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### The Study of Ancient Greek Texts in Early Ottoman Constantinople

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ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ  
ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ  
ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ



# BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA

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BRIGITA KUKJALKO

THE STUDY OF ANCIENT GREEK TEXTS  
IN EARLY OTTOMAN CONSTANTINOPLE

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BRIGITA KUKJALKO

## THE STUDY OF ANCIENT GREEK TEXTS IN EARLY OTTOMAN CONSTANTINOPLE\*

### INTRODUCTION

It is well known that most of the work on ancient Greek texts was transferred to Italy in the period from the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204 –when the migration of Byzantine scholars to Western Europe began– to the late 15th century<sup>1</sup>. However, not all Greek-speaking scholars left Constantinople in the last two centuries of the Byzantine Empire or after its fall to the Ottomans in 1453. Some distinguished Greek learned men remained and continued their intellectual work, including the study of ancient Greek texts.

There are several articles which deal with the interest of the Ottoman court in ancient Greek philosophy and art<sup>2</sup>. They are mainly based on the evidence of Greek manuscripts that were produced in Mehmed's Greek

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1. See J. E. SANDYS, *A History of Classical Scholarship: From the Sixth Century B.C. to the End of the Middle Ages*, v. 1, Cambridge 1903, 376-428; D. J. GEANAKOPOLOS, *Greek Scholars in Venice: Studies in the Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to Western Europe*, Cambridge 1962; N. G. WILSON, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, Baltimore 1992; J. MONFASANI, *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and Other Émigrés: Selected Essays*, Aldershot 1995

2. E.g. H. İNALCIK, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, London 1973, 181; J. RABY, Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron of the Arts, *Oxford Art Journal* 5, 1 (1982), 6; IDEM, Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium, *DOP* 37 (1983), 15-34; M. MAVROUDI, 'Ελληνική φιλοσοφία στην αὐλὴ τοῦ Μωάμεθ Β΄, *Βυζαντινὰ* 33 (2014), 151-182.

Scriptorium (hereafter ‘the Scriptorium’). From at least 16 manuscripts that were produced in the Scriptorium, 14 still survive in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library, while one is now in Paris (National Library of France) and another one in the Vatican Library. Approximately half of these manuscripts deal with ancient Greek language and literature. Apart from the manuscripts that were actually written in the Scriptorium, the Topkapi Palace Museum Library also contains other manuscripts in ancient Greek that were produced in earlier or later centuries (from the twelfth to the sixteenth century)<sup>3</sup>.

It has been suggested that the bulk of these manuscripts was collected by the Sultan himself, thus underlining his humanist leanings. Several authors have tried to answer the question as to why specific ancient Greek texts were copied or otherwise acquired for the purposes of the Ottoman court<sup>4</sup>. Julian Raby assumes that, “some were probably intended for the training of Mehmed’s Greek chancellery staff, for Greek continued as a language of diplomatic exchange into the first decades of the sixteenth century. Others, on the other hand, bear directly in the Sultan’s interest”<sup>5</sup>. Among the last-mentioned Raby lists Arrian’s *Anabasis* (Ἀλεξάνδρου Ἀνάβασις), the standard Greek biography of Alexander the Great, Homer’s *Iliad* (Ἰλιάς), Ptolemy’s *Geography* (Γεωγραφικὴ Ὑφήγησις) and Pletho’s *Book of Laws* (Νόμων συγγραφή). Maria Mavroudi, however, has concluded that the production of these manuscripts “was motivated by a desire to address political, social, and intellectual problems that were important for Ottoman Muslims”<sup>6</sup>. While discussing George Gemistos Pletho’s reception in the Islamic world in her article ‘Pletho as subversive’, Mavroudi suggests that the existence of almost one third of those manuscripts that were produced

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3. Greek manuscripts that survive in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library are completely listed by A. DEISSMANN, *Forschungen und Funde im Serail, Mit einem Verzeichnis der nichtislamischen Handschriften im Topkapi Serai zu Istanbul*, Berlin – Leipzig 1933.

4. E.g. MAVROUDI, ‘Ελληνικὴ φιλοσοφία στὴν αὐλὴ τοῦ Μωάμεθ Β΄, 151-182; A. AKASOY, George Gemistos Pletho and Islam, in: *Proceedings of the International Congress on Plethon and His Time*, ed. L. G. BENAKIS and CH. P. BALOGLOU, Athens – Mistra 2003, 351-352; RABY, Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron of the Arts, 6; İNALCIK, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, 181.

5. RABY, Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron of the Arts, 6.

6. MAVROUDI, ‘Ελληνικὴ φιλοσοφία στὴν αὐλὴ τοῦ Μωάμεθ Β΄, 181.

in the Scriptorium (i.e. texts on demonology, prophecy and divination) can be explained by interest in various specific aspects of Neoplatonist thought pursued at the court of Mehmed the Conqueror. Among the manuscripts is one containing Hesiod's *Theogony* (Θεογονία) in ancient Greek with commentary. Mavroudi believes that this might have helped Ottoman intellectuals to understand better Pletho's *Book of Laws* (or, more precisely, what remained of it<sup>7</sup> that was translated into Arabic<sup>8</sup>) and the use of Greek mythology as a tool of philosophical thought<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to the manuscripts containing ancient Greek texts that were written in the Scriptorium, numerous others were produced in Constantinople in the second half of the fifteenth century. These manuscripts attributed to such Greek learned men as Matthew Kamariotes (fl. mid-fifteenth century), George Scholarios, later known as Gennadios II (ca. 1400 – ca. 1472), John Dokeianos (fl. mid-fifteenth century), and Michael Kritoboulos (fl. mid-fifteenth century) now survive in several European libraries awaiting further research into their origin, purpose and ownership. There is much about ancient Greek text transmission in early Ottoman Constantinople that still remains largely unknown.

As we have seen above, the manuscripts that have survived reflect the interests of the Ottoman court and those studying ancient Greek texts

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7. Pletho's *Book of Laws*, where he explicates his paganism, was publicly burnt at the order of the patriarch Gennadios II Scholarios, a major opponent of Pletho. See, J. MONFASANI, Pletho's Date of Death and the Burning of His Laws, *BZ* 98 (2005), 459-463. An anthology of excerpts from Pletho's works were translated from Greek into Arabic, most probably during the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror. For the context of Pletho's Arabic translation, see M. MAVROUDI, Pletho as Subversive and His Reception in the Islamic World, in: *Power and Subversion in Byzantium*, ed. D. ANGELOV and M. SAXBY, London – New York (2013), 177-203.

8. In the Ottoman lands of the 15th century, the international *lingua franca* used in science communication by educated Muslims was Arabic. As a result, a number of Greek texts were translated into Arabic at the court of Mehmed the Conqueror. For detailed information on these translations, see M. MAVROUDI, Translations from Greek into Arabic at the court of Mehmed the Conqueror, in: *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture, Papers From, The Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium*, ed. A. ODEKAN – N. NECİPOĞLU – E. AKYUREK, Istanbul 2013, 195-207: only a handful of such translations are currently known.

9. MAVROUDI, Pletho as Subversive, 190-191.

in Constantinople in the second half of the fifteenth century. However, the wider circumstances of the study of ancient Greek texts in the period that has been described as the worst and most obscure in the history of Greek learning in the East have not been adequately looked into. The following paper will try to fill this gap in the literature on the history of ancient Greek scholarship by examining the work of contemporary Greek-speaking intellectuals.

#### GEORGE AMIROUTZES' STUDIES OF ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

One of the most learned men of his day was George Amiroutzes (ca. 1400 – ca. 1469). In his native Trebizond, Amiroutzes held high government offices: he was μέγας λογοθέτης and πρωτοβεστιάριος<sup>10</sup>. Amiroutzes was also active as a scholar, and his contemporaries simply referred to him as 'the Philosopher', a title he also used of himself<sup>11</sup>. Two or three years after the fall of the Empire of Trebizond to the Ottomans (in August 1461), Amiroutzes was invited to the court of Mehmed the Conqueror<sup>12</sup>. His contemporary, the

10. For the office of μέγας λογοθέτης see R. GUILLAND, *Les Logothètes: Etudes sur l'histoire administrative de l'Empire byzantin*, *REB* 29 (1971), 5-115, esp. 100-115. For the πρωτοβεστιάριος see R. GUILLAND, *Le Protovestiaire*, *REB* 2 (1944), 202-20 [= IDEM, *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines*, v. 1, Berlin 1967, 216-236]. See also *ODB*, vols. 2, 3, entries *Logothetes* and *Protovestiarios* (A. KAZHDAN). On the career of Amiroutzes, see B. JANSSENS and P. VAN DEUN, *George Amiroutzes and his Poetical Oeuvre*, in: *Philomathestatos: Studies in Greek and Byzantine Texts Presented to Jacques Noret for his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. B. JANSSENS and P. VAN DEUN, Louvain – Paris – Dudley 2004, 297-324; also J. MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes. The Philosopher and His Tractates* [*Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales, Bibliotheca 12*], Leuven – Paris – Walpole (MA) 2011, 5-50.

