

CREATION, THE TRINITY AND *PRISCA THEOLOGIA* IN JULIUS CAESAR SCALIGER

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Among the various schools of ancient philosophy which were rediscovered in the Renaissance, Platonism had the most decisive impact on the intellectual scene. After Marsilio Ficino (1433–99) translated all the Platonic dialogues into Latin, this philosophical current was disseminated widely among the intellectuals of the time. Although it never challenged the longstanding dominance of Aristotelianism, its impact was considerable enough to arouse debates between the followers of Plato and those of Aristotle. The Platonists claimed that Platonic philosophy was compatible with Christian faith, while the doctrines of Aristotle were irreconcilable with it. The Peripatetics, on the other hand, insisted on the superiority of Aristotle. There were also some thinkers who tried to reconcile the two great philosophers. These debates, which are now called the ‘Plato-Aristotle controversy’, began in the middle of the fifteenth century and continued over the course of the next century.¹

Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558) was one of the leading Aristotelians of this period.² His philosophical masterpiece *Exotericarum exercitationum* (Paris 1557), written as a critique of the Milanese physician Girolamo Cardano’s (1501–76) *De subtilitate* (Nuremberg 1550), became a major textbook of metaphysics and natural philosophy in transalpine countries during the first half of the seventeenth century. Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716), who was familiar with this tradition, used Scaliger’s name as a synonym for a great philosopher.³ Historians have also pointed out that his unique interpretation of Aristotle was incorporated in the doctrine of early modern atomists such as Daniel Sennert (1572–1637) and David Gorlaeus (1591–1612).⁴ Yet,

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1. On this controversy see L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann: Funde und Forschungen*, 3 vols, Paderborn 1923–42, I, pp. 346–98; F. Purnell, Jr, ‘Jacopo Mazzoni and His Comparison of Plato and Aristotle’, Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University 1971, pp. 50–92; D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, London 1972, pp. 110–22; J. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of His Rhetoric and Logic*, Leiden 1976, pp. 201–29; idem, ‘Marsilio Ficino and the Plato-Aristotle Controversy’, in *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, ed. M. J. B. Allen and V. Rees, Leiden 2002, pp. 179–202; J. Hankins, *Plato in the*

Italian Renaissance, 2 vols, Leiden 1990, I, pp. 193–263; E. Garin, *History of Italian Philosophy*, tr. G. A. Pinton, 2 vols, New York 2008, I, pp. 379–404.

2. On Scaliger’s life and works see V. Hall, Jr, ‘Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558)’, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, XL, 1950, pp. 85–170; M. Billanovich, ‘Benedetto Bordon e Giulio Cesare Scaligero’, *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, XI, 1968, pp. 187–256; M. Magnien, ‘Bibliographie scaligérienne’, in *Acta Scaligeriana*, ed. J. C. de Beynac and M. Magnien, Agen 1986, pp. 293–331.

3. Leibniz, *Otium Hanoverarum sive miscellanea*, ed. J. F. Feller, Leipzig 1718, p. 142: ‘...ingeniosissimus Taurellus, quem ego Scaligerum Germanorum appellare soleo...’. See P. Petersen, *Geschichte der aristotelischen Philosophie im protestantischen Deutschland*, Leipzig 1921, p. 258; K. Jensen, ‘Protestant Rivalry: Metaphysics and Rhetoric in Germany c. 1590–1620’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XLI, 1990, pp. 24–43.

4. C. Lüthy, ‘An Aristotelian Watchdog as Avant-garde Physicist: Julius Caesar Scaliger’, *Monist*, LXXXIV,

although Scaliger's historical importance has been recognised, little attention has been paid to how his defence of Aristotle against attacks by the Platonists. This paper, therefore, will embed his philosophy within the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the Renaissance. Particular attention will be paid to the doctrines of Creation and the Trinity, since the Platonists claimed that Aristotle, unlike Plato, had presented irreligious ideas which contradicted these doctrines. To refute such criticism, Scaliger set out to reconcile Aristotle's philosophy with Christianity, a project which had been pursued by Aristotelians since the Middle Ages. By exploring how this traditional issue was addressed in the new intellectual scene of the Renaissance, I intend to point out a previously unnoticed dimension of Scaliger's Aristotelianism.

Creation

1. *God as the Efficient Cause*

Scaliger's *Exotericarum exercitationes* is a wholly unsystematic work. It consists of 365 'exercises' on different topics, which are often subdivided into sections. They are by no means grouped together by theme; rather, their arrangement results in a chaotic mass of miscellaneous discussions. This is partly because the *Exercitationes* was written as a running commentary on Cardano's *De subtilitate*, a treatise famous for its unsystematic nature.⁵ A more important factor, however, is Scaliger's fondness for digression. Starting from his opponent's short and cursory remarks, he often lays out his own opinion on various philosophical, as well as theological, problems. This is particularly evident in a number of natural historical descriptions in the middle part of the treatise. Therefore, to grasp his ideas about a particular issue, it is necessary to reconstruct them from remarks scattered throughout his treatise.

The problem of Creation is discussed in three exercises: 1) *ex. 3*; 2) *ex. 65 sec. 3*; and 3) *ex. 77 sec. 5*. Let us first examine *ex. 3*, where Scaliger accuses Cardano of misinterpreting Aristotle's conception of God. According to Cardano, philosophers conceive of God not as the creator of the world but as its administrator.⁶ Although Cardano does not identify these 'philosophers', Scaliger considers that his opponent has the Aristotelians in mind. This means that Cardano regards the Peripatetic idea as incompatible with Christianity since it denies the divine Creation of the world. As a staunch defender of Aristotle, Scaliger rejects this opinion.

2001, pp. 542–61; idem, 'David Gorlaeus' Atomism, or: The Marriage of Protestant Metaphysics with Italian Natural Philosophy', in *Late Medieval and Early Modern Corpuscular Matter Theories*, ed. C. Lüthy, J. E. Murdoch and W. R. Newman, Leiden 2001, pp. 245–90; W. R. Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution*, Chicago 2006, pp. 99–104; H. Hirai, 'Atomes vivants, origine de l'âme et génération spontanée chez Daniel Sennert', *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, XIII, 2007, pp. 477–95 (485).

