Doctoral Dissertation

Competence and Competitiveness of the Byzantine Intellectual: The Case of Theodore Prodromos

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Contents

Dissertation Abstract	5
Statement of Responsibility	6
Authorship Declaration	7
Acknowledgments	8
Abreviations	. 11
INTRODUCTION	. 24
Chapter 1: Competitivity: Prodromos, or the Examiner	. 35
1.1 Assuming the Role of a Frank-Speaker (Παρρησιάδης)	. 35
1.2 A Fighter on Behalf of the Truth: The Necessity to Examine	. 52
1.3 The Examination (Έλεγχος)	. 66
1.3.1 Against Barys	.67
1.3.2 Philoplaton	.68
1.3.3 The Executioner, or Doctor	.71
1.3.4 The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian	.75
1.3.5 For the Color Green	. 88
1.4 Cure and Punishment through Invective	. 98
Conclusions	104
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> On Voices	<i>or</i> 106
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	<i>or</i> 106 106
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	<i>or</i> 106 106 106
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	<i>or</i> 106 106 106
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> On Voices	or 106 106 106 107 109
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> On Voices	<i>or</i> 106 106 107 109 121
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> On Voices	or 106 106 107 109 121
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> On Voices	or 106 106 107 109 121 122 123
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	or 106 106 107 109 121 122 123 136
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	or 106 106 107 109 121 122 123 136 140
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	or 106 106 107 109 121 122 123 136 140
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	or 106 106 107 109 121 122 123 136 140 144
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	or 106 106 107 109 121 122 123 136 140 144 152 156
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's <i>Isagoge</i> in <i>Xenedemos,</i> <i>On Voices</i>	or 106 106 107 109 121 122 123 136 140 144 152 156 158
Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's Isagoge in Xenedemos, On Voices 2.1 Plot, Characters, and Skopos of Xenedemos 2.1.1 Plot 2.1.2 Characters 2.1.3 Skopos 2.2 Examination 2.2.1 Porphyry's Isagoge and the Late Antique and Byzantine Commentary Tradition 2.2.2 Genus (γένος) 2.2.3 Species (εἶδος) 2.2.4 Differentia (διαφορά) 2.2.5 Property (ἰδίον) 2.2.6 Accident (συμβεβηκὸς) Conclusions Chapter 3: Competence: Prodromos's Cirticism of Aristotle's Categories in On Great and Small 3.1 Rhetorical Introduction and Skopos	or 106 106 107 109 121 122 123 136 140 144 152 156 158 158

3.2.1 The Structure of the Categories	55
3.2.2 The Ancient, Neoplatonic, and Byzantine Commentary Tradition: A Brief Summary 16	56
3.2.3 The Problematic Passage17	71
3.3 Great and Small Belong to the Category of Quantity17	73
3.3.1 Aristotle on Quantity17	73
3.3.2 Aristotle on Relatives	75
3.3.3 Prodromos's Counterarguments: Summary17	76
3.3.4 Great and Small are Indefinite Quantities in an Absolute Sense Only17	77
3.3.5 Great and Small Have an Independent Meaning of Their Own	35
3.3.6 Great and Small are Predicated of Quantity19) 0
3.3.7 Great and Small Admit of a More and a Less19) 1
3.3.8 Great and Small Are Not Reciprocal19	96
3.3.9 Great and Small are Quantities in Their Own Right)1
3.4. Great and Small are Opposed to each other as Contraries and not as Relatives)2
3.4.1 Aristotle on Contraries)3
3.4.2 One Thing Should be Compared with the Other Thing at the Time)5
3.4.3 Great and Small as Contraries can Alternate Into Each Other in Things Capable of Receiving Them	15
3.4.4. Great and Small as Contraries are Principles of Existing Things	16
3.4.5. One Thing can be Contrary to Two at the Same Time When the Different Type of	
Contrariety is Involved22	20
Conclusions 22	22
CONCLUDING REMARKS	24
Bibliography 22	27
Primary sources	27
Other Primary Sources:	31
Secondary sources24	12
Appendix 25	50

Dissertation Abstract

Competence and competitiveness are mutually intertwined. While competence provides individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to be superior in competitive situations, competitiveness is a motivational force that urges individuals to strive for competence. Thus, in the highly competitive intellectual environment of twelfth-century Byzantium, in which learned people without an aristocratic background struggled to acquire salaried posts in the bureaucracy, private or state-funded teaching positions, wealthy patrons who would finance their literary or artistic production, or the support of other private individuals who could hire them for their proficiency in their respective skills and disciplines, the display of one's competence was crucial. One of these learned men was Theodore Prodromos (ca. 1100 - ca. 1158), renowned court poet and an important public figure. The Byzantine polymath procured his fame not only through his poetic endeavors but also as a teacher, rhetorician, and philosopher. Prodromos's intellectual and literary versatility is attested in the enormous corpus of his works, which includes poetry, panegyric orations, monodies, theological writings, letters, and satirical, philosophical, astrological, and grammatical works. This thesis examines some of Prodromos's satirical, polemical, and philosophical works in which he, by fighting on behalf of the truth, conducts an examination that serves to expose either social follies, errors in knowledge and expertise, or both. By assuming the superior position of an examiner in these works, Prodromos not only expresses his criticisms in a competitive spirit but also displays his authoritative intellectual presence and competence. The thesis sheds light on Prodromos's expertise in logic and philosophy not only as a teacher, but also as an independent thinker and philosopher. Additionally, the thesis provides deeper insight into the anxieties and struggles, as well as the ethical and intellectual criteria, of a Byzantine teacher, rhetor, and philosopher in twelfth-century Byzantium.

Statement of Responsibility

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Authorship Declaration

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN MEDIEVAL STUDIES Department of Historical Studies



AUTHORSHIP DECLARARTION

I, the undersigned Dunja Milenkovic (name), doctoral candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present doctoral dissertation is exclusively my own work, based on my research and relies only on such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the doctoral dissertation infringes on any person's or institution's copyright.

I also declare that no part of the doctoral dissertation has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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A.15 Authorship declaration US

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Abreviations

Alexander of	Alexandri Aphrodisiensis in Aristotelis topicorum libros
Aphrodisias,	octo commentaria. Vol. 2.2 of Commentaria in
Commentary on	Aristotelem Graeca, edited by M. Wallies. Berlin:
Aristotle's Topics	Reimer, 1891.
Alexander of	Alexandri Aphrodisiensis praeter commentaria scripta
Aphrodisias,	minora. Suppl. 2.2. of Commentaria in Aristotelem
Problems and Solutions	Graeca, edited by Ivo Bruns, 1-116. Berlin: Reimer, 1892.
Ammonius, Commentary	Ammonii in Aristotelis categorias commentarium. Vol.
on Aristotle's Categories	4.4 of Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, edited by
	Adolf Busse and Maximilian Wallies. Berlin: Georg
	Reimer, 1895.
Ammonius, Commentary	Ammonii in Porphyrii isagogen sive quinque voces. Vol.
on Porphyry's Isagoge	4.3 of Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, edited by
	Adolf Busse and Maximilian Wallies. Berlin: Georg
	Reimer, 1895.
Ammonius, On Aristotle	Ammonius. On Aristotle Categories. Translated by Marc
Categories, (tr. Cohen &	Cohen and Gareth B. Matthews. Bloomsbury Academic,
Matthews)	2014.
Ammonius,	Ammonius. Interpretation of Porphyry's "Introduction"
Interpretation of	to Aristotle's Five Terms. Translated by Michael Chase.
Porphyry's Isagoge (tr.	London: Bloomsbury, 2020.
Chase)	
Sophonias, Commentary	Anonymi in Aristotelis categorias paraphrasis. Vol. 23.2
on Aristotle's Categories	of Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca edited by Michael

Hayduck. Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1883.

Anonymous Heiberg	Anonymi logica et quadrivium: Cum Scholiis Antiquis. Edited by Johan Ludvig Heiberg. Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-Filologiske Meddelelser 15.1. Copenhagen: Hovedkommissionær, 1929.
Arethas, Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge	Arethas of Caesarea's Scholia on Porphyry's Eisagoge and Aristotle's Categories. A critical edition by Michael Share, 1-130. Vol. 1 of Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina. Athens: Academy of Athens, 1994.
Arethas, Scholia on Aristotle's Categories	Arethas of Caesarea's Scholia on Porphyry's Eisagoge and Aristotle's Categories. A critical edition by Michael Share, 131-229. Vol. 1 of Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina. Athens: Academy of Athens, 1994.
Aristotle, Categories	Aristotelis categoriae et liber de interpretation, edited by Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, 3-45 (1a1-15b32). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949 (repr. 1966).
Aristotle, <i>Categories</i> (tr. Ackrill)	Aristotle, "Categories", translated by John Lloyd Ackrill. In <i>Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford</i> <i>Translation</i> , edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol. 1: 3-24. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, Metaphysics	<i>Aristotle's Metaphysics</i> , 2 vols, edited by William David Ross. (Vol. 1:980a21-1028a6; Vol. 2:1028a10-1093b29). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924 (repr. 1970 [of 1953 corr. edn.]).
Aristotle, Metaphysics	Aristotle, "Metaphysics", translated by William David

(tr. Ross)	Ross. In Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford
	Translation, edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2: 1552-
	1728. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton
	University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, Nichomachean	Aristotelis ethica Nicomachea, edited by Ingram Bywater,
Ethics	1-224 (1094a1-1181b23). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894
	(repr. 1962).
Aristotle, Nichomachean	Aristotle, "Nichomachean Ethics", translated by William
Ethics (tr. Ross, rev.	David Ross, revised by James Opie Urmson. In Complete
Urmson)	Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation,
	edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.2: 1729-1867. Bollingen
	Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, On Generation	Aristote. De la génération et de la corruption, edited by
and Corruption	Charles Mugler, 1-74 (314a1-338b19). Paris: Les Belles
	Lettres, 1966.
Aristotle, On Generation	Aristotle, "On Generation and Corruption", translated by
and Corruption (tr.	Harold Henry Joachim. In Complete Works of Aristotle:
Joachim)	The Revised Oxford Translation, edited by Jonathan
	Barnes, vol.1: 512-554. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton:
	Princeton University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, On Generation	Aristotelis de generatione animalium, edited by Hendrik
of Animals	Joan Drossaart Lulofs, 1-204 (715a1-789b20). Oxford:
	Clarendon Press, 1965 (repr. 1972).
Aristotle, On Generation	Aristotle, "Generation of Animals", translated by Arthur
of Animals (tr. Platt)	Platt. In Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford
	Translation, edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1: 1111-1218.
	Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University
	Press, 1984.
Aristotle, On	Aristotelis categoriae et liber de interpretation, edited by

13

Interpretation	Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, 49-72 (16a1-24b9). Oxford:
	Clarendon Press, 1949 (repr. 1966).
Aristotle, On	Aristotle, "De Interpretatione", translated by John Lloyd
Interpretation (tr.	Ackrill. In Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised
Ackrill)	Oxford Translation, edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1: 25-
	38. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University
	Press, 1984.
Aristotle, On the	Aristote. Du ciel, edited by Paul Moraux, 1-154 (268a1-
Heavens	313b22). Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1965.
Aristotle, On the	Aristotle, "On the Heavens", translated by John Leofric
Heavens (tr. Stocks)	Stocks. In Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised
	Oxford Translation, edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1:
	447-511. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton
	University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, On the Soul	De anima, edited by William David Ross, (402a1-
	435b25). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961 (repr. 1967).
Aristotle, On the Soul	Aristotle, "On the Soul", translated by John Alexander
(tr. Smith)	Smith. In Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised
	Oxford Translation, edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1:
	641-692. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton
	University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, Physics	Aristotelis physica, edited by William David Ross
	(184a10-267b26). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950 (repr.
	1966 (1st edn. corr.).
Aristotle, Physics (tr.	Aristotle, "Physics", translated by Robert Purves Hardie
Hardie & Gaye)	and Russell Kerr Gaye. In Complete Works of Aristotle:
	The Revised Oxford Translation, edited by Jonathan
	Barnes, vol.1: 315-446. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton:
	Princeton University Press, 1984.

Aristotle, <i>Posterior</i> Analytics	<i>Aristotelis analytica priora et posteriora</i> , edited by William David Ross, 114-183 (71a1-100b17). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964 (repr. 1968).
Aristotle, <i>Posterior</i> Analytics (tr. Barnes)	Aristotle, " <i>Posterior Analytics</i> ", translated by Jonathan Barnes. In <i>Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised</i> <i>Oxford Translation</i> , edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1: 114-166. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, Sense and Sensibilia	<i>Parva naturalia</i> , edited by William David Ross, (436a1-449b4). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955 (repr. 1970).
Aristotle, <i>Sense and</i> <i>Sensibilia</i> (tr. Beare)	Aristotle, "Sense and Sensibilia", translated by John Isaac Beare. In <i>Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised</i> <i>Oxford Translation</i> , edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1: 693-713. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations	<i>Aristotelis topica et sophistici elenchi</i> , edited by William David Ross, 190-251 (164a20-184b8). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958 (repr. 1970 (1st edn. corr.).
Aristotle, <i>Sophistical</i> <i>Refutations</i> (tr. Pickard- Cambridge)	Aristotle, "Sophistical Refutations", translated Arthur Wallace Pickard-Cambridge. In <i>Complete Works of</i> <i>Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation</i> , edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1: 278-314. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
Aristotle, Topics	<i>Aristotelis topica et sophistici elenchi</i> , edited by William David Ross, 1-189 (100a18-164b19). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958 (repr. 1970 (1st edn. corr.).
Aristotle, <i>Topics</i> (tr. Pickard-Cambridge)	Aristotle, "Topics", translated by Arthur Wallace Pickard- Cambridge. In <i>Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised</i> <i>Oxford Translation</i> , edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1:

167-277. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Blemmydes,	Blemmydes, Nicephorus. Epitome Logicae. Vol. 142 of
Compendium on Logic	Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca, edited by
	Jacques Paul Migne, 685-1004. Paris: Migne, 1865.
CPG I	Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum. Volume 1,
	Zenobius, Diogenianus, Plutarchus, Gregorius Cyprius
	cum appendice proverbiorum. Edited by Ernest Ludwig
	von Leutsch and Fridrich Wilhelm Schneidewin.
	Göttingen, 1839.
CPG II	Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum. Volume 2,
	Diogenianus, Gregorius Cyprius, Macarius, Aesopus,
	Apostolius et Arsenius; Mantissa Proverbiorum. Edited by
	Ernest Ludwig von Leutsch. Göttingen, 1851.
David, Commentary on	Davidis prolegomena et in Porphyrii isagogen
Porphyry's Isagoge	commentarium. Vol. 18.2 of Commentaria in Aristotelem
	Graeca, edited by Adolf Busse, 82-219. Berlin: Georg
	Reimer, 1904.
Dexippus, Commentary	Dexippi in Aristotelis categorias commentarium. Volume
on Aristotle's Categories	4.2 of Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, edited by
	Adolf Busse. Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1888.
Dexippus, On Aristotle	Dexippus. On Aristotle Categories. Translated by John
Categories (tr. Dillon)	Dillon. London: Bristol Classical Press, 1990.
Elias, Commentary on	Eliae in Porphyrii isagogen et Aristotelis categorias
Porphyry's Isagoge	commentaria. Vol. 18.1 of Commentaria in Aristotelem
	Graeca, edited by Adolf Busse, 1-104. Berlin: Georg
	Reimer, 1900.
Elias, Commentary on	Eliae in Porphyrii isagogen et Aristotelis categorias

Aristotle's Categories commentaria. Vol. 18.1 of Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, edited by Adolf Busse, 107-255. Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1900.

Eustratios, *Commentary* Eustratii in Analyticorum posteriorum librum secundum commentarium. Vol. 21.1 of Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, edited by Michael Hayduck. Berlin: George Reimer, 1907.

Gennadios Scholarios. Gennadios Scholarios, George. Commentarium in Commentary on Aristotelis logicam et Porphyrii isagogam. Vol. 7 of Oeuvres complètes de Georges Scholarios, edited by Aristotle's Logic and Porphyry's Isagoge Louis Petit, Xenophon A. Siderides, and Martin Jugie, 7-113. Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1936.

Gennadios Scholarios, Gennadios Scholarios, George. Commentarium in *Commentary on* Aristotelis categorias. Vol. 7 of Oeuvres complètes de Aristotle's Categories Georges Scholarios, edited by Louis Petit, Xenophon A. Siderides, and Martin Jugie, 114-237. Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1936.

Gennadios Scholarios, Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's On Being and Essence

Homer, The Iliad, (trans. A.T. Murray)

on Aristotle Posterior

Analytics 2

Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior **Analytics**

Gennadios Scholarios, George. Commentarium Thomae Aquinae de ente et essentia. Vol. 6. of Oeuvres complètes de Georges Scholarios, edited by Louis Petit, Xenophon A. Siderides, and Martin Jugie, 177-326. Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1933.

Homer. The Iliad. Translated by Augustus Taber Murray. Revised by William F. Wyatt. Loeb Classical Library 170, 171. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924.

Ioannis Philoponi in Aristotelis Analytica posteriora commentaria, cum Anonymo in librum II. Vol. 13.3 of Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, edited by Maximilian Wallies. Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1909.

Philoponus,	Ioannis Philoponi in Aristotelis de anima libros
Commentary on	commentaria. Vol 15 of Commentaria in Aristotelem
Aristotle's On the Soul	Graeca, edited by Michael Hayduck, 1-607. Berlin:
	Reimer, 1897.
John Italos, Problems	Italos, Ioannes. Quaestiones quodlibetales (Ἀπορίαι Καὶ
and Solutions	Λύσεις). Edited by Périclès-Pierre Joannou. Ettal: Buch-
	Kunstverlag, 1956.
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	1070.
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Analytics	Maximilian Wallies. Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1909.
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Commentary on	commentaria. Vol 15 of Commentaria in Aristotelem
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	Reimer, 1897.
Philoponus, On Aristotle	Philoponus. On Aristotle Categories 1-5. Translated by
Categories (tr. Sirkerl,	Riin Sirkel, Martin Tweedale, and John Harris. London:
Tweedale and Harris)	Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
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Plato, Phaedo (trans.	Plato. Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Edited and
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	Aristotelem Graeca, edited by Adolf Busse, 1-22. Berlin:
	Georg Reimer, 1887.
Porphyry, Isagoge (tr.	Porphyry. Introduction. Translated by Jonathan Barnes.
Barnes)	Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.
Porphyry, Commentary	Porphyrii isagoge et in Aristotelis categorias
on Aristotle's Categories	commentarium. Volume 4.1 of Commentaria in
	Aristotelem Graeca, edited by Adolf Busse, 55-142.
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Categories (tr. Strange)	K. Strange. London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992.
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the First Alcibiades of	Edited by Leendert Gerrit Westerink. Amsterdam: North-
Plato	Holland Publishing Company, 1954.
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on Aristotle's Posterior	Prodrome aux Analytiques postérieurs, livre II d'Aristote:
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Executioner or Doctor,	letterario di Teodoro Prodromo: Introduzione, edizione,
(ed. Migliorini)	traduzione e commenti," 51-55. PhD diss., Università di
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and Small, (ed. Tannery)	petit (à Italicos). Texte Grec inédit et notice." Annuaire de
	l'Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques
	en France 21 (1887): 104-119, 111-117.
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	Goncharko. "The Dialogue Xenedemos, or Voices, by
	Theodore Prodromos." Scrinium 13, no. 1 (2017): 227-

275, 246-259.

Prodromos, <i>Xenedemos</i> , (tr. Spyridonova et al.)	Spyridonova, Lydia, Andrey Kurbanov, and Oksana Yu Goncharko. "The Dialogue <i>Xenedemos</i> , or <i>Voices</i> , by Theodore Prodromos." <i>Scrinium</i> 13, no. 1 (2017): 227- 275, 260-275.
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Pseudo-Aristotle, <i>On</i> <i>Colors</i> (tr. Loveday and Forster)	Aristotle, "On Colors", translated by Thomas Loveday and Edward Seymour Forster. In <i>Complete Works of</i> <i>Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation</i> , edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol.1: 1219-1228. Bollingen Series 71.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
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Simplicius, Commentary	Simplicii in Aristotelis categorias commentarium. Vol. 8
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Categories 7-8, (tr.	Barrie Fleet. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.
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Simplicius, Commentary	Simplicii in Aristotelis physicorum libros octo
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	Aristotelem Graeca, edited by Herman Diels, vol.9:1-800,
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	10:1895.
Simplicius, Commentary	Simplicii in Aristotelis de caelo commentaria. Vol. 7 of
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INTRODUCTION

Competence and competitiveness almost always go hand in hand. While competence enhances competitiveness by providing individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in competitive situations, competitiveness urges individuals to strive for excellence and motivates them to improve their competence. Competence and competitiveness play an essential role in shaping individual behavior, social interactions, and societal structures. They are conditioned by cultural values and social norms and provide insight into how social power dynamics are formed, maintained, and challenged in a given society.

In the highly competitive intellectual environment of twelfth-century Byzantium, in which learned people without an aristocratic background struggled to acquire salaried posts in the bureaucracy; private or state-funded teaching positions; wealthy patrons who would finance their literary or artistic production, or the support of other private individuals who could hire them for their proficiency in their respective skills and disciplines, the display of one's competence was crucial.¹ This exhibition of knowledge and skill not only served to reinforce an individual's social standing and intellectual authority, but also represented an important aspect of one's self-promotional strategies. Besides this display of intellectual competence, Byzantine authors often resorted to the denigration of rivals and competitors to assert their own value as instructors and solidify their authority in the competitive intellectual market. Moreover, in this context, a strong authorial voice became particularly important in any kind of literary production. The recognizable authorial voice, as Ingela Nilsson explains, plays a crucial role in self-promoting strategies and in establishing one's own authority that can lead to potential commissions by wealthy patrons. This authorial voice can be distinguishable by linguistic, narratological and rhetorical markers. In this way, an author, while assuming various literary personae suitable for their respective occasions, is able to maintain his own distinguishable authorial trademark.²

One of these intellectuals with strong authorial presence was Theodore Prodromos. Within the competitive intellectual landscape of twelfth-century Byzantium, Prodromos sought to differentiate himself from other intellectuals, who were also striving for social

¹ Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Kommenos: 1143-1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 325-329; Robert Browning, "Teachers," in *The Byzantines*, ed. by Guglielmo Cavallo (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 101-108.

² Ingela Nilsson, Writer and Occasion in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The Authorial Voice of Constantine Manasses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 6-12.

recognition and opportunities. Prodromos employed peculiar literary techniques and means in order to display his own intellectual authority and discredit his real and/or imaginary rivals. This is particularly seen in, but not limited to, his works with a satirical, polemical and philosophical character, which will be analyzed in this thesis. However, before I set forth the main research objectives and the structure of the present work, it will be first important to briefly reflect on Prodromos's life as well as the current state of Prodromian scholarship.

Theodore Prodromos: A Biographical Note

Prodromos was not only a court poet and an important public figure, but he was also a rhetorician, teacher, philosopher and above all one of the most prolific and innovative authors of his time. Despite the fact that Prodromos was a superstar intellectual even in his life-time and a prolific writer who left an enormous literary corpus behind, many things about his life are still obscure. His fame is attested not only by the fact that he was praised and imitated by many contemporaries, but also by many spurious literary pieces later attributed to him. Information about his life is mainly derived from his own works as well as from works of his friends, students and admirers. He was born in Constantinople, most probably around 1100, in a well-situated family. Because Prodromos was unable to pursue a military career due to his poor health, his father, being fairly educated, advised Prodromos to put effort in studying, which could bring him wealth and glory. Thus Prodromos, as most of the highly-educated people of that time, acquired training in grammar, rhetoric and philosophy.³

After completing his education, Prodromos was under the patronage of the empress Irene Dukaina (c. 1066-1132), the wife of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081-1118). When the empress died, Prodromos continued his work under the patronage of her son,

³ For the life of Theodore Prodromos see: Synodes D. Papadimitriou, *Feodor Prodrom* (Odessa: Ekonomičeskaja tipografija, 1905) 14ff.; Wolfram Hörandner, Theodoros Prodromos: Historische Gedichte. Wiener Byzantinistische Studien 11 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974), 21-35; Alexander Kazhdan, and Simon Franklin, Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 87-114; Wolfram Hörander, "Prodromos, Theodoros, byzantinischer Autor, Lehrer der Grammatik und Rhetorik (um 1100 - wahrscheinlich vor 1158)," in Lexikon des Mittelalters, volume 7 (Munich: Artemis, 1995) 239-40; Georgios Fatouros, "Theodoros Prodromos," in Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, Traugott Bautz (ed.). Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon, vol. 11 (Hamm: Herzberg, 1996) 972-6; .Marina Bazzani, "The Historical Poems of Theodore Prodromos, the Epic-Homeric Revival and the Crisis of Intellectuals in the Twelfth Century," Byzantinoslavica 65 (2007): 211-4; Tommaso Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo: Introduzione, edizione, traduzione e commenti" (Ph.D. diss., Università di Pisa, 2010), xi-xxiii; Pantelis Golitsis, "Theodore Prodromos," in Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011) 1269-70; Nikos Zagklas, Theodoros Prodromos, Miscellaneous Poems: An Edition and Literary Study (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 32-42. There are some disagreements about Prodromos's lifespan, which are particularly reflected in the abovementioned studies by Papadimitriou, Hörandner and Kazhdan.

Emperor John II Komnenos (r. 1118-1143). During the reign of John II, Prodromos was in charge of the poetic celebrations of the victories of the Byzantine army. There is not much information about his position at the beginning of Manuel I Komnenos's reign (r. 1143-1180), since few of his works survive from this period. His laudatory poems for military achievements and several official eulogies for Manuel I date to after 1149. Prodromos died as the monk Nicholas in the Church of the Holy Apostles probably before 1158, where he also spent the last years of his life.⁴

In his literary production, Prodromos played with different registers of Greek and wrote in variety of genres. His profound knowledge of ancient literature, philosophy and science is evident from the diverse and enormous literary corpus he left behind. His literary output includes poetry, panegyric orations, monodies, theological writings, letters, satirical, philosophical, astrological and grammatical works⁵.

State of the Scholarship

As one of the best-known twelfth-century Byzantine literati, Theodore Prodromos long ago attracted the attention of scholars. To date, most of the scholarship has focused on Prodromos's poetic production.⁶ In the second half of the twentieth century, several pioneering studies and editions of Prodromos's poetic output appeared, such as Herbert Hunger's critical edition of Prodromos's *Cat and Mice War*, a satiric drama written in dodecasyllable.⁷ However, the foundational study of his poetic literary output is Wolfram Hörandner's *Historische Gedichte*, a critical edition of Theodore Prodromos's historical

⁴ Kazhdan and Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine Literature*, 93-100.

⁵ A detailed overview of Prodromos's literary production is available in: Hörandner, *Theodoros Prodromos: Historische Gedichte*, 34-68.

⁶ In this section I will pay attention only to studies dealing with the works certainly attributed to Prodromos and try to narrow down the main thread of the discussion to the most important studies because his doubtful works and "the question of three Prodromoi" (i.e., Theodore Prodromos, Ptochoprodromos and Manganeios Prodromos) has caused vigorous debate among scholars, which at this point goes beyond my research scope.

⁷ Herbert Hunger, *Der byzantinische Katz-Mäuse-Krieg.* Byzantina Vindobonensia 3 (Graz, Vienna, Cologne, 1968); in the same year another, slightly different edition of the same piece was published: Helmut Ahlborn, *Theodoros Prodromos: Der Katzenmäusekrieg*, (Berlin, 1968). On questions related to these two editions see: Anna Kotlowska, "On the two critical editions of Cat and Mouse War by Theodoros Prodromos." *Pomoerium* 6 (2007/08). On perceiving this work as mock-epic poetry see: Przemysław Marciniak and Katarzyna Warcaba, "Theodore Prodromos' Katomyomachia as a Byzantine Version of Mock-Epic," in *Middle and Late Byzantine Poetry: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Andreas Rhoby and Nikos Zagklas, January 2018, 97–110, <u>https://doi.org/10.1484/m.sbhc-eb.5.115585</u>. Before Hunger and Ahlborn, Ciro Giannelli edited Prodromos's tetrastichs calendar as well as tetrastichs on the great martyrs Theodore, George, and Demetrios: C. Giannelli, "Un altro «calendario metrico» di Teodoro Prodromo," EEBΣ 25 (1955) 158–169; and idem, "Epigrammi di Teodoro Prodromo in onore dei santi megalomartiri Teodoro, Giorgio e Demetrio," in: *Studi in onore di Luigi Castiglioni* (Florence, 1960) 333-371.

poems.⁸ In the introduction, besides the biography of the author, the functions and the form of historical poems, and the use of language and metre, Hörandner also gives an extensive overview of almost all of Prodromos's works. He divides Prodromos's literary pieces into three groups: works confidently attributed to him, doubtful works and literary pieces which are falsely attributed to Prodromos. With this study, Hörandner not only made a crucial contribution to "Prodromic studies", but also attracted the attention of many scholars to Prodromos's historical poems as well as to his other poetic literary output.⁹

After Hörandner's monumental study, an important contribution towards our understanding of Prodromos's authorial and intellectual persona, his poetic output and literary production general was made by Nikos Zagklas's doctoral dissertation *Theodore Prodromos: The Neglected Poems and Epigrams*, which was published as *Theodoros Prodromos, Miscellaneous Poems: An Edition and Literary Study*. Apart providing a critical edition of the text, translation and extensive commentary on neglected religious and poems on various subjects, Zagklas also pointed out crucial problems in the scholarly understanding of Prodromos's overall intellectual persona. Thus, as Zagklas argues, Prodromos should not only be seen as a court poet, but also as a private teacher. This professional aspect certainly plays a large role in how Prodromos presented himself as a man of letters. Additionally, Zagklas draws our attention to the reuse of Prodromos's works in various contexts – court, *theatron*, and classroom.¹⁰

⁸ Wolfram Hörandner, *Theodoros Prodromos: Historische Gedichte*, Wiener Byzantinistische Studien 11 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974).

⁹ On Prodromos's historical poems, see, e.g.: Maria Tziatzi-Papagianni, "Theodoros Prodromos, Historisches Gedicht LXXVIII," Byzantinische Zeitschrift 86/87 (1993/94) 364-382; Grigorios Papagiannis, "Bemerkungen zu Theodoros Prodromos Historischem Gedicht XXX," in: Lesarten: Festschrift für Athanasios Kambylis zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von Schülern, Kollegen und Freunden, edited by Ioannes Basses and Athanasios Kambylis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998) 119-128; Vlada M. Stankovic, "Serbs in the Poetry of Theodore Prodromos and Anonymous Manganeios," Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta 43 (2006): 437-450; Maria Bazzani, "The Historical Poems of Theodore Prodromos, the Epic-Homeric Revival and the Crisis of Intellectuals in the Twelfth Century," Byzantinoslavica 65 (2007): 211-228; Paul Magdalino, "Cultural Change? The Context of Byzantine Poetry from Geometres to Prodromos," in: Poetry and its Contexts in Eleventh-Century Byzantium, edited by Floris Bernard and Kristoffel Demoen (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate 2012), 19-36; Roman Shliakhtin, "Master of Kastamon, Emperor of Eternity: Ioannes Komnenos as Border-maker and Borderbreaker in Theodoros Prodromos' poem 'On the advance to Kastamon'," in From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities, edited by Nicholas S. M. Matheou, Theofili Kampianaki, and Lorenzo M. Bondioli (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 425-34. For editions of Prodromos's other poetic output, see: Acconcia Longo, Il Calendario Giambico in Monostici di Teodoro Prodrome (Testi e Studi Bizantino-Neoellenici V) (Rome, 1983); G. Papagiannis, Theodoros Prodromos: Jambische und hexametrische Tetrasticha auf die Haupterzählungen des Alten und des Neuen Testaments (Meletemata 7), vols. I-II (Wiesbaden 1997); Mario D'Ambrosi, I Tetrastici Giambici ed Esametrici sugli Episodi Principali della Vita di Gregorio Nazianzeno, Introduzione, edizione critica, traduzione e commento (Testi e Studi Bizantino-Neoellenici XVII) (Rome 2008); and idem, "Un monostico giambico di Teodoro Prodromo per i ss. Tre Gerarchi," Bollettino dei Classici 33 (2012): 33-46.

¹⁰ Nikos Zagklas, *Theodore Prodromos: the Neglected Poems and Epigrams (Edition, Translation and Commentary)* (Ph.D. diss, University of Vienna, 2014); Nikos Zagklas, *Theodoros Prodromos, Miscellaneous Poems: An Edition and Literary Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

Prodromos's letters and orations were recently edited, translated, and commented by Michiel D.J. Op De Coul in *Epistulae et orationes*, which is based on his doctoral dissertation.¹¹ Prodromos's works, both prose and verse, with a satirical character have also been the object of scholarly research. Giuditta Podestà, Roberto Romano and Tomasso Migliorini, in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, provide a critical edition and commentary on several of Prodromos's satirical works in verse and prose.¹² However, probably the most important contribution to our understanding of Prodromos' works with a satirical character such as *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives, Against an Old Man with a Long Beard* and *Against a Lustful Old Woman, Philoplaton* and *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Gramarian* are the various studies by Przemysław Marciniak.¹³ Finally, an attempt towards a more comprehensive analysis of Prodromos's literary output has been undertaken recently by Ian Zaripov in his unpublished doctoral dissertation. In his thesis, Zaripov explores mimesis and intertextuality in Prodromos's satirical, philosophical and poetical works.¹⁴

Prodromos's philosophical, astrological and grammatical works are for the most part known through outdated nineteenth-century editions and are either neglected by modern scholars, or if treated, still require more in-depth research. While there is nothing written about Prodromos's astrological poem, there is a single study on his grammatical treatise, by Nikos Zagklas.¹⁵ After Cacouros's edition of Prodromos's commentary on Aristotle's

28

¹¹ Michael D.J. Op De Coul, "Théodore Prodrome. Lettres et Discours. Édition, Traduction, Commentaire," vols. I–II. PhD Thesis. Paris 2007; Michiel D.J. Op De Coul *Theodori Prodromi Epistulae etOrationes (Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 81)* (Turnhout: Brepols 2023). Other important works on Prodromos's letters and his networking practice are: Michael Grünbart, "Zwei Briefe suchen ihren Empfänger: Wem schrieb Theodoros Prodromos? Mit Anhang: Edition der beiden Schreiben," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 51 (2001) 199-214; Michael D.J. Op De Coul, "Deux inédits à l'ombre de Prodrome," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Wissenschaft* 56 (2006) 177–192; ibid. "The letters of Theodore Prodromus and some other 12th Century Letter Collections," *Medioevo Greco: Rivista di storia e filologia Bizantina* 9 (2009): 231–239.

¹² Giuditta Podestà, "Le satire lucianesche di Teodoro Prodromo," pt. 1, *Aevum* 19 (1945): 240–41; Ibid., "Le satire lucianesche di Teodoro Prodromo," pt. 1, *Aevum* 21 (1945) 242-252; Roberto Romano, *La satira bizantina dei secoli XI-XV* (Torino: Unione tipografico editrice torinese, 1999); Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo."

¹³ Przemysław Marciniak, "Theodore Prodromos' Bion Prasis: A Reappraisal," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013): 219-39219-39; idem, ""Prodromos, Aristophanes and a lustful woman," *Byzantinoslavica: Revue internationale des études byzantines* 73 (2015): 23-34; Kucharski and Marciniak, "The Beard and its Philosopher: Theodore Prodromos on the Philosopher's Beard in Byzantium," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41 (2016): 45-54; Marciniak, "The Art of Abuse: Satire and Invective in Byzantine Literature. A Preliminary Survey," *Eos* 103.2 (2016): 349-362; Idem., "Of False Philosophers and Inept Teachers: Theodore Prodromos' Satirical Writings (with a Translation of the Poem against the Old Man with a Long Beard).," Byzantina Symmeikta 30 (February 12, 2020): 131–48, <u>https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.20889</u>.

¹⁴ Yan Zaripov, "Mimesis and Intertextuality in Twelfth-Century Byzantine Literature: The Case of Theodore Prodromos" (PhD Dissertation, Oxford 2022).

¹⁵ Nikolaos Zagklas, "A Byzantine Grammar Treatise Attributed to Theodoros Prodromos", *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 16 (2011): 77-86.

Posterior Analytics 2, there were several scholarly attempts to treat this as well as other philosophical works by Prodromos.¹⁶

For example, several scholars became interested in Prodromos's Platonic dialogue Xenedemos or Voices in which through unique aporias Prodromos discusses the five universal items from Porphyry's Isagoge. Thus, Nikolaos G. Charalabopoulos examined Platonic influences on this dialogue and how this impacted Prodromos's intention to be perceived as a legitimate successor of a Plato as a writer.¹⁷ However, despite a very informative and rich discussion on this matter, what Charalabopoulos fails to observe from my point of view is a substantial relationship that Prodromos's Xenedemos bears with Plato's Phaedrus. Recently Lydia Spyridonova, Andrey Kurbanov, and Oksana Yu Goncharko provided a new critical edition of this text accompanied by an English translation. According to them, Prodromos in this work criticizes Porphyry's definitions of five universal terms (genus, species, differentiae, propria and accidents). Moreover, Spyridonova et al. argue that the work reflects Prodromos tendency to doubt possibility for any such definitions to be formulated. Spyridonova et al. do not delve into any deeper into analysis of logical aporias present in this work, but rather discuss possible historical characters behind two main interlocutors of this work – Theocles and Xenedemos.¹⁸ Similar tendencies can be also observed in two studies penned by Oksana Yu Goncharko and Dmitry A. Chernoglazov, Thus, among other things, these authors discuss the Platonic influence, possible historical figures, Prodromos's criticism of Porphyry's definition of five predicable, the didactic and analytic value of this text as well as Prodromos's alleged play with self-referential notions.¹⁹ This last idea is further explored

¹⁶ M. Cacouros, "Le commentaire de Théodore Prodrome aux Analytiques postérieurs, livre II d'Aristote: Texte (edition princeps, tradition manuscrite), étude du commentaire de Prodrome" (PhD dissertation, Paris: Sorbonne 1992); and idem/ "La tradition du commentaire de Théodore Prodrome au deuxième livre des Seconds Analytiques d'Aristote: quelques étapes dans l'enseignement de la logique à Byzance" Δίπτυχα Έταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν καὶ Μεταβυζαντινῶν Μελετῶν 6 (1994-1995) 329-354.

¹⁷ Nikolaos G. Charalabopoulos, "Ενας 'πλατωνικός' διάλογος τοῦ 12ου αἰῶνος: Θεοδώρου Προδρόμου 'Ξενέδημος ἢ Φωναί'" ["A twelfth-century platonic dialogue: Theodore Prodromos's *Xenedemos, or Voices*"], *Ἀριάδνη* 11 (2005): 189-214.

¹⁸ The first modern edition of this text is based only on two manuscripts Bodl. Barocc. gr. 165 (68r-73v, XV century), Bodl. Barocc. gr. 187 (245r-248v, XVI century), and it is available in John A. Cramer (ed.), *Anecdota Graeca e Codd. Manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Prisiensis*, vol. III (Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1836), 204-215. The next modern edition of this text was made a couple of years ago and is accompanied by a detailed introduction and English translation of this text in Lydia Spyridonova, Andrey Kurbanov, and Oksana Yu Goncharko, "The Dialogue *Xenedemos, or Voices*, by Theodore Prodromos," *Scrinium* 13, no. 1 (2017): 259-281, 246-275. There is also a translation of this work into Russian: Oksana Y. Goncharko, Dmitry A. Chernoglazov, "«Ксенедем, или Гласы» Феодора Продрома: русский перевод с логико-философским введением" ["Xenedemos, or Voices by Theodore Prodromos: A Russian Translation with Logico-Philosophical Introduction"], *Платоновские исследования* 12.1 (2020): 259-281.

¹⁹ Oksana Y. Goncharko, Dmitry A. Chernoglazov, "«Ксенедем» Феодора Продрома: Возрождение Платоновского Диалога В Византии XII Века" ["Theodoros Prodromos «Xenedemos»: Renaissance of Platonic Dialogue in 12th century Byzantium"], Вестник Русской Христианской Гуманитарной Академии

in the paper written by Goncharko Yuriy M. Romanenko. According to them, Prodromos in *Xenedemos* is the first person in the history of Byzantine logic who attempts to use universal terms to define themselves and "expresses the self-referential character of definition problem".²⁰ More or less the same ideas are expressed in Goncharko's MA thesis.²¹ However, all these discussions, according to my point of view, are rather problematic and quite superficial. Not only do they fail to observe that the main intention of Prodromos is not to criticize Porphyry's "definitions" of five universal items, but they also display a poor familiarity with ancient, late antique and Byzantine logic in general. Thus, for the most part, Prodromos intricate aporias which mostly rely on Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition on Porphyry's *Isagoge* are left inadequately analyzed and misunderstood.

After the nineteenth-century edition of Prodromos's treatise *On Great and Small* in which he criticizes Aristotle's stance in *Categories* on this matter, the first person to tackle this work was Katerina Ierodiakonou. However, as her treatment of Prodromos's work was part of the broader discussion on the reception of Aristotle's *Categories*, Ierodiakonou's analysis included only a brief summary of the main points of this treatise.²² Additionally, this work was also discussed in one paper by Oksana Y. Goncharko, Yaroslav A. Slinin and Dmitry A. Chernoglazov as well as in Goncharko's MA thesis. These scholars examined Prodromos's work only in comparison with Aristotle's *Categories* and Porphyry's *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*.²³ However, for the most part, their interpretation of Prodromos's text is either incomplete or incorrect as they do not include other Neoplatonic

^{16,} no. 4 (2015): 29-36; Oksana Y. Goncharko, Dmitry A. Chernoglazov, "Платоновский диалог «Ксенедем» Феодора Продрома: псевдоантичные герои и их византийские прототипы" [The Platonic Dialogue *Xenedemos* by Theodoros Prodromos: Ancient Protagonists and their Byzantine Prototypes], $\Sigma XOAH$ (Schole) 10.2 (2016): 571-582.

²⁰ Oksana Yu. Goncharko and Yuriy M. Romanenko, "A Brief History of Self-Reference Notion Implementation in Byzantium. Did the Byzantine Theologians and Scholars Formulate Russell's Paradox?," Scrinium 12, no. 1 (November 17, 2016): 244–60.

²¹ Oksana Y. Goncharko, The Logical Works of Theodore Prodromus: Issues of Genre, Stylistics and Reception of the Ancient Tradition, 16-51.

²² Théodore Prodrome. Sur le grand et le petit (à Italicos). Texte Grec inédit et notice," Annuaire de l'Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France 21 (1887): 104-110. <u>https://www.jstor.org/stable/44253699.</u> 111-117. The Russian translation of this text is available in: Dmitry A. Chernoglazov, Oksana Y. Goncharko, "«О великом и малом» Феодора Продрома: из истории византийской логической мысли XII века" ["On the Great and the Small by Theodore Prodromos as a Sample of Neoplatonic Commentary to Aristotle's Categories"], Вестник Русской христианской гуманитарной академии, 19, no. 2 (2018): 204-213; Katerina Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine reception of Aristotle's Categories," Synthesis Philosophica 39 (2005), 7-31, 27-29.

²³ Oksana Y. Goncharko, Yaroslav Anatol'evich Slinin and Dmitry A. Chernoglazov "Логические Идеи Феодора Продрома: «О Великом и Малом»," ["Logical Ideas of Theodore Prodromus: "On the Great and the Small"] Логические исследования [Logical Investigations] 24, no. 2 (2018): 11-35, https://doi.org/10.21146/2074-1472-2018-24-2-11-35; Oksana Y. Goncharko, The Logical Works of Theodore Prodromus: Issues of Genre, Stylistics and Reception of the Ancient Tradition, 52-87.

and Byzantine commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories* and thus fail to accurately and fully comprehend Prodromos's arguments.

Besides *Xenedemos* and *On Great and Small*, in her MA thesis Goncharko also provided a very brief and superficial summary of Prodromos's *Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics 2*. She does not engage in any substantial manner with this work.²⁴ It is also important to mention that Zaripov in his PhD thesis already mentioned above dedicated a short chapter to Prodromos's philosophical works.²⁵ Although Zaripov makes some correct general remarks regarding Prodromos's philosophical production, his overall analysis is rather superficial. Zaripov does not examine these works from logical and philosophical perspective, but rather from the angle of intertextuality and mimesis. However, it would have been beneficial if Zaripov had actually read Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Aristotle's *Categories* and *Posterior Analytics* in order to avoid terminological mistakes and errors in the translation of relevant passages from Prodromos's philosophical works.

Besides these philosophical works of Prodromos, there is yet another work that substantially deals with philosophical issues, namely *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*. This polemical piece with an invective tone has been classified by Hörandner among Prodromos's prose rhetorical-satirical works. However, I believe that this text must be also assessed together with Prodromos's other philosophical works as it displays Prodromos's serious scholarly engagement with Aristotle's theory of colors. This text was recently edited and translated into English by Eric Cullhed.²⁶ However, Prodromos's philosophical views expressed in this piece are yet to be examined.

²⁴ Goncharko, The Logical Works of Theodore Prodromus: Issues of Genre, Stylistics and Reception of the Ancient Tradition, 88-100.

²⁵ Zaripov, "Mimesis and Intertextuality in Twelfth-Century Byzantine Literature: The Case of Theodore Prodromos" 56-78.

²⁶ This work received its first edition based on Matr. Gr. 4630 (olim N 109) in Juan de Iriarte, *Regiae Bibliothecae Matritensis codices Graeci MSS*, (Matriti: E Typographia Antonii Perez de Soto, 1769), 429-431. The next modern edition based on Bodl. Barocc. gr. 165 (77r-79v, XV century), Bodl. Barocc. gr. 187 (250v-252v, XVI century) is available in: John A. Cramer (ed.), *Anecdota Graeca e Codd. Manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Prisiensis*, vol. III (Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1836) 216-221. And the most recent modern edition of the text, accompanied with short analysis and english translation could be found in And the most recent modern edition of the text, accompanied with short analysis and english translation could be found in Eric Cullhed, "Theodore Prodromos: To the Caesar or For the Color Green," in Foteini Spingou (Ed.), Sources for Byzantine Art History III: The Visual Culture of Later Byzantium (c.1081-c.1350), vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 380-387.

Research Objectives

Taking into consideration existing scholarly production on Prodromos, the research aims of the present work are rather modest. My main aim will be that through analysis of some of Prodromos's satirical, polemical, and philosophical works shed only small light to Prodromos's overall teaching, rhetorical and philosophical endeavors.

As it was already mentioned, in the competitive scholarly environment of twelfthcentury Byzantium, learned men needed to demonstrate their skills and knowledge to stand out and gain fame and recognition. To achieve this, they used various strategies, including displaying their intellectual competence, denigrating rivals, and establishing a strong authorial voice. All these factors were crucial for self-promotion, securing the patronage of wealthy individuals and attracting fee-paying students. Like his contemporaries, Prodromos shared similar anxieties and aspirations. This was particularly evident in Prodromos's works with satirical, polemical, and philosophical themes. In these works, Prodromos often voiced criticism against real and/or imaginary contemporaries, societal follies, and ancient authors in order to assert his intellectual authority and discredit others.

Thus, my main research focus will be on eight different works of Prodromos, namely satirical work *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, apologetic and invective poem Against Barys, three satirical prose invectives – *Philoplaton, or Leather Tanner, The Ignorant, or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, The Executioner or Doctor*, one platonic dialogue *Xenedemos, or Voices* and one logical treatise *On Great and Small*. As can be clearly seen, except for three prose invectives, none of these works belong to the same genre, nor are they delivered in the same form or composed for the same purpose. However, in all of these texts, Prodromos, by fighting on behalf of the truth, conducts an examination that serves to expose either social follies, or errors in knowledge and expertise, or both. By assuming the superior position of an examiner in these works, Prodromos not only expresses his criticisms, but also displays his authoritative intellectual figure and expertise.

It must be noted that Prodromos executes similar kinds of criticism in his other satirical works, but in none of them does he conduct this sort of "question-answer" examination or systematic refutation of his real or imagined opponents and ideas. Moreover, this kind of tendencies towards examining, refuting, and correcting mistakes of stereotypical contemporary characters or ancient authors can be detected to a certain extent in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics 2*. However, I have consciously decided to omit this work from my thesis as it does not involve any kind of systematic refutation of

Aristotle's views in *Posterior Analytics*. The proper and thorough analysis of this work would indeed be useful to shed an additional light on Prodromos's expertise in logic and philosophy, but at the moment it goes beyond the scope of my present research.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I will explore how Prodromos employed the Lucianic authorial alter-ego Frank-speaker (Παρρησιάδης), and its main allies Truth (Ἀλήθεια) and Examination/Refutation (Ἐλεγχος), in order to strategically display his own competence and knowledge. The chapter will open with an analysis of Prodromos's satirical work Sale of Poetical and Political Lives to demonstrate how Prodromos assumes the Lucianic alter-ego Frank-Speaker in the first place. This type of authorial self-identification, as I will argue, allows Prodromos to clearly signal to his audience the main intention behind his satirical literary endeavor - the criticism of inept intellectuals, unskilled professionals, and people unfit for their societal roles. Additionally, the focus of my analysis will revolve around the five works of Prodromos that I have already mentioned. It will include the apologetic poem Against Barys, in which Prodromos not only defends his Orthodoxy, but also fiercely refutes his accuser.²⁷ Additionally, I will examine the examination procedure in his three satirical pieces in prose, namely Philoplaton, The Executioner, or Doctor and The Ignorant, or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, as well as the polemical text To the Caesar or For the Color Green, which has a strong invective tone. Through these critiques, Prodromos displays a high level of competitiveness and enhances his influence in the intellectual realm of twelfth-century Constantinople. However, his display of knowledge in the refutation process is not equally distributed across these works. The demonstration of Prodromos's intellectual competence is mostly evident, as we will see, in The Ignorant, or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, and in For the Color Green. While in the first work, Prodromos demonstrates his expertise as a grammarian, in For the Color Green, he shows an unprecedented understanding of Aristotle's theory of colors.

In the second chapter, my analysis will focus on *Xenedemos or Voices*. In this Platonic dialogue, I will demonstrate how Prodromos's display of his own competence and competitiveness reaches a perfect balance. Both Examination/Refutation and Truth are not straightforward, but rather embedded in rhetorical play. Thus, in this Platonic dialogue, Prodromos only seemingly examines Porphyry's formulation of the predicables (genus, species, differentia, property, and accident) as presented in the *Isagoge*. However, a deeper look into this interrogation will reveal that this dialogue is not merely a critique of Porphyry's

²⁷ Theodore Prodromos, Against Barys, Who Blurted the Name of Heretic at Him, ed. Hörandner, Theodoros Prodromos: Historische Gedichte. 474-473.

Isagoge. Rather, as I will show, it is directed towards an ignorant philosopher and teacher, who is unable to properly comprehend, interpret, and convey the correct understanding of Porphyry's *Isagoge* to his students. In a similar fashion, the puzzling questions, which at first glance seem to be nonsensical, are not Prodromos's true knowledge. These are rather, as I will demonstrate, carefully composed aporias deeply rooted in Prodromos's knowledge of the commentary tradition on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories*. These logical puzzles could only be solved by somebody versed in logic. In this manner, as we will see, Prodromos displays his own philosophical knowledge and teaching competence and offers a possible didactic tool for his students. The work itself, through its fictional setting, reflects the philosophical, interpretative, and educational concerns of twelfth-century Byzantium.

In the third chapter, I will examine Prodromos's logical treatise *On Great and Small*. In this treatise we will see how Prodromos went beyond criticizing the inadequate skills and incompetence of his contemporaries and extended his scrutiny to rectifying inconsistencies in the work of an ancient author. Prodromos's critique of Aristotle's perspective on great and small is a unique example in the late antique, Neoplatonic, and Byzantine commentary tradition on Aristotle's *Categories*. Therefore, this chapter will primarily delve into an examination of Prodromos's arguments and explore how his approach differed from and was influenced by the existing commentary tradition. Through this analysis, we will not only gain a deeper understanding of Prodromos's philosophical Truth on this matter, but also discern how his approach to this issue allowed him to display his expertise in contrast to his predecessors and peers.

Chapter 1: Competitivity: Prodromos, or the Examiner

In this chapter I will first examine how Prodromos in his *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives* assumed the role of Lucianic alter-ego, Frank-Speaker (Παρρησιάδης). I will try to demonstrate here that Prodromos's main intention in this work was not to criticize classical authors, but rather to mock contemporary inept intellectuals and professionals. The remaining part of this chapter will explore how Prodromos employed the Lucianic authorial alter-ego Παρρησιάδης, and its main allies Truth (Ἀλήθεια) and Examination (Ἐλεγχος), in his other satirical works in order to strategically display his own competence and knowledge. My analysis will focus on one apologetic poem *Against Barys*, three satirical invectives in prose *Philoplaton*, *The Executioner*, and *The Ignorant*, and the polemical piece To the Caesar or For the Color Green, which has a prevalent invective tone. The special focus will be placed on Prodromos's examination/refutation procedures in these works.

1.1 Assuming the Role of a Frank-Speaker (Παρρησιάδης)

The setting is ancient. The protagonists are the pagan gods Zeus and Hermes and classical authors: the poet – Homer, the doctor from Cos – Hippocrates, the comedian – Aristophanes, the tragedian – Euripides, a legal authority – Sextus Pomponius, and finally the rhetor – Demosthenes. The plot presents a fictional auction of "poetical and political lives" organized by Zeus and Hermes. The form is Menippean – a prose dialogue with verses skillfully embedded on suitable occasions. The language is mainly Attic with some line in Ionic. The tone is colored with playfulness, mockery, and parody. The text is rich in quotations, allusions, and other intertextual references to classical authors – a patchwork one of its kind.²⁸ However, the text was not penned by Lucian of Samosata (c. 125–after 180) but was

²⁸ After this text was edited and published for the first time at the dawn of the nineteenth century, it took exactly two hundred years for Prodromos's *Bion Prasis* to be edited and translated into Italian in the unpublished doctoral dissertation by Tommaso Migliorini. Soon after, the next edition of this text by Eric Cullhed was published in the appendix of Marciniak's study on Byzantine satire. La Porte Du Theil de François Jean Gabriel, "Notice d'un manuscrit de bibliothèque du vatican, coté cccv parmi les manuscrits grecs", *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques* 8.2 (Paris: De l'Imprimerie Impériale, 1810), 128-150; Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo", 127-168; Eric Cullhed, *Edition of Bion Prasis by Theodore Prodromos (Appendix III)* in: Przemysław Marciniak. *Taniec w Roli Tersytesa: Studia Nad satyrą bizantyjską*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2016. Besides Italian, this work has also received English, Spanish and Polish translations: Michael. J. Kyriakis, "Trial and Tribulations of a Man of Letters in Twelfth-century Constantinople: Theodoros Prodromos and his Adversities," *Δίπτυχα Έταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν καὶ Μεταβυζαντινῶν Μελετῶν* 4 (1986-87): 58-93; Pablo A. Cavallero, "Teodoro Pródromos, Venta de vidas de poetas y políticos (Βίων πρᾶσις). Su rango dramático en el contexto del teatro

composed ten centuries later by a Byzantine polymath, Theodore Prodromos (c. 1100 – before 1158).

In the case of Prodromos's *Bion Prasis* or *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, Lucian and his *Bion Prasis* or *Sale of Philosophical Lives* come as a natural point of reference. While in Lucian's dialogue, Zeus and Hermes auction philosophical lives – not the founders of philosophical schools, but rather typical representatives of a certain philosophical tenet and their teachings (i.e. Pythagorean, Cynic, Cyrenaic, Democritean, Heraclitean, Platonian, Epicurean, Stoic, Peripatetic, and Sceptic), in Prodromos's *Bion Prasis* Zeus and Hermes conduct the public sale of lives of ancient authors from the Byzantine educational curriculum and authorities in their respective disciplines.²⁹ Prodromos clearly fashioned his dialogue by following the Lucianic model in terms of form, content, and literary motifs. Characteristically, Prodromos's text begins precisely where Lucian's text finished: in Prodromos's opening remarks, Zeus talks about the preparations and announcement done on a previous day and thus conveniently leans on Hermes's concluding announcement about the next sale from Lucian's *Sale of Lives*.

Przemysław Marciniak has recently argued that this text should not be simply regarded as an unoriginal imitation of Lucian "but rather a sequel in the most modern sense of the term." By applying Gerard Genette's methodological toolbox of transtextuality (i.e. intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypertextuality), Marciniak has provided fresh insight into the multifaceted relationship not only of Podromos's dialogue with Lucian's *Bion Prasis*, but also its intertextual relationship with other ancient texts. Thus, according to Marciniak, a metatextual relationship can be detected in the way in which Prodromos's dialogue appropriates and reflects on ancient texts in general. Paratextuality is to be found not only in the usage of the same title, but also in the opening remarks of Zeus mentioned above. Architextuality is reflected in the fact that Prodromos positions his work in the same generic and textual tradition as Lucian, while the relationship between Prodromos's hypertext with Lucian's hypotext is more than obvious.³⁰

But what was the reason behind composing the work in the manner of Lucian? Why write a sequel on this specific work of Lucian and not on another one? And ultimately what

bizantino," Anales de Filología Clásica 30. 1 (2017): 5-32; Jan Kucharski, Przemysław Marciniak, and Katarzyna Warcaba, Nie Tylko Dialogi: Recepcja Twórczości Lukiana W Bizancjum (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2019), 201-229.

²⁹ Lucian, *Philosophies for Sale*, in: *Lucian: Volume II*, (Loeb Classical Library 54) translated by Austin Morris Harmon, (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann LTD, 1960); Theodore Prodromos, "Sale of Poetical and Political Lives", in Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo", 127-168.

³⁰ Przemysław Marciniak, "Theodore Prodromos' Bion Prasis", 219-239.
was the *skopos* behind Prodromos's text? These questions become particularly important if one takes into consideration that Prodromos's literary *oeuvre* contains other texts which are clearly inspired by Lucian. Undoubtedly, the popularity of the Syrian rhetor among educated Byzantines played a significant role in Prodromos's choice. Though disparaged for his anti-Christian sentiments, Byzantines particularly commended Lucian as source of vocabulary, a model of Attic style, and perhaps even as a model for creation of didactic texts, as Marciniak suggests.³¹ However, before the matter of Prodromos's specific choice of Lucian's *Bion Prasis* as the foundation text of his sequel is explained in greater detail, it is important to understand the purpose (or even better to say purposes) of Prodromos's *Bion Prasis*.

On this question Marciniak suggests that Prodromos composed this text with his students in mind, who could recognize references and allusions to ancient authors. However, the didactic usage of this text certainly does not diminish its literary value, and thus it was possible that the text was performed in Byzantine literary gatherings. Additionally, the text might have mocked ancient authorities and their usefulness in the educational curriculum.³² Eric Cullhed gives another interpretation of this text. Just as Lucian's lives represent the philosophical lifestyles and not philosophers per se, thus similarly lives in Prodromos work represent "authors of texts, founders of textual professionalisms, or perhaps even embodiments of books and classroom readings." According to Cullhed, Prodromos's characters are sold according to their usefulness to their patrons. Additionally, Cullhed draws parallel between the depiction of Homer and Prodromos's own self-representation.³³ For Ingela Nilsson, on the other hand, this text represents the sale of the literary tradition and mimesis. Prodromos's Sale of Poetical and Political Lives is a metaliterary comment on the Byzantine relation to ancient literature. Thus, it is not simply about the admiration of ancient authors, but also about how these authors could be practically used for someone to become a successful writer-rhetorician.³⁴ Konstantinos Chryssogelos, while not excluding Marciniak's reading of the text, examines Prodromos from a different perspective. His examination is primarily focused on the enigmatic character presented at the end of Prodromos's Sale of

³¹ Przemysław Marciniak, "Reinventing Lucian in Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 70 (2016): 209–224, 213-217. For more information on Byzantine reception of Lucian, see for instance: Charis Messis, "The Fortune of Lucian in Byzantium," essay, in *Satire in the Middle Byzantine Period: The Golden Age of Laughter?*, ed. Przemysław Marciniak and Ingela Nilsson, vol. 12, *Explorations in Medieval Culture*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021), 13-38. For Lucian in the school context see: Przemysław Marciniak, "Teaching Lucian in Middle Byzantium," *Philologia Classica* 14, no. 2 (2019): 267-279.

³² Marciniak, "Theodore Prodromos' Bion Prasis", 225-230, 238-239.

³³ Eric Cullhed, "The Blind Bard and 'I': Homeric Biography and Authorial Personas in the Twelfth Century," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 38, no. 1 (March 10, 2014): 49–67, 50-58.

³⁴ Ingela Nilsson, "Poets and Teachers in the Underworld: From the Lucianic Katabasis to the *Timarion*," *Symbolae Osloenses* 90, no. 1 (January 1, 2016): 180–204, 191-194.

Poetical and Political Lives. In the closing scene, Zeus announces that the life of a man, known also as a Swan (Κύκυκνος), who is left unsold will be auctioned the next day with lives of commoners ($\dot{\alpha}$ yopaĩoı β íoı). Although he initially deliberates that this might be a reference either to Lucian, or even Prodromos himself, Chryssogelos argues that most likely it refers to a specific individual or a type of person that the author wanted to attack, most likely a well-situated patron.³⁵ Yan Zaripov, on the other hand, disagrees with Marciniak's view that this text was initially intended for a school use. Although Zaripov does not exclude this as a possible function of the text, he considers didactic usage rather secondary to its main purpose - a kind of a business card of Prodromos's authorial and intellectual persona. According to Zaripov, through the characterization of ancient authors (Homer, Aristophanes, Euripides and Demosthenes), Prodromos promotes his own ability to compose work in different genres, styles and for various occasions. Additionally, with characterizations of Hippocrates and Pomponius, Prodromos displays not only his own polymathy, but also his concerns for the limited professionalism of his contemporaries in medicine and law. Zaripov also argues that this text reflects Prodromos's own dissatisfaction with professional writers' dependence on their patrons.³⁶

While I do not disagree with all these interpretations of Prodromos's *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, I do believe that it is possible to offer a more holistic view on the purpose(s) and function(s) of this text. The solution to this puzzle might be found in another work of Lucian – *The Dead Come to Life, or the Fisherman*, in a way Lucian's own sequel to the *Bion Prasis*. In this satirical dialogue, Lucian explains and justifies the real motivation behind the slanderous auction of philosophical lives in *Bion Prasis*. The storyline in *The Dead Come to Life* revolves around enraged founders of various philosophical tenets, namely Pythagoras, Empedocles, Diogenes the Cynic, Antisthenes, Crates, Aristippus of Cyrene, Epicurus, the stoic philosopher Chrysippus, Plato, and Aristotle, who come back from the underworld to the world of the living in order to take revenge on Lucian for mocking their doctrines in his dialogues, and most particularly in the *Bion Prasis.*³⁷

³⁵ In order to prove his point, Chryssogelos makes a reference to another work – Anacharsis, or Ananias, most probably penned by Niketas Eugeneianos. According to Chryssogelos, the character after whom this work is titled, depicted as a rich powerful aristocrat who abandoned and mistreated his teacher, closely resembles the enigmatic life at Prodromos's *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*. Konstantinos Chryssogelos, "Theodore Prodromos' Bíων Πρᾶσις as a Satire," *Medioevo greco: Rivista di storia e filologia bizantina* 21 (2021): 302–13.
³⁶ Yan Zaripov, "Mimesis and Intertextuality in Twelfth-Century Byzantine Literature: The Case of Theodore Prodromos", PhD Dissertation (Oxford 2022), 27-55.

³⁷ Lucian, "The Dead Come to Life or Fisherman", in *Lucian*, vol. 3, trans. A. M. Harmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 1-82.

Lucian, who in the dialogue speaks through the figure of Frank-speaker (Παρρησιάδης), is surprised by their attack, as he clearly states that he was simply the benefactor (εὐεργέτης) and the guardian of their ways of life (κηδεμών τῶν έπιτηδευμάτων).³⁸ Moreover, in his defense, Frank-speaker, Lucian's alter-ego, claims that his admiration for their doctrines is clearly reflected in the carefully patched quotations and phrases that he picked from their works. The audience was pleased with his literary bouquet $(\dot{\alpha}\nu\theta o\lambda o\gamma(\alpha))$ and was able to distinguish and commend each flower that derived from the gardens of their philosophical doctrines, especially "if one but knows how to select and interweave and combine them so that they will not be out of harmony with one another" (ɛı̃ τις αναλέξασθαί τε αὐτὰ ἐπίσταιτο καὶ ἀναπλέξαι καὶ ἁρμόσαι, ὡς μὴ ἀπάδειν θάτερον $\theta \alpha \tau \epsilon \rho o v$).³⁹ However, Lucian would agree to properly respond to the attacks of the furious philosophers, if he would have a fair hearing judged by Lady Philosophy (δέσποινα $\Phi i \lambda o \sigma o \phi (\alpha)$ and the founders of the philosophical schools themselves. Philosophy accepts to preside over the trial, warning that it might be the case that Frank-speaker's aim was not to insult her but rather to attack impostors (γόητας ἄνδρας) in the discipline.⁴⁰ Lady Philosophy Truth (Άλήθεια), Liberty (Ἐλευθερία), Free-Speech (Παρρησία), is joined by Examination/Refutation ($E\lambda \epsilon \gamma \gamma \circ \zeta$), and Proof (Aπόδειξις) as jurors in the trial.⁴¹

In this trial Lucian presents himself to Lady Philosophy as "Frank-speaker, son of Truthful, son of Investigator of Fame" (Παρρησιάδης Άληθίωνος τοῦ Ἐλεγξικλέους). On the one hand he considers himself to be a hater of braggarts, frauds, liars and arrogant people (Μισαλαζών εἰμι καὶ μισογόης καὶ μισοψευδὴς καὶ μισότυφος), and on the other a lover of truth, beauty and simplicity (φιλαλήθης τε γὰρ καὶ φιλόκαλος καὶ φιλαπλοϊκός).⁴² Lucian defends his taunting sale of philosophical lives in his response to Diogenes the Cynic, who acts as a prosecutor on behalf of the whole group of wronged philosophers, accusing him of offending philosophy by employing their tool – dialogue – and joining forces with Menippus. According to Frank-speaker, i.e., Lucian, the lives sold at the auction and mocked were not the lives of famous philosophers, but rather of charlatans (ἀλαζόνες) and tricksters (γόητες) who presented themselves as followers of these philosophical schools. After being disappointed in the life of rhetor, he pursued philosophical knowledge and the true life of a philosopher. But as Frank-speaker explains to his prosecutors:

- ³⁸ Ibid., 10-11.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 12-13.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 22-25.

⁴¹ Ibid., 26-29.

⁴² Ibid., 30-33.

When I saw, however, that many were not in love with Philosophy but simply coveted the reputation attached to this profession, and that they very well resembled to good men in these easy and popular issues that anyone can easily imitate, I mean the beard, the way of walking, and the cloak, yet, in their conduct and actions they contradicted their outward appearance, were striving for aims contrary to yours, and destroyed the honour of their promise, I became angry.

Όρῶν δὲ πολλοὺς οὐκ ἔρωτι φιλοσοφίας ἐχομένους ἀλλὰ δόξης μόνον τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ πράγματος ἐφιεμένους, καὶ τὰ μὲν πρόχειρα ταῦτα καὶ δημόσια καὶ ὁπόσα παντὶ μιμεῖσθαι ῥάδιον εὖ μάλα ἐοικότας ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσι, τὸ γένειον λέγω καὶ τὸ βάδισμα καὶ τὴν ἀναβολήν, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀντιφθεγγομένους τῷ σχήματι καὶ τἀναντία ὑμῖν ἐπιτηδεύοντας καὶ διαφθείροντας τὸ ἀξίωμα τῆς ὑποσχέσεως, ἠγανάκτουν [...]⁴³

According to Frank-speaker, these self-proclaimed philosophers behaved as unsuitable actors for the roles they assumed, and he was not able to bear the shame of their hypocrisy (τὴν αἰσχύνην τῆς ὑποκρίσεως) as they were like apes covered with heroic masks and asses of Cumae under lion-skins. Since the acts of these charlatans sullied the name of philosophy, Frank-speaker or Lucian felt invited to expose them and to distinguish them from the real philosophers (ἥλεγχον αὐτοὺς καὶ διἑκρινον ἀφ' ὑμῶν). These money-hungry people were not leading their life in accordance with the philosophical schools they were identifying themselves with and they certainly did not deserve to be compared with the real philosophers simply "because they have long beards and claim to be philosophers and look sour" (διότι πώγωνας ἔχουσι καὶ φιλοσοφεῖν φάσκουσι καὶ σκυθρωποί εἰσι).⁴⁴ At the end of the story, Frank-speaker's (i.e. Lucian's) name is cleared and he receives the pleasure to cure and punish those tricksters.⁴⁵

Why is this specific work of Lucian important for the present discussion? In the first place, Lucian's *The Dead Come to Life* does not only offer the explanation behind the rationale of his own *Sale of Philosophical Lives*, but it also enables us to grasp the purpose of

⁴³ Ibid., 47. Revised translation by István Perczel.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 56-57.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 79-80.

Prodromos's *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*. As Chryssogelos notes, several *schede* from the twelfth century corroborate the popularity of Lucian's *The Dead Come to Life*. Additionally, as this work of Lucian is also characterized by interspersed quotations from Homer and Euripides, characteristic features present in Prodromos's own work, it might be the case that Prodromos was familiar with this work as well.⁴⁶ However, I argue that this is not a mere possibility but rather actuality as I believe that Lucian's *The Dead Come to Life* is not only deeply ingrained in Prodromos's literary agenda in *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives* but also in his overall satirical literary production and beyond.

By following the Lucianic model, Prodromos carefully picks and plucks quotations and ideas from the works of these authors and produces a literary "bouquet" (ἀνθολογία) through which he delivers a humorous characterization ($\eta \theta \sigma \pi \sigma \eta \alpha$) of each life. In this way Prodromos demonstrates, as Zaripov already noted, his own polymathy and ability to write in different registers, styles and genres as well as for different occasions.⁴⁷ However, I would also add here that by these characterizations Prodromos also manages to achieve his other goal - ridiculing contemporary self-proclaimed authorities. In almost all manuscripts of Lucian's Bion Prasis, as well as in modern editions of this work, figures who represent different philosophical schools are assigned to the specific individuals, i.e., Epicureans to Epicurus, Heraclitans to Heraclitus, Pythagoreans to Pythagoras, Academics to Socrates etc.⁴⁸ In a similar way, Prodromos does not merely mock the authors from the Byzantine educational curriculum (Homer, Aristophanes, Euripides and Demosthenes) and authorities in their respective disciplines (Hippocrates, and Sextus Pomponius), but rather taunts those people who claimed to be experts in these authors, such as teachers, medical doctors, public rhetoricians, and legal practitioners. Additionally, his mockery also extends to prospective students or patrons who would "buy" this kind of expertise.

Furthermore, in Lucian's *Sale of Philosophical Lives*, the Academic is sold for two talents, the Peripatetic for twenty minas, the Stoic for twelve minas, the Pythagorean for ten minas, the Epicurean for two minas, the Sceptic one mina, the Cynic for two obols, while the Cyrenaic, Democritean and Heraclitan are left unsold. In the same manner, characters in Prodromos's *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives* are mockingly sold for different prices: while Homer is sold for five talents, Hippocrates is sold only for four minas, Euripides for

⁴⁶ Chryssogelos, "Theodore Prodromos' Βίων Πρᾶσις as a Satire," 306.

⁴⁷ Zaripov, "Mimesis and Intertextuality in Twelfth-Century Byzantine Literature: The Case of Theodore Prodromos", 27-55.

