, ed. Denis Searby, (Berlin, 2017), 181–98. Scholarios claimed that even Aquinas would be supportive of the Palamite distinction.

[68] Cf. George Scholarios, *Tractatus de processu spiritus sancti*, 65.38–66.10 Jugie/Petit/Siderides.

[69] Cf. George Scholarios, *Epistula Constantino Palaeologo dedicata*, lin. 92–93 Jugie/Petit/Siderides: *καὶ εἰσὶ φεῦ ἐν ἁπάσῃ τῇ πόλει τρεῖς ἢ τέτταρες, οἱ δυνάμενοι τὰ φιλοσοφίας δέχεσθαι δόγματα.*

[70] George Scholarios, Against Pletho's ignorance of Aristotle, 3, 1–8 Jugie/Petit/Siderides: *Ὁ μὲν δὴ Πλήθων Ἀριστοτέλους προτιμᾶν φησι Πλάτωνα τοὺς παλαιοτέρους Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων σοφούς, καίτοι ἐκείνων οὐδεὶς οὕτω προετίμησε Πλάτωνα, ὥστε καὶ ἰδίαν κατ' Ἀριστοτέλους πραγματείαν ἐνστήσασθαι· τοὐναντίον μὲν οὖν, ἃς ἐπιστήμας ἐκεῖνος τοῖς τοῦ ὄντος γένεσι πᾶσιν ὑπερφυῶς ἐξευρὼν ἀφώρισεν, ἐξηγήσαντο πολὺν ἀναδεξάμενοι πόνον, ἑαυτοῖς δή που καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις συμφέροντα πράττειν οὕτως ὑπειληφότες, καὶ μόνον Ἀριστοτέλη νομίσαντες ἄξιον ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἡγεμόνα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις εἶναί τε καὶ ἔσεσθαι.*

Scholarios' remark promptly brings me to the next and final section of the present contribution.

IV. Aristotle as an exemplary thinker close to Christianity

For some Byzantines, Aristotle was an inspiring philosopher, a Hellene whose philosophy could not only enrich human knowledge about the world but was also useful for strengthening some fundemantal dogmas of Christianity. The first scholar who deserves our attention in this respect is the anonymous E^2, whom I have already mentioned as the person responsible for the production of the *Parisinus gr*. 1853, the important codex produced around 900, which contains Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, as well as his biological and zoological treatises. E^2 corrected the copying errors made by the four scribes who prepared the manuscript, and at places annotated Aristotle's text. When he arrived at the end of the *Physics*, he added in the margin the following 'heroic verses' (*στίχοι ἡρωικοί*) (i.e., elegiac distiches):

> Mortal as I am, I know that I was born ephemeral but when I search after the serried multitude of the stars in their circular course,
> I no longer touch the earth with my feet but in the presence of Christ himself
> I take my fill of the ambrosia that feeds the gods.[71]

This is a slightly modified version of an epigram attributed to Ptolemy,[72] a sample of what has been called in the scholarly literature 'astral mysticism'.[73] The epigram, which in all probability did not exist in the main model of the manuscript (since it was not copied by the primary scribe), was added by E^2 from another source with the following modification: *χριστῶι* instead of *ζανί*, that is, 'in the presence of Christ' instead of 'in the presence of Jupiter'. This is a significant modification; for if E2 was interested in copying Ptolemy's epigram for 'bookish' reasons, he would have copied it without modification (and, of course, if he was afraid of being accused of Hellenic polytheism, he would not have copied it all). The modification does not reflect censorship—as un-Byzantine Byzantinists would be too ready to admit—but adjustment of Ptolemy's epigram to the Christian worldview. And if it was adjusted, it was because it had something to say. *Physics* ends by demonstrating the necessity of the existence of an indivisible, and therefore immaterial, first being, which moves the world; in other words, it culminates in God. E^2's engaged reading of Aristotle's

[71] *Parisinus gr*. 1853, f. 67v: *οἶδ' ὅτι θνητὸς ἔφυν καὶ ἐφ' ἅμερος ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἄν ἄστρων / μαστεύω πυκινὰς ἀμφιδρόμους ἕλικας / οὐκέτ' ἐπιψαύων γαίης ποσίν, ἀλλὰ παρ' αὐτῶι / Χριστῶι θεοτρεφέος πίμπλαμαι ἀμβροσίης.*

[72] The Ptolemaic epigram is included in the Anthology of Konstantinos Kephalas, confectioned around 900, later integrated in the so-called Palatine Anthology (IX, 57).

[73] Henri D. Saffrey, 'Nouveaux oracles chaldaïques dans les scholies du *Paris. gr*. 1853', *Revue de philologie* 43 (1969): 59–72.

text called into his memory Ptolemy's cosmotheological epigram, which he slightly modified and copied at the end of *Physics*.

E² seems, however, a rather isolated case. As we have seen, Michael Psellos credits himself–and, to some extent, this is certainly true–with the expansion of Aristotelian studies (of Aristotle's *νοῦς*, as he himself says) in the eleventh century Byzantium.[74] But as Psellos was rather attracted by Plato and the Neoplatonists,[75] he is at the same time responsible for a pejorative description of Aristotle as vainly trying to surpass his master. In speaking of the heretical Eunomius, Psellos makes a quite interesting comparison:

> Thus, the ground for this heresy of his [i.e., Eunomius'] has absolutely no starting point but, I think, the same thing happened to this man that happened to Aristotle the Stagirite. For Aristotle came after many wise men who were born before him and, what is more, he flourished after [the coming to be of] the philosophy of Plato; and because he found that Plato had examined minutely everything, and that some things had been discovered by Plato himself, whereas in other matters Plato had [wisely] followed previous [philosophers], Aristotle did not take the same route as his master; *for he did not want to give the impression that he is not a leader in philosophy and the discoverer of most things but a mere exegete of the Platonic doctrines*. This is why he modified [in words] some of Plato's teachings, whereas he contradicted others. This is, I claim, what has also happened to Eunomius; for having found that the impious persons before him divided among themselves the entire subject-matter of impiety, [Eunomius] did not wish to give the impression that he belonged to that mob of unfaithful and, thus, created for himself a new form of heresy, which need even not be refuted; for it is confused in itself and has been refuted [by itself].[76]

[74] See also John M. Duffy, 'Hellenic philosophy in Byzantium and the lonely mission of Michael Psellos', in *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources*, ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou, 139–56.

[75] Psellos' admiration towards the Platonists is readily seen in the expression *νόες γυμνοί* ('naked intellects'), which he uses to describe them in his *Discourse on Soul*; cf. Psellos, *Philosophica minora*, II, 78.3–4 O'Meara: *ἄνδρες ὑπὲρ τὰ σώματα καὶ αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο νόες γυμνοί, καὶ σύμπαντες οἱ Πλατωνικοί*.

[76] Michael Psellos, *Theologica* II 14.97–113 Gautier: *οὐκ ἔχει οὖν ἀφορμὴν οὐδεμίαν αὐτῷ ὑπάρξεως ὁ τῆς αἱρέσεως λόγος, ἀλλ' οἶμαι τὸν ἄνδρα ταὐτὸν πεπονθέναι τῷ Σταγειρίτῃ Ἀριστοτέλει. ἐκεῖνος γὰρ ἐπὶ πολλοῖς σοφοῖς τοῖς πρότερον τῷ βίῳ παραγενόμενος, καὶ μάλιστά γε μετὰ τὴν Πλάτωνος ἀνθήσας φιλοσοφίαν, ἐπειδὴ πάντα ἐκεῖνον εὗρε διακριβώσαντα, καὶ τὰ μὲν αὐτὸν ἐξευρόντα, τὰ δὲ τοῖς προηγησαμένοις ἀκολουθήσαντα, οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ὁδὸν τῷ διδασκάλῳ ἐτράπετο, ἵνα μὴ δόξῃ οὐκ ἀρχηγὸς εἶναι φιλοσοφίας καὶ εὑρετὴς τῶν γε πλειόνων, ἀλλ' οἷον τῶν Πλατωνικῶν δογμάτων ἐξηγητής. διὰ ταῦτα τὰ μὲν μεταμείβει τῶν ἐκείνου, τῶν δ' ἐναντίας ἀφῆκε φωνάς. τοιοῦτον δέ φημι πεπονθέναι καὶ τὸν Εὐνόμιον· εὑρηκὼς γὰρ τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ δυσσεβεῖς κατανειμαμένους ἑαυτοῖς τὴν σύμπασαν ὕλην τῆς ἀσεβείας, ἵνα μὴ ἐκεῖθεν δόξῃ τὸν τῆς ἀπιστίας πλουτεῖν συρφετόν, καινόν τι εἶδος αἱρέσεως ἀνέπλασεν ἑαυτῷ, ὃ μηδὲ δεῖν φημι τῶν ἀνατρεπόντων, αὐτὸ γὰρ ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ συγκέχυται καὶ ἀνατέτραπται.*

In the next century, however, Aristotle attracted some followers, to the detriment of Plato's superiority. In particular, Nicholas bishop of Methone wrote a refutation of the *Elements of theology* by Proclus,[77] whom Psellos had exceedingly admired for his philosophical endeavours. Moreover, in his objections to Soterichos Panteugenos, pronounced in 1156/1157, Nicholas explicitly praises 'the extraordinarily wise Aristotle' for attacking the Platonic Ideas, that is, the theory of Forms:

> Plato, the most prominent among the sages of the Hellenes, fabricates certain 'Ideas'; this is how he calls the genera and the species. For this reason, he claims that some of these Ideas are more universal henads, whereas others are more particular [henads]; but he does not introduce them as having no real existence, as this new sage [i.e., Soterichos] surmises. Quite on the contrary, insofar as he claims that these are primary and self-subsistent substances or natures, [and are such] to the highest degree the more universal [henads], which give existence to the more particular, he proclaims them to be first and second gods and says that the rest of beings acquire their existence from them. But the extraordinarily wise Aristotle, who came immediately after him in time, rejected Plato's doctrine abundantly; he successfully named Plato's arguments in favour [of the existence] of the Ideas 'twitterings',[78] because they do not contribute anything to our comprehension of being and differ in nothing from empty noises, which are useless for the production of harmony. This is why the philosophers who succeeded Aristotle in the Peripatos [i.e the ancient commentators] declared that these very ideas are simply concepts [in our thought].[79]

Some clarifications about the content of the controversy between Nicholas and Soterichos are necessary. Soterichos had accused the deacon Basileios, teacher of

[77] Nicholas of Methone, *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology*, ed. Athanasios D. Angelou (Athens, 1984). See lately Joshua Robinson, 'Proclus as heresiarch: Theological polemic and philosophical commentary in Nicholas of Methone's *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology*', in *Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism*, ed. Sergei Mariev (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 103–36,

[78] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I 2, 83a 33.

[79] Ανδρόνικος Δημητρακόπουλος, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Leipzig, 1866), 324.9–27 (*Τοῦ αὐτοῦ Νικολάου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης ἀντίρρησις πρὸς τὰ γραφέντα παρὰ Σωτηρίχου τοῦ προβληθέντος Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας, περὶ τοῦ «Σὺ εἶ ὁ προσφέρων καὶ προσφερόμενος καὶ προσδεχόμενος»*): *Ἰδέας μὲν γάρ τινας ἀναπλάττει Πλάτων ὁ τῶν παρ' Ἕλλησι σοφῶν ἐξοχώτατος, οὕτω τάχα τὰ γένη καὶ τὰ εἴδη καλῶν· ὅθεν καὶ τούτων τὰς μὲν καθολικωτέρας τὰς δὲ μερικωτέρας ἑνάδας φησίν, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ καὶ ἀνυποστάτους ταύτας εἰσάγει κατὰ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν τοῦ νέου τούτου σοφοῦ· πολλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ· καθ' ὅσον καὶ πρώτας εἶναι ταύτας καὶ αὐθυποστάτους οὐσίας εἴτουν φύσεις, μάλιστα τὰς καθολικωτέρας, ἐξ ὧν καὶ τὰς μερικωτέρας ὑφεστάναι διισχυρίζεται, ὡς καὶ θεοὺς ταύτας πρώτους καὶ δευτέρους ἀναγορεύειν, κἀκ τούτων αὖθις τἄλλα λέγειν ὑφίστασθαι. Ἀλλὰ ταύτην τὴν τοῦ Πλάτωνος δόξαν ἀρκούντως ἀνέτρεψεν ὁ μετ' ἐκεῖνον εὐθὺς τῷ χρόνῳ περιττὸς τὴν σοφίαν Ἀριστοτέλης, ὃς καὶ τερετίσματα τοὺς περὶ τῶν ἰδεῶν τούτων λόγους τοῦ Πλάτωνος εὐστόχως ὠνόμασεν, ὡς μηδὲν πρὸς κατάληψιν τοῦ ὄντος συντείνοντας, μηδὲ ψόφων κενῶν καὶ πρὸς ἁρμονίαν ἀσυντελῶν διαφέροντας. Ὅθεν καὶ οἱ τὸν Περίπατον Ἀριστοτέλους διαδεξάμενοι, αὐτὰς δὴ ταύτας τὰς ἰδέας ἐν ἐπινοίαις κεῖσθαι ψιλαῖς ἀπεφήναντο.*

the Gospel at the Patriarchal School, of heresy because the latter distinguished the two natures in Christ by saying that they have come about as two distinct energies – God as Word who becomes Man corresponds to the energy of the 'sacrificer' (*θύτης*), whereas the flesh of Man who becomes God corresponds to the energy of the 'sacrifice' (*θῦμα*). According to Soterichos, this claim brought Basileios close to espousing the heresy of Nestorianism, that is, the distinction of two persons in Christ, the one (human) being inferior and the other (divine) superior. It seems that for Soterichos, who was reading Plato in accordance with Proclus, Basileios was worse than Plato, who posited the hierarchy in the intelligible world as a thing stemming from our understanding, as a conception in our thought. Nicholas undertook to defend the deacon Basileios.

In the aftermath of the condemnation of 'Platonists' such as John Italos and Eustratius of Nicaea in the late eleventh and the early twelfth century, political and ecclesiastical opponents could be accused of Platonism all too easily. Nicholas argued that the introduction of two natures that are distinct only in thought (in other words, that we understand as distinct, whereas in reality they are only one), as the two energies were for Basileios, has nothing heretical in itself. Heresy emerges when distinct natures are brought about together with distinct hypostases (say, the distinction of Logos and Christ). Plato was a heresiarch precisely because he thought that the Ideas do not only exist in thought but are distinct self-existent hypostases, that is, *henads* which are divided into superior and inferior depending on the degree of their universality. Nicholas brought Aristotle and the Peripatos forward as witnesses for the correctness of his interpretation of Plato. Aristotelianism was now used as a weapon against Platonism within theological controversies.[80]

Nonetheless, the Psellan motive of Aristotle's vain rivalry with Plato was revived in the fourteenth century in accordance with the general anti-Latin sentiment. It is a pertinent motive throughout Theodore Metochites' *Miscellanies*, in which Aristotle is frequently presented as a self-loving man,[81] who only pretended to be wise (*φιλαυτία* and *δοξοσοφία* are the two qualities which by not being present in

[80] Nicholas of Methone may have thus played a pivotal role for the revival of Aristotelian studies in the twelfth century. It is worth noting that the text of the *Metaphysics* in the *Par. gr*. 1853, which we mentioned earlier, is extensively annotated by a scholiast (E^{Σ}) in accordance with the teaching of an unnamed *διδάσκαλος*; in one scholium (f. 231v) Aristotle is called *φιλοσοφώτατος* ('a philosopher to the greatest extent'; compare this characterisation with the adjective *ἀφιλόσοφος* [see below, n. 82], which Metochites uses for describing Aristotle's attitude towards Plato) over and above Plato: *καὶ ὁ φιλοσοφώτατος Ἀριστοτέλης εἰς τὴν τοῦ Πλάτωνος δόξαν τὴν Ἀναξαγόρου τε καὶ τῶν Πυθαγορείων συναγαγὼν καὶ ταύτην ἀξίως εὐθύνας, καὶ τὰς τῶν ῥηθέντων ἀνδρῶν δόξας ταύτῃ συνανατρέπει*. On E^{Σ} and his annotations see Pantelis Golitsis, 'Trois annotations de manuscrits aristotéliciens au XII^{e} siècle: les Parisini gr. 1901 et 1853 et l'Oxoniensis Corp. Christi 108', in *Storia della scrittura e altre storie*, ed. Daniele Bianconi (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2014), 33–52.

[81] The maxim '*amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas*' (cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I 6, 1096a 12–17) is explicitly declined by Methochites, *Semeioseis gnomikai*, 10 ('That all wise men were disrespectful towards their predecessors, and on Plato and Aristotle'), 4, 1–3 Hult.

Metochites, enable him to raise himself to a higher lever than the ancient philosophers):

> In the same way, or indeed much more, we have reason to wonder at a similar trait in Aristotle, and we certainly have no wish to play down his lack of moderation towards the admirable Plato, his guide to the whole wisdom, and his constant disagreement with and opposition against him, which we ascribe to a reprehensible and unphilosophical attitude.[82]

As Psellos did before them, Metochites, as well as his pupil Nikephoros Gregoras, sought philosophical inspiration in Plato. But it seems to me that they, unlike Psellos, turned to Plato not in the spirit of a genuine philosophical interest but mostly out of a reaction to the Westerners, to whom Plato remained essentially unknown. Both Metochites and Gregoras were epistemological pessimists, who declined even for physics the possibility to yield secure scientific knowledge and sought spiritual refuge and human wisdom in the harmless knowledge of the mathematical sciences. They turned to rhetoric and astronomy, when the time was ripe for philosophy. They were not comitted Platonists.

Commitment to Plato was frequently associated in Byzantium to Hellenic polytheism. Byzantine Aristotelians, by contrast, saw in Aristotle a forerunner of Christian monotheism, indeed the unique monotheist among the polytheist philosophers of the entire Hellas. There are two instances of enthusiastic admiration for Aristotle: the one is a poem by George Pachymeres, with which he crowns his full-blown commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*,[83] and the other is a comment by George Scholarios on *Metaphysics* XII 7, where Aristotle resumes his teaching about the existence of a self-existent, eternal and immobile *ousia*.[84] For the two Palaeologian philosophers, Aristotle incarnates human wisdom, having recognized the one divinity (the *πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκίνητον or the νοῦς or νόησις νοήσεως*, of which he respectively speaks in *Physics* VIII and in *Metaphysics* XII 7 and 9) before the revelation of Christ. The most important lesson that Aristotle can teach to humanity is not his logic and his

[82] Metochites, *Semeiôseis gnomikai*, 25, 2 Hult: *τοῦθ' ὡσαύτως, ἢ μάλισθ' ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ πολλῷ γε πλέον, θαυμάζειν ἔχομεν Ἀριστοτέλους καὶ τὴν ἀμετρίαν αὐτοῦ κατὰ τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ Πλάτωνος, τοῦ πάσης τῆς σοφίας ἡγεμόνος αὐτῷ, καὶ διὰ πάντων ἀντιπολιτείαν πρὸς αὐτὸν Πλάτων καὶ ἀντίπραξιν ξυνορᾶν βουλόμεθα πάντως, καὶ γνώμης οὐ χρηστῆς καὶ ἀφιλοσόφου τιθέμεθα* (translation by Hult). Cf. also *Semeiôseis gnomikai*, 3, 2, 1 Hult: 'For the man wants to censure all his predecessors and strives eagerly after this, trying to show that they have failed to find the truth about reality in practically all matters' (*Βούλεται μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ πάντας αἰτιᾶσθαι τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο σφόδρ' ἐπείγεται, καὶ δεικνύειν πειρᾶται περὶ πάντας σχεδὸν ἀτευκτοῦντας τῆς περὶ τῶν ὄντων τῆς ἀληθείας*); translation by Hult.

[83] On this poem see Pantelis Golitsis, 'A Byzantine philosopher's devoutness to God: George Pachymeres' poetic epilogue to his Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*', in *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*, eds Börje Bydén and Katerina Ierodiakonou, 109–27.

[84] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII 7, 1073a3–11: *Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἐστιν οὐσία τις ἀίδιος καὶ ἀκίνητος καὶ κεχωρισμένη τῶν αἰσθητῶν, φανερὸν ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων· δέδεικται δὲ καὶ ὅτι μέγεθος οὐδὲν ἔχειν ἐνδέχεται ταύτην τὴν οὐσίαν...*

physics, so greatly admired by all people and nations, as Scholarios says, but the conviction that the human intellect can acquire through reason a correct understanding of God and, therefore, live accordingly.

For Pachymeres, Aristotle's philosophy was capable not only of generating knowledge about the human soul and the natural world that surrounds the senses, but also of instilling the right convictions about the knowledge that man can have of God in this world. In his commentary on *Physics* VIII 6,[85] Pachymeres does not hesitate to identify Aristotle's first unmoved mover with the 'blessed and only sovereign', of whom Paul speaks in his *First Epistle to Timothy*.[86] And in the poetic epilogue of the commentary, Pachymeres does not only praise Aristotle for his intellectual findings but also commends the Philosopher as an example of how any rational human being should stand before God.[87] More specifically, Aristotle is praised for 'having found' a providential pole (i.e., God), who is nameless, eternal, powerful, partless and unmoved,[88] and 'having stopped' there. To put it differently, Pachymeres praises Aristotle for having determined God's properties and not having committed himself to a vain pursue of knowledge of God's essence. One can hardly dissociate Pachymeres' poem from a concern against contemporary claims of union with God, which predated the official Hesychast doctrine.[89]

Scholarios, in his turn, presents Aristotle as the only ancient monotheist, a real forerunner of Christianity, who possessed the truth about God before the revelation of Christ:

> In what follows, Aristotle posits even more brilliantly the unity of the divine essence, arguing both from the intellection and from the order of beings with regard to the First as the common good and useful, although here too he does so sparingly out of fear, as we have said, of the many. It is in the end of book *Lambda* that he rejects in a more lucid manner the multiplicity of prin-

[85] Aristotle, *Physics*, 258b13sqq.: *Ὅτι δ' ἀναγκαῖον εἶναί τι τὸ ἀκίνητον μὲν αὐτὸ πάσης ἐκτὸς μεταβολῆς, καὶ ἁπλῶς καὶ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, κινητικὸν δ' ἑτέρου, δῆλον ὧδε σκοποῦσιν...*

[86] 1 Tim 6: 15–16 (quoted above, n. 10). See Golitsis, 'A Byzantine philosopher's devoutness to God' (quoted n. 83), 114.

[87] George Pachymeres, *Poetic epilogue to the commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, lin. 19–21 Golitsis: 'Vain is he who wishes to seek further / since you, who are wise, who know the measures of human wisdom / and have reached what on account of so many fortifications is unconquerable, have stopped (*κενὸς ὅς γε μαστεύσοι / ἠύτε σύ δε σοφὸς σοφίης μέτρα οἶσθα βροτείης / καί οἱ προσκύρσας ὅσ' ἐρύματ' ἀδηρίτῳ, ἔστης*)'.

[88] George Pachymeres, *Poetic epilogue to the commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, lin. 13–15 Golitsis: *εὗρες καὶ πόλον, οὔτι γ' ἔρημον ἐόντα προνοίης / εὗρες νώνυμον ἀίδιον κράτος ἀμερὲς αἰὲν / ὡσαύτως ἔχον, ἠδ' ἀκίνητον ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἄλκαρ*. Pachymeres' reasoning might be compared to Thomas' first of the 'five ways' (*quinque viae*) that prove the existence of God, that is, the argument from motion (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 2, a. 3).

[89] Note that the *The Life* of patriarch Athanasios I, who was Pachymeres' main opponent, was written by a Palamite, namely John Kalothetos. Note also that Nikephoros the Hesychast, whom later Hesychasts recognized as their forefather, was Pachymeres' contemporary. On Nikephoros and early Hesychasm see Antonio Rigo, 'Niceforo l'esicasta (XIII sec.): alcune considerazioni sulla vita e sull'opera', in *Amore del bello. Studi sulla Filocalia*, ed. Olivier Raquez (Magnano, 1991), 81–119.

ciples and gods, and that he posits that there is a unique king of the universe and a unique God.[90] You, Aristotle, have come to be the only real philosopher in Hellas and have been rightly called 'the philosopher par excellence', you who are the last in time among the great philosophers of Hellas, those who started from a faint point and progressed through time in wisdom, the one succeeding the other; but you are the summit above all, so that those who lived shortly before you (sc. Plato) are with regard to you what <all> previous philosophers were with regard to them. And, for the time being, I leave aside the part of your philosophy that has been studied with great care and has been admired in every language of the world and by every nation. For you are the only, the first and the last inventor of philosophy, and the author and teacher of the race of men. But it is your most lucid doctrine about the one God and your repugnance against the irrational polytheism that I now timely make the unique cause of the miracle that surrounds you (for I think that you are the only one among those philosophers, or the first among few, who has done that), since the divine logos along with the soul, which He, in dispensing the salvation of men, has received, was directly known by you. You were the wise above all Hellenes; this is why you received the truth about divine things from there, according to what time could allow, being pure in nature and in study and life, which are necessary to faith. This is what I think; our Lord Jesus Christ knows what has become of you.[91]

By contrast to Metochites' self-loving and unphilosophical Aristotle, the Philosopher is here presented by Scholarios as a model for true thought and pious life.

The polemical texts between Pletho and Scholarios on the value of Aristotle and Plato as philosophers close to Christianity (and, subsequently, as philosophers *tout*

[90] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII 10, 1076a 4: *οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος*

[91] George Scholarios, *Praise of Aristotle*, eds Petit/Jugie/Siderides, vol. 8, p. 506, line 28 – p. 507, line 11: *Ἐφεξῆς δὲ καὶ λαμπρότερον τὴν ἑνότητα τῆς θείας οὐσίας ἔκ τε τῆς νοήσεως ἔκ τε τῆς τῶν ὄντων πρὸς αὐτὸ (sc. τὸ πρῶτον) τάξεως ὡς κοινὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὔχρηστον, εἰ κἀνταῦθα φειδομένως τῷ δέει τῶν πολλῶν, ὡς εἴρηται, τίθησιν. Ἐν δὲ τῷ τέλει τοῦ Λ καὶ φανερώτερον τὴν πολυαρχίαν ἀναιρεῖ καὶ πολυθεΐαν, καὶ ἕνα μόνον βασιλέα τοῦ παντὸς καὶ Θεὸν εἶναι τίθησιν. Ὄντως φιλόσοφος σὺ μόνος ἐν Ἑλλάδι καὶ γέγονας καὶ δικαίως οὕτως ἐκλήθης κατ' ἐξοχήν, Ἀριστότελες, ὕστατος μὲν τῷ χρόνῳ τῶν μεγάλων παρ' Ἕλλάδι φιλοσόφων κατὰ καιρὸν προβαινόντων ἐξ ἀμυδροτάτης πρώτης ἀρχῆς καὶ προκοπτόντων ἐπὶ σοφίας, ἄλλου μετ' ἄλλον εὐθὺς ἐκ διαδοχῆς· κορυφαῖος δὲ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν αὐτός, ὥστ' εἶναι τοὺς μικρῷ πρὸ σοῦ παραβαλλομένους σοι ὅπερ ἦσαν οἱ πρότεροι πρὸς ἐκείνους. Καὶ τὴν μὲν ἄλλην σου φιλοσοφίαν παρίημι νῦν ὑπὸ πάσης γλώττης ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ γένους παντὸς πολλῇ σπουδῇ γνωρισθεῖσαν καὶ θαυμασθεῖσαν· σὺ γὰρ μόνος καὶ πρῶτος καὶ τελευταῖος τῆς φιλοσοφίας εὑρετὴς καὶ συγγραφεὺς καὶ διδάσκαλος τῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὑπῆρξας γένει· ἀλλὰ τὴν περὶ τοῦ ἑνὸς Θεοῦ καθαρωτάτην σου δόξαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ἀλόγου πολυθεΐας ἀποστροφὴν αἰτίαν μόνην ποιοῦμαι νῦν ἐγκαίρως τοῦ περὶ σὲ θαύματος (οἶμαι δέ σε καὶ μόνον τῶν ἄλλων φιλοσόφων ἐκείνων, ἢ πρῶτον ἐν ὀλίγοις, πεποιηκέναι) τῷ θείῳ Λόγῳ μετὰ ψυχῆς, ἣν οἰκονομῶν τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίαν προσείληφεν, ὑπὸ σοῦ εὐθὺς γνωρισθέντι· σοφός τε γὰρ ὑπὲρ πάντας ἦσθα τοὺς Ἕλληνας· διὸ καὶ τὴν περὶ τῶν θείων ἀλήθειαν ἐντεῦθεν ἔσχες, ὡς ὁ καιρὸς ἐδίδου, φύσει τε καὶ σπουδῇ καὶ βίῳ καθάρειος, ἃ πρὸς τὴν πίστιν ἄμφω ζητοῦνται. Οὕτω μὲν ἐγὼ νομίζω· ὁ δὲ δεσπότης ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς οἶδε τί σοι γέγονε.*

court) inaugurated the last controversy in Byzantium. A great deal of this philosophical controversy, which was subsumed in Cardinal Bessarion's *Against the calumniator of Plato*,[92] directed against George Trapezountios, took place in Italy after the *halosis* of 1453, so that, at least geographically and historically, it does not really belong to Byzantine philosophy. By looking at the course of philosophy in Byzantium retrospectively, one may find it meaningful that, in proper Byzantine territory, be it in Constantinople or in Mystra, philosophy ended in controversy and by being ultimately hostile towards both Plato and Aristotle.

[92] Ludwig Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1927 [repr. 1967]), vol. 2.