11. E.g. Michael Kritoboulos refers to Amiroutzes as φιλοσοφίαν ἄκρος (IV 9,2) and ὁ φιλόσοφος (V 10, 5-6): *Critobuli Imbriotae historiae*, ed. D. R. REINSCH [CFHB 22], Berolini et Novi Eboraci, 1983, 165-6, 195. For an English translation, see KRITOBOULOS, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, trans. C. T. RIGGS, Princeton 1954, 177, 209-210. MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 6-7, nn. 8-14 lists several Greek and Turkish sources where the epithet of Amiroutzes, ὁ φιλόσοφος, 'the philosopher' appears.

12. There is still speculation on how and why Amiroutzes secured a position at the Sultan's court. Many believe that it was not only his erudition but also his family relationship with the Grand Vizier, the Ottoman negotiator Mahmud Paşa that enabled this. For a more detailed discussion of this question, see MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes* 8, n. 20. On Amiroutzes' religious attitude see, among others, N. B. TOMADAKIS, Ἐτούργησεν ὁ



Greek historiographer Michael Kritoboulos of Imbros (ca. 1410 – ca. 1470), who refers to him as Ἀμηρούκης, explained in his *Histories*<sup>13</sup> how the Sultan received the learned man: ἦν δὲ καὶ τις ἀνὴρ τῶν μετὰ βασιλέως, Γεώργιος Ἀμηρούκης τοῦνομα, φιλοσοφίαν ἄκρος, ὅση περὶ τε τὸ φυσικὸν ἔχει καὶ δογματικὸν τό τε μαθηματικόν τε καὶ γεωμετρικὸν καὶ τὰς ἀναλογίας τῶν ἀριθμῶν καὶ ὅση τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ Περιπάτου καὶ τῆς Στοᾶς, προσέτι δὲ καὶ πλήρης πάσης ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας, ῥητορικῆς τέ φημι καὶ ποιητικῆς. περὶ τούτου μαθὼν ὁ βασιλεὺς μετακαλεῖται τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ πείραν ἱκανὴν ἔκ τε τῆς συντυχίας καὶ ὁμιλίας λαβὼν τῆς τε παιδείας καὶ σοφίας αὐτοῦ θαυμάζει τε τοῦτον διαφερόντως καὶ χώρας τῆς προσηκούσης ἀξιόι παρ' αὐτῷ καὶ συχναῖς ὥς αὐτὸν εἰσόδοις καὶ ὁμιλίαις τιμᾷ δόγματα τῶν παλαιῶν αὐτῷ προτιθεῖς καὶ φιλοσόφους ἀπορίας καὶ συζητήσεις καὶ λύσεις· ἔστι γὰρ τῶν ἄκρως φιλοσόφων ὁ βασιλεὺς<sup>14</sup> ...

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Γεώργιος Ἀμηρούτζης, *EEBS* 18 (1948), 99-143, and A. FRANGEDAKI, On fifteenth-century cryptochristianity: A letter to George Amiroutzes from Michael Apostolis, *BMGS* 9 (1985), 221-224. See also Amiroutzes' contribution on the discussion *de recta fide*, through his dialogue with the Sultan, saved in latin translation and edited by A. ARGYRIOU – G. LAGARRIGUE, *BF* 11 (1987), 29-222 and O. DE LA CRUZ PALMA, *Jorge Ameruzes de Trebisonda. El dialogo de la fe con el Sultan de los Turcos* [Nueva Roma 9], Madrid 2000.

13. Kritoboulos' *Histories* describes the deeds of Mehmed the Conqueror in the period from 1451 to 1467. It is written in imitation of the classical Greek historiographical style, esp. Thucydides (ca. 460 – ca. 400 BC). The only known manuscript of this work, dedicated to the Sultan, is the author's autograph and survives in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library. On Kritoboulos' career, his literary works and his autograph of the *Histories*, see D. R. REINSCH, Introduction in the edition [as in n.11], \*5-6, and IDEM, Kritoboulos of Imbros – Learned Historian, Ottoman Raya and Byzantine Patriot, *ZRVI* 40 (2003), 297-308; also, RABY, *Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium*, 15-30.

14. Critobuli Imbriotae historiae, IV 9, 2-3 (*Among the companions of the ruler of Trebizond was a man named George Amiroukis, a great philosopher, learned in the studies of physics and dogmatics and mathematics and geometry and the analogy of numbers, and also in the philosophy of the Peripatetics and Stoics. He was also full of encyclopaedic knowledge, and was an orator and poet as well. The Sultan learned about this man and sent for him. On getting acquainted with his training and wisdom, through contact and conversation, he admired him more than anyone else. He gave him a suitable position in his court and honoured him with frequent audiences and conversations, questioning him on the teachings of the ancients and philosophical problems and their discussion and solution. For the Sultan himself was one of the most acute philosophers.* (Translation by Charles T. RIGGS in Kritoboulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 177).

Apart from the Kritoboulos' reference to Amiroutzes' fame and work at Mehmed's court, almost nothing is known of his career as a philosopher. However, the philosophical writings of Amiroutzes that have survived to this day are a significant source of information about the ancient Greek authors and works that have influenced him, although it is impossible to trace when and where he was working on his writings<sup>15</sup>.

His first tractate, *I: The Philosopher's*<sup>16</sup> [*Tractate*] *on What the Ancients Taught Concerning Being* (Α': Τοῦ φιλοσόφου ὅπως ἐδόξαζον οἱ παλαιοὶ περὶ τῶν ὄντων), differs significantly from the other 14: rather than a philosophical treatise, it is an enumeration of the greatest ancient Greek philosophers and their main beliefs on being. In this tractate, the author tells of, in chronological order, Thales, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Leucippus, Parmenides, Melissus, Empedocles, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno and Chrysippus and what they said concerning the principle or principles of being; whether there were one or several principles, for example, water or fire, or both, and so on. Amiroutzes does not mention his sources. However, in the footnotes of this treatise, the editor of the text John Monfasani carefully indicates similar passages in the writings of Diogenes Laertius, the Stoics, and especially Aristotle – like *Metaphysics* (Τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά), *Physics* (Φυσικὴ ἀκρόασις), *On the Heavens* (Περὶ οὐρανοῦ), *On Generation and Corruption* (Περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς), which Amiroutzes apparently had studied. In this tractate, the author appears as an objective narrator who rarely reveals his own opinion. Instead, he prefers to refer to Aristotle's thoughts. For example, when narrating on Parmenides' and Melissus' beliefs on the principle of being, Amiroutzes indicates that Aristotle has attributed to them many absurd and impossible assertions, but he does not expand his reference explaining where Aristotle or anyone mentioning his work has stated this<sup>17</sup>. In this tractate Amiroutzes' presence as an author can be felt only when he mentions Socrates (διήνεγκε δὲ πλεῖστον ἐν τῇ διαλεκτικῇ, καὶ ἦν ἀδύνατον τούτῳ διαλεγόμενον μὴ

15. MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes* [as in n.10] has recently produced an edition of 15 previously unknown philosophical tractates in a fragmentary state, in the original and in English translation.

16. I.e. Amiroutzes'. MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 23, conclusively demonstrates that Amiroutzes is the author of this (the first), third and fourth treatise.

