

# Aristotle in Byzantium

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THE HISTORY OF ARISTOTELIANISM in the Greek East up to the fall of Byzantium is a subject that, except for a few specialized enquiries, has received no scholarly attention. In 1882 the Berlin Academy began to publish the Greek commentaries on Aristotle. In 1897 Karl Krumbacher wrote that nothing could be said about the influence of Aristotle in Byzantium until the work of the Academy should be completed. In 1909 the last volume appeared of an edition which is a masterpiece of nineteenth century scholarship. Half a century later there still exists no complete study of Aristotle's influence on Byzantine thought. I shall present a short outline of the history of Aristotle's influence in Byzantium, as it was felt in the schools of philosophy for which most of the commentaries were made, and also as it was felt in Christian theology.<sup>1</sup>

## I

Aristotle died in 322 B.C. The first generation of his successors and part of the second maintained a fairly high level in their teaching. But afterwards the Lyceum began rapidly to decline as a school of philosophy. Important work was accomplished only in certain specialized areas as, for example, in the making of manuals of literature.

In the first century B.C. Andronicus of Rhodes became director of the school, Aristotle's tenth successor in that capacity. The works of Aristotle and his immediate followers had been totally neglected for five generations. Under the leadership of Andronicus they were now collected, arranged and edited; at the same time the long line of commentaries on Aristotle was begun. It is because of this activity that the works of Aristotle have survived. Although the collecting of the works had been begun by the first generation after Aristotle's death, the final form of the Corpus, in which it has been studied throughout history, is the form given it by Andronicus. There followed a revival of Aristotelian studies, and from that time on the chain of

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection of Harvard University, Washington, D.C., on 29 March 1963.

commentaries was never broken. The work of Andronicus was carried on by his pupil, Boethus of Sidon, who, like his teacher, wrote among other things a commentary on the *Categories*. In succeeding generations, the *Categories* were to become a favourite subject of study.

The influence of Aristotle began to spread. Young Nero was taught by the Stoic Chaeremon, but also by the Peripatetic Alexander of Aegae; Marcus Aurelius listened with eager interest to the lectures of the Peripatetic Claudius Severus as well as to those of his Stoic teacher; in the middle of the second century we hear of a group of Roman noblemen who professed to be Aristotelians. In addition to Severus, who was twice honoured with the consulate, they included also the consul Flavius Boethus and the future *praefectus urbi* Sergius Paulus. Aristotelianism had become a power. Evidence of its official acceptance was the creation of a Chair for Aristotelian Studies in Athens. Marcus Aurelius appointed Alexander of Damascus to be its first occupant.

In the age of the Antonines the use of Aristotle's works, especially of his logical works, in the schools stimulated systematic thinking and thus contributed to the development of the sciences. Notable advances were made in astronomy by Claudius Ptolemy, in medicine by Galen, and in linguistics by Apollonius Dyscolus and Herodianus.

Aristotle's position was now equal to that of Plato. The transmission of his doctrine demanded commentaries, and commentaries there were. Galen himself wrote commentaries on the logical treatises of Aristotle—a fact which suggests a close connection between logic and science in that time. Galen mentions Adrastus and Aspasius as being outstanding in this field, and suggests that many others were active as well.

One of the most important exegetes of this period was Alexander of Aphrodisias, who took over the Chair for Aristotelian Studies in Athens sometime between 198 and 211. All subsequent commentators exploited Alexander as much as possible. But as is demonstrated by Galen and his contemporary Alexander of Damascus, the popularity of Aristotle by no means meant that Plato was ignored. From the time of the Middle Platonists onward the Platonic School borrowed freely from Aristotle, especially from his logic and epistemology. From the fact that Plato had occasionally used logical methods of proof, Albinus and other Middle Platonists drew the conclusion that he had had a theoretical awareness of all the forms of a complete logic. So they claimed an Aristotelian logic for Plato.