⁴⁸ Marília P. Futre Pinheiro, "Irony, Satire and Parody in Lucian's the *Dead Come to Life, or the Fisherman,*" *Trends in Classics*, 4.2, 2012, 296-315.

two minas, the value of Demosthenes and Pomponius is estimated to a half a mina each, and Aristophanes is left unsold. However, the price for which they are sold is not proportional to the amount of appreciation Prodromos held for these authors, but rather reflects his low opinion on the expertise of professionals who claimed to have mastered them. To this can attest Prodromos's stance in prose satirical invective *Philoplaton or Leather Tanner*. At some point, while criticizing inept Platonist, Prodromos mockingly says that "With pleasure, I would purchase for a half-drachma the philosophy established such as this." (Σχολῆ ἀν ἐγὼ τριωβόλου πριαίμην τοιούτοις κατορθουμένην φιλοσοφίαν). In this way Prodromos clearly aims to diminish the value of philosophical knowledge of an intellectual who pretends to understand Plato's works.⁴⁹

My interpretation can be further reinforced by the last enigmatic character, a certain "Swaswan" (Κύκυκνος) who is announced for the next-day auction, along with the lives of common people (ἀγοραῖοι βίοι). In this way Prodromos intends to keep the promise of Lucian's Zeus who also says that tomorrow there will be the auction of the lives of laymen (ἰδιῶται), workingmen (βάναυσοι), and commoners (ἀγοραῖοι), which he did not keep in his work, as he auctioned poetical and political lives. Marciniak and Chryssogelos reject the idea that this character can be identified with any of the ancient poets known as Swan, such as Pindar, Anacreon, or Alcaeus, as the description does not match any of them. Instead, they suggest that Prodromos might be referring to one of his contemporaries. While Marciniak considers this possibility very cautiously, Chryssogelos more confidently proposes that this character from his time. ⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, (ed. Migliorini), 69.52-53. There are also three editions of this text, accompanied with Italian translations: Giuditta Podestà, "Le satire lucianesche" pt. 2, (1947): 4-12; Roberto Romano, *La satira bizantina dei secoli XI-XV* (Torino: Unione tipografico editrice torinese, 1999), 327-335; and Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo", 69-81. The text is also translated into Russian and Polish: Андрей Викторович Курбанов, Лидия Валентиновна, "Платонолюб, или кожевник" Феодора Продрома", *Вестник Русской христианской гуманитарной академии*, том 19. выпуск 3 [Andrej Viktorovich Kurbanov, Lidija Valentinovna, "Platonoljub, ili kozhevnik" Feodora Prodroma" ("Philoplaton, or the Currier, by Theodore Prodromos"), *Vestnik Russkoj hristianskoj gumanitarnoj akademii*, tom 19. vypusk]; Kucharski, Marciniak, and Warcaba, *Nie Tylko Dialogi*, 167-179.

⁴⁹ This work received its first edition in Juan de Iriarte, *Regiae Bibliothecae Matritensis codices Graeci MSS* (Matriti: E Typographia Antonii Perez de Soto, 1769), 388-391.The next modern edition is available in: John A. Cramer (ed.), *Anecdota Graeca e Codd. Manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Prisiensis*, vol. III (Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1836) 222-27. Other modern editions with translations into Italian: Giuditta Podestà, "Le satire lucianesche di Teodoro Prodromo," pt. 1, *Aevum* 21 (1945) 242-252; Roberto Romano, *La satira bizantina dei secoli XI-XV* (Torino: Unione tipografico editrice torinese, 1999), 298-309; Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo," 29-49. A polish translation is also available in: Kucharski, Marciniak, and Warcaba, *Nie Tylko Dialogi*, 153-166.

⁵⁰ Marciniak, "Theodore Prodromos' Bion Prasis", 237; Chryssogelos, "Theodore Prodromos' Βίων Πρᾶσις as a Satire," 206-312.

Yet, if this is indeed the case, the question is why Prodromos would announce the sale of the life of one of his contemporaries, or a stereotypical contemporary character, if he was really selling ancient authorities in his work? However, if what I argue is correct - i.e., that behind characters of ancient authors auctioned in Prodromos's work are indeed stereotypical contemporary figures who claimed to be experts in these authors - the last enigmatic character will perfectly fit this agenda. Since all mocked stereotypical figures are hidden behind ancient authorities, the only remaining puzzle will be to whom of the ancient authors the last mysterious character could be related. Besides Pindar, Anacreon, or Alcaeus, there is another ancient author to whom name Swan (κύκνος) is related, namely Plato. Diogenes Laertius in his Life of Plato, informs us that Plato initially composed poems (dithyrambs, lyric poems and tragedies), but that he had a weak voice (ἰσχνόφωνος). Additionally, Laertius tells us that Socrates allegedly had a dream in which "he saw a young swan" (εἶδε κύκνου νεοττόν) sitting on his knees, which suddenly grew feathers and flew away making a sweet sound. The next day, Socrates met Plato as his new student and immediately recognized that he was the bird from his dream. Soon afterwards, Plato abandoned his poetic aspirations.⁵¹ The possibility that behind this mysterious figure is hidden someone who pretends to be versed in the works of Plato can be further corroborated by the fact that Prodromos indeed penned a work in which he criticized an inept Platonist, namely *Philoplaton*.

Prodromos's criticism of inept professionals is particularly evident, for instance, in his characterization of Hippocrates. The playful depiction of Hippocrates's persona reflected in a brief dialogue between the famous medical practitioner from Cos and a potential buyer is patched from allusions and quotations taken from Hippocrates's works. This characterization also incorporates ironical advice to a merchant on how to pursue the career of doctor: "Indeed, it would not be difficult to make you resemble many of today's doctors" ($O\mu\omega\varsigma\mu$ éντοι τοῖσι πολλοῖσι τῶν νῦν ἰητρῶν ἐμφερέα σε ποιέειν οὐ χαλεπόν).⁵² Here Prodromos employs Hippocrates as a medium to express his own attitude towards and perception of contemporary medical doctors, and explains to a potential buyer that, to put it shortly, if he would like to become a doctor he will need neither expertise nor knowledge, but it would be enough simply to play the role of doctor without having the qualities necessary for exercising such a role.⁵³ Prodromos's attitude towards incompetent doctors is also attested in one of his

⁵¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Plato* 3.5, in ibid., *Diogenes Laertius. Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, *Volume I: Books 1-5*, (Loeb Classical Library 184), translated by R. D. Hicks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 281.

⁵² Prodromos, *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, (ed. Cullhed) 195.

⁵³ Ibid. 131-132.

other satirical works, namely in *The Executioner or the Doctor*. In this satirical prose invective, Prodromos, being outraged with his personal experience at the stomatologist, mocks unskilled medical doctors who rather have the expertise of slaughterers than that of healers of humankind.⁵⁴

A similar stance towards incompetent professionals can be observed in the case of Pomponius through whose character Prodromos mocks contemporary lawyers. Thus, for instance, an anonymous buyer inquires by what means Pomponius could make him rich, if Pomponius himself is a poor laborer, unless he initiates his buyer in the mysteries of stealing. On this inquiry Pomponius responds that it is very easy to earn a fortune as a lawyer. The only necessary thing is to memorize some legal terms in Latin and to arbitrarily use them in courts. Additionally, he needs to let impudence ($\dot{\alpha}\nu\alpha\alpha\sigma\chi\nu\nu\tau(\alpha)$) lead the way and let foolishness ($\phi\lambda\nu\alpha\rho(\alpha)$) follow, accompanied with a harsh voice, mad disposition and aggressive behavior against his opponents.⁵⁵

Although not immediately evident, a similar agenda can be observed in Prodromos's characterization of other characters as well. For instance, when the life of Homer is sold, at some moment, Hermes notices that he offended the buyer as he left some of his answer regarding the ability to speak in five dialects unrecited. In response to this, Homer requests from Hermes, whom he recognized as skilled, to testify on behalf of Homer's ability. For corroborating Homer's dialectical versatility, Hermes paraphrases and adjusts the quotation from Empedocles that pertains the transmigration of souls "for now become a child and a girl, a bush and a large bird and a fish that swims in the waves" ($\check{\eta}\delta\eta \ \gamma \grave{\alpha}\rho \ \tau\epsilon \ \gamma \acute{\epsilon}vo\upsilon \ \kappa o \check{\nu}\rho \acute{\sigma} \tau \epsilon \ \kappa \alpha \check{\iota} \ \epsilon \dot{\nu} \ \dot{\alpha}\lambda \grave{\iota} \ v \acute{\eta} \varkappa \upsilon \sigma \check{\iota}.$ ⁵⁶ Soon afterwards, among other things, anonymous buyer questions Homer:

⁵⁴ Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor* (ed. Migliorini), 51-68. There are three editions of this text, accompanied with Italian translations: Giuditta Podestà, "Le satire lucianesche di Teodoro Prodromo," pt. 2, *Aevum* 21 (1947):12-25; Roberto Romano, *La satira bizantina dei secoli XI-XV* (Torino: Unione tipografico editrice torinese, 1999), 299-309; and Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo", 51-68. A Polish translation of the work is available in: Kucharski, Marciniak, and Warcaba, *Nie Tylko Dialogi*, 181-199.

⁵⁵ Prodromos, *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, (ed. Cullhed) 198-200.

⁵⁶ Prodromos, *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, (ed. Cullhed), 190. "Before now I was born a boy and a maid, a bush and a bird, and a dumb fish leaping out of the sea" (ňδη γάρ ποτ' ἐγὼ γενόμην κοῦρός τε κόρη τε θάμνος τ' οἰωνός τε καὶ ἔξαλος ἕμπυρος ἰχθύς), Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Empedocles* 8.2.77, in idem, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Volume II: Books 6-10* (Loeb Classical Library 185) translated by R. D. Hicks, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 390-391. Zaripov, "Mimesis and Intertextuality in Twelfth-Century Byzantine Literature: The Case of Theodore Prodromos", 34, wrongly says that this exchange takes place between anonymous buyer and Homer: "At some point a customer notice that Homer's utterance does not comply with metrical rules". This mistake occurs because he actually does not use Migliorini's edition of this work as he claims (See footnote 84 "Migliorini (2010) p. 129 ln. 140-50 P. 129 ln. 140-50" on the page 34), but rather Migliorini's Italian translation of this work whereby accidental mistake it is indicates the name of a buyer

However, above all, I would like to ask you this, O Homer with the divinely sweet voice: Why do you prefer such a varied versification, which sometimes is not in harmony with itself? So I am often deafened by the malicious grammarians, who speak nonsense about the thin-waist $[\lambda \alpha \gamma \alpha \rho o \dot{\varsigma}]$, with prefixed syllables $[\pi \rho \kappa \epsilon \phi \dot{\alpha} \lambda o \upsilon \varsigma]$, tapering $[\mu \epsilon \iota o \dot{\nu} \rho o \upsilon \varsigma]$ verses, even though I don't know if they exist.⁵⁷

Πλὴν ἀλλ' ἐγώ σε, ὦ θεσπέσιε Όμηρε, τοῦτο πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἐροίμην ἄν· τί ποτέ σοι τὸ ποικίλον τοῦ μέτρου βούλεται καὶ ἔστιν οὖ μὴ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ συνῳδόν, ὡς ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔστιν <εἰπεῖν> ὅσα καὶ ἐκκεκώφωμαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀλαστόρων γραμματικῶν, λαγαρούς τινας καὶ προκεφάλους καὶ τοὺς οὐκ οἶδ' εἴ τινες ἂν καὶ εἶεν μειούρους ψυχρολογούντων;⁵⁸

To this inquiry Homer responds that he is not even aware what these terms mean. The anonymous buyer is shocked and refers to one of the verses from Homer's *Iliad* that the noble grammarians regard as a tapering (μείουρος) verse. To this Homer again playfully retorts that he had no idea what a tapering verse is and adds, "But you will distinguish the good from bad when you approach this multitude of verses" (πλήθει δ' ἐμπελάων ἐσθλούς τε κακούς τε νοήσεις).⁵⁹ Although Homer's response might be taken as suitable for his characterization (i.e., it is not expected for Homer to be familiar with matters that were discussed much later), it is also possible that it is a subtle hint at something else. The ignorance of Homer's character on this matter actually enables a potential buyer to differentiate good from bad verses arbitrarily, without consulting the theoretical knowledge of the grammarians with whom he is so much annoyed. In this way, Prodromos makes a subversive criticism of ignorant grammarians who do not care about theoretical discussion simply excusing themselves with the notion that Homer himself was probably not aware of these practices. This aligns with Prodromos's concern regarding incompetent grammarians expressed in one of his other works, namely *The Ignorant, or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*. In this prose invective,

instead of Hermes's name. See: Prodromos, *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives* (ed. Migliorini) 129, 117-124; Prodromos, *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives* (tr. Migliorini), 139, 117-124.

⁵⁷ Translation taken from Nikos Zagklas, "Experimenting with Prose and Verse in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: A Preliminary Study," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 71 (2017): 229–48, 235.

⁵⁸ Prodromos, *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives* (ed. Cullhed), 191.

⁵⁹ Prodromos, *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives* (ed. Cullhed), 191; translation taken from Zagklas, "Experimenting with Prose and Verse in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: A Preliminary Study," 236.

Prodromos criticizes an inept teacher, who never mastered the basic skills in the discipline yet pretends to be an expert.⁶⁰ It is also important to note that only in the case of Homer's purchaser Prodromos does provide a name – a certain Hermagoras from Athens (Έρμαγόρας ό Ἀθηναῖος). Interestingly, the same name also appears as an incompetent teacher of logic in another work of Prodromos, namely the platonic dialogue *Xenedemos, or on Voices* that deals with Porphyry's *Isagoge*. Although this might be a purely coincidental occurrence, it is possible that by this Prodromos provides a subtle reference to the critique of this fictional persona in his other work.⁶¹

Unlike the Cyrenaic, hedonist philosopher, the Democritean, laughing philosopher, and the Heraclitan, weeping philosopher who are left unsold in Lucian's work, Prodromos fails to sell only the comedian Aristophanes as the tragedian Euripides gets his purchaser at the second attempt. However, the tragedian is not sold because of his value as a drama writer, but for his usefulness to mourn the deceased daughter of an anonymous buyer. Prodromos mentions that the young daughter of Euripides's buyer was snatched by death "from the middle of the bridal chamber" (ἐκ μέσων τῶν νυμφώνων).⁶² It might be the case that Prodromos makes here a subtle reference to his other work, namely Amarantos, or the Erotic Desires of an Old Man. The object of mockery in this satire is an old Stratocles, who transformed his appearance from a philosopher into a rejuvenated man in order to become a suitable groom for a very unsuitable marriage to a very young girl. Not surprisingly, the young bride, the daughter of Stratocles's gardener, was not very pleased with her marriage to an old man. Thus, in the procession after the marital ceremony she proceeded with a sad countenance and downcast eyes, looking as someone prepared not for marriage, but for death (σκυθρωπή τε προήει καὶ κατηφής, ὡς ἄν τις εἰκάσειε τὴν οὐκ ἐπὶ γάμον, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ θάνατον στελουμένην).⁶³ The connection between the gardener who left his daughter to marry an old rich Stratocles, and the rustic buyer of Euripides who mourns his daughter snatched away by

⁶⁰ Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini), 29-35

⁶¹ Prodromos, Xenedemos 246-259.

⁶² Prodromos, *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, (ed. Cullhed), 197.

⁶³ Prodromos, Amarantos (ed. Migliorini) 87, ll. 224-226. The text is edited in: Theodori Prodromi Philosophi Rhodantes et Dosiclis Amorum Libri IX Graece et Latine: Interprete Gilberto Gaulmino Molinensi (Paris: T. Du Bray, 1625), 425-467; La Porte Du Theil de François Jean Gabriel, "Notice d'un manuscrit de Bibliothèque du Vatican, coté CCCV parmi les manuscrits grecs" Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques 8.2 (Paris: De l'Imprimerie Impériale, 1810), 105-127; and in Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo", 83-127. Migliorini's edition is accompanied with detailed commentaries and translation into Italian. The text is also translated into Polish in Kucharski, Marciniak, and Warcaba, Nie Tylko Dialogi, 135-151. For more information about the dialogue, see: Eric Cullhed, "Theodore Prodromos in the Garden of Epicurus", in Dialogues and Debates from Late Antiquity to Late Byzantium, ed. Averil Cameron and Niels Gaul (New York: Routledge, 2017).

death from her bridal chamber is quite far-fetched. Yet, it is not impossible to speculate that Prodromos intended to perhaps provide a subtle reference to his other work for his audience.

Ultimately, only Aristophanes due to his offensive language and abusive humor has been left unsold. However, I disagree with the idea that Aristophanes is left unpurchased because Prodromos deemed his life the least valuable, or because Aristophanes was not worthy of imitation. As Baukje van den Berg notes "Hermes' request in Prodromos' *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, that Aristophanes abandon his jokes and foul language, does not necessarily reflect Byzantine satire and the Byzantine reception of the ancient satirist." On the contrary, as Van den Berg demonstrates, literary humor in the twelfth century Byzantium was firmly rooted in the Lucianic and Aristophanic tradition. Byzantines did not only employ Aristophanes as an exemplary model of Attic Greek, but also as a paradigm for mockery and ridicule. Moreover, twelfth-century Byzantine scholars such as Gregory Pardos (c. 1070–1156), John Tzetzes (c. 1110–1180), and Eustathios of Thessaloniki (c. 1110–1195), appreciated Aristophanic satire for social criticism and moral instruction.⁶⁴

Moreover, Prodromos, as his other contemporaries, shows appreciation for Aristophanes by composing satirical works that heavily rely on Aristophanic language, ridicule and mockery. This can be particularly observed Prodromos's two invective poems, namely *Against an Old Man, Who Thinks Himself Wise because of His Long Beard*, in which he mocks a stereotypical wannabe philosopher, and *Against a Lustful Old Woman*, in which he attacked a stereotypical old woman who assumes social behavior and individual characteristics unsuitable for her age.⁶⁵ Aristophanes, whose fierce humor expressed serious criticisms, was perceived by authors of the Roman imperial era as a symbol of frankness ($\pi\alpha\rho\rho\eta\sigma(\alpha)$).⁶⁶ Thus, it is not inconceivable to speculate that Aristophanes remained unsold in Prodromos's work because people who claimed to follow in Aristophanes's footsteps actually lacked the courage and frankness to do so.

The term $\pi\alpha\rho\rho\eta\sigma\alpha$ is attested for the first time in the works of the tragedian Euripides (c. 480–406 BC). In fifth- and fourth-century BCE Athens, free speech or frankness was the right of every adult free male Athenian citizen to speak in the assembly, and thus denoted equality of rights. However, the situation changed in the time of the Hellenistic kingdoms

⁶⁴ Baukje van den Berg, "Playwright, Satirist, Atticist: The Reception of Aristophanes in 12th-Century Byzantium," in *Satire in the Middle Byzantine Period: The Golden Age of Laughter?*, ed. Przemysław Marciniak and Ingela Nilsson (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021), 227–53, 238-253.

⁶⁵ Janek Kucharski and Przemysław Marciniak, "The Beard and its Philosopher: Theodore Prodromos on the Philosopher's Beard in Byzantium," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41 (2016): 45-54; Przemysław Marciniak, "Prodromos, Aristophanes and a lustful woman," *Byzantinoslavica: Revue internationale des études byzantines* 73 (2015): 23-34.

⁶⁶ Dana Fields, Frankness, Greek Culture, and the Roman Empire (London: Routledge, 2021), 12-13.

when exercising free speech was rather a privilege than a right. Thus, in this context, political free speech was replaced with individual virtue; frankness was a moral duty which required courage and a true commitment to honesty. However, frankness was not always seen as a good characteristic. Too little frankness denoted hypocrisy and cowardice, while too much was regarded as offensive. Therefore, one had to exercise the right amount of frankness at the right time.⁶⁷ In the Roman imperial era, the concept of frankness heavily relied on the idealization of free speech as exercised in classical Athens, Old Comedy, philosophy (e.g., the cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope) and rhetorical practice (e.g., Demosthenes).⁶⁸ In a Christian context, the concept of frankness involved someone's ability to speak the truth clearly, as well as their capacity to preach with confidence and courage. The notion of frankness was not limited only to the act of speech, but also related to one's behavior – that is to say, the capacity to act with boldness and courage.⁶⁹

As Michel Foucault explains in his lectures on Ancient Greek notion of frankness, delivered at the University of California at Berkeley in 1983 as part of his seminar "Discourse and Truth", there is always a concurrence between belief and truth in frankness, when taken in its positive connotation. The frank-speaker ($\pi \alpha \rho \rho \eta \sigma \iota \sigma \sigma \eta \varsigma$) is someone who does not simply believe that he knows the truth but has the moral capacity and personal qualities that enable him to know the truth and conveys it to others as such. However, it is not enough for belief and truth to coincide for someone to exercise frankness. The frank-speaker is someone who takes a risk and has a courage to state the truth despite the repercussions that might follow. Additionally, frankness involves some sort of criticism. Finally, frankness involves a sense of duty and moral obligation to tell the truth in order for benefit of oneself, others and community in general.⁷⁰

Foucault's description for the most part corresponds to the frankness that Prodromos exercised in his works. For example, at the end of a polemical piece with an invective tone

⁶⁷ Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles, California: Semiotext(e): Distributed by MIT Press, 2001), 11-15; Ineke Sluiter, Ralph Mark Rosen, "Chapter 1: General Introduction," in *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Ineke Sluiter and Ralph Mark Rosen (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1–20, 4-8; David Konstan, "The Two Faces of *Parrhêsia*: Free Speech and Self-Expression in Ancient Greece," *Antichthon* 46 (2012): 1–13, 1; Irene van Renswoude, *The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 4-9. Fields, *Frankness, Greek Culture, and the Roman Empire*, 8-10.

⁶⁸ Fields, Frankness, Greek Culture, and the Roman Empire, 12-17.

⁶⁹ van Renswoude, The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, 9.

⁷⁰ Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 12-20.

addressed to an unnamed *caesar*, most probably Nikephoros Bryennios, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, Prodromos says:

I have treated these things as far as I am capable. If I have not spoken in accordance with the opinion of wise Caesar, excuse [this] discourse, which has two friends but privileges truth over the other, and it honors it for ever and ever.

Ταῦτά μοι ὡς οἶόν τε περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἐρρέθη· εἰ δὲ καὶ τῷ σοφῷ μὴ κατὰ γνώμην ἐρρέθη Καίσαρι, συγγνώμη τῷ λόγῳ, δυοῖν ὄντοιν φίλοιν προτιμήσαντι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ῆν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἅπασι τῶν ἁπάντων τιμᾶται.⁷¹

Despite the possible disagreement of the unnamed *caesar*, Prodromos's choice is to speak the truth – knowledge of which, as we will see in the second chapter, he confidently demonstrated. This was an act of Prodromos's moral duty towards *paideia* and society.

However, as Irene van Renswoude notes, "Free speech is not a natural given; it is a cultural construction, governed by social norms, legal rules, rhetorical conventions and scripted roles."72 Prodromos's identification with the Lucianic notion of frankness, which represented a mixture of Cynic philosophy, Socratic frankness, and Aristophanes's aggressive frank-speaking, provided Prodromos with the means to critically reflect upon the follies of his own era and at the same time construct his own authority.⁷³ Thus, by employing Lucian as a literary role model, Prodromos was a key figure, as Marciniak observes, that prompted Lucianic revival in the twelfth-century Byzantium.⁷⁴ Besides the Sale of Political and Poetical Lives, Prodromos also penned two invective poems Against an Old Man, Who Thinks Himself Wise because of His Long Beard and Against a Lustful Old Woman, the satirical dialogue Amarantos, or the Erotic Desires of an Old Man, as well as three satirical invectives entitled Philoplaton or Leather Tanner, The Ignorant or the Self-proclaimed Grammarian and The Executioner or the Doctor, which I have already mentioned. Prodromos's literary and methodological approach to various objects of criticism in all these works was to a greater or lesser extent influenced by Lucian's self-vindicating exposé from The Dead Come to Life.

⁷¹ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 12-13.

⁷² van Renswoude, The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, 3.

⁷³ For the notion of frankness in Lucian see Fields, *Frankness, Greek Culture, and the Roman Empire*: 162-191.

⁷⁴ Marciniak, "Reinventing Lucian in Byzantium," 218-219.

Inspired by Lucian, Prodromos implicitly assumes the alter-ego of Frank-speaker (Παρρησιάδης) and takes upon himself the role of a social and intellectual watchdog, who scrutinizes his subjects' expertise and the social persona they assume, and in a joking manner exposes their real nature. However, it is only in three prose invectives that Prodromos employs the complete Lucianic "toolbox". In these works, it can be clearly seen how Prodromos appropriates Lucian's critical methods and equips himself with Truth (Ἀλήθεια), Liberty (Ἐλευθερία), Free-Speech (Παρρησία), Examination/Refutation (Ἐλεγχος) and Proof (Ἀπόδειξιν) to expose tricksters and those who claim that they are something they are not, or to put it simply, hypocrites.

However, the appropriation of the Lucianic Frank-Speaker (Παρρησιάδης) and his methodological toolbox was not limited to Prodromos's satirical production. It can be also detected in his other works in which Prodromos puts a particular emphasis on Examination/Refutation (Elegyoc). For instance, in the poem Against Barys, who Blurted the Name of Heretic at Him, Prodromos employs the fictional examination to refute his opponent and to vindicate of Prodromos's orthodoxy. Thus, it is his accuser who is heretic and must be examined, i.e., refuted (tòv aipetikòv... έξεταστέον).75 Moreover, in To the Caesar or For the Color Green, Prodromos criticizes an unnamed contemporary who assigned to white and black a higher rank than other colors.⁷⁶ In this piece of writing, Prodromos assumes implicitly the role of Παρρησιάδης for which the Truth ($\lambda\lambda\eta\theta$ εια) that he claims to represent and the Refutation (Elegyoc) that he conducts are simply the other side of the same coin. The attitude of subversive Frank-Speaker and Examiner can be detected in its most accomplished literary form in the platonic dialogue Xenedemus, or Voices, in which Prodromos, by means of the so-called Socratic method, or to be more precise the method of ἕλεγγος, criticizes a teacher who delivered unsatisfying instruction in this work to his student. Thus, while examining a novice student in logic about Porphyry's descriptions of universal terms, as transmitted to him by his ignorant teacher, accomplished philosopher Theocles at some moment says: "Yet we should tap this definition all round to verify it, lest it should sound like a cracked pot" (πλήν άλλὰ περικρουστέον τὸν ὅρον μήτι καὶ κατὰ τὰς οὐχ ὑγιαινούσας φθέγγηται χύτρας).⁷⁷ And finally, the voice of Examiner and Frank-Speaker who assumes the possession of the true knowledge is found in the treatise About Great and Small, as well as Many and Few, that these are not Relatives, but Quantities and [also] Contraries. In this

⁷⁵ Prodromos, Against Barys, Who Blurted the Name of Heretic at Him, (ed. Hörandner), 474-483.

⁷⁶ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 380-387.

⁷⁷ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 255, 271.

work, addressed to his teacher and friend Michael Italikos, Prodromos criticizes Aristotle's classification of great and small, as well as many and few. Thus, Prodromos fictionally addresses Aristotle: "However, I will question you: and you should respond to me coming out of your [syllogistic] labyrinths!" (πλὴν ἀλλ' ἐρήσομαί σε· καί μοι ὦ πρὸς τῶν σῶν λαβυρίνθων ἀπόκριναι).⁷⁸

As can be clearly seen, except for three prose invectives, none of these works belong to the same genres, nor are they delivered in the same form or composed for the same purpose. However, in all of these texts, Prodromos, by fighting on behalf of the truth, conducts an examination that serves to expose either social follies, or errors in knowledge and expertise, or both. At the same time, by assuming, transforming, and adapting Lucianic Frankness and Refutation in these works, Prodromos creates an authorial signature with unique characteristics. In the highly competitive intellectual environment of twelfth-century Byzantium, in which learned people without an aristocratic background struggled to acquire salaried posts in the bureaucracy, private or state-funded teaching positions, wealthy patrons who would finance their literary or artistic production, or the support of other private individuals who could hire them for their proficiency in their respective skills and disciplines, a strong authorial voice became particularly important in any kind of literary production. The recognizable authorial voice, as Ingela Nilsson explains, plays a crucial role in self-promoting strategies and in establishing one's own authority that can lead to potential commissions by wealthy patrons. This authorial voice can be distinguishable by linguistical, narratological and rhetorical markers. In this way an author, while assuming various literary personae suitable for their respective occasions, is able to maintain his own distinguishable authorial trademark. Even though, as Nilsson notes, "all literature could be seen as 'entangled' with reality or 'suggested by real life', since all artistic expression is necessarily based on human experience", this does not imply that the authorial voice necessarily reflects the real historical author.79

⁷⁸ Prodromos, On Great and Small, ed. Tannery, 111-117, 113.

⁷⁹ Ingela Nilsson, Writer and Occasion in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The Authorial Voice of Constantine Manasses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 6-12.

1.2 A Fighter on Behalf of the Truth: The Necessity to Examine

The common thread in all those works, especially those with invective character, which involve the examination and refutation processes is that Prodromos always provides a rationale for his criticism either by clearly stating what triggered his reaction in the first place, or by emphasizing the general necessity for scrutiny of anyone who claims to possesses a certain expertise. This literary practice of Prodromos somewhat differs from that of his role model Lucian. Taking into consideration Lucian's overall literary production, with the exception of *The Dead Come to Life*, where he openly states the rationale behind his satire in *Sale of Philosophical Lives* and implicitly provides a theoretical manifesto for his overall literary output, Lucian typically never discloses what triggered his satirical and/or critical endeavors. Whereas Lucian's authorial persona, Παρρησιάδης, is vested with power and authority by Lady Philosophy (δέσποινα Φιλοσοφία) and Truth (Ἀλήθεια) to take Examination (Έλεγχος) with him and critically differentiate the false from the true philosophers, Prodromos, though employing these literary devices, delves much deeper to both justify his critical reactions and construct his intellectual authority to take on the role of the examiner.⁸⁰

The parallel to Prodromos's literary approach, to a certain extent, might be found in Isocrates's *Against the Sophists*. Isocrates, in this work, briefly mentions that the bad reputation of some teachers is transferred to the whole profession and thus clearly affects those who conscientiously fulfill the teaching duties and intellectual prerequisites of the profession. For this reason, among other things, Isocrates claims that it is his duty both to reproach this type of people and to declare his own views.⁸¹ In the same manner, Prodromos also wants to differentiate himself and the group of highly skilled professionals from inept persons who claim to occupy the same positions. However, in the case of Prodromos, again, the emphasis on justifying his reproaches and his authority to criticize goes much deeper.

Yet generally, it seems that it was not a common practice for authors of invectives to justify their attacks, or, as in case of Prodromos, to additionally underline the necessity to examine incompetent professionals. Invective, according to Aphthonius, can be used to criticize a broad range of subjects, or focus on specific targets. It can be directed towards persons, things, places, occasions, animals, and plants. However, none of the four handbooks

⁸⁰ Lucian, The Dead Come to Life, 70-73.

⁸¹ Isocrates, "Against the Sophists," in Isocrates, *On the Peace. Areopagiticus. Against the Sophists. Antidosis. Panathenaicus*, translated by George Norlin, Loeb Classical Library 229 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 171.

of preliminary exercises or *progymnasmata* attributed to Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius and Nicolaus the Sophist, mention anything about a practice according to which author needs to provide any justification when it comes to *psogos*.⁸²

The situation within the Byzantine literary tradition, which was shaped by these rhetorical handbooks, was quite similar. Therefore, it can be noted that in Byzantine literature, *psogos* functions both as a rhetorical mode and as an independent literary genre, targeting both specific individuals and topics, as well as general subjects and stereotypical characters. Additionally, in most cases, Byzantine authors did not feel compelled to explain the rationale behind their use of *psogos*, whether in prose or in verse invectives.⁸³ Exceptionally, in case of some personal attacks, the cause is explicitly provided. Thus, for example, in an abusive poem composed by Prodromos's contemporary, John Tzetzes, we learn from its lengthy title that *psogos* was composed as a response to a personal offense by George Skylitzes, most probably, and a certain Gregory. Since he was accused of lacking competence to write high-level poetry, Tzetzes was compelled to respond with a counterattack that served to demonstrate his intellectual superiority over his rivals.⁸⁴

In like manner, but with more verbosity, in the poem Against Barys, who Blurted the Name of Heretic at Him (Είς Βαρέα τὸν καταφλυαρήσαντα αὐτοῦ τὸ τοῦ αἰρετικοῦ ὄνομα), Prodromos excuses his psogos as being a response to an unjust accusation against him as a promoter of heretical views. Initially, Prodromos wonders:

What do you say, honorable and wise council? Shall I now remain silent or speak rightfully? Shall I proceed to defense against the inimical Barys, Or shall I endure his drunken insult once more?

⁸² While Theon gives instructions only for writing encomium and says that invective should be derived from its opposites, Hermogenes does not provide any discussion on *psogos*. Aphthonius provides a few sentences on *psogos* and gives an example of prose *psogos*; Nicolaus the Sophist gives a more elaborate description. Aelius Theon, "The Exercises of Aelius Theon," in *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, trans. by George Kennedy (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, 50-52; Hermogenes, "The Preliminary Exercises Attributed to Hermogenes," in Ibid., 81; Aphthonius the Sophist, "The Preliminary Exercises of Nicolaus the Sophist," in *Ibid.*, 111; Nicolaus the Sophist, "The Preliminary Exercises of Nicolaus the Sophist," in *Ibid.*, 157-159.

⁸³ See, for instance: Constantine the Rhodian, "Poems Against Leo Choirosphaktes and Theodore Paphlagon," in *Anecdota graeca*, ed. P. Matranga, vol. 2 (Rome, 1850), 625-632; Emilie van Opstall, "The pleasure of mudslinging: an invective dialogue in verse from 10th century Byzantium," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 108, no. 2 (2015), 775-77; Floris Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry*, *1025-1081* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 90-92, 280-290; Teodoro II Duca Lascari, *Satira del pedagogo, testo edito per la prima volta a cura di L. Tartaglia*, Napoli 1992; Jean Argyropoulos, *La comédie de Katablattas: Invective byzantine du XVe siècle*, P. Canivet and N. Oikonomides (eds.), *Diptycha* 3, 1982-83, 5-97.

⁸⁴ Nikos Zagklas, "Satire in the Komnenian Period: Poetry, Satirical Strands, and Intellectual Antagonism," in *Satire in the Middle Byzantine Period: The Golden Age of Laughter?* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 279-303, 296-300.

Shall I keep my sworn oath, (5)
not to sharpen the pen for writing any invective,
Or shall I break the oath with a discourse worthy of an oath,
And publicly expose his malignant nature?
For if his delirium were within limits,
And were mocking my fate, or my genealogy, (10)
Were imputing to me a flaw in nature,
A lack of learning, or a corrupt behaviour,
I would be resenting it but I would still endure,
And would not disregard the laws that I had established.

Τί φατε, σεμνὴ καὶ σοφὴ γερουσία; καὶ νῦν σιγῶμεν ἢ λαλοῦμεν ἐνδίκως; χωροῦμεν εἰς ἄμυναν ἐχθροῦ Βαρέος ἢ καρτεροῦμεν τὴν παροινίαν πάλιν; τηροῦμεν ἡμῶν τὰς ἐνόρκους ἐγγύας (5) μὴ κάλαμον ξέοντες εἰς γράμμα ψόγου ἢ λύομεν τὸν ὅρκον εὐόρκῳ λόγῷ καὶ τὴν πονηρὰν στηλιτεύομεν φύσιν; εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν ὁ λῆρος ἄχρι μετρίου, ἂν εἰς τύχην ἔσκωπτεν ἢ γοῦν εἰς γένος, (10) ἂν πλημμέλειαν φύσεως ἐλοιδόρει, ἂν δυσμάθειαν, ἂν τρόπου μοχθηρίαν, ἐδυσφόρουν μέν, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐκαρτέρουν καὶ τοὺς τεθέντας οὐκ ἀπέστεργον νόμους.⁸⁵

After this introduction, Prodromos further elaborates and argues against the idea that an unfortunate life, poorness, low birth, or defects of physical appearance should be considered a matter of reproach. Thus, he again underlines that, if the attack on him concerned these matters, he would follow the evangelical command "If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn the other cheek, O man, to be struck" ($\tau \tilde{\varphi} \tau \dot{\psi} \varphi \tau \tau \dot{\psi} \gamma \nu \dot{\alpha} \theta \sigma \nu \kappa \alpha \dot{\alpha} \theta \alpha \tau \dot{\epsilon} \rho \alpha \nu$, $\ddot{\alpha} \nu \theta \rho \omega \pi \epsilon$, $\tau \upsilon \pi \tau \tilde{\eta} \sigma \alpha \tau \sigma \tau \rho \dot{\epsilon} \phi \epsilon$). Similarly, if someone would barbarously snatch his cloak,

⁸⁵ Theodore Prodromos, Against Barys, Who Blurted the Name of Heretic at Him (H59), ed. Hörandner, *Theodoros Prodromos: Historische Gedichte*, 474.

Prodromos in pious fashion would give him also his tunic. By referring to Mathew 5:39-40, Prodromos aims to show that he, as a pious Christian, would never react to such slanders. However, since his opponent accuses him of heretical customs (δυσσέβειαν έγκαλεῖ μου τῷ βίω), he is compelled to react. Prodromos solemnly says: "I decide to break the oath and move my pen, persuaded by the venerable Fathers" (λύω τὸ ὅρκον καὶ κινῶ τὴν γραφίδα τοῖς τῶν σεβαστῶν πατέρων πεισθεὶς λόγοις). He explains that by following their words, he would accept any reproach with piety, except the accusation of impiety, as silence on these accusations would indicate a denial of God. In fact, it is his accuser who is heretic and must be examined (τὸν αἰρετικὸν... ἐξεταστέον).⁸⁶

Being aware of the evangelical precepts of not returning evil to evil. Prodromos feels obliged to apologize for turning to *psogos* against his earlier decision. Nevertheless, the accusation of heresy is such a serious matter that he feels obliged to respond. Thus, Prodromos does break one Christian command by reacting to slander, but he remains faithful to the example of orthodox Church Fathers who advised strong reactions if one's faith is brought into question. This precept of Church Fathers grants Prodromos the authority to conduct a slanderous examination and refutation of his accuser.

Although the invective tone permeates the entire poem, as argued by Zagklas, this work cannot be seen as an independent psogos in the traditional sense. Rather, it is a verse apologia made as a fusion of modes and features from various genres. Unlike his other works in the invective mode, this poem does not put much emphasis on intellectual competition. Prodromos indeed seizes the opportunity to display his intellectual superiority, yet his primary goal is not to compete intellectually, but to vindicate himself from charges of heresy.87

Specifying the cause for rebuttal was perhaps more usual when it comes to the critical assessment of ancient writers. Thus, for instance, Prodromos's contemporary Tzetzes, in the description of his Logismoi given in the scholia on Aristophanes's Frogs, explains, among other things, that he did not attack any of the classical authors because of personal hostility, but rather because he observed their contradictions and mistakes, so that he felt compelled to clarify them.⁸⁸ A similar approach to criticism of ancient authors can be found in

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⁸⁶ Ibid, 474-477

⁸⁷ Zagklas, "Satire in the Komnenian Period: Poetry, Satirical Strands, and Intellectual Antagonism," 296. See also: Nikos Zagklas, "Theodore Prodromos and the Use of the Poetic Work of Gregory of Nazianzus: Appropriation in the Service of Self-Representation," Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 40, no. 2 (2016): 237-238.

⁸⁸ Aglae Pizzone, "Self-authorization and Strategies of Autography in John Tzetzes: The Logismoi Rediscovered," Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 60 (2020): 663-665.

Prodromos's treatise *On Great and Small*, dedicated to his teacher and friend Michael Italikos. After citing the paragraph that reflected the core of Prodromos's problem with the treatment of the categories of great and small, as well as many and few, in Aristotle's *Categories*, Prodromos contradicts Aristotle with a polemical tone full of disapproval, in the same manner as in his fictitious personal debates with one of his contemporaries in the prose invectives. Thus, for instance, Prodromos addresses Aristotle:

Bravo for your arguments and of your philosophical refinement in these matters, Aristotle! What other than this should one say to you, who are Aristotle himself? However, I will question you: and you should respond to me coming out of your [syllogistic] labyrinths.

Ώς εὖγε τῶν ἐπιχειρημάτων καὶ τῆς ἐν τούτοις φιλοσόφου κομψείας σου, Ἀριστοτέλες· καὶ τί γάρ σε ἄλλο, Ἀριστοτέλην ὄντα, ἢ τοιαῦτα λέγειν εἰκός; πλὴν ἀλλ' ἐρήσομαί σε· καί μοι ὦ πρὸς τῶν σῶν λαβυρίνθων ἀπόκριναι.⁸⁹

The act of justly provoked examination was pivotal in those texts of Prodromos where his main intention was to disprove someone, like Barys, or to refute a particular intellectual stance, such as Aristotle's view on great and small. The same concept of a just cause for libelous examination is even more prominent in Prodromos's polemical piece *For the Color Green*, as well as in his prose invectives. In these works, Prodromos displays a very competitive spirit and disparages his real or imagined opponents on account of their intellectual incompetence. Thus, for instance, in *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, Prodromos criticizes an unnamed contemporary who assigned to white and black higher rank in comparison to other hues in the genus of color. In Prodromos's words, the reason for this criticism is the following:

This issue must be investigated with abstract reasoning as a Lydian touchstone, namely which one is nobler and more majestic, and I must allot this privilege to the superior color. At the very least, seeing as some have already considered green a no-show in this contest and voted against it, I must confront them in this text and let discourse wrestle with discourse, as

⁸⁹ Prodromos, On Great and Small, 113.

the proverb goes. This is not to say that I am simply exerting myself to fulfill an unreasonable and irrational request. No, by the head of Caesar, we are not willfully debating with great peoples' wishes in matters of such importance! Rather, first of all, I believe that I am fighting on behalf of the truth when I fight on behalf of the color green. Secondly, I extend helping hands to a creature surrounded by enemies. May Caesar's eyes look graciously upon my discourse, even if it struggles against his wishes.

[...] καὶ θεωρητέον οἶον Λυδία τῷ λόγῷ ταυτὶ παρέξετασιν, ὁποῖον αὐτῶν εὐγενέστερον καὶ σεμνότερον, καὶ ἀποδοτέον ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα τῷ κρείττονι τὰ πρεσβεῖα ἤ, ἐπειδὴ φθάσαντές τινες τὸν ἀγῶνα ἐρήμην ὡήθησαν τοῦ πρασίνου καταψηφίσασθαι, αὐτοῖς γε τούτοις ἀντιπαραβλητέον τὸ γράμμα καὶ λόγον λόγῷ παλαιστέον κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν, οὐχ ὡς ἄλογόν τινα βούλησιν ἢ παράλογον ἐκτελέσειν ἁπλῶς ἡμῶν διατεινομένων—οὐ μὰ γὰρ τὴν Καισαρικὴν κεφαλήν, οὐκ ἐφ' οὕτω μεγάλοις ἀλόγως θεληματαίνομεν— ἀλλὰ πρῶτα μὲν τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ὑποπτευόντων ὑπερμαχεῖν, οἶς τοῦ πρασίνου ὑπερμαχοῦμεν, ἔπειτα καὶ κύκλῷ πολεμουμένῷ πράγματι διδόντων χεῖρα ξυνέριθον. ἰλήκοιεν δὲ τῷ λόγῷ οἱ τοῦ Καίσαρος ὀφθαλμοί, κἂν ἀγωνιεῖταί

Although this text cannot be regarded as an independent prose *psogos*, the polemical nature of this work and its invective tone closely resemble that of *Philoplaton*, *The Executioner or Doctor* and *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*. In *For the Color Green*, Prodromos specifically emphasizes that his endeavor is not an irrational whim, but rather he is compelled to react and to undertake the fight on behalf of the truth. The unnamed person whom Prodromos refers to here was someone who could have considerable intellectual influence in the close circle of the Caesar. Prodromos, taking this into consideration, excuses his polemical piece in a diplomatic manner and delivers carefully built arguments.

In a similar way, Prodromos takes the role of a "justice fighter" in *Philoplaton* when, after a short eulogy addressed to Plato, he announces that he will direct his speech against the

⁹⁰ The translation is taken from Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 380-381. For this work, I have always used Cullhed's translation, unless indicated otherwise.

person who insults Plato's works.⁹¹ Moreover, in *The Executioner or Doctor*, before delving into full-blown assault triggered by an alleged unpleasant visit to the dentist, he highlights:

And so that no one can slander the quarrelsome nature of the work, as some people are most prepared to accuse the opponents, having taken it from here I will reveal the robbers of my inborn teeth.

Καὶ ἵνα μή τις τὸ φίλερι καταβλασφημοίη τοῦ λόγου, ὁποῖοί τινες τοὺς ἐναντίους αἰτιάσασθαι προχειρότατοι, ἔνθεν ἑλὼν τὸ κατά τῶν ἐμφυῶν ὀδόντων ληστήριον ἐκκαλύψομαι.⁹²

Prodromos critical reaction against incompetent doctors thus justified with an alleged personal experience with unskilled dentist. However, this is not the sole reason for Prodromos to write an invective against doctors. At the end of the text, Prodromos declares that he is writing a *psogos* against inept medical practitioners on behalf of the medicine and on behalf of those who possess real expertise in this profession. In Prodromos's words:

If, however, this is said on your behalf, o most noble science, the one that cures the human bodies, and on behalf of you both, o luminaries of the art, you, Kallikles Nicholas, the most brilliant and the most knowledgeable soul in everything, and you, Michael excellent among those from Lysica, the invective of non-doctors and, on the contrary the praise of doctors would be your task, and also to care for this weak body of mine and to destroy together with me these transgressors.

Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ὑπὲρ σοῦ, ὦ γενναιοτάτη ἐἰρἑθη τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐπιστήμη σωμάτων ἰατρική καὶ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν δέ, ὦ καθηγεμόνες τῆς τέχνης, σοῦ τε, ὦ Καλλίκλεις Νικόλαε, εὐφυεστάτη τῷ ὄντι καὶ ἐπιστημονικωτάτη πάντα ψυχή, καὶ σοῦ δὲ Λιζίκων ἄριστε Μιχαήλ, ψόγος γὰρ ἀνιάτρων, ἔπαινος ἄντικρυς

⁹¹ "Then, in order that I leave you, Plato, and turn myself towards the one who insults your book, I will extend my speech to him". εἶτα ἵνα, σε Πλάτων παραλιπών, ἐπὶ τὸν ὑβριστήν σου τῆς βίβλου τράπωμαι, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀποτενοῦμαι τὸν λόγον· Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, (ed. Migliorini), 69.24-26.

⁹² Prodromos, *The Executioner, or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini) 53.73-75.

ίατρῶν, ὑμέτερον ἂν εἴῃ προνοεῖσθαί τε μου τοῦ ἀσθενοῦς τουτουὶ σωματίου καί μοι τοὺς ἀλιτηρίους τούτους συνεπιτρίβειν.⁹³

By addressing Michael Lyzikos and Nicholas Kallikles, a prominent physician and poet, and speaking on their behalf, Prodromos clearly aligns himself as belonging to the group of experts in various disciplines who fulfill the intellectual criteria. In this way Prodromos imposes himself as an authority who has the right to speak, slander and refute on the behalf of the science and real expertise.

Moreover, Prodromos indicates his own role as a just and competent examiner through different rhetorical techniques. Thus, for instance, as can be seen in the passage from *For the Color Green* quoted above, the rebuttal of his opponent's erroneous views and a thorough examination is signaled by the examination which must be conducted by abstract reasoning as a Lydian touchstone. While in *Philoplaton*, Prodromos only briefly mentions that Diogenes the Cynic has tested both the life of a moneychanger and the life of a philosopher with abstract reasoning as coins with a Lydian stone,⁹⁴ in *The Ignorant* he uses this reference to put even greater emphasis on his role as an examiner:

Therefore, it will not be sufficient for you either to say that you are a grammarian to prove that you are one if you have not been put to the test first; for probably, the Lydian stone will expose the spurious coin, the Rhine the illegitimate child, and the Sun [the nestling that] is not an eaglet. At any rate, either you must deny the title or, if you do not deny it, you must accept the test.

Οὐκ ἄρα, οὐδέ σοι ἀποχρῶν ἔσται τὸ λέγειν εἶναι γραμματικῷ εἰς ἔνδειξιν τοῦ εἶναι τοιούτῳ, μὴ καὶ δοκιμασθέντι γε πρότερον. Τάχα γὰρ ἡ Λυδία ἐλέγξει τὸ κίβδηλον καὶ τὸ νόθον ὁ Ῥῆνος, καὶ τὸν οὐκ ἀετιδέα ὁ ἥλιος. Ἡ γοῦν ἀρνητέον σοι καὶ τὸ ὄνομα, ἢ τοῦτο μὴ ἀρνουμένῷ καταδεκτέον τὴν δοκιμήν.⁹⁵

⁹³ Prodromos, Executioner, or Doctor (ed. Migliorini), 55.

⁹⁴ Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, (ed. Migliorini), 70.82-86.

⁹⁵ Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian (ed. Migliorini), 69.50-54.

Prodromos, most probably inspired by Lucian's The Dead Come to Life, where Lady Philosophy encourages Frankness to examine fake philosophers like "eaglets against the sun" (τῶν ἀετῶν πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον), enhances the power of this saying by adding two more proverbs.⁹⁶ This type of testing is recorded by Aristotle in his *History of Animals*, according to which sea-eagles tested their younglings by making them gaze at the sun. Sea-eagles would allegedly kill those eaglets whose eyes would become watery upon sun-gazing, as this would imply that they are not fit for their natural role.⁹⁷ In addition to this, Prodromos also refers to the legend that Celtic tribes had the custom to put newborns either on the river's edge or on a shield floating in the Rhine. They believed that the Rhine itself would determine the legitimacy of the child by returning the legitimate children to their parents, while causing the death of illegitimate babies by overflowing its banks or floating shields.⁹⁸ And finally, the Lydian touchstone, which Prodromos employs in several instances, in a proverbial sense was used to indicate someone's ability to accurately examine and judge things.⁹⁹ This metaphor derives from the fact that Lydian touchstone was used as testing stone for assaying gold. Thus, by identifying his role as an examiner with the Lydian touchstone, Prodromos underlines his intellectual capacity and power to make a just examination and assessment of his opponents.

The necessity for an examination of Prodromos's targets of criticism is most evident in *The Ignorant, or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*. In the opening lines, Prodromos utilizes two mythological stories about Marsyas, the flute-player, and Arion, the harper from Methymna, to justify the prerequisite for his fictional opponent to be examined. Thus, anyone would be perfectly right, if requested a proof and if:

He said: "Marsyas, I have also heard that you once competed in music with the Long-haired and that, when the Muses heard both of you, they granted the victory to the god. I also have heard the rest of the story about the blows that Apollo inflicted upon you and that, because of this, a river was born from the streams of your blood and was named after you. However, if this is not an

⁹⁶ Lucian, The Dead Come to Life, 68-69.

⁹⁷ Aristotle, *History of Animals* 620a1-4. Ό "Ηλιος τὸν οὐκ ἀετιδέα: λείπει τὸ ἐλέγχει. Ἐπὶ δοκιμῆς, Michael Apostolius XII.32, in *Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum* II.

⁹⁸ For the legend, see for example: Libanius, Progymnasmata, 2.35, in Libanius's Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric, trans. Craig Alan Gibson (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Greek Anthology, 9.125, trans William R. Paton, The Greek Anthology: Volume III (London: Heinemann, 1917), 65. Ό Ρῆνος ἐλέγχει τὸν νόθον: ἐπὶ τῶν δοκιμαζομένωνεἰ τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν, οἶοι φαίνονται εἶναι: Arsenius, Apophthegmata XIII.1b, in CPG II.

⁹⁹ Λυδία λίθος: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀκριβῶς ἐξεταζόντων καὶ διακρινόντων τὰ πράγματα, Macarius V.75, CPG II, 186.

invented story, and if it is not the result of poetic ambition, come, take this flute and prove it!" – and if he were to put the instrument in Marsyas's hands, would we approve of this man, if he were to test the flute-player in this way? And if one were not to accept easily the account about the lyre-player from Methymna [i.e. Arion] – his song, the dolphin and the unheard-of ride on the sea – and ifArion were to protest that the story is not an invention, he would say: "all this is very decent, o, Arion. However, I do not know why but I am unabke to believe your story, unless you first take the lyre and sing in the same way as on the prow of the ship back then". Indeed, if he were to demand this, wouldn't he be considered to be at the doorways of truth?

"Μανθάνω μὲν καὶ ταῦτα, εἶπεν, ὦ Μαρσύα, ὡς διαμιλληθείης ποτὲ περὶ μουσικῆς τῷ ἀκερσεκόμῃ καὶ ὡς αἱ Μοῦσαι ἀμφοῖν κατακούσασαι τῷ θεῷ τὴν νίκην ἐπιψηφίσαιντο. Τά τε δὴ ἄλλα τῆς ἱστορίας ἀκούω καὶ τὰς ἐπενεχθείσας σοι παρὰ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος πληγάς, καὶ ὡς ἐντεῦθεν ἀπὸ τῶν αἰμάτων γένοιτο ποταμός, καὶ ἀπό σου παρονομασθείῃ. Εἰ δὲ μὴ λόγος ἄλλως ταῦτα, μηδὲ φιλοτιμία ποιητική, ἄγε μοι, τουτονὶ τὸν αὐλὸν ἀνελόμενος, ἔνδειξαι" καὶ ἅμα οἱ παρὰ ταῖς χερσὶν ἐτίθει τὸ ὄργανον, ἀπεδεχόμεθα ἄν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, εἰ οὕτως ἀκριβολογοῖτο τὸν αὐλητήν; κἅν τις μὴ ῥαδίως μὲν τὰ κατὰ τὸν ἐκ Μηθύμνης κιθαρωδὸν παρεδέχετο, τὸ ἦσμα ἐκεῖνο, καὶ τὸν δελφῖνα ἐκεῖνον, καὶ τὴν καινὴν ἐφ' ὑγρὸν ἰππασίαν. ἀλλὰ κἀκείνου μὴ ἂν ἄλλως ἔχειν τὸν λόγον διαμαρτυρομένου. "Σεμνὰ μέν σοι καὶ ταῦτα, ὦ Ἄριον, ἔλεγεν· ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως τῷ λόγῷ πιστεύειν οὐκ οἶός τέ εἰμι, εἰ μὴ πρότερον ἐναψάμενος τὴν κιθάραν, τοιοῦτον ἄσαις ὁποῖον ἐπὶ τῆς πρώρας τὸ τηνικαῦτα". Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ἐκεῖνος ἀπήτει, παρὰ θύρας ἂν οὐκ ἀπαντᾶν ἐδόκει τῇ ἀληθεία.¹⁰⁰

This masterfully composed rhetorical introduction serves to showcase the righteousness of someone who would ask Marsyas and Arion to prove their fame by demonstrating their skills, and to persuade the audience that Prodromos is in his right mind when he asks from the self-proclaimed grammarian to do the same. Although Lucian also refers to the legends of Marsyas and Arion in his works, it seems that Prodromos is not simply emulating Lucian, but

¹⁰⁰ Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini), 29.7-25.

rather that he transforms and employs stories with which his audience would be familiar through their education.

Thus, for instance, in Lucian's Dialogues of Sea Gods, the dolphin retells to Zeus the famous story about Arion from his own perspective.¹⁰¹ However, Prodromos' account and the specific purpose of this tale in his invective differ from that which we can encounter in Dialogues of Sea Gods, and it would be difficult to simply identify Lucian as the main source.¹⁰² The same goes for the story of Marsyas. While Lucian only briefly mentions in his Ignorant Book-Collector that possessing Marsyas's flute does not automatically guarantee the ability to play it without prior instruction, Prodromos goes into much greater detail and incorporates the myth in accordance with the purpose of his text.¹⁰³ The earliest reference to this story can be found in the seventh book of Herodotus's Histories, where he briefly explains that Apollo flaved Marsyas after the contest.¹⁰⁴ A more detailed account can be found in Apollodoros's *Library of Greek Mythology*.¹⁰⁵ The account that resembles that of Prodromos most closely can be found in the first book of Xenophon's Anabasis, where he explains that Apollo stripped off Marsyas's skin after winning the musical competition.¹⁰⁶ Plato also refers to this myth in his *Republic* and *Symposium*. While the reference in the *Republic* is brief, in the *Symposium*, Alcibiades compares Socrates to the famous flute player, stating that Socrates enchants his listeners with words as Marsyas does with his flute.¹⁰⁷

The decision to begin the work with a reference to Marsyas's story is not coincidental. Marsyas, despite his skill in flute-playing, is depicted as foolishly proud and dangerously

¹⁰¹ Lucian, *Dialogues of the Sea-Gods*, in *Lucian*, vol. 7, translated by M. D. MacLeod (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961) 197-199.

¹⁰² The initial account of the famous harp-player, Arion, is given by Herodotus. Herodotus informs us that Arion was the creator of the dithyramb and was supported by Periander, the ruler of Corinth. At one point, Arion decided to travel to Italy and Sicily, where he amassed great wealth through his musical talents. However, upon his return journey with some Corinthian sailors, Arion discovered their deceitful intentions. The sailors conspired to kill him and steal his riches. Despite his unsuccessful attempts to change their minds, Arion managed to perform one last time on his lyre before plunging into the sea. Remarkably, a dolphin emerged and saved his life by carrying him to the shores of Cape Tainaron. Arion promptly recounted the entire ordeal to Periander, who initially doubted him. However, when the sailors eventually arrived and were caught in a lie, the truth became evident to Periander. Herodotus, The Histories, trans. Robin Waterfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11-12)

¹⁰³ Lucian, *The Ignorant Book-Collector*, 181. Lucian also mentions tale of Marsyas in two other works: Lucian, "Harmonides", in Lucian, vol. 6, trans. K. Kilburn, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959) 219; "Dialogues of the Gods" in Lucian, vol. 7, translated by M. D. MacLeod (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961) 327.

¹⁰⁴ Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Robin Waterfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 418.

¹⁰⁵ Apollodorus, The Library of Greek Mythology, trans. Robin Hard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 32.

¹⁰⁶ Xenophon, Anabasis, trans. Carleton Lewis Brownson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 13

¹⁰⁷ Migliorini, "Gli scritti satirici in greco letterario di Teodoro Prodromo", 41, in his comments on The Ignorant, or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian indicated that Marsyas's story is mentioned in Plato's Republic and Symposium among many other sources.

overconfident in challenging Apollo, which resulted in severe punishment. Prodromos thus suggests that his adversary is equally impudent. He aims to demonstrate that, just as it would be legitimate to test the legendary stories surrounding renowned mythological characters like Marsyas and Arion, it is equally legitimate to examine his adversary's self-proclaimed competence. Therefore, Prodromos continues in the same tone:

Should we call you a grammarian, dear friend, because you grant yourself expertise, and should we not demand in one way or another that you demonstrate your provenness in having practiced this art, rather than simply saying about you, "He himself said so," just as in the case of the ancient sage from Samos [sc. Pythagoras]?

Σοὶ δὲ γραμματικῷ δοῖμεν εἶναι, ὦ φίλ' ἑταῖρε, διότι σαυτῷ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐπιψηφίζῃ, μὴ δὲ ἀπαιτήσαιμεν ὁπωστιοῦν περὶ αὐτὴν ἐνεργήσαντα τὸ εὐδόκιμον ἐπιδείξασθαι; ἀλλὰ φατέον καὶ ἐπί σοι τὸ "Aὐτὸς ἔφα", καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῷ Σαμίῳ πάλαι σοφῷ; ¹⁰⁸

Here Prodromos again emphasizes the fact that it is not enough for his ignorant opponent to claim to be a teacher, but he needs to prove by his actions that he belongs to that profession. In a playful manner, he uses the proverb that was ascribed to Pythagoras's students and followers, "A $\dot{\upsilon}\tau\dot{\upsilon}\varsigma$ č $\phi\alpha$ ", which is usually translated as "He himself said it". This saying enjoyed great popularity in the Latin West and was first translated into Latin as "ipse dixit" by Cicero in his *De Natura Deorum*. Cicero explains here that Pythagoreans would use this phrase and invoke their master's authority whenever they could not corroborate their arguments.¹⁰⁹ In the Greek-speaking world, the earliest preserved mention of this saying is available in the proverb collection ascribed to Diogenianus (2nd century CE), a Greek grammarian from Heraclea in Pontus.¹¹⁰ This proverb enjoyed great popularity not only

¹⁰⁸ Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini) 29.26-29.

¹⁰⁹ Cicero, "De Natura Deorum" in Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods. Academics*, translated by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library 268 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), 13.

¹¹⁰ The proverb is mentioned in two different forms by Diogenianus: "Αὐτὸς ἔφα: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναφερόντων α̂ λέγουσιν ἐπί τινας" (He himself said it: about those referring on someone the thing they say), Diogenianus III 19, *in Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum* I, ed. Ernst Ludwig von Leutsch and Friedrich Wilhelm Schneidewin (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck et Ruprecht, 1839), 216; and also: Αὐτὸς ἔφα: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναφερόντων ἐπί τινα πίστεως ἄξιον."(He himself said it: about those referring on something trustworthy)" Diogenianus I 94, in *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum* II, ed. Ernst Ludwig von Leutsch (Gottingen: Sumptus fecit libraria Dieterichiana, 1851), 16.

among Early Christian theologians and Church Fathers, but also among Prodromos's predecessors and contemporaries, such as Michael Psellos, Eustathios of Thessalonike, and John Tzetzes.¹¹¹ Thus, for instance, in his commentary on Aristophanes's *Clouds*, Tzetzes provides an explanation of this saying by relating that disciples of Pythagoras, when asked about a certain natural cause, they did not have an answer to give and would simply resort to their teacher's authority.¹¹²

Thus, Prodromos's usage of a proverb with which his learned contemporaries were definitely familiar enables him to indicate to his audience that it is not enough for his opponent to claim something, but that he also needs to prove it. Later on in the text, Prodromos emphasizes this point by arguing that he would never call anyone a cobbler, if he was not capable of skillfully making boots and slippers.¹¹³ To this, he also adds the argument that no one could win the prize at the Nemean or Isthmian games in boxing or wrestling, unless they first participated in the contest and proved their skills.¹¹⁴ The necessity for his opponent to be examined is best reflected in the following passage:

And besides, who would entrust his son to you just like this without due examination? Do you really think that, while intending to buy a pot, we would not do so without having examined the earthen vessel with our eyes and having tapped all around it with our fingers, to check whether it emits some ill-sound, like cracked pots do, but when we intend to make our children embark on their studies, we would do so without due trial? And that while we do not entrust a young horse to an ignorant trainer, we would entrust our child to a foolish teacher? And while we consider it important that the tongues of slavesmight be refined to speakcorrect Greek, we would consider it a negligible problem that the tongues and souls of our sons are barbarized and reduced to utter slavery? Men are not so foolish; neither was Peleus such a Melitides as to entrust his son Achilles to a pig instead of

¹¹¹ For usage of this phrase by Christian theologians and early Church fathers see, for instance: Origen, *Contra Celsum* I. 7.15 and IV.9.17, 1; For Byzantine usage, see for instance: Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* 1, 61, 90, 122, in *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*, vol I, ed. Marchinus Van der Valk. Michael Psellos, Letter 174, in *Michael Psellus. Epistulae*, vol II, ed., Stratis Papaioannou, (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2019); John Tzetzes, Commentary on Aristophanes, in "*Jo. Tzetzae commentarii in Aristophanem, Commentarium in Nubes*", in *Scholia in Aristophanem* 4.2, ed. D. Holwerda (Groningen: Bouma, 1960), 367-689, 1432a.

¹¹² John Tzetzes, Commentarium in Nubes 1432a.

¹¹³ Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini), 30.39-43.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 29.46-51.

Chiron, nor was Alexander such a Coroebus as to become the pupil of a completely unaccomplished fellow instead of Aristotle.

καὶ ἄλλως δὲ οὐδὲ ἀβασανίστως οὕτω τίς σοι παράθοιτο τὸν υἰέα. Οἴει γὰρ χύτραν μὲν ἐωνῆσθαι μέλλοντας, μὴ ἄλλως τοῦτο ποιεῖν, πρὶν ἂν καὶ ὀφθαλμῷ τὸν ὅστρακον ἱστορήσαιμεν καὶ περικρούσαιμεν τοῖς δακτύλοις, μήτι καὶ δύσηχος κατὰ τὰς οὐχ ὑγιαινούσας φθέγγεται· λόγῳ τε τὰ παιδία μέλλοντας ἐμβιβάζειν, μὴ οὐχὶ δεδοκιμασμένως τοῦτο ποιεῖν; καὶ τὸν μὲν πῶλον οὐκ ἀμαθεῖ πωλοδάμνῃ, ἀνοήτῷ δὲ τὸν παῖδα διδασκάλῳ παρατιθέναι; καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀνδραπόδων οὐ μικρὸν τίθεσθαι λόγον, εἴ πως ἀποξεσθεῖεν αὐτοῖς αἱ γλῶτται πρὸς τὸ Ἑλληνικώτερον, τῶν δὲ υἰῶν τὰς γλώττας καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς καταβαρβαροῦντας καὶ ἐξανδραποδίζοντας τῶν εὐκαταφρονήτων ἡγεῖσθαι τὸ πρᾶγμα; Οὐχ οὕτως ἀνοηταίνουσιν οἰ ἄνθρωποι, οὐχ οὕτως ὁ Πελεὺς Μελιδίδης, ὡς ἀντὶ Χείρωνος χοίρῷ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἐμπιστεύσασθαι Ἀχιλλέα, οὐχ οὕτως Κόροιβος ὁ Ἀλέξευρος, ὡς τῷ

In this passage, the necessity for the ignorant grammarian to be examined reaches its peak. Here, Prodromos not only justifies his reaction against his opponent, but also indicates his own ethical, intellectual, and pedagogical values. A good instructor must possess a high level of intellectual competence to be entrusted with the shaping of young minds. This idea also permeates another work of Prodromos, *Xenedemos, or Voices*, in which he incessantly underlines the importance of a good education that essentially relies not on didactic text themselves, but on the competence of the teacher.¹¹⁶

Prodromos's criteria, when it comes to teaching practice, are in fact a manifestation of his own competitive spirit. By setting a high standard for intellectual competence, Prodromos is effectively positioning himself as a superior intellectual – one who is capable of meeting the demands of providing adequate education for pupils. This, in turn, serves to distance himself from those who may not possess the same level of intellectual rigor. In this, Prodromos was not an exception, but rather a product of his own time. A similar attitude is observed among contemporaries such as John Tzetzes. As Van den Berg explains, Tzetzes

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 33-34.149-161.

¹¹⁶ On *Xenedemos*, see Chapter 2 below.

self-fashioning as a model grammarian and his teaching philosophy was utilized to increase his value as an instructor and his authority in the competitive teaching market. However, Prodromos's competitiveness was not limited to teaching practice. His critiques, selfrepresentation as of someone committed to defend the truth, and a desire to publicly disparage real or imagined individuals who claim to be experts in various fields, serve to create an overall intellectual authority among his esteemed contemporaries, peers, and students.

1.3 The Examination (Έλεγχος)

The justification for exposing stereotypical incompetent professionals or perhaps even personal enemies to scrutiny enabled Prodromos to assume the role of examiner. Overall, Prodromos's examinations serve as a means to assert his intellectual superiority and demonstrate his expertise in various fields. By critiquing his opponents and establishing his own intellectual dominance, he reinforces his authority as a scholar and thinker. However, the examination process is not conducted in the same manner in all these works, nor does it reflect the same level of competitiveness, or display the same amount of intellectual competence. In Against Barys, the intellectual competitiveness of Prodromos and display of his competence are confined to the vindication of his orthodox beliefs. On the other hand, in *Philoplaton*, the situation is quite different; the examination pertains to refuting an ignorant Platonist and displays Prodromos's competitive intellectual spirit. However, Prodromos's substantial philosophical competence and teaching methods are revealed in a general fashion only in a few instances. The same can be observed in The Executioner, or Doctor. Here, Prodromos does not simply refute an unnamed opponent for his lack of medical expertise, but rather focuses on his insufficient knowledge of philosophy. This leaves some room for Prodromos to display bits and pieces of his philosophical erudition. Besides his competitiveness, in The Ignorant, or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, Prodromos also demonstrates in a more substantial manner his knowledge and teaching competence. And finally, Prodromos's competitive spirit and his display of philosophical knowledge reaches its peak in For the Color Green. Through the examination procedure in this work, we gain clear insight into the depths of Prodromos's philosophical erudition, which served to showcase his superiority over an ignorant opponent.

1.3.1 Against Barys

In *Against Barys*, the fictional examination is focused on *apologia* and the vindication of Prodromos's orthodoxy. In his defense, among other things, Prodromos offers a beautifully composed acrostics dedicated to the Holy Trinity, fashioned after alphabetical acrostics of Gregory Nazianzen.¹¹⁷ Additionally, he emphasizes that he also penned a verse paraphrase of the Old and New Testament.¹¹⁸ As the attack against him was based on his proficiency in pagan learning, in his response to this accusation Prodromos provides an *apologia* for his erudition. Thus, he underlines that although he neglecting all earthly things, he has never neglected the zeal for God. Despite the fact that he was brought up with pagan education, he only kept those things that are useful for and in accordance with Christian faith, while the rest he disregarded. Prodromos explains that he studied the works of Plato and Aristotle in order not to fall into the labyrinths and traps of syllogistic reasoning.¹¹⁹

In the counterattack on Barys, Prodromos presents his opponent as someone who is in fact heretical and impious, and he ridicules his sinful nature, the meaning of his name, his physical appearance, and his stupidity. Thus, besides offending Barys as the one who makes sacrifices to false gods and deities such as the Scythian Baal, Prodromos also accuses him of turning the house of God into a marketplace. The name of Barys also discloses his real nature. Thus, Prodromos explains that " $\beta \dot{\alpha} \rho$ " means "son" (vió ς) when translated from Syriac into Greek, which can be corroborated with Bar-Jonah (Simon, son of Jonah: the Apostle Peter), while the ancients used the word " $\tilde{v}\varsigma$ " to denote the pig ($\chi o \tilde{\rho} o \varsigma$). From this, it is clear for Prodromos that his opponent's name means "son of a pig".¹²⁰

When it comes to erudition, the competitiveness of Prodromos is best reflected when he challenges the intellectual capacity of his adversary. Prodromos openly invites Barys to examine his heretical views and to publicly demonstrate these claims in front of the synod who can decide which of the two is correct. But in case Barys would have assumed the role

¹¹⁷ Prodromos, *Against Barys, Who Blurted the Name of Heretic at Him*, (ed. Hörandner), lines 144-167, pp. 478-479; Zagklas, "Theodore Prodromos and the Use of the Poetic Work of Gregory of Nazianzus: Appropriation in the Service of Self-Representation," 237-238.

¹¹⁸ Prodromos, Against Barys, Who Blurted the Name of Heretic at Him, (ed. Hörandner), lines 175-177.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, lines 191-203.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, line 81; lines 102-103; lines 235-239.

of examiner and attempted to expose Prodromos's allegedly faulty views, he would just display utter ignorance and consequently would be expelled from the house of God.¹²¹

Prodromos argues that Barys could never understand any great dogmatic matter. His stupidity is so great that even his hair has abandoned his ignorant head.¹²² Prodromos also underlines the ignorance of his opponent by saying: "Are you calling heretic the one who is brought up in pagan learning, you who is devoid of reason, in order to conceal your own ignorance?" (ἆρ' αἰρετικὸν ὡς λόγοις τεθραμμένον καλεῖς, λόγων ἄμοιρε, τοῖς ἑξωτέροις, ὡς συγκαλύψης τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μωρίαν). If this is the case, Prodromos argues, then the accusation of heretic should also be proffered against Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor, who all excelled in pagan learning and in front of whose erudition even Plato and Socrates would have been put to shame.¹²³ In this way Prodromos not only justifies his interest in Plato and Aristotle, but also puts himself in the same rank with the most learned Church Fathers and assumes the superior position over his opponent.

1.3.2 Philoplaton

The examination procedure in Philoplaton is mostly focused on ridiculing the base and ignorant nature of an unnamed Platonist. Only in a few instances it is possible to detect more palpable remarks that reveal Prodromos's learning criteria and teaching methods. After a short eulogy of Plato and a display of his own erudition, Prodromos starts his merciless interrogation of his opponent. The latter opens the book containing the Platonic dialogues, plays the serious, simulates to read it from the very beginning ($\kappa \alpha \tau \alpha \kappa \epsilon \varphi \alpha \lambda \tilde{\eta} \varsigma$), but in fact he does not understand a word of what he reads. Prodromos explains that his opponent is not only incapable of understanding Plato's philosophy but cannot even read it according to the correct (Attic) prosody.¹²⁴ This seems to be a precious indication that Classical Attic texts were supposed to be read according to a specific archaizing pronunciation. However, Prodromos philoplatonic foe is inexperienced in this practice. Furthermore, while he would be able to answer what the title of the Platonic dialogue he reads is, he would never be able to

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, lines 123-134.

