

132. Library of Works on Philosophy. -- We may classify as follows the principal works in use in the teaching of philosophy during this period

I. Grecian Philosophers. -- Few indeed were there who read Greek in the original: Latin translations were in use everywhere.

(1) ARISTOTLE. -- (a) *Logic*. -- In the ninth century the *De Interpretatione* was known in the translations of Marius Victorinus and Boëthius: and from the end of the tenth, the *Categories* also, in the translation of Boëthius. Abelard knew of no other Aristotelian treatise in 1136; but the *Heptateuchon* of Theoderic of Chartres, completed about 1141, contains, besides those mentioned, the first book of the *Prior Analytics*, the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Arguments*, *i.e.*, all the remaining parts of the *Organon*, with the exception of the *Posterior Analytics* and the second book of the *Prior Analytics*.^[1] According to a chronicle of Robert de Monte for the year 1128, James of Venice had already translated from Greek to Latin the *Topics*, the two *Analytics* and the *Sophistical Arguments*; but these translations passed unnoticed. About the same time, Otto of Freising made known the newly discovered treatises in Germany. The second half of the twelfth century was in possession of the entire *Organon* of Aristotle: thus with the middle of the century commenced a new and fuller introduction of the *Organon*, marking the distinction between the *Logica vetus* (or treatises known before 1141) and the *Logica nova* (or treatises known after 1141).

(b) The *Metaphysics*, the *Physics* and the *De Anima*, -- which form the very groundwork of the Aristotelian philosophy, -- were unknown in this period. From an isolated study of the *Organon* it was very easy to mistake the thought of Aristotle and reduce his philosophy to a collection of rules of logic. The scholastics of the first period knew Aristotle only as a logician: and bitterly did they complain of his obscurity.^[2]

(2) PLATO was known only through a fragment of the *Timaeus*, translated by Chalcidius (92). The famous dialogue was quoted by John Scotus Eriugena and got a rapid and extensive circulation. The metaphysical character of the *Timaeus* would have, in a certain measure, counteracted the excessive and exclusive influence of the Aristotelian dialectic. But the *Timaeus* is obscure; it is often misleading as regards the real thought of Plato; the eclectic commentaries of Chalcidius made it still more difficult to understand: it was, in fact, generally misunderstood during this period. Of the other works of Plato, only the titles (through Chalcidius) and occasional stray fragments were known. It was not until the twelfth century that some copies of the *Phaedo* and of the *Meno* found their way into circulation. Henricus Aristippus translated them in Sicily. But, on the other hand, many of Plato's theories were transmitted by St. Augustine, and also -- though not without modification and even disfigurement -- in the commentaries of the Neo-Platonists.

(3) *Commentaries on Aristotle*. -- (a) PORPHYRY'S *Isagoge*^[3] (also called the *Institutio*, or *Introduction*, or *Treatise on the Five Words*), already extensively commented by the later Grecian philosophers, enjoyed an immense popularity among the earlier scholastics in the translation of Marius Victorinus, and afterwards in that of Boëthius with the double commentary of the latter. Porphyry passed for a supporter of Aristotle: his connection with a pantheistic school of philosophy does not seem to have been even suspected (86).

The *Isagoge* studies the five predicables (genus, species, specific difference, property, accident): it served as an introduction to the study of the *Categories*. The predicables are an expression of the various ways in which a predicate may be announced about a subject. In the *Isagoge*, Porphyry does not go beyond this *logical* aspect of the predicables; he does not inquire into the *real* or *ontological* significance of the categories. He merely hints at the great problem of the objectivity of universal notions: and his statement of

the question became later on the starting-point of the Universals controversy (Ch. II., art. i., § 1).

(b) BOËTHIUS wrote commentaries on the *Categories* and the *De Interpretatione*. Other commentaries of his, on the *Topics*, *Analytics* and *Sophistical Arguments*, are lost. So too is the translation of these three works, alleged by Robert de Monte about 1128 to have been undertaken by JAMES OF VENICE.

