Aristotle from York to Basra

An investigation into the simultaneous study of Aristotle's *Categories*

in the Carolingian, the Byzantine and the Abbasid worlds

by

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Robert Hoyland

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ABSTRACT

In the eighth and ninth centuries CE intellectuals in three different societies were studying the same classical text in three different languages. In Western Europe, Carolingian intellectuals were studying the *Categories* of Aristotle in Latin, while in Byzantium contemporary scholars were reading it in Greek and in the Middle East Abbasid scholars did so in Arabic. My dissertation addresses the question of why the *Categories* was studied at the same time in these three different culturo-political worlds. The primary sources that I use include paraphrases and translations of the *Categories* that are found in the works of John of Damascus and Photius in the Byzantine world, Alcuin and John Scottus Eriugena in the Carolingian world and Ibn Al-Muqaffaʿ and Al-Kindī in the Islamic world. Rather than providing an analysis of the philosophical interpretations of the *Categories* by any of these intellectuals, I explore the possible explanations of the simultaneous study of the *Categories*, such as direct contact between these scholars, movement of manuscripts and coincidence. I conclude that the most likely explanation is that the late Roman educational curriculum which was established by the sixth century and which included Aristotle's *Categories*, continued to exert its influence in all three cultural zones. As a result, I argue that early medieval scholars living as far apart as England and Iraq had a similar intellectual horizon in which exposure to Aristotelian logic in schools played an important role.

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INTRODUCTION

A REMARKABLE SIMILARITY

In the middle of the ninth century three different intellectuals were studying the same text at the same time. A trained historian who reads the previous sentence might think that starting one's dissertation with such a seemingly trivial observation is an odd choice. After all, one of the fundamental characteristics of intellectuals in most historical societies is their active inquiry into texts and manuscripts. Moreover, the fact that contemporary intellectuals were studying the same text is not a special phenomenon either: intellectuals who were part of the same discourse often shared an interest in the same texts. Such intellectual discourses took place among individuals who either spoke the same language or who were part of the same community. However, the three ninth-century intellectuals in question were not part of the same community. They did not interact with each other and they did not even know about each other's existence. More importantly, they lived in different states where different languages were used. Consequently, the fact that they were still studying the same text at the same time is not trivial, but, instead, remarkable.

The three intellectuals were John Scottus Eriugena, Photius and Al-Kindī. Eriugena (ca. 815 - ca. 877) was active in the Carolingian Empire and wrote all of his works in Latin. Photius (ca. 810 - ca. 893) lived in Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, and wrote in Greek. Al-Kindī (ca. 801 - ca. 873) composed his oeuvre in Arabic and worked all his life in Baghdad, the capital of the Caliphate. In

others words, these three scholars were active in three different worlds that were separated by political, geographical and linguistic boundaries. It is therefore not surprising that they were each part of separate intellectual communities in which different texts were studied and produced. Nevertheless, what is surprising is the fact that, despite these differences, they each studied the same classical text: a treatise by the ancient philosopher Aristotle (384 - 322 BCE), known as the *Categories.* Eriugena used the *Categories* to define the attributes of God in his treatise the *Periphyseon.* At the same time in Constantinople, Photius decided that the *Categories* was the only classical text worthy of being paraphrased in its entirety as part of his theological work the *Amphilochia.* Several hundred miles southeast, Al-Kindī was writing a short primer that explained to his students which texts they had to read in order to become philosophers. The one text to which Al-Kindī gave most prominence in this primer was also the *Categories* of Aristotle. Furthermore, Eriugena, Photius and Al-Kindī were not the only ones in their language tradition to study this treatise. In the generations before them scholars like Alcuin, John of Damascus and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ had studied the same treatise in Latin, Greek and Arabic. The simultaneous interest in the *Categories* of Aristotle in three different early medieval societies is remarkable and requires an interdisciplinary investigation that has not yet been conducted. This dissertation aims to fill that gap in scholarship.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

From ancient unity to early medieval fragmentation

In this dissertation, I will inquire into the eighth and ninth century study of Aristotle's *Categories* in an interdisciplinary fashion. My investigation will cover the Carolingian, the Byzantine and the Abbasid worlds equally. I will use primary sources in Latin, Greek and Arabic and include intellectuals that lived as far apart as York in the British Isles and Basra in Iraq. This comprehensive approach forces me to transcend the boundaries of conventional historical disciplines. Nevertheless, a study that includes regions as far as apart as the British Isles and Iraq is not necessarily interdisciplinary. For example, a dissertation on the provincial structures of the Roman Empire in the third century, which stretched from Iraq to The British Isles, would not be considered interdisciplinary: the Roman Empire is studied as a whole within the modern disciplines of Classics and Ancient History. The study of the early Middle Ages, however, is more compartmentalized. In order to understand the scholarly context of this dissertation, the disciplinary boundaries in early medieval scholarship need to be explained in further detail.

During the first half of the first millennium CE, large parts of Western Eurasia were controlled by two strong and unified states: the Persian and the Roman empires. The Roman Empire was a pan-Mediterranean state. Despite local linguistic

and cultural variation, the entire empire was unified in several ways. Regions as far apart as North Africa, the Middle East and Northern Europe were connected by relatively homogenous political and institutional structures and the elites in all these regions shared a common intellectual horizon, since the educational curriculum was similar throughout the empire. This unity persisted until the fifth century. From this century onwards the western half of the Mediterranean world and Western Europe disintegrated politically and the political structures of the Roman Empire were replaced by those of several smaller kingdoms. In the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern sphere, the imperial structures of the Roman and Persian Empires continued to exist through the sixth century and into the seventh. In the seventh and eighth centuries, however, the Arab conquests resulted in the disappearance of the Persian Empire and in the reduction of the Eastern Roman Empire to half of its former size. The dust of these political storms started to settle from the middle of the eighth century onwards, when three polities managed to gain stable control over the regions that had once been part of the Roman and the Persian Empire. In Western Europe, the kingdom of the Franks emerged as the strongest state and under the Carolingian dynasty (751-888 CE) it stretched from northern France to southern Italy. The Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire managed to stabilize itself, while adjusting to the loss of the the North-African and several Eastern Mediterranean provinces to the Arab armies. From Constantinople, the Byzantines maintained control over the southern Balkans and Anatolia. By far the largest polity

was the product of the Arab conquests: the Caliphate. After it had risen to power in 750, the new Abbasid dynasty ruled from the capital of Baghdad over an empire that stretched from Cordoba to Kabul. In the second half of the eighth and all of the ninth century production of literature increased in these three societies and intellectual life flourished in a way that had not been witnessed in Western Eurasia since the sixth century. In the Carolingian Empire practically all literature was written in Latin, while Greek and Arabic were the dominant languages in the Byzantine Empire and the Caliphate respectively.[1]

In the eighth century the lands between the British Isles and Iraq were, at the elite level, politically and culturally more diverse than they had been in the third century. It is therefore not surprising that this difference is reflected in the scholarly study of these periods. The ancient Roman Empire has generally been approached by academics working within the same disciplinary field: Ancient History. The study of the early Middle Ages is divided into fields that focus on either Western Europe, Byzantium or the Caliphate. Over the course of the twentieth century each of these fields developed as a separate academic discipline with its own conventions, journals, conferences, and departments. As a result, the majority of scholars who specialize in the early Middle Ages nowadays spend their entire career working on

[1] The amount of secondary literature that discusses the standard political narrative of the period 400-800 is endless. A good starting point is: Wickham, C. *The Inheritance of Rome. Illuminating the Dark Ages 400-1000* (London, 2009).

either Western Europe, Byzantium or the Caliphate.[2] Such disciplinary boundaries are in the first place justifiable, since the three politico-cultural spheres were in many ways distinct. The primary context in which early medieval phenomena should be understood is often indeed one of these politico-cultural spheres. For example, if one wants to understand the life and work of Alcuin, then studies that place this eighth century intellectual in the context of the reign of Charlemagne and medieval Latin literature are most revealing. Similarly, to understand the world in which al-Kindī shaped his ideas, one needs to consult studies on the Abbasid Caliphate and on Classical Arabic literature.

Nevertheless, although the politico-cultural spheres of Western Europe, Byzantium and the Caliphate were distinct, they did not exist in isolation. These worlds were economically and politically not only in communication with each other but they were on certain levels truly intertwined. In order to study such wider connections and similarities, one needs to adopt a broader horizon for which the disciplinary boundaries in early medieval scholarship do not function as a useful instrument, but rather as an obstacle. The nature and focus of Byzantine studies, for example, has led to scholarly investigations that entirely ignore relevant events taking place outside of the political borders of the Byzantine Empire and relevant

[2] For the history of scholarship of early medieval Europe, see: Wood, I. *The Modern Origins of the early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2013). No such comprehensive studies on the history of scholarship of Byzantium or the Caliphate exist. For Byzantium, a good starting point is: Jeffreys, E., Cormack, R. Haldon, F. "Byzantine Studies as an academic discipline" in Jeffreys, E., Cormack, R., Haldon, F. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine studies* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 3-20.

texts that were not written in Greek. In this dissertation, however, I will overcome such disciplinary limitations and approach the early medieval texts written by individuals living as far apart as the British Isles and Iraq holistically.

Connectivity and similarities

This is not the first study to approach the early medieval worlds inclusively. As a matter of fact, the eighteenth century historian who is often considered to be one of the founders of the modern study of history, Edward Gibbon, already did so. The three historical individuals to which Gibbon devoted most pages of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* were Justinian, Muhammad and Charlemagne.[3] For Gibbon this was a logical choice, since he saw the societies in which these three figures lived as integral parts of the historical processes that flowed out of Greco-Roman antiquity. Most of Gibbon's successors narrowed their horizons as the study of the Middle Ages professionalized and specialized over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The two main groups of studies that form exceptions to that rule are those that focus on Mediterranean Studies on the one hand and those that discuss material cultural and economic history on the other. Both these groups can be seen as offshoots of the insights of the Belgian scholar Henri Pirenne (1862-1935).

[3] Gibbon, E. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols. (London, 1994), vol. 4, pp. 166-498, vol 5, pp. 180-428.

In his posthumously published *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (1937) Pirenne argued that the consolidation of the Carolingian kingdom in the eighth century with a power base in northwestern Europe could only be explained by the fact that Mediterranean trade routes to Europe had been cut off by the Arab conquests.[4] This argument has become known as the Pirenne thesis, often summarized as 'without Mohammed no Charlemagne.' Pirenne was one of the first historians of the early Middle Ages since Gibbon to include events from both the Middle East and Europe in one study, and his pan-Mediterranean approach inspired fellow historians. One of these historians was Braudel, who wrote an influential study on the early modern Mediterranean, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Epoque de Philippe II,* in 1949. In the wake of Braudel a still ill-defined field of historical inquiry has emerged, which takes the Mediterranean Sea and its adjacent cultures as a specific and coherent object of study: Mediterranean Studies.[5] Although research in this field generally neglects the early Middle Ages, Horden and Purcell used this period to prove the main argument of their influential book *The Corrupting Sea*. They argued that the Mediterranean Sea has always been a vast network of interconnected trade routes that allowed societies on all its shores to be in communication with each

[4] Pirenne, H. *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Paris, 1937).

[5] For overviews of the field of Mediterranean studies, see: Horden, P. Purcell, N. *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (London, 2000), pp. 1-49; Harris, W. "The Mediterranean and Ancient History," in Harris, W. (ed.) *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 1-44; Alcock, S. "Alphabet Soup in the Mediterranean Basin: The Emergence of the Mediterranean Serial," in Harris, W. (ed.) *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 314-338.

other, even when polities in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East were weak, as was the case during the seventh century.[6]

Other studies that make a similar argument are those that focus on the socio-economic history and material culture of the early Middle Ages. The most prominent such works are those by Hodges, McCormick and Wickham.[7] These scholars argued that Pirenne was wrong when he claimed that the Arab conquests had cut off Mediterranean trade routes. McCormick demonstrated that Western Europe, Byzantium and the Caliphate had always been in communication with each other, albeit with periods of abatement and intensification of mutual trade and diplomacy. Wickham elucidated socio-economic similarities and patterns of continuity in socio-economic structures for the period 400-800 in areas as far apart as Denmark and Egypt.

Comparable interdisciplinary investigations of the cultural history of the early Middle Ages are rare. Although some examinations do include evidence from both the Carolingian and the Byzantine realms, or from Byzantium and the

[6] Horden, Purcell, 2000, 153-172.

[7] Hodges, R. *Dark Age Economics. Origins of Towns and Trade, A.D. 600-1000* (London, 1982). Hodges, R., Whitehouse, D. *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe* (Ithaca, NY, 1983). McCormick, M. *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce: AD 300-900* (Cambridge, 2001). Wickham, C. *Framing the early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford, 2005).

Caliphate, hardly any cultural study includes developments from all three societies.[8] Important exceptions to this rule are Brown's *The World of Late Antiquity, The Rise of Western Christendom,* Herrin's *The Formation of Christendom,* Fowden's *Empire to Commonwealth,* Wickham's *Inheritance of Rome* and Höfert's *Kaisertum und Kalifat.*[9] However, these studies all pay attention to religious developments and they do not discuss the influence of Aristotelian texts or other intellectual currents in detail. Fowden's recent book *Before and After Muhammad* does include a chapter on the Latin, Greek and Arabic study of Aristotelian texts in the first millennium CE, but this overview is cursory and lacks synthesizing conclusions.[10]

A cultural-historical approach to a philosophical text

The reception of an ancient text in later centuries can be approached from two different angles: by focusing on the receiving cultures or by focusing on the text itself. One might therefore suspect that the multicultural reception of Aristotle's

[8] For book-length studies that discuss two early medieval societies, see: McCormick, M. *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the early medieval West* (Cambridge, 1998); Noble, T. *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2011). Drews, W. *Die Karolinger und die Abbasiden von Bagdad: Legitimationsstrategien frühmittelalterlicher Herrscherdynastien im transkulturellen Vergleich* (Berlin, 2009).

[9] Brown, P. *The World of Late Antiquity, 150-750 CE* (London, 1971); Brown, P. *The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity, a.d. 200–1000* (Malden, MA, 2003); Herrin, J. *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1987); Wickham, C. *The Inheritance of Rome. Illuminating the Dark Ages 400-1000* (London, 2009); Höfert, A. *Kaisertum und Kalifat. Der imperiale Monotheismus im Früh- und Hochmittelalter* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015).

[10] Fowden, G. *Before and After Muhammad. The First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton, 2014), pp. 127-163.

Categories in the early Middle Ages has received attention from the fields of Classical Reception Studies and the History of medieval Philosophy. Although the influence of Aristotelian texts is one of the pillars of the influence of classical thought upon later generations, the field of Classical Reception Studies predominantly focuses on belletristic texts and on the Modern period.[11] The medieval reception of the *Categories* has, however, received much attention from scholars who study the history of medieval philosophy. It is such philosophical examinations that have actually approached the Latin, Greek and Arabic traditions inclusively.[12] These studies discuss the intricate details of how medieval intellectuals interpreted Aristotle's *Categories* and what the theoretical implications are of the philosophical stance that they adopted. Nevertheless, this dissertation is not a philosophical investigation and the theoretical intricacies of Aristotle's *Categories* are only tangentially relevant. What I will examine is a cultural phenomenon that both comparative studies of the early Middle Ages and philosophical inquiries of

[11] A recent encyclopedia of the Classical Tradition does contain lemmata such as "East and West," "Byzantium," "Islam," "Aristotelianism," "Logic" and medieval traditions do feature in many other lemmata: Grafton, A., Most, G., Settis, S. (eds.) *The Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, MA, 2010). Hopefully this approach will be adopted by more scholars in the field of Classical Reception Studies.

[12] Important interdisciplinary overviews are: Burnett, C. (ed.) *Commentaries and Glosses on Aristotelian Logical Texts: the Syriac, Arabic and medieval Latin Traditions* (London, 1993) (Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts 23); Perler, D., Rudolph, U. (eds.) *Logik und Theologie. Das Organon im arabischen und im lateinischen Mittelalter* (Leiden, 2005); Bruun, O., Corti, L. (eds.) *Les Catégories et leur histoire* (Paris, 2005); Newton, L. *Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's Categories* (Leiden, 2008); Ebbesen, S., Marenbon, J., Thom, P. (eds.) *Aristotle's Categories in the Byzantine, Arabic and Latin traditions* (Scientia Danica, Series Humanistica 8, vol. 5) (Copenhagen, 2013).

medieval Aristotelianism have left unobserved: the very fact that the *Categories* was studied at the same time in three different societies.

METHODOLOGY

Chapter layout

My investigation into the early medieval study of Aristotle's *Categories* has both a linguistic and a temporal focus. In the period 400-900 CE, the *Categories* of Aristotle was studied in the original Greek language and translated into multiple other languages, including Latin, Armenian, Syriac and Arabic. In this dissertation I will focus on the primary sources that I am able to read in their original language: those composed in Greek, Arabic and Latin. Furthermore, since I focus on the simultaneous reception of the *Categories* in these language traditions, it is the inclusion of the Arabic tradition that provides a clear starting point. Whereas the Greek and Latin tradition span the whole early medieval period, the history of Arabic prose goes back no further than the middle of the eighth century. Hence, my investigation focuses on the period that coincides with the first century of Arabic prose texts: from the middle of the eighth century to the middle of the ninth century. Rather than discussing the Latin, Greek and Arabic reception of the *Categories* during that period separately, the first three chapters of this dissertation each discuss and compare the evidence in all three languages within a certain timeframe. The first chapter deals with those Latin, Greek and Arabic speaking intellectuals who

were active around the middle of the eighth century (roughly defined as the period 725-775 CE), whereas the second and third chapter discuss those whose active career took place around the beginning of the ninth century (roughly defined defined as the period 775-825 CE), and around the middle of the ninth century (roughly defined as the period 825-875 CE) respectively. The fourth and final chapter will synthesize the findings of the first three chapters in an attempt to answer the primary question of this dissertation, which I will explain below.

Defining the region and the period

Although the linguistic boundaries of my investigation can be unambiguously explained, the geographic region that I cover is harder to define. The early medieval intellectuals included in this dissertation lived as far apart as York in The British Isles and Basra in Iraq. A single geographic designation that refers to this area as a whole does not exist, and one is forced to use at least two terms, such as “Europe” and the “Middle East”. “The Mediterranean” seems more comprehensive, but to include York and Basra in the Mediterranean hinterlands is both inaccurate and confusing. Consequently, modern scholars who tried to expand the horizon of the conventional fields of history have suggested new geographic terminology. One example is Braudel, whose “Greater Mediterranean” includes everything from the

Sahara to Central Asia and Scandinavia.[13] Another example is Fowden's "Eurasian Hinge", which covers an area "that extends from the easternmost reaches of the Iranian world to the Mediterranean in the West."[14] I refrain from using such newly coined terms, because their exact meaning is not self-evident and they require further clarification for practically every reader. For the purposes of this dissertation, I use conventional terms that refer to the culturo-political spheres in which Latin, Greek and Arabic were the dominant languages of learning in the period 750-850. In the case of Latin, these terms are "Western Europe" and "Carolingian," in the case of Greek "Eastern Mediterranean" and "Byzantine" are used, while "Caliphate" and "Abbasid" refer to the region where Arabic writers were active. These terms are not ideal and sometimes inconsistent (Carolingian, and Abbasid refer to a dynasty, while Byzantine does not), but they are commonly used and self-evident.

Throughout this introduction I have considered the eighth and ninth century to be part of the early Middle Ages (500-900 CE). One obvious alternative periodization has been conspicuously absent thus far, and that is Late Antiquity. Although it has earlier roots, the current field of Late antique studies can be said to have started with Brown's 1971 publication *The World of Late Antiquity A.D.*

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[13] Braudel, F. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Berkeley, 1996), vol. I, pp. 168-231.

[14] Fowden, 2014, pp. 178-85.

150-750.[15] In this long essay Brown connected the cultural history of the Middle East, North Africa and Europe in a sweeping fashion, not unlike Gibbon. The main difference with Gibbon is that Brown asserted that the period in question, which he referred to as Late Antiquity, was not one of decline of classical culture, but a flourishing period, which should be studied in its own right. Brown's ideas proved to be influential and, as a result, Late Antiquity has develop into a thriving scholarly field. Since it is a relatively new field, the boundaries of Late Antiquity have not yet been clearly defined. The end of Late Antiquity is still open to debate.[16] Brown himself included the battle of Tours in 732 and the foundation of Baghdad in the 750's in his overview of Late Antiquity.[17] A number of subsequent Late antique scholars have argued that even Ḥunayn ibn ʾIsḥāq (809-873) or Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) are part of the Late antique world.[18] The argument in such cases is that the work of these intellectuals is part of a continuing cultural and intellectual tradition that goes back to the third century. Although demonstrating such long-term cultural

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[15] For the history of the scholarly field of Late antique studies, see: Rebenich, S. "Late Antiquity in Modern Eyes," in Rousseau, P. (ed.) *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 77-92.

[16] For an overview of the status of the field of Late antique studies, see: Johnson, S. "Preface: On the Uniqueness of Late Antiquity," in Johnson, S. (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. xi-xxx.

[17] Brown, 1971, pp. 200-204.

[18] For Ḥunayn, see: Tannous, J. *Syria between Byzantium and Islam: Making Incommensurables Speak* (Princeton, 2010), p. 54; for Ibn Sīnā see: Wisnovsky, R. *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context* (Ithaca, NY, 2003), p. 266.

continuity is insightful, using periodization as a tool to substantiate this continuity is, in my opinion, pointless.

To start with, neither Ḥunayn ibn ʾIsḥāq nor Ibn Sīnā form a clear endpoint of an intellectual tradition. For example, if the continuing interest in Aristotelian texts is a criterium for calling Ibn Sīnā a Late antique figure, then Thomas Aquinas or Kant would fall into the same category. More importantly, any kind of periodization is inherently artificial and has no existential value. The transition from the ancient period to the medieval period never implies a wholesale discontinuation of societal structures and cultural practices around the year 500. Similar to the use of the Christian calendar adopted by governments all around the globe, the tripartite historiographical division of time into ancient, medieval, and modern continues to be used not because it is more valid than any alternative periodization, but merely because it has become a universal framework that serves clear communication about historical events. If historians choose to adopt a periodization that suits their own particular argument or subfield, then the academic discipline of history will loose one of the few universally accepted frameworks and interdisciplinary communication will only become harder than it already is. Therefore, I refuse to consider the period 750-850 as part of Late Antiquity. For the purposes of this dissertation, figures like Alcuin and Al-Kindī are early medieval intellectuals.

Primary questions

This dissertation is the written product of an investigation that tries to answer the following question:

- *Why was the* Categories *of Aristotle used simultaneously by Carolingian, Byzantine and Abbasid intellectuals?*

As with any research question, different hypotheses may contain the correct explanation. One possible answer to this question is that the *Categories* was exchanged between these three different societies. Another possible explanation is that intellectuals in these three societies independently became interested in the *Categories* at the same. Whether hypotheses such as these are correct will be tackled in the fourth chapter. In order to do so, an evidentiary basis needs to be built up, against which these hypotheses can be tested. The first three chapters consist of discussions of primary and secondary sources that will form this evidentiary basis. The investigation of the primary sources is centered around the following three subsidiary questions of who, how and whence:

- In the works of which intellectuals is knowledge of the *Categories* attested?
- In what way and in what context did these intellectuals use the *Categories* in their own works?
- How did these intellectuals learn about the *Categories* and what is the origin of the source texts that they used?

In a dissertation on late medieval history, these questions may perhaps have yielded a large quantity of useful primary source material. This early medieval investigation, however, has one major constraint: a limited amount of surviving primary sources. It would have been very illuminating if dozens of intellectuals were known to have used the *Categories* during the eighth and ninth century. It would have been equally revealing if the exact years were known in which they produced texts with echoes of the *Categories.* In that case, a significant amount of independent evidence in the Latin, Greek and Arabic tradition could have been compared and probable conclusions of overlap and similarity may have been reached. I will have to make do with less. Even when the evidence from Carolingian, Byzantine and Abbasid societies is combined, only the writings of eight intellectuals demonstrate knowledge of the *Categories* during the eighth and ninth centuries*:* John of Damascus, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Alcuin, Theodore the Studite, Nicephorus, Al-Kindī, Photius and John Scottus Eriugena. It is on these eight individuals and their engagement with the *Categories* that the first three chapters will focus.

Not only the amount, but also the nature of the primary source material forms a complicating factor. Unlike later medieval authors, early medieval intellectuals often did not read ancient texts in their original form. John of Damascus and Alcuin, for example, both knew the *Categories* only through an indirect transmission of paraphrases and epitomes. The question which then arises is one that will be the fourth subsidiary question throughout the first three chapters:

❖ Did these intellectuals have access to a reliable version of the *Categories*?

In order to verify whether one can speak of a reliable version of the *Categories*, one of the central notions conveyed in the Aristotelian text, the tenfold classification, will be taken as a test case in the treatment of the works of each of the eight above-mentioned intellectuals. Finally, before this early medieval reception can be discussed, a brief overview of the contents of the *Categories* and its ancient readership is required.

THE *CATEGORIES* IN ANTIQUITY

In a modern edition the Greek text of the *Categories* spans approximately forty pages.[19] As is the case with every Aristotelian text that has survived, this treatise was never written for publication.[20] Consequently, the *Categories* is not a coherent treatise and it lacks an introduction, conclusion or even any overarching argument. It can be divided into three sections, traditionally referred to as the *ante-*

[19] The standard edition of the Greek text is: Ed. Minio-Paluello, L. *Aristotelis Categoriae et Liber De Interpretatione* (Oxford Classical Texts) (Oxford, 1936), pp. 3-45. The most reliable English translation can be found in: Ackrill, J. *Aristotle*, *Categories and On Interpretation* (Oxford, 1963).

[20] The general term used in secondary literature is "esoteric writings." Whether these Aristotelian texts are the result of college notes or first drafts or other types of documents is unclear, but the scholarly consensus is that these works were never intended to be read by anyone other than Aristotle and his students. The esoteric writings are to be contrasted with the "exoteric writings," which ancient authors praise for their polished style, but none of which have survived. For an introduction to the concept of esoteric and exoteric writings of Aristotle, with references, see: Sharples, R. "Aristotle's exoteric and esoteric works: summaries and commentaries," in Sharples, R., Sorabji, R. (eds.) *Greek and Roman Philosophy from 100 BC to 200 AD. vol.2* (London, 2007), pp. 505-512.

Table 1: The Fourfold Classification (Arist. *Cat.* 1a20-1b6)

	In a subject (ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ)	**Not in a subject (ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ οὐδενί)**
Said of a subject (καθ' ὑποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεται)	Man (ἄνθρωπος) Horse (ἵππος)	Knowledge (ἡ ἐπιστήμη)
Not said of a subject (καθ' ὑποκειμένου δὲ οὐδενὸς λέγεται)	The individual man (ὸ τὶς ἄνθρωπος) The individual horse (ὸ τὶς ἵππος)	The individual knowledge of grammar (ἡ τὶς γραμματικὴ) The individual white (τὸ τὶ λευκὸν)

Table 2: The Tenfold Classification (Arist. *Cat.* 1b25-2a4)

Category	**Greek term**	**Examples**
1. Substance	οὐσία (substance)	man, horse (ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος)
2. Quantity	ποσὸν (how much?)	two cubits, three cubits (δίπηχυ, τρίπηχυ)
3. Quality	ποιὸν (of what kind?)	white, grammatical (λευκόν, γραμματικόν)
4. Relation	πρός τί (to what?)	double, half (διπλάσιον, ἥμισυ)
5. Place	ποὺ (where?)	in the Lyceum, in the agora (ἐν Λυκείῳ, ἐν ἀγορᾷ)
6. Time	ποτὲ (when?)	yesterday, last year (χθές, πέρυσιν)
7. Posture	κεῖσθαι (to be in a position)	is lying, sitting (ἀνάκειται, κάθηται)
8. State	ἔχειν (to be in a state)	is shod, is armed (ὑποδέδεται, ὥπλισται)
9. Action	ποιεῖν (to do)	cuts, burns (τέμνειν, καίειν)
10. Affection	πάσχειν (to undergo)	is cut, is burnt (τέμνεσθαι, καίεσθαι)

praedicamenta (1a1-1b24), the *praedicamenta* (1b25-11b14) and the *post-praedicamenta* (11b15-13b36).[21] These three sections are disconnected and actually constitute three separate mini-treatises. The *ante-praedicamenta* start with a description of the linguistic concepts of homonymy (equivocity, ὁμώνυμα), synonymy (univocity, συνώνυμα), and paronymy (παρώνυμα). Next, a distinction is made between things said (λεγόμενα) in isolation ("without combination," ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς) or as part of a sentence ("with combination," κατὰ συμπλοκὴν). The *ante-praedicamenta* end with the so-called fourfold classification, in which 'beings' (ὄντα) are divided into four different groups according to a combination of two different criteria: whether or not they name a kind to which a subject belongs (either "said of a subject" (καθ' ὑποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεται) or "not said of a subject" (καθ' ὑποκειμένου δὲ οὐδενὸς λέγεται)), and whether or not they name a property that inheres in the subject but not in its kind (either "in a subject" (ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ), or "not in a subject" (ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ οὐδενί)). Beings that are not "said or of a subject" nor "in a subject" are the specific and individual things, such as the human being Socrates and the horse Bucephalus, that are the building blocks (primary substances) of the larger theories in other Aristotelian texts. A schematic overview of this fourfold classification is shown in table 1 on page 22.

[21] The numbers between parentheses refer to the Bekker numbering, used in the margins of all modern editions of the *Corpus Aristotelicum.*

The *post-praedicamenta* consist of isolated discussions of the concepts of opposition, priority, simultaneity, movement, and the different uses of the verb 'to have', which are not relevant for the purposes of this dissertation. The most important part of the treatise is the middle part, the *praedicamenta.* It is this part that has lent the treatise its titles, since *praedicamenta* is the Latin translation of the Greek word for predicates or categories (κατηγορίαι). In this middle part, a tenfold classification is provided, which consists of a list of ten predicates. In English these predicates are normally translated as nouns but in Greek most of them are interrogative adverbs: substance (οὐσία), quantity (ποσὸν), quality (ποιὸν), relation (πρός τί), place (ποὺ), time (ποτὲ), posture (κεῖσθαι), state (ἔχειν), action (ποιεῖν) and affection (πάσχειν). After a short description of these ten predicates, most of the remaining text of the *praedicamenta* is devoted to a detailed explanation of the first four predicates (substance, quality, quantity and relation). A schematic version of the tenfold classification, including the examples of each predicate as they are given in the Greek text, can be found in table 2 on page 22.

It is fair to state that the *Categories* is an enigma. What the different concepts and classifications of this treatise mean is not clear. Nevertheless, the treatise and especially the tenfold classification are among the most influential Aristotelian ideas ever to have been written down. For roughly two millennia philosophers have debated on the possible interpretations and implications of the *Categories.* These debates have not yet been settled, if they ever will be. However, what practically all

interpretations of the *Categories* have in common is that they connect the various concepts and classifications with theorems from other Aristotelian texts.[22] Such philosophical examinations fall outside the scope of this dissertation. What is relevant for now is the general framework of the classifications mentioned in the *Categories,* especially the tenfold classification. This classification is an extreme form of philosophical reductionism. Aristotle proposed that all abstract concepts could ultimately be categorized under ten basic predicates. But what concepts do these ten predicates predicate, and what do the ten predicates classify? There are two main ways in which the question can be answered: it is either a classification of language or a classification of reality. If one takes the tenfold classification to be a terminological division of human language, then the *Categories* becomes a treatise that deals with discourse and semantics and is part of the philosophical field of logic, also called dialectics.[23] This is the way the *Categories* has been understood since ancient times and today it is generally considered to be a logical treatise. Nevertheless, one can also read an extra layer of interpretation into the tenfold

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[22] For accessibly written introductions to the *Categories,* with references to earlier discussions, see: Matthews, G. "Aristotelian Categories," in Anagnostopoulos G. (ed.) *A Companion to Aristotle* (Malden, MA, 2009), pp. 144-161; Griffin, M. *The Categories in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 234-241; Bodéüs, R. *Catégories—Aristote: texte établi et traduit* (Paris, 2001), pp. xi–clxxviii.

[23] The words logic and dialectics are both derived from the same Greek verb λέγω (λόγος, διαλέγομαι), through the Latin words "logica" and "dialectica". The confusing distinction between formal and dialectical logic is an invention of Hegel and is only used in debates among modern logicians, and will not be adhered to in this dissertation. I will use two terms logic and dialectics as synonyms.

classification, and consider it as a categorization of reality. In such a reading, the ten predicates are the most fundamental list of concepts under which all objects in the universe can be categorized. The *Categories* is then not only a logical work, but also an ontological work. The ontological interpretation is generally not adhered to nowadays, but it was popular in ancient and medieval times.

From Andronicus to Boethius

Although Aristotle lived in the third century BCE, the history of his writings until the first century CE is virtually unknown, and only from the third century CE onwards is there enough evidence to reconstruct some details of Aristotelianism in the Roman Empire.[24] In the first century CE, a scholar named Andronicus of Rhodes published a new edition of the works of Aristotle. This organization of Aristotelian works is the basic framework in which the *Corpus Aristotelicum* has come down to modern times. Andronicus gave a new name, *Categories* (κατηγορίαι), to a series of excerpts that had probably been known as *Before the Topics* (Πρὸ τῶν τόπων).[25] He also gave this treatise a prominent position in his new edition, and placed it at the very beginning.

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[24] For an introduction to the the history of Aristotelian thought between the first and the third century CE, see: Barnes, J. "Roman Aristotle," in Barnes J. and Griffith, M. (eds.) *Philosophia Togata II* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 1-69.

[25] It is possible that the *Categories* only acquired its current shape as part of the Andronican edition. Hence, strictly speaking, it would be more accurate to refer to this treatise as a part of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* than as Aristotle's own work. However, for the sake of clarity, I will refer to the *Categories* composed by Aristotle.

Since Andronicus' edition, the *Categories* has probably always been known under that title and it has held pride of place in the sequence of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* throughout ancient, medieval and modern times.[26]

Already Andronicus and several subsequent first and second century Peripatetic philosophers may have interpreted the *Categories* as both a logical and an ontological work.[27] However, the person who truly cemented this double interpretation was Porphyry.[28] Moreover, Porphyry wrote a Greek introduction to Aristotelian logical texts, known as the *Isagoge.* He also canonized the corpus of Aristotelian texts that deal with logic. This corpus, which begins with the *Categories* but includes also five other treatises (*On Interpretation, Prior Analytics, Posterior Analytics, Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations*), became known under the name *Organon*.[29] Porphyry not only canonized the ontological reading of the *Categories,* but he also put Aristotelian logic on the map of philosophers and educators across the Roman Empire. In the centuries after his death Aristotelian logic, in particular the *Isagoge* and the *Categories*, would reach a far wider audience than the small circles of Peripatetic philosophers who had studied it until the third century.

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[26] For an excellent reconstruction of Andronicus' work on the *Categories,* see: Griffith, 2015, 21-77.

[27] Griffith, 2015, 76-78.

[28] A good introduction to Prophyry's engagement with the *Categories* can be found in: Barnes, J. *Porphyry. Introduction* (Oxford, 2003), pp. ix-xxiv.

[29] On the origins of the term *Organon* between the third and the sixth century, see: Solmson, F. "Boethius and the History of the Organon," *The American Journal of Philology* 65 (1944): pp. 69–74.

In the fourth century, the *Categories* was translated into Latin for the first time, by Marius Victorinus. While this translation has not survived, a fourth-century Latin paraphrase by an anonymous writer, known as the *Categoriae Decem*, has survived. The *Categoriae Decem* conveys the main notions of the Aristotelian treatise, including the tenfold classification, reliably and it was through this text that Carolingian authors studied the *Categories* (see pp. 85-103). Martianus Capella used a Latin version of the *Categories* for the section on dialectics in his treatise on the seven liberal arts, the *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii.* Augustine wrote in his *Confessiones* that he had studied the *Categories.*[30] Furthermore, in his *De Trinitate* Augustine experimented with applying the ten predicates to God, which was a predictable development if one understands the ten categories as the most abstract classification of reality.[31] The most intensive study of the *Categories,* however, would take place in Greek institutions of learning in the Eastern Mediterranean. During the fourth and fifth century the philosophical discourse in the eastern part of the Roman Empire became more standardized. As a result, an ecumenical form of Neoplatonic thought became dominant in most schools. The name Neoplatonic is misleading,

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[30] For an overview of the late antique Latin tradition of the *Categories*, see: Kenny, A. "Les Catégories chez les Pères de l'Église latins," In Bruun, O., Corti, L. (eds.) *Les Catégories et leur histoire* (Paris, 2005), pp. 121-33; and: Minio-Paluello, L. "The Text of the Categoriae: The Latin Tradition," *The Classical Quarterly* 39.3/4 (1945): pp. 63-74.

[31] For the use of the *Categories* by Augustine and other patristic authors, see: Frede, M. "*Les Catégories d' Aristote et les pères de l'église grecs,"* Bruun, O., Corti, L. (eds.) *Les Catégories et leur histoire* (Paris, 2005), pp. 136-173.

since the Aristotelian *Organon* was an integral part of the philosophical curricula. As the first text of the *Organon,* the *Categories* was studied by students and professors. Moreover, not only those specializing in philosophy were exposed to the *Categories,* since an elementary philosophical education acquired a prominent place in the general curricula of those students who would become doctors, lawyers or bureaucrats. Consequently, during the fifth and sixth centuries, the *Categories* was discussed in many Roman classrooms, especially those of the philosophical schools of Athens and Alexandria.[32] These late antique classroom discussions resulted in lengthy Greek commentaries, some of which have survived until today.[33] In particular the Alexandrian commentators would have a wide influence, since it was probably the fame of their work that caused the *Categories* to be translated into three different languages. In the fifth century, this treatise was translated into Armenian, while in the first half of the sixth century Boethius translated it anew into Latin while an anonymous scholar in the Levant prepared a Syriac translation.[34]

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[32] Watts, E. *City and School in Late antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley, 2006), esp. pp. 204-231.

[33] A good starting point for discussion of the Late antique commentary tradition is: Sorabji, R. (ed.) *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and their influence* (Ithaca, NY, 1990).

[34] For the Latin translations of the *Categories*, see: Asztalos, M. "Boethius as a Transmitter of Greek Logic to the Latin West: The Categories," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 95 (1993), pp. 367–407. For the Armenian translation, see: Cornwallis, F. *A collation with the ancient Armenian versions of the Greek text of Aristotle's Categories, On Interpretation, De mundo, De virtutibus et vitiis, and of Porphyry's Introduction* (Oxford, 1892). For the Syriac translations, see: Hugonnard-Roche, H. "Sur les version syriaques des Catégories d'Aristote," *Journal Asiatique 1*75 (1987): pp. 205-222; King, D. *The Earliest Syriac Translation of Aristotle's Categories* (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, vol 21) (Leiden, 2010), pp. 19-22.

These different translations were all literal and accurate versions of the original Greek text.[35] Consequently, at the beginning of the sixth century, the *Categories* was known on all shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Nevertheless, as the Mediterranean world disintegrated politically in the period 550-750, the traditional Roman elites would shrink and, in some areas, disappear. The institutions of learning that had schooled late antique intellectuals such as Boethius and the Alexandrian commentators, would decline accordingly. As a result, the late antique educational curricula were drastically transformed in the seventh century. It is therefore not surprising that the study of the *Categories* declined as well. In the eighth and ninth centuries, however, this enigmatic piece of prose would still receive attention from various intellectuals, who in this period lived even further apart than Rome and Alexandria. It is this early medieval readership of the *Categories* that will be discussed in the next four chapters.

[35] Minio-Paluello, 1945, 69.

CHAPTER I

INTELLECTUALS AROUND 750 CE

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JOHN OF DAMASCUS, IBN AL-MUQAFFAʿ

JOHN OF DAMASCUS

For modern scholars John of Damascus is difficult to place. He was a Christian and wrote in Greek, but he lived in a Muslim state. He stands at the end of a tradition, yet his influence in later centuries was far-reaching. In traditional scholarly literature John is often portrayed as the last patristic author.[36] He is then situated at the end of a long line of Greek Church fathers that can, ultimately, be traced back to the apostles. However, despite the fact that his work forms the end of a tradition, John's writings became foundational in subsequent centuries. His influence on Byzantine orthodox theology would become significant and he was declared a saint in the 11th century.[37] In that same century, his magnum opus, *The Fount of Knowledge*, was circulating in Arabic, Armenian and Georgian translations and it would remain the most important text of Russian orthodox theology until the 17th century.[38] In the 12th century, *The Fount of Knowledge* was translated into Latin and it became the principal source for scholastic theologians on the Trinitarian and Christological

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[36] See, for instance, Berthold Altaner, who treats John of Damascus at the end of his classic overview of Patristic literature and writes, "Johannes ist der letzte universal eingestellte Theologe der alten griechischen Kirche": Altaner, B. *Patrologie. Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter* (Basel, 1960), p. 488.

[37] Johnson, S. "Introduction. The Social Presence of Greek in Eastern Christianity, 200-1200 CE." in Johnson, S. (ed.) *Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity: Greek* (The Worlds of Eastern Christianity, 300-1500, volume 6) (Surrey, 2015), pp. 1-122, esp. pp. 87-93.
Johnson, Scott. *Oriens Graecus: The Social Presence of Greek in the Christian East* (London, forthcoming), p. 65.

[38] Kotter, B. "Johannes von Damaskos", in *Theologische Realenzykopädie*, vol. 17 (Berlin, 1988), p.130; Johnson, forthcoming, 118.

debates of the ecumenical councils. John's influence can even be found in Protestant scholasticism and in the work of the 18th century theologian Schleiermacher.[39] Nevertheless, although John holds a prominent position in patristic, Byzantine and other Christian literary traditions, he probably never set foot in the Byzantine Empire or any other Christian state. Instead, he lived and worked all his life in the Umayyad caliphate.[40]

The life of John of Damascus[41]

Unfortunately, reliable source material for the details of the life of John of Damascus is very scarce. There are several Greek *lives* of John, all derived from an Arabic original, but they contain almost exclusively anecdotal information.[42] Only a few facts are mentioned in other sources. What seems plausible is that John was born in

[39] Louth, A. *St John Damascene. Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford, 2002), p. 3.

[40] Since's John's writings are an integral part of the Greek Christian writings of the centuries before and after him, and because his works became popular in the Byzantine tradition, the questions arises whether one should call him a Byzantine author. This question was first posed by Kazhdan (Kazhdan, A. *A History of Byzantine literature* (Athens 1999) p. 3). I agree with Johnson (2015, *passim,* esp. 92) that John of Damascus' works are an integral part of the Byzantine intellectual tradition.

[41] The most recent and accessible biography of John of Damascus is Louth's (2002); Conticello gives the most comprehensive overview of the primary source material on John's life: Conticello, Vassa, "Jean Damascène," in: *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, ed. R. Goulet (Paris, 2000), pp. 989-1001. However, both should be read together with Hoyland's brief account on John of Damascus, where the limits of the primary source material is more critically discussed: Hoyland, Robert, *Seeing Islam as Other Saw it: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (London, 1997), pp. 480-489.

