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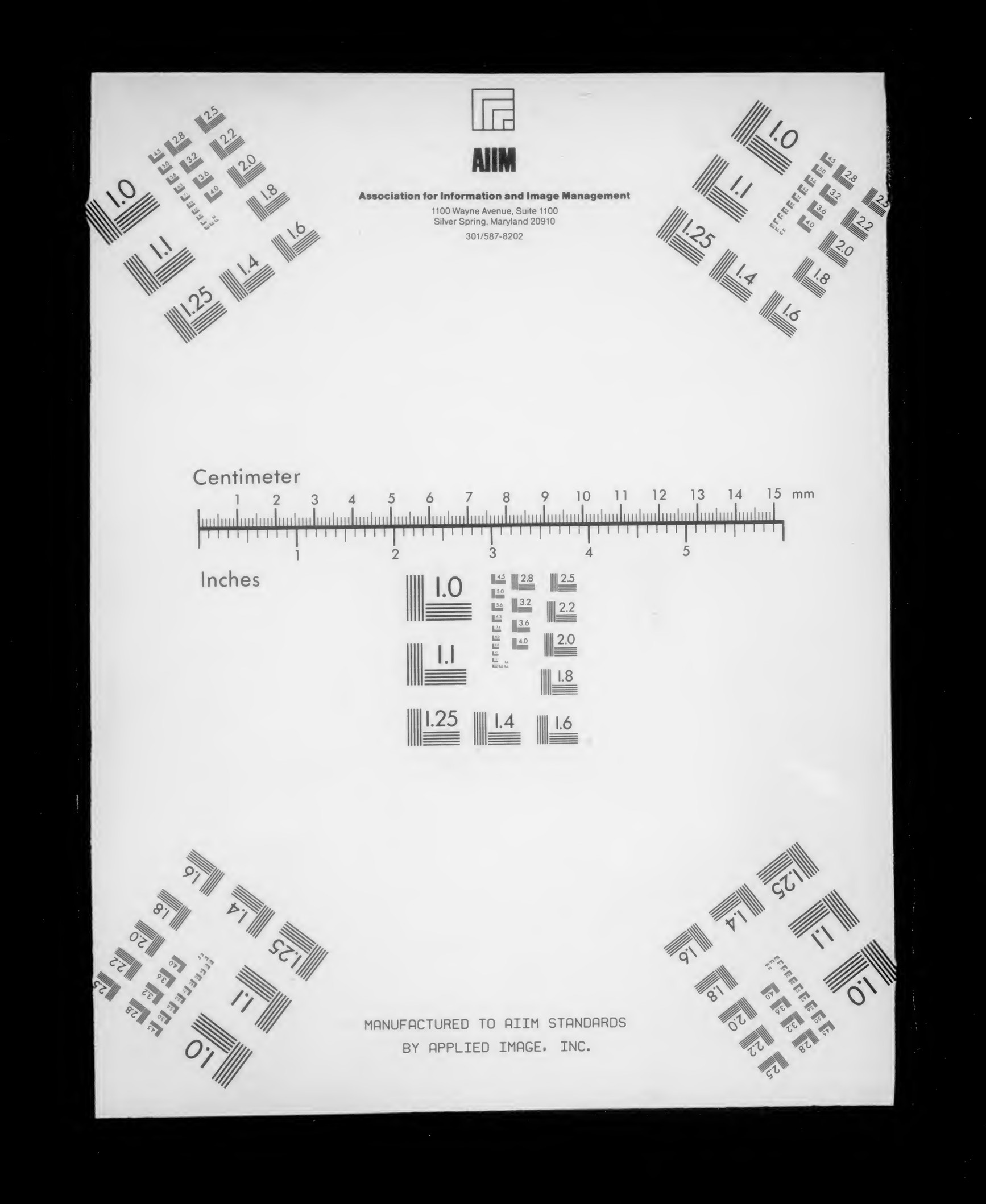
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Georgius Gemistus Pletho's Criticism of Plato and Aristotle

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF GREEK

BY

JOHN WILSON TAYLOR

The Collegiate Press
GEORGE BANTA PUBLISHING COMPANY
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The following books and articles are quoted in this work in abbreviated form:

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Sol. Quaed. *Solutiones Quaedam Quaestionum Naturalium* in M. 122, 784 B ff.
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PREFACE

This study is an attempt to analyze and estimate Gemistus Pletho's criticism of Plato and Aristotle. Gass and Schultze have already written on his philosophic thought but they made no attempt to determine the sources used in the tracts regarding Plato and Aristotle and they dealt with the content of the tracts in such a summary fashion as to leave an impression which does an injustice to Pletho's understanding of the ancient philosophers. It is hoped that sufficient reason has been adduced in this monograph for a revision of this impression.

Pletho's quotations of, and references to, passages of Plato and Aristotle have been, with few exceptions, referred by means of footnotes to the original passages. About one fifth of these had already been identified by Gass, although most of his references proved on examination to be inapposite. The others have been transferred to the pagination of Stephanus for Plato and to that of the Prussian Academy edition for Aristotle. Where possible, also, with a view to throwing light on Pletho's sources, passages have been cited from later philosophic writers to whom Pletho was indebted.

The suggestion of the subject of this work is due to Professor Paul Shorey, to whom the author wishes to express his thanks also for the many valuable ideas and criticisms for which he is indebted to him.

CHAPTER I

Biography

Very few details are known of the life of Georgius Gemistus. His birth is put conjecturally in the year 1355 by Schultze,[1] since, dying in 1450, he was said by Georgius Trapezuntius to have lived almost one hundred years.[2] Gennadius stated that in his youth Gemistus fled from his native land, Byzantium, and lived at the Turkish court, where he became intimate with the Jew, Elissaios.[3] Alexandre's conjecture, followed by Schultze, as to the chronology of his departure and return remains a mere guess.[4] It is certain, however, that he lived in the Peloponnese many years before 1427, when the Prince of the Peloponnese gave him a castle and land at Phanarion, of which the document of conveyance has been preserved.[5] It was during these years that he was the teacher of Bessarion, who retained throughout his life the deepest respect for him.[6] Two letters from his hand written during this period on the defense and reformation of the Peloponnese have come down to us, one to Theodore and the other to the Emperor Emanuel.[7] In two panegyrics delivered at his death he is said to have been a judge.[8] In 1728 the emperor, John VI, consulted Gemistus, during a visit to the Peloponnese, as to his opinion regarding the union of the Eastern and Western Churches, and

[1] P. 24.

[2] *Comparatio inter Platonem et Aristotelem* (Venice, 1523), next to last chapter.

[3] M. 639 B.

[4] Schultze, pp. 30, 31.

[5] Schultze, p. 61.

[6] Vast (p. 35) has demonstrated how little credence is to be put in Syropoulos's statement that Bessarion studied for twenty one years in the Peloponnese.

[7] Schultze, pp. 39, 41. Della Torre (p. 429) refers the latter epistle to the year 1412 on the ground that a time when peace had at last been concluded with the Ottomans would seem to Pletho an especially suitable time for carrying out his reforms. 1413 might perhaps better be suggested (Cf. p. 5). There is no objection to supposing Gemistus to have been in the Peloponnese so early. Cf. Dräseke: *Plethons und Bessarions Denkschriften usw.* in *Neue Jahrbücher*, XXVII, 105. In *Georgios Gemistos Plethon, Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, XIX, 273, Dräseke gives 1415 as their date.

[8] M. 808 C, 817 A, B.

the advice he gave, to insist that the votes of the eastern and western delegations should have equal weight, probably led to his selection ten years later to be a representative from the Eastern Church at the Council of Ferrara. His hostile attitude toward the union and his association with scholars in Italy while attending the Council are discussed at length by Schultze.[9] There too he adopted the name Pletho in addition to Georgius Gemistus, Pletho meaning, like Gemistus, 'full' and being reminiscent of his master, Plato. Returning to the Peloponnese in 1440, he resided there until, after a short illness, he died in 1450.[10] Fifteen years later a Venetian general, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, transferred his remains from Sparta to the church of St. Franciscus at Rimini.[11]

The meagerness of our knowledge of Pletho's life finds some compensation in the greater fullness of our information about his thought. For historians he was a daring social and political reformer,[12] and for philosophers he stood as the first figure in the revival of Platonism in mediaeval Europe.[13] A proper understanding of his thought and writings, therefore, requires a brief survey of the political and intellectual conditions of his age.

[9] Pp. 59 ff.

[10] Battagia, quoted by Vast (p. 27, n. 2) reports that the fatal disease was brought on by an excessive devotion to the study of mathematics. Schultze (pp. 106, 107) has the credit for determining the date of his death. Dräseke in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XIX, 290, n. 1 gives no reason for his rejection of the evidence adduced by Schultze.

[11] Schultze, pp. 108, 109; Symonds, p. 210, n. 1.

[12] Opinions of Fallmerayer and of Finlay are quoted by Schultze, p. 47, n. 3; Cf. Gibbon (ed. Smith) VIII, 115 and Tozer, *A Byzantine Reformer*, in J. H. S. VII, 353 ff.

[13] Ueberweg, III, 13; Prantl, IV, 155; Stein, on Pletho as a social philosopher in *Archiv für Gesch. der Phil.* X, 171.

CHAPTER II

Downfall of the Byzantine Empire in Pletho's Life-time

Pletho's life almost spanned the last century of the independence of the Byzantine Empire. While marauding bands of Turks began to make raids on the coast as early as 1326 and better organized bodies soon made their way inland to plunder and carry off slaves, yet it was only about a decade before Pletho's birth that the first regular army under the orders of the Turkish ruler set foot in Europe, and, in 1356, approximately the year of Pletho's nativity, the Ottomans seized Tzympe near Gallipoli, thereby beginning the conquest of the country. Pletho lived until 1450, three years before the capture of Constantinople by the sultan Mohammed II. He thus witnessed throughout his life the slow but irresistible advance of the Osman power as it crushed and supplanted the Greek Empire.[1]

The Mohammedan conquest was rendered much easier of accomplishment by the civil wars within the Byzantine state and by the fidelity of the Greeks to their religious creed which forbade an effective alliance with the Roman Church.

The first regular Turkish army to enter Europe came on the invitation of Cantacuzene, who disputed the imperial throne with the Empress Anna, acting for her young son, John Paleologus. Anna, having failed to enlist the support of the Turks, called in the Serbians, while Cantacuzene, by the betrothal of his daughter to the Sultan, gained the aid of the Ottomans. Having once gained an entrance, however, the Turks plundered Serb and Greek alike and returned home with enormous booty and numerous slaves. This regrettable invitation became a precedent in following which the Turks, championing one side or the other in the numerous civil conflicts of the Greeks, shortly reduced the independence of Byzantium to a mere shadow.

The unprovoked attack on and capture of Tzympe in 1356 was the first step in the conquest of the coast cities of Thrace. In 1361

[1] The historical sketch which follows is based on Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches in Europa* (Hamburg, 1840) and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

the ambitious and energetic Murad I took Adrianople and made it the seat of his court in Europe, whither the young Emperor John Paleologus often resorted as a mark of his homage to the Sultan. The ruler of Serbia in 1371 acknowledged the Turkish overlordship, which was given the seal of permanency in 1389. In that year the Serbians, aided by the Bulgarians, revolted and suffered a defeat at Kossova from which they never recovered until modern times. Although Murad was killed in the battle, he had in the sultan Bajazet a successor even more energetic than he had been.

Bajazet demanded for his campaigns in Asia Minor the aid of a small Greek force under the command of the emperor's son, Manuel, whom, on his arrival, he held as a virtual hostage to ensure the destruction of certain defenses which were in process of construction about Constantinople. Manuel, in 1391, hearing of the death of his father which occurred in that year, escaped and had himself made emperor. This so angered the Sultan that he proceeded to lay waste the empire from Thrace to the walls of Constantinople. An obsequious Greek bishop led the Turkish troops in 1396 through Thermopyle by way of which they poured into central Greece and ravaged the Peloponnese the following year. More disastrous than the fall of Thermopyle was the victory won by the Turks in the same year at Nicopolis. Sigismund, the king of Hungary, finding the arms of the Turk already at his border, collected an army, and, with the help of the French, marched against Bajazet. The Sultan met the European armies at Nicopolis and, in a desperate pitched battle, inflicted on them a crushing defeat. The victorious Turks proceeded to reduce the city but the emperor defied them and, by virtue of the timely aid of a Genoese fleet, succeeded for a time in balking their efforts. But in 1402 Bajazet was on the point of success when he found his own territory beset by a still more barbarous chieftain, Tamour, the leader of the Moguls. The Sultan hastened to meet him but was defeated and captured in the battle of Angora. Thus the Moguls may be said to have preserved the life of the Byzantine Empire for another half century.

Fortunately for Europe, Tamour, having established himself in Smyrna, conceived and forthwith proceeded to execute the daring project of conquering China. This left Turkey unmolested from without but within she was torn by civil wars between the sons of Bajazet, until, in 1412, the pacific monarch Mohammed I united

the country under him. In the next year he negotiated a treaty of friendship with the Greek Empire and handed over to it Thessaly, the Peloponnese and the fortified places on the Black Sea and the Propontis. The Greeks improved this period of peace by making some preparation for the inevitable renewal of hostilities. A wall was built across the Isthmus of Corinth to protect the Peloponnese, on the advice of Gemistus Pletho. But the hopeless inadequacy of such defenses as were prepared became evident when, in 1423, Mohammed's successor, Murad II, laid seige to Byzantium and broke through the wall at Corinth to plunder once again the Peloponnesian Peninsula. The new Greek Emperor was able to rid his country of the enemy only by the cession of all the cities on the Black Sea and the payment of an annual tribute of thirty thousand ducats.

Throughout the following year the last desperate attempt was made to secure aid from the West. The Emperor obtained a delegation of prominent Greeks who were willing to go with him to negotiate a doctrinal compromise with Rome in order to obtain help against the Turk. The delegation, of which Pletho was a member, sitting in conference with the Roman representatives at Ferrara and Florence in 1438 and 1439, arrived at a basis of union for the Eastern and Western Churches. But as the Eastern Church refused to ratify such a heretical proceeding, the help which should have come from Rome was withheld. Constantinople could do nothing but await its doom. The Turks spread over the empire in conquest and in 1453 the warlike Mohammed II undertook to reduce the city. After a brave defense it fell and bowed to the yoke of the Ottoman in a servitude which was to last for many centuries.

CHAPTER III

Pletho's Place in the Revival of Platonism

The scholastic philosophy, taking its rise in the West from Boethius's translation of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, found its best exponent in Thomas Aquinas, who so far succeeded in reconciling the doctrines of the church with the philosophic thought of Aristotle that, for two centuries after he wrote, an attack on Aristotle was construed as evidence of hostility to the church. By this reconciliation Christianity gained the power that comes from the possession of a self-conscious philosophy and a systematic organon of formal logic. Nevertheless, a weakness was involved in the fact that the pagan philosopher, not being sacro-sanct, was liable to assaults by his own dialectical weapons, assaults the success of which involved a partial discredit of Christianity. It amounted to the same thing, in the eyes of the orthodox, whether such an assault took the form of an independent refutation of Aristotle's doctrines or a demonstration of their incompatibility with Christianity. In the West, however, this danger was slight. On the one hand, the inaccessibility of Aristotle's works, except through the medium of translations from the Arabic and, later, from the Greek, rendered almost impossible an exact knowledge of his thought for a refutation of the prevailing views regarding its agreement with Christianity. Of greater importance was the prevailing ignorance concerning any thinker of equal power and originality with whom Aristotle might be contrasted. But when the works of Aquinas began to be known in the East by translation into Greek they were immediately subject to the judgment of men who knew Aristotle's works and the Aristotelian commentators in the original Greek and who, moreover, were more or less familiar with the writings of Plato.

The period when Greek culture and philosophy may be said to have been extinguished in the Byzantine Empire is at most about three centuries. Damascius had the melancholy honor of being the last head of the philosophical school at Athens, which was closed by edict of Justinian in 529 A. D. but already in 829 Photius was growing up and was to be the principal figure in a revival of learning. He wrote a work, the *Amphilochia*, which in part dealt with the logi-

cal theory of Aristotle. His pupil Arethas wrote annotations on Plato. In 1018 Psellus was born, who later became head of a newly founded Academy of Constantinople. Unlike Photius he favored Plato rather than Aristotle and so is said to have made himself liable to a charge of heresy. His compendia of learning and work on the soul contain many comparisons of the doctrines of the two philosophers. John Italus succeeded him as head of the Academy. He as well as two other pupils of Psellus, Michael of Ephesus and Eustratius of Nicea, wrote commentaries on various works of Aristotle, an example followed with indifferent merit by Theodore Ptochoprodromus and Leo Magentinus. John Mauropus was professor of philosophy at Constantinople for a short time but left no philosophical writings. Tzetzes and Anna Comnena are said to have known something of Platonism and Aristotelianism. In the first half of the thirteenth century Nicephorus Blemmydes wrote a manual of logic and physics, which is a well organized summary of Aristotle's opinion on a large number of subjects that fall under these general heads.

These scholars served to keep alive some knowledge of ancient philosophy. It was not until the middle of the fourteenth century, however, that Gemistus Pletho was born, a man whose zeal for, and knowledge of, Platonism fitted him to combat the accepted views regarding Aristotle and the church. In a work, *περὶ ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται*,[1] written in Florence in 1439 while the author was attending the Council of Ferrara, he pointed out that Aristotle, as compared with Plato, was so far from agreeing with the church that some of his doctrines might lay him open to the charge of inclining toward atheism. In thus assailing the authority of Aristotle by the independent choice of a new authority, Pletho stands as the pioneer in the transition from the submission to absolute authority in thought to the untrammelled investigation which characterized the European Enlightenment.[2] He occupies a unique place between the modern and the ancient world. He looked back to ancient Greece and hoped to make Plato a living force in his nation and by his attempt he stirred up a debate which in turn aroused an interest in Platonism that bore

[1] The tract is printed in M. 889 A ff. It will be referred to under the abbreviated Latin title, *De Differentia*.

[2] Ueberweg, III, 5.

abundant fruit after his death.[3] Before dealing in detail with Pletho's criticism of Plato and Aristotle we shall give a brief outline of the course of the debate which arose as the result of his tract written in Florence.

Georgius Scholarius, as the translator of some of the works of Aquinas into Greek,[4] was the natural defender of the orthodox position. Scholarius was born about 1400 A. D. at Byzantium. For some years he acted as Imperial Judge[5] and in 1438 his influence was sufficient to obtain for him membership in the delegation from the Eastern Empire to the Council of Ferrara. There he worked for the consummation of the union between the two branches of the church and was entrusted with the task of drawing up the doctrinal compromise on the basis of which the union should be effected.[6] In 1448 he entered a monastery and took the name Gennadius, by which he is generally known. Within a year after the fall of Constantinople he was made patriarch of the city, but retired two years later to a monastery. He wrote voluminously on doctrinal subjects[7] and was acquainted with Greek philosophical literature,[8] having himself written a work reconciling Aristotle and Plotinus in the realm of ethics.[9]

Gennadius's reply to Pletho, entitled *κατὰ τῶν* Πλήθωνος *ἀποριῶν ἐπ' Ἀριστοτέλει*[10] and written about 1443,[11] aimed at establishing that Aristotle was more nearly in accord with Christianity than was Plato. This tract, together with Pletho's answer to it, *πρὸς τὰς*

[3] Cf. Dräseke, *Georgios Gemistos Plethon*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XIX, 268: (Plethon), der letzte selbstständige Neuplatoniker und für das Abendland der gefeierte Erneurer des Platonismus.

[4] Translations from the Latin of Thomas Aquinas's *De Ente et Essentia* and his *Expositio D. Thomae in Aristotelis libros De Anima* are attributed to Scholarius by Fabricius, XI, 391.

[5] Schultze, 92, 2 and the authorities there collected.

[6] Schultze, p. 69.

[7] For a list of his writings, cf. Fabric. XI, 369 and M. 285 C ff.

[8] M. 639 C.

[9] Fabric, XI, 392 and M. 310 C.

[10] M. 979 D ff. This tract will be referred to as *Aristotelis Defensio* or the *Defense of Aristotle*, based on the words by which it is described in the title of Pletho's reply. Fragments of it are quoted by Pletho. Migne mentions an edition of the first part by Minoides Mynas (Paris, 1858) whose promised publication of the second part was prevented by his death. Cf. M. 1213, n. (1).

[11] A. pp. xxxvi f.

ὑπὲρ Ἀριστοτέλους Γεωργίου τοῦ Σχολαρίου ἀντιλήψεις,[12] made public about 1448,[13] will be discussed fully below.

The debate was taken up by other scholars and carried on for more than twenty years. The existence of twenty additional tracts in the controversy can be established.[14]

1. Probably in 1440 or 1441 Bessarion wrote a letter to Pletho in which he adduced the opinions of commentators on Plato who did not hold the same views as Pletho had expressed regarding determinism, the creation of the heavens and the nature of being. He also quoted a passage from the *Republic* to show that Plato was committed to the doctrine of the freedom of the will. This letter was not a specific answer to Pletho's tract, *De Differentia*. It contained no reference to it and treated the questions at issue in a more technical way. It discussed also the terms, 'subsistence' (*ὑπόστασις*) and 'participation' (*μέθεξις*), which were not mentioned in Pletho's work. Since Bessarion was a student in the Peloponnese until 1433 after which until 1438 he was occupied with negotiations leading up to the Council of Ferrara and was with Pletho again until 1440 in Italy, the letter was probably written shortly after Pletho's return to Greece and was based on discussions which took place between them in Florence.[15]

2. Pletho replied in a letter which gives evidence of the greatest respect on his part for Bessarion's scholarship and opinions.[16] The content of it will be dealt with below.[17] Its date will, of course, be a short time subsequent to that of Bessarion's letter and may be stated conjecturally as 1440.

Bessarion wrote to Pletho a second time, asking for the authority on which he made the statements contained in his reply, and Pletho obliged him with the information, accompanied by a few remarks

[12] M. 979 D ff. To be cited as *In Scholarii Defensionem Aristotelis*.

[13] Schultze, p. 104

[14] For the bibliography on the history of the debate cf. Schultze, p. 90 and Stein, p. 427, n. 2. To these lists should be added Bandinius, *De Vita* etc., in M. 161, xli ff.; Hacke, pp. 57 ff.; Symonds, pp. 208, 247 f.; Prantl, IV, 155 f.; Gaspary, pp. 50 ff.; Legrand, I, xxxvi f, and Sandys, II, 74 f.

[15] Printed with a very imperfect text in M. 161, 713 D ff.

[16] M. 161, 717 B ff.

[17] Pp. 60–62.

on the interpretation of Plato.[18] Since these two letters are not in the nature of polemics, they have not been counted in the debate.

3. Theodorus Gaza is credited with a work which probably belongs next in the dispute. It is known as the *περὶ ἑκουσίου καὶ ἀκουσίου* and identified by Hodius[19] as the *De Fato* attributed also to Gaza.[20] The Index regius sancti Laurentii contains the following note on it: 'Theodori Gazae Temmachia: de anima, de voluntario et involuntario, definitiones et defensiones contra Plethonem.'[21] It is probable from this note that the work is an answer either to the letter of Pletho mentioned above or to Pletho's original tract, *De Differentia*.[22] The letter, to which the tract was probably a reply, discussed determinism mainly in its bearing on the freedom of the will and the possibility of independent moral choice in the soul. It should be placed later than Bessarion's first letter, since it contains the following reference to it: *βησσαρίωνι . . . ἐν τοῖς ὑπὲρ Πλάτωνος λόγοις περὶ εἱμαρμένης λέγοντι . . .*[23] On the basis of this reference Stein assumed a lost work of Bessarion, entitled *ὑπὲρ Πλάτωνος περὶ εἱμαρμένης*,[24] but Gaspary's statement is probably correct, that Gaza was making mention of the letter of Bessarion described above.[25] Gaza would be justified, according to the habit of scholars in that day,[26] in calling Bessarion's letter a defense of Plato, since, while arguing for the freedom of the will, the view which was in general favor, Bessarion had quoted Plato's *Republic* 617 e[27] in support of that position; in other words, he showed that Plato held the correct view, thus defending him against his false interpreters.

[18] Cf. p. 63. Pletho's letter is printed in M. 161, 721 C ff., but Bessarion's appears to have been lost.

[19] P. 61 below.

[20] Fabricius X, 395.

[21] M. 161, 971.

[22] Stein, p. 453 n. 63, at end suggests that this may be the tract by Aeneas Gaza, entitled *De Anima* and noted by Fabricius I, 690 as a work on the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. If his suggestion is correct, the note of the index quoted above can scarcely have been derived from a perusal of the manuscript.

[23] Stein, 453, n. 61.

[24] P. 452.

[25] Gaspary 51, n. 2.

[26] Gennadius's tract, in which he tried to show that Aristotle agreed with his ecclesiastical views, was called by Pletho a defense of Aristotle.

[27] M. 161, 718A.

A manuscript of a tract of Gaza is found in several libraries,[28] bearing the title *ὅτι ἡ φύσις βουλεύεται*. Migne[29] gave this as the work[30] discussed by Hodius[31] under the title *Omnia a natura alicuius gratia fieri*. Hodius suspected that this was really Bessarion's work, identifying it with the tract which the author, Bessarion, said that Trapezuntius had maliciously ascribed to Gaza.[32] This was rendered probable by the fact that Bessarion was a Platonist while Gaza was a defender of Aristotle and hence unlikely to argue a position apparently in contradiction with Aristotle.[33] Migne, noting the difficulty raised by Hodius, surmised, but without giving reasons, that the title should be *ὅτι ἡ φύσις οὐ βουλεύεται*. The difficulty and suggestion were ignored, however, by Gaspary;[34] and Stein, who has evidently seen the manuscript or a copy of it, gave the title as Fabricius originally had, *ὅτι ἡ φύσις βουλεύεται*.[35] There is reason, however, to doubt whether this title is correctly attached to the tract.

In book VI of *Bessarionis Opera Varia*, pp. 108 r. and v., Bessarion, in opening his account of the dispute regarding teleology in nature, gave in Latin the substance of a letter to himself written by Gaza. He stated that Gaza's conclusion was 'natura omnia alicuius rei gratia facit, veruntamen nihil consulto agit,' or to use an expression employed for the same idea a few lines below, 'nihil consultat.' Gaza had defined 'consultatio' as the operation of the mind in regard to the attainment of an uncertain and unknown end, the means to which were also uncertain. Now this is precisely the interpretation given to *βουλεύεσθαι* by Gennadius in his *Aristotelis Defensio* and opposed by Pletho in his reply.[36] Gaza tried to establish in a very similar manner the proposition 'natura non consultat' or, in the Greek form, *ὅτι ἡ φύσις οὐ βουλεύεται*. Like the former defender of Aristotle he was trying to reconcile Aristotle's statement with the orthodox Christian doctrine. In the case of nature, he

[28] Stein, p. 450, n. 54.