(4) The other monuments of Grecian philosophy were unknown; but the names of many of its leading personalities were familiar to the scholastics of this period from the Latin writings and the Fathers of the Church. They possessed fragments of several Grecian systems, especially of the Epicurean, the Stoic and the Pythagorean. They were acquainted with no original work of the Neo-Platonists: but they were indirectly influenced by Neo-Platonism through St. Augustine and the Platonic commentators of Pseudo-Denis.^[44]

II. Latin Philosophers. -- The otherwise abundant literary output of Latin antiquity was represented in philosophy by the following meagre legacy: --

(1) A collection of Latin compilations dating from the period of decadence. Among them: the works of MARIUS VICTORINUS (92), including a version of the *Isagoge* and various treatises and commentaries on logic; the works of MACROBIUS (92), author of the *Saturnalia* and of a commentary on the *Dream of Scipio*, often referred to in the Middle Ages; the works of CLAUDIUS MAMERTUS OF VIENNE, in Gaul (about 450), who wrote the *De Statu Animae* in defence of the immortality of the soul against Faustus the Semi-Pelagian; the works of DONATUS, to whom, with Macrobius, medieval scholars owed much of their knowledge of the facts of ancient history.

(2) *A number of Platonic and Neo-Platonic Commentaries.* -- (a) A commentary on the *De Interpretatione* and a treatise *De Dogmate Platonis* were circulated under the name of APULEIUS OF MADAURA (81). A dialogue entitled *Asclepius* was also widely attributed to him. It was, however, regarded by the better informed as one of the "hermetic" or occult writings, and identified, under the title of *Liber de Deo Deorum*, as the work of an Egyptian philosopher, MERCURIUS TRISMEGISTUS. Other works of the same character were also known (81); such, for instance, as the *Logosteileios* (**logos teleios**) quoted by Abelard and Alan of Lille.

(b) To the same group we may refer the commentary added by CHALCIDIUS (92) to his version of the *Timaeus*. It is a mere compilation, without originality, after the manner of the Platonic eclecticism of the second century of the Christian era. The compiler ransacks Posidonius, Adrastus and Albinus (72, 74, 81) among others; quoting extracts from the other works of Plato; incorporating Aristotelian theories; quoting the Stoics, Chrysippus and Cleanthus, and comparing their teachings; borrowing ideas from the Pythagoreans, from Philo, Numenius, etc., -- not forgetting the Greek physicians; laying under contribution the Ionians, Eleatics and Atomists of the pre-Socratic period: so that in the twelfth century his commentary was one of the main sources of the history of Grecian philosophy. Hence the enormous influence attaching to it during this period.

(3) Certain works or portions of works of CICERO (the *Topics*, the *De Officiis*, the *De Inventione Rhetorica*, the two *Libri Rhetoricorum ad Herennium*, the *De Partitione Oratoria*); of SENECA (the *De Beneficiis*); and of LUCRETIUS.

Cicero was considered an authority on logic and rhetoric. Seneca's Stoic maxims were reproduced with a ready approval by the few scholastics who gave their attention to ethics. From the dawn of the Middle Ages apocryphal works in abundance were freely circulated under the name of Seneca: his pretended correspondence with St. Paul, the *Formula Honestae Vitae* (or, *De Quatuor Virtutibus Cardinalibus*), the *De Moribus*, etc., all belonging to the fourth century of our era.^[5] Lucretius,^[6] being on the other hand the accredited exponent of Epicureanism, was not looked on with favour by the scholastics, but was rather the

auxiliary of their adversaries. Thus, the Cathari borrow arguments for their materialistic psychology from him (Ch. III., art. ii.).

III. The Fathers of the Church have handed down to the Middle Ages in their theological writings both their own philosophical theories and those of the ancients.

(1) Amongst them St. Augustine holds the first place. His psychology especially was appropriated by the earlier scholastics; metaphysical theses were also borrowed from him. An important group of Platonico-Augustinian doctrines were supported on his authority ([126](#), 3).

