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TRACES OF ANCIENT RECLAMANTES SURVIVING IN FURTHER MANUSCRIPTS OF ARISTOTLE’S METAPHYSICS


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In 1912 W. Jaeger pointed out that codex Laurentianus 87,12 (A¹), a manuscript of Aristotle’s Metaphysics partly dating from the twelfth century, preserves traces of the reclamantes used in antiquity to maintain the correct sequence of the papyrus rolls containing this work.2 The view was reasserted in the preface to the edition of the Metaphysics published in 1957 where Jaeger wrote . . . in A¹ in singulorum librorum fine saepeius prima verba sequentis libri addita sunt, quo facilior legentibus transitus pararetur, quod aequum erat eo tempore fieri, quo libri Metaphysicorum nondum omnes uno codice continebantur, sed singulis voluminibus papyraceis circumferebantur . . . hoc in ceteris codicibus nostris non invenimus.3

Surprisingly, however, an examination of codex Ambrosianus F 113 sup. (M) written in the fourteenth century and of cod. Vat. 115 (Vk) partially assignable to the hand of the erudite Byzantine cler- 
gymn Gennadios II Scholarios (b. between 1400 and 1405 in Constantinople – d. 1472 or shortly afterwards near Serres, Macedonia)4 has revealed that the statement quoted above is somewhat misleading. In not only the Florentine, but also the Vatican and the Milan manuscripts, the first two words of book Δ are in fact written at the end of book Γ.5 Similarly at the end of book H not only A¹, but also M contains the first lines of Θ. On fol. 145v l. 1-4 of the Milan manuscript one can read, just as in A¹ on fol. 348v l. 1–4, the passage περί μὲν οὖν τοῦ πρώτου ὄντος καὶ πρώτης ἀδ ἀλλὰ κατηγορία τοῦ ὄντος ἀναφέρονται ἠρθαι περὶ τῆς οὐσίας (1045 b 27–29). This passage recurs with only a slight variation at the beginning of the ninth book in M on fol. 146t l. 1–3 and in A¹ on fol. 348l l. 1–4.6

* I am indebted to the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana and the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino for giving me access to their collections. To Mr N. G. Wilson, F.B.A. and to the Oxonian papyrologist Dr. N. Gonis I am grateful for valuable stylistic comments. Furthermore I should like to thank the University of Oxford and Professor Armando Petrucci from the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, for supporting my research in Italy.


4 Cf. Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit s.v. Σχολάρχος, Γεώργιος Κουρτέτης and The Oxford Diction- ary of Byzantium s.v. Gennadios II Scholarios. The fols. 101v – 237v of Vk are autographs of Scholarios.

5 Cf. the words ἄρρητη λέγεται A¹ fol. 159f, l. 6–7, Vk fol. 133f, l. 29 and M fol. 73f, l. 21.

6 The only difference is that at the opening of book Θ both MSS correctly read πάσαι after the relative pronoun ὁ. Vk does not transmit the entire text of the Metaphysics; this section is not available (cf. e.g. Johannes Mercati and Pius Franchi de’ Cavalieri, Codices Vaticanci Graeci I, Rome 1923, 142). The Florentine manuscript preserves the trace of a further reclamans on fol. 412v, at the end of book Iota; since the ancient reclamantes were of no use in codices, the absence of this catchline from M is by no means surprising.
As sample collations of over forty other codices of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* have shown, M and Vk are independent.\(^7\) Thanks to the work of Immanuel Bekker and Christian August Brandis, these manuscripts were already known to a certain extent in the scholarly world before the middle of the nineteenth century.\(^8\) The presence of reclamantes in M and Vk confirms that the edition on papyrus rolls from which the Medicean codex Ab derives has more than one surviving descendant.\(^9\) This is significant not only for the history of the transmission of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, but also for the constitutio textus, especially since a manuscript belonging to a different tradition, whose characteristic readings are easily found elsewhere, served as the source of Ab for the final books.\(^10\)

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\(^10\) The change of exemplar occurs at *Metaph.* A 7, 1073 a 1 olov, cf. D. Harlfinger, *op. cit.*, 31. In this context it should also be pointed out that no traces of ancient reclamantes survive in the rather heavily contaminated and damaged manuscript of the *Metaphysics* Taur. B VII 23 (C), which is a relative of M.