5. On the controversy between Cardano and Scaliger see I. Maclean, 'The Interpretation of Natural Signs: Cardano's *De subtilitate* versus Scaliger's *Exercitationes*', in *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, ed. B. Vickers, Cambridge 1984, p. 231–

52; G. Kouskoff, 'La querelle entre Jérôme Cardan et Jules-César Scaliger: le *De subtilitate ad Hieronymum Cardanum*', in *Acta Scaligeriana* (as in n. 2), pp. 207–20; A. Michel, 'Scaliger, Cardan et la subtilité', in *Du Pô à la Garonne: recherches sur les échanges culturels entre l'Italie et la France à la Renaissance*, ed. J. Cubelier de Beynac and M. Simonin, Agen 1990, pp. 49–66; G. Giglioni, 'Girolamo Cardano e Giulio Cesare Scaligero: il dibattito sul ruolo dell'anima vegetativa', in *Girolamo Cardano: le opere, le fonti, la vita*, ed. M. Baldi and G. Canziani, Milan 1999, pp. 313–39.

6. Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Exotericarum exercitationum liber quintus decimus, de subtilitate, ad Hieronymum Cardanum*, Paris 1557 [hereafter *EE*], fol. 4^r (ex. 3). For the text he refers to see Girolamo Cardano, *De subtilitate*, I, ed. E. Nenci, Milan 2004, p. 45.

Although Scaliger's criticism is directed against Cardano, its real scope cannot be understood without taking into account the attacks made by Renaissance Platonists on Aristotle. Both George Gemistos Plethon (c. 1360–c. 1452) and Cardinal Bessarion (1403–72), for instance, claimed that while Plato acknowledges the divine Creation of the world, Aristotle conceives of God merely as a mover of the celestial spheres. Bessarion added that Plato's God was more compatible with Christianity than Aristotle's.⁷ This opinion was taken over by the Veronese philosopher Bernardinus Donatus (1483–1543), whose *Treatise on the Difference between Platonic and Aristotelian Philosophy* (Venice 1540) argued for the superiority of Plato over Aristotle. Focusing on the relationship between God and the world, Donatus says:

This is the pivotal point, this is the source and this is, as the rhetoricians say, the issue at stake (*status*) in the entire controversy between Plato and Aristotle. The former teaches that the world was made, while the latter claims that it was not.⁸

Contrasting the two philosophers' views, the Platonists attacked Aristotle for deviating from the truth of Christianity. Because Scaliger thinks that Cardano's understanding of the Aristotelian God reinforces this type of criticism, he gives a lengthy argument to counter his opponent's rather cursory remark.

Scaliger first concedes that there are some Peripatetic philosophers who do not regard the Aristotelian God as the efficient cause of the world. Relying on Simplicius's commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, he shows that Eudemus and Alexander of Aphrodisias take this position.⁹ Scaliger, however, points out that other philosophers hold different views:

But Simplicius himself, with Philoponus, Ammonius and many other illustrious men, rejected this opinion, not only as false, but also as deviating from Aristotle's view. Moreover, Averroes [said] in many places that eternal things are caused by the first principle in a triple kind of cause: efficient, formal and final. ... Likewise, Themistius said that every entity is nothing but the knowledge of God. Averroes agrees with him in the third book of *On the Soul*.¹⁰

7. Plethon, *De differentiis*, ed. B. Lagarde, 'Le De Differentiis de Pléthon d'après l'autographe de la Marcienne', *Byzantion*, XLIII, 1973, pp. 312–43 (321, 342) [tr. C. M. Woodhouse in idem, *George Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes*, Oxford 1986, pp. 192, 213]; Cardinal Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis*, ed. Mohler (as in n. 1), II, p. 134. See Mohler, *ibid.*, I, pp. 373–74; Hankins (as in n. 1), I, p. 248; G. Karamanolis, 'Plethon and Scholarios on Aristotle', in *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources*, ed. K. Ierodiakonou, Oxford 2002, pp. 253–82 (272–74).

8. Bernardinus Donatus, *De Platonicae atque Aristotelicae philosophiae differentia*, Paris 1541, fol. 9^v: 'hic igitur cardo est, hic fons, hic, ut dicunt rhetores, omnis inter Platonem atque Aristotelem controversiae status. alter factum esse mundum docet, alter non factum esse contendit.' I have not been able to consult the original Venice 1540 edition. On Donatus see Purnell (as in n. 1), pp. 66–67.

9. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Physicorum libros quatuor priores commentaria*, ed. H. Diels, Berlin 1882, p. 11, lines 16–20.

10. *EE*, fol. 4^v (ex. 3): 'At Simplicius ipse, cum Philopono, et Ammonio, aliisque multis illustribus viris, opinionem hanc non solum ut falsam, verum etiam perinde atque ab Aristotelis sententia abhorrentem reiecerunt. Quin Averrois multis in locis: aeterna causata esse a primo principio in triplici genere causae, efficiente, forma, fine. ... Sic entia omnia dicebat Themistius, nihil aliud esse, quam dei scientiam: cui assentitur Averrois in tertio de anima.' Averroes, *Commentum magnum super libro De celo et mundo Aristotelis*, 2 vols, ed. F. J. Carmody, Louvain 2003, I, pp. 36–37; 'Destructio destructionum philosophiae Algazelis' in the Latin Version of Calo Calonymos, ed. B. H. Zedler, Milwaukee, WI 1961, p. 175 [tr. S. van den Bergh in Averroes, *Tahafut al-tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, 2 vols, London 1954, I, pp. 105–06]; *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, ed. F. S. Crawford, Cambridge, MA 1953, p. 501 [tr. R. C. Taylor in Averroes, *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*, New Haven 2009, p. 399]. On opinions of the three Greek commentators see K. Verrycken, 'The Metaphysics of Ammonius son of

According to Scaliger, both the Greek and the Arabic commentators on Aristotle consider God to be the efficient cause of the world. The idea of God as a mere administrator is therefore rejected as non-Aristotelian. Scaliger concludes that Cardano errs in thinking that this view is common among philosophers.¹¹

Among the commentators referred to here by Scaliger, Philoponus deserves special attention, for this Christian commentator presents two opposing views on the Aristotelian God. In his commentary on *On Generation and Corruption*, he claims that Aristotle's God is the efficient cause of the universe. By contrast, in his *Against Proclus's On the Eternity of the World*, he argues that Aristotle conceived of God, not as the efficient cause of the world, but merely as its final cause. Thus, Philoponus continues, the Peripatetic idea of God is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of Creation. Modern interpreters have debated about how to explain this apparent contradiction in his philosophy.¹² But what is important for us is Scaliger's selective reference to Philoponus. Although he is well acquainted with *Against Proclus's On the Eternity of the World*, in order to present Aristotle's idea of God as compatible with Christianity, he refers only to the opinion found in Philoponus's commentary on *On Generation and Corruption*, which holds that God is the efficient cause of the world.¹³ By treating ancient sources in this manner, he gives the impression that his interpretation of Aristotle is widely held among ancient Greek commentators.¹⁴

