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Cluster: Theodore the Stoudite on Traditions of Theological and Philosophical Thought

Introduction

This cluster results from research on ninth-century Byzantine thinking conducted at the University of Vienna under the auspices of the project granted by the European Research Council (ERC) “Reassessing Ninth-Century Philosophy. A Synchronic Approach to the Logical Traditions” (9 SALT, grant agreement No. 648298). First drafts of the aforementioned papers were presented at the international conference “Theodore the Stoudite. Intellectual Context, Logic, and Theological Significance” which took place at the University of Vienna in 2016.

The iconophile thinker Theodore of Stoudios († 826) is, together with Nicephorus (Patriarch of Constantinople from 806 to 815) and the last iconoclast Patriarch, John the Grammarian, one of the major intellectual figures of the debate on image veneration revived by the reestablishment of iconoclasm as official policy by Emperor Leo V in 815. The following cluster of four articles questions Theodore’s relation to his intellectual past and to previous thinking, both theological (Patristic) and philosophical (Ancient and Late Ancient). Special focus is devoted to his engagement with Aristotelian philosophy, more particularly logic, as well as with Patristic Christological thought, as they are especially crucial sources for his work on images.

Christophe Erismann analyzes Theodore’s concept of “circumscription” (περιγραφή). The article demonstrates how Theodore modified the traditional patristic view of the concept, thanks to his knowledge of Aristotle’s *Categories*, in order to have at his disposal a conceptual tool that was better fitted to his own theory of images. Dirk Krausmüller explores the links that connect Theodore’s icon theology to Late Antique Christological discourse. The third paper, by Byron MacDougall, shows that the use of logical concepts by Theodore is not limited to polemical writings like the *Antirrhetici* but is a practice that also features prominently in Theodore’s orations for the great feasts of the ecclesiastical year. Finally, Ken Parry asks whether the label “original thinker” can be applied to Theodore, discussing Theodore’s debt to the earlier theological and philosophical tradition. The importance of the use of Aristotelian logic by Theodore is a well-known phenomenon, but its true extent in Theodore’s work has been underestimated.

I would like to thank the various anonymous reviewers for their careful, competent and insightful evaluation of the papers. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to the editorial team of the *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* for having encouraged, supported and facilitated the publication of this cluster of articles on Theodore the Stoudite.