¹²² *Ibid.*, lines 245-248.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, lines 111-122.

¹²⁴ Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, (ed. Migliorini), 69.27-35.

answer the question of what the subject matter of his reading is.¹²⁵ In addition to this ignorance, Prodromos's opponent goes even further in offending Plato's teachings:

But you, my dear, perhaps you would even reproach Plato somewhere in his writings and say that the wording would be better formulated in this rather than that way, or you would even somewhere polish his alleged mistakes, and you will instead [of this] insert your novelties into the book.

ἀλλὰ σὺ μέν, ὦ 'γαθέ, τάχα ἄν καὶ ἐπιτιμήσειας τῷ Πλάτωνι, ἔστιν οὖ τῆς γραφῆς, καὶ ὡς κρεῖττον οὕτως ἢ ἐκείνως ἐξενηνέχθαι τὴν λέξιν ἐρεῖς, ἤ που καὶ ἀποξέσεις μὲν τὰ ἐκείνου δῆθεν ἁμαρτήματα, ἀντιγράψεις δὲ τὰ ὑπό σου τῷ βιβλίῳ καινουργήματα.¹²⁶

Here Prodromos's attack strongly resembles motifs that Lucian used in his *The Ignorant Book-Collector*. Thus, for instance, while the ignorant book collector is capable of fluent reading aloud, he lacks the ability to comprehend the content and to identify whether the writer applies expressions correctly. Furthermore, Lucian's ignorant book collector, as Prodromos's inept Platonist, is only capable of providing the title of the work he is reading, but not answering any further questions regarding the content.¹²⁷ In the passage quoted above, it is also evident that Prodromos's opponent used his (faulty) interpretative skills to correct the writing of Plato. While it would be difficult to assume that his opponent worked on any kind of commentary of some Platonic work, it is quite probable that he was making personal notes and corrections that he shared with his close circle of learned friends, or even his pupils in the classroom.

While the rest of Prodromos's interrogation is focused on demonstrating how his opponent pretends to read in front of others, as well as that essentially his nature is vulgar and ignoble, as was shown in the previous chapter, he opens his final argument with a reference to Plato's *Phaedo*: "for it is not permitted for the impure to approach what is pure" ($\mu\eta$ καθαρῷ γὰρ καθαροῦ ἐφάπτεσθαι µὴ οὐ θεµιτὸν ἦ).¹²⁸ The purpose of this phrase is two-fold. Firstly, it serves as a mockery towards the adversary, suggesting that as a Platonist, he should be familiar with this principle. Secondly, it implies that the adversary's impure and base

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 69.36-38,

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 69.39-42.

¹²⁷ Lucian, The Ignorant Book Collector, 177, 194-197.

¹²⁸ Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, (ed. Migliorini), 71.94-95; Plato, *Phaedo* 67b.

nature hinders him from attaining true and divine knowledge, which can only be obtained by abstaining from the material world and its physical pleasures. The purification of one's soul before approaching the studies of philosophy in general was the main requirement. In this context, the saying of Plato is often employed by Neoplatonic philosophers in the prolegomena to studies of philosophy in general, or in the prolegomena to commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*. For instance, Ammonius refers to this saying from Plato to explain that one must be well-educated and purified in soul in order to prepare oneself to follow the Aristotelian writings.¹²⁹

Prodromos's opponent retorts to this reference by saying "One should not reproach the poet, who praises the appearence even if it does not correspond to the truth" ("[...]άλλ' οὐ παραλογιστέον τὸν ποιητὴν τὸ δοκεῖν ἐπαινέσαντα, κἂν ἀληθείας ἀπῆ").¹³⁰ Thus, by this answer Prodromos's adversary implies that even if his soul is not purified in its essence, the fact that he resembles a philosopher by appearance would be sufficient for him to engage with philosophy. This fictitious response allows Prodromos to demonstrate the inability of his opponent to properly use the verses and quotations from poets and ancient writers. In the answer of the inept Platonist, Prodromos embeds verses from Euripides's *Orestes*: "Oh, yes; for that has a semblance of health; and the semblance is preferable, though it is far from the truth" (μάλιστα: δόξαν γὰρ τόδ' ὑγιείας ἔχει. κρεῖσσον δὲ τὸ δοκεῖν, κἂν ἀληθείας ἀπῆ). Tormented by Furies for his matricide, Orestes was physically and emotionally exhausted. His sister, Electra, tries to comfort him and to help him feel more relaxed. Thus, she assists Orestes to be comfortably laid back on his bed and urges him to lay his feet down on the ground, so at least his bodily state resembles health, even though he is not very well. It is to this particular situation that the character of Orestes responds with the lines in question.¹³¹

Prodromos's fictional opponent takes these verses for granted and applies them without considering the broader context in which they were used. Prodromos explains that one must be careful when employing sayings of poets, and especially of tragedians, as what they say often does not reflect their own stance, but rather it is adjusted to what would be fitting for a particular character to say. Therefore, one must take into consideration personal

¹²⁹ Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 6. See also: Olympiodorus, *Prolegomena*, 10; in *Olympiodori Prolegomena et in Categorias Commentarium*, ed. Adolf Busse, vol. 12.1, XXIII vols., of *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca. Edita Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1902), 1-25, 10; David, *Prolegomena*, 29, in *Davidis Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Commentarium*, vol. XVIII.2, XXIII vols., ed. Adolf Busse, of *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca. Edita Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1902), 1-25, 10; David, *Prolegomena*, 29, in *Davidis Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Commentarium*, vol. XVIII.2, XXIII vols., ed. Adolf Busse, of *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca. Edita Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1904), 1-79, 29. ¹³⁰ Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, (ed. Migliorini), 71.95-97.

¹³¹ Euripides, Orestes 235-236.

traits of each character in order to properly use the specific saying ascribed to that character.¹³²

The usage of verses improperly contextualized is also part of the criticism of an unnamed individual in *For the Color Green*. Apparently, the ignorant rival argued that the supremacy of white is corroborated by Hesiod, who, while praising the silver generation, is actually praising the color white. Prodromos questions the logic and consistency behind this comparison. In *Works and Days*, Hesiod lists five ages in the history of the world in a declining order: golden, silver, bronze, heroic, and iron. Therefore, Prodromos wonders why his opponent does not praise ocher, which can be related to the golden age considered superior to silver, and why he omits black and does not relate it to the iron generation deemed corrupted.

It is quite peculiar that, although Prodromos's intention in this work is to refute an inept Platonist, he does not at all engage in a thorough examination of the Platonic knowledge of his opponent. In this way, most probably, Prodromos wants to signal the utter ignorance of his fictional opponent in Platonic matters. Additionally, as we can see, Prodromos's criticism is directed against his grammatical and rhetorical expertise. Not only does his fictional opponent not know how to read classical texts according to prosody, but he is also incapable of correctly employing quotes from poets.

1.3.3 The Executioner, or Doctor

In *The Executioner, or Doctor*, Prodromos also has a fictitious dialogue with his unnamed opponent and conducts the examination process. Triggered by personal experience and witnessing through personal suffering the ignorance of the self-proclaimed doctor, Prodromos starts a vicious attack. It is peculiar that while in the opening section of this invective, Prodromos displays theoretical medical knowledge, in the very examination process he does not question his opponent about medicine, but rather about the ability to claim the title of medical doctor, as well as his knowledge of philosophy. Perhaps the description of Prodromos's personal experience was simply enough to demonstrate the incapacity of his opponent to perform a basic dental procedure. Prodromos argues that people are buying an expensive death at home when they hire these people who claim the title of medical doctors. These people not only remain unpunished but are in fact richly rewarded for their transgressions against human health. In the response to Prodromos'

¹³² Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, (ed. Migliorini), 72.102-117.

"Yes", he says, "but it is unjust for you to indict the doctor as ignorant for a single mistake. for neither about a shoemaker, or a potter, or anyone named after any art or science, one would say that they are unskilled, even if the former (the shoemaker) had sewn the sandal wrong once, or if it occurred so (oύτω συμπεσόν) that the latter (the potter) beveled the brim of the pot so that it became oblique; for even in nature sometime there happens an error - witness to this are the bovines of Empedocles, who are born with a man's face - , however, this does not make nature an ignorant architect."

«ναί, φησιν, ἀλλ' οὐ παρὰ μίαν ἀποτυχίαν ἀμαθείας δικαίως γράφῃ τὸν ἰατρόν, οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ τὸν ὑποδηματοῥῥάφον, ἢ τὸν χυτρέα, ἢ τὸν ἐξ οἱασοῦν τέχνης ἢ ἐπιστήμης ὠνομασμένον ἀτέχνους εἴποι τις ἄν, κἄν εἰ ὁ μὲν ἐφάπαξ παρέἰῥαψε τὸ ὑπόδημα, ὁ δὲ τὴν στεφάνην τῆς χύτρας οὕτω συμπεσὸν διελόξωσε· τὴν γὰρ ἔστιν οὖ δὲ ἁμαρτίαν οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις ἠγνόησε, καὶ τὰ βουγενῆ τοῦ Ἐμπεδοκλέος εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἀνδρόπρῷρα ἀλλ' οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο ἀρχιτέκτων φύσις ἀνεπιστήμων».¹³³

In his defense, Prodromos's opponent thus argues that practitioners of other arts could make mistakes, but would never have been accused of lacking expertise in their profession. Prodromos continues by mockingly arguing that if the incompetent doctor would be as capable in the art of medicine as he is semi-capable in constructing rhetorical arguments, there might be even some hope for him. According to Prodromos, the argument of his opponent does not make sense, since he does not properly understand the philosophy of Empedocles. In a subtle way, Prodromos seems to refer here to the inability of his opponent to understand the concept of Love and Strife, which, besides the four root causes (water, air, earth, and fire), formed the world in Empedocles's cosmological system. According to Empedocles, Love and Strife were two opposite creative forces that either united or separated different elements, and thus actively participated in the ongoing becoming of the universe.¹³⁴ The mention of man-headed bovines in the excerpts of Empedocles's philosophical poem

¹³³ Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini), 54.154-160.

¹³⁴ Brad Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles: A Text and Translation with an Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 49-55.
refers to the situation when the limbs and parts of different animals were freely floating in the universe and were brought together in the initial action of Love.¹³⁵

Besides Empedocles, Prodromos brings into his argument a reference to another pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus (6th century BCE):

For to me, one is ten thousand, says the the sage, so even if you believe that you have offended one, nonetheless you have offended ten thousand. The matter should not be scrutinized for quantity, but rather for quality.

Εἶς γὰρ ἐμοὶ μυρίοι, φησὶ ὁ σοφός, ὥστε κἂν ἐνὶ ἐμπαροινῆσαι δοκῆς, μυρίοις οὐδὲν ἦττον ἐμπεπαρῷνηκας· οὐ γὰρ τῷ πόσῷ μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ ποίῷ τὸ πράγμα δοκιμαστέον.¹³⁶

Here Prodromos refers to a fragment from Heraclitus's work On Nature: "To me, one is ten thousand if he be the best."¹³⁷ Prodromos implies here that the bad medical treatment against someone who is considered to be the best, that is, himself, is an offence not against one only but against ten thousand. The problem, according to Prodromos, is that incompetent doctors measure the life of other humans according to the low worth of their own lives.¹³⁸

In continuing his fierce examination of his opponent, Prodromos sarcastically emphasizes that this unskilled doctor sent so many innocent souls to Hades that he should be proclaimed a new conductor of souls in place of Charon. The unnamed doctor, afraid that Prodromos will abolish all incompetent doctors with his refutations, expresses concern that he and his inept colleagues will stay hungry and barefoot as they are inexperienced in any other art apart from medicine. To this, Prodromos strongly responds with the following words:

Do you, vain man, call the killing of humans an art? And calling it so, don't you blush? For tell me, if some Brahmin or a man from Brittany, or one who drinks the waters of the Tigris, or washes in the waters of the Nile, or [even] one who inhabits the area around Byzas and Barbyssos, were to come to us

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 123-125.

¹³⁶ Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini), 54.164-166.

¹³⁷ Patrick George Thomas White, *The Fragments of The Work of Heraclitus On Nature* (Baltimore: N. Murray, 1889), frag. CXIII, 110.

¹³⁸ Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini), 51-52.47-49.

and ask for the names of each art, and if then we were to say that by us there is statuary and stone carving – for we should leave out the rhetoric and mathematics – and also architecture, leather tanning, and so on, and if finally we were to add the art of killing men, don't you think that the man would laugh at this word, and then go away ridiculing the whole state? Thus, I believe, you would also agree with the argument and, if not, let us suppose that you are to grasp for yourself also the victory in this and let the foreigner depart after praising all the arts. Why then the city, given that you, offenders do not starve, should starve of its own citizens?

Τέχνην, ὦ ἀποφώλιε, καλεῖς τὴν ἀνθρωποκτονικήν; καὶ καλῶν, οὐκ ἐρυθριῷς; εἰπὲ γάρ μοι εἴ τις Βραχμὰν ἢ Βρετανὸς ἄνθρωπος, ἢ τοῦ Τίγρητος πίνων ἢ λουόμενος τοῦ Νείλου, ἢ τὰ περὶ τὸν Βύζην καὶ τὸν Βορβύζην νεμόμενος, παρ' ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐλθὼν ἑκάστας ἀπαιτοίη τὰς τέχνας εἰς ὄνομα, εἶθ' ἡμεῖς εἰπόντες ὡς ἡ μὲν ἡμῖν ἀγαλματοποιητική, ἡ δὲ λιθοξοική παρετέον γὰρ τὰς ἐν λόγοις καὶ περὶ τὰ μαθήματα—καὶ ἡ μὲν οἰκοδομική, ἡ δὲ βυρσοδεψική, αἱ δὲ τοιάδε καὶ τοιάδε, τέλος τὴν ἀνθρωποκτονικὴν ἐπιθῶμεν, οἴει μὴ ἂν ἐπιμύξαντα πρὸς τὸ ῥῆμα τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τῆς ὅλης κατακαγχάσαντα πολιτείας οἰχήσεσθαι; οὕτως οἶμαι καὶ αὐτὸς ξυνθεῖο τῷ λόγῷ, εἰ δὲ μή, ἀλλ' ἔστω καθάπερ ἂν αἰροῖο καὶ τοῦτο, καὶ ἀπίτω τὰς ἀπάσας ἐπαινέσας τέχνας ὁ ξένος· τί δὲ ἡ πόλις ἐφ' ῷ μὴ τοὺς ἀλιτηρίους ὑμᾶς λιμώξεσθαι λιμωξεῖται τῶν ἑαυτῆς πολιτῶν;¹³⁹

From Prodromos' humorous attack, it is clear that he makes a distinction between theoretical arts or sciences on the one hand, and productive arts such as s statuary, stonecarving, masonry, and leather tanning, on the other. In the numerous scholia on Dionysius Thrax's (c. 170-90 BCE) *The Art of Grammar*, we learn that the most scholiasts differentiate between theoretical ($\theta \epsilon \omega \rho \eta \tau \kappa \eta$), practical ($\pi \rho \alpha \kappa \tau \kappa \eta$), productive ($\pi o \iota \eta \tau \kappa \eta$), and mixed ($\mu \kappa \tau \eta$) types of arts. Thus, according to some of the scholiasts, the theoretical arts comprise astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and philosophy; the practical arts are strategy, flute-playing, lyre-playing and dancing; the productive arts are sculpting, shoemaking, architecture, smithery, and carpentry; and the mixed arts are medicine and its

¹³⁹ Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini), pp. 54-55, 176-187.

sister, grammar.¹⁴⁰ This division of arts into theoretical, practical, and productive is probably based on the Aristotelian classification of the sciences in the *Topics*.¹⁴¹ Prodromos, familiar with the division of arts and sciences, was certainly aware that medicine is usually placed among the mixed arts. However, as the inept doctors practice the art of killing rather than medicine, their expertise is classified under the productive arts.

Similarly, like in the *Philoplaton* where a wannabe-philosopher was not only called out for his philosophical ignorance, Prodromos's criticism in *The Executioner or Doctor* goes beyond just questioning the medical expertise of his fictional opponent. Rather, Prodromos also disparages his opponent for his fundamental shortcomings in constructing coherent and persuasive rhetorical arguments, as well as his philosophical ignorance. By highlighting these deficiencies, Prodromos aims to discredit his opponent's overall intellectual authority and at the same time display his own.

1.3.4 The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian

In *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, Prodromos's examination offers a more in-depth insight into his teaching of philosophy and its didactic criteria. In this work, he again expresses concerns about the professional expertise of those who claimed to be masters in their respective fields in various arts and sciences. Thus, for instance, Prodromos says:

However, I could not agree with such a belief to such an extent that I could neither easily call anyone a cobbler, even if a "Diomedean necessity" would press upon me as I was being struck on the back with a sword, unless he skillfully applied the cobbler's knife and awl, and made shoes well, and

¹⁴⁰ See *Prolegomena Vossiana* 2-3, 7; *Scholiorum collectio Vaticana* 110, 157; *Scholiorum collectio Marciana* 297, 300. Besides this division of arts, the scholia to the *Art of Grammar* mention two more. Thus one scholiast informs us that Lucius Tarrhaeus differentiates causative (ἀποτελεσματική) art into carpentry, smithery, architecture, and the art of weaving; practical art (πρακτική) is divided according to movement: self-moving arts such as dancing; antagonistic arts, such as wrestling, boxing, and fighting with heavy arms; aiming? arts, such as rhetoric; methodical arts, such as hunting and fishing; service-rendering arts, such as driving and steering ships; instrumental art (ὀργανική) is divided into wind-instruments like piping and trumpet playing, touch-instruments as kithara-playing, and combined instruments such as flute-playing; and finally, theoretical art (θεωρητική) includes geometry and astronomy. Another scholiast gives the following classification: theoretical (θεωρητική), which includes sculpture and architecture; and finally procuring (περιποιητική), which incorporates hunting and fishing. See: *Scholiorum collectio Vaticana*, 110, 122-123.

artfully sewed half-boots and small slippers.

Έγὼ δὲ τοσοῦτον οὐκ ἂν τῷ τοιούτῷ ζυνθείην δόγματι, ὡς οὐδὲ σκυτέα ἑαδίως οὐδένα εἴποιμι ἄν, κἂν ἡ Διομήδειος ἀνάγκη μοι ἐπικέοιτο, ξίφει τὸ μετάφρενον πληττομένῷ, εἰ μὴ τὴν σμίλην εὐφυῶς ἀναλήψαιτο καὶ τὸ κεντητήριον, καὶ τὸ ὑπόδημα εὖ διάθοιτο, καὶ τὴν ἀρβυλίδα τεχνηέντως ῥάψαι, καὶ τὸ βλαυτίον.¹⁴²

The famous "Diomedian necessity" originates from the tale of Diomedes and Odysseus stealing the Palladium, the protective statue of Pallas Athena in Troy. According to Zenobius's collection of proverbs, the story unfolds as follows: While carrying the stolen Palladium towards their ship, Odysseus, desiring sole credit for the theft, tried to kill Diomedes, who was in front of him with the Palladium. However, Diomedes saw the shadow of the sword in the moonlight, turned around, and overpowered Odysseus instead. He then bound Odysseus's hands and struck his back with a sword.¹⁴³ With this proverb, Prodromos emphasizes that by no means he would ever approve of someone who by vocation belongs even to the lowest type of arts (i.e., practical), such as a cobbler, unless the expertise is proven. The same goes, according to Prodromos, for professionals of other fields of practical arts, such as boxers or wrestlers – they all would need to compete and prove their athletic skills.¹⁴⁴ The same demonstrated competence in his respective field is therefore required also from the grammarian.

After a compelling rhetorical exposé in which Prodromos elaborates on the necessity for the incompetent grammarian to be scrutinized, he implicitly invites himself to be the grammarian's examiner and proceeds to a full-fledged attack. Prodromos's refutation is focused on demonstrating that his opponent lacks the basic expertise that a good teacher of grammar should possess. A grammarian's main duties as a teacher are probably best reflected in the above-mentioned *The Art of Grammar* by Dionysios Thrax, which defines grammar as an experience and divides it into six parts: fluent reading in respect of prosody, interpretation of poetical figures, explanation of dialectical peculiarities and allusions, discovery of etymology, accurate account of grammatical regularities (analogies), and critical approach to

¹⁴² Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini), 30.39-43.

¹⁴³ For detailed information about other sources and versions of the story, see the comments in Zenobius III 8, *CPG* I, 59-60.

¹⁴⁴ Prodromos, *The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, (ed. Migliorini) 29.46-51.

poetical works.¹⁴⁵ Thus, Prodromos, undoubtfully familiar with this work and its rich commentary tradition, attacks his opponent for the inability to adequately grasp the proper definition of the discipline, as well as his failure to fulfill at least two out of the six teaching responsibilities of a good grammarian – to interpret etymologies and to have a critical approach to poetry. He probably referred to these two skills as students were instructed in them at the advanced stages of grammar learning.

The first argument goes as follows:

Perhaps you assume that there are two grammars – the one more incomplete and the other more accomplished, and you hold the opinion that one is to be called experience and the other art? Or do you bestow upon one both names, as if art and experience were the same? However, neither would you, I suppose, assume that art and experience are the same thing, nor would I agree with your opinion if you did as long as I am listening to Aristotle, who teaches that experience is born from many recollections, and that art develops from this. I am afraid that I would fall into contradiction from another point of view, too, assuming that the same thing does not and does have rationality, if, knowing that experience is an irrational habit and listening to Plato, who thinks that it is not appropriate to call an art that which is irrational, I would identify experience and art as synonymous. So there remains to assume that there are two grammars and apply one name to the first one, and another [name] to the other one. Therefore, o admirable man, one [that is, the art] is here with us and long is the line of the grammarians who are named after it; the other you should discover yourself. But I don't believe you could, even if you were to endure countless toils, unless you would like to call elementary grammar thus.

Είπὲ γάρ μοι πῶς καὶ τέχνην ὁ τεχνώσας τίθεται τὴν γραμματικήν καὶ ἐμπειρίαν αὖθις ταύτην ὀρίζεται; Πότερον δύο τίθης εἶναί μοι τὰς γραμματικὰς, ἀτελεστέραν τε καὶ τελεωτέραν, καὶ τὴν μὲν ἐμπειρίαν, τὴν δὲ τέχνην ὀνομάζεσθαι ἀξιοῖς; Ἡ καὶ ἄμφω δίδως κατὰ μιᾶς τὰ ὀνόματα, ὡς

¹⁴⁵ Dionysius Thrax, *The Art of Grammar*, trans. Thomas Davidson (St. Louise: R.P. Studley, 1874), 3-4. See also: Browning, "Teachers," 95-97; Robert Henry Robins, *The Byzantine Grammarians: Their Place in History* (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993), 41-42.

ταὐτοῦ ὄντος τέχνης, καὶ ἐμπειρίας; ᾿Αλλὰ τέχνην μὲν καὶ ἐμπειρίαν οὕτε σὺ ταὐτόν, οἶμαι, θείης, οὐτ᾿ ἐγώ σοι ζυνθείμην θεμένω, μέχρις ἂν ᾿Αριστοτέλους ἀκούω, ἐκ πολλῶν μὲν μνημῶν τὴν ἐμπειρίαν γεννῶντος, ἐκ δὲ ταύτης τὴν τέχνην προβάλλοντος. Δέδοικα δὲ καὶ ἄλλως μὴ ἀντιφάσει περιπεσοῦμαι, τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ μὴ ἔχειν λόγον καὶ ἔχειν τιθέμενος, εἴπερ ἄλογον μὲν τριβὴν τὴν ἐμπειρίαν εἰδὼς καὶ Πλάτωνος δὲ ἀκούων, μὴ ἀζιοῦντος τέχνην καλεῖν ὃ ἂν ἄλογον ἦ, ἔπειτα ἐμπειρίαν καὶ τέχνην ταὐτίζοιμι. Λείπεται δὴ γραμματικὰς δύο θέμενον ἑκάτερον τῶν ὀνομάτων ἑκατέρα προσάψαι. Ἡ μὲν οὖν μία ἔστι που καὶ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν, ὦ θαυμάσιε, καὶ πολὺς ὁ ἐκ ταύτης παρωνομασμένος τῶν γραμματικῶν ὀρμαθός, τὴν δὲ ἄλλην εὑρίσκοις αὐτός. ᾿Αλλ᾽ οὐκ οἶμαι, κἂν μυρίον ἀνατλαίης τὸν κάματον, εἰ μή σοι φίλον οὕτω τὴν γραμματιστικὴν ὀνομάζειν.¹⁴⁶

In this passage, Prodromos obviously refers to the controversial definition of the art of grammar given by Dionysios Thrax. Although he explains that the critical judgement of poetry is "the noblest part of grammatical art," he simultaneously argues that "grammar is the experience of the things that are often said in the writings of poets and prose-writers."¹⁴⁷ From Sextus Empiricus's (2nd century CE) treatise *Against the Grammarians*, as well as from the commentaries on Dionysios Thrax's *The Art of Grammar*, it can be seen that Hellenistic, Late Antique and Byzantine grammarians tried to move away from this definition by criticizing it, by explaining the reasoning behind it, or by proposing alternative solutions. For many learned men, the problem with Dionysios's definition was that, by defining grammar as an "experience", he called the "mother of rational arts an irrational practice."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini), 30-31.55-70.

¹⁴⁷ Dionysius Thrax, *The Art of Grammar*, 3-4: Γραμματική ἐστιν ἐμπειρία τῶν παρὰ ποιηταῖς τε καὶ συγγραφεῦσιν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ λεγομένων. See: Robins, *The Byzantine Grammarians*, 42; Minna Seppänen, "Defining the Art of Grammar, Ancient Perceptions of Γραμματική and *Grammatica*", PhD Dissertation (Turku: University of Turku 2014), 53; Alfons Wouters and Pierre Swiggers, "Definitions of Grammar", in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, vol. 1, ed. Franco Montanari, Stephanos Matthaios, and Antonios Rengakos (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 523.

¹⁴⁸ Prolegomena Vossiana 6: Μέμφονται οὖν τινες τῷ Διονυσίῳ, διὰ τί τὴν γραμματικὴν ἄλογον τριβὴν ἐκάλεσε, τὴν πάσης τέχνης λογικῆς μητέρα. In Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammaticam, ed. Alfred Hilgard (Lipsiae: In aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1901), 6. The first person to object to this definition, according to Sextus Empiricus, was Ptolemy the Peripatetic, who argued that "experience" is irrational and non-expert practice, and as such cannot be said of the grammar which is an art. However, Sextus Empiricus offers an alternative view on Dionysios's definition and explains that "experience of the things said in poets and writers" probably meant that the grammarian should be "someone of broad knowledge and learning." Sextus Empiricus also gives an account on the objections to Dionysios and the alternative definitions given by Asclepiades of Myrlea, Chaeris, and Demetrius Chlorus. All these grammarians define grammar as an art. Sextus Empiricus, "Against the Grammarians", in Sextus Empiricus, *Against Professors*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949) 35-53.

In order to gain a better sense of why Dionysios's definition was problematic, and of how Prodromos's position fits into the broader tradition of the understanding of grammatical art, it is important to provide a general framework on how the majority of scholiasts on The Art of Grammar classified and defined grammar. Thus, before explicating Dionysios's definition, certain scholiasts differentiate between experiment ($\pi \epsilon \tilde{\iota} \rho \alpha$), experience ($\epsilon \mu \pi \epsilon \iota \rho i \alpha$), art or expertise (τέχνη), and science (ἐπιστήμη).¹⁴⁹ With a few exceptions, most of the scholiasts agree that grammar is to be defined as an art and not as an experiment, experience, or science. Another important classification that we find in many scholiasts, as was already mentioned, is the differentiation between theoretical ($\theta \epsilon \omega \rho \eta \tau \kappa \eta$), practical ($\pi \rho \alpha \kappa \tau \kappa \eta$), productive (ποιητική), and mixed (μικτή) types of arts. Most scholiasts classify grammar as a mixed art, because it combines all three, or at least the theoretical and practical types of art.¹⁵⁰ This view of grammar as a mixed art is also evident when some scholiasts define grammar either as a theoretical and practical skill in knowledge of the texts of the poets and prose writers, or as a theoretical and practical skill that teaches us to speak and write well.¹⁵¹ In this way, they avoid using the controversial term "experience" from Dionysios's definition. Only one scholiast objects to this view and argues that grammar is neither mixed nor practical, but only theoretical. This is because it is not the grammar that corrects the accents, aspirations, and punctuation, but the practitioner of the art – the grammarian.¹⁵²

From Prodromos's criticism of his fictional opponent, it is evident not only that he is well-acquainted with this issue, but also that he clearly states his position within the mainstream tradition when he identifies himself with "the long line of grammarians" who define grammar as an art and not as an experience. But unlike the scholiasts, who just state what the difference between an experience, an art and a science is, Prodromos summons to his aid the authority of Aristotle and Plato and explain where this differentiation comes from. Thus, he refers to Aristotle's position in the *Metaphysics*, where it is argued that art and

¹⁴⁹ According to scholiasts, πεῖρα is an irrational experience which happens only once or twice, ἐμπειρία is also an irrational experience of a certain thing which occurs many times, τέχνη is "a system of perceptions organized for some goal advantageous in life," and ἐπιστήμη is unchangeable and infallible. Furthermore, πεῖρα leads to ἐμπειρία, ἐμπειρία to τέχνη and τέχνη to ἐπιστήμη. "Prolegomena Vossiana," 8-1. See also, "Commentarius Melampodis Seu Diomedis," in *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammaticam*, ed. Alfred Hilgard, (Lipsiae: In aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1901), 11; "Scholiorum collectio Vaticana," *Ibid*. 112-113, 162; and "Scholiorum collectio Marciana," *Ibid*. 298.

¹⁵⁰ See: "Prolegomena Vossiana," 2-3, 7; "Scholiorum collectio Vaticana," 110, 157; "Scholiorum collectio Marciana," 297, 300.

¹⁵¹ Γραμματική ἐστιν ἕξις θεωρητικὴ καὶ πρακτικὴ τῶν παρὰ ποιηταῖς τε καὶ συγγραφεῦσι... (Grammar is a theoretical and practical skill in knowledge of the texts of the poets and prose-writers...). See: "Prolegomena Vossiana," 3; "Scholiorum collectio Vaticana," 119; "Scholiorum collectio Marciana," 297, 300 "Έξις θεωρητικὴ καὶ πρακτική, τὸ εῦ λέγειν καὶ τὸ εῦ γράφειν διδάσκουσα ἡμᾶς·..." (Theoretical and practical skill that teaches us to speak and write well...). Scholiorum collectio Marciana 300.

¹⁵² Scholiorum collectio Vaticana 123.

science are acquired through experience, which in turn derives from many memories of the same thing, and to Plato's *Gorgias*, which argues that experience is irrational practice and therefore cannot be regarded as an art, as art is rational by definition.¹⁵³

Although almost all commentators mentioned the traditional objection to $\dot{e}\mu\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\dot{i}\alpha$ and defined grammar as an art, some of the scholiasts justified Dionysios's definition to a certain extent and explained the reasoning behind it. Only one of the scholiasts openly defended Dionysios and argued that people who object to his definition are ignorant, because experience comes from the practical aspect of grammar, which is classified as a mixed art.¹⁵⁴ Others simply transmit the traditional justifications of those who defend Dionysios by giving a similar explanation that grammar does not always rely on reason, but also on experience in the works of poets and prose writers.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, probably drawing on Sextus Empiricus, they point out that Dionysios actually uses the term "experience" instead of knowledge.¹⁵⁶ According to one scholiast, for instance, it is because some medical practitioners are called "experience" that the term "experience" is transferred by mistake to grammar, while according to another, Dionysios just wanted to make the definition simpler for beginners.¹⁵⁷ And finally, one commentator argues that for Dionysios "experience" does not bear the meaning of irrational practice but is synonymous with "art", because he employs both terms interchangeably.¹⁵⁸

While denigrating the inept grammarian for his lack of basic theoretical knowledge about the problematic definition of Dionysios, Prodromos seems to be particularly annoyed by two matters. One of them is concerned with the understanding of "experience" and "art" as synonyms, which would imply the logical inconsistency of one thing being both rational and irrational at the same time. But was this inability of an incompetent grammarian to properly understand the term "experience" from Dionysios's definition an exception, or was it a recurring issue among Byzantine teachers of grammar? For instance, in one Byzantine commentary on *The Art of Grammar*, an anonymous Christian scholiast explains, among other things, that experience is sometimes called irrational and sometimes rational knowledge, and that Dionysius uses the term "experience" in a rational sense when he defines grammar.¹⁵⁹ This explanation is unique, as we do not have any comparable examples in any

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¹⁵³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 980b26-981b13.

¹⁵⁴ "Scholiorum collectio Vaticana," 167.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 165-166.

¹⁵⁶ "Prolegomena Vossiana", 6,7; Sextus Empiricus, "Against the Grammarians", 39.

¹⁵⁷ "Commentarius Melampodis seu Diomedis," 10-11; "Scholiorum collectio Vaticana," 167.

¹⁵⁸ "Scholiorum collectio Marciana," 300.

¹⁵⁹ "Commentariolus Byzantinus," 566.

of the other preserved commentaries on *The Art of Grammar*. Since this commentary has been preserved in more than a dozen manuscripts (the oldest one derives from before the tenth century), it might be the case that it was a popular explanatory manual among teachers of grammar who did not possess the higher knowledge of philosophy to bring into question this understanding of "experience" as both rational and irrational.¹⁶⁰ Even if Prodromos's attack was not directed against any particular rival teacher, he may have wanted to point out a burning issue in the Byzantine educational system – underqualified teachers of grammar, or rather the way in which teaching practice was predominantly conducted in his time.

Another matter is brought up when Prodromos sarcastically refers to the possibility that his opponent might be assuming that there are two types of grammar, one more imperfect and to be understood as an experience, the other more perfect and to be taken as an art. This differentiation bears close resemblance to the one that is made by Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE–c. 50 CE). According to him, the imperfect grammar, which some people wrongly call *grammatistica* ($\gamma \rho \alpha \mu \mu \alpha \tau \iota \sigma \tau \kappa \dot{\eta}$), covers basic reading and writing skills, while the more perfect grammar deals with poetical and historical works. However, Philo does not refer to any of these as an empirical practice and also emphizises the importance of philosophical knowledge for practicing grammar. Thus, those who are not equipped with proper philosophical knowledge, when dealing with the parts of speech, they often make mistakes.¹⁶¹

Similarly, Prodromos also emphasizes the importance of philosophical education for teaching the art of grammar at the advanced level. This is particularly reflected in Prodromos's second point of criticism that revolves around the inability of his adversary to use etymology properly:

[...] how come that according to you, dotard, the name Xenophon could be derived from foreign lands in which your ancient [author] was killed? Was he killed because he is called thus? Or is he called so because he was killed? If the first is the case, then those who have given the name to the man are

¹⁶⁰ "Praefatio", in *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammaticam*, ed. Alfred Hilgard (Lipsiae: In aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1901), XXXVII-XLI.

¹⁶¹ Philo, *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia* 147-150 ed. P. Wendland....: Τό γε μὴν γράφειν καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν γραμματικῆς τῆς ἀτελεστέρας ἐπάγγελμα, ῆν παρατρέποντές τινες γραμματιστικὴν καλοῦσι, τῆς δὲ τελειο τέρας ἀνάπτυξις τῶν παρὰ ποιηταῖς τε καὶ συγγραφεῦσιν. (".Writing and and reading is the subject of this more imperfect grammar, which some people wrongly call *grammatistica*). Philo, "De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia", in *Philonis Alexandrini Opera quae Supersunt*, ed. P. Wendland, vol. 3 (Berlin: Reimer, 1898). This differentiation, also understood as the distinction between old and new, as well as small and great grammar, was also mentioned by scholiasts and Sextus Empiricus. Seppänen, "Defining the Art of Grammar", 3. However, it is important to emphasize that none of them refers to incomplete, small, or old grammar as an experience.

misanthropes, if because of this he had to be killed on foreign soil; or they give evidence of their shortage of names so that they had left aside Diomede, Pherecydes, Themistocles, Pericles, Aristodemus, Alcinous, and many other honorable names, and they came across this most ominous name of Xenophon. If, however, he is called so because he was killed, it escapes my notice how he could have been killed first, and [only] then born and named. On the other hand, I notice many other Xenophons, unless I am encountering the books in my dreams, who paid their dues neither abroad, nor violently. Therefore, one must either kill them, or not deem it correct to call them Xenophons, so that it may not happen that the true etymology is refuted. But the grammarian ($\tau \phi \tau \epsilon \chi \nu \kappa \phi$) should not give occasion for being rebuked on account of this - as he was appointed to indicate models and explanations of etymologies, rather than to philosophize about them in a more accomplished manner.¹⁶²

[...] πῶς ἐκ τοῦ ἐν ξένοις φονεύεσθαι τόποις ὃ Ξενοφῶν ἠτυμολογήθη τῶ παλαιῶ σου; Πότερον γὰρ διότι κέκληται οὕτω, πεφόνευται; "Η διότι πεφόνευται, κέκληται; εί μεν τὸ πρῶτον, μισάνθρωποι οἱ τ' ἀνθρώπω τὸ όνομα θέμενοι, εί διὰ τοῦτο μέλλοι φονεύεσθαι ἐπ' ἀλλοδαπῆς· ἢ τοσαύτην έαυτοῖς τῶν ὀνομάτων πενίαν προσεμαρτύραντο, ὡς εἰακέναι μὲν τὸν Διομήδη, τὸν Φερεκύδη, τὸν Θεμιστοκλέα, τὸν Περικλέα, τὸν Ἀριστόδημον, τὸν Ἀλκίνοον, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τῶν ὀνομάτων σεμνά, ἐπὶ τὸ δυσφημότατον δὲ τοῦτο κατηντηκέναι τὸν Ξενοφῶντα. Εἰ δὲ διότι πεφόνευται κέκληται, λανθάνει πρῶτον κτιννύμενος κἆτα τικτόμενος, καὶ ὀνομαζόμενος. Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ Ξενοφῶντας μανθάνω πάνυ πολλούς, εἰ μὴ ὀνείρω τοῖς βιβλίοις έφίστημι, μήτε έπ' άλλοδαπῆς, μήτε βιαίως τὸ χρεὼν ἀπολελειτουργηκότας; ώστε η αφαιρετέον έκείνους η τὸ ὄνομα μηδὲ Ξενοφῶντας καλεῖσθαι άξιωτέον, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἔτυμον καὶ ἀληθέα λόγον συμβῆ διαψεύδεσθαι. ᾿Αλλὰ τῷ τεχνικῷ μέν ἦττον ἂν διὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἐπιτιμητέον: τύπους ἢ γὰρ ύποδεικνύειν μόνους έτυμολογιῶν καὶ ἐμφάσεις τούτῷ προέκειτο, οὐ μέντοι φιλοσοφείν περί τούτων τὰ τελεώτατα.

¹⁶² Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini), 31.74-90.

Generally speaking, according to the scholiasts on Dionysius Thrax, the main task of etymology was to discover the true meaning of the word and to provide an immediate explanation for it.¹⁶³ Ancient etymology, as Ineke Sluiter explains, was guite different from modern etymology. While modern etymology is focused on phonology and historical changes of word forms, ancient etymology is concerned with semantics and finding the reason of why things are named in the way they are. Ancient etymological discourse is concerned with causality, motivation, and explanation. Although ancient and medieval etymological practices aspired to trace the meaning of the word, it was still possible for several different etymologies to co-occur and be valid, as they would be explaining different aspects of the same word. These etymological explanations were often based on a phonetic link between the word in question and the phrase used to expound this word.¹⁶⁴ Thus, according to the *Etymologicum* Magnum, which was probably compiled c. 1150 in Constantinople, the name Xenophon consists of two parts: ξένος (foreigner) and φαίνω (to radiate).¹⁶⁵ However, in some other lexica, such as that of Pseudo-Zonaras, the Etymologicum Gudianum, and the Lexicon artis grammaticae, it is said that the name Xenophon derives from $\xi \in V$ (foreigner) and $\varphi \in V$ (murder).¹⁶⁶

It might be the case that Prodromos was irritated by the etymology of the name Xenophon provided in these lexica, or, perhaps it is more accurate to say, followed by a bunch of teachers. However, the key target of Prodromos's criticism is the inability of the anonymous *grammatikos* to properly conduct philosophical discussion on etymology. As Prodromos's inept *grammatikos* can only give a glimpse into models and the outward appearance of etymologies, he should restrain from philosophize about them in a more accomplished manner.¹⁶⁷ In this way it is clear that Prodromos's adversary is not merely criticized for being an inept grammatian, but rather because his expertise does not go beyond the basic scope of grammar and thus lacks more advanced philosophical knowledge.

¹⁶³ Robins, *The Byzantine Grammarians: Their Place in History*, 47; "Commentarius Melampodis seu Diomedis," 14; "Scholiorum collectio Vaticana," 169; "Scholiorum collectio Marciana," 303; "Scholiorum collectio Londinensis," 470; "Commentariolus Byzantinus," 568.

¹⁶⁴ Ineke Sluiter, "Ancient Etymology: A Tool for Thinking," in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, ed. Franco Montanari, Stephanos Matthaios, and Antonios Rengakos, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 896-922, 898-893.

¹⁶⁵Ξενοφῶν, παρὰ τὸ ξένος καὶ τὸ φαίνω, ὁ ἐν τοῖς ξένοις τόποις φαινόμενος: καὶ Δημοφὼν, ὁ ἐν τῷ δήμῷ φαινόμενος καὶ τὰ ὅμοια ὁμοίως: Τ. Gaisford (ed) *Etymologicum Magnum*, 610.8-30, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1848 (repr. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1967),

¹⁶⁶ Ps.-Zonaras, Lexicon 1416.5: Ξενοφῶν. κύριον. παρὰ τὸ ξένος καὶ τὸ φόνος. ὁ ἐν τοῖς ξένοις τόποις φονευόμενος:;"Ξενοφῶν, ὁ ἐν τοῖς ξένοις νήφων, τοῦτ' ἔστιν εὐχόμενος· ἢ ὁ ἐν τοῖς ξένοις τόποις φονευόμενος": Etymologicum Gudianum 415.10.

¹⁶⁷ Theodore Prodromos, *The Ignorant of Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, 31.87-89.

In this passage, Prodromos also makes a playful reference to Plato's Cratylus, in which Plato discusses and mocks different etymological approaches. One position is presented by Hermogenes, who thinks that names are assigned according to custom and that there is no direct connection between the nature of things and their names. According to Cratylus, conversely, all names derived from a divine name giver and indicate the true nature of the thing named. Things or persons whose names are improperly assigned do not have the right to have that name. Socrates takes a middle position and argues that original names have divine origin, but that they may alter over the time. He also claims that names can be given either correctly, in which case they indicate the true nature of the thing, or incorrectly, when a true nature is not necessarily signified by the name.¹⁶⁸ In his *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed* Grammarian, Prodromos seems to mock both Cratylus's position and the etymological practice of his adversary, when he underlines that he is aware of many persons named Xenophon who died neither abroad nor violently. For that reason, one has to either remove their name or consider them unworthy to be called Xenophon in order to escape logical inconsistency.¹⁶⁹ It goes without doubt that Prodromos used these references not simply to mock an ignorant grammarian and entertain his audience, but also to use the opportunity to show off his own learning.

Prodromos's concern with etymological practice is also attested in *For the Color Green*, where he criticizes the unnamed scholar for being incapable to conduct etymological interpretation properly:

So, we have said and demonstrated – and perhaps correctly! – that you, suffering from some unknown madness, tried to accuse the color purple-red in that you derived it etymologically from murder, unaware of the fact that it is possible to give an alternative etymology and claim that it derives from the word "to radiate", since it is of the most radiant kind of appearance, and thus you have perverted the entire discourse.

Οὕτω μὲν ἡμῖν περὶ τούτων εἴρηταί τε καὶ ἀποπέφανται καὶ ὀρθῶς ἴσως, σὺ δ' οὐκ οἶδ' ὅτι παθών, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, τό τε φοινικοῦν διαβάλλειν ἐπικεχείρηκας, οἶς ἐκ τοῦ φόνου ἠτυμολόγηκας, μὴ εἰδὼς ὅτι δύναταί τις καὶ

¹⁶⁸ George A. Kennedy, "Language and Meaning in Archaic and Classical Greece," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1, ed. George A. Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 86-87. ¹⁶⁹ Prodromos, *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, (ed. Migliorini) 31.83-87.

ἀντετυμολογεῖν αὐτὸ ἐκ τοῦ φαίνειν διὰ τὸ φανότατον τῆς μορφῆς, καὶ τὸν ὅλον λόγον κατεμετάλλευσας.¹⁷⁰

The ridiculing of the idea that "red" ($\varphi \circ i v i \kappa \circ \tilde{v} v$) could be derived from murder ($\varphi \circ v \circ \zeta$), resembles Prodromos's etymological concerns expressed in *The Ignorant*.

Finally, Prodromos rebukes the inept *grammatikos* for his inability to provide proper critical assessment of poems, which is the most important task of a grammarian. Prodromos mockingly interrogates the incompetent teacher about which of the poets he prefers the most. His adversary would only seemingly give the correct answer, if he says that he endorses Homer above all other poets as the wisest, and then Hesiod after him. For Prodromos this was apparently a trick question, as he instantly refutes this stance. He explains that Homer is useless because according to Plato, young people should not be instructed in Homeric poetry, which is full of various kinds of wicked images, and that Hesiod's *Works and Days* are more advantageous for farmers and sailors, who are not even able to understand them, rather than for teachers.¹⁷¹

According to Dionysios Thrax, the critical assessment of poems "is the noblest part of grammatical art".¹⁷² However, as Dionysios does not specifically explain what critical assessment of poems entails, we must turn again to the commentary tradition for further clarification in order to better understand the basis of Prodromos's criticism. According to most scholiasts, the critical assessment of poems is the key part of the grammatical art, because it requires in-depth knowledge of all previous parts of grammar.¹⁷³ It is expected from a grammarian not to assess the literary quality of poems, but rather to evaluate them as a craftsman in the art of grammar based on words, meter, history, form, composition, proper meaning, arrangement, order, and disposition. Therefore, as the grammarian is not a poet, he needs to refrain from any kind of aesthetical literary criticism and to be able, above all, to discern forgeries from authentic poems. For scholiasts, this was apparently the main role of the grammarian, as well as the greatest concern, as many counterfeit works circulated under the name of famous authors.¹⁷⁴

Critical assessment was not limited to poetry alone, but also to works written in prose. For instance, some scholiasts indicate that grammarians are also versed in prose writers.

¹⁷⁰ Prodromos, To the Caesar or For the Color Green, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 384-387.

¹⁷¹ Prodromos, *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, (ed. Migliorini), 31-32.95-118.

¹⁷² Dionysius Thrax, Art of Grammar, 4.

¹⁷³ "Commentarius Melampodis Seu Diomedis," 15; "Scholia Vaticana", 161, 169; "Scholia Londinensia", 472.

¹⁷⁴ "Scholia Marciana", 303-304; "Scholia Londinensia", 471-472; "Commentariolus Byzantinus", 568.

However, they assessed texts in respect of their expertise in grammar and not in respect of more complex matters, such as Platonic doctrine or political issues.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that some scholiasts differentiate critical assessment from the comparison. While it is not clearly specified whether comparison is also one of the duties of grammarian, and what methods in particular the comparison would include, it is emphasized that one has first to know how to critically assess poems before being enabled to conduct comparison.¹⁷⁶

Taking all this into consideration, Prodromos's disapproval of the inept grammarian on the basis of the critical evaluation of poems becomes even more peculiar. First of all, Prodromos invites his adversary to make a comparison and to choose the wisest and the most useful poets in which he will train young students. The obvious answers are definitely first Homer and then Hesiod. Their works, especially the epics of Homer, represented a kind of grammatical inventory for instructors and therefore were mostly used in teaching practice.¹⁷⁷ However, it seems that Prodromos is not really satisfied with the supposed answers given by his inept grammarian. But does Prodromos really disapprove of using Homer and Hesiod in the school curriculum? Did he want to change the Byzantine educational system? Although this cannot be excluded, it is indeed quite hard to assume this, as Prodromos frequently boasts of his familiarity with their works and quotes both Homer and Hesiod for rhetorical purposes in his own texts. Most likely, he strives to demonstrate that his grammarian is incapable of explaining why these two classical authors are important to be taught to students.

Furthermore, for Prodromos one cannot be a grammarian without being previously well-instructed oneself. He advises the incompetent teacher to work actively on gaining knowledge - to start from the basics and to improve gradually, until he is able to seize the fortress of grammar (την τῆς γραμματικῆς καταλάβης ἀκρόπολιν). Prodromos also makes a brief reference to Hesiod's Works and Days by saying that gods put sweat before virtue and mockingly argues that while Hesiod was made wise by the Muses by being granted a laurel wand, it would only be just if an inept grammarian would be struck with a thick pomegranate stick because of his stupidity.¹⁷⁸ Although this advice resembles an excerpt from Lucian's Professor of Public Speaking, it is striking that another twelfth-century Byzantine author had similar remarks regarding learning and teaching grammar. John Tzetzes employs the same ethical topos from Hesiod to emphasize the necessity of laborious work and describes in

¹⁷⁵ "Scholia Marciana", 301; "Scholia Londinensia", 448.¹⁷⁶ "Scholia Marciana", 303; "Scholia Londinensia", 471.

¹⁷⁷ Browning, "Teachers", 96-98.

¹⁷⁸ Prodromos, The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini), 32-33.117-123, 131-136; Lucian, A Professor of Public Speaking, 135-45.

detail the toilsome and painful road to be followed by the one who strives to master grammar. Tzetzes, like Prodromos, often expressed his dissatisfaction with the teaching practice of less qualified contemporaries.¹⁷⁹ Although this might point to a widespread issue in the Byzantine teaching practice, at the same time, these complaints conveniently served these Byzantine intellectuals to promote their own teaching abilities and authority.

The basis on which Prodromos requests his grammarian to make a critical assessment is surprising, since most of the scholiasts agree that the grammarian should not conduct literary criticism and assess which author or poem is better, but rather focus on characteristics of language and composition to determine the authenticity of poems. Was he mocking inept grammarians, because they did not even understand that they should possess this kind of knowledge, or was he challenging the traditional role of the grammarian? I am prone to believe that the second is the case. For Prodromos, it was not enough for a good grammarian to have a superficial understanding of language and forms; rather, a grammarian required indepth knowledge of matters beyond the scope of grammar. This supposition might also be corroborated by Prodromos's sarcastic comment that the inept grammarian is "appointed to indicate the forms alone and meanings of etymologies, and not, however, to philosophize about them in a more accomplished manner" (τύπους η γαρ υποδεικνύειν μόνους έτυμολογιῶν καὶ ἐμφάσεις τούτω προέκειτο, οὐ μέντοι φιλοσοφεῖν περὶ τούτων τὰ τελεώτατα).¹⁸⁰ It seems that to a certain extent Prodromos's stance aligns with Sextus Empiricus, according to whom grammarians are not capable of conducting proper critical assessment of poetry and prose, as they are not specialists in any of the fields in which these works are produced, such as mathematics, music, physics, or medicine.¹⁸¹ However, while for Sextus Empiricus all grammarians are too incompetent to have any deeper understanding of other disciplines, Prodromos's negative evaluation was restricted to a limited group of incompetent grammarians, or rather to how grammar was taught in his time.

When writing this piece, Prodromos may have had in mind a particular teacher, perhaps the same person whom he attacked on the basis of his understanding of colors in *For the Color Green*. However, as there is no evidence that can corroborate this, it can be rather speculated that the incompetent grammarian was a prototype for an entire group of incompetent educators to which this invective could be easily extended. Based on Prodromos's refutation, he challenges the traditional role of the good grammarian, which

¹⁷⁹ Lucian, A Professor of Public Speaking, 135-45; Baukje van den Berg, "John Tzetzes as Didactic Poet and Learned Grammarian," 295-301.

¹⁸⁰ Prodromos, The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, (ed. Migliorini), 31.74-90.

¹⁸¹ Sextus Empiricus, Against the Grammarians, 172-173.

should not be assumed by his contemporary teachers. Even though the scholiasts on Dionysius Thrax argue that the grammar teacher should not assess poems as a literary critic, for Prodromos he should. The commentary tradition does not expect a grammarian to be versed in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy; at the same time, for Prodromos this is a must. For Sextus Empiricus, all grammar teachers are incompetent in matters that go beyond basic grammatical skills, while for Prodromos this is not the case. Based on his arguments, it seems that Prodromos implicitly presents himself as a role model of the excellent teacher.

The line between the grammarian and the philosopher seems to be blurred and therefore, the excellent grammarian has to possess also higher philosophical erudition to provide the best possible education for his students. However, this is not the case only for the grammarian. As we have seen, the ideal philosopher should also be able to read the text aloud according to the rules of prosody. He should also be competent in rhetoric and, when composing arguments, be careful as to how he employs quotations from various poets. The same goes for the unskilled doctor. Besides obviously necessary practical and theoretical knowledge of medicine, a good doctor must demonstrate his rhetorical mastery by correct usage of quotations from poets and writers. Prodromos also expects a good doctor to be familiar and versed in more complex philosophical teaching. Based on the attacks of incompetent professionals in these works, it can be seen that Prodromos expects them to go beyond their expertise in specific disciplines and display overall erudition.

1.3.5 For the Color Green

The treatise *To the Caesar or For the Color Green* represents a critique of a written piece about colors authored by one of Prodromos's contemporaries. As previously mentioned, the text is addressed to an unnamed Caesar, likely Nikephoros Bryennios, the husband of Anna Komnene. In terms of its invective tone and humorous style, it closely resembles three prose invectives – *Philoplaton, Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, and *Executioner or Doctor* – which I have previously discussed. But unlike the other three prose invectives, where attacks on incompetent individuals are more general, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green* predominantly focuses on refuting a specific individual on a particular subject.

Right from the start, it is evident that Prodromos aims to distinguish himself from those who previously discussed the matter, as their philosophical approach may suffice for ordinary people, whereas he chooses a different path. His intellectual reaction is triggered by an individual who praised the superiority of white and black over other colors, and more broadly, against those who share this view. As a defender of truth, Prodromos addresses this issue, even if it goes against the wishes of the Caesar, and humorously states that he will advocate on behalf of the colors green and purple. Here, again we detect Prodromos intention to differentiate between the "in-group" to which he belongs, and the "out-group" that he wants to discredit.¹⁸²

In the initial argument, Prodromos explains that four colors – white (τὸ λευκόν), black (τὸ μέλαν), red (τὸ φοινικοῦν), and green (τὸ πράσινον) – clearly fall under the same subordinate genus, which is color ($\tau \delta \chi \rho \tilde{\omega} \mu \alpha$) that further belongs to quality ($\pi \sigma \omega \delta \nu$) – one of the highest genera. The problem for Prodromos is that some learned men consider white together with black as being "simple, elementary, and the cause of other" colors (ἀπλοῦν καὶ στοιγειῶδες καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις αἴτιον), since it is through their mixture in different proportions that the other colors are produced. ¹⁸³ However, it seems that Prodromos's opponent holds the commonly accepted view that could be traced back to Aristotle and beyond. Thus, in Aristotle's Sense and Sensibilia, intermediate colors are described as a mixture of white and black (τὰ γρώματα ἐκ λευκοῦ καὶ μέλανος μίξεώς ἐστιν). The intermediate species between white and black include most probably yellow (ξανθόν), and certainly red (φοινικοῦν), purple (άλουργόν), green (πράσινον), and dark blue (κυανοῦν). All other tertiary colors are mixed from these.¹⁸⁴

A similar view on this matter can also be found in the work of Prodromos's contemporary, Michael of Ephesus (c. 1090-1055). In the commentary on pseudo-Aristotle's treatise On Colors, he explains that the author (whom he believed to be Aristotle), in his theory of colors "does not seek the final cause, but their productive and material cause" (où ζητεῖ τὸ τελικὸν αἴτιον ἀλλὰ τὴν ποιητικὴν τούτων αἰτίαν καὶ τὴν ὑλικήν). Moreover, as he explains, "there are only two simple colors" ($\delta \psi \sigma \tau \dot{\alpha} \delta \pi \lambda \tilde{\alpha} \epsilon \tilde{i} v \alpha \tau \gamma \rho \dot{\omega} \mu \alpha \tau \alpha$), white and black. While all elements (i.e., earth, water, air, and fire) in themselves are white by nature (tà στοιχεῖα καθ' αὐτὰ τῃ φύσει λευκά εἰσιν), black belongs to their transformation into each

¹⁸² Prodromos, To the Caesar or For the Color Green, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 380-381.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* 380-381.

¹⁸⁴ Aristotle, Sense and Sensibilia 442a12-25. Richard Sorabji also explains that the Greek words for color may be used to indicate both the color and the hue. Therefore, "λευκόν" does not only mean "white", but it could also mean "light-colored" or "bright", and "μέλαν", besides black, can signify "dark-colored" or "dark". Richard Sorabji, "Aristotle, Mathematics, and Colour," Classical Quarterly 22, no. 2 (1972): 293-308.

other (τὸ δὲ μέλαν ἐν τῆ πρὸς ἄλληλα τούτων μεταβολῆ). All other colors arise from the mixture of these two (τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα τῆ τούτων μίξει γίνεσθαι).¹⁸⁵

Prodromos, however, initially disputes this view. In response to the problem at hand, Prodromos sarcastically presents three potential solutions to his opponent. First, he inquires if his opponent aims to create a new principal genus that will be added to the existing ten highest genera. But if this is the case, Prodromos mocks his adversary: "first of all I am at a loss concerning how this genus passed by the sharp mind of Aristotle, but was uncovered by you" ($\dot{\alpha}\pi o\rho\tilde{\omega} \tau \alpha \pi\rho\tilde{\omega}\tau \eta \nu$ Ἀριστοτέλους ἀξύτητα παρελθόν, ὑμῖν γε ἀπεκαλύφθη τοῦτο τὸ γένος). This solution also raises the issue of determining subaltern and specific species within this new genus. Second, he considers whether his opponent assigns white and black to a different genus, which is as ridiculous as the previous option. And finally, Prodromos inquires if his adversary considers them to belong to the same genus together with other colors. In Prodromos's words:

But if you are sane enough to categorize color as a genus to which white and the others belong: what demon persuaded you to accept that one member of a genus is the cause of the others, whereas another is an effect, even though philosophy initiates us into the realization that the advancement from a genus to its many species is equal in degree? You accept that they belong to the same genus but dishonor their equality in degree.

εἰ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο τέως ἐρρωμένως ἔχετε τοῦ νοοῦντος, τὸ τὸ χρῶμα κατηγορεῖν ὡς γένος καὶ τοῦ λευκοῦ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων· τίς ὑμᾶς ζυνέπεισε δαίμων τὸ μὲν τῶν ὁμογενῶν αἴτιον εἶναι, τὸ δ' αἰτιατόν γε ὁμολογεῖν, καὶ ταῦτα τῆς φιλοσοφίας ὁμότιμον εἶναι μυσταγωγούσης τὴν ἐκ τοῦ γένους τοῖς εἴδεσι προβολήν; οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ τό τε ὁμογενὲς ἀποδέχεσθε καὶ λυμαίνεσθε τῆ ἰσοτιμίą.¹⁸⁶

Prodromos bases his counterargument primarily on Aristotle's *Categories*. Simplicius, in his commentary on this work, explains that for Aristotle, one thing is prior to another in five ways: in terms of time (τὸν κατὰ χρόνον), nature (τὸν κατὰ φύσιν), order (τὸν κατὰ τάξιν),

¹⁸⁵ Michael of Ephesus, *Commentaries on De Coloribus*, in Vasiliki Papari, "Der Kommentar des Michael von Ephesos zur ps.-aristotelischen Schrift De coloribus / Περὶ χρωμάτων. Editio princeps", (Ph.D. diss., Universität Hamburg, 2013), 47-60, 47-48.

¹⁸⁶ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 380-381.

capacity (τὸν κατὰ δύναμιν), and cause (τὸν κατὰ αἰτίαν). Additionally, Aristotle identifies three ways in which things can be simultaneous. Firstly, things can be simultaneous in terms of time (ἄμα δὲ κατὰ τὸν χρόνον). Secondly, things can be simultaneous by nature (ἄμα τῷ φύσει), if they reciprocate in terms of the implication of existence, as long as they are not the cause of each other's existence, such as some relatives like double and half. Finally, simultaneous by nature are also co-ordinate species taken from the same genus (τὰ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ γένους ἀντιδιῃρημένα ἀλλήλοις), as they originate from the same division (τὰ κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν διαίρεσιν), such as bird, beast, and fish.¹⁸⁷

With this in mind, Prodromos argues that it is illogical to consider black and white, which belong to the same genus as other colors, as their cause, since this implication would suggest that black and white are prior to other colors. Nevertheless, Prodromos explains that even if one is to accept that white belongs to the same genus as other colors and still is their cause, this does not imply that white should be considered better than the other colors. For instance, even though a house is made from bricks, no one would assume that bricks are more valuable than the house. Also, although the earth as an element is part of the human being, it is certainly not better than the human. Prodromos continues further in the same fashion and says:

Indeed, if the lyre-player from Methymna could hold unconnected strings and unconnected pegs with his hands, he would not produce much of a melody. If, however, he would hold the composite object in his hands, "the truly beautiful lyre," as Homer puts it, he could perhaps even attract dolphins with his melody, ride over the waves and be saved.

καὶ χορδὰς μὲν μόνας καὶ μόνους κολλάβους εἴπερ ἀνὰ χεῖρας ὁ ἐκ Μηθύμνης θεῖτο κιθαρῷδός, οὐκ ἂν οὐδὲ πολλοστόν τι μέλος προήσεται· εἰ δὲ τὸ ξύνθετον μετὰ χεῖρας λάβοι, τὴν περικαλλέα καθ' Όμηρον κίθαριν, τάχα καὶ δελφῖνας ἕλξει τῇ μελῷδίᾳ καὶ ἰππάσεται ἐφ' ὑγρῶν καὶ σωθήσεται..¹⁸⁸

As discussed previously, Prodromos mentions Arion of Methymna in *The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*. However, in this case, Prodromos uses this mythical figure to

¹⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Categories*, 14b24-15a13; Simplicius, *Commentaries on Categories*, 421.

¹⁸⁸ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 382-383.

support a different argument. It is tempting to assume that Prodromos here subtly draws an analogy with Plato's *Phaedo*. When Simias challenges Socrates's argument on the immortality of the soul, he likens the material, composite, and earthly body to a lyre and its strings, and the soul to a harmony. He explains that just as the harmony ceases to exist when the lyre and its strings are destroyed, so also the soul discontinues its existence when the body dies.¹⁸⁹ Though probably not agreeing with Simias's stance, Prodromos seems to employ this analogy to create a masterful metaphor about the most valuable composite thing – the human being.

Prodromos acknowledges that black and white can be perceived as simple colors and cause of other colors, but he does not support the idea that they should be esteemed above composite colors. This perspective is evident in his second counterargument. He admires how his opponent has ingeniously and philosophically organized the colors, placing white and black at the extremes and green and purple in the middle. However, he rejects the notion that white, and by extension black, should be praised for being extremities, as this would imply that cowardice and audacity should also be celebrated for the same reason.¹⁹⁰

The same arrangement of colors that Pordromos supports, as we have seen above, is also found in Aristotle. This classification is based on the concept that white and black are perceived as contraries ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \dot{\epsilon} v \alpha v \tau i \alpha$). According to Aristotle, contraries signify the greatest difference that cannot be surpassed. Contraries must either fall under the same genus (e.g., white and black in terms of color), belong to opposite genera (e.g., justice and injustice in moral virtues), or stand as genera themselves (e.g., good and bad). Contraries that must be inherently present in the things they naturally occur in, such as odd and even in numbers, do not have anything intermediate between them. Conversely, contraries that do not need to be inherently present in the things they naturally occur in, like black and white in bodies, always have something intermediate between them. When these contraries manifest in things capable of embodying them, they can change from one into the other, as for instance, from white into black and vice versa.¹⁹¹

Furthermore, in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle explains that the contraries that have something intermediate between them change into each other through these intermediates. For instance, "in colors if we are to pass from white to black, we shall come sooner to crimson and gray than to black" ($\dot{\epsilon}v \chi p \dot{\omega} \mu \alpha \sigma iv \epsilon i$ [$\ddot{\eta} \xi \epsilon i$] $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa \tau \sigma \tilde{\nu} \lambda \epsilon \nu \kappa \sigma \tilde{\nu} \epsilon i \zeta \tau \tilde{\nu} \mu \epsilon \lambda \alpha \nu, \pi \rho \dot{\sigma} \tau \epsilon \rho \sigma \nu$

¹⁸⁹ Plato, *Phaedo*, 85e-86d.

¹⁹⁰ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 382-383.

¹⁹¹ Aristotle, *Categories* 12a1-25, 13a37-b11.

ήξει εἰς τὸ φοινικοῦν καὶ φαιὸν ἢ εἰς τὸ μέλαν). Therefore, intermediates must belong to the same genus as their contraries and "must be composed out of these contraries" (ἀνάγκη αὐτὰ συγκεῖσθαι ἐκ τούτων τῶν ἐναντίων).¹⁹² Moreover, Aristotle adds, since each species is derived from the genus and the constitutive differences, in the case of contrary species of the same genus, their differentiae will be prior contraries. Thus, for example, the differentiae of white and black – piercing (διακριτικὸν) and compressing (συγκριτικόν) – are prior contraries. But since intermediate species must be composed of the genus and certain differentiae, these differentiae cannot be the primary contraries because every color would then be either white and black, but differentiae that are intermediate between primary contraries (e.g., piercing and compressing).¹⁹³

Keeping in mind these two contrary differentiae of white and black, Prodromos presents another counterargument again rooted in Aristotle's teachings. He argues that it is commonly acknowledged that the most aesthetically pleasing things are those that are pleasurable to the senses. But this cannot be said in the case of white and black: "For the former, i.e. white, dilates the eye, dissolves and scatters it, and the latter utterly contracts and gathers it" (tò μ èv yàp διακρίνει tỳv ὄψιν καὶ διαχεῖ καὶ σκεδάννυσι – τὸ λ ευκόν, τὸ δὲ – τὸ μέλαν – συγκρίνει καὶ συνάγει παντάπασι). Prodromos argues that white and black not only lack aesthetic appeal, but are also harmful to vision. Additionally, yellow (ξανθόν) and red (φοινικοῦν), which are close to white, as well as gray (φαιὸν) and blue (κυανοῦν), which are close to black, are also unpleasant to the eye. On the contrary, green ($\pi \rho \dot{\alpha} \sigma v \sigma v$), being the color closest to the center and the most balanced blend of white and black, is considered by Prodromos to be the most beautiful (κάλλιστόν) and worthy (τιμιώτατον), closely followed by purple ($\dot{\alpha}\lambda$ oupy $\dot{o}\nu$).¹⁹⁴ In this way, Prodromos clearly aligns his views with Aristotle's arguments regarding sense perception as expressed in On the Soul. According to Aristotle, the special perceptible things ($i\delta\iota\alpha \alpha i\sigma\theta\eta\tau\dot{\alpha}$) – which are inherently perceptible and specific to one sense – are most pleasing to the senses not in their pure and unmixed form, but when they are in proportion and harmony. Extremes, such as overly bright or dark colors, can harm the senses, while a harmonious blend of contrasting elements brings pleasure.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1057a18-b5.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 1057b4-34.

¹⁹⁴ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 382-383.

¹⁹⁵ Aristotle, On the Soul 426a27-b8. According to Aristotle, all perceptible things are divided into three types: two are perceptible in themselves ($\kappa \alpha \theta' \alpha \dot{\upsilon} \tau \dot{\alpha}$) – special perceptibles ($\tilde{\iota} \delta \iota \alpha \, \alpha \dot{\upsilon} \theta \eta \tau \dot{\alpha}$) and common perceptibles ($\kappa \iota \iota \dot{\alpha} \dot{\upsilon} \dot{\sigma} \upsilon \mu \beta \epsilon \beta \eta \kappa \dot{\sigma} \zeta$). Special perceptibles are those that pertain to one sense, such as color to sight, sound to hearing, flavor to taste, or odor to smell. Common perceptibles are those like movement, number, figure, and magnitude, which can be perceived by several different senses. Accidental perceptibles occur, for instance, when we attribute a characteristic such as Socrates

Through a continuous display of his extensive knowledge of Aristotle's works, Prodromos strategically works to discredit his rival's familiarity with Aristotle and assert his own intellectual superiority. This is particularly exemplified in Prodromos's confrontation with an unnamed opponent who wrongly asserts that the heaven is blue, the earth is black, and water is white. Thus, he argues:

You who are so well versed in physics, answer me this much: Do you assign a color to air or not? I believe that you do not, out of reverence for the man you proclaim to be your teacher, Aristotle, who shows that it is devoid of all color. If air – the body that surrounds us and is so liable to external influence and change – is devoid of all color, it must be even more so with that etherian body that is not liable to external influence. But even if we would agree that heaven has a color, the most impossible of questions will arise: for how can heaven, being a simple and completely non-composite body, not be allotted a simple color, i.e. white or black, but the composite color blue? As for my part, I would stoutly maintain that none of the simple bodies has color: not fire, not water, not earth.

ἀπόκριναι γοῦν μοι ὁ φυσικώτατος σύ· χρῶμα δίδως τῷ ἀερίῷ σώματι ἢ οὐχί; ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν οἶμαι δοίης αἰδοῖ τοῦ, ὃν διδάσκαλον κομπάζεις, Ἀριστοτέλους, ἀχρωμάτιστον εἶναι αὐτὸ[ν] ἀποφαινομένου. εἰ δὲ ἀὴρ ἀχρωμάτιστον τὸ περὶ ἡμᾶς τοῦτο σῶμα τὸ παθητὸν καὶ ἀλλοιωτόν, πολλῷ πλέον τὸ αἰθέριον ἐκεῖνο καὶ ἀπαθές· ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ κεχρῶσθαι φαῖμεν τὸν οὑρανόν, ἐνταῦθα τὸ ἀπορώτατον ἀνακύψει τῶν ζητημάτων· πῶς γὰρ ἁπλοῦν σῶμα ὃν ὁ οὑρανὸς καὶ ἀσυνθετώτατον οὐχ ἁπλοῦν εἰλήχει καὶ χρῶμα, τὸ λευκὸν τυχὸν ἢ τὸ μέλαν, ἀλλὰ ξύνθετον τὸ κυάνεον; ὡς ἐγώγε οὐδ' ἄλλο οὐδὲν τῶν ἁπλῶν σωμάτων κεχρῶσθαι διατενοῦμαι· οὐ πῦρ, οὐχ ὕδωρ, οὐ γῆν.¹⁹⁶

After a clear exposition of his stance, Prodromos explains that his rival cannot base his argument on a single verse from Homer, as the poet interchangeably uses various colors to

to a white object we see. Here, Socrates is incidental to the white perceptible object. Aristotle, *On the Soul* 418a7-25. See also: Aristotle, *Sense and Sensibilia* 442a16-17.