17. In tractate I, 14.3, in MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 66.



ἐλέγχεσθαι)<sup>18</sup>, Plato (Διήνεγκε δὲ πάντων τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ φιλοσόφων οὐκ ὀλίγῳ τινί. ἡ δὲ γραφὴ αὐτοῦ ἀμίμητος ἐστὶ μετὰ τοῦ ἀρίστου καὶ χαριεστάτου)<sup>19</sup> and Chrysippus and the school established by the Stoics (τιμῆς τε τυγχάνουσαν παρὰ πᾶσιν διὰ τὴν τῶν ἡθῶν εὐκοσμίαν. οὐδενὶ γὰρ οὕτως ὥς ἤθεσι χρηστοῖς ἀλίσκεσθαι ἄνθρωπος)<sup>20</sup>. Conversely, his account of Aristotle can be compared with a panegyric: [...] μόνος εἰς τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον τέλος ἦλθε τῆς φιλοσοφίας. [...] ἐν δὲ τοῖς φυσικοῖς οὐδεὶς ἄμεινον εἶπεν, οὔτε τῶν πρὶν οὔτε τῶν ὕστερον. [...] τό τε ἀξίωμα τῆς ἀντιφάσεως, [...], ἄριστα ἀπέδειξε. [...] τελεώτατα δὲ ὑπεξῆλθε τὰ ἡθικὰ ἐν τε τοῖς Πρὸς Εὐδήμιον καὶ τοῖς Πρὸς Νικόμαχον τὸν υἱόν, ἐν τε τοῖς Πολιτικοῖς καὶ τοῖς Οἰκονομικοῖς<sup>21</sup>.

These assertions are not philosophical; rather, they are related to the personalities under discussion and their work.

Amiroutzes' own philosophical ideas on being and its procession can be found in a number of later tractates: IV: *The Philosopher's [Tractate] Concerning the Procession of Being* (Δ': Τοῦ φιλοσόφου περὶ τῆς προόδου), V: *The Same Author's [Tractate] [on Procession from the First Principle]* (Ε': Τοῦ αὐτοῦ), VI: *The Same Author's [Tractate] Concerning the Procession of Being* (Ζ': Τοῦ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς προόδου τῶν ὄντων), VIII: *The Same Author's [Tractate] Concerning the First Principle* (Η': Τοῦ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς πρώτης ἀρχῆς), IX: *The Same Author's [Tractate] [on Motion and the First Principle]* (Θ': Τοῦ αὐτοῦ)<sup>22</sup> and XIV: *The Same Author's [Tractate]*

18. George Amiroutzes, I, 18.2: *He excelled most of all in dialectics. It was impossible not to be refuted when debating him.* (Translation by MONFASANI, George Amiroutzes, 69).

19. George Amiroutzes, I, 19.19: *He diverges from all prior philosophers in no small degree. His writing style is inimitable because of its supreme excellence and grace.* (Translation by MONFASANI, George Amiroutzes, 73).

20. George Amiroutzes, I, 24. 2-3: *It was comparable to the most distinguished of the schools and esteemed by all because of Chrysippus' own high ethical behaviour. For nowhere is a man proven as in his good deeds.* (Translation by MONFASANI, George Amiroutzes, 79).

21. George Amiroutzes, I, 21. 2-9: = [...] *he arrived at the possible highest point of philosophy. [...] No one spoke better about physics either before or after him. [...] He brilliantly proved, [...], the axiom of contradiction. [...] He published the most perfect ethical principles in his Ethics addressed to Eudemus and in his Ethics addressed to Nichomachus, his son, and in his Politics and Economics.* (Translation by MONFASANI, George Amiroutzes, 75).

22. MONFASANI, George Amiroutzes, 143, n. 88 indicates that this tractate is a fragment, probably of a draft of the same discussion found in tractate XIII.

*Concerning the First Principle* (ΙΔ': Τοῦ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς πρώτης ἀρχῆς). In these treatises, the author discusses what philosophers have said on the First Principle (the One, a God), identifying the philosopher from time to time as Aristotle<sup>23</sup>, Plato and the Platonists, Melissus, Parmenides or Anaxagoras, and further explaining what they have said on the production of being: whether it arises from the First Principle or not. Amiroutzes indicates that οἱ γὰρ πρότερον περὶ τούτου σκεψάμενοι οὔτε ἀλλήλοις φαίνονται ταῦτὰ δοξάζοντες οὔτε ταῖς ὑποκειμέναις ἀρχαῖς συνωδᾷ<sup>24</sup>. Amiroutzes tries to *correct* their assertions with the help of philosophical logic. All the tractates are notable for their complexity and each sheds light on some separate aspect of the issue, but they fail to give us a clear picture of the author's own philosophical views.

Aristotle's influence on Amiroutzes as a philosopher is most obvious in the following three tractates: *II: The Same Author's [Tractate] Concerning the Ideas* (Β': Τοῦ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὰς ἰδέας), *III: The Philosopher's [Tractate] Concerning the Soul* (Γ': Τοῦ φιλοσόφου περὶ ψυχῆς), and especially in *X: The Same Author's [Tractate] Concerning the Substance and Essence of Happiness* (Ι': Τοῦ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς οὐσίας καὶ τοῦ τί ἐστι τῆς εὐδαιμονίας). The last tractate differs from the others in that the author speaks in the person of Aristotle. Amiroutzes does not refer to his sources<sup>25</sup>, i.e. the writings of Aristotle, except *The Posterior Analytics* (Ἀναλυτικὰ Ὑστερα): [...] ὥς ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς Ἀποδεικτικῆς ἀπεδείξαμεν, [...] <sup>26</sup>. Monfasani points out that this tractate, especially in the first half, is an extended paraphrase with frequent quotations of Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια), I.1095a28–1098a20<sup>27</sup>.

23. Amiroutzes refers to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in tractate IV, 1.8, and also quotes it in tractate VI, 13. 3-4, see MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 108 and 130.

24. *George Amiroutzes*, VI, 1.1: *For those who studied the issue before us do not seem to hold doctrines that are in agreement with each other or are even in accord with basic principles.* (MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 143, n. 88, 117).

25. According to the editor, Amiroutzes' sources in this treatise are Aristotle's *The Posterior Analytics*, *The Nicomachean Ethics* and *Metaphysics*, see MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 145-165, nn. 91-120; 122-130 and 132.

26. *George Amiroutzes*, X, 1.6: [...] as we have shown in Book 1 of the *Apodeictic* [...]. (MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 145).

27. See MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 145, n. 91. In the Greek text, Monfasani puts

In tractate *II: The Same Author's [Tractate] Concerning the Ideas* (Β': Τοῦ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὰς ιδέας), Amiroutzes deals with the beliefs of Aristotle and Plotinus on the nature of the First Principle; in this work too, the author's thoughts can be observed throughout the text. Often Amiroutzes expresses his own opinion in the first person singular or plural and with the help of a rhetorical question. In this treatise, Amiroutzes refers to three works of Aristotle: *Physics*, *Metaphysics* and *On the Heavens*, and one work of Plotinus: *The Enneads* (Ἐννεάδες).

In tractate *III: The Philosopher's [Tractate]: Concerning the Soul* (Γ': Τοῦ φιλοσόφου περὶ ψυχῆς), which is perhaps the most interesting and original of all in terms of thought, Amiroutzes aims to prove Aristotle's belief that τὴν λογικὴν [ψυχὴν] μόνον ἀθάνατον καὶ χωριστὴν διὰ τὸν νοῦν, τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς οὐδαμῶς<sup>28</sup>. Especially in this tractate, he appears as a harsh opponent of Plato and his followers and later elaborators as Plotinus and the other Neoplatonists, who have stated that all souls, irrational or rational, are immortal and share the same form. When completely refuting Plato's thesis, Amiroutzes does not shrink from using such epithets as ἀτοπώτατον ('most absurd') or προδήλως ἄτοπα ('blatantly absurd')<sup>29</sup>. However, to oppose the Platonist theories the author uses mainly his own conclusions rather than Aristotle's, for example: ἄνθρωπος δὲ φύσει ἐλεύθερος. σημεῖον δὲ ὅτι οὐδεὶς αἰρεῖται δουλεῦν ἐξὸν εὔ ζῆν ἄνευ δουλείας. τὰ δὲ ζῶα ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως ὥριστα εἰς δουλείαν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, τὰ δὲ φυτὰ πᾶσι τοῖς ζῴοις εἰς χρῆσιν. ἐπεὶ τοίνυν ταῖς κοιναῖς ὑπολήψεσιν ἢ ὑπόθεσις μάχεται, οὐ δυνατόν ἀληθὲ εἶναι. οὐκ ἄρα ὁμοειδεῖς αἱ ψυχαὶ πᾶσαι<sup>30</sup>.