Let us now turn to Scaliger's argument in *ex. 77 sec. 5*, which discusses Aristotle's God on the basis of his own works. Scaliger first cites a famous maxim from *On the Heavens*: 'Nature and God make nothing in vain'.¹⁵ Regarding this phrase, he says:

Here, however, Aristotle places 'nature' alongside [God], not as a kind of helper, but in order to explain the power, within infinite power, which is known as God, that he meant to be ordinary and that we call 'nature'.¹⁶

Hermias', in *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji, Ithaca 1990, pp. 199–231.

11. *EE*, fol. 4^v (*ex. 3*): 'Non sine iactura veritatis ... haec abs te dici potuere. Praesertim cum neque numero pauciores, neque autoritate inferiores sapientes sint iis, qui desipere maluerunt'.

12. Verrycken (as in n. 10), pp. 223–26; idem, 'The Development of Philoponus' Thought and Its Chronology', *Aristotle Transformed* (as in n. 10), pp. 233–74; P. Golitsis, *Les commentaires de Simplicius et de Jean Philopon à la Physique d'Aristote: tradition et innovation*, Berlin 2008, pp. 27–37.

13. On Scaliger's use of *Against Proclus's On the Eternity of the World* see *EE*, fols 97^v–98^r (*ex. 61, sec. 6*).

14. On the impact of the Greek commentators in the Renaissance see, among others, B. Nardi, *Saggi sull'aristotelismo padovano dal secolo XIV al XVI*, Florence 1958, pp. 365–442; E. Mahoney, 'Neoplatonism, the Greek Commentators and Renaissance Aristotelianism', in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, ed. D. J. O'Meara, Albany 1982, pp. 169–77; C. B. Schmitt, 'Philoponus' Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* in the Sixteenth Century', in *Philoponus and the Rejection of*

Aristotelian Science, ed. R. Sorabji, London 1987, pp. 210–30; J. Kraye, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias, Gianfrancesco Beati and the Problem of *Metaphysics α*', in *Renaissance Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Eugene F. Rice, Jr*, ed. J. Monfasani and R. G. Musto, New York 1991, pp. 137–60; C. H. Lohr, 'Latin Translations of the Greek Commentaries on Aristotle', in *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. J. Kraye and M. W. F. Stone, London 2000, pp. 24–40; H. Hirai, 'Semence, vertu formatrice et intellect agent chez Nicolò Leonicensio entre la tradition arabo-latine et la renaissance des commentateurs grecs', *Early Science and Medicine*, xii, 2007, pp. 134–65.

15. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, I.4 (271a33). On this maxim see J. G. Lennox, 'Nature Does Nothing in Vain', in *Beiträge zur antiken Philosophie: Festschrift für Wolfgang Kullmann*, ed. H.-C. Günther and A. Rengakos, Stuttgart 1997, pp. 199–214.

16. *EE*, fol. 121^r (*ex. 77, sec. 5*): 'Naturam vero hic apposit non quasi adiutricem, sed ut explicaret in potentia infinita, quae in dei nomine cognoscitur, potentiam, quam voluit ille esse ordinariam: quam naturam appellamus.'

According to Scaliger, Aristotle does not postulate 'nature' as God's independent helper. Rather, he identifies it with God's ordinary power, which, as part of the divine infinite power, made and continues to maintain the present state of the created world.¹⁷

Scaliger then argues that by applying this concept of nature, one can interpret certain passages of Aristotle as supporting the divine Creation of the world. In *On the Heavens*, Aristotle explains that the celestial bodies, unlike animals, have no organs. According to him, nature endows animals with organs to enable them to move by their own will. The heavenly bodies, however, are deprived of instruments for movement. But this does not mean that they are neglected by nature, for they are bestowed with special bodies to allow them to carry out perpetual circular motion. This is why nature gave them no organs.¹⁸ The wording, Scaliger claims, shows that Aristotle conceives nature to be the maker of both animals and the celestial bodies, which together constitute the world. Since nature is identified with God's ordinary power, Scaliger concludes that Aristotle's philosophy endorses the divine Creation of the world.¹⁹

2. *Creation ex nihilo*

On the basis of the writings of Aristotle and his commentators, Scaliger has established that Aristotle considers God to be the efficient cause of the world. But a crucial task still remains. He needs to show the superiority of Aristotle over Plato against the claims of Renaissance Platonists. In this respect, his discussion in *ex. 65 sec. 3* is of particular importance, since he there attacks the cosmogony of Plato's *Timaeus* as irreligious. According to him, Plato presents many erroneous opinions in this dialogue; but the gravest fault is his postulation that God made the world from pre-existing matter, which was not created but instead coeternal with him. This opinion is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of *Creation ex nihilo*.²⁰

Next, Scaliger refutes some thinkers who try to reconcile Plato with Aristotle. In their opinion, Plato does not really posit pre-existing matter and, consequently, does not endorse the temporal beginning of the world; so, like Aristotle, he considers the world to be eternal. According to this view, the two philosophers disagree only as to whether or not the world was made by God. While Plato acknowledges the divine Creation of the world, Aristotle's God intervenes in the world only as the object desired by inferior beings.²¹ But this type of reconciliation is rejected by Scaliger. Firstly, he

17. This identification also appears in *EE*, fol. 257^r (*ex. 188, sec. 1*). He there cites Hippocrates, *Airs Waters Places*, ch. 22 (in his *Œuvres complètes*, ed. É. Littré, 10 vols, Paris 1839–61, II, p. 78, lines 1–2); *Epidemics*, VI.5.1 (*ibid.*, v, p. 314, lines 5–8); *Regimen*, I.11 (*ibid.*, VI, p. 486, lines 20–21). On his reading of the Hippocratic corpus see K. L. Haugen, 'Aristotle My Beloved: Diagnosis, and the Dreams of Julius Caesar Scaliger', *Renaissance Quarterly*, LX, 2007, pp. 819–51; H. Hirai, 'Lecture néoplatonicienne d'Hippocrate chez Fernel, Cardan et Gemma', in *Pratique et pensée médicales à la Renaissance*, ed. J. Vons, Paris 2009, pp. 241–56 (248–49). For Scaliger's conception of God's infinite and ordinary power see *EE*, fol. 475^r (*ex. 365, sec. 8*). Sennert derives this conception from Scaliger; see

Daniel Sennert, *Hypomnemata physica*, Frankfurt 1636, p. 232 (*Hypomnemata*, 4, ch. 7); Newman (as in n. 4), p. 152 n. 60. On the scholastic distinction between these two powers see A. Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*, Princeton, NJ 1986, pp. 117–45.

18. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, II.8 (290a30–b8).

19. *EE*, fol. 121^r (*ex. 77, sec. 5*).

20. *EE*, fol. 95^r (*ex. 61, sec. 3*). He quotes *Timaeus*, 29e4–30a5. On various interpretations of this passage see M. Baltes, *Die Weltentstehung des Platonischen Timaios nach den antiken Interpreten*, 2 vols, Leiden 1976, I, passim; R. Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Ithaca 1983, pp. 268–76.

claims, the wording in the *Timaeus* clearly indicates that Plato endorses the temporal beginning of the world. It is, therefore, incorrect to interpret his cosmogony as denying pre-existing matter or temporal Creation. Secondly and more importantly, Aristotle does not deny the divine Creation of the world.²² From here on, Scaliger concentrates on elucidating Aristotle's view. But before looking into his arguments more closely, it is worth noting that he elsewhere admits that Aristotle considers the world to be eternal, an idea which conflicts with Christian teaching about temporal Creation.²³ Scaliger thinks that this is the only point where Aristotle deviates from the Christian faith.

His discussion in *ex.* 65 begins by affirming that Aristotle's God is the efficient cause of the universe. As we have seen, the same view is also presented in *ex.* 72. This time, however, Scaliger uses different sources: *On Generation and Corruption*, in which Aristotle says that 'God completed the whole [universe] by making generation continuous'; and the *Problems*, which states that 'God has given us two instruments within ourselves, which enable us to use internal (ἐντὸς) instruments.'²⁴ Scaliger interprets these passages as indicating that, in Aristotle's opinion, both the world and human beings were made by God. The former passage was already used in Philoponus's commentary for the same purpose.²⁵

Scaliger then goes so far as to derive the doctrine of Creation *ex nihilo* from Aristotle. He does this by referring to *On the Heavens*, in which Aristotle says that generation and corruption occur when primary qualities are transformed into their contraries (e.g., hot into cold). In the celestial realm, however, there is no quality which has a contrary; therefore, no generation and corruption can be observed in the heavens.²⁶ Here, Aristotle is arguing for the eternity of the heavens; he does not mention the generation of the world, let alone Creation *ex nihilo*. How, then, does Scaliger use this Aristotelian argument to achieve his aim? This is what he writes:

But the words of Averroes [on this passage of Aristotle] are divine. He says: 'Aristotle does not say that the heavens cannot be generated at all, but that they cannot be generated in the way we usually say, that is, from a contrary [quality] and a pre-existing substrate. For those who consider the heavens to be the first cause say that they cannot be generated at all. But those who say that they were created by the first cause say otherwise.' [Averroes] argues in this way. Therefore, he wishes to interpret Aristotle as saying that the heavens were created by the first cause. Aristotle, he says, does not deny that there is generation in the heavens, but only this type of generation familiar to our [sublunary] world, which occurs in a substrate and from a contrary. Would a Christian say something different? Averroes understood from this reasoning that the heavens had been made out of nothing; for what is generated, but not from a contrary or in a substrate, must have been generated out of nothing. But this could only be brought about by an infinite being. Therefore, by God, for he alone is infinite. Therefore, God is the maker of the world according to Aristotle as well.²⁷

21. Since Bessarion holds a similar opinion, he may be one of Scaliger's targets; see Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis*, ed. Mohler (as in n. 1), II, p. 112.

22. *EE*, fol. 95^r (*ex.* 61, *sec.* 3).

23. *EE*, fol. 93^v (*ex.* 61, *sec.* 2).

24. Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption*, II.10 (336b31–32); Ps.-Aristotle, *Problems*, xxx.5 (955b23–25). Scaliger does not question the authenticity of the *Problems*.

25. Philoponus, *In Aristotelis libros De generatione et corruptione commentaria*, ed. G. Vitelli, Berlin 1897, p. 297, lines 14–15 [tr. I. Kupreeva in Philoponus, *On Aristotle's 'On Coming-to-be and Perishing 2.5–11'*, Ithaca 2005, p. 91].

26. Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, I.3 (270a12–18).

27. *EE*, fol. 95^{r-v} (*ex.* 61, *sec.* 3): 'Averrois autem verba divina sunt. Non dicit, inquit, non esse generabile simpliciter: sed hoc modo, quem vulgo dicimus:

To my mind, this statement presents one of the most striking textual interpretations in the *Exercitationes*. Aristotle says that the heavens are not subject to generation. This claim is interpreted by Averroes to mean that they are not generated in an ordinary manner, but in a special way by the divine first principle. Although Averroes's reading does not necessarily endorse the doctrine of Creation *ex nihilo*, Scaliger imposes on it a decisive Christian twist by maintaining that things which were made neither in the substrate nor from the contrary quality must have been created out of nothing by God. Scaliger's account is thus based on a double interpretation of Aristotle: one given by Averroes, the other he himself adds from a Christian viewpoint. It is true that he does not directly attribute the notion of Creation *ex nihilo* to Aristotle. But through skilful manoeuvring, he succeeds in portraying the philosophy of Aristotle as much more compatible with Christianity than that of Plato.