¹⁹⁶ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 382-385.

describe the sea, such as "gray" (πόλιον), "black" (μέλαν), and "murky" (ἠεροειδές). This inconsistency in the choice of colors, according to Prodromos, either supports the idea that water and air are colorless or suggests that water and air, being simple bodies, can receive various hues such as "murky, violet, black, gray and all the other colors that can be gathered from the rhapsody" (τὸ ἠεροειδές, τὸ ἰοειδές, τὸ μέλαν, τὸ πολιόν, καὶ ἄλλα ἅττα ὁπόσα τῆς ῥαψφδίας ἐστὶ μεταφέρειν).¹⁹⁷

Prodromos's viewpoint on this matter is somewhat more clearly elaborated in one of his other works. In his commentary on John of Damascus's canon on the Holy Lights (τὰ "Άγια Φῶτα), Prodromos explains why the Red Sea is referred to as black by the hymnographer, even though black and red are different colors. According to Prodromos, water, just like air, is colorless (ἀχρωμάτιστον) and shapeless (ἀσχημάτιστον) by its own nature (κατὰ μὲν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν). However, when water is poured into vessels of a certain shape and color, it takes on the shape and color of those vessels. For example, if water is poured into a square blue vessel, it will appear blue and square, and if poured into a round green vessel, it will appear green and round. Therefore, as Prodromos explains, the Red Sea appears reddish on its surface and towards the shores due to the existence of red stones beneath the waters. However, the seas deep inside themselves appear black due to lack of visibility, since the depth does not allow sunlight to penetrate the seabed that might also be covered by red rocks. This is why the entire sea and all the depths are commonly classified as black, even if the material of the seabed is of different colors.¹⁹⁸

Prodromos's argument in *For the Color Green*, as well as his overall understanding of the colorless nature of air and water, is again heavily influenced by Aristotelian thought. In *On the Soul*, Aristotle explains that air, water, and some other solid bodies are "transparent" (διαφανές). Transparent things are those that are not visible in themselves, but owe their visibility to the color of something else and thus they are colored accidently. Air and water owe their transparency to "a certain inherent nature" (τις φύσις ἐνυπάρχουσα) that could also

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 384-385.

¹⁹⁸ Theodore Prodromos, Commentary on the Canons of Jerusalem and John of Damascus, 101, in Theodori Prodromi Commentarios in Carmina Sacra Melodorum Cosmae Hierosolymitani et Ioannis Damasceni Ad Fidem Codd. MSS. Primum Edidit: In Qvinqvagesimum Sacerdotii Natalem Leonis XIII Pont. Max, ed. Henrik M. Stevenson (Romae: Bibliotheca Vaticana, 1888) A similar stance could be also found in Aristotle's On Generation of Animals (779b31-33), where Aristotle explains that the sea at its surface is light blue ($\gamma\lambda\alpha\nu\kappa\delta\nu$), in the middle watery ($\imath\delta\alpha\tau\omega\delta\epsilon\varsigma$), and at its bottom black ($\mu\epsilon\lambda\alpha\nu$) and deep blue ($\kappa\nu\alpha\nuo\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon\varsigma$) due to its depth ($\delta\iota\alpha\beta \delta\theta o\varsigma$). I owe this reference to Katerina Ierodiakonou, "Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on Colour" in The Parva Naturalia in Greek, Arabic and Latin Aristotelianism: Supplementing the Science of the Soul, ed. Börje Bydén and Filip Radovic, vol. 17, Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 77-90, 84.

be found "in the upper eternal body" (ἐν τῷ ἀιδίῳ τῷ ἄνω σώματι).¹⁹⁹ This theory is further elaborated in *Sense and Sensibilia*, where Aristotle clarifies that light (φῶς) is the inherent nature of indeterminate bodies (ἀόριστα) such as water and air, while color is inherently present in determinate bodies (ὡρισμένα). Thus, according to Aristotle, "air and water appear to be colored" (φαίνεται δὲ καὶ ἀὴρ καὶ ὕδωρ χρωματιζόμενα) because they are indeterminate bodies that participate in color accidentally, exhibiting varying hues that depend on viewing distance and other underlying determinate objects.²⁰⁰

In the argument discussed above, it can be seen how Prodromos employs Aristotle's teachings to challenge his opponent's belief that heaven is blue, the earth black, and water white. He entertains the notion that, theoretically, heaven, being a non-composite entity, could possess a simple color like white or black. This stance likely reflects the prevailing view held by Peripatetics after Aristotle and followed among Prodromos's scholarly peers such as Michael of Ephesus. As discussed above, Michael of Ephesus, in his commentary on the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On Colors*, asserts that the four elements – Earth, Water, Air, and Fire – are inherently white, while black appears in the process of their transformation into each other.²⁰¹ However, Prodromos diverges from this perspective by explicitly stating that none of the four basic elements have an inherent color. This assertion is rooted in Aristotle's explanation in *On Generation and Corruption*, where Aristotle argues that black, white, and consequently color in general, do not inherently belong to four fundamental elements. Instead, four simple bodies are qualified only by two pairs of tangible contrary differentiae: hot and cold, as well as dry and moist.²⁰²

The notion that simple bodies are colorless in themselves and that they only derive their color accidentally is also evident in the following passage. After removing the blue tunic

²⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Sense and Sensibilia*, 439a26-b14; Ierodiakonou, "Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on Colour", 82.

²⁰¹ Michael of Ephesus, *Commentary on De Coloribus*, 47-48; Ierodiakonou, "Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on Colour", 87-89.

²⁰² Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption*, 329b6-16, 330a30-b7; Ierodiakonou, "Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on Colour", 87.

from heaven with his argument, Prodromos proceeds to the next step – taking off the black garment from earth put upon it by his rival:

Let me put it simply: do you want to remove this black garment that you put on many-colored earth yourself, or do you prefer that I cut it up with the blade of discourse and tear it off? Surely, you will take it off yourself. For why would the mother of all things wear black, even if she were drunk out of her mind?

καὶ τὸ ὅλον φάναι, παντοδαπὴν βούλει καὶ τὴν γῆν ἀποδῦσαι ὃ περιέθου ταύτην μέλαν χιτώνιον, ἢ ἡμεῖς γε τῆ τοῦ λόγου μαχαίρα φθάσαντες αὐτὸ περιρρήξομεν; ἀποδύσεις γε πάντως αὐτός· τί γὰρ καὶ πεπαρῷνηκυῖα ἡ παμμήτωρ μελαμφορήσει; ²⁰³

Prodromos argues that no one would assume that the earth is black considering the variety of colors it displays. He mockingly wonders why anyone would need to use arguments and words to prove something so self-evident. Additionally, Prodromos uses the natural process of aging and decay, most likely inspired by Aristotle's *Generation of Animals*, as an example to discredit the supremacy of the color white. Thus, Prodromos explains that human hair and facial features transform from vibrant colors, such as yellowish-red (πυρρόν), vermilion (ἐρυθρόν), and scarlet (κόκκινον) in youth, into ochre (ἀχρόν) and white (λευκόν) in old age – a color that ultimately symbolizes the weakness of nature (ἀσθένημα φύσεως). The same process can be seen in the case of corn – in its blossoming stage, the ear of corn is endowed with a green color, while as it approaches the end of its lifecycle, it turns white.²⁰⁴

Continuing in the same fashion, Prodromos focuses on the beauty and symbolic value behind colors like green and red, as opposed to white. He points out how nature is enriched with plants and fruits that come in a spectrum of green and red shades. Furthermore, he points out how rubies and emeralds are emblematic of life and growth, while purple symbolizes the highest rulership. Additionally, he argues that the surface of Earth is more aesthetically

²⁰³ Prodromos, To the Caesar or For the Color Green, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 384-385.

²⁰⁴ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 384-385; The whiteness as the symbol of decay can also be found in Aristotle. See: Aristotle, *On Generation of Animals*, 784a23-785a6.

pleasing in spring when it is adorned with blooming herbs and plants, compared to the white appearance it takes on in winter when covered in snow.²⁰⁵

To the Caesar or For the Color Green is a treatise that embodies Prodromos's unique and unprecedented intellectual reaction to an individual who praised the superiority of white and black over other colors. Through a masterful display of his knowledge of Aristotle's works, Prodromos aims to discredit his rival's familiarity with Aristotle and assert his own intellectual superiority. By employing a humorous tone and clever wordplay, Prodromos refutes his opponent's views and presents a counterargument that are for the most part rooted in Aristotle's Categories, Sense and Sensibilia, On the Soul, Generation and Corruption. Moreover, while Michael of Ephesus, a scholarly peer of Prodromos, wrote a commentary on the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise On Colors, Prodromos takes a different approach. Not only does he not use this work, but he also rejects the mainstream Peripatetic views followed by Michael of Ephesus. Instead, Prodromos closely follows Aristotle's own works and argues that none of the four basic elements have inherent color, diverging from the mainstream Peripatetic tradition after Aristotle. Having in mind Michael of Ephesus philosophical and exegetical activity, it could be tempting perhaps to assume that Prodromos's criticism was directed towards him. Yet, this is just a mere speculation as there is no other existing internal textual evidence that can further corroborate this. Furthermore, since Prodromos addresses his work to Caesar, we might also speculate that Prodromos's intention to defend the truth and the scientific inquiry is not entirely innocent, but served as a strategy to attract a possible patron.

1.4 Cure and Punishment through Invective

The cure and punishment for Prodromos's opponents is reflected in his examination and vicious rhetorical attacks, in which stereotypical figures and rival professionals were mocked and refuted. That this is the case is particularly evident from the following sentence in *The Executioner, or Doctor*, with which Prodromos announces the examination process: "But now I propose, as the saying goes, the fig-tree as aid, [that is to say], the rational arguments against the one who is irrational" (Nῦν δὲ ἄλλο τὴν συκίνην, ὅ φασιν, ταύτην ἐπικουρίαν τοὺς λόγους κατὰ τοῦ ἀλόγου προβάλλομαι).²⁰⁶ The expression "fig-tree as aid" (συκίνη ἐπικουρία) is proverbially used to designate something that is of weak or useless

²⁰⁵ Prodromos, *To the Caesar or For the Color Green*, (ed. trans. Cullhed), 382-383.

²⁰⁶ Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini), 51.42-43.

assistance. This understanding derives from the perception of the fig-tree as a feeble plant that produces useless wood.²⁰⁷ In this context, Prodromos employs this proverb to imply that his intelligent arguments against a non-intelligent doctor would be of little or no help for curing his stupidity. From this, it is not difficult to conclude that Prodromos's main intention in his prose satirical invectives is not to genuinely help and enlighten his adversaries, but rather to utterly denigrate them and expose their stupidity to public ridicule. The same can be observed certainly in the case of his poem *Against Barys*, in which he denigrates his accuser, as well as in *For the Color Green*, which systematically disparages his ignorant peer. This kind of intellectual "remedy" allows Prodromos to display his own superiority, which ultimately serves toward creating and maintaining a positive self-image.

Medical treatment in the form of rational arguments is also offered to our ignorant Platonist. Prodromos heals the drunkenness and vomiting of the rhetorical syllogisms of his opponent with intelligent reasoning. However, as a payment for his services, Prodromos expects from his opponent not to insult Plato's books anymore.²⁰⁸ This expectation is clearly stated in the concluding passage of *Philoplaton*:

You, my friend, have the full medical treatment, for by now your vomit has been treated; so, pay me also my reward, pay for the cure, put down the book from the hand, yes, in the name of fair voyage and swiftness of winds, put it down. Should you not want to put it down, insult the book, even if in front of many; but paraphrase the words of Homer, "in silence by yourself", so that Plato does not learn thereof. Plato by no means [will learn of it], because long ago "his soul fleeting from his limbs went to Hades," but rather one of his more noble friends, who, utterly annoyed at this matter, will tear the book from your hands and he will give you many fist-punches on the head.

ἀπέχεις, ὦ φιλότης, τὴν ἰατρείαν, ἤδη σοι ὁ ἔμετος τεθεράπευται, ἀπόδος μοι καὶ αὐτὸς τὸν μισθόν, ἀπόδος τὰ ἰατήρια, κατάθου τῆς χειρὸς τὸ βιβλίον, ναί, ὦ πρὸς εὕπλοιαν καὶ φορὰν ἀνέμων, κἀτάθου· εἰ δὲ μὴ βούλοιο καταθέσθαι,

²⁰⁷ Σύκινον: ἀσθενές. καὶ παροιμία· Συκίνη μάχαιρα, ἀντὶ τοῦ συκοφάντις. καὶ ἑτέρα παροιμία· Συκίνη ἐπικουρία, ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνωφελῶν. ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ καθήμενοι τὴν συκίνην ἐπικουρίαν, τοὺς στρατιώτας, προσδεχόμενοι. ὅτι συκίνη ναῦς τὸ εὐτελὲς δηλοῖ. καὶ ζήτει ἐν τῷ ἐγένετο καὶ Μάνδρωνι": (Suda Lexicon 1324, line 4) | "Συκίνη ἐπικουρία: ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀσθενὴς καὶ ἀνωφελής· ἀπὸ μεταφορᾶς τῆς συκῆς· ἡ γὰρ συκῆ χαῦνον φυτόν ἐστι καὶ ἀνωφελῆ ζύλα ποιεĩ": Michael Apostolius, Collectio paroemiarum, 15. 81. 1 | "Συκίνη βακτηρία: καί· Συκίνη ἐπικουρία: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσθενῶς βοηθούντων": Macarius Chrysocephalus, Paroemiae, 7, 83, 2.

κἂν γοῦν μὴ ἐπὶ πολλῶν, ἐνύβριζε τῷ βιβλίῳ, ἀλλ' ἵνα τὸ Όμηρικὸν παρωδήσω «σιγῃ ἐπὶ σεῖο», ἵνα μὴ Πλάτων γε πύθηται, ἢ Πλάτων μὲν οὐδαμῶς, πρὸ πολλοῦ γὰρ αὐτῷ ἡ ψυχὴ «ἐκ ῥεθέων πταμένη, Ἄιδος δὲ βεβήκει»,²⁰⁹ τῶν δέ τις γενναιοτέρων ἑταίρων αὐτοῦ, ὃς καὶ δυσχεράνας ὅτι μάλιστα πρὸς τὸ πρᾶγμα, τό τε βιβλίον ἀποσπάσει σου τῶν χειρῶν καὶ πολλοὺς κατὰ κόρρης κονδύλους ἐντρίψεται.²¹⁰

Prodromos assumes the role of doctor and healer of the learned society in twelfth-century Byzantium by providing his opponent with medical treatment and offering the cure for his intellectual state. Prodromos's need to purify the intellectual circles of hypocrites and incompetent professionals is perfectly reflected in this humorous passage. After delivering his fierce invective, Prodromos expects that his opponent will be so humiliated that he will not dare to insult the works of Plato with his ignorance, at least not publicly. In this way, Prodromos seems to censure his opponent's ability to teach and transmit his Platonic (non)expertise within Constantinopolitan learned circles. Even though his opponent should not be afraid of Plato, who could certainly not hear him, Prodromos warns him that he might be heard by one of Plato's "more noble friends" (τις γενναιοτέρων ἑταίρων), i.e., by someone more proficient in Platonic works, including Prodromos himself, and thus risks being severely punished for his ignorance. Prodromos's advice and punishment mirrors those offered by Lucian in his Ignorant Book-Collector. Here Lucian also recommends the ignorant book-collector not to offend the books by reading them, and also gives an example of how once Demetrius the Cynic tore apart the book of an ignorant person, as this act was less offensive towards the book than a foolish person reading it.²¹¹

Besides the healing offered through his learned refutations, which has been discussed in the previous section, Prodromos also provides a more humorous medicine to the incompetent professionals, especially in his three prose invectives. Thus, for instance, in *The Executioner or Doctor*, he casts a curse upon them to fall into their own hands so that in this way they might be destroyed swiftly (ἐπαρῶμαι αὐτοῖς ἄλλο μὲν οὐδὲν τῶν δεινῶν, ἢ ταῖς σφῶν ἑαυτῶν ἐμπεσεῖσθαι χερσίν).²¹² Prodromos adds another curse and wishes that inept doctors should die a wicked death, as they bestow sorrows upon people.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Homer, *Iliad* 22.362.

²¹⁰ Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, (ed. Migliorini), 71.124-132.

²¹¹Lucian, The Ignorant Book Collector, 196-197.

²¹² Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini), 51-52.42-50.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 55.187-190.

Prodromos utilized *psogos* to procure a positive self-image for himself and his close circle of friends, while denigrating inept intellectuals. Thus, for instance, in *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, besides advising an incompetent teacher to climb the fortress of grammar, starting from the basics, he sarcastically adds the following:

You, on the other hand, "may become water and land," as your poet says, if you are not already a mix of both, being made of clay when it comes to grammar. After we have left you to think of yourself as you wish, we will sing of another world hereafter.

Αλλὰ σὺ μὲν ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα γένοιο κατὰ τὸν σὸν ποιητήν, εἰ μὴ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν γε ἤδη πεφύρασαι, πήλινος ὢν τὰ γραμματικά. Ἡμεῖς δέ σε παρέντες, ὡς ἂν ἐθέλῃς διανοεῖσθαι περὶ σαυτοῦ, ἄλλον ἐντεῦθεν κόσμον ἀείσομεν.²¹⁴

By citing a verse from Homer's *Iliad*, Prodromos at the end of his work playfully casts a verdict on his opponent to perish in oblivion.²¹⁵ But even this might not be possible, because the incompetent grammarian is already so stupid that he is already made of clay. As Prodromos indicated earlier in his text, his opponent is so ignorant that he stands silent to his interrogation as a "statue of clay" ($\pi\eta\lambda$ ivoç ἀνδριάς).²¹⁶

This kind of abusive humor, including physical violence and threats, was popular in Byzantium. This is particularly evident, for instance, in the twelfth-century satire *Timarion*, where a humorous fight occurs between John Italos and Diogenes the Cynic in the underworld.²¹⁷ Although both Lucianic and Aristophanic influence can be detected in the mechanisms of how Prodromos's constructed abusive language in all his satirical works, it is important to underline that these works exemplify a broader cultural phenomenon and shed light on the comic sensibilities of Byzantine society. As noted by Lynda Garland, humor in Byzantium often took on an abusive and insulting nature. To a modern reader, this particular type of humor may come across as cruel and vulgar. Byzantines employed a wide array of techniques, such as mockery, puns, anecdotes, violent threats, and personal insults, to infuse humor into their lives. They reveled in poking fun at aspects like physical appearance,

²¹⁴ Prodromos, *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, (ed. Migliorini), 34.162-164.

²¹⁵ Homer, *Iliad* 7.100.

²¹⁶ Prodromos, *The Ignorant or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian*, line 93.

²¹⁷ Timarion, trans. Barry Baldwin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 72-74.

lifestyle choices, intellectual ignorance, commonplace situations, accidents, foreigners, and the ineptitude of government officials, intellectuals, and clergy alike.²¹⁸

Offering medical treatment and cures to the unnamed objects of ridicule, even if brutal and violent, can be considered to be part of a universal satirical language. This is particularly evident from Highet's reflections on the differences between invective and satire:

The man who writes an invective would be delighted if, after delivering it, he were told that his subject had been overwhelmed by shame and obloquy and had retired into oblivion. [...] As for satire, the satirist always asserts that he would be happy if he heard his victim had, in tears and self-abasement, permanently reformed, but he would in fact be rather better pleased if the fellow were pelted with garbage and ridden out of town on a rail. [...] The purpose of invective and lampooning is to destroy an enemy. [...] The purpose of satire is, through laughter and invective, to cure folly and to punish evil; but if it does not achieve this purpose, it is content to jeer at folly and to expose evil to bitter contempt.²¹⁹

Based on the modern perception of satire and invective, it will not be easy to classify Prodromos's prose invectives in any of these two categories. Prodromos does indeed offer cures for social folies and aims to punish evil, but his intention is rather sarcastic and abounds in abusive language. As Marciniak explains, it is tricky to anachronistically apply modern generic markers to Byzantine satirical works, since they might not work. The borderline between invective and satire, taken in its modern sense, is often blurred in Byzantine satirical production.²²⁰ Although Prodromos himself characterizes for instance *The Executioner, or Doctor* as a *psogos*, these works are rather a fusion of satire and invective.²²¹ A similar conclusion can be drawn for *For the Color Green*. This piece is not simply a polemical refutation of an intellectual stance and of a person who represents it, but involves abusive elements of *psogos* and satire. This is also in tune with what Zagklas argues, as has been

²¹⁸ Lynda Garland, "'And His Bald Head Shone Like a Full Moon ...': an appreciation of the Byzantine sense of humour as recorded in historical sources of the eleventh and twelfth Centuries," *Parergon* 8, no. 1 (1990): 1-5, 25-28. See also: Floris Bernard, "Humor in Byzantine Letters of the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: Some Preliminary Remarks," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 69 (2015): 179-196.

²¹⁹ Gilbert Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 155-156.

²²⁰ Marciniak, "The Art of Abuse: Satire and Invective in Byzantine Literature. A Preliminary Survey," 358-362.

²²¹ Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini), 55.194-196.

mentioned above, about *Against Barys*; instead of being seen as an independent *psogos* or *apologia*, this work is a blend of several different genres and modes. ²²²

Prodromos's usage of *psogos* is not surprising, since it played a significant role in Byzantine literature as both an independent genre and as a rhetorical tool. Invective was a powerful means of refuting various matters, opinions, and adversaries in literature and real-life situations. In a highly competitive scholarly landscape, where intellectuals competed for patronage, teaching positions, and roles in imperial service, *psogos* was a convenient way to denigrate rivals and personal enemies. Invectives demonstrated the opponent's intellectual inferiority and humiliated them, while also allowing authors to shape a positive self-image for themselves.²²³

Prodromos's works that utilize *psogos*, and perhaps his overall satirical production, are part of a bigger scheme. The closing paragraph of *The Ignorant or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian* quoted above can perhaps attest to this stance. Here Prodromos announces that he will compose another work dedicated to some other "world". These somewhat enigmatic lines can be further clarified by a statement in *The Executioner or Doctor*. When Prodromos explains that medical practitioners should be assessed based on the quality of their performance, rather than its quantity, Prodromos adds that since philosophers say that man is a great universe in small (κόσμον ἐν μικρῷ μέγαν τὸν ἄνθρωπόν), incompetent doctors could be prosecuted for murdering the cosmos on account of their homicide.²²⁴ Many ancient philosophers, from Anaximander to Neoplatonists, were proponents of this microcosmos and macrocosmos analogy. For instance, in the *Philebus*, Plato implicitly employs this analogy when he explains that both humans and the universe are composed of a physical body and a rational soul. According to him, as the human body has its origin in the universe, thus also a human soul derives from the universal soul.²²⁵

Having in mind that a man in a philosophical context is perceived as a universe in small, it will not be difficult to assume that Prodromos, by stating that he will write another work dedicated to another universe ($\kappa \dot{\sigma} \mu \sigma \varsigma$), in fact has in mind a certain individual that he intends to expose. Based on this, it is possible to conclude that Prodromos consciously undertakes a systematic attack against several contemporary intellectuals, who were probably influential and powerful rivals to him and his friends, in claiming certain professions, salaried

²²² Zagklas, "Theodore Prodromos and the Use of the Poetic Work of Gregory of Nazianzus: Appropriation in the Service of Self-Representation," 237-238.

²²³ Van Opstall, "The pleasure of mudslinging: an invective dialogue in verse from 10th century Byzantium," 771, 789-790.

²²⁴ Prodromos, *The Executioner or Doctor*, (ed. Migliorini), 54.167-168.

²²⁵ Plato, *Philebus* 28e-30d.

posts, and patronage of wealthy individuals. At the same time, these attacks enabled Prodromos to competitively display his own erudition and impose his intellectual authority. *Psogos*, satire, and refutation were convenient tools to implement this agenda into reality.

Conclusions

In the first section of this chapter, I primarily focused on analyzing Prodromos's *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*. My analysis showed that Prodromos's work not only serves as a sequel to Lucian's *Sale of Philosophical Lives* but should also be read and interpreted in consideration of Lucian's other work *The Dead Come to Life, or The Fisherman*. My examination has demonstrated that Lucianic piece not only heavily influenced the literary strategies behind Prodromos's *Sale of Poetical and Political Lives*, but also his overall satirical production. By adopting Lucian's alter-ego, Frank-Speaker, and adapting it to his own needs, Prodromos created a unique authorial voice. In the subsequent three sections, my analysis examined five works by Prodromos: *Against Barys, Philoplaton, The Ignorant, The Executioner*, and *For the Color Green*. Through an analysis of these works, I demonstrated that Prodromos by utilizing Frankness, Truth and Examination not only criticized inept professionals and intellectuals, but also showcased his own expertise.

A close analysis of the examination procedures in these works revealed the expectations Prodromos had from skilled professionals and how he wanted to present himself as an intellectual. Rather than simply attacking his opponents based on their expertise in a specific discipline, Prodromos critiques their lack of erudition in other intellectual areas. For example, he rebuts his alleged accuser, Barys, not only for impiety but also for his lack of familiarity with ancient authors, which Prodromos, as Church Fathers, possessed. Similarly, Prodromos's does not criticize inept Platonist for lacking philosophical knowledge. He also criticizes him for his poor grammatical and rhetorical skills, including his inability to read ancient texts according to prosody and properly employ quotations from poets in his rhetorical expositions. This pattern is repeated with the inept doctor, who is criticized not only for lacking practical and theoretical medical knowledge but also for his lack of philosophical erudition and inability to correctly use quotations from poets and writers. Similarly, the inept grammarian is not only critiqued for his grammatical expertise but also for his inability to conduct etymological inquiries in a more philosophical knowledge that goes

beyond mere grammatical expertise. Finally, an unnamed opponent who lacks understanding of Aristotle's theory of color is also incompetent in conducting etymology and properly contextualizing and applying quotations from ancient poets. By exhibiting all these criticisms, Prodromos not only revealed what kind of knowledge an ideal intellectual should have, but also indicated in what way he wanted to portray as in intellectual.

Chapter 2: Competence and Competitiveness: Prodromos on Porphyry's *Isagoge* in *Xenedemos*, *or On Voices*

In *Xenedemos or Voices*, Prodromos's display of his own competence and competitiveness reaches its peak. In this Platonic dialogue, Prodromos only seemingly criticizes Porphyry's formulation of the predicables as presented in the *Isagoge*. The dialogue recounts a conversation between Xenedemos and Theocles, in which Theocles questions Xenedemos about Porphyry's definitions of the five predicables: genus, species, differentia, property, and accident. Through probing questions, Theocles seemingly aims to highlight the flaws in Porphyry's account. However, a deeper look into this interrogation reveals that this dialogue is not merely a critique of Porphyry's *Isagoge*. Rather, it is directed towards an ignorant philosopher and teacher, who is unable to properly comprehend, interpret, and convey the correct understanding of Porphyry's *Isagoge* to his students. Through puzzling questions that could only be solved by somebody versed in logic, Prodromos displays his own philosophical knowledge and teaching competence and offers possible didactic tool for his students. Taken in general, the work itself, through its fictional setting, reflects the philosophical, interpretative, and educational concerns of twelfth-century Byzantium.

2.1 Plot, Characters, and Skopos of Xenedemos

2.1.1 Plot

Xenedemos, or Voices is a prose work written in the manner of a Platonic dialogue. The text opens with a short discussion between Mousaios from Athens and Xenedemos from Constantinople. In this conversation, Mousaios seeks to learn more about a certain philosopher from Constantinople, Theocles, whose fame he only became acquainted with through fantastic stories told by travelers coming from Byzantion to Athens. Xenedemos, being a pupil and friend of Theocles, is seen by Mousaios as the most legitimate source of information. Initially, in response to this inquiry, Xenedemos delivers a short eulogy for Theocles, praising his "winged nature, eloquent tongue, rapid hand, and wise soul" (φύσιν μèν γàρ $\dot{\alpha}\pi\lambda\omega_{\zeta}\pi\tau\eta\nu\dot{\eta}\nu$ · καὶ γλῶσσαν δεινήν· καὶ χεῖρα γοργήν, καὶ ψυχὴν σοφήν). However, this general description does not satisfy Mousaios. Therefore, he asks Xenedemos to provide

a more concrete example based on Theocles's actual writings or words, in order to gain an accurate perception of Theocles's intellectual capacity.²²⁶

Faced with the difficult task of selecting one of Theocles's numerous works, Xenedemos decides to recount an episode involving Theocles instead. Thus, Xenedemos tells the story of when he was a student of a certain Hermagoras and unexpectedly encountered Theocles on his way to school. Upon noticing that Xenedemos was holding Aristotle's *Categories*, Theocles began questioning him about Porphyry's *Isagoge*, with which Xenedemos was already familiar. The remaining part of the dialogue is dedicated to Theocles's witty examination of Xenedemos's knowledge of Porphyry's definitions of the five universal terms. Initially, it appears that Theocles's persona aims to convince the young Xenedemos, and implicitly Prodromos's audience, that Porphyry's definitions are incorrect. However, Prodromos's criticism, delivered through the persona of Theocles, is far more complex than simply pointing out certain problems in Porphyry's *Isagoge*. On the other hand, it displays a masterful representation of an ideal teacher, rhetorician, and philosopher – Theocles.²²⁷

2.1.2 Characters

As seen in the above summary, four individuals are mentioned in this dialogue, Mousaios, Xenedemos, Theocles, and Hermagoras. However, they do not all participate equally in the conversation. Hermagoras is referred to multiple times throughout the text but does not participate in any discussion. Additionally, the dialogue between Mousaios and Xenedemos simply sets the stage for the central theme of the work – the conversation between Xenedemos and Theocles. While these characters may be purely fictional, Lydia Spyridonova, Andrey Kurbanov. and Oksana Yu. Goncharko in their edition and translation of this text have considered, as have several scholars before them, the possibility that they were inspired or modeled after real historical figures.²²⁸ While it is unclear who Mousaios from Athens and Hermagoras from Constantinople might have been, as the text provides

²²⁶ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 246-248.

²²⁷ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 248-259.

²²⁸ For detailed discussion, as well as for more information about previous scholarship on this matter see: Spyridonova et al., "The Dialogue Xenedemos, or Voices", 229-233. I am using this translation but occasionally modify it.

limited information about them, they have suggested that Xenedemos's character could have been influenced by Plato's Phaedo and/or by Prodromos himself. The way in which Theocles plays with and caresses Xenedemos is reminiscent of how Socrates interacts with Phaedo.²²⁹

Hermagoras is portrayed as a stereotypical fraudulent philosopher and teacher. Spyridonova *et al.* noted that the description of Hermagoras resembles the depiction offered by Lucian in *Icaromenippus* and in Prodromos's poem *Against the Man with a Long Beard.*²³⁰ However, this stereotypical portrayal of a deceitful philosopher, with a long beard, pale face, and flowing cloak, is a recurring motif in Lucian's works. Lucian often ridicules or alludes to phony scholars with similar descriptions in works such as *The Fisherman, or the Dead Come to Life, Timon the Misanthrope, Dialogues of the Dead*, and *The Dependent Scholar*, to name a few. Prodromos's works feature a similar imagery of deceitful scholars, as evidenced in *The Ignorant, or the Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, Philoplaton,* and *Amarantos, or Desires of an Old Man*. Based on the generic description of this character, it is impossible to speculate about possible historical figures who could have inspired this character.

In the case of Theocles, Spyridonova *et al.*, following in the footsteps of previous scholarship, have tried to decipher who could potentially be the historical figure behind this character. In the text, Theocles, whose family originates from Italy, is praised for the outstanding qualities of his philosophical soul. He is also presented as someone "endowed with a tongue breathing the force of Attic fire" ($\gamma\lambda\omega\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu$ $\delta\epsilon$ $\pi\lambda\sigma\nu\eta\sigma\alpha\zeta$ $\dot{\alpha}\tau\tau\kappa\sigma\tilde{\nu}$ $\pi\nu\rho\delta\zeta$ $\mu\epsilon\nuo\zeta$ $\pi\nu\epsiloni\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu)$, despite occasionally duplicating a syllable or a word. Besides his eloquence, Theocles is particularly commended for his improvisation skills. He composed numerous prose and verse works, divided into two groups. The first group, dedicated to emperors, celebrates imperial victories and discusses medical issues, while the second group is dedicated to private individuals and composed for various occasions. Based on this information, it has been speculated that this character could have been inspired by John Italos, Michael Psellos, Michael Italikos (Prodromos's teacher), or even a combination of Italikos and Prodromos.²³¹ Zaripov, however, is prone to offer a more determinate interpretation. He identifies Theocles specifically with Italikos and Xenedemos with young

²²⁹ Spyridonova et al., "The Dialogue Xenedemos, or Voices", 230. See also: Plato, *Phaedo* 89a.

²³⁰ Spyridonova et al., "The Dialogue Xenedemos, or Voices" 230.

²³¹ Spyridonova et al., "The Dialogue Xenedemos, or Voices". 231-233.
Prodromos. Additionally, Zaripov argues that the persona of Theocles served Prodromos not only to depict his teacher, but also to promote his own erudition and teaching methods.²³²

Although it is difficult to say with certainty whether Zaripov's identification of Theocles with Italikos was correct or not, I completely agree with his observation that Prodromos exploited Theocles persona to promote his own learnedness and teaching methods. As tempting as it may be to figure out who is actually hiding behind the personae of Theocles and Xenedemos, or even Hermagoras and Mousaios, it is a futile inquiry. Instead, from my point of view, attention should be directed to the questions of how these characters were portrayed, what Prodromos tried to achieve with these depictions, and ultimately what the overarching *skopos* of this work was.

2.1.3 Skopos

The first step towards answering all these questions might involve the description of Theocles's philosophical nature. In the words of Xenedemos:

He was gifted with aethereal and winged nature which was capable not only of flying like the Homeric bay "mares coursing over the topmost ears of corn," but also of elevating up from the earthly substance by a royal cubit, flying over the aerial fluid and [the sphere] composed of small particles of fire, then after the movable stellar constellation [i.e., sphere of the planets] he approached [the sphere] of fixed [stars] and the starless [sphere], and then ascending into being with God.²³³

φύσιν μέν αἰθερίαν εἰληχὼς καὶ πτηνὴν· καὶ οὐ μόνον ἐπ' ἄκρων ἀνθερίκων κατὰ τὰς Ὁμηρικὰς φερομένην αἴθας· ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν γεηρὰν βασιλικῷ τῷ πήχει ὑπεραναβᾶσαν οὐσίαν· τὸ δὲ ἀέριον ὑπερπτᾶσαν χύμα καὶ τὴν τοῦ ὑπεκκαύματος λεπτομέρειαν· μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀστρῷαν φύσιν καὶ πλανωμένην τῇ ἀπλανεῖ καὶ ἀνάστρῷ πελάσασαν, καὶ μετὰ θεοῦ γενομένην·²³⁴

²³² Zaripov, "Mimesis and Intertextuality in Twelfth-Century Byzantine Literature: The Case of Theodore Prodromos", 74.

²³³ Modified translation from: Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 260-261.

²³⁴ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 246.

By mentioning Theocles's ability to traverse above "the topmost ears of corn" ($\dot{\epsilon}\pi$ ' $\ddot{\alpha}\kappa\rho\omega\nu$ $\dot{\alpha}\nu\theta\epsilon\rho\kappa\omega\nu$), Prodromos makes the reference to lines from Homer's *Iliad* (20.227) that mention twelve fillies that "when they bounded over the earth, the giver of grain, would course over the topmost ears of ripened corn and break them not" ($\dot{\alpha}$ ì δ ' $\check{\sigma}\tau\epsilon$ µèν $\sigma\kappa\iota\rho\tau\tilde{\phi}\epsilon\nu$ $\dot{\epsilon}\pi$ ì $\zeta\epsiloni\delta\omega\rho\sigma\nu$ $\check{\alpha}\rho\sigma\sigma\rho\alpha$, $\check{\alpha}\kappa\rho\sigma\nu$ $\dot{\epsilon}\pi$ ' $\dot{\alpha}\nu\theta\epsilon\rho\kappa\omega\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\rho\pi\delta\nu$ $\theta\epsilon\sigma\nu$ $\sigma\dot{\delta}\epsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon\kappa\lambda\omega\nu$).²³⁵ This expression is frequently used in rhetorical textbooks as an example of hyperbole.²³⁶ With this rhetorical figure, Prodromos aims to imply the swiftness and delicacy of Theocles's philosophical mind.

However, not all of Prodromos's contemporaries shared his opinion regarding the ideal philosopher and intellectual. Thus, for instance, Eustathios of Thessalonike (c.1115-1195) employs the same expression in his dialogue between two speakers, Hierocles and Theophilos, exactly to denigrate this type of philosopher who were untouched by earthly words and matters.²³⁷ A similar process can be observed with Prodromos's characterization of Theocles as someone "gifted with an aethereal and winged nature" ($\varphi \dot{\upsilon} \sigma \iota \nu \mu \dot{\epsilon} \nu \alpha i \theta \epsilon \rho i \alpha \nu \epsilon i \lambda \eta \chi \dot{\upsilon} \varsigma \kappa \alpha \dot{\iota} \pi \tau \eta \nu \dot{\eta} \nu$). For instance, the aethereal rhetors are also often mentioned in a negative context by John Tzetzes.²³⁸

Returning to Prodromos's excerpt, it can be observed that the overall description derives from the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On the Universe*, where an unknown author describes the entire universe with the earth at its center, divided into two main parts. The first part is the supralunary realm made of aether, which is unchanging, and the sublunary realm made of fire, air, water, and earth, which is subject to corruption. The description then moves from the outermost parts of heaven, where the gods dwell amongst the fixed stars that move

²³⁵ Homer, *The Iliad: Books 13-24,* trans. Augustus Taber Murray, revised by William F. Wyatt, vol. II, of *Loeb Classical Library* 171 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924)

²³⁶ See for instance: Anonymous, *On Poetic Tropes* 211.19, in *Rhetores Graeci* ed. Leonhard von Spengel, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1856 [repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1966]): 207-214; George Choeroboscus, *On Poetic Tropes* 252.31, *Ibid.*, 244-256; Trypho, *On Tropes* 14.1.5, ed. Martin Litchfield West, "Tryphon. De Tropis," *Classical Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (December 1965): 230-48.

²³⁷ Καὶ ἐχέτω οὕτως, καὶ γένοιτό σοι φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον, εἰ καί τινες δυσαρεστοῦνται, στρυφνοί γε αὐτοὶ ὄντες καὶ δυσέντευκτοι καὶ ἀθιγεῖς τῶν κάτω καὶ χαμερπῶν ῥημάτων τε καὶ πραγμάτων· οἱ οὑ μόνον ἄκρων ἐπ' ἀνθερίκων ἐξανεμοῦνται θέειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ Πήγασοι ἀερσιπότητοι φέρονται, περιφρονοῦντες τὴν φυσιολόγον γραμματικήν. ("And let it be so, and may you continue to philosophize in this manner, even if some are displeased, being themselves rigid and reluctant, and not having touched the lower and earthly words and matters; they are not only puffed up to run on the tops of the mountains but are also conducting themselves like high-soaring Pegasuses, despising the natural grammar"). Eustathios of Thessalonike, Dialogue of Hierocles and Theophilos XVI.9.12-18, ed. Gottlieb Lukas Friedrich Tafel, Eustathii Metropolitae Thessalonicensis Opuscula: Accedunt Trapezuntinae Historiae Scriptores Panaretus et Eugenicus, e Codicibus Mss. Basileensi, Parisinis, Veneto (Frankfurt: Sumptibus Sigismundi Schmerber, 1932), 141-145.

²³⁸ For more information see: Panagiotis Agapitos, "John Tzetzes and the Blemish Examiners: A Byzantine Teacher on Schedography, Everyday Language and Writerly Disposition," *Medioevo greco* 17 (2017): 1-57, 24; Valeria F. Lovato, "Odysseus the Schedographer", in *Byzantine Commentaries on Ancient Greek Texts: 12th-15th Centuries*, ed. Baukje van den Berg, Divna Manolova, and Przemysław Marciniak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 148-168, 162-164.

in unison with the heavens, to the realm of the wandering stars (planets), which exist in seven circles, each surrounding the other (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Apollo, Venus, the Sun, and the Moon), followed by the realm of fiery particles and then the realm of murky and cold air, beneath which lie the sea and the earth.²³⁹ However, while this description of the universe begins from the wide-angle lens perspective, portraying it from the outermost sphere to its center, Theocles's philosophical journey starts from the earthly realm at the center and travels towards the outermost parts of heaven, ultimately aiming to achieve union with God.

The description of Theocles's philosophical soul also draws on the opening lines of On the Universe. The anonymous author of this work explains that the soul, "seeing that it was not possible (as once the foolish Aloades attempted) for the body to reach the heavenly region" (Έπειδὴ γὰρ οὐχ οἶόν τε ἦν τῷ σώματι εἰς τὸν οὐράνιον ἀφικέσθαι τόπον [...], καθάπερ οἱ ἀνόητοί ποτε ἐπενόουν Ἀλφάδαι), is capable of traversing and comprehending distant entities only when guided by philosophy and the intellect. It is through its divine insight that the soul apprehends and interprets divine concepts for humanity.²⁴⁰

Prodromos refers to the same myth about the giant Aloads – two brothers who received punishment for trying to invade heaven by piling up three mountains (the Olympos, the Pelion, and the Ossa). Thus, when the young Xenedemos says that he is ready to embark on the third step – to discuss Porphyry's definition of the third term, difference, he says that he wishes the ladder had more steps so that he could reach heaven like the Aloades. To this, Theocles responds that Porphyry, being aware that the Aloades were punished for their endeavor, did not create such a great ladder. Nevertheless, as Theocles explains, "And even if the ladder has only a few steps, it still reaches the heavens" (καίτοι καὶ αὕτη βαθμίσι μèν ὀλίγαις καταμετρῆται· εἰς αὐτοὺς δὲ ὅμως φθάνει τοὺς οὐρανοὺς). Theocles warns young Xenedemos that he must be careful not to fall on his way up, as the road is difficult and dangerous. In response, young Xenedemos assures Theocles that such an accident will never occur under Theocles's guidance.²⁴¹ In this way, Prodromos implies that the *Arbor*

²³⁹ Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Universe*, 391b9-393a9. While it is rooted in Aristotelian principles, the text is influenced by Platonic, Stoic, and Neopythagorean philosophies and delves into theological, cosmological, geological, and meteorological subjects. The unknown author emphasizes how God preserves the cosmos, while remaining transcendent and independent. This perspective contrasts with Aristotle's belief in a non-transcendent unmoved mover. See: Johan C. Thom, *Cosmic Order and Divine Power: Pseudo-Aristotle, On the Cosmos* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 4-5; Pavel Gregoric and George Karamanolis, *Pseudo-Aristotle: De Mundo (On the Cosmos). A Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 4-5.

²⁴⁰ Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Universe*, 391a8-16; Translation from: Pseudo-Aristotle, On the Universe (tr. Forster), 626.

²⁴¹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 254.

Porphyriana, composed of five universal terms, has the capacity to direct one to ascend to the heavenly realm by means of philosophy and intellect, but only with the right guidance.

It is not surprising that Prodromos was influenced by *On the Universe*, a widely read work, as its description of the philosophical soul's journey by means of intellect to the heavenly realms aligns with Plato's ideas expressed in *Phaedrus*. This is particularly evident in his choice of words. Instead of utilizing "aethereal and divine nature" ($\tau \eta v \alpha i \theta \epsilon \rho i o v \kappa \alpha i \theta \epsilon (\alpha v \phi \delta \sigma v)$) as the anonymous author in *On the Universe* does, Prodromos describes Theocles as "gifted with an aethereal and winged nature" ($\phi \delta \sigma v \mu \epsilon v \alpha i \theta \epsilon \rho (\alpha v \epsilon i \lambda \eta \chi \omega \zeta \kappa \alpha i \pi \tau \eta v \eta v)$.²⁴² By incorporating the concept of "winged" ($\pi \tau \eta v \eta v$) instead of "divine" ($\theta \epsilon i \alpha v$), Prodromos, as I believe, subtly alludes to Plato's portrayal of the divine aspect of the soul in *Phaedrus*. According to Plato, aside from the souls of immortal gods, which are winged, the soul of a philosopher also possesses a winged nature, as it constantly recollects divine truths and embraces philosophical wisdom.²⁴³ The influence of *Phaedrus* can also be seen in how Prodromos portrays the encounter between Xenedemos and Theocles. Similar to Socrates meeting Phaedrus on his way back from hearing Lysias's speech with the speech's text in his left hand underneath his cloak, Theocles encounters the young Xenedemos on his way to Hermagoras with the book of the *Categories* in his hands.²⁴⁴

As Charalabopoulos notes, Xenedemos shows many intertextual connections with various Platonic dialogues.²⁴⁵ Additionally, Zaripov is certainly correct to identify Plato's *Phaedrus* as one of the core texts with which Prodromos establishes intertextual connection

²⁴² Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Universe*, 392a31; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 246.

²⁴³ Plato's *Phaedrus* begins with Socrates meeting Phaedrus in Athens, after Phaedrus had just heard a speech by Lysias about *eros*. Phaedrus agrees to share the speech with Socrates, which argues that a boy should choose a non-loving old man over a lover in a relationship. In response, Socrates delivers two speeches. The first speech supports Lysias by portraying the negative aspects of the lover and presenting *eros*, as a form of madness, in a negative light. On the other hand, in the second speech, Socrates praises *eros* and the madness it brings, highlighting its divine and beneficial characteristics. Socrates also describes the nature of the soul, using a metaphor of two winged horses and a charioteer, illustrating how immortal gods have horses and charioteers that are always essentially good, while mortal humans have one good horse (emotions) and one bad horse (desires) steered by the charioteer (mind). The ultimate goal for the soul is to gain wings and fly alongside the gods and to attain genuine knowledge. This universal knowledge is achievable only if the mind controls its desires. Therefore, it is only the philosopher's mind that possesses wings, as it continuously recalls divine truths and embraces philosophical wisdom.

²⁴⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 227a and 228d; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 249. A very similar description is found in the opening lines of Lucian's *Hermotimus*, where Lycinus sees Hermotimus with a book in his hand, running over to his teacher. See Lucian, *Hermotimus, or Concerning the Sects*, in *Lucian* Vol VI, translated by K. Kilburn. Loeb Classical Library 430, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 260-261.

²⁴⁵ Nikolaos Charalabopoulos, "Ενας 'πλατωνικός' διάλογος τοῦ 12ου αἰῶνος: Θεοδώρου Προδρόμου 'Ξενέδημος ἢ Φωναί.'" ["One twelfth-century platonic dialogue: Theodore Prodromos's Xenedemos, or Voices."], Ἀριάδνη 11 (2005): 189-214.

in portrayal of Theocles and Xenedemos.²⁴⁶ However, I believe that the influence of Plato's *Phaedrus* does not concern solely Prodromos's portrayal of Thecoles's philosophical nature or his description of the accidental encounter between Theocles and Xenedemos, but runs much deeper and is ingrained in the core methodology and *skopos* of *Xenedemos*. The persona of Theocles is modelled after the exemplary rhetorician from Plato's *Phaedrus*, who must possess mastery of dialectics and philosophy. The portrayal of other characters, like the young student of philosophy Xenedemos, who can easily be manipulated, and the incompetent teacher Hermagoras, as well as the dynamics of the two dialogues as a whole, serve to highlight Theocles's rhetorical abilities.

The influence of Plato's *Phaedrus* on Prodromos's depiction of Theocles's persona can be implicitly detected when Xenedemos praises the philosopher from Byzantion:

Indeed, you have the gift of persuading! There is no passage more suitable for quotation in this connection than that of the comic poet Menander, which refers jestingly to the marvel of Alexander of Macedon: How Alexander-like, indeed, this is; and if I seek someone, Spontaneous he'll present himself; and if I clearly must Pass through some place by sea, this will lie open to my steps. But I would rather say: How Theocles-like, indeed, this is; – I slightly modify it for your sake – If something seems clear, thanks to Theocles it will become unclear; If something is known with certainty, it will be refuted certainly.²⁴⁷

σοῦ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ τῆ πειθοῖ χάριτος, τί ἂν ἄλλο οἰκειότερον κατεπάσαιμι· ἢ ὅ ποτε καὶ ὁ κωμϣδὸς Μένανδρος ἐπὶ ταῖς εὐτυχίαις τοῦ Μακεδόνος εἶπε παίζων πρὸς τὸ παράδοξον· ὡς ἀλεξανδρῶδες τοῦτο· κἂν ζητῶ τινὰ αὐτόματος οὖτος πάρεστι· κἂν διελθεῖν διὰ θαλάσσης δέῃ τόπον· οὖτος ἔσται μοι βατὸς· ἐγώ δ' ὡς θεοκλεῶδες τοῦτο· εἴποιμ' ἂν ἐπὶ σοὶ τὰς συλλαβὰς ὑπαλλάξας· κἅν τι ἀναπόρητον δοκοίη ἀπορηθήσεται· κἂν ἐπ' ἀσφαλοῦς ἑστηκός τε ἀνατραπήσεται·²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Zaripov, "Mimesis and Intertextuality in Twelfth-Century Byzantine Literature: The Case of Theodore Prodromos", 74.

²⁴⁷ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 273-274.

²⁴⁸ Prodromos, *Xenedemos, or Voices*, 257-258. [I've quoted the text in the form it was given in the edition.]

Prodromos probably takes the quoted lines from Menander from Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*. According to Plutarch, when Alexander traveled through Lycia, a spring overflowed and brought to the surface a bronze tablet with an inscription prophesying the downfall of the Persian Empire at the hands of the Greeks. Encouraged by this prophecy, Alexander continued his military campaign, advancing through the coastal region of Pamphylia towards Cilicia and Phoenicia. As Alexander's journey through Pamphylia was so swift, some historians even said that it was as if the sea miraculously split to let him pass through with his army. Plutarch thus says that even Menander, in one of his comedies, "refers jestingly to this marvel" ($\pi \alpha i \zeta \omega v \pi \rho \delta \zeta \tau \delta \pi \alpha \rho \alpha \delta \delta \xi o v$) and gives the same quotation from Menander as Prodromos does in the excerpt above.²⁴⁹ With this quotation, in which Menander suggests that Alexander was so fortunate that everything went his way, Plutarch underlines the miraculous nature of Alexander's campaign. Prodromos, on the other hand, transforms the same verses to highlight Theocles's persuasive nature and his "miraculous" ability to confuse any interlocutor effortlessly.

These traits of Prodromos's Theocles align with the traits of an ideal rhetorician in Plato's *Phaedrus*. According to Plato, the accomplished rhetorician, possessing both persuasive skills and an understanding of the truth about the subject at hand, will not only effectively argue in favor of what aligns with the truth, but will also be capable of deceiving his audience. Knowing the truth, a good rhetorician can easily discern what resembles it the most and use this knowledge to deceive others, but he cannot be easily deceived. Moreover, a skilled rhetorician must also understand that rhetoric is more effective when addressing abstract concepts like goodness and justice rather than non-abstract concepts like iron. Thus, a competent rhetorician must excel in dialectic, which aids in the systematic organization and analysis of knowledge and concepts. Finally, as rhetoric plays a significant role in guiding the soul, competent rhetoricians must grasp the nature of the soul, understand their audience, and adapt their speech accordingly. Therefore, since true proficiency in dialectic can only be attained through philosophical contemplation about life and the soul, a proficient rhetorician must also be a good philosopher.²⁵⁰

The persona of Theocles is portrayed exactly in this vein. Theocles is a master of persuasiveness who can easily perplex his interlocutor because he possesses true knowledge. His rhetorical might is further demonstrated by his ability to manipulate abstract terms, such

 ²⁴⁹ Plutarch, *Alexander* 17.2-5, in Plutarch, *Lives*, Volume VII, translated by Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library 99, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 270-271.
 ²⁵⁰ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 259e-262c, 265e-266d, 269a-269e, 270b-272b.

as Porphyry's universal terms, rather than simple concepts, in order to confuse his interlocutor. Theocles, as a good dialectician, always first enquires about the definition of the universal in his questions and examines it: "Yet we should tap this definition all round, lest it should sound like cracked pots" (πλην άλλα περικρουστέον τον δρον μήτι και κατα τας ούχ ύγιαινούσας φθέγγηται χύτρας).²⁵¹ Theocles, as an ideal philosopher and rhetorician, understands the nature of Xenedemos's soul and is capable of guiding it in the right direction. Thus, he comprehends that a young pupil such as Xenedemos, who has recently mastered Porphyry's Isagoge and embarked on the study of the Categories under the incompetent guidance of Hermagoras, might struggle to refute or respond to Theocles's puzzling arguments.²⁵² It is noteworthy to mention that the idea of combining rhetorical and philosophical knowledge is also present in another work of Prodromos, namely Philoplaton. At the very beginning of this text, he provides a short encomium of Plato. Here Prodromos not only enumerates various Platonic works that he admired such as Timaeus, Gorgias, Phaedo, Theaetetus, and Axiochus to show his expertise and affiliation with Platonic tradition, but also indicates what kind of philosophy he was practicing. Thus, he particularly commends "Plato's words, Plato's dialogues, all of Plato's rhetoric and in turn all his philosophy separately, on the one hand, and jointly philosophical rhetoric and rhetorical philosophy, on the other" (Πλάτωνος τὰ ἔπη, Πλάτωνος οἱ διάλογοι, Πλάτωνος ἡ πᾶσα διηρημένως ρητορική και ή πασα αὖθις φιλοσοφία και ή φιλόσοφος συνημμένως ρητορική καὶ ἡ ῥήτωρ φιλοσοφία).²⁵³

By praising Plato for his "philosophical rhetoric and rhetorical philosophy" in *Philoplaton*, Prodromos aligns himself with other eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantine intellectuals, who were particularly concerned with the combination of philosophy and rhetoric. Studies of rhetoric and philosophy in Byzantium, as Magdalino notes, were never completely separable from each other. However, the synthesis of philosophy and rhetoric reached its peak in the eleventh century with Psellos, who advocates the importance of both in many of his works. For Psellos, rhetoric served to embellish philosophy, while philosophy provided meaning to rhetoric.²⁵⁴ One of the numerous examples of this approach can be seen,

²⁵¹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 255; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 271.

²⁵² Xenedemos's limited capacity to engage in an intricate discussion about Porphyry's predicables is also hinted at by Mousaios, who asks Xenedemos whether he can even understand such elevated speculations and theories as a beginner student of philosophy. Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 266.

²⁵³ Prodromos, *Philoplaton*, 69.12-14.

²⁵⁴ Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Kommenos: 1143-1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 331. See also: Geroge L. Kustas, "The Function and Evolution of Byzantine Rhetoric," *Viator* 1 (1971), 55-74, 69.

for instance, in Psellos's letter to Konstantinos (1043–1058), the nephew of Michael I Keroularios (c. 1000 - 1059). In this letter, influenced by Plato's *Phaedrus*, Psellos criticized his addressee for failing to comprehend the mixture of rhetorical style with philosophical meaning. Here Psellos, as Papaioannou observes: "appropriates Plato's rhetorical philosophy, perfectly mixing meaning with form."²⁵⁵ Psellos's blend of philosophy and rhetoric not only served his own purposes of self-representation but also had a profound impact on twelfth-century intellectuals, who frequently reused this idea as a token of intellectual excellence.²⁵⁶

Needless to say, Prodromos was one of those intellectuals who promoted this fusion of disciplines. Following in the footsteps of Psellos and inspired by Plato's *Phaedrus*, Prodromos in the very text of *Xenedemos* creates the perfect blend of rhetoric and philosophy. Through the construction of the entire discussion between Theocles and Xenedemos, as well as the contesting of Porphyry's definitions of the five predicables, Prodromos aims to illustrate Theocles's proficiency in dialectics and philosophy and thus gives us a portrait of an ideal rhetorician and philosopher. These are indispensable qualities for a teacher who explicates written texts and instructs young minds. A written text itself, for Prodromos, is simply not enough for acquiring true knowledge. This is particularly visible from the quotation that Prodromos takes from the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria: "I do not think that there is such a fortunate writing, which no one would refute but that there is such a reasonable writing that nobody could reasonably refute" (οὐκ οἶμαί τινα οὕτως εὐτυχῆ γραφὴν, ἦ μηδεἰς ἀντερεῖ· ἀλλ' ἐκείνην εὕλογον, ἦ μηδεἰς εὐλόγως ἀντερεῖ).²⁵⁷ From this we can see that Prodromos's idea is not to merely criticize Porphyry's *Isagoge*, but to demonstrate that its text is not enough to acquire the essential knowledge of universals.

The written word is also devalued in *Phaedrus*. According to Plato, a written text is a mere representation and reflection of genuine, internalized knowledge. It is inadequate because it lacks interactivity – the written word cannot adapt itself to different audiences, defend itself, or respond to questions. Additionally, the written text does not enhance memory, but rather leads to forgetfulness, because students would depend on written words as reminders and not have a deep understanding of the matter in question. Furthermore, students, deprived of proper guidance, may be exposed to various ideas from texts without

²⁵⁵ Stratis Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 177-178.

²⁵⁶Ibid., 38, 245.

²⁵⁷ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 252. Modified translation: Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 268. See; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 1.1.17.2.

actually comprehending them. For this reason, oral instruction is essential when it comes to obtaining knowledge from the written text.²⁵⁸

Similarly, Porphyry's *Isagoge* cannot defend itself in the face of Theocles's questions, nor is Xenedemos equipped with the knowledge to properly respond on behalf of Porphyry. He is only able to reproduce from his memory the text of the *Isagoge* or to read the text from the book in his hand without comprehending the ideas conveyed. This is implied throughout the text. When questioned about the content of the text and the definition of predicables, Xenedemos, "who has devoured the book of Porphyry in his adolescence" ($\tilde{\eta} \delta$ ' $\delta \zeta \tau \delta v$ Πορφύριον μειράκιον καταπέπωκας), is depicted as simply repeating information from memory of the text itself without fully grasping its meaning.²⁵⁹ However, the sheer memory and superficial reproduction of Porphyry's *Isagoge* is not enough in front of Theocles's questioning. Xenedemos is required to demonstrate that he understands the meaning behind the concepts and ideas he repeats.²⁶⁰ When he cannot accurately recall the definition from memory, Xenedemos consults the text in his hands. In the words of Xenedemos: "It is for a good reason I have all time the book in my hands" ($\dot{\alpha}\lambda\lambda'$ εἰ μὴ μάτην μοι ἐν χεροῖν ἦν δ' ἐγὼ παντάπασι τὸ βιβλίον).²⁶¹ This statement highlights Xenedemos's dependence on the written text as a mnemonic repository rather than a tool for genuine understanding.

The portrayal of Xenedemos's limited comprehension of the subject at hand reflects the incompetence of his teacher, Hermagoras. Thus, when Theocles is about to start his examination, he mockingly inquires whether Xenedemos is capable of giving answers worthy of Hermagoras's pupil.²⁶² Xenedemos does exactly that – he provides shallow responses worthy of his unworthy teacher. These answers would be satisfactory for Hermagoras (τυχὸν δὲ καὶ Ἐρµαγόρα ταῦτα λέξας χαρίσαιο), but not for a real philosopher, rhetorician, and

²⁵⁸ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 274c-276a. On the importance of orality in Byzantine teaching practice and the commentary tradition see: Michele Trizio, "Forging Identities between Heaven and Earth Commentaries on Aristotle and Authorial Practices in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Byzantium" in *Byzantine Commentaries on Ancient Greek Texts: 12th-15th Centuries*, ed. Baukje van den Berg, Divna Manolova, and Przemysław Marciniak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 61-99, 67-71.

²⁵⁹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 255; Prodromos, Xenedemos, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 271. For example, question -"So what is the definition of the difference which Hermagoras gave to you and Porphyry had formulated long before him?" (καὶ ὅς οὐκοῦν τίνα σοι ταύτης ὁ Ἐρμαγόρας καὶ ὁ Πορφύριος πολὑ πρὸ τούτου λόγον ἀπέδοτο). Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 255; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 270.

²⁶⁰ "I have understood that you had invoked perfectly the description of the genus; but have not understood yet what place among the beings does this description assign to the genus." (πλην άλλα τῆς μεν τοῦ γένους ὑπογραφῆς ὡς κάλλιστά σου φαμένου, ξυνήκαμεν· τί δε τῶν ὄντων ὑπάρχον τὸ γένος, τῷ τοιοὑτῷ ἀποδίδοται λόγῷ, οὕπω ξυνίαμεν). Prodromos, Xenedemos, 250; Translation by Istvan Perczel.

²⁶¹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 253; Trans. Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 268.

²⁶² Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 249.

teacher, such as Theocles.²⁶³ In this way, it becomes obvious that Xenedemos, under the tutelage of Hermagoras, has not been enabled to truly comprehend and apply knowledge from Porphyry's *Isagoge* in a meaningful way.

The incapacity of Hermagoras is ironically reflected in Theocles's words to Xenedemos: "your book is most wise and your teacher, Hermagoras, is one of the most learned" (σοφώτατόν τε γὰρ τὸ βιβλίον καὶ διδασκάλων ὁ Ἐρμαγόρας πολυμαθέστατος).²⁶⁴ Throughout the text, Hermagoras is portrayed as a stereotypical imposter who gives the impression of a philosopher only by his outward appearance – "besides many other things the moustache and the paleness witness him being a philosopher: the one covers his cheeks and the other is falling down to his knees" (ἐκ πολλῶν τε ἄλλων καὶ τῆς ὑπήνης μάλιστα καὶ τῆς ὥχρας· τῆς μὲν, τὰ πρόσωπα περιπλανωμένης· τῆς δ' ἄχρι καὶ ἐπὶ γόνατον καθειμένης, τεκμηριούμενος τὸ φιλόσοφον), but not in his essence.²⁶⁵

On the other hand, Xenedemos is also presented as someone who has the intelligence and potential to achieve true knowledge with the proper guidance. While being questioned, he indeed comes to the comic realization that he trusted too much in the beard of Hermagoras and that he was deluded by him (olog $\mu \epsilon \pi \alpha \rho \lambda$ Ep $\mu \alpha \gamma \delta \rho \alpha$ $\delta \mu \beta \alpha \nu \epsilon \pi \lambda \delta \alpha \nu \varsigma \tau \tilde{\rho} \delta \mu \phi \iota \lambda \alpha \phi \epsilon \tilde{\iota}$ έκείν ϕ πιστεύοντα πώγωνι).²⁶⁶ This realization is even better reflected in the following passage:

Oh, how miserable I am from the gross ignorance that seized my mind without being noticed. If one had asked me: "Xenedemos, which do you know better, your proper name or Porphyry's *Isagoge*," I would have replied with confidence: "The latter." But I don't know how, the situation has been reversed, and I feel that I don't know anything.²⁶⁷

οἴ ἐγὼ δείλαιος ἦν δ' ἐγὼ τῆς ἀγνοίας· ὑπόση τίς μου περικαθημένη τὸν νοῦν, ἐλάνθανεν· ὡς εἴ τις με ἤρετό ποτε, ποῖον ὦ Ξενέδημε κρειττόνως ἀμφοτέροιν τούτοιν ἐπίσταιο, τὴν σαυτοῦ κλῆσιν, ἢ τὴν Πορφυρίου εἰσαγωγὴν, τὸ δεύτερον ἂν, θαρρούντως ἀπεκρινάμην· νῦν δ' ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδ'

²⁶³ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 258.

²⁶⁴ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 249; Trans. Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 264.

²⁶⁵ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 249; Trans. Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 264.

²⁶⁶ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 255-256.

²⁶⁷ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 270.

ὅπως εἰς τὸ ἐναντίον τὸ πρᾶγμα περιετράπη μοι· καὶ τοῦτό γε ἠσθόμην τὸ εἰδέναι μηδὲν.²⁶⁸

Xenedemos, upon acknowledging his ignorance, is willing to embark on the real path of learning and to climb the intellectual ladder. Therefore, he requests that Theocles lead him.²⁶⁹ The result of Theocles's interrogation is the gradual "conversion" of Xenedemos from someone confident in his knowledge into a person who admits his own ignorance and expresses the readiness to embrace true wisdom. Xenedemos's confidence is strongest at the beginning of the dialogue. Thus, when Theocles commences his inquiry about the first universal, genus ($\gamma \epsilon v \circ \varsigma$), Xenedemos, assured of his knowledge, excitedly responds that he is ready to clarify everything. Nonetheless, Theocles does not immediately request the account of the genus from Xenedemos, as would be expected. As Aristotle "said that things we seek correspond to the things we scientifically know" ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \zeta \eta \tau \circ \dot{\mu} \epsilon \sigma \tau \dot{\alpha} \dot{\varepsilon} \tau \circ \dot{\gamma} \epsilon \nu \tau \ddot{\eta} \mu \dot{\eta} \dot{\epsilon} \sigma \tau \tau \dot{\sigma} \gamma \epsilon \nu \varsigma$) in the first place. Here Prodromos refers to the introductory lines of the second book of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics.*²⁷⁰ In his commentary on this work, Prodromos explains in what way the questions asked reflect someone's knowledge and why they are important:

For the one who is doubly ignorant also being ignorant of his ignorance, will never inquire – for how could one who does not know that he is ignorant? – and having not inquired, he will not know; but he who does not remain ignorant of his ignorance, will inquire and will acquire knowledge.

ό μὲν γὰρ τὴν διπλῆν ἔχων ἄγνοιαν καὶ τὸ ἀγνοεῖν αὐτὸ ἀγνοῶν, οὕτε ζητήσῃ ἄν ποτε – πῶς γὰρ ὁ μὴ ἀγνοεῖν οἰόμενος; - οὕτε ἐπιστήσεται μὴ ζητήσας· ὁ δ' αὐτό γε τέως μὴ ἀγνοήσας τὸ ἀγνοεῖν, καὶ ζητήσει καὶ ἐπιστήσεται.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 254.

²⁶⁹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 254.

²⁷⁰ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 249; Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics II*, 89b23-24. Trans. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* (tr. Barnes).

²⁷¹ Prodromos, *Commentary on Posterior Analytics*, 172-173.

The Platonic notion of double ignorance that Prodromos employs in the passage above reflects his overall approach to both teaching and learning that is also demonstrated in *Xenedemos*. The interaction between Theocles and Xenedemos at its core closely resembles that between Socrates and Alcibiades in Plato's *Alcibiades*. Xenedemos, just as Alcibiades, is depicted as someone in the state of double ignorance – he believes that he knows things that he actually does not. Double ignorance is not only harmful for Alcibiades, but also for those around him. However, through his conversation with Socrates, Alcibiades begins to recognize and acknowledge his own ignorance. By understanding what he does not know, Alcibiades transitions from double ignorance to the state of simple ignorance and comprehends what he does not know – Porphyry's *Isagoge*. This makes him closer to genuine knowledge, wisdom, and enlightenment.

For Prodromos, good education plays a pivotal role in shaping one's intellectual and moral development.²⁷³ This idea is reinforced at the end of the work when he transmits the alleged saying of Anaxarchus (c. 380–c. 320), a follower of Democritus, written in pseudo-Doric dialect:

Wide learning can be both extremely helpful and extremely harmful—useful for worthy people and harmful for those who lightly say anything in any company. You must know the measures of the appropriate moment. That is the definition of wisdom.

πολυμαθίη κάρτα μὲν ὠφελέει· κάρτα δὲ βλάπτει· ὠφελέει μὲν τὸν ἄξιον ἐόντα· βλάπτει δὲ τὸν ρηϊδίως φωνέοντα πᾶν ἔπος καὶ ἐν παντὶ δήμῳ· χρὴ δὲ καιροῦ μέτρα εἰδέναι· σοφίης γὰρ ὅρος οὖτος·²⁷⁴

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²⁷² The notion of double ignorance is mentioned in Plato's *Sophist* (229b7-8), but the transitional process from double ignorance to simple ignorance is perfectly depicted in Plato's *First Alcibiades* (116b-119a). Double ignorance is not only discussed in commentaries on *First Alcibiades*, but also in other philosophical works and commentaries. Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato*, 189 ed. Leendert Gerrit Westerink (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1954; Olympiodorus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato*, ed. Leendert Gerrit Westerink (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1954; Olympiodorus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato*, 123-146, ed. Leendert Gerrit Westerink (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1956).

²⁷³ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 256-257: "The son of Ariston [sc. Plato] teaches me that the naturally best souls which happen to have a bad upbringing become particularly evil, and so he implies that education has a significant influence on virtue and viciousness" (τὰς γὰρ εὐφυεστάτας ψυχὰς κακῆς παιδαγωγίας τυχούσας, κακωτέρας γίνεσθαι διδάσκει με ὁ Ἀρίστωνος· μέγα μέρος λέγων εἰς ἀρετὴν καὶ κακίαν, τὴν ἀνατροφὴν συντελεῖν). Cf. Plato, *Republic* 491e.

²⁷⁴ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 259; Trans. Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 275.

This quotation brings us back to the main idea from Plato's *Phaedrus* that gives power to "the living and ensouled word of the man who knows" ($\tau \delta v \tau \sigma \tilde{v} \epsilon i \delta \delta \tau \sigma \zeta \lambda \delta \gamma \sigma v \zeta \tilde{\omega} v \tau \alpha \kappa \alpha i \tilde{\epsilon} \mu \psi v \chi \sigma v$), over the written word, which is just an image ($\epsilon i \delta \omega \lambda \sigma v$) of what is spoken. Thus, for Socrates, in this dialogue, power belongs to "The word that is written, along with knowledge, in the soul of the one who is learning, capable of defending itself, yet knowing to whom it should speak and with whom it should be silent" ($\delta \zeta [\delta \lambda \delta \gamma \sigma \zeta] \mu \epsilon \tau$ ' $\epsilon \pi i \sigma \tau \eta \mu \eta \zeta$ $\gamma \rho \delta \phi \epsilon \tau \eta$ $\tau \sigma \tilde{v} \mu \alpha v \theta \delta v \sigma v \tau \varsigma \psi v \chi \eta$, $\delta v v \alpha \tau \delta \varsigma \mu \epsilon v \delta \mu \tilde{v} \sigma u \epsilon \delta \sigma \tau \eta \mu \omega v \delta \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \gamma \epsilon v \tau \epsilon \kappa \alpha \delta \sigma v \sigma v \sigma \delta \delta \epsilon \delta \epsilon \delta \epsilon$.

It is evident that Plato's influence on Prodromos's Xenedemos goes beyond the dialogical form in which this work is presented, and the few direct quotations interspersed throughout the text. Plato's teachings are deeply embedded in the essence of this dialogue. Depictions of Hermagoras as a fraudulent teacher, Theocles as a skilled philosopher who already possesses true knowledge and can effortlessly manipulate abstract concepts, and Xenedemos who, upon realizing his own ignorance, takes the first step towards attaining true wisdom, all serve to display Prodromos's own "teaching philosophy." For Prodromos, influenced by Plato's *Phaedrus*, the inert knowledge of the written text, which has its own technical limitations, is not enough. The proper understanding of a text is conditioned by the guidance of a knowledgeable and experienced teacher. This teacher must also be an accomplished rhetorician who has persuasive skills, philosophical erudition, and the ability to discern the "souls" of his students, so that he can accommodate their learning needs and transmit true knowledge to them. Moreover, the dialogue itself demonstrates how Prodromos in practice created a seamless blend of rhetoric and philosophy. By expertly combining his rhetorical skills with his profound philosophical knowledge, Prodromos crafts logical aporias that showcase his mastery of both disciplines.

2.2 Examination

At the core of *Xenedemos* is the examination and criticism of Porphyry's five universal terms. Through this examination, as has been already said, Prodromos not only reflects upon the incompetent teaching practice of his contemporaries, but also displays his own learnedness and his teaching philosophy. Besides critical reflection on certain aspects of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Prodromos also demonstrates his in-depth philosophical knowledge of the

²⁷⁵ Plato, Phaedrus 276a.

commentary tradition on the *Isagoge* and the *Categories*, which is clearly reflected through the logical puzzles that Theocles poses in front of the young Xenedemos. Even though these puzzles are often left unsolved, Prodromos does leave subtle hints and points out the directions which could lead the careful reader to an answer. This might suggest another possible purpose of this work – a didactic tool for beginner students. The text of *Xenedemos*, besides offering a kind of overview of the most important aporias in the studies of the *Isagoge*, thus also allows students to check their knowledge and urge them to seek the right answers. This possibility corresponds to Zagklas's observation that many of Prodromos's works could potentially serve multiple purposes and be suitable for different contexts. As a court poet, writer, intellectual, and teacher, Prodromos created works that could be used in three different settings: the imperial court, the *theatron*, and the classroom. Thus, as Zagklas explains, Prodromos's works could be easily reused in different contexts regardless of their primary skopos.²⁷⁶

2.2.1 Porphyry's Isagoge and the Late Antique and Byzantine Commentary Tradition

The *Isagoge* deals with five universal terms, namely genus ($\gamma \epsilon v o \varsigma$), species ($\epsilon t \delta o \varsigma$), differentia ($\delta t \alpha \phi o \rho \dot{\alpha}$), property ($t \delta t \delta v$), and accident ($\sigma \upsilon \mu \beta \epsilon \beta \eta \kappa \delta \varsigma$). In the first part of the text, Porphyry describes and explains each of these items. In the second part, he examines the commonalities and differences among them in all possible combinations of the five entities. This text was envisioned as a gateway into logic and Porphyry's language for the most part is simple and clear. However, it was not an easy task for novice students to digest this work, as it is packed with technical terminology and contains some less well-explained and obscure passages. Therefore, late antique and Byzantine authors expounded, explained, and summarized this text to make it more accessible for beginner students of logic. Preserved Greek commentaries by Ammonius (c. 440–between 517 and 526), Elias (sixth century), David (sixth century), and Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David) (seventh century) survive from late antiquity. These commentaries heavily influenced the marginal scholia written by Arethas (c. 860-939). ²⁷⁷ Other Byzantine learned men, such as Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662), John of Damascus (c. 675/6-749), Photios (c. 810/20-893), the *Anonymous Heiberg*, Michael

²⁷⁶ Zagklas, *Miscellaneous Poems*, 58-70.

