



# Reading Ancient Texts in Byzantium

## Aristotle and his Byzantine Readers (9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> c.)

### Photius the Reader

Thursday 29 September (17h30) - Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022

Department of Byzantine Studies, Postgasse 9, 1010 Vienna

The image shows a manuscript page with Greek text and diagrams. The text discusses Aristotle's theory of color and light, specifically the relationship between color, light, and the eye. The diagrams illustrate the concept of color being a mixture of light and dark, and how it is perceived by the eye.

The text is written in a cursive hand and includes several lines of Greek script. The diagrams consist of horizontal lines with vertical arrows and labels, representing the interaction of light and color.

Key elements of the diagrams include:

- A horizontal line with an upward-pointing arrow labeled 'Α' (Alpha) and a downward-pointing arrow labeled 'Β' (Beta).
- A horizontal line with an upward-pointing arrow labeled 'Γ' (Gamma) and a downward-pointing arrow labeled 'Δ' (Delta).
- A horizontal line with an upward-pointing arrow labeled 'Ζ' (Zeta) and a downward-pointing arrow labeled 'Η' (Eta).
- A horizontal line with an upward-pointing arrow labeled 'Θ' (Theta) and a downward-pointing arrow labeled 'Ι' (Iota).

The text below the diagrams discusses the relationship between these colors and the eye, mentioning terms like 'χρῶμα' (color) and 'ὄψις' (vision).

## Reading Ancient Texts in Byzantium

This workshop aims at improving our understanding of the use of classical and philosophical texts in Byzantium thanks to new sociohistorical approaches.

The first day of the workshop is focusing on the manuscripts containing texts of Aristotle up to the 9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> century and their analysis regarding aspects of palaeography, codicology and transmission of texts. The main question is centered on the scholars who ordered or used these texts. In this respect, the “material” study of the manuscript will provide additional information about the circles in which Aristotle was read and studied. The workshop will present the results of meticulous analyses of the earliest preserved papyri and manuscripts of Late Antiquity and the early Byzantine period. The majority of them is preserved in minuscule script which confronted the Byzantine “editor” / scribe with the problem of understanding and structuring the text according to the newly applied system of (complete) Byzantine punctuation (and accentuation). The text had to be divided into logical reading units. Some manuscripts of this time use a more elaborate system of punctuation than the classical one of Dionysios Thrax; it reflects an intense reading of the text, undertaken in academic circles.

Each contributor will present a manuscript in its socio-cultural context of production and address the following points:

- the time of production, according to the palaeographical and codicological analysis
- the presentation of the text (the text itself and paratextual elements structuring the text, titles, ethica, marginalia, script in marginalia, preconditions of reading)
- the script and its particular use for this (and maybe other) manuscript(s) (conclusions regarding the scribe[s]; hints to *theatron* readings)
- the interests of the reading circle as reflected by the ordering of the texts (based on observations of the script and scribe)
- the script and its punctuation (how many distinctive markers, correctly applied, additional markers, did the scribe / redactor correctly understand the text and divide the cola?)
- the text and text corpus (text composition regarding the textual transmission; new composition of an Aristotelian corpus / philosophical corpus; which intention lays behind a particular composition of different texts?)
- the reader(s) / user(s) of the manuscripts (contemporary, later; which signs did they leave; how did they understand or correct the text; did later readers / users comment on the texts; did later readers / users correct the colon units and, thus, the punctuation to give the phrase a different meaning; did later users / readers add something?)

The second day of the workshop is focused on the figure of the learned Patriarch Photius and his well-known passionate relation to books. We will mainly discuss his famous work gathering critical lecture notes, the so-called Library or *Myriobiblos*.

## Programme

**Thursday 29 September 2022**

### **Aristotle – a Sociocultural Approach from his Transmitted Works**

17h30 Welcome and Introduction

CHRISTOPHE ERISMANN (Universität Wien): “Towards a social history of the Byzantine reception of Aristotle”

CHRISTIAN GASTGEBER (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften): “Manuscripts as mirrors of Byzantine scholastic communities. The case of the ms Vienna phil. gr. 100”

18h30 OLIVER PRIMAVERESI (LMU, München):  
“On Editing Aristotle: Manuscripts, Idioms, and Arguments”

*In memoriam Klaus Alpers*

**Friday 30 September 2022**

### **Aristotle and his Byzantine Readers (9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> c.)**

9h30 MARCO STROPPA (Università degli Studi di Firenze):  
*P.Berolinensis inv. 5009*

*10h30 Coffee Break*

11h00 ZISIS MELISSAKIS (National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens):  
*Codex Atheniensis gr. 192*

12h00 MARGHERITA MATERA (Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen):  
*Codex Parisinus gr. 1330*

*13h00 Lunch Break*

14h00 NIKOS AGIOTIS (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften):  
*Codex Vaticanus Barberinus gr. 87*

15h00 DAVID SPERANZI (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze):  
*Codex Laurentianus Plut. 81.11*

*16h00 Coffee Break*

16h30 CIRO GIACOMELLI (Università degli Studi di Padova):  
*Codex Marcianus gr. Z 201*

17h30 STEFANO VALENTE (Universität Hamburg):  
*Codex Vaticanus Urbinas gr. 35*

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

## **Photius the Reader**

- 10h00 MARGHERITA LOSACCO (Università degli Studi di Padova):  
“Reading Photius’ *Library* in Byzantium”
- 11h00 CLAUDIO SCHIANO (Università degli Studi di Bari):  
“Photius, the aftermath of the struggle against icons, and the problem of the glorious body in the *Library*”
- 12h00 *Lunch Break*
- 14h00 CHRISTOPHE ERISMANN (Universität Wien):  
“Photius and Natural Philosophy. What can we learn from the *Library*?”
- 15h00 FILIPPO RONCONI (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris):  
“The *Library* and the *Mystagogy*: similarities and differences in the composition of two decisive 9<sup>th</sup> century works”
- 16h00 NIGEL WILSON (University of Oxford):  
“Editing the *Library*: Observations of an editor”

*All sessions take place in the lecture hall of the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Vienna: Postgasse 9, 1010 Vienna.*

Organisation: Christophe Erismann and Christian Gastgeber

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*No registration is needed for participating in person. To follow the event online, via zoom, please send an email to Petra Greger: petra.greger@univie.ac.at*