The Trinity

Along with Creation, the Trinity was another issue where Renaissance Platonists brought about a harmonisation between the doctrine of Plato and that of Christianity. For example, Bessarion taught that Plato and Neoplatonists such as Plotinus, Porphyry and Amelius afforded important insights into this mystery, even if their doctrines should never be identified with the true Christian teaching.²⁸ This position was taken over by Ficino, whose discussion of the divine hypostases exerted a vast influence on subsequent generations of philosophers. Although his views were rejected by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94), they were accepted by the French physician Jean Fernel (1497–1558), whose *On the Hidden Causes of Things* (Paris 1548) Scaliger criticised in the *Exercitationes*.²⁹ Donatus should also be mentioned here, since he argued that Platonic philosophy and Christianity had similar conceptions about the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity.³⁰

quippe et e contrario, et subiecto praeexistente. Nam qui putant caelum esse primam causam, dicunt esse non generabile simpliciter. At non sic ii, qui dicunt ipsum esse creatum a prima causa. Ad hunc modum ille. Igitur vult apud Aristotelem esse creatum a prima causa: quem ait, non negare in eo generationem: sed nostratrem hanc generationem, quae fit et in subiecto, et e contrario. Quid aliud diceret Christianus? Etenim hac ratione e nihilo factum esse, intellexit. Nam quod est generatum, neque generatum est e contrario, neque in subiecto: necesse est, e nihilo generatum esse. Hoc autem non nisi ab infinito fieri potest. Ergo a deo. Solus enim infinitus est. Ergo deus effector mundi etiam apud Aristotelem.' Averroes, *Commentum magnum super libro De celo et mundo* (as in n. 10), pp. 36–37.

28. Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis*, ed. Mohler (as in n. 1), II, pp. 92–104. He quotes: Plato, *Republic*, VI (506d–509b); Ps.-Plato, *Epinomis*, 986c–d, *Letter II*, 312e, and *Letter VII*, 323c–d; Plotinus, *Enneads*, v.1.6 (lines 38–44), v.1.6 (line 50)–v.1.7 (line 2), v.1.8 (lines 1–10); Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Julian*, 1.47 (on Porphyry); Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, XI.19 (on Amelius). See Mohler, *ibid.*, I, pp. 371–73.

29. M. J. B. Allen, 'Marsilio Ficino on Plato, the Neoplatonists and the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity', *Renaissance Quarterly*, xxxvii, 1984, pp. 555–84; *idem*, 'The Second Ficino-Pico Controversy: Parmenidean Poetry, Eristic and the One', in *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone: studi e documenti*, ed. G. C. Garfagnini, Florence 1986, pp. 417–55; H. Hirai, *Le concept de semence dans les théories de la matière à la Renaissance: de Marsile Ficin à Pierre Gassendi*, Turnhout 2005, pp. 97–99. Scaliger's attack on Fernel is found in *EE*, fols 13^r–14^r (ex. 6, sec. 5). See L. A. Deer, 'Academic Theories of Generation in the Renaissance: The Contemporaries and Successors of Jean Fernel (1497–1558)', Ph.D. thesis, Warburg Institute, University of London 1980, p. 454.

30. Donatus, *Differentia* (as in n. 8), fol. 17^v. For other thinkers see E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, rev. edn, Oxford 1980, pp. 241–55. On the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity in 17th-century natural philosophy see K. Sakamoto, 'German Hercules's Heir: Pierre Gassendi's Reception of Keplerian Ideas', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, LXX, 2009, pp. 69–91.

Taking into consideration all of these discussions by Renaissance Platonists, we can readily understand why Scaliger's account of the Trinity, which is found in *ex. 365 sec. 3*, begins with a criticism of the Neoplatonists. According to him, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblicus and Proclus are right in positing the three hypostases of the One, Intellect and Soul, for these three substances can be identified with the three persons of the Trinity. The Neoplatonists, however, deviate from the true religion in introducing a relationship of higher and lower into their hypostases, since Christian theology teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all coequal.³¹

By contrast, the 'divine' Aristotle, Scaliger says, has a correct understanding of the Trinity. In the *Metaphysics*, he says that God thinks only about himself, and consequently his thought and its object are the same.³² For Scaliger, the object of God's thought is nothing other than the Son of God. Aristotle thus rightly considers the first two hypostases to be equal in their essence. Scaliger then takes up the third person. In his opinion, when God thinks about the object of his thought, he produces the Holy Spirit, which functions as a bond between the other two hypostases and is equal to them in rank. In this way, Scaliger establishes that Aristotle, unlike the Neoplatonists, conceives the three persons of the Trinity as be equal to one another. He then concludes the section by stating:

This divine man [Aristotle], having reached an understanding of these things beyond human capacity, even connected human nature with the deity. Therefore, those slaves of little reading should at last stop preferring Plato to him in divine matters. In the first book of the *Politics*, too, [Aristotle] makes God himself of the same kind as us. He says that God generated us and that he is our father; he differs from us only in his superior nature. 'Therefore, when calling Zeus "father of the gods and men", Homer appropriately named him, who is the king of them all. For a king should be different [from his subjects] in respect of nature, but he should be the same in respect of kind, and such is the relationship of elder to younger, of father to son.'³³

Scaliger again Christianises Aristotle in a very surprising way. In the *Politics*, Aristotle argues that the relationship between a king and his subjects is the same as that between a father and his son, and that therefore Homer is right to call Zeus the 'father of the gods and men'. Aristotle here thinks of the Homeric Zeus merely as an example of a king. He does not concern himself with theological implications. It is Scaliger who attaches a decisive religious dimension to the original argument, maintaining that the Homeric Zeus in the *Politics* can be equated to the Christian God, that is, the Father in the Trinity. Since Aristotle argues for the common nature of father and son, he correctly understands the coexistence of divine and human nature in the Son of God. 'Therefore, those slaves of little reading should at last stop preferring Plato to him [Aristotle] in divine matters.'

31. *EE*, fols 472^v–73^r (*ex. 365, sec. 3*).

32. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.7 (1072b18–21).

33. *EE*, fol. 473^r (*ex. 365, sec. 3*): 'Haec ille vir divinus cum supra humanum captum apprehendisset: etiam humanam coniunxit naturam cum deitate. Ut ei tandem in divinis rebus anteferebat Platonem desinant ista mancipia paucae lectionis. In primo etiam Politicorum eiusdem generis cum genere nostro deum

ipsum facit: aitque eum genuisse nos: et esse patrem nostrum. Excellentiore tantum natura esse. διὸ καλῶς Ὅμηρος τὸν Δία προσηγόρευσεν, εἰπὼν, πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε, θεῶν τε, τὸν βασιλέα τούτων ἀπάντων. φύσει γὰρ τὸν βασιλέα διαφέρειν μὲν δεῖ, τῷ γένει δ' εἶναι τὸν αὐτόν. ὅπερ πέπονθε τὸ πρεσβύτερον πρὸς τὸ νεώτερον, καὶ ὁ γεννήσας πρὸς τὸ τέκνον [Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.12 (1259b12–17)].'