With Porphyry, the pupil of Plotinus, there begins a new period in the history of Aristotelianism. Whereas Alexander of Aphrodisias had been interested in philosophy as such and, although he considered himself merely an interpreter of Aristotle, had frequently come up with his own ideas, Porphyry desired only to expound Aristotelian logic (or what he thought to be Aristotelian logic) to a wide audience. He addressed himself especially to the schools and for this reason prepared a new form of commentary for the *Categories*, i.e. the catechetical or question-and-answer commentary. He also composed a commentary on the *Categories* of the usual type and, at the request of the Roman Senator Chrysaorius, an introduction to the *Categories*, which is known as ἡ *Εἰσαγωγή*. Henceforward it was not only the content of Aristotle that was the concern of his commentators; they would also have to give much thought to the form in which he should be presented in the schools. The needs of the classroom caused Themistius, for example, to reintroduce an ancient kind of explanation, the paraphrase. He used it with great skill. Furthermore Porphyry's introduction of Aristotelian exegesis into the Neoplatonic classroom was to have important consequences in the history of thought. The explanation of Aristotelian texts was to become a permanent activity of Neoplatonic philosophers. The movement of Neoplatonism is not Byzantine, but must be considered for a proper understanding of Byzantine developments.

With regard to the development of philosophy from the third century on, two things must be borne in mind: (1) that philosophy was not simply a development of Neoplatonism, and (2) that Neoplatonism itself was at times more Aristotelian than Platonic. Since the second century, philosophical instruction had been essentially exegesis; for it was supposed that all truth had been found by Plato and Aristotle and was preserved in their works for all time.

Aristotelian exegesis was influenced by Neoplatonic ideas, but in some cases the influence was but slight, as in the school of Alexandria. This school was free from the religious and speculative tendencies of Athenian and Syrian Neoplatonism. The lack in the Alexandrian school of any eccentric conception of the nature of ultimate reality opened the way to the Christian world for instruction in pagan philosophy. To become acceptable to Christianity, Alexandrian exegesis needed only a few small modifications.

The smoothness of the transition can be seen in the relations

between Philoponus, David and Elias on the one hand and Ammonius and Olympiodorus on the other. The course of lectures given by Ammonius on the *Categories* might be heard by Christians just as Elias' lectures might be heard by pagans. Thus the commentaries on Aristotle formed one of the most important bridges between pagan philosophy and Eastern Christian philosophy. It came about that the teacher's function in the Platonic School of Alexandria became more and more to teach Plato and Aristotle to Christians. As time went on, the teachers too were Christians. It could not be avoided, of course, that while interpreting Plato and Aristotle these teachers occasionally drew upon writers of the Neoplatonic School in Athens, whose views were based on a metaphysics that was polytheistic and therefore hostile to Christian metaphysics. But the Alexandrians did not further develop the speculations of the Athenian school and, indeed, did not indulge in any autonomous metaphysical speculation whatsoever. Learned enquiry and exegesis were their chief concerns. In these circumstances it was inevitable that Plato and Aristotle should be made the central subject of philosophical instruction. To make the Athenian metaphysics the basis for the teaching of Christians was out of the question.

The school had to begin its teaching with an introduction to philosophy; philosophy meant Greek philosophy, and Greek philosophy meant Plato and Aristotle. Since the dialogue form was thought to be unsuitable for classroom use, one chose for the philosophical instruction of Christians an introduction to Aristotle. Consequently, the majority of commentaries were commentaries on Aristotle and, since logic was the natural introduction to philosophy, the majority of commentaries on Aristotle were commentaries on the *Organon*.

Although Aristotle occupied the first place in the activities of the school, Plato was not forgotten. The general tendency of the school was to bring Plato and Aristotle into accord. When decisions had to be made, they were usually, but not always, made in favour of Aristotle. Platonists and Aristotelians were able to come into agreement by developing the view that Aristotle's attacks on the philosophy of Plato were actually attacks on misunderstandings of what Plato meant. Whereas the Athenian school was closed in 529 by order of Justinian, as no compromise with Christianity could be reached, the school of Alexandria was able to survive the revolutionary changes of the times: it was Christianized without protest. But by inevitable consequence, Christianity was Neoplatonized.