²⁷⁷ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 1-128; Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 1-104; David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 82-219; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge* 1-136; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 1-130.

Psellos (1018-1078), John Italos (c. 1025-1082), John Tzetzes (1110-1180), Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197-1272), and George Gennadios Scholarios (c. 1400-1472), also dealt with the *Isagoge* in their compendia, synopses, and short treatises.²⁷⁸

2.2.2 Genus (γένος)

Theocles's interrogation of Xenedemos about the *Isagoge* begins with genus ($\gamma \acute{e} vo\varsigma$), the first universal term discussed by Porphyry. However, before inquiring about the definition of genus as given by Porphyry, Theocles first asks Xenedemos "whether genus exists or not" (ϵi $\epsilon \sigma \tau iv \eta \mu \eta \epsilon \sigma \tau i \delta \gamma \acute{e} vo\varsigma$).²⁷⁹ An explanation as to why Prodromos even poses this question might be found in the opening lines of the second book of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*: "The things we seek are equal in number to those we understand. We seek four things: the fact, the reason why, if it is, what it is." (Tà ζητούμενά ἐστιν ἴσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὅσαπερ ἐπιστάμεθα. ζητοῦμεν δὲ τέτταρα, τὸ ὅτι, τὸ διότι, εἰ ἔστι, τί ἐστιν).²⁸⁰ In his commentary on this work, Prodromos explains that Aristotle proceeds from less honorable to more honorable questions (ἐξ ἀτιμοτέρων μὲν δεῖν εἰς τιμιώτερα μεταβαίνειν), as he first posits "the fact" and "the reason why", which pertain to accidentals, and afterwards proceeds to "if it is" and "what it is", which pertain to substances. This approach, according to Prodromos, stems from the belief that "the scientific knowledge of substances is more honorable than the [scientific knowledge] of accidentals" (τιμιωτέραν δὲ εἶναι τὴν τῶν οὐσιῶν ἐπιστήμην τῆς τῶν

²⁷⁸ John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, 25-146; Maximus Confessor, *On Porphyry's Isagoge and On* Aristotle's Categories, ed. Mossman Roueché, "Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century," Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik 23 (1974): 70-71 Photios. Synopsis on Ten Categories (qu. 137 -147), in Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia, ed. Leendert Gerrit Westerink, vol. VI.2, VI vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1989), 140-165; Anonymous Heiberg, Loaic and Quadrivium, in Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., Anonymi Logica et Quadrivium: Cum Scholiis Antiquis, vol. 15.1, of Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-Filologiske Meddelelser (Copenhagen: Hovedkommissionær, 1929); Psellos, Philosophica Minora 1 (Opus. 13, 50 and 51), 40-43, 186-190, 190-217; Italos, Problems and Solutions, (qu. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 21, 22, 26, 67); John Tzetzes also wrote a synopsis of Isagoge in twelve-syllable verses. An edition of this text is currently being prepared by Rogelio Toledo Martin; Blemmydes, Compendium on Logic, 685-1004; Gennadios Scholarios, Commentary on Aristotle's Logic and Porphyry's Isagoge, 7-113. For general information on Byzantine reception of Porphyry's Isagoge see: Christophe Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," in The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 362-380; George L. Kustas, "The Commentators on Aristotle's 'Categories' and on Porphyry's 'Isagoge,'" chapter, in Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric, ed. George L. Kustas (Thessalonike: Patriarchikon Hidryma Paterikōn Meletōn, 1973), 101-126; Christophe Erismann, Byron David MacDougall, "The Byzantine Reception of Porphyry's Isagoge", in Medioevo. Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale 43 [L'Isagoge di Porfirio e la sua ricezione medievale] (2018): 41-72.

²⁷⁹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 248.

²⁸⁰ Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 2, 89b23-24.

συμβεβηκότων).²⁸¹ Therefore, if someone inquiries about substantial things such as genus, it would be logical to ask first whether genus exists and only after this is established to inquire into what genus is and consequently provide a definitional account for it.

By posing the questions "if it is" and "what it is" regarding genus, Prodromos makes a subtle reference to the fact that scholars reproached Porphyry for not asking these questions first. For example, Pseudo-Elias mentions that some people criticized Porphyry for not inquiring first "if it is, what it is, what kind it is, and why it is" ($\tau \delta \epsilon i \, \delta \sigma \tau i$, $\tau i \, \delta \sigma \tau i \, \delta \sigma \tau i \, \delta \sigma \sigma i \, \delta \sigma \sigma i$ in respect of genus. In response to this criticism, Pseudo-Elias explains that Porphyry does not inquire into these issues regarding universals as his work is of an introductory nature. He argues that Porphyry deliberately refrains from asking "if it is" (i.e., whether universals subsist or depend on bare thoughts alone), "what it is" (i.e., whether they are corporeal or incorporeal), and "what kind it is?" (i.e., whether they are separable or are in perceptible items and subsist about them). Consequently, by avoiding these three questions altogether, he also avoids discussion pertaining to the question "why it is."²⁸² Prodromos was undoubtedly aware of the commentators' suggestion that Porphyry intentionally refrained from asking these questions. With the two initial questions that he poses in the dialogue, he subtly signals that his discussion on five universal terms would require knowledge that goes beyond Porphyry's introductory text.

In response to the question "if it is", Xenedemos quickly gives an affirmative answer. Theocles agrees with the response and adds that if this perspective is not accepted as accurate, most books would disappear and "the best of philosophy would be overturned" (τὰ κάλλιστα τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀνατραπήσεται).²⁸³ Here Prodromos makes a subtle reference to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. While other sciences do not deal with substantial questions such as whether the genus exists or not (εἰ ἔστιν ἢ μὴ ἔστι τὸ γένος) and what it is (τί ἐστι), it is the task of the first philosophy (φιλοσοφία πρώτη), i.e., metaphysics, to inquire into these matters. Since this is the highest science, it is its task to deal with the highest genera.²⁸⁴

Theocles's next question, not surprisingly, pertains to "what among the existing things the genus is and through which definitional account it is explained?" (τί δὲ τῶν ὄντων

²⁸¹ Prodromos, *Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics 2*, 172-174.

²⁸² Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 71; See also: Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 1. Prodromos line of inquiry was not an isolated instance in metatextual production on Porphyry's *Isagoge*. David, for example, applies the same line of inquiry as Prodromos. Thus, he announces that he will first inquire in respect of genus "if it is", and afterwards "what it is". However, since "what it is" is revealed either through definition or through description, he explains that he will first discuss difference between these two concepts. This will allow him to inquire whether the genus is described or defined. David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 130.
²⁸³ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 250; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 265.

²⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI.1: 1025b15-18; 1026a21-32.

ἐστὶ καὶ τίνι ἀποδίδοται λόγῳ).²⁸⁵ In his response, Xenedemos swiftly cites "the description of genus" (τοῦ γένους ὑπογραφὴν) as provided by Porphyry. However, Theocles is not satisfied with this answer as he believes that Xenedemos does not understand what is meant by this definition. Hence, he asks Xenedemos to tell him to which out of the ten categories he would assign genus. Xenedemos again readily responds and assigns genus to relatives (τῷ πρός τι), since one can say that "the genus of the species" (γένος γὰρ εἴδους ἐστίν).²⁸⁶

Xenedemos's response to this question is problematic. A similar issue regarding the species and genera of substances had been brought up by Aristotle in the *Categories*. In his discussion on relatives, Aristotle explains that neither primary substances, taken as a whole or in its parts, nor secondary substances can be relatives. Still, in the case of the secondary substances (i.e., genera and species of substances), Aristotle refrains from asserting any firm conclusion and leaves room for debate.²⁸⁷ Aristotle's interpretation is commonly accepted and further explicated in the commentary tradition on the *Categories*. Commentators for the most part agree that no substance, whether primary or secondary, nor their parts should be considered relatives.²⁸⁸

This is the case for genera and species of substances. Yet, what about genera and species in general? Is it possible for them to be classified as relatives? It appears that the commentary tradition on the *Isagoge* is affirmative on this matter. Ammonius, when explaining why the genus is given priority over the species, says: "Genus is causally prior to species, although genus and species belong among the relatives" ($\pi\rho\omega\tau\nu$ dé έστι τὸ γένος τῶν εἰδῶν κατ' αἰτίαν, καίτοι τῶν πρός τί ἐστι τὸ γένος καὶ τὸ εἶδος). For instance, a father, as a human being, takes causal precedence over the son, even though relatives are simultaneous and constitute each other. As "relatives must be substances first" (τὰ γὰρ πρός

²⁸⁵ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 250; Modified translation: Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 265. I translate the following terms as follows: λόγος – definitional account; ὑπογραφή – description; ὄρος – definition; ἀποδίδωμι – to explain.

²⁸⁶ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 250.

²⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Categories* 8a14-28. According to Aristotle, this problem (i.e., whether the primary and secondary substances or their parts can be considered to be relatives) occurs because the first description that he gives for relatives, "things that are said to be what they are either about other things, or in some other way in relation to something else" (πρός τι δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγεται, ὄσα αὐτὰ ἄπερ ἐστιν ἑτέρων εἶναι λέγεται ἢ ὑπωσοῦν ἄλλως πρὸς ἕτερον), is not accurate enough. Therefore, he introduces another description and explains that for relatives "being is the same as being somehow related to something" (οἶς τὸ εἶναι ταὐτόν ἐστι τῷ πρός τί πως ἔχειν). This allows him to exclude the possibility for primary and secondary substances to belong to the category of relatives. Translation from: Aristotle, *Categories* (tr. Ackrill modified) 8a14-28. See also: *Ibid*. 6a37-8b24; 6a37-6b1; 8a37-39.

²⁸⁸ See: Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 121-126; Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 77-80; Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 197-205; Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 110-113; Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 124-133; Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 215-219.

τι ἀνάγκη πρότερον οὐσίας εἶναι), the pre-existent substances (τὴν προϋπάρχουσαν οὐσίαν) can be causally prior either in respect of time or by nature (ἢ χρόνῷ ἢ φύσει). Thus, while the father is causally prior to the son in respect of time, the genus is causally prior to the species by nature and becomes constitutive of their substance, because the genus is divided into species.²⁸⁹

The same line of reasoning can be observed in Elias's commentary on the *Isagoge*. Elias beautifully illustrates the Porphyrian tree and explains that discussion must start from genus, "because the genus seems to be like the root, differences like the trunks, the species like the branches, and properties and accidents like twigs" (διότι τὸ μὲν γένος ῥίζῃ ἔοικε, πρέμνοις αἰ διαφοραί, κλάδοις τὰ εἴδη, παραφυάσι τὰ ἴδια καὶ τὰ συμβεβηκότα). For Elias, it is reasonable to start from the genus, since when the genus exists, there are species, differences, properties, and accidents, but when it does not exist, none of them exists. However, the existence of the genus does not depend on the other four universals, because if any of them is removed the genus will still exist. Therefore, "if the genus is the cause of the species and species of the genus" (εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὸ γένος τῷ εἴδει αἴτιον καὶ τὸ εἶδος τῷ γένει), they are not each other's causes equally. Just as the father is the cause of the son's existence and relation, while the son is only the cause of the father's relation, in the same way "the genus is the cause of the existence and of relation for the species" (τὸ γένος αἴτιον τῷ εἴδει καὶ τῷς σχέσεως), while the species is only the cause of relation for the genus. This is the reason why, according to Elias, Porphyry commences his discussion with genus.²⁹⁰

Although Elias does not explicitly state here that genus and species are relatives ($\pi\rho \dot{\alpha} \zeta$ τ_1), based on how he describes the relationship between genus and species, it can be concluded that he clearly considers them to be relatives. This can be further corroborated by the fact that later, in his discussion on species, he indeed briefly refers to genus and species as relatives.²⁹¹ Similarly, David briefly mentions that "the genus is a genus of species" ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \gamma \dot{\alpha} \rho$ $\gamma \dot{\epsilon} v \alpha \zeta \dot{\epsilon} \dot{\epsilon} \sigma \tau \dot{\epsilon} \gamma \dot{\epsilon} v \alpha \zeta$) when discussing genus, and only later when he talks about species mentions them as relatives. Furthermore, Pseudo-Elias and Arethas consider genus and species relationally. Their account agrees with what is said by Ammonius and especially

²⁸⁹ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 47. Ammonius did not perceive genera strictly as relatives, but relation was accidental to genera.

²⁹⁰ Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 50-51; 63.

²⁹¹ Elias, Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge,63,

Elias, as they consider genus not only to be the cause of the relation to the species, but also of its existence.²⁹²

However, as we will see, Prodromos, in his dialogue, seems to represent a different stance. Theocles disagrees with the possibility that the genus can be assigned to the category of relatives. He argues that there must be first Socrates, as a primary substance, "so that, secondarily, his being a father comes to existence" ($\delta \epsilon \tilde{i} \gamma \alpha \rho \epsilon \tilde{i} v \alpha i \pi \rho \tilde{o} \tau \sigma v \Sigma \omega \kappa \rho \dot{\alpha} \tau \eta \nu i v \alpha \pi \alpha \rho \sigma \sigma \tau \alpha \eta \alpha \dot{v} \tau \tilde{o} \kappa \alpha i \pi \alpha \tau \eta \rho$), just as there must first be the number four in order for the double or half of four to exist.²⁹³ This line of reasoning does not seem to contradict the commentary tradition on the *Isagoge*, as Theocles says that a substance or a definite quantity must be pre-existent for a relation to exist. In this way, he goes along with the commonly accepted view that relatives cannot be conceived in themselves, but only through some other category.²⁹⁴ However, Prodromos, through the words of Theocles, brings to absurdity the possibility that a genus could belong only to one category, as this would imply that the remaining nine categories are alien to it, which is impossible given that all ten categories are equal. Therefore, according to Theocles, there are two options: either the "genus will perish as a being" (τò εἶναι τò γένος διαπεσεῖν) if it is considered as a relative, or it will be above all ten categories. Since the first is not possible, the latter must be the case.²⁹⁵

Why does Prodromos reject the possibility that genus is considered a relative, if this is a mainstream view in the commentary tradition on the *Isagoge*? First of all, it is not that Prodromos denies that genus is considered relationally in respect of species, but rather that genus should not be classified in the category of relatives. This does not contradict the commentary tradition on the *Isagoge* per se since the relative relationship between genus and species is only secondary. Perhaps the best explanation for Prodromos's aporia might be found in Simplicius's commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*. He explains that "we say that the ten categories are ten genera" (τὰς δέκα κατηγορίας δέκα γένη λέγομεν), each of which is divided into species. Relatives are one of these ten genera. However, since it is said that "the genus is the genus of species, and the species is of a genus" (τὸ γένος εἰδῶν ἐστι γένος, καὶ τὸ εἶδος δὲ γένους ἐστίν)", it will also imply that "if genus belonged to relatives, it would also have to be one of the species of relatives" (ὥστε τῶν πρός τι ἂν εἴη τὸ γένος καὶ εἶδος ἕν τῶν

²⁹² David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 121, 143; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 70; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 31.

²⁹³ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 250.

²⁹⁴ See, for instance, Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 114.

²⁹⁵ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 250.

πρός τι).²⁹⁶ According to Simplicius, this is absurd. Firstly, it implies that the highest genus is one species of relatives. Secondly, if we say that genus is relative and thus one species of relative, and since genera inherently exist before their species, it will appear that genus exists before its own existence (i.e., as a species of relatives). Thirdly, since relatives are an accidental category, if they are removed, their species, including genus, would also be removed. This is absurd because it implies that relatives would remove together with themselves all ten genera, including the substance, which is prior by nature. Finally, if the genus is merely one of the species of relatives, this would imply that all ten categories should be classified as relatives. According to Simplicius, this problem should be treated in the same way as unity ($\tau \delta \hat{\epsilon} v$) and being ($\tau \delta \hat{o} v$) that belong homonymously to all ten categories. The genus belongs primarily to substance and to all other things because of it. Thus, even if genus "is classed with relatives according to the relational, even so, in so far as it belongs homonymously to all the categories, in that respect it would not be classed definitively in any one category" (καν κατά τὸ σχετικὸν τοῖς πρός τι συντέτακται, ἀλλὰ καθ' ὅσον πάσαις ταῖς κατηγορίαις όμωνύμως ύπάργει, κατὰ τοσοῦτον οὐκ ἂν ἐν μια τινι κατατάττοιτο άφωρισμένως).297

Prodromos must have been familiar with Simplicius's commentary, or at least with the tradition that explicated this issue in a similar fashion. Prodromos expected his learned audience to get his hints and be capable of providing an answer to this aporia - i.e., how genus does not belong to the category of relatives exclusively, even if there is a relational connection between genus and species.

Going back to the dialogue, we can see that Xenedemos agrees with Theocles that the genus should be placed above the ten categories. Yet, this opens the stage for Prodromos to posit a new *aporia* for his audience: If this is the case, Theocles asks, how should the name of "genus" be predicated for all ten categories? This conundrum addresses the question of whether genus should be predicated homonymously or synonymously for the ten categories. Thus, if the name of the genus is predicated about the ten categories and the account corresponding with the name (κατὰ τοὕνομα τούτου λόγος) is not, then, the genus will be homonymous (ὁμώνυμος); and if both the name of the genus and the account corresponding with the name are predicated about the ten genera, then, the genus will be synonymous

²⁹⁶ Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 204; Modified translation from Simplicius, *On Aristotle Categories* 7-8, (tr. Fleet), 62.

²⁹⁷ Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 204-205. Translation from Simplicius, *On Aristotle Categories* 7-8, (tr. Fleet), 63.

(συνώνυμος).²⁹⁸ On Theocles's interrogation, Xenedemos first provides an account of the genus from Porphyry's *Isagoge* according to which "the genus is that which is predicated of multiple things differing in species, in answer to what a thing is" (γένος γὰρ [...] εἶναι τὸ κατὰ πλειόνων καὶ διαφόρων τῷ εἴδει ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι κατηγορούμενον".²⁹⁹ Additionally, Xenedemos confidently responds that genus is synonymously predicated as the name of the genus and its account coincides with the ten genera.³⁰⁰

Obviously, the answer Xenedemos gives is wrong. We have already seen that Simplicius also explains that genus is homonymously predicated of the ten categories. Furthermore, in the *Isagoge*, Porphyry himself clearly states the following:

For the existent is not a single genus common to everything, nor are all things cogeneric in virtue of some single highest genus — as Aristotle says. Let it be supposed, as in the *Predications*, that the first genera are ten — ten first origins, as it were. Thus, even if you call everything existent, you will do so, he says, homonymously and not synonymously. For if the existent were a single genus common to everything, all things would be said to be existent synonymously. But since the first items are ten, they have only the name in common and not also the account which corresponds to the name.³⁰¹

οὐ γάρ ἐστι κοινὸν ἕν γένος πάντων τὸ ὂν οὐδὲ πάντα ὁμογενῆ καθ' ἕν τὸ ἀνωτάτω γένος, ὥς φησιν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης. ἀλλὰ κείσθω, ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς Κατηγορίαις, τὰ πρῶτα δέκα γένη οἶον ἀρχαὶ δέκα πρῶται· κἂν δὴ πάντα τις ὄντα καλῆ, ὁμωνύμως, φησί, καλέσει, ἀλλ' οὐ συνωνύμως. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἕν ἦν κοινὸν πάντων γένος τὸ ὄν, συνωνύμως ἂν πάντα ὄντα ἐλέγετο· δέκα δὲ ὄντων τῶν πρώτων ἡ κοινωνία κατὰ τοὕνομα μόνον, οὐκέτι μὴν καὶ κατὰ τοὐ λόγον τὸν κατὰ τοὕνομα.³⁰²

This view is commonly accepted in the commentary tradition on both Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories*. It is clearly impossible for the ten genera to be predicated synonymously. Although they share a common name, "genus," they do not have a common

²⁹⁸ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 251.

²⁹⁹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 251; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 266; Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 2.

³⁰⁰ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 251; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 267.

³⁰¹ Porphyry, *Isagoge* (tr. Barnes), 7.

³⁰² Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 6.

description, as each genus has its own description. On the other hand, genera are predicated synonymously of species, and species are predicated synonymously of individuals.³⁰³ However, Prodromos did not inquire if genera share the name "genus" and the descriptions of each genus, but rather the name "genus" and the description of genus in general. The question is why he created such an *aporia* and how do we solve it?

Before I proceed to answer this question, it is important to clarify three concepts that will be important for our discussion. There is a difference between definition (ὅρος), description (ὑπογραφή), and definitional account (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας). The perfect definition is made from genus (i.e., matter) and its constitutive differences (i.e., form), signifies the essence of the definiendum, and is convertible with it. Description, on the other hand, through a unique mixture of accidents, signifies the substance that underlies them. While definition clearly reveals the realities (τὰ πράγματα) through substance (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας), description is like an image of these realities and reveals them through accidents (ἐκ τῶν συμβεβηκότων). The definition is always composed from essential words (ἐξ οὐσιωδῶν φωνῶν), while the description is composed from non-essential (ἐπουσιωδῶν). Moreover, the definition always pertains what is existing (ἐπὶ ὄντων), while description can pertain both to existing and nonexisting things (ἐπὶ ὄντων καὶ μὴ ὄντων). The highest genera do not have definition but only description, while the subalternate genera and most specific species have a definition. A definitional account that reveals the essence can be used to designate both definition and description.³⁰⁴

Returning to the *aporia*, the issue posed by Prodromos regarding genus has also been explored in the commentary tradition concerning homonyms and their definitional account. The problem with homonyms is that by virtue of being named homonyms, they share both the name and the definitional account of homonyms, which makes them synonyms. Therefore, everything with the same name would be considered synonymous. For instance, Simplicius, in his commentary on the *Categories*, notes that Porphyry was the first to resolve this *aporia* by suggesting that the same realities can be both homonyms and synonyms in respect of

³⁰³ For the commentary tradition on *Categories*, see: Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 61; Dexippus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 13-15, 17; Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 16; Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 22; Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 28; Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 15; Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 135; For commentary tradition on *Isagoge*, see: Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 41-42; Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 51; David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 130-131, 158-159; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 91; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 80. ³⁰⁴ See for instance: Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 60; Dexippus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 20; Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 19; Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 54-55; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 37.

different predications. We can consider the well-known example of the "two Ajaxes." While they are homonyms as two distinct individuals, they are synonyms as they belong to the species of men, sharing the same definitional account of "rational mortal animal." Just as there is nothing preventing the two Ajaxes from being homonyms in terms of their participation in the nature of men, they can also be considered synonyms in their participation in the definitional account of homonyms.³⁰⁵ One could provide the same explanation for Prodromos's puzzle: the ten genera are homonyms in terms of their unique descriptions and synonyms regarding the description of what a genus is.

Another peculiar answer to this puzzle can be found in Ammonius's commentary on the *Isagoge*. He explains that things with the same definitions also have the same realities. Homonyms cannot have one common definition but are instead described. Since description is based on accidents that can belong to different substances, it is possible to give one description of things that differ in substance without making them identical, as is the case with genera and homonyms.³⁰⁶

Returning back to the dialogue we can clearly see that Theocles only seemingly accepts Xenedemos's response and says this would indeed imply that "the genus is a genus of ten categories" (γένος εἶναι τῶν δέκα τὸ γένος), then the polyarchy would turn into monarchy (πολυαρχία εἰς μοναρχίαν) and plurality into monad (εἰς ἑνάδα τὸ πλῆθος).³⁰⁷ However, Theocles explains that someone might oppose this answer by saying "that the genus is not a real thing, but a word; it does not subsist in itself but receives when the ten categories are given" (φωνὴν τὸ γένος λέγων εἶναι ἀπράγματον· μὴ δὲ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ὑφεστῶσαν· ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς προχειριζομένοις τῶν δέκα τὸ εἶναι λαμβάνουσαν).³⁰⁸ To this objection, Theocles ironically says that Porphyry was not a true philosopher since "he defined a word without existence" (ἀνυπόστατον φωνὴν ὁρισάμενος), as he was not aware that "the definition of anything is the statement of its nature" (τὸν γὰρ ἑκάστου ὄρον, τῆς τούτου φύσεως εἶναι δηλωτικὸν).³⁰⁹ Afterwards, Theocles continues and argues:

³⁰⁵ Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 30-31; Porphyry, in the preserved commentary on the *Categories*, does give an example of the "two Ajaxes", but he does not explicitly say that the same thing can be both homonymous and synonymous in respect of different appellations. It might be the case that Simplicius refers here to Porphyry's more extent commentary on the *Categories*, namely the book titled *To Gedalius*, which is lost. See also: Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 64; Dexippus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 135-136.

³⁰⁶ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 56.

³⁰⁷ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 251; Modified translation: Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 267.

³⁰⁸ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 251; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 267.

³⁰⁹ Modified translation from: Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 267. From hereafter I translate "ἀνυπόστατος φωνή" as "non-substantial word" or "word without real existence", as I find Spyridonova et. al. translation of "ἀνυπόστατος φωνή" as "a word without significance" terminologically misleading. For the five

But then I would demand that he considers animal as such an unsubstantial word (i.e., word without existence) unless it is comprehended in a human being, given that it is not comprehended in itself. I will call Aristotle to witness, he who said that "the universal animal is either nothing or is posterior."³¹⁰ But if he attributes an actual existence to the animal, saying that it is an animate sensitive substance, then, accordingly, we would also attribute real existence to the genus, describing it as something 'that is predicated of multiple things differing in species, in answer to what a thing is.'³¹¹

ἕπειτα καὶ τὸ ζῶον, τοιαύτην εἶναι φωνὴν ἀνυπόστατον ὑποθέσθαι αὐτὸν ἀπαιτήσομεν· εἰ μὴ ἐν ἀνθρώπῷ ληφθείη, καθ' ἑαυτὴν μὴ θεωρουμένην· καὶ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη κομίσομεν μάρτυρα τὸ ζῶον λέγοντα τὸ καθόλου, ἢ οὐδέν ἐστιν ἢ ὕστερον· εἰ δ' ὑπόστασιν ἐκεῖνος τῷ ζώῷ διδοίη· οὐσίαν ἕμψυχον αἰσθητικὴν τιθέμενος εἶναι· κατὰ ταυτὸν καὶ ἡμεῖς, τῷ γένει ὑπόστασιν δοίημεν· τὸ κατὰ πλειόνων ἀποδιδόντες καὶ διαφόρων τῷ εἴδει καὶ ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι·³¹²

This aporia actually addresses the question from Porphyry's *Isagoge* regarding genera and species that he restrains to discuss:

For example, about genera and species—whether they subsist, whether they actually depend on bare thoughts alone, whether if they actually subsist they are bodies or incorporeal and whether they are separable or are in perceptible items and subsist about them $[...]^{313}$

universals are all significant words "σημαντικαί φωναί". For example, as Arethas explains, a word can be articulate (ἕναρθρος) or inarticulate (ἄναρθρος). Furthermore, words can be significant (σημαντική) or without significance (ἄσημος). Articulate significant words can be either universal (καθόλου) or particular (μερική). Philosophers deal only with articulate significant universal words. These words can be further divided into substantial (οὐσιώδης) and non-substantial (ἐπουσιώδης). Substantial words can either accommodate one nature (μιῷ φύσει ἀρμόζει) i.e., species, or many (πολλαῖς) natures i.e., genus and difference. Non-substantial words can also accommodate one nature i.e., property or many natures i.e., accidents. Arethas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Isagoge*, scholion 4.

³¹⁰ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 402b7.

³¹¹ Modified translation from: Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 267.

³¹² Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 252.

³¹³ Porphyry, *Isagoge* (tr. Barnes), 1.

αὐτίκα περὶ τῶν γενῶν τε καὶ εἰδῶν τὸ μὲν εἴτε ὑφέστηκεν εἴτε καὶ ἐν μόναις ψιλαῖς ἐπινοίαις κεῖται εἴτε καὶ ὑφεστηκότα σώματά ἐστιν ἢ ἀσώματα καὶ πότερον χωριστὰ ἢ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς καὶ περὶ ταῦτα ὑφεστῶτα [...]³¹⁴

However, although Porphyry restrains himself from this discussion, the commentary tradition did not. Thus, for example, Ammonius in his commentary on the Isagoge explains that of beings (τῶν ὄντων), some subsist (τὰ μὲν ὑφέστηκε) whereas others are mere concepts (τὰ δὲ έν ψιλαῖς ἐπινοίαις ὑπάρχει), such as centaurs, which exist only when they are conceived (when they are not conceived, they do not have existence). Antisthenes, as Ammonius explains, held that genera and species were mere conceptions (τὰ γένη καὶ τὰ εἴδη ἐν ψιλαῖς έπινοίαις εἶναι), with which Ammonius disagrees. Ammonius further explains that of subsistent things (τῶν ὑφεστηκότων), some are bodies, and others are incorporeal (τὰ μὲν σώματά έστι, τὰ δὲ ἀσώματα). Therefore, Ammonius then explicates, of those who believed that genera and species are subsistent, some argued that they are corporeal, and some that they are incorporeal. Of those who said that genus and species are incorporeal, some argued that they subsist in themselves (oi $\mu \epsilon \nu \kappa \alpha \theta' \alpha \delta \tau \dot{\alpha}$), and others that they subsist within sensible things (οἱ δὲ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς ὑφεστάναι). Again, from those who believed that genera and species subsist within sensible things, some believed that they are present throughout (δi) όλου ἐστίν), some said that they subsist at the surface (κατὰ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν), and others that they subsist around subsistent things (περί τὰ ὑφεστῶτα). According to Ammonius, Porphyry holds that genera and species are subsistent and incorporeal. Having established this, he was able to inquire "whether they are inseparable from matter and in the many, or prior to them, and have become separate" (εἰ ἀχώριστά ἐστι τῆς ὕλης καὶ ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς ἢ πρὸ τούτων καὶ κεχώρισται).315

Ammonius, like other Neoplatonic commentators, distinguished between three different types of universals. ³¹⁶ Therefore, for Ammonius, "genera are threefold" (τριττά ἐστι τὰ γένη):

- 1) "some before the many" (τὰ μὲν πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν)
- 2) "some in the many" (τὰ δὲ ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς)

³¹⁴ Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 1.

³¹⁵ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 39-41.

³¹⁶ For more information on this see: Katerina Ierodiakonou, "John Italos on Universals," *Documenti E Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 18 (2007): 231–47, 231-235.

 3) "some upon the many" (τὰ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς), "which are also called last-born and conceptual, since they are in our thought" (ὰ καὶ ὑστερογενῆ καλεῖται καὶ ἐννοηματικὰ ὡς ἐν τῆ διανοίҳ ὄντα τῆ ἡμετέρҳ).³¹⁷

For instance, Ammonius invites the reader to imagine that there is a ring-seal bearing a relief of Achilles, which is used to imprint the same relief on multiple pieces of wax. Someone, who comes later, will observe that all the wax pieces bear identical imprints, each derived from the same seal. As a result, this person forms an impression of the seal-relief in their thought. In this example, the relief of the seal ring is what is before the many, its imprint in pieces of wax is something what is in the many, and "the one in the thought concerning that thing that made the impression on the many and is last-born" (ή δὲ ἐν τῆ διανοία τοῦ άπομαξαμένου έπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ ὑστερογενή). The same can be said in the case of genera and species. Since all the forms are within the mind of the Demiurge, thus is also the form of the human being as the impression in the ring. This form is before the many and is separable from matter (τὸ εἶδος πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν καὶ χωριστὸν τῆς ὕλης). However, the form of a human being is also to be found in each particular human being, just like the seal-ring relief is to be found in pieces of wax. These types of forms are in the many and inseparable from matter (τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς εἶναι καὶ ἀχώριστα τῆς ὕλης). Finally, the impression that we have for all particular human beings, just as in the case of identical imprints on the pieces of wax, exists in our thought. This form is upon the many and the last born $(\dot{\epsilon}\pi\dot{\iota}\tau\sigma\tilde{\iota}\tau\sigma\lambda\lambda\sigma\tilde{\iota}\tau\sigma)$ [...] καὶ ὑστερογενές). Although these forms "are separable from bodies" (εἰσὶ δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα σωμάτων μέν χωριστά) because "they do not subsist in a body but in the soul" (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐν σώματι ὑφέστηκεν, ἀλλ' ἐν ψυχῆ), they are "not separable properly speaking" (οὐχ ἀπλῶς δὲ χωριστά) because "they cannot be known in and by themselves" (οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ γνωρίζεσθαι δύναται) unlike the Platonic forms before the many.³¹⁸ For Ammonius, Porphyry does not speak about genera that are before the many, nor those that are in the many, but of those that are upon the many. This is the reason why Porphyry provides a "description of the concept', that is, of the conceptual genus" ($\dot{\upsilon}\pi \sigma\gamma\rho\alpha\phi\dot{\gamma}\nu$ $\tau\eta\varsigma$ έννοίας, τοῦτ' ἔστι τοῦ έννοηματικοῦ γένους).³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 69; translation from: Ammonius, *Interpretation of Porphyry's Isagoge* (tr. Chase), 50.

³¹⁸ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 41-42; translation from: Ammonius, *Interpretation of Porphyry's Isagoge* (tr. Chase), 48-50.

³¹⁹ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 69; translation from: Ammonius, *Interpretation of Porphyry's Isagoge* (tr. Chase), 50.

Prodromos shares the same stance with Ammonius when it comes to genera. This is particularly evident from his reference to Aristotle's *On the Soul*. However, before we proceed to deciphering Prodromos's aporia, it is important to clarify two things. First of all, Prodromos only ironically says that Porphyry was not a philosopher as he "defined a word without existence" (ἀνυπόστατον φωνὴν ὁρισάμενος). Porphyry does not give the definition of the genus, but rather its description. Secondly, it is important to understand what Prodromos actually means by "ἀνυπόστατον". As John of Damascus explains in his *Philosophical Chapters*, what has no real existence (ἀνυπόστατον), can be described in two different senses – that which has absolutely no existence, and that which does not exist in itself (τὸ μηδαμῆ μηδαμῶς ὄν), but subsists in a substance (οὐκ ἔχει ἰδίαν ὕπαρξιν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῆ οὐσία ὑφέστηκεν), as an accident (τὸ συμβεβηκὸς).³²⁰ This is exactly, as we will see, how genera as universals are understood – even though they do not have the real existence in themselves, they are still subsistent in the primary substances.

Therefore, Prodromos, holding this view, uses the example from On the Soul in which Aristotle says that the universal animal is either nothing, or posterior (τὸ ζῶον λέγοντα τὸ καθόλου, η οὐδέν ἐστιν η ὕστερον).³²¹ With this reference, Prodromos gives a hint to his audience about how it is possible to solve the puzzle at hand. However, in order to understand both what Aristotle meant by this and how Prodromos employs this idea, it will be useful to briefly discuss the authors who dealt with this matter. For instance, in Questions and Solutions (Physical problems), attributed to Alexander of Aphoridisias, it is explained that the universal is not a real thing in the strictest sense ($\tau \delta \delta \delta \kappa \alpha \theta \delta \lambda \delta \upsilon \delta \tau$ $\pi \rho \tilde{\alpha} \gamma \mu \dot{\alpha} \tau \iota \kappa \upsilon \rho (\omega \zeta)$, but rather something that is accidental (συμβεβηκός) to that thing. Therefore, genera exist universally, but not as something real in themselves. For example, an animal is something real ($\pi \rho \tilde{\alpha} \gamma \mu \alpha$) and indicates a certain nature – it signifies an animate sensitive substance (σημαίνει γὰρ οὐσίαν ἕμψυχον αἰσθητικήν) which according to its own nature is not universal (ὃ κατὰ μὲν τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν οὐκ ἔστι καθόλου). However, the animal as the genus, is either nothing or posterior because it does not signify the proper nature of its own (μή φύσιν τινά οἰκείαν σημαίνει), but is an attribute (σύμπτωμα) that happens to some real thing. So, even if genera exist in this way, they will be posterior to that to which they belong.³²²

A somewhat similar account is also given by Themistius, who in his paraphrase of *On the Soul*, explains Aristotle's statement by saying that genus is a concept (ἐννόημά) without

³²⁰ John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, chapter 29.

³²¹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 252; Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 402b7.

³²² Alexander of Aphrodisias, Problems and Solutions, 21-22

real existence (ἀνυπόστατον). Thus, the definitions of genera and species are not the definitions of notions, but rather of entities that really exist in individuals. For the notion (νόημα) of animal is not animate sensitive substance, but rather the particular animals are animate.³²³ Philoponus in his commentary *On the Soul*, agrees with what was previously said by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius. Philoponus also adds that with the statement that "the universal animal is either nothing or posterior," Aristotle actually refers to forms that are last-born (ὑστερογενῆ), i.e., to those universals that are upon the many. Thus, an animal exists and is defined as a substance, but as a universal it does not have real existence(τὸ δὲ καθόλου οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ὑποστάσει). Therefore, the animal, as universal and as genus, is either nothing or posterior, because it exists only conceptually (ἐννοηματικῶς).³²⁴

2.2.3 Species (εἶδος)

The next universal term that Prodromos treats in his dialogues is species. This section begins with Theocles inquiring about the account ($\lambda \delta \gamma o \varsigma$) of the most specific (είδικώτατον) species. Xenedemos readily takes the answer from the book at his hand and says that "the most specific species is the species that is predicated, in answer to 'What is it?', of several items which differ in number" (είδικώτατον εἶδος εἶναι λέγεται, τὸ κατὰ πλειόνων καὶ διαφερόντων τῷ ἀριθμῷ ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι κατηγορούμενον).³²⁵ Satisfied with this answer, Theocles further inquires whether the given account should be applied to one of the most specific species, such as horse or man, or to the most specific species in general. According to Theocles, the account should certainly apply to the most specific species in general. For instance, Theocles argues, when someone defines a man (γὰρ ὁ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὁριζόμενος), they do not define a particular man, but a man in the absolute sense. Since the definition is indicative of the universal and united nature of the definiendum, we should not define some of the most specific species acount of species seems not to be accurate enough. Theocles keeps confusing his opponent and says:

³²³ Themistius, *Paraphrase on Aristotle's On the Soul*, 3-4.

³²⁴ Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's On the Soul, 37-38.

³²⁵ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 253; Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 4.

The most specific species are different in nature and species and, therefore, they should not be considered as something 'predicated of many things differing in number, in answer to what the species is,' but rather as something 'predicated of the things differing in the species.' And, if we suppose that this is the case, then the account $(\lambda \delta \gamma \circ \varsigma)$ of the species will coincide with that of the genus. If the two definitions do not differ in anything other than one differing in number and the other differing in species, and the last definition undermines even this distinction, then nothing remains for us to do but to equate both definitions. Given that the definitions do not differ either. Consequently, the genus and the species will be the same. Thus, our five voices will reduce to four.³²⁶

τὰ δὲ εἰδικώτατα ἑτεροφυῆ καὶ εἴδει ἀλλήλων διάφορα, οὐ τὸ κατὰ διαφόρων τῷ ἀριθμῷ λεγόμενον ἐν τῷ τί ἐστιν εἶδος ἔδει θέσθαι·³²⁷ ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὸ κατὰ διαφόρων τῷ εἴδει· πάλιν δὲ εἰ τοῦτο δοθῆ, ὁ λόγος τοῦ εἴδους τῷ τοῦ γένους ταυτισθήσεται λόγῳ· εἰ γὰρ κατ' ἄλλο μὴ δὲν ἀμφοτέρω τὼ ὅρω διενηνόχατον, εἰ μὴ τὸ διάφορον εἴδει καὶ διάφορον ἀριθμῷ, ὑφέλοι δὲ ὁ λόγος καὶ τοῦτο, λείπεται παντάπασιν ἀλλήλοιν ἰσάζειν τὼ ρηθέντε ὅρω· ὦν δὲ οἱ ὅροι κατ' οὐδὲν διαλάττουσι, τούτων οὐδὲ τὰ ὁριζόμενα πράγματα· ἕσται ἄρα γένος τὲ καὶ εἶδος, ταυτὸν· καὶ οὕτως ἡμῖν ἡ πεντὰς τῶν φωνῶν, εἰς τετράδα μετενεχθῆ·³²⁸.

As can be clearly seen, the description of the most specific species bears a striking resemblance to the one provided by Porphyry regarding genera – "tò κατὰ πλειόνων καὶ διαφερόντων τῷ εἴδει ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι κατηγορούμενον" (a genus is what is predicated, in answer to 'What is it?', of several items which differ in species). Thus, while species are predicated of several items that differ in number, the genus is predicated of several items that differ in species is taken as a universal definition, it will imply that the most specific species are predicated of several

³²⁶ Translation from: Prodromos, *Xenedemos* (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 268-269. I have just substituted here the term "definition" with "account" in case of "λόγος".

³²⁷ Here István Perczel has changed the punctuation and, per consequent, also the translation, of Spyridonova et al. According to Perczel this is the obvious sense of the sentence.

³²⁸ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 253.

items differing in species. As previously explained in the section on the genus, the most general genera cannot be defined, but only described, since a perfect definition arises from genus and constitutive differences. The same applies to the genus taken as a universal term, as it is predicated homonymously of the ten highest genera. However, the most specific species, as well as subalternate genera and species taken individually, can be defined since they all possess genera and constitutive differences. Yet, the question remains: what happens with the most specific species taken as a universal term? Can universal terms in general be defined or only described? In order to clarify the issue at hand, I will first briefly summarize how Porphyry describes species. Then, I will examine how the commentary tradition approached the question of defining universals in order to decipher Prodromos's aporia.

According to Porphyry, "they render" (ἀποδιδόασιν) species in the following ways:

"a species is what is ordered under a genus" (εἶδός ἐστι τὸ ταττόμενον ὑπὸ τὸ γένος);

 a species is "that of which a genus is predicated in answer to 'What is it?'" i.e., essentially (οὖ τὸ γένος ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι κατηγορεῖται);

 "a species is what is predicated, in answer to 'What is it?', of several items which differ in number" (εἶδός ἐστι τὸ κατὰ πλειόνων καὶ διαφερόντων τῷ ἀριθμῷ ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι κατηγορούμενον.).³²⁹

While the last account is suitable only for the most specific species, the first two are also applicable to species that are not the most specific. To clarify this, Porphyry explains that in each type of predication ($\kappa\alpha\theta$ ' ἑκάστην κατηγορίαν) there are:

1) the most general items (γενικώτατα);

- 2) the most specific items (εἰδικώτατα);
- 3) the intermediate items ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \delta \dot{\epsilon} \mu \dot{\epsilon} \sigma \alpha$).

The most general items are the ten genera and there is no other superordinate genus above them. The most specific items are those after which there are no other subordinate species – they cannot be further divided into species, but only into individuals. The intermediate items are those that are between the most general and the most special. They are also called subaltern genera and species ($\dot{\nu}\pi \dot{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\eta\lambda\dot{\alpha}\gamma\dot{\epsilon}\nu\eta\kappa\alpha\dot{\epsilon}\dot{\epsilon}\dot{\delta}\eta$) as they can be both genera and species depending on the relation. Whereas the extremes have a single relation ($\tau\dot{\alpha}$ $\delta\dot{\epsilon}$ $\check{\alpha}\kappa\rho\alpha$ µí $\alpha\nu$ $\check{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota$ $\sigma\chi\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\iota\nu$) – the most general with items below them, the most special with items above them, the intermediate items ($\tau\dot{\alpha}$ $\delta\dot{\epsilon}$ µ $\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\alpha$) have two relations ($\delta\dot{\nu}\sigma$ $\sigma\chi\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota$) – one to the items before

³²⁹ Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 4; Translation from: Porphyry, *Isagoge* (tr. Barnes), 5.

them in respect of which they are species, and one to the items after them in respect of which they are genera.³³⁰

It can be clearly seen that Porphyry does not provide a definition of the most specific species as universal term, but rather its descriptions. Prodromos, on the other hand confuses his audience by interchangeably using two fundamental concepts, namely account ($\lambda \dot{0} \gamma \sigma \zeta$) and definition (opoc). This is indicated by his inquiry about the definition of the most specific species. However, while each of the most specific species can be defined, the most specific species as a universal term cannot. To the best of my knowledge, only two authors in the entire Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition on the Isagoge, namely Pseudo-Elias and David, explicitly examine why Porphyry used description instead of definition for the genus and the remaining universal terms. According to Pseudo-Elias, for example, the true reason why Porphyry did not define the five universal words is because they are homonymous. Since homonyms are not defined, so also the five universals are not defined. Pseudo-Elias further clarifies that homonyms cannot be defined because the definition signifies one essence (à opiquoc μίαν οὐσίαν σημαίνει), while homonyms indicate many natures. Moreover, he explains that universals are considered as homonyms because they fall under the ten categories that are also homonymous. To be precise, in each category there is a genus, difference, species, and property in most cases as something accidental (tò συμβεβηκός).331

Although someone with a limited understanding of logic might mistakenly assume that Prodromos is criticizing Porphyry's definitional account of species here, this is not the case. By presenting this aporia, Prodromos not only cleverly exposes inadequately trained students under the tutelage of incompetent instructors, but also skillfully crafts a puzzle that allows his audience to identify logical inconsistencies in his argument and find a solution. Firstly, in this aporia, Prodromos exploits the similarities between the descriptions of the genus and the species to confound his audience. Secondly, Prodromos keeps perplexing a reader with two fundamental concepts, namely account ($\lambda \dot{\alpha} \gamma \sigma \varsigma$) and definition ($\tilde{\delta} \rho \sigma \varsigma$). Although a definitional account that reveals the essence can serve as both a definition and a description, Porphyry does not provide a definition for the universal term species; instead, he offers its descriptions. Finally, and most importantly, Prodromos make a confusion between "this particular" most specific species (e.g., man, horse), and the most specific species

³³⁰ Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 4-6; Translation from: Porphyry, *Isagoge* (tr. Barnes), 5-7.

³³¹ Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 75-76; David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 131-133.

understood as a universal and a homonymous. While "this particular" most specific species such as man and horse can be defined, the most specific species as universal and homonymous term can only be described. This is the answer that Prodromos expects from a knowledgeable reader to provide.

2.2.4 Differentia (διαφορά)

After finishing the discussion on species, Prodromos leads the dialogue to the third term from Porphyry's *Isagoge* – differentia (διαφορά). In this section, Theocles asks Xenedemos to tell him what the definitional account (λόγον) of difference is as rendered by his teacher Hermagoras and as formulated by Porphyry before him. Xenedemos readily responds to this question, stating that there are several definitional accounts, but not all of them are applicable to every difference. Therefore, he decides to provide the definition that he believes befits every difference: "the difference is that by which each singular thing differs as a whole" (διαφορά ἐστιν, ὅτῷ διαφέρει ἕκαστα ὡς ὅλον).³³²

Theocles, not surprisingly, is not satisfied with this answer and invites Xenedemos to examine and check whether this definition (ὅρος) is correct. For, if it is the case that differentiae are defined as that by which each type of thing differs (ὁρίζοιτο δὲ τῷ ὅτῷ ἕκαστα διαφέρει), then, the genera, though prior by nature, will become equivalent to them, since each type of thing differs in genus as well. For example, Socrates, who belongs to the genus of animal, is different from white, which belongs to the genus of color. Moreover, since each type of thing could be differentiated based on their species, such as man and horse, the species will also become differentiae. If genera and species are equivalent to differentiae, they will not be predicated in answer to "what a thing is" (οὐκέτι ἐν τῷ τί ἐστιν), but as the difference in answer to "what kind of thing it is" (ἐν τῷ ὁποῖον τί ἐστιν). In addition, this will also imply that "the species will be predicated of several items that differ in species" (τὸ εἶδει ὑηθήσεται). Furthermore, since the genus corresponds to matter (ὅλη) and the difference to form (μορφὴ), it will imply that matter and form will be the same. If this is the case, then also substance (οὐσία) and privation (στέρησις), as well as being (τὸ εἶναι) and non-being (τὸ μὴ εἶναι) will be the same. None of this is possible. ³³³

In order to decipher the aporia that Prodromos poses, it is necessary to briefly turn to what Porphyry says about the differentia in general, how he defines it and ultimately how the

³³² Prodromos, Xenedemos, 254-255.

³³³ Prodromos, Xenedemos, 255.

Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition deals with the definitional account in question.

According to Porphyry, difference can be called: commonly (κοινῶς) - when one item is distinguished "by otherness" (ἑτερότητι) in any manner, either in relation to itself or in relation to another item (e.g., young Socrates from old Socrates, or Socrates from Plato); properly (ἰδίως) – when one item differs "by an inseparable accident" (ἀχωρίστῷ συμβεβηκότι) from the other one (e.g., blue-eyedness and black-eyedness); and most properly (ἰδιαίτατα) – when one item differs by a specific difference (εἰδοποιῷ διαφορῷ) from the other item (e.g., man differs from horse by the specific difference of rationality). The common and proper differences make an item other-like (αἰ μὲν κοινῶς καὶ ἰδίως ἀλλοῖον ποιοῦσιν), whereas the most proper difference makes an item other (αἱ δὲ ἰδιαίτατα ἄλλο).³³⁴

Moreover, differences can be separable (χωριστά) – such as being healthy and being ill, and inseparable (ἀχώριστα), which are further distinguished into those by accident (κατὰ συμβεβηκότα) – such as blue-eyed and black-eyed, and those in their own right (καθ' αὐτάς) – such as rational and receptive of scientific knowledge. Accidental differences (κατὰ συμβεβηκός) are not included in the definitional account of substance; they make an item just other-like and not other, and they accept augmentation and diminution. Differences in their own right (καθ' αὐτάς), on the other hand, are taken into account in the definitional account of the substance, they make the item other, and they do not admit the more and the less.³³⁵

Differences in their own right can be divisive ($\delta\iota \alpha\iota\rho\epsilon\tau\iota\kappa\alpha i$) and constitutive ($\sigma\upsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\alpha i$) and they are called specific ($\epsilon\iota\delta\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\alpha i$) differences. For instance, the differences or rational and irrational are divisive differences through which the genus of animal is divided into species. At the same time, these divisive differences of genera are completive ($\sigma\upsilon\mu\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\tau\iota\kappa\alpha i$) and constitutive differences of the species. These specific differences are used to divide genera into species and for definitions.³³⁶

Porphyry provides four different definitions of differentiae. According to the first definition "a difference is that by which a species exceeds its genus" (διαφορά ἐστιν η περισσεύει τὸ εἶδος τοῦ γένους). For example, man exceeds the genus of animal by rational and mortal. The genus of animal, however, does not possess any opposite differences (e.g., rational and irrational, mortal and immortal) at the same time in actuality but rather in potentiality only. According to the second definition, "a difference is what is predicated, in

³³⁴ Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 8-9.

³³⁵ Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 9-10.

³³⁶ Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 10

answer to 'What sort of so-and-so is it?', of several items which differ in species." (διαφορά έστι τὸ κατὰ πλειόνων καὶ διαφερόντων τῷ εἴδει ἐν τῷ ποῖόν τί ἐστι κατηγορούμενον). Porphyry further explains that real things are constituted from matter (ὕλη) and form (εἶδος) – e.g., a statue is constituted from bronze (i.e., matter) and figure (i.e., form). In the same way, the common and special man (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ κοινός τε καὶ εἰδικός) are constituted from the genus (i.e., animal) that is analogous to matter, and the difference (i.e., rational and mortal) that is analogous to form (μορφή). According to the third description, "a difference is what is of a nature such as to separate items under the same genus" (διαφορά ἐστιν τὸ χωρίζειν πεφυκὸς τὰ ὑπὸ τὸ αὐτὸ γένος), just as rational and irrational separate man and horse, species that belong to the genus of animal. Finally, according to the fourth rendering, "a difference is that by which each type of thing differs" (διαφορά ἐστιν ὅτῷ διαφέρει ἕκαστα). For example, man and horse do not differ in virtue of their genus as they are both mortal animals, but in terms of rational and irrational. Similarly, humans and gods are both rational animate substances, but they differ in terms or mortal and immortal.³³⁷

Porphyry further explains that difference is not anything that by chance divides items under the same genus, but rather something that adds to their being and is a segment of what it is to be the thing itself.³³⁸ In Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentaries on the *Isagoge*, this explanation of Porphyry is often used to explicate not only the third, but also the fourth description of differentiae. While Ammonius does not delve much into this matter, other commentators employ Porphyry's explanation more thoroughly.³³⁹ Elias, for example, notes that the first two descriptions of differentiae relate to constitutive differences, whereas the other two refer to divisive differences. Elias further emphasizes that in the case of the third description of difference, namely what is of a nature such as to separate items under the same genus, it is necessary to add "according to essence" ($\tau \dot{o} \kappa \alpha \tau' \ o \dot{v} \sigma (\alpha \nu)$). To illustrate this, Elias uses the example of being capable of laughing, which distinguishes humans from horses. However, this is not a difference but a property. Similarly, in the case of the fourth

³³⁷ For the first two accounts, I have used the term "definition" as Porphyry uses the verb "ὑρίζω". For the third account, I have used the term "description" since Porphyry employs the verb "ὑπογράω". For the fourth account, I have used the term "to render" since Porphyry employs the verb "ἀποδίδωμι". See: Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 10-11. Translation of quotations is taken from: Porphyry, *Isagoge* (tr. Barnes), 10-11. ³³⁸ Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 11.

³³⁹ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 108. The commentary tradition has extensively explored the four descriptions of differentiae, with particular attention devoted to the first. However, since this topic is not directly relevant to our current discussion, I will focus on the information that is most pertinent to the fourth description. For general discussion on all four descriptions of differentiae see: Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 101-108; Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 82-88; David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 187-199; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 110-117; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholia 142-163.

description of a difference, namely that by which each type of thing differs, it is also necessary to add "according to essence". For example, white and black also differ from each other. However, these are not differences in the proper sense, but rather accidental attributes. Elias also adds that the fourth description of differentiae is more comprehensive ($\kappa\alpha\theta o\lambda \iota \kappa\omega \tau \epsilon \rho \alpha$) than the third one because the third description only includes differences that belong to the same genus, while the fourth description pertains all things that differ in their essence.³⁴⁰

David's account on differentiae somewhat differs from Elias's account. According to David, all four definitions of differentiae are necessarily given and are crucial for understanding the concept of differentiae. Specifically, the first definition, which defines differentiae as that by which a species exceeds its genus, includes both constitutive and divisive differences. The second definition, which answers the question "What sort of so-and-so is it?" when applied to multiple items that differ in species, includes only constitutive differences. The third definition, which defines differentiae as that which separates items under the same genus, includes only divisive differences. Like Elias, David also underlines the importance of the addition "what is essential" (τ ò οὐσιωδῶς), as Porphyry implicitely does in his own account. However, David does not discuss the fourth definition of differentiae at all.³⁴¹

Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), while following the same line of reasoning as David, presents a more detailed account of this matter. He explains that it is necessary to have four descriptions of the differentiae (διαφοραί) because they are either of the same genera (ὁμοιογενῶν) or of different genera (ἀνομοιογενῶν), or they are either divisive (διαιρετικαί) or constitutive (συστατικαί), or they are both divisive and constitutive. As a result, the first description befits both constitutive and divisive differences, the second description accommodates constitutive differences, the third description pertains to divisive differences, and finally the fourth description - i.e., that by which each type of thing differs – is suitable for differences that belong to different genera. To illustrate the last description, Pseudo-Elias provides the following example: "scientific knowledge differs from the line" (διαφέρει ἐπιστήμη γραμμῆς), since scientific knowledge belongs to the genus of quality, while line belongs to the category of quantity. He also notes that this description of the differentiae is listed in the last place because it also befits common (κοινῶς) and proper (ἰδίως) differences.

³⁴⁰ Elias, Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge, 88.

³⁴¹ David, Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge, 196-199.

Therefore, according to Elias, Porphyry says that it is necessary to add to these descriptions that they "essentially" ($\tau \circ \circ \delta \sigma \omega \delta \tilde{\omega} \varsigma$) contain what is said about them.³⁴²

Although Pseudo-Elias does not mention it explicitly, it is obvious that the first three descriptions befit differences that belong to the same genus. This is emphasized by Arethas, who provides a similar treatment of the four descriptions of differences. In addition, Arethas mentions that while the first three descriptions pertain to actual differences, the last description can also be used for differences in a broader sense. However, Arethas also emphasizes that it is necessary in the case of the third and fourth description also to add that they are essential differences.³⁴³

Taking Porphyry's own account of differentiae and their four descriptions into consideration, as well as the explications provided by the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition on this matter, it becomes immediately apparent that Prodromos's primary objective was not merely to criticize the fourth definition as presented by Porphyry, but rather to expose how it might be misinterpreted or inadequately explained by an incompetent teacher to a beginner student. However, his decision to subject the fourth definition of differentiae to scrutiny is not arbitrary. Based on Porphyry's presentation of the fourth definition in the *Isagoge*, when considered in isolation, it leaves considerable room for criticism. Firstly, it is not sufficient to select only the last definition that, when taken generally, applies to all differences. Instead, one must enlist all four definitions as they are equally important. Secondly, even if one were to choose the last definition, it would be necessary to emphasize that a difference is that by which each type of thing differs essentially. In this manner, differentiae would never be considered equivalent to genera or species. Prodromos's treatment of this subject reveals that he expected anyone claiming knowledge of Porphyry's *Isagoge* to demonstrate a thorough understanding of its intricacies. Consequently, one should either consult what has been written on this subject or receive proper oral guidance from a teacher possessing comprehensive knowledge.

2.2.5 Property (ἰδίον)

The *aporia* about property (iδíov) in this dialogue begins with Theocles asking Xenedemos to explain how this universal is divided. This description leads to Theocles questioning the

³⁴² Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 113-114, 117.

³⁴³ Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholia 150, 157, and 158.
validity of the definition of proprium in the most proper sense. The Xenedemos character closely follows Porphyry's text on this matter:

"The fourth is divided into four!" I said. "The first one is that which 'happens to some species alone, though not to every individual of that species and not always, as to a man to practice medicine.' The second one is that which 'happens not to that species alone, but to every individual of that species, as to man to be a biped.' The third one is that which 'happens to a species alone, and to every individual of it, but not always, as to every man to become gray-haired in old age.' The fourth one is that in which 'all three cases concur: to happen to one species alone, and to every individual of it, and always.' These four parts Porphyry called the properties."³⁴⁴

εἰς τέτταρας ἦν δ' ἐγὼ ἡ τετάρτη· ὃ τὲ γὰρ μόνῷ τινὶ ξυμβέβηκεν εἴδει· κἂν εἰ μὴ παντὶ μὴ δ' ἀεὶ· ὡς τῷ ἀνθρώπῷ τὸ ἰατρεύειν· καὶ ὃ παντὶ κἂν εἰ μὴ μόνῷ· ὡς τούτῷ τὸ εἶναι δίποδι· καὶ ὃ μόνῷ καὶ παντὶ κἂν εἰ μὴ ἀεὶ· ὡς τῷ αὐτῷ ἡ ἐν γήρᾳ πολίωσις· καὶ τὸ, ἐφ' οὖ τὰ τρία συνέδραμον τὸ, μόνῷ καὶ παντὶ καὶ ἀεὶ, ἴδια τῷ Πορφυρίῷ ὠνόμασται·³⁴⁵

In response to this, Theocles ironically reacts by saying that this is indeed a scientific and precise division ($\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\dot{\epsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\eta\mu$ ov $\iota\kappa\eta\varsigma$ $\tilde{\eta}$ δ ' $\ddot{o}\varsigma$ $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ $\dot{\alpha}\kappa\rho\iota\beta\sigma\sigma\varsigma$ $\delta\iota\alpha\rho\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$). However, he expects from his interlocutor, if he is really to be a true philosopher, to be careful in what he is saying and add the details that are lacking in this explanation. Theocles further confuses his interlocutor by asking him to specify the difference between the first and the fourth type of property: the capability to laugh ($\tau\dot{o} \gamma\epsilon\lambda\alpha\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\dot{o}\nu$) and practicing medicine ($\tau\dot{o} i\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon\dot{v}\epsilon\nu$). The main reason behind this interrogation is to confuse his interlocutor and ultimately demonstrate that if there is no difference between these four types of properties, then the division is not conducted correctly and the definition of property in an absolute sense is not accurate. Xenedemos, shocked by this inquiry, responds that the answer is simple – "to laugh is inherent to every man and always, and to practice medicine only to some men and

³⁴⁴ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 272.

³⁴⁵ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 256. See also: Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 11-12.

sometimes" (ὧν τὸ μὲν, ἀεὶ καὶ παντὶ τὸ γελᾶν· τὸ δὲ, τινὶ καὶ ποτὲ τὸ ἰατρεύειν ἀνθρώπῷ πέφυκεν).³⁴⁶

Not surprisingly, Theocles is not satisfied with this answer. Firstly, he argues that not everyone laughs on all occasions. There are examples of people who could never laugh or cry, such as the husband of Torone mentioned by Lycophron.³⁴⁷ Also, people do not laugh at moments of sorrow, or sickness, or while drinking, eating, speaking, and sleeping. Here, Theocles thus expects the young student to recall and properly understand the reference from Porphyry's *Isagoge* that every man is always of such a nature as to laugh, even though he does not always laugh.³⁴⁸ In the commentary tradition on the *Isagoge*, this is usually explained by the potentiality versus actuality paradigm. Thus, for instance, Ammonius clarifies that the capability of man to laugh always is said according to potentiality, but not actuality — every man always has the potential to laugh, but a man does not always laugh in actuality. This interpretation of Ammonius is particularly evident in two specific paragraphs. Firstly, when explaining the fourth type of property, Ammonius states:

Each of these is said according to potentiality, not to actuality; for it is not said to be capable of laughing or neighing insofar as it laughs or neighs, but insofar as it is naturally suited [to do so]. For this is the property in the proper sense – that which belongs to [a species] alone, and to all of it, and always. ³⁴⁹

τούτων δὲ ἕκαστον λέγεται κατὰ δύναμιν, οὐ κατ' ἐνέργειαν· οὐ γὰρ καθὸ γελῷ ἢ χρεμετίζει, γελαστικὸν λέγεται ἢ χρεμετιστικόν, ἀλλὰ καθὸ πέφυκε. τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ κυρίως ἴδιον τὸ μόνῷ καὶ παντὶ καὶ ἀεὶ ὑπάρχον.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁶ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 256-7; Modified translation after: Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 273.

³⁴⁷ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 257. Lycophron in *Alexandra* indirectly refers to Proteus, a shape-shifting sea-god, a husband of Torone, which is a female eponym of a city in northern Aegean: "For the grim husband of the Phlegraian wife Torone, he who hates both laughter and tears, and is ignorant of and lacking in both" (ò yap σε συλλέκτροιο Φλεγραίας πόσις στυγνὸς Τορώνης, ῷ γέλως ἀπέχθεται καὶ δάκρυ, νῆις δ' ἐστὶ καὶ τητώμενος ἀμφοῖν). According to the myth, Proteus lost ability to laugh or cry due to loss of his children. See: Simon Hornblower, *Lykophron: Alexandra. Greek Text, Translation, Commentary, and Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 148-149, lines 115-118. On this passage, see also John Tzetzes, *Scholia on Lycophron*, ed. Christian Gottfried Müller, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Sumtibus F.C.G. Vogelii, 1811), 392.

³⁴⁸ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 257; Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 12.

³⁴⁹ Translation taken from: Ammonius, *Interpretation of Porphyry's Isagoge* (tr. Chase) 107-108.

³⁵⁰ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 109-110.

Secondly, when explicating Porphyry's statement that man is of such a nature as to laugh, Ammonius adds:

By saying 'connatural', he indicated potentiality and the fact of having a natural tendency, not actuality. For even if we do not always laugh, we are said to be always capable of laughing, for we have laughing potentially, and we always have a natural tendency to laugh. We are therefore capable of laughing, although we do not always laugh; for it is one thing to laugh, and another to be capable of laughing; and neighing is one thing, and being capable of neighing is another.³⁵¹

Τῷ εἰπεῖν σύμφυτον τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὸ πεφυκέναι ἐδήλωσεν, οὐ τὴν ἐνέργειαν· εἰ γὰρ καὶ μὴ ἀεὶ γελῶμεν, ἀλλὰ γελαστικοὶ εἶναι λεγόμεθα ἀεί· δυνάμει γὰρ ἔχομεν τὸ γελᾶν ἀεὶ καὶ πεφύκαμεν γελᾶν ἀεί. γελαστικοὶ οὖν ἐσμεν οὐ γελῶντες ἀεί· ἄλλο γὰρ τὸ γελᾶν καὶ ἄλλο τὸ γελαστικόν, καὶ ἄλλο τὸ χρεμετιστικόν.³⁵²

Although Prodromos does not explicitly mention the potentiality versus actuality paradigm, his familiarity with it and the commentary tradition is implicitly attested in the very example that he gives — Proteus, a shape-shifting sea-god and the husband of Torone (a female eponym of a city in northern Aegean), who lost his ability to laugh or cry after the loss of his children. A similar example is given by David, Pseudo-Elias, and Arethas, who provide as an example people who, after visiting the cave of Trophonius and seeing all the dreadful images there, completely lost their potential to laugh.³⁵³ Whereas David, Pseudo-Elias, and Arethas used this example to demonstrate that the capability to laugh is a non-substantial property, Prodromos simply wants to show that the young Xenedemus, guided by a fraudulent teacher,

³⁵¹ Translation taken from: Ammonius, *Interpretation of Porphyry's Isagoge* (tr. Chase) 108.

³⁵² Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 110.

³⁵³ The loss of the potentiality to laugh in all three sources is mentioned in the context of demonstrating that the ability to laugh is a non-substantial property. Firstly, the substantial items are perfective (τὰ οὐσιώδη τελειωτικὰ) when actualized. The capability to laugh in no way perfects human nature when actualized. Secondly, the substantial qualities are constituent of human nature. Laugher cannot be constituent of human nature, as that would imply that crying, its opposite, will also be constituent of human nature, and human nature cannot be constituted of opposites. Finally, what is substantial does not separate from the subject, even by a mere conception. Since there are cases of humans who lost their potential to laugh completely, this will imply that the capability to laugh is not substantial, but non-substantial property. See: David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 203-204; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 119; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 165.

cannot even comprehend the basics from Porphyry's *Isagoge*, such as that all men are always of such a nature as to laugh and not that all men are always laughing. With this claim, Prodromos paves the way for further argumentation, in which the potentiality versus actuality paradigm is more evident:

If we assume this, then I would like to know the reason why we cannot also say that practicing medicine is always inherent to every human. For even if every human does not always practice medicine, every human is of such a nature as to practice medicine. Thus, practicing medicine will be a property of a human like the capability to laugh. If so, then even practicing geometry, rhetoric, and any science in general will be a property of every human. Thus, if every human is defined as receptive of scientific knowledge, and if this is so, though the properties assigned to the same species will be more numerous, one property will be implied by another property. Thus, it seems that Porphyry has not classified and explained the properties in the best way.³⁵⁴

άλλ' εἰ τοῦτο οὕτως δοῖμεν ἔχειν, ζητῶ μαθεῖν τὴν αἰτίαν· δι' ἢν μὴ καὶ τὸ ἰατρεύειν ἀεὶ καὶ παντὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ λεχθείη· εἰ γὰρ καὶ μὴ ἰατρεύοι αἰεὶ, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ἰατρεύειν πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος· καὶ εἰ μὴ πᾶς ἱατρεύοι, ἀλλὰ πέφυκε πᾶς· ἔσται ἄρα καὶ τὸ ἰατρεύειν, ἀνθρώπῳ ἴδιον κατὰ τὸ γελαστικὸν· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, καὶ τὸ γεωμετρεῖν καὶ τὸ ῥητορεύειν· καὶ ἐπιστήμη συνόλως ἅπασα· εἴ γε δεκτικὸν ἐπιστήμης ἁπάσης ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὥρισται· κἂν εἰ τοῦτο, πλείω τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐσεῖται εἴδους τὰ ἴδια· ἀλλ' ἕν ἑνὸς ὑποτέθειται· κινδυνεύεται ἄρα μὴ καλῶς μήτε διελεῖν μήτ' ἀποδοῦναι τὸ ἴδιον τὸν Πορφύριον.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Modified translation from: Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 273.

³⁵⁵ Prodromos, Xenedemos 257.

άρμόζει), such as genus, difference, and accident.³⁵⁶ The point of divergence among commentators comes at how property is perceived. Some commentators (e.g., Ammonius and Elias) strictly perceive property as a non-substantial or adventitious universal; others (e.g., David, Arethas, and Nikephoros Blemmydes) argue that although property is non-substantial, sometimes it can be understood substantially (οὐσιωδῶς), such as receptive of thought and scientific knowledge (τὸ νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικὸν), or non-substantially (ἐπουσιωδῶς), such as capable of laughter (τὸ γελαστικὸν).³⁵⁷

This divergence on the same subject is linked to the contrasting views of Porphyry and Aristotle on how "τὸ νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικὸν" should be understood. Porphyry enlists it as a difference which is problematic, because "receptive of thought and scientific knowledge" overlaps with his definition of properties, as it pertains exclusively to humans and is convertible.³⁵⁸ In contrast, in the *Topics*, Aristotle views "receptive of scientific knowledge" as a property in the strict sense (ἀπλῶς ἴδιον) – "something which does not indicate the essence of a thing, but belongs to that thing alone, and is predicated convertibly of it" ('Τδιον δ' ἐστιν ὃ μὴ δηλοῖ μὲν τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, μόνῷ δ' ὑπάρχει καὶ ἀντικατηγορεῖται τοῦ πράγματος.).³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 33; Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 36; David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 85; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 29-30; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 4; John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, 60-63; *Anonymous Heiberg*, chapter 1, section 4; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 746-749.

³⁵⁷ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*,", 33, 108; Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 101-102; David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 85; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 52-53; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 164; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 749.

³⁵⁸ For instance, Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 19: "Proper to differences is the fact that they are often said of several species—for example, rational applies both to man and to god—whereas a property applies to one species (the species of which it is a property). Differences follow the items of which they are differences but do not convert, whereas properties are counterpredicated of the items of which they are properties inasmuch as they convert." (Ίδιον δὲ διαφορᾶς ὅτι αὕτη μὲν ἐπὶ πλειόνων εἰδῶν λέγεται πολλάκις, οἶον τὸ λογικὸν καὶ ἐπὶ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ άνθρώπου, τὸ δὲ ἴδιον ἐφ' ἑνὸς εἴδους, οὖ ἐστιν ἴδιον. καὶ ἡ μὲν διαφορὰ ἕπεται ἐκείνοις, ὧν ἦν διαφορά, οὐ μὴν καὶ ἀντιστρέφει· τὰ δὲ ἴδια ἀντικατηγορεῖται ὦν ἂν ἦ ἴδια διὰ τὸ ἀντιστρέφειν.) Translation taken from: Porphyry, Isagoge (tr. Barnes), 17. This explains why Ammonius and Elias, following Porphyry, categorize "receptive of thought and scientific knowledge" as a difference. In Elias, for example, property is seen as strictly accidental. He explains that Porphyry's description of property as what is reciprocal (ἴδιόν ἐστι τὸ άντιστρέφον) is not sufficiently accurate, because it would include other reciprocal items such as definitions or receptive of thought and scientific knowledge, but it should be rendered that as what is reciprocal accident (ἴδιόν ἐστι συμβεβηκὸς ἀντιστρέφον). In this manner he implicitly indicates that he does not consider receptive of thought as scientific knowledge to be property. This stance is further corroborated when Elias uses Porphyry's explanation: "proper to differences is the fact that they are often said of several species" (Ίδιον δὲ διαφορᾶς ὅτι αὕτη μέν ἐπὶ πλειόνων είδῶν λέγεται πολλάκις), in order to underline that Porphyry "adds 'often' (πολλάκις) because of receptive of thought and scientific knowledge: for this difference is not said regarding many species, but only about humans (πρόσκειται δὲ τὸ πολλάκις διὰ τὸ νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν· αὕτη γὰρ ἡ διαφορὰ οὐκ ἐπὶ πλειόνων τινῶν λέγεται, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μόνου ἀνθρώπου). Ammonius, Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge, 33, 108; Elias, Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge, 101-102.

³⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Topics* 1, 102a19-20; 5, 128b33-129a5; 131b37-134a18. David, Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), Arethas, and Nikephoros Blemmydes take the middle position between Aristotle and Porphyry by classifying

Prodromos does not enter the discussion of substantial and non-substantial properties, but he certainly follows Aristotle and aligns with the majority of the commentary tradition by classifying "receptive of scientific knowledge" as a property in the strict sense. Prodromos goes even one step further and argues that if all humans are receptive of scientific knowledge by nature, then consequently the practicing geometry, medicine, rhetoric, or any other science will also belong to all humans.

Prodromos's idea can be corroborated by Aristotle's *Topics*, in which he clearly states on one occasion: "Thus it is a property of man to be receptive of learning grammar; for if he is a man, then he is receptive of learning grammar, and if he is receptive of learning grammar, he is a man" (οἶον ἴδιον ἀνθρώπου τὸ γραμματικῆς εἶναι δεκτικόν· εἰ γὰρ ἄνθρωπός ἐστι, γραμματικῆς δεκτικός ἐστι, καὶ εἰ γραμματικῆς δεκτικός ἐστιν, ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν).³⁶⁰ Additionally, Aristotle explains in *Topics* that if genus is predicated of something, one of the species that belong to that genus must also be predicated of that same thing. Similarly, if something has a certain genus or paronymously derives its name from that genus, then it must also possess or paronymously derive its name from one of the species contained within that genus.³⁶¹ For example, in Aristotle's words:

if scientific knowledge is predicated of something, then so too will be grammatical or musical knowledge, or knowledge of one of the other sciences; and if any one possesses knowledge or is described by a term derived from knowledge, then he will also possess grammatical or musical knowledge or knowledge of one of the other sciences, or will be described by a term derived from one of them, e.g. as a grammatian or a musician.

[&]quot;τὸ νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικὸν" as a substantial property. For example, Nikephoros Blemmydes explains that "Most characteristics are accidental; however, sometimes they are also substantial, such as the receptive of thought and scientific knowledge in humans. For this is not a difference. The difference is in respect of several species, not in respect of one species" (Καὶ τὰ πολλὰ μὲν ἐπουσιῶδές ἐστιν· εὐρίσκεται δέ που καὶ οὐσιῶδεςοἶον ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν. Οὐ γάρ ἐστι τοῦτο διαφορά. Κατὰ πλειόνων γὰρ εἰδῶν, οὐ καθ' ἐνὸς ἡ διαφορά). David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 85; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 52-53; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 164; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 749. Besides this division between substantial and non-substantial properties, Arethas, John of Damascus, and Nikephoros Blemmydes also mention the Platonic threefold division of property from potentiality (ἀπὸ τῆς ἑνεργείας) – e.g., the ability to laugh and receptive of thought and scientific knowledge, from actuality (ἀπὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας) – e.g., walking erect in man; from the way thing is formed (ἀπὸ τῆς διοργανώσεως) – e.g., being broad-nailed. (These specific examples are taken from Arethas; other authors use different examples). See Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 164; John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, 84; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 780.

 ³⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Topics* 102a20-24. Modified translation from: Aristotle, *Topics* (tr. Pickard-Cambridge).
³⁶¹ Aristotle, *Topics* 111a33-37.

οἶον εἴ τινος ἐπιστήμη κατηγορεῖται, καὶ γραμματικὴ ἢ μουσικὴ ἢ τῶν ἄλλων τις ἐπιστημῶν κατηγορηθήσεται, καὶ εἴ τις ἔχει ἐπιστήμην ἢ παρωνύμως ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης λέγεται, καὶ γραμματικὴν ἕξει ἢ μουσικὴν ἤ τινα τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν ἢ παρωνύμως ἀπό τινος αὐτῶν ῥηθήσεται, οἶον γραμματικὸς ἢ μουσικός.³⁶²

Based on this passage, it is quite logical to assume that if human beings are receptive of intellect and scientific knowledge, they are also receptive of any kind of scientific knowledge - grammatical, musical, philosophical. Yet, how do we solve the aporia presented by Prodromos then? Prodromos correctly argues that just as every man is of such nature as to laugh, even though he does not always laugh, so it is also every man, being receptive of intellect and scientific knowledge, of such a nature to practice medicine for example, even though he does not always practice medicine. However, it is important to underline that Prodromos in the passage does not make the comparison between being receptive of knowledge of medicine, geometry, rhetoric, or any other science and capable of laughing. He rather makes comparison between practicing medicine (τὸ ἰατρεύειν), practicing grammar (τὸ γεωμετρείν) and practicing rhetoric (τὸ ῥητορεύειν) on the one hand and capable of laughing (τὸ γελαστικὸν) on the other. As we have seen in the excerpt from Ammonius's commentary on the *Isagoge*, it is one thing to laugh ($\tau \delta \gamma \epsilon \lambda \tilde{\alpha} v$), which exists in humans potentially, and another to be capable of laughing (τὸ γελαστικόν). Consequently, it is not difficult to conclude that there is also a difference between practicing medicine and being capable of practicing medicine.

Prodromos's aporia can be perhaps best clarified with an explanation provided three centuries later by George Gennadios Scholarios in his commentary on Thomas Aquinas' *On Being and Essence*. Here, Gennadios Scholarios explains that to laugh is not a property of man, but it is a common accident (τὸ γελᾶν οὐκ ἔστιν ἴδιον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλὰ κοινόν ἐστι συμβεβηκός). According to Porphyry, the property in the absolute sense is something that belongs "alone and all and always" (τὸ παντὶ καὶ μόνῷ καὶ ἀεὶ). However, laughter, as Gennadios Scholarios clarifies, although it belongs only to humans and all of them, does not always exist in them, but rather sometimes "for humans do not always laugh in actuality" (οὐ γὰρ ἀεὶ γελᾶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐνεργεία). However, the property of humans in the strict sense is to

³⁶² Aristotle, *Topics* 111a37-111b5. Translation from: Aristotle, *Topics* (tr. Pickard-Cambridge)

be capable of laughing "for man are always in actuality capable of laughing" (ἀεὶ γὰρ ὁ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν ἐνεργεία γελαστικόν).³⁶³

Prodromos likely anticipated that a person well-versed in logic would be able to unravel the puzzle and elucidate the distinction between being capable of practicing medicine, or more precisely, being receptive to medical knowledge, on the one hand, and "to practice medicine" on the other. Just as "to practice medicine" pertains to the first type of property, as described by Porphyry, so too does "to laugh". Similarly, just as being capable of laughter represents the fourth type of property – namely, property in the strict sense – so too is being capable of practicing medicine. Therefore, in the case of this aporia, we also observe that Prodromos is not concerned with Porphyry's inadequate description of the four types of properties, but rather with a student who being poorly instructed by an incompetent teacher was unable to decipher this aporia.

2.2.6 Accident (συμβεβηκός)

Prodromos's fifth and final question deals with the accident (συμβεβηκός), which is the last universal item discussed in Porphyry's *Isagoge*. After a short interlude between arguments, Theocles mockingly asks Xenedemos to give him the definition of accident since he has already defined the previous four universals in the best possible way. Xenedemos swiftly responds by paraphrasing Porphyry's definition: "An accident is that for which it is possible to be present or absent in the same thing" (ο γὰρ ἐνδέχεται τῷ αὐτῷ εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι, τοῦτο συμβεβηκὸς).³⁶⁴

In his account on accidents, Porphyry distinguishes between separable accidents $(\chi \omega \rho \iota \sigma \tau \delta \nu \sigma \upsilon \mu \beta \epsilon \beta \eta \kappa \delta \varsigma)$ – e.g., sleeping, sitting, walking, and inseparable accidents $(\dot{\alpha} \chi \dot{\omega} \rho \iota \sigma \tau \delta \nu \sigma \upsilon \mu \beta \epsilon \beta \eta \kappa \delta \varsigma)$ – e.g., black-eyedness in ravens and some humans. Additionally, Porphyry provides two different definitions of accidents. According to the first, "accidents are items which come and go without the destruction of their subjects" ($\sigma \upsilon \mu \beta \epsilon \beta \eta \kappa \delta \varsigma$ δέ ἐστιν ο̈ γίνεται καὶ ἀπογίνεται χωρὶς τῆς τοῦ ὑποκειμένου φθορᾶς), while according to the second "accidents are what can hold or not hold of the same thing; or: what is neither a genus nor a difference nor a species nor a property but is always subsistent in a subject" ($\sigma \upsilon \mu \beta \epsilon \beta \eta \kappa \delta \varsigma$ ἐστιν ο̈ ἐνδέχεται τῷ αὐτῷ ὑπάρχειν ἢ μὴ ὑπάρχειν, ἢ ο̈ oὕτε γένος ἐστὶν οὕτε διαφορὰ oὕτε

³⁶³ Gennadios Scholarios, *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's On Being and Essence*, 312-313.

³⁶⁴Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 258; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 274.

εἶδος οὕτε ἴδιον, ἀεὶ δέ ἐστιν ἐν ὑποκειμένῷ ὑφιστάμενον).³⁶⁵ Prodromos's reference, as it can be clearly seen, is based on the second definition.

Satisfied with this response, the Theocles character proceeds with his inquiry and poses another simple yes-or-no question to Xenedemos: If Socrates is to be defined ($\delta\rho(\zeta\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha)$) not through species (i.e., man) but as an individual, would not he be designated as "the combination of accidental attributes" ($\tau\eta$ συνδρομη τῶν τούτφ συμβεβηκότων)? For Xenedemos, familiar with the *Isagoge*, the only possible answer to this question is affirmative.³⁶⁶ Obviously, Prodromos here refers to Porphyry's explanation of individuals according to which each individual is constituted of a unique mixture of accidental attributes.³⁶⁷

This exchange creates a perfect setting for Theocles to confuse young Xenedemos even more by stating the following:

In this case, you may describe Plato and Socrates, for instance, as follows. The first one is dark-haired, straight-haired, snub-nosed, and thin, or somehow otherwise. The second one is dark-haired, straight-haired, snub-nosed, but potbellied. So, what is the difference between one and the other? The answer is clearly evident, the former is thin and the latter is potbellied, is it not? However, if being thin and being potbellied are accidental attributes, they can be present and absent in the same subject; hence, Socrates can be thin, and Plato potbellied, and consequently, Plato will become Socrates .³⁶⁸

καὶ δὴ ὑπόγραψαι ἦ δ' ὃς Πλάτωνα καὶ Σωκράτη· τὸν μὲν, μέλανα τυχὸν τετανότριχα σιμὸν λαγαρὸν· ἢ ὅπως ἄλλως· τὸν δὲ, τῷ προκοιλίῳ ἐκείνου διάφορον· μέλανά τε γὰρ καὶ τοῦτον καὶ τετανότριχα καὶ σιμὸν· τίνι διαφέρετον ἀλλήλων τὼ ἄνδρε, ἢ πάντως τῷ λαγαρῷ καὶ τῷ προκοιλίῳ· ἀλλ' εἰ συμβεβηκὸς τὸ λαγαρὸν καὶ προκοίλιον, τοῦτο δ' ἐνδέχεται τῷ αὐτῷ εἶναι

³⁶⁵ Porphyry, *Isagoge* 12-13; Translation taken from: Porphyry, *Isagoge* (tr. Barnes), 12.

³⁶⁶ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 258; Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 274.

³⁶⁷ Porphyry's explanation of individuals goes as follows: "Such items are called individuals because each is constituted of proper features the assemblage of which will never be found the same in anything else—the proper features of Socrates will never be found in any other of the particulars" (ἄτομα οὖν λέγεται τὰ τοιαῦτα, ὅτι ἐξ ἰδιοτήτων συνέστηκεν ἕκαστον, ῶν τὸ ἄθροισμα οὐκ ἂν ἐπ' ἄλλου ποτὲ τὸ αὐτὸ γένοιτο - αἰ γὰρ Σωκράτους ἰδιότητες οὐκ ἂν ἐπ' ἄλλου τινὸς τῶν κατὰ μέρος γένοιντο ἂν αἱ αὐταί). Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 7; Translation taken from: Porphyry, *Isagoge* (tr. Barnes), 8.

³⁶⁸ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, (tr. Spyridonova et al.), 274-275.

καὶ μὴ εἶναι, ἐνδέχοιτο ἂν καὶ λαγαρὸν εἶναι Σωκράτην καὶ προκοίλιον Πλάτωνα· καὶ οὕτω Σωκράτης ἂν ὁ Πλάτων ἐσεῖται.³⁶⁹

The *aporia* that Prodromos poses here has been brought into question by many learned men before and after him in their commentaries, treatises, and logical compendia. As has already been explained, the commonly accepted view in the commentary tradition is that the highest genera and individuals cannot be defined, but only described, while definition is possible only in the case of intermediate genera and species.³⁷⁰ The perfect definition is composed from genus and constitutive differences, while the description signifies the substance through the peculiar combination of accidents that underlie the substance.³⁷¹ Furthermore, according to Aristotle, the definition mostly relies on the question of sameness and difference; things can be the same or different in three ways: either in genus, or in species, or in number ($\eta \gamma \alpha \rho$ $\tau \phi \gamma \epsilon v \epsilon i \epsilon \sigma \tau i \tau \alpha v \tau v \eta \tau \phi \epsilon i \delta \epsilon \tau \eta \tau \phi \alpha \rho u \phi i)$. Thus, for example, Socrates is the same with horse, as they both equally participate in the genus of animal. Secondly, Socrates as an individual will not be the same as Plato or another person named Socrates, as they would not share the mixture of the exact same accidental attributes.³⁷²

Authors tackling this matter are unanimous in following Porphyry that a particular substance, e.g., Socrates, can be only determined through this peculiar combination of accidents which cannot be found in any other particular.³⁷³ Yet, what happens if we assume that there are two particular items that are supposedly made from the combination of the exact same accidental attributes? According to Ammonius, this would simply be impossible, because even if two individuals have the same accidental attributes, they would not have it at

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³⁶⁹ Prodromos, *Xenedemos*, 258-259.

³⁷⁰ See for instance: Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 56-57; Psellos, "Whether the Two Basils or the Two Gregories are Homonyms or Synonyms" (opus. 6), in Psellos, *Philosophica Minora* 17-21, 18.

³⁷¹ The reason why highest genera cannot be defined is due to the fact that they do not have constitutive differences, but only divisive ones. See for instance: Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 56-57; Psellos, "Whether the Two Basils or the Two Gregories are Homonyms or Synonyms", 18.

³⁷² Aristotle, *Topics* 1, 102b7-103a35; 7, 152b30-33. See also for instance: Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Topics*, 58-59; Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 65; Psellos, "Whether the Two Basils or the Two Gregories are Homonyms or Synonyms" 18-19; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*," 809.

³⁷³See for instance Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 56-57; Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 76; David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 122, 167; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 98; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 103; John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters* 88, 165; Psellos, "Whether the Two Basils or the Two Gregories are Homonyms or Synonyms", 20; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 805.

the same time (ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ χρόνῳ).³⁷⁴ This is also argued, though more elaborately, by David and Arethas.³⁷⁵ Besides this impossibility for two individuals to have the exactly same characteristics at the same time, Elias and Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David) add that they would also never occupy the same space (ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ). ³⁷⁶ Elias, for instance, says: "Surely it is not possible for them to be also standing in the same place: for the one [peculiar combination] of the accidental attributes in Socrates is impossible also to exist in someone else, so that these two would stand at the same time and the same place, without one body containing the other body." (οὐ δήπου καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ τόπῳ ἑστάναι· ἕν γὰρ ὃν τῶν συμβεβηκότων τῷ Σωκράτει οὐ δύναται καὶ ἄλλῷ ὑπάρξαι, ἵνα οἱ δύο ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ χρόνῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῷ σταῖεν, ἵνα μὴ χωρήσῃ σῶμα διὰ σώματος).³⁷⁷

How this differentiation of the particular individual works can be perhaps best seen, for example, in Pseudo-Elias's commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge*. He explains that since there are many accidents, Porphyry categorizes them into three distinct groups: homeland, parents, and individual attributes (ἕκ τε τῆς πατρίδος καὶ τῶν γονέων καὶ τῶν ἑκάστῷ προσόντων). Accordingly, Socrates by being Athenian is differentiated from people who inhabit different places, and from other Athenians by being son of Sophroniscus. If Socrates has a brother, he can be further distinguished by specific attributes "the philosopher, the teacher, the snub-nosed, the barefooted" (ὁ φιλόσοφος, ὁ προγάστωρ, ὁ σιμός, ὁ ἀναφαλαντίας). If Socrates has a brother who shares exactly the same attributes as he does, they can be still distinguished by the time of birth (τῷ χρόνῷ τῆς γεννήσεως), as one must be born before the other, and in terms of place (τῷ τόπῷ), as "they cannot stand in the same place according to the number" (κατὰ γὰρ τὸν ἀριθμὸν οὐκ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῷ ἴστανται).³⁷⁸

³⁷⁴ Ammonius, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 90.

³⁷⁵ David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 122, 167-168; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 103.

³⁷⁶Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 76; Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 99-100.

³⁷⁷ Elias, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 76. David and Arethas, who probably follows David, consider that this view is erroneous. According to David, for example, who seems to be directly criticizing Elias, by saying that those who say that "For it is not possible for two to sit in the same place, since one body will contain another" (οὕτε γὰρ δύναται δύο ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ καθέζεσθαι, ἐπεὶ ἔσται σῶμα διὰ σώματος χωροῦν) are wrong for two reasons. Firstly, if place is understood universally, the proposition is false, because Socrates, for instance, does not differ from Alcibiades as far as the place is concerned, and if place is understood accidentally, the proposition is again false, because the place in the Lyceum, for instance, is not solely the place of Socrates, but it can be occupied also by Plato. However, I am prone to believe that David and Arethas probably misunderstood in what way a place was used to differentiate between two different particulars, but I refrain from entering this discussion at the moment, as it is not relevant for the subject matter at hand. For more information see: David, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 122, 167-168; Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 103.

³⁷⁸ Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), *Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge*, 99-100.

Another peculiar example can be found in Arethas. After giving a similar explanation as the one offered by Pseudo-Elias, Arethas also provides a response to the Stoics who disagree that the combination of accidental attributes of one individual could have never been found in someone else. According to Arethas, even if Socrates is made countless times, he would never be the same: "But neither in number (for this one is different from that one), nor in time (for the former is earlier than the latter), nor using the same things (for this one and that one do not share the same accidents), it impossible to make them the same." ($\dot{\alpha}\lambda\lambda'$ oὕτε $\dot{\alpha}\mu\theta\mu\phi$ τὸν αὐτόν ($\check{\alpha}\lambda\lambdao\varsigma$ γàρ οὖτος κἀκεῖνος), οὕτε χρόν ϕ ($\piρ\phi\etaν$ γàρ τούτου ἐκεῖνος), οὕτε τοῖς αὐτοῖς χρ $\phi\mu$ ενος $\piρ\dot{\alpha}$ γμασιν οὖτος κἀκεῖνος, α̈ δή, συμβεβηκότα ὄντα καὶ οὐ τὰ αὐτά, τὸν αὐτὸν ποιῆσαι ἀδύνατον).³⁷⁹

It is possible to infer that Prodromos posed an aporia for which a solution would have been readily apparent to anyone acquainted with the commentary tradition on Porphyry's *Isagoge* or to someone instructed by a knowledgeable teacher. By leaving his question unanswered, Prodromos may have anticipated that his audience or, perhaps, his students would propose multiple solutions to resolve the enigma. The most straightforward solution to this puzzle would be that Prodromos in his example did not exhaust all the accidental characteristics of Socrates and Plato in the first place. For if he had, it would be inconceivable for Socrates and Plato to share identical accidental characteristics at the same time, given that they do not have common ancestry and the fact that they occupy different physical spaces as two distinct individuals.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that Prodromos's main intention in *Xenedemos* is not to criticize Porphyry's *Isagoge*. Instead, just as Zagklas observed in the case of his other works, this complex text serves multiple purposes. The most obvious aim of this work is to utilize Prodromos's own self-promotional agenda. Thus, not only does Prodromos disparage a stereotypical incompetent teacher, but he also promotes a model instructor that he himself identifies with. Furthermore, the text stresses the importance of a good and skilled teacher for educating young minds. This reveals not only Prodromos's ethical and intellectual concerns, but also signals the competitive anxiety of an instructor whose personal income depends on fee-paying students. The representation of Theocles's impeccable rhetorical and

³⁷⁹ Arethas, *Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge*, scholion 104.

philosophical abilities, inspired by Plato's Phaedrus, in fact discloses what kind of rhetorician and philosopher Prodromos was, or was at least, striving to be. Thus, the text itself displays a perfect fusion of rhetoric and philosophy, as Prodromos combines his rhetorical skills with profound knowledge of philosophy to create aporias.

With the series of logical puzzles pertaining to Porphyry's five predicables, Prodromos displays a high level of competence and erudition that surpasses that of the text of the *Isagoge* itself. His knowledge entailed in-depth familiarity with the rich commentary tradition on this text and beyond. At the same time, these logical puzzles also implicitly reveal Prodromos's own interpretative concerns when it comes to the *Isagoge*. They indicate the pitfalls that someone could easily fall into without proper education and guidance or even errors that some of his less educated contemporaries made in their teaching practice. In fact, Prodromos's aporias reflect almost all the major problems that the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentators on the *Isagoge* dealt with. While some aporias have an evident solution, others are more complex and require knowledge that exceeds elementary education in logic. This might imply that the text was not intended for beginner pupils of logic but rather for those students at a more advanced level. By posing logical puzzles that only a person well-trained in logic could solve, Prodromos offers a unique didactic tool for students that allows them to check their own knowledge and inspires them to perfect their education by seeking correct answers.

Chapter 3: Competence: Prodromos's Cirticism of Aristotle's Categories in *On Great and Small*

Prodromos's criticism was not limited to the intellectual, professional, and societal competence of his contemporaries; it extended to pointing out and correcting contradictions in the works of ancient authors. This enabled Prodromos to display his own competence and increase his intellectual reputation in the competitive, learned environment of twelfth-century Constantinople. One example of this criticism is his treatise – By the Most Wise and Learned Lord Theodore Prodromos: On Great and Small, Many and Few, that These Terms Do Not Belong to the Category of Relation but to That of Quantity, and [that they are also] Contraries. (Τοῦ σοφωτάτου καὶ λογιωτάτου κυροῦ Θεοδώρου τοῦ Προδρόμου· περὶ τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τοῦ μικροῦ, καὶ τοῦ πολλοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὀλίγου· ὅτι οὐ τῶν πρός τί εἰσιν, ἀλλά τοῦ $\pi \sigma \sigma \sigma \tilde{\nu}$, $\kappa \alpha i \, \dot{\epsilon} \nu \alpha \nu \tau i \alpha$), addressed in the form of a letter to his teacher and friend Michael Italikos.³⁸⁰ Although criticism and correction of ancient authors was not an unusual practice for twelfth-century Byzantine intellectuals, Prodromos's disapproval of Aristotle's stance on great and small is unique in the late antique, Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition on Aristotle's Categories. This chapter will primarily focus on an analysis of Prodromos's arguments and an examination of the extent to which his approach diverged from and was influenced by the commentary tradition. Through this analysis, we will gain insight not only into Prodromos's contribution to this topic, but also how his approach enabled him to demonstrate his expertise in comparison with his predecessors and contemporaries.

3.1 Rhetorical Introduction and Skopos

Prodromos's *On Great and Small* can be divided into two unequal parts. The first part of the text consists of a rhetorical introduction in which Prodromos explains to Italikos how he was triggered by the incongruities in Aristotle's *Categories* and felt obliged to address them.³⁸¹ The second part is written, as Prodromos himself underlines, in the manner of works of natural philosophy (φυσικοῦ χαρακτῆρος).³⁸² Again, the second part can be divided into two

³⁸⁰ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 111.

³⁸¹ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 111-113.

³⁸² Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 112.

more or less equal sections. While in the first section Prodromos brings six counterarguments to prove that great and small, as well as many and few, do not belong to the category of relatives, but to the category of quantity, in the second section, with another six counterarguments, he intends to demonstrate that these pairs are opposed to each other as contraries and not as relatives.³⁸³ This division into six counterarguments for each section is noted in the margins of two of the three manuscripts on which the modern edition of the text is based.³⁸⁴

The introductory part of the treatise is packed with rhetorical language and figures. This is immediately evident from its opening lines, which praise Italikos:

By what other than reason should one reason about the things that are the object of reasoned thought, my friend full of reason? And by what other than the Rule should one rule about the things for which a ruling should be declared? Also, all philosophy and rhetoric, both conjointly and separately, and any other reasoning, both ours [i.e., Christian] and that from the outside [i.e., pagan], by whom else should they be judged than by Italikos? Just as, of course, gold [is judged] by the Lydian stone and eaglets by the sun.

Τίνι δὲ ἄλλῷ, ἢ λόγῷ, τὰ λογιζόμενα λογιστέον, λογία μοι κεφαλή; καὶ τὰ κανονιζόμεγα τίνι, ἢ κανόνι, κανονίστέον; φίλοσοφίαν δὲ ἄπασαν, καὶ ὑητορικὴν, καὶ συνδεδεμένως ἄμφω καὶ ἂσυνδέτως, καὶ πάντα λόγον, τόν τε ἡμεδαπὸν καὶ τὸν θύραθεν, τίνι ἂν ἄλλῷ, ἢ Ἰταλικῷ γε, κριτέον; ὥσπερ ἀμέλει τὸν χρυσὸν τῇ λυδίᾳ καὶ τοῦς ἀετιδεῖς τῷ ἡλίῳ.³⁸⁵

Prodromos' stylistic playfulness here is displayed by employing a rhetorical device known as *figura etymologica* ($\pi o \lambda \dot{v} \pi \tau \omega \tau o v$): using words of the same etymological root to give emphasis to his statement. By using this device, Prodromos creates a unique rhetorical tautology to eulogize Italikos as the ultimate authority by which philosophy and rhetoric must be assessed. Just as gold needs to be assessed by the Lydian touchstone and eaglets against the sun, philosophical and rhetorical discourses need to be examined by Italikos. Prodromos

³⁸³ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 113-119.

³⁸⁴ The enumeration of arguments is evident in Paris. gr. 1928 (6r-8r, XV century) and Paris. gr. 2350 (89-93, XVI century), which was most probably a copy of the former manuscript. See: Tannery, "Théodore Prodrome. Sur le Grand et le Petit (à Italicos). Texte Grec inédit et notice" 107, 113.

³⁸⁵ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 111.

again here re-uses his authorial signature lines – Lydian touchstone and eaglets against the sun. He also presents Italikos as someone who is a specialist in rhetoric and philosophy, both jointly and separately. By doing this, Prodromos alludes that Italikos, like Prodromos himself and Psellos before him, was practicing philosophical rhetoric and rhetorical philosophy.

Prodromos and Italikos probably frequently engaged in intellectual exchange, and it is therefore not surprising that Prodromos asks for the opinion and for corrections from his teacher and a friend. For example, in the first part of one of his letters to Prodromos, Italikos provides a playful description of their relationship. Italikos's rhetorical display is packed with logical terms and metaphysical allusions that reveal someone well-versed in logic and philosophy. Thus, when he describes how they relate to each other, Italikos subtly uses Aristotelian terminology from the *Categories*, explaining that: "We, on the other hand, are in each other and whoever says Prodromos has included Italikos, and whoever calls Italikos has simultaneously revealed Prodromos" (ήμεῖς δὲ ἄτερος ἐν θατέρῷ καὶ ὁ εἰπὼν Πρόδρομον τὸν Ιταλικὸν συνειλήφει καὶ ὁ τὸν Ἰταλικὸν τὸν Πρόδρομον συνενέφηνεν).³⁸⁸ This description resembles the one that Aristotle provides for relatives (πρός τι), when he explains that for relatives "being is the same as being somehow related to something" (οἶς τὸ εἶναι ταὐτόν ἐστι τῷ πρός τί πως ἔχειν) and therefore "if someone knows any relative definitely he will also

³⁸⁶ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 111.

³⁸⁷ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 111.

³⁸⁸ Michael Italikos, *To Prodromos*, ed. Paul Gautier, *Michel Italikos: Lettres et Discours* (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1972), 60. For this letter, I have used translation from: Stratis Papaioannou, "Language Games, Not the Soul's Beliefs: Michael Italikos to Theodoros Prodromos, on Friendship and Writing," in in Martin Hinterberger and Elisabeth Schiffer (eds.), *Byzantinische Sprachkunst: Studien zur Byzantinischen Literatur Gewidmet Wolfram Hörandner zum 65. Geburtstag. Byzantinisches Archiv* 20, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007): 218-233, 220.

know definitely that in relation to which it is spoken of" (ἐάν τις εἰδῃ τι ὡρισμένως τῶν πρός τι, κἀκεῖνο πρὸς ὃ λέγεται ὡρισμένως εἴσεται).³⁸⁹

With this quoted sentence, Italikos begins a series of playful references to the Aristotelian description and the propria of relatives. In the first place, he refers to the common proprium of some relatives by which Aristotle considered them to be simultaneous by nature (ἄμα τῆ φύσει) and therefore to reciprocate as to the implication of existence (i.e., without being the cause of each other's existence).³⁹⁰ However, since there are other items that are simultaneous by nature, such as the coordinate species of the same genera, he makes a playful reference to those species that are not coordinate with each other and therefore do not reciprocate as to the implication of existence. Therefore, Italikos states that the simultaneity between him and Prodromos is not comparable to that between an "animal" (genus) and "man" (species), since these two items do not reciprocate as to the implication of existence. Secondly, he refers to the proprium of relatives in the strict sense, according to which they are said in relation to correlatives that reciprocate, provided that they are properly given (πάντα οὖν τὰ πρός τι, ἐάνπερ οἰκείως ἀποδιδῶται, πρὸς ἀντιστρέφοντα λέγεται).³⁹¹ However, this type of reciprocity is to be found also in other items, such as a perfect definition and the thing being defined, as well as a property with the thing of which it is property.³⁹² Therefore, Italikos emphasizes that the simultaneity between Prodromos and himself does not correspond to the reciprocity of the concepts of "man" (thing to which a property belongs) and "laughing" (property). Moreover, their reciprocity, Italikos continues, also cannot be compared to the "definition" and the "definiendum".³⁹³ Italikos's rhetorical and philosophical play continues with other examples from logic and metaphysics that he employs to depict the uniqueness of their connection. Ultimately, Italikos arrives to the conclusion that their connection can be best depicted, as Papaioannou concludes from Italikos's description, with the kind of unity that exists in the Christian Trinity and the Neoplatonic One.³⁹⁴ Although what Italikos says here might not have been his "soul beliefs" regarding their friendship, it certainly shows that their friendship was based on common philosophical interests.

³⁸⁹ Italikos, *To Prodromos*, 60; Aristotle, *Categories*, 8a33-34, 8a38-39.

³⁹⁰ Italikos, *To Prodromos*, 60; When discussing simultaneity, Aristotle differentiates two – in terms of time (ἄμα δὲ κατὰ τὸν χρόνον) and by nature (ἅμα τῇ φύσει). Aristotle, *Categories*, 14b24-15a13.

³⁹¹ Italikos, *To Prodromos*, 60; Aristotle, *Categories* 6b15-8a13.

³⁹² See, for instance: Aristotle, *Topics* 102a18-30; 109a9-26.

³⁹³ Italikos, *To Prodromos*, 60.

³⁹⁴ Italikos, *To Prodromos*, 61; Papaioannou, "Language Games, Not the Soul's Beliefs: Michael Italikos to Theodoros Prodromos, on Friendship and Writing," 225.

After praising Italikos, Prodromos excuses himself for his lack of eloquence: he is writing for his friend and will present his text in a writing style suitable for works of natural philosophy (φυσικοῦ χαρακτῆρος). Next, Prodromos provides an explanation regarding the purpose (πρόθεσις) of his work. As he allegedly recently became familiar with the *Categories*, he was triggered by Aristotle's discussion on quantity in the part "where he refers to great and small, and in addition to these, many and few, as relatives rather than quantities" (ὅπου τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρὸν καὶ τὸ πολὺ πρὸς τούτοις καὶ τὸ ὀλίγον τοῖς πρός τι μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ ποσῷ ἀνετίθετο).³⁹⁵

Concepts of $\sigma \kappa \sigma \kappa \delta \varsigma$ and $\pi \rho \delta \theta \varepsilon \sigma \varsigma$ played a pivotal role for the correct understanding and interpretation of any text in the late antique and Byzantine philosophical tradition, as they give insight into the author's purpose in composing a philosophical work and the specific aim they seek to accomplish through their writing. In the late antique commentary tradition, it was common to answer in most cases six questions about the interpreted text: what is its purpose ($\sigma \kappa \sigma \pi \delta \varsigma$, $\pi \rho \delta \theta \varepsilon \sigma \varsigma$), its utility ($\chi \rho \eta \sigma \mu \sigma \nu$), the order in which text needs to be read in relation to other works of the same author ($\tau \alpha \xi \varsigma \varsigma$), what is the title of the work ($\dot{\epsilon} \pi \iota \gamma \rho \alpha \phi \eta$), whether the text is authentic ($\gamma \nu \eta \sigma \sigma \nu$), as well as what is its chapter division ($\delta \iota \alpha (\rho \varepsilon \sigma \varsigma \varsigma)^{396}$ Thus, for instance, Porphyry, Simplicius, Ammonius, Dexippus, and Philoponus, in their commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*, raise these questions and dedicate special attention to its $\sigma \kappa \sigma \pi \delta \varsigma$ or $\pi \rho \delta \theta \varepsilon \sigma \varsigma$.³⁹⁷ However, taking into consideration the importance of clarifying the aim of a specific work, Neoplatonic and Byzantine philosophers often also underlined the purpose of their own works. For example, Simplicius clearly states that the purpose of his commentary on the *Categories* is to provide an accurate comprehension, make the text more accessible, and summarize the most important contributions from earlier commentators.³⁹⁸ Therefore, it

³⁹⁵ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 112.

³⁹⁶ For more information see: Jaap Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions to Be Settled before the Study of an Author, or a Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 10-11; Charles Vergeer, *Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Boundaries of Being* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), 14.

³⁹⁷ Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 56; Dexippus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 7; Ammonius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 8-10; Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 9-13; Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 8-9. For more information on how the skopos of a certain philosophical work can be determined see: L. G. Westerink, trans., Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy (Frome, England: Prometheus Trust, 2010), 38- 44.

³⁹⁸ Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 3. The importance of precisely delineating the aim of someone's work is perhaps best reflected by John of Damascus in his *Philosophical Chapters*: "Anyone who begins something without a purpose is like someone fumbling in the dark, because he who labors with no end in view is entirely at loose ends. So, then, let us state at the very beginning what the proposed purpose of this work is, so that what we are to say may more easily be grasped." (Επειδή πᾶς ἀσκόπως ἐναρχόμενος πράγματος ὡς ἐν σκότει διαπορεύεται—ὁ γὰρ ἀσκόπως κοπιῶν καθολικῶς πτωχεύει—, φέρε τὸν προκείμενον τοῦ λόγου σκοπὸν πρότερον εἴπωμεν, ὡς ἂν εὕληπτα εἴη τὰ λεγόμενα). John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters* 55; translation from: John of Damascus, *Writings* (tr. Chase), 10.

is not surprising that Prodromos, in writing a philosophical work, also justifies the purpose of his own work.

It is difficult to believe that Prodromos became familiar with Aristotle's *Categories* only shortly before writing his treatise as he says: "Yesterday and not quite yesterday, nor long before this day, I happened to busy myself with the *Categories* of Aristotle" (Χθιζά καὶ ού πάνυ χθιζά, ούδὲ πρὸ πολλοῦ ταύτης ἡμερῶν, ταῖς ᾿Αριστοτέλους Κατηγορίαις οὕτω τυχὸν καθωμιληκώς).³⁹⁹ As mentioned before, together with Porphyry's Isagoge, Aristotle's On Interpretation and Prior Analytics, the Categories were one of the first texts that a Byzantine student of logic encountered in an educational setting. Moreover, the text of the treatise itself – the manner in which the arguments are constructed as well as the sources used to support this argumentation, reveal an author versed in logic and philosophy far beyond the beginner stage. Byzantine scholarly production on Aristotle's logic, as Michele Trizio argues, emerged for the most part in the didactic context. Byzantine intellectuals engaged in discussing, compiling, paraphrasing, and commenting on Aristotle in order to facilitate the teaching process and to make knowledge of his works more accessible to future generations of both scholars and students. Additionally, most probably under the guidance of a prominent figure, Byzantine scholars orally discussed and interpreted problematic passages from Aristotle's works in their own intellectual circles.⁴⁰⁰ Thus, it is possible that, Prodromos might have re-encountered this issue in his teaching practice and decided to correct the problematic view in the Categories.

Even though he was not satisfied with Aristotle's stance on great and small, Prodromos initially tried to restrain his critical reaction by repeating relevant Homeric verses such as "Endure my heart" (τέτλαθι... κραδίη) and "be seated still and listen to the story of others" (ἀτρέμας ἦσο καὶ ἄλλων μῦθον ἄκουε).⁴⁰¹ Both of these verses refer to scenes in the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, respectively, where patience and self-control is required.⁴⁰² However,

³⁹⁹ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 112.

⁴⁰⁰ Michele Trizio, Reading and Commenting on Aristotle, in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 397-412, 398-399.

⁴⁰¹ Homer, *Odyssey*, 20.18; Homer, *Iliad*, 2.200.

⁴⁰² For more information see: Zaripov, "Mimesis and Intertextuality in Twelfth-Century Byzantine Literature: The Case of Theodore Prodromos", 66. In his response to Simias in the *Phaedo* (94d), Plato refers to the same scene from Homer's *Odyssey* with the lines: "Beat his breast and addressed his heart in reproach: Be strong, my heart: you have endured worse than this before" (στῆθος δὲ πλήξας κραδίην ἠνίπαπε μύθῳ: τέτλαθι δή, κραδίη: καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης) in order to enhance the image of the opposition between soul and bodily emotions. Although it would be tempting to ascribe Prodromos's usage of the same reference to Plato's *Phaedo*, as his stance on great and small is heavily influenced by this work, this is most probably not the case, if one takes into consideration the popularity of this verse among Byzantine authors. Translation taken from Plato, *Phaedo* (trans. Emlyn-Jones and Preddy).

as he could not agree with Aristotle's contradicting arguments, Prodromos ultimately arrives at a critical response worthy of the philosopher's authority. In this way, we can see that also in this work Prodromos justifies his critical reaction. Even though his criticism here was not incited by the hypocrisies or follies of his contemporaries but by what he considers a faulty stance of an ancient authority, Prodromos, as a speaker on a behalf of the truth, feels an internal urge to react and correct the teaching according to his own intellectual convictions.

Although this work was initially intended to be read and assessed by Michael Italikos, he was probably not the only intended audience. It is possible that Prodromos's work was read and discussed in private intellectual circles consisting of his peers, students and learned friends. Moreover, this treatise did not only serve Prodromos to argumentatively show his intellectual stance and display his philosophical competence but was also utilized for Prodromos's own self-promotional strategies. There was significant revival of Aristotelian scholarship in eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantium. This started with Michael Psellos and John Italos. Besides compendia, short treatises and paraphrases on works of logic, in this period we can also observe the emergence of fully-fledged commentaries written in the manner of Neoplatonic commentators. Anna Komnene (1083-1153), a daughter of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos, played an important role in this revival and supported the scholarly production on Aristotle of scholars such as Eustratios of Nicaea (c.1050-1120), who commented on certain books of the Nicomachean Ethics and the second book of Posterior Analytics, and Michael of Ephesus (c. 1090-1155), who commented on other books of the *Ethics*, sections of the *Organon*, the *Rhetoric*, the *Physics*, the *Politics*, and several zoological and anthropological works. Regarding this vivid interest in Aristotle's works, we can add the translatory activity of James of Venice who in thirties of the twelfth century translated from Greek into Latin the missing works from Aristotle's Organon, as well as Physics, Methaphysics and On the Soul. As Robert Browning points out, it appears that almost all literary activity in twelfth-century Byzantium was closely connected to the institutions and literary circles that formed around wealthy patrons. Thus, for instance, besides Anna Komnene's so-called Aristotelian circle, several literary circles existed in the early twelfth century, including those centered around the Patriarchal School (e.g., Michael Italikos) and the sebastocratorissa Irene (e.g., Prodromos, Constantine Manasses, John Tzetzes).⁴⁰³ Thus, Prodromos' treatise On Great and Small, along with his other philosophical works, must be situated within this broader context. It can be speculated, that with this work, Prodromos also

⁴⁰³ Robert Browning, "An Unpublished Funeral Oration on Anna Comnena," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 8 (1962): 1–12, 6-9. <u>https://doi.org/10.1017/s0068673500005290</u>.

aimed to reinforce his own teaching and intellectual authority in order to attract more feepaying students or wealthy patrons who would sponsor his intellectual pursuits.

3.2 The Byzantine Commentary Tradition on *Categories* and the Problematic Passage

Aristotle's *Categories* is one of the most influential philosophical texts of all time. The *Categories* were interwoven into Greek, Latin, and Arabic philosophical traditions as being an integral part of logic.⁴⁰⁴ This text, together with *On Interpretation, Prior Analytics, Posterior Analytics, Topics*, and *On Sophistical Refutations*, represented a collection of six logical and dialectical works traditionally known as the *Organon*. The popularity of the *Organon* in Byzantium is corroborated by the fact that its text is preserved in more than one hundred manuscripts from the tenth to sixteenth centuries. This makes the *Organon*, after the Bible and works of John Chrysostom, the third most copied text in Byzantium.⁴⁰⁵

3.2.1 The Structure of the Categories

The text of the *Categories* can be divided into three sections conventionally referred to as the Pre-Predicamenta, the Predicamenta, and the Post-Predicamenta, after the Latin title of the work. In the Pre-Predicamenta (chs. 1-4), Aristotle first discusses the differentiation between homonyms ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \circ \mu \dot{\omega} \nu \nu \mu \alpha$), which have a name in common but have a different definition of their essence; synonyms ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \sigma \nu \nu \dot{\omega} \nu \nu \mu \alpha$), which share both the name and the definition of essence; and finally, paronyms ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \pi \alpha \rho \dot{\omega} \nu \nu \mu \alpha$), which derive their name from something else. Aristotle also explains that things that are said ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \lambda \epsilon \gamma \dot{\omega} \mu \epsilon \nu \alpha$) can be said either according to combination or without combination.

Furthermore, Aristotle makes two distinct divisions of being or of things that are (τὰ ὄντα). According to the first division, Aristotle classifies things that are into four groups by combining two different notions: said-of a subject (καθ' ὑποκειμένου λέγεται) and exist in a subject (ἐν ὑποκειμένῷ ἐστίν). Thus, things that are can be (1) said of a subject and do not

⁴⁰⁴ Michael J. Griffin, *Aristotle's Categories in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1-2.

⁴⁰⁵ Sofia Kotzabassi, "Aristotle's Organon and Its Byzantine Commentators," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 64, no. 1 (2002): 51-62, 51-52.

exist in a subject – universal or secondary substances, (2) not said of a subject and exist in a subject – particular accidents, (3) both said of and exist in a subject – universal accidents, and finally (4) both not said of and not exist in a subject – particular or primary substances.

According the second division of things there are, when they are said without any combination, they can either signify substance $(o\dot{v}\sigma(\alpha))$, such as "man", "horse"; quantity $(\pi o\sigma \delta v)$ such as "four-foot"; quality $(\pi \sigma \sigma \delta v)$ as, for instance, "white", "grammatical"; relation/relatives $(\pi \rho \delta \varsigma \tau \iota)$ as "double", "half", "larger"; where $(\pi \sigma \delta)$, as "in the Lyceum", "in the market-place"; when $(\pi \sigma \tau \delta)$, such as "yesterday", "last-year"; being-in-position ($\kappa \epsilon \tilde{\sigma} \sigma \alpha \iota$), as "is-lying", "is-sitting"; having ($\tilde{\epsilon} \chi \epsilon \iota v$), such as "has-shoes-on", "has-armour-on"; doing $(\pi \sigma \epsilon \tilde{\iota} v)$ like "cutting", "burning"; and finally being-affected $(\pi \alpha \sigma \chi \epsilon \iota v)$ like "being-cut," "being-burned."

In the second part of *Categories* (chs. 5 to 9), Aristotle discusses in detail substance, quantity, quality, and relatives, while other categories are mentioned only briefly. In the last part of the *Categories* (chs. 9-15), he discusses opposites ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \, \dot{\alpha} v \tau \iota \kappa \epsilon \iota \mu \epsilon v \alpha$), priority ($\pi \rho \dot{\sigma} \epsilon \rho v$), simultaneity ($\ddot{\alpha} \mu \alpha$), motion/change ($\kappa \iota v \eta \sigma \iota \varsigma$), and having ($\tau \dot{o} \, \check{\epsilon} \chi \epsilon \iota v$).⁴⁰⁶

3.2.2 The Ancient, Neoplatonic, and Byzantine Commentary Tradition: A Brief Summary

Aristotle's pupils, including Theophrastus (c. 371-287 BCE), his heir as head of the Lyceum, maintained a high level of interest in the *Categories* and the works of Aristotle in general. However, soon after the first generation of Aristotle's immediate successors, the Lyceum faced a slow decline. The revival of serious engagement with Aristotle's texts happened only in the first century BCE. This revival on the one hand is reflected in the editorial activity that culminated with Andronicus of Rhodes (first century BCE), the compiler and chief editor of the whole Aristotelian corpus, and on the other, in the critical engagement with the works of Aristotle. Thus, for instance, based on the information passed down by Simplicius, there are allegedly five authors in the first century BCE who commented on the *Categories*: Andronicus, Boethus of Sidon, Athenodorus, Ariston, and Eudorus. Interest in the *Categories* continued well into the first and the second century CE. The scholia of Alexander of Aegae,

⁴⁰⁶ See also: Griffin, Aristotle's Categories in the Early Roman Empire, 16-18.

Sotion, Achaius, Galen, Adrastus of Aphrodisias, and Aspasius are lost for the most part, or have come down to us only in fragments.⁴⁰⁷

The continuation of interest in Aristotle's *Categories* is well attested in the works of Neoplatonic philosophers, who for the most part tried to reconcile Aristotle's logic with Plato's metaphysics. Undoubtedly, Porphyry (239-309 CE) exercised the greatest impact on the Neoplatonic reception of the *Categories*. He penned the *Isagoge*, an introduction to the whole Organon, as well as two commentaries on Aristotle's Categories. While one commentary is still preserved, the other more extensive commentary, addressed to Gedalius, which also influenced other Neoplatonic commentators, survives only in fragments. Porphyry, it seems, disagreed with his teacher Plotinus's rejection of the Aristotelian categorial system. According to Plotinus (c. 204/5-270 CE), in his treatise On the Genera of Being (Enn. 6.1-3), this scheme first of all is not applicable to the intelligible realm of being. Therefore, he takes Plato's five highest genera – being of substance, otherness, identity, rest, and motion – as the most suitable to categorize the intelligible realm. Furthermore, for Plotinus, only four out of ten Aristotelian categories – substance, quality, quantity, and relation, to which he also adds motion – are suitable for the categorization of the sensible realm of being. However, while for Plotinus Aristotle's Categories had ontological implications, for Porphyry Aristotelian categories did not represent actual things but rather words denoting tangible objects.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷ This exegetical activity culminated with Alexander of Aphrodisias' exegesis of various Aristotelian texts. However, it is most likely that he never wrote commentaries on the Categories. See: Richard Sorabji, "The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle," in Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 1-30, 1-5; Andrea Falcon, "Commentators on Aristotle," Stanford Philosophy, September 24, Encyclopedia of 2021, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2022/entries/aristotle-commentators/. For more information on ancient and Neoplatonic Aristotelian commentary tradition, see also other chapters in Richard Sorabji, ed., Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990); Griffin, Aristotle's Categories in the Early Roman Empire; and Andrea Falcon, ed., Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 2016). For more information on the Greek, Latin, and Arabic commentary tradition on Aristotle in general and relevant bibliography, see: Silvia Fazzo, "Aristotelianism as a Commentary Tradition," Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies 47: Issue Supplement: Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic And Latin Commentaries, no. 83, part 1 (2004): 1-19, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-5370.2004.tb02292.x; and John Sellars, "The Aristotelian Commentators: A Bibliographical Guide," Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies 47: Issue Supplement: Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic And Latin Commentaries, no. 83, part 1 (2004): 239-268, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-5370.2004.tb02305.x.

⁴⁰⁸ This is a simplified explanation of a much more complex issue that has provoked fierce debates in modern scholarship. Porphyry's student Iamblichus (c. 245–320), whose commentary on the *Categories* is only fragmentarily transmitted through Simplicius's work, went even further and deemed categories to be applicable both to the sensible and to the intelligible realm of being. Christos Evangeliou, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry*, vol. 48, of *Philosophia Antiqua: A Series of Studies on Ancient Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 23-33, 93-128; Frans De Haas, "Did Plotinus and Porphyry Disagree on Aristotle's Categories?," *Phronesis* 46, no. 4 (2001): 492-526, https://doi.org/10.1163/156852801753736517, 492-496; Riccardo Chiaradonna, "Genera and Predication: Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus," in *Ontology in Early Neoplatonism: Plotinus, Porphyry*,

Porphyry's approach heavily influenced all posterior Neoplatonic commentators on the *Categories*. Most of the preserved Neoplatonic commentaries were published in the Berlin Series *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*. Thus, besides the commentary of Porphyry, we have available commentaries by Dexippus (fourth century), Ammonius (c. 440-between 517 and 526), Simplicius (c. 480-560), Olympiodorus (c. 495-after 565), Philoponus (c. 490-570), and Elias (sixth century).⁴⁰⁹ However, when it comes to the Byzantine commentary tradition, there are a large number of texts that yet remain unpublished. This represents the major obstacle in our overall understanding of the reception of the *Categories* in Byzantium. The lack of interest in these Byzantine texts is usually justified by the fact that the Byzantine contribution to the philosophical interpretation and development of Aristotelian logic is insignificant. Byzantine authors produced various different types of exegetical texts such as fully-fledged commentaries and paraphrases, marginal scholia, and concise treatises dealing with particular topics as well as compendia, which were used in didactic settings as a general introduction either to Aristotle's *Categories* or to the whole *Organon* and in this way prepared students for more advanced study of philosophy and theology.⁴¹⁰

Iamblichus (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 138-162, 139-146; Sara Magrin, "Plotinus' Reception of Aristotle," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. Andrea Falcon (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 258-276, 262-268; Riccardo Chiaradonna, "Porphyry and the Aristotelian Tradition," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. Andrea Falcon (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 321-340, 224-327; Jan Opsomer, "An Intellective Perspective on Aristotle: Iamblichus the Divine," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. Andrea Falcon (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 321-340, 224-327; Jan Opsomer, "An Intellective Perspective on Aristotle: Iamblichus the Divine," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, ed. Andrea Falcon (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 341-357, 349-352. For Plotinus's treatisem see the following translation: Plotinus, "On the Genera of Being (Enn. VI.1-3)," in *Plotinus: The Enneads*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson, trans. George Boys-Stones et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 641-736. For the opposite view on Plotinus's and Porphyry's reception of the *Categories*, see for instance: Karl Praechter, "Nikostratos der Platoniker," *Hermes* 57, no. 4 (1922): 481-517; and Steven K. Strange, "Plotinus, Porphyry and the Neoplatonic Interpretation of the Categories," in *Teilband Philosophie, Wissenschaften, Technik. Philosophie (Platonismus [Forts.]; Aristotelismus*), ed. Wolfgang Haase, vol. 36.2, *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt* (ANRW) (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 1987), 955-974.

⁴⁰⁹ Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 55-142; Dexippus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories; Ammonius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories; Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, Olympiodorus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 26-148; Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories; Elias, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 107-255. (For full bibliographic description see the list of abbreviations)

⁴¹⁰ Katerina Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories," Synthesis Philosophica 20, no. 1 (2005): 7-31; Christophe Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," in The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 362-380. For general information on Aristotle's commentary tradition in Byzantium, see for instance: Klaus Oehler, "Aristotle in Byzantium," Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 5 (1964): 133-146; George L. Kustas, "The Commentators on Aristotle's 'Categories' and on Porphyry's 'Isagoge," chapter, in Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric, ed. George L. Kustas (Thessalonikē: Patriarchikon Hidryma Paterikōn Meletōn, 1973), 101-126; Linos G. Benakis, "Commentaries and Commentators on the Logical Works of Aristotle in Byzantium," in Gedankenzeichen: Festschrift für Klaus Oehler zum 60. Geburtstag, ed. Regina Claussen and Roland Daube-Schackat (Tübingen: Stauffenburg-Verl, 1988), 3-12; Michele Trizio, "Reading and Commenting on Aristotle," in The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 397-412; Mikonja Knežević, ed., Aristotle in Byzantium (Alhambra, CA: St. Sebastian Orthodox Press, 2020); and Michele Trizio, "Forging Identities between Heaven and Earth Commentaries on Aristotle and Authorial Practices in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Byzantium," in

One of the first texts dealing with the *Categories* that sprouted from the Byzantine milieu is the *Philosophical Chapters* by John of Damascus (*c*. 675-749). This work is the first part of the Damascene's larger literary enterprise known as *The Fountain of Knowledge*, which includes two more works: *Concerning Heresy* and *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*. In *Philosophical Chapters*, the Damascene recapitulates the most important aspects of the *Isagoge* and the *Categories* and aims to provide a synopsis of the basic philosophical knowledge and terminology necessary for the correct understanding of the other two works.⁴¹¹

Among ninth-century Byzantine authors who dealt with the *Categories*, one can find Photios (*c*. 810/20-893), Patriarch of Constantinople, who besides scholia, also composed a synopsis, which is included in his monumental question-and-answer work *Amphilochia*, dedicated to Amphilochius, archbishop of Cyzicus.⁴¹² In addition to this, Photios also left commentaries on the *Isagoge* and *Categories*, preserved in different manuscripts together with scholia by Ammonius. Photios' work was continued by his students Zacharias of Chalcedon and Arethas (*c*. 860-939), archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. While in his short treatise on time, Zacharius of Chalcedon relies on both Aristotle's *Categories* and Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Arethas composed scholia on both the *Categories* and the *Isagoge*.⁴¹³

From the beginning of the eleventh century, the *Categories* are also covered in a philosophical synopsis known as *Anonymous Heiberg*, which deals with logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. The logical part of this work, besides a synopsis of the *Categories*, includes a short summary of *Isagoge*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, and *Sophistical Refutations*.⁴¹⁴ Michael Psellos (c. 1018-1078) also commented on *Categories*,

Byzantine Commentaries on Ancient Greek Texts: 12th-15th Centuries, ed. Baukje van den Berg, Divna Manolova, and Przemysław Marciniak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 61-99.

⁴¹¹ John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, 55.

⁴¹² Photios. Synopsis on Ten Categories (qu. 137 -147), in Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia, ed. Leendert Gerrit Westerink, vol. 6.2, of 6 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1989), 140-165; See: Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories," 9.

⁴¹³ Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories'," 9; Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," 371; Arethas's commentary is preserved only in a single manuscript and ends abruptly with 4b15, just after the start of the discussion on quantity. It is heavily influenced by Simplicius, Philoponus, and Elias. Arethas, *Scholia* on Aristotle's Categories, 131-229; and Michael Share, "Introduction," in *Ibid.*, ed., Arethas of Caesarea's Scholia on Porphyry's Eisagoge and Aristotle's Categories: A Critical Edition by Michael Share, vol. 1 of 7 vols., of Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi / Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina (Athens: Academy of Athens, 1994).

⁴¹⁴ Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories'," 9; Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," 373. A modern edition of the text is available in Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., Anonymi Logica et Quadrivium: Cum Scholiis Antiquis, vol. 15.1, of Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-Filologiske Meddelelser (Copenhagen: Hovedkommissionær, 1929). For more information on this commentary see: Christian Marinus Taisbak, "The Date of Anonymus Heiberg, Anonymi Logica et Quadrivium," Cahiers de l'Institut Du Moyen Âge Grec et Latin 39 (1981): 97-102; Jonathan Barnes, "Syllogistic in the Anonymous Heiberg," in Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources, ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 97-

On Interpretation, and *Prior Analytics*.⁴¹⁵ He also penned four brief treatises in which he reflects upon specific parts of the *Categories*. In *Opusculum 6*, Psellos debates homonyms and synonyms, and in *Opusculum 7*, he discusses the self-subsistence of substance. *Opusculum 8* is dedicated to discussion of natural and acquired qualities, as well as states and conditions, while in *Opusculum 9* Psellos deliberates on the category of relatives and briefly discusses qualities such as shape, color, and form, as well as capacity and incapacity.⁴¹⁶ Psellos has also been considered to be the author of three synopses (*Opuscula 50*, 51, and 52), in which Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories* are treated.⁴¹⁷

Certain aspects of the *Categories* were also the subject of John Italos's (*c*. 1025-1082) *Quaestiones Quodlibetales (Problems and Solutions)*, in which he concisely discusses why substance should be the first in respect to other categories (qu. 25, and qu. 72), answers the question of why Aristotle claims that neither substance nor differentia are in the subject (qu. 26), demonstrates how quantity just seemingly accepts the contrariety in the case of place (qu. 27) and argues how the category of quality is derived from the mixture of relatives and quantity (qu. 35).⁴¹⁸

While from the twelfth century we have only Prodromos's treatise *On Great and Small*, several works dealing with the *Categories* came down to us from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Thus, for instance, Leo Magentenos, twelfth-century bishop of Mytilene, wrote *scholia*, while Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197-1272) composed a logical compendium as a general introduction to studies of logic that paraphrased the *Isagoge*, *Categories*, *On Interpretation, Prior Analytics* and *Sophistical Refutations*. Sophonias (thirteenth and fourteenth century) paraphrased Aristotle's *Categories*. Finally, George Pachymeres (1242-c. 1310) wrote an all-encompassing epitome of Aristotelian logic covering the whole *Organon* as well as the first chapter of his *Philosophy*.⁴¹⁹ Additionally, Pachymeres also composed a still unedited fully-fledged commentary on Aristotle's *Organon*. ⁴²⁰

^{138;} Gianna Katsiampoura, "The Quadrivium of 1008 and Pachymeres' Syntagma: Comparing Two Byzantine Quadrivia," essay, in *Libri Di Scuola e Pratiche Didattiche: Dall'Antichità Al Rinascimento: Atti Del Convegno Internazionale Di Studi Cassino, 7-10 Maggio 2008*, ed. Del Lucio Corso and Oronzo Pecere (Cassino: Edizioni Università di Cassino, 2010), 409-424.

⁴¹⁵ Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," 373.

⁴¹⁶ Psellos, *Philosophica Minora* 1, (opus. 6, 7, 8, and 9), 14-32.

⁴¹⁷ Psellos, *Philosophica Minora* 1, (opus. 50, 51, and 52).186-236. Although in some manuscripts Psellos has been named as the author of these works, due to their style, John M. Duffy, the editor, has designated these works as dubious. See also: Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories'," 10-11; Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," 374.

⁴¹⁸ Italos, *Problems and Solutions*, (qu. 25, qu. 26, qu. 27, qu. 35, and qu.32), 26-28, 43-44, 125.

⁴¹⁹ I would like to thank Michele Trizio for providing me with information about new date for Magentenos and reference to: Nikos Agiotis, "The Reception of Magentenos' Work and Modern Scholarship on him: an Overview" in Ibid. ed., *Leon Magentenos, Commentary on Aristotle, Prior Analytics (Book II). Critical*

In the fourteenth century, the *Categories* were covered in Joseph Rhakendytes's (c.1280-1330) *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric, Logic, Physics, Psychology, Mathematics, Ethics and Theology*, Joseph Philagrios's fourteenth-century synopsis and scholia on *Categories*, as well as John Chortasmenos's (c.1370-1436) collection of different texts which served as a companion to *Organon*.⁴²¹ Finally, from the fifteenth century there is only one work, composed by George Gennadios Scholarios (c. 1400-1472), which represents the most extensive preserved Byzantine commentary on the *Categories*. This long commentary is dedicated to the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI Palaiologos (r. 1449-1453) and its form is heavily influenced by the Latin commentaries of that time.⁴²²

3.2.3 The Problematic Passage

The Byzantine reception of the *Categories* was mostly influenced by Neoplatonic commentators such as Porphyry, Ammonius, Simplicius, Philoponus, Olympiodorus, and Elias, as well as by the logical tradition deriving from the works of Church Fathers. When dealing with the *Categories*, Byzantine authors mostly adhere to what they believe was Aristotle's view according to tradition and the previous commentaries. However, it was not always the case that Byzantine authors aimed to present themselves as faithful to Aristotle's views. Thus, for example, Photios emphasizes his own input on the subject and openly criticizes Aristotle for his treatment of substance.⁴²³

Byzantine authors were concerned in their treatment of the *Categories* with several questions, such as the question of what the correct order of categories is, whether individuals bearing the same name should be regarded as homonyms or synonyms, in what way substance is "self-subsistent" ($\alpha \dot{\upsilon} \theta \dot{\upsilon} \pi \alpha \rho \kappa \tau \sigma \zeta$), as well as to which category the great and the small, the many and the few belong. When it comes to the last question, most Byzantine

Edition with Introduction and Translation, vol. 5 of Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca et Byzantina – Series academica (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2021), XXVII-XXXVII. Blemmydes, Compendium on Logic, 685-1004; The Anonymous Commentary to Aristotle's Categories most probably, according to the editor of the text, belongs to Sophonias. See: Anonymi in Aristotelis Categorias Paraphrasis, ed. Michael Hayduck, vol. XXIII.2, of XIII Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca. Edita Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1883), 1-72. George Pachymeres, Synopsis of Aristotle's Logic, in Philp Bech, ed., Georgii Pachymerii Hieromnemonis, in universam fere Aristotelis philosophiam, epitome. MicFor more information see also: Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories'," 11-12; Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," 377-378.

⁴²⁰ I would like to thank Michele Trizio for providing me with this information.

⁴²¹ Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories'," 12-13.

⁴²² Gennadios Scholarios, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 114-237. For more information see: Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories'," 13-14; Erismann, "Logic in Byzantium," 380.

⁴²³ Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories'," 15-16.

authors agreed either with Aristotle that the great and the small, the many and the few are not quantity but relatives and that they are opposed to each other not as relatives, but as contraries. A few of them, probably influenced by Neoplatonic commentators, allowed in some cases for the great and the small and the many and the few to be considered indefinite quantities or even indefinite quantities in the absolute sense when things compared do not belong to the same genus.⁴²⁴ Therefore, taking both the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition into consideration, it appears that Prodromos's stance on this issue was an exception. However, in order to position Prodromos within this tradition, it will be important to first take a closer look at the problematic passage in the *Categories* that triggered Prodromos's critical reaction.

After the statement about the subject matter of his treatise, Prodromos provides a carefully patched excerpt from the *Categories* which gives the reader the gist of Aristotle's line of reasoning:

Let us state here, first by citing as a proof the passage of Aristotle, as it is: for he says that "a quantity has no contrary" and proving the argument from the induction, he adds: "unless someone would call 'great' the contrary of 'small,' or 'many' the contrary of 'few'." None of these, however, is a quantity; they are relatives. For nothing is called large or small just in itself, but by reference to something else. For example, a mountain is called small yet a grain of millet large because the latter is larger than other things of its kind, while the former is smaller than other things of its kind." He continues: "Moreover, whether one counts them as quantities or does not, they have no contrary. For how could there be any contrary to what cannot be grasped just in itself but only by reference to something else? Further, if large and small are to be contraries it will turn out that the same thing admits contraries at the same time, and that things are their own contraries." ⁴²⁵

Λέγωμεν δὴ ὦδε, αὐτὴν πρότερον τὴν Ἀριστοτέλους, ὡς ἔχει, παραθέμενοι ῥῆσιν· οὐδὲν γάρ φησιν ἐκεῖνος τῷ ποσῷ ἐναντίον, καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἐπαγωγῆς τὸν λόγον πιστούμενος, «εἰ μὴ τὸ πολὺ τῷ ὀλίγῷ φαίη τις ἐναντίον» ἐπάγει «ἢ τὸ

⁴²⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴²⁵ My translation here is combined with translated quotations from: Aristotle, *Categories* (tr. Ackrill), 5b10-13, 5b19-22.

μέγα τῷ μικρῷ· τούτῶν δὲ οὐδέν ἐστι ποσόν, ἀλλὰ τῶν πρός τι. οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ μέγα λέγεται ἢ μικρόν, ἀλλὰ τῷ πρὸς ἕτερον ἀναφέρεσθαι· οἶον ὅρος μὲν μικρὸν λέγεται, κέγχρος δέ μεγάλη, τῷ, τὴν μὲν τῶν ὁμογενῶν μείζονα εἶναι, τὸ δ' ἔλαττον τῶν ὁμογενῶν (Arist. *Cat.* 5b10-13)». Καὶ ἐφεξῆς ὁ φῆσιν· «ἐάν τε τιθῇ τις ταῦτα ποσά, ἐάν τε μὴ τιθ틙, οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς ἐναντίον οὐδέν· ὃ γὰρ μὴ ἔστι λαβεῖν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτό, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἕτερον ἀναφέροντα, πῶς ἂν φαίη τις τούτῷ τι ἐναντίον; ἔτι δὲ εἰ ἔσται τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρὸν ἐναντία, συμβήσεται τὸ αὐτὸ ἅμα τὰ ἐναντία ἐπιδέχεσθαι καὶ αὐτὰ δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐναντία εἶναι» (Arist. *Cat.* 5b19-22).⁴²⁶

With this excerpt, Prodromos summarizes what Aristotle says about great and small, many and few. In order to refute Aristotle's stance, Prodromos formulates six counterarguments to prove that the great and the small, the many and few, actually do belong to the category of quantity and not to the category of relatives, and another six counterarguments in order to show that they are opposed to each other as contraries and not relatives.

3.3 Great and Small Belong to the Category of Quantity

3.3.1 Aristotle on Quantity

In order to contextualize Prodromos's counterarguments, I will first give a brief overview of what Aristotle himself says on quantity and relatives in *Categories*. On one hand, this will help us to better comprehend Prodromos's line of reasoning and clearly see in what manner he crafted his refutation, and on the other, it will set up the basis to properly situate Prodromos within the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition.

Quantity ($\pi o i \delta v$) is, after substance ($o \delta \sigma i \alpha$), the second category that Aristotle lists.⁴²⁷ He outlines two major *differentiae* of quantity. According to the first one, Aristotle divides quantities into those that are discrete ($\delta i \omega \rho i \sigma \mu \epsilon v o v$) and therefore do not have a common boundary, and those that are continuous ($\sigma v \kappa \epsilon \epsilon c$) and therefore have a common boundary.

⁴²⁶ Prodromos, *On Great and Small*, (ed. Tannery), 113; Aristotle, *Categories* 5b10-13, 5b19-22. For the translation of the excerpts that Prodromos inserts here, as well as for all subsequent translated quotations that I include in the main body of my dissertation, I have used the translation of John Lloyd Ackrill from: Aristotle, "Categories," translated by John Lloyd Ackrill, in Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 9-10.

⁴²⁷ Aristotle, *Categories* 4b20-6a36.

Discrete quantities are number (ἀριθμὸς) and language (λόγος), while continuous are line (γραμμή), surface (ἐπιφάνεια), body (σῶμα), time (χρόνος), and place (τόπος). The second division Aristotle provides is differentiation between quantities composed from parts which have a position in relation to one another (τὰ μὲν ἐκ θέσιν ἐχόντων πρὸς ἄλληλα τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς μορίων συνέστηκε), such as line, surface, body, and place, and those whose parts do not have a position in relation to one another (τὰ δὲ οὐκ ἐξ ἐχόντων θέσιν), such as number, language, and time. Aristotle adds that only these quantities are called quantities in the strictest sense (κυρίως) and all others are called quantities accidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός). For example, the action (πραξις) is called long because the time to execute the action is long, or the white (λευκὸν) is called large because the surface in which it inheres is large. In this case, both the long action and the large white surface are quantities accidentally, and not quantities in the strict sense, because they are not quantities in themselves, but rather in virtue of something else (i.e., large surface, long time).⁴²⁸

Each category is characterized by certain properties. Yet, before we turn to propria (ίδία) or common characteristics of quantity, it is important to explain what types of properties there are. In his Commentary on the Categories, Porphyry differentiates between three types of propria. The first type of proprium is what is characteristic of all members of a species, but also belongs to other species. The second type is what is characteristic for some members of a species, but not all of them. The third type of proprium is what belongs to all and only to the members of species and this is the proprium in the strictest sense.⁴²⁹ In the Isagoge, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Porphyry lists four different types of propria as he divides the third propria mentioned here into two separate types based on whether it occurs only and in all members of a species at some time ($\pi \sigma \tau \epsilon$) or always ($d\epsilon i$). Thus, according to the *Isagoge*, the third type of proprium is what belongs only and to all the members of a species and at some time ($\mu \dot{\phi} v \omega \kappa \alpha i \pi \alpha v \tau i \kappa \alpha i \pi \sigma \tau \dot{\epsilon}$), such as a man going gray in his old age. Finally, the fourth type of proprium is what is characteristic only and to all members of a species and always (μόνω και παντι και ἀεί), such as laughing to men. This is the strictest type of propria as they are convertible (i.e., if laughing, man; if man, laughing).430

When it comes to propria or common characteristics of quantity, Aristotle mentions three. In the first place, a quantity has no contrary as there is nothing contrary in case of

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 4b20-5b11.

⁴²⁹ Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 94.1-3.

⁴³⁰ Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 1-22, 12.15-24.

definite quantities (ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἀφωρισμένων φανερὸν ὅτι οὐδέν ἐστιν ἐναντίον) such as for instance to four-foot or five-foot.⁴³¹ Secondly, he claims that quantity does not seem to admit of a more and a less (οὐ δοκεῖ δὲ τὸ ποσὸν ἐπιδέχεσθαι τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἦττον); for example, a three is not more three than any other three.⁴³² Finally, the last and the most distinctive feature of quantity is that it is being said both equal and unequal (ἴδιον δὲ μάλιστα τοῦ ποσοῦ τὸ ἴσον τε καὶ ἄνισον λέγεσθαι). Thus, for instance, a body can be called equal and unequal, as well as time, line, or number.⁴³³ As Porphyry explains, only the last one is the proprium of quantity in the strict sense, because the first two are rather common characteristics of quantity in a broader sense, since they are also a property of substance and some qualities.⁴³⁴

3.3.2 Aristotle on Relatives

After quantity, Aristotle introduces the category of relatives (πρός τι), which he describes as "those 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" (πρός τι δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγεται, ὅσα αὐτὰ ἄπερ ἐστὶν ἑτέρων εἶναι λέγεται ἢ ὁπωσοῦν ἄλλως πρὸς ἕτερον).⁴³⁵ As this description does not fully reflect on the nature of relatives, Aristotle later makes it more specific and explains that for relatives "being is the same as being somehow related to something" (οἶς τὸ εἶναι ταὐτόν ἐστι τῷ πρός τί πως ἔχειν) and therefore "if someone knows any relative definitely he will also know definitely that in relation to which it is spoken of" (ἐάν τις εἰδῆ τι ὡρισμένως τῶν πρός τι, κἀκεῖνο πρὸς ὃ λέγεται ὡρισμένως εἴσεται).⁴³⁶ Among relatives he includes larger (μεῖζον) and smaller (ἕλαττον), double (διπλάσιον) and half (ἥμισυ), state (ἕξις), condition (διάθεσις), perception (αἴσθησις), knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), and position (θέσις).⁴³⁷

As common characteristics of this category, Aristotle explains that there is contrariety (ἐναντιότης), that they seem to have ability to admit of a more and a less (τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἦττον ἐπιδέχεσθαι), that they seem to be simultaneous by nature (ἅμα τῇ φύσει), and that they cancel each other (συναναιρεῖ δὲ ταῦτα ἄλληλα). However, these common characteristics are not applicable to all relatives because, for instance, double and half do not have contrariety,

⁴³¹ Aristotle, *Categories* 5b12-14.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 6a19-25.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 6a26-36.

⁴³⁴ Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 110-111.

⁴³⁵ Aristotle, *Categories* 6a37-8b24; 6a37-6b1.

⁴³⁶ Aristotle, *Categories* 8a32, 8a40.