Simplicius on the principal meaning of *physis* in Aristotle's *Physics* II. 1–3[1]

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At the beginning of his Commentary on Aristotle's Physics II.2, Simplicius attempts to reveal the principal meaning of physis, that which in his view is preeminent above all others presented by Aristotle in Physics II.1. Through the arguments he uses to show what the principal meaning of physis is, we are also able to better understand the other meanings. These other meanings are, on the one hand, those which can be indisputably traced in the Aristotelian text itself, and on the other, those which are discovered in the light of Simplicius' insightful reading of it. Simplicius appears to recognize—or at least to be conscious of the fact—that this part of his Commentary constitutes an autonomous analysis and explanation of the different meanings of physis, which sets out to reveal its concealed principal meaning. My aim in this paper is to show that in his comments on Physics II.1, Simplicius is trying to offer an exegesis of the Aristotelian arguments, while in his comments regarding the beginning of Physics II. 2, he proceeds to a bold reading of what Aristotle has said in chapter one. He does this by giving his own interpretation of the meaning of physis, within the frame which Aristotle had already sketched out in the previous chapter, but also by deviating to some extent from Aristotle. For Simplicius the principal, albeit concealed, meaning of physis, within the Aristotelian philosophical framework, lies in the idea that nature is a sort of propensity for being moved and a sort of life, to wit, the lowest sort of life (eschatē zōē).

I. The differentia specifica *of things that exist* by nature *and the definition of* physis *in the* Physics *II.1*

In the first half of chapter one of *Physics* II, Aristotle explains that all natural things are clearly distinguishable from those that are not constituted by nature.[2] According

[1] An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the 'I Simpósio Ibérico de Filosofia Grega: Aristóteles e o Aristotelismo' [I Imperian Symposium for Greek Philosophy: Aristotle and Aristotelianism], *Centro de Filosofia da Univesidade de Lisboa*, Faculdade de Letras da Univesidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, September 25–26, 2014.

[2] *Physics* 192b 8–13. I follow the translation by Philip Henry Wicksteed and Francis Macdonald Cornford (Aristotle, *Physics, Volume I: Books 1-4*. Loeb Classical Library 228 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957]).

to Simplicius,[3] Aristotle accomplishes his intention to discover just what nature is by systematically revealing the difference between what exists by nature and what does not exist by nature but through other causes; this difference he concludes to be nature. Things that exist by nature differ from those that do not exist by nature in no other way than that 'they have within themselves a source of change and cessation of change'. All the things that do exist by nature clearly have within themselves the source of change and of its cessation—either in respect of place, or of growth and decay, or of alteration.[4]

Simplicius[5] clarifies that by 'source' Aristotle means the efficient cause. He also adds that, just as natural things clearly change from within themselves, in just the same way they have cessation of such change within themselves; for the change and its cessation do not originate from outside, nor are they without limit; rather the change proceeds as far as the limit of the appropriate form and then ceases.[6] It is useful to highlight that while Simplicius in his comment on 192b 12–14 asserts that, when considered as 'source' (*archē*), nature is an efficient cause, in his comment on passage 194b 29–32, he relates nature to the formal rather than to the efficient cause. In his comment on the latter passage he states that Aristotle calls the producer 'the primary principle of change and its cessation' because he wants the productive cause, in the strict sense of the term, to be separate and distinct from its product. Simplicius[7] justifies this exegesis by asserting that the inherent cause, such as the form and the nature, adheres to or is tied to the formal principle. He also reminds us that Alexander, commenting on this passage, agrees that nature is not a productive cause in the strict sense, but is rather a formal cause since it is not foremost among the producers.[8]

It is obvious that in the first half of *Physics* II.1, Aristotle reaches a conclusion regarding the *differentia specifica* of those things which exist by nature and at the same time formulates the definition of nature (*physis*). Simplicius[9] is of the opinion that the conclusion which has been drawn can be put syllogistically according to the first figure as follows. First premise: Nature is that by which things that exist by nature are differentiated from those that do not. Second premise: Things that exist by nature are differentiated from those that do not by having an internal source of change and its cessation in a primary sense, *per se*, not *per accidens*. Conclusion: Therefore, nature is a source of change and its cessation in those things in which it

[3] All references to Simplicius' Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* are to the page and line of the Berlin Academy Edition (*CAG* IX) and follow the translation of Barrie Fleet (*Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 2,* [London: Duckworth, 1997]). See Simpl. 264. 6–8.

[4] *Physics* 192b 13–15; see also Simpl. 264. 4–5; 8–9.

[5] Simpl. 264. 10.

[6] Simpl. 264. 10–18.

[7] Simpl. 315. 9–12. Regarding the passage Simpl. 315. 11–12, the translation is my own and is completely different to that of Fleet.

[8] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys.* 315. 12–15.

[9] Simpl. 266. 5–9.

is present in a primary manner, *per se* and not *per accidens*. Simplicius[10] believes that the same syllogism and the corresponding conclusion can also be framed according to the third figure.

In the second half of *Physics* II.1, Aristotle determines in how many ways nature is spoken of. According to Simplicius,[11] Aristotle himself has made it quite clear that the whole thrust of his argument has been directed at just that, to distinguish the different meanings of 'nature', since thinkers have understood the term differently and have attributed different meanings to it. Simplicius[12] claims that Aristotle has given a clear exposition of the other meanings, while keeping the principal one concealed. At the beginning of his commentary on the second chapter of *Physics* II, the commentator also provides some very useful summaries of five distinct definitions or meanings of nature.[13]

One possibility would be to study these summaries of five distinct meanings of nature only as complementary to Simplicius' detailed analysis and explanation of the distinct meanings of nature, which Aristotle himself distinguishes within the second half of the first chapter of *Physics* II. However, the consequence of this would be to ignore the significance and importance of what Simplicius puts forward and examines thoroughly within the frame of his Commentary on the second chapter of *Physics* II.[14] What he says here is something new and surpasses in value his comments on the first chapter for three reasons: firstly, because he claims that the principal meaning of *physis* has been concealed by Aristotle in *Physics* II.1; secondly, in his Commentary on *Physics* II.2, he attempts to reveal the principal meaning of *physis*,

[10] Simpl. 266. 10–14. In this case the syllogism can be framed as follows: Things that exist by nature differ from those that do not by having a nature. Things that exist by nature differ from those that do not by having within themselves a source of change and its cessation *per se* and not *per accidens*. Therefore, things that have a nature have a source of change, etc. Therefore, nature is a source of change *per se* and not *per accidens*.

[11] Simpl. 282. 30–283. 1.

[12] Simpl. 283. 1–2.

[13] Simpl. 283. 2–285. 12. See Richard Sorabji in Fleet (Introduction to *Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 2,* [London: Duckworth, 1997] Part 1, p. 2.).

[14] Simplicius, in his comment on passage 193a 9–28, announces in advance what he will state at the beginning of his comments on *Physics* II.2 (see Simpl. 273. 10–15). In the latter passage of his comments he notes that Aristotle from 193a 9 onward cites the views of those who say that nature is the substrate and of those who say it is what is in the substrate, and he outlines and criticises the arguments of each of the two groups. At the same time, according to Simplicius, Aristotle tells us the meanings of the word 'nature', which is spoken of in several ways, as he himself has made clear at the end of this passage. Instead of the last sentence of chapter one, Simplicius cites here (273. 14–15) the first sentence of chapter two, where Aristotle says: 'Since it has been determined in how many ways nature is spoken of […]' (193b 22). He then adds that he will comment on it *ad locum*. In my view, this statement is clear evidence that in his comments on *Physics* II.1, Simplicius is trying to offer an exegesis of the Aristotelian arguments, while in his comments regarding the beginning of chapter two, he proceeds to a bold reading of what Aristotle has said in chapter one. He does this by giving his own interpretation of the meaning of *physis*, within the frame which Aristotle had already sketched out in the previous chapter. I will return to this discussion later with more textual evidence, which shows that Simplicius in his comments on *Physics* II.1, is just trying to reconstruct Aristotle's argumentation. Conversely, in his comments on II. 2, he develops his own reasoning regarding the principal meaning of *physis,* to some extent deviating from Aristotle.

that which in his view is preeminent above all others; thirdly, through the arguments he uses to show what the principal meaning of *physis* is, we are also able to better understand the other meanings. These other meanings are, on the one hand, those which can be indisputably traced in the Aristotelian text itself, and on the other, those which are discovered in the light of Simplicius' insightful reading of it.

Simplicius appears to recognize—or at least to be conscious of the fact—that this part of his Commentary constitutes an autonomous analysis and explanation of the different meanings of *physis*, which sets out to reveal its concealed principal meaning. This is what we can infer from his words in the following sentence: 'But since he has given a clear exposition of the other meanings while keeping the principal one concealed, it would be a good idea to review them all briefly […]' (Simpl. 283. 1–3). Let us attempt to analyse and understand his argumentation in these summaries of the different meanings of *physis*, as presented at the beginning of his Commentary on *Physics* II. 2. Simplicius states the following by way of an introduction: '[…]since natural body comprehends matter, form and the compound, and is generated and consequently embraces both the change which results in coming-to-be and above all the cause of change (for where there is change there is in all cases a source of change), nature can be spoken of in five ways'.[15] This introductory passage already describes in a comprehensive way the criteria by which Simplicius proceeds to the recognition and formulation of five distinct meanings of *physis* which are tantamount to five distinct definitions of it.

II. Simplicius' five distinct definitions or meanings of physis in his Commentary on Physics II.2

1. The matter

The first meaning of *physis* (nature) mentioned by the commentator relates to the matter of each thing and is identified with the first meaning of *physis* as presented by Aristotle in passage 193a 9–28. According to Simplicius,[16] when Aristotle says matter (*hylē*) he means that which belongs primarily as something formless (*arrhythmiston*) to every natural entity, just as in the case of the products of art, in the statue it is the bronze, in the ship it is the wood, in every natural body it is the primary matter (describing it from the bottom upwards) or the ultimate substrate (as those starting their analysis from the top call it). B. Fleet[17] notes that there is a certain ambiguity in the way in which matter is designated because the examples given here refer to the

[15] Simpl. 283. 3–6.

[16] Simpl. 283. 6–10.

[17] Fleet (*Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 2,* 170, n. 102) notes that 'the proximate matter of a thing (e.g., the bronze of a statue) is on some occasions termed its primary matter, although this term is more normally applied to the bare matter, devoid of all qualities […]'.

proximate matter, although Simplicius clearly means the primary matter, as the use of the words *prōtōs arrhythmiston* (283.8) and *prōtē hylē* proves. In his comments on passage 193a 9–28 of the *Physics* II.1, Simplicius explains the relation between the several substrates of a natural being, given that in each composite entity there are often several things which go by the description of substrates and which the procedure of analysis can bring to the fore; for example, in the bodies of animals the organic parts act as substrates immediately below the whole form, while the *homoeomerous* parts act as substrates to them, the so-called four elements as substrates to them, and finally primary matter as substrate to the four elements.[18]

This genealogy of the substrates leads Simplicius[19] to draw a distinction between that which is *prōton arrhythmiston* or *arrhythmiston kath'auto* (i.e., formless or unformed *per se*) and that which is *pros ti arrhythmiston* (i.e., formless or unformed in relation to something else). While primary matter—that matter which is common to all things—is unformed *per se*, all the other things, such as the organic parts, the *homoeomerous* parts, and the elements, are lacking in form in relation to something else (i.e., in relation to the form which will be imposed on them), although they do already have their own forms. For example, bronze, the matter of a statue, and wood, the matter of a bed, already have their own forms (*eidopepoiēmena*) and in parallel are only lacking in form in relation to something else (*pros ti arrhythmista*). Still, there is a close relation between the proximate and the primary matter because, as Simplicius explains, the bronze and the wood are analogous to the primary matter, for just as they stand in relation to the statue and the bed, so it stands in relation to all things that have their own forms.[20] Furthermore, in terms of the distinction between that which is *prōton arrhythmiston* or *arrhythmiston kath'auto* and that which is *pros ti arrhythmiston,* Simplicius proceeds to the distinction between the primary and common nature of all things, namely the primary matter (*prōtē hylē*), and the proximate nature of each thing, which is its proximate matter (*prosechēs hylē*).[21]

[18] Simpl. 273. 21–24.

[19] Simpl. 273. 25–29.

[20] Simpl. 273. 30–32. This analogy can also be deduced from the fact that in any case the substratum (*hypokeimenē physis*) is to be known from analogy, as Aristotle states in *Physics* I.7, 191a 7–12. The substratum relates to the individual substance as bronze to the statue, wood to the bed, the shapeless material to the shaped thing; William David Ross (*Aristotle's Physics, A revised text with Introduction and Commentary* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936], 346, 494) illustrates the above proportion as follows: *ἄμορφον:τεχνητόν=ὕλη:οὐσία*. From the analogy bronze:statue=wood:bed= primary matter:things that have their own forms, we can deduce the analogy between the bronze, the wood and the primary matter. The latter analogy is deduced from—or implied in—the analogy referred to by Aristotle in the above passage. This analogy between the substrates also becomes obvious from what is said in *Physics* II.1, 193a 17–21, where the phrase '*εἰ δὲ καὶ τούτων ἕκαστον πρὸς ἕτερόν τι ταὐτὸ τοῦτο πέπονθεν […] ἐκεῖνα τὴν φύσιν εἶναι καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτῶν*' shows that whenever we trace the relation matter: form, what we must consider as the nature and essence of a thing is its matter or its substrate which persists.

[21] Simpl. 273. 32–34. Gerard J. Pendrick (*Antiphon the Sophist, The Fragments*, Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 277–78) casts doubt on the meaning Simplicius ascribes to the word *πρῶτον* in passage 193a 10–11. As we have seen, the latter

At the beginning of his comments on *Physics* II.2, Simplicius points out that matter seems to be *physis* because the nature of each thing must be seen to remain the same throughout all its various changes. In all the various changes of any natural body, that which remains the same would be its nature; and it is the matter which remains the same.[22] According to what is said in his Commentary on *Physics* II.1, in order to show that nature is the substrate and not the form, Antiphon the Sophist adduced the fact that it is nature which either causes things to germinate (*phyousa*) or else is the germination (*ekphysis*), the continuing and constant cause of growth and motion and of generation of like species (*dianastasis eis kinēsin kai tou homoiou apogennēsin*).[23] This description or definition is followed by an example from the field of products of art, where a sharp distinction is drawn between that which is made according to the normal practice of craftsmanship and that which exists according to nature. This is also reduced to a sharp contrast between form and matter, on the assumption that the former is related to art and the latter to nature.

In the case of products of art, 'if you were to bury a bed and if the decay were to have the power to put forth a shoot, then it would be wood that grew, not a bed'.[24]

construes the whole sentence as a reference to the primary matter. It is worth mentioning that in his Commentary on the *Metaphysics* (357. 16–18), Alexander interpreted the words *πρώτου ἐνυπάρχοντος* in the parallel passage 1014 b 17-18 in the same way as Simplicius. Pendrick's main argument is that Simplicius' interpretation does not accord with the immediately following examples of bronze and wood as the nature (respectively) of a statue and a bed, in passage 193a 11–12. He believes that the real meaning of *πρῶτον* appears clearly from passage *Metaph*. 1015a 7–10; he claims that in this passage primary matter does not appear at all, so he concludes that in 193a 10–11, *πρῶτον* should be understood in the sense of 'proximate'. But Alexander (359. 26–29) asserts that in this passage of the *Metaphysics,* the water as bronze's immediate constituent is an example which denotes the primary matter, while bronze denotes the proximate matter. Apart from this objection, it is important to remember that Simplicius explains the Aristotelian examples (i.e., the bronze and the wood) as analogous to the primary matter (see also note 20). It is also worth mentioning that Simplicius, in his comment on passage 193a 28–29 (275. 8–30), clarifies that nature must belong to natural things and that even in the case of natural things it is not just any matter that is the nature, but only the primary substrate; this, he states, they call 'the ultimate substrate', the substrate of everything else, but having no substrate of its own. He adds that in the case of animals the organic and the *homoeomerous* parts, together with the elements, act as substrate, but none of these can properly be called the nature, because none of them are the primary substrate.

[22] Simpl. 283.10–16.

[23] Simpl. 273. 35–274.1.

[24] *Physics*, 193a 12–14; cf. frg. 80B15 DK (Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Griechisch und Deutsch*, Zweiter Band [Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1907]). William Keith Chambers Guthrie (*The Sophists* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971], 203, n.1) points out that the conception of the origin of life from putrefying matter does not show any originality, adding that Antiphon's observations on these topics seem to go back to Heraclitus and Empedocles, and to views common to Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia. Fleet (*Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 2,* 168, note 78) correctly stresses that behind this argument here lies the nature-convention antithesis, formulated by the Sophists of the 5th century B.C. According to Fleet, Antiphon's point is that a bed is wooden by nature, but a bed only by convention, as is evident from its behaviour when buried. I believe the point is that nature consists in what germinates and decays, namely in what is subject to germination and decay or, in a broader sense, to generation and destruction and eventually to life and loss of life or death; this proves to be the wood (i.e., according to the Aristotelian terminology, matter and not the bed as form or as compound). It is remarkable that Harpocration in his *Lexicon* s.v. *ἔμβιος* quotes Antiphon as using in his work *On Truth, I* the phrase '*καὶ ἡ σηπεδὼν τοῦ ξύλου ἔμβιος γένοιτο*'; so, Antiphon's whole phrase is reconstructed by Hermann Sauppe ('De Antiphonte sophista', in *Ausgewählte Schriften,* ed. C. Trieber [Berlin: 1896], 508-526) as the

Simplicius explains Antiphon's thesis and the above example by stating that this happens because the form is according to custom and convention, to wit, according to the normal practice of craftsmanship as opposed to what is according to nature, and because it is there by convention it comes and goes as something belonging *per accidens*, while the matter persists because it is the essence and nature of the thing, for persistence is the particular property of the essence;[25] but the essence of natural

last phrase of frg. 80B15 DK shows (cf. Ross, *Aristotle's Physics,* 503). It is also worth noting the terminology used in Simplicius' testimony and citation of this fragment from Antiphon's *On Truth*; the decay (*sēpedōn*) is supposed to have the power (*dynamin*) to put forth a shoot (*aneinai blaston*) and become a living thing. These words combined with the use of the infinitive *genesthai* show that Aristotle is deeply influenced by this opinion, which as Guthrie notes can be traced in various pre-Socratic philosophers; because also for him, things that are *by nature* or *according to nature*, are things that have within themselves the power (*dynamin*) to be subjected to motion, generation and corruption. But he deviates from the thesis which maintains that form is connected with *nomos,* custom and convention, by establishing form as the goal of each natural procedure (i.e., of each change and motion), a goal that nature in all its productions aims towards. Still, the view that the form is associated with nature is also something which Aristotle inherited from his predecessors. As reported by Diels immediately after Antiphon's frg. 80B1 and by contrast to Antiphon's thesis, in the Hippocratic work *De arte* 2 it is said that names dictate the forms of things and are legislation or conventions imposed on nature, whereas forms do not originate from names and are not conventions but natural growths, or, in other words, genuine products of nature (*blastēmata)*. Guthrie (*The Sophists*, 204, and *A History of Greek Philosophy, Volume V: The Later Plato and the Academy* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978], 27) remarks that as one reads this fragment from *De arte* 2, one is also reminded of Antiphon's contrast between nature as a matter of growth and law as conventional agreement. Elizabeth M. Craik (*The 'Hippocratic' Corpus: Content and Context* [London and New York: Routledge, 2015], 39) notes that the author of the *De arte* is imbued with contemporary medical ideas and influenced by the contemporary sophistic debate, while the scientific thought of the sophists is also implicit in his work. Félix Heinimann (*Nomos und Physis. Herkunft und Bedeutung einer Antithese im griechischen Denken des 5. Jahrhunderts* [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972],157) is of the opinion that the sophist who composed this work used the Ionian-poetic words *nomothetēmata* and *blastēmata* instead of the opposites *nomos- physis,* for the sake of *homoioteleuton* and in order to exalt his poetry to a higher sphere. Harold Cherniss ('Review of Eugene Dupréel, *Les Sophistes: Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippias,* Neuchatel, Éditions du Griffon, 1948-49, pp 408. Bibliothèque Scientifique 14: Philosophie et Histoire', *The American Journal of Philology* 73, no. 2 [1952]: 199–207, at 201–203, especially n.10) has shown in detail the parallels between this specific passage from *De arte* II referred to by Diels and Antiphon's frg. 15 as reported by Simplicius; he highlights in particular the striking affinities between Antiphon's language in frg. 15 and the *De arte* II antithesis between *nomothetēma* and *blastēmata* (cf. Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist,* 251, 284). Pendrick remarks that Diels and Kranz are not justified for printing the *De arte* II alongside the frg. 80B1, because it does not appear to have anything to do with it, although he recognizes its close parallel with Antiphon's frg. 15. In my opinion these connections show that Aristotle was also influenced by the very sophistic thought which he seems to refute and criticize. But he proceeded to the formation of his theory by introducing selections, transformations and modifications, which make the thread which binds his thought with its origins invisible or at least not easily discernible.

[25] Simpl. 274.1–8. According to Fritz Steckerl's ('On the Problem: Artefact and Idea', in *Classical Philology* 37, no. 3 [1942]: 288-298, 296) interpretation of Antiphon's fragment within Aristotle's *Physics* 193a9-17, 'that can only mean that the artefacts made by man are *nomos*, not *physis*; only the material is *physis*, and this *physis* will always break through whatever one might do to the material. The form which the artefacts may give to the material is weak; the material-the truly permanent basis of the artefacts-will again and again rid itself of the form. If you bury a bed in the ground, new wood may grow from it, but never a new bed . Arnaud Macé ('La naissance de la nature en Grèce ancienne', in *Anciens et Modernes par-delà nature et* société, eds Stéphane Haber and Arnaud Macé, Collection Annales Litteraires, Série Agon [Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche Comté, 2012], 47-84, 59) points out that within Antiphon's fragment in Aristotle's *Physics* we can find the original philosophical motif that the thrust, the budding, and the flowering become in the realm of the natural things the factors which determine the identity and the permanence, and simultaneously the capacity of each natural thing to extend itself and attach to what it grows.

things is according to nature (the being and essence of things that exist by nature are according to nature[26]). It is a widely held view that the distinction and contrast between the wood—considered as the bed's nature—and the bed—which is considered as a conventional arrangement—illustrates the opposition between *physis* and *nomos*, which is prominent in sophistic thought.[27] It is obvious that Simplicius' analysis of Antiphon's thesis, which follows along the lines of the Aristotelian text, tries to adjust the opposition between matter and form, as rival candidates for the meaning and title of *physis*, to the sophistic antithesis between *physis* and *nomos* (nature-convention), by adopting the terminology which accompanies the latter.[28] But in order to form the analogy *physis*: *nomos*=matter: form, following Aristotle, he uses as a medium the relation *physis*: *technē* (nature: art). The following is a brief analysis of this transition.

It is worth noting here that a difficulty arises from the fact that Aristotle in 193a 11–12 mentions the bed and the statue as instances of natural things (*φύσει ὄντα*).[29] Guthrie, in my opinion correctly, stresses that these are quoted by Aristotle as Antiphon's examples and not his own. According to his suggestion, the examples were used by Antiphon, and Aristotle retains them because he is about to show

In other words, according to my reading of this motif, these factors indicate not only the permanence but also the attachment of what grows to the future end and product of its growth, which means that they also bring to the fore a self-identity and a self-union. Sean Kelsey ('Aristotle on Interpreting Nature', in *Aristotle's Physics*, *A Critical Guide,* ed. Mariska Leunissen [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015], 31–45, at 34) ascribes this view to Antiphon himself: 'Antiphon, in asking after a thing's *nature*, is focused on its *substance*, which he conceives of not as the source of a thing's movement and rest—of its behaviour while it exists—but as what survives its demise. Indeed, this approach betrays an attitude in which the nature of things is positively concealed by their behaviour, being manifested instead in their destruction'.

[26] Simpl. 274. 8–9; cf. 273,17.

[27] See Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist*, 283. Sarah Waterlow (*Nature, Change and Agency in Aristotle's Physics, A Philosophical Study* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982], 55) maintains that Aristotle has himself made the point that it is not the bed as such that has a nature, but the wood. She believes that Antiphon's point as Aristotle presents it is rather different; it is that the wood is endowed with nature because the wood is *matter* as opposed to the form, ʻthe immediate unstructured constituent . In my opinion, from Aristotle's citation of Antiphon's words (these are included in the phrase '*σημεῖον δέ φησιν Ἀντιφῶν ὅτι […] ἀλλὰ ξύλον*' [193a 12–14]), it is obvious that Aristotle has not himself made the point that it is not the bed as such that has a nature, but the wood. Also, from Simplicius' analysis of the whole passage it is clear that the reference to ʻthe immediate unstructured constituent is an interpolation of Aristotelian origin, incorporated into the presentation of the materialists' position.

[28] See Simpl. 274. 4–6: *kata tropon*, *kata nomon*, *kata to tais technais nenomismenon* which is opposed to *kata physin*, *kata synthēkēn on* which is associated with the *kata symbebēkos yparchon*.

[29] Cf. Ross (*Aristotle's Physics,* 502–3). Ross suggests that the bed and the statue are introduced as examples of natural things because *qua* wood or bronze they *do* exist by nature. Pendrick (*Antiphon the Sophist*, 278) points out that it is at least surprising to see the bed as an example in a discussion of naturally existing entities, since it is used immediately prior to the passage under discussion as an example of a non-natural object; see *Physics* 192b 16. Wicksteed and Cornford (Aristotle, *Physics,* 111) translate 193a 11–12 in a way which shows that they interpret the phrase introduced by *οἷον* as drawing an analogy rather than offering direct examples of the case (cf. Hans Wagner, *Aristoteles, Physikvorlesung, Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, Band 11 [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972], 450). I agree with Pendrick (*Antiphon the Sophist,* 279) that this solution is not plausible because it would destroy the meaning of the report of Antiphon's views. The testimony of Antiphon's words does not present the meaning of the alleged analogy, but explains literally the first of the two Aristotelian examples, put forward in 193 a 11–12.

up the sophist's argument, and the best way to do it is to keep his own words and refute him out of his own mouth.[30] However, I believe that only the reference to the bed, the decay, and the wood was Antiphon's original example,[31] because only this example is connected with Antiphon's thesis by name ('*σημεῖον δε φησιν Ἀντιφῶν ὅτι […]*' [193a12]). This example also enables a better understanding of the power of growth which is inherent in the wood, which is considered as the matter or nature of the bed. As Pendrick correctly points out, the reasoning underlying the buried-bed argument identifies *physis* with what grows naturally or spontaneously (i.e., the wood) in contrast to the arrangement which is imposed by human convention (*kata nomon*) and is accidental rather than spontaneous and organic.[32] Aristotle, in passage 193a 15–16, explains this argument by using a conjunction; he associates human convention with art (*tēn kata nomon diathesin kai tēn technēn*) and both of these notions with what is accidental (*kata symbebēkos*). From this reasoning follows that both human convention and art are opposed to *ousia*, which is what persists continuously while undergoing these affections. Pendrick[33] also notes that it is not hard to see how Aristotle, from the standpoint of his own concerns, concepts, and terminology, could have reinterpreted Antiphon's opposition of nature and conventional arrangement as a distinction between form and matter. He adds that in this way, Aristotle imports into Antiphon's argument not only the identification of *physis* (nature) with *hylē* (matter) he attributes to the pre-Socratics generally,[34] but also one of the central doctrines of his own philosophy.

I agree with Pendrick that Antiphon's argument is definitely connected with the intention to demonstrate the superiority of *physis*, with its dynamic and spontaneous character, to human convention and art.[35] In my view, in order to achieve the demonstration of this superiority, Aristotle begins from the antithesis between

[30] William Keith Chambers Guthrie, 'Notes on some Passages in the Second Book of Aristotle's Physics', *The Classical Quarterly* 40, no. 3–4 (1946): 70–76, at 70–71.

[31] Pendrick (*Antiphon the Sophist,* 280) believes that the bed is unquestionably Antiphon's example, although the statue is another matter.

[32] See Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist,* 284; cf. note 24 above. For the contradistinction between nature, considered as a source of spontaneous causality, and a different sort of causality which derives from intelligence, cf. Plato, *Sophist* 265c7-9. Arnaud Macé (*L' invention de la Nature en Grèce ancienne,* Mémoire inédit, Habilitation à diriger les recherches, [Paris: Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2013], 311-12) notes that the idea of this passage of the *Sophist* fits perfectly with the idea expressed in another Platonic passage, that is *Laws* 892c 1-3, where it is said that nature is the principle of the primary generation or, in other words, the generation of the primary things. He stresses that in those passages nature presents itself under the guise of a Mother-Nature which has a mechanistic character and is unconscious of itself.

[33] See Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist,* 284.

[34] Pendrick (*Antiphon the Sophist,* 282–3) points out that Aristotle's general claim that the pre-Socratics (Antiphon included) identified nature with matter should be treated with caution. He adds that the net result of Aristotle's interpretation is to read into Antiphon's argument a clearer distinction between form and matter, substrate and attribute than is plausible to ascribe to any pre-Socratic. Harold Cherniss (*Aristotle's Criticism of Pre-Socratic Philosophy* [Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1935], 242–5, 359–61) also noted that Aristotle contends that the pre-Socratics for the most part recognized only the material cause, so in his discussion of the meaning of *physis* he naturally argues that by that term they meant matter alone.

[35] See Pendrick (*Antiphon the Sophist,* 284).

nature and convention (*physis kai nomos*) and uses as a transitional and analogous antithesis that between nature and art (*physis kai technē*), with which he is more acquainted and used in the first part of *Physics* II.1.[36] But in order to show the superiority of *physis* to *technē*, he focuses on the connection between *physis and essence* on the one hand, and on the other, between *technē* and what is accidental (*kata symbebēkos*). While Antiphon's treatment shows growth as an indication of the superiority of *physis,* Aristotle chooses to show that the superiority of *physis* lies in its characteristic to persist. Since the material substrate in *his* frame of thought is that which persists through change, and since he is convinced that Antiphon and the pre-Socratics identified *physis* with what *he* calls *hylē* (matter), he further combines *hypokeimenon* (substrate) or *hylē* with *physis* and *ousia* (essence), based on the criterion of persistence. Simplicius' analysis shows that this is the route followed by the Aristotelian thought processes.