[42] Hoyland, 1997, 483-484.

a family of Umayyad administrators. The Council of Hiereia of 754 and the Greek chronicler Theophanes refer to John as "Mansour" (Μάνσουρ), which means "victorious" in Arabic (منصور) and is John's name in Arabic sources.[43] He is therefore connected with the Christian Mansūr family, which is mentioned by medieval Arab historiographers. John's grandfather was Mansūr ibn Sarjūn, who was the financial governor of Damascus when it was still part of the Byzantine Empire and when the Arabs took it in 635. John's father, Sarjūn ibn Mansūr was secretary to the first five Umayyad Caliphs during the second half of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth.[44] The hagiographical tradition claims that John himself followed in his father's footsteps and most modern scholars have accepted that John held an important position in the Umayyad administration. However, this is not corroborated by other sources. In the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, it says that John of Damascus emulated Matthew the Evangelist, who was originally a tax collector.[45] This reference makes it plausible to assume that John held some position in the fiscal administration of the Umayyad caliphate.[46]

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[43] Ed. Mansi, J. *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* vols. 53 (Florence, 1767, repr. Paris, 1902), vol. 13. columns. 203-367, column 356C; Ed. de Boor, C. *Theophanis Chronographia.* 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883 repr. Hildesheim, 1963), vo1. p. 417.

[44] Hoyland lists the different Arabic sources for the Mansūr family: Hoyland, 1997, 481 fn.87.

[45] Mansi, 1902, 13. 357B: Ἰωάννης (…) Ματθαῖον εὐαγγελιστήν ζηλώσας," That Matthew was a tax collector is already mentioned in the New Testament: *Matt* 9.9

[46] Louth, 2002, 6; Hoyland, 1997, 481-82.

Since there is little information on John's life outside of the hagiographical tradition, modern scholars have long given too much credence to it. One fact mentioned in these *Lives* is that soon after Mansūr died, John became a government official.[47] Since Mansūr probably died around 700, one could assume that John must have started working as a government official soon after 700. Following this logic, John must have been born around 680 at the latest, and some scholars have even tried to pinpoint his date of birth in exact years, such as 655.[48] The fact is that there is simply no indication in any source of John's date of birth. Nevertheless, it has also been argued that John cannot have worked in the Umayyad government after 705, when Arabic became the language of administration, since there is no indication that he knew this language.[49] However, if one connects John with the Mansūr family, then this Arab background makes it very likely that John was at least comfortable in Arabic.[50] There is, thus, no cogent argument that he must have worked in the fiscal administration before 705 and hence no logical inference about his date of birth.

It does seem certain that John of Damascus left the Umayyad administration at some point and spent the rest of his life as a monk. Where he did this is uncertain.

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[47] Hoyland, 1997, 481.

[48] Nasrallah, J. *Saint Jean de Damas: son époque, sa vie, son oeuvre* (Beirut, 1950), p. 58. Kotter proposed 650: Kotter, 1988, 127. For a brief refutation of these dates, see: Louth, 2002, 5.

[49] For this argument, see: Louth, 2002, 6, and Conticello, 2000, 1002. Surprisingly, Conticello, who admits that there is no certainty about John's date of birth, follows Nasrallah and states that John must have been born around 655.

[50] See: Johnson, 2015, 64.

Conticello and Louth argue that John must have moved to the vicinity of Jerusalem since in one of his works, he mentions his closeness to John V, who was Patriarch of Jerusalem from 706 to 735.[51] Although this is certainly possible, it is not conclusive, especially since Louth and Conticello have not repudiated evidence to the contrary. The earliest biographical reference to John of Damascus is in Theophanes, who writes under the year 729 that "in Damascus of Syria shone forth in his life and discourse John of the Golden Stream, son of Mansūr, a presbyter and a monk, a most excellent teacher."[52] As for the death of John, the *terminus ante quem* seems to be 754 since the Acts of the Council of Hieraia, held in that year, state that the "Trinity has deposed (…) John."[53] None of the attempts to establish a *terminus post quem* have lived up to scrutiny.[54] However, since almost all of his writings deal with iconoclasm, John must have been an active after 730 when the veneration of icons was officially condemned by the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople.

In short, John of Damascus was of Arab origin, born in a privileged Christian family that had produced senior officials in the Umayyad government. John himself

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[51] Conticello, 2000, 1002-3; Louth, 2002, 6. This argument is crucial for Louth's biography of John of Damascus, since he interprets all of John's works as written for a Chalcedonian monastic community in Palestine.

[52] Trans. Mango, C., Scott, R. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History 284-813* (Oxford, 1997), p. 565; ed. de Boor, 1962, 408: 'ἐν δὲ τῇ κατὰ Συρίαν Δαμασκῷ Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσορρόας, πρεσβύτερος καὶ μοναχός, ὁ τοῦ Μανσούρ, διδάσκαλος ἄριστος, βίῳ καὶ λόγῳ προέλαμπεν.

[53] Mansi, 1902, 356C-D: Μανσούρ (..) ἡ τριὰς (…) καθεῖλεν. See: Hoyland, 1997, 482.

[54] *Ibid*., 483.

worked in the fiscal administration of Damascus, until, some time before 730, he became a monk. In the 730's and 740's John was active as a writer and wrote all of his works in Greek, while residing somewhere in the western regions of the Umayyad caliphate.

The Fount of Knowledge and the *Categories*

John of Damascus was a prolific writer, whose work can be divided into three groups: prose texts that defend Chalcedonian orthodoxy, sermons and liturgical poetry. John was a staunch defender of the veneration of icons and probably the most important iconophile author who was active during the period of iconoclasm itself.[55] This defense was part of what is the larger *leitmotiv* in all of his work: the exposition of orthodoxy. The most elaborate of such expositions is John's *magnum opus,* which is known under the title *The Fount of Knowledge* (Πηγὴ γνώσεως).

The Fount of Knowledge consists of three parts. The first one, the *Dialectica*, presents the intellectual tools for understanding theological discussions. The second one, *De Haeresibus*, refutes various inaccurate interpretations of God and religion, and the third, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, is the actual exposition of the correct interpretation of the Christian faith. The *De Fide Orthodoxa* became most influential in medieval centuries, whereas the *De Haeresibus* is well-known among modern

[55] See, for instance: Brubraker, L., Haldon, J., *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850): the sources. An annotated survey* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 248.

scholars, since it contains the earliest Greek polemic against Islam.[56] However, it is in the *Dialectica* that John of Damascus discusses Aristotle's *Categories*.[57]

Scholars have speculated about the date of composition of the *Dialectica*.[58] There is very little evidence to substantiate these claims.[59] What seems likely, is that the *Dialectica* was revised several times by John of Damascus and that another logical text of John that has come down to us, the *Institutio Elementaris*, is simply an early phase of John's work on the *Dialectica*.[60] Consequently, it is plausible that the *Dialectica,* together with the rest of *The Fount of Knowledge*, reached its final stage by the end of John's life, which makes the 740's a rough estimate for a date of final composition.[61]

The *Dialectica* has been called a 'theological glossary'.[62] Although the text does not take the form of an alphabetical glossary, it does function as an

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[56] For an annotated overview of the scholarship on John of Damascus' polemic against Islam, see: Hoyland, 1997, 484-89.

[57] It seems that John of Damascus himself as well as most manuscripts use the title *The Fount of Knowledge* to refer to the *Dialectica* alone. The seventeenth century humanist Allatius is the first to use this title to refer to the whole trilogy: Louth, 2002, 32.

[58] Louth, 2002, 33 fn. 14.

[59] For a discussion of scholarly attempts to date the *Dialectica* on the basis of the dedication to Cosmas of Maioumas in its preface, see: Hoyland, 1997, 482-483,

[60] For the Greek text of the *Institutio Elementaris*, see Kotter, B. *.Die Schriften des Johannes Von Damaskos.* Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1969), pp. 19-26.

[61] For a detailed discussion of the different phases of the *Dialectica*, see: Richter, G. *Die Dialektik des Johannes von Damaskos* (Ettal, 1965), pp. 74-78, 222-35.

[62] Brubaker, Haldon, 2001, 249.

introduction to terminology that is deemed necessary for theological debates. In the opening chapters John praises knowledge in general, explaining that only through knowledge one can avoid darkness. To attain knowledge of God one needs to understand philosophy, John argues. Therefore he has set out a number of basic philosophical concepts in his *Dialectica*.[63] Surprisingly, John does not use the definitions of these philosophical concepts in any of his other works nor does there seem to be any clear connection between the *Dialectica* and the other two parts of *The Fount of Knowledge*. All one can assume is that John intended to provide novice theologians with the necessary tools for critical reasoning.[64]

Like the other parts of the *Fount of Knowledge,* the *Dialectica* is divided into 'chapters' (κεφάλαια), which each provide a brief discussion of a philosophical term or concept.[65] Almost all of the 68 chapters are discussions taken from Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories.* The *Dialectica* seems to rely on these two texts to such an extent that Louth argues that it is the first moment in intellectual history where the florilegium and patristic theology meet.[66] This is only a recent articulation

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[63] *Dialectica* 1-4; Kotter, 1969, 53-59.

[64] See also: Louth, 2002, 46. It is noteworthy that John does not use any logical terminology for the defense of the veneration of icons. It would take another generation for Byzantine authors to do so, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

[65] For the ancient roots of this structure of philosophical texts, see: Ivanka, E. "KEPHALAIA: Eine byzantinische Literaturform und ihre antike Wurzeln," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 47 (1954), pp. 285-91.

[66] Louth, 2002, 36.

of the established scholarly view that John did not do anything other than systematically collecting earlier material.[67] However, Erismann has convincingly demonstrated that the *Dialectica* is innovative due to John's replacement of Aristotle's pair of primary/secondary substance—one of the fundaments of the *Categories* and Aristotle's logic in general—with with that of hypostasis/ substance.[68] Nevertheless, this does not change the fact that reading the *Dialectica* in its entirety is similar to reading Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories,* albeit in reworked form.

Chapters 32-39 and 47-63 rephrase the *Categories* most explicitly.[69] The organization of the philosophical material does not follow Aristotle. Nor does John mention Aristotle's name anywhere in his *Dialectica*. All he says about the origin of his philosophical definitions is one sentence in his preface: 'I shall set forth the best contributions of the philosophers of the Greeks'.[70] It is likely that he did not use the original text of the *Categories,* but worked with later commentaries and handbooks. Richter has argued that the sixth century commentaries of Ammonius and Elias on

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[67] See, for instance: Tatakis, B. *Byzantine Philosophy* (Indianapolis, 2001, French orig, Paris, 1949), p. 86.

[68] Erismann, C. "A World of Hypostases. John of Damascus' Rethinking of Aristotle's Categorical Ontology, " *Studia Patristica* 50 (2011), pp. 269-287, esp. p. 270.

[69] The best discussion of the logical terminology used in these chapters is: Richter, 1965, 153-207.

[70] τῶν παρ' Ἕλλησι σοφῶν τὰ κάλλιστα παραθήσομαι: Kotter, 1969, 52; trans. F. Chase. *St. John of Damascus: Writings* (The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, vol. 37) (Washington D.C., 1958, repr. 1970), p5.

the *Categories* were John's most important sources.[71] Roueché, however, thinks that John did not have these lengthy commentaries at his disposal, but merely later logical handbooks that are based on the commentaries of the sixth century Alexandrians.[72] Nevertheless, despite this indirect transmission, some passages of the *Dialectica* follow the original text of *Categories* still very closely. Most importantly, the tenfold classification is conveyed in an accurate and reliable manner. Below an English translation is provided of the passage in the *Dialectica* that discusses the tenfold classification, with the ten predicates in **bold** and the examples that are identical to those mentioned in the *Categories* underlined:

> 'Of those things which are affirmed simply and without combination, one signifies **substance**, as, for example, man or horse, another, **quantity**, as, for example, two or three, two cubits long or three cubits long; another, **relation**, such as father and son; another, **quality**, such as white or black, another, **place**, such as in a temple or in a marketplace, another, **time**, such as last year, yesterday, or today; another, **position**, such as standing or sitting, another, **state**, such as being dressed or being shod, another, **action**, such as burning or

[71] Richter, 1965, 104-5, 120-1.

[72] Roueché, M. "Byzantine philosophical texts of the seventh century," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* (1974), pp. 61-76, esp. pp 66-7.

cutting; another, **passion**, such as being burnt or being cut. In so far as these ten are affirmed of certain things, they are called categories, because to categorize is the same thing as to affirm.'[73]

A comparison of the Greek text with that of the *Categories* shows that not just the examples but also the phraseology in general follows Aristotle's text very closely.[74] Consequently, even if the transmission of the *Categories* to John of Damascus was indirect, his *Dialectica* still communicated a reliable version of the foundational ideas of this Aristotelian text to an eighth century Christian audience.

John of Damascus and the Greco-Syriac transmission of the *Categories*

It would seem that John of Damascus is the first to take up the *Categories* since the sixth century Alexandrian lecturers. Since Elias, who was active in the middle of the

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[73] Chase, 1970, 61.

[74] John of Damascus' *Dialectica* 36 (Kotter, 1969, 104):
'Τῶν δὲ ἁπλῶς λεγομένων καὶ ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς α΄ τὸ μὲν **οὐσίαν** σημαίνει οἷον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος· β΄ τὸ δὲ **ποσὸν** οἷον δύο, τρία, δίπηχυ, τρίπηχυ· γ΄ τὸ δὲ **πρός τί** ὡς πατήρ, υἱός· δ΄ τὸ δὲ **ποιὸν** ὡς λευκόν, μέλαν· ε΄ τὸ δὲ **ποῦ** ὡς ἐν ναῷ, ἐν ἀγορᾷ· ς΄ τὸ δὲ **ποτὲ** ὡς πέρυσι, σήμερον· ζ΄ τὸ δὲ **κεῖσθαι** ὡς τὸ ἵστασθαι, καθῆσθαι· η΄ τὸ δὲ **ἔχειν** ὡς τὸ ἐνδεδύσθαι, ὑποδεδύσθαι· θ΄ τὸ δὲ **ποιεῖν** ὡς τὸ καίειν, τέμνειν· ι΄ τὸ δὲ **πάσχειν** ὡς τὸ καίεσθαι, τέμνεσθαι. Αὗται αἱ δέκα λέγονται κατηγορίαι ὡς ἐκ τοῦ λέγεσθαι κατά τινων· τὸ γὰρ ἀγορεύειν λέγειν ἐστίν.'
Aristotle's *Categories* 1b25-2a4 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, p.5):
'Τῶν κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγομένων ἕκαστον ἤτοι οὐσίαν σημαίνει ἢ **ποσὸν** ἢ **ποιὸν** ἢ **πρός τί** ἢ **ποὺ** ἢ **ποτὲ** ἢ **κεῖσθαι** ἢ **ἔχειν** ἢ **ποιεῖν** ἢ **πάσχειν**. ἔστι δὲ **οὐσία** μὲν ὡς τύπῳ εἰπεῖν οἷον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος· **ποσὸν** δὲ οἷον δίπηχυ, τρίπηχυ· **ποιὸν** δὲ οἷον λευκόν, γραμματικόν· **πρός τί** δὲ οἷον διπλάσιον, ἥμισυ, μεῖζον· **ποὺ** δὲ οἷον ἐν Λυκείῳ, ἐν ἀγορᾷ· **ποτὲ** δὲ οἷον χθές, πέρυσιν· **κεῖσθαι** δὲ οἷον ἀνάκειται, κάθηται· **ἔχειν** δὲ οἷον ὑποδέδεται, ὥπλισται· **ποιεῖν** δὲ οἷον τέμνειν, καίειν· **πάσχειν** δὲ οἷον τέμνεσθαι, καίεσθαι.'

sixth century, there does not seem to have been any Greek intellectual who explicitly studied the Aristotelian text or discussed the concept of ten categories. However, closer inspection shows that John of Damascus' treatment of the *Categories* was in fact part of an ongoing tradition of the study of Aristotelian logic.

Anastasius of Sinai (who died ca. 700), a Christian scholar of the generation before John, shows familiarity with some concepts of the *Categories*. Anastasius wrote a work that is in many ways similar to John's *Fount of Knowledge*, the *Viae Dux,* sometimes translated as "The guide along the right path."[75] This work is an exposition of the orthodox faith according to the Chalcedonian creed and includes refutations of heresies. As a preamble to his theological arguments, Anastasius provides definitions of crucial philosophical terms, similar to John's *Dialectica*. This section of Anastatius' *Viae Dux* shows knowledge (probably indirect) of Aristotle's *Categories*.[76] If we go back yet another generation, then some small works by Maximus Confessor (ca. 580-662) also betray knowledge of terminology that is specific to Aristotle's treatise.[77] Furthermore, Roueché has traced several seventh century logical handbooks: short texts that give a rudimentary summary of terms

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[75] Ed. Uthemann, K. *Anastasii Sinaïtae: Viae dux* (Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca, vol. 8) (Brepols, 1981).

[76] The passage on the category relation (πρός τί) is probably the most clear echo of the *Categories*: *Viae Dux*, 2.7 (ed. Uthemann, 1982, p. 63-4). See also: Richter, 1965, 20 fn. 59.

[77] Richter, 1965, 20; Roueché, 1974, 63.

that are ultimately derived from Aristotle's *Categories* and Porphyry's *Isagoge*.[78] Consequently one can draw a continuous line of Christian theologians studying the *Categories*, either directly or indirectly, from the sixth century to the time of John of Damascus. Furthermore, if this line seems to be very thin, then that is only because modern scholars have often only looked at the evidence found in Greek texts. However, it is now clear that that is an incomplete and incorrect approach.

Although the scholarly study of Syriac and other Near Eastern languages of the first millennium A.D., such as Aramaic and Coptic, goes back to at least the nineteenth century, it is only recently that scholars have argued for a comprehensive approach to the intellectual discourses in both Greek and these other languages in the period from the fourth to the ninth century. Tannous has made the case for Syriac most cogently. In his dissertation, he argues that between the sixth century and ninth century Baghdad, the Syriac speaking world was not merely a gateway that transmitted certain ancient texts, but that this world was a one of lively and innovative intellectual debates and that without the fruits of these debates, the ninth century Arabic translation movement in Baghdad would not have been possible.[79] Johnson has convincingly argued that from the fifth century onwards, there was regular cross-pollination between Greek intellectual discourses and those in Syriac,

[78] Roueché, 1974, *passim*.

[79] Tannous, 2010, 22-107.

Coptic and Armenian.[80] Consequently, Greek texts from, for instance, the 7th and 8th century can only be properly understood if they are seen as being in conversation with Syriac texts. Within the borders of the Umayyad Caliphate, one can even go a step further and state that the intellectual discourse in Greek and Syriac were to a large extent intertwined.

The picture that then emerges of the larger intellectual milieu of John of Damascus is that of bilingual one, if not a multilingual one, where Greek and Syriac are the two vehicles of intellectual output. This integral approach significantly broadens the picture of the transmission of the *Categories* of Aristotle. In the Introduction, I mentioned the first Syriac translation of the *Categories,* made in the sixth century (see p. 29). That translation was only the beginning of what would become a lively study of Aristotelian logic in Syriac. Probably by the year 600, the first half of the *Organon* had been translated into Syriac: the *Isagoge*, the *Categories*, the *On Interpretation* and the *Prior Analytics* until I.7, sometimes referred to collectively as the *Proto-Organon*. Although direct evidence about education is scarce in Syriac sources from before the twelfth century, it does seem that the *Proto-Organon* became part of the educational curricula in Syriac monastic schools.[81] This educational background may also explain why we have more than ten Syriac

[80] Johnson, 2015, 23-69.

[81] Tannous discusses a thirteenth century Syriac list of school texts, from which one can infer a curriculum in earlier centuries: Tannous, 2010, 328-332.

treatises that deal with the *Categories* in one way or another and three actual translations from before the tenth century.[82]

If we now include this lively Syriac engagement with the *Categories* in our discussion of the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus, then his treatment of this Aristotelian text seems solidly grounded in an ongoing tradition. The line of transmission between the sixth century Alexandrian commentators and John in the eighth century is no longer thin, nor is there any reason to assume that the mere fact that John took up the *Categories* is novel or innovative.

In the eighth century the study of the *Categories* in the Umayyad Caliphate is not only reflected in Greek and Syriac texts, but in two other languages as well: Middle Persian and Arabic. For that, we have to turn to a contemporary of John of Damascus, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ.

IBN AL-MUQAFFAʿ

Whereas scholars have traditionally situated John of Damascus at the end of a tradition, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ is commonly seen as one of the pioneers of a new one: that

[82]King lists the translations and the major commentaries: King, D. *The Earliest Syriac Translation of Aristotle's Categories* (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, vol 21) (Leiden, 2010), pp. 19-22. See also: Hugonnard-Roche, H. "Sur les version syriaques des Catégories d'Aristote," *Journal Asiatique* 175 (1987), pp. 205-222; and: Brock, S. "The Syriac Commentary Tradition," in Burnett, C. (ed.) *Commentaries and Glosses on Aristotelian Logical Texts: the Syriac, Arabic and Medieval Latin Traditions* (London, 1993) (Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts 23), pp. 3-18. esp. p. 3-4; and: Hugonnard-Roche, H. "L'intermédiaire syriaque dans la transmission de la philosophie grecque à l'arabe: le cas de l'*Organon* d'Aristote," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* I (1991), 187-209.

of Arabic literary prose. In the words of one scholar: "it is he who opens the door to the golden age of Arabic prose writing; it is by him that a wide humanistic concept of letters is introduced to the Arabs."[83] As is the case with John of Damascus, we have very little information about Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's life, despite his later reputation. However, unlike John of Damascus, the bits and pieces of information on his life are found in sources that are more reliable than hagiographies: biographical dictionaries and chronographies. In Arabic literature of the medieval period, history was often written in the form of prosopography. Consequently, many biographical dictionaries, although party filled with anecdotes, contain valuable historical information of elite individuals from earlier generations. Some of these biographical dictionaries contain entries on Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, and their information can be verified and complemented with bits of information found in general narrational histories, the chronographies.[84] The groundwork of piecing together the biographical information on Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ has already been done by other scholars, and, unlike with John of Damascus's life, no

[83] Latham, J. "Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and early 'Abbasid prose," in Ashtiany, J. ed., *Abbasid Belles Lettres* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 48-77, p. 48

[84] For an introduction to these different genres in Arabic historiography, see: Robinson, C. I*slamic Historiography* (Themes in Islamic History, vol. 2) (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 66-79.

controversial conclusions have been made.[85] Below, I will provide a summary of these conclusions.

The life of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ

Since medieval biographers write that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was murdered in the year 757 when he was only 36 years of age, scholars have concluded that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ must have been born in 720-721 A.D.[86] The few biographical details available about him mostly pertain to his family background and his professional career. His father, Dādūya, worked in the Umayyad administration as a tax collector.[87] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was born in Fars, the traditional heartland of the Persian world in what is now southern Iran. His family was part of the Persian elite and his native language was Persian.[88] This ethnonym implies that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's first written language was Middle Persian, the dialect that had become a prestige language in the Sasanian

[85] The most recent biography of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ can be found in: Kristó-Nagy, I. *La pensée d'Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Un < agent double > dans le monde persan et arabe* (Studia Arabic XIX) (Paris, 2013), pp. 27-79. Earlier studies include: Gabrieli, F. "L'opera di Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ," *Rivista degli studi orientali* 13 (1932), pp. 197-247; Sourdel, D. "La biographie d'Ibn al-Muqafa' d'après les sources anciennes," *Arabica* 1.3 (1954), pp. 307-23; Latham, J. "Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and early 'Abbasid prose," in Ashtiany, J. ed., *Abbasid Belles Lettres* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 48-77; Arjomand, S "Abd Allah Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and the 'Abbasid Revolution," *Iranian Studies* 27.1 (1994), pp. 9-36.

[86] Arjomand, 1994, p. 13, fn. 23.

[87] Kristó-Nagy, 2013, 50; Sourdel, 1954, 308.

[88] Unfortunately, ethnic labels have not yet been deconstructed in Middle Eastern history as they have been in other disciplines. Consequently, an individual's native language is often equated with his ethnicity. Due to the lack of a more nuanced theoretical framework, I call Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ a "Persian" since his native language was Persian.

period.[89] His religion was Manichaeism, until he converted to Islam late in his life.[90] Dādūya probably had his son schooled privately in Basra, in southern Iraq.[91]

Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ followed in his father's footsteps and took up a career in the Umayyad administration. In 744, he functioned as a mediator between two competing Umayyad officials in Shapūr, Fars.[92] When Fars was taken over by Abbasid revolutionaries during the third Fitna, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ withdrew with his Umayyad employers to Wāsiṭ in Iraq; in 747-48 he was installed at the fiscal administration of Kermān, in central Iran.[93] Before 750, he must have returned to Basra. In these turbulent years, he remained loyal to the unraveling Umayyad state. However, not long before the actual fall of the Umayyads in 750, he probably decided to switch sides and joined the revolutionaries and the Abbasid family.[94]

In the early 750's, we find Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ in the highest circles of the new Abbasid regime. He had entered the service of ʾIsa ibn ʿAli, as a personal secretary. ʾIsa ibn ʿAli was the brother of Sulaymān ibn ʿAli, the new Abbasid governor of Basra.

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[89] The word 'Middle Persian' is also used to refer to the Aramaic derived script, which Middle Persian texts are written in. The proper term for this script is Pahlavi. In this dissertation I use Middle Persian to refer to the Middle Persian language and not the script.

[90] Kristó-Nagy, 2013, 75-79; Sourdel, 1954, 311.

[91] *Ibid.,* 308; Kristó-Nagy, 2013, 51.

[92] Arjomand, 1994, 16.

[93] *Ibid.,* 17.

[94] *Ibid.*, 17-8.

Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ became the personal tutor of Sulaymān's sons.[95] It is probably in this period of his life that he converted to Islam.[96]

ʾIsa and Sulaymān were the paternal uncles of the first two Abbasid caliphs. When the first Abbasid caliph, as-Saffāḥ, died in 754, it was ʾIsa ibn ʿAli who emerged as kingmaker and who put his other nephew, Al-Mansūr on the throne. However, a few years later Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ became the victim of a political intrigue in the Abbasid family, when Al-Mansūr suspected Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ of being instrumental in the political ambitions of his uncles ʾIsa and Sulaymān. Al-Mansūr had Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ put to death in 757, only 36 years of age.[97]

Intellectual milieu and oeuvre

Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was not the only Persian secretary in the Umayyad or Abbasid administration. In fact, there was a whole bureaucratic elite that was to a large degree of Persian descent. Ever since Umar, in the middle of the seventh century, the fiscal administration of the caliphate had relied upon Persian secretaries. When the language of administration was changed into Arabic at the beginning of the eighth century, this situation did not change. On the contrary, under caliph Hishām, who ruled from 724 to 743, the Umayyad bureaucracy was expanded mostly by hiring

[95] Sourdel 1954, 310; Arjomand, 1994, 17-8.

[96] Sourdel, 1954, 311.

[97] The circumstances of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's death are discussed in detail by Sourel (1954, 311-323) and by Arjomand (1994, 24-36).

new Persian recruits. It is in this period that it became clear that the Persian secretaries brought not only their administrative expertise to government circles but also their own intellectual heritage.[98]

During the caliphate of Hishām, several Persian bureaucrats translated Persian works into Arabic. Most of these works were histories of Persian kings and treatises on statecraft. An important example is the now lost *Ordinance of Ardashir,* a tract which purports to contain the rules of cosmic and political order as laid down by the founder of the Sassanian empire. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was part of this Persian translation movement and would in subsequent centuries be considered its most famous member. His best known translation is called *Kalila wa Dimna* and consists of a collection of fables, originally composed in Sanskrit and translated into Middle Persian in the sixth century. He also translated the now lost *Book of Kings*, a chronicle of the rulers of pre-Islamic Iran.[99]

The Persian translation movement of the middle of the eighth century was not only influential for the political culture in the Umayyad and Abbasid states. It also led to the earliest phase of literary prose in Arabic. Whereas Arabic literature from before the middle of the eighth century had been only poetry, the Persian secretaries made both Arabic prose translations and composed original works in

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[98] For discussion of Persian secretaries in the Umayyad and Abbasid administrations, see: Arjomand, 1994, 12-16.

[99] The best discussions of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's translations are: Kristó-Nagy, 2013, 81-107; Gabrieli, 1932, *passim*; Latham, 1990, 50-57.

sophisticated Arabic prose. A well-known example is the corpus of letters by ʿAbd al-Hamīd al-Kātib, the secretary of the last Umayyad caliph Marwan II and an acquaintance of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. ʿAbd al-Hamīd's letters are the beginning of Arabic epistolography.[100] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's own compositions include treatises on ethics, statecraft and Manichaeism.[101] Although it seems contradictory, the translations and compositions of Persians such as ʿAbd al-Hamīd and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ became foundational in the formation of a literary writing style in classical Arabic.[102]

Finally, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's literary output seems to be connected with his career as a government official. Since he was born in 720/721, it seems reasonable to assume that he did not start this career before 740. That means that his literary output can in general be dated between 740 and 757, most of which coincides with the last years of John of Damascus' literary activities. Furthermore, another similarity between the lives of these two individuals stands out: they were both born in a secretarial family and worked as officials in the administration of the caliphate. However, whereas John spent all his life in the western half of the caliphate, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ did so in the eastern half. There is no reason to assume that they have ever

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[100] See: Latham, J. "The beginnings of Arabic prose literature: the epistolary genre," in Beeston, A. e.a. (eds.) *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 154-179.

[101] For a good overview of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's own compositions, see: Kristo-Nagy, 2013, 109-380; Latham, 1990, 57-77.

[102] Versteegh, K. *The Arabic Language* (New York, 1997), pp. 64-71.

met or communicated with one another. Regardless, both scholars were working on the same text at roughly the same time: the *Categories* of Aristotle.

Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and the *Manṭiq*

As diverse as the output of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and his fellow Persian bureaucrats was, transmitting Greco-Roman thought into Arabic does not seem to have been part of their activities. It is therefore surprising that the first translation of any Greek text into Arabic, that of the *Proto-Organon*, is ascribed to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Fortunately, this Arabic text has survived. In 1926, Furlani published some preliminary notes on a manuscript that he had found in the library of Saint Joseph University in Beirut.[103] This manuscript contains an Arabic paraphrase—generally referred to as the *Manṭiq*—of the *Isagoge* of Porphyry, and Aristotle's *Categories, On Interpretation* and the first few chapters of the *Prior Analytics*. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ is mentioned as its author. Scholars reacted to this new discovery with disbelief. In 1932, Gabrieli published a detailed overview of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's oeuvre but dismissed the Aristotelian text in a footnote on the first page.[104] Two years later, Paul Kraus took Gabrieli's footnote up and developed a larger argument to refute the ascription to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Kraus'

[103] Furlani, G. "Di una presunta versione araba di alcuni scritti di Porfirio e di Aristotele," *Rendiconti Lincei II* (1926), pp. 205-213.

[104] Gabrieli, 1932, 2: "Dell' essatezza di queste notizie credi ci sia da dubitare: non risulta in alcun modo un familiarità di Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ col siriaco, attraverso cui furono generalmente redatte queste versioni o compendi di testi filosofici greci."

main point is that, since the title of the Beirut manuscript contains the name Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ instead of Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, the text must have been translated by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's son.[105]

The Beirut manuscript, upon which that Kraus based his argument, dates from the early nineteenth century.[106] Although the manuscript is this recent, Kraus' refutation of the attribution to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ on the basis of a small but significant difference in the name of this author is still plausible. However, there is a relatively strong base of secondary evidence in the medieval biographical tradition in favor of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's authorship. The best example is a passage in Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī's *Book of Nations*, written in the eleventh century:

> 'The first scholar to become known for his study of logic, in this dynasty, was 'Abd Allah Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, the Persian orator and secretary of Abū Jaʿafar al-Mansūr. He translated Aristotle's three books on logic, which are the precise foundations of that science. They are the books of categories, of interpretations, and of analytics. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ mentioned that up to this time only the first of these books had been translated. He also translated the introduction of the book of logic known as *Isaghuji* [Eisagoge] written by Porphyry and

[105] Kraus, P. "Zu Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ," *Rivista degli studi orientali* 14 (1934): pp. 1-5.

[106] MS 338, dated 1240 H.

> Mūrqūs of Tyre and others. His translation was simple and accessible in style. He also translated the Indian book *Kalilah wa Dimna*; he was the first to translate from the Persian language into the Arabic language.'[107]

The details in this account are unambiguous: Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ himself is the translator of the first half of the *Organon.* This ascription to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ is confirmed by other biographers, such as Ibn al-Qifṭi, but those are of later centuries and to a large extent rehash Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī's passage.[108] However, earlier authors also confirmed that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was an Aristotelian translator. The tenth-century bibliographer Ibn al-Nadīm lists Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ among those who abridged the *Categories* and the *On Interpretation*.[109] Even al-Jahiẓ, who was born in 776 and

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[107] Salem, S., Kumar, K. Science of the Medieval World: Book of the Categories of Nations (Austin, 1996). 46; Ed. Cheikho, L. Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-Umam. Livre des Catégories des Nations (Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic-Science, Islamic Philosophy vol. 1) (Beirut, 1912, repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1999), p. 49:

فامَّا المنطق فاوَّل من اشتهر بهِ في هذه الدولة عبدالله بن المقفع الختيب الفزاسي كاتب ابي جعفر المنصور قانهُ ترجم كتب ارسطاطليس المنطقية الثلاثة التي في صورة المنطق و هي كتاب قاطاغورياس و كتاب باري ارمناياس و كتاب انولوطيقا و ذكر انهُ لم يُترجم منهُ الى وقتهِ الَّا الكتاب الاوَّل فقط و ترجم من ذلك المدخل الى كتاب المنطق المعرب بالايساغوجي لفرفوريوس الصوري و عبّر عمَّا ترجم من ذلك عبارةً سلة قريبة المأخذ. و ترجم مع ذلك الكتاب الهندي المعروف بكليلة و دمنة و هو اوَّل مَن ترجم من اللغة الفراسيَّة الى اللغة العربيَّة.

[108] Ed. Lippert, J. *Ibn al-Qifṭī's Tārīḫ al-Hukamā* (Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic-Science, Islamic Philosophy vol. 2) (Leipzig, 1903, repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1999), p. 220.

[109] Ed. Flügel, G. *Kitāb al-Fihrist mit Anmerkungen herausgegeben* (Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic-Science, Historiography and Classification of Science in Islam, vols. 1-2) (Leipzig, 1871, repr. Frankfurt am Main, 2005), pp. 248-49.

whose lifetime was therefore only decades removed from Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's own, mentions him among those who translated Aristotle.[110]

Kraus was aware of these medieval testimonies, but he asserted that this whole tradition was based on a conflation of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ with his son. Although he explicitly states that the name in the colophon of the Beirut manuscript is the reason behind this refutation, Kraus' underlying motivation is revealed later in his article, when he writes: "The result of our investigation has a larger significance for the history of science in Islam. It has become clear that Aristotelian works were never translated from Persian into Arabic, as has often been claimed on the basis of the misunderstood evidence on Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ".[111] The refutation of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's authorship solves a larger and, for Kraus, more problematic implication. If the translation was made by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, then the original text must have been written in Middle Persian, since there is no reason to assume that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ knew either Greek or Syriac. In other words, skepticism towards the Sasanian world as a conduit of Aristotelian logic plays a role in Kraus' argument. Consequently, without discrediting Kraus' individual statements, his overall argument has a biased

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[110] *Kitāb al-Hayawān*: Ed. Hārūn, A. *Abū ʿUthman ʿAmr bin Bahr al-Jāhiẓ. Kitāb al-Hayawān* vols. 7 (Cairo, 1943). vol. 1, p. 38.

[111] Kraus, 1934, 13: "Das resultat unserer Untersuchung ist von grosser Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Wissenschaften im Islam. Es hat sich herausgestellt, dass aristotelische Schriften niemals aus den Persischen ins Arabische übersetzt worden sind, wie oft auf Grund der missverstandenen Nachricht über Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ gesagt worden ist."

undertone. It is therefore surprising that later scholars often uncritically referred to Kraus' article.[112]

In 1978, the *editio princeps* of the text appeared. The editor, Muhammad Dāneshpazhūh, was the first scholar to challenge Kraus' argument. He did this in the introduction of his edition.[113] Dāneshpazhūh presented the different medieval testimonies to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's activity as an Aristotelian translator.[114] More importantly, he explained that his edition was not just based on the nineteenth century Beirut manuscript, but on three other ones as well, which he had discovered himself. These manuscripts are older, the oldest one dating from the sixteenth

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[112] Peters mentions Kraus's view as a reasonable option in: Peters, F. *Aristoteles ArAbūs. The Oriental Translations and commentaries on the Aristotelian Corpus* (Leiden, 1968), p. 11. So does Fritz Zimmermann in: Zimmerman, F. "Some Observations on Al-Fārābī and Logical Tradition," in Stern, S., Hourani, A., Brown, V. (eds.) Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition. Essays presented by his friend and pupils to Richard Walzer on his seventieth birthday (Columbia, SC, 1972), pp. 517-546., esp. p. 537. Walzer considered Kraus' article 'un de ses plus brilliant articles' in: Walzer, R. "L'Eveil de la philosophie islamique," Revue des études islamiques 38 (1970): pp. 7-42, 207-242, esp. 33.

Madkour neglects the Arabic text and Kraus' article altogether in: Madkour, I. *L'Organon d'Aristote dans le monde arabe. Ses traductions, son étude et ses applications* (Paris, 1969). So does Rescher in: Rescher, N. *The Development of Arabic Logic* (Pittsburgh, 1964). This omission can probably be explained by the fact that the Arabic text had not been edited at the time.

[113] Dāneshpazhūh, M. *Manṭiq Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ* (Tehran 1978). pp. 1-84 (the numbers refer to the introduction in the book, which has a separate pagination in Persian). I thank Mehrnoush Soroush for her assistance in reading the Persian introduction to this edition.

[114] Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, pp. 64-68.

century.[115] All three of these manuscripts contain the name Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and not of his the son, according to Dāneshpazhūh.[116]

The printed edition of the Arabic text did not cause any significant reaction in the small world of Greco-Arabic scholarship. Although the earliest Arabic translation of any Greek text had now been edited, Dāneshpazhūh's work received little scholarly attention, as did his arguments in favor of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ as the translator.[117] Nevertheless, in a brief discussion, Josef van Ess made a significant contribution to this debate. Van Ess claimed that Dāneshpazhūh misrepresented the manuscript evidence, since the name of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's son is found not only in the title of the Beirut manuscript but also in the title of two earlier manuscripts and in the colophon of all four known manuscripts.[118] Only one manuscript contains unambiguously Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ name. This manuscript, however, is the oldest of the four. Van Ess then applies the *lectio difficilior* principle and argues that it is more

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[115] Hamadam, Madrasa-I Garb 4750, dated 1042 H.

[116] Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, pp. 15-80.

[117] Hein did acknowledge Dāneshpazhūh's conclusions and the importance of the *Manṭiq* in: Hein, C. *Definition und Einteilung der Philosophie. Von der spätantiken Einleitungsliteratur zur arabischen Enzyklopädie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), pp. 41-46. Gérard Tropeau discussed some logical terms in the section on the *On Interpretation* and did accept Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ as its author in: Tropeau, G. "La logique d'Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ et les origines de la grammaire arabe," *Arabica* 28.3 (1981): pp. 242-250. Tropeau states (*ibid*, 243) that Madkour, in a personal letter, also accepted Dāneshpazhūh's conclusions. Elamrani-Jamal also accepted Dāneshpazhūh's conclusions in: Elamrani-Jamal, A. "L'Organon. Tradition Arabe," Goulet R. (ed.) *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* (Paris, 1989), vol I, pp. 510-513, esp. p. 510.

[118] van Ess, J. *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (Berlin, 1991-97), vol. 2, p. 27.

logical to assume that medieval scribes mistook the unknown son for his famous father than vice versa.[119] Consequently, without bias but with more evidence and a more sophisticated argument, van Ess rehabilitates Kraus' conclusion that not Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's but his son was the author.

In conclusion, the state of the debate on the ascription of the Aristotelian paraphrase is as follows. All medieval biographical testimonies and sections of the manuscript tradition can be construed as evidence in favor of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ as the author, while other sections of the manuscript evidence point to his son. The final conclusion depends on which part of the evidence one favors. Consequently, recent scholarship presents the attribution as undecided.[120] Nevertheless, whether one accepts either father or son as the actual translator, a more fundamental aspect of this text remains unresolved. The ultimate reason for early twentieth century scholars such as Kraus to start the debate about the authenticity of this text, was its Persian origins. However, as I will argue below, whether Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ or his son

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[119] van Ess, 1991-1997, vol. 2, p. 27.

[120] See: Schöck, C. *Koranexegese, Grammatik und Logik. Zum Verhältnis von arabischer und aristotelischer Urteils-, Konsequenz- und Schlußlehre* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 119; Gutas, D. "Origins in Baghdad," in Pasnau, R. (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 9-25, esp. 18; Gutas, D. "Die Wiedergeburt der Philosophie und die Übersetzungen ins Arabische," in Rudolph, U. Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie. Philosophie in der islamischen Welt. 8. - 10. Jahrhundert (Basel, 2012), pp. 55-91, esp. pp. 72-73.

Cristina d'Ancona refers to Dāneshpazhūh's edition and to Kraus' article but not to van Ess in: d'Ancona, C. "Le traduzioni di opera greche e la formazione del corpus filosofico arabo," *Storia della filosofia nell'Islam medievale* 1 (2005), pp. 180-258, esp p. 202. Kristo-Nagy follows Dāneshpazhūh and ascribes the text to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, but does not refer to van Ess or to Gutas in: Kristo-Nagy, 2013, 175-179.

translated the text, circumstantial evidence shows that it was translated from Middle Persian.

Middle Persian as the source language of the *Manṭiq*

When Kraus argued that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's son was the translator, he did not know anything about the identity of this son, other than the fact that Ibn al-Nadīm states that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ had one.[121] However, later scholars discovered that a passage in the work of al-Balādhurī provides more details on this eighth century individual.[122] al-Balādhurī writes that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ junior was a secretary of Maʿn ibn Zaʿida, who was governor of Egypt under al-Manṣūr.[123] Moreover, al-Balādhurī writes that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ junior died before Maʿn ibn Zaʿida was transferred to Yemen in 760. Consequently, the *terminus ante quem* for Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ junior's death is 760, only a few years after his father passed away. Other than that, there is nothing known about Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's son. The conclusion is that the translation was made during the reign of al-Manṣūr (754-775). Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ junior followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps and pursued a bureaucratic career in the administration of the caliphate. Moreover, since any evidence to the contrary is lacking, the most

[121] *Kitāb al-Fihrist,* ed. Flügel (118); Kraus, 1934 5.

[122] The earliest reference to this passage in al-Baladhuri (see foonote 122) that I can find is in Kennedy's entry on Maʿn ibn Zaʿida in the sixth volume (1991) of the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (p. 345). See also: van Ess, 1991-1997, vol 2, 27; Arjomand, 1994, 35.

