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WHO WRITES THE HISTORY OF THE ROMANS? AGENCY AND CAUSALITY IN NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS' *HISTORIA RHŌMAÏKĒ*

Abstract

The present article inquires into the philosophical conceptions of spontaneity and chance, fate and necessity, free will and divine providence employed by Nikephoros Gregoras (d. ca. 1360) in his historiographical project *Historia Rhōmaikē*. Based on examples from Gregoras' letters, *First Antirrhetics* and his *History*, the author argues that Gregoras drew on Aristotle and Ptolemy for his views on chance and spontaneity, whereas with respect to historical agency and causality, he emphasized the role of the free individual will which he understood as independent from necessity and fate and reconciled with divine foreknowledge.

Keywords: Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historia Rhōmaikē*, Byzantine historiography, agency, causality, spontaneity, chance, fate, free will, divine providence

In 1981, Roger Scott, following the studies of imitation in Byzantine historiography and literature by Moravcsik¹ and Hunger,² problematized himself the classicizing character of Byzantine history writing.³ Notably, he stated that “there is still an important general question which has not been discussed, and that is whether the Byzantine historians continued the tradition of the classical Greek historians in their approach to their subject and in their methods and concept of history”.⁴ Further, he argued that “the Byzantine approach to the writing of history after the seventh century was fundamentally different from that of the classical Greek historians”⁵ and the main divergence consisted in “the intrusion of the author’s person into the subject”.⁶ Notably, however, Byzantine historians inherited a number of concerns their ancient and late-antique

counterparts were preoccupied with, among them, the engagement with historical causality.⁷ Thus, a number of Byzantine historians explored the notions of spontaneity (*to automaton*), chance and fortune (*tychē*), fate (*heimarmenē*), divine providence (*pronoia*), and free will or choice (*proairesis*) as principles of historical causation and, in so doing, imitated, emulated, and, in some cases, innovated a theme prominently featured in 'classical' models such as Thucydides and Polybius.⁸ Scott himself pointed out that in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, for instance, a number of features distinctive for the classical historians are present, such as "the apparent stress on *tyche*, chance or fate, as an important factor in causation"⁹ and that "though it would be going too far to equate the role of Christianity in Anna's work with that of *tyche* in say, Thucydides or Polybius, it is still fair to claim that Anna does not often let Christianity interfere with her interpretation of events, but rather she uses the judgement of God as a way of reinforcing an interpretation which she will have already made in purely human terms".¹⁰ Conversely, despite incorporating a number of classicizing features in his *History*, George Akropolites (1217–1282),¹¹ for instance, distinguished himself from classicizing authors who emphasize the role of *tychē* in order to explain causes of events. As Macrides pointed out, Akropolites did not attribute special importance neither to *tychē*¹² nor to divine providence, but rather to kinship: "Divine providence does play a role in Akropolites' understanding and interpretation of events but its role is modest except in Palaiologan affairs. It would not be an exaggeration to say that kinship is adduced more readily and more commonly by Akropolites as a cause of events than is God."¹³ Nikephoros Gregoras (d. ca. 1360) and John Kantakouzenos (ca. 1292–1383),¹⁴ on the other hand, approached spontaneity (*to automaton*), chance or fortune (*tychē*), divine providence, human free will, or necessity (*anankē*) as prominent causal principles in the history of humankind. According to Kazhdan, for instance, Kantakouzenos presented *tychē* as instable, inconstant, and incomprehensible and divine providence as rarely revealed to humankind, thus leading to the misconception that spontaneity is in fact the cause of events, since no other could be discerned. In addition, Kazhdan demonstrated an important feature of Kantakouzenos' narrative, namely, his insistence on the role and constraint of necessity which often induced him to act against his own will.¹⁵

In his interest in spontaneity, chance, divine providence, and human free will as historical principles of causation, Gregoras inscribed himself in the tradition of classicizing historians¹⁶ alongside Pachymeres and

Kantakouzenos. In the following exposition I offer, first, a short biographical account of his life and scholarly activity as well as a short introduction into his *Roman History*. Secondly, I examine his views on spontaneity and chance and inquire after their philosophical foundations. Finally, I relate the theoretical framework, I have thus reconstructed, to discussions of chance, free will, and divine providence featured in the *History*.