Simplicius formulates the reasoning which is deduced from the relations described above: in the case of natural things, it is the matter and the substrate which persist and generate; such is the essence of natural things; nature is the essence of natural things; therefore, matter is the nature in the case of natural things, so that nature is matter; their definitions correspond.[37] Thus, since the form changes while the substrate persists, according to the criterion of persistence which determines the essence or nature of each thing, matter has priority over form in the question being debated, which of the two constituents of natural being is nature.

Nevertheless, the criterion of persistence is not an Aristotelian invention or innovation. Aristotle, in his *Physics* and in *De Generatione et Corruptione,* ascribes to all who wrote 'on nature', all the *physikoi*, as a common assumption (*koinē doxa*) the principle of '*ex nihilo nihil fit*'. He believes that this assumption is as old as the first philosophers themselves, and states that for them the greatest fear was the threat that the absolute non-being or *nil* is a real antecedent of genesis.[38] Although Aristotle has been accused of anachronism,[39] a belief in the law of the conservation of matter

[36] Arist. *Physics*, 192b 16–32. Steckerl ('On the Problem: Artefact and Idea', 296) compares the Aristotelian thesis about the opposition between *physis* and *technē* with Plato's fervent pleading of the case for the idea of the couch as the couch's true nature, in the *Republic* 597b-e. He believes that we can clearly see that the conceptions of *physis* are completely different in the systems of Plato and Aristotle. He justifies this inference as follows: ' For, if the idea of the bed expressly has a *physis* of its own and is part of *physis*, the bed cannot be completely exempt from all *physis*. So, in contrast to Antiphon, the artefacts for Plato are not forms imposed upon nature by man but belong to *physis*, since they partake of the true physis of the ideas . It is also true, as Steckerl notes, that *σκευαστὸν* and *φυτευτόν γένος* stand side by side in the *Republic* 510a.

[37] Simpl. 274. 9–12.

[38] See Arist. *Physics* I. 4, 187a 27–29 and 34–35; *De Generatione et Corruptione* I. 3, 317b 29–31.

[39] Alexander P.D. Mourelatos ('Pre-Socratic Origins of the Principle that There are No Origins from Nothing', *The Journal of Philosophy* 78, no. 11 [1981]: 649–65, at 649–50) remarks that the suspicion of anachronism is reinforced when we consider that when Aristotle discusses in his *Physics* the *aporia* of the ancient philosophers about the principles and the nature of beings, he projects to all his predecessors a rationale for '*ex nihilo nihil fit*', which seems to be grounded on his own doctrine. Aristotle states in *Physics* I. 8, 191a 30–31: 'from what-is-not nothing could have come to be, because something must be present as a substratum'.

and energy is considered a fundamental tenet which underlies early Greek cosmology.[40] After all, the Eleatic challenge as illustrated in *Physics* I. 8, may be viewed as a kind of motivation for Aristotle's introduction of the triadic Ontology matter-privation-form, combined with the doctrine of potentiality and actuality.[41] In addition, the idea that in every change there is something which somehow remains identical with itself,[42] may be also ascribed to previous philosophers of nature (*physikoi*).[43]

2. The form

Simplicius[44] notes that Antiphon even tried to prove the persistence of the matter also from the sprouting of like material, although the sprouting demonstrates that form comes from form rather than matter from matter. He justifies this opinion by referring to what was stated in Physics 193b 8–12. Man is propagated by man, he says, and wood by wood; the wood too is the form, even if it has the description of matter in relation to the bed. Thus, Simplicius implies that Antiphon's attempt to enforce the argument of persistence by connecting it with the sprouting of like materials, leads to an undermining of the argument because from the Aristotelian point of view, the criterion of the generation of like species gives priority to form over matter. Simplicius[45] cites as a second meaning of nature the form which is to do with the matter (*to peri tēn hylēn eidos*).

This meaning is identified with the second meaning of nature as presented by Aristotle in passage 193a 30–b5 of *Physics* II.1. In his comments on this same chapter, Simplicius[46] explains that nature both shares common ground with art and differs from it; nature shares common ground with art in producing the form, but differs from it in so far as nature produces the form in terms of the materials of the art (*to kata tēn hylēn eidos*), wood in the case of a bed and bronze in the case of a statue. According to my reading, this means that nature produces 'the form of the materials' (*to eidos tēs hylēs*) of the art, while art produces just the shape or the artificial form.[47]

[40] See J.D. Logan, 'The Aristotelian Concept of ΦΥΣΙΣ', *The Philosophical Review* 6, no. 1 (1897): 18–42, at 20–21. This law secures 'the relative permanence and stability of the various forms of existence that go to make up the world'; see John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: A&C. Black, 1930), 9.

[41] Daniel W. Graham ('Aristotle's Discovery of Matter', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 (1984): 37–51, at 44) describes the Aristotelian reply to the Eleatic challenge in *Physics* I.8 as a diagnosis of a fallacy which is implicit in it, because 'what is, comes to be from what is not' is paradoxical only if 'what is not' is taken as 'nothing', while 'what is not' means 'what is not F'.

[42] This leads Aristotle to the assumption that if there is change at all there must be inner principles of change; see Waterlow (*Nature, Change and Agency in Aristotle's Physics,* 27).

[43] Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy,* 10; Karl Popper, *The World of Parmenides, Essays on the Presocratic Enlightenment* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 15–16.

[44] Simpl. 283. 16–20.

[45] Simpl. 283. 21.

[46] Simpl. 275. 34–276. 7.

[47] The argument seems to be that if nature produces the form of the materials of the art (i.e., the form of the wood), nature is the form of the wood, and then the nature of wood will also be the nature of things made of wood. Apart from Simplicius, I have been helped to articulate this argument by some ideas of D.

He further provides us with the very useful information that some people, wanting to make the matter the nature, attempted to prove it on the basis of the difference between nature and art, by saying that the bed, when buried, reveals its nature in the wood and not in the shape of the bed; because what germinates spontaneously or by nature is the wood, whereas the shape is something given by the craftsman. Conversely, others, wanting to make the form the nature, pressed the affirmation of their own claim, on the basis of the common ground between nature and art in the producing of the form.[48] It is important to note that, in order to decide if nature is the matter or the form, there is a constant need to examine the behaviour of the products of art. Therefore, the commentator explains the two opposite theses (i.e., that nature is the matter or that nature is the form) in terms, on the one hand, of the communion and, on the other, of the difference between nature and art.

In order to present the view that nature is form, Aristotle draws an analogy between art and nature in *Physics* II.1, 193a 31–b5. Just as in the case of the products of art, that which is produced by art (*kata technēn*) and is artificial is said to be art, so, in the case of things which exist by and because of nature, that which is

Bostock (*Aristotle*, Robin Waterfield (trans.), and David Bostock (ed. with an introduction and notes), *Physics* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 239), formulated in his comment on passage 193a 17. While for those who believe that the nature is the matter, the nature of the bed is the wood as matter (and in this case by analysis the proximate matter can be reduced to the ultimate matter), for those who believe that the nature is the form, the nature of the bed resides in the form of its matter (i.e., in the form of the wood) because the wood is already formed and not indeterminate matter. Consequently, it is supposed that what makes the substratum of the wood 'wood' is the form of the wood, which becomes the nature of the wood; otherwise the wood could be any kind of matter. So, the wooden bed is such and such, because of the form of its matter, which is a natural form (i.e., a form produced by nature); see also *Physics* 193b 9–11; Simpl. 278. 19–20.

[48] Helen Lang (*Aristotle's Physics and its Medieval Varieties* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992], 29–30) also presents a materialist point of view in which art and nature have a common ground. From this point of view, since matter of all things could be reduced to the four elements, there is no real difference between natural form and artistic form, 'because both are like accidents added to, and ultimately separable from, matter'. According to this line of reasoning, natural form is also considered as something imposed on matter from without, like the artistic form. On the other hand, Jonathan Lear (*Aristotle: the desire to understand* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 16–17) in his excellent analysis stresses what Aristotle would think as the correct use of the craft-nature analogy; if we are to make correct use of it, we must get away from thinking of the form of a bed as superficially imposed on wood. We must think of the bed as having its own integrity and understand that the answer to the question, what is it to be a bed, cannot be: to be wood. Lear shows that which Antiphon and Aristotle agreed upon: that a bed does not reproduce other beds shows that the bed does not have a nature; for the form of a bed is not a principle internal to the bed. Lear also shows that they disagree only to the extent that Antiphon thinks that this reveals something important about the nature of natural objects, whereas Aristotle thinks it reveals an important difference between natural objects and artefacts. As Lear notes, the form according to Aristotle's view, cannot be defined in terms of properties superimposed on a matter which exists before and (maybe) after the natural object exists. According to Lear's reading of this view, if the nature of a natural object is an internal principle, it would seem that form would have to be a part of a natural object from the beginning, i.e., it would have to be an internal principle. In my opinion, this reading is implied in the second Aristotelian argument in support of the thesis that nature is the form (*Phys*. 193b 8–12); see section III. This argument focuses on the production of the like species which is conveyed by the efficient cause. From this point of view, the form of each generated natural thing is an internal principle, since it is a part of a natural thing from the beginning.

according to nature (*kata physin*) and is natural is said to be nature.[49] Simplicius, in his comment on this passage, notes that, just as art stands in relation to the products of art, so nature stands in relation to what exists according to nature and vice-versa, for art is to be found in what exists by art, and nature in what exists by nature.[50] It is important to note that Simplicius uses the word *analogon* here and refers to the way that the children of geometricians construe this word.[51] As W.D. Ross correctly notes, the whole argument is in essence an argument by analogy from art to nature.[52] The common ground (*eidopoios koinōnia*) of which Simplicius has spoken[53] is based only on the analogy drawn, because the form which nature produces is not the same as that produced by art.[54] But this part of the argument is necessary for the construction of its second part.

The second part of the Aristotelian argument is articulated on the basis of the ontological antithesis between potentiality and actuality. Simplicius, commenting on *Physics* II.1, says that, in the case of what exists by art, that which has not yet received the form but still only exists in potentiality cannot yet be said to exist according to art; therefore, art does not reside in it; for art resides in the form. In an analogous way, in the case of things which come into being by nature, that which exists only in potentiality is still neither according to nature nor has a nature.[55] In his comments on *Physics* II.2, he adds that just as the statue is not called a statue according to the terminology of art until it has received the form according to the art, just so the matter is not called by the name of any natural entity until it has received the form. Simplicius repeats the Aristotelian theory that the matter is only potentially the thing of which it is the matter, as for example the seed is only the animal in potentiality, and each thing receives its specific designation only according to what it is in actuality. And that is the form.[56] The reception and the presence of the form (*eidos*) becomes the ontological criterion in each case for a thing's placement in the realms

[49] Trans. Fleet (1997).

[50] Simpl. 276. 12–15.

[51] Fleet (*Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 2*, 168, note 83) refers to Plato, *Gorgias* 465b–c, where geometers are portrayed as presenting analogies in a similar way as in this case: as A is to B, so is C to D. I think even more representative of this interpretation of analogy (i.e., equivalence of relations) is the whole passage of the simile of the line in Plato's *Republic*, particularly in 510a 9–10, 511e 2–4, and also 534a 3–8. It seems that Plato in drawing the line and its division, applies the method of the geometricians. Also, Aristotle in *Metaph*. 1016b 31–35 explains that the things that are *one by analogy* (*kat' analogian*) are those which are related as a third thing is to a fourth (trans. Ross: Internet Classics Archive).

[52] Ross, *Aristotle's Physics*, 503.

[53] See again Simpl. 276.1; 276.6.

[54] The argument is that, since the relation between art and artificial is analogous to that between nature and natural, given that art is the form (i.e., art resides in the form), nature is also the form. The conclusion of this reasoning is that art and nature are both identified with form. However, the crucial difference between the natural and the artificial form is that the natural form is not separable from the matter within the realm of natural reality; it is separable only conceptually by abstraction, when it is illustrated within the definition, but which excludes the matter; cf. Lang (*Aristotle's Physics and its Medieval Varieties*, 30); see also Simpl. 277. 2–9.

[55] Simpl. 276. 15–19.

[56] Simpl. 283. 22–26.

of art or the realms of nature.[57] As in the case of an artificial thing, the character of art inherent in it is not identified with its bare matter but with the form imposed on this, so nature in a natural thing is to be identified not with its matter but with its form.[58]

Furthermore, we can note here that the name which designates that which exists according to art, and in an analogous way that which exists according to nature, is associated only with the actuality (i.e., the form [*eidos*]). This means that the accomplishment of a reality (i.e. of the form considered as actuality) is verified by the verbal designation. Thus, logos becomes the proximate to us logical and linguistic criterion which diagnoses and guarantees the reception of the form. On the other hand, the reception of the form is the ontological and teleological criterion for the accomplishment of reality.[59] Simplicius, paying due attention to the significance of the relation between form and *logos*, explains the thesis that nature is the form also in terms of the twofoldness of the form. The form has a twofold character, one

[57] Simplicius (276. 22–24) states that one could reason thus: 'Nature is the very thing whose presence causes what exists by nature to exist by nature; what exists by nature does so by the presence of the form'.

[58] Cf. Ross (*Aristotle's Physics*, 503). Yet, with regard to the analogy drawn here, apart from the problem that the natural form is not the same as the artistic form, there emerges another relevant problem. In each concrete product or work of art the evaluation of its artistic character is based on the criterion of the reception of the appropriate form. But this presupposes that it has been produced or created in accordance with the rules of art. Whereas the artistic form is imposed from without, the natural form is not, so the reception of the artistic form depends also on the capacities of the artisan; and there is a clear-cut distinction between the way the artisan acts and nature produces, since the former first conceives in his mind of the form and then acts, whereas nature does not; see Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys.* 310. 25–36. We will examine this aspect of the problem later. However, Charlotte Witt ('In defense of the craft analogy: Artifacts and natural teleology', in *Aristotle's Physics, A Critical Guide,* ed. Mariska Leunissen, [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015], 107–20, at 118–19), in examining Aristotle's use of the craft analogy in his explanation of natural teleology in *Physics* II. 8, makes an inference which would be useful also in the context of *Physics* II. 1. She notes that Aristotle distinguishes between the individual psychological process of the artisan, who deliberates, and is the external origin of the product, and the craft itself, which is (as it were) a stationary body of knowledge; craft is the knowledge of what is to be made and how to make it. Ross (*Aristotle's Physics,* 503–4) believes that the argument in 193a 31–b3 is also complicated by a reference to a concrete sense of *technē,* in which it means a work of art, and to a corresponding concrete use of *physis*, in which it means a natural object of a certain kind. William Charlton (*Aristotle's Physics, Books I and II, Translated with Introduction and Notes* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970], 90) stresses the common point between art and nature; art, like nature, is always the art of something definite, the art of making a table or restoring men to health or the like, and is, in fact, the form which the artist has in mind, or intends, for the material. Charlton, by referring to the passage *Metaph*. 1032b 5–14, points out that while the artist has it in mind only, it is only a possible form; it is realized in the material only when the work is finished, and it is only then that it actually exists.

[59] It is not the first time in the *Physics* that Aristotle traces in the way we speak of the things, the real ontological relations, the principles and the principal meaning of the things. The analysis of the use of our language brings to the fore the ontological structure of the natural world we investigate. Perhaps the most representative application of this method can be found in *Physics* A7, 189b 32–190a 31, where Aristotle shows that the ontological difference between accidental and substantial change, and also between matter and privation, is illustrated in our speech; see Philoponus *In Physics*, 144. 20 ff; Wolfgang Wieland (*Die aristotelische Physik. Untersuchungen über die Grundlegung der Naturwissenschaft und die sprachlichen Bedingungen der Prinzipienforschung bei Aristoteles* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962], 112, n.1); Wagner (*Aristoteles, Physikvorlesung,* 425).

according to the shape, the other according to the account.[60] The character that is according to the account represents the unique formulation (*monoeidē typon*) of the explicit definition (*aneiligmenou orismou*), which corresponds to the definition—as also does the name—and this is what embraces even the shape. Simplicius stresses that this form —the one according to the account or to such-and-such a shape—is the nature;[61] for if the nature of each thing lies in its being, and the being of each thing lies in the form according to the account and the definition (which is why the definitions correspond to what they define), then the nature would be the form.[62]

3. The compound

The third meaning of nature as presented by Simplicius is the compound of matter and form. Aristotle refers to this meaning only to deny it, adding a very

[60] Simpl. 276. 24–25.

[61] Simpl. 276. 27–30. The introduction of the definition as a central point in our attempt to decide what is nature, formulates an effective argument against Antiphon's thesis in the realm of artefacts, because as Lang (*Aristotle's Physics and its Medieval Varieties*, 30) points out, when we define an object such as a bed as an artefact, the material out of which it is made is no longer central to the definition. She remarks that in an artefact what is by nature is its matter in relation to its form, but what makes it definable as an artistic thing is the form imposed upon it by the artist; so, an artefact is properly identified both with what it is by nature (i.e., its matter in relation to natural form) and with its artistic form. But finally, within this line of reasoning the primacy of form is true for all things, whether by nature or by art, since all things bear their names and have definitions in virtue of their form.

[62] Simpl. 276. 35–277. 2. Friedrich Solmsen (*Aristotle's System of the Physical World, A Comparison with His Predecessors* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960]: 95–96) believes that it is patent that this *physis* does not have its place in the theory of movement; he notes that instead here we find ourselves in the shadow of the doctrine of Forms. Nevertheless, he states that Aristotle provides for connections between this concept of *physis* and its definition as source of movement. Solmsen proceeds to a really insightful reading of *Physics* II.1; he notes that 'the "source" or "principle of movement" is incorporated also in these definitions of "nature"' as formulated in the second part of the chapter, and he stresses that this conception of nature 'helps again substantially to set physical things apart from, e.g., the products of craft'. He also notes that 'the reasoning proceeds smoothly enough, showing neither break nor fissure'. According to his explanation, one concept of nature is superimposed upon another, and only historical analysis reveals that the two concepts are quite different in origin and that Aristotle's procedure is eminently synthetic. Lang (*Aristotle's Physics and its Medieval Varieties,* 30) also notes the combination of the definition of nature as form with its definition as source of movement, when Aristotle says that nature is the shape and the form of things having in themselves a source of motion (193b 3–4). But she herself also makes an interesting combination, since she identifies the thing's source of being moved with matter, because matter is aimed at form. If we read the argument in this way it seems that Aristotle recognizes both matter and form as nature. Kelsey ('Aristotle on Interpreting Nature', 31–45, at 32–33, 36) maintains that the very idea of a principle of 'motion and rest'—that is, of a thing's characteristic *behaviour*— is more or less idle in the latter half of *Physics* II. 1 and that Aristotle's focus in identifying the natures of things is not on their behaviour, not on what they 'do', but on what they most fundamentally 'are'. According to this view, in identifying the nature of things, Aristotle makes no appeal to the sources of their behaviour, and this is contrary to the expectation created by his definition of nature. On the other hand, in his comment on *Phys*. 192b 8, Philoponus notes with regard to the definition of nature that we did not learn what nature is through learning that it is the source of movement and rest, but what it does; see Philop. *In Phys.* 197. 30–33; see also note 163. So, we can assume that the second half of *Physics* II. 1 is an expected continuation of the first half. We will see (in section V) that Simplicius asserts that the definition will suit all the meanings of nature if taken of each in the appropriate way; he further explains how the definition can be applied to each of these meanings; see Simpl. 284. 28–285.12.

short statement within parenthesis in passage 193b 5–6, which says that that which is compounded of matter and form 'is not itself *a nature* (*physis*) (for the matter is a nature, as is the form) but exists *by nature* (*physei*)'. For example, the man compounded of matter and form is not *a nature*, but exists *by nature*.[63] Simplicius, in his comments on *Physics* II.1, explains that, when what is something in potentiality becomes it in actuality according to nature (*kata physin*), it has a nature (*physin echei*) and exists *by nature* (*physei*). No one would say that this is itself any longer a nature. That thing which has the form which was the nature (*hoper ēn hē physis*) is said to exist according to nature (*kata physin*) and by nature (*physei*)[64]. In his comments on *Physics* II. 2, he asserts that just as the word 'substance' is used in three ways—matter, form, and compound—so 'nature' could be spoken of in three ways. He then gives an explanation for what Aristotle says of the compound: 'it is not a nature, but exists by nature'; if each of the two components is itself a nature, and if the compound which exists because of them is something else other than these two, then it would not strictly be a nature, but only exist by nature.[65]

Simplicius, in his comments on *Physics* II. 1 as well as II. 2, testifies that Porphyry understood Aristotle's words, 'This *rather than* matter is nature' (193b 6–7), as referring to the compound. He then justifies Porphyry's opinion by stating that, even if the compound is not a nature in the proper or the strict sense (for not even any of the simple bodies is a nature in the strict sense), nevertheless it is a nature to a greater degree than matter is, since it possesses within itself the form, which is nature to a greater degree than matter is.[66] Moreover, in referring to the Aristotelian example of the man, Simplicius believes that according to Antiphon's distinction, since a man is propagated by a man as compound by compound, the compound too would be a nature.[67] Simplicius obviously implies Antiphon's thesis, referred to by Aristotle in passage 193a 12–17. Thus, if according to the commentator's interpretation of this thesis, nature is that which either causes things to germinate or else is the germination, the continuing growth, and the generation of like species, then nature could also be the compound, since a man is propagated by a man as compound by compound, and not just as form by form.

4. The growth

According to the fourth meaning Simplicius mentions, nature is said to be, as it were (*oion*), the growth (*ekphysis*), coming-to-be (*genesis*) and motion (*kinēsis*) by which the growing thing is made to grow by that which produces its growth.[68]

[63] Simpl. 277. 12–14.
[64] Simpl. 277. 14–18.
[65] Simpl. 283. 28–34.
[66] Simpl. 277. 24–27; 283. 34–37.
[67] Simpl. 284. 1–2.
[68] Simpl. 284. 5–6.

Simplicius again draws an analogy between the artefacts and the things which exist by nature; just as in the case of art, the act of producing the artefact is a change stemming from the agent and directed towards the artefact (for example, in the case of a cloak, it is the weaver who weaves, the cloak which is woven and, as a third thing, the act of weaving, which is a motion stemming from the agent and directed towards the thing that comes-to-be—i.e., the artefact), just so in the case of a natural entity there is what is growing (*to phyomenon*), what makes it grow (*to phyon*) and, between the two, such a nature as is the movement (*kinēsis*) stemming from the active nature (*tēs poiousēs physeōs*), as the process of healing stems from the art of medicine.[69] This meaning of nature is given by Aristotle only within the frame of his argumentation in support of the thesis that nature is the form. In fact, he only invokes this meaning in order to enforce his argument that nature is the form. Aristotle states in passage 193b 12–13: 'again, nature which is spoken of as genesis is the route (*hodos*) to nature'.[70] Wicksteed and Cornford translate broadly as they read: 'Again, *na-ture* is etymologically equivalent to *gene-sis* and (in Greek) is actually used as a synonym for it; nature, then, *qua* genesis proclaims itself as the path to nature *qua* goal'.[71] Simplicius seems to combine in this meaning the crucial point of Antiphon's thesis—i.e., nature as *ekphysis* (germination or sprouting or outgrowth or more generally growth)—with the meaning offered by Aristotle in the aforemen-

[69] Simpl. 284. 6–11.

[70] The translation is my own.

[71] Trans. Wicksteed and Cornford (Aristotle, *Physics,* 115); in a reference of theirs (Wicksteed and Cornford, Aristotle, *Physics,* 114, note c), they state: 'So, too, in Latin *na-tura* derived from the *na* of *na-scor* and *na-tivitas*'; they add that in fact (*g*)*natura* is derived from the same root as *gi-gno*, *γί-γνομαι*; they also refer to passage *Metaph*. 1014 b 17. Ross (*Aristotle's Physics*, 505) also believes that 'growth' is the etymological meaning which Aristotle ascribes to *φύσις* (*physis)*, and that based on this meaning he assumes that *growth* must be identical with progress towards *φύσις* (*physis*). But he casts doubts on whether *physis* ever bore this meaning of 'birth' or 'growth', although he notes that the few references to *physis* in the meaning of *γένεσις* in Greek literature (e.g., Plato, *Laws* 892c; Aristotle, *Physics* 193b 12; *Metaphysics* 1014b 16–17) seem to be learned references to a *supposed* etymological meaning; cf. also his reference to Burnet; see Ross's note on *Metaph*. 1014 b 17 (*Aristotle's Metaphysics, A revised text with Introduction and Commentary*, Volumes I-II [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924], I, 296). Alexander of Aphrodisias justifies the first meaning of nature offered by Aristotle in this passage of the *Metaphysics* as follows: 'He says that one sense of nature is growth and germination; for we say that what is coming to be is growing, and that for a thing to be brought to a point where it is coming to be is for it to proceed towards its nature. He gave a similar definition of nature in the *Physics*'; Alex. *In Metaph.* 357.7–10; I follow the translation by William E. Dooley (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics 5* [Ithaca, NY: Duckworth 1993). Dooley (*On Aristotle's Metaphysics 5*, 135–36, n. 65) correctly stresses that Alexander's expression '*to eis genesin eis physin agesthai*' (*In Metaph.* 357. 9) seems to be based on the text of *Physics* (193b 12–13) to which Alexander refers, where *physis* in the sense of *genesis* is said to be *hodos eis physin* ('the road towards nature'). In my view, the etymological connection is not a necessary presupposition of this meaning because in ancient Greek, *genesis* is an already recognizable or common meaning of *physis*. Philoponus justifies this meaning as follows: 'for we commonly call the sprouting and outgrowth of fruits nature'; Philop. *In Phys*. 211. 1–2; all references to Philoponus' Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* II follow the translation by Alan R. Lacey (Philoponus, *On Aristotle's Physics 2*, trans. [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993]). I agree with Lacey (Philoponus, *On Aristotle's Physics 2,* 152, n. 121) that *ekphysis, blastē* and *physis* itself are ambiguous between process and product; the meaning they bear depends on the context in which they are used.

tioned passage 193b 12–13, that is, nature considered as *genesis* and movement or change.[72]

Philoponus considers that the meaning concerned with generation and the road to form is the third sense of nature, the other two being the form and the matter.[73] He also explains in a very useful way as follows why *genesis* has been called *physis*:

> For every process of generation gets its name paronymously from the form towards which it moves; for we call the road to whiteness whitening, naming the road from the end-state towards which the movement [is], and not blackening, from that from which it has moved; and similarly [we call] the road towards heat heating. So, in the case of the generation of plants, too, the generation will be called after the end-state. So, since it strives after nature, but could not paronymously be called 'naturing' (*physansis*) because that sounds cacophonus [in Greek], it was called 'nature' (*physis*), coinciding in name with the end-state.[74]

It is important to note that although Philoponus cites 'generation and the road to form' as the third meaning of nature, he believes that from this as well, is again shown that form is nature, not matter.[75] W.D. Ross points out that Philoponus ingeniously uses φύσανσις, 'naturation', as equivalent to φύσις (*physis*) in the sense of 'growth' and, following a similar interpretative line, he states that what is referred to by Aristotle in 193b 12–18 (i.e., nature in the sense of genesis or growth) must be considered as a third argument in support of the view that φύσις (nature) is μορφή (form).[76] Alexander of Aphrodisias identifies nature as genesis or growth (i.e., what Simplicius considers the fourth meaning of nature) with the first meaning of *physis* referred to by Aristotle in *Metaph*. 1014b 16–17.[77] Alexander also associates *physis* in the meaning of *genesis* with form (*eidos*), since he notes that 'every coming-to-be is a progression towards the complete form'.[78] Solmsen remarks that this meaning of *physis*, used as a synonym of *genesis*, is the meaning in which the pre-Socratics like to employ it.[79]

[72] We only have to compare Simplicius' terminology on 284. 5–6 with that on 273. 35–274. 1.

[73] Philop. in *Phys*. 210. 33–211.1; 211. 20–22.

[74] Philop. *In Phys.* 211. 3–9.

[75] Philop. in *Phys*. 211. 2–3; cf. 211. 9–12. Macé ('La naissance de la nature en Grèce ancienne', 82) associates Aristotle's thesis that nature is the form with what we define as the fourth meaning of nature recognized by Simplicius. He claims that when Aristotle says 'man propagates man', he restores the balance which permits to consider nature as a path to nature or, in other words, to consider the origin of all natural things as a path towards their nature. In my reading, through this connection of these two meanings of nature (i.e., nature as form and nature as growth or process or progression towards the complete form), we can realize that there is a reversion of each natural thing to its origin.

[76] Ross (*Aristotle's Physics,* 505).

[77] Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Metaph*. 357. 7–13; see again note 71.

[78] Alex. *In Metaph.* 357. 11–12; trans. Dooley.

[79] Solmsen (*Aristotle's System of the Physical World*, 96). See esp. Empedocles DK 31 B8.1, Plutarch

5. The cause of change

From what Simplicius recognizes as the fourth meaning of nature there is only one step till the fifth and last meaning of nature because any change, coming-to-be and growth needs or presupposes an efficient cause. Simplicius states that, according to the fifth, and most important, meaning, nature is the cause of change in natural bodies. He again sets out to trace what is common and what differs between art and nature, as he did in his comment on *Physics* II.1, 193a 30–b5. The commentator again draws a parallel between art and nature, claiming that, just like art (which is the producer of artefacts) and its motive force, nature in this sense starts from the material nature and ends at the formal nature, producing the compound nature, and this is what the productive nature has in common with art.[80] According to Simplicius' analysis, the difference between art and nature is that the art is external, and starts from the considerations proper to it, but ends at some completion beyond itself (e.g., the medical art ends up with health).[81] On the other hand, the nature, which is inherent in what is growing, works through the, as it were, outgrowth towards the nature of the perfected entity, and ends as a nature reaching a nature through a nature. Art preserves its similarity to nature since it also works through an artistic change and ends up with the artefact which is of like form, but nature differs from art in that the actualization of the nature is inherent and internal.[82]

III. Simplicius on the Aristotelian arguments in support of the thesis that nature is the form

in B11; B63; Plato, *Laws* 892c; cf. also Cherniss (*Aristotle's Criticism of Pre-Socratic Philosophy,* 243–245, n.114); Charlton (*Aristotle's Physics*, 91). For the usual connection of *physis* with origin, birth and growth, or with the appearance and development of a thing in the pre-Socratics, see also Patricia Curd (*The Legacy of Parmenides, Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought* [Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2004 (1998)], 43); Enrique Hülsz Piccone ('Heraclitus on *Φύσις*', *Epoché* 17, no. 2 [2013]: 179–94, at 182). See also Ross (*Aristotle's Metaphysics*, I, 296) in his note on *Metaph*. 1014 b 17, where he remarks that the general meaning of *physis* in the pre-Socratics is pretty much the same, 'stuff' or 'material'.