## II

In comparison with the changes that had been made in the method of Aristotelian exegesis in the third century, those that were to be made during the whole of the Byzantine period would prove to be very small. The closing of the Academy in 529 was of little consequence, for opposition between paganism and Christianity did not occur in the commentaries of the sixth century. These commentaries do not let us know whether their authors were Christians or pagans. In the Alexandrian school Ammonius Hermeiou and Asclepius were pagans. The religion of Olympiodorus is unknown to us. John Philoponus was a Christian. But in their commentaries we can see that these men all belonged to a single school of thought. The same was true of the next generation: the names of Olympiodorus' pupils Elias and David suggest that they were Christians, but their works do not. They are completely in the tradition of Ammonius. Simplicius, too, who was a member of the Athenian school of Neoplatonism, is strongly influenced by Ammonius, his teacher in Alexandria. The clear-headed form of Simplicius' learned commentaries is the fine result of his stay at the school in Alexandria.

In Constantinople the study of Greek philosophy had been neglected since the time of Themistius. Yet in the reign of Heraclius, a hundred years after the closing of the Academy, Stephen was summoned from the school of Alexandria to Constantinople there to teach and expound Plato and Aristotle. A new epoch in the history of thought had begun.

From the time between Stephen and Photius no commentaries have survived. The *Library* of Photius contains outlines of some works of philosophy. In his *Quaestiones Amphiloichianae* Photius deals in detail with philosophical matters. He also explained the *Categories*, and to that end made use of both Porphyry and Ammonius. It is very probable that Photius wrote commentaries on many other works of Aristotle and that he published some of them for classroom use. We have knowledge, for example, of his textbook on dialectics, that is on the *Topics* of Aristotle.

Among the pupils of Photius were Arethas and Zacharias of Chalcidon. Arethas, who in 907 was made Archbishop of Caesarea, put learning in his debt by his efforts to preserve a number of manuscripts, for example the codex of the Apologists and the codex of Plato. In contrast to his teacher he preferred Plato to Aristotle. From his work there is preserved, but as yet unpublished, an abridgement of

Aristotle's *Categories*. Of Zacharias we possess a short treatise entitled *Περὶ τοῦ χρόνου*, probably a summary of a lecture of Photius.

The world of learning received new life from the founding of the Academy of Constantinople in the eleventh century under Constantine Monomachus. From this time on Plato was studied intensively along with Aristotle. Conflicting evaluations of the two thinkers led to violent disputes in the succeeding centuries. Michael Psellus came out for Plato and began a struggle that was to last for hundreds of years. However, when a patriarchal synod condemned the study of both Plato and Aristotle, Psellus defended both ancient thinkers, gave courses on them in the University of Constantinople, and wrote commentaries on them which still exist. Psellus' preference for Plato brought him into conflict with the friend of his youth John Xiphilinus. Like Psellus John was a teacher in the Academy of Constantinople, yet unlike Psellus, he became Archbishop of Constantinople. He wrote several philosophical treatises, none of which has survived. Among them was a textbook of philosophy and theology which was mainly based on Aristotle and on the Chaldaean doctrines of the Alexandrians. It was attacked vigorously by Psellus in works which have come down to us. Psellus wrote a series of commentaries on Aristotle, only a few of which have been edited, and these in the sixteenth century. It is probable that the *Timaeus* was the only Platonic dialogue on which Psellus wrote a commentary; this commentary is still extant. There is a good critical edition of his *Διδασκαλία παντοδαπή* by L. G. Westerink (1948).