[29] M. 161, 971.

[30] Fabricius does not list it with the works of Gaza.

[31] PP. 78 ff.

[32] Cf. p. 15, n. 62 below.

[33] Phys. 199b.[26]

[34] *Ital. Lit.* II, 159.

[35] P. 450, n. 54.

[36] Cf. p. 57 below.

held, both the end and the means are defined and known, hence nature acts not with '*consultatio*' but with '*prudentia*' or fore-knowledge. Now the circumstance that, on the one hand, Bessarion gives this as the opening tract in this phase of the debate and on the other that Stein asserts the content of the extant Greek tract to indicate that it was the first polemic in the dispute[37] points strongly to the conclusion that Bessarion was giving the substance of this extant tract of Gaza's. If this is so and Bessarion did not entirely miss the meaning of Gaza's words, the title which the manuscript evidently bears is not a correct index to its content.

4. This work of Gaza, quoted by Bessarion, was written as a reply to a section of Pletho's *De Differentia*.[38] As indicated above, it followed the argument of Gennadius so closely as to be virtually a repetition of it.[39] The letter ended with a request that Bessarion give his opinion on the matter in dispute.

Stein adduced good reason for believing that this letter could not antedate 1458.[40] Bessarion, writing in 1468, said that it was written many years before.[41] Since Bessarion, to whom it was addressed, was in Germany during the latter part of 1459 and throughout 1460,[42] it follows that the letter must be put in 1458–9 or a short time after 1460.

5. Bessarion replied to Gaza in a short tract synopsized in the 1469 edition of his works.[43] He defined the terms of the debate and held that, rightly understood, Plato and Aristotle were not so far apart in their opinions as they seemed. His conclusion was that nature plans or purposes, not by her own mind, but by the universal mind which stands over her and directs her.[44] It must be referred to a time at most a few months after Gaza's letter.

[37] P. 450, n. 54.

[38] Bessarion, p. 108 v.

[39] If the reasoning in the text is correct, there would seem to be insufficient ground for Stein's warm praise of Gaza (p. 429).

[40] Stein, p. 447, n. 47.

[41] Bessarion, p. 108 r.

[42] Bandinius, in M. 161, xxxii.

[43] Legrand I, xxxvi and Stein, p. 450, imply that this tract was the *De Natura et Arte*. This is disproved, however, by the fact that the title page of Bessarion's 1469 edition, as reproduced in the catalogue of the British Museum, states that that work was in answer to Trapezuntius, not Gaza.

[44] Cf. G. *Ital. Lit.* II, 159.

6. Probably in the same year Bessarion wrote a treatise called πρὸς τὰ Πλήθωνος πρὸς Αριστοτέλη περὶ οὐσίας.[45] (*In reply to Pletho's criticism of Aristotle's theory of being.*) Consistently with his attitude of mediation between the partisans of Plato and Aristotle, he concluded that the two philosophers had the same meaning but expressed it in different words.[46]

7. About the same time Gaza also wrote a tract on Aristotle's theory of being, bearing the title πρὸς Πλήθωνα ὑπὲρ Ἀριστοτέλους.[47] (*A defense of Aristotle in reply to Pletho.*) This tract does not seem to have been an answer to Bessarion, although it may have been, in some respects, a corrective to it. Both tracts were opposed to Pletho. Gaza represented himself in a dialogue with Pletho and the conclusion of the debate, as given by Stein, is hardly distinguishable from that reached by Bessarion. There is reason to believe that the assumption made throughout the recent history of the debate, that Gaza was an opponent of Bessarion, should be somewhat modified.[48]

Since we have as yet no published evidence[49] that either tract is an answer to the other, the order of their appearance is uncertain. Stein[50] assigned Gaza's tract to the year 1463 or 1464, but Gaspary[51] proved this incorrect by showing that it was already answered by a tract of Apostolius, which in turn had called forth a letter from Bessarion, dated May 19, 1462.

8. The tract of Apostolius was entitled πρὸς τὰς ὑπὲρ Αριστοτέλους περὶ οὐσίας κατὰ Πλήθωνος Θεοδώρου τοῦ Γαζῆ ἀντιλήψεις(?).[52] The char-

[45] Stein, p. 453, n. 62.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Gaza concluded that Aristotle, in regard to the whole and the part, is really in agreement with Pletho, (who was arguing for Plato). This brings Gaza into virtual agreement with Bessarion. Bessarion opposed and criticized Pletho on several occasions (cf. pp. 14 and 61 ff.) just as did Gaza. If the latter, as a defender of Aristotle, called Bessarion a partisan of Plato, this must be understood as due to the comparative mildness of Bessarion in his strictures on Pletho, the Platonist. Bessarion's tract, moreover, (no. 5 above) is rather a corrective to Gaza's than an answer to it. Finally, Gaza's tract, described as no. 17 below, was written by the request of Bessarion and in his defense.

[49] Stein (p. 453, n. 62) says that Bessarion's tract occasioned Gaza's, but cites no evidence.

[50] P. 454.

[51] P. 51.

[52] Legrand I, lxvi.

acter of it may be known from the rebuke which it elicited from Bessarion,[53] of whom Apostolius was a young protégé. Taking up the gauntlet for Pletho, the author vilified Gaza and spoke of the ignorance shown by Aristotle, yet without advancing arguments in support of his contentions It was probably written in 1460 or 1461, since some time elapsed after its despatch before Bessarion received it, and his answer is dated May 19, 1462.[54]

9. Andronicus the son of Callistus obtained possession of the polemic of Apostolius before Bessarion received it, and forwarded it together with a reply from his own pen, the title to which in Latin is given as *Defensio Theodori Gazae adversus Michaelum Apostolium*.[55] Bessarion wrote a commendatory letter in reply,[56] which contained, however, much less extravagant praise than a similar letter addressed to Andronicus by Nicholaus Secundus.[57]

10. Bessarion wrote a letter of rebuke to Apostolius which was not so much a reasoned treatise as a lecture on the arrogant impudence of a young man who would use of Aristotle language that did not become even Gemistus Pletho to employ. This effectually silenced the only uncompromising supporter of Plato except Pletho himself. The letter was dated May 19, 1462.[58]

11. In 1464[59] appeared in Latin a work by Georgius Trapezuntius, entitled *Comparatio inter Platonem et Aristotelem*.[60] It was a bitter invective against both Plato and Pletho, against the former as a corruptor of society and against the latter as an infidel. Some knowledge of Pletho's *Laws* had by this time transpired so that it was the easier to excite prejudice against the author and even against Plato, his acknowledged master. This is attested by the fact that Bessarion, when coming later to the defense of Plato, did not say a word in vindication of his deceased teacher.[61]

[53] M. 161, 688 A ff.

[54] Fabricius, XI, 191, and Hodius, p. 78, refer to the tract of Apostolius, which has, according to Sandys (*History of Classical Scholarship* II, 75, n. 1), been printed in *Apostolius*, *πονήματα τρία* (Smyrna, 1876).

[55] Boerner, quoted by Migne 161, 1015.

[56] Printed in M. 161, 692 C ff.

[57] Printed in M. 161, 691, note (1).

[58] Printed in M. 161, 688 A ff.

[59] Cf. Stein, p. 449, n. 52.

[60] Fabricius XII, 79 and M. 161, 755 f., sec. 20. It is printed in an edition bearing the legend, Venice, 1523.

[61] This was noted by Boivin, II, 726.

12. The monk Hesaias (Esaias) wrote to Trapezuntius, probably after reading his attack on Plato, and asked him how he would defend Aristotle when found contradicting himself. The evidence for the content of this letter is Trapezuntius's reply to it, quoted by Bessarion in Book VI of his *Opera Varia*, 110 v. and 111 r. (pagination for the 1516 edition). Probably along with this letter Hesaias sent the tract of Bessarion, described as number 5 above, which had been written some three to six years previously, for his question had reference to an alleged contradiction of Aristotle on the subject dealt with in that work, and the answer of Trapezuntius was a reply to Bessarion's tract. The dating of the letter will be discussed in connection with that of the reply of Trapezuntius.

13. Trapezuntius pretended to believe that the tract of Bessarion to which he now replied came from the pen of Gaza. This was doubtless to avoid giving offence to his distinguished patron.[62] Unless the manuscript, noted by Migne, 161, 757, number 28 as *Contra Theodorum Gazam*, is a tract by Trapezuntius not elsewhere mentioned, it refers to this reply of Trapezuntius, otherwise described by Migne, *loc. cit.*, number 37,[63] as a letter to the monk Hesaias entitled *εἰ φύσις βουλεύεται* (*Utrum Natura Consilio Agat*). The tract was mentioned by Boivin,[64] Bandinius[65] and Hacke,[66] all of whom placed it before the tract of Apostolius, while more recent accounts of the debate have omitted it as well as the letter of Hesaias which was its occasion.[67] It must, however, be put later than 1464, since it contains a reference to the author's 'Comparatio philosophorum latine scripta,' in which, he said, his opinion of Plato and Aristotle was fully developed.[68] Being included in the 1469 edition of Bessarion's works, it must have been written before that year.

[62] Bessarion, 110 v.

[63] This supposition, to be sure, makes numbers 28 and 37 refer to the same work under two different titles, but since the words in which each is described fit the work described in this valuable book of Bessarion, the assumption seems less arbitrary than its alternative.

[64] II, 719.

[65] Quoted in M. 161, xliii, section 72.

[66] P. 69.

[67] With the exception of Gaspary, *Ital. Lit.* II, 159, who referred to it without naming it, but placed it in the forties (1440–49).

[68] Bessarion, p. 111 v. The work referred to is that described as number 11 above.

Trapezuntius insisted on the definition of *βουλεύεσθαι* first given by Gennadius, which appeared in Bessarion's translation as 'consilium est dubitantis.'[69] In the conclusion of the letter he gave several reasons for eschewing the study of Plato.

14. Bessarion, having obtained the letter of Trapezuntius to Hesaias, wrote a reply, which was published in the 1469 edition of his works.[70] It is this tract to which the title *De Natura et Arte* belongs, rather than that discussed as number 5 above.

15. A much more ambitious work in reply to the *Comparatio inter Platonem et Aristotelem* was written by Bessarion in 1468[71] under the title, *Adversus Calumniatorem Platonis*.[72] According to Boivin it completely reinstated Plato in the good opinion of scholars of Italy.

16. In the same year Giannandria, bishop of Aleria, published an edition of Apuleius and Alcinous in the introduction to which he praised Bessarion and Pletho.

17. This preface was answered by Andreas, son of Trapezuntius, in a tract which Zaccaria saw in the library of Mantua and of which he published the preface and conclusion.[73] For lack of available evidence as to its date it is referred to the same year, 1469.

18. Argyropoulos objected in a letter to Bessarion to some things in the introduction to the latter's defense of Plato, that is, the *Adversus Calumniatorem Platonis*. Bessarion replied in a letter quoted by Bandinius[74] to the effect that he had not the leisure to answer the objections himself, being disinclined in any case to disputation and a useless display of learning. He had, therefore, asked Theodorus Gaza to reply for him.

19. By way of compliance with his request Gaza wrote the so-called *ἀντιρρητικόν*.[75] It was a reply to Argyropoulos's criticism

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] *Ibid.* Fabric. XI, 432.

[71] Stein, p. 449, n. 52.

[72] Fabric. XI, 432 and M. 161, cli, no. 18. Printed in Venice 1469, 1503 and 1516 as the first four books of *Bessarionis Opera Varia*.

[73] Cf. Tiraboschi VI, 360. The tract is mentioned also by Hodius, pp. 82, 108. Valentinelli, IV, 10 lists an anonymous manuscript, in which, he says, Aristotle is much preferred and Plato disparaged after the manner of George of Trebizond. This may be the tract of Andrea.

[74] Bandinius, *Bibliotheca Laurentiana*, II, 275 f.

[75] *Ibid.* Fabric. X, 395 and M. 161, 971; Hodius, p. 80.

(number 18 above) of Bessarion's stricture (number 15) on Georgius Trapezuntius's failure to speak of the nature of Ideas in his *Comparatio* (number 11). As it was concerned with the question of being and appeared to Stein to have been quoted by Apostolius, he surmised that it was the occasion of Apostolius's polemic.[76] His slight linguistic evidence, however, can not stand against the fact, pointed out by Gaspary,[77] that Bessarion's letter asking Gaza to undertake the work showed the writer to be already Patriarch of Constantinople, a dignity to which he was advanced in 1463, while Apostolius wrote in 1462. Sandys said of the work: "Simply for approving this answer (*Adversus Calumniatorem Platonis*) Argyropoulos was denounced by Theodorus Gaza."[78] Oddly enough, however, he did not give any reason for doubting the following evidence to which he referred, being extracts from the letter of Bessarion to Argyropoulos quoted by Bandinius in order to give the setting of the *ἀντιρρητικόν*.

ἀνέγνομεν ἃ πρὸς τὰ ἐν προοιμίοις τῆς ὑπὲρ Πλάτωνος ἀπολογίας ἐνιστάμενος γέγραφας . . . αὐτοὶ μὲν μηδεμίαν, ὡς ὁρᾶς, σχολὴν ἄγοντες φιλοσοφεῖν, φεύγοντες ἅμα καὶ τὸ ἐρίζειν καὶ μάτην ἐπιδείκνυσθαι, Θεοδῶρον ἐξετάσαι τοὺς λόγους, ὅσον δύναται, προσετρέψαμεν . . . ἐκεῖνος μὲν οὖν τὸ κελευθὲν ἐποίησεν.

Plainly Gaza's denunciation was for criticizing and not for approving Bessarion's answer.

The date of the work is probably about 1470.

20. Another answer to the *Comparatio* of Trapezuntius (number 11) was written by a native Italian, Nicholaus Perottus, under the title *Refutatio Deliramentorum Georgii Trapezuntii Cretensis*.[79] It is also to be dated about 1470.

Its author was one of a number of Italian scholars to write letters of congratulation to Bessarion on his *Adversus Calumniatorem Platonis*.[80] The other letters are from the hands of Omnibonus Leonicenus,

[76] P. 451, n. 58.

[77] P. 52.

[78] II, 75.

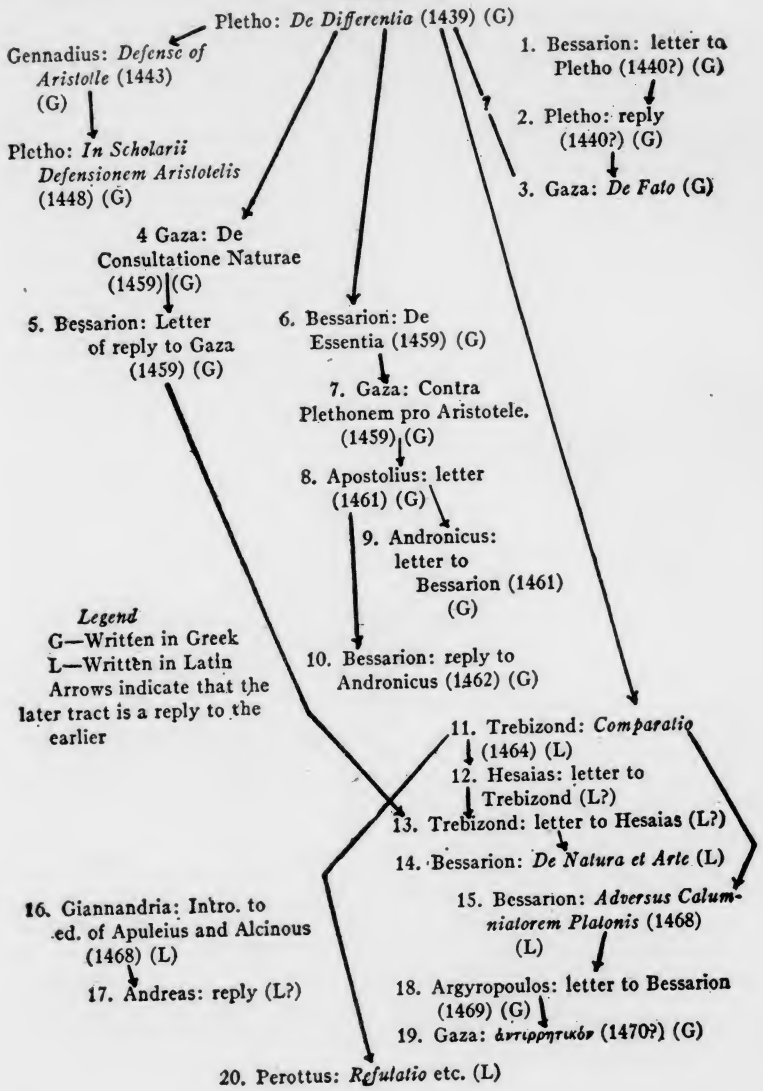
[79] Valentinelli, *Bibliotheca manuscripta ad S. Marci Venetiarum*, IV, 8.

[80] These letters are to be found in the manuscript containing the tract of Perottus. They, with the exception of the letter of Naldius, were published at Rome in 1665 in Bonaventur Malvasia's *Compendio historico della veral. basilica de' ss. dodici apostoli*. Cf. Valentinelli, IV, 7.

Naldus Naldius, Marsilius Ficinus, Antonius Panormata and Franciscus Philelphus. Among them is found a letter from Johannes Argyropoulos. This is not inconsistent with the fact that he had written to Bessarion a communication containing a minor criticism of his work.[81]

[81] Cf. number 18 above. An echo of this controversy may be discovered in certain books printed in the next century and described by Fabricius III, 146 ff. and Boivin II, 729.

DIAGRAM OF DEBATE BETWEEN PLATONISTS AND ARISTOTELIANS OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY



CHAPTER IV

Tracts from Which Pletho's Criticism of Plato and Aristotle Is Derived and His Attitude Toward the Two Philosophers

Pletho's criticism of Plato and Aristotle is to be found principally in two tracts, *De Platonicae et Aristotelicae Philosophiae Differentia* and *Contra Scholarii Defensionem Aristotelis*, supplemented by two letters written to Bessarion answering questions regarding the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies.

The *De Differentia* was written at Florence in 1439. Pletho, by his lectures on Plato,[1] had stimulated among his learned friends an interest in the thinker who had previously been known to them only as the object of Aristotle's captious criticism.[2] They accordingly requested that he should put into writing the points in which Aristotle differed from Plato. He agreed and carried out his promise[3] while confined to his house during a short illness.[4]

[1] Ficino (*Plotini Opera*, ed. Creuzer, p. xlii) represented Pletho, whom he of course could not have known, being six years of age in 1439, as giving eloquent lectures on Plato before Cosimo Di Medici and inspiring him by his lively style to conceive the thought of forming an academy. There is no reason to suppose that Cosimo understood Greek. Did Pletho speak Latin, then? It is very dubious whether he even understood it. It is true that Gregorius (M. 813 D) praised Pletho's persuasiveness before his Italian audience and Hieronymus (M. 807 D) lauded his power of speech exhibited there, but both these references were in panegyrics delivered at Pletho's death by men who had not been with him in Italy. He knew of the doctrines of Averroes only through the oral explanations of learned Italians and Jews. (M. 982 D). The value of the Latin commentators on Aristotle he could estimate only on the authority of Peter of Calabria, who knew both Greek and Latin, and of Hugo Bencius. (M. 982 B). The *De Differentia*, written for the benefit of his friends in Florence (who included native Italians) was written in Greek. His recognition of a statement of Gennadius (M. 1011 B) as coming from Thomas Aquinas does not imply a knowledge of Latin, for Gennadius had translated some of the works of Aquinas into Greek.

Peter of Calabria was identified with Pomponius Laetus by Joecher (*Gelehrten-Lexikon*), Gass (II, 56, n. a), and Schultze (p. 75), followed by Hettner (Italienische Studien, 175). If this is correct, he was but ten years of age at the time, being born in 1428 (Tiraboschi VI, 647). Yet Pletho said of him that he was skilled in both languages (Greek and Latin) and did not lack distinction in judging of the value of commentators on Aristotle. Pletho was about eighty years old at the time yet said nothing about the precocity of a ten year old boy who was among the best qualified among scholars to judge of philosophical writers in Greek and Latin.

[2] M. 982 C.

The treatise took the form of brief statements of specific doctrines of Aristotle. These were criticized on the basis of presuppositions of the Aristotelian system, or disparaged on various grounds in comparison with the corresponding doctrines of Plato or the Platonists. Pletho did not profess to appraise the work of Aristotle, so that the tone of the tract is not an accurate index of his estimate of him. He was careful to state this, and to make clear that he was merely protesting against the excessive favor with which scholars, and especially those of the West, esteemed Aristotle in comparison with Plato.[5] We must judge Pletho, therefore, not as an author of a work on comparative philosophy, but by reference to the understanding which he showed of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies, by his freedom from Neo-Platonic confusions and by the insight with which he laid bare the fundamental contradictions in Aristotle's point of view.

All Pletho's arguments against Aristotle are not to be judged from the same standpoint. In some we see the clever logician using Aristotle's dialectical weapons to refute Aristotle. In others we see the serious thinker, impatient at the futility of even his own skill in sophistry, demanding honesty in the use of language and appealing to the first principles of thought.[6]

The *Contra Scholarii Defensionem Aristotelis* was Pletho's reply written in answer to Gennadius's attack on the *De Differentia*.[7] The tract of Gennadius appears to have been a work of some length,[8] and written in a boasting[9] and abusive tone. Minoides Mynas, who edited the first part of it, tells us that Pletho was represented, not as being mistaken, but as a liar, dialectical trickster (συκοφάντης) and a mad-man.[10] Gennadius himself informs us in a letter to the Exarch Joseph[11] that the work was inspired, not by an abstract interest in

[3] M. 999 B.
[4] M. 1017 C.
[5] M. 929 A, B; 1006 B, C; 1017 B, C.
[6] M. 896 A, 900 B, 1017 A.
[7] Cf. p. 7 above.
[8] M. 984 D, 999 B, 1019 A.
[9] M. 984 D. Cf. Gass, I, 6 and Sch. p. 101.
[10] M. 979, note (a).
[11] M. 633 B.

either Aristotle or Plato, but by anger at the real aim of Pletho and zeal to defend the faith. We scarcely needed the confession of the author. Of the thirty-one extracts quoted by Pletho, twenty are arguments on the thought of Aristotle, and of these fifteen are concerned with proving that Aristotle did not deny the creation of the world, while the remaining five are devoted to a defense of Aristotle against the charge of impiety in his treatment of ethics and the question of divine providence. That is to say, Gennadius brought the debate down from a discussion of the fundamental presuppositions of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle to a dispute as to whether Aristotle was in accord with the orthodox religious opinion of the day. The character of the arguments which he employed will be discussed later. It is sufficient to point out here that, although he showed considerable familiarity with the text of Aristotle, his thesis led him into many misinterpretations of Aristotle's meaning. The following two cases will serve as illustrations.

He quoted Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 1074 a[16] ff. to show that the author believed in divine revelation. Aristotle had arrived at the conclusion that there were forty-seven spheres in the heavens. It was probable, he said, that the active principles of motion behind them were of the same number, but the necessary conclusion (that is, the proof of the matter) would have to be left to those who were better qualified to speak on the subject (*τοῖς ἰσχυροτέροις λέγειν*) These Gennadius interpreted to be the recipients of divine revelation.[12] Pletho briefly gave the correct interpretation of the passage, explaining clearly the sequence of Aristotle's thought, and pointing out that the words in question must mean those more expert in astronomy.[13]

One of the best instances of the inability of Gennadius to see the implication of a general statement is found in his criticism of a passage in the *De Differentia*. Pletho had said[14] that Aristotle, like some others, perhaps, thought a logical cause was inevitably a temporal cause.[15] Gennadius seized on this sentence as evidence of Pletho's admission that Aristotle was in agreement with the church, interpreting the word "some" as "the Christians."[16] He failed to see that

[12] M. 989 A.
[13] M. 989 A, B.
[14] M. 892 B.
[15] Cf. p. 63 below.
[16] M. 986 C, D.

if the Christians held this doctrine they would be compelled to admit that the Son and Holy Spirit, having the Father as their logical cause, were created by Him in time. Pletho pointed out this obvious application, and informed Gennadius that it was the Arians who held this doctrine and at whom he was hinting. Yet it could not detract much from Gennadius's reputation, he said, that, while arguing that Aristotle and the church were in agreement on this point, he here attributed the doctrine to the church and elsewhere denied it to Aristotle.[17] Other misinterpretations due to the desperate attempts to reconcile Aristotle with the church will be dealt with below.

[17] M. 986 D, 987 A. A few other examples of palpable mistakes made by Gennadius follow.

In one of his numerous attempts to show that Aristotle taught that the heavens were created by God, Gennadius appealed to *De Caelo* 270b[6] ff. In it all men are said to suppose that the eternal God inhabits the eternal heavens, basing their supposition on the idea that the eternal is connected with the eternal. "Connected with" is expressed by the word *συναρτᾶσθαι*, which Gennadius interpreted to denote the relation of simultaneity and cause and misquoted in support of his contention *De Caelo* 279a,[28] where *ἐξαρτᾶσθαι* occurs in the sense of "be caused by." His misquotation consisted in the suppression of the prefix *ἐξ-*. Pletho pointed out his folly in bringing together two passages which illustrated so clearly the difference between *συναρτᾶσθαι* and *ἐξαρτᾶσθαι* and correctly interpreted the passage as meaning, not that the heavens were caused by God, but that both alike were eternal. (M. 990 D, 991 A).

Again, Gennadius, quoting freely *De Caelo* 283a[31], inserted after the expression *ἀπ' αὐτομάτου* the words *καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε* showing that he regarded the two as synonymous, meaning 'by chance.' Pletho pointed out by a reference to *Physics* 197b[29] that in Aristotle *τὸ ἀπ' αὐτομάτου* meant that which happens, not without a cause, but *μάτην* or without a purpose. (M. 1010 B.) (This distinction in Aristotle's use of the words was pointed out by Psellus (O. D. 79) but without Pletho's specific textual reference.)

In quoting *Physics* 252a[35] as evidence that Aristotle made God the creator of the heavens, Gennadius seems to have utterly missed the meaning of the passage. Aristotle there said of Democritus that he held it unnecessary to seek for any cause (*ἀρχή*) of eternity in things. Aristotle objected that this opinion was right in regard to some things, but that the eternity of geometrical properties did have some cause beyond itself. Eternal essences, however, which included the heavens, had no causes beyond themselves. Pletho pointed out that Gennadius, in order to prove his case, should have found a passage in Aristotle which assigned a cause to eternal *essences*. On the contrary, his quotation denied any cause to eternity in them and assigned causes only to that in *properties* of eternal essences. (M. 989 C, D, 990 A.) The same misconception on the part of Gennadius was shown in his citation of the passage (*Meta.* 1026a[16]) in which Aristotle posited principles of motion as causes of motion for the heavenly spheres. (Gennadius

Gennadius recognized with what sort of man he had to do, if we may judge from the reluctance with which he allowed Pletho to see the book.[18] Indeed, Pletho never did see the whole work but what he did secure was sufficient to enable him to form a satisfactory conclusion as to the quality of the whole.