[80] Simpl. 284.12–16.

[81] This means that the form which is according to the considerations proper to art or the form which inheres in the artisan's soul is the same with art, whereas the artefact which results from the artisan's agency is not identified with art, but is of like form with it (*homoeides*). Only the form of the artefact is identified with the art because the artefact as a whole is a complex which also includes matter, but the art resides only in the form (cf. *Metaphysics* 1032a 22–25; a32–b1; b13–14; see also pseudo-Alexander *In Metaph*. 488. 16–23; 489. 5–9; see also again *Phys.* 193a 33–35; b 8–12). Horst Seidl, ed., (*Beiträge zu Aristoteles' Naturphilosophie, Elementa*, Band 65 [Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995], 37–38) stresses the difference between art and nature by focusing on the same point as Simplicius; while art ends at something different from it, nature with its activity (i.e., the generation and growth of natural things) in a way attains self-reversion. But at the time of self-reversion, nature has a different sense from the one it had at the starting point of its activity, because at the beginning what is coming-to-be and growing is nature without the corresponding form, whereas at the end it is nature endowed with form.

[82] Simpl. 284. 16–24.

Simplicius, referring to *Physics* 193b5–6, asserts that having interpolated this passage about the compound, Aristotle adds what else he has to say about the form.[83] Aristotle states in passage 193b 6–8: 'this rather than matter is nature; for each thing is said to exist when it is in actuality rather than in potentiality'. Simplicius notes that Aristotle adds this comment about form since he wants both matter and form, but more so form, to be nature; therefore, Aristotle henceforth explains the reasons why he wants form rather than matter to be nature, demonstrating it in several ways.[84] Thus, we can assume that henceforth and until passage 193b 18, Aristotle will expound his own arguments in support of the thesis that nature is form. From Simplicius' analysis of Aristotle's words in passage 193b 6–18, we can infer that the commentator recognizes in it three arguments or proofs in support of the thesis that nature is the form. According to this reading, we can assume that Aristotle presents these arguments as independent of that articulated in the relevant passage 193a 30–b5 by those who claim that nature is form, although they constitute a natural sequence of it and some of them presuppose it, because they refer to it.

1. The first Aristotelian argument in Physics 193b 6–8

Nature is the reason why each natural thing is what it is said to be; the reason why it is what it is said to be is the reason why it is in perfect realization (entelekheia) and not merely in potentiality; the reason why it is in actuality what it is said to be is the form; therefore, its nature is the form.[85] According to Simplicius' testimony, Alexander summed the argument up as follows:

> Each existing thing is what it is when it is in perfect realization; so what exists by nature so exists when it is in perfect realization; anything is in perfect realization when it possesses the form, and so things that exist by nature so exist when they possess the form; but the very thing whose presence causes

[83] Simpl. 277. 18–19.

[84] Simpl. 277. 20–24.

[85] Simpl. 277. 27–31. Philoponus recognizes three arguments in support of the thesis that nature is the form in the Aristotelian text. According to him, the first is illustrated in 193a 31–b5, the second in 193b 6–8 and the third in 193b 8–18 (see Philop. *In Phys*. 214. 22–217. 17). Philoponus seems to include in the same argument the phrase 'Furthermore a man comes to be from a man, but a bed does not come to be from a bed' and the phrase 'again, nature qua *genesis* is *hodos* towards nature'. This is verified by the fact that in the same comment he refers to the nature which is spoken of as *genesis* and makes the following statement: 'Again nature in the sense of coming-to-be is a process towards nature. [He means] that from the third sense of "nature" too, that of "outgrowth", form is shown to be more strictly nature than matter'; see Philop. *In Phys*. 215. 24–216. 2. According to my reading of his comment on 193b 13–14, Philoponus believes that Aristotle uses the phrase 'a man comes to be from a man', just in order to justify and explain why in the case of natural things, in contradistinction to matters of the arts, it is reasonable that the generating has a single name; see in particular Philop. 216. 9–22.

what exists in nature to so exist is nature, and it is by the presence of the form that what exists in nature does so exist; therefore the form is nature.[86]

Simplicius points out that the term *entelekheia* (perfect realization) is considered to be Aristotle's own. According to him, it signifies the form which is said *in actuality*, inasmuch as it is in this respect that we refer to the reception of *telos* of the one or of being one (*hē tou henos telous apolēpsis*), or to the reception of being one and perfect, or to the continuous possession of the perfect, to wit, the state according to the perfect.[87] In my opinion, what is remarkable in this exegesis is the connection of *telos* with the *hen* within the frame of a continuous state.[88]

2. The second Aristotelian argument in Physics 193b 8–12

This argument presupposes and takes advantage of the argument put forward by those who claim that matter rather than form is nature, and more specifically the argument associated with Antiphon's view of nature. Those who claim that matter is nature say that the natural factor in the case of a bed is not its shape but the wood, because if it was buried and then germinated it would come up wood and not a bed.[89]

[86] Alexander apud Simplicius 277. 31–278.3.

[87] Simpl. 278. 5–9. It is also important to pay due attention to the fact that Simplicius chooses to explain the meaning of the term *entelekheia* with regard to this passage. This proves that he thinks that this passage is crucial for the accomplishment of this meaning and its understanding. Philoponus chooses to give his own exegesis of the term with regard to the definition of motion in *Physics* III.1 (Philop. *In Phys.* 342. 10–15). He explains the term in a rather similar way to Simplicius, by stating that 'the word "*entelechy*" in Aristotle signifies actuality and completion, for it is a compound of the words *hen* ("one"), *teleion* ("complete") and *ekhein* ("have a certain state"). When any particular thing possesses its own completion, it is said to exist in *entelechy*'; (Philoponus, *On Aristotle's Physics 3*, trans. Mark J. Edwards [London: Duckworth, 1994]). Cf. Suidae Lexicon, ed. Ada Adler, ([Lipsiae: B.G. Teubner, 1928-1938]1931: 293), where it is supported that *entelekheia* is the form associated with the one and the complete and what brings about cohesion, completion and unity. It is worthwhile noting that Philoponus also emphasizes the connection between *hen, teleion* and *ekhein*. Ross (*Aristotle's Metaphysics,* II, 245–46) remarks that the existence of the word *ἐντελεχής*, from which the word *ἐντελέχεια* is supposed to be derived, in the time of Aristotle is doubtful, but he stresses that it is not necessary to suppose its existence in this time, because he may have formed the abstract noun directly from *τὸ ἐντελὲς ἔχον* or possibly from *ἐντελῶς ἔχον*. For different etymologies of *entelekheia* see Daniel W. Graham ('The Etymology of Entelexeia', *The American Journal of Philology* 110, no. 1 [1989]: 73–80), George A. Blair ('Aristotle on Entelexeia: A Reply to Daniel Graham', *The American Journal of Philology* 114.1 [1993]: 91–97) and also Florian D. Walch (*Ökonomie der Natur, Die Frage der Naturkonzeption in der Physik des Aristoteles* [München: Herbert Utz Verlag-Wissenschaft, 2002], 54).

[88] The *telos* as constituent of the word bestows a strong teleological dimension on it, which is related to the completion or perfection, while the presence of the word *hen* offers the trait of self-sufficiency, oneness and separation, and *ekhein* or *hexis* shows the continuity of perfection. Aristotle in *Metaph.* 1039a 3–14, referring to the conclusion that a substance cannot consist of substances present in it in complete reality (*ἐντελεχείᾳ*), points out that *entelekheia* separates things from one another. See also pseudo-Alexander, *In Metaph.* 525. 38–526. 27.

[89] I partly follow the translation by Wicksteed and Cornford (*Aristotle, Physics*, [1957]). Philoponus notes that through the considerations by which they established that matter is nature Aristotle himself establishes that form more than matter is so; see Philop. *In Phys.* 215. 26–28.

Simplicius explains the Aristotelian argument included in the above passage as follows: Since a man is propagated by a man, and a man is a man because of the form, then nature would be the form. Even if a bed is not propagated from a bed, a man is propagated from a man like wood from wood, and in general products of art are not propagated from other products of art, but natural things are. Since this is the case, a general rule about natural things must be inferred only on the basis of what is true in the realm of nature, and such a rule must say that the form is the nature and one should not disavow it, judging from the case of the products of art. In this way, following Aristotle, Simplicius draws a clear-cut distinction between art and nature. Art does not make forms that are productive of their like, as nature does. For even if the wood is the matter of the bed, it is still a natural form and it is in respect of this that it too has the power of propagating its like.[90] Based on this reasoning, the commentator reconstructs the argument as follows: A man comes to be from a man as a natural form from a natural form, not as an artificial form from an artificial form. Looking to this latter assumption, they claim that the form is not nature, but they ought rather to look to natural entities that propagate things like their own forms; since this is peculiar to nature, they should say that the form is nature.[91] It is also interesting to note that Simplicius, in his exegesis, apart from the criterion of propagating the like, attaches to the form the criterion of persistence, in the sense that what persists in nature is the form. We have seen that those who claim that nature is the matter have also used this argument, focusing on matter's persistence.[92]

[90] Simpl. 278. 10–20. Lang (*Aristotle's Physics and its Medieval Varieties*, 31–33) maintains that Aristotle returns to this odd *sign*, the planted bed, and reinterprets it in light of his own account because this sign, which originates from Homer, may serve as an ancient *locus classicus* for the problem of the union of art and nature.

[91] Simplicius believes that the words 'A man comes to be from a man' were proclaimed like some final conclusion of the argument, but they only served to cloud its premises, so he sets up to reformulate it in its full structure; see 278. 20–26. We can see the above phrase also in Arist. *Phys*. 194b 13; *Metaph*. 1032 a 25; see also pseudo- Alex. *In Arist. Metaph*. 683. 12–22 (in his comment on 1071a 11–17). It is worth noting that in the construction of this argument, Aristotle follows a different path from that chosen by the thinkers who claim that nature is the form. While they use the analogy between art and nature, as is obvious in passage 193a 31–36, Aristotle chooses to put forward the crucial difference between art and nature, namely that the natural forms propagate their like; see in particular *Metaph*. 1032a 24–25. This difference corresponds to a crucial difference between two kinds of *genesis*, since for the products of art we should rather talk about *poioumena* and *poiēsis*, which is the artistic procedure by which a product of art comes into existence. Walch (*Ökonomie der Natur*, 57) stresses that the artefacts are not generable and characterises *genesis* as an innate principle of change which affects both matter and form. In such an interpretation, *genesis* is identified with nature. Aristotle establishes the criteria of the distinction between *genesis* in the realm of nature and *genesis*, namely *poiēsis*, in the realm of art in *Phys*. 192b 16–32; *Metaph*. Z 7; *EN* 1140a 10–16; see also Melina G. Mouzala *Zētēmata Gnōsiologias, Ontologias kai Metaphysikēs stēn philosophia tou Aristotelous, Hupo to phōs archaiōn kai byzantinōn hupomnēmatōn* [*Issues of Epistemology, Ontology and Metaphysics in Aristotle's Philosophy, In the light of Ancient and Byzantine Commentaries*], (Athens: Gutenberg-Dardanos Publications, 2013), 82–85.

[92] Walch (*Ökonomie der Natur*, 57–58) correctly notes that behind the phrase 'A man comes to be from a man' is hidden the Aristotelian conception of the eternal Nature, the eternity of which resides in the eternity of the Aristotelian natural forms. Marjorie Grene (*The Understanding of Nature, Essays in the Philoso-*

3. The third Aristotelian argument in Physics 193b 12–18.

Nature used in the sense of 'growth' (*ekphysis*) and 'coming to be' (*genesis*) is a process towards nature, starting from the thing that is coming-to-be, and finding completion in its nature.[93] Simplicius again draws a parallel between the products of art and natural things: Just as in the case of the products of art anything that is being made is said to be being made into what lies at the end of the process, not what lay at the beginning, similarly in the case of natural things, the thing which is growing is said to be growing when it is proceeding towards its nature, not from its nature. Since it is proceeding towards its form, the form is its nature. The structure of the argument is as follows: Nature is that towards which anything growing and increasing is proceeding; anything growing and increasing is proceeding towards its form, not towards its matter; therefore, its form is its nature.[94] It is important to note that Simplicius construes nature as *genesis* as a process (*hodos*) towards nature as a goal (*telos*), in other words, he identifies *eidos* with *telos*, meaning the natural form.[95]

We can see that Aristotle uses this meaning of nature, as also defined by Simplicius as the fourth meaning, namely nature as genesis or growth, only as a vehicle or means in order to prove that nature is the form. He does not lay emphasis on it as if he was thinking that the two meanings are of equal importance. On the contrary, Simplicius recognizes this meaning of nature, nature as growth, coming-to-be and change, as a totally distinct and autonomous meaning which deserves separate analysis and explanation. It is also useful to note that for Simplicius, nature as growth, as genesis or change, represents an intermediate meaning from two points of view. On the one hand, nature as growth, as genesis or change *stemming from the active nature,*[96] seems to be for Simplicius an intermediate meaning (or a medium) between nature considered as agent or as efficient cause and nature considered as compound or as form; the latter is the goal or the end (*telos*) of each growth or change in the natural world, since nature as form is that towards which anything growing and increasing is proceeding. When Simplicius states that nature, according to his fourth meaning, lies between what is growing and what makes it grow, by the term 'what is

phy of Biology, Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science 23, [Dordrecht/Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974], 75–76), by referring to *De Gen. et Cor.* II. 11, 338 b 7ff., notes that 'Aristotle's world is finite, unique, eternal, consisting of a finite number of eternally existent species', which endeavour in their re-production to simulate the eternal circling of the celestial spheres. For the meaning of the Aristotelian *telos* with regard to *eidos*, see Grene (*The Understanding of Nature*, 76–77; 79ff.). In terms of the criterion of persistence, it is generally acknowledged that what is repeatable in the sense that it persists is the form. Sheldon Cohen ('Aristotle's Doctrine of the Material Substrate', *The Philosophical Review* 93, no. 2, (1984): 171-194, 173) notes that the principles of persistence shift as we move from Aristotle's physics to chemistry, and then to biology, while there are cases where we are able to see that form has a greater claim than matter to be called 'substratum'. Cohen adds a further meaningful remark: 'to understand Aristotle we might want to drive a wedge between the notions of a persisting matter and a persisting substratum, to allow for cases in which form, not matter, is the more rightful substratum'.

[93] Simpl. 278. 36–279.2.

[94] Simpl. 279. 2–11.

[95] Simpl. 279. 23–24; 25–31.

[96] Simpl. 284. 8–10.

growing' (*to phyomenon*), in my opinion, means here rather the form, namely, that towards which anything growing is proceeding, than the compound.[97] On the other hand, according to Simplicius' fifth meaning, nature as growth, outgrowth, genesis or change seems to be an intermediate meaning, placed between nature considered as matter (the material nature) and nature considered as form (the formal nature).[98] Nature as outgrowth,[99] genesis or change is the movement of the active or productive nature, which by moving from the material to the formal nature produces the compound nature.[100]

IV. Simplicius on the Aristotelian form as paradeigma

The special relation and close connection between nature in the sense of cause of change and form is also obvious in Simplicius' Commentary on the third chapter of *Physics* II, particularly in the passage in which Aristotle refers to the formal cause. Simplicius states that when Aristotle calls the form a model (*paradeigma*), he is not suggesting that it is some self-subsisting eidetic substance (*eidikē ousia*) to which the things in this world bear a likeness, as do those who posit the Forms.[101] He then quotes an extended passage from the lost Commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias on Aristotle's *Physics*, in which the latter among others states the following:

> Things that are productive in nature do not first of all have a conception of what they are producing, and then produce it in such a way that one could say that according to Aristotle the conception is a model of what is produced, as is the case with the arts; rather it is the form which is instantiated in matter

[97] Simpl. 284. 9–10; I have reached this conclusion based on the analogies which can be traced in the terms used by Simplicius within his fourth meaning (284. 6–10). In 284. 6–8 the cloak (*himation*) which is woven, which is referred to as *to huphainomenon*, could also be interpreted as the compound, and by analogy the same meaning could be attributed to *to phyomenon* in 284. 9. In 279. 25–27 Simplicius uses the term *phyomenon* for the matter (*hylē*), while for the form he uses the words *ho phyetai*; but that does not mean that he could not use the same term with another meaning in a different context.

[98] I believe this interpretation could be perfectly sustained by Simplicius' words 'physis eis physin dia physeōs' (284. 19–21).

[99] From Philoponus' exegesis of passage 193b 13–15, it is clear that nature in the sense of outgrowth or process is tightly bonded with nature in the sense of end or *telos* (i.e., in the sense of form). According to my reading of Philoponus' exegesis of the relevant passage, this means that nature in the sense of outgrowth or process is associated exclusively with the final cause; on the other hand, in the case of matters of the arts the generatings and the processes are associated both with the efficient and the final cause because these are called what they are both after the ends and after what they arise from by way of efficient cause; see Philop. 216. 5–217. 6; in particular 216. 11–18 and 216. 25–217. 6.

[100] In my opinion in 284. 13–16 and 19–21, Simplicius includes all of the five meanings of nature that he recognizes in the Aristotelian text.

[101] *Physics* 194b 26–29; Simpl. 310. 23–24. Francis A. Grabowski III (*Plato, Metaphysics and the Forms,* Continuum Studies in Ancient Philosophy [New York/London: Continuum, 2008], 29) notes that the Forms and abstract universals obviously share many of the same features, but they have also important differences. One of these differences between them is that, 'unlike universals, which do not in any way look like the particulars that instantiate them, the Forms are routinely depicted as *paradeigmata*, 'standards' or 'paradigms', which resemble their sensible counterparts to a greater or lesser extent'.

which he calls a model because nature produces whatever it produces by aiming at this.[102]

According to Alexander's explanation, this is clear from the fact that when it has been produced, nature ceases producing it, since the form is something defined and, as it were, a target set up at which nature aims, which is the reason for its being called a model by Aristotle.[103]

According to Simplicius' testimony, Alexander points out that the end (*telos*) and the model (*paradeigma*) do not have the same significance in the case of everything that produces for the sake of something. Nature does not work as the things that produce according to choice, art, and reason. In the latter case the end for the sake of which everything else comes-to-be must first be conceived in the mind of the producer and be set up as a target and model for what is to be. On the contrary, in the case of things that come-to-be by nature, this is not so.[104] Alexander states that nature does not work by choice or by any reason within it, because nature is an irrational power.[105] But this in no way implies that nature produces at random and not for the sake of something. Besides, as the commentator points out, the term *heneka tou* ('for the sake of something') is not applied only to coming-to-be based on reason and choice, but everything that comes-to-be according to some regularity and because of something else does so for the sake of something.[106] So even if we accept that nature is an irrational power, one should not represent nature for this reason as not acting for the sake of something.

The real teleological dimension of nature is recognized when we construe form as a model according to which nature produces everything, nodding in its direction

[102] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 310. 25–28.

[103] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 310. 28–31. Fleet (*Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 2,* 173, note 188) stresses that, on the contrary, art can go on working on its matter *ad infinitum*. Nevertheless, I believe it is necessary to underline that the conception which pre-exists in the artisan's mind as a model is also definite. Otherwise it could not be a model and a target.

[104] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 310. 31–36.

[105] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 310. 36–311. 1. In his comment on *Phys*. II. 2, 193 b 22, Simplicius, following what Aristotle states in passage 199a 17 ff., supports that nature, being analogous to art, acts for the sake of something and is a cause in the sense of being for the sake of something (*heneka tou*); Simpl. 288. 11–14. Nevertheless, in this context it is not quite clear if Simplicius believes that nature is a rational or irrational power. Based on what he states in passage 314. 15–19, we can infer that he believes that nature aims at the enmattered form as a target, but that this is not a purposeful action. But from what he states in 288.15–16, we can infer that he ascribes to nature a kind of volition to realize targets and to achieve completion and ordering in its products. In the latter passage, by referring to passage 271a 33 in *De caelo*, Simplicius stresses that Aristotle is clearly matching nature's work with that of God. This means that Simplicius implies the presence of *Nous* also in the realm of nature. But it is most probable that he simply means that nature as productive power realizes the procedure of coming-to-be of natural things by looking towards a definite goal. This approach brings to the fore a kind of intentionality, but this intentionality is oriented towards a certain *telos*, namely a goal, which is the good; see Simpl. 288. 20–24; 27–30. For the view that nature is mind-directed see Solmsen (*Aristotle's System of the Physical World,* 94–95), while for the view that it was the Judaeo-Christian God who imposed the dominance of a cosmic teleology upon Aristotelian nature, see Grene (*The Understanding of Nature*, 76–77).

[106] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 311. 20–25.

not through choice, but more like a 'marionette' (*neurospastoumena*).[107] The meaning of this word is clarified in Alexander's description of the way in which natural things are produced:

> The power which is engendered from the first change produces in its turn a second change, and keeps its force until it has produced something like that from which it started when it was lodged in matter, and something the same either in species or in genus […]. This progression proceeds according to stages and regularity until what is coming-to-be is perfected according to the form, if nothing prevents it. This does not happen according to any reason or choice in the agents of change and production, as has been said.[108]

Alexander further explains the reasons why the Aristotelian form must be considered as a model (*paradeigma*), but in a completely different way to the Platonic conception of a model (*paradeigma*). In the case of natural things, the form of the producer is the same as the form or the genus of the thing produced and it too would be a model. In general, those who produce something according to a model produce it according to something determined. It is special to that which is produced according to a model to be produced according to something that is both determined and like it. If something is produced according to something determined and like it, then it would be produced according to a model. This is how the products of nature come-to-be; therefore, they are produced according to a model.[109]

Simplicius follows the same line of reasoning as Alexander and supports the thesis that it is clear that Aristotle calls the form a model not in the sense of a Platonic Form. The proof of Aristotle's divergence from Plato's view, according to him, is that he takes the enmattered form as a cause according to which the compound has the essence (*ti ēn einai*).[110] At the end of his comment on passage 194b 26, Simplicius offers another significant interpretation. He suggests that perhaps Aristotle calls the enmattered form a model equally as a target for nature, at which it aims not by way of knowledge but by way of substance, so producing everything, and equally as a model that is produced for art, since he does not want natural things to be produced according to some model, while he says that artefacts do need some model. The aim of this approach, according to the commentator, is to make clear that the natural form is the model for art.[111]

[107] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 311. 28–30.

[108] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 311.14–21. For the description of this procedure see also Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 311. 1–14.

[109] Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 311. 30–37.

[110] Simpl. 312. 1–3. I translate in a different way to Fleet because my syntax is different.

[111] Simpl. 314. 15–21. In this way Aristotle preserves the priority of nature over craft. Solmsen (*Aristotle's System of the Physical World,* 93) speaks of the Aristotelian tendency to preserve the priority of nature over craft and chance by contrasting nature's mode of operation with the working of chance, accident, and craft. Conversely, the priority of *technē* over nature in Plato is depicted in 'the idea of the "natural" world

V. The principal meaning of Nature (physis)

Simplicius draws a distinction between the word *physis* itself and its common connotation. He points out that the word *physis* itself is more strictly suitable to nature in the sense of change and growth (on the analogy of weaving, healing, and change in general). But he notes that the common connotation of the word fits better with nature in the principal sense, to wit, the nature which is productive of natural things. However, according to his exegesis, the definition of nature will suit all its meanings if taken of each in the appropriate way.[112] He further explains how the definition of nature offered by Aristotle in passage 192b 20–23 can be applied to each of the five meanings he has recognized. Nature in the strict sense is a principle and cause of movement and its cessation, while nature as change is something instrumental; for it is by means of nature in the sense of change that the productive nature brings to completion change and its cessation in natural things, just as a doctor brings about health through the practice of medicine.[113]

Simplicius states that matter and form are principles in an elemental sense of the actualization brought about according to nature. He testifies that Eudemus says that even these admit being described as nature, because the matter and the end in view (*to hou heneka*) seem to be principles or sources of change.[114] For example, the underlying matter is responsible for the fact that lead drops downwards. It is carried downwards because it is made of this sort of matter; hence it has a principle of change within itself and *per se*, considered as lead *qua* lead. The form is a principle also in the sense of an end in view (*hou heneka*), since it is to this that nature looks in doing all its work.[115] With regard to the compound, Simplicius poses the question: 'how could the compound be a principle and a cause when it comprises only the finished product?'. He then answers by asserting that even this could be a principle of change in the sense of an end in view (*hōs telos*); for whether the compound is a form

as *unnatural*', in other words, as the product of a *technē*, which as James G. Lennox ('Plato's Unnatural Teleology', in *Platonic Investigations,* ed. Dominic J. O'Meara [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985], 195-218: 195–196) notes, is a stable feature of Plato's later thought (see esp. *Laws* 892b). Plato usually explains the paradigmatic role of the Forms by indicating that a craftsman or artist must use a Form as his model if his intention is his work to be beautiful. This tendency culminates in the view that an intelligent Maker or Craftsman is the truly responsible agent in the procedure of the creation of the world; for the references to the relevant Platonic dialogues see Grabowski (*Plato, Metaphysics and the Forms,* 29–31). For the view that it is craft that provides the model for nature in Aristotle, not the reverse, see Sarah Broadie ('Nature and Craft in Aristotelian Teleology' in *Aristotle and Beyond: Essays on Metaphysics and Ethics* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 85-100, 85–86). Broadie points out that it is nature in the sense of the specific essential nature of an individual substance, the inner principle of its behaviour and organisation that Aristotle likens to craft—to one or another specific craft—for craft in its active exercise is evidently end-directed, and to Aristotle the same is true of nature, although less evidently so. Broadie's view is well supported by the passage *Phys*. 193a 31–36.

[112] Simpl. 284. 25–29.

[113] Simpl. 284. 29–33. This explanation justifies why Aristotle does not lay so much emphasis on nature considered as genesis or growth but only uses this meaning in order to prove that nature is the form; see again 193b 12–18.

[114] Simpl. 284. 33–285. 1.

[115] Simpl. 285. 1–5.

in matter or a product of matter and form, nature is productive of this compound and not of the form as existing *per se*.[116] Furthermore, he adds that perhaps the compound is a principle of change and its cessation also as a productive cause, since actualizations and their cessation, as changes, are produced in compounds.[117]

Simplicius notes that it seems worthwhile asking why Aristotle, in his listing of the different meanings of nature, failed to give the most important one, that of nature as productive of natural things. In the second half of *Physics* II.1, Aristotle presented the other meanings of nature, namely he said that nature is the name given to the matter and the form, and then to the compound and to the outgrowth and the change leading to the form; but he made no mention of it as the productive cause.[118] The commentator believes that in reply to this question it must be said that at the very outset of his discussion about nature in *Physics* II.1, Aristotle presented nature in the strict sense as the productive cause and defined it as such. According to him, the evidence for this is that when Aristotle was explaining the term *per accidens* (*kata sumbebēkos*), he took as an example the doctor treating himself, as though seeking that which is a *per se* (*kath' auto*) productive cause, that which is analogous to the person making a house and other artefacts.[119] Thus, having in that passage presented nature in the strict sense (*kyriōs physin*), in the second half of the same chapter he offers the other meanings of the description of nature (*ta alla sēmainomena tou tēs physeōs onomatos*).[120]

We can assume that for Simplicius, the principal meaning of *physis* is definitely that denoted by and included in its Aristotelian definition. This is identified with what was presented by him as the fifth meaning of nature, namely, the cause of change in the natural bodies or the productive nature. Moreover, the commentator believes that perhaps Aristotle did not pass over nature in the strict sense even in the passage 193a 9–b 21. He maintains that Aristotle revealed this principal meaning when he said that healing was a process starting from medical knowledge and aiming not at that knowledge but at health, and that nature as change started from a nature and moved towards a nature. He points out that the nature which is analogous to medical knowledge is the productive nature and not any of the other kinds of nature that correspond to the four meanings.[121] From this reasoning we can infer once again that the fourth meaning, nature as change, is an absolutely necessary stage in Simplicius' exegesis, since it is crucial for understanding the fifth and principal meaning of

[116] Simpl. 285. 5–8; cf. Simpl. 283. 37–284. 2, where the commentator states that 'a man is propagated by a man as compound by compound'. It is worth noting that Simplicius considers the compound as the subject in the strict sense (*kuriōs hupokeimenon*) of generation and destruction; see 246. 24–33.

[117] Simpl. 285. 8–11.

[118] Simpl. 285. 13–17.

[119] Simpl. 285. 18–22; see *Physics* 192b 22–27. See also Simpl. 267. 5–22.

[120] Simpl. 285. 22–24

[121] Simpl. 285. 24–28.

nature. This will be more obvious when we clarify what kind of change is nature for Simplicius.