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into italics words and phrases taken directly from Aristotle, which together constitute a significant part of the text.

28. George Amiroutzes, III, 1.3 [...] *only the rational soul is immortal and separable because it is a mind; all other souls are in no way immortal*. (MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 91).

29. In tractate III, 7.1-4, in MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 95-6.

30. George Amiroutzes, III, 2. 8-10: *Men are, however, by nature free. A sign of this is that no one chooses to be a slave if he can live well without being a slave. By nature, on the other hand, animals have been destined to be the slaves of men and plants to be exploited by all animals. Since, then, [Plato's] view is at odds with common conceptions, it cannot be true. Therefore, not all souls share the same form*. (MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 93).

More than once, he indicates that Plato's view is not even in harmony with other principles posited by him and his followers<sup>31</sup>: for example, the theory of Ideas. Amiroutzes avoids directly referring to Plato or Plotinus, but says rather *νομίζουσιν* 'they think' when discussing their beliefs, and he does not mention the relevant works.

Amiroutzes concludes that the Soul is not an Idea and repeatedly professes to prove that souls do not share the same form and that only the rational ones are immortal. Although heavily influenced by Aristotle, in this tractate Amiroutzes shows himself to be an original thinker. He continues in the same vein in the remaining five tractates, which cover different topics.

In tractate VII: *The Same Author's [Tractate] [on Time According to Plotinus]* (Z: *Toῦ αὐτοῦ*), Amiroutzes reveals and discusses Plotinus' multiple views regarding the nature of time: the life of the soul, activity, or the length and interval of life. He disagrees with Plotinus and opposes all his statements with the help of logic. The author's own views on time can be found scattered throughout the treatise.

In the remaining tractates: XI: *The Same Author's [Tractate]. That within man the same soul possesses sensation and thought and the other facilities of a living creature* (IA': *Toῦ αὐτοῦ. Ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῆς αὐτῆς ἐστὶ ψυχῆς τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ τὸ νοεῖν καὶ τ' ἄλλα τὰ τοῦ ζῶντος ἔργα*), XII: *The Same Author's [Tractate] [Concerning Man]* (IB': *Toῦ αὐτοῦ*), XIII: *The Same Author's [Tractate] [Concerning Matter and Form]* (II': *Toῦ αὐτοῦ*), XV: *[The Same Author's [Tractate]]. Whether there are bodies that are indivisible and without parts* (IE': *Εἰ ἔστι σώματα ἄτομα καὶ ἀμερῆ*), Amiroutzes expresses mainly his own thoughts on the issues reflected in the titles, giving very few references to other philosophers. In tractate XI, there are two references to the assertions of Plato and Aristotle<sup>32</sup>. Monfasani indicates that this treatise reflects, to some degree, the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, though Amiroutzes does not refer to him<sup>33</sup>. In treatise

31. In tractate III, 7.2 and 9.4 (MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 94 and 96). Fortunately, the editor of the text has indicated possible works where to look for Plato and the Neoplatonists' beliefs discussed by Amiroutzes; Plato's dialogues *Phaedo* (*Φαίδων*), *Phaedrus* (*Φαῖδρος*), *Republic* (*Πολιτεία*) and *Laws* (*Νόμοι*), and Plotinus' *Enneads*. See Monfasani, *George Amiroutzes*, 95 and 97, nn. 62-63.

32. In tractate XI, 2.2, in MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 166.

33. See MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 165, n. 131.

XII, Amiroutzes refers once to the Platonists to express his opposition to them<sup>34</sup>. Tractate XIII includes one reference to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*<sup>35</sup> that confirms Amiroutzes' belief on matter. At the very end of the last tractate, XV, the author, confirming his own statement, refers to Zeno; however, in the notes on this treatise, Monfasani indicates several ancient Greek sources that contain similar ideas or sources that might have inspired Amiroutzes. These include Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Physics*, also *On Indivisible Lines* (*Περὶ ἀτόμων γραμμῶν*) and Euclid's *The Elements* (*Στοιχεῖα*).

Amiroutzes' tractates come across as chaotic – «they are drafts of Amiroutzes' thoughts», states Monfasani<sup>36</sup>. He considers that these texts might have formed the material for lessons aimed at younger students, because of the simplified and incomplete information provided in several tractates<sup>37</sup>. Indeed, to a certain extent, the form of Amiroutzes' philosophical tractates resembles Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* (*Ῥητορική*), which is commonly believed to have been used by Aristotle as a set of lecture notes. Amiroutzes' tractates are even more fragmentary; the thoughts expressed are quite often obscure, they are frequently repeated and they are sometimes at variance with one another. Just like *On Rhetoric*, these texts were never published by the author.

Whatever the level of Amiroutzes' teaching as reflected in his tractates, they clearly show that he studied the philosophical works of the greatest ancient Greek learned men. His tractates, though short and fragmentary, reveal erudition in ancient Greek philosophical thought and prove that he had access to works by or on Aristotle, Plato, the Stoics, Plotinus and others. In his treatises, Amiroutzes appears as an Aristotelian philosopher. They are full of references to Aristotle's thoughts, beliefs and sometimes even include quotations, albeit often without any reference. As Aristotle's teachings were considered fundamental in Byzantium and every Greek intellectual knew his works well, scrupulous references to them would have been superfluous. These treatises were probably written with a Greek readership in mind, but it is nevertheless believed that Amiroutzes' knowledge of ancient Greek

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34. In tractate XII, 3.4, in MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 170.

35. In tractate XIII, 6.9, in MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 178.

36. MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 24.

37. MONFASANI, *George Amiroutzes*, 25.

philosophical thought inspired his Ottoman peers to study and interpret Aristotle, Plato and others<sup>38</sup>.

#### THE DISPUTE BETWEEN PLATONISTS AND ARISTOTELIANS IN THE OTTOMAN COURT?

The philosophical works of the late Pletho and his major opponent Scholarios, an ardent Aristotelian, may also have contributed significantly to the study of the greatest authors of the ancient Greek past at the Ottoman court. Several of Scholarios' works from the last decade before 1453 were written to oppose Pletho, whose works were attempts to demonstrate Plato's superiority to Aristotle as a philosopher and show that Plato's philosophy was more compatible with Christian revelation. For example, the voluminous Scholarios' work *Against the Ignorance of Pletho on Aristotle* (*Contra Plethonis ignorationem de Aristotele*) originated as a response to Pletho's *On the Differences between Aristotle and Plato* (*De differentiis Aristotelis et Platonis*). To this work, Pletho reacted once again in *Against the Objections of Scholarios Concerning Aristotle* (*Contra Scholarii pro Aristotele obiectiones*)<sup>39</sup>. Pletho and Scholarios' exchange of treatises resulted in a controversy that continued in Italy between Platonists and Aristotelians for decades<sup>40</sup>. However, the lack of textual evidence does not allow us to assume

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38. RABY, Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron, 6, believes that Mehmed the Conqueror studied peripatetic philosophy with Amiroutzes in 1465. The same belief has also been expressed by M. BALIVET, *Aristote au service du Sultan! Ouverture aux Turcs et Aristotélisme chez quelques penseurs Byzantins du quinzième siècle*, *Byzantins et Ottomans: Relations, interaction, succession*, Istanbul 1999, 149, who shows that the spiritual relationship between Amiroutzes and the Sultan was similar to Aristotle and Alexander the Great. In two poems attributed to Amiroutzes, Mehmed is associated with Alexander the Great. In one of these poems, Amiroutzes speaks in the person of Aristotle. For the relevant Amiroutzes' poems, see S. P. LAMBROS, Ποιήματα Γεωργίου τοῦ Ἀμιρουτζή, *ΔΙΕΕ* 2 (1885), 279-280 and JANSSENS – VAN DEUN, *George Amiroutzes*, 314-315.

39. For more on their dispute, see N. SINIOSOGLOU, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium: Illumination and Utopian in Gemistos Plethon*, Cambridge 2011, 125-160.

40. See J. MONFASANI, A Tale of Two Books: Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis* and George of Trebizond's *Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis*, *Renaissance Studies* 22 (2008), 1-13; P. SCHULZ, George Gemistos Plethon (ca. 1360-1454), George of Trebizond (1396-1472) and Cardinal Bessarion (1403-1472): the Controversy Between Platonists and Aristotelians in the Fifteenth Century, in: *Philosophers of the Renaissance*, ed. P. R. BLUM, Washington, D.C. 2010, 23-32.



that this debate would also have taken place, at least at the same level, in early Ottoman Constantinople.