[123] *Ansāb al-ashrāf,* ed. Muhammad al-Firdaws al-Aẓm (Damascus: Dar al-Yaqaẓa, 1996), vol. 3, p. 268.

logical assumption is that the son also knew the same languages as his father, Arabic and Persian, and that if he made a translation of the first half of the Aristotle's *Organon*, he did so from Middle Persian.

Since the translation must have been made before 760, there is reason to assume that this was done from Middle Persian rather than from Greek. Already in the 1920's, Nallino argued that several Arabic translations of Greek texts must have had Middle Persian intermediaries.[124] Pingree and Kunitzsch substantiated and expanded these claims and their research has resulted in the following list of Greek texts that were translated from Middle Persian into Arabic: Cassianus Bassus Scholasticus' *Geoponica*, Dorotheus' *Carmen Astrologicum*, Vettius Valens' *Anthologiae*, Teucer of Babylon's *Paranatellonta*, and Hermes Trismegistus' *De Stellis Beibeniis*.[125] These translations were most likely made in the second half of the eight century, at a time, it has been argued, when translations from Persian were more common than translation from Syriac or Greek. In the case of astronomy, Pingree argued that until the reign of caliph al-Maʿmūn (813-833) and what he dubs the 'Ptolemaicisation' of astronomical models, Persian and Indian texts were more

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[124] Nallino, C. "Tracce di opere Greche giunte agli Arabi per trafila Pehlevica," in Arnold, T., Nicholson, R. *A volume of Oriental Studies presented to Edward G. Browne on his 60th birthday* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 346-363.

[125] Kunitzsch, P. "Ueber das Frühstadium der arabischen Aneignung antiken Gutes," *Saeculum* 26 (1975): pp. 268–282; Pingree, D. "Classical and Byzantine Astrology in Sasanian Persia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43 (1989): pp. 227–239. van Bladel lists these five ancient texts together with the other relevant publications by Kunitzsch and Pingree in*:* van Bladel, K. *Arabic Hermes* (Oxford, 2009), p. 27.

pervasive than Greek ones.[126] Kunitzsch argued that this primacy of Persian texts applied to the first phase of the Translation Movement in general.[127] At the end of the twentieth century, Gutas gave such claims a solid context by convincingly arguing that the instigator of the Translation Movement, caliph al-Manṣūr, adopted Sasanian imperial ideologies, including the patronage of translations of ancient texts, to appease Persian factions of political subjects and supporters.[128] Finally, van Bladel has supplemented these earlier studies by showing that during the reigns of al-Manṣūr , al-Mahdī and Harūn al-Rashīd, the ancient heritage of the lands that lay east and far east of Baghdad were more on the intellectual radar than the western lands, resulting in patronage of translations from Sanskrit and Middle Persian texts rather than Syriac and Greek.[129]

In short, the scholarly picture of the intellectual climate in Baghdad during the second half of the eighth century in general and at the court of al-Manṣūr in

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[46] *EI*[2] s.v. "Sindhind".

[127] Kunitzsch, 1975, 274.

[128] Gutas, D. *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*. *The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ʿAbbāsid Society* (New York, 1998), pp. 28-52.

[129] van Bladel, "The Bactrian background of the Barmakids," in Akasoy, A., Burnett, C., Yoeli-Tlalim, R. (eds.) *Islam and Tibet. Interactions along the Musk Routes* (Surrey, 2011), pp. 43-88, esp. pp. 81-86; van Bladel, K. "The Arabic History of Science of Abū Sahl ibn Nawbakht (fl. ca 770-809) and Its Middle Persian Sources," in Reisman, D., Opwis, F. (eds.) *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 41-62, esp. pp. 42-43; "Eighth-Century Indian Astronomy in the Two Cities of Peace," in Ahmed, A., Hoyland, R., Sadeghi, B., Silverstein, A. (eds.) *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Patricia Cron*e (Leiden, 2015), pp. 257-94, esp. pp. 260-264.

particular, points to an interest in translations from Middle Persian rather than Greek. Therefore, this circumstantial evidence substantiates rather than contradicts the initial assumption that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ or his son must have translated the paraphrase of Aristotle's text from Middle Persian some time during the 750's.

One major problem remains and that is the fact that the source text of this translation has not survived. If circumstantial evidence from the early Abbasid period points to a lost Middle Persian original, then the next question is whether any evidence of the Sasanian intellectual tradition contradicts the possibility of the existence of Aristotelian logic in Middle Persian. Compared to the evidence of the late antique and medieval intellectual traditions in Syriac, Greek and Arabic, the Middle Persian one is a black hole, since hardly any text has survived. Nevertheless, there are a few minor indications that Greek logic played a role in Middle Persian discourses.

The *Denkārd,* a tenth century Zoroastrian text written in Middle Persian, mentions that the third century Sasanian shah Shapūr I (ca. 240 - ca. 270) collected Greek texts on logic.[130] In another passage of the *Denkārd* the Middle Persian word for 'substance', *tōhmak*, is explained in a recognizably Aristotelian way.[131] This could mean that some Aristotelian logic was known in the third century in Sasanian

[130] Gutas, 1998, 36.

[131] Shaki, M., "Some Basic Tenets of the Eclectic Metaphysics of the Dēnkart," *Archiv Orientalni* 38 (1970): pp. 277-312, esp. p. 289.

intellectual circles. More importantly, in the middle of the sixth century, Khusrau I Anushiruwān (531-579) is mentioned in different sources as a shah who promoted Greek learning: Procopius writes that he was interested in philosophical debates and in Agathias' history there is an often quoted passage which says that several philosophers were hosted by Khusrau I for two years after Justinian had closed the Academy in Athens.[132] Agathias' account seems somewhat less anecdotal in light of the fact that one of the intellectuals at the court of Khusrau I, Paul the Persian, dedicated a treatise on Aristotelian logic to this monarch.[133] Until he converted to Zoroastrianism, Paul was a Nestorian Christian. Nestorian intellectuals provide us with the clearest evidence of the presence of Aristotelian logic in the Sasanian realm, since they are an integral part of the Syriac intellectual sphere. In the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, Syriac speaking Christians could be found on either side of the contested border of the Byzantine and the Sasanian Empire. Especially after 489, when the school of Edessa was moved to Nisibis, which remained mostly under

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[132] Dignas, B., Winter, E. *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity. Neighbours and Rivals* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 263-265; Izdebski, A. "Cultural Contacts between the Superpowers of Late Antiquity: the Syriac School of Nisibis and the transmission of Greek educational experience to the Persian Empire," in Izdebski, A., Jasiński, D. (eds.) *Cultures in motion. Studies in the medieval and early modern periods* (Byzantina et Slavica Cracoviensia 2) (Krakow, 2014), pp. 185-204, esp. pp. 203-204.

[133] On Paul the Persian, see: Gutas, D. "Paul the Persian on the classification of the parts of Aristotle's philosophy: a milestone between Alexandria and Baghdad," *Der Islam* 60 (1983): pp. 231-67; Bruns, P. "Paul der Perser," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 104 (2009): pp. 28-53.; Hugonnard-Roche, H. "Du commentaire à la reconstruction: Paul le Perse interprète d' Aristote," in Lössl, J., Watt, J. (eds.) *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity. The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition between Rome and Baghdad* (Surrey, 2011), pp. 207-224.

Sasanian rule, Aristotelian logic and the texts of the *Organon* were taught and discussed in the Sasanian world. Consequently, if Syriac translations of Aristotelian logical texts were circulating in the Sasanian world, it is possible that these texts were translated into the intellectual language of the empire, Middle Persian. In fact, Paul the Persian's works are an example of such Syriac-to-Middle Persian cross-pollination. Two of Paul's works have survived, the *Introduction into Logic* and a commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. Both texts have survived in Syriac, but one of the manuscripts says that the commentary on *On Intepretation* was translated in the seventh century from Middle Persian into Syriac. For this reason, scholars have speculated that the other text by Paul may also have been composed in Middle Persian.[134] Bruns has argued that such conjectures are confirmed by clues within the text.[135] This means that two Aristotelian logical texts circulated in Middle Persian in the sixth century. Considering the fact that in the Greek and Syriac tradition the first four texts of the *Organon* were studied as a whole, it is not unlikely that the other three texts were also available in Middle Persian. In short, the presence of Aristotelian logic in Middle Persian intellectual discourses is plausible. Although the evidence of Paul the Persian does not prove that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, who lived 150

[134] Gutas, 1983, 239.

[135] Bruns, 2009, 36: "Pauls Diktion ist nicht nur (...) in der Widmung durch und durch persisch, seinen gelehrten Ausführungen zur univoken bzw. äquivoken Verwendung der Begriffe für "Sonne" und "Feuer" kann nur ein iranischer Muttersprachler folgen, da im Syrischen jeglicher Wortwitz verloren gegangen ist."

years later, used a Middle Persian version of the *Organon*, it does substantiate such a claim.

In conclusion, all the circumstantial evidence points to the fact that the text was translated from Middle Persian into Arabic: the fact that the translator was either Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ or his son, who were both Persian secretaries; the fact that, consequently, it was translated before 760, at a time when translations from Middle Persian were more common than from Syriac or Greek; and, subsidiarily, the fact that an Aristotelian logical tradition in Middle Persian is at least a possibility. Although, almost a century ago, the scholarly debate on the circumstances of this Arabic translation was instigated by a scholarly reluctance to accept Middle Persian as the source language, the circumstantial evidence that has been accumulated since, points to that very fact. Nevertheless, internal evidence could still turn the final verdict around. A thorough linguistic analysis of the Arabic text could, if unambiguous Persianisms are detected, corroborate the circumstantial evidence, or, if unambiguous Grecisms or Syriacisms are detected, refute it. However, until such a study is conducted, the conclusion must be that *Manṭiq* was translated from Middle

Persian into Arabic.[136] This translation is the oldest Arabic translation of any Aristotelian text. Below I will discuss the section of the *Manṭiq* that deals with the *Categories.*

The paraphrase of the *Categories* in the *Manṭiq*

The Arabic text does not include an introduction. Instead, it starts right away with a paraphrase of the *Isagoge,* after which follow paraphrases of the *Categories,* the *On Interpretation* and the *Prior Analytics*. This follows the established structure of the Proto-Organon as we know it from the Greco-Syriac world. The first sentence of the paraphrase starts as follows:

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[136] Since I do not read either Syriac or Middle Persian, I am not able to perform such an investigation.

Professor Azranouche, of the University of Tehran, told me that she has is convinced that the Arabic text contains linguistic evidence of a Middle Persian origin. Sadly, none of her findings have been published.

Cooperson claimed that the language of the text reveals that is was based on a Greek original (and, therefore, he proposes that the author was an unknown Christian convert to Islam who was also named Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ), but he does not provide any examples in Cooperson, M. "Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ," in Cooperson, M., Toorawa, Sh. (eds.) *Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol CCCXI: Arabic Literary Culture, 500-925* (Detroit, 2005), pp. 150-163, esp. p. 156.

Similarly, Gutas asserts that the text must have been translated from Greek and subsequently proposes an interesting but speculative scenario (using information from the colophon in the manuscript), in which the text was first translated from Greek into Arabic and then revised by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ or his son. For evidence of the text internal Grecisms, Gutas refers to Kraus in: Gutas, 2012, 73. Kraus' main point, (1934, 8-9) is that the Greek word for substance, "ousia," has been translated with the Semitic word "'ayn" and not with the Persian word "jāwhar." However Carlo Nallino has already shown that early Muslim theologians used "jāwhar" for a specific interpretation of substance, that of a singular atom, and *'ayn* for composite substance, which is closer to what Aristotle talks about: Nallino, C. "Noterelle su Ibn al-Muqaffa e suo figlio," *Rivista degli studi orientali* 14 (1934): pp. 130-134, esp. p. 133.

> "We have presented, **as is customary**, the interpretation of the book of the *Isagoge,* so that we have come to the four, the origin of which is the book of the *Categories* (…)."[137]

The 'four' refer to the first four of the ten predicates in the *Categories,* which Aristotle discussed in detail: substance, quantity, relation and quality. Moreover, this opening sentence of the Arabic texts provides two important pieces of information. The fact that the first person plural is used (as is the case throughout the *Manṭiq*) probably indicates that the text was part of oral classes or discussions. Similar to the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus, therefore, education seems to be the context in which the *Categories* was used. Secondly, the fact Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ writes that discussing the *Isagoge* before the *Categories* was customary implies that teaching the Proto-Organon was an established tradition and not a new practice.

The text is not a translation of any of the existing Greek or Syriac commentaries on the *Categories.* Consequently, there are two possibilities: either Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ literally translated a lost Middle Persian paraphrase and the first person is the voice of some unknown commentator/teacher or Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ collected the material and he himself is the subject of the first person. Zimmermann, after studying

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[137] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs,* 17:

قد قدمنا **ما جرت العادة** بتقديمها من كتاب ايساغوجى، و حين صرنا الى الاربة: الاول منها كتاب قطوغوريوس (…)

All the numbers refer to sections in Dāneshpazhūh's edition of the *Categories* (Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, pp. 9-24). The English translations are my own.

the paraphrase of the *On Interpretation* in the Beirut manuscript, stated that the "element of explanation is most naturally ascribed to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ himself."[138] However, what is "natural" is arbitrary and the possibility of a literal translation from a Middle Persian original cannot be excluded with certainty.[139] Furthermore, Zimmerman writes that the text "may be a "translation" only in the very weak sense that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ gave the final linguistic form to bits of information gathered from various sources."[140] Although it is true that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's text is not an actual translation of the original Greek text, the structure of the text does follow Aristotle closely, as this table shows:[141]

Table 3: The *Categories* in the *Manṭiq*

Topics discussed:	**Aristotle, *Categories***	**Ibn al-Muqaffa, *Manṭiq***
1. Univocal/Equivocal	1a1-1a15	—
2. Fourfold division	1a15-1b9	28-29
3. Predicates	1b10-1b24	28
4. Tenfold division: the ten predicates	1b25-2a10	18-28

[138] Zimmermann, 1972, 542 n.34.

[139] Nevertheless, in the rest of this chapter, I discuss the details of the Arabic text as if they are Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's own deliberate choices.

[140] *Ibid,* 542 n. 34.

[141] The numbers under Aristotle are the Bekker numbering, also printed in the margins of Minio-Paluello's edition (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 3-45). The numbers under Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ refer to the sections in Dāneshpazhūh's edition of the *Categories* (Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, 9-24).

Topics discussed:	Aristotle, *Categories*	Ibn al-Muqaffa, *Manṭiq*
5. Substance	2a11-4b19	30-33
6. Quantity	4b20-6a35	34-43
7. Relation	6a36-8b24	44-46
8. Quality	8b25-11a39	47-49
9. Remaining Categories	11b1-11b14	50
10. Opposites	11b15-14a25	51
11. Five senses of 'prior'	14a26-14b23	52
12. Simultaneity	14b24-15a12	53
13. Kinds of motion	15a13-15b16	54
14. Meanings of 'to have'	15b17-15b32	55

The Arabic text follows the Greek original more closely than one would expect of a paraphrase.[142] Except for the opening paragraph, all the sections of the original *Categories* are discussed and, except for numbers 2 and 4, the original sequence has been maintained. The text ends in the same way as Aristotle's *Categories*, with a haphazard discussion of the different meanings of the verb 'to have'. Therefore Ibn

[142] Much more accurately, for instance, than the Latin *Categoriae Decem,* see: Kenny, 2005, 122-128.

al-Muqaffaʿ did not freely give his own form to the material, but to a large degree faithfully followed Aristotle's own organization of the text.

The exact wording within each of these sections does not follow Aristotle's text. At this verbal level, the *Categories* has actually been paraphrased. More than a century after Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, in the second half of the ninth century, ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn made a new translation of the *Categories* - probably from a now lost Syriac translation made by his father, Ḥunayn ibn ʾIsḥāq.[143] ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's text is an almost verbatim translation of the *Categories.* In comparison, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's text seems a loose rendering. Nevertheless, a closer analysis of the two most important sections of the text, that of the tenfold and fourfold classification, will show that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ still conveyed the principal concepts of the *Categories* clearly and accurately.

Aristotle enumerates the ten predicates in a short paragraph in the form of a list with one or two examples after each category. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ has made an effort to render the wording in Arabic in a way that is similar to the original Greek version: by means of interrogative adverbs. The category "place," for instance, is introduced like this:

[143] ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's translation has been edited by Georr: Georr, K. *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions Syro-Arabes* (Beirut, 1948), pp. 319-358

> "He said: then we found, after these names, other things that occur in speech, such as when someone says: in the house and in the market. We looked for a collective name for these and we found "place," that is everything which relates to: "where.""[144]

The word "place" is a perfectly good description of what Aristotle discusses in his text and would have been sufficiently clear for a paraphrase. Nevertheless, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ chose to add a relative clause in his text which rephrases the noun "place" as the interrogative adverb "where." It seems likely that he did this in an attempt to render Aristotle's text more accurately. Moreover, one of the example he mentions, 'in the market', is also one of the examples found in Aristotle.[145]

All the ten categories are introduced in a similar style. Wherever Aristotle uses a interrogative adverb, so does Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Conversely, where the original Greek text does not use an interrogative adverb, neither does Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, such as the category "posture:"[146]

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[144] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs,* 22:
قال: ثم وجدنا بعد هذه الاسماء اشياء اخرى تجري في الكلام كقول القاءل: في البيت و في السوق، فالتمسنا لذلك اسما جامعا، فوجدناه المكان، و هو كل شيء يقع عليه اين.

[145] ἐν ἀγορᾷ: Aristotle, *Categories* 2a1 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 5).

[146] κεῖσθαι: Aristotle, *Categories* 2a1 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 5).

> "He said: then we found, after that, other things that occur in speech, such as when someone says: standing, sitting, lying down. We looked for a collective name for these and we found "posture.""[147]

In this sentence as well, two of the examples mentioned, "sitting" and "lying down'" are literal translations of the Greek.[148] Furthermore, if we compare Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's translations of the categories with those found in the translation by ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn, then it is clear that in many cases they are the same, as this table shows:[149]

Table 4: The Tenfold Classification in the *Manṭiq*

Category	Aristotle	Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ	ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn
1. Substance	οὐσία (substance)	al-ʿayn العين	al-jāwhar الجوهر
2. Quantity	ποσὸν (how much?)	kam كم	kam كم
3. Quality	ποιὸν (how?)	kayf كيف	kayf كيف
4. Relation	πρός τί (to what?)	al-muḍāf المضاف	al-iḍāfa الأضافة

[147] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs,* 25:
قال: ثم وجدنا بعد هذه ذلك اشياء اخرى تجري في الكلام كقول القاءل: قاءم قاَعد مضطجع، فالتمسنا لذلك اسما جامعا، فوجدناه النصبة.

[148] κάθηται, ἀνάκειται: Aristotle, *Categories* 2a1-2a2 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 5).

[149] Aristotle, *Categories*, 1b26-1b27 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 5), Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs,* 18-27 (Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, 9-11), ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn, *Kitāb Aristūtelīs al-Muqālāt* 1b25 (Georr, 1948, 321).

Category	Aristotle	Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ	ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn
5. Place	ποὺ (where?)	ayna اين	ayna اين
6. Time	ποτὲ (when?)	matā متى	matā متى
7. Posture	κεῖσθαι (to be in a position)	al-naṣbah النصبة	mawḍūʿ موضوع
8. State	ἔχειν (to be in a state)	dhū māl ذو مال	an yakūn lahu أن يكون له
9. Action	ποιεῖν (to do)	al-fʿal الفعل	an yafʾal أن يفعل
10. Affection	πάσχειν (to undergo)	al-mafʿūl المفعول	an yafʿal أن ينفعل

Numbers 2,3,5 and 6 are exactly the same in ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn and in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, whereas numbers 4,9 and 8 are different forms of the same verb. Perhaps ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn made use of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿʾs text when he translated the *Categories* anew but there is no evidence for that. What this similarity does show is that the wording of the categories in the very accurate and the almost verbatim translation of ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn is similar to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿʾs. This is another indication of the accuracy of the latter's Arabic paraphrase.

Regarding the category "substance," Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ uses a purely Arabic word, *al-ʿayn*, whereas ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn uses an Middle Persian loanword,

jāwhar.[150] Kraus used this difference to corroborate his argument that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's text was not translated from Middle Persian.[151] However, Nallino has shown that the early Muslim theologians used *jāwhar* for a specific interpretation of substance, that of a singular atom, and *al-ʿayn* for composite substance, which is closer to what Aristotle talks about in his *Categories*.[152] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, in paragraph 28, writes himself that *al-ʿayn* is the name of all the *jāwhar.*[153] Finally, the category "state" is the only one that is incorrectly translated by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. The Greek verb 'to have' (ἔχειν) is used by Aristotle intransitively, meaning "to be in a certain condition," but Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ translates it actively, describing it as "possessing wealth" - a mistake which ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn did not repeat.

The fourfold division is paraphrased as follows:

> "Then, accident and substance exist in four stages: firstly, general and specific. The general and specific are the whole and the particular. A general substance is as when someone says: "human," a specific substance is as when someone says: "this particular human being." A

[150] This difference was already noted by al-Khawrizmi: Nallino, C., 'Noterelle su Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ e suo figlio', *Rivista degli studi orientali* 14 (1934), pp. 130-134, esp. p.133.

[151] Kraus, 1934, 8-9.

[152] Nallino, 1934, p. 133-4. See also: Hein,1985, 44.

[153] فالعين اسم كل جوهر

general accident is as when someone says: “whiteness,” and a specific accident is as saying: “this particular whiteness.’’[154]

In this paragraph Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ follows Aristotle less strictly. Aristotle’s “not in a subject,” “in a subject,” “said of a subject” and “not said of a subject,” are paraphrased as “substance,” “accident,” “general” and “specific.”[155] Although there may be philosophical implications to these choice of words, the actual meaning is not significantly dissimilar to what Aristotle is describing in the *Categories*. Furthermore, the examples used, “human,” “this particular human being” and “his particular whiteness” are identical to those in the Greek original.[156]

A closer philosophical analysis of the whole *Manṭiq* may reveal that this text is influenced by certain Late antique commentaries. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the philological analysis of the section on the *Categories* above is that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ has not deviated significantly from Aristotle’s text. Both with regard to structure of the text at a macro-level with regard to the wording of key terms on a micro-level, this paraphrase follows the original Greek text accurately. It is hard to imagine that

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[154] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs,* 29:
ثم يصير العرض و العين على اربع منازل: من قبل و الخاص. فالعام و الخاص هما الكل و البعض. فالعين العام كقول الالقاءل: الانس، و العين الخاص كقول القاءل: هذا الانسان. والعرض العام كقول القاءل: البياض، و العرض الخاص كقوله: هذا البياض.

[155] Aristotle, *Categories,* 1a20-1a24 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 3-4): “ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ,” “ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ οὐδενί,” “καθ’ ὑποκειμένου λέγεται,” “καθ’ ὑποκειμένου δὲ οὐδενὸς λέγεται.”

[156] Aristotle, *Categories,* 1a22-1b4 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 4): “ἄνθρωπος,” “ὸ τὶς ἄνθρωπος,” “τὸ τὶ λευκὸν.”

this paraphrase was made on the basis only of other epitomes, paraphrases or commentaries. Furthermore, it seems impossible that only oral sources lay at its root. It seems far more plausible that the author of this paraphrase had access to some kind of translation of the *Categories.* And whether Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ is the translator or the author of this paraphrase, the inevitable implication is that reliable translations or epitomes of the Aristotelian logical texts must have circulated in Middle Persian in the eighth century.

In conclusion, around the middle of the eighth century the *Categories* was known in the Caliphate in Greek, Syriac, Middle Persian, and Arabic. The *Dialectica* of John of Damascus and the *Manṭiq* of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ indicate that this text was actively studied. Both texts depend on an indirect transmission of the *Categories,* but do convey the main concept of the treatise, including the tenfold classification, accurately. Furthermore, the nature of both texts shows that this Aristotelian treatise was used in some kind of educational context. It is clear that this educational context was not marginal because of several reasons: the fact that many Syriac commentaries and translations were composed in this period; the fact that the *Categories* was integral to the only known seventh century educational textbooks in Greek; and, finally, the fact that the *Categories* is part of the first Aristotelian text that was ever translated into Arabic.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN WESTERN EUROPE?

As far as the study of *Categories* is concerned, there seems to be complete silence in the West during the middle of the eighth century. No intellectuals are known to have translated, copied or in any other way engaged with the *Categories* or with Aristotelian dialectics during this period. In fact, scholarly accounts of early medieval dialectics jump from Boethius to Alcuin.[157] Marenbon writes that "between the death of Boethius and the time of Alcuin, there is no evidence of any (…) active philosophical speculation."[158] However, the word "philosophical" betrays a selective approach to the source material. It is true that only by the end of the eighth century do intellectuals start to engage with Aristotle's *Categories* explicitly. It is clear that the philosophical ideas of people like Alcuin and John Scottus Eriugena are influenced by the *Categories*. Between Boethius and Alcuin there is no evidence for that kind of engagement. Nevertheless, John of Damascus and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ were not influenced by the *Categories* or by Aristotelian logic either. They paraphrased or translated the *Categories* but never used its terminology in the rest of their oeuvre. In the strictest sense, therefore, John of Damascus and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ did not

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[157] See, for instance: van de Vijver, A., "Les étapes du développement philosophique du Haut Moyen-Âge," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 8.2 (1929), pp.425-452, esp. pp. 428-431; van de Vijver, A., "Vroeg-Middeleeuwsche wijsgeerige verhandelingen," *Tijdschrift voor philosophie* 4 (1942), pp. 156-199, esp. 159-160; Minio-Paluello, 1945, 70; Marenbon, J. *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 3-4; Law, V. "Carolingian Grammarians and Theoretical Innovation," in Ahlquist, A., ed., *Diversions of Galway. Papers on the History of Linguistics* (Studies in the History of the Language Sciences 68) (Amsterdam, 1992), pp. 27-37, esp. pp. 28-29.

[158] Marenbon, 1981, 3.

approach the *Categories* philosophically. Consequently, in the Latin tradition one should not look for a philosophical engagement in order to find a counterpart to John and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Was there any engagement with the *Categories* whatsoever in the Latin west at the middle of the eighth century?

Latin paraphrases and translations of the *Categories* were made in the 4th to 6th centuries, Boethius' being the most accurate and famous one. Therefore, there was no need for any western contemporary of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ to make a new Latin translation. Moreover, by the seventh century, the earlier Latin versions of the *Categories* had made their way into works that functioned as general overviews of higher learning, such as the fifth century *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* by Martianus Capella and Cassiodorus' *Institutiones*. The most influential of such works was the seventh century *Etymologies* by Isidore of Seville. In the second book of this encyclopedic work, Isidore includes an account of the *Categories* in his section on dialectics:

> "We come to the categories of Aristotle, which in Latin are called "predications." With these every form of discourse is included in accordance with their various signfications.(…) There are ten species of categories: substance, quantity, quality, relation, situation, place, time, habit, activity, and passivity. "Substance" is what a thing properly and principally is called, which is neither predicated of the subject, or

> inheres in the subject, as "some particular man" or "some particular horse." In addition, there are things called "secondary substances," in which types of those things that were just now called substances in the principal sense are present and included, as the principal substance "Cicero" in the secondary substance "man." "Quality" is the measure by which something is shown to be large or small, as "long," "short." "Quality" expresses "of what sort" a person may be, as "orator" or "peasant," "black" or "white." "Relation" is what is related to something, for when "son" is said, "father" is also indicated."[159]

This passage, which is approximately a fifth of Isidore's account of the *Categories,* is an accurate but simplified paraphrase of the first paragraphs of Aristotle's original Greek text. Then ten predicates are listed in a correct translation, after which the fourfold division is simplified into the difference between primary and secondary

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[159] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XXV.1,5-7: Trans. Barney, S., Lewis, W., Beach, J., Berghof, O. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge 2006, repr. 2010), p. 81-2;
Ed. Lindsay, W. *Isidori hispalensis episcopi Etymologiae sive Originum. Libri XX.* 2 vols. (Oxford Classical Texts) (Oxford, 1911):
"De Categoriis Aristotelis. Sequuntur Aristotelis categoriae, quae Latine praedicamenta dicuntur, quibus per varias significationes omnis sermo conclusus est. (…) Categoriarum autem species sunt, id est substantia, quantitas, qualitas, relatio, situs, locus, tempus, habitus, agere et pati. Substantia est, quae proprie et principaliter dicitur, quae neque de subjecto praedicatur, neque in subiecto est, ut aliqui homo vel aliqui equus. Secundae autem substantiae dicuntur, in quibus speciebus illae, quae principaliter substantiae primo dictae sunt, insunt atque clauduntur, ut in nomine Cicero. Quantitas est mensura, per quam aliquid vel magnum vel minus ostenditur, ut longus, brevis. Qualitas est, ut qualis sit, orator an rusticus, niger aut candidus. Relatio est, quae refertur ad aliquid. Cum enim dicitur filius, demonstratur et pater."

substance. The predicates "Substance," "Quality" and "Relation" are explained first, three of the four categories that Aristotle singles out. In other words, although Isidore's paraphrase is less accurate than those of John of Damascus or Ibn al-Muqaffa', an early medieval reader of the *Etymologies* would still have acquired a rudimentary sense of the basic notions of the *Categories*.

Whereas there is no indication that Boethius' translation of the *Categories* was read in the first few centuries after his death, Isidore of Seville's work found a wide audience throughout the medieval world starting from the seventh century. Already in the seventh century, within decades after its composition, this work was copied in Spain and Italy; and in the first half of the eighth century, manuscripts of the *Etymologies* had spread to Francea and the British Isles.[160] Already in the late seventh century the British scholar Aldhelm had read at least parts of the *Etymologies.*[161] Díaz y Díaz claims that there is enough evidence to assume that over the course of the seventh century copies of the *Etymologies* could be found in all of the major cultural centers of Western Europe.[162] Consequently, it is possible that the

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[160] Bischoff, B. "Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla," in Bischoff, B. *Mittelalterliche Studien,* vol. I (Stuttgart 1966), pp. 171-194.

[161] Barney, S., Lewis, W., Beach, J., Berghof, O. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge 2006, repr. 2010), p. 24.

Aldhelm shows in his *De Virginate* knowledge of the ten predicates: Riché, 1995, 551 fn. 189.

[162] In his introduction to the Spanish edition of the *Etymologies:* Ed. Oroz Reta, J., Casquero, M. *Etimologías: edición bilingüe.* with translation, commentary and introduction by Díaz y Díaz, C. (Madrid, 1993), p. 210. See also: Díaz y Díaz, M. "Les arts libéraux d'après les écrivains espagnol et insulaires aux VIIe et VIIIe siècles," *Arts libéraux et philosophie au Moyen Age* (Montréal, 1969), pp. 37-46.

seventh century intellectuals who studied this text, also read the passage on the *Categories.* The most famous of these scholars is an older contemporary of John of Damascus and Ibn al-Muqaffa‘: Bede the Venerable (672-735), who lived and worked all his life in England. Bede was a prolific author, whose oeuvre includes scientific, historical and theological works. Nevertheless, none of his works mentions the *Categories* or is in any way influenced by it. In general, Bede showed reluctance towards using pagan authors, and, more importantly, he seems to have ignored many parts of the curriculum of liberal arts, including dialectics.[163] In the *Trivium* of the canonical organization of the seven liberal arts— grammar, dialectics and rhetoric—grammar seems to have received by far the most attention in the seventh and eighth centuries. This may be the reason why intellectuals in the Western Europe who may have had access to Isidore's *Etymologies* did not take up the section of the *Categories*.

Neither John of Damascus nor Bede used the *Categories* in their theological works, but John did include a large paraphrase of the *Categories* in his *Dialectica* and Bede did not, although he had access to the *Etymologies* of Isidore and was influenced by it.[164] This difference seems indicative: the theoretical notions conveyed in Aristotle's text did not play an important role, if any, for scholars in

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[163] Riché, P. *Éducation et culture dans l'Occident barbare. VIe-VIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1962, repr. 1995), p. 318.

[164] Barney e.a., 2010, 25.

Western Europe. Nevertheless, that the theory of the ten predicates was used in education cannot be excluded altogether, since there is so little known about the educational curriculum in general.

CHAPTER II

INTELLECTUALS AROUND 800 CE

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ALCUIN, NICEPHORUS, THEODORE THE STUDITE

THE COUNCIL OF 787

Practically all Greek literature that survives from the eighth century seems to have been produced outside of Constantinople. The most productive area was the Levant with John of Damascus as its most famous representative. By the end of the eighth century this picture changes, when intellectual activity picked up again in the capital of the Byzantine Empire. The main event that preluded this upswing was the seventh ecumenical council, which took place in 787 in Nicaea, not far from the capital: the Second Council of Nicaea. This council reinstated the veneration of icons and therefore marked the end of the first period of iconoclasm.[165] However, the debates between iconophile and iconoclastic intellectuals did not stop in 787. In fact, more intellectual reflections on the issue of iconoclasm survive from the period after this council. It is in these debates that references to Aristotle's *Categories* appear.

The application of terminology from the *Categories* to the debate of icons is most clearly found in the works of Nicephorus and Theodore the Studite at the beginning of the ninth century. However, the first echoes of this treatise in Greek literature of this period are attested in the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea.

[165] Two good introductions to the Second Council of Nicaea are: Davis, L. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Theology and Life Series 21) (Wilmington 1988), pp. 290-322; and: Thümmel, H. G., *Die Konzilien zur Bilderfrage im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn, 2005), pp. 87-198.

When the Acts discuss the relation between an icon and the heavenly or divine figure it depicts, we find the following sentence:

> "The icon resembles the prototype, not with regard to the essence, but only with regard to the name."[166]

This analytical separation between the name and the essence of an object recalls the opening paragraph of Aristotle's *Categories* to mind:[167]

> "When things have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different, they are called homonymous. Thus, for example, both a man and a picture are animals.

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[166] Mansi, 1902, 13. 257D: καὶ ἡ εἰκὼν οὐ **κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν** τῷ πρωτοτύπῳ ἔοικεν, ἢ μόνον **κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα**. Trans. Sahas, D. *Icon and logos : sources in eighth-century iconoclasm : an annotated translation of the sixth session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicea, 787), containing the definition of the Council of Constantinople (754) and its refutation, and the definition of the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Toronto, 1986), p. 89.

[167] This parallel was first noticed by Anagnastapoulos, in her dissertation: Anagnostopoulos, T. *Object and Symbol: Greek Learning and the Aesthetics of Identity in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Berkeley, 2008), p. 129 fn. 51. See also: Anagnastopoulos, T. "Aristotle and Byzantine Iconoclasm," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013): pp. 763–790, esp. pp. 772-4.

> These have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different (….)."[168]

Tarasius, who was patriarch from 784 to 806, presided over the Second Council of Nicaea and was most probably the main author of the Acts. The main source for Tarasius' life is the ninth century *Vita* written by Ignatius the Deacon.[169] Ignatius does not mention Aristotle or the study of logic, only the fact that Tarasius also received a secular education.[170] Nevertheless, a plausible explanation for the echoes of the *Categories* in the Acts is that Tarasius had studied logical handbooks based on Aristotle's *Categories*, such as the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus.[171] Furthermore, Tarasius' use of the *Categories* should be placed in the larger development of the use of this text in the period 775-825. In the wake of the Second Council of Nicaea several authors applied terms from the *Categories* to their discussions of the veneration of icons. Surprisingly, however, the first instance of such an application is

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[168] Ed. Aristotle's *Categories* 1a1-3 (Ed. Minio-Paluello, 1936, p.3):
'Ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, **ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος**, οἷον ζῷον ὅ τε ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὸ γεγραμμένον· τούτων γὰρ ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος (…)'.
Trans. Ackrill, J. Aristotle, *Categories and On Interpretation* (Oxford, 1963), p.3.

[169] See: Efthymiadis , S. *Ignatius The Deacon: The Life of the Patriarch Tarasius* (Surrey, 1998).

[170] Lemerle P. (trans. Lindsay, H, Moffatt, A.) *Byzantine Humanism: the First Phase. Notes and Remarks on Education and Culture in Byzantium from its Origins to the 10th Century.* (Byzantina Australiensia, 3.) (Canberra, 1986), p. 147.

[171] For the small number of other echoes of the *Categories* in the Acts, see: Anagnastopoulos, 2008, 129; Anagnastopoulos, 2013, 772-4.

not found in Greek literature, but in a Latin text from the Carolingian world, the *Libri Carolini*.

The *Libri Carolini*

Within a few years after the council of 787, an official response to a Latin translation of the *Acts* was composed at the court of Charlemagne, the *Libri Carolini*.[172] Three references in the *Libri Carolini* show that the author must have been familiar with the *Categories*. However, he had not read the Aristotelian text, as one would expect, in Boethius' literal translation or as part of Isidore's *Etymologies,* but in the fourth century paraphrase, the *Categoriae Decem.* The three references to the *Categoriae Decem* in the *Libri Carolini* are the first instance in more than 150 years that a surviving Latin text refers to any paraphrase or translation of the *Categories*.[173] Since the Greek text of the *Acts* of the council of 787 also contained an echo of the *Categories,* it is tempting to think that it was the Latin translation of the Greek *Acts* that prompted the author of the *Libri Carolini* to take up the *Categoriae Decem.* Consequently, before I discuss the *Libri Carolini*, it is worth exploring the details of

[172] The title of this work in the manuscript tradition is *Opus Caroli Regis contra Synodum*, but the work is most often referred to by its post-medieval designation, *Libri Carolini.* For the standard edition of this work, see: Ed. Freeman, A., Meyvaert, P. *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum (Libri Carolini)* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Concilia, Tomus II, Supplementum I) (Hannover, 1998).

[173] The last author to have used this text was Isidore of Seville in the early seventh century: see Minio-Paluello, 1945, 70.

the westward transmission of the *Acts.* Perhaps some kind of epitome of the *Categories* accompanied this text as it was brought to Western Europe?

At the Second Council of Nicaea two papal envoys were present, Peter the Archpriest of the Roman Church and Peter the abbot of St. Saba.[174] The best source for the return of these envoys to Rome is the following passage in the biography of pope Hadrian I in the *Liber Pontificalis:*

> "The same envoys brought with them this synod's decree in Greek along with the empress' mandates with their actual signatures. The noteworthy bishop bade them to be translated into Latin and deposited in the sacred library, and so created a worthy everlasting memorial to his own orthodox faith."[175]

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[174] Noble, T. *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2011), p. 160.

[175] Trans. Davis, R. *The Lives of the Eighth Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis). The Ancient Biographies of Nine Popes from AD 715 to AD 817* (Translated Texts for Historians 13) (Liverpool, 1992), p. 165 (I have corrected "emperor's" into "empress'").
Ed. Duchesne, L. *Le Liber Pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire*. 2 vols. (Paris, 1886-1892), vol. I, p. 512:
"Quam synodum iamdicti missi in greco sermone secum deferentes una cum imperialibus sacris propriis subscriptis, praedictus egregius antistes in latinam eam translatari iussit, et in sacra bibliotheca pariter recondi, dignam sibi orthodoxe fidei memoriam faciens."

This account is corroborated by the only ninth century Carolingian author who refers to the *Libri Carolini*, Hincmar of Reims: Noble, 2011, 161 fn.6; Freeman, A. "Theodulf of Orleans and the Libri Carolini." *Speculum* 32.4 (1957), pp. 663-705, esp. p. 664-5.

This passage tells us that the Greek text of the *Acts* was accompanied by imperial letters from empress Irene, but there is no indication that the two Peters brought an Aristotelian text, or any other text for that matter, along with them. Unfortunately, the imperial letters have not survived.[176] The Latin translation that pope Hadrian commissioned has not survived either, but on the basis of the *Libri Carolini,* which includes many quotes from this translation, it is obvious that whoever translated them must have either had a limited knowledge of Greek or worked hastily.[177] The result was an inaccurate Latin translation.[178] Approximately a century later, in 873, Anastasius Bibliothecarius even felt obliged to make an entirely new and more reliable translation, as he explains in his dedicatory letter.[179]

Noble has demonstrated that the papal envoys returned to Rome in the fall of 787 and that by 789 a copy of the Latin translation of the *Acts* had arrived at the

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[176] For a general discussion of the interactions between Charlemagne and pope Hadrian I, see: Hartmann, F. Hadrian I (772-795). *Frühmittelalterliches Adelspapsttum und die Lösung Roms von byzantinischen Kaiser* (Päpste und Papsttum, 34) (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 197-278, esp. pp. 256-278.

[177] The actual translator is unknown, but scholars have speculated that it must have been someone close to the papal court: von den Steinen, W., "Entstehungsgeschichte der Libri Carolini," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 21 (1929-30), pp. 1-93, esp. pp. 20-23; and: Freeman, Meyvaert, 1998, 1.

[178] It seems also possible that the Latin translator was not incompetent, but that he deliberately distorted the meaning of several theological statements when translating the Greek words of the *Acts* into Latin. Such deliberate distortions could have resulted from papal instructions, which seems not implausible at a time when the papacy was distancing itself from the Byzantine church and state. Nevertheless, I have not found any secondary source exploring this possibility.

[179] See: Freeman, 1957, 666 fn. 7.

Carolingian court.[180] The inadequate Latin translation of the *Acts* made Charlemagne and his courtiers believe that some kind of heretical idolization of icons had prevailed in Byzantium. Consequently, Charlemagne set the wheels in motion for an official condemnation, which ultimately led to the council of Frankfurt in 794 and the publication of the *Libri Carolini* in 793.[181] It is not known who sent the translation to Charlemagne in 788-789, nor has any cover letter survived. Once again, there is no indication here either that the *Categories* or any other Aristotelian text was sent along with the translations. Furthermore, although the Greek text of the *Acts* contain an echo of Aristotle' *Categories,* neither the word "Aristotle" nor the word "*Categories*" is explicitly mentioned anywhere. It is therefore unlikely that the inaccurate Latin translation contained any mention of Aristotelian logic. Consequently, there is no evidence that the external impetus from Byzantium of the *Acts* of the Second Council of Nicaea are an explanation for the fact that the *Libri Carolini* are the first text in 150 years to quote from a paraphrase of Aristotle's

[180] Noble, 2011, 160.

[181] For the role of iconoclastic debate at the council of Frankfurt, see: Noble, 2011, 169-80 (169 fn 41 for references to general discussions on the council of Frankfurt).

Categories. The answer has to be sought in the internal dynamics of the intellectual activities at the Carolingian court and in the Carolingian society at large.[182]

The genesis of the *Libri Carolini* has received much scholarly attention.[183] The two most important results of these discussions concern the author and the date of composition. The *Libri Carolini* are written in the voice of Charlemagne himself, but the actual author is not revealed in any of the manuscripts. Since the sixteenth century, scholars have speculated about the original author, but in 1957 Freeman convincingly argued it was Theodulf of Orléans.[184] Theodulf was born in northern Spain in the middle of the eighth century and joined the Carolingian court sometime in the 780's.[185] Freeman has also shown that it was in 790 that Charlemagne

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[182] Another example of a theological debate between intellectuals at the Carolingian court which had its origins in Byzantium, is that of the so-called "nomen theory" (the difference between *nomen* and *res*). In this debate there is no indication of exchange of Aristotelian logic from Constantinople to Francia either, see: Ertl, T. "Byzantinischer Bilderstreit und fränkische Nomentheorie. Imperiales Handeln und dialektisches Denken im Vorfeld der Kaiserkrönung," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 40 (2006): pp. 13- 42, esp. pp. 35-36.