1. Nature and soul (physis and psychē)

Since the soul too is a principle of movement and change in ensouled bodies according to both Plato and Aristotle himself, Simplicius poses the question: what, then, is the distinction between nature and soul?[122] He then attempts to explain what kind of principle or source of change nature is in Aristotle's natural philosophy, by comparing it with the soul. The first thing he clarifies is that even the lowest part of the soul, called the 'vegetative' (*phytikē*), is something other than nature even according to Aristotle, even if they often call the vegetative part of the soul 'nature' on the grounds that it is close to nature.[123] From what Simplicius states within his investigation of the relation between nature and soul, we can infer that he establishes the following four criteria, on the basis of which *physis* is differentiated from *psychē*: 1) While soul is 'the ultimate actuality of the natural body possessing organs', it is not only bodies with organs that have a nature, but also *homoeomerous* substances and the four elements[124] 2) Furthermore, we give the name 'ensouled' to things that have within themselves the cause of growth, increase and the propagation of their kind, while we designate as 'natural' also things which are not like this, such as rocks, other minerals, lifeless bodies, and simple bodies[125] 3) Furthermore, all body has a nature (including the materials of artefacts like the material of the statue) and is natural just like the wood of the bed. But not all body is ensouled. At this point Simplicius reaches the conclusion: 'Therefore nature would not be soul'.[126] One would expect that with this inference the commentator integrates his argumentation regarding the difference between nature and soul. But this is a temporal impression, since immediately thereafter he poses again in a more decisive way the

[122] Simpl. 286. 20–22. Cf. Simpl. 262. 13–263. 17; in the latter passage, Simplicius poses the question in what sense does Aristotle mean that animals and plants exist by and because of nature, given that they are ensouled, and are what they are because of soul. He then attempts to answer this question by offering a detailed discussion of the matter.

[123] Simpl. 286. 22–25. Simplicius notes that all soul, even the lowest kind, is said by Aristotle to be 'the ultimate actuality of the natural body possessing organs'; Simpl. 286. 25–27; Arist. *De anima*, 412 a 19–b 6. The vegetative part of the soul belongs to the body which has a nature, being something clearly different from its nature. He states that it is clear that nature is inferior even to the vegetative soul, since such soul supervenes on natural body as form on matter; Simpl. 286. 34–36.

[124] Simpl. 286. 27–29. See also note 122.

[125] Simpl. 286. 29–31; cf. Simpl. 262. 22–26, where the commentator notes that the definition of the soul given in *De anima*, 412a 27–28, which calls it 'the first actuality of a natural body with organs, potentially possessing life', fits both plants and animals, but not the simple bodies such as earth and fire, etc., which do not have organs.

[126] Simpl. 286. 31–34.

question: 'How then did Aristotle present the difference between it and soul?'. In answer to this question, Simplicius' argumentation in support of the radical difference between nature and soul culminates with him introducing his final and strongest argument. 4) This argument consists of two parts. Simplicius states that he thinks that the phrase 'in which it resides' (*en ō estin*) is sufficient in respect of the answer to that question, and the following clearer phrase, 'in a substrate', refers to nature.[127] But while nature always resides in a substrate and is within the thing of which it is the source of change, all soul, because it properly has the power of moving, is set apart from what is moved.[128] This is the first part of the argument. We can trace the second and more crucial part of it in passage 287. 9–17 of Simplicius' Commentary. The commentator believes that it is most decisive both for the understanding of the natural substance and for the distinction between it and the soul. This part of the argument is intended to satisfy those who were not yet convinced on the basis of its first part. The counter-argument they provide is that the vegetative and irrational parts of the soul also reside in bodies as substrates.[129] As stressed by Simplicius in answer to these, Aristotle does not say that nature is a source of change for bodies in the same sense that both he and Plato say that the soul is. For according to both, the soul is what moves bodies, but nature is not a source of movement in respect of moving but of being moved, and of cessation of movement not in respect of stopping but being stopped. That is why natural things are not said to be moved by themselves; for if they could move themselves, then they could also stop themselves. He adds that, if nature were a principle of movement in the sense of causing movement, it would not in this respect differ from the soul and the primary moving cause.[130] In his comment on passage 195a 3 of *Physics* II. 3, Simplicius draws a distinction, saying that the principle of change is twofold, the self-changing (*autokinētos*) and the unchanged (*akinētos*). He then clarifies that being the principle of change in the strict sense (*kyriōs*) means being an unchanged changer, so that the efficient cause in the strictest sense (*kyriōtaton*) of things that come-to-be would be that which is unchanged, eternal and always remaining enduringly the same; such is august Intellect.[131] Below Intellect comes soul, explains Simplicius; for even if soul is changed, it has the agent of change within itself. According to him, that is why Aristotle prefers to call it unchanged, since he thinks that only those things that are altered in body are changed. So, the self-changed could be a principle of change in

[127] See Arist. *Phys*. 192b 22; 192b 34; Simpl. 286. 36–287. 3.
[128] Simpl. 287. 3–4.
[129] Simpl. 287. 4–7. Cf. *De anima* 412a 17–21.
[130] Simpl. 287.7–13; 16–17.
[131] Simpl. 317. 9–10; 14–17. Simplicius stresses that therefore that which is unchanged and subsisting eternally, being productive and a cause of change in the strict sense, is primary; Simpl. 318. 15–16. Alexander also stresses that the efficient cause in the strict sense must be separate and distinct; Alexander apud Simplicius *In Phys*. 317. 27–28.

that it has the agent of change within itself, although it is not a principle in the strict sense, because it remains the same and yet is changed.[132]

2. Nature as a sort of propensity for being moved

Simplicius sets out to discover what the principal meaning of nature is, by systematically attempting to reveal the difference between nature and soul. One of the most characteristic points of Simplicius' explanation of the Aristotelian nature is the view that nature seems to be a sort of propensity (*epitēdeiotēs*) for being moved and regulated. He adds that this propensity seems to be, as it were growing upwards from below and inviting the regulative causes because of its own fitness.[133] The commentator points out that it is clear what Aristotle primarily means by the word *nature* when he defines nature as the principle of change in the sense of being changed, not causing change.[134] The definition given in passage 192b 20–23 says that 'nature is a

[132] Simpl. 317. 17–20; 12–14.

[133] Simpl. 287. 13–15.

[134] Simpl. 287. 26–27; Arist. *Phys*. 192b 21–22. Richard Sorabji (*Matter, Space and Motion*: *Theories in Antiquity and their Sequel* [London: Duckworth, 1988], 220) correctly points out that the word *kineisthai* stands indifferently for the intransitive *being in motion* and for the passive *being moved*. Helen Lang (*The Order of Nature in Aristotle's* Physics*, Place and the Elements* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 40–41) notes that since the forms are homographic, the verb *kineisthai* may be either middle or passive, and that the choice between them is crucial because the middle voice implies that nature is a self-mover, whereas the passive voice clearly indicates being moved (i.e., moved by something). She argues that the verb here must be passive: what is by nature must be moved by something. Her main argument is that *kineisthai* is always passive, not middle (or reflexive), in both Plato and Aristotle and, furthermore, is never used to express self-motion (Lang, *The Order of Nature,* 42–43). David Furley ('Self-Movers', in *Self-Motion, From Aristotle to Newton,* eds Mary Louise Gill, James G. Lennox [Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994], 3–4) notes that to anyone who reads the *Physics* incautiously it might appear that since nature is declared to be an internal source of change and rest, all the things specified at the beginning of *Phys.* II.1 should be self-movers: living things and their parts, plants, and simple bodies, earth, water, air, and fire. Furley stresses that, of course, this turns out to be too generous, since we are told explicitly in *Phys*. 255a 5–10 that the bodies that move by nature up or down cannot be said to move themselves. Johannes Fritsche ('Aristotele's Usage of *Ἀρχὴ κινήσεως* (›Principle of Motion‹) and the two Definitions of Nature in *Physics* II 1', *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte,* Band 52 [Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2010], 7-31, 7ff.) maintains that in the entire corpus of Aristotle's writings the expression 'principle of motion' most probably never means a passive principle. By examining several relevant Aristotelian passages, he sets out to prove that this expression in *Physics* 192b 14 and 20–23 is used in the sense of a mover. It is also worth mentioning that Philoponus replaces the infinitive *kineisthai* of the definition with the phrase *archē kinēseōs* in his commentary and he generally interprets nature as an active principle of motion; see Philop. *In Phys.* 195.24–26; 196.6–8; 196. 13–16;196. 21–26;197. 9–10; 197. 30–33; 198. 9–10; 198. 22–23; 198. 30–32; 199. 12–16; amongst these the most indicative passage is 196. 13–16. In his comments on *De Generatione et Corruptione* 336a 6–12, Philoponus also stresses that the efficient cause in a strict sense is not acted upon. He then adds: 'And indeed we would not say that nature is acted upon, insofar as it is efficient cause, but if at all, [that] its underlying substrate [is acted upon], while [nature] itself always imparts motion' (Philop. *In De Gen. et Cor.* 287. 29–288.1; Inna Kupreeva, trans., Philoponus: *On Aristotle On coming- to-Be and Perishing 2.5-11* [London: Duckworth, 2005]). From Philoponus' words we can infer that he recognizes that nature is an efficient cause in the strict sense, namely, in the sense that it is always active, that it always imparts motion, and is never acted upon. Furthermore, with regard to Simplicius' interpretation of nature as passive principle, it is worth remembering that in *De Generatione et Corruptione* 323a 15–20, there is the statement that the mover is said to act (*poiein*) and the acting thing to impart motion (*kinein*). Nevertheless, Aristotle invites us to draw a distinction, for not every mover can act, if the term

principle and cause of being changed and its cessation', and that the nature resides in the substrate. But, according to what was previously stated, that which resides in the substrate would not in the proper sense be a principle that moves the substrate, because the moving or the efficient cause in the strict sense must be separate and distinct from what is to be moved.[135]

Simplicius' first and main argument that nature is a sort of propensity for being moved is the Aristotelian reference to the principle of change in the sense of being changed and not causing change, within the definition of nature offered in *Physics* II.1. His second argument is based on what is referred to in passage 255b 29–31 of book VIII of the same treatise. In the latter passage, when discussing the four elements, Aristotle states: 'It is clear that none of these things moves itself. But they do have a principle of movement, not in the sense of acting or causing movement, but of being moved'.[136] Simplicius adds that since it is acknowledged that the elements are not moved by themselves, Aristotle asks what it is that moves the elements; for he wants moving by themselves to be particular to animals that have a soul, which he defines as a source of movement (*archēn kinētikēn*).[137] The commentator also makes

ʿagent'(*poioun*) is to be used in contrast to ʿpatient' (*paskhon*) and ʿpatient is to be applied only to those things whose motion is a qualitative affection... in the sense that they are altered (trans. Harold H. Joachim, *Aristotle, On Coming-to-be and Passing-away (De Generatione et Corruptione), A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary* [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1922]). Joachim (*Aristotle, On Coming-to-be,* 147) notes that the term *poioun in the strict sense* applies only to a body which causes a change of *pathos* (affection) in another body. So, we can infer that *kinein* is a wider term than *poiein*; and based on this reasoning we can also infer that *kineisthai* is not identified with *paskhein* but is a wider term than the latter.

[135] Simpl. 287. 27–30; *Phys*. 192b 34. See also note 131 above.

[136] Simpl. 287. 30–33. Sorabji (*Matter, Space and Motion,* 220), when referring to the passage *Phys*. 255b 30–31, notes that this idea of passivity illustrated in it, to wit, the idea that nature is an internal source of change, a source not of causing motion, but of passively undergoing it (*paskhein*), had been prepared for in the earlier account of nature in *Physics* II.1, when Aristotle had described it as a source of *kineisthai*; see *Phys*. 192b 21. Simplicius, in his comments on *Physics* VIII.4, repeatedly stresses that being moved is a kind of being affected; see Simpl. 1210. 21; 1220. 22. In his comment on *Phys*. 255 b 24, he further notes that since none of these [sc.the elements] are moved by themselves, but by something else, an objection presents itself, asking how these physical [bodies] are said to have in themselves their nature as the principle of motion, if they are not moved by themselves, from within, but by something else, from outside. Simplicius believes that Aristotle resolves this objection precisely by saying that these are said to have ʿthe principle of motion' not as [the principle] of ʿcausing motion, nor of producing [motion]', but of ʿbeing moved' and ʿbeing affected'. He explains that not only that which moves from itself is said to possess a principle of motion, but also that which is of a nature to be moved. For the term ʿmotion' is common both to the mover and to that which is moved; but if motion is in that which is moved, as it has been proved in *Physics* III.3, motion is more proper to that which is moved; see Simpl. 1217. 34–1218. 7. All references to Simplicius' Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* VIII. 4 follow the translation by István Bodnár (István Bodnár, Michael Chase, and Michael Share, Simplicius*, On Aristotle's Physics 8. 1-5* [London: Bloomsbury, 2012]).

[137] Simpl. 287. 33–288. 1. See *Phys*. 254b 33–255a 10, especially 255a 4–7; see also Simpl. 1207. 26–27; 1208. 8–10; 1208. 28–31; 1209. 5–6; 1209. 20–24. Simplicius notes that Aristotle proves by several arguments that it is impossible that the elements are moved by themselves. The first argument is the one that it is the sign of life (*zōtikon*) that something moves itself. The commentator proves that this is a common assumption, by adding a reference to Plato's *Laws* and *Phaedrus*: 'For we all say that for something to move itself is the same as to live, as Plato says in the tenth book of the *Laws*, "-Are you asking me whether we say that something lives when it moves itself. -Indeed" (see *Laws*, 895c). And, Aristotle says, it is the property of ensouled beings that they are moved from themselves. This is also said by Plato in the *Phaedrus*: "That for which motion is from outside-he says- is without soul, that for which it is from within, is ensouled"

reference to two other Aristotelian passages in order to articulate his argument. Firstly, he alludes to passage 255a 24–26 in book VIII of the *Physics*, where Aristotle states: 'Similarly that which can by nature be changed is that which is potentially of a certain quality, quantity or position when it has within itself such a source'. He believes that Aristotle is clearly referring here to the nature of the thing which can be changed (*kinēton*).[138] Secondly, he alludes to passage 284b 30–285a 1 in Book II of the *De caelo*, where Aristotle stated the following: 'In none of the soul-less entities can we see the origin of the source of movement'.[139] Finally, the reasoning of this second argument is formulated as follows: 'If, then, the four elements are natural entities and do not have within themselves the origin of the source of movement, i.e., the moving cause, it is clear that it is not in this sense that nature as a cause of movement is said to be a source of movement, but as a source of being moved'.[140]

Immediately after defining nature as something like potentiality and the propensity to be moved, Simplicius poses the following question: If nature is something like that, why do we so often say that it is active or a cause of change, in other words, efficient or productive cause?[141] *Prima facie*, one could claim that Simplicius

(see *Phaedrus*, 245e). If, then, these bodies (i.e., the elements) are without a soul, and the ones which move themselves are ensouled, these would not be moved from themselves'; see Simpl. 1209. 26–35.

[138] Simpl. 288. 1–3; cf. Simpl. 1211. 31–37.

[139] Simpl. 288. 3–6. See also Alexander apud Simplicius *In De caelo*, 387. 5–12. In this passage Simplicius presents a citation from Alexander, where the latter states that the soul-less entities also have within them a source of movement since they are natural bodies, but this is not a moving principle or a capacity (*dynamis*) to move, for the cause of their movement is from without; but they have a passive principle and capacity of being moved (my own translation). Cf. Simpl. *In Phys.* 1209. 23–27; 1211. 15–16. Terence Irwin (*Aristotle's First Principles* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988], 94) claims that Aristotle explains the 'origin of change' only in *Physics* II. 3, when he introduces the doctrine of the four causes, and specifically in passage 194b 29–30 (cf. 195a 22–23), where in his view, the 'efficient cause' is described in terms very similar to those applied to nature in *Physics* II.1. In my view this is not true, because the definition of nature in *Physics* II.1 obviously emphasizes the idea that this principle, which can be considered either passive or active—that depends on the interpretation—, is inner or inherent, whereas in the *Physics* II. 3, we see that Aristotle describes only the relation between the agent and its effect, or between the producer and its product, and determines what is primarily called 'efficient cause'.

[140] Simpl. 288. 6–9. In his Commentary on *Physics* VIII. 4, Simplicius remarks that the case of the elements is problematic, because it seems absurd that they should be moved by something else when they perform their natural motion (*kata physin kinēsin*), since they are said to possess the principle of their motion in themselves (for animals were said to be moved by themselves on this very same account), while to assert that they (heavy and light bodies) are moved by themselves is to say something impossible; see Simpl. 1209. 20–24. Sheldon M. Cohen ('Aristotle on Elemental Motion', *Phronesis* 39, no. 2, [1994]: 150-159, 153) notes that if the natural motions of the elements are caused by another, rather than having an internal source in their natures, it might seem that they do not proceed from an internal principle, and so ought not to be counted as *natural* motions in the first place. He adds that Aristotle's main task is to explain how elemental motions can be natural, granted that they have an external cause. But the difficulty, according to Cohen, is that he has to come up with an answer to this question that is compatible with the account of nature in *Physics* II.1, which seems to require an internal principle for natural motions.

[141] Simpl. 288. 9–11. It is worth mentioning what Simplicius testifies about Alexander's views on nature considered as efficient cause. In his comments on *Physics* II. 3, Simplicius presents a climax of the efficient causes, culminating in the efficient cause in the strictest sense, which is the unmoved prime mover. He states that, 'since of natural things those that come-to-be and pass away come-to-be because of the proximate agency of what is eternal and in orbit ("for both man and the sun generate man"), it is clear that the producer in the strict sense causes change not by approaching what comes-to-be and passes away di-

is being inconsistent when he finally defines nature as a sort of propensity for being moved, whereas he has already defined its fifth meaning, that is nature as the cause of change in the natural bodies, as the most important.[142] How could nature be both an active and passive principle? As always, Simplicius expounds his own peculiar dialectic, articulated by means of crucial questions and equally insightful answers and comments. While he gives the impression that he just wishes to anticipate an objection, he in fact uses this dialectical device in order to reinforce and deepen our understanding of his explanation.

According to Simplicius, there are two reasons for which it is plausible and legitimate to say that nature is active and productive. Firstly, everything that comes-to-be does so from a substrate which is potentially that which it is going to become, and by the agency of whatever produces the change, which is actually that which the substrate potentially is. Both are necessary for the end result. For this reason, even if nature is a propensity in the substrate, it is said to *act* because it contributes to the end result.[143] Secondly, Simplicius places emphasis on these Aristotelian passages

rectly, but through everlasting intermediaries'" (317. 20–23). The commentator believes that in this way it becomes clear to us what the instrumental cause is, namely, that which is both changed by something else and itself changes another thing. This is evident in the production of artefacts, says Simplicius. And he adds that, according to Alexander, nature in its whole as well as partial nature is a kind of instrumental cause because the efficient cause in the strict sense must be separate and distinct; see Simpl. 317. 23–28; cf. 315. 15–18. In his comment on *Phys*. 194b 29–32, where Aristotle determines what the efficient cause is, Simplicius states that since Aristotle wants the productive cause, in the strict sense of the term, to be separate and distinct from its product, the inherent cause, such as the form and the nature, is to be associated with the formal principle. He then points out that it is useful to remember that Alexander, commenting on the same passage, agrees that nature is not a productive cause in the strict sense, but is rather a formal cause since it is not foremost among the producers; see Simpl. 315. 10–15; see also note 8 above.

[142] T. Irwin (*Aristotle's First Principles,* 96) believes that, 'When the effect is specified more clearly, reference to the first three causes turns out to be attribution of formal, final, or material properties to the efficient cause. If this is right, then Aristotle's initial suggestion that form and matter are internal origins of change, and therefore efficient causes, is more nearly correct than his claim that formal and material causes are not efficient causes'. From Irwin's reasoning we can infer that, since form and matter as internal origins of change can be construed of as internal efficient causes, in stating that form and matter are nature, Aristotle claims that nature is an internal efficient cause. I believe that Irwin's suggestion is not consistent with what Aristotle in the most explicit way states about matter in *De Generatione et Corruptione* II. 9. In *De Gen. et Cor.* 335b 16–18 and 24–35, Aristotle reproaches those who tried to explain generation and destruction of the things by the material cause, to wit, as effects of the movement originating in the matter. He states that, although to assign to the matter the causal role in the process of generation and destruction of things would be more in accordance with the study of nature than considering the Forms as efficient causes, it is also incorrect. He believes that those who posited matter as the cause of generation or movement deserve also criticism insofar as they did not display anything else as the cause of movement in matter. According to him, this proves that they were unaware of the fact that matter does not have movement from itself; see Melina G. Mouzala ('Aristotle's Criticism of the Platonic Forms as Causes in *De Generatione et Corruptione* II.9. A reading based on Philoponus' exegesis', *Peitho-Examina Antiqua*- 1, no. 7 [2016]: 123-147, 142). Aristotle says in 335b 29–31: 'For it is the property of matter to be acted upon and to be moved, whereas causing movement and acting belongs to another capacity' (Christopher John F. Williams, trans., *Aristotle's De Generatione et Corruptione, Translated with Notes* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982]). Philoponus, in his comments on *De Gen. et Cor.* 335a 22, 335a 31 and 335b 24, also stresses that matter obviously does not have the principle of producing and moving, but rather of being moved and being acted upon by another (trans. Kupreeva, 2005); see Philop. *In De Gen. et Cor.* 282. 10–11; 283. 27–284. 4; 287. 2–5.

[143] Simpl. 288. 17–21.

which present nature as *acting* for the sake of something (*heneka tou poiein*). In particular, he focuses on what Aristotle himself says towards the end of the second book of his *Physics*, in passage 199a 8–20. Here it is said that nature is analogous to art and that it acts for the sake of something, which means that the coming-to-be of natural things looks towards a definite goal, and that they do not come-to-be through luck or chance, but because they are constituted by nature to become what they become.[144] There are also two specific references by Simplicius to the notorious Aristotelian statement in the first book of the *De caelo,* in passage 271a 33: 'God and nature do nothing to no purpose'. The commentator believes that Aristotle through this statement is clearly matching nature's action and production (*poiēsin*) with that of God. According to him, the real meaning of this statement is that nature provides from below the propensity which looks towards a goal which is the good, while God sheds his light from above in the actualized form of it.[145]

The thesis that physical bodies are said to possess the principle of being moved because they possess the capacity and the propensity or the aptitude for being changed into something, is also expressed in Simplicius' Commentary on *Physics* VIII.4.[146] It is worth considering the meaning of the word *epitēdeiotēs*, which Simplicius prefers to use in his exegesis of the principal meaning of nature.[147] Based

[144] Simpl. 288. 11–14; 21–27.

[145] Simpl. 288. 15–16; 27–30. In his comments on *Physics* VIII.4, Simplicius states that if the nature of these bodies (of the elements) is not a principle of causing motion and producing (motion), but of being moved and of being affected, when Aristotle says that nature is a productive cause, somewhere saying that 'neither god nor nature does anything in vain', and somewhere else proving that nature is a productive cause according to reasons and for the sake of something, we have two possibilities: either we have to think of that nature as some other nature—that is to say, the demiurgic intellect pervading everything—or, provided he speaks about the same nature, one has to understand what he says in a material and passive way, as we have understood also the principle; see Simpl. 1218. 13–19. I believe the identification of nature with the demiurgic intellect which pervades everything alludes to the Neoplatonic perspective of the dialectic between unity and plurality, which escorts the manifestations of the demiurgic intellect. The latter has established the cosmos as one and many; and if this is true, since that which creates bestows on what it makes this character that it possesses, then the plurality and the unity are inherent in him; see Glenn R. Morrow and John M. Dillon (*Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* [Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1987], 130). But clearly this is not Aristotle's view of nature.

[146] Especially in the passage 1218. 7–10 of Simplicius' Commentary in the *Physics*, we can find the most detailed explanation of the real meaning of the statement that nature is the *principle of being moved*. The key-word *epitēdeiotēs* which is repeatedly used by Simplicius both in his comments on *Physics* II. 2 and *Physics* VIII.4 is translated by Fleet as 'propensity', whereas by I. Bodnár as 'aptitude'.

[147] The definition of nature as inner principle of change begs some questions anyway. Lear (*Aristotle: the desire to understand,* 16) believes that a plausible question emerges: 'if nature is an *internal* principle of change, how could nature be a cause? Nature would seem to be too much a piece of the thing itself to be its cause'. Sorabji (*Matter, Space and Motion,* 220) stresses that 'Aristotle needed to find something by which a falling rock was moved. And the rock's inner nature would not be sufficiently distinct from the rock to serve his subsequent argument for a prime mover distinct from the heavens'. But he adds that Aristotle had also to reconcile this constraint with the need to distinguish natural bodies from artefacts as having an *internal* cause of motion; see also Sorabji (*Matter, Space and Motion,* 221). According to Lang (*The Order of Nature*, 45), the characterisation of nature as a source or cause of being moved and being at rest essentially and not accidentally, in *Physics* II.1, is followed immediately by the rejection of an apparent case of self-motion, a doctor who cures himself. H. Lang construes the case of a doctor who cures himself (*Phys*. 192b 24–33) as a case of an apparent self-motion because the doctor cures himself only accidentally.

on the passage 192b 18 in *Physics*, H. Lang asserts that Aristotle identifies nature with *hormē* (*ὁρμή*),[148] and describes the latter as 'an intrinsic active striving that contrasts with external force'.[149] Simplicius, in his comment on 192b 15, states that 'he (Aristotle) called this source of change from within an impulse in the proper sense of the word' and adds that some people write 'source' instead of 'impulse'.[150] Simplicius' statement shows that Lang's suggestion is absolutely reasonable, since it paraphrases what Aristotle states in the definition of nature and its surroundings in 192b 16–23. Lang further explains this interpretation and associates it with that of Aristotle's teleology. By referring to the way Charlton construes the *passive power,*[151] she points out that 'passive' in the case of the definition of nature, as in the phrases 'to be affected' or 'to be moved', does not mean for Aristotle 'to be passive', because the ability of a natural thing to be moved is always potential *for* something, which means that is never neutral to its mover. Lang construes of nature considered as *hormē*, as the active orientation of potency to actuality which rests on the intimate relation between them: the moved, or potential, has its very definition in that which is actual (i.e., the mover). She also claims that Aristotle's teleology should be identified with this active orientation of a thing toward its own being. In her opinion, although the definition of nature determines nature as an intrinsic source of being moved, its force lies here: 'nature is uniquely defined by an intrinsic active orientation of the moved, potency, toward its mover, actuality'.[152] I have strongly insisted on this interpretation because I believe that 'active orientation' is a good candidate for the meaning of *epitēdeiotēs* and this discussion helps me to expound my own view of it.

She believes that through this example, Aristotle proves that even apparent self-motion is nothing other than being moved by another and that the target of his argument about self-motion is undoubtedly Plato's doctrine of the soul. According to this doctrine, soul is defined as self-moving motion and serves as the origin of all motion in the cosmos; see again *Phaedrus* 245c–246a. Although what Lang suggests is an interesting interpretation and is generally correct with regard to Aristotle's criticism of Plato's doctrine of the soul, I believe that passage 192b 22–27, and particularly that which is within the parenthesis, sets out to only show the difference between what is present primarily and *per se* and what exists *per accidens*; see also Simpl. 266. 33–268. 12.

[148] This term is translated in different ways: '(innate) impulse' by Robert P. Hardie and Russell K. Gaye (Aristotle: *Physics*, Translation [Oxford, 1930]), '(inherent) trend' by Wicksteed and Cornford (Aristotle, *Physics,* 1957), '(innate) tendency' by Charlton (*Aristotle's Physics,* 1970), '(innate) impulse' by Fleet (*Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 2,* 1997).

[149] See Lang (*The Order of Nature,* 48, and note 49). In my opinion the Greek term is more successfully rendered by this description in English than by the suggested English translations of it.

[150] Simpl. 265. 14–15. See also Fleet (*Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 2,* 166, note 41).

[151] See William Charlton ('Aristotelian Powers', *Phronesis* 32, no. 3 [1987], 277-289: 278).

[152] Lang (*The Order of Nature,* 48). I believe that Lear's interpretation is oriented towards the same direction, which suggests that an object's nature would seem to be a developmental force which impels it *toward* the realization of its form; see Lear (*Aristotle: the desire to understand*, 19). It is important to emphasize here the distinction between nature and art, because as Lang (*Aristotle's Physics and its Medieval Varieties,* 31) correctly notes, 'matter is exclusively oriented toward natural form and possesses no innate ability to be moved by artistic form'.

In my view, Simplicius' *epitēdeiotēs* is not the *hormē* referred to by Aristotle in 192b 18.[153] *Epitēdeiotēs* is not a trend, tendency, impulse or intrinsic active striving; the word *hormē* is appropriate to describe the difference between natural beings and artefacts, but not to render the meaning of Simplicius' term. To say that *epitēdeiotēs* is 'an active orientation of potency to actuality' would be closer to what Simplicius means; but still this is not a precise meaning, because as we saw from Lang's explanation, this presupposes an intrinsic active effort or a movement towards. But what Simplicius really means is 'having a good or natural disposition for being moved'. We can understand very well what he means if we pay due attention to his own words, since in his comments on *Physics* VIII.4 he explains it in a clear way, as follows: 'For to be of a nature to be moved with some motion is the same as possessing the principle of such motion, as, for example, one who is gifted for philosophy [is said] to possess the principle of philosophy, not [the principle] of making someone else a philosopher, but [the principle] of himself becoming a philosopher'.[154] The key-word in Simplicius' explanation of *epitēdeiotēs* is *euphyēs*, which in its etymological structure contains as a constituent, apart from the 'nature', the *eu* (*εὖ*), in other words, the good nature, or the good disposition for something.[155] In my view, nature as a kind of propensity for being moved is something distinct from the natural thing itself as well as from the efficient cause of its movement, considered in the strict or proper sense of the efficient cause. We have seen that Simplicius justifies the characterisation of nature as efficient cause, by the fact that nature is said to act to the extent that it contributes to the end result. I would say that *epitēdeiotēs* of a thing for being moved is a presupposition of the realization of the agency and efficacy of the efficient cause, since it pre-exists the efficient cause. Consequently, it ensures and allows for the possibility that something can act as efficient cause on whatever has this kind of propensity. Furthermore, given that *epitēdeiotēs* is *euphyia* for being moved, I conclude that nature as *epitēdeiotēs tis* is neither the material nor the formal cause. In other words, it cannot be identified with either matter or form. But it could

[153] Philoponus, with regard to the elements, also uses the word *ropē*; in his comments on *Physics* 192b 8, he says that what brings the stones down is the natural inclination they have; see Philop. *In Phys.* 195. 27–29.