The works of Scholarios<sup>41</sup> show that after the fall of Constantinople his intellectual activities were more related to theological matters, especially the promotion of the Christian faith among the Ottomans, than to the study of ancient Greek texts<sup>42</sup>. However, Amiroutzes' tractates prove that this debate still occupied his mind, and apparently the minds of his students too. Some of the ancient Greek manuscripts found in the Scriptorium indicate that this dispute may also have continued in the Ottoman court, most likely in the form of discussions, and perhaps with Amiroutzes' help as an expert.

#### AMIROUTZES' WORK ON PTOLEMY'S INDIVIDUAL REGIONAL MAPS

According to Kritoboulos, Amiroutzes' activity at the Sultan's court was not limited to philosophical discussion of the teachings of the ancients. In the summer of 1465, the Sultan commissioned Amiroutzes to carry out a challenging task related to ancient Greek scholarship. As stated in his *Histories*, that summer Mehmed the Conqueror had the chance to examine a manuscript copy of the *Geography* (Γεωγραφικὴ Ὑφήγησις) of Klaudios Ptolemaios, better known as Ptolemy –a second-century Alexandrian scientist– and its numerous regional maps scattered in various places in the text: ἐντυχὼν δὲ πον καὶ τοῖς τοῦ Πτολεμαίου<sup>43</sup> διαγράμμασιν, ἐν οἷς

41. For the works of Scholarios see: *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, ed. M. JUGIE – L. PETIT – X.A. SIDERIDES, 8 vols, Paris 1936.

42. A. PAPADAKIS, Gennadius II and Mehmed the Conqueror, *Byz.* 42 (1972), 88–106, calls Scholarios the last Byzantine to attempt to explain the Christian faith to the Moslems. His conversations with Mehmed the Conqueror on Christianity resulted in two treatises, written at the Sultan's request. See also A. ZIACA, Rearticulating a Christian-Muslim Understanding: Gennadios Scholarios and George Amiroutzes on Islam, in: *Christianity and Religious Plurality*, edited by Ch. METHUEN – A. SPICER – J. WOLFFE, [Studies in Church History – 51], Suffolk – New York 2015, 150–165.

43. MAVROUDI, Translations from Greek into Arabic, 196–197, points to three manuscripts that can be associated with the library of the Sultan: *Seragliensis* 27 (late 14th–early 15th centuries), *Seragliensis* 57 (1300) and *Marc. gr.* 516 (14th century). She assumes that Kritoboulos refers in his narrative either to *Seragliensis* 27 or *Marc. gr.* 516, as these two contain regional maps, but do not include a map of the inhabited world or the so called 'Ptolemaic world map', as does *Seragliensis* 57. However, R. Burri indicates that in *Marc. gr.* 516 the maps are not scattered through the text, and that its date of production has to be

ἐκεῖνος ἐπιστημονικῶς τε καὶ φιλοσόφως τὴν τοῦ κόσμου περιήγησιν καὶ περίοδον πᾶσαν ἐκτίθεται, (...) <sup>44</sup>. The Sultan wanted Ptolemy's individual charts or maps to be combined ἐν ἐνὶ πέπλῳ καὶ πίνακι σαφεστέραν τε οὖσαν οὕτω καὶ εὐληπτοτέραν συμπεριλαβεῖν τε ἅμα τῇ διανοίᾳ καὶ κατασχεῖν καὶ γνῶναι καλῶς. (...) <sup>45</sup>. For that purpose, he called on the philosopher Amiroutzes. Kritoboulos goes on to say how Amiroutzes created a huge wall map for the Sultan that combined all the individual maps in Ptolemy's *Geography*: μετὰ χειρας τὸ βιβλίον λαβὼν καὶ τὸ θέρος ὅλον ἐνδιατρίψας τε καὶ σχολάσας αὐτῷ καὶ ἱκανῶς ἐκμελετήσας τε καὶ τὴν τούτου γνῶσιν ἀναλεξάμενος διέγραψεν ἄριστα καὶ ἐπιστημονικώτατα πᾶσαν τὴν τῆς οἰκουμένης περίοδον ἐν ἐνὶ πέπλῳ καὶ πίνακι γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης ὁμοῦ, ποταμοὺς τέ φημι καὶ λίμνας καὶ νήσους καὶ ὄρη καὶ πόλεις καὶ πάντα ἀπλῶς, παραδοὺς ἐν τούτῳ καὶ κανόνας καὶ μέτρα καὶ ἀποστάσεις καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα εἰδέναι καλῶς. (...) <sup>46</sup>. The map included the names of the countries, cities and places written in Arabic. According to Kritoboulos, the translation was done by the son of Amiroutzes who was

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reassessed, which makes it less probable that Kritoboulos refers to this codex; instead, most likely, he refers to *Seragliensis* 27. See R. BURRI, *Die Geographie des Ptolemaios im Spiegel der griechischen Handschriften*, Berlin – Boston 2013, 445 and 452 (for the arrangement of the maps); 448 and 456 (for its production time). For the most recent and thorough descriptions of all these three codices, see IDEM, *Die Geographie des Ptolemaios*, 255-270 (*Seragliensis* 27); 445-458 (*Marc. gr.* 516); 505-515 (*Seragliensis* 57). *Seragliensis* 27 and *Seragliensis* 57 survive in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library.

44. *Critobuli Imbriotae historiae*, V 10,5 (He also ran across, somewhere, the charts of Ptolemy, in which he set forth scientifically and philosophically the description and outline of the entire earth: Translation by Charles T. RIGGS in Kritoboulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 209).

45. *Critobuli Imbriotae historiae*, V 10,5 ... into one united whole as a single picture or representation, and thus made clearer or more comprehensible, so as to be more easily understood by the mind, and grasped and well apprehended. (In Kritoboulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 209).

46. *Critobuli Imbriotae historiae*, V 10,6: He took the book in hand with joy, and read it and studied it all summer. By considerable investigation and by analysing its wisdom, he wrote out most satisfactorily and skilfully the whole story of the inhabited earth in one representation as a connected whole – of the land and sea, the rivers, harbours, islands, mountains, cities and all, in plain language, giving in this the rules as to measurements of distance and all other essential things: Kritoboulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 209-210).

expert in the languages of the Arabs and the Greeks<sup>47</sup>. The son of George Amiroutzes referred to by Kritoboulos is likely the eldest, Basileios, later known as Mehmed Bey, who, along with his brother Alexander (İskender Bey), converted to Islam. The so called 16<sup>th</sup>-century Greek chronicle *Ἐκθεσις χρονική* mentions that: *Ὑπῆρχον γὰρ ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς ἐκείνοις νέοι εὐγενέστατοι ἐντὸς τοῦ σαραγίου ἔκ τε Πόλεως καὶ Τραπεζοῦντας, ἐξ ὧν ἦν καὶ ὁ τοῦ Ἀμουρήτζη ὁ υἱὸς ὁ Μεχμετ μπέις, λογιώτατος καὶ ἑλληνικῶς καὶ ἀραβικῶς, ὃς καὶ ὁρισμῶ τοῦ κρατοῦντος μετεγλώττισε τὰ ἡμέτερα βιβλία εἰς τὴν τῶν Ἀράβων γλῶτταν γράψας αὐτὰ ἀκριβέστατα*<sup>48</sup>.

Although no longer extant, Amiroutzes' map must have been impressive, since the Sultan rewarded him generously and encouraged him to prepare an Arabic translation of the *Geography* itself: *ἡσθεῖς οὖν πάνν τῷ ἔργῳ τούτῳ ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ τὴν σοφίαν τε καὶ περὶ νοίαν τοῦ Πτολεμαίου θαυμάσας, ἀλλὰ δὴ τοῦ ἐκθεμένου τοῦτο καλῶς, δωρεῖται τοῦτον πολυτρόπως καὶ φιλοτίμως, κελεύει δὲ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν βίβλον ὑπ' αὐτῶν Ἀρραβικῶς ἐκδοθῆναι μισθοὺς μεγάλους ὑπὲρ τούτου καὶ δῶρα ἐπαγγεῖλάμενος*<sup>49</sup>.