It was long believed that Psellus was also the author of a compendium of logic with the title *Σύνοψις εἰς τὴν Ἀριστοτέλους λογικὴν ἐπιστήμην*, which in five books condenses Aristotle's *Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας*, the *Prior Analytics* and the *Topics*. In this compendium we find the use of mnemotechnical words for syllogistic figures. Almost word for word this compendium agrees with the *Summulae Logicales* of Petrus Hispanus. For a long time the question of the relationship of these two works was disputed. Carl Prantl maintained that the *Logic* of Petrus Hispanus was a translation from the Greek. The opposite view, *i.e.* that the *Σύνοψις* was a translation of the Latin *Summulae Logicales*, was held by Valentin Rose and several other scholars. I myself favour the second view, for new and recently discovered Latin texts from the thirteenth century have shown that the highly developed terminology of Petrus Hispanus had been prepared by earlier, primitive techniques

within Western Scholasticism. Also the pupil and younger contemporary of Psellus and his successor in the office of ὑπάτος τῶν φιλοσόφων at the University of Constantinople, Johannes Italus, wrote commentaries on the writings of Aristotle, several parts of which have yet to be published. The text of the *XCIII Quaestiones* of Italus has now been published in an exemplary edition by Perikles Joannou (1956). Michael Ephesius, another student of Psellus, wrote commentaries on a part of the *Organon*, and on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Parva Naturalia*, and *De partibus Animalium*.

A pupil of Italus, Eustratius, who became Metropolitan of Nicaea, wrote commentaries on the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. At about the same time lived Theodorus of Smyrna, whose still unedited treatise survives, Ἐπιτομή τῶν ὅσα περὶ φύσεως καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν ἀρχῶν τοῖς παλαιοῖς διείληπται, that is *Physics and Physical Principals according to the Ancients*.

An important figure in the history of Aristotelianism in the thirteenth century was Nicephorus Blemmydes, who wrote among other things a handbook of physics and an excursus on the philosophy of the Byzantines. It is worth noting that in the manuscripts of Blemmydes, there can be found the Greek mnemotechnical words for the syllogistic figures (with the exception of those for the five Theophrastic figures). But in Blemmydes these words have been added in the margins and are not referred to in the text itself. It is very probable that they were added by later writers. Also active at this time was Georgius Aneponymus, who wrote a compendium of Aristotelian logic which exists in an old edition. From the beginning of the fourteenth century we have an epitome of the whole of Aristotelian philosophy written by Georgius Pachymeres; there is a complete edition of a Latin translation of this work (Basel, 1560), whereas only a portion of the Greek text was published in Paris in 1548.

The monk Sophonias, a close contemporary of Pachymeres, wrote paraphrases of the *Categories*, the *Prior Analytics*, the *Refutations of the Sophists*, *De Anima* and other works of Aristotle. His commentaries consist of the text of Aristotle and outlines of the explanations made by writers earlier than himself.

In the fourteenth century Theodorus Metochites wrote paraphrastic commentaries on Aristotle, which have survived in a valuable and beautifully illuminated manuscript, made for the Medici in the fifteenth century. The text is as yet unpublished.

There also was made in this period, though the exact date is uncertain, a paraphrase of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which was at one time thought to be the work of Andronicus of Rhodes. Its true author is unknown.

Typical for these times were the quarrels over the relative merits of Plato and Aristotle between Nicephorus Polyhistor and the Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus. John, who favoured Aristotle, wrote a paraphrase of the first five books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

The commentaries of the Byzantines deserve our attention for various reasons, of which I shall mention two. In the first place the theologians of the Greek Middle Ages for the most part did not go back to the ancient Greek philosophers themselves when they developed their doctrines, but instead to the commentaries and anthologies made during the Christian era. There were important exceptions, however. Secondly, these commentaries are mostly records of classroom activities and therefore they constitute valuable sources for our knowledge of the methods of philosophical instruction in that age. The simultaneous existence of commentaries in the form of copies of lectures and in the form of copies of dialogues reflects two different types of instruction, which have their modern parallels in lectures and seminars. Analysis of the commentaries sometimes enables us to see the schemata on which the structure of the lessons was based.