[154] Simpl. 1218. 7–13; esp. 10–13.

[155] I owe my interpretation partly to Simplicius and partly to the fortune that I have to use and feel the meaning of the word *epitēdeiotēs*, since it is also used in Modern Greek where it has approximately the same meaning. This meaning of nature, namely, *epitēdeiotēs tis* of a certain thing for being moved, perfectly supports what Charlton (*Aristotle's Physics,* 88) points out in his Notes on the *Physics*; in particular, that Aristotle conceives the word *nature* as applying not to some single all-pervading demiurgic force, but to that factor in a thing which we call its nature. So, for Aristotle there is no such thing as nature over and above the nature of this, the nature of that, etc. Charlton notes that Aristotle, in the *Metaphysics* 1070a 12, states that nature is a 'kind of disposition'. But according to pseudo-Alexander, in this passage Aristotle calls 'nature' and 'a this' (*tode ti*) and 'a kind of disposition' (*hexis*) the form, because all these are in parallel; see ps. Alex. *In Metaph*. 676. 30–31.

be successfully described as something that prepares the linkage between matter and form, as a *sine qua non* presupposition of their joining.[156]

Simplicius notes that earlier thinkers also clearly had some such conception of nature viewed in terms of the propensity of each thing for change, according to which natural entities are characterised. He adds that, since all natural entities have matter and form, some of these thinkers ascribed such a potentiality to the matter, claiming that this was a nature by which natural entities are constituted to be changed, and seeing that natural things were most changed in their matter (as for example a bed is changed in terms of the wood). Others, claiming that it was nature in terms of which natural entities have their being, since the form is the mark of each thing by which each thing subsists and is said to be just what it is, for this reason said that the form was the nature.[157] However, Simplicius stresses the fact that Aristotle did not think it right either to call *matter per se* 'nature' (for *matter per se* is an impotent substrate), or to call the form 'nature' (for this is natural but not nature), but he designated as nature the propensity of matter for appropriate movement and change, when it changes from one form to another; for the loss and reception of the form happens to matter according to its natural propensity.[158] So, according to Simplicius' explanation of Aristotle's conception of nature, matter and form are both natural, but neither is nature; nor, similarly, is the compound. But still, there is a scale and a climax regarding the relation to nature: Form rather than matter would be nature because of its character and power. And the compound rather than matter would be nature because of the form, since it becomes an entirely natural individual thing when it receives the form; for matter *per se* is indeterminate and lacking in definition.[159]

3. Nature as a sort of life (eschatē zōē)

Simplicius attempts to explain more accurately and further specify the fifth meaning of nature, namely, the designation of nature as cause and inner principle of change in all natural bodies. Nature, being a propensity (*epitēdeiotēs*) for the existence of the form, in a way pre-exists the form by being present in the matter in potentiality, as one would expect; and it gives within itself a prior indication of

[156] On the other hand, in passage 1045a 30–33 of his *Metaphysics,* Aristotle mentions as the cause of this union of what is potentially with what is actually in the case of things which are generated, apart from the agent, the essence of matter and form: 'For there is no other cause of the potential sphere's becoming actually a sphere, but this was the essence of either' (trans. W.D. Ross, The Internet Classics Archive). But here it is easy to assume that the *essence* of matter and form is the *nature* of matter and form; see also Melina G. Mouzala (*Ousia kai Orismos, Hē Problēmatikē tēs henotētos eis ta oikeia kephalaia tōn* 'Meta ta Physika' *tou Aristotelous* [Substance and Definition: The Problematic of Unity in the relevant chapters of Aristotle's Metaphysics], [Athens: Harmos Editions, 2008], 86–95; Mouzala, 'Aristotle's Criticism of the Platonic Forms as Causes', 127, note 15).

[157] Simpl. 288. 33–289.7.

[158] Simpl. 289. 9–15.

[159] Simpl. 289. 17–22.

the form, being its nature and its growth, as it were, and its sprouting from the matter.[160] Simplicius states that those who say that nature is the lowest level of life are quite right. He then reaches the point where he states that nature, being the life of the form, is not only its growth, but also its cohesion and continuation once it has come-to-be, and its rising up to act and be acted upon, according to its natural constitution.[161] The commentator describes what the relation is between nature and the bodies using as a starting point his own perspective: since bodies are far removed from the indivisible and unextended essence and since there is a life that subsists in (absolute) being,[162] with regard to absolute being they are lifeless and spiritless in themselves and too chilled for any kind of life. But they have within themselves the lowest (*eschaton*) sort or form of life which relates to potentiality and propensity, namely that which we call 'nature'.[163] It is because of this that even lifeless bodies can be moved and changed, and what is more, grow and act upon each other, being passive.[164] Simplicius explains the phrase '*kai eis allēla pathētika energein*' (287. 22–23) by clarifying that their activities are not pure but involve being acted on; and he adds that this is the reason why all natural bodies can only move other things if they themselves are moved; yet what is strictly unmoved itself moves.[165] In Simplicius' reference to the life that subsists in the (absolute) being, it is implied that there is a contradistinction between this life and the lowest sort or form of life, which is what we call 'nature'. The relation between them becomes clear in passage 289. 26–33 of his Commentary on *Physics* II. 2.

From his Neoplatonic perspective, Simplicius draws an analogy in passage 289. 26–35 between the primary life and potentiality and the lowest life and potentiality. The primary potentiality and primary life, which subsists according to the first movement of being, is the bubbling over, as it were, from primary being into

[160] Simpl. 289. 22–25.

[161] Simpl. 289. 25–26; 33–35.

[162] I deviate from the translation by Fleet, because my syntax is different with regard to Simpl. 287. 17–19.

[163] Simpl. 287. 17–21. Philoponus also defines nature as life. In his comment on *Phys.* 192b 8, he notes that this definition of nature does not signify what nature is but the activity of it, for we did not learn what nature is through learning that it is the source of movement and rest, but what it does. According to him, in order to give also the definition of its essence itself we must say that nature is a life or a power which has descended into bodies, and which moulds and manages them, being a source of change and rest for that ' in which it belongs primarily, *per se* and not *per accidens*'. He believes it is clear that the definition of nature will also embrace the nature of the animate, which is the soul. Moreover, with regard to the animate things he identifies their life with their soul. One could infer from this that he identifies soul with nature, since both are determined as life by him. However, he clarifies that nature manages not only animate things but also inanimate ones and that as form is more manifest in the animate, so also is the providence of nature. Each thing owes the holding together of its being to the natural power which inheres in it, for it would have perished and gone over into not being if there were nothing holding it together; see Philop. *In Phys.*197. 30–198. 8.

[164] Simpl. 287. 21–23.

[165] Simpl. 287. 23–25; cf. Simpl. 289. 15–17, where he states that the form comes-to-be according to its own nature from its opposite, and once it has come-to-be it is preserved and changed by both acting and being acted on, or rather by having a passive activity.

the separating out of the *hypostasis* of form and the movement outwards (*ekstasis*) from being (*einai*) to actuality (*energein*). Analogous to the movement outwards from *einai* to *energein*, which is characterised as the first movement of being, is the growth of the enmattered form from matter and the movement towards that form, viewed according to the potentiality of the form; this movement is the lowest potentiality and the lowest life.[166] The crucial point of Simplicius' analysis in this whole passage (289. 21–35) is that nature is the nature (*physis autou*) and growth (*ekphysis*) of the form, as it were (289. 24; 34), and its sprouting (*anablastēsis*) from the matter (289. 25). Moreover, being the life of form, is not only its growth, but also its continuation once it has come-to-be, along with its rising up (*dianastasis*) to act and be acted upon, according to its natural constitution (289. 33–35). We can see here that Simplicius uses the same terms, *ekphysis, anablastēsis* and *dianastasis*, as he used in the analysis of Antiphon's views. We have also seen that this analysis adopts, to a certain degree, the crucial terms and arguments of the view that nature is the matter.[167] Thus, we can reach the conclusion that, by defining nature in its principal meaning as a sort of propensity for being moved, Simplicius basically attempts to make an insightful reading of Aristotle's definition of nature in 192b 20–23. However, when he determines nature as a sort of life of the form, he offers an interpretation in which his Neoplatonic approach is merged with Aristotelian and pre-Aristotelian lines of reasoning.[168]

[166] In *Metaph*. 1072b 26–28, Aristotle determines life as the actuality of Intellect, and finally identifies the first Intellect (i.e., God) with that actuality. But while for Aristotle, life is identified with *energeia*, considered as the energeia of the first Intellect or the first principle, according to the Neoplatonic approach of Simplicius, the primary life is the first movement of the primary being from *einai* to *energein*.

[167] See again Simpl. 273. 35–274. 1; see also notes 24 and 27 above.

[168] When Simplicius describes the primary life as the first movement of being, and more specifically as an *ekstasis* from *einai* to *energein*, it is obvious that he determines it from a Neoplatonic perspective, because as previously mentioned in note 166, Aristotle in Book Lambda of his *Metaphysics* firstly identifies life with *energeia* of the Intellect, and secondly identifies the first Intellect with *energeia*. But when Simplicius defines nature as the lowest life or the life of form, by using a terminology which alludes to his analysis of the materialist's position (e.g., Antiphon), it is obvious that he also exploits both Aristotelian theory and pre-Aristotelian philosophical tradition.

Aristotle's Rhetoric in the Manuals of Byzantine Rhetoric

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Aristotle was the first ancient philosopher to draft a manual of rhetoric containing the definition of rhetoric, its relation with dialectic, the norms of rhetoric, rhetorical techniques, the presentation of the orator's personality, the psychological and logical persuasion required of an orator, as well as his communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal. The content of Aristotle's rhetoric, despite the harsh criticism of Byzantine philo-Platonist Theodore Metochites, constituted a source of inspiration for the Byzantines, who wrote few commentaries on Aristotle's rhetoric, but adopted many elements from his manual in order to express their socio-political ideology through the perception of the aesthetically verbally beautiful. Particularly significant is the fact that the Byzantines inherited from Aristotle the first communication model that was based on the threefold use of language: the theoretical, the practical and the productive or artistic. Frequently, Aristotle's theory about language in relation to that of Isocrates is found in Byzantine manuals of rhetoric. Aristotle's rhetoric had a significant impact on the Byzantine perception of the aestheticality and practicality that must imbue the orator's speech in order that the communicative interaction with his audience be improved. In this way, communication in its modern form was polished by the Byzantine's contemplation on aesthetically beautiful speech in style and verbal forms.

Introduction

Rhetoric rapidly occupied a significant position in Byzantine literature and in the life of the Byzantines, because the Byzantines used rhetoric to externalise their spiritual world and manifest their aesthetic perceptions of art.[1]

Some Byzantine scholars drew up manuals of rhetoric based mainly on Hermogenes' rhetoric, as well as that of Aristotle. Many commentaries were written on Hermogenes' rhetoric, which was the most basic source for the Byzantines. From the fourth to fifth century, interest in Hermogenes' rhetoric was strengthened by commentaries written by neo-Platonists, such as Syrianos. The representatives of the Alexandrian School displayed particular interest in Aristotle's rhetoric.[2]

[1] Hans Georg Beck, 'The Byzantine rhetoric as an expression of the Byzantine spirit', *Journal of Research in Philosophy* 9 (1965): 102.

[2] George L. Kustas, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric* (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Stud-

In Byzantium, flamboyant rhetoric became the most thriving form of rhetorical art. Already from the third century B.C., this kind of rhetoric had become very popular in Christian circles, with the main representative being Gregory the Miracle-Worker (Gregory Thaumatourgos). The panegyric speeches of Eusebius of Caesaria, Gregory Nanzianzen, St Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, St Athanasius the Great, and John Chrysostom were also of great importance. The Fathers, with their speeches, were the model of Christian eloquence, and they elevated rhetoric to the level of high rhetorical art.[3] At the same time, they had a great effect on subsequent Byzantine scholars, who drew on the speeches of Christian fathers and composed flamboyant speeches referring to emperors and members of the imperial family.

Rhetoric went through a gradual expansion, which the Byzantines considered primarily as 'paideia', adopting Isocrates' view.[4] From the early Byzantine period through to the tenth century, manuals of rhetoric did not exist. However, the art of reason and the effects of ancient Hellenic, Hellenistic, and Christian rhetoric on the works of the Byzantines were intense. From the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, many commentaries on rhetoric were written, mainly on the *Progymnasmata* of Aphtonius and Hermogenes, as they were considered to be authorities on the formation of rhetorical speech regarding the technique system.

Furthermore, Plato's *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* were known, as well as Aristotle's rhetoric.[5] Rhetoric attracted more Byzantine interest than did Aristotle's *Poetics*[6]—which did not have a prominent position in Byzantine literature, something that is demonstrated by the fact that the Byzantines did not write commentaries on it.[7] The fewest commentaries have been written on Aristotle's rhetoric.

Commentaries on Aristotle's rhetoric

The only surviving commentaries on the rhetorical art of the great philosopher is a fairly extensive anonymous commentary, and one attributed to an unknown person, Stephanos. Both commentaries are dated back to the second half of the twelfth century.[8]

ies, 1973), 7–8. Kustas also mentions that there were Byzantines who commented on Apthonius' *Progymnasmata*, who was a student of Libanius (second half of the fourth century).

[3] George Kennedy, *Ιστορία της κλασσικής ρητορικής*, trans. in Greek by Νίκος Νικολούδης (Αθήνα: Παπαδήμας, 2000), 414–20.

[4] George Kennedy, 'The Byzantine rhetoric as an expression of the Byzantine spirit', (1965): 106.

[5] George Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 291–2.

[6] Aristotle, *On poetics,* trans. Σίμος Μενάνδρου, ed. Ιωάννης Σικουτρής (Αθήνα: Εστία, 1995).

[7] Regarding Byzantine poetry, see Norman H. Baynes and Henry St.L.B. Moss, *Βυζάντιο, Εισαγωγή στο Βυζαντινό πολιτισμό,* trans. in Greek by Δημήτριος Ν. Σακκάς (Αθήνα: Παπαδήμας, 1986), 340 et al.

[8] Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, 318. Cf., Kennedy, *Ιστορία της κλασσικής ρητορικής*, 356.

In the first commentary (1126 AD), the anonymous commentator wrote, preferably, on passages from all three books of Aristotle's rhetoric. Specifically, he started from the point that links rhetoric to dialectic, which constitutes the most important purpose of both arts. He clarified that neither rhetoric nor dialectic examine what is credible in certain persons, but they examine rather what appears credible in persons in a particular situation. This fact implies that both employ syllogisms for matters that should remain under the control of logic. At this point, the commentator indirectly wanted to separate and distinguish the role and purpose of rhetoric from dialectic. He laid stress on the function of rhetoric, that deals with those issues that defy technical solutions. This indicates the involvement of rhetoric with issues that apply to the general public and for which issues public argumentation is carried out in front of a popular audience.

Consequently, the issues under discussion have two opposite solutions, that are analysed through syllogisms that are sometimes easily comprehended by the commentator and sometimes are not.[9] The anonymous commentator analysed the available means of rhetoric and its kinds. In the second book, he commented on morality and passion as a means of persuasion and entered into the analysis of two types of logical arguments: conclusion gathering, which is accomplished by the use of example, and secondly abduction, which is the use of rhetorical syllogism, which Aristotle named enthymeme.[10] His commentary was completed by the anonymous author, who commented on the style and layout of rhetorical speech.

In the same line as the anonymous commentator, Stephanos (1151–1154) commented fragmentarily on all the books of Aristotle's rhetoric, selecting specific passages. Stephanos extracted a proposal from Aristotle's text and attempted through combined syllogisms to interpret it. Stephanos started his annotation with a significant argument referring to the direct relation of rhetorical art with philosophy. Stephanos considered there to be similarities between the structure of philosophical and rhetorical speech. In philosophy, syllogism, which constitutes a form of argument, corresponds to rhetoric with enthymeme. The distinction of philosophical reason in proving and in dialectical reason, which results from the creation of necessary and possible syllogisms, applies to rhetoric as well.[11] Stephanos indirectly took a stand against the timeless problem of the contrast between rhetoric and philosophy,[12] and supported the reconciliation and coexistence between philo-

[9] *Anonymi in Aristotelis Rhetorica*, CAG, vol. XXI (Berlin, 1896), I 2, 1 [Arist. P. 1356b34–1357a1].

[10] *Anonymi in Aristotelis Rhetorica*, vol. II, 20–24 [Arist. P. 13931–1402A16].

[11] *Έτερα σχόλια του κύρου Στεφάνου*, CAG, vol. XXI (Berlin, 1896), I 2, 263 [Arist. P. 1357a22]: *Ἐπειδ' ἐστὶν ὀλίγα τὰ ἀναγκαῖα. Ἅπαξ εἰπὼν τὰ κατὰ τὴν ῥητορικὴν παρεοικέναι τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ (συλλογισμός τε γὰρ ἐκεῖ ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τῇ ῥητορικῇ ἐνθύμημα. ἐπαγωγὴ ἐκεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τῇ ῥητορικῇ παράδειγμα) νῦν πάλιν καὶ ἄλλην τινὰ φιλοσοφίας κοινωνίαν καὶ ῥητορικῆς πολυπραγμονεὶ καὶ λέγει 'ὥσπερ παρὰ τοῖς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ συλλογισμοῖς ἡ γένεσις αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ ἐξ' ἀναγκαίων καὶ γίνεται ὁ ἀποδεικτικὸς ἡ ἐξ ἐνδεχομένων καὶ γίνεται ὁ διαλεκτικός, οὕτως εὑρήσεις λοιπὸν καὶ παρὰ τῇ ῥητορικῇ προτάσεις οἷον ἐνδεχομένας τὰ εἰκότα, οἷον δὲ ἀναγκαίας τὰ τεκμηριώδη σημεία'. τριχῶς γὰρ τὸ σημεῖον.*

[12] Kennedy, *Ιστορία της κλασσικής ρητορικής*, 18. Kennedy points out that the enmity between rheto-

sophical and rhetorical speech by identifying their similarities. In his annotation, he highlighted the issue of independence or dependence of rhetoric from dialectic. Moreover, he did not consider philosophy necessary for the formation of rhetorical speech and likely expressed his opposition to Hermagoras, who supported the autonomy of rhetoric on stasis-theory, establishing it as antagonistic to philosophy.[13] In the epilogue of the commentary, Stephanos referred to the verbal and specifically to the phrasal modes of speech.[14]

According to G. A. Kennedy, both the anonymous commentator and Stephanos tried to combine Aristotle's thought with Hermogenes' teachings.[15] Besides the above two commentaries, a Byzantine scholar of the eleventh century, John Italos, wrote a concise manual on rhetorical art, titled: *Του αὐτού φιλοσόφου μέθοδος ῥητορική ἐκδοθείσα κατά σύνοψιν*.[16]

The impact of Aristotle's rhetoric on John Italos

Italos was a student of Michael Psellos and an adherent of Plato. Italos was familiar with dialectic and he wrote his manual, based on Aristotle's rhetoric. He used Aristotle's rhetoric attentively as a guide and/or as a draft in the formation of his thought and the writing of his treatise.[17] Through study of his brief manual, it becomes clear that Italos in many parts reconciled Aristotle's with Plato's views regarding the character and the art of rhetoric, which Plato analysed thoroughly in *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias* dialogues.[18] Italos probably wanted to write and deliver to his

ric and philosophy existed during the entire period of the Roman Empire. Furthermore, he mentions that some contemporary readers support philosophy in its dispute with rhetoric (see p. 19).

[13] Παντελής Μπασάκος, *Επιχειρήματα και κρίση* (Αθήνα: Νήσος, 1999), 46–51. Basakos mentions that the Hermagorian model died out as a general theory of the use of speech. However, it sealed the Roman, post-Hellenic and Byzantine theory of forensic argument, and from there, the entire tradition of forensic thinking.

[14] *Έτερα σχόλια του κύρου Στεφάνου*, III 9, 321 [Arist. P. 1410a17–26]. Regarding the verbal part see Δημήτριος Σταμούλης, *Βασικοί κανόνες ρητορικής και ρητορείας ομιλίας και επιστολογραφίας* (Αθήνα, 1972), 84 et al.

[15] Kennedy, *Ιστορία της κλασσικής ρητορικής*, 356. Specifically on his book f.n. 239.

[16] John Italos, *Του αυτού φιλοσόφου μέθοδος ρητορική εκδοθείσα κατά σύνοψιν* (ed. G. Ceretell, Tphilislis, 1924), 33–46.

[17] Regarding the life and work of John Italos see: Wolfgang Buchwald, Armin Hohlweg, and Otto Prinz, eds, *Tusculum. Λεξικόν Ελλήνων και Λατίνων συγγραφέων της Αρχαιότητας και του Μεσαίωνα*, vol. 1, trans. in Greek by Αθανάσιος Φούρλας (Αθήνα: Αθανάσιος Φούρλας, 1993), 256–7. See *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, vol 9 (Αθήνα: Εκδοτική Αθηνών, 1980), 350–1. Cf. Βασίλειος Τατάκης, *Η Βυζαντινή Φιλοσοφία*, trans. from French by Εύα Καλπουρτζή (Αθήνα: Εταιρεία Σπουδών Νεοελληνικού Πολιτισμού και Γενικής Παιδείας, 1977), 201–7. Furthermore see Σωτηρία Τριαντάρη-Μαρά, 'Η ρητορική στο φιλόσοφο Ιωάννη Ιταλό', *Βυζαντινός Δόμος* 13 (2002–2003): 13–25. In Σωτηρία Τριαντάρη-Μαρά, *Θέματα φιλοσοφίας: Αρχαία, βυζαντινή και νεότερη φιλοσοφία. Κοσμολογία, λογική, αισθητική, πολιτική, ρητορική, εκπαίδευση* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Σταμούλης, 2007), 372–387.

[18] Plato's Gorgias or *Περί ρητορικής ανατρεπτικός και του ιδίου Φαίδρος*, trans., research, and comments by Παναγιώτης Δόικος (Θεσσαλονίκη: Ζήτρος, 2001).

students a concise manual of rhetoric equal to that of Aristotle, in which he highlighted the Platonic background of his syllogism as well.[19]

Italos defined rhetoric, stressing that this definition derived from Aristotle himself, according to whom rhetoric is the most glorious and important of all other methods, because it can find the perceived probable on the topic under discussion, namely convincing arguments. Italos reconciled Aristotle's with Plato's view, and he illustrated that there is a relation between rhetoric and dialectic. This relation is founded on the cooperation between persuasion and teaching. His view is contrary to that of Aristotle, who attributed the above definition exclusively to the method of rhetoric.[20]

Italos points out the differences and similarities that exist between rhetoric and dialectic. He mentions the kinds of rhetorical speech and briefly referred to forensic speech. Italos paid particular attention to the content of political rhetoric, which deals mainly with issues that concern political virtue, as it is the foundation of political life, cohabitation, and the society of citizens among themselves, as well as the preservation of law and obedience to it. The political orator, who must have the appropriate verbal style, undertakes the dissemination and comprehension of issues of political virtue, which are discussed in public, and he aims at the prosperity and affluence of the state, as well as at the common interest of the citizens.[21] Italos adopted Plato's and Aristotle's thought, and he considers the orators's skill in rhetorical art to be made apparent in the communication with his audience. Italos stressed that the foundation of this communication is the combination of perfect knowledge of the issue under discussion, the listener's psychology, and the orator's verbal skill.[22]

[19] Τριαντάρη, 'Η ρητορική στο φιλόσοφο Ιωάννη Ιταλό', 372–373.

[20] John Italos, *Του αυτού φιλοσόφου μέθοδος ρητορική εκδοθείσα κατά σύνοψιν*, 33, 1–3: *Ἡ ῥητορικὴ μέθοδός ἐστιν ἐξ' ἐνδόξων τοῦ περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρήσαι τὸ πιθανόν, διο καὶ ἀντιστρόφως ἐστὶ τῇ διαλεκτικῇ, ὥς φησιν Ἀριστοτέλης*'. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* A, 1355b, 32–34 and Plato, *Gorgias,* 453e, 454b. For the thorough analysis of this subject see Τριαντάρη, 'Η ρητορική στο φιλόσοφο Ιωάννη Ιταλό', 374–375. Regarding the power of persuasion in Plato see Χλόη Μπάλλα, *Πλατωνική Πειθώ* (Αθήνα: Πόλις, 1997), 111–12. Μπασάκος, *Επιχειρήματα και κρίση*, 49. Regarding the relation between rhetoric and dialectic in Aristotle see Amélie O. Rorty, *Aristotle's Rhetoric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 7 et al.

[21] Ιωάννης Ιταλός, *Του φιλοσόφου μέθοδος ρητορική εκδοθείσα κατά σύνοψιν*, 35, 7–12: *Πολιτικὰ μὲν οὖν ἐκείνα ῥητέον, ὅσα περὶ ἀρετῆς ἔχει τὴν ἐξέτασιν οὐ πάσης, ἀλλὰ τῆς πολιτικῆς, καθ' ἣν καὶ πολιτεύεσθαι εἰώθαμεν, ἤτοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους συναναστρέφεσθαι καὶ σῴζειν ἕκαστα τῶν τῳ νόμῳ διατεταγμένων, ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα […]. Ὧν δὴ τὴν ἀκριβὴν κατανόησιν ἔχειν ἔργον μὲν οὐ ῥητορικῆς πλὴν τῶν ὧν πορρητικὼς ἔχομεν*. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* A 1357b, 39–40 και 1359b, 19–23.

[22] Ιωάννης Ιταλός, *Του φιλοσόφου μέθοδος ρητορική εκδοθείσα κατά σύνοψιν*, 35, 16–23: *Ἐπεί διχῶς τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐγγίγνεσθαι φάσιν […] οὐκ ἀργὸν ἔδοξεν εἶναι οὐδ' ἀπὸ λογισμῶν λόγω τὴν τοιαύτην διάθεσιν ταῖς δεχομέναις ψυχαῖς ἐμποιεῖν καὶ ἄγειν πρὸς τὸ καλόν. Ἐν δὴ τούτοις καὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν ἡ ῥητορικὴ κέκτηκαι, κατηγοροῦσα μὲν ὧν δεῖ κατηγορεῖν, συμβουλευομένη δὲ τὰ εἰκότα καὶ ἐκ τῶν δοκούντων ἑκάστοις τοὺς λόγους ποιουμένη ὡς εἴρηται*. Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 269d–272b and Aristotle *Rhetoric* A, 1356a, 21–26. Regarding the necessary knowledge of the technical norms of rhetoric from the politician, as it is presented by Plato see Alfred Edward Taylor, *Πλάτων, Ο άνθρωπος και το έργο του*, trans. in Greek by Ιορδάνης Αρζόγλου (Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 2000), 364–5. Regarding the art of rhetoric and orator's verbal skill in Aristotle see Ingemar Dűring, *Αριστοτέλης, Παρουσίαση και ερμηνεία της σκέψης του*, trans. in Greek by Παρασκευή Κοτζιά-Παντελή (Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 1994), 233.

Italos appropriated the Aristotelian view regarding the inseparable relationship between rhetoric and politics and he stressed the points that prove this relationship. He pointed out the importance of political speech, illustrating that rhetorical art can be a useful tool for a genuine political orator, who seeks the most direct way of communication with his audience. In Italos' syllogism, a politician without oratorical skill seems passive and helpless. Italos emphasised political speech, on the one hand to serve the political ideology of each era, on the other hand to constitute a significant communicative factor, which inseparably links philosophy and politics to the personality of the political man.[23]

The fourteenth-century Byzantine scholar, humanist, and erudite, Theodore Metochites, who in his voluminous work *Υπομνηματισμοί και Σημειώσεις γνωμικαί*, which contains a small chapter titled: *Ότι διὰ τὴν πρὸς Πλάτωνα μάχην σπουδάζει ἠξίωσεν Ἀριστοτέλης περί ταὴν ῥητορικήν*,[24] strictly criticized Aristotle's personality and treatise on rhetoric.

Theodore Metochites' criticism in Aristotle's rhetoric

Metochites, in a small chapter preceding this chapter, pointed out the aversion the great philosopher of ancient times, Plato, showed to rhetorical method. Specifically, he pointed out that even Plato himself as an orator, even though his speech was considered to be sufficiently enlightened, avoided the orator's method from the beginning, refraining from rhetorical wiles in parliamentary and judicial games, and at the same time accusing other orators of concealing the truth.[25] Metochites indirectly highlighted a highly significant issue, which Platonic criticism touched upon: the division and distinction between truth and plausibility. The roots of their causal connection are found in Plato's cosmological system, and specifically in the division and reduction of the perceptible from the conceivable world. However, Metochites considered the Platonic position extreme, regarding the interest of rhetoric in the knowledge of the truth—if we take into consideration the fact that in Plato's *Phaedrus,* the deception of the audience does not constitute the basic touchpoint in the Platonic criticism of rhetoric. Moreover, according to Plato, the knowledge of

[23] Regarding John Italos' views on rhetorical art, as well as the views he drew from Plato and Aristotle, see Τριαντάρη, 'Η ρητορική στο φιλόσοφο Ιωάννη Ιταλό', 377.

[24] Theodore Metochites, *Υπομνηματισμοί και Σημειώσεις γνωμικαί* [Miscellanea Philosophica et Historica Graece] (Amsterdam: M. Th. Klessling, 1966), 155–59, 167–73.