[183] The best discussions can be found in: von den Steinen, 1929-30, 1-93; Freeman, 1957, 663-705; Noble, 2011, 162-69, 180-206.

[184] Freeman, 1957, 676-705. Freeman's argument is mostly based on Hispanicisms in the language of the *Libri Carolini* and quotes from Mozarabic liturgy which must have come from Theodulf, the only Spaniard at Charlemagne's court. The most forceful attack on Freeman's argument is Wallach's, who holds that Alcuin was the author, see: Wallach, L. *Diplomatic Studies in Latin and Greek documents from the Carolingian Age* (Ithaca, 1977), esp. pp. 161-294. Despite Wallach's well-documented counterarguments, the scholarly consensus follows Freeman. For a convincing refutation of Wallach's argument, see: Bullough, D. "Alcuin and the Kingdom of Heaven: Liturgy, Theology and the Carolingian Age" in *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 161-240, esp. 181-6.

[185] The best discussions of the life and works of Theodulf of Orléans can be found in the Variorum collection of Freeman's work on him: Freeman, A. *Theodulf of Orléans: Charlemagne's Spokesman against the Second Council of Nicaea* (Surrey, 2003).

entrusted Theodulf with the task of writing up the *Libri Carolini,* which was finished in 793.[186] Although the *Libri Carolini,* which comprises more than four hundred pages in a modern edition, is based on an incorrect translation of the Greek *Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea*, the work itself is learned and abounds with references to other Latin texts. Three of these references are to the *Categoriae Decem*.

The *Categoriae Decem* is much longer than Aristotle's original *Categories* because it is interspersed with commentary and exegetical passages. One of these non-Aristotelian passages is quoted in a section of the *Libri Carolini* that discusses the concept of simultaneity.[187] Another passage in the first book of the *Libri Carolini* refers to a section of the *Categoriae Decem* that is actually derived from Aristotle's *Categories*. In a discussion of the three concepts of *aequalitas, imago* and *similitudo,* it says:

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[186] Freeman, Meyvaert, 1998, 4.

[187] *Libri Carolini* I.1: Freeman, Meyvaert, 1998, 108-9; *Categoriae Decem* 167: Ed. Minio-Paluello, L., Aristoteles Latinus I 1-5. Categoriae vel Praedicamenta. Translatio Boethii - Editio composita. Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka. Lemmata e Simplicii commentario decerpta. Pseudo-Augustini paraphrasis Themsitiana (Paris, 1961), pp. 133-175, p. 173. Here several sentences are copied verbatim and the alleged author of the text, Augustine, is also referred to explicitly. This first reference to the *Categoriae Decem* is clear, the second and third one are less obvious. On Augustine as the alleged author of the *Categoriae Decem*, see below.

> "These three, although they are part of one category, which is called 'relation', still have certain properties in common, which other things lack."[188]

Although this is not a direct quote from the *Categoriae Decem*, according to Freeman, Theodulf must have had the section in mind that discusses the Aristotelian category "relation."[189] The last and third reference can be found in a discussion of the concept of opposites.[190] However, as Freeman has shown, although this third passage is an echo of the *Categoriae Decem* 160, it follows a contemporary adaptation of the same paragraph of the *Categoriae Decem* more closely.[191] This contemporary adaptation was part of the *De Dialectica,* written by Alcuin of York. However, Alcuin is not the only key to unlocking the origin of this particular passage in the *Libri Carolini.* Since there are only three minor references to the *Categoriae Decem* in the *Libri Carolini,* Theodulf was clearly not heavily indebted to this text. It is more likely that he was influenced by logical debates that were held at the court of Charlemagne. The activities and writings of Alcuin of York are pivotal to these logical debates, and an investigation into the reception of the *Categories* at the court of Charlemagne should

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[188] *Libri Carolini* I.8 (Freeman, Meyvaert, 1998, 146):
"Quae tria, quamquam unius sint categoriae, quae relatio dicitur, habent tamen inter se quasdam proprietates, quibus aliae carent." The English translation is my own.

[189] *Categoriae Decem* 93-112: Minio-Paluello, 1961, 154-9.

[190] *Libri Carolini* II.1: Freeman, Meyvaert, 1998, 60-1; *Categoriae Decem* 160: Minio-Paluello, 1961,171

[191] Freeman, Meyvaert, 1998, 60-1.

not focus on Theodulf, but on Alcuin. Therefore, it is to Alcuin that we must now turn.

ALCUIN

Alcuin is one of the best documented individuals of early medieval Europe. First of all, his life has been the subject of many articles and monographs.[192] Due to his close ties with Charlemagne later in his life, Alcuin has often been approached through the same scholarly prism of grandeur as his king. Echoes of Traube's nineteenth century description of Alcuin as the longtime "intellectual leader of Europe" can still be found in scholarly literature.[193] Secondly, an unusually large amount of relevant primary material has survived. Apart from an early ninth century *Vita Alcuini* and the fact that he is mentioned in many sources on Charlemagne, a lengthy semi-autobiographical poem and nearly three hundred of his letters have also come down to us—more than, for instance, the surviving correspondence of Augustine or Jerome.[194] Below I will give an summary of the conclusions reached by scholars who have pieced together these primary sources into a biographical narrative.

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[192] The starting point for any scholarly study of the life of Alcuin should be: Bullough, D. *Alcuin. Achievement and Reputation* (Leiden, 2004). The most accessible recent biography is: Dales, D. *Alcuin. His Life and Legacy* (Cambridge, 2012). For the shortest overview of the relevant primary source material for Alcuin's life, see: Godman, P. *Alcuin*. *The bishops, kings and saints of York* (Oxford, 1982), pp. xxxv-xxxix. For an overview of the history of scholarship on Alcuin see: Bullough, 2002, 3-24; and: Godman, 1982, xxxv fn.6.

[193] Bullough, 2004, 12.

[194] *Id.*, 37.

The Life of Alcuin

Alcuin was born sometime during the second quarter of the eighth century, probably around the year 740.[195] Unfortunately nothing is known about his family background.[196] He was born in the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria and spent most of his youth in the cathedral community of York. In 767 Alcuin became master of the school in York.[197] In the subsequent decade he travelled widely in the British Isles and around the Carolingian kingdom and acquired a reputation for his learning among the ecclesiastical elites on both sides of the English Channel. In 781, Alcuin was sent to Rome to receive from pope Hadrian I the *pallium* of the newly installed archbishop of York, Eanbald. On his way back, Alcuin met Charlemagne in Parma.[198] This encounter resulted in an invitation by the king to join the Frankish court, which Alcuin accepted. In 781-782 he left the British Isles and joined Charlemagne's court. Apart from the years 786 and 790-793, when he returned to the British Isles, Alcuin would remain at the court, which was itinerant until Charlemagne settled permanently in Aachen over the course of the last decade of the eighth century. In 796 Alcuin was made abbot of St. Martin's at Tours. In subsequent years Alcuin

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[195] *Id.,* 34; Godman, 1982, xxxvi.

[196] Bullough, 2004, 164.

[197] *Id.*, xxxvi.

[198] Bullough, 2004, 331-6.

would travel back to Charlemagne's court, but eventually spent most of his days in Tours until he died in 804, around 65 years of age.[199]

It was Alcuin's activities at Charlemagne's court that eventually resulted in his posthumous reputation. It is also during these years, especially since 790, that Alcuin wrote most of his works. At the court he was at the center of an international elite of poets and scholars and became the leading intellectual behind an extensive overhaul of clerical education in the Carolingian kingdom.[200] These educational activities are the backdrop of an important part of Alcuin's oeuvre: his didactic treatises. These treatises are mostly written in the form of dialogues with Charlemagne and deal with subjects such as grammar, rhetoric and ethics. Furthermore, Alcuin has composed several theological works, including treatises on biblical texts and hagiographies, most of which he probably wrote in the final years of his life at Tours. Finally, apart from his letters, Alcuin has left us with a small but important corpus of poems.[201] In each of these three parts of Alcuin's prolific oeuvre —in his didactic, his theological and his poetical works—there are traces of Aristotle's *Categories*.

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[199] Godman, 1982, xxxviii fn. 2

[200] Bullough, 2004, 371-391.

[201] For a comprehensive overview of Alcuin's oeuvre, see: Jullien, M., Perelman, F., eds., *Clavis scriptorum latinorum medii aevi: Auctores Galliae 735–987. Tomus II: Alcuinus* (Turnhout, 1999).

Alcuin's study of the *Categoriae Decem*

The first possible hint of the *Categories* in Alcuin's oeuvre is found in a lengthy poem he wrote on the city of York.[202] Some time during his first years at the court of Charlemagne in the 780's, Alcuin penned 1658 hexameters in which he describes the ecclesiastical and political history of York, devoting the last third to his own lifetime there. In verses 1531-1562 he celebrates the library of the school in York he used to run. When Alcuin lists some of the important books in this library, he includes the following authors:

> (…) Cassiodorus and John Chrysostom;
> the teachings of Aldhelm and of Bede the master,
> the writings of Victorinus and Boethius,
> and the ancient historians Pompey and Pliny,
> of keen-minded Aristotle and of Cicero, the great rhetorician.[203]

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[202] Often referred to as the 'York poem', the official title is: *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae* (Ed. and trans. Godman, P. *Alcuin. The bishops, kings and saints of York* (Oxford, 1982)).

[203] Godman, 1982, 125; *Versus de Patribus regibus et Sanctis Eurboricensis Ecclesiae* 1546-1550 (ed. Godman, 1982, 123-4):

> Cassiodorus item, Chrysostomus atque Iohannes;
> quicquid et Althelmus docuit, quid Beda magister;
> quae Victorinus scripsere Boethius atque
> historici veteres: Pompeius, Plinius; ipse
> acer Aristoteles, rhetor quoque Tullius.

This is the first time that Aristotle is mentioned in a library catalogue or a booklist in early medieval Western Europe.[204] Unfortunately, Alcuin does not explain which Aristotelian works were available in the library in York. Scholars have assumed it was the Latin version of the *Categories* and/or the *On Interpretation,* since these were the only Aristotelian texts studied in the ninth century.[205] It is possible that Boethius' translation of the *Categories* is referred to here, but there is no indication whatsoever in Alcuin's oeuvre or in that of any of his contemporaries of this translation.[206] It is more likely that Alcuin referred to the *Categoriae Decem*, since three texts in his oeuvre indicate that he studied this paraphrase intensively.[207]

The first indication is the fact that Alcuin decided to dedicate a manuscript of the *Categoriae Decem* to Charlemagne. Although the actual dedicated manuscript has

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[204] Lapidge, M. "Surviving booklists in Anglo-Saxon The British Isles," in Lapidge, M., Gneuss, H. (eds.) *Learning and literature in Anglo-Saxon The British Isles. Studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 33-89, esp. pp. 45-7; Lapidge, M. *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006), p. 230.

[205] Godman, 1982, 125; Lapidge, 1985, 47-48; Marenbon, J. "Alcuin, the Council of Frankfurt and the Beginnings of Medieval Philosophy," in Berndt, R. (ed.) *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794 im Spannungsfeld von Kirche, Politik und Theologie* (Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte 80) (Mainz, 1997), pp. 603-15, esp. 606 fn. 15.

[206] There were actually three different Latin versions of the *Categories* in Alcuin's time: Boethius' literal translation, a composite translation (consisting of parts of Boethius' translation supplemented with passages from an unknown translation) and the *Categoriae Decem*. Only by the eleventh century is there evidence of circulation and study of the former two. In earlier centuries only the *Categoriae Decem* was studied: Marenbon, 1981, 16-7; Minio-Paluello, 1945, 70-1.

[207] For the most recent discussion of Alcuin's library in York, see: Garrison, M. "The library of Alcuin's York," In Gameson, R. (ed.) *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Volume 1: c.400–1100* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 633-664. Unfortunately, Garrison does not pay attention to the evidence of Aristotelian texts in the York library.

not survived, the dedicatory poem Alcuin wrote for the *Categoriae Decem*, has been copied in several other manuscripts as a preface to this Aristotelian paraphrase.[208] A prose translation of the poem reads as follows:

> "This little book contains the ten terms relating to the created world; by an astonishing mental achievement it holds the words appropriate to all things: everything which is accessible to our understanding. Read it, and admire the wonderful intellect of the men of old, endeavoring to exercise your own intellect in the same way, to the adornment of such lifespan as is allotted you. Master Augustine drew this work with a Latin key from the treasures of the ancient Greeks:

[208] Bullough, 2004, 378 fn. 146.

and I send it to you, o king, who greatly love and ensue wisdom, as a gift that will give you pleasure."[209]

The "ten terms" are the ten predicates of Aristotle. However, Aristotle is not mentioned in this poem. The only person who is mentioned by name is Augustine., whereas Aristotle is implied by the "ancient Greeks." Alcuin seems to be the first to attribute the *Categoriae Decem* to Augustine.[210] His motivation behind this attribution is unclear. Perhaps the fact that Augustine mentions in his *Confessiones*

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[209] Trans. Gibson, M. "Boethius in the Carolingian Schools," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (Fifth Series) 32 (1982), pp. 43-56, esp. p. 46. Ed. Minio-Paluello, L., *Aristoteles Latinus I 1-5. Categoriae vel Praedicamenta. Translatio Boethii - Editio composita. Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka. Lemmata e Simplicii commentario decerpta. Pseud-Augustini paraphrasis Themsitiana* (Paris, 1961), p. LXXXVII:

Continet iste decem naturae verba libellus
Quae iam verba tenent rerum ratione stupenda
Omne quod in nostrum poterit decurrere sensum.
Qui legit ingenium veterum mirabile laudet,
Atque suum studeat tali exercere labore
Exornans titulis vitae data tempora honestis.
Hunc Augustino placuit transferre magistro
De veterum gazis Grecorum clave latino.
Quem tibi, rex, magnus sophiae sectator, amator,
Munera qui talis gaudes, modo mitto legendum.

The poem itself has never been discussed as a piece of literature. It is noteworthy that it is written in ten nice dactylic hexameters. Although the prosody is in general followed correctly (note the correct elision in the fourth foot of verse 5 and fifth of of verse 6, and the fact that there are no diaereses nor weak caesuras), Alcuin does takes some licenses with the length of vowels (for instance: stūpenda (v. 2) and exercēre (v. 5). For an assessment of Alcuin's poetic achievement in general, see: Godman, 1982, cx.

[210] Minio-Paluello, 1961, LXXXVII. Freeman argues that by the time of Alcuin the attribution to Augustine had already been established, but there is no evidence for that: Freeman, 1998, 60.

that he read the *Categories* or the fact that Charlemagne seems to have admired Augustine's writings led Alcuin to this attribution.[211] Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Alcuin states that the Aristotelian categories relate to the "created world" (*natura*). Consequently, Alcuin takes a clear stance in the ancient debate whether the Aristotelian categories related to language or to reality. In other words, he assigned not merely a logical but also an ontological status to the categories.[212] Finally, what is most remarkable is the fact that Alcuin took the effort to compose this poem and dedicate a manuscript of the *Categoriae Decem* to his king. This effort shows how important the text was for Alcuin. Moreover, his initiative to reintroduce this logical text did not fall on deaf ears, judging by the fact that from the ninth and tenth centuries alone more than twenty manuscripts of the *Categoriae Decem* survive.[213]

Alcuin not only studied Aristotelian logic but also used it in his own works. His foremost logical composition is the *De Dialectica,* which is part of Alcuin's

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[211] For Charlemagne's admiration of Augustine, which is mentioned in Einhard's biography of the king, see: Freeman, 1998, 60.

[212] For the ancient debate of the ontological status of the *Categories*, Introduction, pp. 24-25. For a discussion of Alcuin's stance in this debate, see: Marenbon, 1981, 20-29; Marenbon, 1997, 607-9. Demetracopoulos provides a good discussion of whether the word *sensum* in verse 3 of the poem also relates to intelligible (as opposed to sensible) things: Demetracopoulos, J. "Alcuin and the Realm of Application of Aristotle's Categories," in Pacheco, M., Meirinhos, J. (eds.) *Intellect et imagination dans la philosophie médiévale* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 1733-42.

It is noteworthy that John of Damascus also assigns ontological status to the *Categories* (Erismann, 2011, 269 fn. 2).

[213] Marenbon, 1981, 16; Bullough, 2004, 378 fn. 146.

didactic works. Alcuin can justifiably be credited with the implementation of the first curriculum of the liberal arts. The notion of the seven liberal arts was already discussed in detail by people such as Augustine (in his *De Ordine*) and Martianus Capella (in his *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercuriis*), but for them the liberal arts were merely ideals. Alcuin put these late antique ideals into practice as part of the overhaul of clerical education in the Carolingian kingdom.[214] Alcuin laid emphasis on the *trivium*, the first three subjects of the liberal arts, grammar, dialectics and rhetoric, and wrote treatises on each of them. It seems that he also changed the traditional sequence into grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, making the latter the crown of the *trivium.*[215] Consequently, the study of dialectics gained a prominent position in Carolingian discourses and became a tool that was relevant for all learning.[216]

Despite the importance of the *De Dialectica* for Alcuin's thought and Carolingian literature in general, it has been largely neglected by modern

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[214] For discussions of Alcuin's implementation of the liberal arts, see: Marenbon, J. "Carolingian thought," in McKitterick, R., (ed.) *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 2004), pp.171-192, esp. 172-7; and: Luhtala, A. "'Unity' of the Liberal Arts in the Early Middle Ages," in McLelland, M. (ed.) *Flores grammaticae: Essays in Memory of Vivien Law* (Münster, 2005), pp. 55-65.

[215] Luhtala, A. "On Early Medieval Divisions of Knowledge," in Teeuwen, M., O'Sullivan, S. (eds.) *Carolingian Scholarship and Martianus Capella. Ninth-century Commentary Traditions on De Nuptiis in Context* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 75-98, esp. p. 88.

[216] Luhtala, 2005, 57.

scholars.[217] At first glance, this work seems to be nothing more than a compilation of several late antique works on dialectics: Alcuin seems to follow the accounts of Cassiodorus and Isidore slavishly. However, a closer look reveals that Alcuin's arrangement is in fact innovative. Whereas both Cassiodorus and Isidore spend more words on syllogisms and less on the *Categories*, Alcuin devotes more than a third of his treatise to the *Categories*. This section is not derived from either Cassiodorus or Isidore but from the *Categoriae Decem*.[218] A passage in the opening paragraphs of this part of the *De Dialectica,* which is written in the form of a dialogue between Alcuin and Charlemagne, shows how Alcuin introduces the Aristotelian categories:

> "Alcuin: 'They are called categories in Greek,
> predicates in Latin'.
> Carolus: 'What do you mean, when you say predicates?'
> Alcuin: 'When I speak about any subject, then I predicate it, that is how the philosophers wanted it to be understood'.

[217] The only three scholarly discussions I was able to find are: Lehmann, P. "Cassiodorstudien VI," *Philologus. Zeitschrift für antike Literatur und ihre Rezeption* 74 (1917), pp. 351–383 (where predominantly the sources of the passage on the *Isagoge* are discussed), Delp, M. "Alcuin: Master and Practitioner of Dialectic," *Proceedings of the Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Conference* 16/17 (1992-1993), pp. 91-103 (a discussion of the meaning of *substantia*); and: Marenbon, 1997, 606-9. For negative dismissals of the *De Dialectica* by other scholars, see: Delp, 1992-3, 91 (with footnotes).

[218] Marenbon, 1997, 608-9.

Carolus: ‘In how many ways occurs such predication, which, it seems to me, we can call discourse?

Alcuin: ‘You are right. Our discourse occurs in two ways: either about substance, or about accidents.

Carolus: ‘Why is it called substance?’

Alcuin: ‘It is called substance, because it subsists, like any nature, in its own property.

Carolus: ‘How many accidents are there?

Alcuin: ‘In the corporeal world there are nine.’

Carolus: ‘Which ones?’

Alcuin: ‘Quantity, relation, quality, action, affection, position, place, time, condition. When substance, which the Greeks call ‘usia’, is added to these nine then there

are ten categories. And between these ten words

whatever a human being says is inevitably found.'"[219]

Alcuin introduces the concept of the Aristotelian categories step by step. When he finally lists the ten categories, he does so by using the Latin translation of the Aristotelian words found in the *Categoriae Decem.* The table below gives a comparison of Aristotle's Greek terms, the translations found in Alcuin's *De Dialectica*, *Categoriae Decem,* and, finally in Boethius' translation, the most literal Latin rendering of the *Categories*:[220]

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[219] Ed. *Patrologia Latina* 101, columns 954D-955A:

"Alcuinus: 'Categoriae Graeca, Latine praedicamenta dicuntur.'

Carolus: 'Quid significas, dum dicis praedicamenta?'

Alcuinus: 'Dum de qualibet re loquor, tum de ea praedico, sicut philosophi voluerunt intelligi.'

Carolus: 'Quot modis fit illa praedicatio, quam locutionem, ut mihi videtur, nominare possumus?'

Alcuinus: 'Recte tibi videtur. Duobus modis fit locutio nostra; aut de substantia, aut de accidentibus.'

Carolus: 'Unde dicitur substantia?'

Alcuinus: 'Substantia dicitur, quia subsistit, ut est unaquaeque natura in sua proprietate.'

Carolus: 'Quot sunt accidentia?'

Alcuinus: 'Corporalibus naturis novem.'

Carolus: 'Quae?'

Alcuinus: 'Quantitas, ad aliquid, qualitas, facere, pati, situs, ubi, quando, habere. His novem junctis ad substantiam, quam Graeci usian vocant, fiunt decem categoriae. Et inter haec decem verba, quidquid homo loquitur, inevitabiliter invenitur. (…)'"

The English translation is my own.

[220] Aristotle, *Categories*, 1b26-1b27 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 5); Alcuin, *De Dialectica* (PL 101, 955A); *Categoriae Decem* (Minio-Paluello, 1961, 144); Boethius, *Liber Aristotelis de Decem Praedicamentis.*

Table 5: The Tenfold Classification in Alcuin's *De Dialectica*

Category	Aristotle	Alcuin	Categoriae Decem	Boethius
1. Substance	οὐσία (substance)	Substantia	Substantia	Substantia
2. Quantity	ποσὸν (how much?)	Quantitas	Quantitas	Quantitas
3. Quality	ποιὸν (of what kind?)	Qualitas	Qualitas	Qualitas
4. Relation	πρός τί (to what?)	Ad aliquid	Ad aliquid	Ad aliquid
5. Place	ποὺ (where?)	Ubi	Ubi	Ubi
6. Time	ποτὲ (when?)	Quando	Quando	Quando
7. Posture	κεῖσθαι (to be in a position)	Situs	Iacere	Situs
8. State	ἔχειν (to be in a state)	Habere	Habere	Habere
9. Action	ποιεῖν (to do)	Facere	Facere	Facere
10. Affection	πάσχειν (to undergo)	Pati	Pati	Pati

What this table shows is that, as indirect as the transmission between the ancient Greek text of Aristotle's *Categories* and Alcuin's *De Dialectica* may be, the latter text

still communicated a reliable version of the core terms of the *Categories* to Carolingian intellectuals in the eighth and ninth century.[221]

The third text in Alcuin's oeuvre that is influenced by the *Categoriae Decem* is a theological treatise on the Trinity, the *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis et de Incarnatione Christi*.[222] This treatise is proof that Alcuin did not merely study the *Categoriae Decem* and instigate its distribution, but also applied the theory of the ten predicates to his own theological ideas. Alcuin's *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis* discusses a topic, the nature of the Trinity, that is far from special in Christian literature. However, what is special is the wide readership Alcuin's text received in subsequent centuries: it was copied many times in every century from the ninth to its *editio princeps* in the fifteenth and more than 100 manuscripts of it survive.[223] Consequently, if the contents of Alcuin's *De Dialectica* can be compared with John of Damascus' *Dialektika*, then the influence of Alcuin's *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis* in Western Europe can be compared with John of Damascus' *Fount of Knowledge* in the East.

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[221] Alcuin's choice to use the word "situs" for the category "posture" (as opposed to "iacere") is not an indication that he must have borrowed this word from Boethius' translation: in the *Categoriae Decem* both "situs" and "iacere" are interchangeably used as translations of κεῖσθαι in other passages. See, for instance: *Categoriae Decem* 144 (Minio-Paluello, 1961, 167).See, for instance: *Categoriae Decem* 144 (Minio-Paluello, 1961, 167).

[222] Ed. Knibbs, E., Ann Matter, E. *Alcuini Eboracensis De fide sanctae trinitatis et de incarnatione Christi* (Corpus Christianoum Continuatio Mediaeualis 249) (Turnhout, 2012).

[223] Cavadini, J. "The sources and theology of Alcuin's 'De Fide Sanctae and Individuae Trinitatis'," *Traditio* 46 (1991), pp. 123-146, esp. p. 124; Knibbs, Ann Matter, 2012, xiv-lxix.

The ten predicates play an important role in the *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis*, in particular the question whether the predicate substance can be applied to God. The *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis* is also a compilatory work.[224] One of the most important sources for Alcuin was Augustine's *De Trinitate*. In the prefatory letter to Charlemagne, Alcuin explains that he is following Augustine's footsteps in using the *Categories* in a discussion of the Trinity:

> "(…) so that I convince those who disregard your most noble intention to want to learn the strategems of the subject of dialectics, which the blessed Augustine, in his books on the Holy Trinity, already deemed extremely necessary, since he reckoned that the most profound questions about the Holy Trinity can only be explained by the subtlety of the categories."[225]

Augustine had already used the Aristotelian predicates in his discussion of the Trinity and had already proposed that only the first one, substance, can be applied to

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[224] For a discussion of the sources used by Alcuin, see: Cavadini, 1991, *passim;* Hadot, P. "Marius Victorinus et Alcuin," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 29 (1954): pp. 5-19.

[225] Alcuin, *Epistula Dedicatoria ad Carolum Magnum* (Ed. Knibbs, Matter, 2012, 7):
"(…) ut convincerem eos qui minus utile aestimabant vestram nobilissimam intentionem dialecticae disciplinae discere velle rationes, quas beatus Augustinus in libris de sancta Trinitate adprime necessarias esse putavit, dum profundissimas de sancta Trinitate quaestiones non nisi categoriarum subtilitate explanari posse probavit."
The English translation is my own.

God. Alcuin repeats this Augustinian notion but takes it to a higher level. In Augustine's work, the predicates are part of a much larger speculation in which Plotinian ideas play an important role. Alcuin, however, takes up Augustine' use of the predicates exclusively and devotes the whole first book of his *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis* to explaining why only the predicate substance can be truly applied to God.[226] In doing so, Alcuin the compiler transcended his sources and gave the Aristotelian concept of the predicates a new impetus in medieval theological debates.[227]

The three texts that have been discussed—the dedicatory poem, the *De Dialectica* and the *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis*—all show that Alcuin revived the study of the *Categoriae Decem.* However, these three texts are not isolated incidents in Alcuin's career or in the intellectual debates at the court of Charlemagne. They should be seen as snapshots of a lively intellectual discourse on logic and theology at the Carolingian court, of which Alcuin was both the instigator and the most prominent representative. A good window into these debates is a manuscript owned by Alcuin's associate Leidrad. The first hundred folios of this manuscript contain the first collection of logical texts to have survived from the Middle Ages: Porphyry's *Isagoge*,

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[226] Marenbon, 1997, 609-10.

[227] Bullough argues that the *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis* is the first work in which Alcuin truly transcends his sources: Bullough, 1991, 202.

the *Categoriae Decem*, preceded by Alcuin's poem, excerpts from Alcuin's *De Dialectica*, Apuleius's *Periermenias* and Boethius' first commentary of Aristotle's *On Interpretation.*[228] This collection can be considered a logical handbook and a reflection of the foundational texts Alcuin and his intellectual circle used for their debates on logic.

Another window into the logical debates around Alcuin is the collection of the so-called Munich Passages. This is a small corpus of fragmentary logical texts written at the court of Charlemagne. At least one of them is written by Alcuin himself, but the other ones, whose authors are anonymous, were most likely written by students or interlocutors of Alcuin and collected by his student Candidus.[229] The Munich Passages have God, the Trinity and the ten categories as their main subjects. The first one is known under the title "On the Ten Categories of Augustine" and includes the following text:

> "The Greek word 'usia' is 'substance' or 'essence' in Latin: that means God.
>
> Quality: God is good without quality.

[228] For a description of the manuscript, see: Delisle, M. "Notice sur un manuscript de l'église de Lyon du temps de Charlemagne," *Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliotheque Nationale et autres bibliothèques* 35 (1896), pp. 831-842; see also: Marenbon, 1981, 52-3; and: Bullough, D. "Charlemagne's Court Library Revisited," *Early medieval Europe* 12 (2003), pp. 339-363, esp. p. 356.

[229] The Munich Passages are discussed in detail in: Marenbon, 1981, 30-54. For the best edition of the texts see: Marenbon, 1981, 144-172.

Quantity:	He is big without quantity.
Relation:	He is the creator without want.
Position:	He is present without position.
Condition:	He encompasses everything without being in a condition.
Place:	He is whole everywhere without place.
Time:	He is eternal without time.
Action:	He is active without a changeable alteration of himself."
Affection:	And he never undergoes anything. (…)[230]

This text is clearly inspired by Augustine's *De Trinitate*—to such an extent that its author thought that the theory of the ten categories had sprung from Augustine's

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[230] Ed. Marenbon 1981, 152:
"De Decem Cathegoriis Augustini
'Usia' graece quod est latine 'substantia' siue 'essentia', hoc est Deus.
Qualitas: Deus autem sine qualitate bonus.
Quantitas: Sine quantitate magnus.
Ad aliquid: Sine indigentia creator.
Situs: Sine situ praesens.
Habitus: Sine habitu omnia continens.
Locus: Sine loco ubique totus.
Tempus: Sine tempore sempiternus.
Agere: Sine sui mutacione mutabilia faciens.
Pati: Et nihil paciens."
The English translation is my own.

mind.[231] Consequently, it is very likely that this text should be considered part of those debates that eventually led to Alcuin's *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis*.

When the different works of Alcuin and his intellectual circle are seen as the products of ongoing debates, then the dates of composition of these works become less absolute. The *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis* was ready for presentation to Charlemagne in 802.[232] Nevertheless, the above-mentioned Munich Passages were probably composed as much as ten years earlier.[233] Similarly, the Leidrad manuscript with the collection of logical handbooks was commissioned in the years 804-814, but the logical books had probably already been assembled in such a collection by the mid to late 790's.[234] That manuscript is also the earliest one with Alcuin's dedicatory poem, but it is not the original manuscript of the *Categoriae Decem* that Alcuin dedicated to Charlemagne. Therefore, the poem was probably composed before the mid 790's.

Similarly, the *De Dialectica* was probably published in the years 796-7.[235] However, Alcuin's lectures on dialectics in the years leading up to that must have resulted in earlier versions and fragments of what eventually became the polished

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[231] Marenbon, 1981, 50-1. Marenbon also speculates that this interest in Augustine's connection between logic and theology may explain why Alcuin attributed the *Categoriae Decem* to Augustine: Marenbon, 2004, 175.

[232] Bullough, 1991, 202.

[233] Marenbon, 1981, 43.

[234] Marenbon, 1981, 52; Bullough, 2003, 356;

[235] Bullough, 1991, 185; Delp, 1992-3, 99 fn. 3.

end product that is *De Dialectica* as we have it now. Some of these fragments are probably the excerpts that have ended up in the Leidrad manuscript. More importantly, earlier versions of the *De Dialectica* probably circulated among the students of Alcuin before 790. Here we come full circle, since it is these early versions of Alcuin's *De Dialectica* that explain Theodulf of Orléans' references to the *Categoriae Decem* in his *Libri Carolini.* The third of these references, as discussed above, is not merely an echo of the *Categoriae Decem*, but an echo of Alcuin's rendering of the *Categoriae Decem* in his *De Dialectica*. Whereas Theodulf cannot have had access to the *De Dialectica*, since that would be published several years after the *Libri Carolini,* he may well have had access to earlier versions of Alcuin's treatise and was probably also an avid student of Alcuin's lectures on dialectics.[236]

The picture that has emerged is that in the 780's and 790's interest in logic in general and in the Aristotelian categories in particular flourished at the Carolingian court. The earliest text to show knowledge of some of *Categories*, the *Libri Carolini,* is a response to the Greek Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea of 787, which also contain echoes of the *Categories*. However, even though the debates around the *Libri*

[236] Bullough already suggested this genesis of the *Libri Carolini* and the *De Dialectica:* Bullough, 1991, 185 (followed by Freeman: Freeman, Meyvaert, 1998, 59). Marenbon suggests that Alcuin felt compelled to compose his own works on logic, since he was challenged by the logical knowledge displayed in the *Libri Carolini* (Marenbon, 1997, 605-6). He argues that scholars have too easily connected all logical discourse in this period to Alcuin. However, Marenbon does not explain why the *Libri Carolini* contain an echo of Alcuin's *De Dialectica*'s rendering of the *Categoriae Decem*. Although there is indeed no explicit evidence of Alcuin's importance as an intellectual at the court before 794, it seems plausible that Alcuin's lectures and notes influenced Theodulf and not vice versa, since there is no evidence of the latter's interest in logic outside of the *Libri Carolini.*

Carolini may have spurred interest in logic, it was mostly the efforts of Alcuin that were the engine behind the study of the *Categories* at the court of Charlemagne.

NICEPHORUS AND THEODORE THE STUDITE

In the Byzantine Empire, intellectual contemporaries of Alcuin also used Aristotle's *Categories* in their own writings. However, there are several important differences. The source material in Greek is less extensive than in Latin. The Carolingian sources allowed us to form a picture of how the efforts of Alcuin led to debates about logic and the *Categoriae Decem*. The Byzantine source material only provides references to the *Categories* in certain theological writings. One way to understand this difference is to imagine that in the Latin tradition we would only have texts such as Alcuin's *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis.* In the Carolingian world we would then know nothing about the immediate background of Alcuin's application of the category *substance* to God. Such is the case with Greek texts from this period: all that is certain is that some terms from the *Categories* were applied to theological questions. Furthermore, whereas the engagement with the *Categories* in the Carolingian world was most intensive in the 790's, in Byzantium the first ten years after the reintroduction of iconoclasm in 815 seem to have been the most important decade.

Nevertheless, although the first text after the *Acts* of the Second Council of Nicaea to use the *Categories* is the *Libri Carolini*, the Greek texts of the 810's and 820's are more clearly a continuation of the way the *Categories* was used in the Acts: to elucidate the relation between an icon and what is portrayed in an icon.

The first Greek text after the Acts to use the *Categories* is an anonymous commentary on the gospel of John.[237] The *terminus ante quem* for this text is 812.[238] The author discusses in an Aristotelian way, for example, how the artistic image of God resembles God only in form, but not in matter.[239] However, these statements do not echo the *Categories* as clearly as some of the works of two prominent intellectuals of this period: Nicephorus and Theodore the Studite.

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[237] The text is edited and discussed by Hansmann: Hansmann, K. Ein *Ein neuentdeckter Kommentar zum Johannesevangelium. Untersuchungen und Text*. (Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte, 16.4-5) (Paderborn, 1930). For later discussions, which do not add much to Hansmann's comments, see: Alexander, P. *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople*. *Ecclesiastical policy and image worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 98-9, 196-7; Parry, K. *Depicting the Word: Byzantine Iconophile Thought of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries* (The Medieval Mediterranean, 12) (Leiden, 1996), pp. 53-4.

[238] On the basis of several reference in the commentary to the Moechian controversy, a religious and legal dispute about the second marriage of emperor Constantine VI, Hansmann argues that the commentary must have been written between in the years 809-811: Hansmann, 1930, 14-56. Alexander considered Hansmann's argument as 'conclusive': Alexander, 1958, 98.

[239] Hansmann, 1930, 184, 187.

The lives of Nicephorus and Theodore the Studite

Nicephorus was born in Constantinople, probably in the 750's.[240] His father, named Theodore, worked as a secretary, a *protoasecretis*, in the imperial administration under emperor Constantine V (741-775).[241] During the 760's Theodore was banned twice because of his iconophile convictions. Whether Nicephorus joined his father or not is not certain, but after Theodore died in 767, Nicephorus received an education in Constantinople.[242] The *Life of Nicephorus* by Ignatius, composed in the 840's, provides some information on Nicephorus' educational curriculum.[243] In a surprisingly long list of subjects related to logic and physics, the *Categories* are included a few times, most clearly when Ignatius mentions the topic of syllogisms

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[240] Still the best overview of Nicephorus' life is Alexander's excellent discussion of his life and work: Alexander, 1958, 54-188. See also: O'Connell, P. *The ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828), Patriarch of Constantinople. Pentarchy and Primacy* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 194) (Rome, 1972), pp. 37-67. For an overview of earlier literature on Nicephorus, see: Alexander, 1958, 54 fn. 1.

The standard year of Nicephorus' birth is 758, which is based on a passage in the *Synaxarium Constantinopolitanum* which says he died in 828 when he was seventy years old. The *terminus post quem* for his birth is the fact that he has to rely on other witnesses for the bubonic plague of 745-7: Alexander, 1958, 54.

[241] Alexander, 1958, 55. Lemerle writes that Nicephorus was born in an "upper middle-class Constantinopolitan family:" Lemerle, 1986, 148. This statement implies detailed historical information about the different social classes in Constantinople in this period, which simply does not exist.

[242] Alexander suggests that Theodore's family joined him in his exile (Alexander, 1958, 56), whereas O'Connell thinks that Nicephorus was left behind by both his parents in Constantinople (O'Connell, 1972, 37).

[243] On Ignatius the Deacon (not to be confused with Ignatius the Patriarch), see: Fisher, E. "Introduction," in Tablot, A. (ed.) *Defenders of Images. Eight saints' lives in English translation* (Washington D.C., 1998), pp. 25-39. esp. 32-39, and p. 33 for the date of the *Life of Nicephorus.*

and the question "what sort is categorical and how they differ."[244] It is likely that Ignatius did nothing more than to copy chapter headings from a handbook on logic and physics, but it is not certain whether Nicephorus studied the same book that Ignatius used for his biography.[245] Nevertheless, as we shall see, based on his own writings, Nicephorus must have studied logic and the *Categories* at some point in his life.

It seems that Nicephorus' iconophile beliefs did not prevent him from following in his father's footsteps and taking up a career in the imperial administration in 770's. Under empress Irene (780-797) he furthered his career and even made a brief entrance at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.[246] In the 790's Nicephorus retreated from imperial service and lived as an ascetic in the mountains

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[244] Ignatius, *Life of Nicephorus:* ed. de Boor, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica* (Leipzig, 1880), pp.139-216, p. 150, lines 24-5:
'ποῖος δὲ κατηγορικὸς, καὶ τί διαφέρουσι;'
Trans. Fisher, A. "The Life of Patriarch Nikephorus I of Constantinople," in Tablot, A., (ed.) *Defenders of Images. Eight saints' lives in English translation* (Washington D.C., 1998), pp. 25-142, p.55.

[245] Alexander is the first to suggest that Ignatius copied chapter headings from a handbook: Alexander, 1958 , 57 fn. 1. This suggestion is followed by later scholars, see: Lemerle, 1986, 151-2; Fisher, 1998, 54 fn. 109. Alexander also argues that Ignatius inserted this list because he lacked any specific information on Nicephorus educational experiences. Although Alexander may be correct, the lack of circumstantial evidence allows for his argument to be turned around and one could just as easily argue that Ignatius includes this list, which is unusual in hagiographies, because he happened to know that Nicephorus used this particular handbook (for the speculation that Ignatius and Nicephorus were classmates, see: O'Connell, 1972, 38 fn. 11).

[246] Alexander discusses the three sources for Nicephorus' presence at the council, the *Acts* and the *Life and Nicephorus* and the *Life of Tarasius* by Ignatius: Alexander, 1958, 60.

near the Sea of Marmara, until he was recalled to public service in 802.[247] When patriarch Tarasius passed away in 806, Nicephorus was elected as his successor. It was unusual for a layman to be elected patriarch, and hence Nicephorus' appointment did not happen without clerical protest.[248] His tenure as patriarch was an active one, in which he was involved in various ecclesiastical and political debates and conflicts.[249] When in 815 the new emperor Leo V reinstated iconoclasm, Nicephorus was deposed as patriarch and forced into exile to a monastery near the Sea of Marmara. His exile seems not to have been without a certain level of comfort and Nicephorus would pray, read and write books refuting iconoclasm until his death in 828.[250]

Nicephorus' oeuvre can be divided into historiographical and theological works.[251] He wrote a short list of rulers from the creation of the world onwards, the *Chronographikon,* and, more importantly, the first Byzantine chronicle since Theophylact of Simocatta in the early seventh century: the *Breviarium.* Nicephorus probably wrote this work before he became patriarch, perhaps even before the

[247] I agree with O'Connell that Alexander's theory that Nicephorus was forced into retirement (Alexander, 1958, 63-4) is unconvincing: O'Connell, 1972, 40.

[248] Alexander describes the details of the appointment well: Alexander, 1958, 65-71.

[249] Whereas the main sources for life before and after his patriarchate is Ignatius' *Life,* the source material for Nicephorus' activity as patriarch is recorded in several historiographical works and, consequently, relatively well documented: *Ibid.,* 71-110.

[250] On the conditions of Nicephorus' exile, see: O'Connell, 1972, 49.

[251] A letter to pope Leo III, which falls into neither of these two categories, has also survived: Alexander, 1958, 163.

Second Council of Nicaea.[252] The rest of his works are theological and all have the refutation of iconoclasm as their main subject. Either directed at a clerical or a more general audience these works are all written in response to certain iconoclastic works and are were predominantly composed in the last few years of Nicephorus' tenure as patriarch or during his exile. In his three *Antirrhetici,* probably written in the years 818-820, Nicephorus refutes in detail different statements made by emperor Constantine V in the council of Hiereia in 754.[253] It is in these *Antirrhetici* that Nicephorus uses the *Categories* of Aristotle. The manner in which he did so is very similar to the way his contemporary and acquaintance, Theodore the Studite, used notions from the *Categories* in his own *Antirrhetici*. Therefore, the application of the *Categories* by these two iconophile writers has to be discussed together. Consequently, we first have to look at the life of Theodore the Studite.

Theodore's life is better documented than Nicephorus'. Apart from several hagiographic *Lives,* his own oeuvre contains many biographical details, in particular his funeral encomia and the more than 500 letters (more than Alcuin's!) that have

[252] *Ibid.,* 162; O'Connell, 1972, 55.