At the order of the Sultan, Amiroutzes and his son, probably Mehmed Bey, prepared an Arabic translation of Ptolemy's text. Two different fifteenth-century copies are still extant: MS *Ayasofya* 2596 (text without maps) and MS *Ayasofya* 2610 (text with maps). Both manuscripts are today preserved in the Suleymaniye Library, Istanbul<sup>50</sup>.

47. *Critobuli Imbriotae historiae*, V 10,7.

48. *Ἐκθεσις χρονική*: *Ecthesis chronica and Chronicon Athenarum*. Edited with critical notes and indices by Spyridon P. Lambros, Athens 1902. 67: *At that time there were some very noble young men within seraglio; they were from the City and from Trabizond. One of them was the son of Amiroutzes, Mehmed Beg, who had been educated in Greek and Arabic literature; by order of the ruler he had translated our books into Arabic in the most accurate manner.* (Translation by M. PHILIPIDES in *Emperors, Patriarchs, and Sultans of Constantinople, 1373–1513: An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the Sixteenth Century*, Brookline 1990, 87).

49. *Critobuli Imbriotae historiae*, V 10,8 ([He] *admired the wisdom and ingenuity of Ptolemy, and still more that of the man who had so well exhibited this to him. He rewarded him in many ways and with many honours. He also ordered him to issue the entire book in Arabic, and promised him large pay and gifts for this work:* Kritoboulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 209).

50. The manuscript with maps: MS *Ayasofya* 2610 contains twenty-six double-page and twenty-four single-page maps, all in colour, including the Ptolemaic world map which might

The period when Amiroutzes created his world map is indicative of a general Ottoman interest in cartography, and especially in the copying, translation and adaptation of Arabic geographical works<sup>51</sup>. The motivation behind this interest was, no doubt, the growing Ottoman awareness of the practical importance of maps in the continual expansion of their new empire<sup>52</sup>. Nevertheless, as Ahmet T. Karamustafa points out, Mehmed the Conqueror's personal interest in cartography should not be exaggerated. Although he was a patron of mapmakers and actively encouraged the drawing of maps for navigation purposes, this did not lead to the establishment of any substantial tradition in Ottoman cartography. The interest was, rather, a symptom of a wider cultural change that accompanied the shaping of the Ottoman Empire in the frontier areas between Christianity and Islam, a development which certainly points to the collegial roots of Ottoman cartographic practice<sup>53</sup>.

#### GEORGE OF TREBIZOND'S INTRODUCTION TO PTOLEMY'S GREAT ARRANGEMENT

The activity of George of Trebizond (1395–1486) –a Greek émigré in Italy – in Constantinople demonstrates that there was strong interest among the Ottomans in ancient Greek scientific writings. George of Trebizond was well-

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be, as many believe, a depiction of the world map made by Amiroutzes. However, R. Burri points out that this world map is codicologically independent from the rest of the manuscript. This observation gives reason to doubt whether the world map in *Ayasofya* 2610 has any connection at all with Amiroutzes' work. See R. BURRI, *Die Geographie des Ptolemaios*, 312, n. 301. On the later publishing of the MS *Ayasofya* 2610, see A. T. KARAMUSTAFA, Military, administrative, and scholarly maps and plans, in: *The History of Cartography, Volume Two, Book One. Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, ed. J. B. HARLEY and D. WOODWARD, Chicago 1992, 210, n. 9. On Amiroutzes and cartography, see S. CHRYSOCHOOU, *The Cartographical Tradition of Ptolemy's Geographike Hyphegesis in the Palaeologan Period and the Renaissance (13th–16th century)*, Univ. of London 2010 (with further literature, notes 269–270).

51. On the study of Islamic geography in early Ottoman Constantinople, see J. C. DUCÈNE, The Knowledge of the Seas According to the Ottoman Translations and Adaptations of Arabic Works (15th–16th c.), in: *Uluslararası Piri Reis ve Türk Denizcilik Tarihi Sempozyumu, 26–29 Eylül 2013, İstanbul*, v. 4, Ankara 2014, 123–134 and 301–304.

52. On the history of Ottoman overseas exploration, see G. CASALE, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, Oxford 2010.

53. KARAMUSTAFA, *Military, administrative, and scholarly maps*, 210.

known in Italy as a rhetorician and Latin translator from Greek. He belonged to the so-called ‘Aristotelians’, and his *A Comparison of the Philosophers Aristotle and Plato* (*Comparatio philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis*) published in 1459 was the first major Latin work in the above-mentioned Plato–Aristotle controversy. Monfasani treats George of Trebizond as one of the major intellectual figures of the mid-15th century<sup>54</sup>.

In the spring of 1465, George of Trebizond went to Constantinople as an emissary of Pope Paul II to make contact with the Sultan<sup>55</sup>. While staying in Constantinople and awaiting an audience with the Sultan, George of Trebizond met Amiroutzes, who was already in Mehmed the Conqueror’s service. From George of Trebizond we learn that it was Amiroutzes who advised<sup>56</sup> him to translate into Greek for the Sultan the Latin introduction that George of Trebizond had once written to Ptolemy’s astronomical manual *The Mathematical Arrangement* (*Μαθηματικὴ Σύνταξις*)<sup>57</sup>, better known as *Almagest*, and by that to show his usefulness. John Freely indicates that this work by Ptolemy served as the basis for the further development of astronomy in the Muslim world, after its translation into Arabic<sup>58</sup>. Thus, one can assume that Ptolemy’s *Almagest* was well known to Mehmed<sup>59</sup>.

In the preface to the Greek introduction of the *Almagest* (*Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν μεγάλην τοῦ Πτολεμαίου σύνταξιν*, literally ‘Introduction to Ptolemy’s

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54. On George of Trebizond’s biography, see J. MONFASANI, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of his Rhetoric and Logic*, Leiden 1976.

55. For more details, see MONFASANI, *George of Trebizond*, 185.

56. See the preface for the introduction to Ptolemy’s *Almagest* in J. MONFASANI, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana. Texts, Documents, and Bibliographies of George of Trebizond*, Binghampton – New York 1984, 282.

57. In his preface and introduction, George of Trebizond refers to Ptolemy’s work as *The Great Synthesis* (*Μεγάλη Σύνταξις*).

58. See J. FREELY, *The Grand Turk. Sultan Mehmet II – Conqueror of Constantinople, Master of an Empire and Lord of Two Seas*, London – New York 2010, 112.

59. At the Ottoman court in the mid-15th century, there was even instituted the office of *Munajjimbashilik* ‘chief astronomer’ that dealt with matters of astronomy and astrology as they related to the sultan and the state. For more information on astrology for the Ottomans, see S. AYDÜZ, *Constellations, Fixed Stars and the Zodiac in Islamic Astronomy*, Manchester 2004, 6–10. Available [cited 06.01.2018]: [www.muslimheritage.com](http://www.muslimheritage.com); *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam*, entry ‘Office of the Muwaqqit’ and the ‘Munajjimbashi’ (S. AYDÜZ).

great arrangement'), George of Trebizond shows himself an eager servant of the Sultan: Ἀφικόμην εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντίνου, ἄριστε βασιλεῦ βασιλέων καὶ αὐτοκράτορ αὐτοκρατόρων, δι' οὐδὲν ἄλλο, εἰ μὴ τὸ συνελθεῖν εἰς λόγους τῷ σῷ ὕψει καὶ δηλῶσαι τὴν ἐμὴν προθυμίαν ἣν ἔχω πρὸς τοὺς ἐπαίνους τοῦ κράτους σου, νομίζων μηδὲν εἶναι κρεῖττον, ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ τοῦ δουλεύειν βασιλεῖ σοφῷ καὶ φιλοσοφοῦντι τὰ μέγιστα<sup>60</sup>.

However, despite all his efforts to approach Mehmed, George of Trebizond left Constantinople without meeting him. He sent the introduction to Mehmed after he had returned to Rome in 1466. He also dispatched his *A Comparison of the Philosophers Aristotle and Plato* and several other writings, probably still hoping to offer his services to the Sultan in the future<sup>61</sup>. His note in the preface to the Greek introduction of the *Almagest* proves that he knew about the Sultan's interest in ancient Greek philosophical thought: φέρεται γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων σου βασιλικῶν ἀνδραγαθημάτων, ὥς μᾶλλον ἀριστοτελίζει τὸ κράτος σου τῶν τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ἔργον ἐχόντων τὸ ἀριστοτελίζειν<sup>62</sup>.