[25] Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης, *Ότι διὰ τὴν πρὸς ῥητορικὴν πόλεμον εἰ διάλογος ὁ Πλάτων χρῆται,* 167*: Θαυμάσαι τις ἂν ἴσως εὖ μάλα ξυννούμενος τὸν εἰς τοσούτον τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ Πλάτωνος πρὸς ῥητορικὴν πόλεμον, καὶ τὴν κήρυκτον, ὡς εἰπεῖν, καθάπαξ ἄσπονδον μάχην, ὅτι καίτοι ῥητορικὸς ὡς ὁ ἀνήρ […] καὶ τὴν γλῶτταν εἰς ἄκρον πεπαιδευμένος διὰ τὴν κατὰ τῆς ῥητορικῆς ἐκτόπως ἐπ' αὐτοῦ πρόθεσιν κρατοῦσαν παντάπασιν ἀπέστη τοῦ καὶ ὀτι οὐν ἐξ ὀρθοῦ συγγράψασθαι κατὰ τὸ τῶν ῥητόρων ἔθος ποτάδην οἴκοθεν συνεχῆ καὶ ἀδιάκοπον τὸν δρόμον ποιούμενος.* 167–68: *Καὶ φεύγειν* (sc. *Πλάτων*) *τὰ ῥητορικὰ μήκη, καὶ τοὺς διαύλους τῶν ἀγωνιστικῶν λόγων, ἐξ ὧν ἐν τοῖς βουλευτηρίοις τε καὶ δικαστηρίοις εὐδοκιμεῖν, μᾶλλον ἐξ ὧ ἐστιν, ὡς αὐτὸς βούλεται, συστρέφειν τοὺς ἀκροωμένους καὶ συγχεῖν καὶ κλέπτειν τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθειαν.*

the truth does not oblige the orator to avoid techniques that contribute to audience deception.[26]

The reader, through the study of the subsequent chapter that concerns us here, will understand the reason why Metochites presents, in an exagerrated way, Plato's acute criticism of rhetorical art. Metochites, known for his erudition and philo-Platonism,[27] laid the appropriate foundations to show the reason for Aristotle's engagement in rhetoric. At the same time, he attempted to illustrate the verbal weakness of the Stagirite philosopher, as well as his lack of rhetorical skill.

Metochites claimed that Aristotle clearly engaged in rhetoric, wrote his treatise on rhetoric, and, as its master, used to receive money for his engagement in it. Thus, he really showed himself opposed to the negative attitude his teacher Plato displayed to rhetorical art.[28] In a masterful way, Metochites demonstrated[29] Aristotle's spiritual inferiority to Plato. In particular, he pointed out that Aristotle went forward to his self-demotion through his actions and his immeasurable behaviour, which he characterised as 'anti-praxis' against Plato.[30]

Metochites contrasted the noble and gentle language that Plato used in his arguments with the rhetorical method and the improper handling of language from Aristotle in his conflict against social criticism on rhetoric. Metochites characterised the Aristotelian speech as untrue and unpracticed. It is obvious that Metochites was also trying to belittle the tone and style of Aristotelian speech, and the quality of Aristotle's rhetorical writing, perhaps even indirectly, using as a weapon the—directly hostile—argument of the 'Stagerite' against Plato, which diverged from the technical norms of rhetoric. Metochites pointed out that, although Aristotle studied rhetorical art, with his misuse of language, he appears incapable of learning. On the contrary, Plato, who strictly criticised rhetoric, used its weapons, such as eloquence.[31]

[26] Regarding platonic criticism in rhetoric Μπάλλα, Πλατωνική Πειθώ, 98–99.

[27] Σωτηρία Τριαντάρη-Μαρά, 'Ο "σκεπτικισμός" στους Βυζαντινούς διανοητές του 14ου αι.: Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης – Νικηφόρος Γρηγοράς', *Βυζαντινά* 20, n. 1 (1999): 45.

[28] Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης, *Ὅτι διά τήν πρός Πλάτωνα μάχην σπουδάζει ἠξίωσεν 'Αριστοτέλης περί τήν ρητορικήν', 170–71: Καὶ οἱ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς διάλογοι πιστούνται, καὶ πολύ γε μηδὲν ἧττον, ὅτι μὴ καὶ μᾶλλον ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸ κατὰ τοῦ Πλάτωνος καὶ λόγοις πᾶσι, καὶ τρόποις πᾶσι, καὶ χρήσει πολέμιον Ἀριστοτέλους, ὅς γε καὶ μὴ πεφυκὼς περὶ τὴν γλῶτταν, εὖ μηδ'ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀσκήσας εὐστομίας ἐνέργειαν ῥητορικός τις εἶναι βούλεται, καὶ περὶ ῥητορικῆς εὖ μάλ' ὡς βελτίστου κατὰ τὸν βίον χρήματος, αὐτόθεν ἄξιοι δάσκαλος εἶναι, καὶ βιβλία τῇ τῶν λόγων τέχνη συντάττει […]. Μηδ' ἐξὸν ἴσως αὐτῷ κάλλιστ' ἐνταῦθα σπουδάζειν καὶ δείκνυσθαι, ἀλλ' ἢ μόνον δι' ἐναντιότητα καὶ πόλεμον πρὸς Πλάτωνα.*

[29] See Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης, 170: *Καὶ πολλῷ γε πλέον θαυμάζειν ἔχομεν Ἀριστοτέλους καὶ τὴν μετρίαν αὐτοῦ κατὰ τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ Πλάτωνος, τοῦ πάσης τῆς σοφίας ἡγεμόνος αὐτῷ, καὶ διὰ πάντων ἀντιπολιτείαν πρὸς αὐτὸν Πλάτωνα καὶ ἀντίπραξιν ξυνορᾶν βουλόμεθα πάντως, καὶ γνώμης οὐ χρηστῆς καὶ φιλοσόφου τιθέμεθα.*

[30] Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης, *Ὅτι διά τήν πρός Πλάτωνα μάχην σπουδάζει ἠξίωσεν 'Αριστοτέλης περί τήν ρητορικήν'*, 170: *Καὶ πολλῷ γε πλέον θαυμάζειν ἔχομεν Ἀριστοτέλους καὶ τὴν μετρίαν αὐτοῦ κατὰ τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ Πλάτωνος, τοῦ πάσης τῆς σοφίας ἡγεμόνος αὐτῷ, καὶ διὰ πάντων ἀντιπολιτείαν πρὸς αὐτὸν Πλάτωνα καὶ ἀντίπραξιν ξυνορᾶν βουλόμεθα πάντως, καὶ γνώμης οὐ χρηστῆς καὶ φιλοσόφου τιθέμεθα.*

[31] Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης, *Ὅτι διά τήν πρός Πλάτωνα μάχην σπουδάζει ἠξίωσεν 'Αριστοτέλης περί τήν ρητορικήν'*, 171: *Καὶ τὸ μὴ χαρίεν ἐκεῖνος (sc Ἀριστοτέλης) μὲν κατὰ τῆσ ερήτορικῆς εὐγενῶς τῇ φωνῇ*

From the arguments above, it becomes clear that Aristotle's rhetoric was not read sufficiently by the Byzantines. Moreover, it was subject to harsh criticism, particularly from Plato's adherents, such as Theodore Metochites. This criticism applied to both personality and Aristotle's work. In addition, as previously mentioned,[32] the Platonic dialogues *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias* constituted a subject of study at schools of philosophy more so than Aristotle's rhetoric.

Despite Theodore Metochites' harsh criticism about Aristotle's way and method of writing, certain Byzantine scholars, such as John Doxapatris (first half of the eleventh century), specifically in his work on *Περί το ευρέσεως Ερμογένους βιβλίον*, may have infrequently used Platonic and Aristotelian elements in their commentaries, drawn from subsequent Alexandrian commentators of Aristotle, such as Olympiodorus, David and Elias.[33]

The influence of Aristotle's rhetoric on the Byzantines is revealed through the correlation of language with rhetoric. Four theories of language have been formulated to highlight this correlation and the most prevalent among Byzantines scholars was that of Isocrates and Aristotle.[34]

The Aristotelian view of language and the effects on Byzantine rhetoric

Language is a significant factor in the discussion process. It is the means of rhetoric, the instrument of communication, as well as the motive for action. Rhetoric cannot exist without language. According to Aristotle, all linguistic practices have a fundamental place in the discussion process, (i.e., in the social activity of forming opinion and making collective choices). Regarding language, there are four theories, that highlight its correlation with rhetoric.[35]

According to the Sophists, language is the orator's weapon, he wields it to influence human souls, to lead them to good or evil, and to persuade.[36] The Sophists tried to establish their rhetoric on the empirical and autonomous use of language.

χρώμενος καὶ συγγράφων, οὗτος δ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ῥητορικῆς διὰ πάντων ρρητόρευτος τὴν γλῶτταν καὶ τοῦ λέγειν ἀνάσκητος. 172: *Ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀδικῶν* (sc *Ἀριστοτέλης*) *μὲν ἴσως, προσποιεῖται δ' ὅμως κατολιγωρεῖν, περὶ ἃ μαλιστ' ἐσπούδακεν, ὁ δὲ* (sc *Πλάτων*) *μηδὲν ἧττον δικῶν τα ἀληθές, ἑαυτοῦ ποιεῖται καὶ σοφίζεται, πὼς ἄν ἐπιεικῶς εἴποιμι: ὧν αὐτῷ μὴ μέτεστι.*

[32] ibid f.n. 4

[33] Kustas, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric*, 24. Cf. Χριστίνα-Παναγιώτα Μανωλέα, 'Ερμηνευτικές προσεγγίσεις του Ιωάννη Δοξαπατρή στα έργα του Ερμογένους', *Λακωνικά* 192, (2000): 27–28.

[34] Σωτηρία Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας από την Αρχαιότητα στο Βυζάντιο, Η επικαιροποίηση της ρητορικής και η εξέλιξή της* (Αθήνα: Σταμούλης, 2016), 67 et al.

[35] Regarding the analysis of the three classical theories about the relation of language with rhetoric, I used the valuable and very significant study of John Poulakos, Takis Poulakos, *Classical Rhetorical Theory* (Boston-New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 89–118.

[36] *Gorgias' Encomium of Helen*, & 8, 330–331. '*ο λόγος δυνάστης μέγας είναι, που με το πιο μικρό και το πιο αφανές σώμα θειότατα έργα επιτελεί. Μπορεί και φόβο να παύει και λύπη να διώχνει και χαρά να φέρει και συμπόνια περίσσεια μέσα μας να γεννά*'. For the translation of this passage, see T. Pentzopoulou -Valala, 1999, 331.

Plato claimed that knowledge of things precedes language. In his work '*Sophist*', he observes objects and researches their essence, regardless of language and without its contribution.[37] He does not acknowledge the autonomy of language, because its dynamic, unbreakably linked to his idealistic view, is based on the rise of the metaphysical reminiscent truth. The ensuring of moral and gnoseological points of rhetoric is based on the uniqueness of truth, given by philosophical speech.[38]

Isocrates, in his theory about language, understood this as a fundamental element and power that is considered necessary for the foundation and consolidation of human civilization. Isocrates presented the general perception about rhetoric as a reason that leads to coordinated activity for the benefit of the city. With this perception about the art of rhetoric, he stood out from other orators. Isocrates had the temperament of the practical orator, making rhetorical art an art of public conversation regarding city issues.[39]

Aristotle, on *Ῥητορική*, created a strong bond and a strong relationship between speech, morality and passion. He considered the linguistic and syllogistic skills of the orator as a source of projection of his morals and as an effect on the passions of the audience. Aristotle understood language as a natural phenomenon, as a tool of knowledge, as an exhortation to action and as a means of artistic expression. According to Aristotle, language has three uses: a)- the theoretical that serves as an instrument of knowledge, b)- the practical that functions as a means of communication, and c)- the productive that appears as a form of artistic expression. Language functions as a material, with which the artist builds words, aiming at the audience's pleasure.[40]

Aristotle stressed the practical use of language at the level of communication. He understood, on the one hand, consensus as a common semantic definition of a word, which concerns its esoteric mental state, and, on the other hand, the differentiality in language, which regards its exoteric state. A fundamental element in communication is the point, concerning the exact meaning of word, which makes language the basic instrument of communication.[41] Language is the orator's weapon, that he should be able to handle it with ease, in order to conquer the psychology and acceptance of the audience. It is not enough for the orator to be eloquent, but the right use of language is required as well: a clear articulation, a strong and pleasant voice, appropriate pacing, being neither too loquacious nor too brief.[42]

[37] Plato, *Sophist* 263e3. Introduction, translation, comments Δ. Γληνός, (Αθήνα: Ζαχαρόπουλος, 1971)

[38] Poulakos, *Classical Rhetorical Theory*, 13, 92.

[39] Takis Poulakos, *Speaking for the polis. Isocrates' Rhetorical Education* (California: University of South California Press, 1997), 10–11. Cf. Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας,* 74–75.

[40] Poulakos, *Classical Rhetorical Theory*, 114. Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας,* 107.

[41] Regarding the interest of Aristotle in the importance he gave to words, see Deborah K.W. Modrak, *Aristotle's Theory of Language and Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13–23.

[42] Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας,* 78–79.

Aristotle defined the semantic purpose of language, concentrated his interest on the common semantology of words, and introduced the basic purpose of language, which is communication.[43]

The theories of Isocrates and Aristotle prevailed in Byzantine rhetoric. Michael Psellos (1018–1072), in his concise treatise about rhetoric,[44] considered rhetoric as a tool of the politician and politics. Rhetoric, with its aesthetic quality, achieves through the variety of shapes, words, and sentences the formation of argument as a result of the free personal expression of the orator, who constantly changes masks to persuade, through the alteration of content and style of his arguments. Psellos seems to have adopted the Aristotelian notion that 'rhetoric appears with the clothes and masks of politics'.[45] Psellos adopted the Aristotelian view about the productive use of language and highlighted the aesthetically high through the modes and stylistic and verbal forms, such as modesty, roughness, and brightness. The aesthetic dress of sound, style, rhythm, and content embellish and prettify every political speech, that stands out for the specific style and is characterised by morality, truth, abundance, swiftness, clarity, roughness, vigour, modesty, brightness, skill and methods.[46]

Michael Psellos' thought is dominated on the one hand by the aesthetic perception of a self-made speech, which is distinguished for its beauty and artistic value, which appears in the selection and variety of beautiful words and phrases, with the orator's main goal being to attract the audience. On the other hand, it becomes clear that the syllogistic proof, which substantiates the arguments, is more stable and by no means questionable with respect to political speech. He advises to put the words with relevance to political style at the end of arguments, in order to highlight the inspiration and autonomy of the artist-orator, seeking to embody the ideal orator.[47] In his rhetoric, Psellos conspicuously supported the Aristotelian productive use of language as a condition of a dynamic self-made and inspired speech.

John Tzetzes (1110–1185) wrote a concise manual of rhetoric with the title *Ἐπιτομὴ ῥητορικῆς*.[48] The technical use of rhetoric was fundamental for Tzetzes, particularly when it serves the interest of the city and is defined by the city's laws in force. The practical use of rhetoric is made indisputable when the orator argues and obeys his city's law, thus simultaneously accomplishing the one and basic gift that

[43] Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας,* 111–12.

[44] Michael Psellos, *On Rhetoric*, vol. III, ed. Chr. Walz (Rhetores Graeci, 1834), 687–703.

[45] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* A, 1356a. Cf. Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας*,128–29.

[46] Michael Psellos, *On Rhetoric*, 702–3: '*ὁ λόγος δ' ὁ πολιτικὸς πᾶσι μὲν κεκοσμείσθω. τὰς δε γε κατ' ἐξαίρετον ἐχέτω τὰς ἰδέας. τὸ ἠθικὸν, τὸ ἀληθὲς, τὸ περιβεβλημένον· γοργότητα, σαφήνειαν, τὸ τραχὺ, τὸ ἀκμαῖον. Σεμνότητα, λαμπρότητα, δεινότητα, μεθόδους*'. Nf. Jeffrey Walker, 'Michael Psellos on Rhetoric: A Translation and Commentary on Psellos' Synopsis of Hermogenes', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31 (2001): 27.

[47] Jakov N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, trans. in Greek by Αργυρώ Τζέλεσι (Αθήνα: Κανάκης, 2004), 207, 217.

[48] Ιωάννης Τζέτζης, *Ἐπιτομὴ ῥητορικῆς*, vol. III, ed. Christianus Walz (Stuttgartiae et Tubingae, 1834), 670.

Aristotle had already stressed with regards to rhetoric, namely the orator's moral through his character.[49] Tzetzes tried to define a stable, strong, and communicatively practical rhetorical speech.[50] The originality in Tzetze's thoughts is revealed in his mixing of forensic with panegyric speech, consultative with panegyric, as well as with the mixture of three kinds of speech, the forensic, consultative, and panegyric.[51] With the mixture of three kinds of speech, Tzetzes emphasised the second basic principle, that provides the orator with the capability to create his speech and the character of his style autonomously, exercising his synthetic ability as well.

In this way he combines the speeches, while simultaneously altering them according to the circumstances, which are associated with persons. Tzetzes wanted with the mixture of three kinds of speech to make the sensibility and practicality of speech possible, considering that both elements strengthen the orator's verbal skill.[52]

Joseph Rakendites (1280–1328) attempted to highlight the self-reliance of speech, which pervaded the relativistic perception of the Sophists, through the Aristotelian perception about the practicality of speech. Rakendites wrote the *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*,[53] which is included in his extensive work *Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*. It is a concise display of rhetorical art, in which he sought to highlight the value and importance of rhetoric for the Byzantines.[54] Rakendites stressed the power of persuasion, which he subordinated to the orator's self-reliance of speech. He made rhetorical political speech communicative, and placed it at the level of the orator's psychological comprehension of the audience's emotions. The public's acceptance of an argument relies basically on its nature, which is psychology. As such, amongst two means that render an orator's argument acceptable by the public—intellect and will—he emphasised will. Consequently, the good orator and politician base the persuasiveness of their speech on what is likeable, and not too much on what is proved. The formation of speech is attributed to the orator's will, who appears as a thinker of the time of '*στοχαστὴς γὰρ τοῦ καιροῦ ἐστιν ὁ ῥήτωρ*',[55] and he influences the public in order to express the views, ideas and feelings of his people.

The most important element in Rakendites' manual is that it combines all three uses of language: a)- The theoretical, where language functions as an instrument of knowledge transfer, which the orator should have in order to compose the reasoning processes, arguments, and evidence. Thus, the knowledge of history con-

[49] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* A, 1356a.

[50] Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας,* 138.

[51] Ιωάννης Τζέτζης, *Ἐπιτομὴ ῥητορικῆς*, 671: '*δικανικοῦ παράδειγμα συμμίκτου πανηγύρει […] τῆς συμβουλῆς παράδειγμα μικτῆς τῇ πανηγύρει […] τῶν δὲ τριῶν παράδειγμα εἰδῶν συμμεμιγμένων δικανικοῦ, τῆς συμβουλῆς, τοῦ πανηγυρικοῦ τε*'.

[52] Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας,* 141–42.

[53] Ιατρός Ιωσήφ Πιναρός Ρακενδύτης, *Σύνοψις της ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Christianus Walz (Rhetores Graeci, 1834), 467–68.

[54] Σωτηρία Τριαντάρη, 'Η Ρητορική ως εγχειρίδιο πολιτικής αγωγής στον Ιωσήφ Ρακενδύτη ή φιλόσοφο', *Παρνασσός* 41, (1999): 343–61. Cf. Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας*, 144.

[55] Ρακενδύτης, *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, 505, 3–9.

stitutes an inexhaustible source of evidence that the orator uses as an example in his speech.[56] b)- The practical, which is communicative with the help of verbal and stylistic forms.[57] The orator's speech takes into account the psychological state of the audience, following the Aristotelian combination of the psychological and logical persuasion. c)- The productive use of language, consisting of the artistic style of speech and highlighting its aesthetic perspective, Rakendites pointed this out, delivering along with the preamble in epitome and written in iambic verse the content of rhetoric, which he then analysed in prose.[58]

The post-Byzantine philo-Platonist George Gemistos Plethon (1360–1452) attempted to invoke the practical and productive use of language. Plethon borrowed many elements from Aristotle's rhetoric. Despite the fact that in a large part of his thought he disapproved of the Aristotelian philosophy, he adopted positions of Aristotelian rhetoric, with the ultimate goal of raising rhetoric to a kind of political consciousness.[59]

Plethon adopted the division of Aristotelian *rhetoric* and separated speech into forensic, which is based on the category and plea with a purpose of ensuring the law· consultative, which is based primarily on exhortation or dissuasion, with common interest as a goal, and into panegyric or rigorous, which moves towards praise and blame, with good being the ultimate goal.[60] Plethon indicated that the orator must be trained: a) in how to use the rhetorical forms, in order to persuade, communicate with his audience and to contribute to the progress of rhetorical art and b) in how to correctly express with words his thoughts, feelings, arguments, morality, and passion. Plethon presented the rhetorical method by which the aesthetic element in language formation is projected, in order to responsibly achieve political oratory, which is determined by the practical separation of rhetoric in the above three kinds. The orator is obliged to know the content and purpose of each kind. The orators are trained in a system of cultural communication, which is directly related to their personal benefit and their need for fame and glory. This was proved by Plethon's emphasis on the purpose that each of the three kinds of speech serves.[61] He pointed

[56] Ρακενδύτης, *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς* 492, 4–6.

[57] Ρακενδύτης, *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, 497, 3–7, 16–18, 25–27: '*τὸ δὲ μέγεθος τοῦ λόγου καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα πρώτην ἔχει ἰδέαν τὴν σεμνότητα, ἧς ἔννοιαι μὲν αἱ περὶ θεοῦ καὶ ὡρῶν καὶ κτισμάτων καὶ περὶ νόμων, καὶ περὶ ἀρετῶν καὶ πραγμάτων μεγάλων, σεισμοῦ τε καὶ χειμῶνος, καὶ τῶν ἐξῆς […] σχήματα δὲ σεμνά, εἴπερ καὶ καθαρά, τὸ ποφαντικῶς ἐκφέρειν τὸν λόγον, καὶ τὸ εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνώμην ἀναφέρειν τὸ ῥηθησόμενον […] ὁ δὲ σεμνῶς λέγων περιαργεῖν καὶ βεβηκέναι καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν λεγομένων ὀφείλει, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτων δῆλος καὶ ὁ ῥυθμὸς τῆς σεμνότητος*'. Cf. Hermogenes, *Prolegomenon Sylloge*, ed. H. Rabe (1931), 241, 10–24, 242, 1–20, 21–22, 388, 8–10.

[58] Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας*, 146.

[59] Τριαντάρη, *Η ρητορική, Η τέχνη της επικοινωνίας*, 168.

[60] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* A, 1358b. Cf. Plethon or Gemistos, *Σύντομη περί τινων μερῶν τῆς ῥητορικῆς,* vol. 1, ed. Christianus Walz, (Rhetores Graeci, 1832), 546–98, 546–47.

[61] Γεώργιος Ξ. Τσάμπης, *Η παιδεία στο Χριστιανικό Βυζάντιο* (Αθήνα: Ιρηγόρης, 1999), 307. According to those mentioned by Tsampis, Plethon adopted this part from Kamariotis.

out the degree of psychological encouragement and political communicative speech with the masterful use of verbal forms, which were subdivided into categories.[62]

In Plethon's thought, the Isocratic and Aristotelian view of speech was established, which seems to serve many purposes, such as: to renew the ancient form of rhetorical art, which was graced by elegance, beauty and accuracy—to train the youth at the time of Plethon in a rhetoric free from any religious evidence—to incite the orators to highlight the social and political role of rhetorical speech, in order to be instructors towards a democratisation of the institutions, which, at that time, were being subjected to the divine right of kings, which was often equivalent to the profound esoteric and exoteric oppression of human personality.[63]

Conclusion

Aristotle's rhetoric was a source of inspiration for the Byzantines, at times demanding their interest and at other times inciting their criticism. The Byzantine rhetoric inherited from Aristotle the first communicative model, which was based on the threefold use of Aristotelian view about language that the Byzantines often adopted with respect to Isocrates's theory. The present historical-philosophical review constitutes a brief deepening of the degree of influence of Aristotelian rhetoric in Byzantium. The Byzantine interest in Aristotelian rhetoric is highlighted in many ways, either by the Byzantine commentaries on his rhetoric, the adoption of elements, that concerned mainly verbal, stylistic forms and basic points of the orator's personality, which should characterise the emperor as well, or the combined use of Aristotle's tripartite perception of language. Aristotle's rhetoric created a favourable ground for the development of the social and political role of rhetoric in Byzantium. In this context, Byzantine rhetoric emphasised the communicative role of the orator, and, through the aestheticality and practicality underlying the orator's speech, significantly contributed to the evolution of communication, based on the two-way relation and interaction of the orator with his audience.

[62] Plethon or Gemistos, *Σύντομη περί τινων μερῶν τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, 562–66.

[63] Sotiria Triantari, 'Plethon's views on rhetorician's education: Brief interpretation of the parts of Rhetoric', *Skepsis* (2009): 296–97.

Visions of political philosophy in the 'Commentary on Aristotle's Politics' by Michael of Ephesus

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In this work, in the fragmentary Commentary on Aristotle's Politics, Michael of Ephesus (1059–1129) says that in nature there are relations of sovereignty and subordination. This relationship validates the view of natural slavery, that there are masters by nature and slaves by nature. The organic use of the slave by the master or of the subject by the sovereign resembles the sovereignty of the soul over the body. In addition, Michael points out that the differentiation between politicians and citizens is not just about governance and subordination, but also about the issue of virtues. A real political man would be an exemplary form of expression of the private and public application of the virtue of justice. This article, I think, highlights the political philosophy in Byzantium and specifically the Aristotelian political philosophy, as it is understood and developed by important thinkers of the same period, such as Michael of Ephesus.

If we want to deal with political philosophy in Byzantium, and specifically with Aristotelian political philosophy, we cannot ignore the fragmentary commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* by Michael of Ephesus (1059–1129). In this study, the Byzantine thinker addressed the basic problems of Aristotelian thought and political philosophy in general, attempting to interpret basic directions of Aristotelian political philosophy, but also to integrate them into the political model of the Byzantine Empire.

The ruler as a simulation of the divine mind

A structural parameter of Michael's thought is the perception of political governance as a simulation of divine dominance in the universe. This idea is not new but is inherited from the ancient Greek tradition and specifically from the Pythagoreans. According to the Pythagoreans, the communication between the parties of a political community must be modelled on the communication between the different parts of the universe. The universe, however, was not created acciden-

tally, but it was a product of rational design. The divine creator constructed the world and used its parts in order and rationality to achieve harmonious arrangement and seemliness. The creator and ruler of the universe is the rational god, who excels in his creation; having full knowledge of its essence and purpose, he is the cause and purpose of everything. In an absolute analogy, the political governor—since he first imitates the creator himself and establishes order and harmony within his individual nature, having attained self-knowledge of the essence and purpose of the man and becoming virtuous himself among the other political parts of the political entity—must properly assemble the political whole to give it a seemliness[1] and harmonious arrangement that is analogous to the universe.[2] This image of the political governor as an imitator of the divine ruler of the universe is used by Michael to establish the superiority of the emperor in virtue in relation to his own citizens, thus linking political and ecclesiastical power. However, Michael's interpretation attempts to rely on an Aristotelian basis,[3] as it adopts Aristotle's interpretation of the natural sovereignty of the rational part over the irrational.[4] Michael carries this interpretation into the political field by identifying the governor with the rational part.

The concept of natural slavery

Paradoxically, the notion of political sovereignty as an imitation of the divine ruler is founded in Aristotle's well-known view of natural slavery. The expression slave by nature (*φύσει δοῦλον*) is a conspicuous Aristotelian assumption of natural slavery based on the difference in natural abilities between human beings and in the political union of people into the background of natural bliss-integration.[5] The relationship between their sovereignty and the subordination of the other which

[1] C.f., Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, 293 (*Aristotelis Politica*, ed. Otto Immisch [Leipzig, 1929], 293–327), (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b, 6).

[2] C.f., Joannes Stobaeus, *Anthology, Ὑποθῆκαι Περὶ βασιλείας* ΜΗ′, 61–66, Διωτογένεος Πυθαγορείου *ἐκ τοῦ Περὶ βασιλείας* (περ. 400 π.Χ.)*: βασιλέως ὥσπερ θεῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὦ ἀγεμών τε καὶ προστάτας ἐντί, ξυνᾷ μὲν τὸ ποτὶ μίαν ἀρχάν τε καὶ ἀγεμονίαν τὸ ὅλον ξυναρμόσθαι, καθ′ ἕκαστον δὲ τὸ καὶ τὰ κατὰ μέρος ποττὰν αὐτὰν ἁρμονίαν τε καὶ ἀγεμονίαν συναρμόζεσθαι.*

[3] C.f., Aristotle, *Politics*, 1284a. 9–15: *Ἀδικήσονται γὰρ ἀξιούμενοι τῶν ἴσων, ἄνισοι τοσοῦτον κατ′ ἀρετὴν ὄντες καὶ τὴν πολιτικὴν δύναμιν· ὥσπερ γὰρ θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις εἰκὸς εἶναι τὸν τοιοῦτον. Ὅθεν δῆλον ὅτι καὶ τὴν νομοθεσίαν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι περὶ τοὺς ἴσους καὶ τῷ γένει καὶ τῇ δυνάμει, κατὰ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστι νόμος· αὐτοὶ γάρ εἰσι νόμος. Καὶ γὰρ γελοῖος ἂν εἴη νομοθετεῖν τις πειρώμενος κατ′ αὐτῶν.*

[4] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a: *τὸ μὲν γὰρ δυνάμενον τῇ διανοίᾳ προορᾶν ἄρχον φύσει καὶ δεσπόζον φύσει, τὸ δὲ δυνάμενον [ταῦτα] τῷ σώματι πονεῖν ἀρχόμενον καὶ φύσει δοῦλον*. 'For that which can foresee by the exercise of mind is by nature intended to be lord and master, and that which can with its body give effect to such foresight is a subject, and by nature a slave'. C.f., Joannes Stobaeus, *Anthology, Περὶ Πολιτείας, Ἀρχύτα Πυθαγορείου ἐκ τοῦ Περὶ νόμου καὶ δικαιοσύνης*, ΜΓ′, 132. 22: *συνείρονται μὲν γὰρ ταὶ πράξιες ἐκ τοῦ ἄρχειν καὶ τοῦ ἄρχεσθαι καὶ τρί τον ἐκ τοῦ κρατεῖν. Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἄρχεν τῶ κρείσσονος οἰκῆον, τὸ δ′ ἄρχεσθαι τῶ χερήονος, τὸ δὲ κρατὲν ἀμφοτέρων· ἄρχει μὲν γὰρ τὸ λόγον ἔχον τᾶς ψυχᾶς, ἄρχεται δὲ τὸ ἄλογον, κρατοῦντι δὲ τῶν παθέων ἀμφότερα. Γίνεται γὰρ ἐκ τᾶς ἑκατέρων συναρμογᾶς ἀρετά.* C.f. Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, 293 (*Aristotelis Politica*, ed. Otto Immisch [Leipzig, 1929], 293–327), (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b, 6): *τὸ φύσει ἄρχον ἤτοι τὸν νοῦν*.