Pletho wrote a reply to Gennadius, which he sent to him by the hand of the Emperor John VI, informing Gennadius in a letter that he had done so,[19] but the Emperor delayed the delivery of the treatise out of regard for Pletho's reputation, according to Gennadius, but more likely to avoid mortifying Gennadius, with whom the Emperor had recently been reconciled after a disagreement.[20] It was finally delivered, but not published until after the death of the Emperor in 1448.[21]

The treatise consists of thirty-one passages selected from the tract of Gennadius and answered in detail. The nature of these selected passages has already been indicated. In as far as they involved questions of Aristotle's thought, their aim was to show that he was in agreement with the church, and Pletho's task was to disprove this thesis. He did not, however, confine himself to this

understood *ταῦτα γὰρ αἱ δὴ ἀκίνητοι οὐσίαι, αἴτια τοῖς φανέροις τῶν θείων* to mean that the unmoved essences were the causes of the heavens. Pletho saw that the full expression was *αἴτια κινήσεως τοῖς φανέροις* and explained it accordingly.) They were not the causes of the essences, Pletho said, that is, of the spheres, but of a property of them, that is, of their motion. (M. 990 A, B.)

In another passage (M. 991 A), by assuming that *πρώτη ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων* meant the "creator of all that is," Gennadius showed his innocence of the double meaning of *ἀρχή* as "beginning" and "first principle." At any rate, as he nowhere gave evidence of suspecting the latter meaning, Pletho professed despair at trying to explain it to him. (M. 991 B.)

[18] M. 981 A. It is true that Gennadius likewise charged Pletho with reluctance in sending him the *De Differentia*, a charge which Pletho denied, even though it is hard to see why Gennadius should have expected a special copy of the work, which was not directed to him. Pletho's charge, moreover, was more specific. He finally secured Gennadius's work only through the sagacity of friends who saw it (and probably made extracts) and only part of it reached him even in that way, in spite of the author's statement that he had sent a copy of the treatise. A comparison of the scholarship of the two men suggests good grounds for the unwillingness of Gennadius.

[19] M. 599 A, B.

[20] Sch. p. 97.

[21] Cf. p. 9, n. 13.

aim, but, as in the *De Differentia*, advanced objections to, and criticisms of, Aristotle from the point of view of an admirer of Plato.

The tone of the polemic is that of heated debate, but an examination of it shows that, in comparison with the tract to which it was an answer, it was comparatively moderate. Gennadius was informed that he was ignorant of the language[22] and thought[23] of Aristotle. His reported intention of annotating Aristotle's works excited in Pletho great amusement, and called forth the advice to give up all thought of making himself so ridiculous, or, if he had begun the work, to burn up his manuscript.[24] As a result of his mental blindness[25] or his aptitude for the mastery of wilful sophistries taught by Aristotle[26] he failed to take into account the context of the passages which he cited from Aristotle[27] and so wrested them from their true sense.[28] Quite oblivious of his own fallacies in reasoning,[29] he interpreted Aristotle so as to make him appear to contradict himself,[30] and in many other ways he cut a sorry figure in the debate.[31] He even misunderstood the passages of Pletho's first polemic which he had proposed to refute,[32] and turned his dialectical weapons on himself.[33] His failure to deal with the theory of Ideas in his reply was due to his utter inability to understand it.[34] Some of his arguments Pletho said he did not condescend to answer.[35] When Gennadius, dissatisfied with his attempts to find the Christian doctrine of creation in the extant works of Aristotle, resorted to the theory that part of the *Metaphysics* had probably been lost, Pletho compared his tactics to those of the ignoble cock, which struts off crowing before it has

[22] M. 989 B, 991 A, 1012 D.

[23] M. 985 D, 989 B, C, 998 A, 1003 C, D, 1010 D, 1011 A.

[24] M. 1011 A.

[25] M. 981 D, 1011 A, 1013 C.

[26] M. 987 D.

[27] M. 1006 C.

[28] M. 985 C, 987 C, 993 A.

[29] M. 1019 A.

[30] M. 1008 B.

[31] M. 991 A, 1012 D, 1020 A.

[32] M. 989 C, 991 C, 995 B, C.

[33] M. 1015 B.

[34] M. 1019 B. The one passage in which it is mentioned shows his total failure to grasp it. Cf. p. 70, n. 189.

[35] M. 984 D, 1019 A, B.

won the victory.[36] The whole work as it came to Pletho showed him the ignorance and intellectual mediocrity of its author,[37] with whom exact thought counted for nothing.[38] Gennadius's arguments elicited no abuse beyond such ridicule of his ignorance,[39] an ignorance proved by Pletho again and again. We may say, then, that while Gennadius accused Pletho of lying, sophistry and madness in a work devoted entirely to impersonal thought, Pletho attributed the faults of his opponent's reasoning to intellectual rather than moral defects, replied with comparative moderation to the opprobrious terms and threats used against him, and accused Gennadius of lying only in the matter of action, when he falsely declared he had sent to Pletho a copy of his work.[40] On the whole, he did not depart from the Platonic attitude approved by himself,[41] that error is involuntary and not to be censured. He had no objection, however, to calling it error and indicating without circumlocution the nature of the error.

In this tract Pletho stated much more fully than in the *De Differentia* his own attitude toward Plato and Aristotle.

He had no sympathy with those who saw in Plato mysterious doctrines darkly shadowed forth.[42] On the contrary, Plato, he asserted, aimed at making his meaning clear to every kind of reader. For those capable of any depth of thought his words were perfectly

[36] M. 1011 B. Cf. *Theaet.* 164 c.

[37] M. 981 A, 1019 A.

[38] M. 1020 A.

[39] It was not in criticism of his thought, but in reply to an attempt to arouse against him the "odium theologicum" by accusing him of disbelief in divine revelation and inspiration that Pletho stamped the words of Gennadius as slander and blasphemy. (M. 987 B, 984 D). His only retaliation for the attempt was the legitimate one of pointing out that, as Aristotle inclined toward atheism in comparison with Plato, Gennadius, who praised Aristotle, should be known by the company he kept (M. 1019 A). Gennadius's threats were met by ridicule. They were not gorgons but goblins to frighten children, used by a man who boasted of his advantage over a mere woman and a prostitute at that (M. 984 D), and they would have no more effect on him than the barking of a lap-dog. (M. 1020 B. For the kind of dog cf. M. 864 C. This is an adaptation of Plato's *Laws* 967 c, d and Lucian's *Symposium*, 432, 19. For threats cf. A. 324; M. 634 A and 605 D; and for a fruitless discussion of the identity of the woman referred to cf. Sch. p. 95, n. 4.)

[40] M. 981 A. The language is reminiscent of Plato's *Apology* 17 b.

[41] M. 876 B. Cf. p. 89 below, third paragraph from end in note 34.

[42] Cf. p. 87, n. 33 for Pletho's attitude to divine revelation.

intelligible, while for those of less ability he expressed his meaning in poetic myths.[43] The literal interpretation of these myths was not to be pressed, since it was their function to express the writer's meaning in a form less exact, even if more intelligible to the many.[44] His treatment of the different branches of philosophy did not purport to be exhaustive but merely outlined the principles involved,[45] yet he followed the principles up to their ultimate implications,[46] unlike Aristotle, who treated virtue in man and the phenomena of nature as though they were independent of the ultimate nature of the universe.[47] Yet it should not be inferred, he held, that Plato was ignorant of the details of the sciences and the application of their principles. While he did not investigate logic with any such minuteness as Aristotle, yet he showed an artistic mastery in the use of argument which would suggest a practised faculty rather than ignorance of a science undiscovered until Aristotle's time.[48] Pletho

[43] Gennadius, while admitting that Aristotle was obscure, had said that he was obscure as a philosopher, but Plato was obscure as a poet or one of some worse calling. Gemistus in reply (M. 985 A, B) gave the explanation of Plato's use of myths outlined above, and urged the illegitimacy of all avoidable obscurity. Its principal causes were incomplete mastery of language, a desire to conceal haziness of thought or a malicious pride which delights in mystifying the readers and having them come to the author for interpretation. Pletho valued exactness and clarity of thought very highly and judged other scholars by that canon. (M. 982 B, 1020 A.)

[44] M. 161, 721 B. Proclus held the same view. Cf. his *In Rem Pub.* II, 107, 26 ff. and Whittaker, 304.

[45] M. 929 A, 983 D, 984 B.

[46] M. 993 B, C, D.

[47] Or, as Pletho put it, Aristotle left his discussions incomplete, dealing with ethics and physics without theology, just as if one should study geometry without arithmetic, the latter being necessary for a knowledge of commensurable magnitudes. Pletho was probably thinking of Plato's *Theaetetus* 147 d ff. or, better, the *Epinomis* (which he believed authentic) 990 d. Psellus did not disparage geometry as compared with arithmetic. (*De Anima*, M. 122, 1056 A.) Cf. Burnett, 320 ff.

[48] M. 929 A. This was in criticism of Aristotle's boast that, while many fields of thought had been investigated before him, he had himself developed the whole science of logic. (*Topics* 184b[1]. His words have been interpreted as referring to the investigation of the syllogism only, but Pletho took them at their face value as applying to logic as a whole.) Pletho maintained also that Aristotle owed a debt not only to Plato but also to Archytas, who, he said, wrote works on logic used by his more illustrious successor. This is a reference to the works of the pseudo-Archytas which Proclus among others thought to be authentic. He said he had read a book by him on demonstration (*In Tim.* II, 34, 1). Simplicius

stated that much of the detail of his learning Plato transmitted to his pupils by word of mouth.[49] While Plato was for him the world's supreme philosopher, yet he was not an isolated thinker. Among the doctrines he expressed were some which came down from the followers of Zoroaster through the Pythagorean tradition to him.[50] It should be noted, however, that Plato's superiority had nothing to do with supernatural revelation, but consisted in his treatment of ethics, psychology and physics[51] as calculated to lead one's mind to the contemplation of nobler things, and in his desire to attain a unified view of existence and trace the causes of all things back to one principle.[52]

(*In Cat.* 157, 23) attributed the doctrine of the ten categories to Archytas. In opposition to these and to Iamblichus we find Themistius suspecting the works attributed to Archytas as being rather the writings of a later Peripatetic philosopher. Cf. Prantl I, 615.

[49] Pletho interpreted *Phaedrus* 275, 276a, not unreasonably (cf. Aristotle's words in *Phys.* 209b[15].), as in keeping with Plato's own practice. It is better, Pletho held, that facts should exist as knowledge in the mind than as written words in books, for, although books are useful in bridging the inevitable periods of intellectual stagnation, they encourage people to be careless of the cultivation and activity of their minds. (M. 983D).

[50] M. 984 A, B. Gennadius ridiculed this theory of the ancient origin of the Platonic teaching. (M. 639 B.) Pletho's sources for the similarity between Zoroastrianism and Platonism were Psellus (*Expositio Oraculorum Chaldaicorum* in M. 122, 1124 ff.), from whose statement of the relation (M. 122, 1153 B) Pletho differed by omitting mention of Aristotle's name as an inheritor of the doctrines of the Magi, and Plutarch, from whose *De Iside et Osiride* Pletho quoted two passages. (A. 281 and M. 984A, from *Moralia* II, 519, 12 ff. and A. 280 from *Moralia* II, 523, 3–5). The theory of a truth gradually unfolded to mankind by a succession of wise men, some of whom imparted their wisdom to oracles, was, of course, a Neo-Platonic tradition, taking its rise probably from Plato's *Alcibiades* I, 122 a, in which Plato spoke of the magic of Zoroaster as the service of God. Plutarch, Porphyry (Cf. Wolff, *Porphyrius: De Philosophia ex Oraculis Haurienda*, Berlin, 1856), Iamblichus, Proclus and Psellus were the principal transmitters of the tradition to Pletho. The theory of Ideas was ascribed to no one earlier than Pythagoras, however. Pletho, following Proclus, supposed the *De Anima Mundi* which taught the doctrine, to be genuinely the work of Timaeus, the Pythagorean. (Cf. Whittaker, 265 and n. 3).

This tradition was put to a definite use by Pletho. It served to add a halo of antiquity to the doctrines out of which he hoped to construct a theology to rejuvenate his beloved Greece and which should give her the vitality to throw back the invading Turk. Cf. pp. 90, 91.

[51] M. 988 C, D, 1018 B ff.

[52] M. 928 D, 990 B, C, 993 B, C, 1018 D.

Pletho regarded Aristotle with a tinge of the contempt of the true philosopher depicted in *Theaetetus* 173 c ff. for the sharp-sighted practical man who feels dizzy at a glimpse of abstract problems.[53] So far was Aristotle from a single-minded devotion to the truth that through pride and the desire to be the leader of a new school of thought[54] he was betrayed into statements ill becoming the character of a philosopher. He refused to acknowledge his debt to his predecessors,[55] and especially to Plato. In criticizing Plato he employed many sophistical arguments, made palpable mistakes in syllogistic reasoning[56] and urged objections which could readily be turned against him.[57] In particular, he employed the fourteenth sophistical trick, as described by himself,[58] confounding the thoughtless by the multitude of his words.[59] He showed marvellous keenness of vision in small things, such as oysters and embryoes,[60] just as a bat has sharp eyes for objects in the dark,[61] and placed great value on being able to put questions so as to refute an opponent[62] but in dealing with the implications of his statements and with more ultimate problems of philosophy he wavered in mind,[63] contradicted himself[64] and showed such mental blindness as might well be compared to the indistinct vision of a bat in the daylight. The logical method which he employed largely, that is, induction, was not calculated to enable one to distinguish, organize, and so unify, facts as well as that which Plato

[53] *Theaet.* 175 c, d.

[54] M. 984 B.

[55] M. 928 D, 929 A. Cf. p. 27, n. 48.

[56] *οὐ περαίνειν.* Schultze, p. 84, translates: "sind unzureichend und treffen den wahren Sachverhalt nicht." But cf. M. 986 B, and B-C where the word evidently means "to reason," or, more specifically, to draw the conclusion in a syllogism.

[57] M. 916 B, 928 D.

[58] *Soph. El.* 174a[17] ff. Cf. *Prot.* 335 b, c.

[59] M. 984 C.

[60] M. 892 B. Cf. Lucian, *Vitarum Auctio*, ch. 26.

[61] M. 990 C. Cf. *Meta.* 993a[30], which Psellus, *De Anima*, M. 122, 1056 B, quoted. The simile was there used to characterize the plight of most people when dealing with metaphysics. Pletho transferred it to Aristotle's own understanding of some problems.

[62] M. 990 C.

[63] M. 992 D.

[64] M. 897 B, 901 D, 924 C, 993 A.

used to a greater extent, the method of logical division.[65] Some minor criticisms Pletho advanced, such as Aristotle's inferiority to Plato in the mastery of language[66] and his occasional obscurity[67] and lack of precision[68] in the use of it, his vanity over what he regarded as his cleverness[69] and the futility of some of his distinctions.[70] Such censure was called forth largely in answer to praise which Gennadius bestowed on him. Pletho's serious criticism of Aristotle is confined to the first tract, except in so far as it is repeated in the second. Aristotle inclined toward impiety and atheism,[71] he held, that is to say, toward materialism. Pletho did not imagine, however, that Aristotle went the whole way, but in fairness to him[72] allowed that merely some passages in his work admitted of such an interpretation. But this concession involved the criticism that his thought was not a unity, but that he continually expressed opposite points of view. Pletho, professing to criticize Aristotle on the basis of his fundamental presuppositions,[73] repeatedly pointed out these irreconcilable inconsistencies.

[65] M. 1018 D. By the term "logical division" Pletho refers to the dichotomies, as in the *Sophist*.

[66] M. 988 A.

[67] M. 985 C.

[68] M. 988 A, 992 D.

[69] M. 893 A.

[70] M. 908 A, 909 C.

[71] M. 1018 C, D, 1019 A. The terms "impiety" and "atheism" must be interpreted in the light of the actual theories criticized by Pletho as making the Stagirite liable to such charges. It will be seen that he referred especially to the metaphysical doctrine which made sensible objects rather than Ideas the first essences, and, in the second instance, to his denial of the reign of law and divine purpose in nature and his apparent coquetry with the theory of the annihilation of the soul, his presumptive belief in the absolute value of sensual pleasure, and to his mechanical explanation of the virtues. Such a choice of words, although it was the only one open to Pletho, yet had an added pertinence in view of the fact that the scholars of the day, following Aquinas, had virtually reconciled Aristotle with the church. It seems to have misled Schultze, who on p. 89 says "Ueberblickt man diese Kritik (Pletho' criticism of Aristotle) so wird man bestätigt finden, dass sie Aristoteles hauptsächlich in religiöser Hinsicht angreift."

[72] Cf. pp. 47, 73.

[73] M. 1000 A.

CHAPTER V

Sources of Pletho's Judgments Regarding Plato and Aristotle

The question of how far the philosophical tracts of Pletho represent his independent judgment and criticism of Plato and Aristotle and how far they represent the judgment of authorities accepted by Pletho can not be answered completely until all the works of earlier Byzantine writers from Photius on have been made accessible. It is possible, however, to give a partial solution to the problem.

The form of the *De Differentia*, in the first place, is due to Byzantine influence. The Platonic and Aristotelian philosophers before the extinction of Greek learning by the rise of Christianity wrote voluminous commentaries on the text of their masters but at the same time a second form of philosophical writing grew up which consisted of succinct statements of doctrine or explanations of terms. Perhaps the earliest and certainly the most influential example of this type was Porphyry's *Isagoge*,[1] a very clear and concise explanation of the Aristotelian teaching regarding genus, species, difference, proprium and accident as terms in logic. Still more concise were the *Sententiae*[2] by the same author. Proclus wrote a somewhat similar work, the *Institutio Theologica*,[3] in which in separate paragraphs he gave definite and positive statements of metaphysical doctrine. Damascius in his *Dubitationes et Solutiones*[4] and after him Priscian in the *Solutiones Quaestionum*[5] prefaced their explanations by questions to which they were the answers. This proved a convenient form for Christian apologists to use in stating religious doctrine while at the same time elucidating difficulties and allaying doubts. It may thus be regarded as the prototype of the form which the "catechism" took after the Protestant Reformation. Following such a model Photius wrote a lengthy work, the *Amphilochia*,[6] mainly devoted to explanations of difficulties arising from the scriptures, but some

[1] Aristotelian Commentators, Berlin ed.

[2] Teubner ed.

[3] Didot ed. of Plotinus.

[4] Ruelle ed., Paris, 1889.

[5] Didot edition of Plotinus, 553 ff.

[6] Cf. p. 32, n. 12.

paragraphs were spared for answering questions in Aristotelian logic. Psellus, having been educated in a philosophical literature moulded by the thought and method of Aristotle, was naturally familiar with the Stagirite's philosophy but he personally inclined to the system of Plato. When he undertook, therefore, to compile a digest of learning for the Emperor Ducas, he not only gave the opinions of Aristotle on various points but, where Plato and, at times, Neo-Platonic or Stoic thinkers differed from him, Psellus placed in juxtaposition the dissentient judgments. This might be regarded as a reversion to the style of the doxographers but it arose independently of them and was confined mainly to a comparison of Plato and Aristotle. The best examples of this literary type among Psellus's works are the *De Omnifaria Doctrina*,[7] the *Solutiones Quaedam*[8] and Σύνοψις εἰς τὴν Ἀριστοτέλους λογικὴν ἐπιστήμην.[9] The last mentioned work was used as the basis for the Latin work of Petrus Hispanus, entitled *Summulae*,[10] which in turn was translated into Greek by Gennadius.[11] This literature of summaries includes in Greek a lengthy *Epitome Logica*[12] of Nicephorus Blemmydes and in the West it may be said to have reached the summit of its development in the *Speculum Theologicum* of Vincent de Beauvais.

It is against such a background as this that we must consider Pletho's *De Differentia*. When his friends in Florence asked him to point out the differences between the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle they probably had in mind such summaries as Psellus wrote. At any rate, Pletho was demonstrably familiar with them and with other philosophic summaries extant in his day.

It is evident from an examination of Pletho's tracts on Plato and Aristotle that he did not derive all his material from the reading of Platonic and Aristotelian works nor did he choose by this means the points in respect to which he should compare their doctrines. He utilized many statements and suggestions from other writers on Plato and Aristotle. We may infer from a letter of Bessarion to him

[7] M. 122, 688 ff.
[8] M. 122, 784 ff.
[9] Printed in Augsburg, 1597, 8. Unfortunately inaccessible to the author.
[10] Cf. Prantl I, 658 and by the same author *Michael Psellus und Petrus Hispanus*, Leipzig, 1867.
[11] Prantl IV, 248.
[12] M. 142, 688 ff.

that he was familiar with the works of Proclus, Hermeias, Damascius, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Syrianus, Olympiodorus, Simplicius and Ammonius.[13] Pletho mentioned by name in addition to these Plotinus, Cyrillus,[14] Timaeus (whom Pletho, following Proclus, supposed to be the author of the *De Anima Mundi*[15]) and Plutarch.[16] Although he did not speak of any Byzantine Platonist there is not the slightest doubt that he was familiar with the works of Psellus. Not only did he write scholia on a work of Psellus[17] but he obtained from him more suggestions as to the respects in which the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle differed than from any other writer. He often adopted Psellus's interpretations and he often differed pointedly from them. Apart from Psellus, the only Byzantine philosopher whom our present evidence will justify us in asserting to have influenced Pletho is Photius.

Pletho's interpretation of the theory of Ideas followed that of Proclus. He did not admit Ideas of individuals (p. 51, n. 54), of manufactured objects (p. 54, n. 69), evils, or negations (p. 52, n. 58). The doctrine of the ὄχημα for man and the universe was described at length by Proclus (p. 71, n. 194), although Pletho knew it also through others. He was indebted to Proclus also for some hints in a passage on the value of prayer, (M. 877 D and Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 208, 3 ff.) and the theory of the influx and efflux of matter in living bodies was familiar to him (p. 71, n. 191). Proclus seems also to have been Pletho's source for the conception of chains of causes (p. 53, n. 62) and he may have suggested to Pletho Aristotle's quotation from Homer used in support of the theory of metaphysical unity (pp. 47, 48). The belief in a theological truth communicated by oracles was often expressed by Proclus and was adopted by Pletho (p. 28, n. 50).[18]

Points of possible and probable contact which Pletho showed with the works of Plutarch (pp. 28, n. 50; 64, n. 146; 71, n. 194; 98, n. 86), Alexander Aphrodisias (pp. 45; 64, n. 146), Ammonius (pp. 45;

[13] M. 161, 713 D ff.
[14] M. 981 B, C.
[15] Cf. p. 50 and n. 42.
[16] Cf. p. 28, n. 50.
[17] Published in *Oracula Sibyllina* (ed. Gallaeus, Amsterdam, 1689), Appendix, pp. 80 ff.
[18] For Pletho's debt to Proclus in connection with his system of deities cf. pp. 96 ff.

80, n. 256; 82, n. 264), Asclepius (pp. 44; 45), Simplicius (p. 27, n. 48; 40, n. 8; 70, n. 188), Philoponus (pp. 64, n. 146; 71, n. 194; 72, n. 203) and Damascius (pp. 46, n. 27; 47; 61, n. 124; 62, n. 127) are indicated in footnotes to the pages cited in parentheses.

Psellus was apparently Pletho's principal source for his philosophic tracts.[19] The evidence is conclusive that he very frequently used Psellus's *De Omnifaria Doctrina* and *De Anima*. The more significant agreements between Pletho's writings and those of his Platonic predecessor may thus be catalogued: Pletho rebuked Gennadius for his confusion of *μάτην* and *ἀπ' αὐτομάτου* by drawing concisely the distinction between the terms given by Psellus (p. 23, n. 17). Pletho's seemingly unmotivated introduction of the question as to when the soul is united with the body and the two suggested answers become significant in view of Psellus's paragraph citing the authorities who held the two views (p. 75, n. 218). The strange argument for the immortality of the soul based on the ability to commit suicide is found in both writers (p. 74, n. 215, (c)). Not only did Psellus, like Pletho, state that Aristotle's works left enough doubt as to his opinion of the soul's immortality to give occasion for Alexander Aphrodisias to deny Aristotle's belief in the doctrine but he also adduced as evidence that Aristotle really thought the soul immortal a passage to which Pletho merely referred by the name of the book from which it was cited (p. 73, n. 215). Pletho's statement that the soul is the real self reads strikingly like the same expression of opinion in the *De Anima* of Psellus (p. 73, n. 211). Pletho frequently stated that the real reason for Aristotle's assumption of the fifth element was to provide for the eternity of the heavens. Psellus several times said the same thing (p. 69, n. 180) and indicated like Pletho that his theory of a sun heatless by nature was motivated in turn by a desire for consistency with his theory of the aether (p. 72, n. 199). But when Pletho compared Aristotle's inconsistency in more ultimate questions of philosophy to the blind movements of a bat in the sun light he did not directly quote Psellus's opinion about Aristotle. He applied to Aristotle a simile which Psellus quoted from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where it was used to describe the attitude of the unphilosophical person to the ultimate philosophy (p. 29, n. 61). Pletho repeated in part a statement of Psellus to the effect that the oracles of the Magi were

[19] Cf. Ueberweg, II, 231: "Der späteren Begeisterung für Platon wie sie bei Gemisthus Plethon u. a. hervortrat, hat Psellus ohne Zweifel vorgearbeitet."

not inconsistent with the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle but, being less favorable to Aristotle, mentioned Plato's name only (p. 28, n. 50). It is highly probable that Pletho thought to point out the absurdity of Aristotle's supposing the stars to have souls and yet to be fixed in their spheres because he had read brief paragraphs in a work of Psellus stating each of these beliefs of Aristotle. The probability is increased by the fact that Pletho also supposed the stars to have souls and so would have been unlikely of himself to select these statements with which to reproach Aristotle, while it was more natural in Psellus, who did not hold that the stars had a psychic motion (p. 82, n. 262).

