

MS 5

Aristotles, 384-322 B.C. *De Moribus ad Nicomachum*.

MS 5

Italy (in Latin).

ca. 1464.

John Argyropulos, a Byzantine refugee professor of Greek, translated the *Nicomachean Ethics* from Greek into Latin and dedicated it to Cosime de' Medici, who died in 1464 (f. 1a). This manuscript is a fair copy of the complete translation and may have been presented to Cosimo. Niccolo Laurenti printed it at Florence about 1478 (*Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in Italy in the British Museum*, p. 46). Jacopo Pencio de Leuco also printed it at Venice in 1503 (UC Rare Book PA 3895.E6A7, 1503), and S. Colinaei produced a Paris edition in 1527 (UC Rare Book PA 3895 f.A3E8, 1527).

Folio, 28.7 x 22 cm.

79 leaves (76b-79b blank). Foliated.

Original brown leather binding, tooled on boards.

From the Berlin Collection acquired from Calvary Brothers in 1891. (De Ricci, *Census I*, 554; Goodspeed, *Catalogue*, pp. 6-7). Previously in the library of the Marquis Taccone, treasurer of the King of Naples in the late eighteenth century.

G. S. Sipek  
May 1971

MANUSCRIPT 5

Aristotle, 384-322 B.C.

Ethica Nicomachea, in the translation of Iohannes Argyropulos  
(1415-1487)

MS. 5

Italy (in Latin)

Ca. 1460-1470

Iohannes Argyropulos was one of a long line of translators of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. Versions had already begun to appear in Europe by the 13th century, translated first from Arabic and later from the original Greek. Argyropulos was one of the many Greeks forced to seek asylum in Italy by the conquests of the Turks. Born at Constantinople, he first came to Italy in 1438 with the Greek delegation to the Council of Florence (he favored reunification of the Roman and Greek churches) and remained for a few years teaching Greek. He had returned to Constantinople as a professor of literature by the time of the fall of the city in 1453, which forced him to return, finally, to Italy, where he spent the rest of his life. He made translations of many other of Aristotle's works besides the Ethics, but he is mainly remembered for his teaching, first at Florence and later at Rome.

Bibliographical note:

Aristotle, tr. Iohannes Argyropulos, Ethica ad Nicomachum (Florence, ca. 1480)

"Giovanni Argiropulo," Dizionario biografico degli Italiani I, 129-31

"John Argyropoulos," New Catholic Encyclopedia I, 789-90

Börje Knös, L'histoire de la littérature néo-grecque (Uppsala, 1962)

Goodspeed, E. J. A Descriptive Catalog of Manuscripts in the University of Chicago Library (Chicago, 1912)

DESCRIPTION. Folio, on paper, written probably in Florence ca. 1460-1470 : 287 X 219 (183 X 136) mm. : collation, a-g<sup>10</sup>, h<sup>9</sup> = 79 ff., old signatures, numbered 1-76 followed by 3 blanks : 35 (sometimes 33) long lines ruled in lead : written space polished : catch-words in lower right-hand margin. Contemporary blind-tooled pigskin over wooden boards; first quire loose.

2° folio: mones sunt

Fol. 1 (in red): Liber aristotilis de moribus ad nicomachum quem iohannes Agropylos byzantius gratia magnifici cosme medicis florentini traduxit beg. [O]Mnis ars omnisque doctrina. Ends (ff. 76) aggredientes deinceps dicamus

SCRIPT. Written in a formal Italian gothic showing considerable humanistic influence. Letters to watch are: gothic a, ligatured ct, upright d, figure-8 g (occasionally it has a humanistic form), 3-stroke h, 2-shaped r common, and round angular final s; among the capitals, H and N are usually humanistic, the rest vary between humanistic and gothic forms. Marginal indexing keys by the text scribe in red on ff. 11-12, one or two other notes here and there, and portions of the Greek text in the margins of ff. 1-1<sup>V</sup>; "Iesus" in red at top of f. 1.

DECORATION. Spaces for initials at the beginning of each chapter were not filled in. Headings to each book and chapter in red minuscules.

PROVENANCE. No. CXII in an old Italian library. From the Marquis of Taccone Coll. (?), Naples; obtained from Calvary (1891).