⁴³⁷ Aristotle, *Categories* 6a37-6b6.

nor do they admit of a more and a less. Also, when it comes to knowledge and the knowable, as well as to perception and the perceptible, it is clear that these relatives are not simultaneous by nature as they do not cancel each other. Thus, for instance, while the destruction of the knowable cancels knowledge, the same cannot be said vice versa, because the destruction of knowledge does not lead to the destruction of the knowable. The same goes for the perception and perceptible – annihilation of the perceptible cancels perception, but the destruction of perception does not destroy the perceptible itself. The only proprium of relatives in the strict sense is that they are said in relation to correlatives that reciprocate, provided that they are properly given (πάντα οὖν τὰ πρός τι, ἐάνπερ οἰκείως ἀποδιδῶται, πρὸς ἀντιστρέφοντα λέγεται).⁴³⁸

3.3.3 Prodromos's Counterarguments: Summary

Whereas Aristotle argues that great and small, many and few cannot be quantities but relatives, Prodromos intends to prove exactly the opposite. He does so by adducing six counterarguments, which mostly revolve around proving that the definition and common characteristics of relatives are not applicable in the case of the great and small. In the first place, Prodromos aims to demonstrate that Aristotle's description of relatives as "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" (πρός τι δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγεται, ὅσα αὐτὰ ἅπερ ἐστὶν ἑτέρων εἶναι λέγεται ἢ όπωσοῦν ἄλλως πρὸς ἕτερον) is not applicable to great and small, and thus denies the possibility for these to be understood in the relative sense.⁴³⁹ Here, it appears that Prodromos understands the great and small as indefinite quantities in their absolute sense and denies completely the possibility for these to be used in a relative sense.⁴⁴⁰ Secondly, Aristotle's more accurate "definition" according to which for relatives "being is the same as being somehow related to something" (ois to eival tautov έστι τῷ πρός τί πως ἔχειν) and therefore "if someone knows any relative definitely he will also know definitely that in relation to which it is spoken of" (ἐάν τις εἰδῃ τι ὡρισμένως τῶν πρός τι, κἀκεῖνο πρὸς ὃ λέγεται ώρισμένως εἴσεται) is again not applicable to the great and small.⁴⁴¹ Thirdly, great and small, as well as many and few, are predicated of quantity.⁴⁴² Fourthly, Prodromos implicitly refutes

⁴³⁸ Aristotle, *Categories*, 6b15-8a13.

⁴³⁹ Aristotle, Categories, 6a37-8b24; 6a37-6b1.

⁴⁴⁰ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 113-14; Aristotle, Categories, 8a32, 8a40.

⁴⁴¹ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 114; Aristotle, Categories, 8a32, 8a40.

⁴⁴² Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 115.

the ability of relatives to admit of a more and less (τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἦττον ἐπιδέχεσθαι). While according to Aristotle this is one of the common characteristics of some relatives, for Prodromos no relatives can admit of more and less. He argues that other categories, by admitting of more and less, might become relatives, but once they are relatives, they cannot further admit of more or less. As small and great are a quantity, according to Prodromos, they can become greater and smaller and thus be understood as relatives.⁴⁴³ In the fifth argument, Prodromos aims to prove that great cannot be said in relationship with other small that reciprocate. In this way, Prodromos denies these items the proprium of relatives in the strictest sense – relatives are said in relation to correlatives that reciprocate, provided that they are properly given (πάντα οὖν τὰ πρός τι, ἐάνπερ οἰκείως ἀποδιδῶται, πρὸς ἀντιστρέφοντα λέγεται).⁴⁴⁴ In the final argument, Prodromos builds on the first and fourth arguments and ultimately denies the possibility for great and small to be understood in a relative sense.⁴⁴⁵

The following analysis of Prodromos's arguments will mostly revolve around the first, the second, the fourth, and the fifth argument, since the third argument is quite straightforward and the sixth argument summarizes what has already been said in the first, third, and fourth arguments. In this analysis, I will incorporate, when applicable, the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition, including both authors who produced their works before and those who did so after Prodromos's lifetime, in order to situate Prodromos's stance within the broader tradition.

3.3.4 Great and Small are Indefinite Quantities in an Absolute Sense Only

The first argument revolves around demonstrating that Aristotle's description of relatives as "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" ($\pi\rho\delta\varsigma$ τι δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγεται, ὅσα αὐτὰ ἄπερ ἐστὶν ἑτέρων εἶναι λέγεται ἢ ὁπωσοῦν ἄλλως πρὸς ἕτερον) is not applicable to the great and the small. This is particularly evident in the case of species which consist of only one individual, according to commonly accepted scientific opinion of that time, such as heaven, sun, moon, earth and

⁴⁴³ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 115; Aristotle, Categories, 6b20-6b27.

⁴⁴⁴ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 115-116; Aristotle, Categories, 6b15-8a13.

⁴⁴⁵ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 116.

air.⁴⁴⁶ In this way, Prodromos denies the possibility for great and small to be understood in a relative sense at all. The first part of this argument goes as follows:

For, if we compared a grain with a grain, as you know well, we could say that it is great; and if we compared a hill with a hill, we could call it small; and nothing else is to be assumed concerning these things, because it has been ordained so by your laws; but in case of these species, to you admirable, whose individuals would not be more than one, such as, for example, the sun as well as the moon and the heaven itself, how will we be able to predicate the great? For not just as one grain tends to take the name 'great' or 'small' in relationship with another one and one mountain in relationship with another, the same would also be in the case of these. For the heaven is great and, by heavens, there is no one who, while saying heaven, did not immediately attribute great, or if not having attributed this does not seem to be impious about such a great matter; but certainly, the great is not at all in relation to another small. For in relationship with what is the one and only? Thus, it is in similar manner with other cases: for instance, the size of the whole earth is called great, and the entire mass of air is called much; but the former (i.e. great heaven) is not compared in relationship with another small one, nor is the latter (i.e. much air) in relationship with other few. For these individuals are monadic and numerically one according to each species (to which they belong); unless someone would like to invent the plurality of worlds again, or to fabricate an infinite number of them.

Κέγχρον μὲν γὰρ κέγχρῷ παραβαλόντες μεγάλην ἄν, ὡς εὖ οἶσθα, φαίημεν· καὶ ὅρος ὅρει παρεξετάσαντες μιχρὸν ὀνομάσαιμεν· καὶ οὐχ ἔστιν ἄλλως περὶ τούτων ὑπειληφέναι, σοῦ γε νομοθετήσαντος· ἐφ' ὧν δὲ εἰδῶν, ὦ θαυμάσιε, μὴ ἂν πλείω ἑνὸς τὰ ἄτομα εἴη, οἶον ἡλίου τε καὶ σελήνης καὶ αὐτοῦ οὐρανοῦ, πῶς ἕξομεν τὸ μέγα κατηγορεῖν; οὐ γὰρ καθάπερ ἡ τὶς πρὸς τήν τινα κέγχρος καὶ τό τι πρὸς τό τι ὅρος τὴν τοῦ μεγάλου ἢ τοῦ μικροῦ προσηγορίαν ἐλάμβανον, οὕτως ἂν ἔχοι καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων. ὁ γὰρ οὐρανὸς μέγας μὲν καί, ναὶ μὰ τόν, οὐκ ἔστιν ὃς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰπών, οὐχ εὐθὺς τόν μέγαν ἐπήνεγκεν ἢ μὴ

⁴⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Categories*, 6a37-8b24; 6a37-6b1.

έπενεγκών ούχ άσεβεῖν περί τὸ τηλικοῦτον ἔδοξε χρῆμα· ἀλλ' οὐ μήν πω πρὸς άλλον μέγας μικρόν. πρός τίνα γάρ ὃ μόνος καὶ εἶς; ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν άλλων οἶον, μέγας ὁ τῆς γῆς ἁπάσης ὄγκος, καὶ πολὺ τὸ ἅπαν τοῦ ἀέρος λέγεται χῦμα· ἀλλ' οὔτ' ἐκεῖνος πρὸς ἄλλον μικρὸν συγκρινόμενος, οὕτε τοῦτο πρὸς ἄλλο ὀλίγον. μοναδικὰ γὰρ ταῦτα καὶ ἕν ἀριθμῷ καθ' ἕκαστον εἶδος ἄτομα· εί μὴ πολλούς τις ἀναπλάττειν ἐθέλοι κόσμους καὶ πάλιν ἢ καὶ άπείρους τούτους δημιουργεῖν. 447

In what sense heaven, sun, moon, earth and air are perceived monadically is perhaps best explained by Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David). In his commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge, Pseudo-Elias clarifies that there is a difference between notions of each particular (καθέκαστα), individual (ἄτομον) and monadic/single (μοναδικόν). While each particular can refer to any particular, like a horse, or a man, the individual refers to the specific individual, such as this specific Socrates, and monadic is something that does not have any corresponding companion (μή ἔχον δὲ ὑμόζυγον) such as this sun, or this moon.⁴⁴⁸

Additionally, Simplicius in his commentary on Categories provides us with an explanation in what sense these monadic items are considered as species. Simplicius reflects implicitly on possible issues one might encounter in Porphyry's descriptions of differentiae and species. As there is no need at the present moment to provide an account of the entire discussion, I will here briefly reflect on Simplicius explication of this matter when it comes to species. Thus, according to Simplicius, there is a problem with applying the term species to things that differ in number, as there are some species that are monadic (εἴδη τινά ἐστιν μοναδικά) both among the perceptible things (έν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς) as well as in all the eternal things (tà μèν ἀίδια πάντα). For instance, in case of the monadic perceptible things, such as a phoenix, there is no problem as the species phoenix is predicated of several individual phoenixes that do not exist simultaneously, but successively. The situation with all eternal monadic things such as sun ($\eta \lambda \iota o \varsigma$) and moon ($\sigma \epsilon \lambda \eta \nu \eta$), on the other hand, is different. There is a distinction, as Simplicius explains, between the species that is said of several things differing in number as they are not ordered (τὸ ἀκατάτακτον) and considered in many things (ἐν πολλοῖς θεωρούμενον) on the one hand, and the species that pertains to that which are ordered within matter (ἐν ὕλη κατατεταγμένον) and monadic (μοναδικόν) on the other. The

179

⁴⁴⁷ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 113-114.

⁴⁴⁸ Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David), Lectures on Porphyry's Isagoge, 77. For similar stance about monadic items see for instance: Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 18; Blemmydes, Compendium on Logic, 917.

latter type of species is in fact something between individuals ($\check{\alpha}\tau\sigma\mu\alpha$) and species/forms in the strict sense ($\kappa\nu\rhoi\omega\varsigma$ είδοί.), as they exceed individuals by being monadic, and are exceeded by species/forms in the strict sense as they are generated within matter.⁴⁴⁹

Prodromos, probably inspired by this type of example regarding monadic items, constructs the argument to implicitly prove that great and small and many and few are quantities absolutely and denies any relative usage of these items. Although Prodromos here, as Aristotle himself, does not explicitly distinguish between definite ($\dot{\omega}$ ρισμένον πόσον) and indefinite ($d \delta \rho \sigma \sigma v$) quantities, this differentiation is present in the commentary tradition. For instance, Porphyry explains that there is a differentiation between definite (two cubits, three cubits) and indefinite quantities (great and small). Thus, the great and the small as well as the many and the few can be understood either absolutely ($\alpha \pi \lambda \tilde{\omega} \zeta$), in which they are to be taken as indefinite quantities, or in their relative sense ($\pi\rho\delta\varsigma\tau\iota$), in which they are to be taken as relatives. As Porphyry further explains, Aristotle does not state that they are indefinite quantities and therefore does not accept these in their absolute sense, but considers them only to be taken in the relative sense. Porphyry seems to agree with Aristotle's position, because even when great and small are taken absolutely, they are still indefinite quantities which cannot be conceived in themselves; therefore, it is more appropriate for them to be understood as relatives and not as quantities in a strict sense (κυρίως), i.e. as definite quantities.450

Ammonius also differentiates between definite and indefinite quantities. In this matter, he closely follows Porphyry by saying that only definite quantities are quantities in the strict sense ($\kappa \upsilon \rho(\omega \varsigma)$), while great and small are indefinite quantities and are said only in relationship with something else; therefore, they belong to the category of relatives. However, unlike Porphyry, he does not mention the possibility that indefinite quantities could be taken either in an absolute or a relational sense. The only peculiar thing that Ammonius adds to the discussion is that great and small are applicable to continuous ($\sigma \upsilon \kappa \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma$), while many and few to discrete ($\delta \iota \omega \rho \iota \sigma \mu \varepsilon \nu v \varepsilon \nu \varepsilon \tau \varepsilon$) quantities.⁴⁵¹ Essentially the same stance, although in a longer discussion, is expressed by Olympiodorus the Younger, a student of Ammonius, as well as by Elias, a student of Olympiodorus.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 55-56.

⁴⁵⁰ Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 107-109.

⁴⁵¹ Ammonius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 61-63.

⁴⁵² Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 92-94; Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 196-197.
Philoponus follows the same line of reasoning by saying that great and small are indefinite and therefore are not quantities. He further elaborates that this does not mean that all indefinite quantities are not quantities. Thus, for instance, he brings to his readers' attention the case of "continuous" ($\sigma \nu \epsilon \chi \epsilon \zeta$) quantities and "number" ($\dot{\alpha} \rho \iota \theta \mu \delta \zeta$), which, as genera, are certainly more indefinite than any definite quantity, such as two and three cubits. However, according to Philoponus, continuous quantity and number do not display the same indefiniteness as great and small for two reasons. Firstly, continuous quantities and number are genera and therefore by default display indefiniteness, while great and small occur in the individual quantities; individuals can be compared only with individuals, not with genera. Secondly, continuous quantity and number as concepts denote quantity and the type of magnitude they convey is exactly defined, while great and small occur only in individual quantities and denote quantity, but do not convey the exact magnitude as two cubits and three cubits. For this reason, great and small cannot be regarded as quantity.⁴⁵³

Simplicius takes a middle position. In a similar way to Porphyry, he explains that there are definite and indefinite quantities and that indefinite quantities can be taken either absolutely or relationally. Here, Simplicius goes a step further in clarifying this matter and explains that indefinite quantities (e.g., great and small) are to be understood absolutely when they are compared with other things that do not belong to the same kind (ἀνομοιογενής), because they participate in the size in itself ($\tau \delta \kappa \alpha \theta' \alpha \delta \tau \delta$); they are to be perceived as relatives when they are compared with things that belong to the same kind (ὁμογενής). According to Simplicius, it was Andronicus who first pointed out the distinction between definite and indefinite quantities, followed by Iamblichus, who also claimed that great and small do not only signify relatives, but also imply a certain indefinite quantity. Furthermore, Iamblichus argues, as Simplicius informs us, that when taken absolutely, that is to say in themselves (τὰ καθ' αύτὰ), great and small are "to be considered among immaterial forms" (έν τοῖς καθ' αὐτὰ καὶ ἀύλοις εἴδεσιν θεωρεῖσθαι), while when taken relatively they are "to be considered among enmattered forms" (ἐν τοῖς ἐνύλοις ὁρᾶν). When the immaterial form approaches the matter, as Iamblichus explains, the combination of the two creates certain power, which has the characteristics of both. Therefore, the enmattered great and small partake in their immaterial form, while at the same time, due to the indefiniteness of the matter, they also participate in the more and less, relation and contrariety. Here Iamblichus openly disagrees with Plotinus, who in his On the Genera of Being considered the great and

⁴⁵³ Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 94-96.

small to be taken only as quantities in their absolute sense. According to Iamblichus, this is wrong because in common speech great and small are mostly understood relatively in the first place. Secondly, Iamblichus extends the concept of magnitude, which for Plotinus cannot be understood relationally, to things perceived both absolutely (quantities in the strict sense) and relatively (great and small, many and few). Finally, even if someone is to perceive, for instance, multitude as the expansion of number and few as the contraction in the absolute sense, there are still consistent differences in their relationship to each other based on excess and deficiency.⁴⁵⁴

Some of the Byzantine authors that tackled this matter, such as Arethas, Psellos, and George Gennadios Scholarios, although distinguishing between definite and indefinite quantities, and including great and small and many and few within indefinite quantities, closely follow the Porphyrian mainstream commentary tradition on this matter and explain that these are not quantities in the strict sense but simply relatives.⁴⁵⁵ Others, like Sophonias, who in his commentaries closely paraphrases the view of Simplicius on this matter, accept that, depending on the context, great and small can be understood either as quantities or relatives.⁴⁵⁶ John of Damascus and Nikephoros Blemmydes also belong to this group and bring a Christian perspective on the matter. Thus, John of Damascus recognizes indefinite quantities, such as the great and the many, in their absolute sense, and thus implicitly the small and the few. by stating that the compassion of God is plenty (Πολλή ή εὐσπλαγχνία τοῦ θεοῦ) and the mystery of the dispensation of God the Word is great ($\mu \epsilon \gamma \alpha$ τὸ $\mu \nu \sigma \tau \eta \rho \rho \nu \sigma$ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου οἰκονομίας). He explains that although Aristotle considers these to be relatives, under different circumstances the same thing can be assigned to different categories. Thus, when great is said in relation to another small, it will be placed in the category of relatives, but when used as in the given example, it will be

⁴⁵⁴ Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 143-145. See also Plotinus, *On the Genera of Being* (Enn. 6.1-3), 6.3.11.12-14, 6.3.12.7-8, 6.3.12.9-15. Unfortunately, Iamblichus's commentary on the *Categories* is available only in fragments transmitted by Simplicius. Also, it is important to note that in what is preserved from the commentaries on the *Categories* written by Dexippus, a student of Iamblichus, there is not much that is said about the matter in question: Dexippus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 71.

⁴⁵⁵ Although Arethas's commentary abruptly stops just after he was about to start his discussion on quantity, it briefly tackles the issue of indefinite quantities (great and small) in the section where he explains that the proprium according to which there is nothing contrary to the substance is not the property of the substance in the strict sense, since it also belongs to the category of the quantity. In his exposition he follows Olympiodorus and Elias for the most part. Arethas, *Scholia on Aristotle's Categories*, scholion 297, lines 74-96; Psellos, *Philosophica Minora* 1, (*Opus. 51*), 172-173. Some other Byzantine compendia, synopses and commentaries on *Categories*, available in modern editions, that also cover discussion on category of quantity, do not even mention the differentiation between definite and indefinite quantities. See, for instance: Photios. *Synopsis on Ten Categories* (qu. 137 -147), 142; Psellos, *Philosophica Minora* 1, (Opus. 50), 186-190, 189; Ibid., (Opus. 52), 218-236, 222; and George Pachymeres, *Synopsis of Aristole's Logic*, 9.

⁴⁵⁶ Sophonias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 24-25.

assigned to the category of quantity.⁴⁵⁷ A similar train of thought can be found in the logical compendium of Nikephoros Blemmydes, who also admits that indefinite quantities such as great and small, many and few, can be understood in their absolute sense, especially when it comes to saying that "Oh how great is your goodness, my Lord, for great is your compassion towards me" ($\Omega \zeta \pi 0 \lambda \tilde{\upsilon} \tau \tilde{\upsilon} \pi \lambda \tilde{\eta} \theta \circ \zeta \tau \tilde{\eta} \zeta \chi \rho \eta \sigma \tau \tilde{\upsilon} \tau \tau \tilde{\upsilon} \tilde{\upsilon} \delta \varepsilon \tilde{\upsilon} \sigma \circ \upsilon \mu \epsilon \tilde{\upsilon} \alpha \epsilon \pi$ ' $\epsilon \mu \epsilon$).⁴⁵⁸

These religious references are not unusual for Byzantine compendia, synopses, and commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*. Byzantine authors frequently used Christian examples, parallels, and metaphors to clarify logical intricacies.⁴⁵⁹ However, Prodromos refrains from directly employing any reference to Holy Scripture, as for example John of Damascus does before him or Nikephoros Blemmydes after him, when pointing out the usage of great and small in their absolute sense and denying any possibility for these items to be understood relatively. However, he evokes a Christian religious feeling by pointing out that it would be very impious not to call heaven great. I believe that his choice was again consciously dictated by the way he delivered his treatise. As he is composing a work of logic, in the manner of ancient and late antique philosophical treatises, he leaves very little room for references to Christian teachings. He rather chose ancient authorities, and in this specific case Aristotle himself, in order to demonstrate contradictions in the philosopher's own line of reasoning. In fact, when signaling at the end of the excerpt quoted above, that it is impossible to have plurality of the worlds, Prodromos draws his readers' attention to another important work of Aristotle:

But this is neither possible, as it has been demonstrated most clearly in your *On the Heavens*, nor it was assumed to be, as it will inflict indignity on the discourse. For even those who postulate [several] worlds would have postulated them to be equal in size, and "great" and "small" would never have been understood comparatively with regard to them. Therefore, either heaven is not great – something that is very blasphemous – and the air mass is not much – something that is very laughable – or "great" and "much" are not relatives. And if these are not [relatives], then neither are, of course, the things corresponding to them, I mean the small and few.

⁴⁵⁷ John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, chapter 50, lines 63-80.

⁴⁵⁸ This is a combination of Psalms 86:13 and 31:19. Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 825.

⁴⁵⁹ Ierodiakonou, "The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's 'Categories'" 17-18, 27-28.

ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν οὕτ' ἔστιν, ὡς ἐν τοῖς Περὶ οὐρανοῦ σοι τρανότατα δέδεικται, οὕτ' εἶναι ὑποτεθὲν λυμανεῖται τῷ λόγῷ· ἰσομεγέθεις γὰρ καὶ οἱ ὑποθέμενοι τοὺς κόσμοὺς ὑπέθεσαν, καὶ οὐκ ἄν ποτε τῷ «μέγα» τὸ «μιχρὸν» συγκριτικῶς ἐπ' αὐτῶν ἐκληφθείη. ὥστε ἢ οὐρανὸς οὐ μέγας, τὸ βλασφημότατον, καὶ τὸ χῦμα τοῦ ἀέρος οὐ πολύ, τὸ γελοιωδέστατὸν· ἢ οὐ πρός τι τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ πολύ. εἰ δὲ μὴ ταῦτα, οὐδὲ τὰ τούτοις δηλαδὴ ἀντικείμενα, τὸ μικρὸν λέγω καὶ τὸ ὀλίγον.⁴⁶⁰

In the ninth chapter of the first book of *On the Heavens*, Aristotle refutes the possibility that heaven can be more than one. According to Aristotle, there is the differentiation between a heaven in an absolute sense ($o\dot{v}\rho av\dot{v}\varsigma \dot{a}\pi\lambda\tilde{\omega}\varsigma$) taken as a form ($\epsilon\tilde{i}\delta\sigma\varsigma$) or a shape ($\mu\rho\rho\phi\eta$), and this specific heaven ($\delta\delta\epsilon \dot{o} o\dot{v}\rho av\dot{v}\varsigma$), which, being perceptible, must be counted among the particulars ($\tau\omega\nu$ καθ' ἕκαστον) which result from combination of form and matter ($\delta\lambda\eta$). As any form might have several particular instances or an infinite number of them, it is logical that someone might question whether there are several heavens, or an infinite number of them. However, as Aristotle says, it is impossible to assume a plurality of worlds ($\pi\lambda\epsilon$ ίους κόσμοι) as all existing matter, including the moon, the sun, and stars, is encompassed within this world (i.e., heaven).⁴⁶¹ Prodromos thus uses Aristotle's own work to demonstrate that Aristotle's claim that great and small are relatives is erroneous.

Contrary to the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition, which either perceives great and small and many and few simply as relatives, or differentiates between their relative and absolute sense as indefinite quantities, Prodromos perceives them only as quantities in their absolute sense. However, although the only parallel to Prodromos's viewpoint could be detected in Plotinus's *On the Genera of Being*, we have to be careful when assessing whether Prodromos was indeed influenced by Plotinus or not, and if he was, to what extent. In any case, with the first counterargument Prodromos calls reader's attention to the trickiness of Aristotle's syllogistic reasoning in this specific case that results in the conclusion that the great and small and many and few cannot be conceived in themselves, but only in comparison to something else. It seems indeed logical to call a grain great as well as a mountain small in comparison with items belonging to the same species. However, as Prodromos demonstrates, this specific line of reasoning would definitely not work in the

⁴⁶⁰ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 114.

⁴⁶¹ Aristotle, On the Heavens, I.9, 278a.

species that consist only of one individual, because there is no other individual belonging to the same species that they can be compared to.

Oksana Goncharko, Yaroslav Anatol'evich Slinin, and Dmitry A. Chernoglazov argue that, while Aristotle allows comparison of items that belong to different species in virtue of magnitude, Prodromos understands it more strictly and writes that comparison is possible only between items belonging to the same species. However, according to Goncharko et al., Prodromos, by inducing the example of species consisting only of one individual, tries to create an objective set which includes other types of items that have the property of magnitude. In this way, Prodromos seems to approach Cantor's set theory, according to which any property defines a set of elements that satisfy this property and consequently implies that the sky could be called great in comparison for instance with grain.⁴⁶²

I disagree with this interpretation. First of all, it is not that Prodromos believes that according to Aristotle we cannot compare items belonging to different species, but rather that Aristotle's specific line of reasoning is not applicable in the case of those species consisting of only one individual. Secondly, even if Goncharko et al. are right that Prodromos in this way approaches Cantor's set theory by implying the possibility to compare items belonging to different categories in terms of size, he would certainly not be an exception in the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition. For instance, as has already been discussed, Simplicius and Sophonias, who closely follows Simplicius, perceive indefinite quantities absolutely when compared with other things that belong to a different kind, and relatively when compared with things that belong to the same kind. Finally, if one takes into consideration the other counterarguments that follow in the treatise, it is evident that Prodromos allows no room for great and small, as well as many and few, to be understood in a comparative sense (i.e., a relative sense) at all.

3.3.5 Great and Small Have an Independent Meaning of Their Own

Prodromos's second counterargument could be divided into two different parts. In the first place, he attempts to show that Aristotle's more elaborate description of relatives – according to which it is in their essence to be somehow related to something (\tilde{oig} to \tilde{eivai} tautto' \tilde{eoti} to $\tilde{\tau}$ \tilde{v} $\tilde{$

⁴⁶² Goncharko, Slinin, Chernoglazov, "Логические Идеи Феодора Продрома: «О Великом и Малом»," ["Logical Ideas of Theodore Prodromus: "On the Great and the Small"] 15-16; Goncharko, Логические сочинения Феодора Продрома: вопросы жанра, стилистики и рецепции античной традиции [The Logical Works of Theodore Prodromus: Issues of Genre, Stylistics and Reception of the Ancient Tradition], 68-69.

definitely that in relation to which it is spoken of (ἐάν τις εἰδῃ τι ὡρισμένως τῶν πρός τι, κἀκεῖνο πρὸς ὃ λέγεται ὡρισμένως εἴσεται) is not applicable to great and small.⁴⁶³ This is particularly visible in the case of double and half – if someone would know a certain double, they will also know of which thing it is a double and vice versa.⁴⁶⁴ The first part of Prodromos's counterargument goes as follows:

Moreover, in the case of double or half, neither does the speaker indicate something with the speech when he stops, nor does the hearer pause his thought; the reason is that each of these is said what it is in relation to the other. If, accordingly, both "great" and "small" were relatives, the same should apply to them, but now we observe the absolute contrary. For the one hearing "great" does not immediately think of the small, nor vice versa; but having discharged contemplation towards the greatness of the former or towards the smallness of the latter, he pauses.

Έτι ἐπὶ διπλασίου μὲν ἢ ἡμίσεος οὕθ' ὁ λέγων βεβηκός τι τῆ φωνῆ διεσήμηνεν, οὕθ' ὁ ἀκούσας τῆ διανοία ἠρέμησεν· αἴτιον δὲ τὸ ἑκάτερον αὐτῶν ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἑκατέρου εἶναι λέγεσθαι. εἰ τοίνυν πρός τι ἦν καὶ τὸ μέγα τε καὶ μικρόν, ἔδει καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων ὁμοίως ἔχειν· νῦν δὲ τὸ ἐναντίον ἅπαν ὁρῶμεν. οὐ γὰρ ὁ «μέγα» ἀκούσας εὐθὺς καὶ «μικρὸν» ἐνενόησεν, οὐδὲ ἔμπαλιν· ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητα ἢ πρὸς τὴν τούτου μικρότητα τὴν θεωρίαν ἀποτοξεύσας, ἡρέμησεν.

Prodromos clearly accepts Aristotle's line of reasoning when it comes to the relative relationship of double and half. However, he goes a step further with his paraphrasis of the expression from Aristotle's *On Interpretation* according to which when names signify something (e.g., verbs) "the speaker arrests his thought and the hearer pauses" (ἴστησι γὰρ ὁ λέγων τὴν διάνοιαν, καὶ ὁ ἀκούσας ἠρέμησεν); based on this Aristotelian expression, Prodromos implies that double and half, being relatives, do not have an independent meaning in abstraction.⁴⁶⁶ In this way, Prodromos refers to what Aristotle says about relatives in his *Sophistical Refutations*, according to which relatives do not have in abstraction an

⁴⁶³ Aristotle, *Categories* 8a32, 8a40.

⁴⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Categories* 8b5-8.

⁴⁶⁵ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 115.

⁴⁶⁶ Aristotle, On Interpretation 16b19-21.

independent meaning of their own, such as in the case of double and half. Even if one is to grant that they have an abstract meaning by themselves, it would not have been the same meaning as the meaning they convey together in their relative relationship. For instance, as Aristotle explains, the specific knowledge of a primary substance is not the same as general knowledge, which, as relative, is always considered in the relationship with the knowable.⁴⁶⁷

In his commentary on the *Categories*, Porphyry seems to adopt the same view and states that also great and small, being relatives, do not have an independent meaning of their own, because they cannot be conceived independently in themselves. He claims that "whenever our thought says that a thing is large, it is immediately directed towards a particular small thing, so that it can conceive the quantity by which the large thing in question is large" (εὐθὺς οὖν φέρεται ἡ διάνοια ἐπί τι μικρόν, ὅταν εἴπῃ μέγα, ἵνα διανοηθῃ, πόσῷ τὸ μέγα ἡηθἑν ἐστιν).⁴⁶⁸ It is quite striking that by using similar vocabulary, Prodromos intends to prove exactly the opposite – that great and small have an independent meaning, because someone does not think of great when they hear small and vice versa. A similar line of reasoning can be found in Plotinus's *On the Genera of Being*, where he briefly notes that great and small are called such due to participation in the form of greatness and smallness, respectively.⁴⁶⁹

Although Prodromos might have been familiar with Plotinus's work and perhaps inspired by this specific passage, it is more likely that here he, as Plotinus himself, simply refers to Plato's *Phaedo* and does not rely on Plotinus's work per se. In the final argument of this work, Socrates explains that the Forms are causes of all existing things and that all things participate in them. Thus, for instance, he says that it is by magnitude that great things are great and greater things greater, and by smallness that smaller things are smaller ($\kappa \alpha i \mu \epsilon \gamma \epsilon \theta \epsilon i$ $\ddot{\alpha} \rho \alpha \tau \dot{\alpha} \mu \epsilon \gamma \dot{\alpha} \lambda \alpha \mu \epsilon \gamma \dot{\alpha} \lambda \alpha i \tau \dot{\alpha} \mu \epsilon i \zeta \omega \mu \epsilon i \zeta \omega$, $\kappa \alpha i \sigma \mu \kappa \rho \dot{\sigma} \eta \tau i \dot{\epsilon} \lambda \dot{\alpha} \tau \tau \omega \dot{\epsilon} \lambda \dot{\alpha} \tau \tau \omega$). In other words, things are either small or large, because they participate either in the Form of Greatness or in the Form of Smallness.⁴⁷⁰ While the first part of this counterargument is very straightforward, the second part is somewhat enigmatic:

⁴⁶⁷ Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations 181b25-182a6.

⁴⁶⁸ Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 108. The Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition mostly agrees with Porphyry on this matter. See for instance: Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 61-63; Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 92-94; Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 196-197; Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 94-96; Psellos, *Philosophica Minora* 1, (*Opus*. 51), 211-212; Gennadios Scholarios, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 172-173.

⁴⁶⁹ While in the first instance Plotinus simply says that great and small are due to the presence of greatness and smallness respectively, in the second instance he probably again refers to Plato, when he says that someone will say that greater and smaller come by participation in greatness and smallness. Plotinus, "On the Genera of Being (*Enn.* 6.1-3)," 6.1.8 and 6.1.11.

⁴⁷⁰ Plato, *Phaedo* 100a-102c.

But, if someone would also enumerate these [i.e. great and small] among relatives, for which someone hearing about the one seems to have also understood the other, he would also observe both rational and irrational to be relatives, and moreover the aquatic and terrestrial: for in a similar way the sequence of argumentation will apply to these things, and the one hearing the irrational would have had certain thought also of the rational. But when this is assumed, it is clear, even to the blind man, as the saying goes, that it is absurd; for it is necessary to assume that parts of the substances are not substances; therefore, the great is not a relative, if indeed the rational is not.

εἰ δέ τις καὶ ταῦτα τοῖς πρός τι συναριθμοίη, οἶς ὁ θάτερον ἀκούσας καὶ περὶ θατέρου πως συνυπειληφέναι δοκεῖ, ὅρα οἱ πρός τι εἶναι τιθέναι καὶ τὸ λογικὸν καὶ ἄλογον, καὶ ἔτι τὸ πλωτὸν καὶ πεζόν· ὁμοίως γὰρ ἕξει καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων τὰ τῆς ἀκολουθήσεως, καὶ ὁ τὸ ἄλογον γὰρ ἀκούσας ἕννοιάν τινά σχῆ καὶ τοῦ λογικοῦ· τούτου δὲ ὑποτεθέντος, καὶ τυφλῷ, φασι, δῆλον τὸ ἄτοπον· οὐκ οὐσίας γὰρ τὰ μέρη τῶν οὐσιῶν ὑποθεῖναι ἀνάγκη· οὐκ ἄρα πρός τι τὸ μέγα, εἴπερ μηδὲ τὸ λογικόν.

From the excerpt above it is not quite clear what the connecting point would be between these three different pairs – the great and small, the rational and irrational, and the aquatic and terrestrial. Why should someone who enlists the first pair of items among relatives do the same for the remaining two pairs?⁴⁷¹ Goncharko, Slinin, and Chernoglazov argue that Prodromos here actually confuses the concepts of contraries ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \dot{\epsilon} \nu \alpha \nu \tau (\alpha)$) and opposites ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \dot{\alpha} \nu \tau \kappa \epsilon (\mu \epsilon \nu \alpha)$). They explain that just because certain instances of opposing concepts fall into the realm of relation (e.g., great and small), it does not necessarily mean that all other types of oppositions (e.g., rational and irrational), as per Aristotle, must also fall into this category.

I disagree with this explanation. Half of Prodromos's argumentation in this treatise is dedicated to proving that great and small, as well as many and few, are opposed to each other as contraries and not as relatives. Therefore, it would be difficult to assume that Prodromos was not well acquainted with the other two types of opposition besides contraries and

⁴⁷¹Goncharko, Slinin, Chernoglazov, "Логические Идеи Феодора Продрома: «О Великом и Малом»," ["Logical Ideas of Theodore Prodromus: "On the Great and the Small"] 17; Goncharko, Логические сочинения Феодора Продрома: вопросы жанра, стилистики и рецепции античной традиции [The Logical Works of Theodore Prodromus: Issues of Genre, Stylistics and Reception of the Ancient Tradition], 70-71.

relatives – namely, privation and possession on the one hand, and affirmation and negation on the other. Rather, Prodromos probably wanted to say the following: if someone would enlist the pair of opposites such as the great and small, which he considered as contraries, they would also need to enumerate other types of opposites, such as the rational and irrational, the aquatic and terrestrial. The problem here is that while rational and irrational can be considered items opposed to each other as affirmation and negation, it is questionable to which type of opposition, according to Aristotle's *Categories*, the concepts of aquatic and terrestrial belong.

The answer might lie in the fact that part of the Aristotelian commentary tradition considered differentiae of species to be opposites. This can be seen for instance in Simplicius's interpretation of simultaneity in Aristotle's Categories. Aristotle differentiates two types of simultaneity: in terms of time (ἄμα δὲ κατὰ τὸν χρόνον) and by nature (ἄμα τῆ φύσει). While the first type of simultaneity is strict and absolute, things that are simultaneous by nature reciprocate as to the implication of existence, and therefore they are not the cause of each other's existence, as in the case of double and half (ἀντιστρέφει μὲν κατὰ τὴν τοῦ είναι ἀκολούθησιν, μηδαμῶς δὲ αἴτιον θάτερον θατέρω τοῦ εἶναί ἐστιν, οἶον ἐπὶ τοῦ διπλασίου καὶ τοῦ ἡμίσεος).⁴⁷² However, this is not only a common property of almost all relatives, but it is also characteristic of contradistinguished things (i.e., co-ordinate species) from the same genus ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \dot{\epsilon} \kappa \tau \sigma \tilde{\upsilon} \alpha \dot{\upsilon} \tau \sigma \tilde{\upsilon} \gamma \dot{\epsilon} v \sigma \upsilon \zeta \dot{\alpha} v \tau i \delta \eta \rho \eta \mu \dot{\epsilon} v \alpha \dot{\alpha} \lambda \dot{\eta} \lambda \sigma \zeta$), such as winged ($\tau \dot{\delta}$) πτηνὸν), terrestrial (τὸ πεζὸν), and aquatic (τὸ ἔνυδρον) in the case of animals.⁴⁷³ According to Simplicius' interpretation, this contradistinction (ἀντιδιαίρεσις) of genera represents the opposition (ἀντίθεσις) of the divided items (διαιρήματα) that arises from the one and the same split. Therefore, inanimate (ἄψυχον) is contradistinguished from animate (ἕμψυχον) and the terrestrial ($\pi\epsilon\zeta\delta\nu$) and aquatic ($\epsilon\nu\delta\rho\sigma\nu$) are contradistinguished from the winged (πτηνόν). 474

Further evidence might be found in the commentaries on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. In his *Posterior Analytics* 2.13, Aristotle discusses how to arrive at the definition of what something is by means of differentiae, i.e., by means of division. Among other things, he explains that one who defines and divides does not need to know everything there is. If one would consider the opposites and the differentiae and conclude that what one is categorizing belongs to one of them, it is not necessary for one to know all the other things of

⁴⁷² When discussing simultaneity Aristotle differentiates two forms – in terms of time (ἄμα δὲ κατὰ τὸν χρόνον) and by nature (ἄμα τῷ φύσει); Aristotle, *Categories* 14b24-15a13.

⁴⁷³ Aristotle, *Categories* 14b24-15a13.

⁴⁷⁴ Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 424-245.

which these differentiae are predicated.⁴⁷⁵ In his commentary on *Posterior Analytics*, Philoponus explains that here Aristotle uses the differentiae and opposites interchangeably. He explains that of those differentiae that are opposites which have nothing between them, it will be necessary for everything that is divided in virtue of these differentiae to belong to one of them. Furthermore, as examples of opposing differentiae of the animal that have nothing between them, he mentions the rational ($\lambda \alpha \gamma \kappa \delta \nu$) and irrational ($\lambda \alpha \gamma \alpha \nu \delta \nu$), also opposed to each other as affirmation and negation, as well as terrestrial ($\pi \epsilon \zeta \delta \nu$), winged ($\pi \tau \eta \nu \delta \nu$), and aquatic ($\nu \eta \kappa \tau \delta \nu$).⁴⁷⁶ Eustratios seems to closely follow Philoponus's stance on this matter as he expresses the same line of reasoning and mentions rational and irrational as examples of opposed differentiae.⁴⁷⁷ Prodromos's opinion on this matter, in his commentary on the second book of *Posterior Analytics*, seems also to be not far from Philoponus and Eustratios. Thus, for instance, while he mentions winged ($\pi \tau \eta \nu \delta \nu$), terrestrial ($\pi \epsilon \zeta \delta \nu$), and aquatic ($\pi \lambda \omega \tau \delta \nu$) as differentiae of animal in a different context, he specifically mentions opposition in differentiae of rational.⁴⁷⁸

3.3.6 Great and Small are Predicated of Quantity

Prodromos's third argument is quite straightforward. Here, he explains that if there is a certain amount of quantity, just as there is a certain kind of quality and a certain essence of substance, and if someone would inquire what the size of the Atlantic Ocean is, it would be appropriate to answer great ($\pi o \lambda \dot{v}$).⁴⁷⁹ With this argument, Prodromos thus simply intends to argue that great and small, as well as many and few, are predicated on quantity.

To a certain extent, a parallel to this kind of reasoning can also be found in the Neoplatonic commentary tradition. Thus, for instance, when Ammonius differentiates between definite and indefinite quantities, he explains that great and small are said of continuous ($\sigma \nu v \epsilon \chi \epsilon \zeta$), while many and few of discrete ($\delta \iota \omega \rho \iota \sigma \mu \epsilon \nu v v$) quantities.⁴⁸⁰ The same line of reasoning is expressed also by his student, Olympiodorus the Younger. However, Olympiodorus asks, if this is really the case, how then could we, for instance, predicate "much" ($\pi o \lambda \dot{v}$) of water ($\check{v} \delta \omega \rho$) or time ($\chi \rho \dot{v} v v$), which belong to continuous quantity? This happens due to the fact that both items are divisible conceptually ($\dot{\epsilon} v \dot{\epsilon} \pi \iota v o (\dot{\alpha})$, as water is

⁴⁷⁵ Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 97a14-23.

⁴⁷⁶ Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics, 407-408.

⁴⁷⁷ Eustratios, Commentary on Aristotle Posterior Analytics 2, 206-207.

⁴⁷⁸ Theodore Prodromos, *Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics*, 314-318.

⁴⁷⁹ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 115.

⁴⁸⁰ Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 62.

divisible by amphoras and time by years, days, weeks, months, and hours. Therefore, he concludes, it is possible for continuous quantities to be discrete, but for discrete quantities it is impossible to be continuous. Consequently, continuous quantities can receive predicates of discrete quantities, but discrete quantities cannot receive predicates of continuous.⁴⁸¹ Whereas Elias, a student of Olympiodorus, only mentions that great and small are predicated of continuous quantities and many and few of discrete, Arethas offers a somewhat similar, albeit very brief, explanation to that of Olympiodorus. He explains that some discrete quantities accept predicates of continuous quantities, because they can be conceptually divided. That is why we say, for instance, that water is "much" ($\pi \alpha \lambda \dot{\omega}$), because it is divisible by amphoras, and that the road is "much" ($\pi \alpha \lambda \dot{\alpha}$), because it is divisible by the footsteps of those who walk.⁴⁸² Although these scholars accepted that great and small, as well as many and few, can be predicated of continuous and discrete quantities, they still regarded them as relatives and not quantities in an absolute sense. Prodromos, on the other hand, uses this predication in an absolute sense.

3.3.7 Great and Small Admit of a More and a Less

With the fourth argument Prodromos implicitly disproves one of the common properties of some relatives according to Aristotle, namely the ability to admit of a more and a less ($\tau \dot{o} \mu \tilde{\alpha} \lambda \lambda \sigma v \kappa \dot{\alpha} \tau \dot{o} \tilde{\eta} \tau \tau \sigma v \dot{\epsilon} \pi \iota \delta \dot{\epsilon} \chi \epsilon \sigma \theta \alpha \iota$).⁴⁸³The argument goes as follows:

Moreover, from proper names of quantity, of quality or of some other category, some relatives come to exist and are called paronymously, just as, indeed, double from dyad and more beautiful from beautiful; but no further other relative is called paronymously after relatives. For there is not, just as from dyad double, thus also from double more double: for double is not more or less than double; nor, just as from beautiful there is more beautiful, thus also from more beautiful there is even more beautiful. We say paronymously "greater" from great and "smaller" from "small." This should not have happened if these were relatives; but it happened; therefore, the great and the small are not relatives.

⁴⁸¹ Olympiodorus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 92.

⁴⁸² Elias, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 195; Arethas, Scholia on Aristotle's Categories, scholion 297, lines 74-81.

⁴⁸³ Aristotle, *Categories*, 6b20-27.

Έτι ἐκ μὲν τῶν τοῦ ποσοῦ ἢ τοῦ ποιοῦ ἤ τίνος ἄλλης κατηγορίας οἰκείων ὀνομάτων παρωνύμως τῶν τινος πρός τι γίνεταί τε καὶ λέγεται, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει διπλάσιον ἐκ δυάδος καὶ κάλλιον ἐκ καλοῦ· ἐκ δὲ τῶν πρός τιά οὐκέτι ἄλλο πρός τι παρωνυμίζεται· οὐ γάρ, ὡς ἐκ δυάδος διπλάσιον, οὕτω καὶ ἐκ διπλασίου διπλασιώτερον· διπλάσιον γὰρ διπλασίου οὐκ ἔστι μᾶλλον καὶ ἦττον· οὐδ' ὡς ἐκ καλοῦ κάλλιον, οὕτω καὶ ἐκ καλλίονος καλλιώτερον, ἐκ δὲ μεγάλου τὸ μεγαλώτερον παρωνύμως φαμέν, καὶ ἐκ μικροῦ τὸ μικρότερον· καὶ μὴν οὐκ ἐχρῆν γεγονέναι, εἰ τῶν πρός τι ἦν τὰ τοιαῦτα·γέγονε δέ· οὐκ ἄρα πρός τι τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρόν.⁴⁸⁴

This argument is in clear contradiction with what Aristotle says in the *Categories*, according to whom relatives do seem to have the ability to admit of a more and less. In order to understand Prodromos's counterargument, it is important to first explore what exactly Aristotle says on this matter, and how the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition dealt with this issue. In Aristotle's words:

Relatives seem also to admit of a more and a less. For a thing is called more similar and less similar, and more unequal and less unequal; and each of these is relative, since what is similar is called similar to something and what is unequal is unequal to something. But not all admit of a more and less; for what is double is not called more double or less double nor the same applies to any of such things.

Δοκεῖ δὲ καὶ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἦττον ἐπιδέχεσθαι τὰ πρός τι· ὅμοιον γὰρ μᾶλλον καὶ ἦττον λέγεται, καὶ ἄνισον μᾶλλον καὶ ἦττον λέγεται, ἑκάτερον αὐτῶν πρός τι ὄν· τό τε γὰρ ὅμοιον τινὶ ὅμοιον λέγεται καὶ τὸ ἄνισον τινὶ ἄνισον. Οὐ πάντα δὲ ἐπιδέχεται τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἦττον· τὸ γὰρ διπλάσιον οὐ λέγεται μᾶλλον καὶ ἦττον διπλάσιον οὐδὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐδέν.⁴⁸⁵

This excerpt shows the complete contradiction with Prodromos's line of reasoning. Aristotle's statement here is problematic because similar (ὅμοιον), together with dissimilar

⁴⁸⁴ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 115.

⁴⁸⁵ Aristotle, *Categories* 6b20-27.

($\dot{\alpha}\nu\dot{\alpha}\mu\sigma_{0}\sigma\nu$), is considered by Aristotle himself also as the property of quality in the strict sense, and unequal ($\dot{\alpha}\nu\sigma\nu$) is together with equal ($\dot{\sigma}\sigma\nu$) considered to be the property of quantity in the strict sense.⁴⁸⁶ So, how can they also belong to the category of relatives, while they are simultaneously properties in the strict sense of quantity and quality, respectively? Aristotle solves this contradiction with two distinct arguments. In the first place, many relatives such as states and conditions are included among qualities, because when they refer to universals, they are relatives; when they refer to particulars, they are considered to be qualities in which particular things are being qualified. Secondly, there is nothing illogical for the same thing to belong to two different genera, in this case specifically to be counted both as a quality and as a relative.⁴⁸⁷

Porphyry strictly follows Aristotle in respect of these two arguments.⁴⁸⁸ Additionally, he brings two more arguments that corroborate Aristotle's view. Firstly, when he explains how there is contrariety in some relatives, he explains that it is not possible to imagine any relative in itself, without reference to some other category. Therefore, once a relative is considered to belong also to another category which admits of contrariety, such as quality, it will also admit of contrariety. The opposite applies too: if the relative belongs also to another category that does not admit of contrariety, such as substance, it will not be receptive of contrariety either. Secondly, Porphyry explains how equal and unequal, which are taken to be the property of quantity in the strict sense, can admit of more and less as accidents of quantity, while quantity as a category does not. A parallel to this line of reasoning can be found in the case of substance and contrariety. Although there is nothing contrary to substance, accidents of substance do admit contrariety. Furthermore, he argues that quantity and its proprium are two distinct things; since proprium is a quality and an essential affection affections admit of a more and a less, in the same way the property of quantity does as well.489

A similar line of reasoning, although expressed in a simpler way, can also be found in Ammonius, who adds that when there is a contrariety in relatives, there is also more and

⁴⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Categories* 6a26-6a36; 11a15-19.

⁴⁸⁷ Aristotle here gives an example of knowledge. As long as it is considered to be universal, that is to say the knowledge of the knowable, it is counted among relatives, but once it is referring to species, that is to say the knowledge of something, such as, for example, the knowledge of grammar, in which certain species are qualified, it is considered to be quality; Aristotle, *Categories* 11a20-37.

⁴⁸⁸ Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 140-141.

⁴⁸⁹ Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 114-115.

less.490 His student Olympiodorus mentions the same idea and explains that it is not surprising that we find equal and unequal as well as similar and dissimilar also in relatives, because they can be conceived only through other categories, such as substance, quality and quantity.⁴⁹¹ Simplicius's account on this issue is more extensive and mostly follows Aristotle's stance and Porphyry's explications of it.⁴⁹² Philoponus has another view on this matter. Although Philoponus agrees with Aristotle that one thing can belong to two different categories, e.g., to the category of quality and to the category of relatives when considered from different perspectives,⁴⁹³ as well as that admitting of a more and a less is a common property of some relatives, he questions whether unequal admits of a more and a less or not. According to Philoponus, more or less occurs only in things in which contraries are present through mingling of those contraries. However, since there is no contrariety in quantity, equal and unequal cannot be considered as contraries, and therefore they are not capable of admitting of a more or less. He points out that if an item is considered to be more or less unequal, it follows that it must be considered also to be more or less equal, which is impossible. Therefore, unequal is rather opposed to equal in terms of privation and indefiniteness than in terms of contrariety.494

When it comes to the Byzantine commentary tradition, it is evident that most exegetes followed the mainstream view that it is a common property of some relatives to admit of a more and a less. Thus, while John of Damascus avoids discussion of the matter, Photios in his *Amphilochia* mentions the same common property of both some relatives and some qualities.⁴⁹⁵ Without entering into a detailed discussion of this issue, Sophonias also explains that admission of a more and a less can be found in those relatives which display contrariety.⁴⁹⁶ Both Nikephoros Blemmydes and George Gennadios Scholarios not only agree that some relatives admit of a more and a less, but also, when discussing the problem of

⁴⁹⁰ Ammonius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 69-70.

⁴⁹¹ Both Ammonius and Olympiodorus use the same reference to Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* 1096a21-22 to corroborate their argument that relatives are offshoots of and produced from other categories. While Ammonius does not specifically mention his source, Olympiodorus makes direct reference to this work of Aristotle: Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 69; Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 96. Elias, Olympiodorus's student, also agrees that two items can belong to two different categories, as well as that relatives originate from other categories. His discussion is brief and does not add anything new; Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 239.

⁴⁹² As Simplicius does not shed any new light on this matter which will be relevant for our discussion, I will not engage in detail with his exposition. Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 176-179.

⁴⁹³ Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 98-99.

⁴⁹⁴ Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 53-54.

⁴⁹⁵ John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, 23-24; Photios. *Synopsis on Ten Categories* (qu. 137 -147), qu. 141, page 157.

⁴⁹⁶ Sophonias, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 32.

whether equal and unequal admit of a more and a less, transmit the same justification as Porphyry does on this issue.⁴⁹⁷

Prodromos's fourth counterargument is in direct contradiction not only with Aristotle, but also with the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition. Prodromos certainly agrees with the stance that relatives can be derived from items belonging to other categories. However, once they are derived, by the procession of admission of a more or less, they cannot further accept more or less. None of the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentators on Aristotle's *Categories* has used an argument similar to the one we find here in Prodromos. The only similar argumentation can be found in Plotinus's On the Genera of Being. Firstly, Plotinus explains that "the great is great because of some quantity, and magnitude is not a relative, rather more and less are, since they are more and less relative to something, as is double" (Ποσότητι γάρ τινι μέγα τὸ μέγα, καὶ τὸ μέγεθος δὲ οὐ τῶν πρός τι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μεῖζον καὶ τὸ ἔλαττον τῶν πρός τι· πρὸς γὰρ ἕτερον, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ διπλάσιον). Therefore, it is by mistake that a mountain is called small instead of smaller and a millet seed large instead of larger. Secondly, Plotinus points out that if great and small are said to belong to relatives, then also beautiful, being a quality, should be counted among relatives. However, Plotinus explains that beautiful as participating in the form of beauty is to be taken as a quality, while "more beautiful" is to be taken as a relative. Thus, one thing taken in itself would still be beautiful, but when compared to something else it will be either more or less beautiful. In the same way, we say that something is great because it participates in magnitude, while when compared to something else it can be more or less great.⁴⁹⁸

Although there is a similarity of Prodromos's arguments to those of Plotinus's, however it is difficult to assess to what extent Prodromos could have been, if he even was, influenced by Plotinus's work. Perhaps, it can be speculated, that Prodromos might have been influenced by these specific passages from Plotinus, but not by the teachings expressed in the treatise taken as a whole. This will be particularly evident in the section 3.4.2 of the present work, where it will be clearly demonstrated that while Plotinus considered "up" and "down" as relatives, Prodromos perceived them as quantities. Furthermore, Prodromos's own argument is quite peculiar as he argues that even though items from other categories, for instance quantity or quality, become relatives by admitting of a more and a less, once they have become relatives, they are no longer able to admit of a more and a less. Consequently,

⁴⁹⁷ George Gennadios Scholarios, when discussing the problem of unequal and equal, refers to Boethius as his source. Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 856-857; Gennadios Scholarios, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 190.

⁴⁹⁸ Plotinus, On the Genera of Being 6.3.11, 716-717.

these relatives obtain names paronymously from the items that they are derived from. In this way, Prodromos challenges admitting of a more and a less to be a common property of some relatives.

This counterargument does not only affect the common proprium of relatives, but also one of the common propria of quality. According to Aristotle, some items belonging to the category of quality have the capacity to admit of a more and a less. Thus, for instance, one pale thing can be called more or less pale than another thing. However, not all qualities can accept more or less, such as in the case of square and triangular.⁴⁹⁹ Taking this into consideration, Prodromos's argument would also imply that qualities, once they admit of a more and a less, are not qualities anymore but relatives.

3.3.8 Great and Small Are Not Reciprocal

When discussing relatives, Aristotle argues that a proprium of all relatives and only of relatives is that they are spoken of in relation to the relatives that reciprocate, if they are properly given ($\pi \dot{\alpha} v \tau \alpha \ \tilde{ov} v \tau \dot{\alpha} \ \pi \rho \dot{o\varsigma} \ \tau \iota$, $\dot{\epsilon} \dot{\alpha} v \pi \epsilon \rho \ oi\kappa \epsilon i \omega \varsigma \ \dot{\alpha} \pi o \delta \iota \delta \tilde{\omega} \tau \alpha$, $\pi \rho \dot{\delta\varsigma} \ \dot{\alpha} v \iota \sigma \tau \rho \dot{\epsilon} \phi o v \tau \alpha$ but they are implied in his description of the ways in which different relative pairs can be reciprocated.⁵⁰⁰ However, Prodromos's fifth counterargument does not only revolve around this distinct feature of relatives, but actually uses it to disprove the incomplete definition of relatives that we already discussed and therefore the possibility that relatives can be reciprocated in any other way than those he mentions:

Moreover, relatives can be clear through implication [of existence] and through reciprocation; reciprocation and implication have been divided through the following three cases only: either one must define the word in the genitive and it should be reciprocated equally, as is possible in the case of

⁴⁹⁹ Aristotle, *Categories* 10b26-11a4.

⁵⁰⁰ In Aristotle's words (*Categories* 6b28-36): "For example, the slave is called slave of a master and the master is called master of a slave; the double double of a half, and the half half of a double; the larger larger than a smaller, and the smaller smaller than larger; and so for the rest too. Sometimes, however, there will be a verbal difference, of ending. Thus, knowledge is called knowledge *of* what is knowable, and what is knowable knowable *by* knowledge; perception perception *of* the perceptible, and the perceptible perceptible *by* perception (οἶον ὁ δοῦλος δεσπότου λέγεται δοῦλος καὶ ὁ δεσπότης δούλου δεσπότης λέγεται, καὶ τὸ ὅπλάσιον ἡμίσεος διπλάσιον καὶ τὸ ἡμισυ διπλασίου ἡμισυ, καὶ τὸ μεῖζον ἐλάττονος μεῖζον καὶ τὸ ἕλαττον μείζονος ἕλαττονὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων· πλὴν τῆ πτώσει ἐνίοτε διοίσει κατὰ τὴν λέξιν, οἶον ἡ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστητοῦ λέγεται ἐπιστήμη καὶ τὸ ἐπιστητὸν ἐπιστήμῃ ἐπιστητόν, καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις αἰσθητοῦ αἴσθησις καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν.

the relationship in respect of a son and a father; or one must give it in the genitive, but it must be reciprocated in the dative, just as in the case of the knowable and of knowledge; or, again, it must be given as well as reciprocated in the dative, just as in the case of similar and dissimilar; or having been given in the accusative, it must be reciprocated in the dative, and vice versa, just as it is possible, in the case of the things said with regards to actuality and affection. So, what would not happen according to some of the above-mentioned manners, but in some other way is given, such a [case] clearly, as it seems to me, is alien to the category of relative. However, the great and small would have been given according to none of the given definitions; thus, neither are they relatives, if indeed they have not in any manner been given, as we were saying. Indeed, it would be absurd and fairly barbarous either to say the small is small of the great, or by great, and vice versa.

Έτι τὰ πρός τι καὶ τῷ ἀκολουθήσει τε καὶ ἀντιστροφῷ δῆλα εἶναι οἶάτ' ἐστίν· ἡ δ' ἀντιστροφὴ καὶ ἡ ἀκολουθήσις ταῖς τρισὶ ταῖσδε καὶ μόναις συνδιήρηνται πτώσεσιν· ἢ γὰρ γενικῶς ἀποδοτέον τὸν λόγον καὶ ὁμοίως ἀντιστρεπτέον, ὡς ἐπὶ τῆς καθ' υἰὸν καὶ πατέρα σχέσεως ἔχει· ἢ γενικῶς μὲν ἀποδοτέον, δοτικῶς δὲ ἀντιστρεπτέον, ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐπιστητοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης· καὶ αὖθις ἢ δοτικῶς ἀποδοτέον ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀντιστρεπτέον, ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ ὁμοίου καὶ ἀνομοίου· ἢ αἰτιατικῶς ἀπιδιδόντας δοτικῶς ἀντιστρεπτέον καὶ ἕμπαλιν, ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν κατ' ἐνέργειαν καὶ πάθος λεγομένων ἔχει. ὡς ὅπερ μὴ πρός τινα τῶν εἰρημένων ἐμπίπτοι τρόπον, ἀλλ' ἄλλως πως ἀποδίδοται, τὸ τοιοῦτον σαφῶς ἂν ἀλλότρίον εἶναί μοι δοχεῖ τῆς τῶν πρός τι κατηγορίας· ἀλλὰ μὴν τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρὸν κατ' οὐδεμίαν ἀποδοθείη τῶν ἀποδιδῶται, ὡς ἔφαμεν. γελοῖον μέντ' ἂν εἴη κὰὶ ἐπιεικῶς βάρβαρον, ἢ μεγάλου τὸ μικρὸν λέγειν εἶναι μικρόν, ἢ μεγάλῷ, καὶ ἕμπαλιν.⁵⁰¹

In the commentary tradition, reciprocation or correlatives were commonly expressed by explicitly mentioning grammatical cases. Thus, for instance, Porphyry claims that

⁵⁰¹ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 115-116.

reciprocation of correlatives can be expressed in three different ways - by employing the same grammatical case, with different grammatical cases, and by not using grammatical cases at all. Thus, in the first instance, when the same grammatical case is used, we have as an example "father of a child" and "child of a father", where both relatives are given in the nominative case and their correlatives are reciprocated in genitive case. In the second instance, Porphyry gives as an example the perception of the perceptible and the perceptible by perception: in the first case, the correlative is reciprocated in the genitive, but in the second in the dative case. Finally, the instance in which grammatical cases are not used at all is, of course, the instance of great and small which are not reciprocated as other relatives, because it is impossible to say that great is great of the small and conversely that small is small of the great. Porphyry claims that from Aristotle's definition of relatives as "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" (πρός τι δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγεται, ὅσα αὐτὰ ἅπερ ἐστὶν ἑτέρων εἶναι λέγεται ἢ όπωσοῦν ἄλλως πρὸς ἕτερον), the last part "in some other way relative to something else" does not refer to reciprocation expressed by grammatical case, but in some other way as in the case of the great and the small. Thus, their relationship is not expressed by grammatical case, but in another way in relation to something else.⁵⁰²

While Simplicius holds almost the same opinion on this matter as Porphyry, other Neoplatonic commentators expressed slightly different views.⁵⁰³ Thus, for instance, Ammonius, who does not dwell on this issue in much detail, interprets the description of relatives in question differently. He simply states that the first part of the definition refers to those relatives reciprocated in the genitive, and "in some other way" assumes relatives reciprocated in the accusative.⁵⁰⁴ While Olympiodorus and Elias follow more or less the same view as Ammonius, Philoponus seems to be more exclusive in this matter. He explains that all relatives are given in the nominative case and their correlatives are reciprocated in one of the oblique cases.⁵⁰⁵

There is very little discussion on reciprocation expressed by grammatical cases in the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus.⁵⁰⁶ Photios, in his *Amphilochia*, only briefly mentions, when he discusses reciprocation of relatives, that larger is said to be larger than smaller and smaller

⁵⁰² Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 112-116.

⁵⁰³ Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 162-163.

⁵⁰⁴ Ammonius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 68, 70-71.

⁵⁰⁵ Olympiodorus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 100; Elias, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 207; Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 105-106, 111.

⁵⁰⁶ John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, 77-78.

is said to be smaller than larger.⁵⁰⁷ On the other hand, in the unfinished *Synopsis of the Categories* (*Opus. 50*) attributed to Psellos, it is stated that the great is called great in relationship with the small (καὶ μέγα πρὸς μικρὸν λέγεται μέγα).⁵⁰⁸ Another philosophical text, *On Five Voices* (*Opus.51*) also attributed to Psellos, discusses reciprocation of relatives expressed by grammatical cases, but nothing is stated in particular for the instance of great and small.⁵⁰⁹ It is quite surprising that Sophonias, who in other instances closely follows Simplicius, does not offer any discussion about the reciprocation of great and small. He only mentions that larger is called larger than smaller, and the smaller is said to be smaller than larger.⁵¹⁰ Nikephoros Blemmydes, besides mentioning different grammatical cases by which reciprocation might be expressed, also states that in some cases reciprocation can be expressed by relative proposition, as in the case of great and small (ώς τὸ μέγα πρὸς μικρὸν.⁵¹¹

From this brief overview, it is evident that while some Neoplatonic commentators differed in opinion from Porphyry, Byzantine scholars who dealt with the *Categories* either agreed with the stance of Porphyry when it comes to the reciprocation of great and small, or stayed silent on this matter. Contrary to other Byzantine intellectuals, Prodromos clearly contradicts Porphyry and rather aligns himself with Ammonius, Olympiodorus, and Philoponus, whose views he articulates in a much more drastic way. It seems reasonable to assume that Prodromos directly criticized Porphyry, as well as those of his Byzantine predecessors who followed Porphyry's opinion, that great is called great in relationship with the small. Thus, Prodromos continues:

But, if someone would invent also the fourth definition in addition to these and somehow in the same way would carry on methodically the reasoning that the great is called great in relationship with the small, and the small in relationship with the great, such a person should know that he strives to include the majority of existing things among relatives. For also the body is called in relationship with the bodyless; and inanimate in relationship with animate; and immortal in relationship with mortal; and in general, all the

⁵⁰⁷ Photios. Synopsis on Ten Categories (qu. 137 -147), qu. 141, page 157.

⁵⁰⁸ Psellos, Philosophica Minora 1, (Opus. 50), 190.

⁵⁰⁹ Psellos, Philosophica Minora 1, (Opus.51), 215-216.

⁵¹⁰ Sophonias, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 32.

⁵¹¹ Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 856. George Gennadios Scholarios, mentions the reciprocation of relatives expressed by grammatical cases, but does not say much about great and small. Gennadios Scholarios, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, line 264.

logically distinguishable differentiae of genera at once. Therefore, these will also be relatives. That this has slipped into a place of absurdity, has been said above.

Εἰ δέ τις καὶ τετάρτην πρὸς ταῖς εἰρημέναις ἀπόδοσιν ἀνευρίσκοι, καὶ οὕτω πως ἐφοδεύοι τὸν λόγον, τὸ μέγα μέγα λέγων εἶναι πρὸς τὸ μικρόν, καὶ τὸ μικρὸν πρὸς τὸ μέγα, ὁ τοιοῦτος τὰ πλείω ἴστω τῶν ὄντων τοῖς πρός τι φιλοτιμούμενος. τό τε γὰρ σῶμα πρὸς τὸ ἀσώματον λέγεται· καὶ τὸ ἄψυχον πρὸς ἕμψυχον· καὶ πρὸς τὸ θνητὸν τὸ ἀθάνατον· καὶ ἀπλῶς αἱ διαιρετικαὶ τῶν γενῶν διαφοραὶ ἀπαξάπασαι· πρός τι ἄρα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἔσονται· τοῦτο δ' ὅποι ἀτοπίας ἐξώλισθεν, ἀνωτέρω λέλεκται.⁵¹²

Prodromos here brings the possibility that large and small are relatives to absurdity by drawing attention to the absurdity that if one would follow the vague definition "or in some other way related to each other", all existing things would be called relatives. A similar line of reasoning is also found in Philoponus's commentary on the *Categories*. When explicating Aristotle's claim that there is contrariety in relatives, Philoponus draws the reader's attention to the absurdity of the first given definition of the relatives – that they are things that are said of other things. According to Philoponus, this would imply that all other nine categories, except for substance, that come from accidents are also to be considered relatives because they are being said of a substance. However, Philoponos categorically rejects this possibility and explains that relatives do not derive their essence from being said of another thing, but from them being somehow related to something else fundamentally.⁵¹³

The view that all things are relatives was held by Protagoras and refuted by Plato in his *Theaetetus*.⁵¹⁴ In the commentary tradition on the *Categories*, both Ammonius and Philoponus draw the reader's attention to this dialogue of Plato, in which it was proven that not all things can be considered relatives. In addition, Philoponus mentions that this stance is refuted also by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*.⁵¹⁵

Even though it cannot be said with certainty whether and to what extent Prodromos was familiar with the commentaries of Ammonius and Philoponus, it is clear that he was well

⁵¹² Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 116.

⁵¹³ Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 108-109.

⁵¹⁴ Plato, *Theaetetus* (trans. Rowe)151e-187a.

⁵¹⁵Ammonius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 78 Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 47-48.

acquainted with Aristotle's Metaphysics, as he explicitly mentions it in the treatise under discussion, as well as with Plato's *Theaetetus*, as he himself claims in the *Philoplaton* that he admires, among other works of Plato, his *Theaetetus*.⁵¹⁶ In the quest for the true nature of knowledge, by refuting the first definition of knowledge of Socrates's interlocutor Theaetetus that knowledge is perception, Plato actually refuted Protagoras's view that "man is the measure of all things".⁵¹⁷ For this would imply that everything is relative and, according to Plato, that there would not be great and small, because small will be great and great small. In the series of demonstrations used to rebut relativity and becoming of everything existent, Plato employs change in size as one of the examples. Thus, for instance, in the dialogue, Socrates explains that if he compared himself with something else great in size, its size could not have simply changed by mere comparison, unless it changed in itself. For these reasons, Plato provides the following conclusion: First, "nothing will ever become greater or smaller, whether in size or in number, so long as it is equal to itself." Secondly, "if a thing had nothing either added to it or taken away from it, it never grows or shrinks but is always equal." Thirdly, "that it's impossible for a thing to be, later on, what it was not before, and for it to be this without having become it or becoming it."518 Therefore, it is quite compelling to assume that Prodromos was influenced by this Platonic work when writing his treatise; following Plato's authority, he did not consider great and small or many and few to be relatives.

3.3.9 Great and Small are Quantities in Their Own Right

In the final argument, Prodromos differentiates between the absolute and relative sense of great and small, and ultimately denies the possibility that great and small can be understood relatively:

Moreover, if size is said in respect of small and great, the predication must be sought either in its own right (per se) or accidentally (per accidens); and if it is in its own right, we would obviously have such things as quantities synonymously, when both are predicated of size, because it is a quantity; but if accidentally, just as for instance we say 'human' of a son and a father, then it needs to be asked what greater and smaller mean, and for the sake of what

⁵¹⁶ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 116. Prodromos, Philoplaton, (ed. Migliorini), 69, ln. 15-18.

⁵¹⁷ Plato, *Theaetetus* (trans. Rowe) 152a.

⁵¹⁸ Plato, *Theaethetus* (trans. Rowe) 152d-e, 155a-b.

they have been invented? For if the smaller and greater are the same as small and great, why is there a need of polyonomy? And if they are different, the greater is called greater of something smaller, and vice versa, it is undisputable: the fact remains that great is something else and is not a relative.

Έτι, εἰ κατὰ μικροῦ καὶ μεγάλου τὸ μέγεθος λέγεται, ζητητέον πότερον καθ' αὑτὸ ἢ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ἡ κατηγορία· καὶ εἰ μὲν καθ' αὑτό, ἔχοιμεν ἂν αὐτόθεν ποσὰ τὰ τοιαῦτα συνωνύμως, τοῦ μεγέθους ἀμφοῖν κατηγορηθέντος, ποσοῦ γε ὄντος· εἰ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς καὶ ὥσπερ ἀμέλει τὸν ἄνθρωπον καθ' υἱοῦ φαμεν καὶ πατρός, τί γοῦν ἐπερωτητέον τὸ μεῖζον βούλεται καὶ τὸ μεῖον, καὶ ὅτου χάριν ἐξεύρηται; εἰ μὲν γὰρ ταῦτα τῷ μικρῷ καὶ μεγάλῷ τὸ μεῖον καὶ μεῖζον, τίς ἢ χρεία τῆς πολυωνυμίας; εἰ δὲ ἕτερα, τὸ μεῖζον δ' ὅτι τινὸς λέγεται μεῖζον τοῦ μείονος, καὶ ἕμπαλιν, ἀναμφήριστον· λείπεται ἕτερόν τι καὶ οὐ πρός τι τὸ μέγα εἶναι.

In this rhetorically triumphant finish, Prodromos effectively combines the first, third, and fourth arguments. Here, he transmits the commonly accepted differentiation in the commentary tradition between the absolute and relative sense in which great and small can be understood. He ultimately denies the possibility for these to be taken in a relative sense. Yet, as Prodromos's first argument implies, for him there is no room for great and small to be considered comparatively.