[253] On the chronology Nicephorus' *Antirrhetici*: Alexander, 1958, 182-8.

survived.[254] Theodore was an exact contemporary of Nicephorus and their paths crossed numerous times during their lives. They were both born in Constantinople and most probably in the same decade: Theodore was born in 759.[255] His family was wealthy and well-connected: his mother was from a senatorial family and his father was an official in the imperial treasury.[256] Theodore must have received most of his education in Constantinople, but in 781, at the age of 22, he joined his family when they renounced their wealth and public life and retreated to several monasteries in Bithynia.[257] He joined his uncle and mentor Plato in the monastery of Sakkoudion, which was the base from which Theodore would become one of the most important

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[254] Until quite recently the starting point for any study of the life of Theodore the Studite was a biography published in the early twentieth century: a lengthy work by Alexander Pavlovich Dobroklonskij, written in Russian and published in 1913-14 (which I have not consulted, since I do not read Russian). Fortunately, this gap of scholarship has been filled by Pratsch in 1998 and Roman Cholij in 2002 with new and well researched books on the life and thought of Theodore: Cholij, R. *Theodore the Stoudite: The Ordering of Holiness* (Oxford 2002), esp. pp 3-78 (Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain Pratsch's book (Pratsch, T. *Theodoros Studites (759-826) — zwischen Dogma und Pragma: der Abt des Studiosklosters in Konstantinopel im Spannungsfeld von Patriarch, Kaiser und eigenem Anspruc*h. (Bern, 1998)).

Cholij's work should be read together with Fatouros' brief introduction to Theodore life's (with more references to primary sources) in the standard edition of Theodore's letters: Fatouros, G. "Einleitung. Theodoros Studites' Leben und Werk," in Fatouros, G. *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, 2 vols. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 31) (Berlin 1992), vol. 1 pp. 3-38, esp. pp. 3-21.

For a brief overview of the history of scholarship on Theodore the Studite, see: Cholij, 2002, 6-10.

[255] Fatouros, 1992, 5 fn. 16; Cholij, 2002, 15.

[256] Cholij, 2002, 16; Fatouros, 1992, 5-6.

[257] There is no specific information about the study of Aristotle in the *Lives* of Theodore other than the fact that is implied when it is mentioned that he studied dialectics, see: Cholij, 2002, 21.

reformers of Byzantine monasticism.[258] In 794 Theodore became co-abbot of the monastery and from this moment onwards he seems to have wielded significant influence in political and ecclesiastical affairs. Nevertheless, this influence worked against him several times during his life, firstly in 797, when he was imprisoned for several months due to his opposition to the second marriage of emperor Constantine VI.[259]

When Arab incursions made Sakkoudion unsafe, Theodore and his monks were invited to take over the old monastery of Stoudion within the city walls of Constantinople in 799.[260] This monastery is the origin of his epithet "the Studite'." When patriarch Tarasius died in 806, Theodore was considered as a successor. However, when Nicephorus turned out to be the successful candidate, Theodore was imprisoned for a month to make sure his opposition to a layman as patriarch would not obstruct the appointment.[261] Although he seems to have accepted the new patriarch afterwards, Theodore was vehemently at odds with him about the appointment of the archbishop of Thessaloniki in 808, which resulted in a three year exile.[262] In 811 Theodore was back at the helm of the Studite monastery, only to be exiled again when he opposed the reintroduction of iconoclasm in 815. Theodore's

[258] On Theodore's reforms, see: Cholij, 2002, 81-152.

[259] Fatouros, 1992, 10.

[260] *Ibid.,* 11.

[261] *Ibid.,*13; Cholij, 2002, 47-8.

[262] Cholij, 2002, 50-53.

fate was similar to that of Nicephorus and he would spend the rest of his life in exile, at first under harsh treatment in prison and after 819 while traveling to different places, until he died at the age of 66 on the island of Prinkipo, in 826, two years before Nicephorus.[263]

Theodore's turbulent life did not stop him from becoming one of the most prolific Greek authors of the eighth and ninth centuries.[264] The extant epistolographic corpus of more than 500 letters is probably half of what he originally wrote.[265] He also composed numerous sermons, several funerary panegyrics and a small number of poems. Theodore's main theological legacy is twofold. On the one hand, his two catecheses and his testament reflect his reform of coenobitic monasticism that would prove very influential in subsequent centuries. On the other hand, his polemical treatises against iconoclasm would become standard works for later iconophile authors and modern historians to go back to. Theodore composed these polemical works during his post-815 exile, just as Nicephorus did. It seems that iconophilism was the only main theological issue of their days that these two intellectuals were in agreement on. Furthermore, the resemblance between them does not stop there, since Theodore also wrote three

[263] Fatouros, 1992, 16-19.

[264] The most comprehensive overview of Theodore's oeuvre can be found in: Fatouros, 1992, 21-38

[265] *Ibid.,* 39; Cholij, 2002, 73.

Antirrhetici against iconoclasm, in which he used logical terms from Aristotle's *Categories* as well.

The scholastic phase of iconophile writing

During their exile Nicephorus and Theodore the Studite wrote refutations of iconoclasm that were not only polemical, but also sophisticated. To be able to defend the veneration of icons, they deemed it necessary to define what an icon actually is. In order to do this they analyzed what the relation is between an icon and what is portrayed in the icon, in other words between the image and the prototype. Consequently, we find the following passage in Theodore's first *Antirrheticus:*

> "And when there is likeness of the image to the prototype, we speak of 'Christ' and [an image] 'of Christ'. But it is 'Christ' equivocally, and 'of Christ' by relation."[266]

Theodore employs here two terms that have their origin in Aristotle's *Categories*. The first one, "equivocal" (ὁμώνυμον), was also referred to in the *Acts* of the Second Council of Nicaea and is found in the opening chapter of Aristotle's *Categories:*

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[266] Theodore the Studite, *Antirrheticus* I.11 (ed. *PG* 99, 341C):
"Ὅτε δὲ πρὸς τὴν δι' ἐκτυπώματος ἐξομοίωσιν τοῦ ἀρχετύπου, καὶ Χριστὸν καὶ Χριστοῦ. Ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν μὲν κατὰ τὸ **ὁμώνυμον**, Χριστοῦ δὲ κατὰ τὸ **πρός τί**."
The English translation is my own.

> "When things have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different, they are called homonymous. Thus, for example, both a man and a picture are animals. These have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different (….)."[267]

This passage of Aristotle's *Categories* is even more clearly echoed in one of the Theodore's letters, addressed to the prominent iconoclast intellectual John the Grammarian. When Theodore explains his philosophical position, he writes:

> "Relation belongs to the relative terms. They exist simultaneously and are correlatives as pattern and image are. The one could not exist without the presence of the other, as philosophers have said about simultaneous terms. I added in the previous letter to Athanasius 'or equivocal'. This word, too, has the same meaning: for 'name' is the name of something named, so that even here we deal with relation. Furthermore, we are taught according to the definition of philosophy

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[267] Ed. Aristotle's *Categories* 1a1-3 (Ed. Minio-Paluello, 1936, p.3):
"**Ομώνυμα** λέγεται ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος, οἷον ζῷον ὅ τε ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὸ γεγραμμένον· τούτων γὰρ ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος (…)."
Trans. Ackrill, J. Aristotle, *Categories and On Interpretation* (Oxford, 1963), p.3.

> that things are said to be named 'equivocally' if, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding to the name differs for each, as in Christ himself and his portrait."[268]

The last sentence of this passage is almost a literal quote of the first sentence of Aristotle's *Categories.*[269] The second term that Theodore uses, "relation" (πρός τί), is also taken from the *Categories* and is actually one of the ten predicates. When Aristotle, in the seventh chapter of the *Categories,* discusses what he means with this particular predicate, he writes:

> "We call relatives all such things as are said to be just what they are, *of* or *than* other things, or in some other way *in relation to* something else. For example, what is larger is called what it is *than* something else (it is called larger than something); and what is double is called is what it is

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[268] Theodore Studites, Letter 528 (Ed. Fatouros, G. *Theodori Studitae Epistulae,* 2 vols. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 31) (Berlin 1992), vol. II p. 789-90:
"ἡ γὰρ σχέσις, ὥς φασι, τῶν **πρός τί** ἐστιν· ἅμα τε γάρ ἐστι καὶ ἀντιστρέφει πρὸς ἄλληλα, οἷον ἀρχέτυπον πρὸς εἰκόνα. οὐ γὰρ ἂν εἴη θάτερον μὴ θατέρου παρόντος, καθὸ καὶ τῶν ἅμα πεφιλοσόφηται. πρόσκειται δέ, ἤγουν **ὁμωνυμική**, καί γε τῆς αὐτῆς ἐμφάσεως καὶ ἥδε ἡ λέξις· τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα ὀνομαζομένου ὄνομα. ὥστε κάνταῦθα τῶν πρός τί ὁ λόγος, ἐπεὶ καὶ κατὰ φιλοσοφίας ὅρον **ὁμώνυμά ἐστι διδασκόμεθα, ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος, οἷον αὐτὸς Χριστὸς καὶ ὁ ἐγγεγραμμένος**."
The translation of this passage is taken from: Alexander, 1958, 195.

[269] Compare Theodore's "ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος, οἷον αὐτὸς Χριστὸς καὶ ὁ ἐγγεγραμμένος' with Aristotle's: 'ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος, οἷον ζῷον ὅ τε ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὸ γεγραμμένον."

> *of* something else (it is called double of something); similarly with all other such cases."[270]

This Aristotelian explanation of the notion of relatives is echoed in the first *Antirrheticus* of Nicephorus, when he discusses the relation between an icon and a prototype:

> "Therefore necessarily it belongs to, and is called, a relative [notion]. Relatives are said to be such as they are from their being of some other thing, and through their relation their are mutual correlatives. A father, for instance, is called the son's father (…)."[271]

Where Aristotle mentioned the example of "double," which only has meaning in relation to something else, Nicephorus used the concept of "father." Further on in the same *Anthirrheticus,* Nicephorus uses the *Categories* again when he responds to

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[270] Aristotle, *Categories* 6a37-b1 (ed. Minio-Paluello, 1936, 18):
"**Πρός τί** δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγεται, ὅσα αὐτὰ ἅπερ ἐστὶν ἑτέρων εἶναι λέγεται ἢ ὁπωσοῦν ἄλλως πρὸς ἕτερον· οἷον τὸ μεῖζον τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἑτέρου λέγεται, —τινὸς γὰρ μεῖζον λέγεται,— **καὶ τὸ διπλάσιον ἑτέρου λέγεται τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἐστίν, —τινὸς γὰρ διπλάσιον λέγεται**·— ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα."
Trans. Ackrill, J. Aristotle, *Categories and On Interpretation* (Oxford, 1963), p. 17.

[271] Nicephorus, *Antirrheticus* I.30 (ed. *PG* 100, 277C):
"Ἀνάγκη οὖν διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τῶν **πρός τί** εἶναι τε ταύτην καὶ λέγεσθαι. Τὰ δὲ **πρός τί**, αὐτα ἅπερ ἐστὶν, ἑτέρων εἶναι λέγεται, καὶ ἀντιστρέφει τῇ σχέσει πρὸς ἄλληλα, **ὥσπερ ὁ πατὴρ υἱοῦ πατὴρ** (…)."
The translation of this passage is taken from: Alexander, 1958, 200.

certain aspects of iconoclast ideas of emperor Constantine V in the *Acts* of the Council Hiereia and to iconoclast interpretations of those *Acts*:

> "For whereas he [Constantine] should have operated with the words 'similar' and 'dissimilar', which are inherent in the aforesaid, and are referred to [the category of] quality, as the devotees of these studies would say, whence somehow and gradually he might have reached the enquiry into these matters, he produces here [the notion of] identity which is matched by [the notion] of otherness and which is considered under the [the category of] substance. Of these there is no need in the aforesaid discussion."[272]

In this passage Nicephorus implies that iconoclast intellectuals also employed the *Categories* in order to substantiate their own theological cause. Although most iconoclast texts have not survived, there seem to be two pieces of evidence for the use of Aristotelian terms by the iconoclast John the Grammarian.[273] The first one is

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[272] Nicephorus, *Antirrheticus* I.31 (ed. *PG* 101, 281A-B):
"Δέον γὰρ τὴν τοῦ ὁμοίου καὶ ἀνομοί μεταχειρίζεσθαι φωνὴν, ἃ τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἐνυπάρχει καὶ πρὸς τὸ **ποιὸν** ἀνάγεται, ὡς ἂν οἱ περὶ ταῦτα ἐσχολακότες εἶποιεν, ὅθεν ἦν αὐτῷ ποσῶς καὶ κατὰ βραχὺ τοῦ περὶ τούτων ἐφικέσθαι λόγου, τὸ ταὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα προάγει, ᾧ σύζυγον τὸ ἕτερον, καὶ περὶ τὴν **οὐσίαν** θεωρεῖται. Ὧν οὐδὲ μία πρὸς τὰ προκείμενα χρεία."
The translation of this passage is taken from: Alexander, 1958, 202-3.

[273] On John the Grammarian, see: Lemerle, 1986, 154-68.

the letter of Theodore the Studite quoted above, which was addressed to John the Grammarian. The letter is a response to a lost work by John the Grammarian which probably contained Aristotelian logical terms. The second piece of evidence is an anonymous refutation of iconoclasm written some years after the final restoration of icons in 843, which quotes passages of a lost work by John the Grammarian that also includes terminology taken from Aristotle's *Categories*.[274]

In short, there is evidence that a quarter of a century after the Second Council of Nicaea terms from the *Categories* of Aristotle were employed in the debate about icons. The earliest evidence is from around 812, when the anonymous commentary on the Gospel of John must have been written. After that the iconoclast John the Grammarian, but most notably Theodore the Studite and Nicephorus used Aristotelian logic to substantiate their arguments. The passages from their *Antirrhetici* provided above contain the clearest echoes of the *Categories* and although there are a handful of similar passages, the total amount of evidence is not overwhelming.[275] Nevertheless, modern scholars have used these passages to form a

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[274] These passages have been edited in: Gouillard, J. "Fragments inédits d'un antirrhétique de Jean le Grammairien," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 24 (1966), pp.171-181). For a brief discussion of these passages see: Lemerle, 1986, 167-8.

[275] A discussion of the other passages can be found in: Alexander, 1958, 189-213; Parry, 1996, 52-63; Anagnastopoulos, 2008, 63-86; Anagnostopoulos, 2013, 767-77. See also: Parry, K. "Aristotle and the Icon: The use of the Categories by Byzantine iconophile writers," in Ebbesen, S., Marenbon, J., Thom, P. (eds.) *Aristotle's Categories in the Byzantine, Arabic and Latin traditions* (Scientia Danica, Series Humanistica 8, vol. 5) (Copenhagen, 2013). For a more speculative and philosophical approach, see: Baudinet, M. "La relation iconique à Byzance au IXe siècle d'après Nicéphore le Patriarche: un destin de l'aristotélisme," *Les Études philosophiques* 1 (1978), pp. 85-106.

theory of the development of iconophile thought. Alexander was the first to highlight the contrast between John of Damascus—who uses the *Categories* extensively for his *Dialektika*, but never applies any Aristotelian terms in his treatises against iconoclasm—with Theodore and Nicephorus, who do use Aristotelian notions to substantiate their theological stance on several occasions. Consequently Alexander came up with a tripartite scheme of iconophile thought: the first phase, from the beginning of iconoclasm until the council of Hiereia in 754, he dubbed the "traditional'" one where defenders of icons largely repeat the ancient pagan defenders of cult images. The second phase, which ended with the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, Alexander named "christological," since most debates about images were framed in a christological fashion. The third and last phase is the "scholastic" one, since Aristotelian logic was now being applied to iconophile arguments.[276] Alexander's theory was taken up by later scholars, most recently by Parry and Anagnostopoulos.[277] Anagnostopoulos convincingly argues that Alexander's scholastic phase can be explained by a change in the way people approached the role of an icon. Whereas for someone like John of Damascus icons had didactic value because they resembled a prototype, such as the important lessons from the Bible,

[276] Alexander, 1958, 189-213, esp. 189.

[277] Parry dedicated a whole book to this subject: Parry, 1996, *passim*. In a recent article he provides some minor corrections an additions to his earlier findings: Parry, 2013, *passim*. Anagnostopoulos' argument can be found in her dissertation: Anagnostopoulos, 2008, *passim*, esp. 63-86, 121-143. Her recent article presents the same argument more succinctly: Anagnostopoulos, 2013, *passim*, esp. 767-77, 780-4.

Nicephorus and Theodore the Studite argued that the icon was a metaphor for these biblical lessons and that the actual resemblance was not relevant. In other words, the mimetic value of an icon was replaced by its symbolic value. Consequently, Theodore and Nicephorus needed philosophical terms to explain this more complex relationship between the prototype and the icon.[278]

Whereas Anagnostopoulos's main argument is instructive and convincing, one detail of her most recent article needs correction. At first glance, it seems curious that Theodore and Nicephorus never mention Aristotle by name. The closest thing to an attribution is found in the passage of Theodore's letter that is quoted above, where he writes that the philosophical terms come from "the philosophers."[279] Mondzain has suggested Theodore the Studite and Nicephorus downplay their indebtedness to secular learning.[280] Anagnostopoulos presents Mondzain's suggestion as a possibility.[281] However, it is unlikely that Theodore and Nicephorus used the actual text of the *Categories.* It is much more likely that they used logical handbooks like the anonymous ones studied by Roueché or the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus, which were discussed in the previous chapter. In

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[278] Anagnostopoulos, 2013, 767-77, 780-4.

[279] "πεφιλοσόφηται:" Theodore Studites, Letter 528 (Ed. Fatouros, G. Theodori Studitae Epistulae, 2 vols. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 31) (Berlin 1992), vol. II p. 789.

[280] Mondzain, M. (trans. Franses, R.) *Image, Icon, Economy. The Byzantine origins of the contemporary imaginary* (Stanford, 2005), pp. 74-5.

[281] Anagnostopoulos, 2013, 780.

fact, Alexander has shown that a passage in Nicephorus' work *Contra Eusebium* on the notion of change is copied verbatim from John of Damascus' *Dialectica* 61.[282] In the previous chapter I have shown that John of Damascus provided a reliable version of the core ideas of the *Categories.* Consequently, it is plausible that Nicephorus and perhaps also Theodore took the Aristotelian ideas of relation and equivocality from the *Dialectica* as well. Another possibility might be the logical handbook that is behind the list of chapter headings in the *Life* of Nicephorus.[283] Whatever handbook Nicephorus and Theodore took their Aristotelian terms from, there is no reason to assume that they ascribed those specific terms directly to Aristotle. Nor is there any reason to assume that they considered the centuries old tradition of studying Aristotelian logic as something secular that needed to be downplayed. However, what is certain is that, although Nicephorus and Theodore used their knowledge of the *Categories* for a different purpose later in their lives, they had studied a derivative version of that Aristotelian text in a way that is similar to how Alcuin and his students had studied it at the same time, about fifteen hundred miles northwest of Constantinople.

[282] Alexander, 1958, 205.

[283] Alexander speculates about the identification of this handbook: Alexander, 1958, 57 fn. 3.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE CALIPHATE?

Although the production of Arabic literature was flourishing in the period 775-825 there is no contemporary individual to parallel Alcuin, Nicephorus and Theodore the Studite as far as the study of the materials derived from the *Categories* is concerned. However, it is still very likely that the *Categories* was studied in Arabic during this period. Two individuals in particular may well have read the *Categories* in Arabic, Theodore Abū Qurrah and and the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I.

Born in Edessa in modern Syria around 750, Theodore Abū Qurrah was a Chalcedonian Christian who served as bishop of the city of Harran, in modern Turkey, between 795 and 812.[284] He is most famous for being the first Christian writer in Arabic and is often considered the intellectual heir of John of Damascus. Theodore's tract on the veneration of images, for instance, draws upon John of Damascus' work on the same subject.[285] Anagnostopoulos argues that Theodore Abū Qurrah's argument in favor of icon veneration shows also many similarities with those of Nicephorus and Theodore the Studite's in that he tries to persuade his readers of the metaphorical and symbolical nature of icons.[286] Furthermore,

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[284] For the biography of Theodore Abū Qurrah, see: Lamoreaux , C. "The Biography of Theodore Abū Qurrah Revisited," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), pp. 25-40, with references to earlier literature.

[285] See: Griffith, S., "Theodore Abū Qurrah's Arabic Tract on the Christian Practice of Venerating Images," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105.1 (1985), pp. 53-73.

[286] Anagnostopoulos, 2013, 777-80.

Theodore knew both Greek and Arabic well and even translated the pseudo-Aristotelian *De virtibus animae* from Greek into Arabic.[287] Consequently, it is very likely that Theodore Abū Qurrah studied John of Damascus' *Dialectica.* Neither is it unlikely that he translated the *Categories* of Aristotle, the *Dialectica* or another logical handbook into Arabic or that he studied Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's *Manṭiq*. Nevertheless, there seems to be no references to any of these texts in Theodore's extant oeuvre.[288]

Timothy was born around 730 in Hazza, in the north of modern Iraq. He was a Syriac speaking Christian who made his career in the Nestorian Church, eventually becoming the Patriarch in Baghdad in 780, in which office he remained until his death in 823.[289] His tenure as patriarch is remembered as a successful one, which is well documented since a corpus of his Syriac letters have survived. Timothy must have known Syriac, Greek and Arabic, and two of his letters, one from the 780's and one from the 790's, show that Caliph al-Mahdi had asked him to produce an Arabic

[287] For Theodore's translation, see: Lamoreaux, 2002, 38; for his bilingualism, see: Mavroudi, M. "Greek Language and Education Under Early Islam," in Sadeghi, B. e.a. (eds.) *Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 295-342, esp. p. 316-318.

[288] I have only conducted a general survey of some of Theodore's Abū Qurrah's work focusing on central terms from the *Categories.* A more thorough study of all philosophical terminology in his whole oeuvre may lead to new insights.

[289] For the biography of Timothy, see: Suermann, H. "Timotheos I, † 823," in Klein, W. (ed.) *Syrische Kirchenväter* (Stuttgart 2004), pp. 152-167.

translation of the Greek text of Aristotle's *Topics*.[290] In book I of the *Topics*, Aristotle briefly discussed the *Categories* and lists all ten of them.[291] It is possible that Timothy consulted Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase of the *Categories* when working on the Arabic translation of this *Categories*-passage in the *Topics*. Unfortunately, Timothy's Arabic version has not survived and the oldest and sole Arabic translation that does survive was made in the early tenth century by Abū 'Uthman al-Dimashqi.[292] Furthermore, the following passage about the *Topics* in one of

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[290] The two letters are translated into English and discussed in: Brock, S. "Two letters of the patriarch Timothy from the late eighth century on translations from Greek," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999), pp. 233-246. See also: Gutas, 1998, 61-69.

[291] Aristotle, *Topics* 103b21-23(Ed. Ross, W. Aristotelis Topica et Sophistici Elenchi (Oxford Classical Texts) (Oxford, 1958), pp. 9-10): "Ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα τὸν ἀριθμὸν δέκα, τί ἐστι, ποσόν, ποιόν, πρός τι, ποῦ, ποτέ, κεῖσθαι, ἔχειν, ποιεῖν, πάσχειν."

For a discussion of this passage, see: Malink, M. "Categories in Topics I.9," *Rhizai*: *A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* 4 (2007), pp. 271-94.

[292] If al-Dimashqi, who appears to have translated directly from Greek, even consulted an earlier Arabic version of the *Categories,* he would probably have used ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's literal ninth century's version and not Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase. There is also no way of knowing whether he copied parts of Timothy's translation of the *Topics.*

Al-Dimashqi's Arabic translation of the *Categories* in the *Topics* is as follows (ed. Ed. Badawī, A. *Manṭiq Arisṭū, al-ǧuzʾ al-ṯānī, al-ǧuzʾ al-ṯāliṯ. Dirāsāt islāmīyah* 7.2 (Cairo 1949), pp. 467-733, p. 502):

"إن عدتها عشرة: ما هو الشىء؛ و الكم؛ و الكيف؛ و المضاف؛ و أين؛ و متى؛ و النصبة؛ و له؛و يفعل؛ و ينفعل"

What is noteworthy is that, whereas in general al-Dhimashqi gives the same translation of the categories as ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn, in two cases (النصبة = κεῖσθαι, and المضاف = πρός τί) he gives a translation that is different from ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's but identical to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's (see the table in the previous chapter, p. 68). Nevertheless, this is hardly proof of the fact that al-Dhimasqi consulted Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase or Timothy's translation of the *Topics,* which (in this speculative line of thought) must then have included Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's translation of the ten predicates.

Timothy's letters can be construed as evidence against him using Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase:

> "And although there were some others who were translating this from Greek into Arabic - we have written to inform you how and in what way it happened that all this took place - nevertheless (the king) did not consider it worth even looking at the labours of those other people on the grounds that they were barbaric, not only in phraseology, but also in sense, whether because of the natural difficulty of the subject (hypothesis) - for you are aware of the style (eidos) of the Philosopher in matters of logic, and how and to what extent he infuses obscurity into the beauty of (his) meaning and sense -, or as a result of the lack of training of those who approached such things."[293]

Although neither the *Categories* nor Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase is mentioned literally here, the words "the Philosopher in matters of logic" most likely refer to Aristotle and his proto-Organon. Timothy's distrust of other translations and the fact that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's work was not a literal translation from Greek, make it plausible that Timothy would have ignored it. Finally, Timothy mentioned that he translated a part of the *Topics* himself from Greek into Syriac but that the Arabic

[293] Brock, 1999, 236.

translation was largely done by his assistant, Abū Nūh.[294] Abū Nūh is a rather obscure figure, but it so happens that he is mentioned in a subscript in the nineteenth century manuscript of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase. This subscript tells us that the first translator of the proto-Organon after Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was Abū Nūh. Kraus takes this subscript at face value, and although there is no trace or mention of this translation anywhere else, it is indeed possible that Abū Nūh translated the proto-Organon.[295] Even if Abū Nūh did translate the *Categories* anew, there is no Arabic text from this period that shows any engagement with this text or with Aristotelian logic in general. For the earliest traces of such study we have to look at the next generation of intellectuals.

[294] Brock, 1999, 235, 241.

[295] Kraus, 1934, 10-13.

CHAPTER III

INTELLECTUALS AROUND 850 CE

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Al-KINDI, PHOTIUS, JOHN SCOTTUS ERIUGENA

More Arabic, Greek and Latin literature has survived from the ninth century than from the preceding two hundred years taken together. Moreover, the ninth century has produced scholars who transcend the obscurity in which most early medieval intellectuals remain nowadays. Three of the best known intellectuals who were each active in the middle of the ninth century, not only studied the *Categories* but also used it in their own writings: al-Kindī, Photius and John Scottus Eriugena.

AL-KINDI

Whereas the *Categories* must have been studied by a number of Arabic intellectuals in the first 75 years after Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, the earliest traces of this tradition can only be found in the writings of al-Kindī, a prominent intellectual who was active at the caliphal court both as writer and as a teacher. Reliable sources on al-Kindī's life are scarce and a proper modern biography cannot be written.[296] Although information on al-Kindī's life can be found in al-Jahiz' *Book of Misers* and in several medieval

[296] Due to this scarcity of source material combined with the fact that most modern scholars are more interested in al-Kindī's philosophy than in his life, most studies on al-Kindī contain merely brief introductory discussions of his life. The best starting point for these discussions is Adamson's monograph on al-Kindī: Adamson, P. *Al-Kindī* (Oxford, 2006), esp. pp. 3-20, which can be supplemented by Adamson's chapter on al-Kindī in the Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy: Adamson, P. "Al-Kindī and the reception of Greek philosophy," in Adamson, P., Taylor, R. (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 32-51, and by the introduction to the English translation of al-Kindī's philosophical works by Adamson and Pormann: Adamson, P., Pormann, P. "Introduction," in Adamson, P., Pormann, P. *The Philosophical Works of al-Kindī* (Oxford, 2012), pp. xvii-lxxv.

biographical dictionaries, these accounts are largely anecdotal and contain few historical facts.[297] Nevertheless, two facts are certain and form the skeleton of the chronology of al-Kindī's life. The first one is that in an astrological treatise on the duration of the reigns of Arab monarchs, al-Kindī discusses a political rebellion that is known from other sources to have happened in 866, which is therefore the *terminus post quem* for his death.[298] Secondly, several of al-Kindī's treatises are dedicated to caliph al-Mu'tasim, who reigned from 833 to 842, and one is dedicated to al-Ma'mun, who held the throne in Baghdad from 813 to 833.[299] al-Kindī must therefore have been connected to the caliphal court around the year 830 at the latest. Consequently, his date of birth is normally put around 800 and his death around 870. These rough chronological estimates of al-Kindī's lifetime are confirmed by the medieval biographical dictionaries since they include anecdotes in connection to the caliphs al-Ma'mun, al-Mu'tasim and al-Mutawakkil (847-861) whose reigns all fall in the period 800-870.[300] The fact that these accounts also

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[297] The four most important accounts, those of Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Andalusi, al-Qifti and Ibn Abi Usayba, are collected and translated into English by Adamson and Pormann: Adamson, Pormann, 2012, l-lxxii. For a discussion on whether Al-Jahiz' account is really about al-Kindī, see: Beaumont, D. "Parody and lying in *al-Bukhala,*" *Studia Islamica* 79 (1994): pp. 27-49.

[298] Adamson, 2006, 4.

[299] *Ibid*., 4.

[300] For a discussion of the anecdote at the court of al-Mutawakkil, which is found in Ibn Abi Usayba, see: Adamson, Pormann, 2012, xvii-xix.

mention that Ahmad, the son of al-Mu'tasim, was one of al-Kindī's students, seems to be confirmed by the dedication of several of his treatises to Ahmad.[301]

In the biographical dictionaries, al-Kindī's lineage receives much attention, since he was a descendant of the Kinda tribe, a prestigious and ancient tribe with long pre-islamic roots that played an important role under the Umayyads and the Abbasids.[302] This Arab lineage is significant since it makes al-Kindī the first Arab Muslim to show an interest in Greek thought and to be connected to the Greco-Arabic translation movement. All the other intellectuals connected to the translation movement were either Nestorian Christians, such as patriarch Timothy or Persians such as Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Medieval biographers and modern scholars alike emphasize al-Kindī's Arab ethnicity such that he is often referred to with the epithet "philosopher of the Arabs."[303]

al-Kindī's oeuvre shows that he was a true polymath. Ibn al-Nadīm lists approximately 250 titles and other biographers list an additional 60.[304] The works cover topics as diverse as arithmetic, pharmacology, psychology, spherics, astrology,

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[301] Adamson, 2006, 4. The names of some of al-Kindī's other students are mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm: Adamson, Pormann, 2012, lxii; see also: Adamson, 2006, 12-3.

[302] See the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd ed.), s.v. "Kinda."

[303] The earliest source for this phrase is Ibn al-Nadīm (second half of the tenth century), who writes in his *Fihrist*: "يسمى فيلسوف العرب " = "He is called the philosopher of the Arabs" (Ed. Flügel, 2005, 255; trans. Adamson, Pormann, 2012, lxiii). Later biographers and modern scholars have copied this phrase and it can be found in practically every scholarly publication on al-Kindī.

[304] For a comprehensive list in English (with references to the different Arabic sources), see: Adamson, Pormann, 2012, l-lxii.

music, medicine, classification, metaphysics and cosmology. Of these more than three hundred works, less than 40 survive.[305] Half of the surviving corpus can be classified under the modern umbrella term "scientific," and the other under "philosophy," although such distinctions are anachronistic. The format of these texts can best be described as that of epistolary essays, varying in length from several to more than 50 pages in a modern edition. Since most of the surviving essays are dedicated to Ahmad or the caliphs al-Ma'mun and al-Mu'tasim, it is likely that the topics of al-Kindī's entire oeuvre were to a large extent dictated by the interests of his students and patrons at the court.[306]

To describe al-Kindī as only a prolific writer and influential teacher does not do him justice, since he was also an important figure in the translation movement. His significance in this regard is twofold: al-Kindī both commissioned translations from Greek into Arabic and he incorporated ideas from these translation into his own writings. Although there is no reason to assume that he knew Greek, al-Kindī was a seminal figure who gathered scholars around him to translate and discuss Greek texts. Endress has reconstructed this "circle of al-Kindī" and on the basis of

[305] 24 of these works survive in only one manuscript, which was discovered in the library of the Aya Sophia in Istanbul in the 1930's: Ritter, H, "Schriften Jaqub ibn 'Isḥāq al-Kindī's in Stambuler Bibliotheken," *Archiv Orientalni* 4 (1932): pp. 363–372.

[306] Adamson suggests that al-Kindī was able to write so many essays on so many different topics because most of the lost works were probably short: Adamson, 2006, 8. In my opinion, there is no reason to deem it unlikely that al-Kindī was able to write many long essays over the course of his whole lifetime.

manuscript evidence and linguistic particularities he has convincingly argued that al-Kindī was directly or indirectly involved with the translation or retranslation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, *De Anima, De Caelo,* Plato's *Timaeus*, Proclus' *Elements of Theology,* Nicomachus' *Introduction to Arithmetic* and the Plotinian text *The Theology of Aristotle*.[307] Furthermore, by commissioning and collecting these translations, al-Kindī acted as a catalyst for the new dimension the translation movement was acquiring in first half of the ninth century. Before al-Kindī's lifetime, the Greco-Arabic translations concerned mostly logical, astronomical and medical texts, which were part of existing curricula that were now continued in Arabic.[308] al-Kindī does not simply continue existing curricula, but he uses the translated Greek texts for philosophical and scientific discussions.

The question, then, is whether al-Kindī commissioned different translations because he needed them for his philosophical discussions or the translations he had commissioned inspired him to speculate on philosophical matters. Gutas has suggested the former: that it was al-Kindī's innovative idea to apply methods from mathematical and cosmological debates of his day to theological questions that led

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[307] Endress, G. "The Circle of al-Kindī," in Endress, G., Kruk, R. (eds.) *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 43–76, esp. pp. 52-62. al-Kindī's role in the translation of the *Theology of Aristotle* is a matter of debate: Adamson, 2005, 26 fn. 7 with references.

Unfortunately, Endress is less able to trace the individual scholars that were part of the circle of al-Kindī, other than Usthāt and Yahya ibn Bitriq: Endress, 1997, 52, 55.

[308] Explicit evidence for continuing curricula is scarce. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation I will discuss these matters in more detail.

him to his philosophical theories and his interest in other and yet untranslated Greek texts.[309] Gutas even goes as far as to argue that al-Kindī resurrected philosophy which had been absent in the Mediterranean and Middle East for more than 200 years.[310] Sadly Gutas does not define what he means by "philosophy." Nevertheless, it is true that al-Kindī did do something innovative, since he discussed theoretical and theological matters without being part of either the circle of theological scholars or a philosophical "school," since there was no philosophical school in Baghdad in the ninth century to begin with.[311]

In conclusion, al-Kindī took the Greco-Arabic intellectual current of his day to a new level by not merely studying and commissioning translations but by also applying ideas from these texts to his own intellectual speculations.[312] In the case of Aristotle's *Categories*, these two sides of al-Kindī's intellectual activities are clearly discernible in the surviving corpus: one of his texts shows how he continued to

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[309] Gutas, D. "Geometry and the Rebirth of Philosophy in Arabic with al-Kindī," in R. Arnzen and J. Thielmann (eds), *Words, Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea: Studies on the Sources, Contents and Influences of Islamic Civilization and Arabic Philosophy and Science* (Leuven, 2004), pp. 195–209, esp. pp. 201-8.

[310] Gutas, 2004, 195.

[311] Only in the tenth century, with figures such Abū Bishr Mattā and al-Fārābī, can one speak of a philosophical school in Baghdad.

[312] al-Kindī philosophical theories have received much scholarly attention (much more than his scientific texts). Again, the best starting point is Adamson's monograph on al-Kindī: Adamson, 2006, esp. pp. 21-159.

teach an existing curriculum that included the *Categories,* and in other texts al-Kindī applied notions from the *Categories* to his own philosophical theories.

A primer on Aristotle

One of al-Kindī's essays, which fills approximately twenty pages in a modern edition, bears the title "Letter on the Quantity of Aristotle's books and what is required for the Attainment of Philosophy."[313] The manuscript does not list any dedicatee.[314] Consequently, as is the case with most undedicated essays of al-Kindī, there is no

[313] Prosaic titles such as these are probably not by al-Kindī himself, but they form the result of attempts by later readers to summarize the contents that have found their way into the manuscript tradition: Adamson, 2006, 9.

[314] This treatise was one of the 24 discovered by Ritter in Istanbul in the 1930's. It was first edited by Walzer and Guidi in 1940: Guidi, M. and Walzer, R. "Studi su Al-Kindī I: uno Scritto Introduttivo allo Studio di Aristotele," *Reale Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei: Serie VI. Volume VI. Fascicolo V* (Rome, 1940) (repr. (Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic-Science, Islamic Philosophy, vol 4, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, pp. 283-329). This edition includes an Italian translation and a brief introductory discussion in Italian which is mainly useful for the fact that authors point to echoes of some Late antique commentaries on Aristotle in al-Kindī's text: Guidi, Walzer, 1940, 290-1.

The text was edited again in Cairo in 1953 as part of the standard edition of al-Kindī's text: Ed. Abū Ridah, M. *Rasā'il Falsafīya* (Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic-Science, Islamic Philosophy, vol 4) (Cairo 1953, repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1999), pp. 363-384. About a third of the Arabic text is briefly discussed and translated into English by Rescher in: Rescher, N. "Al-Kindī's Sketch of Aristotle's Organon," *New Scholasticism* 37.1 (1963), pp. 44-58. The whole treatise has been translated into English anew by Adamson and Pormann: Adamson, Pormann, 2012, 279-296.

way of dating it other than during his active years, from roughly 830 to 870.[315] This treatise is an exceptional text: if there is such a thing as a ninth century equivalent of a modern philosophical primer for students, then al-Kindī' *On the Quantity of Aristotle's Books* is it. In this treatise, he summarizes the contents of a number of Aristotelian works and explains what is useful about them. Although no dedicatee is given, the text itself is directed at someone, possibly one of al-Kindī's students, and the whole treatise is written in the form of a letter in response to an alleged request of this person:

> "You have asked me – may God help you in the things you seek, making them such as to bring you near to Him, keep you away from ignorance, and impart to you the enlightenment of the the truth—to tell you, according to their number and their order, about the books of Aristotle, the Greek man who expounded his philosophy in them—which are indispensable for those who wish to attain philosophy, and to possess it and hold it firmly—and to tell you about his purposes in

[315] Adamson conjectures that references in al-Kindī's works to certain Greek texts could be used as an argument from silence for relative chronology: if topic X is discussed in two treatises, A and B, and B refers to a certain obvious Greek text, Y, regarding topic X whereas A does not, then it follows that treatise A was written earlier, when the Greek test Y was not yet translated into Arabic. Adamson himself admits that such relative chronology is weak: Adamson, 2006, 8-10.

them, with a brief, concise, discussion. Upon my life, what you ask is of great help towards the achievement of philosophy (….)."[316]

The first thing that stands out in this passage is al-Kindī's enthusiasm about Aristotle. Although such an explicitly positive attitude about Aristotle is not found in earlier Arabic sources regarding the *Categories,* the pivotal place that al-Kindī grants Aristotelian texts is not a novel phenomenon. In fact, the texts that al-Kindī discusses and the sequence in which he does that largely follows the late antique curriculum.

After a long and verbose opening, al-Kindī provides a general classification of the Aristotelian works he will discuss:

"Aristotle's books have an order and arrangement which the student must follow when perusing them one after the other, so that he may thereby become a philosopher. After the propaedeutics, they are of four kinds. The first of the four is logic. The second is physics. The

[316] Adamson, Pormann, 2012, 281; ed. Abū Ridah, 1999, 363:
سألت — أسعدك الله بمطلوباتك، فصيّرها فيما يقرعد عن الجهل به، و يُكسِب إنارةَ الحق! — أن أنبأك بكتب أرسطاطاليس اليونانى الذى تفلسف فيها، على عدّتها و مراتبها، التى لا غنى لمن أراد نيل الفلسفة واقتناءها وتثبيتها ،عنها، و أغراضِه فيها بالقول الجمل الوجيز. ولعمرى أن فيما سألت من ذلك لعظيما المعينات على درك الفلسفة(…).

third deals with what has no need for nature (….), the fourth deals with what does not require bodies (….)."[317]

Later on in the text, al-Kindī explains that the most important part of the "propaedeutics" is mathematics. This preliminary and foundational position of mathematics is an innovative addition by al-Kindī.[318] However, the rest of the texts that he lists follow a familiar order. In the passage above al-Kindī announces that he will discuss Aristotelian texts in the fields of logic, physics, psychology and metaphysics. However, in the sections on the last three fields he merely lists titles and explains them. There is no indication that he knew the actual contents of these works. Even within the section on logical texts, al-Kindī only tackles the actual content of three texts: the *Categories*, the *On Interpretation* and the *Prior Analytics*. He devotes almost the same amount of text to his discussion of these three works as to the explanation of all the other Aristotelian titles taken together. Consequently, it is likely, as Rescher has already suggested, that when writing this treatise, al-Kindī only had access to these three logical texts and knew the other titles merely from

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[317] Adamson, Pormann, 2012, 282; Ed. Abū Ridah, 1999, 364:
فكتب أرسطوطاليس المرتبة التى يحتاج المتعلم إلى استطراقها على الولاء على ترتيبها ونظمها ليكون بها فيلسوفا بعد علم الرياضيات هى أربعة أنواع من الكتب: أما أحد الأربعة فالمنطقيات، وأما النوع الثاني فالطبيعيات، وأما النوع الثالث ففيما كان مستغنيا عن (…) الطبيعة (..) وأما النوع الرابع ففيما لا يحتاج إلى الأجسام.

[318] See: Abū Ridah, 1999, 369-70. Gutas uses this passage for his very interesting argument that it was mathematical texts that led al-Kindī to resurrect philosophical thinking: Gutas, 2004, 202.

The "third" and the "fourth" kinds are metaphysics and psychology respectively, see: Rescher, 1964, 50.

booklists.[319] Finally, whether al-Kindī had access to the other texts or not, it is not accidental that *Categories,* the *On Interpretation* and the *Prior Analytics* hold pride of place, since these were part of the proto-Organon that must have been circulating in Baghdad in the Arabic version of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and possibly other people, such as Abū Nūh.[320]

The one Aristotelian text that receives more attention than any other text in al-Kindī's treatise is the *Categories*. This summary is in itself a valuable document for the history of the reception and transmission of the *Categories* in Arabic. Although many Greek texts must have circulated as an Arabic paraphrase or translation in the period 750-850, most of these early versions were superseded by the translations that Ḥunayn ibn ʾIsḥāq and ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn made in the middle and second half of the ninth century. In the tenth and eleventh centuries the earlier translations were no longer studied and as a consequence almost none of them have survived. The case of the *Categories,* however, is exceptional. Although later intellectuals such al-Fārābī and ibn Sīnā exclusively used the translation that ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn made in the second half of the ninth century, two documents of the pre-Ḥunayn transmission

[319] Rescher, 1963, 50.