Prisca theologia

Scaliger argued that Aristotle held much sounder opinions than Plato concerning Creation and the Trinity. For modern readers, his arguments might seem unconvincing and even rather odd. For example, he used Averroes's interpretation to derive the doctrine of Creation *ex nihilo* from Aristotle; but it is known that this doctrine was, in fact, rejected by Averroes.³⁴ As for the Trinity, the passages Scaliger took from the *Metaphysics* and *Politics* do not mention the divine hypostases. In the history of Aristotelianism, however, his discussion was not as unconventional as it might at first appear. Albert the Great (c. 1200–80) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–74), for instance, taught that Aristotle had believed in the Creation of the world by God. Thomas even used the maxim in *On the Heavens*, 'God and nature make nothing in vain', for the same purpose.³⁵ In the fifteenth century, in opposition to contemporary Platonists such as Plethon and Bessarion, George of Trebizond (1395/96–1472/73) attributed to Aristotle not only the notion of Creation but also of the Trinity.³⁶ Given Scaliger's enormous erudition, it is natural to suppose that he knew the opinions of these earlier philosophers. Did Scaliger follow them? Were there no characteristics in his Aristotelianism which distinguished him from his predecessors?

A clue for settling these questions can be found in Scaliger's discussion of Plato's *Timaeus*, again in *ex. 65 sec. 3*. As we have seen, this section contains his criticism of the Platonic cosmogony. But before this, he explains that the *Timaeus* contains a number of passages which were not written by Plato because, in composing the dialogue, he relied on *On the Nature of the Universe and Soul* by the Pythagorean Timaeus of Locri. Although this treatise was actually written long after Plato's death, in the Renaissance it was believed to be one of the main sources from which he learned Pythagorean doctrines.³⁷ Believing that Plato used it as a guide in writing his *Timaeus*, Scaliger thought that the dialogue contained many elements from Chaldean and Egyptian literature, since Pythagoras was famous for his association with the wisdom of those peoples.³⁸ As we shall see below, in addition to Timaeus of Locri's work, Scaliger considered that Plato had incorporated the words of other ancient sages in the dialogue.

Scaliger goes on to argue that the passage in the *Timaeus* stating that '[God] brought forth that self-sufficient, most perfect god' was not written by Plato himself, but could be traced back to an ancient saying.³⁹ He surprisingly claims that Plato

34. B. S. Kogan, *Averroes and the Metaphysics of Causation*, Albany 1985, pp. 215–21.

35. Albert the Great, *Physica*, VIII.1.4, in his *Opera omnia*, IV, *Physica: pars II libri 5–8*, ed. P. Hossfeld, Münster in W. 1993, p. 557, lines 14–16. Albert's view, however, is somewhat ambiguous; I am grateful to Adam Takahashi, who discussed this point with me and intends to address it in a future publication. For the relevant passages in Thomas Aquinas, see M. F. Johnson, 'Did St. Thomas Attribute a Doctrine of Creation to Aristotle?', *New Scholasticism*, LXIII, 1989, pp. 129–55.

36. George of Trebizond, *Comparationes phylosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis*, Venice 1523 (facs. repr.

Frankfurt 1965), sig. D3^v–4^r (II.3), sig. [G6^r–7^r] (II.7), sig. I1^v (II.10); see also his *On the Glory of the Autocrat*, in *Collectanea Trapezuntiana: Texts, Documents, and Bibliographies of George of Trebizond*, ed. J. Monfasani, Binghamton, NY 1984, pp. 533–36; and Monfasani (as in n. 1), pp. 157–58, 161; Hankins (as in n. 1), I, pp. 243–44.

37. M. J. B. Allen, 'Marsilio Ficino's Interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus* and Its Myth of the Demiurge', in *Supplementum Festivum: Studies in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. J. Hankins, J. Monfasani and F. Purnell, Jr, Binghamton, NY 1987, pp. 399–439 (407–08).

38. *EE*, fol. 94^v (*ex. 61, sec. 3*); Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, VIII.3.

39. Plato, *Timaeus*, 68c3–4.

transcribed this passage without understanding its true meaning, wrongly assuming that this 'self-sufficient' god was the world made by God. Since, however, the world cannot continue to exist without the first god, it is not self-sufficient. What, then, is the real meaning of this second god? Scaliger says:

When Plato read these things [about the self-sufficient god] in the writings of the ancient prophets and Sibyls, who had prophesied about Lord Jesus, the Son of the living God, he did not recognise the Son himself; he showed us instead another, supposititious son [i.e., the world].⁴⁰

Remarkably, Scaliger contends that the *Timaeus* contains an implicit reference to Jesus Christ, for the term 'the self-sufficient god' was originally used, according to him, by the ancient prophets to mean the Son of God.⁴¹ But Plato was so blind to the revealed truth that he mistook it for the world. Therefore, 'Plato's words denote much more than he could grasp in his mind.'⁴² In Scaliger's eyes, Platonic philosophy incorporated Christian truth without understanding it.

The relationship between Christianity and ancient paganism is further developed in *ex.* 365 *sec.* 4. In the latter half of this section, various ancient conceptions of God are enumerated. Scaliger begins by referring to that of Plato, who thinks that the world is a god, and to Hermes Trismegistus, who calls the heavens a 'sensible god'.⁴³ What is important for us comes next. According to Plutarch, Zoroaster compared God to light. Scaliger believes that this opinion agrees with Christian teaching, for Jesus called himself 'light'.⁴⁴ He then turns to Pythagoras, who described God as the giver of life. To reconcile this idea with Christian theology, Scaliger first says that, according to the sages, life is made from fire in light. He then adds that in the Scriptures, the Son of God was nothing but light and that God appeared before Moses in the form of fire. Thus, the Pythagorean conception of God as the giver of life is in accordance with that of Christianity.⁴⁵ After enumerating further examples, at the end of this chain of reasoning, Scaliger finally refers to Aristotle's opinion:

We see in the second book of *On Generation [and Corruption]* that God is the maker of everything according to Aristotle: 'God completed the whole [universe] by making generation continuous'. Is this one who completes not also the one who makes? ... Indeed, those ancient [sages] covered everything with veils which were designed to mask things. Pythagoras not only overlaid all this with obscure codes, but also undertook to envelop it by enjoining a lengthy silence [on his pupils], so that it would not be contaminated by profane thoughtlessness. Therefore, Trismegistus, from the books of the Chaldeans, hinted that fire, too, is God, since he attributed the Creation of other elements to fire. He writes as follows: 'Air is made from water through purification which is effected by fire'; for he was not so ignorant of the nature of things that he regarded one element as the maker of another. Thus, the sages interpreted fire in that passage to mean God.⁴⁶

40. *EE*, fol. 94^v (*ex.* 61, *sec.* 3): 'Haec igitur cum legisset apud veteres prophetas, ac Sibyllas, de domino Iesu filio dei vivi, vaticinantes: neque filium ipsum agnosceret, alium subditicium ostentavit nobis'.