3.4. Great and Small are Opposed to each other as Contraries and not as Relatives

In order to demonstrate that great and small, as well as many and few are opposed to each other as contraries and not as relatives, Prodromos brings six counterarguments. These six counterarguments can be reduced to three. The first and the second counterargument and revolve around the notion that one thing cannot be opposed to two things at the same time. The third counterargument is based on Aristotle's own view according to which contraries of existing things able to receive them turn into one another, such as for instance in the case of great and small. The fourth and the fifth counterarguments revolve about Plato, Aristotle and

other philosophers who posited contraries, including great and small, as the first principles of all existing things. Finally, the sixth counterargument goes back to the idea that even if one thing is opposed to two at the same time, the nature of the opposition involved is never the same.⁵¹⁹

3.4.1 Aristotle on Contraries

Before we proceed to analysis of Pordromos counterarguments, it will be useful to briefly reflect on what Aristotle says in Categories about contraries. This will enable us to properly contextualize Prodromos's line of reasoning. According to Aristotle's Categories, there are four different types of opposites ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \, \dot{\alpha} \nu \tau \iota \kappa \epsilon (\mu \epsilon \nu \alpha)$: relatives ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \, \pi \rho \dot{\alpha} \zeta \, \tau \iota$) – such as double and half, contraries ($\tau \dot{\alpha} \, \dot{\epsilon} v \alpha v \tau i \alpha$) – such as bad and good, privation ($\sigma \tau \dot{\epsilon} \rho \eta \sigma \iota c$) and state ($\tilde{\epsilon} \xi \iota c$) – such as blindness and sight, and finally affirmation ($\kappa \alpha \tau \dot{\alpha} \phi \alpha \sigma_{1\zeta}$) and negation ($\dot{\alpha} \pi \dot{\alpha} \phi \alpha \sigma_{1\zeta}$) – such as he is sitting, and he is not sitting. While things opposed to each other as relatives are said to be what they are in relationship with their correlatives, things opposed to each other as contraries are not said to be what they are in relationship with their opposites, although they are being contraries to each other. Thus, for instance, white is not being said white of black but contrary to black, while knowledge is said to be the knowledge of knowable. Privation and possession are spoken in the connection with the same thing that they would naturally occur in at the specific period of time. Thus, one would not call a baby toothless, or a puppy blind. However, it is important to differentiate privation and possession, from being deprived - having a privation (tò $\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\eta\sigma\theta\alpha$) and possessing - having a possession (tò $\dot{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\nu$). While being deprived and possessing are qualities in themselves, being deprived and possessing are predicated of qualified things named paronymously after qualities. While the first three types of the opposition refer to things said without the combination, the fourth type of opposition refers to statements i.e., things said with the combination.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁹ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 116-118.

⁵²⁰ Aristotle, *Categories*, 11b18-13b36. Ammonius further explains that opposites are opposed either as statements (λόγοι) or as things (πράγματα). Those opposed as statements are affirmation and negation, and those opposed as things are either in relation or manifested on their own. Those in relation are relatives, and those that are not in relation are divided into those that change into one another – i.e., contraries, and those that do not change into one another – i.e., privation and state. Ammonius also explains that Aristotle arranged the opposites from the mildest type of opposition to the strongest one. While Philoponus follows Ammonius and gives the same explanation on this matter, Olympiodorus besides this division, mentions also another one. According to the other division the existing things either preserve each other, or destroy each other, or neither preserve nor destroy each other (τὰ ὄντα ἢ σώζει ἄλληλα ἢ ἀναιρεῖ, ἢ οὐδὲ σώζει οὐδὲ ἀναιρεῖ). If they neither preserve nor destroy each other they are not opposites. If they do not preserve, they either change into each other or do not change, they make affirmation and negation. And if they do change, either they

As it has been already mentioned in the first chapter of the present work, Aristotle says that contraries signify the greatest difference that cannot be surpassed. According to him, there are two types of contraries. Those contraries for which it is necessary to be present in things that they naturally belong to or are predicated of, such as for instance sickness and health to animals' bodies or odd and even to numbers, do not have intermediaries. However, contraries for which it is not necessary to be present in things that they naturally occur in, such as for instance black and white in bodies, always have something intermediate between them.⁵²¹ Once they occur in the things capable of receiving them, contraries can alternate from one into another, like from sick to healthy and vice versa. The exception happens in cases where one contrary is inherent to the nature of the thing like heat is to fire.⁵²²

All contraries must either belong to the same genera (e.g., white and black in color), or to contrary genera (e.g., justice and injustice in virtue and vice), or be themselves genera (e.g., good and bad). Moreover, contraries occur in the things that are either same in genera or in species, like justice and injustice in a soul, and white and black in a body. In addition, if one contrary exists, it does not necessarily mean the other contrary exists as well. For example, if everything is white, whiteness would exist, but blackness would not. Also, contraries never occur simultaneously in the things capable of receiving them. They are mutually destructive.⁵²³ For example, there is nothing contraries. This is the proprium of substance in the strict sense. However, substance does not receive contraries at the same time. Thus, Socrates can be either healthy or sick, but not simultaneously. One contrary is substituted with another once the primary substance itself undergoes the change.⁵²⁴

Aristotle also discusses contrariety when discussing *propria* of quantity. According to him, quantity has no contrary and even if someone would assume that great and small, as well as many and few are to be regarded as quantity, they are not opposed to each other as contraries but as relatives. First of all, according to Aristotle, they are not to be regarded as quantities at all, just as relatives. Secondly, they cannot be opposed as contraries because they

change completely and make contraries, or they do not change completely themselves, but one thing changes and the other does not change and make state and privation – for state changes into privation, but privation does not change into state. The similar explanation on this matter is also to be found in Elias's commentary. See: Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 93-94; Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 168-169; Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 139 Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 242.

⁵²¹ Aristotle, *Categories*, 13a37-13b11.

⁵²² Aristotle, Categories, 12a1-12a25.

⁵²³ Aristotle, Categories, 14a7-14a26.

⁵²⁴ Aristotle, Categories, 3b24-3b31, 4a10- 4b19.

cannot be regarded in themselves, but only in relation to something else. Thirdly, if they were to be contraries, that would imply that the same thing at the same time would have been both great and small in comparison to other things, and therefore that thing would have been contrary to itself. Finally, although substance is capable of receiving contraries, it is not the case that receives them at the same time.⁵²⁵

This is in fact the problematic passage, which we have already mentioned, that Prodromos refers to in his treatise. Excepting Plotinus, who in "On the Genera of Being" considers great and small as contraries, authors of Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentaries, synopsis and compendia on *Categories* closely follow Aristotle on this matter and agree with him that great and small are not opposed to each other as contraries, but as relatives.⁵²⁶

3.4.2 One Thing Should be Compared with the Other Thing at the Time

The first and the second argument revolve around two notions. Firstly, Prodromos argues that there is philosophical consensus according to which one thing can only have one contrary. Secondly, and more importantly, one thing can be opposed to one thing at the time. ⁵²⁷This clearly underlined in his first counterargument:

That the above-mentioned matters are not relatives has, as I believe, been demonstrated in this way, and equally, I believe, is not far from reason. It must therefore be concluded that they are opposed to each other as contraries: after having understood this before the other things, the philosophical discourse used to declare long before our time that one [thing] has one contrary, and elsewhere, I believe, also used to assume that it is unjust that two [things] are opposed to one; and nor it seems [to be just] for proverbial Heracles [to be compared] in respect of two. Aristotle's false reasoning escaped the reader's notice; for by comparing the same size with

⁵²⁵ Aristotle, Categories, 5b12-6a12.

⁵²⁶ Plotinus, "On the Genera of Being", 6.3.12; Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 107-110; Ammonius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories,, 61-64; Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 96-99; Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 143-144; Olympiodorus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 92-94; Elias, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 195-197; Arethas, Scholia on Aristotle's Categories, scholion 297, lines 74-96; Photios. Synopsis on Ten Categories (qu. 137 -147), qu. 139, p. 152; Psellos, Philosophica Minora 1, (Opus. 51), 210-212; Blemmydes, Compendium on Logic, 825; Sophonias, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 23-24.; Gennadios Scholarios, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 172-174.

⁵²⁷ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 116-118.

two [things], and by assuming it to be in respect of one [thing], great, but in respect of another, small, and by following this assumption, he syllogistically infers reputable opinions. So, if he would not compare the comparandum to one and then to another [thing], but to one and the same thing, what seemed an absurdity to reason would not have occurred, nor would the same great thing seem to be also small at the same time, but necessarily one of the two.

Ότι μὲν οὖν οὐ πρός τι τὰ εἰρημένα, ταύτῃ, ὥς γε οἴομαι, δέδεικται, καὶ οὐ πόρρω ἴσως οἴομαι λόγου· ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἀλλήλοις ὡς τὰ ἐναντία ἀντίκειται, ἕνθεν ἐλόντα φατέον· τοῦτο πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων ὑπειληφότες, ὅτι ἕν ἐνὶ ἐναντίον εἶναι πολὺ πρὸ ἡμῶν ὃ φιλόσοφος ἐθέσπισε λόγος, τῃ τε ἄλλῃ καὶ ὅτι, οἶμαι, δύο ἐνὶ ἀντιθεῖναι τῶν ἀδικωτάτων ἕδοξεν εἶναι· μηδὲ Ἡρακλεῖ πρὸς δύο τῃ παροιμία δοκεῖ, Ἀριστοτέλῃς δὲ λανθάνει τὸν ἀκροατὴν παραλογιζόμενος· δυσὶ γὰρ τὸ αὐτὸ παραβάλλων μέγεθος, καὶ πρὸς μὲν τό, μέγα, πρὸς δὲ τό, μικρὸν ὑποθέμενος, ἐντεῦθεν ἀκολούθως τῃ ὑποθέσει τὰ δοκοῦντά οἰ συνεπεράνατο. ὡς εἴγε μὴ πρὸς ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ταὐτὸ καὶ ἕν παρέβαλλε τὸ παραθαλλόμενον, οὐκ ἂν ἡ δοκοῦσα τῷ λόγῷ ἀπήντηχεν ἀτοπία, οὐδὲ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ μέγα ἐδόκει κατὰ ταὐτὸν καὶ μικρόν, ἀλλ' ἀμφοτέροιν ἐξ ἀνάγκῃς τὸ ἕτερον.⁵²⁸

In the first place, Prodromos refers primarily here to Aristotle who, besides other philosophers, argues that one thing can have one contrary. This stance is particularly evident when Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* explains that contraries represent the complete difference. For example, the two extremes of different species within the same genus that generate all intermediate species in between are placed at the greatest distance from each other. Since this greatest distance cannot be surpassed, the difference between two contrary extremes is complete. Additionally, since there cannot be something more extreme than the extreme, nor there can be more than two extremes for the one interval, therefore one thing cannot have more than one contrary.⁵²⁹

However, the explanation above is applicable to contraries taken absolutely, but what about those instances when contraries occur in particular subjects and when comparison is involved? We have already explained that contraries in things capable of receiving them

⁵²⁸ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 116-117.

⁵²⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1055a9-1055a31.

cannot coexist simultaneously since they are mutually destructive. As it can be seen from the excerpt above, Prodromos argues that Aristotle makes conclusion on false premises for he compares the same thing with other two things, and consequently it appears to be small in comparison with one thing, and great in relation with the other. This would imply that one thing would be contrary to itself which is impossible because things capable of receiving contraries could never receive both contraries simultaneously. However, according to Prodromos this absurdity, would have never happened if the thing would have been compared in relation to itself and to other thing only.

The similar idea that forms the basis of Prodromos's counterargument can also be found in Simplicius's commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*. When discussing the types of opposition, Simplicius notes that some Peripatetics (likely Nicostratus) argued that opposites are a separate genus because they share a common definition. According to this definition, opposites are those things that cannot coexist in the same subject nor in relation to the same external thing at the same time. Simplicius agrees that this rule applies to all four types of opposition. For instance, in the case of contraries, it is impossible for a thing to be both white and black at the same time. Similarly, in the case of relatives, it is impossible for a thing to be both master and slave of the same person. The same principle applies to state and privation, as it is impossible for a thing to have both sight and blindness in the same eye. Finally, affirmation and negation cannot coexist simultaneously, as seen in statements like "it is day" (which is true) and "it is not day" (which is false).⁵³⁰ Additionally, when speaking about relative opposition, Simplicius underlines that it is not conflicting if one and the same thing is called greater in relation to one thing, and smaller in relation to another.⁵³¹

We can clearly see that Simplicius regards greater and smaller not as opposed contraries, but as relatives. The relative opposition, just like other types of opposition, cannot coexist simultaneously in the subject when compared to the same external thing. However, even though Prodromos also perceives greater and smaller as relatives, his view diverges from Simplicius because he believes that there is a contrariety between greater and smaller. This can be explained in the following way: Since relatives often derive their existence from other categories, there will be contrariety among them insofar as there is a contrariety in those categories from which they derive their existence. For example, as there is no contrariety to substance, there will be no contrariety in relatives derived from substance, like in the case of

⁵³⁰ Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 381.

⁵³¹ Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 384.

father and son. Yet, since there is contrariety in qualities, relatives derived from them, such as virtues and vices, will have contrariety. Since Prodromos considers great and small to be quantities opposed as contraries, therefore relatives derived from them - greater and smaller - will also have contrariety.

What is more important to take from Simplicius's account above is the fact that any opposition cannot coexist, neither in the same thing nor in relation with the same external thing, at the same time. Prodromos uses the same rationale to criticize Aristotle for opposing two things to one, also in his second counterargument. Thus, he argues, if one were to apply this logic to great and small, the same thing should have been done in the case of up and down, from which all other contraries derive their appellation of contrary. For example, as Prodromos explains, if he were placed in the middle between two things – one below his feet and another above his head – it would also appear that "up" ($\check{\alpha}v\omega$) and "down" ($\kappa\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega$) as contraries would also occur in one and the same person at the same time, and consequently Prodromos would be contrary to himself. However, this accidental absurdity of joining two contraries in one and the same thing happens because one thing is opposed to two at the same time, which should not have been done in the first place.

The example that Prodromos employs here is certainly inspired by Aristotle himself. Although Aristotle in *Categories* argues that there is no contrariety in quantity, he suggests that it appears that there is contrariety in terms of place, which is a property of quantity. Many people consider "up" and "down" to be contraries, since "down" refers to the space near the center of the world, which is farthest from the limits of the world i.e., "up". It is most probable that these people also derive their definition of contraries from "up" and "down" since contraries are defined as those things that belong to the same genus and are at the greatest distance from one another.⁵³²

Nevertheless, Prodromos' usage of this example is problematic. As Aristotle leaves this question open, the majority of the commentary tradition, following the general rule that there is nothing contrary to any definite quantity struggled to prove that Aristotle certainly did not hold the view that "up" and "down" are contraries. However, in his commentary on *Categories*, Porphyry cautiously says that perhaps contrariety exists in the case of place, if indeed "up" and "down" are species of place and opposed to each other as contraries. Porphyry does not give any definite judgement of his own, but simply enlists three different views on this matter. He first explains that some people (probably referring to Plato's

⁵³² Aristotle, *Categories*, 6a 13-6a18

Timaeus) do not take "up" and "down" to be place, but simply relations of place because what is above our heads is "up" and what is below our feet is "down". Since the universe is a sphere, there is neither "up" nor "down" in itself.⁵³³ In the second place, Porphyry explains that if we consider "down" and "up" in respect of the universe taken as a whole, and not in respect of other dimensions in between, then they will be contrary to each other. This is because the distance from the center of the universe to its outermost limit is the greatest possible, and thus what is above will be only above and what is below will be only below. This will imply that "up" and "down", being differentiae of place, when taken absolutely will be contraries and consequently the category of quantity which contains place will admit of contrary from quantity by explaining that "above" and "below" belong to category of "where" rather than to "place" which belongs to category of quantity.⁵³⁵

Other Neoplatonic interpreters of *Categories* are more explicit in claiming and proving that Aristotle does not consider "up" and "down" as contraries of place. Ammonius, for instance, simply says that although Aristotle takes into consideration "up" and "down" as contraries, he ultimately rejects this notion because there is no absolute up and down, but only circumference ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\xi$) and center ($\mu\epsilon\sigma\sigma\upsilon$) which are not contraries but relatives since the circumference is called circumference of the centre.⁵³⁶ Philoponus endorses Ammonius's view and elaborates it further. He distinguishes two types of "up" and "down" – one by nature ($\phi to \varepsilon \iota$) and one by position ($\theta to \varepsilon \iota$). This differentiation is in alignment with Aristotle's account in *Physics*. However, Philoponus diverges from Aristotle and argues that "up" and "down" do not exist by nature in the strict sense since they have to be separated from one another by "the distance at the diameter" ($\tau t v \kappa \alpha \tau t \delta t \alpha \mu \epsilon \tau \rho v \delta t \delta \sigma \tau \alpha \sigma v$). However, the earth, which is considered to be the center of the universe, is not separated from the outermost limits of the universe by the diameter. Therefore, the center and circumference are neither up and down by nature in the strict sense, nor they are contraries but relatives. For Philoponus, "up" and "down" exist only by position (i.e., relatively), as for example a roof

⁵³³ Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 107; Plato, Timaeus, 62c-63a.

⁵³⁴ Porphyry, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 107. This view is most probably derived from Aristotle, who in *On the Heavens*, rejects the view from Plato's *Timaeus* and claims just the opposite. He explains that people who claim that there is not up and down in the heaven are wrong because the extremity of the whole is above according to position and primary by nature. The universe must have both up and down because it has extremity and the center. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 380a17-38a28.

⁵³⁵ Porphyry, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 107.

⁵³⁶ Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 64-65. This argument actually derives from Plato's *Timeus* and not from Aristotle. See: Plato, *Timaeus*, 62c-63a.

which is in relation to us is " $\check{\alpha}v\omega$ ", but in relation to something above it is " $\kappa\dot{\alpha}\tau\omega$ ". Therefore, these type of "up" and "down" are not contraries, but relatives.⁵³⁷

Simplicius, Elias and Olympiodorus also differentiate between these two types of "up" and "down". However, while their explanation of "up" and "down" taken in their positional sense or according to their relationship towards us (κατὰ τὴν πρòς ἡμᾶς σχέσιν) is similar to the one given by Philoponus, their stance towards "up" and "down" by nature is different. For instance, Simplicius (just as Porphyry) explains that both place (τόπος) and time (χρόνος) belong to "quantity" only in respect of their extension, while in terms of their particular characteristics they belong to category of "where" (ποῦ) and category of "when" (πότε) respectively. Just as "yesterday" and "today" do not belong to category of "quantity", but rather to category of "where". Even though this clarification pertains "up" and "down" in their positional sense, it seems that Simplicius applies it somehow also when they are understood by nature.⁵³⁸

Simplicius also underlines that "up" and "down" are not contraries insofar as they are quantities, but their contrariety, taken from "where", comes to effect only in their relative sense. For instance, in relation to us what is below our feet is "down" and what is above our head is "up". In relation to the whole universe, "down" or the center is the direction towards which heavy things fall, and "up" or periphery is the direction towards which light things rise. Furthermore, he argues that contrariety is not a property of quantity itself, but rather accidental to certain things that exist within or in relation to quantity. For example, straight and curved are not contraries insofar as they are quantity, but rather because they are accidental characteristics of existing quantity – line. Similarly, just as animal has nothing contrary to it, but it is demarcated according to contrary differentiae, so is the place demarcated with contrary differentiae – up and down.

However, opposite to Philoponus, for Simplicius "up" and "down" exist not only relationally, but also in themselves by nature. Thus, he explains that although extremes of the diameter are contraries in terms of the distance, but in respect of their form, being at the circumference of the universe, they are identical. This is the reason why Aristotle takes the center and the circumference, which are distinct in the form itself, as contraries and claims that the distance between them is the greatest. In this way, according to Simplicius, Aristotle

⁵³⁷ Aristotle, *Physics*, 206a3-206a6; 208b9-208b26; Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 99-100. ⁵³⁸ We have seen that Porphyry ascribes this view to Herminus (2nd century CE), a peripatetic philosopher, but Simplicius says that this is also the opinion of Andronicus of Rhodes (1st century BCE). Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 142-143.

aimed to present the immutable difference made by nature between the center and the circumference of the universe, and not relational "up" and "down". However, Simplicius disagrees with that "up" and "down" should be considered as parts of place opposed to each other as contraries, instead as contrary differentiae predicated of parts. According to this view, "up" and "down" being at the greatest distance from each other define the natural movement of light and heavy things. For Simplicius, it is not that the place in itself causes their movement, but rather it is their movement according to their essence – light or heavy, that defines the limits of place – up and down. Therefore "up" and "down" should not be considered as parts of place in themselves.⁵³⁹

Elias also explains that "up" and "down" are not contraries either in relation to us (i.e., by position), or in respect of nature. While he does not say anything new about relational sense of "up" and "down", in terms of nature he brings three major arguments to prove that they are not contraries. First of all, the limits of the contrary motions (upward and downward) are not places but pauses (πέρατα γὰρ τῶν ἐναντίων κινήσεων οὐχ οἱ τόποι, ἀλλ' αἱ ἠρεμίαι). Secondly, one place is not contrary to another place in itself and therefore the upper place is not contrary to the lower place. For just as cities are enemies to each other not because of the buildings and territories, but because of the enemies who inhabit them, so too the upper place is not opposed to the lower place as a place, but rather because of the opposing bodies that exist within them. Thirdly, it is not enough merely to have greatest distance to make things contraries. For if this is the case, the radius between the center and circumference is twice smaller than the diameter of the whole universe. Therefore, it is not enough to be separated by the greatest distance in terms of place, but also by the greatest distance in terms of nature (οὐκ ἀρκεῖ οὖν τὸ τοπικῶς διεστάναι πλεῖστον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆ φύσει δεῖ πλεῖστον διεστάναι). However, this alone is again not sufficient. For example, substance and accident, as well as being and non-being are also separated by nature, but they are still not contraries. It is also necessary to be under the same genus (ὑπὸ τὸ αὐτὸ γένος). Again, this does not suffice. For instance, whiteness and heat are in the same genus (i.e., quality) but they are not contrary to each other. Contraries must also occur in the same substrate (ἐν ἐνὶ ὑποκειμένω). Thus, heat or coldness, and dryness or wetness first occur in an unqualified body ($\dot{\epsilon}\nu \,\dot{\alpha}\pi o(\omega \,\sigma \omega\mu\alpha\tau)$), and then whiteness and blackness appear in a qualified body (ἐν πεποιωμένω σώματι) as secondary qualities. Once again this is not enough. For whiteness in a swan and blackness in a raven occur in the same substrate - a qualified body, but they are not contrary to each other

⁵³⁹ Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 147-151.

because they do not alternate from one to another (ἐπειδὴ οὐ μεταβάλλονται εἰς ἄλληλα). Therefore, since "up" and "down" do not fulfill all of these requirements, they cannot be regarded as contraries.⁵⁴⁰

Olympiodorus also differentiates between "up" and "down" by nature – i.e., sky and earth, and by position. According to Olympiodorus, "up" and "down" (i.e., sky and earth), as places by nature, are not inherently contraries, but rather they are called contraries because they are receptive to contrary bodies. Specifically, "up" is receptive to light fire, while "down" is receptive to heavy earth. Moreover, just as in the case of great and small, it is not the quantities themselves that are contraries, but rather the quality that is inherent in them, namely the increase and decrease. Similarly, "up" and "down" as places are not contraries in themselves, but rather it is the distance between them that belongs to quality, not quantity. Furthermore, according to Olympiodorus, "up" and "down" by position are not contraries but rather relatives, since it is possible to say that the same thing is both "up" and "down" by position (e.g., house). If this was not the case, then the same thing could have been said about great and small. Therefore, "up" and "down" by position can be only perceived as relatives.⁵⁴¹

This last argument by Olympiodorus perhaps illustrates why it is important for Prodromos to consider "up" and "down" as contraries, although majority of the Neoplatonic commentary tradition rejected this view. Even Plotinus in his *On the Genera of Being*, who just like Prodromos considers great and small as both quantities and opposed to one another as contraries, argues that "up" and "down" are neither quantities, nor contraries. Probably influenced by Plato's *Timaeus*, Plotinus explains that even if place were a quantity, "up" would have not been contrary to "down" since there is no such a thing as "down" in the universe.⁵⁴² Additionally, the authors of Byzantine commentaries, logical compendia, and synopses also share the view that "up" and "down" are either not contraries at all, or if they are considered contraries, they are not quantities, but rather belong to category "where".⁵⁴³ For instance, Prodromos's contemporary, John Italos, who specifically addresses this from

⁵⁴⁰ Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 197-200. Similar line of reasoning is also to be found in Italos, *Problems and Solutions*, qu. 27, which specifically deals with the passage from Aristotle's *Categories* in question (i.e., "Μάλιστα δὲ ἡ ἐναντιότης τοῦ ποσοῦ περὶ τὸν τόπον δοκεῖ εἶναι" ["But is most of all with regard to place that there seems to be contrariety of a quantity"]). Thus, Italos, probably inspired by Elias, explains that contraries are not only those things between whom is the greatest distance, but also those that alternate one into other and mutually destroy each other. Since this is not applicable to "up" and "down", they are not contraries. ⁵⁴¹ Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 94-95.

⁵⁴² Plotinus, On the Genera of Being, 6.3.12.

⁵⁴³ John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, chapter (38) 55, p. 124; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 784; Sophonias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 25; Gennadios Scholarios, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 174, 176.

Categories, argues that "up" and "down" are not contraries. Thus, Italos, perhaps inspired by Elias, explains that contraries are not only those things between whom is the greatest distance, but also those that alternate one into other and mutually destroy each other. Since this is not applicable to "up" and "down", they cannot be considered as contraries.⁵⁴⁴

Why then does Prodromos take at the face value this passage from *Categories* that the entire Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition has rejected? Certainly, as Aristotle is ambiguous on this matter, it is convenient for Prodromos to use the case of "up" and "down" to support his own argument on great and small. However and besides this, Prodromos might have relied to certain extent on Aristotle's Physics and On the Heavens to make these claims. Thus, Aristotle in *Physics* explains that there are six species ($\epsilon i \delta \eta$), differences ($\delta i \alpha \phi o \rho \alpha i$), or parts (μέρη) of place: up and down, in front and behind (ἕμπροσθεν καὶ ὅπισθεν), right and left (δεξιὸν καὶ ἀριστερόν). According to Aristotle, these exist not only in relation to us and by position (πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ θέσει), but also in the whole itself (ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ὅλω). In relation to us they change, and thus the same thing can often be both up and down, in front and behind, right, and left. However, in nature (ἐν τῆ φύσει), each has been distinguished separately by itself. Furthermore, the natural movements of the bodies – light things and fire move up, and what is made of earth and heavy go down, indicate that these places do not differ only by position, but also by power (τῆ δυνάμει).⁵⁴⁵ In On the Heavens, Aristotle mentions that contrarieties of movements actually correspond to contrarieties of places, namely "up" -"down", "in front" - "behind", and "left"- "right". Additionally, he mentions that two types of rectilinear motion (i.e., upwards and downwards) are opposed to each other on account of their places – because up and down are differences and contrariety (ἐναντίωσις) of place.⁵⁴⁶ Furthermore, when explaining that the existence of infinite body and of infinite motion is impossible, Aristotle argues that "up" and "down" are not infinite (ἄπειρον) but definite contrary places. Since the center (i.e., down) is definite (ώρισμένον), its contrary pair - the upper place (ἄνω τόπον) must be definite as well.⁵⁴⁷

Clearly, Aristotle recognizes "up" and "down" not only as relatives, but also as contraries in their absolute sense. This is most probably the reason why Prodromos, in opposition to the commentary tradition, takes that "up" and "down" in themselves are contraries. His example, as we could see, involves the relational usage of "up" and "down" – one thing would be both "up" and "down" when compared to what is above and what is

⁵⁴⁴ Italos, *Problems and Solutions*, qu. 27.

⁵⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Physics*, 206a3-206a6; 208b9-208b26.

⁵⁴⁶ Aristotle, On the Heavens, 271a2-271a5; 271a26-271a28.

⁵⁴⁷ Aristotle, On the Heavens, 273a7-273a21.

below at the same time and thus it will be contrary to itself which is impossible. However, this relative usage does not exclude the existing contrariety between "up" and "down" when taken absolutely. This is exactly what he tries to prove about "great" and "small". Although they are contraries in themselves, when the comparison is involved, they become relatives – "greater" and "smaller". The problem arises only when the one thing is simultaneously compared with other two things.

The gist of Prodromos's argument can be best grasped from the other two examples he provides. For instance, when Hector is compared to both Menelaus and Achilles simultaneously, he appears to be both strong ($\dot{\rho}\omega\mu\dot{\alpha}\lambda\varepsilon\sigma\varsigma$) and weak ($\dot{\alpha}\sigma\theta\varepsilon\nu\dot{\eta}\varsigma$) at the same time. In comparison to Menelaus, he is strong, but in comparison to Achilles, he is weak. As a result, Hector appears to be contrary to himself. However, as Prodromos again underlines, this contradiction would not occur if he were compared only to one of them at a time. Similarly, a just (δ iκαιος) person may be considered unjust ($\check{\alpha}\delta$ ικος) when compared to Aristides, a renowned just statesman from Athens. On the other hand, the same person may be seen as just when compared to Echetus, a sinister figure from mythology, or Phalaris, a notorious tyrant.⁵⁴⁸ With these two examples, Prodromos aims to demonstrate the same thing as with "up" and "down". Both contrary pairs strong-weak and just-unjust which, when taken absolutely, belong to category of quality. Yet, once the comparison is involved, they become relatives. This is not unusual since relatives, as it has been already pointed out, often derive their existence from other categories. Therefore, the relative usage of these concepts by no means cancels their existence as contrary qualities. However, if two things are simultaneously compared to one, as Aristotle does in case of great and small, these concepts would also appear to be relatives only which is not the case.

The rationale behind Prodromos's argument can be also found in Plato's *Phaedo*. In the final argument of this dialogue, Socrates uses "great" and "small" as one of the examples to demonstrate to his interlocutors that the soul is indestructible and therefore eternal. He explains that Simias, when compared to Socrates, is greater, and when compared to Phaedo, he is smaller. This implies that Simmias has both greatness and smallness within him. Thus, Simmias is not greater than Socrates due to his being Simmias, but because he has a certain amount of greatness. Similarly, Simmias is not smaller than Phaedo because he is being Phaedo, but because Phaedo has greatness relative to Simmias' smallness. Therefore, Simmias is both great and small. However, greatness in itself could never be both great and

⁵⁴⁸ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 117-118.

small. Although the greatness in someone will withdraw or cease to exist when the smallness approaches, it will never in itself as a concept admit the smallness and become other than what it is – greatness. Likewise, smallness in itself will never accept greatness and change into greatness. Great and small as contrary in themselves never change into each other, nor they are generated one from another. This process happens only when contraries appear in the concrete real things capable of receiving them. Therefore, one contrary as an abstract concept is immutable and it would never change into its contrary.⁵⁴⁹

3.4.3 Great and Small as Contraries can Alternate Into Each Other in Things Capable of Receiving Them

Prodromos's third counterargument is quite straight-forward. Here, Prodromos refers to Aristotle's teaching according to which once contraries occur the things capable of receiving them can alternate from one to another, as for example from warmth into cold, and from vice into virtue.⁵⁵⁰ For relatives, as Prodromos points out, this is not the case since neither perception turns into perceptible, nor knowledge into knowable. However, in the case of great and small, the one and the same subject capable of receiving them can turn from small into great. In this way, Prodromos leads his reader to the conclusion that great and small are opposed to each other as contraries and not as relatives.⁵⁵¹

Besides Aristotle's own teachings, Prodromos in this counterargument probably again relies on Plato's *Phaedo*. In this dialogue, Socrates implies three different arguments to prove the immortality of the soul - the cyclical argument, the argument from recollection, and the affinity argument. In the first, so-called cyclical argument, Socrates employs the theory of contraries to prove that just as the souls of the dead in the underworld came from the living souls of this world, thus also the living souls in this world originate from the souls of the dead. As Socrates explains, contraries are always derived from their contraries ($\dot{\epsilon}\kappa \tau \tilde{\omega} v$ $\dot{\epsilon}v\alpha v\tau(\omega v \tau \dot{\alpha} \dot{\epsilon}v\alpha v\tau(\alpha)$). For instance, when a certain thing becomes larger from previously being smaller and in turn it becomes smaller from being larger. The same applies to weaker and stronger, slower and quicker, worse and better, just and unjust, as well as to all other contrary pairs including dead and alive. Furthermore, between every pair of contraries there are two opposite kinds of generation that lead from one contrary to the other and vice versa.

⁵⁴⁹ Plato, *Phaedo*, 102b-103c.

⁵⁵⁰ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 118; Aristotle, Categories, 12a1-12a25

⁵⁵¹ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 118.

For example, between greater and smaller there are the processes of increase ($\alpha \check{\upsilon} \xi \eta \sigma \iota \varsigma$) and decrease ($\varphi \theta (\sigma \iota \varsigma)$), while for dead and alive there are the processes of coming to life and dying. The same goes for cooling and heating, sleeping and being awake, and so on. Both of these two contrary processes of coming-to-be must exist in order to balance each other out. If one of them did not exist, eventually everything would be in the same state. For instance, if there was no process of waking up to balance the process of falling asleep, eventually everything capable of sleeping would be in the state of sleeping. In the same way, if there is no process of coming back to life to balance the process of dying, everything would have been eventually dead.⁵⁵²

3.4.4. Great and Small as Contraries are Principles of Existing Things

In the fourth counterargument, Prodromos explains that there is a philosophical consensus according to which contraries are the first principles of all existing things. Moreover, Plato himself posits the Great and the Small, as the contrary pair and the first principles from which all existing things are produced. Therefore, one must either reject the commonly accepted opinion as well as the teaching of Plato or accept that great and small are contraries. According to Prodromos, no one would be so ignorant to go against these philosophers and Plato, and thus great and small must be considered as contraries.⁵⁵³

Prodromos connects the fifth counterargument to the previous one and argues that even Aristotle in *Physics* and *Metaphysics* agrees with this view and explicitly calls great and small contraries. In Prodromos's words:

Moreover, Aristotle himself often, in the treatise *On Natural Principles*⁵⁵⁴ and in the first [book] of the *Metaphysics*, disagrees with many [philosophers], including Plato himself, on many other points, because they,

⁵⁵² Plato, *Phaedo*, 70c-72e.

⁵⁵³ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 118.

⁵⁵⁴This title refers On Natural Pricnicples (Περὶ Φυσικῶν ἀρχῶν) refers to the first three or first four books of Aristotle's Physics (Φυσικὴ ἀκρόασις). Simplicius, in his commentary on Aristotle's Physics, explains that Aristotle calls the five books of the Physics by the special term On Natural Principles, and the last three On Motion. (εἴωθεν δὲ τὰ πρῶτα πέντε βιβλία Φυσικὰ καλεῖν ἐξαιρέτως καὶ Περὶ φυσικῶν ἀρχῶν, ὥσπερ τὰ τελευταῖα τρία Περὶ κινήσεως). See Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Physics, vol 10, 1358. However, in his commentary on Aristotle's On the Heavens, Simplicius says that Aristotle actually calls first four books on On Natural Principles and the other four On Motion (καλεῖ δὲ περὶ ἀρχῶν τὰ τέσσαρα πρῶτα βιβλία τῆς Φυσικῆς ἀκροάσεως, ὥσπερ τὰ λοιπὰ τέσσαρα περὶ κινήσεως ἐκάλει). See: Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's On the Heavens,226. For the detailed discussion on this matter see also William David Ross, "Introduction", in Ibid. ed., Aristotle's Physics. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary, (Oxford: University Press, 1936), 1-5.
in his view, were wrong; in this alone he approves them and says something cognate – for they have established the contraries as the first principles of existing things: some [proposing] Love and Strife, others Rarity and Density, and some the Great and the Small. At some point placing Plato above the other [philosophers], he says that the former [sc. Plato] ranks contraries according to reason– i.e., the Great and the Small of course, [thus] calling these explicitly contraries; and the latter [sc. the other philosophers] rank [contraries] according to sense perception, I mean, rarity and density.

Έτι καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης πολλαχοῦ τῆς Περὶ Φυσικῶν ἀρχῶν πραγματείας, καὶ ἐν πρώτῷ δὲ τῶν Μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ, πολλοῖς καὶ αὐτῷ Πλάτωνι τὰ ἄλλα διαμαχόμενος, ὡς παρὰ θύρας, ἐκείνῷ δοκοῦν, ἀπαντῶσι τῆ ἀληθεία, ταύτῃ μόνον ἀποδέχεταί τε αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀδελφὰ φθέγγεται, ἦ τὰ ἐναντία τῶν ὄντων ἀρχὰς ἔθεσαν· κἂν εἰ ὁ μὲν φιλίαν καὶ νεῖκος, ὁ δὲ μανότητα καὶ πυχνότητα, ὃ δὲ τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρόν. ἔστι δὲ οὖ καὶ Πλάτωνα τῶν ἄλλων ὑπερτιθέμενος, τὸν μὲν τὰ κατὰ λόγον φησὶν ἐναντία ταῦτα καλῶν, τοὺς δὲ τὰ κατ' αἴσθησιν, μανότητά φημι καὶ πυκνότητα.⁵⁵⁵

Prodromos here points out to the clear contradiction with Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, where great and small are indeed mentioned as contraries. Although Aristotle here gives an account of what other thinkers say, he implicitely accepts that great and small are considered as contraries, as he does not deny this.

In both *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, Aristotle informs us that all great thinkers agree in establishing contraries as the first principles.⁵⁵⁶ However, they disagree as to which contraries specifically should be posited as the first principles. For instance, Empedocles considers Love and Strife as two contrary forces through which everything is created, while some other natural philosophers consider Rarity and Density.⁵⁵⁷ Plato, on the other hand, posits Great and Small (i.e., Indefinite Dyad) as primary contraries. While for Plato, Great and Small represent the matter, while the one represents the form, the other thinkers posit the one as matter, and

⁵⁵⁵ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 118.

⁵⁵⁶ Aristotle, Physics, 188a19-188a21; Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1.5. 986b2-986b3.

⁵⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Physics*, 189a21-189a27; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.4. 985a5-985a28; 985b4-985b20; 1. 7. 988a18-988a32; 3.4. 1000a25-1000b16.

contraries as forms.⁵⁵⁸ However, as Aristotle explains, some contraries are "more knowable in the order of explanation" (οἱ μὲν γνωριμώτερα κατὰ τὸν λόγον), "others more familiar to sense" (οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν). Those contraries more knowable in the order of explanation are prior (πρότερα), and pertain the universal (τὸ καθόλου), such as Love (φιλίαν) and Strife (φιλίαν), Odd (περιττὸν) and Even (ἄρτιον), Great (μέγα) and Small (μικρὸν). On the other hand, those contraries that are more familiar to sense are posterior (ὕστερα) and pertain the particular (καθ' ἕκαστον), like Hot (θερμὸν) and Cold (ψυχρόν), Moist (ὑγρὸν) and Dry (ξηρόν), the Rare (μανὸν) and Dense (πυκνὸν).⁵⁵⁹

Aristotle argues in *Physics* that positioning contraries is the correct view since the first principles cannot be derived from each other, nor from anything else, but everything must be derived from them. All these conditions are fulfilled by the primary contraries. Additionally, it is clear that everything existent changes either into its contrary or intermediate state. However, for Aristotle the first principles are three in number – one pair of contraries and the substance that underlies them.⁵⁶⁰

However, Prodromos is not the only one to observe this contradiction. The similar observation is made by Olympiodorus in his Commentary on Aristotle's Categories. After providing four counterarguments as to why great and small cannot be regarded as contraries, Olympiodorus questions why then Plotinus (probably referring here to On the Genera of Being) and Aristotle in Metaphysics say that great and small are contraries. Initially, Olympiodorus explains that both positions are true. Thus, he says: "For if the great and the small are present in two different substrata, they are not contraries but relatives" (ἐν μὲν γὰρ δύο ὑποκειμένοις ὄντα τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρὸν οὕκ εἰσιν ἐναντία ἀλλὰ πρός τι·). This is the case because "the contraries fight against each other in one substratum" (τὰ δὲ ἐναντία περὶ ἕν ὑποκείμενον μάχονται). On the other hand, when they are considered in one substratum (ὅτε δὲ ἐν ἑνὶ ὑποκειμένῷ θεωροῦνται), in which there is augmentation (αὕξησις) and diminution ($\mu\epsilon$ i $\omega\sigma\mu$), then they are contraries. This happens because the great is the boundary (ὄρος) of augmentation and the small is the boundary of diminution. Since augmentation and diminution, being contrary paths (ὧν δὲ αἱ ὁδοὶ ἐναντίαι), are contraries, then also great and small, being their limits (τούτων καὶ τὰ πέρατα ἐναντία), are also contraries. However, Olympiodorus wonders why it is impossible for the second argument to be true. Great and small, according to him, are not contraries when they are present in one substratum (ev ev)

⁵⁵⁸ Aristotle, Physics 187a17-187a20; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.6. 987b19-987b22.

⁵⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Physics* 188b29-188b35; 189a2-189a10; translation taken from: Aristotle, *Categories* (tr. Ackrill).

⁵⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Physics* 188a27-188a31; 188b21-188b26; 191a3-191a8.

ὑποκειμένῷ ὄντα οὕκ εἰσιν ἐναντία). This is because the size of great is not opposed to the size of small (τὸ γὰρ μέγεθος τοῦ μικροῦ τῷ μεγέθει τοῦ μεγάλου οὐκ ἀντίκειται). Even if the augmentation is considered to be contrary to the diminution, these are not quantities but qualities (οὐκ ἔστι ποσὸν ἀλλὰ ποιόν). However, deficiency and excess are contraries (ἡ δὲ ἕλλειψις καὶ ἡ πλεονεξία ἐναντία) since they participate in the magnitude (τὰ μεγέθη μετέχει). Yet, deficiency and excess participate in the magnitude only accidentally, just as odd and even are only accidental contraries of numbers. For it is not that a number is opposed to a number, but oddness and evenness are.⁵⁶¹

As it can be seen, for Olympiodorus, ultimately great and small are not contraries. However, for Prodromos, Aristotle's account of Plato's supposition of Great and Small as primary contraries and first principles is sufficient to make his argument. The importance of this is argument for Prodromos is particularly evident in the closing remarks of the whole treatise:

Either one must consider the great and small as contraries, if we are convinced by Aristotle and Plato, as the latter [i.e. Plato] considers the Great and the Small the first principles of existing beings, and it is undisputable that contraries are the first principles of all existing things; the former [i.e. Aristotle] accepts the same opinion, and follows it, as it is possible to gather from the great treatises of the man that we mentioned. Or if we are not convinced, one should understand and speak about these things in whatever way is preferable to each.

"Η πειθομένους Άριστοτέλει καὶ Πλάτωνι, τούτῷ μὲν ἀρχὰς τῶν ὄντων τὸ μέγα τιθεμένῷ καὶ τὸ μικρόν, ἀρχὰς δὲ πάντων τῶν ὄντων τὰ ἐναντία εἶναι ἀναμφισβήτητον· ἐκείνῷ δὲ καὶ δεχομένῷ τὴν δόξαν ταύτην, καὶ ἀποδεχομένῷ, ὡς ἐξ ὦν ἔφαμεν μεγάλων πραγματειῶν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀναλέξασθαι δυνατόν, ἐναντία θετέον τὸ μέγα χαὶ τὸ μικρόν· ἢ μὴ πειθομένους, ὅπως ἂν αἰρετὸν ἑκάστῷ, καὶ ὑποληπτέον περὶ αὐτῶν καὶ φατέον.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶¹ Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 94.

⁵⁶² Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 119.

However, Aristotle indeed agrees with the view that contraries are the first principles of all existing things. Yet, even though he implicitely accepts Great and Small as contraries, it is not the case that Aristotle like Plato posits Great and Small as the first principles. Prodromos must have been aware of this, even though his concluding remark might imply otherwise.

3.4.5. One Thing can be Contrary to Two at the Same Time When the Different Type of Contrariety is Involved

In the final counterargument, Prodromos argues that even if one thing is compared to two contrary things at the same time, it would not necessarily mean that a particular thing is contrary to itself. Thus, he explains:

Moreover, even if it would be assumed that contraries have come together in the same thing when, in relation to one and then another thing, the same great thing at the same time is also called small, the thing will not necessarily also be contrary to itself. For temperance is said to be contrary to licentiousness and insentience, and it seems somehow that contraries have been joined in the same thing; however, temperance itself will not be contrary to itself.

Έτι, κἂν πρὸς ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο τοῦ αὐτοῦ μεγάλου θ' ἄμα καὶ μικροῦ λεγομένου ἐν ταὐτῷ συνεληλυθέναι τὰ ἐναντία ὑποτεθείη, οὐκ ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ αὐτὸ ἑαυτῷ ἐναντίον ἐσεῖται. ἡ γὰρ σωφροσύνη ἀκολασία μὲν καὶ ἡλιθιότητι ἐναντία λέγεται, καὶ δοκεῖ πως τὰ ἐναντία εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ συνελθεῖν· οὐ μέντοι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ σωφροσύνη ἑαυτῇ ἐναντία ἐσεῖται.⁵⁶³

With this final argument, Prodromos makes a subtle reference to Aristotle's stance from *Categories*. When discussing contraries, Aristotle explains that what is contrary to a good thing ($\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta \dot{o}\nu$) is always bad (e.g., sickness is contrary to health, and injustice to justice), but what is contrary to a bad thing ($\kappa\alpha\kappa \dot{o}\nu$) is not necessarily always good. For instance, excess

⁵⁶³ Prodromos, On Great and Small, (ed. Tannery), 118.

(ὑπερβολή) is contrary to deficiency (ἔνδεια) and they are both bad, while mean (μεσότης) which is a good thing is contrary to both of them.⁵⁶⁴

Aristotle's explanation is problematic because it seemingly implies that one thing can have two contraries. While Ammonius does not dwell much on this issue, Philoponus, Simplicius, Elias and Olympiodorus provide a more substantial explanation on this matter.⁵⁶⁵ Just like Prodromos in the case of great and small, Philoponus, for example, ponders "What? Is nature so unfair as to oppose two things to one?" (τί οὖν; οὕτως ἄδικος ἡ φύσις ὡς δύο ἐνὶ ἀντιτάξαι;).⁵⁶⁶ However, as Philoponus explains, this is not the case, and there are actually two different types of contrariety involved. On the one hand, injustice (ἀδικία), which is a bad thing, is opposed to justice (δικαιοσύνη), a good thing. Here, the good thing is opposed to the bad one as proportion (συμμετρία) to disproportion (ἀσυμμετρία). On the other hand, greediness (πλεονεξία), which is a bad thing, is not always opposed to justice, but also to taking less than one's due (μειονεξία). Here, the bad thing is opposed to another bad thing, both being disproportionate (ἀμετρία), as excess (ὑπερβολή) to deficiency (ἕνδεια).

In fact, virtue (ἀρετή) is considered to be proportion, and vice (κακία), either as an excess or deficiency, is considered to be a disproportion. For instance, temperance (σophrosyne) is proportionate, licentiousness (ἀκολασία), as its deficiency, and insentience (ἠλιθιότης), as its excess, are disproportionate. Similarly, courage (ἀνδρεία) is proportionate, while cowardice (δειλία) is its deficiency and over-boldness (θρασύτης) is its excess. Prudence (φρόνησις) is proportionate, while folly (ἄνοια) is its deficiency and knavery (πανουργία) is its excess. Vices, bad things, are thus opposed to virtue, a good thing, just as disproportionate things are opposed to proportionate things. However, vices are opposed to each other as excess and deficiency. Accordingly, as Philoponus explains, it is not the case that one thing is opposed to two things, but rather one thing is opposed to one thing in one respect, and to another thing in a different respect.⁵⁶⁷

A similar explanation can be found in Elias and Simplicius. While Elias provides almost the same explanation as Philoponus, Simplicius elaborates on this matter even more

⁵⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Categories* 13b37-14a6.

⁵⁶⁵ Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 101; Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 187-188. Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 409-411; Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 248-249; Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 141-142.

⁵⁶⁶ Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 188. The same concern is to be found also in Olympiodorus, Elias, John of Damascus, and Nicephorus Blemmydes. For instance, Elias says: "But nature is unjust to oppose two things to one." ($\dot{\alpha}\lambda\lambda$ ' ἄδικος ή φύσις ένὶ δύο ἀντιτάξασα.), Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 249. See also: Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 141; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 876; John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, chapter 41 (58), p. 126.

⁵⁶⁷ Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Categories, 187-188.

and provides an additional insight into the nature of contrariety. He suggests that the first type of contrariety, in which the good thing is opposed to the bad one as proportion ($\sigma \nu \mu \epsilon \tau \rho i \alpha$) to disproportion ($\dot{\alpha} \sigma \nu \mu \epsilon \tau \rho i \alpha$), is expressed in terms of quality. On the other hand, the second type of contrariety, in which a bad thing is opposed to another bad thing as excess ($\dot{\nu} \pi \epsilon \rho \beta \rho \lambda \dot{\eta}$) to deficiency ($\check{\epsilon} \nu \delta \epsilon \iota \alpha$), is expressed in terms of quantity.⁵⁶⁸

Prodromos, likely familiar with these explanations, argues in a similar manner for the concepts of great and small. Just as temperance, which is opposed to both licentiousness and insentience, is not contrary to itself, similarly, the same thing, when referred to as small in relation to one thing and as great in relation to another thing, will not be contrary to itself. However, it would be difficult to claim that Prodromos's point here is valid.

Conclusions

Prodromos's discussion on great and small is indeed a unique example in Neoplatonic and Byzantine reception of Aristotle's *Categories*. Although some authors have expressed similar views when it comes to great and small (e.g., Plotinus), or observed the same contradictions (e.g., Olympiodorus), none of them treated the problem of great and small in the same manner as Prodromos did. In his treatise, Prodromos tries to demonstrate that propria of relatives are not applicable to great and small. Additionally, contrary to his Neoplatonic and Byzantine predecessors, Prodromos regards the great and the small, the many and the few as an indefinite quantity only in their absolute sense. Moreover, Prodromos, with one of his counterarguments, implicitly rejects one of the common propria of relatives, i.e., the ability to admit of a more and a less. Finally, by trying to prove that these items are not only quantities, but also opposed to each other as contraries, he implicitely refutes one of the common propria of quantity according to which there is no contrariety in this category. Consequently, this implies that the same common proprium of substance according to which there is nothing contrary to substance would become the proprium in the strict sense. Although this was not

⁵⁶⁸ Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 409-411; Elias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 248-249. Olympiodorus very briefly tackles this matter and suggests as Simplicius does, that deficiency is opposed to proportion as quality, and to excess as quantity. Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 141-142. John of Damascus and Blemmydes also provide very short explanations on these two types of contrariety, that mostly resembles the account of Philoponus. See: John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, chapter 41 (58), p. 126; Blemmydes, *Compendium on Logic*, 876.

Prodromos's primary intention, his refutation bears greater implications towards the understanding of the *Categories* in its entirety.

Contrary to his dialogue *Xenedemos, or Voices*, which represents a perfect balanced mixture of rhetorical philosophy and philosophical rhetoric, the treatise on *Great and Small*, except for the introduction, is written without any rhetorical embellishments. By presenting his ideas in a clear and concise manner, suitable for works of natural philosophy, Prodromos clearly aimed to display his own philosophical erudition and to offer a different and, I am tempted to say, an original view on the great and small. Although Prodromos claims in the treatise itself that he only became recently familiar with Aristotle's *Categories*, his counterarguments reveal someone very well versed in logic and philosophy. This is not only attested by Prodromos's reliance on works of Aristotle and Plato, but also by his implicit familiarity with the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentary tradition on *Categories*.

Considering Byzantine scholarly production on Aristotle's logic, it is not inconceivable that Prodromos, being a teacher, re-encountered the issue of great and small in the school setting and felt compelled to give his view on this matter. His work was initially intended to be read and scrutinized by Michael Italikos, his friend and teacher, with whom Prodromos must have frequently discussed matters pertaining logic and philosophy, as it can be concluded based on Italikos' letter to Prodromos. However, it is unlikely that Prodromos envisioned Italikos to be the sole audience for his work. Most probably Prodromos's work was read and discussed in private intellectual circles consisting of his peers, students and learned friends.

The significant revival of Aristotelian scholarship in eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantium, on the one hand, and the competitive scholarly environment, on the other, certainly influenced Prodromos's own scholarly production. Prodromos's display of competence in logic did not serve solely to incite discussion on this specific subject matter in learned circles, but was also part of his self-promotional strategies.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the present work, I firstly explored how Theodore Prodromos employed the Lucianic authorial alter-ego Frank-speaker, together with its allies Examination/Refutation and Truth to criticize inept intellectuals, unskilled professionals, and those unfit for their societal roles. Through a close analysis of his satirical and polemical works, including Sale of Poetical and Political Lives, Against Barys, Philoplaton, The Executioner, The Ignorant, or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian, and For the Color Green, I showed how Prodromos used his writings not only to voice his criticisms, but also to showcase his expertise as a grammarian, teacher, and philosopher. This can particularly be seen in his invective *The Ignorant*, or Self-Proclaimed Grammarian where he displayed his teaching and grammatical expertise, as well as in the polemical treatise For the Color Green where his knowledge of Aristotle's theory of colors came to the fore. Additionally, the close analysis of these works has revealed not only how Prodromos created a unique authorial voice to express his criticisms and intellectual pursuits, but also showed what were Prodromos's expectations from an ideal intellectual, expert, and polymath, with whom he identified himself. Thus, for example, we have seen that for Prodromos a clergyman, a philosopher, a grammarian, a doctor, and an expert in logic should not have knowledge limited to their respective professions. Thus, for instance, a clergyman should be also familiar with ancient authors, a philosopher should be also able to create rhetorical arguments, a grammarian should also have a philosophical expertise, a doctor should be also versed in rhetoric and philosophy, and finally expert in logic should also have grammatical and rhetorical knowledge. All these criticisms that address the lack of knowledge that go beyond one's discipline and profession, certainly suggest that Prodromos's main intention was to utterly denigrate his real or imagined opponents and stereotypical characters. At the same time these criticisms also reveal what kind of expertise Prodromos expected for an ideal intellectual and simultaneously claimed for himself.

The second chapter was focused on Prodromos's Platonic dialogue *Xenedemos*. In this chapter, I argue that Prodromos's primary objective is not merely to deliver a critique of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, but rather of a more complex nature. First, it delivers a subtly embedded examination/refutation of an ignorant teacher who is unable to properly comprehend, interpret, and convey the correct understanding of Porphyry's *Isagoge* to his students. Secondly, by emphasizing the essential role that a good teacher plays in shaping young minds, Prodromos not only reflects his ethical and intellectual concerns but also his anxiety as an instructor whose livelihood depends on attracting fee-paying students. Thus, through

the representation of an ideal teacher, rhetorician, and philosopher inspired by Plato's *Phaedrus*, Prodromos creates a self-promotional manifesto and implicitly reveals what kind of intellectual he aspired to be or considered himself to be. This is also reflected in the perfect blend of rhetoric and philosophy in the text, which aligns with the intellectual tendencies of that time. Thirdly, the series of logical aporias that, at first glance, seem nonsensical actually attest to Prodromos's exceptional rhetorical competence and in-depth knowledge of logic that goes far beyond the basic text of *Isagoge*. These aporias reveal Prodromos's interpretative concerns about the *Isagoge* and underline the potential errors that less educated instructors might make in teaching practice. Additionally, I demonstrate in this chapter that through these aporias, Prodromos reflects upon the same challenges faced by Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentators when interpreting the text of *Isagoge*. Finally, the results of this analysis suggest that the text was also intended for advanced students who would require a deeper understanding of logic to solve these complex problems. This implies that another function of this text was to serve as a unique didactic tool for students, allowing them to check their skills and improve their knowledge..

In the third chapter, I examined Prodromos's treatise On Great and Small. In this philosophical work, Prodromos's criticism extends beyond merely addressing the inadequate skills and incompetence of his contemporaries; it focuses on rectifying inconsistencies in the works of an ancient author. I have demonstrated that Prodromos's critique of Aristotle's perspective on the great and small is a unique example in the late antique, Neoplatonic, and Byzantine commentary tradition on Aristotle's Categories. Although some authors have expressed similar views regarding great and small (e.g., Plotinus) or noted the same contradictions (e.g., Olympiodorus), none of them addressed the problem of the great and small in the same manner as Prodromos. In his treatise, Prodromos tries to demonstrate that propria of relatives are not applicable to great and small. Additionally, contrary to his Neoplatonic and Byzantine predecessors, Prodromos regards the great and the small, the many and the few as an indefinite quantity only in their absolute sense. Moreover, Prodromos, with one of his counterarguments, implicitly rejects one of the common propria of relatives, i.e., the ability to admit of a more and a less. Finally, by trying to prove that these items are not only quantities, but also opposed to each other as contraries, he implicitely refutes one of the common propria of quantity according to which there is no contrariety in this category. Consequently, this implies that the same common proprium of substance according to which there is nothing contrary to substance would become the proprium in the strict sense. Although this was not Prodromos's primary intention, his refutation bears greater implications towards the understanding of the *Categories* in its entirety. Moreover, considering the Byzantine scholarly production on Aristotle's logic, it is not inconceivable that Prodromos, as a teacher, encountered the issue of the great and small in an academic setting and felt compelled to share his perspective on the matter. Although the treatise was addressed to Michael Italikos, Prodromos's teacher and friend, it is unlikely that Italikos was the sole audience for this work. Most likely, Prodromos's work was read and discussed in private intellectual circles comprising his peers, students, and learned friends. Additionally, in light of the revival of Aristotelian scholarship in eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantium, Prodromos's displays of competence in logic did not merely serve to incite discussion on this specific subject matter in learned circles; they were also part of his self-promotional strategies.

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On Great and Small

Full title: *Of the Most Wise and Learned Lord Theodore Prodromos, On Great and Small, Many and Few, that These Terms Do Not Belong to the Category of Relation but to That of Quantity, and [that they are also] Contraries.*

(Τοῦ σοφωτάτου καὶ λογιωτάτου κυροῦ Θεοδώρου τοῦ Προδρόμου· περὶ τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τοῦ μικροῦ, καὶ τοῦ πολλοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὀλίγου· ὅτι οὐ τῶν πρός τί εἰσιν, ἀλλά τοῦ ποσοῦ, καὶ ἐναντία)

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249

Appendix

By the most wise and learned lord Theodore Prodromos, On Great and Small, Many and Few, that These Terms Do Not Belong to the Category of Relation but to That of Quantity, and [that they are also] Contraries.⁵⁶⁹

By what other than Reason should one reason about the things that are the object of reasoned thought, my friend full of reason? And by what other than the Rule should one rule about the things for which a ruling should be declared? Also, all philosophy, and rhetoric, both conjointly and separately, and any other reasoning, both ours [i.e., Christian] and that of outside [i.e. pagan] by whom else should be judged than by Italikos, just as, definitely, gold by the Lydian stone and eaglets by the Sun? I leave aside the judge of Mount Ida [i. e. Paris] and the goddesses being judged for the apple in Gargaros, as the myth says, because I shrink away from poetical ambition in these matters. From the latter [i.e., from the poetic ambition], I would only keep this, namely that I, myself am alsopresenting my naked discourse to your eye that is infallible in judging discourses. I beseech you to arbitrate about it [i.e., discourse] not so much as a judge but rather as an advocate, and I am not asking this – on you I swear!-so that you may disregard the mistakes in the discourse, – for why would I need a child that is unruly or unhealthy in some other manner? – but to eliminate, be it in a mild way, its disorderliness, and to cure the patient, but in no way by scorching or cutting, and to eliminate the defect.

You should not be surprised, o, living statue of oratory, if my writing does not encounter you with embellished cheeks and softened in all manners. First, she [i.e., writing] had left these things to the younger ones and to those, for whom the appended make-up has been found to be of assistance to their natural ugliness, while she was rather looking at the daughters [i.e., writings] of Demosthenes, Plato and Aristeides – I would also add here, of Italikos. Also, she thought that it would be unworthy of my sincerity towards you if my envoy to you [that is the letter/treatise sent to you] would be bragging. In fact, let the general concepts and their signified be appropriated by you by means of the appropriateness of the discourse and of its stage. If perhaps, o, most wise soul, I were carving the present letter for

⁵⁶⁹ This translation is based on edition of this text available in Paul Tannery, Théodore Prodrome. Sur le grand et le petit (à Italicos). Texte Grec inédit et notice," Annuaire de l'Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France 21 (1887): 104-110. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44253699, 111-117

someone else, I would have shown off as much as I would be able to and would have beautified myself if as much as possible, and certainly beyond moderation. However, now that I am writing to you, who are mine and who are wise, I will not beautify myself, nor will show off by any means, since it is unwise to play the wise to a wise man, and unfriendly show off to a friend. I will exhibit a writing [style] corresponding to its natural character.

But thus far I have been apologizing about such things. The following things discuss what the purpose of the discourse is.

Yesterday and not quite yesterday, nor long before this day, I happened to busy myself with the *Categories* of Aristotle, and when I arrived at that passage on quantity, where he refers to great and small as well as many and few, as relatives rather than quantities, I was not easily satisfied to agree with the Philosopher on this part. Rather, even if I sang it many times in my mind- sometimes like this:

"Endure my heart"⁵⁷⁰

and other times like this:

"... be seated still and listen to the story of others." ⁵⁷¹

and other such lines from the poetical Calliope; for ever since I was a child there is in me a certain fondness of and reverence for Homer – for him more than for anyone else; [so] I recited upon myself, yet I still was not able to master the movements of the soul. In fact, the minds of young people, according to that same wise man [i.e., Homer], not only "turn with every wind,"⁵⁷² but they also are difficult in respect of opinions and preconceptions, because they are above all the most vigorous. As, on the one hand, many noble (as it seemed to me) counter-arguments occurred to my mind in travail, and on the other, in many places I understood that Aristotle himself was practicing more than demonstrating – for not only this man [i.e. Aristotle], if anyone, knew [how] to infer syllogistically from immediate and primary [propositions], but also [how] to draw good conclusions from reputable opinions and to argue dialectically from both sides – and therefore I considered it necessary to find a middle way between both of these options [i.e., to give refutations or to respect Aristotle's expertise] and to give free rein to speech, but not so that the runaway horse would throw the rider over the cliff; and at the same time, [I considered it necessary] not to venture to say something unworthy of the respect appropriate for Aristotle.

⁵⁷⁰ Hom.*Od*.20.18. trans. A.T. Murray.

⁵⁷¹ Hom. *Il.* 2.200, trans. A.T. Murray.

⁵⁷² Hom.*Il*.3.108, trans. A.T. Murray.

Let us state here, first by citing as a proof the passage of Aristotle, as it is: for he says that "a quantity has no contrary" and proving the argument from the induction, he adds: "unless someone would call 'great' the contrary of 'small,'or 'many' the contrary of 'few'." None of these, however, is a quantity; they are relatives. For nothing is called large or small just in itself, but by reference to something else. For example, a mountain is called small yet a grain of millet large because the latter is larger than other things of its kind, while the former is smaller than other things of its kind." He continues: "Moreover, whether one counts them as quantities or does not, they have no contrary. For how could there be any contrary to what cannot be grasped just in itself but only by reference to something else? Further, if large and small are to be contraries it will turn out that the same thing admits contraries at the same time, and that things are their own contraries."⁵⁷³

How well said of dialectical proofs and of your philosophical refinement in these matters, Aristotle; and, in fact, what else other than this, being Aristotle, befits you to say? However, I will question you: and you should respond to me on account of your labyrinths.

For, if we compared a grain with a grain, as you know well, we could say that it is great; and if we compared a hill with a hill, we could call it small; and nothing else is to be assumed concerning these things, because it has been ordained so by your laws; but in case of these species, o you admirable, whose individuals would not be more than one, such as, for example, the sun as well as the moon and the heaven itself, how will we be able to predicate the great? For not just as one grain tends to take the name 'great' or 'small' in relationship with another one and one mountain in relationship with another, the same would also be in the case of these. For the heaven is great and, by heavens, there is no one who, while saying heaven, did not immediately attribute great, or if not having attributed this does not seem to be impious about such a great matter; but certainly, the great is not at all in relation to another small. For in relationship with what is the one and only? Thus, it is in similar manner with other cases: for instance, the size of the whole earth is called great, and the entire mass of air is called much; but the former [i.e., great heaven] is not compared in relationship with another small one, nor is the latter [i.e., much air] in relationship with other few. For these individuals are monadic and numerically one according to each species [to which they belong]; unless someone would like to invent the plurality of worlds again, or to fabricate an infinite number of them. But this is neither possible, as it has been demonstrated most clearly in your On the Heavens, nor it was assumed to be, as it will inflict indignity on the discourse.

⁵⁷³ My translation here is combined with translated quotations from: Aristotle, *Categories* (tr. Ackrill), 5b10-13, 5b19-22.
For even those who postulate [several] worlds would have postulated them to be equal in size, and "great" and "small" would never have been understood comparatively with regard to them. Therefore, either heaven is not great – something that is very blasphemous – and the air mass is not much – something that is very laughable – or "great" and "much" are not relatives. And if these are not [relatives], then neither are, of course, the things corresponding to them, I mean the small and few.

Moreover, in the case of double or half, neither does the speaker indicate something with the speech when he stops, nor does the hearer pause his thought; the reason is that each of these is said what it is in relation to the other. If, accordingly, both "great" and "small" were relatives, the same should apply to them, but now we observe the absolute contrary. For the one hearing "great" does not immediately think of the small, nor vice versa; but having discharged contemplation towards the greatness of the former or towards the smallness of the latter, he pauses. But, if someone would also enumerate these [i.e., great and small] among relatives, for which someone hearing about the one seems to have also understood the other, he would also observe both rational and irrational to be relatives, and moreover the aquatic and terrestrial: for in a similar way the sequence of argumentation will apply to these things, and the one hearing the irrational would have had certain thought also of the rational. But when this is assumed, it is clear, even to the blind man, as the saying goes, that it is absurd; for it is necessary to assume that parts of the substances are not substances; therefore, the great is not a relative, if indeed the rational is not.

Moreover, if there is a certain amount of quantity, just as there is a certain kind of quality, and a certain essence of substance, then if someone has enquired what the size of the Atlantic Ocean happens to be, it would be appropriate to answer great, because clearly it will have been classified as great.

Moreover, from proper names of quantity, of quality or of some other category, some relatives come to exist and are called paronymously, just as, indeed, double from dyad and more beautiful from beautiful; but no further other relative is called paronymously after relatives. For there is not, just as from dyad double, thus also from double more double: for double is not more or less than double; nor, just as from beautiful there is more beautiful, thus also from more beautiful there is even more beautiful. We say paronymously "greater" from great and "smaller" from "small." This should not have happened if these were relatives; but it happened; therefore, the great and the small are not relatives.

Moreover, relatives can be clear through implication [of existence] and through reciprocation; reciprocation and implication have been divided through the following three cases only: either one must define the word in the genitive and it should be reciprocated equally, as it is possible in the case of the relationship in respect of a son and a father; or one must give it in the genitive, but it must be reciprocated in the dative, just as in the case of the knowable and of knowledge; or, again, it must be given as well as reciprocated in the dative, just as in the case of similar and dissimilar; or having been given in the accusative, it must be reciprocated in the dative, and vice versa, just as it is possible, in the case of the things said with regards to actuality and affection. So, what would not happen according to some of the above-mentioned manners, but in some other way is given, such a [case] clearly, as it seems to me, is alien to the category of relative. However, the great and small would have been given according to none of the given definitions; thus, neither are they relatives, if indeed they have not in any manner been given, as we were saying. Indeed, it would be absurd and fairly barbarous either to say the small is small of the great, or by great, and vice versa.

But, if someone would invent also the fourth definition in addition to these and somehow in the same way would carry on methodically the reasoning that the great is called great in relationship with the small, and the small in relationship with the great, such a person should know that he strives to include the majority of existing things among relatives. For also the body is called in relationship with the bodyless; and inanimate in relationship with animate; and immortal in relationship with mortal; and in general, all the logically distinguishable differentiae of genera at once. Therefore, these will also be relatives. That this has slipped into a place of absurdity, has been said above.

Moreover, if size is said in respect of small and great, the predication must be sought either in its own right (per se) or accidentally (per accidens); and if it is in its own right, we would obviously have such things as quantities synonymously, when both are predicated of size, because it is a quantity; but if accidentally, just as for instance we say 'human' of a son and a father, then it needs to be asked what greater and smaller mean, and for the sake of what they have been invented? For if the smaller and greater are the same as small and great, why is there a need of polyonomy? And if they are different, the greater is called greater of something smaller, and vice versa, it is undisputable: the fact remains that great is something else and is not a relative.

That the above-mentioned matters are not relatives has, as I believe, been demonstrated in this way, and equally, I believe, is not far from reason. It must therefore be concluded that they are opposed to each other as contraries: after having understood this before the other things, the philosophical discourse used to declare long before our time that one [thing] has one contrary, and elsewhere, I believe, also used to assume that it is unjust

that two [things] are opposed to one; and nor it seems [to be just] for proverbial Heracles [to be compared] in respect of two. Aristotle's false reasoning escaped the reader's notice; for by comparing the same size with two [things], and by assuming it to be in respect of one [thing], great, but in respect of another, small, and by following this assumption, he syllogistically infers reputable opinions. So, if he would not compare the comparandum to one and then to another [thing], but to one and the same thing, what seemed an absurdity to reason would not have occurred, nor would the same great thing seem to be also small at the same time, but necessarily one of the two.

However, if someone would not want to pay attention to these things but would tightly hold on to Aristotle's disposition, he would say: "if great and small are contraries, at the same time the thing will admit contraries in itself, and that thing would be its own contrary." But if someone would say this, he should apply the same problem to the case of up and down, in as far as there is contrariety in them, as from these also the rest of contraries obtained the appellation of contrary. For, if by chance, I stand in the middle of the two - the one thing below the feet, and the other thing above the head, the contraries would happen at the same time in myself, that is to say, up and down, and I would be contrary to myself. If this is absurd in this case, then it is thus also in the case of former [i.e., great and small]: or why would this be so in certain cases but not in others? The cause, however, of the accidental absurdity, is the following, in order that I reveal the secret of false inference: for it does not suffice to join only these two things to make the union of contraries impossible, at the same time and in the same subject, but a third one in addition to these, in relationship to the same thing. Indeed, when this has been added, the contraries would not be joined together; if not, then their coming together is nothing absurd. For, if the same thing according to the same interval of time in relationship with the same [other] thing is called great or small, the same thing would not be at the same time great and small. If, however, [it is placed] in relation to one and then another, there is nothing absurd. For example, when Hector has been compared with Menelaus son of Atreus, he would naturally be called strong, if indeed this Homeric passage is not read as incidental/beside the subject:

"And now Menelaus, would the end of life have appeared for thee

at the hands of Hector, seeing he was mightier far"⁵⁷⁴

This same person [i.e., Hector] at the same time, in relationship with the son of Peleus [i.e., Achilles], is weak. Thus, at the same time there are contraries in Hector, and Hector himself

⁵⁷⁴ Hom. *Il.* 7.104-105, trans. A. T. Murray.

is contrary to himself; the same thing would have never happened, if he had been compared only with Menelaus or only with Achilles. In the same manner, also a particular just person, in comparison with Aristides, who is just by name, is unjust, but in comparison with Phalaris, by chance, or Echetus he is just; he is definitely not both in comparison with the same person.

Moreover, contraries change into one another, just as, of course, warmth changes into cold, and vice changes into virtue. However, for relatives, this is not necessary. For neither does perception changes into the perceptible nor knowledge into the knowable. Indeed, when the subject stays the same, the small of the thing capable of receiving it changed into the great; therefore, they are contraries and not relatives.

Moreover, if almost all wise men laid down the contraries as the first principles of existing things, while Plato generates the existing things from the Small and the Great, either one of them must be disbelieved – I mean of the general rule and of the Platonic thesis – or clearly the great and the small must be considered contraries. But may no one introduce this [as an argument] to such an extent that he would either disagree with those who follow common consent, or with Plato himself; therefore, the second [possibility] remains.

Moreover, Aristotle himself often, in the treatise *On Natural Principles* and in the first [book] of the *Metaphysics*, disagrees with many [philosophers], including Plato himself, on many other points, because they, in his view, were wrong; in this alone he approves them and says something cognate – for they have established the contraries as the first principles of existing things: some [proposing] Love and Strife, others Rarity and Density, and some the Great and the Small. At some point placing Plato above the other [philosophers], he says that the former [i.e., Plato] ranks contraries according to reason– i.e., the Great and the Small of course, [thus] calling these explicitly contraries; and the latter [i.e., the other philosophers] rank [contraries] according to sense perception, I mean, rarity and density.

Moreover, even if it would be assumed that contraries have come together in the same thing when, in relation to one and then another thing, the same great thing at the same time is also called small, the thing will not necessarily also be contrary to itself. For temperance is said to be contrary to licentiousness and stupidity, and it seems somehow that contraries have been joined in the same thing; however, temperance itself will not be contrary to itself.

The summary of the discourse

Either one must consider the great and small as contraries, if we are convinced by Aristotle and Plato, as the latter [i.e., Plato] considers the Great and the Small the first principles of existing beings, and it is undisputable that contraries are the first principles of all existing things; the former [i.e., Aristotle] accepts the same opinion, and follows it, as it is possible to gather from the great treatises of the man that we mentioned. Or if we are not convinced, one should understand and speak about these things in whatever way is preferable to each.