Although I have not been able, in this short survey, to discuss all the writings of all the commentators, I hope that I have given some idea of how much work was done on Aristotle in the Byzantine age and of how little this work has been exploited by modern scholarship. Numerous questions of authorship and of interdependence will have to be answered before this huge gap in our knowledge can be closed.

### III

Closely related to the development of Aristotelian scholarship in Byzantium is the history of the relation of the theologians of the Eastern Church to Aristotle's thought.

The early Greek Fathers, although they favoured Plato, did not ignore Aristotle. As both Apologists and Alexandrians were eclectics, many of them betray Aristotle's influence. This influence is especially evident in various heresies, most of all in Arianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism. Cyril of Alexandria repeatedly attacked those who

were in the habit of quoting Aristotle and who knew their Aristotle better than their Scriptures.

At Antioch Plato was given second place. The Antiochene school, which flourished in the time of Diodorus of Tarsus, the teacher of John Chrysostomus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, practised a sober grammatical form of biblical exegesis which would not admit of the slightest eccentricity or enthusiasm, and was therefore open to the influence of Aristotle. Through Theodore of Mopsuestia the Aristotelian strain in Antiochene theology produced a Christology which was to result in Nestorianism. With the help of Nestorianism Aristotle took his place in the theological schools of Syria. In the school of Edessa, which was the successor of the school of Antioch, the works of Aristotle and Porphyry were translated and commented upon. Through John Philoponus and the Neoplatonic Aristotelianism of Alexandria, the Syrian Monophysites, also, became interested in Aristotle and like the Nestorians used his philosophy for the formation of their doctrine.

John Philoponus, in his treatise *Διατηρητῆς ἢ περὶ ἐνώσεως*, of which only a few fragments survive, applied the Aristotelian teachings on nature and substance to Christology in such a way that he became a defender of Monophysitism; and to Trinitology in such a way that he was accused of Tritheism. His views on the Trinity and on the person of Christ resembled those which in the West were at a later period maintained by Roscelinus of Compiègne, and there produced similar effects. Despite the fact that Aristotelianism was closely associated with heresy it nevertheless exerted such a strong influence on speculative thought that none of the Fathers could quite escape it.

There are several reasons why the Greek Fathers from the sixth to the eleventh century made more use of Aristotle than of Plato in the shaping and defense of Christian doctrine. First of all there is the controversy which Origen had stirred up. The Origenists were called pupils of Pythagoras, Plato and Plotinus. The mistakes, both real and imaginary, of Origen and his followers were attributed to the influence of Plato. The resulting decline of Plato's prestige among the Orthodox meant a rise of Aristotle's. In the second place it was the task of Christian theology to make tight distinctions and careful definitions, and the tools which had to be used for such purposes were more numerous in Aristotle than in Plato. Aristotelian philosophy offered systematic treatment of the terms which were the center of the Christological controversy, for example *οὐσία* and *φύσις*. The fact that some heretics,

especially the Nestorians and Monophysites, had made so much use of Aristotelian terms and concepts forced their orthodox opponents to take up the same weapons. Finally, the use of commentaries on Aristotle in the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria had an influence on the thought of the Christian schools which cannot be overestimated. It also influenced the form under which theological treatises were presented. *Ἀπορίαι*, in Aristotle the very stuff of thought, in the Neoplatonic commentaries produced *ἀπορίαι* and *λύσεις*, *ἐρωτήσεις* and *ἀποκρίσεις*, the new literary form for the presentation of thought. This form was taken over by the Christians in their theological treatises.