(2) PSEUDO-AUGUSTINE. -- The reputation of St. Augustine as a philosopher and exponent of dogma, accounts for the number of apocryphal works attributed to him, -- works often teeming with anti-scholastic and even anti-Augustinian theories. The principal pseudo-Augustinian treatises are the following: (a) *Categoriae Decem*, a synopsis of the *Categories* of Aristotle; (b) *Principia Dialecticae*, a monograph by some grammarian on the distinction between simple and compound terms; (c) *Contra Quinque Haereses*, the author of which quotes "hermetic" texts, giving them a Christian meaning; (d) later, the *De Spiritu et Anima*, a really faithful manual of Augustinian psychology, in high favour among the scholastics. It is simply a compilation from the works of Isidore of Seville, Alcuin, Hugh of St. Victor and Isaac de Stella, and is identified by Stöckl and Hauréau with the work of Alcher of Clairvaux.^{[17](#)}

(3) We find among the scholastics of this period quotations from the writings of ORIGEN (in the version of Rufinus ([103](#), n. 2)), CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, LACTANTIUS, ST. AMBROSE; the *Hexaëmeron* of the latter embodying a number of Aristotelian theories. CASSIAN, the Semi-Pelagian, against whom St. Augustine directed his latest writings, transmitted some philosophical notions to the Middle Ages, through the writings of Alcuin and Rhaban Maur.

(4) The *De Natura Hominis* (**peri phuseôs anthrôpon**) of NEMESIUS ([104](#)) was current in the twelfth century in the version of Alfanus (1058-1085), Archbishop of Salerno. The same work was again translated in 1159, under Frederick Barbarossa, by Richard Burgondio of Pisa.^{[18](#)}

(5) Finally we may mention the writings of PSEUDO-DENIS THE AREOPAGITE and of MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR. The treatises *De Nominibus Divinis* and *De Hierarchia Coelesti* were translated from the Greek in the ninth century by John Scotus Eriugena; they were placed high in the general estimation by St. Anselm in the eleventh, and they appear again in still greater esteem in the twelfth.^{[19](#)} Medieval mysticism and esthetics were steeped in the spirit of these pseudo-Dionysian treatises. Commentaries were written on them simultaneously in the interests of Neo-Platonic pantheism and of orthodox individualism.

IV. Arabian and Byzantine Writers. -- Some results of Arabian science became known to the Western world in the twelfth century through the monks of Monte Cassino. Notably, CONSTANTINE THE AFRICAN, or Constantine of Carthage (about 1050), translated a treatise of ISAAC ISRAELI (about 900) on the elements, together with certain writings of GALEN and HIPPOCRATES. Burgondio of Pisa translated the **pêgê gnôseôs** of St. John Damascene. But these translations were facts of very trifling importance: prior to the thirteenth century there was no real contact between Western culture and the philosophies of Arabia and Byzantium.

V. Writers of the Younger Races. -- Besides Isidore of Seville, Gregory the Great,^{[10](#)} Venerable Bede and Rhaban Maur, to whom we have referred already, the leading educators of the early Middle Ages were Martianus Capella, Cassiodorus and Boëthius.

MARTIANUS CAPELLA, a native of Carthage, flourished in the fifth century. He came to Rome about 430 and there wrote the *Satyricon* and a treatise entitled *De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*, in which he

incorporates Varro and other grammarians. This curious encyclopedia was eagerly studied in the Middle Ages on account of its attempt to classify the human sciences and to arrange a complete course of studies. Martianus popularized the trivium and quadrivium, symbolizing the various arts and sciences under the form of mythological personages. His work is more fanciful than scientific and enjoyed a quite unmerited influence in the early Middle Ages.^{11}

CASSIODORUS and BOËTHIUS were both ministers of the Gothic king, Theoderic, who was the wise initiator of a scientific renaissance throughout his dominions.^{12} The former (470-570) was, like Martianus Capella, a teacher who collected into his treatises *De Artibus ac Disciplinis Liberalium Litterarum* and *De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum*, all that he had learned about the trivium and quadrivium, chiefly at the school of Boëthius.

BOËTHIUS (480-525, sometimes referred to as Manlius, consul) was of a much higher order of genius and learning than Cassiodorus and Capella. His literary work is considerable. It includes

(1) Translations, especially of Porphyry's *Isagoge* and of various works of Aristotle. He translated the five parts of the *Organon*, but the last three (the *Analytics*, the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Arguments*) were apparently lost sight of until the end of the twelfth century. He states himself (in *Lib. de Interpr.*, ii.) that he undertook the translation of all the works of Aristotle. These were unknown in the early Middle Ages.^{13}

(2) Commentaries: two on the *Isagoge*, one each on Aristotle's *Categories* and *De Interpretatione* (his chief work on logic), and one on the *Topics* of Cicero.