[320] Porphyry's *Isagoge*, which is the first text of the proto-Organon, is not mentioned or discussed by al-Kindī, probably because he limits himself to Aristotle's works. See also: Rescher, 1963, 49.

of the *Categories* have survived.[321] The first one is the section of the *Categories* in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase of the proto-Organon and the second document is the summary of the *Categories* in al-Kindī's *On the Quantity of Aristotle's books*.[322]

Since there is no indication that al-Kindī commissioned a new translation of the *Categories*, he must have consulted one of the existing versions. Although several paraphrases and translations of the *Categories* must have circulated in Baghdad during al-Kindī's active career, it is possible that he used the one Arabic version that has survived: the paraphrase by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ.[323] This possibility has not yet been investigated. Whereas a first glance at the text makes clear that al-Kindī has not literally copied any part of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ'a text, there may still be more subtle

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[321] Other examples of extant pre-Ḥunayn translations are those of Hippocrates' *Airs, Waters and Places* and Aristotle's zoological works. Mattock lists these and discusses a pre-Ḥunayn translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics'* book *alpha elatton*: Mattock, J. "The early translations from Greek into Arabic: an experiment in comparative assessment," in Endress, G., Schmeink, M. (eds.) *Symposium Graeco-Arabicum: Akten des Zweiten Symposium Graeco-Arabicum,* Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 3-5 März 1987 (Archivum Graeco-Arabicum 1) (Amsterdam 1989), pp. 73-102.

[322] Technically, al-Kindī's *On the Quantity of Aristotle's books* is not pre-Ḥunayn, since Ḥunayn ibn ʾIsḥāq was an exact contemporary of al-Kindī. However, Ḥunayn ibn ʾIsḥāq translated the *Categories* into Syriac. His son, ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn translated this Syriac version into Arabic. Although it is possible that ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn did this during the last years of al-Kindī's career, in the years 850-870, this is not likely. Furthermore, as I suggested above, it is likely that al-Kindī's wrote his *On the Quantity of Aristotle's books* in the early phase of his career, before 850. In conclusion, it is safe to state that al-Kindī's summary of the *Categories* is part of the pre-Ḥunayn tradition.

[323] The only scholarly comparison of the different Arabic translations of technical terms from Aristotle's logical texts that I have been able to find, is: Hugonnard-Roche, H. "La formation du vocabulaire de la logique en arabe" in Jacquart, D. (ed.) *La formation du vocabulaire scientifique et intellectuel en arabe* (Etudes sur le vocabulaire intellectuel du Moyen Âge, vol. VII) (Turnhout, 1994), pp. 22-38. Hugonnard-Roche does include Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase, but, unfortunately his investigation is brief and preliminary.

indications on a lexical level. Below I will discuss al-Kindī's summary of the *Categories* and examine whether there is any reason at all to assume that al-Kindī had Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ paraphrase in front of him when writing this treatise.

al-Kindī starts as follows:

> "There are eight books on logic. The first is called the *Categories,* and deals with terms, I mean subject and predicate. The subject is what is called 'substance', whereas the predicate is what is called 'accident', predicated of the substance, but not giving [the substance] its name or its definition."[324]

The four key words in this passage are "subject," "predicate," "substance" and "accident." For the first two words al-Kindī uses the active (الحامل) and passive (المحمول) particle of the verb "to carry" (حمل), whereas Ibn al Muqaffaʿ uses a different verb, "to attribute" (نعت).[325] al-Kindī's Arabic rendering of "substance" (جوهر) is

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[324] Adamson, Pormann, 2012, 282. Ed. Abū Ridah, 1999, 365:
فأما المنطقيات منها ثمانية. الأول منها المسمى قاطوغورياس، و هو على المقولات، أعنى الحامل و المحمول، و الحامل و هو ما سُمى جوهراً و المحمول هو ما سمى عرضاًمحمولا في جوهر غير مُعطٍ له اسمَه و لا حدَّه.

[325] For instance: Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs*, 28 (Ed. Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, 11). Both حمل and نعت are plausible translations of the word κατηγορεῖν as Aristotle uses it (حمل is also found in ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's translation, see for instance: ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn, *Kitāb Aristūtelīs al-Muqālāt,* 1b9 (Ed. Georr, 1948, 320)). Hugonnard-Roche states that نعت is primarily used in grammatical literature and is a rare alternative to حمل: Hugonnard-Roche, 1994, 27.

found in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ only once whereas the latter's preferred translation (عــين) is not found in al-Kindī at all.[326] The Arabic rendering of "accident" (عــرض) is very commonly used in both early and later translations of Aristotelian logical texts.[327]

Al-Kindī continues as follows:

> For 'predicate' is said in two ways. In the first, the predicate gives its name and definition to [the subject]. For example 'animal' is said of man, and man is called animal and defined by the definition of animal (…). Likewise, 'quality' is said of whiteness, because quality is that which applies to it and is said of it: this whiteness is similar to that whiteness, or this whiteness is not similar to that whiteness; or this shape is similar to that shape, or this shape is not similar to that shape. So 'quality', being said of the various kind of qualities, gives to the kinds of qualities their name and definition. The other way to predicate is when it is said of a subject equivocally, rather than

[326] For the only instance of جوهر as a translation of οὐσία in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, see: Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs*, 28 (Ed. Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, 11). Hugonnard-Roche overlooks this one instance and his assertion that عــين is replaced by جــوهــر by translators from the circle of al-Kindī (Hugonnard-Roche, 1994, 26) should therefore be nuanced by adding that although it is true that جــوهــر becomes the common translation during the time of al-Kindī, it was already introduced into the logical Arabic vocabulary by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ more than 70 years earlier.

[327] It can be found both in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (see, for instance: *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs*, 28; Ed. Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, 11) and ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (see, for instance: *Kitāb Aristūtelīs al-Muqālāt,* 5a39 (Ed. Georr, 1948, 330).

> univocally, and it does not give it its name or definition. For example, 'whiteness' is predicated of the white, that is, the white body. 'White', that is, the word 'white', is derived from 'whiteness', not from anything else. Whiteness is a color that blocks vision. So whiteness does not give [the white body] its definition, nor does its name give [the white body] its [body's] essence; rather ['white'] is a derived term, since 'white' is derived from 'whiteness'.[328]

The most significant word in this passage is the translation of the category "quality" (الـــكيفية). Although this is similar to the translation found in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (الكيف), the suffix -ية- makes it a neologism.[329] Moreover, this passage contains words that can be construed as evidence in favor of al-Kindī's use of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's as well as ones that can be construed as evidence against it. al-Kindī uses the words "white" (الأبـــيض) and "whiteness" (الـــبياض) as examples to explain the concept of

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[328] Adamson, Pormann, 2012, 282. Ed. Abū Ridah, 1999, 365-6:

إذْ المحمول يقال على نوين: أحدهما يعطى الحاملَ له اسمه و حده، كالحى المقول على الإنسان؛ فإن الإنسان يسمى حياً و مُحدّ : مجد الحى (...) و كذلك الكيفية المقولة على البياض؛ فإن الكيفية هى التى يلحقها و يقال عليها: هذا البياض شبيه لهذا البياض، و هذا البياض ليس بشبيه لهذا البياض؛ و هذا الشكل شبيه بهذا الشكل، و هذا الشكل ليس شبيه بهذا الشكل؛ فقد أعطت الكيفيةُ المقولةُ على أنواع الكيفية أنواَعها التى

هي مقولة عليها، اسَمها وحدَّها . و أما أحد المحمولين فهو ما قيل على حامله باشتباه الاسم لا بتواطئه، و لم يعطه حدَّه و لا اسمه، كلبياض المحمول على الأبيض، أعنى الجسم الأبيض؛ فإن الأبيض، أعنى هسم الأبيض، مشتق من البياض، لا عين البياض؛ و البياض لون يعون البصر، و الأبيض، أعنى الجسم الأبيض، ليس لون يعون البصر، فلم يعطِ البياضَ حدَّه، و لم يعطه اسمه عينه، بل [هو] اشتقاق، إذ أبيض مشتق من بياض.

[329] Hugonnard-Roche lists the addition of this suffix as one of the more common strategies employed by translators: Hugonnard-Roche, 1994, 27.

"quality." Aristotle does use the word "white" in the *Categories* as an example, but in the section on his fourfold division and not in relation to the category quality.[330] Furthermore, whereas Aristotle uses other examples both in a specific and in an abstract form (such as "man" (ἄνθρωπος), "horse" (ἵππος) and "the individual man" (ὸ τὶς ἄνθρωπος), "the individual horse" (ὸ τὶς ἵππος)), he uses only the specific form of white, "the individual white" (τὸ τὶ λευκὸν) and never the abstract form. Consequently, a supposed direct Aristotelian origin of al-Kindī's abstract "whiteness," such as λευκότης, does not exist. However, this discrepancy can easily be explained by the fact that al-Kindī may have taken "whiteness" from some paraphrase or commentary. In fact, Guidi and Walzer note that "whiteness" became part of the Aristotelian commentary tradition as early as the sixth century, since it is found in Simplicius' commentary on the *Categories*.[331] However, although Simplicius' commentary may be the ultimate source of the use of the concept of "whiteness" in relation to Aristotle's *Categories,* it is unlikely that al-Kindī took this directly from Simplicius' text.[332] There is a much more obvious source: the paraphrase by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. In a passage discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation (see p. 140), Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ writes:

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[330] Aristotle, *Categories*, 1a20-1b8. This passage is quoted and discussed the Introduction of this dissertation, where I introduce Aristotle's fourfold division.

[331] Guidi, Walzer, 1940, 290.

[332] Simplicius' commentary on the *Categories* was translated into Arabic, but this translation is lost and the earliest references to it are in Ibn al-Nadīm and the Paris manuscript (BN 2346): see Walzer, R. "New Light on the Arabic Translations of Aristotle," *Oriens* 6.1 (1953), pp. 91-142, esp. pp. 100-106.

> "A general accident is as when someone says: 'whiteness', and a specific accident is as saying: 'this particular whiteness'."[333]

This parallel between Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and al-Kindī can be construed as evidence for the argument that the former was a direct source for the latter. However, since other Arabic translations or paraphrases that have not survived may well have contained similar statements with "whiteness" in them, this evidence is not conclusive.

The same passage in al-Kindī's *On the Quantity of Aristotle's books* also contains the words "equivocal" (باشتباه الاسم) and "univocal" (بتواطئه الاسم). These words are found in the opening section of Aristotle's *Categories* (1a1-1a15: Ὁμώνυμα and συνώνυμα) but are entirely absent from Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase. Consequently, it is certain that al-Kindī must have used other Arabic sources on the *Categories,* either instead of or in addition to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's paraphrase.

[333] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ *Kitāb Qaṭūghurīūs,* 29. Ed. Dāneshpazhūh, 1978, 11:
العرض العام كقول القاءل: البياض، و العرض الخاص كقوله: هذا البياض

Finally, al-Kindī ends his summary of the *Categories* by listing the ten categories themselves.[334] The table below schematically compares the translation of the Greek terms by both al-Kindī and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ:

Table 6: The Tenfold Classification in Al-Kindī's *On the Quantity (…)*

Category	**Aristotle**	**al-Kindī**	**Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ**	**ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn**
1. Substance	οὐσία (substance)	al-jāwhar الجوهر	al-ʿayn العين	al-jāwhar الجوهر
2. Quantity	ποσὸν (how much?)	kamiyya كمية	kam كم	kam كم
3. Quality	ποιὸν (how?)	kayfiyya كيفية	kayf كيف	kayf كيف
4. Relation	πρός τί (to what?)	iḍāfah إضافة	al-muḍāf المضاف	al-iḍāfa الأضافة
5. Place	ποὺ (where?)	ayna اين	ayna اين	ayna اين
6. Time	ποτὲ (when?)	matā متى	matā متى	matā متى
7. Posture	κεῖσθαι (to be in a position)	waḍaʿ وضع naṣbah al-shāy نصْبة الشىء	al-naṣbah النصبة	mawḍūʿ موضوع

[334]Adamson, Pormann, 2012, 283:
"The terms predicated accidentally of the subject term, which is substance, are nine: quantity, quality, relation, where, when, action, passion, possession, and position, i.e. something's posture."
Ed. Abū Ridah, 1999, 366:
و المقولاتُ المحمولات العرضية، على المقول الحامل، [و هو] الجوهر، تسعة: كمية، و كيفية، و إضافة، و أين، و متى، و فاعل، و منفول، و له، و وضع، أى نصْبة الشىء.

Category	Aristotle	al-Kindī	Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ	ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn
8. State	ἔχειν (to be in a state)	lahu له	dhū māl ذو مال	an yakūn lahu أن يكون له
9. Action	ποιεῖν (to do)	fāʿil فاعل	al-fʿal الفعل	an yafʾal أن يفعل
10. Affection	πάσχειν (to undergo)	manfʿūl منفعول	al-mafʿūl المفعول	an yafʿal أن ينفعل

This overview does not provide any conclusive evidence either. In some cases, such as the predicates relation, action and affection, al-Kindī uses a cognate form of the word that is found in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. In others, such as substance and state, al-Kindī chooses a translation that is different from Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and similar to the later version of ʾIsḥāq ibn Ḥunayn. In the case of the category posture, al-Kindī provides two translations, one that is identical with Ibn al-Muqaffaʿʾs (نـــصْـبـة) and another which is a cognate (وضـع) of the rendering that would become standardized (موضوع).

In conclusion, the lexical particularities of al-Kindī's Arabic summary of the *Categories* show that he must have consulted a translation or a paraphrase of the *Categories* that has not survived. Whether he also used Ibn al-Muqaffaʿʾs paraphrase cannot be proven, but it is certainly within the realm of possibilities.

The *Categories* in al-Kindī's philosophical texts

The long list of al-Kindī's works in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* includes two works on the *Categories* of Aristotle, "On the Intention of Aristotle in the *Categories"* and "On the Ten Categories."[335] Unfortunately, neither of these works has survived. What has survived is a short treatise (six pages in a modern edition) that bears the title "Substances which are not Bodies."[336] al-Kindī's argument in this treatise is convoluted. His main aim is twofold: showing that species are substances which are incorporeal and that souls are incorporeal substances since they are the species of a living thing. To make this argument al-Kindī employs technical vocabulary, which he takes almost exclusively from the *Categories,* most importantly the distinction between equivocal and univocal:

> "The proof that there are incorporeal substances in the parts of the natural world comes (…) after our knowing the concomitants of

[335] Ed. Flügel, 2005, 256:

(كتاب) فى قصد ارسطاليس فى مقولات؛ (كتاب) رسالة فى مقولات العشر.

Peters suggests the first one was "probably an imitation or paraphrase of a Greek prolegomena-work" and the second an epitome: Peters, 1968, 11.

[336] The standard edition of this work can be found in: Abū Ridah, 1999, 265-9. For the English translation, see: Adamson, Pormann, 2012, 107-110. Adamson and Pormann provide an introduction and valuable explanatory notes on this translation in: Adamson, P. and Pormann, P. "Aristotle's categories and the soul: an annotated translation of Al-Kindī's That there are separate substances" in Elkaisy-Friemuth, M. and Dillon, J.(eds.) *The afterlife of the Platonic soul: reflections of Platonic psychology in the monotheistic religion* (Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic tradition, vol. 9) (Leiden, 2009), pp. 93-106.

> substance that distinguish it from other things: that it subsists in itself (…) and is characterized by all the categories. There are, however, [two kinds of characterizations]: univocal characterizations and equivocal characterizations. (…) Once this is known it can be established that incorporeal substances do exist."[337]

Not only does al-Kindī use the same translation of the words univocal (مـــتواطئ) and equivocal (مـــتشاب) as in *On the Quantity of Aristotle's Books,* he also leaves out the third term which Aristotle mentions in the first paragraph of the *Categories,* analogous (παρώνυμα, next to συνώνυμα and ὁμώνυμα). Furthermore, later on in *Substances which are not Bodies* al-Kindī conflates univocal predication with essential predication and equivocal predication with accidental predication.[338] The actual theoretical validity and implication of these uses of Aristotelian terminology lie outside of the scope of this dissertation. What is relevant for now is the fact that al-Kindī uses Aristotle's *Categories* to prove a Platonic point: the immateriality of the soul. The fact that he chooses to do so implies, on the one hand, that he probably did not have access to a more relevant philosophical text, such as Plato's *Timaeus* or

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[337] Adamson, Pormann, 2012, 108. Ed. Abū Ridah, 265-6:
الدليل أن جواهراً لا جسم له يكون فى أجزاء العالم الطبيعي (…) بعد أن لواحق الجوهر المميزةَ من غيره، التى هى أنه القائم بذاته (…)، المنعوتُ من جميع المقولات؛ أو أنه المنعوت إما نعتاً متواطئاً و إما نعتا متشابهاً (…) فإن هذه إن كانت معلومةٌ مقرّاً بها وجد جوهر لا جسم.

[338] See: Adamson, Pormann, 2009, 97.

Aristotle's *De Anima.*[339] On the other hand, however, it shows that al-Kindī considered the *Categories* a foundational text that could be used for various philosophical themes.[340]

PHOTIUS

Photius was the most prolific author of ninth-century Constantinople. Moreover, his activities as a scholar and a patriarch, combined with the fact that most of his writings survive, make him one of the most famous intellectuals of Byzantine

[339] For a similar suggestion, see: *Ibid.*, 99.

[340] The parts that survive from Al-Kindī's most celebrated treatise, *On First Philosophy*, heavily draw upon Aristotelian and logical thought as well (ed. Abū-Ridah, 1999, 97-162; trans. Adamson, Pormann, 3-57; for an English translation with commentary, see: Ivry, A. *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics. A Translation of Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq's al-Kindī's Treatise "On First Philosophy." With an Introduction and Commentary* (Albany, 1974). However, whereas Aristotle's *Metaphysics* figures prominently throughout the whole work and Porphyry's *Isagoge* is explicitly used to discuss divine attributes, no clear quote of the *Categories* can be found in *On First Philosophy.* Nevertheless, words like "univocally" (متواطئاً قولا (Abū Ridah, 1999, 128; see: Ivry, 1974, 172), which is also used in the *Isagoge*, make it plausible that al-Kindī had the *Categories* in the back of his head, if not directly in front of him, when writing this work (see also Ivry*, 1974,* 205, for a list of *loci* in Aristotle's *Categories* that Ivry includes in his commentary to elucidate passages in *On First Philosophy*).

history.[341] More importantly, his writings are the first since those of Theodore the Studite and Nicephorus to contain information regarding the *Categories.* Despite his fame, much of Photius' life before he became patriarch is shrouded in mystery. His date of birth is unknown. However, on the basis of several references in his own works—such as that he personally knew Nicephorus and Tarasius as old men and that his parents died early and in exile due to the second iconoclasm—scholars have deduced a date of birth around the year 810.[342] Photius was born into an aristocratic family: his father's brother was patriarch Tarasius and empress Theodora was probably a distant family member of his.[343] Unfortunately, there is no source

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[341] Unfortunately, there is no recent monograph on Photius. The last attempt at such a book was: White, D. *Patriarch Photios of Constantinople: his life, scholarly contributions, and correspondence together with a translation of fifty-two of his letters* (Brookline, 1981). However, White's book rarely transcends earlier scholarly work and she uses her sources inaccurately at times (see Treadgold's critical review of this work: Treadgold, W. "Review of '*Patriarch Photios of Constantinople: His Life, Scholarly Contributions, and Correspondence together with a Translation of Fifty-Two of His Letters* by Despina Stratoudaki White; *The Patriarch and the Prince: The Letter of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople to Khan Boris of Bulgaria* by Despina Stratoudaki White and Joseph R. Berrigan, Jr.," *Speculum* 58.4 (1983): pp. 1100-1102.

The most useful starting points for the first half of Photius' life (with references to primary sources and earlier studies) are the lemma on Photius (6253) in the *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinische Zeit* (volume 3, Berlin, 2000, pp. 671-684; and: Ahrweiler, H. "Sur la carrière de Photius avant son patriarcat" *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 58.2 (1965): pp. 348-362; and: Lemerle, 1986, 205-35. For Photius' activities as patriarch, see: Hergenroether, J. *Photius, Patriarch von Constantinopel. Sein Leben, seine Schriften und das Griechische Schisma* (3 vols) (Regensburg, 1867-69); and: Dvornik, F. *The Photian schism: History and Legend* (Cambridge, 1948).

[342] Ahrweiler, 1965, 349-55; Lemerle, 1986, 209-10.

[343] Ahrweiler, 1965, 353-5.

whatsoever on Photius' education.[344] Furthermore, the role Photius may have played in the final restoration of the worship of images in 843 is also unclear, but what is certain is that in the 840's and 850's he worked at the imperial administration in Constantinople and quickly rose to the highest position of *protoasekretis*.[345] During these years Photius had already become known for his wide learning and he was probably the mentor of several students, although the details of such teaching activities are unclear.[346]

After a youth which was in all likelihood spent in exile, the 840's and 850's seem to have been a peaceful and prosperous period for Photius. However, this stability was not to last. In 858, Bardas, the regent for emperor Michael III, deposed patriarch Ignatius and installed Photius, allegedly against his will. Since Photius was an unmarried layman, a battle arose within the church led by clerics who supported

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[344] Lemerle deems this lack of information on the education of an individual as learned as Photius surprising. However, Lemerle's explanation that this lacuna can be explained by Photius' own tendency to be haughty and mysterious about his own knowledge is unconvincing: Lemerle, 1986, 210-11.

[345] Ahrweiler, 1965, 361-3.

[346] Dvornik, has suggested that Photius taught at the alleged Patriarchal Academy: Dvornik, F. "Photius et la réorganisation de l'Academie patriarcale," *Mélanges Paul Peeters* (Analecta Bollandiana 68) (Bruxelles, 1950), pp. 108-25, esp. pp. 120-5. However, Lemerle has convincingly argued that there is insufficient evidence that such an academy ever existed in the ninth century: Lemerle, 1986, 105-10, 213-4. Nevertheless, I agree with Treadgold in thinking that Lemerle pushes his point too far when he asserts that there is no evidence at all that Photius was active as a teacher in the first place: Treadgold, W. *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius* (Washington, D.C. , 1980), p. 3 fn. 13. For instance, when Photius talks about his "διδάσκαλος" in the *Amphilochia,* the most plausible interpretation seems that Photius taught students privately (Lemerle, 286, 232).

the deposed Ignatius. This conflict would last for the rest of Photius' tenure as patriarch and it acquired a new dimension when the papacy in Rome first supported Ignatius and later also opposed Photius on the theological issue of the *filioque*-phrase in the Nicaean creed.[347] When emperor Basil I took power in 867, Ignatius was reinstalled and Photius deposed, condemned and exiled. However, when Ignatius died in 878, Photius was reinstalled as patriarch, only to be exiled and condemned again in 886 when emperor Leo VI succeeded Basil I. Photius died in exile, possibly after 892.[348]

Photius' tumultuous career did not prevent him from writing thousands of pages of learned Greek on a variety of topics. At a young age he composed a reference book of obscure and archaic Greek words, known as the *Lexicon*. His most famous work is the *Bibliotheca,* a compilation of his own summaries and reviews of the books that he had read. The *Bibliotheca* includes 280 such extracts and fills nearly a thousand pages in a modern edition. Furthermore, after his first patriarchate, Photius collected 300 answers to theological questions, which became known under the name *Amphilochia*. Before and during his first patriarchate he wrote a number of homilies and nearly 290 letters, the most famous of which is a

[347] Dvornik, 1948, *passim*. On the *filioque* controversy in general, see: Siecenski, E. *The Filioque, History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (Oxford 2010).

[348] Treadgold, 1980, 3 fn. 14.

mirror for princes directed at the Bulgarian king Boris I.[349] Of this vast oeuvre, it is the *Bibliotheca*, one letter and several chapters of the *Amphilochia* that deserve further investigation regarding Photius' engagement with Aristotle's *Categories*.

The *Categories* in Photius' oeuvre

The *Bibliotheca* has come down to us with an informative preface and postface. In the first sentence of the preface, Photius explains that he will provide summaries of the books he has read, in response to his brother Tarasius' request. Tarasius had asked him to do so, since Photius was about to embark upon an embassy to the "Assyrians" (Ἀσσυρίους).[350] The most plausible interpretation of this opening statement is that Photius was about to join one of the Byzantine embassies to the Abbasid Caliphate. Scholars have argued that Photius joined one of the ninth century embassies to the Caliphate that are known from other sources, and the ones of 845 or 855 seem the most likely candidates and, hence, are the likely *termini ante quem* for the date of composition of the *Bibliotheca*.[351] Furthermore, during the last fifty years one theory has occasionally popped up in secondary literature which argues that Photius read and summarized all the books during his visit in Baghdad. If this

[349] For an overview of Photius' oeuvre, see: *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinische Zeit,* vol. 3, 679-684 (with ample references).

[350] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 1 (ed. Henry, R. Photius. Bibliothèque. Texte établi et traduit. (8 vols.) (Les Belles Lettres, Collection Byzantine) (Paris, 1959-1991), vol. 1, p. 1.

[351] Treagold summarizes the different proposed dates with references to earlier studies: Treadgold, 1980, 12-3.

were true, it would have profound implications for our understanding of the ninth century intellectual climates in both Constantinople and Baghdad. However, there is no evidentiary base for this theory whatsoever. Not only does Photius' own preface of the *Bibliotheca* state that he read and summarized his books before his journey, there is also no reason to assume that all the literary works Photius discusses were available in Baghdad, nor that Photius ever set foot in Baghdad, since practically all the embassies in this period were sent either to the military frontier or to the temporary capital of Samarra.[352]

In the *Bibliotheca,* Photius summarizes a large number of secular works from antiquity. Consequently, one would expect some of Aristotle's works to be included. However, Photius does not discuss even one Aristotelian text. This apparent lacuna should be understood in connection with the absence of other obvious classical authors, such as Thucydides, Plato, Homer and the tragedians.[353] In the postface, Photius explains that he included all the works he could remember, except those works "whose study and perusal commonly constitute the arts and sciences."[354]

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[352] The most recent discussion of these arguments against this theory of the 'Baghdad-library', can be found in: Stronk, J. *Ctesias' Persian History. Part I. Introduction, Text, Translation*. (Düsseldorf, 2010), pp. 135-8. This theory seems to have sprung from the mind of the one scholar who thought it up in the 1950's, Hemmerdinger. See: Hemmerdinger, B. "Les 'notices et extraits' des bibliothèques grecques de Bagdad par Photius," *Revue des Études Grecques* 69 (1956), pp. 101-103. See also: Treadgold, 1980, 13.

[353] Treadgold, 1980, 6.

[354] Photius, *Bibliotheca* 545 (ed. Henry, 1959-91, vol 8, p. 214):
"χωρὶς ὧν ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ μελέτη τέχνας φιλεῖ καὶ ἐπιστήμας ἐργάζεσθαι." Translation: Treadgold, 1980, 6.

Photius probably means that he did not include texts that were commonly known by educated people in ninth century Constantinople, in other words: school texts. Consequently, the implication of the absence of Aristotle's works from *Bibliotheca* is that Photius considered Aristotle's works to be school texts. Although it is unlikely that all of Aristotle's works were part of the common educational curricula, the *Bibliotheca* does not give any further information about which Aristotelian texts were studied and which were not. However, there is a hint in another text by Photius that he was familiar with Aristotle's logical texts.

When Photius was made patriarch, he had to deal with opposition from both the Constantinopolitan and the Roman clergy, even from the pope himself. One of Photius' letters, which dates from the first year of his first patriarchate (probably 861) is directed at pope Nicholas I.[355] In this lengthy letter, Photius writes in a curiously apologetic fashion that he should not be blamed for being installed as patriarch, since he was merely a pawn in the political game played in Constantinople. He explains how he was forced to renounce a peaceful and studious life, which is idyllically described. This description includes the following passage:

[355] For the date of this letters see, the Latin introduction to this letter by Westerink (with references to other secondary literature) in the Teubner edition of Photius' letters: Laourdas, B., Westerink, L. *Photius. Epistulae et Amphilochia* (vols. 1-3) (Bibliotheca Scriptorum et Romanorum Teubneriana) (Leipzig, 1983-5), vol 3, p. 123.

> "When I was still at home, I was immersed in the most delightful of pleasures, namely the zeal of those who were learning, the eagerness of those who asked questions, and the enthusiasm of those who answered. That is how the faculty of judgment is formed and strengthened, among those whose intelligence is sharpened by scholarly pursuits, those whom **logical methods** set on the pathway of truth, those whose minds the Holy Scriptures direct towards piety, the highest goal of all the other studies. For it was this kind of band which frequented my home."[356]

Even if one does not take the apologetic tone of this whole letter at face value, then the passage above contains valuable information about Photius' scholarly activities in the 850's. In a circle of intellectuals, possibly including students, he discussed different texts and topics, including "logical methods."[357] The rest of the letter does not provide any evidence for the actual texts that Photius used in such logical

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[356] Epistula 290, 64-71: Ed. Laourdas, Westerink, 1983-5, vol 3, p. 126:
'οἵκοι μὲν γὰρ μένοντι ἡ χαρίεσσα τῶν ἡδονῶν περιεπλέκετο τέρψις, τῶν μανθανόντων ὀρῶντι τὸν πόνον, τὴν σπουδὴν τῶν ἐπερωτώντων, τὴν τριβὴν τῶν προσδιαλεγομένων, δι' ὧν ἡ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ῥᾷστα παράγεσθαι καταρτίζεται γνώμη, τῶν ταῖς μαθηματικαῖς σχολαῖς λεπτυνομένων τὴν διάνοιαν, τῶν ταῖς λογικαῖς μεθόδοις ἰχνευόντων τὸ ἀληθές, τῶν τοῖς θείοις λογίοις ἱθυνομένων τὸν νοῦν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν, ὃ τῶν ἄλλων ἁπάντων ὑπάρχει πόνων ὁ καρπός. τοιοῦτος γὰρ χορὸς τῆς ἐμῆς οἰκίας ἦν ὁ χορός.'
Trans.: Lemerle, 286, 229.

[357] See also: Laourdas, Westerink, 1983-5, vol. 4, p. 140.

discussions, but the *Categories* of Aristotle or a paraphrase of that is a likely possibility. Finally, the *Amphilochia* provide evidence that actually Photius did study the *Categories.*

The *Amphilochia* is Photius' largest theological work. Its organization shows similarities with that of the *Bibliotheca.* In more than 300 "questions" in an apparently random order, a large array of topics are discussed, that vary from Biblical matters to the different uses of the verb to be. This collection is preceded by a letter, directed to Amphilochius. Just as the *Bibliotheca* was allegedly written for Tarasius, Photius explains in the prefatory letter that he writes the *Amphilochia* in response to his friend Amphilochius' request to collect the written answers to various theological questions.[358] On the basis of internal evidence Lemerle argues that Photius made this collection shortly after his first deposition in 867.[359] Even if one rejects this date of collection, Photius most probably wrote these different parts of the *Amphilochia* over a longer period of time. Furthermore, a number of questions are not newly composed texts by Photius, but excerpts of other texts. One example is 33 questions that are taken from Theodoret's biblical commentary.[360] Another example is a series of questions on the *Categories*.

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[358] For the Greek text of the prefatory letter, see: Ed. Westerink, L. *Photius. Epistulae et Amphilochia* (vols. 4-6) (Bibliotheca Scriptorum et Romanorum Teubneriana) (Leipzig, 1986-8), vol. 4, pp. 1-2.

[359] Lemerle, 1986, 232.

[360] *Amphilochia,* 249-272: Ed. Westerink, 1986-8, vol. 6, pp. 35-64.

Questions 137-147 of the *Amphilochia* are exclusively dedicated to the *Categories* of Aristotle. Since Amphilochius is not mentioned anywhere in these chapters, and since the style and diction of the Greek differs from Photius' other texts, both Hergenroether and Westerink have concluded that these eleven chapters are not Photius' own composition but are copied from an Aristotelian commentary.[361] Parts of this Aristotelian commentary are also found in scholia on the *Categories* which are attributed to Photius.[362] Both the author and the title of this commentary are unknown. The *Amphilochia* only provide a generic subheading:"'For the same Amphilochius who asks for a *Clear Summary* of the ten categories."[363]

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[361] Westerink, 1986-8, vol. 5, p.140. Hergenroëther's conclusion can be found in the in introductory comments before question 137 in his edition of the *Amphilochia*, as printed in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*: PG, vol. 101, cols. 757-760. See also: Bydén, B. "Photius on the non-synonymy of Substance: Amphilochia 138," in Ebbesen, S., Marenbon, J., Thom, P. (eds.) *Aristotle's Categories in the Byzantine, Arabic and Latin traditions* (Scientia Danica, Series Humanistica 8, vol. 5) (Copenhagen, 2013), pp. 9-34, esp. 9-10.

See also: Oehler, K. "Aristotle in Byzantium," Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 5 (1964): 133-46, esp. p. 137-138.

Treadgold states, without providing further evidence, that Photius the copying of this commentary for the *Amphilochia* was done not by Photius himself but by a secretary: Treadgold, 1980, 38.

[362] These scholia are found in several manuscripts (see: Westerink, 1986-8, vol. 5, p. 140), but they have not been properly edited. The footnotes of the Hergenroethers' edition of *Amphilochia* 137-147 includes the scholia as they are found in one of the manuscripts: PG 101, cols. 759-804.

Since most sentences in the scholia are similar but not identical to *Amphilochia* 137-147, Westerink states that the scholia must have been taken from an earlier version of the Aristotelian commentary: Westerink, 1986-8, vol. 5, p. 140.

[363] Ed. Westerink,, 1986-8, p.141: "Τῷ αὐτῷ Ἀμφιλοχίῳ ζητήσαντι σύνοψιν σαφῆ τῶν δέκα κατηγοριῶν." My own translation.

Bydén refers to this commentary as the "Clear Summary": Bydén, 2013, *passim*. I will also use *Clear Summary* as the title of this work as well.

The first thing that is significant about the *Clear Summary* is that it is not derived or excerpted from an ancient commentary. It is therefore the first post-iconoclastic commentary on the *Categories* or any other Aristotelian text. Bydén even states that it is the first Aristotelian commentary since the lost 6th century work by Stephanus of Alexandria, but his argument that John of Damascus' *Dialectica* was too derivative and elementary to be considered a philosophical commentary is difficult to justify.[364] Nevertheless, the *Clear Summary* does include several new philosophical interpretations of the *Categories*, some of which have received scholarly attention.[365] What is relevant for our exploration is the extent to which this commentary contains and is dependent on a reliable version of the main ideas of Aristotle's *Categories.* A schematic overview of the *Clear Summary* shows a familiar organization:

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[364] Bydén, 2013, 9. Bydén does not refer to Erismann's article on John of Damascus' *Dialectica,* where an argument is made for John's originality and sophistication: Erismann, 2011, 33. See the first chapter of this dissertation, p. 38.

[365] For a general exploration, see: Schamp, J. "Photios aristotélisant? Remarques critiques," in Billerbeck, M., Schamp, J. (eds.) *Kainotomia. Le renouvellement de la tradition hellénique* (Freiburg, 1996a), pp. 1-17; for an analysis of *Amphilochia* 145, see: Schamp, J. "La 'localisation' chez Photios. Traduction commentée de Questions à Amphilochios 145," in Motte, A. Denooz, J. (eds.) *Aristotelica Secunda. Mélanges offert à Christian Rutten* (Liège, 1996b), pp. 265-79; for a brief note on *Amphilochia* 142, see: Ierodiakonou, K. "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's Categories," *Synthesis Philosophica* 39 (2005): pp. 7-31, esp. p. 24.; for an analysis of *Amphilochia* 138, see: Bydén, 2013, 11-26.

Table 7: Photius' *Clear Summary*

Quaestio	Greek subheading	Subject discussed
137	(σύνοψιν σαφῆ)	the antepraedicamenta
138	Περὶ ούσίας	the category substance
139	Περὶ ποσοῦ	the category quantity
140	Περὶ ποιότητος	the category quality
141	Περὶ τῶν πρός τί	the category relation
142	Περὶ τῶν ὑπολοίπων ἓξ κατηγοριῶν	the last six categories
143	Περὶ τοῦ ποιεῖν	the category action
144	Περὶ τοῦ πάσχειν	the category affection
145	Περὶ τοῦ ποῦ	the category place
146	Περὶ τοῦ κεῖσθαι	the category posture
147	Περὶ τοῦ ποτέ	the category time

Although the sequence is different from Aristotle's, the *Clear Summary* discusses all the ten predicates, except state. Furthermore the treatment of the first four predicates (substance, quantity, quality and relation) takes up more space than the discussions of the other six, which follows Aristotle's original emphasis on these first four categories. Finally, Aristotle's original Greek text is followed closely on many occasions.[366] In the first chapter of this dissertation the passage in John of Damascus' *Dialectica* where the ten categories are introduced with examples, was shown to have close resemblances to the same passage in Aristotle's *Categories.* (see

[366] Westerink's *apparatus criticus* lists all the *loci*: Westerink, 1986-8, 141-65.

p. 39-40). The same passage in the *Clear Summary* shows even more similarities with Aristotle. Below the English translation is given, with the ten categories in **bold** and the examples that are identical to those mentioned in the *Categories* underlined:

> "And of those things which are **without combination**, one is **substance,** another is **quality**, another is **quantity**, another is **relation**, another is **place**, another is **time**, another is **posture**, another is **state**, another is **action,** another is **affection.** And **substance** is as man or horse; **quantity** is as two cubits long or three cubits longs; **quality** is as white or grammatical; **relation** is as double, half and more; **place** is as in Athens or in the academy; **time** is as as yesterday or last year; **posture is** as standing or sitting; **state** is as

being dressed or being shod, another; **action** is as burning or cutting; **passion** is as being burnt or being cut." [367]

This passage leads to the same conclusion as the passage in John of Damascus' *Dialectica*. There is no evidence that the author of the *Clear Summary* had access to the original text of Aristotle's *Categories,* and he was probably dependent on earlier commentaries and paraphrases.[368] Nevertheless, this indirect transmission did not entail a significant distortion of Aristotle's main ideas and a ninth century reader of the *Clear Summary* would have studied a reliable version of the *Categories.* One of

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[367] Photius, *Amphilochia* 137, 120-127 (Westerink, 1986-8, 144):
Ἔτι τοίνυν τῶν χωρὶς **συμπλοκῆς λεγομένων** τὸ μέν ἐστιν **οὐσία**, τὸ δὲ **ποσόν**, τὸ δὲ **ποιόν**, τὸ δὲ **πρός τί**, τὸ δὲ **ποῦ**, τὸ δὲ **ποτέ**, τὸ δὲ **κεῖσθαι**, τὸ δὲ **ἔχειν**, τὸ δὲ **ποιεῖν**, τὸ δὲ **πάσχειν**. καὶ ἔστιν **οὐσία** μὲν οἷον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος· **ποσὸν** δὲ οἷον δίπηχυ, τρίπηχυ· **ποιὸν** δὲ οἷον λευκόν, γραμματικόν· **πρός τί** δὲ οἷον διπλάσιον, ἥμισυ, μεῖζον· **ποῦ** δὲ οἷον ἐν Ἀθήναις, ἐν Ἀκαδημίᾳ· **ποτὲ** δὲ οἷον χθές, πέρυσι· **κεῖσθαι** δὲ οἷον κάθηται, ἵσταται· **ἔχειν** δὲ οἷον ὑποδεδέσθαι, ἐνδεδύσθαι· **ποιεῖν** δὲ οἷον τέμνειν, καίειν· **πάσχειν** δὲ οἷον τέμνεσθαι, καίεσθαι.
The English translation is my own.
Aristotle's *Categories* 1b25-2a4 (Minio-Paluello, 1936, 5):
Τῶν κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγομένων ἕκαστον ἤτοι οὐσίαν σημαίνει ἢ **ποσὸν** ἢ **ποιὸν** ἢ **πρός τί** ἢ **ποὺ** ἢ **ποτὲ** ἢ **κεῖσθαι** ἢ **ἔχειν** ἢ **ποιεῖν** ἢ **πάσχειν**. ἔστι δὲ **οὐσία** μὲν ὡς τύπῳ εἰπεῖν οἷον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος· **ποσὸν** δὲ οἷον δίπηχυ, τρίπηχυ· **ποιὸν** δὲ οἷον λευκόν, γραμματικόν· **πρός τί** δὲ οἷον διπλάσιον, ἥμισυ, μεῖζον· **ποὺ** δὲ οἷον ἐν Λυκείῳ, ἐν ἀγορᾷ· **ποτὲ** δὲ οἷον χθές, πέρυσιν· **κεῖσθαι** δὲ οἷον ἀνάκειται, κάθηται· **ἔχειν** δὲ οἷον ὑποδέδεται, ὥπλισται· **ποιεῖν** δὲ οἷον τέμνειν, καίειν· **πάσχειν** δὲ οἷον τέμνεσθαι, καίεσθαι.'

[368] Although it is possible that the author of the *Clear Summary* had access to John of Damascus' *Dialectica,* there are no clear references to substantiate such a claim.

these readers was Photius, who included the *Clear Summary* in his *Amphilochia.*[369] The fact that he deemed it necessary to include a commentary of the *Categories* in his own work and the fact that the *Clear Summary* is the only Aristotelian or philosophical work that fills more than one question in the *Amphilochia,* is significant. It is likely that Photius discussed the *Categories* with his fellow intellectuals and that he referred to it when he talked about "logical methods" in his letter to pope Nicholas I. Finally, even if the details of Photius' use of the *Clear Summary* or the *Categories* are unknown, a plausible conclusion is that the *Categories* played an important role in his intellectual career.[370]

JOHN SCOTTUS ERIUGENA

While al-Kindī and Photius were studying the *Categories* in Arabic and Greek, the *Categoriae Decem* were read in the Carolingian world. This Aristotelian paraphrase had been put into circulation by Alcuin in the last decade of the eighth century and one of its very few documented readers was at the same time its most avid reader,

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[369] Bydén has shown that there is no evidence in later Byzantine literature that *Amphilochia* 138 was used or read by anyone: Bydén, 2013, 28-32. Consequently, it is possible that the *Clear Summary* did not have any readership after Photius.

[370] Anton has discussed Photius' use of *Categories* in the *Amphilochia* in a very peculiar way: Anton, P., "The Aristotelianism of Photius' philosophical theology," in Schrenk, L. (ed.) *Aristotle in Late Antiquity* (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 27) (Washington, D.C., 1996), pp. 158-183. He argues, incorrectly, that the whole *Amphilochia* is related to the *Categories* (p.160) and that in this text Photius reassessed the "mind of Greece" and accomplished a confluence of Hellenism and Christianity (p.165). Anton's argument seems to me to be too holistic and essayistic to be included in a scholarly discussion.

John Scottus Eriugena. Eriugena is a an Irish intellectual who spent most of his life at the court of Charles the Bald, the grandson of Charlemagne who ruled over the kingdom of West Francia from 843 to 877. John Scottus Eriugena is famous for his knowledge of Greek and for his philosophical *magnum opus,* the *Periphyseon*. Eriugena has received more scholarly attention than any of the historical figures that are discussed in this dissertation.[371] This fame is mostly due to that fact that modern scholars have discovered more innovative and sophisticated philosophical ideas in the *Periphyseon* than in most other early medieval treatises.[372]

Despite Eriugena's fame, very little is known about his life.[373] Unlike Alcuin, he has not left us with any letters. Nor is he mentioned in the *Annals of St. Bertin*, an important historical source for the ninth century Carolingian world. The first accounts of his life date from several centuries later and are largely anecdotal.[374]

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[371] Brennan's useful bibliography of Eriugenian scholarship until the 1990's alone takes up several hundreds of pages: Brennan, M. "A Bibliography of Publications in the Field of Eriugena Studies 1800-1975," *Studi Medievali* (ser. 3a) 28 (1977), pp. 401-47.; and: Brennan, M. *A Guide to Eriugenian Studies. A Survey of Publications 1930-87* (Paris, 1989). I do not know of any such bibliographical overviews of the last 25 years of scholarship.