A good example of the ascendancy of Aristotle is the work of the monk Leontius of Byzantium, who flourished in the first half of the sixth century. His thought, which constitutes an important stage in the long development of Aristotelianism in the East, was based on that of such Greek Fathers as Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus, and also on such non-patristic sources as Porphyry's *Ἐισαγωγή* and the condensation of Aristotle's *Categories* made by Porphyry or his pupils. Interest in logic was intensified and the Porphyrian "predicables" and the Aristotelian categories cut even deeper than before into theology, especially into Christology and Trinitology. Some Aristotelian terms, mediated by Porphyry, which at this time became very influential were *γένος*, *εἶδος*, *διαφορά*, *ἴδιον* and *συμβεβηκός*. Equally important were the opposition of substance and accidents and the exact definition of the relation of *οὐσία* and *φύσις* to *ὑπόστασις*.<sup>2</sup> The Cappadocians had shown some interest in these problems, but they were closer to Plato than to Aristotle; John Philoponus was a thoroughgoing Aristotelian, but he was also a heretic. Leontius was the first theologian who was able to express Church dogma in Aristotelian terms and who still remained within the limits of orthodoxy.

Aristotelianism as Leontius conceived of it had very little to do with the historical Aristotle. Of the works of Aristotle Leontius knew only the *Categories*, and these he knew through the medium of Neoplatonic commentaries. He was, however, familiar also with a few Aristotelian formulas other than those which could be found in the *Categories*, most likely through his readings of the Fathers, to whom such formulas had been known since the time of Clement of Alexandria.

<sup>2</sup> As a philosophical term, *hypostasis* was not Aristotelian, but became associated with other concepts of Aristotelian origin in the period of Neoplatonism.

Leontius exercised a strong influence on Maximus the Confessor. In the field of Christology Maximus took over the terminology of Leontius; his writings show all the Aristotelian elements which are found in the Neoplatonists. Maximus was also influenced by the Neoplatonism of the *Pseudo-Dionysiaca*.

A further step in the development of Aristotelianism in the East is represented by the thought of John of Damascus. His chief work, *Πηγὴ γνώσεως*, is full of Aristotelian Neoplatonism. John made no claim to originality. But the *Πηγὴ γνώσεως* was the first attempt by an Eastern theologian to bring together in an organized form the main doctrines of the Fathers. The first part of this work is a survey of philosophical terms as used by Christians, the so-called *Κεφάλαια φιλοσοφικά*. The view put forward by John at the very beginning of this work, that pagan philosophy was the mistress of Christian theology, became a cliché of the later Middle Ages but was not original with him. It had already been expressed in several different versions, and is ultimately traceable to Philo. The treatment of metaphysical concepts in the first part of the work is meant to serve as a propaedeutic to theology, and to Christology in particular. The second part is a catalogue of a hundred heresies; the third is an almost complete compendium of dogmatic theology. The *Πηγὴ γνώσεως* was to have a profound influence on the theology of the Greek Middle Ages.

It is unlikely that John ever read Aristotle himself. He is controlled, especially in his Christology and Trinitology, by the Neoplatonism of the Fathers. The Aristotelian dialectics of Neoplatonism had been inextricably bound up with the problems of Christology from the time when the Monophysites had first begun to use Aristotelian logic as it was found in the *Εἰσαγωγή* of Porphyry and other Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle. The terms used in Christology were seemingly the terms of Aristotle. The reaction of Orthodoxy was either to eliminate these terms or to give them new meanings. This is true in the sixth century of the circle of Theodorus of Raithu when it sought to oppose Severus of Antioch; and in the seventh century for Maximus the Confessor, Anastasius Sinaita, and the author of the *Doctrina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi*, which is directed against the Monophysites and Monothelites. It was the result of this controversy that the dialectic of Aristotle became more deeply embedded than ever before in Christian thought. For John of Damascus it was no longer a question of whether he should remove the Aristotelian terms from the Christian argument.