Pletho differed in many respects from the opinions of Psellus. Psellus was a Christian and hence believed the world to be created and of finite duration (p. 64, n. 147). He did not hold a theory of absolute determinism (Cf. M. 122, 736 A, B). He followed Aristotle, with whom Pletho differed, in saying that a series admitting a before and after could not form a genus (p. 43, n. 20). He followed Aristotle in holding virtues to be means (p. 76, n. 224), that mind was unmoved (p. 75, n. 221) and that the sun produced heat by its motion rather than by its nature (p. 72, n. 200). Unlike Pletho, he committed himself to the theory that the Ideas were in the mind of God (p. 51, n. 53). His belief, based on Plutarch and others, that there are evil demons, was explicitly and repeatedly denied by Pletho (p. 95, n. 68) and where Psellus stated dogmatically that the stars exercised power over human souls Pletho adopted the sceptical position (p. 62, n. 131). When Gennadius argued that the One has the primacy over being he might have based his statement on that of Psellus but Pletho opposed it uncompromisingly (p. 46, n. 27). Finally, Psellus did not, like Pletho, disparage geometry as compared to arithmetic on the ground of its being less fundamental (p. 27, n. 47).

Photius's work, the *Amphilochia*, undoubtedly suggested one topic to Pletho. Photius quoted with approval a passage of Aristotle's *Categories* setting forth the primacy of the concrete object over the universal. Pletho summarized this passage and attacked the theory expressed in it (p. 40, n. 8). But Photius, favorable as he was to Aristotle, pointed out the main contradiction in the Aristotelian ontology (p. 41, n. 11). Pletho repeated this statement and maintained that Aristotle often contradicted himself in other fields too (p. 29).

Nicephorus Blemmydes in his works on logic and physics touched on a few topics dealt with by Pletho but there is no evidence that Pletho used these handbooks as a source. Blemmydes repeated the statement that man can not be the genus of individual men (M. 142, 757 B. Cf. p. 44), that the class difference of man is rationality (M. 142, 988 C, D. Cf. p. 45) and that the heavens consist of aether (M. 142, 1232 A. Cf. p. 69). His detailed discussion of the consistency of the affirmative and negative indeterminate propositions was very similar, except in conclusion, to that of Pletho, but evidence is adduced on p. 80, n. 256 to show that both Blemmydes and Pletho used Ammonius as a source.

We are now in a not unfavorable position to estimate the value of Voight's words (II, 120), "Plethon, der mit seinen (that is, Plato's) Werken, wie es scheint, wenig vertrauter war als mit denen des Zoroasters oder Pythagoras."

In Pletho's writings he never, as far as we are able to discover, professed to quote from the presumable sayings of Zoroaster[20] and to Pythagoras he attributed the theory of Ideas, as was natural in one who accepted as authentic the pseudo-Timaean *De Anima Mundi* (p. 28, n. 50). To both he attributed the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and such others as were to be found ascribed to the Chaldeans in the works of Psellus or to the Egyptians in the works of Plutarch (p. 28, n. 50). As teachers of these doctrines Zoroaster and Pythagoras were both said to be in the succession of wise men who passed on the truth that found its completest expression in the oral and written teaching of Plato.

It is true that many if not all the points in respect to which Pletho represented Plato as differing from Aristotle were suggested to Pletho directly by later writers and the *De Differentia* contains many passages from which it is possible to show that Pletho did not even consult the passages of Plato and Aristotle upon which the criticisms were based. This was natural in view of the fact that this work was written in Florence where the author did not have access to his library. But his answer to Gennadius's tract indicates a careful perusal of various parts of Aristotle's works.[21] The evidence for

[20] Pletho frequently, of course, attributed Platonic doctrines to both Pythagoras and Zoroaster. This was not quotation, however, but the deliberate adoption of a tradition. Cf. p. 28, n. 50.

[21] P. 23, n. 17.

his acquaintance with the text of Plato is not so much in his quotations, which were frequently obtained through commentators on Plato, as in his reminiscences of Plato's language,[22] his use of Platonic similes,[23] such statements regarding Plato as that he kept saying everywhere that the soul makes its choices by necessity[24] and, perhaps, his judgment on Plato's style.[25] There is a bare possibility that as further material comes to light it may be found that such statements were mere quotations of others' opinions but until such evidence is found the presumption is that a man who professed such admiration for Plato and who evidently laid such emphasis on exact knowledge did avail himself of the opportunity to read the words of his master.

[22] Pp. 26, n. 40; 51, n. 51; 76, n. 228; 55, n. 75 and 76; also cf. M. 1009 D and *Rep.* 487 a.

[23] Pp. 26, n. 36 and 39; 91, n. 43; etc.

[24] M. 161, 721 B.

[25] Pp. 27, and n. 43. Dräseke, in the *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, XXVII, 288 ff. shows how minutely Pletho's own activities and ambitions to be a saviour of society were based on Plato's similar attempt at Syracuse. The manner also in which he named the virtues in his tract on the subject shows the most detailed knowledge of the words of Plato's works. The author hopes shortly to publish a demonstration of this.

CHAPTER VI

Pletho's Criticism of Plato and Aristotle

More than half of the *De Differentia* is occupied, directly or indirectly, with the discussion of the relation of the universal to the particular as set forth by Plato and Aristotle. In the polemic against Gennadius it is barely mentioned, because, being beyond the intellectual range or interest of the churchman, Pletho's treatment of it was not challenged by him. Pletho regarded it as the fundamental difference between the two philosophers. Before considering Pletho's discussion of it, we shall endeavor to give a brief statement of the attitude of Plato and Aristotle on the subject.

Plato was passionately intent on finding some authorative principle in morality by which the unity of society might be preserved, and some logical necessity in thought by which opinion might be developed into knowledge. He therefore tended to emphasize the universal at the expense of the particular. Aristotle, on the other hand, preserved the imperturbable calm of one above the battle. It is characteristic of him to say that the thinker must be an arbitrator and not an advocate.[1] Irritated by some of the extravagancies of the followers of Plato and perhaps also by some of the more emotional utterances of the master himself, he never lost a chance to attack the hypostasization of the universal. In politics he was more of an individualist, and in logic he laid emphasis on the particular.

The relation of the universal to the particular is the same problem as that involved in the theory of Ideas. It is quite plain that Plato developed the theory as an explanation of that relation. We know individual objects. But we could have no such knowledge of what they were unless we had certain concepts to which they more or less accurately conform. Whence come these concepts? By reflection, Plato held; that is, by comparison of particular objects as perceived.[2]

[1] *De Caelo* 279b[11]. The index of the Prussian Academy edition of Aristotle under διαιτήτης wrongly gives this reference as 279a[11].

[2] This process of thought is seldom self-conscious and seems to be performed even by the lower animals for the simpler concepts. The formation of the more complex ones, such as the concept of justice, Plato regarded as accomplished by the same mental process. It is more difficult and often consciously performed, as in *Theaet.* 186 a, *Meno* 98 a.

These concepts, from an ontological point of view, are qualities[3] which, being present in concrete objects, qualify them and make them what they are. But Plato was not satisfied to leave the question here. Qualities have no perfect manifestation in the objects of sense, yet the mind has perfect concepts. While the concepts, then, seem to be gained by reflection, they are in reality regained, being recollections of the perfect qualities which exist in the super-celestial region inhabited by the soul before it receives a body. Qualities present in objects are sufficiently clear to enable the soul to recognize the objects as copies of the 'objective concept,' form or Idea directly perceived by it before birth. The mind's gradual formation of concepts, then, is really a recovery by recollection of what has once been clearly perceived.

It is important to distinguish here the scientific explanation of knowledge as the formation of concepts by the comparison of particular objects, from the metaphysical explanation superimposed upon this statement of the process or fact. The former or logical explanation is in many passages adopted and elaborated by Aristotle; the latter or metaphysical explanation is made the object of numerous attacks.

It must be further pointed out that the universal was often spoken of by Plato as the cause of the particular.[4] The Idea of objects was nothing else than the universal, existing not only as a concept but, in some sense, as an objective reality. This reality, this quality by virtue of which individual things were what they were, was said to be their cause. Aristotle made it his fourth or 'formal' cause. This is a sense of the word 'cause' which must be carefully distinguished from the more usual sense on pain of endless confusion of thought. As opposed to the efficient cause, that is, to the stage of a process of change in nature immediately preceding the next stage, known as the result, it may be described as a cause only in thought, or a logical cause, much like the reasons in Euclidian geometry.

[3] Just as in chemistry indeterminate matter, so to speak, might be said to become such and such a substance by being qualified by certain properties, so matter, in Plato and Aristotle, being qualified by "man-ness" or "tree-ness" becomes a man or a tree. That by which matter is so qualified that it takes on the form and properties of some knowable object is the sense in which "quality" is here used.

[4] *Phaedo* 100 d ff., *Soph.* 247 d, e.

Plato understood that he was attributing a special meaning to the word,[5] but did so in order to stress the importance of the universal in philosophy. It was a dangerous habit, nevertheless, since his less gifted successors often failed to mark the distinction and so fell into interminable sophistries.

Aristotle in his criticism of Plato attributed to him the meaning that the Idea or universal was not merely the logical cause of particular objects but was the efficient cause, and against this conception of the theory of Ideas he aimed his dialectical assaults. Having rejected the Ideas on the assumption that such was their significance, he tried to build up a system of philosophy on the supposition that not the quality but the concrete qualified object is the primary essence in terms of which all else should be understood and explained.[6] His attempt, however, was not consistently followed up and, sooner than accept the materialism to which his premise drove him, he frequently shifted his point of view back to that of Plato.[7]

Gemistus Pletho, in his criticism of Plato and Aristotle, must be judged by the clarity with which, in dealing with Plato, he alike distinguished the scientific and metaphysical explanation of knowledge and saw the difference between the logical and efficient causes of phenomena, and by the accuracy with which in reference to Aristotle he pointed out the main contradiction of his system.

Pletho indicated, in the first place, that Aristotle regarded sensible objects as the primary essences, summarizing *Categories* 2a[11] ff., "Particular objects are the first and most sovereign essences, while species and genera are less than they."[8]

Replying to this statement of Aristotle's he retorted that the Philosopher himself admitted that essence is that which most exists.[9] If, then, the part *is* less than the whole, it will be less in the scale of 'is-ness' or existence. The particular, therefore, which corresponds to the part, is or exists less than the general (universal), which

[5] *Phaedo* 97 b, 100 c, d.

[6] *Meta.* 1003a[7], 1028a[13], *Categ.* 2b[11].

[7] *Meta.* 981b[8], 1028a[22], 1032b[1], 1035b[2], 1045b[27].

[8] M. 896 C. Photius (M. 101, 773 A) quoted verbatim and with approval this passage of the *Categories*. Part of it also was quoted by Simplicius (*In Cat.* 75, 24) but he did not, like Photius (cf. p. 41, n. 11), note Aristotle's inconsistency. Photius, therefore, rather than Simplicius, is to be regarded as Pletho's source.

[9] *Meta.* 1045b[27].

corresponds to the whole; and existing less, it is plainly not the first and most sovereign essence.[10]

This argument assumes the analogy, first expressed by Plato and adopted by Aristotle, of the universal and particular to the whole and the part. The analogy is, for purposes of logic, perfectly valid. If anything is predicated of all men, the whole, we may infer that it may be predicated of all the individual men, the parts of the whole. Again, that the whole *is* more than the part will be seen to be axiomatic if examined from the point of view of knowledge rather than being. The hand, for example, a part of the body, can be known only in relation to the body, the whole of which it forms a part. Platonists and Aristotelians would admit without question that if the the knowledge of A were more ultimate than the knowledge of B, then A would be more real or existent than B. This follows from the correlation of knowledge and being. The body, therefore, *is* more than the hand. Pletho's argument amounts to a reduction of Aristotle's position to a dilemma: either the analogy of the whole and part for the universal and particular does not hold or the particular object is not the primary essence. For Aristotle to accept the first horn would be to surrender the whole basis of his logic. This is precisely the strait to which Aristotle would have been driven, had he carried out his premise consistently. To accept the second horn would be to contradict his own statement that essence is what most exists. Indeed, with characteristic indifference to what he had already said, he did accept this alternative, as Pletho showed,[11] by admitting that the knowledge of the whole was better than the knowledge of the part.[12]

In order to leave no ground even for a captious reply, Pletho went on to admit that Aristotle would have been right if by his statement he had meant that some particular individual in a class may be better than any other member of it, for example, that the man (meaning Socrates) is better than any other man.[13] But to say that any individual man or even all men taken as individuals are more

[10] M. 896 D.

[11] M. 897 B. Photius also accused Aristotle of self-contradiction for admitting two "propria" of being the particular object and the class predicated of it. (M. 101, 777 C.)

[12] *Anal. Post.* 86a[31].

[13] M. 897 A.

important than the class man, that is, the quality of 'man-ness,' is to transgress the law of unity and divide existence into disparate and incommunicable elements. Individual men are rather for the sake of 'man-ness,' which in turn is for the sake of the more comprehensive quality, rationality, and, in general, the part or particular is for the sake of the whole or universal.[14]

In these words Pletho is criticizing Aristotle for making each individual object a substance in its own right, instead of by grace of a quality, being; In other words for denying the common quality of being and holding that each object is an individual and independent essence. His objection is sound in that it calls attention to the impossibility of systematizing the manifold phenomena of experience on Aristotle's supposition. The teleological language in which he describes the relation of the universal and the particular follows very closely the words of Plato,[15] the Neo-Platonists and commentators generally.

How, then, it may be asked, did Aristotle account for concepts and the natural species and genera which correspond to them? It was by a logical device, a piece of cleverness, according to Pletho, which he imagined had never occurred to anyone before.[16] The common predicate 'white' as applied to a piece of wool and to snow does not represent anything real, but it is merely an accident of language that the same word is used to describe the color of the wool and the color of the snow. "Why," asks Aristotle, "can we not inquire which is the sharpest, the pen, the wine or the vinegar? It is because their sharpnesses are not comparable but they are called sharp by a mere coincidence of language."[17]

Pletho granted that this so-called 'equivocation of being' was clever as a theory but maintained that it was not true. The quality by virtue of which things are thought to be and are in the same class is a real common element in things, inasmuch as the quality is, in some sense, the source of the things.[18] Different things can not, therefore, be the causes of their own existence, standing independently of all else. In sensible objects to which a common predi-

[14] M. 897 B.
[15] *Laws*, 903 c, d.
[16] M. 893 A.
[17] *Phys.* 248b[6].
[18] M. 896 B and 161, 719 D.

cate may be applied, the quality, corresponding to the predicate, as whiteness in white objects, is present, though in varying degrees. There are not different qualities to which the common term is applied by a mere coincidence. Numbers, even though some are naturally before others,[19] are all alike numbers by virtue of their common definition, of which their common name is evidence. Objects which are related by the fact that some include others, such as compounds and their elements,[20] have nevertheless in common the ultimate qualification that they *are*. In respect of being, therefore, they all have a common substance.[21]

Pletho went on to elaborate and refute two arguments by which Aristotle tried to prove that being is not the class of all things.[22] The most noteworthy fact about these arguments is that they are not in Aristotle's works, although their points of departure are found in the *Metaphysics*.

The first contention, as given by Pletho,[23] rested on the consideration that a class may have besides its definition a 'proprium' or invariably concomitant characteristic shared by nothing else. In the case of man it would be "risible," so that men would be men no more by virtue of the quality of "man-ness," indicated by the true definition, a living being gifted with reason, than they would by the quality of risibility. In the same way, since "the one" was a convertible term with "being" and so its proprium, being would not be distinctively the class of all things.

[19] Aristotle stated that those things which admitted of a before and after could not be one essence or form a class. There would, therefore, not be a class of white things (*Cata.* 3b[33] ff.), of numbers (*Meta.* 999a[7] ff.) nor of compounds and elements (*Meta.* 1070b[2], which implies rather than states the conclusion).

[20] Psellus (*De Anima*, M. 122, 1060 B) said that Aristotle denied there could be a class of a series containing a before and after (such as the vegetative and rational soul) or in which one member was included by others but did not include them (such as the rational as compared to the vegetative and percipient soul). Pletho's examples show that he, rather than Psellus, had his eye on the text of Aristotle's works.

[21] M. 893 B, C.

[22] "Class" as used in this discussion means natural genus or species, rendered natural by the fact that a certain quality is present in each individual. The term is sometimes applied to the quality itself, and so comes to mean the formal or logical cause.

[23] M. 893, C, D.

The basis for this interpretation of Aristotle's position is his statement, quoted exactly by Pletho, that man is not the genus of individual men.[24] Aristotle's purpose was to call attention to the difference between genus and species as such and this in turn was a step in proving that genera and species were not first principles of being. Species only could have concrete individuals as members whereas a genus could have only species. For this reason man could not be a genus of individual men but only a species. It will be seen that the train of thought pursued by Aristotle was not that attributed to him by Pletho.

The clue to Pletho's argument is probably to be found in the *Metaphysics* 1039a[24] ff., where Aristotle argued against the hypostasization of the Ideas. If man and horse are species of the genus animal, then the animal in man and the animal in horse are distinct and the genus is no longer indivisible and hence no longer a genus. Now Asclepius, commenting on this passage, added the example of the animal in the risible.[25] This is, of course, man. The suggestion was inept but it possesses some significance for our purpose. Into an argument of Aristotle against the assumption that a real genus or Idea can be a concrete object it introduced the example of man's proprium, the risible.

Pletho's answer to the argument as he represented it showed an understanding of Aristotle's meaning in stating that man is not the genus of particular men but it imputed to him a subtle piece of sophistry. Man is not the genus of all men because the class man has a proprium convertible with it. If an opponent should deny this statement, saying that man, in spite of this objection, is the genus of particular men, he would find himself stating an obvious untruth in saying that any class of concrete individuals could be a *genus*. Pletho in his answer contrived to avoid this snare by transferring Aristotle's example from the class man to the genus of plant-animal. This genus by the application of the difference, perception, might be divided into the species of animals and plants, each of which would be also a genus in relation to its own species. One might deny that animal fails of being a genus just because it has a proprium without fear of falling into the trap set by Aristotle. Pletho then

[24] *Meta.* 999a[5].

[25] *In Meta.* 438, 21.

proceeded to make the denial and, as the weapon forged for the assault on the genus of being was thus rendered innocuous, the assault collapsed of itself.

In his second attack Aristotle, changing his ground, as Pletho said, argued that being was not the class of all things because it could not be treated as other classes could. The genus animal might be divided into species by the application of the class difference, rationality, but the genus could not be predicated of the difference. We could not say that rationality was animate. But if we divided being into species by the application of an appropriate class difference, we should be met by no such impossibility. We could predicate the (alleged) genus, being, of the difference, since being might be predicated of everything.

This argument is to be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 998b[22], in a state of extraordinary condensation. It is there stated that the species can not be predicated of its difference (This seems to be irrelevant to the argument.) nor the genus of the difference apart from the species to which the difference gives rise. (That is, the genus can not be predicated of the difference in itself, but only of that difference as embodied in the species.) The specific application to being as the alleged class of all things is not made. No example of a class difference is given at all. This is to be noted particularly as Pletho stated that Aristotle's argument hinged on his coinage of the Greek word corresponding to rationality and on his use of it in the place of rational.

It is plain that Pletho's source was not in this instance the text of the *Metaphysics*. What, then, was it? We may answer this question provisionally by pointing out that this elaboration of Aristotle's argument is to be found in Alexander Aphrodisias's *In Metaphysica*, 205, where rationality as an example of the difference in itself is suggested. Asclepius (*In Meta.* 178, 3 ff.) repeated the argument and example and quoted the answer given to it by his own teacher, Ammonius. Part of his reply was to the effect that animal may be predicated of the class difference rational and can not be so predicated of rationality only because rationality is non-existent. Not even being could be predicated of it. Pletho's reply in part followed this lead.

If Aristotle's argument proved anything, Pletho held, it was merely that the highest class could not be treated in the same way

as the lower ones. But it really proved nothing. Aristotle gratuitously invented the term rationality and found that it did not admit of the predication of animal. But this impossibility would not have resulted, if for animal he had coined a corresponding term, animality. He might have predicated animality of rationality. Such was Pletho's answer to what he regarded as an intolerable quibble on the part of Aristotle.[26]

This question of the 'equivocation of being' was touched on again in Pletho's second tract, that in answer to Gennadius's *Defense of Aristotle*. There Gennadius, answering on behalf of Aristotle Pletho's contention that being is the class of all things, objected that no such class was needed. Its function, the production of unity in things, might be amply performed by the first cause, which, being itself a unity, would by reproducing its likeness in things, bring them to a unity.[27]

Pletho answered Gennadius first on his own grounds as a logician rather than a metaphysician. If the first cause, he said, brought things to a unity by producing in them a likeness to itself, it would produce in things both unity and being. This position would be impossible for Aristotle to adopt, because it would amount to making a cause have two results.[28] Even apart from this objection he would not derive everything from one cause, for he would thereby reduce everything to one general class,[29] the very position which he and Gennadius in his behalf were trying to avoid. He might have got rid of the difficulty of attributing two results to the first cause by arguing that it produced unity in the abstract quality of being before putting being into the world. But as a matter of fact, Pletho continued, when the abstract quality of being is imparted by God, unity is thereby produced in things.[30]

[26] M. 893 D, 896 A.

[27] M. 1015 B. Psellus also, following Damascius (*Dub et Sol. I*, 37, 21) held that the first principle was the One and after it came being (O. D. 38.)

[28] Upon what in Aristotle does Pletho base this opinion? It may be a generalization of *Meta.* 1073a[26] ff., where a separate deity is assumed for each kind of motion in the heavenly spheres. What is true here of efficient causes Pletho may have generalized to include formal causes or, perhaps more likely, this is merely a way of stating Aristotle's theory that there are no Ideas which as universals are the logical causes of all the particulars included in their respective classes. Each thing exists individually without the help of Ideas.

[29] "Cause" in this passsage plainly refers to the formal or logical cause.

[30] M. 1015 D, 1016 A.

Pletho attributed Aristotle's position, at least in part, to his desire to explain the apparent anomaly of the genus and species belonging on the same level as regards being, even though the one included the other. It seemed an anomaly, he held, only because Aristotle did not reflect that the different species of a genus are only verbally on the same level. If the species of the genus 'animate' are 'rational' and 'irrational,' each species appears to be equally a subdivision of the genus 'animate,' that is, to participate equally in the quality of animateness. But really the 'irrational' is an imperfect 'rational,' a copy of it, so to speak, and so shares less in 'animateness.' If, therefore, the two species, differing by the degree in which they share in the quality which makes them a class, are nevertheless unified by the common quality, there is no reason why the genus and the species, differing by the degree in which they share in being, can not be unified by the common quality of being.[31]

Pletho objected, finally, that Aristotle's theory of being has the common usage of language against it. When we say that things are, we mean 'are' to have the same significance in each case, that is, we attribute to each thing 'being,' a definite, even if the most general, qualification. Indeed, Aristotle himself in one passage, deserting his former position, professed to be of this opinion, when he said, quoting the *Iliad* II, 204, "Rule by many is not a good thing; let one be king." Yet by making concrete objects primary essences and denying a common substance to qualities predicated of different objects by means of the same term, he really was guilty of introducing anarchy into the realm of being and forbidding it to remain one.[32]

Pletho here quotes against Aristotle a passage used by Aristotle himself when arguing for monotheism and implies that it commits the author to the theory that being is one. If Aristotle's reasoning was made by Pletho the basis for his argument, he seems to have admitted an element of captiousness. It is more likely that he took the argument from Proclus (*In Tim.* I, 262, 16) or Damascius (*Dub.*

[31] M. 1016 A ff., 161, 719 D. The ascent from species to genus must be understood to be by the method of dichotomy, as described in Plato's *Sophist* and *Politicus* and the particular argument here used by Pletho may well have been suggested by *Soph.* 226 d, where specific mention is made of the division of a class into a better and worse sub-class.

[32] *Meta.* 1076a[3], M. 896 B.

et Sol. I, 98, 22 ff.), both of whom employed it and repeated the Homeric quotation, the former verbatim and the latter in substance.

Pletho took exception to an isolated statement of Aristotle allied to this general subject. He could not grant to the ancient philosopher that the general (universal) is analogous to matter and the particular to form. If, said Pletho,[33] the universal and particular are related as the whole to the part, and form is everywhere found in the whole rather than the part (for example, the form or quality by virtue of which certain matter is actually a wagon is to be found in the whole wagon rather than in one wheel), Aristotle is wrong. Moreover, since Aristotle admits that form is opposed to matter as the actual to the potential and since the universal, that is, the quality of things, is both actual itself and actually embraces all its particulars, while the particular embraces only its share of the universal, that part, that is, of the quality which makes it among others a member of its class, therefore the universal is more actual, and so analogous to form rather than to matter. The universal, too, being the whole, is more complete than the particular, just as form is more complete than matter.[34]

The theory of Ideas is the metaphysical explanation of the relation of the universal to the particular. The essential characteristic of a class, by its presence in each individual, makes it a member of the class, and so comes to be thought of as the cause of the particulars, that is, their formal cause. Being, the highest of the universals, is in this sense the cause of all else. Pletho does not seem in his strictly philosophical writings to have confused cause in this sense with the efficient cause. In a letter to Bessarion he devoted some space to distinguishing the two kinds[35] and in dealing with the

[33] M. 897 C.

[34] M. 897 C.

[35] M. 161, 715 D, 718 D. Pletho was distinguishing two kinds of "participation." Ideas or separable minds were said to participate in things of sense when they merely caused their existence. (*παράγειν*. Cf. M. 161, 715 B where the meaning of *παράγειν* is given by the sentence of Bessarion quoted from Proclus *λέγω γὰρ αὐθυπόστατον ὃ ἂν ἑαυτὸ παράγῃ*.) Souls, too, were said to participate in bodies when they took the bodies to themselves, disposed and moved them, and so were the cause of their activity (*κινεῖν*). Here and in M. 161, 718 B, C Pletho clearly used *παράγειν* for the function of the logical cause and *κινεῖν* for the function of the efficient cause. The two might be comprehended under the term *αἴτιον* or *ἀρχή* (Cf. *ὅλως ἄρχον* in M. 161, 719 A).

'creation' of the universe he was careful to point out the difference between the logical and the temporal or efficient function of the creator.[36] But when he gave an account of the theory of Ideas according to the Platonists,[37] as he called the Neo-Platonic philosophers, he was almost driven to this confusion. The word 'cause' as logical cause was subject in the history of Platonism to two corrupting influences. 'Being' was, in the proper sense of the word, the cause of all else, the first cause, which might be spoken of as God. But in the *Republic* and *Timaeus* God was the creator of the universe and the Ideas. Thus the term 'God' might be used equivocally of being, which imparted to all things that by which they were, or of the creative, efficient agent which produced the world. Secondly, the words *αἴτιον* and *ἀρχή* might apply to the logical and also the efficient cause; but, since the conception of an efficient cause was easier and more familiar, it drove out, so to speak, the more difficult conception. Hence the Idea as an *αἴτιον* or *ἀρχή* came to be thought of as a principle of motion[38] or the efficient cause of particular objects. This was an inevitable development when it was once granted that sensible objects had to be fashioned after the likeness of Ideas and yet no especially suitable instrument was provided for making them so. The Ideas themselves assumed the function. Thus in M. 928 B Pletho, speaking for the Platonists, said that the Ideas actively produce natural objects with the help of the sun, which supplies the matter. In his account of the Ideal world, that is, in his system of deities, he made the demiurge an Idea, with whom other Ideas actively cooperated to produce still other Ideas. They were conceived of as active minds and in their totality produced all the phenomena of the visible world.[39]

Pletho defended the theory of Ideas against Aristotle's attacks in a long chapter of the *De Differentia*. Before the defense proper, however, he paused to reply to Aristotle's attribution of the theory to Plato.[40] This would be to make Plato an innovator, a term with Gemistus, as with Plato himself, generally used as a reproach.[41]

[36] Cf. p. 64.