[372] Consequently, following a traditional scholarly bias of ancient originality versus medieval derivativeness, the *Periphyseon* has even been described as the final achievement of ancient philosophy: Bosworth Burch, G. *Early medieval Philosophy* (New York, 1951), p. 5.

[373] The best starting point for the biography of Eriugena is: Moran, D. *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena. A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), esp. pp. 35-47. Moreover, for a useful overview of the medieval testimonia for the biography of Eriugena, see: Brennan, M. "Materials for the Biography of Johannes Scottus Eriugena," *Studi Medievali* (ser. 3a) 27 (1986), pp. 413-60. The foundational study on the life of Eriugena is still: Cappuyns, M. *Jean Scot Erigène: sa vie, son oeuvre, sa pensée* (Louvain, 1933).

[374] Moran, 1989, 35, 37

Eriugena was born some time in the first quarter of the ninth century in Ireland.[375] The first actual evidence of his activities indicates that he was active as a teacher in the liberal arts at the itinerant court of Charles the Bald in the 840's.[376] Like many medieval kings, Charles was an ambitious ruler who wanted to display his power by means of patronage of learning. More specifically, he wanted to emulate the patronage of his grandfather Charlemagne and of that of the Byzantine emperors in Constantinople.[377] Charles actively attracted intellectuals and, as a result, in the middle of the ninth century his court was a lively center of learning where a circle of eminent intellectuals discussed the important debates of their time.[378] Therefore, although there is no explicit evidence on the reasons behind Eriugena's move to the continent, it is likely that the court of Charles the Bald was simply an ideal place for him to teach and write.[379] In short, similar to Alcuin at the end of the eighth century,

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[375] *Ibid*., 36.

[376] *Ibid.,* 28, 35.

[377] For a discussion of Charles the Bald's patronage and propaganda, see: Staubach, N. *Rex Christianus. Hofkultur und Herrschaftspropaganda im Reich Karls des Kahlen* (Vienna, 1993); with regard to Eriugena in particular, see: *ibid.,* pp. 41-104.

[378] For discussions of the intellectual milieu at the court of Charles the Bald in general, see: McKitterick, M. "Charles the Bald (823-877) and his library: the patronage of learning," *English Historical Review* 95 (1980): pp. 29-47; McKitterick, M. "The palace school of Charles the Bald," in Nelson, J., Gibson, M. (eds.) *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 384-400; Riché, P. "Charles le Chauve et la culture de son temps", in Roques, R. (ed.) *Jean Scot Erigène et l'Histoire de la philosophie* (Paris, 1997), pp. 37-46.

[379] As part of her impressive study on networks of intellectuals in Western Europe, Steckel discusses Eriugena's interactions with contemporary scholars, in: Steckel, S. *Kulturen des Lehrens im Früh- und Hochmittelalter. Autorität, Wissenskonzepte und Netzwerke von Gelehrten* (Vienna, 2011), pp. 618-688.

Eriugena migrated to the continent and became a prominent intellectual at the Carolingian court.

Eriugena was a cleric, but whether he was a monk or a priest is not known. He probably spent the rest of his life in Francia, probably at Charles the Bald's court. Nothing is known about his death, but the *terminus post quem* is 877, since one of his poems commemorates the consecration of the church of Saint Mary in Compiègne, which took place in that year. Consequently, Eriugena' active career spanned from the 840s to the 870's. Apart from the *Periphyseon,* Eriugena's surviving oeuvre includes a few smaller theological works, a number of poems and translation from the Greek works of Pseudo-Dionysius. There are three aspects of Eriugena's life and work that deserve a closer look regarding his engagement with the *Categories*: the evidence for his teaching activities, his translation of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius and his *Periphyseon*.[380]

Eriugena and the *Categories*

As is the case with most early medieval intellectuals, there is little evidence of Eriugena's teaching activities.[381] The most important source is the glosses on

[380] His surviving oeuvre includes also a number of poems and three smaller theological works, which have received relatively little scholarly attention: Moran, 1989, 27-34.

[381] The best introduction into Eriugena as a teacher, is: Contreni, J. "John Scottus, Martin Hibernensis, the Liberal Arts of Teaching" in Herren, M. (ed.) *Insular Latin Studies. Papers on Latin Texts and Manuscripts of the British Isles*: 550-1066. (Toronto, 1981), pp. 23-44, esp. pp. 23-30.

Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*. Later medieval authors refer to a commentary by Eriugena on Martianus, and in the early twentieth century Lutz reconstructed this commentary on the basis of glosses in different manuscripts.[382] However, the attribution of these glosses to Eriugena has met with much criticism, and a large part of the glosses can no longer be ascribed to him.[383] Nevertheless, even if these glosses are not by Eriugena, they provide a reliable window into the Carolingian discussions, both scholarly and educational, of the *De nuptiis.* It takes, then, only a small leap of faith to imagine Eriugena instructing his students in a very similar way. For instance, one of the glosses on book four of the *De nuptiis*, which deals with dialectics, includes the following gloss:

[382] Lutz, C. *Iohannis Scotti Annotationes in Marcianum* (Cambridge, MA, 1939).

[383] Moran discusses the main stances in this debate and lists the main twentieth century publications: Moran, 1989, 37-40. For the latest views on these glosses, see the recent collection of articles on the Carolingian reception of Martianus Capella: Teeuwen, M., O'Sullivan, S. (eds.) *Carolingian Scholarship and Martianus Capella. Ninth-century Commentary Traditions on De Nuptiis in Context* (Turnhout, 2011) and the introduction to the new edition of the ninth century glosses to Martianus; O'Sullivan, S. "The oldest gloss tradition on Martianus Capella's De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii," in O'Sullivan, S., (ed.) *Glossae Aevi Carolini in Libros I-II Martiani Capellae De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis, 237) (Turnhout, 2010), pp. v-xxxv.

> "There are ten genera of things, which are called categories in Greek, predicaments in Latin: substance, quantity, quality, relation, position, posture, place, time, action, affection."[384]

What this passage tells us is that ninth century intellectuals like Eriugena paid attention to the logical sections of *De nuptiis.*[385] Even if this particular gloss was not written down by Eriugena himself, then it is still plausible that he also read and discussed the dialectical parts of Martianus Capella's work in a similar way and that he would explain the theory of the ten categories with his students. Such an assumption becomes even more likely if one takes into account that the ten categories figure prominently in Eriugena's *Periphyseon.*

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[384] Ed. Lutz, 1939, 84:
"Sunt enim decem genera rerum quae a Grecis categoriae, a Latinis predicamenta dicuntur, substantia quantitas qualitas relatio situs habitus locus tempus."
The English translation is my own.

[385] A passage in the writings of a contemporary of Eriugena, Martin Hiberniensis, provides similar evidence. Martin was a fellow Irishman who also worked most of his life in Francia, in Laon (see: Contreni, J. *The Cathedral School of Laon from 850 to 930. Its Manuscripts and Masters* (Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance-Forschung, 29) (Munich, 1978), esp. pp. 95-134). A teaching book that he owned, contains a small compilation of liberal arts material from the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville (ed. Contreni, 1981, 32-36). A significant part of this small text is devoted to dialectics and here the ten categories are listed with examples (*ibid.,* 35). Martin Hiberniensis also knew Greek and compiled a Latin-Greek glossary and it appears that some of the Greek words were taken from the *Categoriae Decem* (ed. Miller, E. "Glossaire grec-latin de la bibliothèque de Laon," *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, 29.2 (1880), pp. 1-230, esp. pp. 181-5) which would make Martin the only other scholar of Eriugena's generation to have studied this text (see also: Marenbon, 1981, 111).

The *Periphyseon* is a philosophical treatise of five books that is written as a dialogue and dedicated to Charles the Bald. In it, Eriugena presents a cosmology that is as much Neoplatonic as it is Christian. The whole universe is in constant process of emanating from and returning to the One, who is God. God is infinite and transcends all. In the first book Eriugena discusses this concept of an all-transcendent God. In this discussion he employs the ten categories, which are introduced as follows:

> "Aristotle, the shrewdest among the Greeks, as they say, in discovering the way of distinguishing natural things, included the innumerable variety of all things which come after God and are created by Him in ten universal genera which he called the ten categories, that is, predicables. For, as he holds, nothing can be found in the multitude of created things and in the various motions of minds which cannot be included in one of these genera. Now, the Greek call them οὐσία, ποσότης, ποιότης, πρός τί, κεῖσθαι, ἕξις, τόπος, χρόνος, πράττειν, παθεῖν, which are called in Latin essentia, quantitas, qualitas, ad aliquid, situs, habitus, locus, tempus, agere, pati. And of these ten genera there are innumerable subdivisions which our present task does not permit us to discuss lest we should digress too far from our topic - especially as it is the function of that

> branch of philosophy which is called dialectic to break down these genera into subdivisions from the most general to the most specific, and to collect them together again from the most specific to the most general."[386]

After this introduction of the Aristotelian categories, Eriugena discusses each predicate and investigates whether it can be applied to God. For instance, in the case of the predicate quantity, we find the following treatment:

> "It is not quantity, because it is more than quantity. For every quantity extends in three dimensions, length, breadth, and depth, and these three dimensions are again produced in six directions, for length goes up and down, breadth to the right and to the left, and depth forwards

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[386] Ed. and trans. Sheldon-Williams, I. *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae Periphyseon* (*De Divisione Naturae*) 4 vols. (Scriptores Latini Hibernae) (Dublin, 1968-95), vol. 1, p. 84-5:
"Aristoteles acutissimus apud Graecos, ut aiunt, naturalium rerum discretionis repertor, omnium rerum, quae post deum sunt, et ab eo creata<e>, innumerabiles uarietates in decem uniuersalibus generibus conclusit, quae decem categorias, id est, praedicamenta vocauit. Nihil enim, ut ei uisum, in multitudine creatarum rerum variisque animorum motibus inveniri potest, quod in aliquo praedictorum generum includi non possit. Haec autem a Graecis vocantur ΟΥΣΙΑ ΠΟΣΟΤΗΤΑ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΙ ΚΕΙΣΘΑΙ ΕΞΙΣ ΤΟΠΟΣ ΧΡΟΝΟΣ ΠΡΑΤΤΕΙΝ ΠΑΘΕΙΝ. Quae latialiter dicuntur essentia, quantitas, qualitas, ad aliquid, situs, habitus, locus, tempus, agere, pati. Horum autem decem generum innumerabiles subdivisiones sunt, de quibus nunc disputare praesens negotium non admittit, ne longius a proposito recedamus, praesertim cum illa pars philosophiae, quae dicitur dialectica, circa horum generum divisiones a generalissimis ad specialissima, iterumque collectiones a specialissimis ad generalissima versetur."

and backwards. But there is no dimension in God: therefore there is in Him no quantity."[387]

In a similar way all the ten categories are applied to God. Eriugena comes to a negative, or apophatic conclusion: none of the categories can be applied to God.[388] More interesting than this conclusion is the extent to which Eriugena employs the theory of the ten *Categories:* it flows as a major theme throughout the first book of the *Periphyseon*. Consequently, the *Categories* were of great importance to Eriugena. The final question that has to be answered then, is the source that Eriugena used.

Marenbon has asserted that the main source for Eriugena's knowledge of the *Categories* was the *Categoriae Decem.*[389] Nevertheless, the Latin wording of the ten categories in the *Periphyseon* differs in several cases from that found in the *Categoriae Decem* and Alcuin's *De Dialectica,* as the table below shows:

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[387] Ed. and trans. Sheldon-Williams, 1968-95, vol.1, p. 86-7:
"Non est quantitas quia plus quam quantitas est. Omnis enim quantitas tribus spatiis extenditur, longitudine quidem latitudine altitudine, quae iterum tria patia senario protenduntur numero. Nam longitudo sursum et deorsum, latitudo dextrosum et sinistrorum, altitudo ante et retro protenditur. Deus autem omni spatio caret; caret igitur quantitate."

[388] This statement should, strictly speaking, be nuanced, since Eriugena asserts that the categories can, in fact, be applied to God metaphorically, but that in actuality this is impossible, since God is above all: Marenbon, J. "John Scottus and the Categoriae Decem" in Beierwaltes, W. (ed.) *Eriugena: Studien zu seinen Quellen* (Heidelberg, 1980), pp. 116- 34, esp. p. 120. See also: Kavanagh, C. "The Influence of Maximus the Confessor on Eriugena's Treatment of Aristotle's Categories," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79.4 (2005): pp. 567-596. esp. p. 572; and: von Perger, M. "Eriugenas Adaption der Aristotelischen Kategorienlehre," in Perler, D., Rudolph, U. (eds.) *Logik und Theologie. Das Organon im arabischen und im lateinischen Mittelalter* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 239-303.

[389] Marenbon, 1980, 119.

Table 8: The Tenfold Classification in Eriugena' *Periphyseon*

Category	Aristotle	Eriugena	Categoriae Decem	Alcuin
1. Substance	οὐσία (substance)	Essentia	Substantia	Substantia
2. Quantity	ποσὸν (how much?)	Quantitas	Quantitas	Quantitas
3. Quality	ποιὸν (of what kind?)	Qualitas	Qualitas	Qualitas
4. Relation	πρός τί (to what?)	Ad aliquid	Ad aliquid	Ad aliquid
5. Place	ποὺ (where?)	Locus	Ubi	Ubi
6. Time	ποτὲ (when?)	Tempus	Quando	Quando
7. Posture	κεῖσθαι (to be in a position)	Situs	Iacere	Situs
8. State	ἔχειν (to be in a state)	Habitus	Habere	Habere
9. Action	ποιεῖν (to do)	Agere	Facere	Facere
10. Affection	πάσχειν (to undergo)	Pati	Pati	Pati

The differences between the Latin renderings of "essentia" and "substantia," "tempus" and "ubi," and "habitus" and "habere" are not fundamental. For any other hypothetical ninth century author, such differences would not give any reason to doubt that the main sources for the theory of the ten Categories were the Latin tradition surrounding the were the *Categoriae Decem.* Eriugena, however is an

exceptional figure, since he knew and translated Greek texts that had been sent from Byzantium. It is therefore worth investigating the possibility of him having access to a new Greek version of the *Categories.*

Apart from a wide knowledge of both secular and Christian latin literature, Eriugena was also well versed in Greek, a rarity in Western Europe in the ninth century. Whether he learned Greek in Ireland or in Francia is a matter of debate.[390] What is certain is that around the year 860 he was asked by Charles the Bald to undertake a new translation of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.[391] The Carolingian identification of this Greek author is a matter of double confusion. In the sixth century a mystic theologian wrote philosophical texts portraying himself as the Dionysius mentioned in the biblical Acts of the Apostles (Acts 17:34). In the subsequent Byzantine tradition this author was always believed to actually be the biblical Dionysius. Furthermore, in Western Europe this pseudo-Dionysius became conflated with the saint Denis of Paris. Consequently, intellectuals in the Carolingian world had an interest in acquiring the texts of pseudo-Dionysius. This desire is most likely the background of the fact that several Greek codices of pseudo-Dionysius' texts were sent to the Carolingian court: the first one from Rome in 758, the second one during the papacy of Hadrian I (772-795), and the third as a gift from the

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[390] Moran gives an overview of the secondary literature on Eriugena's Greek education: Moran, 1989, 56 fn. 20.

[391] *Ibid.,* 49.

Byzantine emperor Michael II as a gift to Louis the Pious is 827.[392] The first two codices have vanished without a trace, but the third one was translated into Latin by Hilduin before 834. This translation was very literal and there is nor reason to assume that it attracted any enthusiastic readers.[393] Eriugena's new translation did acquire readership, even as far away as Rome, where Anastasius Bibliothecarius, another Greek translator, voiced his high regard for Eriugena's work in a letter to Charles the Bald.[394] More important was the effect the translation would have on Eriugena himself: not only did it lead him to translate several other Greek works such as works by Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor, but it also exposed him to aspects of Neoplatonic thought that had not been known in Western Europe for centuries. Eriugena would soon use this newly acquired knowledge for his *Periphyseon.*

The transmission of the Greek works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite from Byzantium to the Carolingian world and the Latin translations of these texts are a good example of intellectual exchange between two of the three language realms that are under investigation in this dissertation. Since Eriugena not only used insights from Pseudo-Dionysius in his own works, but also employs the Aristotelian predicates, the question arises whether a Greek version of Aristotle's *Categories* was

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[392] Sheldon, Williams, I. "Johannes Scottus Eriugena" in Armstrong, A. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 518-34, esp. pp. 518-9.

[393] Moran, 1989, 48; McCormick, 2001, 912.

[394] *Ibid.,* 50; Brennan, 1986, 431.

part of the westward transmission of Pseudo-Dionysius' texts. However, this question can firmly be answered in the negative. I have studied all the surviving evidence surrounding the transmission and translation of Pseudo-Dionysius and none of them contain any reference to an Aristotelian text.[395] Consequently, the minor differences in Eriugena's Latin versions of the ten categories have to be understood as variations within an existing tradition of Latin paraphrases of the *Categories.* Nevertheless, even if Eriugena is not dependent on any contemporary Byzantine version of the Aristotle's *Categories,* his *Periphyseon* can only be properly understood if it is placed in the larger context of the reception of the *Categories* which stretches from Francia to Baghdad. This overarching context is the topic of the next chapter.

[395] A letter from the year 758 which accompanied the first Pseudo-Dionysian codex does contain the name Aristotle: I will discuss this interesting detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

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THE *CATEGORIES*

FROM YORK TO BASRA

ANSWERING THE PRIMARY QUESTIONS

In the preceding three chapters a diverse array of primary and secondary sources have been discussed that are relevant to the eighth and ninth century study of Aristotle's *Categories* in Latin, Greek and Arabic. As a result, I will now be able to answer the primary questions that were posed in the introduction of this dissertation. One of those questions can be answered in a straightforward manner:

- In the works of which intellectuals is knowledge of the *Categories* attested?

A brief summary of the preceding three chapters suffices as a basic answer to this question. In the period 750-850, the *Categories*—either in Greek or in a Latin or Arabic translation—was taken up by intellectuals in places as far apart as York and Basra. In the middle of the eighth century, John of Damascus used the *Categories* extensively for his *Dialectica* in Syria/Palestine, while Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ translated it into Arabic in Basra/southern Iraq. Around 800, the text was used for iconoclastic debates in Constantinople by Theodore the Studite and Nicephorus, while in the Carolingian realm Alcuin dedicated the *Categoriae Decem* to Charlemagne and used it for his treatises on dialectics and the trinity. Finally, in the middle of the ninth century, the *Categories* was used by Eriugena in Francia, by Photius in Constantinople and by al-Kindī in Baghdad.

The answer to the following question has also emerged concretely out of the previous discussions:

- Did these intellectuals have access to a reliable version of the *Categories*?

This question can be answered in the affirmative. None of the early medieval intellectuals knew the *Categories* through a literal rendering or translation. Instead, all of them relied upon an indirect and derivative tradition of paraphrases and epitomes. Nevertheless, as I have demonstrated in each chapter, these epitomes and paraphrases conveyed the main notions of the *Categories* reliably. The central concept of this Aristotelian treatise as a whole, the tenfold classification, was accurately transmitted in Latin, Greek and Arabic and authors like John of Damascus, Alcuin and al-Kindī read the same version of it as Boethius and the Alexandrian commentators had done in the sixth century.

The previous three chapters also allow me to answer the other primary questions of this dissertation. The two remaining subsidiary questions are:

- In what way and in what context did these intellectuals use the *Categories* in their own works?
- How did these intellectuals learn about the *Categories* and what is the origin of the source texts that they used?

The discussions in the preceding chapters contain evidence for the answers to these two questions. However, the relevant pieces of evidence are scattered throughout the preceding discussions and there are different ways in which those pieces of evidence can be tied together. Furthermore, explaining in what kind of intellectual context the early medieval intellectuals studied and used the *Categories* and how

they were exposed to it automatically leads me to answering the main question of this whole dissertation:

- ❖ Why was the *Categories* of Aristotle used simultaneously by Carolingian, Byzantine and Abbasid intellectuals?

In this chapter I will answer this question by using evidence that has been collected in all the preceding chapters. Since the different pieces of evidence can be tied together in different ways, this chapter is composed of the successive treatments of three hypotheses—exchange of texts, simultaneous renaissances, a common educational curriculum. I will argue that the third hypothesis provides the most plausible answer to the primary question of this dissertation.[396]

HYPOTHESIS I: EXCHANGE OF TEXTS

The fact that the *Categories* was studied simultaneously in the Carolingian, the Byzantine and the Abbasid states is exceptional. Therefore, it is not illogical that this treatise must have been exchanged between these three societies. Such an

[396] There is one possible answer that would render the rest of this chapter otiose, and that is the possibility of coincidence. Theoretically speaking, it can simply be a genuine coincidence that Eriugena, Photius and al-Kindī used the same text at the same time. However, not only is such a coincidence seemingly improbable, an answer of this type would explain nothing and it would leave us with an intractable mystery. For a useful discussion of the improbability of genuine coincidences in nature and history, see: Cleland, C. "Philosophical Issues in Natural History and Its Historiography," in Tucker, A. (ed.) *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography* (Malden, MA, 2009), pp. 44-62, esp. pp. 55-56.

assumption seems even more likely now than it would have fifty years ago. As I explained in the introduction (see page 11-12), for most of the twentieth century, the paradigm of the Pirenne thesis defined the *communis opinio* of trade and communications between early medieval states. The general view among the first two generations of scholars after Pirenne was that the Frankish, the Byzantine and the Arab polities of the seventh and eighth centuries were virtually isolated from one another. However, over the course of the last few decades, scholars like McCormick and Wickham convincingly argued that material and written sources demonstrate that both short and long-distance trade and communications in Western Eurasia never stopped during the sixth and seventh centuries.[397] The general picture that emerges out of these studies, is that, allowing for regional variation, the start of the eighth century was indeed a low-point for pan-Mediterranean trade, compared to the levels of connectivity around 500 CE or 900 CE, but there was never a total cessation of communication. In other words, during the eighth and especially the ninth century, merchants, diplomats and clerics always travelled and exchanged artifacts, money and knowledge between the Frankish, the Byzantine and the Arab worlds.

Within this context of early medieval connectivity, it makes sense to assume that literary, scientific and philosophical texts, such as Aristotle's *Categories,* were also transmitted across political and linguistic borders. Although there were direct

[397] McCormick, 2001, 25-119; Wickham, 2005, 154-258.

diplomatic exchanges between the Caliphate and the Frankish state in this period, I have found no evidence of exchange of texts between these two polities nor of any Latin-Arabic or Arabic-Latin translation in the eighth and ninth century.[398] What concerns us here is the transmission of texts between the Frankish and the Byzantine worlds on the one hand and Byzantium and the Caliphate on the other.

Latin-Greek interaction

A comprehensive study that investigates intellectual exchange between Western Europe and the Byzantine world of the eighth and ninth centuries, to complement the socio-economic picture that has emerged from the studies of Michael McCormick and Chris Wickham, does not exist. Nevertheless, there are well-known examples of the transmission and translation of literary texts. The most important channel of transmission was southern Italy, and especially the city of Rome. McCormick has shown that most travelers from Western Europe to Byzantium either came from Rome or passed through it.[399] Furthermore, Peter Brown has described the city of Rome in the period 550-800 as a frontier city on the western periphery of an eastern

[398] I exclude here the Iberian peninsula, where there may be evidence of (lost) Latin-Arabic translations made in the eighth and ninth century. As far as I know, the earliest Arabic translation of a Latin literary, philosophical or scientific text made in the Iberian peninsula that survives, is the tenth century translation of Orosius' *Historiarum adversus paganos libri septem;* see: Sahner, C. "From Augustine to Islam: Translation and History in the Arabic Orosius„" *Speculum* 88.4 (2013): pp. 905-31, esp. 907, fn. 8.

[399] McCormick, 2001, 153-158.

empire.[400] Following that strain of thought, one can describe Rome in both the eighth and the ninth century as a cultural middle ground between the Latin and Greek intellectual worlds.[401] This role is, for instance, reflected by the fact that in the middle of the eighth century, the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great were translated from Latin into Greek by pope Zacharias in Rome, and approximately a century later Anastasius Bibliothecarius compiled his *Chronographia Tripartita* in Latin on the basis of the Greek writings of Theophanes, Nicephorus, and George Syncellus.[402] Furthermore, the transmission of the *Acts* of the second council of Nicaea (787), which was discussed in chapter two (see pp. 78-80), also makes more sense if one sees Rome as a Latin-Greek middle ground. Only a few years after the council took place, a Latin version of the acts reached the court of Charlemagne in north-western Europe. In that swift transmission Rome also played an intermediary role, since that was the place where the Greek text was translated before it was sent north. Similarly,

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[400] Brown, 2003, 2.

[401] For a discussion of early medieval Rome as a middle ground, see: Gantner, C. "The eighth-century papacy as cultural broker," in Gantner, C., McKitterick, R., Meeder, S. (eds.) *Cultural Memory and the Resources of the Past: Europe c. 400-1000* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 245-261.

For the use of the notion of middle ground (originally applied to historical phenomena in American colonialism) in early medieval history, see: Reimitz, H. "Cultural Brokers of a Common Past: History, Identity and Ethnicity in the Merovingian Kingdoms," in Pohl, W. and Heydemann, G. (eds.) *Strategies of Identification – Early Medieval Perspectives* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 257-301.

[402] Louth, A. "Gregory the Great in the Byzantine tradition," in Bronwen, N., Dal Santo, M. (eds.) *A Companion to Gregory the Great* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 343-358; Forrai, R. "Anastasius Bibliotecarius and his Textual Dossiers: Greek Collections and their Latin Transmission in 9th century Rome," In Gioanni, S., Grévin, B. (eds.) *Formation et transmission des collections textuelles de l'antiquité tardive au Moyen Âge central (IVe- début XIIIe siècle)* (Rome, 2008), pp. 317-336.

in the transmission of the Greek works of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite to Western Europe, which was dealt with at the end of the third chapter (see p. 166), Rome also was a crucial channel. The first two Greek (lost) manuscripts of that text were sent from Rome by pope Paul I and Hadrian I respectively, in the second half of the eighth century. It is likely that the Greek codex that was sent by Michael the Stammerer to Louis the Pious and which John Scottus Eriugena translated into Latin, also passed through Rome.[403]

The existence of this intellectual exchange between the Frankish and Byzantine world seems to substantiate the assumption that Eriugena and Photius or Alcuin and Theodore the Studite were studying the *Categories* simultaneously: because the treatise was exchanged between Byzantium and the Carolingian world in or around their lifetime. However, I have not found any evidence for the exchange or translation of this text or any text dealing with Aristotelian logic between

[403] There is no explicit evidence for the routes that the Byzantine envoys to Louis the Pious took: McCormick, 2001, 912.

Byzantium and Western Europe in the eighth or ninth century.[404] Of course, absence of evidence does not equal evidence of absence, and given the fact that other literary and philosophical texts were transmitted and translated from Greek into Latin in the eighth and ninth centuries, it is still theoretically possible that the *Categories* was transmitted from Byzantium to Francia in this period. Yet, there is another and more cogent refutation of this assumption. In chapters two and three, I have discussed the sources Alcuin and Eriugena used for the treatment of the notion of the ten categories. What has become clear is that there is no evidence in their writings that they used a lost contemporary translation of the *Categories.* Instead, both intellectuals used the Latin compendia of the *Categories* found in the works of Martianus Capella, Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville as well as the fourth century *Categoriae Decem*. In other words, when Alcuin and Eriugena chose to use the *Categories* in their own works they used late antique Latin texts and not contemporary translations.

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[404] In the *Epistulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi* of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae* I have found a peculiar reference to an Aristotelian text in Greek. In the letter pope Paul I sent to Pepin the Short in 758, it is written that several Greek manuscripts were sent along from Rome to Francia. One of them is the (lost) Greek version of the *Corpus Dionysiacum,* but another one is the "artem gramaticam Aristotelis" (ed. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistulae* vol III., *Epistulae Merovingici et Karolini* vol. I (Berlin, 1892), *VIII Codex Carolinus*, ep. 24, p. 529). It is unclear to me what text the manuscript in question may have contained. It is possible that, due to fact that grammar and dialectics were often studied together in this period, a grammatical treatise was incorrectly attributed to Aristotle (see also: Law, V. "The Study of Grammar," in Mckitterick, R. (ed.), *Carolingian Culture, Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 88-110.) In any case, there is no reason to assume that the "artem gramaticam Aristotelis" was the *Categories.* Furthermore, there is no indication that pope Paul I acquired these manuscripts from Constantinople, so in all likelihood these texts came from the papal archive in Rome.

Although Greek translations of Latin texts have always been less common than Latin translations of Greek text, they did exist.[405] One example in the eighth century is the Greek translation of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great. Therefore, it is also theoretically possible that one of the Latin versions of the *Categories* were (re)translated into Greek. However, because such Latin-to-Greek translations were uncommon, one would need cogent evidence for the existence of such a translation of the *Categories*. Such evidence does not exist: there is no circumstantial evidence nor any clues within the writings of Theodore the Studite, Nicephorus or Photius. Consequently, as far the as intellectual connections between the Frankish and the Byzantine world are concerned, a contemporary exchange or translation of the *Categories* never took place and can therefore not be adduced to explain why Alcuin and Nicephorus or Eriugena and Photius used that text at the same time.

Greek-Arabic interaction

The picture of intellectual exchange between Byzantium and the Caliphate is significantly different. If anything, the intellectual connectivity in this eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern arena was more profound. Whereas the linguistic borders between the Latin and Greek cultural spheres in the ninth century were

[405] See: Ebbesen S. "Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction," in Ierodiakonou, K. (ed.) *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 15-30; Mavroudi, M. "Translations from Greek into Arabic and Latin during the Middle Ages: Searching for the Classical Tradition," *Speculum* 90.1 (2015), pp. 28-59.

roughly the same as in ancient times, in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle Eastern arena the linguistic borders were drastically redrawn as a consequence of the Arab conquests. By the ninth century, Greek practically ceased to be an active language of learning in all the lands south of Anatolia, and was replaced by Arabic.[406] This process of Arabicization was gradual and in the seventh and eighth century Greek texts were still being produced in the new caliphate. In fact, the epicenter of Greek learning in the eighth century was not in Constantinople or the Byzantine domains of Anatolia, but in the region of Syria and Palestine.[407] This is also the area where the eighth-century Greek study of the *Categories* was to be found, as has become clear in my discussion of the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus in chapter one (see pp. …). It may, therefore, be tempting to compare eighth-century Syria with eighth-century southern Italy, and to consider it a middle ground as well. However, although such a claim could perhaps be made about the Greek-Syriac cross-pollination, there is very little evidence of Arabic translations of Greek (or Syriac)

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[406] For different positions on the speed of the process of Arabicization, see: Wasserstein, D. "Why did Arabic succeed where Greek failed? Language change in the near East after Muhammad," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 22 (2003), pp. 257–72; Hoyland, R. "Language and identity: The twin histories of Arabic and Aramaic (and: Why did Aramaic succeed where Greek failed?)," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 23 (2004), pp. 191–98; Papaconstantinou, P. "Why did Coptic fail where Aramaic succeeded? Linguistic developments in Egypt and the Near East after the Arab conquest," in Mullen, A., James, P. (eds.) *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman worlds* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 58–76.

[407] See: Mango, C. "Greek Culture in Palestine after the Arab Conquest," in Cavallo, G., e.a. (eds.) *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio. Atti del Seminario di Erice, 18-25 Settembre 1988* (Spoleto, 1991), pp. 149-160; Cavallo, G. "Qualche riflessione sulla continuità della cultura Greca in oriente tra i Secoli vii e viii," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 88.1 (1995), 13-22.

texts in eighth-century Syria.[408] The process of Arabicization did entail the adoption and translation of a significant portion of the corpus of learned texts that had existed in Greek, Syriac and Middle Persian, but, counterintuitive as it may sound, this did not happen until the political center of the Caliphate had been moved to an area where Greek had never been used: Iraq.

While the translation movement took off in Iraq, Greek learning in Syria and Palestine declined. There are indications that Greek scholars moved to Constantinople in the second half of the eighth century. For instance, there are two scholars who were born in Palestine in the eighth century, George and Michael, but who filled the episcopal office of *syncellus* in Constantinople in the ninth.[409] Along with such individuals, books must have travelled. One such work was the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus, which, as I discussed in chapter two, was known to Nicephorus in Constantinople in the early ninth century. Although the details of this influx of knowledge into Byzantine territory around 800 are not known, it is plausible that it contributed to the fact that in the ninth century Constantinople and not Syria or

[408] For a discussion of the evidence for Greek translations of the Qur'an in this period, see: Høgel, C. "The Greek Qur'an: Scholarship and evaluations," *Orientalia Suecana* 61(Suppl.) (2013), pp. 173-180.

[409] Mango, 1991, 152-4; Auzépy, M. "De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIIIe-IXe s.): Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène," *Travaux et Mémoires* 12 (1994), pp. 183-21.

Palestine was the epicenter of Greek learning.[410] Due to the emigration of some Greek scholars to Constantinople and the adoption of Arabic by the Christian communities in the caliphate, Greek virtually ceased to be a language of learning in Syria and Palestine after 800.[411] Consequently, although at first sight eight-century Syria and Palestine seems to have provided better conditions for a Greek-to-Arabic translation movement, such a movement took place in an area where Greek had never been a language of learning and at a time when Greek learning was on decline within the borders of the caliphate.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I have argued that in the middle of the eighth century the first Arabic translation of the *Categories* was made from Middle Persian by either Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ or his son (see pp. 49-55). There is no indication that either of these individuals knew that several hundred miles west John of Damascus had just used the *Categories* to compose his *Dialectica.* There is no evidentiary base for arguing that the *Categories* entered the Arabic language due to contact with the Greek intellectual world. Nevertheless, although Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's translation is the only pre-Ḥunayn translation that has survived, one or more other

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[410] Auzépy, M. "Le rôle des émigrés orientaux à Constantinople et dans l'Empire (634-843): acquis et perspectives," *Al-Qantara Revista de estudios arabes* 33.2 (2012), pp. 475-503; Griffith, S. "What has Constantinople to do with Jerusalem? Palestine in the Ninth Century; Byzantine Orthodoxy in the World of Islam," in Brubaker L. (ed.) *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive? Papers from the Thirtieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1996* (Aldershot 1998), pp. 181-194.

[411] For the interesting argument that Greek learning in the Middle East after 800 played a more important role than generally acknowledged, see: Johnson, 2015, 75-92.

Arabic versions of the *Categories* must have existed before 850, as has become clear in my discussion of al-Kindī's summary of the *Categories.* These translations were either made from Syriac or Greek.[412] If they were made from a Greek text, then the question is where these Greek manuscripts were acquired. If they were acquired in Constantinople, then a scenario in which a Greek codex of the *Categories* was transported from Constantinople to Baghdad during the lifetime of Photius and al-Kindī becomes more likely. Such a scenario could substantiate our initial assumption about why these two intellectuals were studying *Categories* at the same time.

There are some indications that the translators in Baghdad acquired manuscripts from Constantinople. Some entries in the biographical dictionaries of Ibn Juljul, Ibn al-Nadīm and Ibn abī Usaybʿa mention the fact that Greek manuscripts were brought in from Byzantium by diplomats, after the conquest of Amorium or even upon the request of caliph al-Maʿmūn.[413] However, to what extent these later stories are anecdotal or apocryphal is uncertain. A more stimulating approach to this problem has been taken by Gutas, who noticed that there is an overlap between the Greek works translated into Arabic in Baghdad in the ninth century and the

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[412] Dimitri Gutas downplayed the extent to which eighth and ninth century translators were indebted to the Syriac tradition in his (Gutas, 1998, 20-22). For a recent rehabilitation of that role of the intelligentsia of the Nestorian communities, see: Tannous, 2010, 22-107.

[413] For a discussion of these testimonies, see: Sypianski, J. "Arabo-Byzantine Traffic of Manuscripts and the Connections between the Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement and the First Byzantine Renaissance'," in Janocha, M. e.a. (eds.), *Byzantium and Renaissances. Dialogue of Cultures, Heritage of Antiquity. Tradition and Modernity* (Varsovie, 2012), pp. 177-194, esp. 189-91.

works that were transliterated into the minuscule Greek script in Constantinople at the same time. Gutas argued that this overlap must imply a contemporary correlation between the two centers of learning and the exchange of manuscripts of those works. Whether it was the Constantinopolitan scholars who were influenced by the Baghdadi ones, or vice versa, is a matter of debate.[414] Nevertheless, even if such exchange of manuscripts took place, the *Categories* were probably not among them. From the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus one can deduce the fact that a Greek version of the *Categories* was available in Syria and Palestine in the middle of the eighth century. Although the production of Greek texts was on the decline in the subsequent decades in the caliphate, it is unlikely that the Greek library collections entirely disappeared within one or two generations. Consequently, supposing that no Greek manuscript of the *Categories* was available in Baghdad around the year 800, and a translator was in need of one, then it is unlikely that he was unable to find one in any of the remaining Greek libraries in the caliphate and that he was forced to import one from Constantinople. A well-known passage in the *Risāla* of the most celebrated Baghdadi translator, Ḥunayn ibn ʾIsḥāq, corroborates this line of reasoning. Ḥunayn writes that, in order to find a Greek manuscript of Galen's *On Demonstration,* he searched in libraries in Palestine and Egypt and finally found it in

[414] Gutas, 1998, 175-86. Gutas' conclusion that scholars in Constantinople acquired manuscripts from Baghdad has been challenged by Mavroudi (2014, 319-21). See also: Sypianski, 2012, 191-4.

a library in Damascus.[415] A similar scenario for the Greek manuscript of one of the lost Arabic translations of the *Categories* is more plausible than that it was acquired from Constantinople.[416]

Finally, the ninth century tradition of the *Categories* in Constantinople does not seem to be dependent on the simultaneous activities in Baghdad either. Photius did travel to the Arab world, as he explains in the postface of his *Bibiliotheca.* However, in chapter three (see p. 149), I have explained that there is no evidence that Photius came back with any manuscripts.[417] What is a plausible context for Photius' use of the *Categories* is the fact that a generation before him Nicephorus also used the *Categories* in Constantinople and that at least one of Nicephorus' sources was John of Damascus' *Dialectica.* The origins of Photius' engagement with the *Categories* must therefore be sought within the Greek tradition.

In conclusion, a supposed exchange of the *Categories* between the Carolingian, the Byzantine and the Abbasid centers of learning does not constitute a satisfactory explanation for the simultaneous appearance of this treatise in those three cultural zones. It is true that the three early medieval worlds were

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[415] Bergsträsser, G. *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq über die syrischen und arabischen Galen-übersetzungen (*Leipzig, 1925), pp. 46-8.

[416] A further corroboration is that the one manuscript of Aristotelian logical texts that Gutas lists (an excerpt of the *On Interpretation*) was part of a palimpsest discovered in the Umayyad mosque in Damascus (Gutas, 1998, 183).

[417] For a discussion of other ninth century Constantinopolitan intellectuals who travelled to the caliphate, see: Magdalino, P. "The road to Baghdad in the thought world of ninth century Byzantium," in Brubraker, L. (ed.) *Dead or Alive? Byzantium in the Ninth Century* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 195-213.

interconnected on an economic and on a political level. It is also true that the Latin, Greek and Arabic intellectual discourses influenced one another and that texts were transported and translated in the eighth and ninth century. However, the *Categories* was probably not transmitted between the courts in Francia, Constantinople and Baghdad. Even if it was, then these imported manuscripts were not a necessary condition for any of the intellectuals in question to take up the *Categories.* In all three politico-cultural spheres, the *Categories* was already available. A scenario that is similar to the transmission of the Greek text of the works Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, which was sent by the Byzantine emperor to the Carolingian emperor, seems a very attractive and plausible explanation of why intellectuals such as Eriugena, Photius and al-Kindī used the *Categories* simultaneously. Nevertheless, this hypothesis is unconvincing. The answer has to be sought in parallel developments in the three different intellectual discourses.

HYPOTHESIS II: SIMULTANEOUS RENAISSANCES

If exchange of texts cannot be the reason for the simultaneous study of the *Categories*, then the next logical step is to look for similar developments within each of these three societies. Since these developments have to explain the reception of a classical text in post-classical societies, the notion of 'renaissance' inevitably springs to mind. The standard narratives of the cultural history of the eighth and ninth centuries often include the notions of the Carolingian renaissance and the

Macedonian renaissance.[418] These two renaissances occurred while in Baghdad the Translation Movement was flourishing and much money was being spent on the translation of ancient Greek texts.[419] Consequently, a picture emerges in which these three societies experienced in the ninth century an unprecedented interest in classical literature. Nevertheless, such a picture is misleading. To understand why it is misleading, a brief digression into the history of the scholarly use of the term 'renaissance' by medievalists is required.

The term renaissance is inextricably linked with the western European tripartite division of history into ancient, medieval and modern, which was solidified in scholarly circles in the nineteenth century.[420] People like Jakob Burkhardt gave the early modern Renaissance a paradigmatic status, by portraying it as the major cultural shift from medieval to modern.[421] Within this paradigm, the medieval period has always had a negative reputation. It is, therefore, understandable that medievalists have revolted against this reputation. However, what is remarkable is that they have done so without breaking out of the Burckhardtian paradigm, but by

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[418] See, for instance: Treadgold, W. *Renaissances before the renaissance* (Stanford, 1984), pp. 58-98; Reynolds, L., Wilson, N. *Scribes and scholars. A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 55-65, 92-94.

[419] For a discussion of the money spent on translations in Baghdad, see: Gutas, 1998, 136-41.

[420] For general discussions of the origins and genesis of this tripartite division, see: Clark, F. *Dividing Time: The Making of Historical Periodization in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, 2014); and: Raedts, P. *De ontdekking van de middeleeuwen. De geschiedenis van een illusie* (Amsterdam, 2011).

[421] Burckhardt, J. *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien (*Basel, 1860); Woolfson, J. *Palgrave advances in Renaissance historiography* (New York, 2005), pp. 9-26.

continuing to employ its terms and parameters. The use of the term renaissance is a case in point. The best-known example concerns the historiography of the twelfth century. In an attempt to positively assert the cultural efflorescence of this period, medievalists in the 1920's dubbed the notion of "the renaissance of the twelfth century."[422] Similarly, the activities of intellectuals in the Carolingian period and Ottonian period and their impressive literary output have led medievalists dub these cultural movements the "Carolingian renaissance" and the "Ottonian renaissance" respectively.[423] Byzantinists followed suit, resulting in the fact that the activities of Byzantine intellectuals and artists in the ninth/tenth, the twelfth and the fourteenth century are now often referred to as the Macedonian, the Komnenian and the Palaiologan renaissances.[424] The Greco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and the Arabic scientific and philosophical traditions that were based on Greek texts

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[422] For a critical discussion of the foundational study of Charles Haskins (1927) see: Colish, M. "Haskins's Renaissance Seventy Years Later: Beyond Anti-Burckhardtianism," *Haskins Society Journal* 11 (2003), pp. 1–15.