(3) Original treatises on *Categorical* and *Hypothetical Syllogisms*, on *Division*, on *Definition*, on *Topical Distinctions*: all highly appreciated in the Middle Ages. With equal approval the scholastics also quote from his works on Mathematics and Music and more especially from an ethical work which Boëthius wrote in the prison of Ticinum, into which he had been thrown after falling into political disfavour: the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. The elegant style of this treatise shows to what an extent its author was imbued with the culture of the ancients. Various other writings on theological subjects (*De Trinitate*, *De Hebdomadibus*, *De Fide Christiana*, *De Duabus Naturis in Christo*) were circulated under his name, but they are of doubtful authenticity.

The influence of Boëthius on the philosophy of this period was considerable. Down to the end of the twelfth century he was the chief source of Aristotelianism, and was regarded as the equal of Aristotle, or even as his superior. His translations and commentaries, and his original treatises -- which long supplied the place of the unknown portions of the *Organon* -- formed the basis of all *logical* studies. Numerous other Aristotelian ideas were also transmitted by the "barbarian" philosopher: for instance, *methodological* theories, such as the famous tripartite division of the theoretical sciences into Metaphysics, Mathematics and Physics (34). He affected the mathematical or deductive method himself. We also find, scattered through his works, fragments of ideas on the nature and genesis of knowledge; and imperfect, rudimentary conceptions of matter, substantial form, change, substance, person, causes. The *De Consolatione Philosophiae* reproduces the argument for the Immovable Prime Mover. The *De Trinitate* studies the application of grammatical forms to the Divinity, etc.

Boëthius, moreover, was not a slave to the teachings of Aristotle. He transmitted to the Medieval schools quite a number of Platonic, Stoic, Pythagorean and Augustinian doctrines. The theology of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* is a study of Divine Goodness and Providence; while theories on number and unity permeate his teachings on the Divine Nature, on Creation and on Exemplarism. In a word, he is the channel through which the scholastics received that varied assortment of theories which we find analyzed and sifted later on by the eclectic spirit of the thirteenth century.

VI. Medieval Writers. -- We may set down in conclusion, as forming an integral part of the scholastic library of this first period, a few works of medieval philosophers: works of such wide popularity that they came to be regarded as classics. The *De Divisione Naturae* of John Scotus Eriugena and the *Liber Sex Principiorum* of Gilbert de la Porrée are, perhaps, the best examples.

{1} This point of history has been established by CLERVAL, *Les écoles de Chartres*, etc., p. 244.

{2} Boëthius calls him *turbator verborum*; an unknown author of the tenth century speaks of the *Aristotelicus labyrinthus* (BAUMGARTNER, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 11).

{3} Re-edited by A. Bussis, Berlin, 1887 (vol. iv., p. 1, of the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Gracca*, edited by the Berlin Academy).

{4} JOHN OF SALISBURY also quotes extracts from a letter of Plutarch, *Polycraticus*, V., I.

{5} HAURÉAU, *Not. et Extr. de qqes MSS. latins*, ii., 202, iv., 15 and 267.

{6} Isidore of Seville and Rhaban Maur, two compilers, treat him with exceptional favour ([126](#), 1).

{7} STÖCKL, *Gesch. d. Phil. d. Mittelalters*, i., pp. 384 sqq. HAURÉAU, *op. cit.*, V., p. 113 (Paris, 1892).

{8} BAEUMKER, *Nemesius*, reprint from the *Wochenschrift für klass. Philol.*, 1896, pp. 2 sqq. Cf. DOMANSKI, *Die Psychol. d. Nemesius*, p. xii.

{9} Cf. [247](#), n.

{10} In the early Middle Ages St. Gregory the Great was quoted even more extensively than St. Augustine.

{11} The seven arts are represented as young maidens, escorting Philologia, the *fiancée* of Apollo. Grammar appears as a daughter of Memphis, and carries a tray of instruments for loosing the tongues of children, etc. Logic figures as an emaciated female with a serpent in one hand and a hook concealed in the other.

{12} It was stifled by the invasion of the Lombards (565), just as a similar revival inaugurated in Spain by Isidore of Seville was arrested by the conquest of 712.

{13} On the translations of Boëthius see a long note by PÈRE MANDONNET, *Siger de Brabant*, etc. (2nd edit., Louvain, in preparation, pp. 7-9, and 13-15).