41. For the Christian interpretation of the Sibylline prophecy see H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity*, London 1988, pp. 152–73.

42. *EE*, fol. 94^v (*ex.* 61, *sec.* 3): 'Platonis verba plus designare, quam quantum ille poterat animo concipere.'

43. Plato, *Timaeus*, 55d; *Asclepius*, 3. For Justus Lipsius see H. Hirai, 'L'âme du monde chez Juste

Lipse entre la théologie cosmique romaine et la *prisca theologia* renaissante', *Revue des sciences philosophique et théologique*, XCIII, 2009, pp. 251–73.

44. Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 46; John 8.12, 9.5, 12.46.

45. *EE*, fol. 474^r (*ex.* 365, *sec.* 4); Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, VI.72.4 (on the Pythagorean God as πύρως); Exodus 3.2.

46. *EE*, fol. 474^r (*ex.* 365, *sec.* 4): 'Quod vero sit effector omnium rerum apud Aristotelem: videmus in secundo De generatione. συνεπλήρωσε τὸ ὅλον ὁ θεός

According to Scaliger, Aristotle recognised Christian doctrines such as Creation and the Trinity. The truth was known not only by him, however. It was shared among the ancient sages who came before him: Zoroaster, Pythagoras and Hermes Trismegistus had a correct understanding of God, even though it was not expressed explicitly.

This belief is now called the ‘ancient theology’ (*prisca theologia*) by historians.⁴⁷ It was revived by Ficino in the second half of the fifteenth century and was disseminated mainly among Platonists. Scaliger also held this belief; however, unlike Renaissance Platonists, he did not consider that the tradition of ancient wisdom had culminated in Platonic philosophy. He claimed instead that Plato had misunderstood the truth announced by previous sages concerning the Son of God. By contrast, Aristotle shared theological doctrines with them which were compatible with Christianity. It is his acceptance of the *prisca theologia*, which was closely associated with Renaissance Platonism, that distinguishes Scaliger’s Aristotelianism from that of Aristotle’s previous followers such as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

James Hankins has argued that George of Trebizond also believed in the *prisca theologia*.⁴⁸ Was his work perhaps a direct source of Scaliger’s Aristotelianism? It is true that, in George’s opinion, Aristotle was sent to the world by divine providence to prepare the pagan mind for the Advent of Christ. This explains why he believed that a kind of Christian truth had been divulged to Aristotle. To the best of my knowledge, however, George never rated the ancient pagan sages such as Zoroaster and Hermes Trismegistus so highly that they were said to have approached Christian revelation. This absence of the genealogy of the ancient sages distinguishes his *prisca theologia* from that of Ficino and Scaliger. Therefore, although the possible influence of George should not be dismissed, it is reasonable to conclude that Scaliger’s belief in the *prisca theologia* was ultimately the result of the doctrine’s revival by Ficino.

Conclusion

We have examined how Scaliger attributed the notion of Creation and the Trinity to Aristotle. According to him, it could be demonstrated, from Aristotle’s own works and those of his ancient Greek commentators, that he accepted the doctrine of Creation; and he argued that Aristotle also had a correct understanding of the Trinity on the

ἐνδελεχῇ ποιήσας τὴν γένεσιν. Nonne est hic πληρωτὴρ, καὶ ποιητής? ... Et sane rerum involucris omnia operta sunt a priscis illis. Quae non solum obduxit notarum obscuritate Pythagoras, sed etiam diuturno silentio curavit involuenda: ne prophanis temeritatibus contaminarentur. Ergo Trimegistus e Chaldaeorum libris ignem quoque deum innuit. Quando igni attribuit aliorum elementorum creationem. Scribit ille sic: aerem ex aqua factum per defaecationem, cuius autor ignis sit. Non enim tam nescius rerum naturae fuit: ut elementi elementum faceret opificem. Quare ignem ibi pro deo sapientes sunt interpretati,’ Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption*, II.10 (336b31–32); *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. R. Majercik, Leiden 1989, fr. 10 = Michael Psellus, *Opuscula psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, in his *Philosophica minora*, ed. D. J. O’Meara, 2 vols, Leipzig 1989, II, p. 142, line 20; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of*

Eminent Philosophers, VIII.10. The passage attributed to Hermes Trismegistus is not found in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, *Asclepius*, *De sex rerum principiis* (ed. P. Lucentini, Turnhout 2006), or in the works included in *Astrologica et divinatoria*, ed. G. Bos et al., Turnhout 2001.

47. See C. B. Schmitt, ‘Perennial Philosophy from Agostino Steuco to Leibniz’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXVII, 1966, pp. 505–32; Walker (as in n. 1); M. J. B. Allen, *Synoptic Art: Marsilio Ficino on the History of Platonic Interpretation*, Florence 1998, pp. 1–49; W. Schmidt-Biggemann, *Philosophia perennis: Historische Umrisse abendländischer Spiritualität in Antike, Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Frankfurt 1998.

48. Hankins (as in n. 1), II, pp. 445–48; but George’s position on the *prisca theologia* merits further investigation.

basis of the *Metaphysics* and *Politics*. By contrast, he claimed that Plato's philosophy was incompatible with Christianity on both issues: the generation of the world from pre-existing matter and the postulation of a hierarchy among the hypostases were, in Scaliger's opinion, irreligious. My account of Scaliger's views on these topics has shown how deeply his Aristotelianism was conditioned by the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the time. This explains why his discussions of these matters were mostly conducted on grounds far removed from his criticism of Cardano's *De subtilitate*. On these theological issues, his main adversary was not the Milanese physician, but the Platonists of his day.