[5] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a.8.

takes place in the context of civil society is seen by Aristotle as evident and non-negotiable; there can be no political entity without the relations of sovereignty and subordination that underpin the concept of justice,[6] which is the cornerstone, the foundation of the human political road towards natural bliss.

Michael uses the Aristotelian terms *tool* and *acquirement* (*ὄργανον-κτῆμα*) to establish his position on power relations within the political community. The *tool* is considered as a means of producing other things and is defined as a *creative tool* (*ποιητικὸν ὄργανον*), while the *acquirement* is a simple tool and defined as a *practical tool (πρακτικόν ὄργανον).*[7] The slave by nature is also a *practical* and *creative tool* in his relationship with his master.[8] When subordinate to the master in a direct way, he is a *practical tool*. This domination resembles the dominance of the soul over the body. Just as the soul does what it wants to the body, so the master does whatever he wants to the slave. The soul uses the body as a *tool* and an *acquirement*. The body as an *acquirement* is nothing but a *tool* of the soul. On the contrary, when a slave is a *creative tool,* he serves the master by executing orders or creating something without the ability of mental processing.[9] It could be said that the relationship between the governor and the subject parallels for Michael the relationship between master and slave with the Aristotelian justification of the natural superiority of the rational over the irrational part. From this point of view, the subjugated, either as a slave or as a subject, is a living *acquirement* of the mentally superior governor-master. Indeed, the relationship of sovereignty and subordination is inevitable by nature because there cannot be a political society consisting only of sovereigns or only of subjects. The necessity of nature is inevitable.

Here, Michael, in order to be understood, uses another Aristotelian distinction between *mind* (*νοῦς*) and *appetition* (*ὄρεξις*). *Appetition* is presented in three forms: as *thymic*, as *desire,* and as *will.*[10] Appetition as a desire for pleasure is an irrational urge of the soul inherent in all living beings. The *thymic*, also inherent in all living beings, is an instinctive urge to punish another being for something evil that has come from it. On the contrary, *appetition* as *will* exists only in man. The *appetition* of a virtuous man with the function of rational judgment, with the function of mind, is transformed to *will.*[11] This ability of the *mind* to dominate the *appetition* defines the

[6] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a.37.

[7] Σωτηρία Τριαντάρη, *Οι πολιτικές αντιλήψεις των Βυζαντινών διανοητών* (Αθήνα: Ηρόδοτος, 2002), 61.

[8] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics* (1254a), 293–94: *ὁ δοῦλος ποτὲ μὲν πρακτικὸν ὄργανον ῥηθήσεται, ότὲ δὲ ποιητικόν.*

[9] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics* (1254a), 294: *Φύσει δοῦλος ἐστιν ὁ μὴ διορατικὸς τῶν πρακτέων δι' ἀφυΐαν ἀλλ' ὑπηρετικός.*

[10] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics* (1254b), 294:*Ἡ ὄρεξις ἀναιρεῖται εἰς θυμὸν καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν καὶ βούλησιν.*

[11] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics* (1254b), 294: *Τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὀρεξις μετὰ κρίσεως γινομένη βουλὴ καλεῖται.*

will and, by extension, the ability to engage in political or royal science.[12] It is worth noting that Michael argues that not all people can attain the right *will*, an essential requirement for political science. Not everyone can impose the dominance of rationalism on the desperate appetition of desires. This parameter also separates the majority decisions of the parliament from the decisions of a real political scientist. The parliament or the people decide and do anything they like with everything they please, while the political scientist decides and acts in accordance with the correctness that stems from the absolute dominance of rationalism over irrational impulses. The political scientist and the mind can make good use of the *will*, while the parliament or the people cannot, and this is a fundamental difference (in the good use of the *will* by the political scientist and by the parliament) in Michael's thought.[13]

The sovereign and the subjects

Thus, Michael provides four arguments detailing the difference between the sovereign and the subjects:

> 1) In nature there are relations of sovereignty and subordination. This relationship validates the view of natural slavery; there are masters by nature and slaves by nature. The slaves by nature have the function of a living tool (*ἐμψυχον ὄργανον*) for their masters. The difference between sovereign and subject, master and slave, is not conventional or arbitrary, but is based on the difference in the rational ability of every human being.
>
> 2) The organic use of the slave by the master or of the subject by the sovereign resembles the sovereignty of the soul over the body. The slave-subject is either a means of producing other things (*creative tool*)—for example, the hands construct/create something by obedience to cognitive commands without themselves having the ability to think—or a simple utilitarian tool (*practical tool*)—such as a hammer. The same is true in the case of civil governance, in which the rationalists have a commander position, while those who cannot adequately develop their rational ability are utilitarian tools of the government authority.
>
> 3) Within the human organism, there are the *appetition* and the *mind*. The blind sovereignty of the appetition to the mind is an animal process rather than a human process. Those who can impose the rationality of sovereignty on the irrational appetition of desires are proclaimed by Michael as sovereigns, while those who are driven by their desires through neglecting their

[12] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics* (1254b), 294: *ἄρχει ὁ νοῦς τῆς ὀρέξεως βασιλικὴν καὶ πολιτικήν.* C.f., Katerina Ierodiakonou, 'Some Observations on Michael of Ephesus' Comments on *Nicomachean Ethics* X', in *Medieval Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics,* eds Charles Barber and David Jenkins (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 185–202.

[13] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics* (1254b), 294: *Διαφέρει δὲ ὅτι ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς καὶ ὁ νοῦς δύνανται βουλεύεσθαι ἐκεῖνα δὲ οὔ.*

rational ability are subjects. Indeed, Michael defines political science as the sovereignty of rationality over appetition within the human soul. The real possibility of the *will* belongs to the rationalist man. Michael expresses his reservations about whether it is possible to have proper consultation in a democratic assembly, considering that political science can only be found in very few individuals.

4) Michael then draws another argument, this time not from Aristotelian but from Platonic philosophy (which Aristotle[14] also attempts to overturn). He refers to the argument of social mobility in Plato's *Republic* to prove that the city is not a single entity but is divided into subjects by the sovereigns because of their difference in virtue. According to the Platonic argument, the class of guardians must communicate with the class of creators so that there is unity in the city. If there was no communication between the social classes, we could not talk about a city but about two or more. The argument of social mobility validates, according to Plato, this position of political unity through the demotion to the class of creators those of the guardians' children who do not respond adequately to educational processes. On the contrary, the children of creators demonstrating remarkable skills in educational processes are promoted to the upper class of guardians, where there is also a reproductive community (the erotic companions of the guardians in the Platonic State are determined by the dominant class of philosophers-kings at a directed festival. The choice of erotic companions is based on the individual nature of the guardians). This mobility among members of civil society maintains its unity and certifies that it is a common political organisation. The whole city is common to Plato, whether we refer to guards or creators, the whole city is governed by unity, the city is a common natural and political organisation. However, Michael disputes the unity of the city as portrayed in the Platonic view. In fact, he notes that there are two opposing political parties within the city. The separation of the city into two parts is ratified by the enforcement of justice only in one place and not in both. The class of creators is subject to a justice process for the injustices committed by its members among themselves. On the other hand, there are no judicial proceedings in the class of the guardians because its members excel in virtue and rationality. There is no need for law enforcement in people who excel in virtue and have settled inside their souls through rationality the idea of justice, and thus never commit injustices.[15] Consequently, civil society is not

[14] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1261a–b.

[15] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1261a) 297: *κοινωνεῖν δὲ ἀλλήλοις ἀναγκαῖον δι' ἕν μέν, ὅτι δεῖ μίαν εἶναι τὴν πόλιν […]. Εἰ γὰρ τοῖς γεωργοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπάρχειν ἀνάγκη δίκας καὶ ἐγκλήματα κατ' ἀλλήλων, τοῖς δὲ φύλαξι διὰ τὴν παιδείαν μηδὲν τούτων, πῶς οὐχ ὑπενάντιοι; ἐνάντιοι γάρ πως οἱ δικαζόμενοι καὶ ἀπαίδευτοι τῶν μη δικαζομένων καὶ παιπεδευμένων.*

unified but consists of sovereigns and subjects according to the difference they have in virtue.[16]

Citizen and statesman

Aristotle states that the intellectual virtue of prudence (*φρόνησις*) as a structural catalyst of knowledge and the practice of political science is the property of the superior political man only, who is a political governor in the principles of natural right (i.e., the natural justice-order governing human nature and the political community. According to Aristotle, the distinctive feature of the mind is the point of differentiation between man and the other animals, but also between men as citizens or statesmen). The subjects do not have the virtue of prudence, but they participate in it through their consensual or coercive agreement on legal provisions, which are not active agents of prudence, but the reflection of supreme governmental prudence as a *true opinion* (*δόξα ἀληθής*).[17] *True opinion* (*δόξα ἀληθής*) is not a political science that can rationally prove its principles and steadfastly direct the will of the state towards the good human purpose of bliss,[18] but a declaration of faith without reason in the blissful political venture of the ruling prudence. This is the essential difference between the concept of citizen and the concept of the political man-statesman,[19] while prudence is the virtue that differentiates the political man from the ordinary citizen.[20] The real political man differs from the common citizen in that he possesses the virtue of prudence, which thus becomes the hallmark of the political man. A real political man,[21] through the virtue of prudence, defines scientifically rational rules of political virtue, in which ordinary citizens voluntarily submit to obedience to legal provisions by their uniform adherence to the true political opinion, which is not a rational prudence, but a mimetic reflection of it.

Also, following the Aristotelian vision, Michael differentiates the virtue of the citizen from the virtue of the virtuous man, who is essentially identified with the political man. The virtuous or political man is the only one who can rule—because of the virtue of prudence, as Aristotle has told us—while the virtuous citizen can

[16] C.f., George Arabatzis, 'Michael of Ephesus on the Empirical Man, the Scientist and the Educated Man (*In Ethica Nicomachea* X and *In de Partibus Animalium* I)', in *Medieval Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics,* eds Charles Barber and David Jenkins (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 163–184.

[17] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b.25–29: *Ἡ δὲ φρόνησις ἄρχοντος ἴδιος ἀρετὴ μόνη. τὰς γὰρ ἄλλας ἔοικεν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι κοινὰς καὶ τῶν ἀρχομένων καὶ τῶν ἀρχόντων, ἀρχομένου δέ γε οὐκ ἔστιν ἀρετὴ φρόνησις, ἀλλὰ δόξα ἀληθής.*

[18] Charles H. Kahn, 'The Normative Structure of Aristotle's *Politics*', in Günther Patzig, ed., *Aristoteles' 'Politik'* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 369–384.

[19] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1275a.23: *Πολίτης δ᾽ ἁπλῶς οὐδενὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὁρίζεται μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ μετέχειν κρίσεως καὶ ἀρχῆς.*

[20] *ἡ δὲ φρόνησις ἄρχοντος ἴδιος ἀρετὴ μόνη.*

[21] Terence H. Irwin, 'Moral Science and Political Theory in Aristotle', *History of Political Thought* 6 (1985): 150–68.

lead and follow[22] by participating in the governmental and judicial processes of civil society. In addition, Michael points out that the differentiation of politicians and citizens is not just about governance and subordination, but also about the issue of virtues. For example, the virtue of bravery exists both to the ruler and to the ruled, but in a different way.[23]

The virtue of justice

Michael attributes an important role to the virtue of justice for the functioning of the city as well as for the formation of the individual's moral identity and of the political man. At this point, a connection between Platonic and Aristotelian thought is attempted. From the beginning, Michael notes that justice and the just man are the greatest goods of the city,[24] the prerequisite, coherent ties to the political edifice. Also, the commentator of the text states that justice is part of the sphere of political science; justice is a predominantly political thing.[25] Then justice is defined as a permanent mood of the souls of people who cohabit and form a political society. Michael is completely clear that without justice, there can be neither cohabitation nor a political community.[26] In fact, it includes not only the political actors (i.e., rulers and ruled) but also those who live only within the city boundaries, such as the inhabitants,[27] thus recognizing the important role that they can play in the pursuit of politics. Then, Michael ends up defining justice as an order of political society, as an organisation that governs the political whole from one side to the other and determines its quality and stability.[28] The political nature of justice is once again highlighted. Here, Michael also mentions the justice that exists within the human soul by defining it as universal justice. Indeed, the existence of this universal justice guarantees the existence of the other three virtues of *bravery*, *prudence,* and *saneness* (*ἀνδρεία*, *φρόνησις*, *σωφροσύνη*).[29] Even here, Platonic influence is obvious.

[22] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1277b) 303: *οἱ δὲ πολῖται διάφοροι* […] *δῆλον, ὡς καὶ αἱ τούτων ἀρεταί* […] *ὅστις πολιτικός εὐδαίμων καὶ ἄρχειν μόνον δύναται, οὐ μὴν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι μέχρις ἂν εὐδαιμονήσειε* […]. *Διαφέρει δὲ ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ τοῦ σπουδαίου πολίτου, ὅτι ὁ μὲν σπουδαῖος πολίτης δύναται καὶ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι, ὁ δὲ ἀγαθὸς ἄρχειν μόνον.*

[23] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1277a) 303: *Ἄνδρεῖος καὶ ὁ ἄρχων καὶ ὁ ἀρχόμενος, ἀλλ' ἕτερον εἶδος ἀνδρείας* […]. *Ὥστε οὐ ταυτόν ἐστιν ἡ ἀνδρεία τοῦ ἄρχοντος τῇ τοῦ ἀρχομένου ἀνδρείᾳ.*

[24] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1253a) 293: *ὁ δίκαιος καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη μέγιστα ἀγαθὰ τυγχάνουσιν.*

[25] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1253a) 293: *ἔστι δὲ ἡ δικαιοσύνη πολιτικόν.*

[26] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1253a) 293: *ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἕξις τῶν συζώντων καὶ συμπολιτευομένων.*

[27] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1253a) 293: *συμπολιτεύονται καὶ οἱ ἐν πόλει οἰκοῦντες.*

[28] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1253a) 293: *Ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἔτι τάξις ἐστὶ πολιτική.*

[29] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1253b) 293: *ἡ καθόλου δικαιοσύνη διαιρεῖται εἰς τὴν ἀντιδιῃρημένην δικαιοσύνην τῇ ἀνδρείᾳ καὶ φρόνησει καὶ σωφροσύνη.*

Universal justice is contradicted by the four virtues: justice (in its individual form), *bravery*, *prudence* and *saneness.* (It is important to demonstrate the two-way course from universal justice to the four virtues, but also from the four virtues to universal justice. Universal justice is defined by the four virtues). It is particularly important that Michael does not restrict the functioning of justice to the political man but extends it to every citizen individually, recognizing in the virtue of justice respect for citizens in the political order of the system and the implementation of laws.[30] Justice justifies the orderly and correct functioning of the political system, which stems from the permanent mood of the soul in the virtue of justice in the souls of all members of the political community. In this respect, political justice is a function of the individual ethics of citizens. Citizens obey the laws, but they do so voluntarily, provided they have a permanent mood of virtue of justice within them without having to enforce the order of law.

Moreover, Michael notes that the law itself is not wrong, but the people who enact the laws are enslaved to their passions. That is why a real political man would be an exemplary form of expression of the private and public application of the virtue of justice. Subjects or citizens, imitating the justice inherent in the form of the true political man or the laws that are his creation, will be able to acquire more easily in their soul a permanent mood and a choice of the virtue of justice.[31]

The constitutions

Michael then approaches the issue of the distinction and comparison of the constitutions. Its purpose is to highlight the qualitative superiority of the royal constitution by strengthening the existing state of the Byzantine Empire. The king, having established justice through the justice in his soul and becoming a virtuous, true political man, must be able to apply law to the state, as God rules in the universe. However, Michael does not leave the subject with a superficial interpretation but tries to justify why a king is necessary if there is a law that is universal for every political member. The weakness of the law lies precisely in its universality.[32] The law, being universal, cannot intervene in the individual circumstances. While the king as a supreme legislator holds the rationality behind the legislative system, he can also intervene in individual circumstances to be more flexible or more objective in the administration of justice.[33] The same issue was raised by Plato in the *Statesman,* who wanted to demonstrate the rigidity of the law. Plato likens the law to a trainer giving universal/identical commands to a group of athletes, although each needs a different

[30] Τριαντάρη, *Οι πολιτικές αντιλήψεις των Βυζαντινών διανοητών*, 64–66.

[31] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1281a) 306.

[32] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1286a) 307–308: *ὁ νόμος τὸ καθόλου διορίζει.*

[33] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1286a) 307–308: *Οὐδὲν γὰρ διαφέρει τὸν νόμον λέγειν ἄρχειν ἢ τὸν θέντα τὸν νόμον.*

kind of training. He also likens the law to a doctor who leaves for a business trip and leaves his orders in written text. But the doctor's orders relate to a specific phase of the illness of sick people and if the illness or the conditions vary, the written advice will be useless, and the result could prove fatal. The doctor must intervene to change the form of therapy through knowledge of medical science. But the doctor is absent, and people have to interpret his advice.[34] However, Michael stresses the need for the enforcement of universal law. Without it, political men could not intervene in individual cases of justice. Actually, Michael proposes that the law should co-operate with the political man, so that universal justice is imposed on political situations.[35]

Michael then analyses the Aristotelian division of the constitutions and highlights the difference between the perfect constitution of the *Republic* and the other six.[36] The excellent constitution is structured by a mixture of elements of other constitutions and aims at the equality of citizens.[37] Also, the preservation of the form of an excellent constitution is the consensus of the people in the exercise of power. This last parameter is used by Michael to support the royal constitution. Using the Aristotelian distinction between tyranny and reign, it concludes that tyranny aims at the prosperity of the tyrant and succeeds in doing this through the violent subordination and coercion of members of the political community. On the contrary, the royal constitution is based on the consensus of the political body in the rule of the king; the king desires to be honoured by his people and does not desire their oppression. In this sense, the kingdom is a kind of agreement-consensus between the governor and the political body and is not based on the arbitrariness of power, such as tyranny.[38] The royal constitution is based on the legitimacy resulting from the consensus of the citizens to the exercise of power by the king. Therefore, the aim of

[34] Plato, *Statesman*, 295b–c.

[35] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1286a) 307–308: *κρεῖσσον τὸν νόμον ἄρχειν, οὗ χωρὶς ἀδυνατοῦσιν οἱ ἄρχοντες τὰ καθέκαστα πράττειν.*

[36] C.f., Arist., *Pol.* 1279a.20–1279b.10:

Correct constitutions	Incorrect constitutions
Monarchy One Ruler Aim is the common good	**Tyranny** One Ruler Aim is the good of the Tyrant
Aristocracy Few Rulers Aim is the common good	**Oligarchy** Few Rulers Aim is the good of the few - wealthy
Republic Many Rulers - the people Aim is the common good	**Democracy** Many Rulers - the people Aim is the good of the many - poor

[37] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1293a–1293b) 312, (1294a) 313.

[38] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1311a) 321: *Ὁ πλεονεκτῶν εἰς χρήματα τύραννος, ὁ δὲ εἰς τιμὴν βασιλεύς. Ὁ πλεονεκτῶν εἰς χρήματα καὶ τοῦτο σκοπῶν, λέγω δὴ τὸ πτωχίζειν τοὺς πολίτας , τύραννος, ὁ δὲ τιμῆς μόνης ἐφιέμενος βασιλεύς* […]. *Ἡ δε βασιλεία καὶ ἡ ἀριστοκρατία ἐναντιοῦνται τῇ τυραννίδι ὡς τὰ ἐναντία καὶ βουλόμενοι καὶ πράττοντες.* C.f., Τριαντάρη, *Οι πολιτικές αντιλήψεις των Βυζαντινών διανοητών*, 70–71.

the reign is the common good, the pursuit of benefit for the entire political body and not just for the political governor. Just as God would not have created the world if he had only thought of himself,[39] so the king is not a real king if he does not care for the good of the political society that he has in his care but only for his self-interest. Michael's goal, ultimately, is the emergence of royal power, established in the king's superiority in virtue.

[39] Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on Aristotle Politics*, (1325b) 324.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Christian Liturgical Papyri: An Introduction

BY ÁGNES T. MIHÁLYKÓ

STAC 114 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019)

This revision of Mihálykó's 2017 Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Oslo studies the earliest liturgical practices in Egypt as evidenced in pre-tenth century liturgical manuscripts. An impetus for the study is that 'early Egyptian liturgy remains little known to historians of the church and of religion'.[1] This book aims to fill this gap and address the shortcomings of various editions of papyri, modern online databases, and scholarly knowledge of liturgical practices. Mihálykó also wants to contrast ancient and contemporary practices since 'Changes happened slowly and thus rarely drew the attention of authors'.[2]

In chapter one, Mihálykó explains her rationale for selecting her primary evidence, which is a corpus of 323 liturgical papyri with Egyptian provenance, dated from the third to ninth centuries. The papyri are written primarily in Greek but also in Coptic and Latin. They are listed in the appendix with basic information (i.e., size, date, etc.). The selected papyri are written on a variety of mediums including potsherds. Mihálykó chose a cutoff date of around 900 CE since that is when the first fully extant liturgical manuscripts from the monastery of St Michael in Hamouli appeared, as well as extensive fragments from the White Monastery. The ninth century also provides demarcations in both the development of writing material, namely the introduction of paper, as well as in the development of writing style (e.g., the introduction of the flat μ). Mihálykó is not rigid in her exclusion of material and rightly makes exceptions. She notes that her corpus 'does not do justice to the multiplicity of worship practices in the early centuries'.[3] She promises nonetheless that 'from this corpus emerges a detailed picture of how Christian liturgy in Egypt was written in the late antique and early medieval periods'.[4]

The second chapter offers a broad introduction to the history and contemporary practice of Coptic liturgy. The chapter relies heavily on secondary sources, but is supplemented by examples of types of prayers, intercessions, etc., found in the papyri that serve to sharpen her narrative. Much like the pervasive theory of the diversity

[1] Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 1.
[2] Ibid., 1.
[3] Ibid., 38.
[4] Ibid.

of early Greek New Testament papyri, Mihálykó also suggests that before the fourth century, 'liturgical practices were marked by a considerable variety, freedom, and flexibility of text'.[5] She continues, 'The celebrant had the liberty to improvise prayers on the basis of traditional patterns and formulaic expressions. The first attempts to fix liturgical texts in writing probably occurred in the fourth century, the period for which we first have more concrete evidence'.[6] As Mihálykó explains, the first millennium continued to witness changes in wording and modifications of existing prayers, and though this seems to have settled down by the thirteenth century, 'the addition or omission of words or phrases is still common procedure' into the second millennium.[7]

In chapter three, which discusses dating liturgical papyri, Mihálykó notes 'Liturgical manuscripts are not timeless witnesses of a text, but rather reflect the customs observed in a given time and place'.[8] Determining dates for liturgical papyri proves more difficult than other genres since there are few dated comparanda, and the writing style (variants of the sloping majuscule) has been little studied. Mihálykó re-dates around 200 papyri based on several factors, including references to the patriarch in office, knowledge of who the scribe was and when he lived, information of when certain monasteries were active, date of re-use of the papyrus, and writing style (i.e., cursive, upright, sloping).

Chapter four explores local variants in Egyptian liturgy, discussing locations like the Fayum, the Heracleopolite Nome, Oxyrhynchus, Hermopolis, Deir el-Bala'izah, and Upper Egypt. The majority of the chapter focuses on Thebes because almost one-third of Mihálykó's corpus stems from there and its surroundings. The evidence from Thebes has a clear provenance and is extensive enough for her to reconstruct a Theban liturgy from the end of the sixth century and first half of the eighth century.

As explained in chapter one, Mihálykó employs the term 'papyri' in a broad sense, meaning portable texts written on papyrus, parchment, ostraca, and wooden tablets.[9] Chapter five further expands on the materiality of liturgical papyri. Due to their fragmentary state, it is not always clear-cut if a papyrus was originally part of a codex or a single sheet, but Mihálykó lists criteria to help with this determination. In her corpus, she identifies 101–115 single sheets, 54–64 codices, 1 roll, 99 ostraca, 8 wooden tablets; the remaining papyri are too difficult to determine. She suggests that one common theme throughout the liturgical papyri is their informal character, evident not only in the higher percentage of single sheets and ostraca (compared to a format that requires careful planning like codices) but also in the writing style.

[5] Ibid., 52. Cf. Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2nd ed., trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 59–64.

[6] Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 52.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 74.

[9] Ibid., 3.

Chapter six explains the practical uses of liturgical papyri and challenges a common misconception, namely that the papyri were not extensive enough to be used in liturgy. Mihálykó argues, 'This does not necessarily mean that every papyrus was produced so that the priest or the singer read or sang directly from it during the service; other uses can be imagined as well: the copy may have been made to help memorize the text, for example, but some connection with the performance of the liturgy is expected even for informal copies'.[10] Single sheets, therefore, could have been used in the performance of liturgy but could have also been amulets or school texts designed for educational purposes.

Chapter seven is a discussion of the three genres of liturgical texts: prayers, acclamations, and hymns. Prayers, which were compiled by the bishop, consisted of multiple sheets collected together. Due to the fragmentary nature of early manuscripts, it is difficult to say how extensive these collections were, but they can be divided into two groups: those with titles and the priest's text, and those in a continuous text (without titles) with parts for other speakers. Hymns mainly consisted of single sheets 'since only a few were sung in service and varied according to the liturgical season'.[11] Acclamations were generally short and could be passed on by oral transmission—only later as they grew more complicated were they written down on single sheets or ostraca as reading aids. These three genres were not originally bound together since different individuals performed them during liturgy.

Chapter eight discusses the three languages of liturgical papyri. Through the fifth century, liturgy was conducted in Greek, but biblical readings could have been read in Coptic, and prayers were regularly conducted in Coptic by the sixth century. Although hymns stayed largely in Greek—perhaps due to the difficulties of reproducing the same syllabic and tonic structures in a translation—the entire liturgy was translated into Coptic and Syriac by the ninth century. Mihálykó suggests the translation could have been the result of Coptic and Syriac Christians trying to distinguish their identity after the Chalcedonian Schism. Prayers were probably one of the first elements of liturgy to be translated (ca. fourth century) since they 'could convey theological thoughts, which could be communicated to the people better in Coptic than Greek'.[12] Nevertheless, the Miaphysites never completely rejected Greek as a liturgical language; Mihálykó notes that the translation of the liturgy was a process of different parts being translated at different times and eventually coming together to form a complete liturgy.

Her final chapter offers a brief summary of her findings.

Mihálykó's work is a welcome contribution to the fields of liturgical studies and papyrology. The helpful analyses of primary evidence help to elucidate what liturgy looked like in the first millennium and adds volumes to our knowledge of the papyri

[10] Ibid., 189.
[11] Ibid., 252.
[12] Ibid., 278.

of this time. Her exhaustive approach has drawn attention to several papyri that would make good candidates for inclusion in the *Kurzgefasste Liste der Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*.[13] It is perhaps only natural that a book this stimulating would leave the reader postulating how the research could be expanded further. For example, Mihálykó's theory that liturgical manuscripts were copied differently than contemporaneous literary manuscripts is worthy of further testing. She states, 'Very often a particular reading is attested in only one codex, and the variants do not lead us to the reconstruction of an original reading as they would in literary texts'.[14] On a similar note, since a stemma of biblical texts in Greek *can* be created—and several papyri Mihálykó includes have biblical text in Greek—would the biblical text in liturgical papyri fall into the traditional scheme for transmission, or would it be more similar to Mihálykó's theory about liturgical papyri where manuscripts were 'tailored to immediate needs, which reflected the usage of their given time and place'?[15]

Mihálykó posits that the irregular orthography and lack of corrections evidenced in liturgical papyri could indicate either a lack of knowledge of Greek orthography and syntax and/or 'that there was no aspiration to be faithful to a regular exemplar, as was expected with literary manuscripts; rather, some of the copies were made from oral transmission'.[16] Although irregular orthography and lack of corrections could have resulted from these factors, it is also possible that they resulted simply from a lack of standardization since varied orthography can be apparent within a single manuscript.[17]

One small quibble lies with the book's organization. Although key data from her papyri is compiled in the appendix, at times her statistics (especially in chapter five) could have been easier to follow. For example, she says there are fifty-four papyri that 'can be attributed to codices with some degree of certainty' and 10 that are 'uncertain'.[18] However, the reader must sort through her entire appendix of 323 papyri to compile a list of all the papyri she means here. This is not a criticism of Mihálykó's analyses but just a wish for alternative organization.

In sum, Mihálykó accomplishes far more than her book's somewhat modest subtitle of '*An Introduction*' would suggest. Her robust knowledge of two fields, liturgy and papyri, provide a unique and valuable look into first millennium Egypt. Those researching these two areas will not be disap-

[13] This list of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts is now kept online here: http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/

[14] Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 2–3.

[15] Ibid., 281.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Cf. Gregory S. Paulson, *Scribal Habits and Singular Readings in Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Ephraemi, Bezae, and Washingtonianus in the Gospel of Matthew* (Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse, 2018), 41, 60.

[18] Ibid., 158.

pointed, obtaining not only a better understanding of ancient Coptic liturgical practices and papyri but a desire to delve deeper.

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