It could only be his task to use Aristotle within the limits of Orthodoxy; and it is in this connection that we must consider the first part of his compendium, the *Κεφάλαια φιλοσοφικά*, which was meant to be a definitive treatment of the problems of logic. It includes outlines of Porphyry's *Εἰσαγωγή* and of a Neoplatonic commentary on Aristotle's *Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας*, discussions of *φύσις* and *ὑπόστασις*, and a collection of definitions. The outlines were probably not the work of John himself, but rather of some earlier Christian authors. The corresponding passages in the Neoplatonic commentaries are much more extensive; of these it is probable that John did not have direct knowledge. John's is the first compendium of its kind of which we have reliable knowledge, but there is a possibility that other such compendia had been made by the Monophysites before and were in existence in his time. In any event John's compendium created the pattern which recurs in all subsequent Byzantine books of logic, including works by men like Michael Psellus, John Italus, Nicephorus Blemmydes.

It is not without interest to study the relationship between the terms John used in his compendium of logic and the terms he used in his theological treatises. Such a comparison makes it clear that in writing the *Κεφάλαια φιλοσοφικά*, John was chiefly interested in distinguishing the meanings of the terms as employed by the Fathers from the meanings they had in Aristotle. It is surprising that in his theological treatises John does not use all the terms he used in his logical treatise but, almost without exception, only such as were used by the Fathers and only with the meanings which they had in the Fathers. In addition, there are in the theological treatises terms which he never used in his logical treatise. It is therefore unlikely that the *Κεφάλαια φιλοσοφικά* was meant to be a general philosophical introduction to the theological treatises. Its purpose was rather to protect the terms which were used both by Aristotle and the Fathers from being misunderstood. Its significance therefore is theological rather than philosophical.

In the ninth and tenth centuries Photius and Arethas continued the Aristotelian tradition. In the eleventh century Platonism was given new life by Michael Psellus. Gemistus Pletho and Marsilio Ficino, who more than three centuries later imported the partisan preference for Plato from Byzantium to Florence and thereby profoundly influenced the Italian Renaissance, are direct descendants of Psellus.

Psellus' pupil John Italus favored Aristotle, but he did not neglect Plato and the Neoplatonists completely. The most splendid period in

Byzantine literature, the twelfth century, is almost without philosophical importance. But in the thirteenth century, Byzantine philosophers began to influence Italian culture. Nicephorus Blemmydes was highly esteemed in Italy, as was Georgius Pachymeres, who lived into the fourteenth century. In connection with the transmission of Greek philosophical thought to the West, mention ought to be made of Maximus Planudes, the author of the anthology entitled *Συναγωγή ἐκλεγείσα ἀπὸ διαφόρων βιβλίων*. Because of his attacks on Platonic doctrines Maximus Planudes' contemporary Nicephorus Chumnus has often been called an Aristotelian. But he believed in the reality neither of the Platonic *εἶδος* nor of the Aristotelian *γένος*. His position, unique in Byzantium, comes very close to what is traditionally understood to be Nominalism. The most important figure in the intellectual life of Byzantium in the fourteenth century was Nicephorus Gregoras, who was the leader of a group of zealous Platonists. His conflict with John VI Cantacuzenus, Emperor and Aristotelian, was intimately connected with the attempts that were made at this time to achieve unity between East and West. It was to be continued one hundred years later in Florence and Rome, when the Platonic Academy was founded.

One of the channels through which the spirit of Byzantium was brought to Italy was Barlaam, the teacher of Petrarch and Boccaccio, who had come from Italy to Byzantium in order to study Aristotle. The seed which Barlaam brought to Italy had borne fruit before Gemistus Pletho took up the cause of Plato in Florence. The appearance of Pletho in Florence is not the beginning of the Renaissance in Italy, but rather the end of its first chapter.

The Renaissance in Italy had begun when the three separate cultures of the Middle Ages, the Greek-Byzantine, the Arabic-Jewish, and the Western-Latin, came into contact with one another by force of political circumstance. Now the three streams of Aristotelianism, namely (1) that of the Neoplatonists of the Latin West, and especially of Boethius, (2) the stronger one of the Greek-Byzantine tradition, and (3) that of the Arabic-Jewish tradition, flowed together. The Arabic tradition is of especial interest today, for the authors whom the Arabs knew best were Aristotle and his commentators. All the writings of Aristotle were known to the Arabs with the exception of the *Politics*, which was seldom studied in the Greek schools of the Roman Empire. Arabic translations of Greek philosophers were first made early in the Abbasid times about 800 and continued to be made until about 1000,

usually from Syriac versions, less frequently from the Greek. Only a small number of these translations have survived, and a few of these have been traced, edited, and translated into Western languages. In the last few decades Orientalists have become very active in this direction. Such work is of great value because there are Arabic translations of texts which have survived in no other form.