[37] M. 928 B ff.

[38] Cf. M. 928 B. Also *Phaedo* 100 c, d and *Gen. et Cor.* 335b[9].

[39] Cf. p. 93 below.

[40] M. 916 B.

[41] M. 908 A, 909 C, 1002 C, etc. Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 424 c, *Laws* 657 b, 708 d.

That the Pythagoreans already held the doctrine, he said, is shown by the book of Timaeus the Locrian.[42] This slander disposed of, Pletho went on to quote arguments brought by Aristotle against the theory of Ideas and to answer them in detail.

(a) Aristotle stated that the Platonists made of like nature the Ideas and the objects which were their copies, inasmuch as the two were distinguished only by the greater duration of the Ideas.[43] This would make the Ideas the doubles of the objects and so open to the argument of "the third man."[44]

It is true, Pletho replied, that mere duration will not separate Ideas and their sensible copies into different kinds of being, but they are distinguished by more than mere duration. Being eternal, they can not be compared with their copies, the objects of sense, which are liable to change and decay. Their dissimilarity might be likened to that of Lysander and his statue. These plainly belong to different classes, for if we take the class characteristic of Lysander, his 'man-ness,' and ask which is more man, he or the statue, the question has no meaning. 'Man-ness,' therefore, is not present in the statue, which is consequently of a different order of being, or, rather, degree of being.[45]

(b) In mathematics there must be as many Ideas as there are concepts, and that will mean an Idea for each individual number and quantity.[46] In logic there must be Ideas not only of things in a certain class but also of things not in that class. That is, there will be an Idea of man which will make men be what they are; and there will also be an Idea of not-man, which will make all other things be not-men.[47] In other words there must be Ideas of negations. Among the Ideas of things that change, there will be some corresponding

[42] Cf. p. 28, n. 50. This work is published in Bekker's edition of Plato (London, 1826), I, 47 ff.

[43] *Eth.* 1096b[3].

[44] M. 916 C. The argument is as follows: if the concrete objects a and a′ necessitate the postulate of the Idea A, on the same principle a and A necessitate the further postulation of an ulterior Idea A′ and in the same way still others will arise indefinitely. This amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum*. Cf. Shorey's *Unity of Plato's Thought*, p. 36, n. 244.

[45] M. 916 D, 924 B. Cf. p. 43 and n. 19.

[46] M. 916 D, *Meta* 990b[11].

[47] M. 916 D, 917 C, *Meta.* 990b[13].

to objects, not in existence these objects either having passed away or not yet come into being.[48]

To show the bearing of these criticisms which he quoted, Pletho gave a short outline of the theory of Ideas as held by the Platonists.[49] The soul, he said, in viewing the sensible embodiment of an Idea, as when it beholds the figure of a triangle, gets a purer conception of it than the exact mental replica of the sensible object; it gets a knowledge of the perfect object.[50] Now the soul could not get the pure concept from the sensible object, for the pure form of it is not in the thing perceived by the senses. No more could the soul get the pure concept from itself, for it can not think what does not objectively exist[51]. It remains that the soul must get the pure concept from some other source. This source is found in the Idea of the triangle or number, or object generally. The relation of the Ideas to God and the sensible world is briefly explained as follows:

The transcendental and perfectly good God did not directly create the world.[52] A second nature, Mind or Intelligence (νοῦς) coming from God formed the intelligible world or hierarchy of the Ideas. Using the Ideas as models,[53] this Being made the sensible world. There is not an Idea, however, for each individual object of sense but for each class of objects only. Thus, while there may be an infinite number of objects of sense, there will be a finite number of Ideas;[54] while phenomena are irrational and changeable, their Ideas are rational and unchangeable.[55] There are also Ideas of various kinds of properties and relations of objects. The world of Ideas is intermediate between the transcendental God and the phenomena of sense, because being and properties can be predicated of the Ideas but potentiality and actuality can not (for the Ideas are

[48] M. 917 A, *Meta.* 990b[14].

[49] M. 917 A, D ff.

[50] M. 917 A. Cf. *Phaedo* 75 e.

[51] Error, Pletho explains, is rather a confused conception of what is than an idea of what is not. He follows *Theaet.* 193 b, c in this.

[52] Cf. pp. 92, 93.

[53] Psellus, unlike Pletho, supposed that the Ideas were in the mind of God. (O. D. 60; *De Anima*, M. 122, 1061 C.)

[54] In denying that there were Ideas for individual objects Pletho followed Proclus (*In Parm.* 824) as against Plotinus (*Enn.* V, 7), whose opinion was adopted by Psellus (O. D. 116).

[55] M. 920 B, C.

unchangeable); while, on the one hand, God can not be considered under any of these categories[56] and, on the other, objects of sense can be considered under them all.[57]

This outline of the theory meets Aristotle's three objections. By postulating one Idea for each class of things, even if the members of the class are arranged in a series, as are numbers, Pletho obviated the necessity of having an Idea for each object and mathematical concept; by showing that objects in a class have an Idea as cause of their being in that class he indicated that negations are due to a lack of cause, not to a special cause of their own;[58] and by making the Ideas rational, unchanging and always actual he explained away any anomaly that might be thought to attend the Idea of a phenomenon which, existing only potentially, has not yet come into actual existence or has ceased to exist actually.

(c) The dyad of great and small was held by Plato, as interpreted by the commentators generally, to beget all other numbers.[59] It was, therefore, their cause. But those who make number the Idea of all numbers will give the primacy to it and not to the dyad.[60]

Pletho replied that this might be so among the ideal numbers and yet in the extended numbers here the dyad would still retain its primacy, as in Plato, and beget the other numbers.[61]

[56] Psellus (O. D. 22) expressed the same idea, saying that mind, being unmoved, can not be measured by time, essence or actuality. The statement that mind is unmoved may be traced back to Aristotle (*De Anima*, 430a[17]), where, as in Psellus's work, we must suppose mind to be synonomous with God. Pletho pointed this out in the case of Aristotle (Cf. p. 75 and n. 221). According to Psellus the fluctuations of human thought belong not to the mind but to the soul.

[57] M. 920 C, D.

[58] So in his letter to Bessarion (M. 161, 720 A) Pletho says that "being" is used in the same sense when predicated of everything except negations (στερήσεις), things that no longer are (φθοραί) and evils, all of which are declinations (ἀποπτώσεις) M) from being. Applied to them "being" has a different meaning and is not caused by God, who provides with "being" all that *is* in the usual sense of the word. Pletho follows Proclus in this. Cf. *In Parmen.* 829 ff.

[59] *Phileb.* 26 b, c. But cf. Shorey, p. 64 and n. 501.

[60] M. 921 C. *Meta.* 990b[19].

[61] Aristotle's criticism is based on the supposition that in Plato's philosophy numbers are Ideas. Pletho holds that there is merely an Idea for all numbers just as for any other class of *relations*. Numbers produced by the dyad are of the world of sense. Pletho's admission to Aristotle that number holds the primacy in the Ideal world is to be expected from one who holds that number only and not the dyad or any other individual number is to be found in it.

(d) If there are Ideas of relations there will be Ideas of every chance relation. Pletho explained Aristotle's meaning by the example of an eclipse of the sun occurring at the time of the Olympian games. Neither occurrence is the cause of the other, so that their simultaneity may be taken as an example of a purely casual relation.[62]

Pletho replied that there will not be one but many Ideas to represent this relation, each one corresponding to a type of real cause in the two chains of events which lead, on the one hand, to an eclipse of the sun at a certain time and, on the other, to the celebration of the games at the same time. These two chains cross at a certain point, but beyond that have nothing to do with each other. There will be Ideas of the types of *causal* relations in the chains but not of the *casual* relation involved in the crossing of the chains. The coincidence can be said to have a cause only if by 'cause' we understand that divine harmony in the universe in accordance with which the two chains of events meet at the time they do. This is neither direct causation in the ordinary sense, nor yet chance, as Aristotle implied.[63]

(e) Ideas and their copies are either of the same class or they are not. If they are, they have a common nature, and the Ideas, as mere doubles of the sensible objects, lead to the argument of 'the third man.' If they are not of the same class, their connection is a mere matter of language which corresponds to no real identity of essence.[64]

The dilemma is not real, Pletho retorted. The Ideas and copies need not be of the same class in order to have some common element. Lysander and his statue are not in the same class yet they have in common the shape of the man.[65]

(f) Ideas are of no benefit to things of sense, because they are not the cause of motion or change.[66] Many things exist, indeed, for which, even according to the Platonists, there are no Ideas, such as a house or a finger.[67]

[62] M. 921 C, *Meta.* 990b[27]. The conception of the chain of causes as well as the generalized causation by which harmony in the universe is procured is probably taken from Proclus, *In Tim.* III, 272, 22 ff.

[63] M. 921 D, 924 A.

[64] M. 924 A, *Meta.* 991a[2].

[65] Cf. p. 50 above.

[66] M. 924 B, *Meta.* 991a[8], 1079b[12].

[67] M. 925 B.

Pletho pointed out that such a criticism implies that the efficient cause is the only cause and, more particularly, that it is a denial of the formal cause. In this Aristotle was inconsistent, for he admitted among his four causes the formal cause.[68] He did not need it, of course, to explain the genesis of the heavens, for they were eternal and had none; but without it he could not explain the genesis of natural phenomena. Even in the case of the house and finger there must be a model. In the former case it is in the mind of the artisan.[69] He and his tools could not be the efficient cause of the house unless he had the plan in his mind. No more could the sun be the efficient cause of the finger, as Aristotle would have it, without an Idea. Yet the sun is not even the efficient cause. When an artisan leaves his task his work ceases, but when the sun is absent at night growth takes place none the less, and, furthermore, the sun lacks the necessary position and form for fashioning objects as the artisan does. Natural phenomena have not their efficient cause in the sun, nor yet in themselves, for Aristotle confessed that they, while existing only potentially, could not become actual without the instrumentality of some other actuality. The requisite actualities are to be found in the Ideas. They directly produce the heavens,[70] but to produce natural phenomena they require the help of the sun which supplies the matter.[71]

(g) Ideas are of no value for knowledge, since they are not the essence of things and do not inhere in them.[72]

Pletho replied that, though Ideas do not inhere in things, yet they do cause them to be and so are of advantage in knowledge. For he who knows both the original and the copy will be better able to judge of the copy than he who knows the copy only.[73]

(h) Lastly, Aristotle objected that Ideas will not be the models merely of perceptible objects but also of other Ideas. For example, the Idea of man is the model imitated by perceptible man; but, since

[68] M. 928 B, C.

[69] This is an evasive admission of Aristotle's statement. Pletho here follows Proclus's interpretation (*In Tim.* i, 344, 7 ff.) of Plato's *Republic*, 596 b.

[70] Cf. pp. 93, quintet (c); 95.

[71] M. 928 A, B. The idea that Aristotle believed the sun an efficient cause of phenomena may have been based on such passages as *Hist. Anim.* 598a[3].

[72] M. 925 A, *Meta.* 991a[12], 1079b[15].

[73] M. 925 A.

man is a species of the genus animal, the Idea of man is in turn an imitation of the Idea of animal.[74]

Pletho replied that, while such a result does sound strange—as if one proved that a thing were greater and less than itself—,[75] yet there is nothing impossible in the same thing being an image of one thing and imitated by another. A statue might be the image of a man and have an imitation of itself by reflection in water.[76] Such arguments of Aristotle, he said, are "full of sound, signifying nothing."[77]

Pletho attributed Aristotle's hostility toward the theory of Ideas to his desire to show that things eternal had causes of their motion only and not of their being.[78] For this reason, although he divided causes into the material, efficient, final and formal, yet he never employed the formal cause, that is, the Ideas, in accounting for phenomena.[79]

We have seen that in metaphysics Aristotle represented a reaction against Plato's idealism but a reaction so far incomplete that his thought failed of unity and confused two points of view. Similarly, in dealing with the world of phenomena, Aristotle with a like incompleteness rejected Plato's teleology as set forth in the poetico-scientific work, the *Timaeus*. Plato had explained the order in the world as due to the purpose of some external intelligence;[80] Aristotle denied to God any interest in the world[81] but at the same time by personifying nature he implicitly admitted an intelligence directing change in the world. Nature with him was a cause. As a ship takes form under the hand of a ship-builder, so a tree takes form under no hand that we can see but in obedience to nature and as directed by a purpose in nature.[82] The change is comparable to a

[74] M. 925 A, *Meta.* 991a.[29]

[75] Cf. *Rep.* 523 c ff.

[76] Cf. *Rep.* 516 a for a passage which probably suggested this example.

[77] M. 925 B. Pletho employed against Aristotle here the word of reproach which Aristotle himself used of Plato's theory of Ideas in *Anal. Post.* 83a[33], *περίττωμα*.

[78] M. 924 C. Cf. pp. 84, 85.

[79] M. 928 B.

[80] *Tim.* passim, *Sophist* 265 e. But for Plato's sober opinion cf. *Phaedo* 99 b, c.

[81] *Eth.* 1207a[8].

[82] *Phys.* 199b[26].

physician's healing himself.[83] His theory might be described as an immanent teleology[84] as contrasted with Plato's transcendental teleology. By making nature a sort of art and describing art as a cause of change, abstracting it from the artisan, Aristotle skilfully avoided having to state what corresponded in nature to the artisan in art. Nevertheless, to say that there is purpose in nature does imply a conscious intelligence.

Pletho was quick to seize upon this weakness. The possible alternatives are, he maintained, the Platonic view, according to which things in themselves irrational are directed by an intelligence outside of them, and the atheistical, that is, mechanistic, theory of the atomists, who deny all purpose in the happenings of nature.[85] Aristotle, he said, wishing to found a school of his own, tried to take a middle position between these views.[86] His position may be stated thus: nature acts for an end but without a conscious purpose. But the very example he used, objected Pletho, shows the inconsistency of his viewpoint. Aristotle meant the example of the physician curing himself to be an analogy of nature acting with no director but herself, as Pletho pointed out in M. 1004 C. Aristotle would not grant to a natural object a mind of its own and insisted that there is no mind outside of itself to direct it. That it may still act toward an end without conscious purpose within or directing intelligence without, he adduced in proof the analogy of a man acting toward an end which is a certain state of himself. Yet the man in the illustration so acts only by virtue of having a conscious purpose.[87] An end assuredly implies a conscious purpose, Pletho maintained, and if there is an end some mind must conceive and will the end. It is so in art, in spite of Aristotle's attempt to abstract art from the artisan, and, if nature is essentially like the arts, it must be so in nature too. We do not see the tools in art inspired by a conscious purpose, just as we do not see the moving cause in nature so actuated, but that

[83] *Phys.* 192b[23].

[84] Cf. *Meta.* 1070a[7].

[85] Cf. *Philebus* 28 d, 29 a, *Soph.* 265 c.

[86] M. 1004 A, B.

[87] M. 1004 C, D. Gass, I, 47, note a, remarks on this argument, "Der Tadel des Pletho ist beschränkt und misverständlich." Gass seems to think that Pletho demands too much from Aristotle's analogy, but Pletho is surely right in pointing out that this analogy brings into strong relief the inherent contradiction in Aristotle's thought.

does not prove that there is no mind in art, nor does it therefore in nature. In the arts the conscious purpose is in the artisan's mind and in nature, according to Plato,[88] it is in the mind of God.[89] When the tendril of a vine reaches out toward a support and, upon finding it, grasps it, the purpose or end of its reaching out exists before the attainment of the goal. But the purpose or end could not precede the action unless it were conceived in some mind. The mind which conceives it is not in the tendril. It remains that the purpose must be in the mind of God.[90] Pletho stated that this view was shared also by Pindar, who called God the supreme artisan.[91]

Gennadius tried to defend Aristotle against Pletho by taking advantage of the double meaning of *βουλεύεσθαι*, which means not only 'to plan' or 'purpose' but also 'to deliberate.' He interpreted it to mean 'aim at without knowing how to attain' (*ἀγνοεῖν μὲν ζητεῖν δέ*)[92] Aristotle, according to Gennadius,[93] was replying to those who held that a mind presided over nature but that, groping about in ignorance, it did not direct natural objects to their appropriate ends. Aristotle answered these supposed opponents to the effect that it was strange that anyone should think things were not directed to some end merely because he did not see their cause[94] groping about (*βουλεύεσθαι*). That is, Gennadius took Aristotle to be rebuking the professors of the mechanistic theory for denying purposive action because they did not see the divine mind working.[95] The implication is that Aristotle did believe in a divine mind directing the world of change. Pletho answered that it was absurd to suppose any such creed for Aristotle to refute. He meant *βουλεύεσθαι* to be equivalent to *λογίζεσθαι*.[96] Had he believed in a divine mind external to nature he should have compared nature to a patient being cured by a physician

[88] Soph. 265 e.

[89] M. 909 D, 912 A, B.

[90] M. 1005 A, B.

[91] M. 912 B. Cf. Pindar, frag. 29 (Boekh).

[92] This was the interpretation adopted also by Gaza and Trapezuntius when defending Aristotle. Cf. pp. 11, 12 above.

[93] M. 1003 C, D.

[94] Gennadius evidently took *τὸ κινοῦν*, here translated "cause," to mean the mind which operates on phenomena.

[95] *Phys.* 199b[6].

[96] M. 1004 A. Pletho probably bases this statement on *Eth.* 1139a[12], although he does not say he has Aristotle's authority.

and not to a physician curing himself. Neither would he have, in all probability, failed to state his belief explicitly somewhere in his works.[97]

Aristotle, while allowing that the processes of nature have a purpose, yet asserted that they accomplish much which is without a purpose. When the eye is produced it accomplishes an end, namely, sight, but the blueness of the eye has no purpose.[98] Results then that occur in response to no purpose he called *ἀπ' αὐτομάτου*.[99] Unpurposed results of *human* action, as a subdivision of these, were denoted by *ἀπὸ τύχης*,[100] yet this term is often used loosely to cover occurrences in *nature* which are without a purpose.[101] The cause of all purposeless results he spoke of as undefined, because they do not produce their results with any fixed bond of necessity but might act differently.[102] Here, then, is room for spontaneity in nature, Aristotle held, just as among men we see it in volition or voluntary action.[103]

Pletho undertook to refute Aristotle's opinion regarding spontaneity in nature by pointing out that all phenomena are bound together by a necessary bond of cause and effect unless one or other of the two following propositions can be disproved: (a) Nothing arises from nothing, that is, every result has a cause, and (b) every cause acts in a certain definite and fixed way.[104] Now Aristotle, he asserted, believed that some things happen from an indeterminate cause, that is, without a real cause,[105] yet he did not refute either axiom. Indeed, he virtually admitted both. In his treatise on the eternity of motion he made use of the second;[106] and, again, when he

[97] M. 1004 C, D.
[98] *Part. Anim.* 778a[32].
[99] *Phys.* 197b[18], *Meta.* 1032a[12], [28].
[100] *Phys.* 197a[36].
[101] *Eth.* 1112a[31].
[102] *Phys.* 196b[24].
[103] *De Interpr.* 19a[7]. Gass I, 54, note b, rightly remarks regarding this passage of Aristotle, "Diese Stelle bietet nur für Theilung der Causalität, nicht für völlige Aufhebung des Fatums einen Beleg." But it was not necessary for Aristotle to deny all causation in order to introduce the element of indeterminateness against which Pletho was arguing. It was precisely the "Theilung der Causalität" to which he objected.
[104] M. 912 C, 1007 B, C; 161, 720 A.
[105] Cf. Procl. *In Tim.* I, 262, 6 ff.
[106] *Phys.* 266b[5] and [19] ff.

stated that nothing is moved without some efficient cause,[107] he came perilously near asserting that nothing comes from nothing. For when a thing is moved, that is, changed, the final state of it is due to a sort of genesis, and he admitted that this genesis can not come from nothing.[108] In such statements he granted by implication that everything is inexorably bound together by cause and effect, a result in direct contradiction to his express admission of chance.

Furthermore, the practical influence of Aristotle's theory is bad. When a thing happens without any *apparent* cause, such as phenomena in the heavens, a Platonist, believing that everything has some cause, will attribute it to God;[109] for he regards things over which men have no control as subject to divine providence, that harmony in the universe, which, while ordering all individuals in the world for their highest good, yet prefers the good of the whole in accordance with the most perfect justice.[110] For an Aristotelian such an event will have no such power to elevate the mind.

Gennadius defended Aristotle's position and argued against determinism. Pletho in the *De Differentia* blamed Aristotle because, while saying that some things happen without a cause, he did not give any example of such phenomena.[111] Gennadius undertook to furnish the examples, namely, the plants and animals which arise without seeds.[112] These, he said, have only a material cause. Pletho replied that Aristotle would not have given these examples, for if no seed is found to act as the formal cause of a plant or animal he assigned the air to take the place of seed.[113] But even otherwise it would still be necessary to show that the material cause did not act in a determined way before the example would be pertinent.[114]

Aristotle's champion essayed a second defense which was even more unfortunate than the first. When Aristotle said, he argued,

[107] *Phys.* 242b[24], 251a[17].
[108] M. 912 D, 913 A.
[109] M. 913 A.
[110] M. 1006 A, B. Cf. Plato, *Laws* 903 b, c.
[111] M. 913 A.
[112] *Hist. Animal.* 539a.[17]
[113] *Hist. Anim.* 541a[26]. "Seed" in this passage will correspond, of course, to sperm cell which, with Aristotle, was the formal cause of generation, while the germ cell or the female part in reproduction, was the material cause.
[114] M. 1007 D, 1008 A.

that some things happen without a cause, he meant 'cause' to be taken in the narrow sense of the word.[115]

Gennadius here referred to the 'immediate' cause which Aristotle illustrated by the absence of heat in the causation of ice by water,[116] or the position of the earth and moon as the cause of an eclipse.[117] He interpreted Aristotle to mean that in some processes such a special condition was not needed, so that after all there was room for chance in his system.

Pletho quoted in reply a passage in which Aristotle says that he did not intend the 'immediate' cause to be the only cause properly so-called, but merely that it must be taken into account by one who would know all the causes of a change. Gennadius was wrong, he argued, in making this a different kind of cause from the others. *αἴτιον* (cause), unlike *αἰτία* (cause or blame), has only the one meaning in Aristotle's writings and in Greek generally. Yet not only was Gennadius's objection mistaken but, had it been sound, it would have made against his main contention. If Aristotle had meant that some things happen without 'immediate' causes, he still allowed that they result from ordinary causes and in no way argued against determinism, as Gennadius wished to make him appear to do and defended him in doing. Thus Gennadius, in his zeal to refute a specific statement of Pletho's, argued counter to his own main thesis.[118] Aristotle's real meaning is that some things happen without a cause. This is clear from the course of the argument. In trying to allow for chance he was obliged to admit causes which do not act in a determined way. To say, however, that some things happen without an 'immediate' cause would still leave the other causes operating from necessity.

Human action as well as nature admitted spontaneity, according to Aristotle. This proposition he supported by the sentence in which he said that in planning and acting we see a beginning of the future.[119] Pletho took this to be Aristotle's sole example of a causeless phenomenon. Yet even it, he said, will not bear scrutiny. The thought and act, while a beginning of what is to be in the sense

[115] M. 1006 C.
[116] *Anal. Post.* 95a[16].
[117] *Meta.* 1044b[13].
[118] M. 1008 A, B.
[119] *De Interpr.* 19a[7].

that it is a cause of what follows, yet is not an absolute beginning, for it is itself conditioned, first, by the divine element from without which leads the soul and, secondly, by the ideas and conceptions obtained from without, that is, from the world of Ideas.[120] Thus the thought and act are a mere link in the chain of cause and effect.[121]

We have a further elaboration of this point occasioned by Bessarion's quotation of various commentators on Plato and Aristotle in rebuttal of Pletho's position. Bessarion adduced the opinions of Ammonius and Olympiodorus to reduce Pletho to the dilemma that either the will is free or the soul is mortal. If the soul is not, as Plato said,[122] self-moved, it can not be immortal. On the other hand, if it is self-moved, it must be free and its operations uncaused from without.[123]

Pletho replied that the soul is self-moved, but that self-motion and self-subsistence do not imply an entire absence of cause, since even Proclus defined the self-moved to be intermediate between the unmoved and that which is moved from without itself.[124] God is the unmoved mover, the causeless cause. The highest part of the soul, or the intelligence,[125] is a part of the divine. The intelligence moves the other parts of the soul, which are thus moved by something outside themselves. The soul as a unity, therefore, consists of the divine unmoved element coming from without and lower parts which are moved and governed by the higher. As a union of these two elements it is said to be self-moved. The lower parts Pletho catalogued as the will or wish (*βούλησις*), impulse (*ὁρμή*), and the states of the soul dependent on these, inner joy, not that coming from perception, (*χαρά*) anger, hope, fear, desire, courage, and beyond them the *φαντασίαι*, or the psychological reflex of the objective world as perceived by the senses.[126] The immortality of the soul is not due to the fact that it is self-moved but to the presence of its highest part,

[120] M. 161, 720 C, D.
[121] M. 913 B.
[122] *Phaedrus*, 245 c.
[123] M. 161, 713 D ff.
[124] M. 161, 718 C, D. Cf. Procl. *In Tim.* I, 379, 1 ff. Also Damascius I, 264, 20 ff.
[125] M. 161, 720 C, D.
[126] M. 161, 720 D. The purely sensuous seems, in this account, to be excluded from the activity of the soul. Inner joy corresponds to the sensuous pleasure of the body and the *φαντασίαι* to the sense perceptions.

the divine unmoved element coming from without.[127] A similar explanation might be adduced to show that the 'separable minds' or Ideas may be said to be self-subsistent and eternal and yet caused from without by God.[128]

Bessarion in his letter mentioned above went on to quote various authorities who held that the will and moral choice are free and uncaused from without. Ammonius, cited by Olympiodorus, said he knew men whose astrological horoscopes had marked out for them the lot of adulterers, yet by the self-determination of their souls they lived chastely. Furthermore, Plato in the *Republic*[129] represented human souls freely choosing their own lives.[130]

Pletho replied that moral choice and the will are really dependent on the intelligence even when they decide to disobey it, since the resolution to disobey is based on a conception by the intelligence of a desirable state of the soul. The case of men who acted differently from the character foretold for them by the horoscope does not constitute a valid objection, he held, since the horoscope was probably read incorrectly in the cases referred to and is always hard to interpret.[131] The argument drawn from Plato seems plausible until one reflects that it comes from one of his myths, the literal interpretation of which can never rightly be pressed. Plato, he held, gave his real opinion in such passages as that in the *Epinomis*,[132] where he says the most intelligent soul is subject to the greatest necessity, that of choosing the best, and in the numerous passages where he repeats

[127] Pletho took no account of the criticism of Damascius (*Dub et Sol.* I, 29, 15 ff.) that it is a contradiction of terms to say that the activities of the lower intelligence are not the activities of it but of the higher coming from without.