Although the work of George of Trebizond cannot be treated as an internal product of the Ottoman Empire, it does show at least some leanings in the study of ancient Greek texts at the Ottoman court.

#### MATTHEW KAMARIOTES' TEACHINGS ON THE ANCIENT GREEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The study of ancient Greek texts in early Ottoman Constantinople was not linked only with the court. Some writings of Matthew Kamariotes that are dated post-1453 clearly demonstrate that he was active as a teacher of

60. *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 283 (*I arrived in Constantinople, O best king of kings and autocrat of autocrats, for no other reason than to talk with Your Highness and to demonstrate the zeal I have for the praise of your power, thinking that there is nothing better in the present life than to serve a wise king and one who philosophize about the greatest matters.* Translation by MONFASANI *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 281).

61. See MONFASANI, *George of Trebizond*, 281. See also G. Th. ZORAS, Γεώργιος ὁ Τραπεζούντιος καὶ αἱ πρὸς ἐλληνοτουρκικὴν συνεννόησιν προσπάθειαι αὐτοῦ, Athens 1954.

62. *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 283 (*For in addition to your other manly virtues which befit a king, Your Mightiness is also said to study Aristotle even more than those who have a professional responsibility to study Aristotle.* Translation by MONFASANI, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 281).



grammar, rhetoric and perhaps also philosophy. From Martinus Crusius' (German philologist, historian, 1526–1607) notes in his *Turcograecia* we learn that Kamariotes came to Constantinople from Thessalonica in the final years of the Palaiologan dynasty<sup>63</sup>. It is also known that Kamariotes worked together with Scholarios. Judging by the fact that Scholarios dedicated his work *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas "On Being and Essence"* (*Commentarium Thomae Aquinae "De ente et essentia"*) to Kamariotes, many assume that he was pupil<sup>64</sup> of Scholarios. Indeed, in the preface of the aforementioned work, Scholarios praises Kamariotes' *προθυμίαν* (eagerness) and *φιλομαθές* (diligence), but this could indicate either a relationship as colleagues or a teacher-student relationship<sup>65</sup>.

It has been assumed that Kamariotes was the first teacher or even a principal<sup>66</sup> of the so-called 'Patriarchal School' (better known later on as the Patriarchal Academy or the Great School of the Nation) established soon after the fall of Constantinople by the newly appointed patriarch Gennadios II Scholarios (1454?)<sup>67</sup>. However, there are no contemporary sources which prove the establishment of the School, let alone the position of Kamariotes<sup>68</sup>. Nevertheless, from the evidence of his manuscripts and the aforementioned

63. M.S CRUSIUS, *Turcograeciae libri Octo*, Basel 1584, 187.

64. See the dissertations by K. PAPADAKIS, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης. Τὸ θεολογικὸν τοῦ ἔργου, μετὰ ἐκδόσεως ἀνεκδότων ἔργων τοῦ*, Thessaloniki 2000, (=http://hdl.handle.net/10442/hedi/23093), 41, and D. CHATZEMICHAEL, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης: συμβολὴ στη μελέτη τοῦ βίου, τοῦ ἔργου καὶ τῆς εποχῆς τοῦ* (doctoral thesis), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2002 (=http://hdl.handle.net/10442/hedi/20545), 70.

65. See JUGIE – PETIT – SIDERIDES, *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, v. 6, 178.

66. For biographical data of Kamariotes and his writings, see A. BIEDL, *Matthaeus Camariotes: Specimen Prosopographiae Byzantinae*, BZ 35 (1935), 337-339. K. PAPADAKIS, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης*, 21-58; CHATZEMICHAEL, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης*, 25-78.

67. Gennadios II Scholarios at the Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror's behest was elected Ecumenical Patriarch in January 6, 1454 by an Episcopal synod assembled from Asia and Europe. On the career of Gennadios II Scholarios, see M.-H. BLANCHET, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400 – vers 1472). Un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'Empire byzantine*, Paris 2008.

68. See CH. G. PATRINELIS, *Τὰ πρῶτα σχολεῖα καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι δάσκαλοι, Ἱστορία τοῦ ἐλληνικοῦ ἔθνους. Τομὸς I: Ὁ Ἑλληνισμὸς ὑπὸ ξένη κυριαρχία (περίοδος 1453-1669). Τουρκοκρατία – Λατινοκρατία*, Athens 1974, 370-371.

references by Crusius and Scholarios it is possible that Kamariotes lived in early Ottoman Constantinople and belonged to Scholarios' educational circle, initially probably as a student, later as a teacher. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly where he taught or who his students were.

Kamariotes' texts that could possibly provide us with the most information about his teachings on the ancient Greek language and literature in early Ottoman Constantinople, the *Introduction to Grammar* (*Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν γραμματικὴν*) and three short philological works on the Erythraean Sibyl, the prophetess of classical antiquity presiding over the Apollonian oracle at Erythrae, a town in Ionia, on Plato and Aristotle, and on Homer's epic and life, are still concealed in a manuscript<sup>69</sup>. However, there are two rhetorical writings of Kamariotes from which we can learn something of the study of ancient Greek rhetoric in his circle: the *Summary of Rhetorical Progymnasmata* (*Ἐπιτομὴ εἰς τὰ τῆς ῥητορικῆς προγυμνάσματα*), and the *Summary of Hermogenes' Rhetorical Works* (*Ῥητορικῆς ἐπιτομὴ ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Ἑρμογένους*)<sup>70</sup>. Both epitomes are introductory texts to the so-called 'Hermogenean Corpus', the five-part rhetorical canon of four books that was assembled by the sixth century, at that time attributed to Hermogenes (Greek rhetorician, 161–180) – *On [Legal] Issues* (*Περὶ στάσεων*), *On Invention* (*Περὶ εὐρέσεως*), *On Types of Style* (*Περὶ ἰδεῶν*), *On Method* (*Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος*), and one work of Aphthonios (a Greek fourth-century sophist and rhetorician,), the *Rhetorical Exercises* (*Προγυμνάσματα*)<sup>71</sup>.

69. For further details of these manuscripts and their authorship, see BEIDL, *Matthaeus Camariotes*, 338–339; CHATZEMICHAEL, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης*, 83–150; PAPADAKIS, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης*, 149–170.

70. See Ματθαίου τοῦ Καμαριώτου ἐπιτομὴ εἰς τὰ τῆς ῥητορικῆς προγυμνάσματα, in: *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. WALZ, v. 1, Stuttgart – Tübingen – London 1832, 121–126, and Ματθαίου τοῦ Καμαριώτου ῥητορικῆς ἐπιτομὴ ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Ἑρμογένους, in: *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. WALZ, v. 6, Stuttgart – Tübingen – London 1834, 601–644. Recently R. F. HOCK, *Commentaries on Aphthonius's "Progymnasmata"*, Atlanta 2012, 321–331 has examined Kamariotes' *Summary of Rhetorical Progymnasmata* in the light of Aphthonios' *Rhetorical Exercises* paying particular attention to the *χεῖρα* chapter; T. M. CONLEY, Greek Rhetorics After the Fall of Constantinople: An Introduction, in: *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 18, 3 (2000) 265–294, mentions Kamariotes' *Summary of Hermogenes' Rhetorical Works* in his article on the teaching of rhetoric after 1453.

71. Cf. HOCK, *Commentaries on Aphthonius's "Progymnasmata"*, 4. See also PAPADAKIS, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης*, 111–116; CHATZIMICHAEL, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης*, 98–104.

In the first work, the *Summary of Rhetorical Progymnasmata*, which covers just six pages in Christian Walz's edition, Kamariotes provides definitions of all those rhetorical exercises (like μῦθος 'fable', διήγημα 'narrative', χρεία 'chreia' or γνώμη 'maxim' etc.) that Aphthonios has described in his *Rhetorical Exercises*. It is interesting that the author never refers to his source. Aphthonios' work was a standard textbook for centuries and it was apparently well-known to Kamariotes' audience. His definitions are considerably shorter and simpler than Aphthonios' and he has omitted a large amount of additional information that Aphthonios provides, including several illustrations and examples. Ronald F. Hock has calculated that Kamariotes' text constitutes less than fifteen percent of Aphthonios'. He also suggests that "the brevity of this epitome is so severe that it is difficult to imagine its utility in a classroom setting"<sup>72</sup>.