[423] Although the term Carolingian renaissance was already dubbed in the 1830's by Jean-Jacques Ampère, it only became part of the scholarly discourse after Erna Patzelt's 1924 study, titled *Die karolingische Renaissance. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kultur des frühen Mittelalters.* The Ottonian renaissance was introduced by Hans Naumann in 1927 in his *Karolingische und ottonische Renaissance.* See: Riché, P. *Les Carolingiens. Une famille qui fit l'Europe* (Paris, 1983), p.354.

[424] See the introductory chapters on the Macedonian (pp. 75-98) and the Palaiologan renaissance (pp. 144-72) in: Treadgold, W. *Renaissances before the Renaissance* (Stanford, 1984). For the Komnenian renaissance, see: Magdalino, P. *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos,* 1143-1180 (Cambridge, 1993).

have in general not been framed as a renaissance. However, the notion of "Abbasid renaissance" does appear in scholarly literature now and then.[425]

The concept of medieval renaissances leads to heuristic problems. The Renaissance with a capital R refers to a cultural movement with particular aspects. Leaving aside vaguer notions of progress and individualism that have often been associated with the Renaissance, one concrete aspect is a secular interest in antiquity on the side of the humanists who were the actors of the Renaissance. Early modern humanists took classical, non-Christian literature on its own terms and revived this pagan past by distancing themselves from the period that lay between them and antiquity. Such an attitude, however, is alien to intellectuals of the early medieval period. Overall, they never saw a big rupture between antiquity and themselves, and any tendency to revive certain glorious days of antiquity implied continuity with this ancient past.[426] Furthermore, if antiquity was idealized, then the focus was on the period of Constantine, Augustine and Justinian and not on the pre-Christian period.[427] In the Abbasid world, the foundational period of the past was not Greco-Roman antiquity at all, but the period of Muhammed and the Rāshidūn

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[425] For a recent example, see: Codoner, J. *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842 Court and Frontier in Byzantium during the Last Phase of Iconoclasm* (Surrey, 2014), pp. 423, 440-2.

[426] See: Pocock, J. *Barbarism and Religion. Vol III. The First Decline and Fall* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 77-152.

[427] See: Brown, 2003, 437-440; Magdalino, P. "The Distance of the Past in Early Medieval Byzantium (7th-10th centuries)," *Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 46 (1999), pp. 115-46.

caliphs.[428] Ancient Greek figures such as Aristotle and Euclid had at best a legendary status and Arabic texts in general betray a blurry and limited awareness of pagan antiquity.[429] Consequently, a secular appreciation of pagan literature was extremely rare in early medieval Latin, Greek and Arabic texts, if it existed at all.[430]

The problems that are inherent to the notion of medieval renaissances have received much criticism from medievalists.[431] As a result, most medievalists nowadays use the term renaissance in a neutral sense, indicating either the study of ancient texts in general or an upswing in literary production.[432] Nevertheless, a truly alternative terminology for approaching medieval cultural movements has not been devised. Finally, for anybody outside of a circle of specialists the concept of medieval

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[428] Khalidi, T. Arabic *Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 17-82.

[429] See: *ibid.*, 83-181; van Bladel, 2009, 3-22.

[430] Scholars have attempted to trace secular interests in antiquity in the works of Carolingian scholars, and one favorite candidate for a ninth-century proto-humanist is Lupus of Ferrières. See: Stofferahn, S. "Knowledge for Its Own Sake? A Practical Humanist in the Carolingian Age," *The Heroic Age* 13 (2010).

[431] Especially the concept Carolingian renaissance has received criticism: Lehmann, P. "Das Problem der karolingischen Renaissance," *Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 1 (1954), pp. 310-57; Trompf, G. "The Concept of the Carolingian Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34.1 (1973), pp. 3-26. For a holistic discussion of the concept of medieval renaissances in Western European history, see: Otter, M. "Renaissances and Revivals," in Hexter, R., Townsend, D. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 535-52.

Scott Johnson argues that the narrative of waves of renaissances is detrimental for the story of Byzantine literature: Johnson, 2015, 91.

[432] Treadgold, 1984, 59; Otter, 2012, 536-8.

renaissances still conjures up confusing ideas of the study of classical literature in the medieval world.[433]

As far the early medieval study of the *Categories* is concerned, the notion of a renaissance seems to have much explanatory power. In this line of thought, the reason why, for instance, Eriugena, Photius and al-Kindī studied the *Categories* of Aristotle at the same time is because in each of these three societies a revival of ancient learning took place. However, not only are the notions of the Carolingian, the Macedonian and the Abbasid renaissance misleading descriptions of the cultural movements in these societies at large, they are *a fortiori* inept explanations for the study of the *Categories.* Although Aristotle did have a legendary or even semi-scriptural status in medieval centuries, there is no evidence that an antiquarian interest in Aristotle or in classical Athens of the fifth and fourth century BCE ever motivated early medieval intellectuals to study the *Categories*. Furthermore, if the eighth and ninth century study of the *Categories* was part of a renaissance, then in the preceding centuries, this text must have been forgotten or neglected. As I will argue below, the opposite is true. In short, the second hypothesis of simultaneous renaissances needs to be discarded as well.

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[433] As far as the macro-narratives of cultural history are concerned, the notion of medieval renaissances implies the underlying presence of decline: whenever the status of cultural production was not significantly less than in the ancient or modern period, one can speak of a renaissance. Although an apologetic account of medieval cultural history that denies clear upswings and downturns is not fruitful either, it is also questionable whether medieval culture should continue to be studied within a framework whose parameters are set by ancient and modern history.

HYPOTHESIS III: A COMMON EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM

To be able to properly understand the diverse reception of the *Categories* in the eighth and the ninth century, one has to trace the transmission of this treatise from the sixth century onwards. Throughout this dissertation I have adopted a horizontal and synchronic approach, discussing in each chapter the study of the *Categories* across political and linguistic boundaries within the same period. I will now adopt a vertical approach, discussing each language tradition separately and diachronically, only to weave the horizontal and vertical lines together into one comprehensive overview of the early medieval study of the *Categories.*

Greek

In the sixth century, the *Categories* was most intensively studied in its original language*:* Greek. In particular the Alexandrian scholars produced lengthy commentaries on this small treatise. What I would like to draw attention to is the context in which these commentaries emerged: education. Around the year 500, an educational framework was still intact and flourishing in the eastern Mediterranean. The small segment of society which received education normally did so by following

a tripartite pattern.[434] Having acquired basic literacy skills before the age of eight, pupils first studied under the supervision of a grammarian and learned advanced language composition and how to elaborate upon themes and stories. At the age thirteen/fourteen they moved on the secondary level, where they were taught by a rhetor how to compose actual orations. Those who moved on to a tertiary level, did so around the age of twenty. The three conventional tracks of this highest level were in the fields of philosophy, medicine and law.[435] What is remarkable about the eastern Mediterranean around the year 500 is that, whereas instruction at the primary and secondary level was conducted by a private instructor at home or in the open air, some of the tertiary level education took place in institutions with multiple auditoria, such as the law school in Berytus and the philosophical schools in Athens and Alexandria.[436] Consequently, the study of the *Categories* in sixth century Alexandria was not the result of an individual or temporary endeavor, but part of an established educational framework.

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[434] For discussions of Greek education in Late Antiquity, see: Watts, E. "Education: Speaking, Thinking, and Socializing," in Johnson, S. (ed.) The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity, pp. 467-86; Watts, 2006, 204-256; Cribiore, R. *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, 2001), pp.185-244.

[435] Philosophy also played a role in the other two tracks, in particular medicine: Gutas, D. "The 'Alexandria to Baghdad' Complex of Narratives: A Contribution to the Study of Philosophical and Medical Historiography among the Arabs," *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 10 (1999), pp. 155–194, esp. 169-79; Roueché, M. "Did Medical Students Study Philosophy in Alexandria?" *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (1999) 43, pp. 153–169; Westerink 1964, 169-177.

[436] Cribiore, R. "Spaces for Teaching in Late Antiquity," in Derda, T., e.a. (eds.) *Alexandria: Auditoria of Kom el-Dikka and Late Antique Education* (Warsaw, 2007), pp. 143–150.

This educational framework began to unravel over the course of the sixth century. The academy in Athens was closed in 529 and the law school in Berytus was not rebuilt after it was destroyed by an earthquake in 551.[437] More importantly, one of the many repercussions of the Persian wars and the Arab conquest in the seventh century was that the elites of the eastern roman empire and their traditional institutions, such as classical education, either disappeared or were drastically transformed.[438] Along with the breakdown of classical instruction, the readers and writers of texts in classical genres disappeared. Consequently, after the first quarter of the seventh century hardly any Greek panegyrics, epigrams, letters or histories are composed for at least 150 years.[439] However, one classical text that continued to be studied was the *Categories.* As I mentioned in my first chapter (see pp. 41-42), the works of Maximus the Confessor (ca. 580-662) and Anastasius of Sinai (died ca. 700) betray knowledge of the *Categories.* Furthermore, logical compendia that are based

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[437] Jones Hall, L. *Roman Berytus: Beirut in Late Antiquity* (London, 2004), pp. 70-84.

[438] For discussions of these processes, see the collection of articles in: Haldon, J. Conrad, I. (eds.) *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East : Elites old and new in the Byzantine and early Islamic Near East : Papers of the Sixth Worshop on Late Antiquity and Early Islam* (Princeton, 2004).

[439] For discussions of the disappearances of classicizing genres on the one hand, and the traditionally neglected continuation of texts such as sermons, saints lives, hymns and treatises against heresies, see: Chrysos, E. "Illuminating Darkness by Candlelight: Literature in the Dark Ages," in Odorico, P. Agapitos , A. (eds.) *Pour une «nouvelle» histoire de la literature byzantine. Problèmes, methodes, approches, propositions* (Paris, 2002), pp. 13-24; Cameron, Av. "New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature: Seventh-Eighth Centuries," in Cameron, Av., Conrad, L. (eds.) *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I: Problems in the Literary Source Material* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 81-105; Cameron, Av. "New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature, A Title Revisited," in Johnson, S. (ed.) *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 11-28.

on the *Categories* have survived from the seventh and eighth century. The most well-known and elaborate of these compendia is the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus. If one continues to diachronically follow the trail of evidence in the Greek tradition, then around the year 800, Theodore the Studite and Nicephorus must have had knowledge of the *Categories* through John's *Dialectica* and perhaps other compendia. Finally, in the middle of the ninth century Photius includes yet another compendium of the *Categories* in his *Amphilochia.*

In short, if one looks at the Greek tradition, then there is a continuation of the study of the *Categories* between the sixth and the ninth century. Admittedly, the short compendia from the seventh and eighth centuries are very limited compared to the lengthy commentaries of the sixth. Nevertheless, the study of the *Categories* never fully stopped in the Greek tradition. Furthermore, it is this continuation that explains why Photius studied the *Categories* in the ninth century. When he included a compendium of the *Categories* in his *Amphilochia,* he did not pick up a lost tradition, but simply continued to do something that every generation before him had also done for centuries. The question then arises why every generation before him had done so.

Whenever in ancient or medieval times a text continues to be read consistently by successive generations, then a plausible explanation is the assumption that this text was part of an educational curriculum. In the case of the study of the *Categories* in the seventh and eighth century, this assumption is

substantiated in two different ways. First of all, it is certain that in the preceding period, the sixth century, the *Categories* was part of educational curriculum. Secondly, the anonymous compendia of the *Categories,* the *Dialectica* and the summary found in Photius' *Amphilochia* are all very rudimentary and introductory. They do not contain experimental or complex philosophical theories, but merely summarize and rephrase the main notions of the *Categories.* Therefore, the most plausible purpose for these texts is the instruction of students.

What place the study of the *Categories* held in the educational curricula of the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries is unclear. Sources about educational curricula in Western Eurasia before the rise of universities and madrasas are few and far between in general, but Greek education in the seventh and eighth centuries is perhaps most obscure. Paul Lemerle and Ann Moffat have tried to distill information about education in this period from hagiographies.[440] These testimonies are scarce and often formulaic, due to the fact that a passage on education was a literary trope the Byzantine hagiographers inherited from ancient panegyrics.[441] Nevertheless, many hagiographies do mention some kind of instruction in dialectics and/or philosophy.[442] It makes sense to assume that the compendia of the *Categories* played

[440] Lemerle, 1986, 89-153; Moffatt, A. "Schooling in the Iconoclast Centuries," in Bryer, A. and Herrin, J. (eds.), *Iconoclasm* (Birmingham, 1977), pp. 85-92; Moffatt, A. "Early Byzantine school curricula and a liberal education," in *Byzance et les Slaves. Etudes de civilisation. Melanges I. Duicev* (Paris, 1979), pp. 275-88.

[441] Moffatt, 1977, 86.

[442] Moffat, 1977, 91-2; Moffatt, 1979, 282-5;

an important, if not the only, role in such philosophical education. However, at what stage students were instructed in the *Categories* is unknown. What is certain is that the situation of sixth century Alexandria, with formal tertiary philosophical instruction taking place in auditoria, no longer existed. However, since in later centuries there was such as thing as tertiary education in Byzantium, it is possible that it also existed in the intermediary period.[443] Since there is no evidence for any institutionalized form of instruction, all education must have taken place by a private tutor or in the form of reading groups. Whether students were commonly required by their instructor to study the *Categories* at the age of twenty as part of a philosophical or theological curriculum or at the age of fifteen as part of a more general curriculum, cannot be ascertained.[444]

Arabic

The Arabic tradition of the *Categories* started in the middle of the eighth century, but not *ex nihilo*. It was a direct continuation of the existing study of the *Categories* in the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. As I explained in the first chapter (see pp. 56-62), this seventh and eighth century tradition of the *Categories* consisted not

[443] On traces of (the ideal of) a three-tiered educational system in this period, see: Moffatt, 1979, 281-5; for an overview of secondary literature on Byzantine education after the ninth century, see: Markopoulos, A. "Education," In Jeffreys, E., e.a. (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of Byzantine studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp.785-795.

[444] See also: Roueché, M. 1980, 71-2.

only of texts written in Greek, but also in Syriac and Middle Persian. In this period, the Syriac study of the *Categories* was more extensive than in any other language. The evidence in Syriac can be explained in the same way as the evidence in Greek: through the prism of education. If one combines the evidence from the surviving east Syriac and west Syriac text corpora—in the form of translations, logical compendia, commentaries or short references and quotes—then it is clear that in the period 550-750 at least some members of every successive generation of intellectuals were familiar with the *Categories.*[445] As in the Greek tradition, such consistent engagement with one text is best explained by the fact that this text was part of an educational curriculum. Furthermore, what is also similar to the Greek tradition is the substantiating evidence of that explanation: both the introductory nature of the Syriac compendia as well as the fact that Syriac sources from another period, in this case the thirteenth century, show that *Categories* was part of an educational curriculum.[446] As I argued in chapter one (see pp. 59-61), the Syriac tradition must have spilled over into Middle Persian at some point before the middle of the eighth century, perhaps as early as the sixth century, when Paul the Persian wrote a treatise on Aristotelian logic in Middle Persian. Although neither Middle Persian version of the *Categories* nor any testimonies of the role of Aristotelian logic

[445] For a chronological overview of the Syriac translations and commentaries, see: King, 2010, 19-22.

[446] Tannous discusses a thirteenth century list of school texts, from which one can infer a curriculum in earlier centuries: Tannous, 2010, 328-332.

in Middle Persian have survived, it is plausible that the *Categories* was also in this language used for educational purposes.

In short, by the middle of the eighth century in the regions of Palestine, Syria and Iraq, many, if not all, pupils who were educated in either Greek, Syriac or Middle Persian, had to study the *Categories.* The Arabic tradition of the *Categories* can be understood as a continuation of this educational practice. When Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ or his son translated this treatise into Arabic, what he effectively did was to facilitate the continuation of that existing educational practice in the new language of learning. Furthermore, that the *Categories* was also in the Arabic tradition part of an educational curriculum is clear from the al-Kindī's *On the Quantity of Aristotle's Books.* This short treatise contains the most explicit evidence from the eighth and ninth century on the educational role of the *Categories.* The purpose of al-Kindī's whole treatise is to explain to students which Aristotelian texts they need to read in order to become philosophers. The text that figures most prominently in this ninth-century Aristotelian primer is the *Categories.* Consequently, the reason why al-Kindī studied the *Categories* is the same as the reason why Photius studied it: because both as a student and a teacher he used this Aristotelian treatise in class. In doing so,

al-Kindī continued an educational curriculum that had continuously been handed down, generation after generation, since antiquity.[447]

Latin

Whereas in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, multiple languages were used for education and learning, in the western Mediterranean and western Europe there was only one: Latin. As I discussed in the Introduction (see p. 27), the *Categories* entered the Latin discourse for the first time in the fourth century, when it was translated into Latin by Victorinus and paraphrased as the *Categoriae Decem.* Boethius made a new translation in the early sixth century. Moreover, between the early fifth and the early seventh century, different Latin paraphrases of the *Categories* were included in the encyclopedic works of Martianus Capella, Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville. Once again, the context of the reception of the *Categories* here is education. These three Late antique intellectuals included their

[447] What is also similar to the Greek tradition, is that it is not clear at what stage of their Arabic education students were required to read the *Categories:* at a secondary or tertiary level? However, the situation in Baghdad was more diverse than in Constantinople, and the education curriculum for those students aspiring a career in medicine and philosophy was fundamentally different from those aspiring to become religious scholars. The latter did not study any Aristotelian texts at all. Nevertheless, a major lacuna in Abbasid studies is a comprehensive investigation of education. The best overview that currently exists is a collection of various specific studies that were written over the course of the twentieth century: Gilliot, C. *Education and Learning in the Early Islamic World* (The Formation of the Classical Islamic World: 43) (Surrey, 2010). In his introduction Gilliot lists the names of known ninth-century elementary instructors, the *kuttab* (pp. xxxv-xxxvii). For a brief argument that the *kuttab* have their origins in Greek educators, see: Canard, M., Lecomte G. "Sur la vie scolaire à Byzance et dans l'Islam," *Arabica* 1.3 (1954), pp. 324-336.

paraphrases of the *Categories* in a discussion of the field of dialectics, which was an integral part of a new division of the main subjects of education: the seven liberal arts. However, whereas it is clear that the sixth century Greek commentaries on the *Categories* were the products of actual lectures and classes, there is no evidence that the Latin versions of the *Categories* were ever used in classrooms in the same period. In general, the concept of the liberal arts in Late Antiquity is problematic. The notion of dividing education into the seven main fields of grammar, dialectics, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy dates back to the fifth century, but for a long time it was probably more a theoretical ideal than the reflection of an educational practice.[448] Nevertheless, the *Categories* was a crucial part of one the seven fields of this ideal.

In the early seventh century, Isidore of Seville was the last of the late antique encyclopedists to include the *Categories* in his own work, the *Etymologies.* After that, the transmission of the *Categories* in western Europe is difficult to trace. There is no Latin equivalent of the seventh and eighth century anonymous Greek logical compendia. However, one might argue that there was no need for such compendia in Latin. One text that received a remarkably wide audience in this period was Isidore's *Etymologies.* Already in the seventh century, within decades after its composition, this work was copied in Spain and Italy; and in the first half of the eighth century,

[448] Hadot, I. *Arts libéraux et philosophie dans la pensée antique* (Paris, 1984), pp. 101-214.

manuscripts of the *Etymologies* had spread to France, England and Ireland.[449] Consequently, Isidore's Latin version of the *Categories* was also available in these places. Nevertheless, there is little evidence about which parts of the *Etymologies* were actually studied or used for education in the seventh and eighth centuries. It is plausible that Isidore's discussion of grammar was taken up, since there is evidence that grammar, as a tool for scriptural exegesis, was studied in its own right in this period.[450] Similar evidence for the study of the other liberal arts, including dialectics, does not exist. In the period between Isidore and Alcuin, the only reference to the *Categories* can be found in the *On Virginity* of the British scholar Aldhelm (ca. 639-709), who is also known to have owned a copy of the *Etymologies.*[451] On the one hand, Aldhelm's reference indicates that the study of the *Categories* had not entirely died out in western Europe in the period 650-750. On the other hand, since Aldhlem's reference is the only one in this period, the Latin tradition was most likely more limited than the contemporary Greek or Syriac ones. In short, as I argued in chapter one (see pp. 75-76), there was no contemporary western European counterpart of John of Damascus.

However, there actually was a counterpart of John of Damascus who wrote in Latin, but he was active half a century later: Alcuin. Alcuin's *De Dialectica* and John of

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[449] Bischoff, B. "Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla," in Bischoff, B. *Mittelalterliche Studien*, vol. I (Stuttgart 1966), pp. 171-194.

[450] Law, V. *Grammar and Grammarians in the early Middle Ages* (London, 1997), pp. 4-69.

[451] Riché, 1995, 318; Bischoff, 1966, 181.

Damascus' *Dialectica* are similar in two fundamental ways: both treatises aim at introducing the basic principles of Aristotelian logic to students and both draw heavily on the *Categories.* Furthermore, as I explained in chapter two, Alcuin is the first intellectual to put the ideal of the seven liberal arts into practice. As the main court intellectual in charge of the overhaul of education in the Carolingian kingdom, Alcuin's preferences would be influential. One of his preferences was a predilection for the subject of dialectics and the study of the *Categories.* Alcuin dedicated a manuscript of the *Categoriae Decem* to his king Charlemagne. Moreover, he made dialectics the most important subject of the liberal arts. As a result, subsequent Carolingian scholars had to read the *Categories* in school, such as Martin Hibernensis and John Scottus Eriugena. However, the reason why Eriugena was exposed to the *Categories* was not only because of Alcuin's efforts half a century earlier. Alcuin had given new live to a tradition which had started as an ideal and which had at times been dormant, but which had been part of the intellectual discourse of Latin authors since antiquity. Consequently, like Photius and al-Kindī, Eriugena studied the *Categories* because it was part of a educational curriculum that went back hundreds of years.

A cultural space from York to Basra

The diachronic overviews that have just been presented show that in each language tradition (semi-)continuous lines of transmission of the *Categories* can be drawn

from the sixth to the ninth century. However, the previous three chapters have demonstrated that the Latin, Greek and Arabic receptions of the *Categories* show many similarities that have not been explained by modern scholars. Not only are conventional scholarly investigations focused on the philosophical as opposed to the educational context of the *Categories*, but such investigations normally do not include more than one language tradition.[452] Nevertheless, if anything has become clear throughout this dissertation, then it is the fact that the early medieval reception of the *Categories* does not respect linguistic boundaries. In order to weave together the synchronic observations of the previous three chapters and the diachronic observations of this chapter, I will now adopt a diachronic and cross-linguistic approach.

By the year 450, the *Categories* of Aristotle was known on both sides of the Mediterranean within the borders of the Roman Empire. It had been studied in two languages, Latin and Greek, by people such as Dexippus in the fourth century and Martianus Capella in the early fifth. A century later, around the year 550, knowledge of the *Categories* had linguistically and geographically expanded. It was now studied by intellectuals in different polities and in more than two languages. The treatise had been translated anew into Latin by Boethius in Ostrogothic Italy, and, while the

[452] Pines briefly discusses similarities between the Latin and Arabic corpora of logical texts, in: Pines, S. "A parallel in the East to the logica vetus," in Beckmann, J. (ed.), *Philosophie im Mittelalter: Entwicklungslinien und Paradigmen* (Hamburg, 1987), pp. 125–129. Parry observes in passing that Theodulf or Orléans applied notions from the *Categories* to iconoclastic debate at roughly the same time as Theodore the Studite and Nicephorus: Parry, 2013, 52.

Greek tradition in eastern Roman Empire continued, it was also translated into Syriac and Armenian, and possibly in Middle Persian in the Sassanian empire.[453] In the following two hundred years, from 550 to 750, this expansion continued and the *Categories* spread all the way to the British Isles in the west, where Aldhlem knew it around the year 700, and to Iraq in the east, where it was translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ or his son. A century later, it was studied in the three main political centers in western Eurasia, by John Scottus Eriugena at the Carolingian court, by Photius in Constantinople, and by al-Kindī in Baghdad.

Consequently, between the sixth and the ninth century, the study of the *Categories* expanded vastly. Whereas in ancient times the text was only known on the hinterlands of the Mediterranean sea, by the eighth and the ninth century it was known from York to Basra.[454] The channel of transmission that made this expansion possible was education. Both the relatively consistent continuity of the transmission as well the introductory nature of the texts in which it was transmitted, indicate that the *Categories* was part of an educational curriculum. It is this educational

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[453] Hugonnard-Roche briefly draws the comparison between the simultaneous Latin and Syriac translations in the sixth century, in: Hugonnard-Roche, H. "Aux origines de l'exégèse orientale de la logique d'Aristote: Sergius de Resh'aina († 536), médecin et philosophe" *Journal Asiatique* 277 (1989), pp. 1-17, esp. p. 12.

[454] I have not found any trace of the *Categories* further east than Iraq in this period. It is not unthinkable that Aristotelian logic reached further east, since aspects of Galenic medicine were transmitted as far as Tibet in the seventh and eighth centuries, see: Beckwith, C. "The Introduction of Greek Medicine into Tibet in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99.2 (1979), pp. 297-313.

curriculum that ties together all the different individuals that have been discussed throughout this dissertation. Whether it is the seventh century anonymous Greek logical compendia, or Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's Arabic translation, or Alcuin's *De Dialectica,* all these texts can be interpreted as reflections of the same educational practice: instruction in the *Categories.* This educational practice is what expanded from the sixth to the ninth century.

Eriugena, Photius and al-Kindī were exposed to the *Categories* and later taught it to their own students, because that is what had been done for centuries. Although these three intellectuals lived in different societies, wrote in different languages, and were exposed to different canons of ancient texts, there was at least one thing that united them: instruction in the *Categories* of Aristotle. In other words, if one observes these three intellectuals through the prism of the instruction of the *Categories,* then they were part of the same cultural space. This cultural space spanned geographically from Iraq to the British Isles and temporally back to the classrooms of the ancient Roman Empire.

The point here is not that every student of every generation between 550 and 850 was always instructed in the *Categories,* nor that at any point in time the *Categories* was necessarily taught in all existing classrooms between Basra and York. Such an inference from the surviving evidence would be a stretch—it is plausible that there were temporal and regional gaps, such as Francia and Constantinople around year 700, and it is certain that religious scholars in ninth century Baghdad

were exposed to the *Categories.* Rather, the point here is that there was an intellectual undercurrent within this cultural space that never completely died out. Although at times it was merely a theoretical ideal, and at other times it was only taught in a limited number of places, instruction in the *Categories* was something that never completely disappeared from the radar of intellectuals and educators within this cultural space. More specifically, instruction of the *Categories* was always kept alive by some individuals in the existing language traditions. For instance, if such instruction had been dormant in Constantinople and Francia for some generations between 650 and 750, then it was introduced again at the end of the eighth century by intellectuals coming from places where it had not died out, in this case Palestine and England. What is also possible is that in Francia and Constantinople rudimentary instruction in the *Categories* had never disappeared. The absence of direct evidence for such a scenario does not necessarily refute it, given the general absence of direct evidence of educational curricula in this period. What is certain is that when Alcuin breathed new life into the study of dialectics at the end of the eighth century, he did not have to take recourse to a new translation of the *Categories* from Greek. Whether the manuscript of the *Categoriae Decem* that Alcuin dedicated to Charlemagne was available in Aachen or had to be imported from the British Isles or the Italian peninsula, it was available in the world of Latin learning. Similarly, whether Nicephorus' education in logic was a continuation of a lost tradition in Constantinople or that his education was fully dependent on the

influx of Greek knowledge from Syria/Palestine, the *Categories* had never disappeared entirely from Greek speaking classrooms in the century before Nicephorus.

A helpful comparison is the socio-economic model that Horden and Purcell introduced in their diachronic study of Mediterranean history, *The Corrupting Sea.* Horden and Purcell argued that even in the "darkest" period, the seventh and the eighth centuries, from which there is relatively little evidence for long-distance trade across the Mediterranean, there was always an undercurrent of local traders, despite the lack of direct evidence for each individual local trader.[455] Horden and Purcell infer this "background noise" of "*caboteurs"* by connecting the dots of information on material exchange and other interconnections over the course of many centuries.[456] I propose a similar undercurrent on a cultural level. I connect the dots of the study of the *Categories* by inferring that this text was part of an educational curriculum. This inference also means that more individuals were instructed in the *Categories* than can be ascertained now. The details of the geographical and chronological gaps in this cultural space are unknown: maybe some students in Francia in 700 did actually read the *Categories,* maybe none did; maybe nobody studied the *Categories* in Constantinople around 750, maybe some people did.

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[455] Horden, Purcell, 2000, 153-160.

[456] *ibid.* 127, 366. Peter Brown also applied the notion of Horden and Purcell's "background noise" to early medieval cultural history: Brown, 2003, 22-3.

Nevertheless, throughout this cultural space there must have been a "background noise" of instruction in the *Categories* and students and teachers whose names and whereabouts have not survived, must have discussed it.

An important aspect of this cultural space is that it transcended linguistic barriers. In western Europe no new language of learning was adopted in the period 500-900 and consequently the *Categories* was only studied in Latin. However, in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East several different languages became new vehicles for education and intellectual discourse. Nevertheless, such a change of language did not result in the discontinuation of the study of the *Categories,* but in the translation of it. Since translations require expertise, time and effort, the different translations of the *Categories* are testimony to the tenacity of the intellectual undercurrent that I have just described. Moreover, besides linguistic transformations, this undercurrent survived the processes of political fragmentation and military conquests that swept through western Eurasian societies in these centuries. Many aspects of intellectual discourses from the sixth century did not survive these processes, let alone expand while these processes took place. Therefore, now that I have argued for the existence of this undercurrent and its cultural space, a new question arises: why was this undercurrent so persistent?

Logica est ancilla scientiae

Before the question of persistence can be answered, one aspect of the early medieval transmission of the *Categories* has to be brought to the fore. For the sake of argument I have referred to the *Categories* in this chapter as one text, although in the period 550-850 it was studied through paraphrases, compendia and epitomes. In chapters one through three, I have explained that despite this indirect transmission, the main notions of the *Categories* were reliably communicated to early medieval students. What I have not yet touched upon is the fact that the *Categories* was not transmitted in isolation. By the sixth century the collection of the seven texts on Aristotelian logic that make up the *Organon* was known in the sequence in which it has been transmitted until today: Porphyry's *Isagoge,* and Aristotle's *Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics, Posterior Analytics, Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations.*[457] In subsequent centuries, different truncated versions of the *Organon* were transmitted. The anonymous Greek compendia of the seventh and eighth century as well as John of Damascus' *Dialectica* draw most of their information from the *Isagoge,* the *Categories* and the *On Interpretation.* Photius focuses mostly on the *Categories* alone*.* The Syriac tradition paid attention to the proto-Organon—*Isagoge, Categories, On Interpretation* and *Prior Analytics* until paragraph I.7: excluding all of

[457] For the early sixth century as the *terminus ante quem* for this sequence, see: Solmson, 1944, 69–74.

the *Organon* that deals with the theory of syllogisms.[458] Ibn al-Muqaffa''s *Manṭiq* also stopped after *Prior Analytics* I.7. al-Kindī knew only the *Categories,* the *On Interpretation* and *Prior Analytics* I.7 in detail, and excluded the *Isagoge* in his *On the Quantity of Aristotle's Books.* In the Latin tradition, only the *Categories* and *De Intepretatione* had ever been fully translated, by Boethius in the sixth century. However, these translations were largely ignored in the period in question. For his *De Dialectica,* Alcuin used the *Categoriae Decem* and the paraphrases of the *Organon* in works of Martianus Capella, Cassiorodus and Isidore. Furthermore, Carolingian intellectuals studied these texts in conjunction with Augustine's *De Dialectica,* Apuleius' *Periermeneia* and Cicero's *Topics* IV.[459]

Consequently, Aristotle's *Categories* was an essential part of a small corpus of Aristotelian logical texts, which, in truncated and paraphrased form, was taught throughout our early medieval cultural space. More importantly, the *Categories* was the only common denominator in the different truncated versions of this curriculum: none of the other texts of the *Organon* were simultaneously studied by Eriugena, Photius and al-Kindī. Therefore, investigating why instruction in the *Categories* was such a persistent intellectual undercurrent in the early medieval world, is the same as investigating why Aristotelian logic continued to be taught. The

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[458] About *Prior Analytics* I.7 as dividing point in the Greek, Syriac and Arabic educational tradition, see also: Gutas, 1999, 179-82.

[459] See: Marenbon, 1993, 78.

source material that I have collected throughout this dissertation can be used for answering this question, if it is put in the perspective of the continuity and discontinuity of practices and institutions in the late antique and early medieval world.

Allowing for regional variation, western Eurasia experienced a period of decline between the fourth and the eighth century.[460] Quantitative data has revealed long term processes of demographic decrease, contraction of trade networks and reduction of overall material wealth.[461] This process of decline was correlated with political instability and military conquests. Leaving aside the question of causation, a major consequence was the fact that the Roman Empire had to involuntarily shed much of its size and complexity.[462] One of the ramifications of the shrinking Roman state was the transformation of education, which was most drastic in the western Mediterranean in the early sixth century and in the eastern Mediterranean in the

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[460] The concept of decline has become a heavily fraught term. For discussion on its use, see: Ando, C. "Decline, Fall and Transformation," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), pp. 30-60; Liebeschuetz, J. "Transformation and decline: are the two really incompatible?" in Krause, J. Witschel, C. (eds.) *Die Stadt in der Spätantike—Niedergang oder Wandel? Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums in München am 30. und 31. Mai 2003* (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 463-483.

The area that forms an exception to the rule of decline is Syria and the Levant and the intensive production of Syriac literature that took place in that area in the seventh century. See: Tannous, 2010, 22-168.

[461] A good starting point for such studies, is the bibliographical list in: Haldon, J. "Comparative State Formation: the Later Roman Empire in the Wider World," in Johnson, S. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 1111-1147.

[462] I borrow the notion of involuntarily shedding complexity from: Tainter, J. *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (Cambridge, 1988), esp. 39-44.

early seventh. When Boethius wrote his *Consolatio Philosophiae* in Italy in the early sixth century and when Theophylact Simocatta wrote his history of emperor Maurice in Constantinople in the early seventh, they both stood at the end of a centuries old line of authors who had received an education that included instruction in pagan texts. Subsequent generations would no longer receive such an education. In other words, classical education was discontinued. After they had mastered Greek or Latin grammar, students were from now on educated to read the Bible and to understand and compose texts in Christian genres such as world chronicles, sermons and hagiographies, but most of all the Bible. Consequently, it is therefore remarkable that one aspect of classical education was not discontinued: Aristotelian logic.

The fact that the *Categories* and other logical treatises continued to be taught when other corpora of pagan texts were neglected, requires elucidation. Educational path dependency or traditionality cannot be adduced to explain this continuity. To take the Greek tradition as an example: one can argue that the reason why the *Categories* was taught in Alexandria around 550 is because instructors continued to do what previous generations had done within the established institutional framework of tertiary philosophical education. However, when that framework disappeared and other traditional fields of education were abandoned in the seventh century, teachers must have made a deliberate choice was to continue instruction in Aristotelian logic. That choice implies that in the minds of the Greek intellectuals of

seventh century Palestine, Aristotelian logic was not considered irrelevant, but instead deemed foundational. Moreover, the translations of texts used for instruction in Aristotelian logic is further evidence of that mindset: also in these situations a deliberate choice was made to continue instruction in the *Categories* because, apparently, it was deemed indispensable for a basic education. This mindset of early medieval intellectuals is the ultimate carrier of the undercurrent that I have described. From York to Basra Aristotelian logic was considered to be a foundational aspect of education. It is this mindset that united Alcuin with John of Damascus and Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, and Eriugena with Photius and al-Kindī.

In the medieval Latin tradition, philosophy is often referred to by quoting Thomas Aquinas: *philosophia ancilla theologiae* (the handmaiden of theology).[463] Furthermore, scholars have noted that until the twelfth century most of philosophy equalled logic. In our early medieval cultural space, the role of logic was even more foundational than that of the handmaiden of theology: it was the framework for intellectual discussions in general, an indispensable instrument for all theoretical inquiry.[464] Therefore, a better description of the role of Aristotelian logic in this period would be *ancilla scientiae* (handmaiden of knowledge). Because it was given

[463] Seckler, M. "„Philosophia ancilla theologiae". Über die Ursprünge und den Sinn einer anstößig gewordenen Formel," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 171 (1991), pp. 161-187.

[464] For a similar argument in the Latin tradition, see: Marenbon, J. "The Emergence of Medieval Latin Philosophy," in Pasnau, R. (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 26-38, esp. p. 29. For a similar argument in the Syriac and Arabic tradition, see: Gutas, 1998, 21, 61-9.

such a foundational role, Aristotelian logic continued to be taught when most other ancient texts disappeared from educational curricula. Since this practice of teaching logic had one common origin—the late antique classrooms of the Roman Empire—it continued to demonstrate similarities in different early medieval intellectual traditions that otherwise show little overlap. The *Categories* was the most important of such similarities.

From early medieval education to medieval philosophy

Ordinarily, studies of the post-classical reception of the *Categories* are philosophical investigations. From a philosophical perspective, the period between sixth and the ninth century is a dark age and, hence, it is often disregarded. Whether one looks at investigations of the Latin, Greek or Arabic reception of Aristotelian logic, the same pattern occurs. About the Latin tradition, Marenbon writes that "between the death of Boethius and the time of Alcuin, there is no evidence of any similarly active philosophical speculation."[465] About the Greek tradition, Bydén argues that all the texts between the sixth century and Photius "rehashed material deriving ultimately from late antique commentaries."[466] About the Greek and Arabic traditions, Gutas notes that, between the activities of Stephanus of Alexandria in the early seventh century and the works of al-Kindī in the ninth, "philosophy died for about two

[465] Marenbon, 1981, 2.

[466] Bydén, 2013, 9.

hundred years."[467] What fills the gap that these scholars observe is the practice of instruction in the *Categories* that I have argued for in this dissertation. Complex philosophical speculations may not have been written between the sixth and the ninth centuries, but an undercurrent of instruction in Aristotelian logic never truly died out.

The fact that in the Latin, Greek and Arabic philosophical traditions there is an overlapping chronological gap which ends around the beginning of the ninth century, is not a coincidence. The tide of economic and demographic decline in western Eurasia turned during the eighth century. A new western Eurasian wide trade cycle started that would lead to demographic increase and the expansion of trade networks.[468] Alongside these upward economic movements, political stability emerged. Around the middle of the eight century, new dynasties took power in western Europe (the Carolingians) and in the Middle East (the Abbasid), while the Byzantine empire solidified its political and economic institutions. In the ninth century, these three polities would reach a level of stability, wealth and power that had not existed since ancient times. Concomitantly, there was an upswing in the production of literature from 750 to 900 in Latin, Greek and Arabic.[469] In the

[467] Gutas, 2004, 195.

[468] A good starting point for literature on the economic processes in the eighth century, is: Hansen, I., Wickham, C. (ed.) *The Long Eighth Century. Production, Distribution and Demand* (Leiden, 2000). See also: McCormick, 2001, 25-119; Wickham, 2005, 154-258.

[469] As far as I know, no study exists which quantitatively compares the the number of written works produced in the period 750-900 with those produced in the period 600-750.

flourishing intellectual climates of the ninth century, some theoretical investigations reached a level of complexity and originality that scholars nowadays include under the umbrella term philosophy. The most famous ninth-century philosophers in these three polities were John Scottus Eriugena, Photius and al-Kindī. Each of them stood at the beginning of a long philosophical tradition that would go its own way. Nevertheless, one text that all three intellectuals studied and used was the *Categories* of Aristotle. Although they lived in three different thought worlds, they were each part of the same cultural space in which instruction in the *Categories* and Aristotelian logic had been deemed an *ancilla scientiae* since antiquity.[470]

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has now come full circle. The primary question that I posed in the introduction was:

- Why was the *Categories* of Aristotle used simultaneously by Carolingian, Byzantine and Abbasid intellectuals?

[470] Throughout this dissertation I have refused to refer to the eighth and ninth century as late antique centuries. Nevertheless, by arguing for the continuation of an ancient cultural practice, I have inadvertently substantiated the main argument underlying the concept of a "Long Late Antiquity:" that aspects of late antique culture persisted into the eight century and beyond (see, for instance: Cameron, Av. "'The 'long' late antiquity. A late-twentieth century model?," in Wiseman, T. (ed.) *Classics in Progress* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 165-191). However, the study of the *Categories* does not stop in the ninth century. In the tenth century century more literal Arabic and Latin translations become the standard versions in which the *Categories* would be studied. This educational and philosophical tradition would continue for many centuries. In other words, despite the fact that Alcuin of al-Kindī studied a late ancient curriculum of logic, there is not cogent reason to consider them—or Ibn Sīnā or Kant— late antique intellectuals.

The answer is that the *Categories* was a common denominator in the different early medieval versions of the same late antique educational curriculum of Aristotelian logic. The three societies in question shared a common ancestor: the late antique Roman Empire. Whereas many late antique cultural practices were discontinued in the period 500-700, instruction in Aristotelian logic by means of the *Categories* persisted. As a result, intellectuals in the Carolingian, Byzantine and Abbasid societies studied the *Categories* simultaneously, without being aware of it. One can therefore conclude that, although intellectuals in these three societies were not part of the same community, they were part of the same discourse.

This conclusion does not imply an outright rejection of the other two hypotheses. Although there is no evidence for the exchange of the *Categories* in the eighth and ninth century and intellectuals already had access to this treatise in each language tradition, it is still possible that an outside impulse gave rise to a new interest in the late antique curriculum of Aristotelian logic. Similarly, although the term renaissance is misleading, there clearly was a simultaneous revival of the production of texts in the second half of the eighth century in each of the three cultural zones. Without these cultural revivals instruction in the *Categories* might have disappeared in the eighth century. Nevertheless, the main argument of this dissertation is that these other influences are secondary and might complement the primary cause behind the simultaneous study of the *Categories*: the continuation of a late antique tradition of education.

The conclusions of this dissertation will inevitably raise new questions. What is the reason that Aristotelian logic obtained such an important role in late ancient educational curricula of the Roman Empire? How is the transition from imperial to monastic education in the sixth and seventh centuries related to the continuation of instruction in Aristotelian logic? To what extent was the continuation of this late antique practice dependent on patronage? Questions such as these deserve further scholarly attention. In my opinion, such investigations should adopt a multilingual and interdisciplinary approach, like the one that I have adopted for this dissertation. Most importantly, those future investigations should take the main insight of my conclusions into account: that early medieval students as far apart as York and Basra continued to be taught analytical and logical thinking in the same late antique manner, by means of Aristotle's *Categories.*

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