[128] Bessarion's argument had been so worded as to include not only souls, which were said to be self-moved, but also Ideas (*χωριστοὶ νοῖ*) described as self-subsistent.

[129] 617 e.

[130] M. 161, 716 D ff.

[131] M. 161, 722 A. Pletho added that the readings given would not, probably, have been convincing to him. His words seem to convey not an out and out rejection but a guarded skepticism regarding astrology. The extant part of his *Laws* contains no hint of a belief in astral influence on souls. This is in marked contrast to Psellus, who stated that the stars exercised a compulsion over earthly affairs. (O. D. 77.)

[132] 982 b. Pletho assumed the *Epinomis* to be a genuine work of Plato. (M. 161, 722 C). He wrote a work himself with the same title.

to the point of weariness that the bad are bad against their will, and hence, by some necessity. The Stoics, too, much as they spoke of moral choice, yet regarded it as subject to necessity, bidding us not to be angry with the wicked, since they were compelled to be so by the opinions that moved them.[133]

Those who deny necessity, Pletho explained, were led into this error by a mental confusion between two kinds of necessity: violent constraint and the impossibility of a thing to be otherwise than it is.[134] Some thinkers in their anxiety to show that the soul is free from violent constraint are betrayed into thinking that it is not subject to the other kind of necessity either. But thereby they make 'the good' a weak influence, and imagine that the soul can act in a desultory fashion,[135] choosing anything that appears to it rather than what appears best.[136]

The explanation of the number in the *Republic* 546 a ff. as a symbol of necessity Pletho professed himself unable to give, although he made certain suggestions to elucidate the arithmetical difficulties in it.[137]

In the *De Differentia* Pletho pointed out that according to Aristotle God was not the creator of the universe. He had declared the universe to be eternal[138] and, with him, that which was eternal was not only endless but also without a beginning.[139] The universe, therefore, had no beginning and God's activity could not include its creation.[140] Aristotle had said that Plato was not clear as to whether the universe had a beginning or not.[141] Pletho denied this and explained that the two passages on the subject which might be thought to involve a contradiction in Plato's works were not really inconsistent. In the *Phaedrus*[142] Plato spoke of soul as uncreated. If 'soul' is generalized and made to include the soul of the universe,

[133] M. 161, 721 A, B.

[134] This follows Plato, *Cratylus* 403 c, where Pletho interprets *ἐπιθυμία* as the psychological analogue of the apparent good, which is stronger than compulsion.

[135] *τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ ματαιότητα προσάπτοντες.*

[136] M. 161, 722 D-723 A.

[137] M. 161, 723B-724A.

[138] *De Caelo* 290a[5].

[139] *Meta.* 1091a[12].

[140] M. 889 C.

[141] *Gen. et Cor.* 329a[13].

[142] 245 c.

it results that the universe itself is uncreated and so without a beginning. In the *Timaeus*,[143] again, the universe was said to be created. These passages are not contradictory, but imply, according to Pletho, two different senses of the word 'create.' If, as in the Timaeus,[144] time came into existence with the universe, the universe was not created in time and hence always was. If, therefore, God was spoken of as creator, he was such, not in time, but only in thought. That is to say, He is merely the cause of the universe much as qualities are the cause of what they qualify.[145] Creation in logic or thought, then, is merely another way of describing the dependence of the universe on the principle of being by virtue of which all things are. It is to the logical creation that the passage in the *Timaeus* referred, and the soul is uncreated in the sense that it is not created in time.[146] While, therefore, Pletho ostensibly represented Plato as affirming, and Aristotle as denying, a creation of the universe, he was really comparing their attitudes toward the material universe. Both held that it always had been and always would be; but Aristotle held that matter had the inherent capacity for endless existence,[147] while

[143] 32 c.

[144] 38 b.

[145] Cf. p. 39, n. 3 above.

[146] M. 892 B, C, 987 C, D, 988 A. Gass, I, 44, n. a, says: "Diese Distinction ist ohne Zweifel eine der vornehmsten von Pletho gebrauchten Instanzen." This distinction, however, was a commonplace among the commentators on Plato. Crantor (Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 277, 8 ff.), Alcinous (XIV. Cf. Hermann, *In Plat. Dialog.* VI, 169), Severus (Procl. *ibid.* I, 289, 6 ff.) Taurus (Philopon. *De Aet. Mund.* 146, 8 ff., 186, 17 ff.) and Proclus (*In Tim.* I, 391, 4 ff.) held on such grounds that Plato believed the universe was eternal, while Atticus (Procl. *ibid.* I, 283, 27 ff.), Plutarch (*De Anim. Procr.* 1013 a, in ed. Bernard. VI, 156, 18 ff.), Alexander Aphrodisiensis (Philop., *De Aet. Mund.* 191, 20 ff.) held that Plato believed in a creation in time. Theophrastus (Philop. *ibid.*, 145, 20 ff.) and Xenocrates (*De Caelo* 279b[32] and Zeller 2, (1), 792, n. 1) held that Plato made the distinction for the sake of clearness only. The two passages from Plato which Pletho quoted are to be found and similarly reconciled in Philoponus (*ibid.*, 195, 10 and 11) and Psellus (M. 122, 1084 B). Cf. Zeller, 2 (1), 792, n. 1 and 1025, n. 2; Steinheimer, 3–11; Roger Jones, *Chalcidius and Neo-Platonism* in Cl. P. XIII (1918), 195.

[147] Psellus (O. D. 121) refers to Aristotle's theory of the eternity of the universe and rejects it. He disagrees also with Plato's opinion that it will never be destroyed, on the ground that this doctrine is contradictory to the scriptures and he deprecated the attempt of Proclus to show that even Plato thought the universe was created in thought only and not in time.

Plato held that God, that is, that by virtue of which things have being, was sovereign over things of sense.[148] We have here, then, another form of the difference between the two philosophers which we found in the realm of metaphysics.

To Gennadius, however, the debate had no such significance. He saw in Pletho's words only a charge that Aristotle did not believe in the creation of the world, and so was not in agreement with the church. None of Pletho's arguments exercised him more to refute. While we have only short extracts from Gennadius's *Defense of Aristotle* and those, too, taken merely from the part of the speech which came into Pletho's possession, yet we should not likely be far wrong if we conjectured that the greater part of the work was spent on establishing that Aristotle believed in God the Creator. Certainly the majority of the extracts deal with the subject and the greater part of Pletho's answer is devoted directly or indirectly to exposing the fallacies of such an attempt. Moreover, no subject touched on by Pletho lent itself so readily to disputation by a man of Gennadius's comprehension and interest.

His first piece of evidence was that Aristotle described God as the beginning or first principle,[149] thereby implying that He created the world.[150]

Pletho, professing to despair of making clear to his opponent just what Aristotle did mean by ἀρχή, contented himself with pointing out the analogies which the Stagirite employed to explain the position of the deity. God was never spoken of as the beginning of a house but He was rather compared to a general marshalling an army or a despot managing his empire, not causing the empire's existence but rather effecting its organization and arrangement.[151] Aristotle never called God the creator, maker, father,[152] or cause of the universe, but clearly tried to avoid any expression which might suggest such a relation.[153]

[148] For this reason Pletho describes Plato's doctrine as better and more pious, that is, less materialistic, than Aristotle's. (M. 988 D.)

[149] *Meta.* 983a[8], *Eth.* 1248a[25].

[150] M. 991 A.

[151] *De Mundo* 398b[4].

[152] As Plato did, for example, in *Politicus* 273 a, b.

[153] M. 1012 C.

Gennadius in a second argument pointed out that Aristotle had described God as the beginning of motion in the soul and the universe.[154] Now motion, under which term Aristotle placed change of all kinds, in the physical world, at least, is that by which one thing becomes a second thing, hence that by which the second thing comes to be. If a certain nature, namely God, is the cause of motion in the universe, it must be, on Aristotle's own showing, creative.[155]

Not necessarily so, Pletho replied, for 'motion' is used in two senses. The sun by motion begets grass from the earth where there was no grass before. In that case the motion is creative or productive of what did not before exist. But the sun by motion might warm the earth also, thereby only changing its state but not begetting any new entity. The ox that moves the cart does not make it.[156] By this same example it is plain that the cause of motion in a thing does not produce the unity of the thing, that is, cause it to be what it is, as Gennadius argued in another passage.[157]

Gennadius again quoted Aristotle to the effect that if the first cause or ἀρχή did not exist there would be no ordering of the universe and, in the lack of order and sequence, all that is subject to generation and corruption, that is, the realm of physical nature,[158] would not exist.[159] Therefore God must be regarded in Aristotle's system as the cause of the existence of the world of physical nature, and so as its creator.[160]

Pletho's answer was that this very passage was evidence that Aristotle did not hold God to be the creator. If he had, we should expect him to have said that the absence of God would result, not in disorder of the world, but in its non-existence, so that there could have been no creation. Such a hypothetical statement on the part of Aristotle would have justified Gennadius's inference but certainly the one he quoted did not.[161]

[154] Cf. *Phys.* 198b[1] f. for a possible justification for this statement.

[155] M. 1008 B.

[156] 1008 B, which is a commentary on *Gen. et Cor.* 335b[29] ff.

[157] M. 1008 D. The logical and efficient causes are here clearly distinguished.

[158] Excluding the heavenly bodies, of course, which were incorruptible and uncreated, in Aristotle's system.

[159] *Meta* 1075 b[24] ff.

[160] M. 1010 B, C.

[161] M. 1010 C, D.

Gennadius himself was not quite satisfied with the defense he was making for Aristotle. Apart from his resort to the supposition of a lost part of the *Metaphysics* which doubtless contained the evidence he required,[162] he protested that it was hard to believe that, while Aristotle made the heavenly bodies the cause not of motion only but also of existence[163] in other things, he conceived God to be, in the heavenly bodies themselves, the cause of *motion only* and not of existence. In any case, it is not fair, he said, to accuse Aristotle of disbelief in the doctrine when he nowhere expressly denied it but merely failed to commit himself on the subject.[164]

Pletho tried to show in reply that Aristotle's failure to commit himself was significant. It was dangerous in Aristotle's day to express disbelief in the orthodox view, "Διὸς δ'ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται," as Orpheus put it.[165] This is evident, he said, from the expressed opinion of Aristides, the orator.[166] Orators, being dependent on the public for success, must conform to the opinions of the many. Now, although Aristides believed that the world was eternal, he yet managed to reconcile with this view the doctrine that Zeus was the creator of all.[167] The poets, to be sure, among the Greeks, were allowed to weave extravagant fancies about the gods, but if philosophers did so they soon felt the weight of their countrymen's anger. Anaxagoras ran the risk of an indictment for impiety because he taught that the sun was a stone. For merely associating with him Pericles found himself in a like danger and was saved only by the excitement incident on the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. Socrates was put to death on a false charge of atheism.[168] There were strong reasons, therefore, against Aristotle's stating positively that God did not create the world. On the other hand, if he held the traditional view, there was no special reason why he should not express it, as might be the case were he confined rigorously to a

[162] Cf. p. 26, n. 36 above. Pletho compared this argument to the statement of the Jews that somewhere on the earth they have an empire and an excellent kingdom. M. 1011 B.

[163] M. 1009 C. Cf. p. 54 for the creative activity of the sun.

[164] M. 1011 C.

[165] Pletho may have quoted this from Procl. *In Tim.* 1, 313, 20, as Gass (II, 66, n. (b)) suggested, or from Aristotle, *De Mundo* 401a[27] ff.

[166] Born 117 A. D.

[167] Aristides, ed. Dindorf I, 2.

[168] M. 1012 B.

restricted subject, like a lawyer pleading a case or an orator discussing the question of war or peace. The only possible explanation of his silence is not that he, whose gaze took in the whole universe even to such minutiae as seeds, oysters and embryoes, overlooked this matter but that he did not believe the world was created at all.

Yet as a matter of fact Aristotle did commit himself inferentially, Pletho held. He believed the universe to be eternal, without beginning or end, so that it required no creator.[169] The analogies which he employed to represent God's relation to it suggested a commander rather than a creator.[170] Furthermore, by making the gods of the same number as the spheres of the heavens and postulating them only that there might be some means of turning the spheres, he implied that God's task was merely to turn the highest,[171] certainly not to create it. It is the first principle of motion which Aristotle is concerned with proving eternal, not the first principle of the heavens' existence, that is, the creator.[172] Indeed, with him the heavens were entirely independent of any creator, since they did not have the power not to be but, rather, had of themselves the inherent capacity for endless existence.[173]

Having given the heavens this inherent capacity, Aristotle felt obliged to maintain that they were made of imperishable material. But the four elements which science admitted (earth, water, air and fire) were all perishable individually.[174] Even fire was perishable, as may be seen from the following considerations. In Aristotle's system the nature of matter and its motion were closely connected. Matter the motion of which was liable to cease was subject to change and might pass out of existence; if, on the other hand, a body passed on with a regular and never-ending motion, as did the spheres of the heavens, we had evidence of some divine being that caused the motion, and the matter on which it operated was itself eternal.[175] Again, since space was limited but time infinite, eternal motion necessarily took place in a circle, while all motion which took place

[169] *Phys.* 192b[28]. Cf. p. 84.
[170] M. 1010 A.
[171] M. 892 C, D, 985 D, 1010 A, *De Caelo* 292b[28], *Meta.* 1073a[23].
[172] 986 A, C.
[173] M. 986 B, 1015 A, B.
[174] M. 908 D, 1001 B.
[175] *Meta.* 1073a[26], [31], *De Caelo* 391b[16].

in a straight line(that is, not in a closed curve) was finite.[176] Now even fire, which moves upwards, is seen to go in a straight line.[177] It must, therefore, be perishable, and it can not, as the Platonists held, be the material of the eternal heavenly spheres. Of what, then, are the heavens composed? The answer is that they are not matter in the sense of that which is the substratum of change[178] but only in the sense of that which is capable of motion in space.[179] This 'divine' element Aristotle called aether but by later thinkers, including Pletho, it was often spoken of as the fifth element. Being an element, it was matter, and Aristotle was thus committed to the proposition that some matter was eternal. This, Pletho argued, was a device for dispensing with the presence of soul as the means of keeping the heavens, in accordance with God's will, forever in existence.[180] Pletho proceeded to show that the device was not only inconsistent with the rest of Aristotle's system but was unnecessary to account for the facts.

The function of the fifth element, Pletho argued, could be fulfilled by fire. The observed upward motion of fire is in itself no proof that the element does not move in a circle, for the fire which we see is out of its natural place, the heavens, and all its motion until it returns should be regarded as foreign to its nature. When it reaches its abode, as even Aristotle admitted,[181] it is carried in a circle by the comets.[182] If it revolves in a circle compelled by the comets its proper movement should be described as circular, though slower than

[176] *Phys.* 266b[25].
[177] *De Caelo* 269b[12].
[178] *Gen. et Cor.* 320a[2].
[179] *Meta.* 1042b[5], 1050b[20], 1069b[24].
[180] M. 908 D, Cf. *Tim.* 32 c. Psellus (O. D. 17, 88, 96 and 97) gives an account of this debate, stating that Aristotle's purpose in assuming a fifth element was to account for the eternity of the heavens. Although he did not believe himself that they were eternal (Cf. p. 64, n. 147), he yet accepted Aristotle's doctrine of the fifth element. (O. D. 59.) Such inconsistencies mark him as a distinctly inferior philosopher in comparison with Pletho.
[181] *Meteor.* 341b[23].
[182] M. 1000 C. The discussion of the fifth element begun in the *De Differentia* is resumed in the *Contra Scholarii Defensionem Aristotelis* in answer to Gennadius's statement that fire did not revolve in a circle. M. 1000 A. His argument, if any, is not even hinted at by Pletho. Presumably, he advanced none.

that of the comets.[183] If, then, it moves in a circle it may be the component element of the heavens and the fifth element is unnecessary.

Furthermore, Pletho argued, if comets consist of aether, what explanation can be given of the fact that they pass out of existence[184] and are more or less irregular in their motion?[185] We should look for these characteristics in matter, which is refractory and liable to dispersion, not in the divine and eternal substance, aether. Now if the comets are composed of the combustible substance, the 'raw material' of fire, as Aristotle said,[186] they are surrounded by fire;[187] and, since the comets conform in general to the movements of the stars, rising and setting with them, they move in a circle and the environing fire with them. Now as the comets and their environing fire conform to the movements of the stars, they evidently have a common center of revolution,[188] and, sharing the same motion, are composed of the same kind of substance. It is impossible to suppose that the perishable comets are of aether, hence neither are the stars.

Gennadius raised an objection to Pletho's theory that the heavenly bodies, which are eternal, consisted of fire, which is liable to dispersion. Not even the Ideas would secure eternity to stars composed of fire, for the fire, passing out from under the form of the stars and being unable to take the form with them, would leave nothing but the form. The stars would then disappear.[189] Before answering the objection Pletho paused to take notice of his opponent's reference to the theory of Ideas. Had he known, Pletho wrote, of the distinction between actual and potential, he might have used the theory of Ideas to account for the eternity of the heavens without supposing them made of anything more eternal than fire. The fire composing the stars might potentially compose any body and yet never actually leave the star under whose form or Idea it found itself, because of the greater holding power of the Idea which already controlled the matter as compared with the attraction of any Idea

[183] M. 908 B, C, 1000 D, 1001 A, B.

[184] M. 1000 B.

[185] *Ibid.*

[186] *Meteor.* 341b[18], 344a[16].

[187] *De Mundo* 392b[2].

[188] M. 1001 A. Cf. Simplicius 415, 21.

[189] M. 1001 B, C. This is Gennadius's only mention of theory of Ideas. Pletho attributed his silence on this subject to his inability to grasp the theory. Cf. M. 1007 D, 1008 A.

which did not so control it.[190] While suggesting this solution, Pletho proposed as a serious attempt to remove Gennadius's difficulty quite a different explanation. The heavens are eternal because of the presence of soul.[191] In all living beings an influx and efflux of matter takes place. When the influx is greater than the efflux, the organism grows; when the efflux is greater, decay takes place; when both are equal, the organism is in a state which, if perpetuated, will make it immortal.[192] This is the condition of the heavenly bodies. The presence of soul causes the flow of matter and, in obedience to the will of God,[193] the inflow and outflow are equal throughout time. Gennadius's objection that the human soul does not thus make the human body immortal was not a happy argument, Pletho pointed out, to use against the Platonists, who held that the divine did not consort with the mortal body directly but through the medium of a fiery spirit, a sort of immortal body, the immortality of which was due to the presence of soul.[194]

The fifth element, according to Pletho, was thus unnecessary to account for the eternity of the heavens. This being so, the

[190] 1001 D. ὕλην . . ., περιουσίᾳ τῆς τῶν κατεσχηκότων εἰδῶν δυνάμεως κωλυομένην. Cf. Porphyry, *Sententiae* 3, 4 ff. for the language.

[191] M. 1002 A. Cf. M. 909 A. This theory is referred to by Proclus *In Rem. Pub.* II, 161, 18.

[192] Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 105, 32.

[193] The presence of soul must be regarded as the means employed by the will of God, which, in the last analysis, was the cause of the eternity of the heavens. (M. 1014 C, D. Cf. *Tim.* 32 c).

[194] M. 991 D, 1002 B, C; A. 277. The theory of the immortal body, the ὄχημα, took its rise from the interpreters of Plato's Timaeus 41 d, e and 69 c and was discussed at length or familiarly referred to by practically all later Platonic philosophers, including Psellus (M. 122, 1052 C etc.). Cf. Jones, *The Platonism of Plutarch*, 47, n. 137. For the theory in relation to the universe cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 5, 11 ff.

Pletho said that Plutarch and John attributed the doctrine, probably wrongly, to Aristotle. The basis of the statement, regarding Plutarch is doubtless the *Moralia* VII, 401, 17 ff. "John" means Philoponus, as Gass (II, 88, n. (b)) surmised on insufficient evidence. He cited Timotheus the Presbyter (M. 86, 44 A), who said that Philoponus held the doctrine. The words of Philoponus, however, (*In De Anima* 51, 12 ff.) leave little room for doubt that he is the John referred to. Psellus's repetition of the statement in his *De Anima* (M. 122, 1041 C) is almost certainly based on the words of Philoponus in this introduction to his commentary on the *De Anima* of Aristotle, since it is the principal source from which he drew his material for his own book on the soul. The critical reservation is original with Pletho.

distinction which Aristotle drew between the sun and the moon regarding their manner of heating the earth was useless.[195] This distinction was that the heat of the sun was due to its motion only,[196] since the sun was composed of aether, which was by nature heatless.[197] The moon, on the other hand, being of fire,[198] is hot by its own nature. The distinction, according to Pletho, was introduced purely on account of the theory of the aether,[199] since it did not help to explain the facts. If the sun's heat is due to its motion,[200] there is no reason, Pletho maintained, why that of the moon should not be also. The heat reaching the earth from the two bodies varies inversely as the distance it has to travel and directly as the speed of the body generating it by its motion. Hence, if the moon does go more slowly, it is enough nearer the earth to compensate for its slowness of motion. If, again, the moon gives heat because it is naturally hot, there is no reason why the sun should not also, once the aether theory is disposed of.[201] More than this, there is an actual absurdity in attributing the sun's heat to its motion if it were made of aether. Mere motion does not generate heat; there must also be friction.[202] Yet it is hard to see how the sun can touch us and so produce friction to become hot.[203]

In regard to the immortality of the soul Pletho held that Aristotle was full of contradictions.[204] In the *De Anima*[205] and the *Meta-*

[195] M. 909 B, C, 1002 C ff.

[196] *Meteor.* 341a[19] and [35].

[197] *De Mundo* 392a[5] and [29] ff.

[198] *Meteor.* 340b[5–14].

[199] This repeats the statement of Psellus, O. D. 96.

[200] As Aristotle maintained. This also is found in Psellus, *loc. cit.*

[201] M. 909 C, 1002 C.

[202] M. 1003 B. Cf. *Meteor.* 341a[34].

[203] M. 1003 B. The sun, by Aristotle's theory, would not come into contact with the elements of this world extending as far as the moon. (Pletho's "us" must refer to our world.) Beyond the moon was heatless aether. Also, as Philoponus explained (*In Meteor.* 42, 16 ff.) the sun is separated from the earth by three spheres, those of Hermes, Stilbon and the moon. The moon, of course, being on the boundary of the perishable elements, would come into contact with the fire and so might generate heat by friction with it.

[204] M. 994 A.

[205] 413b[24], quoted by Psellus, *De Anima*, M. 122, 1044A.

physics[206] he implied that the soul continued to exist after death.[207] In the *Ethics*[208] he spoke of it as a living being that, through inability to perceive things in the world, was not affected by them.[209] Nowhere did he expressly say that it perished at death but many things he did say pointed in that direction. In the *Ethics*,[210] where the doctrine was of the greatest importance because of its bearing on conduct, he stated that death was the end and that nothing good remained for the dead man after it.[211] He ought surely to have mentioned the immortality of the soul as a corrective to the statement that death was the most terrible issue to face,[212] yet he did not. In spite of these contradictions[213] into which Aristotle was lead by his customary blindness when dealing with fundamental problems,[214] he nevertheless would seem to have held that the soul is immortal.[215]

[206] 1070a[24], Psellus (*De Anima*, M. 122, 1041 D) did not mention the *Metaphysics* in this connection but quoted from the *De Partibus Animalium*. (641a[17]-ff. and 736b[27]).

[207] M. 901 C, D.

[208] 1100a[18].

[209] M. 994 B, C.

[210] 1115a[26].

[211] M. 901 D. In this passage δοκεῖ is now usually interpreted as a reference to common opinion but Pletho understood it as a reference to Aristotle's opinion. His answer was as follows: If any part of man is immortal, it is not a shade with weak senses but that which is most properly called man. It is "the man." (Cf. I *Alcib.* 130 c.) By being rid of the mortal part it would be happier and hence a great good would remain to man after death. Psellus (O. D. 27) in like strain stated that beyond the logical soul was the νοερὸς ἄνθρωπος, the αὐτανθωπος, the real "we," since "we" and the soul are one.

[212] M. 994 A.

[213] M. 993A.

[214] M. 990 C.

[215] M. 889 A. Schultze's statement (p. 88) contradicts Pletho's words: καὶ ταῦτα οὐδ' Ἀριστοτέλους ταύτην (τὴν ψυχὴν θνητὴν εἶναι) δοκοῦντος τὴν ἀμαθίαν ἀμαθαίνειν. In spite of this Schultze represents Pletho as saying: "Wenn nicht alles trügt, so ist er aber der Meinung gewesen, die Seele sei sterblich." Equally incorrect it is to paraphrase Pletho's words from the same passage thus: "Mit Recht hat schon Alexander Aphrodisiensis aus diesem Satz (Aristotle's words, that there is no good for men after death) geschlossen, dass Aristoteles die Unsterblichkeit geleugnet habe." (p. 88). Pletho really said that Aristotle left the matter so indecisive, that Alexander, having already a bias toward materialism, claimed that Aristotle actually did deny the immortality of the soul. This statement is taken almost verbatim from Psellus, *De Anima*, M. 122, 1041 C.

With Pletho the immortality of the soul was axiomatic. It is interesting to see what arguments he used in support of his belief when speaking before a

Plato sought to establish besides the immortality of the soul the doctrine of its preëxistence. Pletho held that Aristotle was committed to the same belief by the statement that the mind is before the body in time,[216] but showed an inconsistency when he inveighed against Plato's theory of reminiscence, by which the hypothesis was supported.[217] Pletho maintained that, if mind is older than body in time, it must have known and learned. If it forgot such learning

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public audience. In two funeral orations which are extant he urged the following five grounds for the belief:

(a) Nearly all races from the most ancient times have held it and it has seemed invariably to accompany a belief in the existence of God Himself.

(b) Man is of such a nature that he can know causes and eternity and has a desire for immortality. He is in part, therefore, akin to the eternal, which is the divine. That the divine element in him should long for immortality just by reason of his divine nature and yet have it denied him would constitute an incompleteness which can be found nowhere else in the universe.