The confluence of these separate cultures of the Middle Ages produced a revolution in the Western mind which created the Modern Age. The understanding of this historical process is the aim of the study of Byzantine philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The following items are meant merely to suggest further reading. Detailed bibliography will be available in my forthcoming *Geschichte der byzantinischen Philosophie*. Entries are arranged chronologically: K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*<sup>2</sup> (Munich 1897); L. Stein, "Die Continuität der griechischen Philosophie in der Gedankenwelt der Byzantiner," *AGPh* NF 2, 9 (1895) 225-246; A. Baumstark, *Aristoteles bei den Syrern vom 5.-8. Jahrhundert I* (Leipzig 1900); K. Praechter, "Die griechischen Aristoteleskommentare," *BZ* 18 (1909) 516-538; H. Cherniss, "Review of R. E. Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism*," *AJP* 59 (1938) 351-356; E. v. Ivánka, *Hellenisches und Christliches im frühbyzantinischen Geistesleben* (Vienna 1948); B. Tatakis, *La Philosophie byzantine*<sup>2</sup> (Paris 1959); M. Richard, "Ἀπὸ φωνῆς," *Byzantion* 20 (1950) 191-222; H. Hunger, "Theodoros Metochites als Vorläufer des Humanismus in Byzanz," *BZ* 45 (1952) 4-19; L. Minio-Paluello, "Jacobus Veneticus Grecus," *Traditio* 8 (1952) 265-304; M. V. Anastos, "Aristotle and Cosmas Indicopleustes on the Void," *Hellenica* 4 (1953) 35-50; P. Joannou, "Die Definition des Seins bei Eustratios von Nikaia: die Universalienlehre in der byzantinischen Theologie im 11 Jh.," *BZ* 47 (1954) 358-368; I. Düring, "Von Aristoteles bis Leibniz: einige Hauptlinien in der Geschichte des Aristotelismus," *AuA* 4 (1954) 118-154; B. Spuler, "Hellenistisches Denken im Islam," *Saeculum* 5 (1954) 179-193; G. Downey, "Themistius and the Defense of Hellenism in the Fourth Century," *HTR* 50 (1957) 259-274; I. Ševčenko, "The Definition of Philosophy in the 'Life of Saint Constantine,'" *Festschrift Jakobson* (The Hague 1956) 449-457; C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople: English Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1958); F. Dvornik, "The Patriarch Photius in the Light of Recent Research," *Berichte zum XI Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress München 1958* (Munich 1958) III. 2; H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich 1959); J. Meyendorff, *Grégoire Palamas: Défense des saints hésychastes. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes* (Louvain 1959); M. V. Anastos, "Some Aspects of Byzantine Influence on Latin Thought," *Twelfth-Century Europe and the Foundations of Modern Society* (Madison 1961) 131-187; L. G. Westerink, "Elias on the Prior Analytics," *Mnemosyne* ns 4, 14 (1961) 126-139; L. Benakis, "Studien zu den Aristoteles-Kommentaren des Michael Psellos," *AGP* 43 (1961) 215-238; *ib.*, 44 (1962) 33-61; I. Ševčenko, *Études sur la polémique entre Théodore Métochite et Nicéphore Choumnos* (Brussels 1962); R. Walzer, "Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy," *Oriental Studies I* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); P. O. Kristeller, *La Tradizione Aristotelica nel Rinascimento* (Padua 1962); M. V. Anastos, "Nestorius was Orthodox," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962) 117-140.