In the second treatise, which is considerably longer – 42 pages, Kamariotes recounts definitions and conclusions from several Hermogenean works, again without giving any references<sup>73</sup>. Both his epitomes clearly show that the role of Hermogenean handbooks on rhetoric was still significant in the post-1453 educational curriculum. It is likely that these epitomes formed the introductory material in lessons aimed at younger students, given the simplified information provided. Unfortunately, Kamariotes' texts tell us practically nothing about other ancient Greek authors and texts that would have been studied along with them. There are no citations of classical authors. In addition, it seems that in his works Kamariotes tried to separate rhetorical questions from those of *grammar* and *philology*. However, there is one significant remark regarding the language. In his *Summary of Rhetorical Progymnasmata*, among the virtues of one of the rhetorical exercises, the διήγημα, Kamariotes mentions the concept of ἑλληνισμὸς ὀνομάτων 'Hellenism of words, imitation of the ancient Greek language': Ἀρεταὶ δὲ διηγήματος σαφήνεια, συντομία, πιθανότης καὶ ὀνομάτων ἑλληνισμός<sup>74</sup>. This remark shows that knowledge of classical Greek was

72. HOCK, *Commentaries on Aphthonius's "Progymnasmata"* 323-325.

73. See in general PAPADAKIS, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης*, 102-111; CHATZEMICHAEL, *Ματθαῖος Καμαριώτης*, 82-97.

74. *Ματθαίου τοῦ Καμαριώτου ἐπιτομὴ εἰς τὰ τῆς ῥητορικῆς προγυμνάσματα*, 122. *The virtues of the narrative are clearness, conciseness, persuasiveness and Hellenism of words.*

important in Kamariotes' time. It is also a wonderful illustration of how the very basic principles of classical rhetoric<sup>75</sup> still appear in post-Byzantine rhetorical education. Manuscripts copied or owned by Kamariotes reveal that Aristotle's works constitute the biggest part of his library which allows us to conclude that Kamariotes used these works, including Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* in his teaching<sup>76</sup>.

Kamariotes is also the author of a theological and philosophical work called *The [Address] Against Pletho (Contra Plethonem)*<sup>77</sup>, which is dated around 1455 and echoes the aforementioned attacks of his teacher or colleague Scholarios on Pletho. Kamariotes has never met Pletho, as he himself indicates: ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐδ' εἶδον αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἀκοῇ λαβὼν ἔχω τὰ κατ' αὐτόν<sup>78</sup>. This text suggests that Kamariotes might also have taught philosophy. However, once again, it tells us practically nothing about his education as a philosopher. On the other hand, his library shows that the philosophical works of Aristotle, Pletho, Plotinus, Epictetus might have influenced him<sup>79</sup>. Unfortunately, many of Kamariotes' writings have yet to be edited and adequately analysed.

#### CONCLUSIONS

This paper has shown that work on ancient Greek texts was carried out in early Ottoman Constantinople. The evidence of the surviving 15th century manuscripts containing ancient Greek texts, the writings of the contemporary Greek intellectuals and the statements of their Greek peers have enabled us to learn more about what was studied, where and by whom.

75. Cf. 1404b1–1405b33 on τὸ σαφές 'clarity' as a virtue of prose style, 1407b28–1408a9 on συντομία 'conciseness' in a narrative, and 1403b18–1404a39 on τὸ πιθανόν 'persuasiveness' in delivery in *Aristotelis ars rhetorica*, ed. RUDOLFUS KASSEL, Berlin, 1976.

76. About the vast library of Kamariotes, see CHATZEMICHAEL, *Ματθαίος Καμαριώτης*, 311–5; PAPADAKIS, *Ματθαίος Καμαριώτης*, 149–170.

77. For the most recent contribution on the attack on Pletho from Kamariotes' perspective, see D. CHATZEMICHAEL, *Ματθαίου Καμαριώτη, Προς Πλήθωνα περί εμιαομένης λόγοι δύο, Φιλοσοφεῖν* 17 (2018) 185–210; For the original text and on the date of the *Contra Plethonem*, see CH. ASTRUC, *La fin inédite du Contra Plethonem de Matthieu Camariotes*, *Scriptorium* 9 (1955), 255–259, 260. On Kamariotes' attack, see C. M. WOODHOUSE, *George Gemistos Plethon. The Last of the Hellenes*, Oxford 1986, 180, 187, 272, 362.

78. *La fin inédite*, 255: *I have not met him, but I have heard of his [works].*

79. See CHATZEMICHAEL, *Ματθαίος Καμαριώτης*, 314.

The manuscripts show that contemporary learned men and their students were interested in a very wide range of topics – from ancient Greek language and literature to sciences and philosophy. They also indicate that the study, and moreover the transmission, of ancient Greek texts in Constantinople should not be associated only with the Ottoman court. The same process was occurring in the educational circle of Matthew Kamariotes and probably also of some other highly educated Greeks.

The philosophical writings of the scholar George Amiroutzes suggest that he and his peers, and his students, whoever they were, were especially interested in Aristotelian philosophy and the differences between Aristotle's and Plato's views. Kritoboulos' statement in his *Histories* on Amiroutzes' position in the court of Mehmed the Conqueror strongly indicates that it was Amiroutzes who assisted Ottoman intellectuals and the Sultan himself in the study of ancient Greek philosophical thought and its later interpretations.

From George of Trebizond's writings and activities we learn that Mehmed the Conqueror was especially interested in Aristotelian philosophy and that the Plato-Aristotle controversy which had begun some ten years before 1453 was probably also well-known to him. Indeed, judging by the manuscripts in ancient Greek acquired for the Sultan's Library, it seems that this debate might have inspired the Ottoman intellectuals to study not only ancient Greek philosophers and their followers, but also a number of other ancient Greek authors.

From Kritoboulos and George of Trebizond we learn that the Ottomans, as well as studying the ancient Greek philosophical writings, were also interested in at least two ancient Greek scientific texts and their practical use. Kritoboulos describes in detail the study of Ptolemy's *Geography* at the Ottoman court. George of Trebizond's work in Constantinople in 1465 suggests that the Sultan might have had an interest in another scientific work by Ptolemy – the *Almagest*, an astronomical manual. Undoubtedly, the personality of Mehmed the Conqueror and his obvious interest in science and the humanities contributed a great deal to the study of these works at the Ottoman court.

Some writings of Kamariotes that are dated after 1453 show that he in his educational circle, which was apparently connected to the patriarch Gennadios II Scholarios, was teaching grammar, rhetoric and perhaps also

philosophy to his Greek students. The available information about his works, as well as his two edited rhetorical texts, tell us that Kamariotes and his students might have studied such ancient Greek authors as Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Hermogenes and Aphthonios. Unfortunately, due to the lack of edited material, it is as yet impossible to discuss at length and evaluate Kamariotes' contribution to the study of ancient Greek texts in his educational circle in early Ottoman Constantinople. Further studies of the surviving manuscripts in ancient Greek that were produced in Constantinople in the second half of the 15th century but which are now dispersed among several European libraries might well reveal more important information about the study of ancient Greek texts by the contemporary Greek and Ottoman intellectuals.

ΤΑ ΑΡΧΑΙΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΗ  
ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟ ΜΙΣΟ ΤΟΥ 15ΟΥ ΑΙΩΝΑ.

Η εργασία αποτελεί επισκόπηση των έργων σχετικά με τα αρχαία ελληνικά κείμενα στην Κωνσταντινούπολη κατά το δεύτερο μισό του 15ου αιώνα. Μαρτυρίες από τα σωζόμενα χειρόγραφα που περιέχουν αρχαία ελληνικά κείμενα, τα συγγράμματα των Ελλήνων διανοουμένων της εποχής όπως ο Αμιρούτζης, ο Γεώργιος Τραπεζούντιος, ο Ματθαίος Καμαριώτης, καθώς και πληροφορίες που παρέχονται από τον σύγχρονό τους Κριτόβουλο, αποδεικνύουν ότι οι λόγιοι της εποχής και οι μαθητές τους ενδιαφέρονταν για ευρύ φάσμα θεμάτων, από την αρχαία ελληνική γλώσσα και τη λογοτεχνία μέχρι τις επιστήμες και τη φιλοσοφία. Η μελέτη των αρχαίων ελληνικών κειμένων δεν περιοριζόταν στην Αυλή των Οθωμανών Σουλτάνων, αλλά και στους εκπαιδευτικούς κύκλους των Ελλήνων διανοουμένων.