(c) No organism wills its own destruction, yet men deliberately commit suicide. Hence, when a man decides to kill himself, he does not decide to destroy the part of himself which makes the decision but resolves to rid it of the mortal body. (This argument is found also in Psellus's *De Anima*, M. 122, 1048 B.)

(d) Man is akin to the lower animals in as far as he shares in the activities of animals, such as eating and reproduction, but in as far as he performs the activities of the beings above men (demons), such as contemplation of truth and of the Maker of the universe, he is akin to them. Since God is without envy, He would not deny immortality to the creatures most like Himself, the demons. The part of man that is like them would in all probability share also in the immortality imparted to them.

(e) The belief that death is the end of all produces a deterioration in the character of men and states that embrace it. This fact in itself is presumption for its falsity and the truth of the opposite doctrine.

[216] Gennadius objected that Aristotle did not mean that the soul first existed and was later united with the body, but maintained that his real belief could be inferred from the fact that he said mind was the "entelechy" of the body and the "entelechy" always comes after the potentiality in time. Hence mind comes after the body in time. (M. 991 B, C.) Pletho did not make any specific reply to this argument but he refuted the general position by a reference to the Aristotelian doctrine of eternity. If the soul is immortal it must have existed forever; Gennadius admitted that Aristotle believed it to be immortal; it followed that Aristotle must also believe it to have existed forever. (M. 992 C.)

[217] *Meno* 81 d, *Phaedo* 72 e, 92 d.

at birth and later acquired what it once knew, surely such learning was reminiscence.[218]

Two isolated statements made by Aristotle about the soul were further selected by Pletho for criticism. Aristotle had said that the perceptible comes before perception,[219] meaning that the perception of a concrete object can not arise before the object comes into existence. Pletho objected that things mutually conditioned must arise simultaneously. While there could be no perception without an object, neither could there be an object unless it were the object of some intelligence. The potentially perceived and potential perception are mutually conditioned, and both become actual at the same time.[220] Again, Aristotle said that mind was unmoved and actual.[221] This is true of the divine mind, Pletho replied, but, if such was Aristotle's meaning, he should have so limited the term. Of the human mind it is not true. The human mind is unmoved in the sense that it is not moved in space but it is moved in the sense that it passes from potentiality to actuality and from one kind of actuality to another. It potentially exists when it is unconscious or ignorant; it is partially actual when it has incomplete knowledge; as it passes from thought to thought, it changes from one realm of actu-

[218] M. 901 B, C. Gennadius (M. 991 B, C) tried to show that Aristotle held the Christian doctrine that the soul came into existence at birth and was immortal. Pletho replied (M. 992 B) that, in the first place, Aristotle admitted that the mind was older than the body in time and hence could not suppose it to be created by God either at the time of conception or when the individual attained to mature intelligence. The former, as shown by Psellus (O. D. 42), was the opinion of Gregorius Nyssenus and the philosopher Maximus; the latter, that of authorities among the Greeks. Psellus mentioned none of these authorities by name but he might well have named Proclus (Cf. *In Tim.* III, 321, 25.) Secondly, for him to suppose that a soul which had a genesis could have no death would be to ignore his own principle that only that which has no beginning can be without an end. (M. 992 A.) It would be inconsistent, also, with his view of the universe. Space being limited and time infinite, the souls coming into existence with the birth of each body would eventually become indefinitely numerous and could not be contained in the finite universe, in accordance with the principle developed by Aristotle in his *De Caelo* 273a.[13] (M. 992 C.)

[219] *Categories* 7b[36]; M. 897 D.

[220] M. 900 A. Pletho here, following Plato's *Theaetetus* 160 b, anticipates Berkeley against the "common sense" view of Aristotle.

[221] M. 901 A, 991 C; *De Anima* 430a[17]. Psellus followed Aristotle literally, adopting the opinion of Proclus (*Instit. Theol.* 168). Cf. O. D. 80.

ality to another and it never becomes wholly actual until it grasps the whole of reality.[222]

Not only does Aristotle take from man one of the strongest incentives to virtue by casting doubt on the immortality of the soul but, according to Pletho, the virtues themselves are not attractive in his system. They are defined as the means between two extreme states of character or moral activity.[223] Courage, for example, having to do with objects of fear and confidence, is the mean between rashness and cowardice. Inquiring whether Aristotle had a quantitative or a qualitative mean in view in his definition, Pletho inferred from his example of a thunderbolt and earthquake justifying fear even in a brave man that Aristotle was thinking of the quantitative mean.[224]

It must be noted here that we are not dealing with the debate whether the mean is purely quantitative or is in the nature of an ideal, as described by Plato;[225] but Pletho was inquiring whether Aristotle meant the mean in feelings stimulated by the *physically* impressive or insignificant, or the mean between feelings stimulated by objects which differed *in kind*, such as the noble and the base.

Pletho held that only vice is formidable and that it differs in kind from what is not to be feared. Like Plato in the *Thaetetus*,[226] he held that virtue and vice are fundamentally opposed. All else he regarded as indifferent, such as nobility of family, reputation, political honors, wealth or poverty, health or sickness and life or death.[227] Such things by means of intelligence or its absence can be made beneficial or the opposite and so, in themselves, are not to be feared. Some can not be avoided, so that, as one has no effective means of dealing with them, it is irrational to fear them.[228] Such are earthquakes and thunderbolts. Virtue alone is the source of the happiness of a good man, yet, if he feared such objects, he could not be happy in a country like Greece, where they are frequent, but would have to go to Egypt to escape the earthquakes and to the land

[222] M. 900 D, 901 A, B.
[223] *Eth.* 1106b[36].
[224] M. 904 A ff. Psellus did not differ from Aristotle in regarding the virtues as means. (O. D. 56.)
[225] *Politicus* 283 c ff., *Phileb.* 24 b–26 c.
[226] 176 a.
[227] M. 999 C.
[228] This is reminiscent of *Rep.* 604 b.

of the Hyperboreans to avoid the thunderbolts.[229] Moreover, it is impious to fear them, since God ordained that they should be. Aristotle would not have regarded them as formidable either, had he not made the good depend too closely on the condition of the body.[230] To say that an ulgy man can not be happy[231] is to suppose that an evil of the body can corrupt the soul,[232] since happiness and virtue are the health of the soul. This would contravene the principle that each thing has its appropriate evil, by which alone it can be destroyed.[233] If he does not contravene the principle, it must be inferred that he regards the body and soul as of the same kind. The good, Pletho held, ought rather to be defined by its effect upon the soul;[234] in which case virtue turns out to be the only good and vice the only evil. All else may in a particular case be good or it may not, according as it is used for the benefit of the soul and of that to which the soul is related, the divine order of the universe. At any rate, external events are not to be feared by the wise man, who will, if God commands, submit without a groan to earthquake, lightning or disease.[235]

Pletho adduced other arguments in refutation of the doctrine of the mean. If the virtues are merely quantitative means, they do not result in good actions and therefore can not be virtues.[236] A good man's desires are for noble ends and a bad man's for base ends. If the desires of both for their respective ends are excessive, vice, according to the definition, should result in each case. Thus the good man would be included in the company of the evil. Again, badness consists in desiring what one ought to despise and in despising what one ought to desire. He who does both of these in the mean is none the less a bad man, although Aristotle's theory would place him among the good. The doctrine of the mean is also open to the objection that it violates the principle that each thing can have only one contrary. Aristotle held that virtue, the mean, was the contrary

[229] M. 997 A, B.
[230] M. 996 D, 997 A.
[231] *Eth.* 1099b[3]; M. 999 C.
[232] M. 995 A.
[233] Cf. *Rep.* 608 d ff.
[234] M. 996 D.
[235] M. 997 C.
[236] M. 904 C, D. For the definitions of badness cf. *Rep.* 402a, *Laws* 653b, c and 654d.

of each of two vices, the extremes. Virtue, Pletho maintained, ought to have only one opposite, vice.[237] The theory was indicative of Aristotle's restricted point of view[238] which makes his ethics a corpse, as it were,[239] since it is totally unrelated to the soul's destiny. The hope of immortality, had he admitted it, would have imparted to the virtues infinitely greater moment than they have when he makes them operate only in this life.[240] The relative insignificance which he assigned to intelligence among the virtues also marked his treatment of ethics as inferior to that of Plato, who made intelligence the indispensable requisite of every virtue.[241]

The criterion which Aristotle assigned for judging of virtuous and vicious action in the *Eudemian Ethics*,[242] while quite satisfactory, in Pletho's opinion, was, nevertheless, not in keeping with his own general position and in the *Nicomachean Ethics* he assigned no gauge of what one ought to do.[243] The Platonists claim, said Pletho, that the true criterion is the noble, the ability to perceive which is inherent in the divine part of man.[244]

In opposition to the Christian doctrine defended by Gennadius Pletho maintained that men need not be *either* good *or* bad but that there is an intermediate state. The good are those who desire and hate what they should; the bad, those who desire what they should hate and hate what they should desire. Those in the intermediate state desire and hate sometimes what they should and sometimes what they should not, that is, they have no settled principle of choice for good or evil. By way of maintaining his thesis against Gennadius he placed another kind of person also in the intermediate class, which really, he said, is worse than the bad in the ordinary sense of bad.

[237] M. 996 A, B.

[238] M. 993 D.

[239] M. 993 B, D. *νεκρά τις ἂν εἴη, οἷα δὴ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους αὕτη <ἡ> ἠθική.*

[240] M. 994 D. Cf. *Rep.* 608 b, c.

[241] M. 999 C; *Phileb.* 20 e ff. Cf. Lodge, *Reality and the Moral Judgment in Plato* in *Philosophical Review XXIX*, 355 ff. and 453 ff.

[242] 1249a[16].

[243] That is, no further than "as right reason directs." In *Eth.* 1138b[18] he deprecated any further attempt at definition. It is dubious whether "the noble" is any more specific.

[244] M. 905 B, 996 B, C.

It is the sort of person who at the same time desires the form of what is good and the substance of what is bad, that is, the hypocrite.[245]

The discussion of the highest good afforded Pletho another point of attack against Aristotle. Aristotle had laid it down as speculative thought.[246] In another passage he said that God always enjoyed unalloyed pleasure.[247] Pletho objected that the ideal itself lacked nobility and Aristotle's way of describing it implied that it consisted of two distinct elements, speculative thought as such and pleasure, that is, the pleasure in speculative thought. It was not clear, Pletho maintained, which element he meant to be the *summum bonum*, but he seemed to mean that speculative thought was the true function of man and pleasure in it his highest good. If so, his philosophy might well have been the starting point for Epicureanism. In any case he implied that some pleasures were good. This was a non-committal way of handling the subject. If some pleasures are good, are they good *as* pleasures or, if some are evil, are they evil *as* pleasures? An answer to this question would have committed him to one side or the other of the important question[248] whether the noble or the pleasurable is the end of life. As far as could be inferred from his writings, his position was equivocal.[249] He should rather have said that pleasure and speculative thought were both good, not as such and in themselves, but because they had present in them the 'good' flowing from the supercelestial and perfectly good God.

It is not the pleasure that lies in speculative thought, Pletho argued, which is the highest good, as may be seen from the following consideration: Such pleasure lies in recalling what is known. If pleasure were the supremely desirable element, we should continue to recall what we knew rather than to continue in actual or conscious knowledge. But as this contradicts the very idea of specu-

[245] M. 995 B, C. Gennadius had accused Pletho of saying that the same person may at the same time desire good and evil. Pletho replied that he had not said "at the same time," yet even that was true of this third kind, among whom might be classed those who express ignoble thoughts in the language of philosophy; this with a glance at his opponent.

[246] *Eth.* 1178b[7].

[247] *Eth.* 1054b[26].

[248] Cf. p. 90, n. 42 below.

[249] M. 998 C.

lative thought, which is the active thinking of truth, the pleasure in it is not chosen at all hazards.[250]

Gennadius quoted Aristotle to the effect that every activity is completed by pleasure,[251] and used these words as evidence that Aristotle did not consider pleasure the end of action. Pletho replied that what completes an activity is its completion (τελειότης), and, since in its absence the activity would lack a completion or end (τέλος) it becomes practically the end. But in reality, Pletho held, pleasure does not accompany the completion but the perception of the completion, or accomplishment, of an action.[252]

If, lastly, ugliness, as Aristotle said, can destroy happiness,[253] that is, the enjoyment of the highest good, it would seem to be the contrary of happiness. Thus Aristotle considers that ugliness has as its contrary happiness in addition to its natural contrary, beauty. This is in violation of the principal that each thing can have but one opposite.[254]

Pletho took occasion to criticize two points of logic in Aristotle's works.

Aristotle had said that the affirmative and negative propositions regarding a general term are not contradictory when they are not general themselves.[255] οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος λευκός and ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος λευκός might both be true, for the negative proposition does not mean, "No man is white" but "Some man is not white."

Pletho objected that Aristotle in this offended against the general usage of language. οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος λευκός does mean, Pletho said, "No man is white," since the proposition of which it is the negative is really a particular proposition meaning "There is a white man" or "Some man is white."[256]

[250] M. 905 C, 999 A.

[251] *Eth.* 1174b[23], 1175a[21]. M. 997 C, D.

[252] M. 998 D, 999 A, B.

[253] *Eth.* 1099b[3].

[254] M. 999 D. Cf. *De Caelo* 269a[14].

[255] *De Interpr.* 17b[29].

[256] M. 900 B. The technical Greek terms ἀπροσδιόριστος and συναληθεύειν are not found in the passage of Aristotle. They are found first, in this discussion, in Ammonius's commentary, *In Lib. De Interpr.* 115. Aristotle used two examples, "Man is white" and "Man is beautiful." Ammonius has both with the addition of "Man is just." This additional one only is found in Blemmydes' discussion of the point. (M. 142, 1001 B, C.)

Gennadius tried to defend Aristotle on this point but misunderstood his words and so laid himself open to refutation by Pletho.

Pletho, said Gennadius, is making οὐκ ἔστι λευκὸς ἄνθρωπος the negative of two affirmative propositions, the indeterminate affirmative, ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος λευκός, and the particular affirmative ἄνθρωπός τίς ἐστι λευκός. These two affirmatives, if he is right, should have the same meaning. Yet as a matter of fact one of the propositions is not contradicted by the negative of the other. οὐκ ἔστι λευκὸς ἄνθρωπος may be true at the same time as τὶς ἔστι λευκὸς ἄνθρωπος, inasmuch as the former means "Not-man, but something else, such as wood, etc., is white."[257]

Pletho retorted against Gennadius, as against Aristotle, that the usage of language was against his statement. "Not" and "man" would not be joined in thought by one who heard the sentence. If one were allowed to add some foreign idea to a proposition in order to change its significance and then speak of it as if it were the same proposition, there would be no limit to which one might not go.

The second point singled out for criticism was a statement made by Aristotle regarding the theory of the syllogism. He had said that the conclusion from a necessary major premise and existent minor premise might be necessarily true.[258] Pletho replied that in all cases the nature of the conclusion will depend upon the nature of the minor premise. Whether it is particular, negative, existent or only possible, the conclusion will conform to it and only if it is necessary will it cause a necessary conclusion to follow from a necessary major premise.[259]

It remains to mention two other strictures of Pletho on statements alleged to have been made by Aristotle.

He took occasion to laugh at Aristotle for saying that stars are animals[260] and at the same time motionless except as moved by the

[257] M. 1016 D.

[258] *Anal. Post.* 31a[18].

[259] M. 900 B, C.

[260] *De Caelo* 292a[18] and b[1]. Pletho's quotation combines these two sentences and amounts to a misunderstanding of the first. By "we" Aristotle indicated common opinion but in Pletho's citation it must refer to Aristotle himself.

spheres.[261] Were their souls like those of an oyster, Pletho inquired.[262]

Lastly, an inconsistency was noted in Aristotle's theory of motion.[263] While admitting that potentially there were two kinds of motion, active and passive, Aristotle maintained that in actuality there was only passive motion.[264] This was for fear, Pletho suggested, that a body might be found which caused motion but was not itself moved. Nevertheless, Aristotle saw no anomaly in this when he described God as the unmoved mover.[265]

[261] *De Caelo* 289b[32].

[262] M. 909 B. Cf. *Philebus* 21 c and Lucian's *Vitarum Auctio*, ch. 26. Psellus called attention to the fact that Aristotle held the stars to be fixed in the heavens (O. D. 98) and disputed his affirmation that they had soul. (*Sol. Quaed.* 12.)

[263] M. 913 D, 1019 A, B.

[264] *Phys.* 198*a*[35]. *De Anima* 426a[4]. Cf. Ammonius, *In Lib. De Interpr.* 114, 19.

[265] *Meta.* 1072a[24].

APPENDIX

The Purpose of Pletho's *LAWS* and the Interpretation of the System of Deities Described in the *LAWS*

Pletho's largest work was his *Laws* (*ἡ τῶν νόμων συγγραφή*), composed in part, at least, several years before the *De Differentia*.[1] The extant fragments are discussed by Schultze (pp. 116 ff.). It is from this work, principally, that Schultze developed his account of Pletho's philosophy, setting forth[2] and criticizing the system of deities there described. He explained, in part rightly, the purpose of the work[3] but shifted his ground somewhat in arguing the thesis that it contained the secret doctrine of a sect founded by Pletho.[4] This opinion he based mainly on the language employed in two highly rhetorical funeral orations pronounced at Pletho's death, one by Gregorius, the other by Hieronymus.

In the former speech Pletho was praised as a pioneer in some fields of learning and as having developed and amplified others, hewing out for *those of his choosing* a path which offered the easiest access to knowledge.[5] Farther on the orator said: "The truth of my words (in praise of Pletho's wisdom) is attested by the most wise and clear writings[6] of that blessed and divine soul. If anyone follows them throughout without losing heart, he will not fail to find the sacred truth; for they are, as it were, a pattern of philosophy and unerring doctrine to those who pursue them."[7] After an extravagant statement of the world's loss in Pletho's death Gregorius called him the "mystagogue" of the sublime, celestial doctrines, the broad-

[1] Cf. Schultze, p. 55 f.

[2] Pp. 147 ff. with a summary on pp. 215, 216. Cf. p. 119 ff. below.

[3] Pp. 127 ff.

[4] Pp. 53 ff. The statement was repeated by Symonds II, 204; by Hettner, p. 175, and Dräseke in *Georgios Gemistos Plethon, Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XIX, 279.

[5] M. 818 A.

[6] *συγγράμματα.*

[7] M. 818 B.

est and most divine mind, and the divine leader in sublime philosophy, who had examined by his reason all divine and human wisdom.[8]

Schultze saw in the reference to chosen men for whom Pletho hewed out an easy path to knowledge evidence of a religious sect and a secret doctrine. The speaker was one of the chosen, as Schultze pointed out;[9] he was acquainted with Pletho's *Laws*[10] and spoke to an audience which was, at least to some extent, familiar with the work.[11] Others, as we shall see, were barred from any access to the book or its contents.[12] Nevertheless, a circle of friends to whom alone the book was known was not necessarily a sect, nor does the expression, "follow the writings of the divine man" (*ἕπεσθαι τοῖς τοῦ θείου ἀνθρώπου συγγράμμασι*),[13] mean to practise the regulations laid down in the *Laws*, but its significance is rather, "understand the writings of Pletho."[14] Even the passage[15] in which Gregorius

[8] M. 813 B, C. The word "mystagogue" in this passage need not be supposed to bear any obscurantist meaning. In the same speech (M. 814 B) it is applied to St. Paul, who was described as developing the thesis (after Psalm XIX) that the beauty of the heavens reveals the nature of God. (Cf. *Romans* I, 20.) Psellus (R. E. G. XVI, 404, *Prosecution of the Patriarch Cerularus*, Chap. XX) used the word of any one who held a doctrine in philosophy or a dogma in religion. Cf. also Bessarion's use in M. 161, 716 A.

Symonds (II, 204) says that Pletho was called by his esoteric followers (belonging to the sect) "the mystagogue of divine and celestial doctrines." The basis for this statement is the occurrence of this expression in the speech of Hieronymus (M. 807 C). Symonds, however, failed to notice that Hieronymus was not one of the intimate circle. (Cf. Schultze, p. 55.)

[9] P. 53, also 54 and n. 2.

[10] Cf. M. 820 C.

[11] The orator mentioned the work (M. 820 C) and quoted from it (Sch. 54, and n. 2) and yet the knowledge of it was confined to a chosen few up to that time. In view of the secrecy regarding it which Pletho practised and no doubt advised it is highly probable that the audience consisted of the chosen few.

[12] Cf. p. 85, n. 23.

[13] *συγγράμματα* is not necessarily used as another form of *συγγραφή*, a shorthand reference to the *Laws;* it is the regular word for a treatise of any kind in the language of Plato, Aristotle, Pletho and Gennadius. The technical meaning 'code' is surely out of place when the result of following the *συγγράμματα* is to be knowledge of the truth.

[14] *ἕπεσθαι* (follow) is used of understanding the course of an argument regularly in Plato, with whose language Gregorius, under Pletho's instruction, gives evidence of familiarity.

[15] M. 820 C.

said, "We should imitate his *πολιτεία* as far as possible," does not imply the prayers should be offered and the hymns sung to the gods as provided for in the state described by Pletho, but its meaning is rather to be gathered from the fact that the sentence in which these words occur is an exhortation to virtue, for the realization of which the state should exist. The argument that the whole speech abounds in terms suggesting the superstitious reverence in which the founder of a sect might be regarded by his followers carries no weight in view of the conventional language of the panegyric. The expression, "mystagogue of high, heavenly doctrines," should be taken in the same spirit as the statement that Pletho was incomparably more just than Minos, Rhadamanthus or Aeacus,[16] as chaste as Bellerophon or Joseph[17] and the most perfect image of God possible for man.[18] Moreover, the divine knowledge with which Pletho was credited by his panegyrists[19] was described as of things that always are, as opposed to those of the changeable world of nature and human society. This means no more than a knowledge of metaphysics.

One passage from Gregorius was paraphrased by Schultze in such a way that its meaning was misrepresented. According to his rendering the orator spoke of Pletho as "der grosse Führer zu dem hyperuranischen Gotte, den auch Platon gelehrt habe."[20] The whole sentence, literally rendered, runs as follows: "This divine and great leader brought all men by his own proper beauty and adornment of virtue[21] to a belief in the supercelestial God, for the contemplation of whom the great Plato says that the eyes were placed in the head."[22] There is nothing more mystical in this sentence than that a good man is evidence of the existence and goodness of God.

Hieronymus in his panegyric spoke of Pletho as the teacher of teachers, whose task it was to pour forth benefits without stint to all but not to him.[23]

[16] M. 817 A.

[17] M. 816 A.

[18] M. 816 B, C.

[19] M. 817 C.

[20] Schultze, p. 53, translating M. 814 C.

[21] Cf. *Phaedo* 114 e.

[22] Cf. *Tim.* 45 a, b; 47 b, c.

[23] M. 811 B, C.

Schultze maintained that Hieronymus was complaining of exclusion from Pletho's sect and that his speech showed no evidence of acquaintance with the secret theological doctrines. It is quite true that Hieronymus was complaining of exclusion from Pletho's circle and gave no evidence of knowing the *Laws*. But we can no more infer from this the existence of a religious sect than we could from the fact that Socrates refused to associate with some of the men of his day.[24] Socrates' reason was the inability of some people to profit by association with him but Pletho had a far more urgent motive from the practical point of view. To let such heretical doctrines as were contained in the *Laws* come to the knowledge of the ecclesiastical authorities would be to court a fate which may be surmised from the threats contained in Gennadius's *Defence of Aristotle*[25] and from the treatment accorded to the *Laws* after Pletho's death.[26] Pletho was, therefore, obliged to exercise the greatest care regarding those whom he admitted to a knowledge of it. This was the real motive for secrecy.

The outstanding fact of Pletho's day was the steady crumbling of Greece before the power of the Ottomans. Pletho saw in this the downfall of all that was most valuable in civilization. Two extant letters from him, one to Prince Theodore of the Peloponnese[27]

[24] Xen. *Memor.* I, 6, 5; *Theaet.* 151 b. Equally inconclusive as an argument is the sentence quoted (p. 54 and n. 3) from Matthaeus Camariota (ed. H. S. Reimarius, Lugd. Batv. 1721, p. 4). Camariota had said that there were others who shared in the Plethonic madness and the wickedness which he engendered, receiving it gladly. Surely this is a natural enough way for an orthodox churchman to refer to a heretic with a following of admirers, without any implication that the heretic had founded a religious sect. Even if Camariota had thought there was a sect, the evidence of an outsider and an enemy would be suspect.

No more can Schultze (p. 54 and n. 4) be permitted to maintain that Hieronymus's statement (M. 812 B), "We lovers of discussion shall be scattered to the ends of the earth," is a prophecy of the dissolution of the sect, when he at the same time shows that Hieronymus was not a member of the sect.

[25] Cf. p. 26, n. 39. In a letter to Pletho death by fire was mentioned as a suitable fate for the writer of such heresies as were contained in Pletho's works. (A. 324.)

[26] The Exarch Joseph of the Peloponnese sent the book of the *Laws* to Gennadius, the Patriarch of Byzantium, who, in a letter of reply, gave his official opinion of the work and its deceased author. The book was to be burned and anyone who refused a second demand to surrender a copy of the book in his possession should be excommunicated. (M. 648 B.)

[27] M. 841 A ff.

and another to the Emperor Emanuel,[28] show Pletho's sense of the terrible danger which impended. But in spite of this he still entertained the hope that Greece might be strengthened sufficiently to resist the Turks.[29] When the Emperor Emanuel in 1415 visited the Peloponnese, where Pletho was acting as Judge, he advised the Emperor to build across the Isthmus the wall which actually was begun the same year. But anything which would do more than postpone the day of disaster, Pletho was convinced, would have to go deeper. The only hope lay in the most fundamental changes in the government of Greece and the religious ideas which lay behind the government.

Pletho seems to have laid the blame for the evils of society and the body politic to the charge of the church. To be sure, he did not openly attack it. That would have been a suicidal course. Yet the plain implication of his religious reforms is that he believed that Christianity was no less detrimental to the country than the political system with which it was associated and for which, in his view, it was responsible. By characterizing them as sophists he covertly attacked the Christian monks and the institution of monasticism on the ground that it was parasitic.[30] It is doubtful, however, whether his hostility to the church was entirely, or even mainly, due to political and social considerations. His intellectual antipathy to its doctrines as compared to Platonism is evident. He argued against the doctrine of the "sophists" that the soul, while immortal, yet had a genesis,[31] holding that it had neither birth nor death but suffered many incarnations.[32] He rejected the doctrine of divine revelation,[33] argued for a determinism incompatible with a belief in

[28] M. 821 A ff.

[29] M. 840 A ff.

[30] M. 832 C ff.

[31] M. 972 B ff.

[32] M. 647 C; A. 196.