My analysis has also highlighted a new dimension which distinguishes Renaissance Aristotelianism from medieval scholasticism. This point can be clearly observed in the debates over the Trinity. As Bessarion pointed out, Thomas Aquinas and his followers did not search for any traces of this Christian dogma in Aristotle.⁴⁹ The arguments adduced by George of Trebizond and Scaliger on this matter were new doctrinal elements introduced into Aristotelianism in order to oppose contemporary Platonists. Likewise, Scaliger's belief in the *prisca theologia*, revived by the Florentine Platonist Ficino, illustrates well not only the tension but also the interaction between the two major philosophical currents. For Scaliger, ancient sages such as Zoroaster, the Sibyls, Hermes Trismegistus and Pythagoras recognised the revealed truth of Christianity. This assumption made it possible for him to number Aristotle among those sages.⁵⁰ It is true that Scaliger was not the first to attempt to reconcile Aristotle and Christianity by drawing on the *prisca theologia*. The same strategy had already been adopted by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (c. 1455–1536) about half a century before. Lefèvre, however, considering philosophy as a first step towards theology, devoted his later career to biblical studies. Consequently, unlike Scaliger, he did not leave behind a philosophical masterpiece which had a decisive impact on the subsequent development of Aristotelianism.⁵¹ Taking these points into consideration, Scaliger's philosophy offers us an important insight into the complex relationship between Platonism and Aristotelianism in the sixteenth century, a field which generally remains to be explored.⁵²

I would like to close this article by looking at two criticisms: one is specifically directed against Scaliger himself, the other against Aristotelians in general. In 1641, Paganino Gaudenzi (1595–1649) published a treatise attacking Scaliger for distorting Aristotelian philosophy. He claimed that the *Exercitationes* attributed many non-Peripatetic ideas to Aristotle. Such notions included the doctrines of Creation *ex nihilo* and the Trinity. Because of the incorporation of these Christian teachings,

49. Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis*, ed. Mohler (as in n. 1), II, p. 92. On Thomas Aquinas's opinion about the Trinity see, e.g., G. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Oxford 2007.

50. On the presence of the *prisca theologia* in Renaissance Aristotelianism see C. B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, Cambridge, MA 1983, pp. 95–98.

51. E. F. Rice, Jr, 'Humanist Aristotelianism in France: Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and His Circle', in *Humanism in France at the End of the Middle Ages and in the Early Renaissance*, ed. A. H. T. Levi, Manchester 1970, pp. 132–49. It may be more profitable to compare

Scaliger with Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, but further study on Pico is necessary; see C. B. Schmitt, *Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) and His Critique of Aristotle*, The Hague 1967, pp. 56–63; I also obtained useful information from D. Robichaud, 'The Proximity of the Platonists to Christian Theology', paper presented at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, Los Angeles 2009.

52. Several case studies can be found in H. Hirai, *Medical Humanism and Natural Philosophy in the Renaissance*, Leiden [forthcoming in 2011].

Gaudenzi claimed, Scaliger's philosophy lost its coherence.⁵³ A similar criticism was expressed by Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). In his dialogue on the two world systems, the Aristotelian interlocutor Simplicio says:

[In reading Aristotle, we] must be able to combine this passage with that, collecting together one text here and another very distant from it. There is no doubt that whoever has this skill will be able to draw from his books demonstrations of all that can be known; for every single thing is in them.⁵⁴

Although this famous sarcasm was directed against contemporary Aristotelians, Scaliger was among those ridiculed: the notebooks of the young Galileo contain references to the *Exercitationes*;⁵⁵ and, before launching an attack on Aristotelian physics in his mature works, he studied Scaliger's treatise carefully.⁵⁶

These criticisms by Gaudenzi and Galileo are clear indications of Aristotelianism's decline. For them, the reconciliation of Aristotle's philosophy with Christianity was no longer an indispensable task, but rather signalled a lack of critical acumen. One of the most important issues that had traditionally been addressed since the Middle Ages was losing its validity. In this changed intellectual climate, Scaliger's philosophy could not maintain its prominent position. His work suffered the same fate as the philosophical current to which it belonged.

Despite its later rejection, Scaliger's attempt at reconciling Aristotelianism with Christianity still has historical significance. It was precisely on the basis of this reconciliation that he built his unique interpretations of Aristotle, which would have a perceptible influence on the next generation of intellectuals. Particularly important in this respect are his ideas about forms and celestial intellects. Scaliger developed these theories from a theological perspective. His doctrine of the celestial intellects was accepted by Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) in his early years; and his account of forms was incorporated in the atomism of Sennert, its echo finally sounding in the epigraph of *The Origine of Formes and Qualities* by Robert Boyle (1627–91).⁵⁷ Without understanding the theological dimension of Scaliger's Aristotelianism, we cannot grasp how his ideas were received in the changed intellectual setting of the early seventeenth century, which was to pave the way for the 'New Philosophy'. Delving into this period, however, will have to be carried out in another study.

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53. Paganino Gaudenzi, *De nonnullis quae non Peripatetice dixisse videtur J. C. Scaliger in opere De subtilitate: excursio exoterica*, in his *De Pythagoraea animarum transmigratione ...*, Pisa 1641, pp. 200 (ch. 1), 217–18 (ch. 10; on the Trinity), 219–21 (ch. 12; on Creation *ex nihilo*). On Gaudenzi see Lüthy, 'An Aristotelian Watchdog' (as in n. 4), p. 548.

54. Galileo Galilei, *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo, Tolemaico e Copernicano*, ed. O. Besomi and M. Helbing, 2 vols, Padua 1998, I, p. 117 ('Giornata seconda'): '... bisogna ... saper combinar questo passo con quello, accozzar questo testo con un altro remotissimo; che e' non è dubbio che chi averà questa pratica saprà cavar da' suoi libri le dimostrazioni di ogni scibile, perché in essi è ogni cosa'. English version

from *Dialogue concerning the Two Chief World Systems: Ptolemaic and Copernican*, tr. S. Drake, Berkeley 1953, p. 108.

55. Galileo Galilei, *Le opere*, ed. A. Favaro, 20 vols, Florence 1890–1909, I, pp. 76–77, 161, 412.

56. Galileo's reading of Scaliger merits further investigation.

57. Johannes Kepler, *Mysterium cosmographicum*, 2nd edn, in his *Gesammelte Werke*, VIII, ed. F. Hammer, Munich 1963, p. 113; Sennert (as in n. 17), p. 217 (*Hypomnemata* 4, ch. 6); Robert Boyle, *The Origine of Formes and Qualities*, in his *Works*, ed. M. Hunter and E. B. Davis, 14 vols, London 1999, v, p. 339. I am currently preparing a study on Scaliger's theory of celestial intellects.