[33] In his *Defense of Aristotle* Gennadius charged Pletho with calling divine revelation and inspiration error and teaching that truth was attainable only by the human reason through the medium of philosophy. Pletho did argue to this effect in the *Laws* (A. 34, 36) but, as this work was kept secret, Gennadius must have seen the passage repeated in some other work or received an oral report of it. Pletho's reply to the charge was a virtual admission. (M. 987 B.)

the efficacy of prayer as held by the church[34] and developed a system of ethics which is Platonic even when it seems to be most Christian. We learn from Gennadius that Pletho had left his fathers' religion

[34] Prayer elevated the soul of the one who prayed but could not be expected to affect God's ordering of events, which was already determined and perfect. (M. 877 D. Cf. Procl., *In Tim.* I, 208, 6 ff. for a similar opinion of Porphyry on the value of prayer.) Pletho, like Plato (*Tim.* 48 a), rather forcibly reconciled necessity with purpose and intelligence on the part of God. The case for determinism was argued at some length in the fragment of the *Laws* published separately under the title περὶ εἱμαρμένης. The argument runs as follows:

For one who does not hold the doctrine of determinism two other possibilities are open. He may altogether deny the relation of cause and effect or he may, like Aristotle, believe that some causes act in an arbitrary and incalculable way. The former alternative is equivalent to a denial that the gods have any knowledge. Knowledge comes in two ways. It may come by being ordered or disposed by objects, i.e., receiving the appropriate impressions from objects; or it may come by ordering or disposing the objects of knowledge and being their cause. (This curious identification of causation with the only kind of knowledge attributable to the gods is intelligible only in one who has made of Ideas both efficient causes and minds. Psellus in his *De Operatione Daemonum*, 35, likewise gives as one subdivision of foreknowledge that which is causative and the same position is taken by Plotinus (*Enn.* V, 2, 7) in the words: ἅμα δὲ (ὁ νοῦς) νοεῖ καὶ τίθησι εἴπερ νοεῖ. The development probably goes back to Plato's *Laws* 902 a, where Plato argued that to deny that the gods cause change in the world is to deny them knowledge.) It is only by the second means that the gods could know, since to suppose that they learn of things as we do would be to degrade them below the rank of gods. That the gods do have knowledge of what is to happen is evidenced by the fact that the gods reveal the future to men. (Cf. *Crito* 44 a.) The second alternative, that some causes act in an arbitrary way, implies that the world is not ruled in the best possible manner. For if the cause A produces sometimes the result B and sometimes the result C, God has decided differently in the two cases as to the best issue of A and in one case has brought about the worse result, even if in answer to prayers or gifts or for some other motive. (Cf. *Rep.* 364 e, 365 e, *Alc.* II, 149 e.) Whoever holds, therefore, that some things happen without a real and necessary cause can not at the same time hold that God rules all things and manages them in the best possible way. (M. 961 B ff.)

But the absolute rule of cause and effect is attested by the cases in which the gods have revealed the future to men. Some, having learned what was in store for them, have tried to escape it only to find that fate had taken account of their foreknowledge also. (M. 961 A.)

The common objection to determinism, that it destroys all freedom, arises from a misconception of the nature of freedom. It is not absence of rule but obedience to the rule of reason. (M. 963 B.) This is true whether we consider the reason in the soul of man or in the universe.

In the individual there is an element of unreason, namely, the part which comes entirely by inheritance and is, therefore, beyond his control. It is this

even in his youth[35] and that his hostility to Christianity was evident from many things Gennadius had heard Pletho say in the Peloponnese and Italy.[36] Georgius Trapezuntius quoted Pletho's spoken words to the effect that the future religion of the world would be neither

irrational part which modifies the expression of the universal reason in the individual so that reason issues in such varying results. Some people are so far misled by these differences as to deny the universal element altogether. Yet only by supposing it can an explanation be given of the fact that reason often opposes the nature and habits proper to the individual. (M. 963 C.) In other words, in the dual nature of man one part, which is lower, is peculiar to the individual. This part is the source of sin and unreason. The other part is by nature universal. It is in obedience to it that the composite being, man, finds his freedom.

Even if it be objected that to be ruled is to be enslaved, yet to be ruled by that which is best is a good thing and this slavery, since it leads to the highest good of all, would be profitable and welcome even to the slave. Or, again, if freedom is the license to do what one wishes, then everyone is free, since everyone wishes happiness and the good, and reason by its rule aids each to the utmost in the attainment of this wish. (M. 964 B.)

It would seem to follow from this position that it is unjust for God to punish. Pletho denied this, maintaining that punishment inflicted by God makes free those who are enslaved to the element of unreason in themselves. Evil men, pursuing what they think is their good, find it to be an evil. This evil is punishment which restores their souls to health so that thereafter their vision is true and the apparent good coincides with the real good. God may, therefore, justly punish. (M. 964 B, C.)

[This justification for punishment may be said to mark Pletho's determinism as Platonic rather than Stoic, (Cf. Pato's *Laws* 860 D) in spite of the fact that Pletho admitted his ethics followed in part the Stoic system. (M. 957 C.)]

In the universe all things are subject to necessity. But since necessity is identical with God's will and intelligence, while freedom is to be subject to intelligence, all things must be free.

This tract, probably published at Florence in 1439 (Sch. 79, n. 2), was answered in detail by two speeches of Camariota, which were edited by Reimarius and published in 1721. The two speeches really form one unit. There is but one introduction and the conclusion (pp. 210 ff.) sums up both speeches. The first deals with arguments of Pletho contained in the first part of his work, M. 961 B to 963 A and the second to arguments in the second part from M. 963 A to the end. The first speech seems to have been written before Pletho's death while his circle kept guard over their master's writings, the *De Fato* alone having come to the notice of Camariota. (Cf. p. 4.) The latter part, however, gives evidence of having been composed after Pletho's death when some knowledge of his *Laws* had transpired. (Cf. pp. 216 ff. and especially p. 220.)

[35] M. 638 B, 639 D.

[36] M. 633 A, B.

Christianity nor Mohammedanism but one more like the ancient Greek religion.[37] Manuel of the Peloponnese, a churchman who flourished about 1510,[38] said that Pletho's infidelity showed everywhere in a little tract by Pletho on the Latin Dogma.[39]

While rejecting Christianity in favor of Platonism as his own religion, Pletho nevertheless held that an abstract philosophy was not possible for every one. Those incapable of severe thinking needed something more concrete if they were to attain even to that measure of truth which was possible for them. Plato, like many other religious philosophers, he asserted, in recognition of this fact expressed his meaning for the benefit of the many in poetical myths.[40] By combining such religious teaching with (theoretical) statesmanship Plato conferred upon mankind the greatest benefit which it is given to man to accomplish. Pletho never wearied of praising those whom tradition celebrated as at once religious teachers and law-givers or organizers of society.[41] It is to be expected, therefore, that Pletho should follow the example of Plato as a law-giver and teacher of a religion which would foster a spirit consonant with the laws. The *ἡ τῶν νόμων συγγραφή* is his attempt. In the account of the fundamental religious ideas which should be accepted by the state he followed Plato closely.[42] In other respects he differed from him considerably but the so-called polytheism or system of religion which he developed in the *Laws* is based on Plato much more minutely than has generally been believed.

Before dealing with this subject, however, it should be pointed out that Pletho really expected his plans for the re-organization of

[37] *Comparatio inter Platonem et Aristotelem* by Georgius Trapezuntius, next to last chapter.

[38] Fabric. XII, 100.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] M. 985 B. Cf. pp. 26, 27 above.

[41] M. 994 C. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 859a. Pletho mentioned Zoroaster, Men, Dionysus (M. 971 C), Pythagoras and Plato (M. 984 A, B) as teachers of religious truth, some of whom also founded institutions for men. Other law-givers to whom Pletho referred are given by Gennadius in his review of Pletho's *Laws*. They are Minos, Lycurgus, Eumolpus, Polyeides and Teiresias. (M. 639 A, B.)

[42] M. 854 D, 856 A, B. These doctrines were taken from Plato's *Laws* 885 b. They run as follows: There is a divine principle which gives being to all that is; this divinity cares for human affairs; it manages them according to the strictest justice undeterred by prayers or gifts. In Plato's account the first doctrine is merely that the gods exist.

Greece to be carried out.[43] The purpose of the *Laws* as stated in the Introduction was to outline the constitution which would bring the greatest possible happiness to those who lived under it;[44] and later in the course of the work the wish was expressed that the constitution might be put into effect with a view to the greatest possible happiness both public and private of those who should live under it.[45] The character of Prince Manuel of the Peloponnese probably led Pletho to believe that in him he had found the tyrant who, as Plato said, could accomplish the greatest good for men by compelling them to adopt a good constitution.[46] At any rate, Pletho gave him advice not only as to the defense but also regarding the reorganization of the Peloponnese; advice which was doubtless repeated from what he had already written in his *Laws*.[47] Moreover, he offered his own services to aid in carrying out the advice.[48] Disappointed at the fruitlessness of his counsel Pletho yet cherished the hope that the time would come when his wisdom would meet with the practical support necessary for its realization. Gennadius, who as Patriarch of Byzantium had the power and also the will to uphold Christianity, heard that Pletho regarded Gennadius's living as an obstacle to the fulfillment of his hopes.[49] Even in the last years of his life Pletho prophesied to Georgius Trapezuntius the supremacy of his own religion.[50]

Strange as this confidence appears, it nevertheless seems to be the case that the work was written, not as the secret doctrine of a religious sect, but as the description of a political organization and a religion. While necessarily kept secret as long as the leaders of

[43] Pletho's admission to Prince Theodore (M. 864 C, D) that the execution of his plans for reorganization would involve many difficulties can not, as Schultze wishes (p. 47), be taken as evidence that Pletho recognized that the times were not suited to his reforms. Pletho was rather leading up to the comparison of himself to a physician, who knows how to cure even if it involves pain, as opposed to a cook, who is indifferent to the health of those to whom he ministers. This was a favorite comparison of Plato also. Cf. *Gorgias* 500 e, *Politicus* 297 e.

[44] M. 636 C.

[45] A. 44.

[46] *Laws*, 709 e. Cf. Dräseke, *Zu Platon und Plethon*, in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, XXVII, 288 ff.

[47] Schultze, 265.

[48] M. 840 B.

[49] M. 633 D, 634 A.

[50] Cf. p. 90, n. 37.

church and state were hostile, these doctrines were to be imparted under more favorable circumstances to the whole of Greece, restoring her to a vigor by which she might repel the Turks and save to mankind for all time the world's choicest race and culture.

In the *Laws* Pletho described an elaborate ritual for an equally elaborate system of gods. He was accordingly accused by Gennadius of a belief in polytheism[51] and even Schultze, while offering an explanation of part of the system as a representation of mediaeval logic,[52] nevertheless criticized it as though it were an original and serious attempt to give a metaphysical explanation of the universe. But if the deities are divested of their names and if we consider what they represent as Pletho tells us, it becomes clear that Pletho has merely filled in the picture of the universe given in Plato's *Timaeus*. or the *De Anima Mundi* of the pseudo-Timaeus. A few modifications have been introduced from Proclus or other works of Plato.[53]

The following summary outline of the system is reproduced substantially from Schultze, pp. 215, 216.

At the head of the deities was Zeus, who was pure being. Beneath him were his children, the Ideas, divided into two groups, the legitimate and illegitimate. The legitimate offspring comprised the Ideas which participated in whatever was eternal, while the illegitimate

[51] M. 638 B.

[52] Pp. 158 ff. He is followed in general by Symonds, II, 202 and Hettner, *Italienische Studien*, 174. Hacke, p. 62, regards the work as a mark of Pletho's intellectual decline.

[53] Some scholars referred to by Boivin (II, 727) already surmised that the system was based very closely on Plato's writings. He writes: "Il s'est trouvé des écrivains catholiques, du nombre desquels est Leo Allatius qui ont fort regretté la perte de cet ouvrage de Pléthon et qui ont prétendu que le dessein de l'auteur n'estoit nullement de renverser la religion Chrestienne, mais seulement de develloper le système de Platon et d'eclaircir ce que lui et les autres philosophes avoient écrit sur la matière de religion et de politique."

This is a juster estimate than that of Symonds, who says (II, 202) "It will be perceived that this is bastard Neoplatonism—a mystical fusion of Greek mythology and Mediaeval Logic, whereby the products of speculative analysis are hypostasized as divine persons."

Tozer (J. H. S. 7, 361) says: "Whether the gods of Plethon's system are to be regarded as embodiments of Plato's Ideas, or as a resuscitation of the Aeons of Gnosticism, or as an eclectic combination of the two. . . . "

Della Torre's explanation is as follows (429): "O per meglio dire la dottrina neoplatonica dell' emanazione ai diversi gradi della quale egli fece corrispondere secondo la loro rispettiva importanza i diversi Dei dell' Olimpo pagano."

were the Ideas of those things which were perishable. The former group included one pair and three quintets of deities. They were as follows: (a) Poseidon, the Idea of form, and Hera, the Idea of matter. They were the creators of all below them. (b) A quintet of gods representing general categories: Apollo, the Idea of sameness; Artemis, the Idea of difference; Hephaestus, the Idea of rest or permanence; Dionysus, the Idea of self-motion due to love; Athena, the Idea of caused motion. (c) A second quintet of gods, Ideas participating in that which has soul and is eternal: Atlas, the Idea of the stars in general; Tithonus, the Idea of the planets; Dione, the Idea of the fixed stars; Hermes, the Idea of the earthly demons; Pluto, the Idea of the human souls. (d) The third quintet consisted of the Ideas of that which has no soul but is eternal: Rhea, the Idea of the elements in general; Leto, the Idea of the aether; Hecate, of the air; Tethys, of water; Hestia, of the earth.

The Ideas of the perishable had at their head a pair corresponding to Poseidon and Hera among the Ideas of the eternal. Kronos and Aphrodite were the Ideas of form and matter respectively in what was mortal. Aphrodite was further defined as the Idea of the immortality seen in the sequence of generations. Kore or Persephone was the Idea of the mortal part of man; Pan, of the reasonless animals; Demeter, of plants.

Below the Ideas was a lower group of deities, those within the heavens, that is, in space, and known as the offspring of Poseidon. They also were distinguished as legitimate and illegitimate. The former were the stars, the latter the demons. The stars were divided into the planets and the fixed stars. The planets were headed by the sun, Helios, and Selene, the moon, a pair of deities which had certain creative functions for the world of matter. Beneath them were stationed Phosphoros (Venus), Stilbon (Mercury), Phaenon (Saturn), Phaeton (Juppiter), and Pyroeis (Mars).

As the link between the gods and the world of "nature" stood man, partaking of both. By his soul he belonged to the world of the immortals and by his body to the world of the lower animals, plants and lifeless matter.

A little consideration will reveal the close relation between this system of Pletho's and Plato's account of the universe in his *Timaeus*.

Plato spoke of two worlds, one of Ideas and the other of the created world, a copy of the first.[54] He said little of the world of Ideas but described in some detail the created world. Pletho, on the other hand, with the intention of providing a religion, gave most of his attention to the world of Ideas and attributed divinity to the Ideas themselves. In examining his system we shall disregard the names of the divinities and look beyond the Ideas for the sort of universe depicted by Pletho in order to compare it with that described by Plato.

In the first place, the universe, according to Pletho, had being. This was likewise the most important element of it in Plato's account,[55] as it was the most general category, according to the *Parmenides*,[56] *Theaetetus*[57] and *Sophist*.[58] Next below being we find, in Pletho's account, form and matter, ranked among the entities, sameness and otherness. They were not so ranked in the *Timaeus* but they had their place and were there compared to male and female, while the concrete objects formed by their union were likened to children.[59] In Pletho's work the same comparison is seen raised to the level of the world of Ideas, where the Ideas of form and matter were made male and female deities who begot the visible bodies in the heavens. The next two categories, sameness and otherness, were mentioned in the *Timaeus*[60] along with being as parts of the universe. Rest or permanence was a category drawn from many passages of Plato.[61] Motion, in Plato's writings, was sometimes one category and at other times it was divided into several. Pletho made two categories of it, following the division made by Plato in the *Phaedrus*[62] and *Laws*,[63] according to which its two subdivisions were motion caused from without and motion which was its own cause while also causing

[54] *Tim.* 29 a, 39 e.
[55] *Tim.* 35 a.
[56] 141 e, etc.
[57] 186 a.
[58] 245 a ff.
[59] *Tim.* 50 d.
[60] 35 a.
[61] *Parm.* 163 e, *Theaet.* 180 d, e, *Sophist* 254 d, etc.
[62] 245 c.
[63] 894 b.

motion in other things, as, for example, the activity of the soul.[64] Pletho identified the latter kind with motion due to the love of the good, as described in Plato's *Symposium* 204 e.

So much of the universe was immaterial and invisible; the rest was material. It consisted, first, of the heavenly bodies (which were gods), of the demons, human souls and material elements, these being eternal; and, in the second place, of what was mortal—the bodies of men, the lower animals and the plants.

The heavenly bodies were living deities, as in the *Timaeus* 41 d. The most important were the sun, moon and five other planets. These were mentioned in Timaeus 38 c but their names may have been taken from Aristotle's *De Mundo* 392a[23]. The existence of the demons might have been inferred from *Timaeus* 40 d,e, while in the *Symposium*[65] and *Politicus*[66] their mediation between gods and men was more fully described.[67] Although Pletho believed in their existence, his belief had nothing in common with popular superstition. He wrote a chapter of the *Laws*, now lost, the title of which indicates that it was an attack on the belief in evil demons,[68] probably based on Politicus 271 d. The demons ranked between the gods and human souls. The four elements (aether or fire, air, water and earth) were inanimate but eternal, for, while the individual elements might perish by passing into each other, as in the Timaeus

[64] Symonds II, 203 remarks: "Nothing can be more grotesque than the personification of identity and self-determining motion under the titles of Apollo and Dionysus, nor any confusion more fatal than the attribution of sex to categories of the understanding."

Pletho, of course, having lived before Kant, was not aware of "categories of the understanding," nor did he even suppose that the Ideas were within the mind, like Psellus (O. D. 26) who said that every mind was full of sameness, justice and other similar divine Ideas.

Regarding the sex of the Ideas, cf. p. 94, n. 59 and 97, n. 79.

[65] 202 d.
[66] 271 d.
[67] Pletho was convinced that Plato held a serious belief in good demons, a belief derived probably from Egypt. (M. 161, 717 C. Cf. *Repub.* 468 e.)
[68] M. 960 A. Pletho markedly differed from Psellus, who attributed to the Greeks a belief in evil demons. (M. 122, 876 C.) Pletho attributed to the demons right opinion, which, as in *Meno* 97 c ff., is never mistaken, while Psellus supposes them to have a conjectural foreknowledge, which is generally mistaken. (M. 122, 873 C.) Cf. della Torre's unfortunate remark (433) about Porphyry's advice to placate evil demons, as though Pletho also might have used similar language.

49 b ff., yet as a whole the elements, that is, matter, were eternal. The perishable part of the universe consisted of the mortal part of man, the lower animals and the plants, the formation of which was described at great length in the *Timaeus*. They might, however, be said to be immortal by virtue of the succession of generations. This notion of biological immortality was developed in Plato's *Symposium* 206 c. Its expression is disguised in Pletho's work. He identified the Idea of matter in that which is perishable with the Idea of the immortality due to the succession of generations. By the use of the key we have employed in the interpretation of his system of gods this identification in the world of Ideas becomes nothing more than the continuity of the material existence of the animals and plants. This is the biological immortality as found in Plato's *Symposium*.

A few aspects of Pletho's system can not be exactly reconciled with Plato's account. The Idea of form was made the Demiurge by Pletho. If the sense of the words is pressed, this means that the Demiurge was a part of the Ideal world and even had a part in its creation, in as far as eternal things have a creation. In Plato's account, on the other hand, the Demiurge was apparently external to both the visible and the Ideal universe, his task being to fashion the former after the likeness of the Ideal world.[69] Again, Pletho allowed for Ideas of form and matter in what was eternal and others of form and matter in what was perishable. This implies form and matter in the eternal as distinct from form and matter in the perishable. Yet in the Timaeus, while different deities created the eternal and the perishable,[70] there was no explicit distinction drawn between the two kinds of form and matter. This is rather a plausible development of Plato's account than the employment of an idea clearly expressed in his writings.

Pletho's source for the names of his deities and in general for the idea of logical gods to whom hymns of praise were composed was indicated in general terms by his chief opponent, Gennadius. Writing to the Exarch Joseph, he said that the unavowed origin of Pletho's

[69] Pletho stated in M. 161, 717 B that Plato seemed to be of the opinion that the Demiurge came second in order after the highest God.

[70] *Tim.* 41 c.

"polytheism" was Proclus,[71] adding that Pletho suppressed his name,[72] in order that he might himself be thought the originator of the religion. It is true that Pletho did not include the name of Proclus in the list of those through whom religious truth had come to mankind[73] but that he did it for the purpose assigned is absurd. Pletho believed he was embodying in the religion the philosophical truth, which was gradually attained by a few wise men and handed down to later ages. He probably did wish to conceal from the many the source of this *embodiment* of the truth, lest the knowledge that it was a "medicinal lie" might beget a spirit of rebellion against its authority. At least, such a Platonic attitude (Cf. *Rep.* 537 e ff.) would not be inconsistent with the frequency with which he adopted other Platonic attitudes.[74]

Gennadius was in a position to know, however, that Pletho had spoken of Proclus as an authority on Aristotle's views in theology[75] and privately Pletho discussed Proclus as he did any other philosopher.[76] There can be no doubt that Proclus was his direct source for the conception of logical deities and their relationships, for some of their names and probably also for the idea of composing hymns to them.

Proclus composed hymns to the sun, "the king of intelligible fire," to the Muses, to Aphrodite and several other deities.[77] These, like Pletho's,[78] were addressed to divinities with the ordinary Greek names but were understood in a logical sense. General categories were named by Proclus in his commentaries and divided into male and female.[79] Zeus was not, as with earlier writers, the intelligence and creator of the universe.[80] He was being. His creative or demiurgic

[71] M. 639 C.

[72] Voight (II, 120), who in general adopted regarding Pletho the judgment of his bitterest enemy, repeated Gennadius's statement concerning the suppression of Proclus's name.

[73] A. 32.

[74] Cf. p. 37.

[75] M. 981 C.

[76] M. 161, 717 B ff.

[77] Didot ed. of Proclus, 1316 ff.

[78] A. 202 ff.

[79] *In Tim.* I, 47, 6.

[80] As Porphyry, for example, held, quoted by Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* I, 130, 16 ff.

function was taken over by Poseidon,[81] who had Hera as wife.[82] She was the leader of animal generation in the logical world.[83] These characteristics were all adopted by Pletho, who seems to have chosen the names of the next two deities in accordance with a proportion worked out by Proclus. Poseidon and Apollo created the Ideas, the former as a whole and Apollo the particulars.[84] Again, Hera and Artemis were those who supplied the material for the genesis of what has soul, Hera of the logical[85] and Artemis of the physical. Hence Poseidon : Hera :: Apollo : Artemis.[86] Apollo was chosen by Pletho to represent the Idea of identity, which is analogous to being and the Ideal, and Artemis to represent the Idea of difference, which divides the unity up into particulars and so produces the multiplicity of things. It might be observed that, since of the five highest categories named by Proclus,[87] being, sameness, otherness, rest and motion, the first was reserved for Zeus, there were only four left for the quintet below Zeus, Poseidon and Hera. It was,

[81] *In Tim.* I, 206, 15 and 182, 18. Some justification for degrading Poseidon as well as Hera below their traditional places as brother and wife of Zeus was found by Proclus in the fact that he could cite passages from Homer in which each called Zeus father. Cf. *In Tim.* III, 185, 3 ff. The appropriateness of choosing Poseidon to preside over the world of becoming seems to have been arrived at somewhat as follows: Proclus interpreted the constitution of the ancient Athens (Cf. *Timaeus* 24 d ff.) and the struggle with the Atlantians as symbolic of the heavens and the world of becoming. (*In Tim.* I, 206, 3). Over the heavens, which was the world of being, presided Zeus. It was natural that over the world of genesis should preside the god who was the ancestor of the Atlantians. They, coming from a sea-girt continent, were the children of Poseidon. (*In Tim.* I, 71, 8.) This seems a more natural ground for his choice than the fact that Poseidon's name was applied by the Pythagoreans to the first cube, according to Plutarch, *Moralia*, II, 480, 6 ff.

[82] Cf. n. 81.

[83] *In Tim.* I, 79, 1.

[84] *In Tim.* I, 79, 1.

[85] *Ibid.* The logical world is the world of Ideas. They had a genesis in thought or logic and they had soul or life, being "separable minds."

[86] Proclus seems to show Neo-Pythagorean influence here. Those of that persuasion, according to Plutarch, *Moralia* II, 480, 6 ff., gave the name of Apollo to the monad, which corresponds to the Ideas, and that of Artemis to the dyad, which is productive of particulars. They named the hebdomad Athene, as reported in this book, with which Pletho was familiar. It may be no more than a coincidence that Athene in Pletho's system is the seventh deity among the Ideas.

[87] Cf. *In Tim.* I, 106, 12.

therefore, necessary to add one. This was done by dividing motion into two kinds.[88] One other exact correspondence between Proclus and Pletho is observable in the fact that Hermes was, according to Proclus,[89] the leader of the "gnostic powers" (that is, the demons) and in the system of Pletho was the Idea of the earthly demons. The rest of the names used by Pletho seem to have been assigned independently.[90]

The Stoic tradition of rationalization by which names of deities were assigned, often on the basis of fanciful etymologies, to various elements or aspects of the universe would seem to have been without influence on Pletho. Porphyry represented this tradition[91] but there is little or nothing in common between his account of the gods and that of Pletho. His deities were not general categories or Ideas but the potencies of parts and aspects of nature so that his hymns to them[92] resembled addresses to a generalized Zeus or Aphrodite such as might be found in tragedy or the Orphic fragments. Moreover, even when Pletho named the Ideas of the material elements, where, if at all, he might be expected to follow the example of Porphyry, there is no discoverable correspondence, except in one case, which is probably accidental.[93]

[88] Cf. pp. 94, 95.

[89] *In Tim.* I, 79, 9 ff.

[90] For possible exceptions cf. n. 86 above and n. 93 below.

[91] Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.*, I, 130, 16 ff.

[92] Wolff, p. 144 ff.

[93] Hestia, in Porphyry's account, was leader of the chthonic potency and with Pletho was the Idea of earth. If Pletho had any example in mind, it was probably that of Psellus, who said that Hestia represented the earth, the element which "remained," that is, remained in the center of the universe, because she remained at home when the other gods went in chorus to view the intelligible world, as described in the *Phaedrus*, 247 a. (Cf. the fragment of Psellus's commentary on the *Phaedrus* published in *Hermes* 34, 316.)

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