The Author

Nikephoros Gregoras (ca. summer 1293/June 1294–1358/1361)¹⁷ is well-known to modern scholars as the author of a major work on Byzantine history for the period from 1204 until ca. 1359, namely the *Historia Rhōmaikē*. Recently, however, more attention has been brought to his saints' lives and homiletic works, as Gregoras was also one of the most prominent Palaiologan writers of hagiography. Theologians recognize him as a determined opponent of Palamism, while philosophers emphasize the skeptical tendencies he inherited from his mentor Theodore Metochites. He was also a prolific letter-writer and one of the few scholars in early Palaiologan Byzantium competent in mathematics and astronomy.

Gregoras was born in Hērakleia Pontikē in Asia Minor (today's Karadeniz Ereğli) and, orphaned at an early age, received his initial education by his maternal uncle John, metropolitan of Hērakleia.¹⁸ Around the age of twenty, Gregoras had already moved to Constantinople in order to continue his studies. His teacher of logic and rhetoric was the future patriarch John XIII Glykys (12 May 1315–11 May 1319),¹⁹ while by 1316, his mentor became the *megas logothetēs* Theodore Metochites (1270–1332).²⁰ Though initially reluctant, Metochites eventually initiated Gregoras in the study of astronomy. During the 1320s, besides tutoring Metochites' children, with the patronage of emperor Andronikos II (r. 1282–1328)²¹ and the support of his prime minister Metochites, Gregoras began studying Ptolemy (fl. mid-second century CE) and most probably in 1324, he proposed to Andronikos II a calendar reform related to the calculation of the date of Easter, similar to the one adopted in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII.²² In 1326, he participated in an embassy to the court of the Serbian king Stefan Uroš III Dečanski,²³ which seems to be the last time he left the Byzantine capital until the end of his life.²⁴ During the 1320s, Gregoras started forming a scholarly circle at the monastery of Chora where he taught the disciplines of the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry,

astronomy, and music), as he himself related in his *Letter* 114 addressed to Kaloeidas,²⁵ while establishing his network and gaining prestige at court. After 1324 and before 1328, he had already composed the first redaction of his treatise on the construction of the astrolabe.²⁶ Moreover, the *meγas logothetēs* Metochites bequeathed his personal library to the Chora monastery and publicly appointed Gregoras as its “defender and protector”.²⁷ In 1328, following the abdication of Andronikos II on May 28, Gregoras shared the downfall of the elderly emperor and his senior minister Metochites. As a supporter of Andronikos II in the civil war of 1321–1328, his possessions were confiscated. He was, nevertheless, allowed to remain in the capital, unlike his mentor Metochites who was exiled to Didymoteichon whence he returned to Constantinople in 1330 and ended his life as the monk Theoleptos at the monastery of Christ Saviour of Chora two years later. It is in the late 1320s and early 1330s that Gregoras started seeking new patrons, such as the *meγas domestikos* John Kantakouzenos, the future emperor John VI (r. 1347–1354), to whom he probably dedicated his commentary on Synesios’ *On Dreams*.²⁸ Later in the 1330s, Gregoras succeeded in establishing himself as the leading philosopher and astronomer at the court of Andronikos III (r. 1328–1341),²⁹ Andronikos II’s grandson. At some point between 1332 and 1335 Gregoras published the second redaction of his work on the construction of the astrolabe. Importantly, in the 1330s Gregoras composed and circulated his Platonicizing dialogue *Phlorentios, or, On Wisdom* (ca. 1337),³⁰ this dialogue being, as well as Gregoras’ correspondence, the major witness for the debate over astronomical and philosophical issues between the latter and Barlaam the Calabrian. A number of scholars have viewed the dialogue *Phlorentios*, together with the other dialogue authored by Gregoras, namely *Philomathēs, or, On Arrogant People*, as well as the calculations of lunar and solar eclipses, such as the solar eclipse of May 14, 1333,³¹ the *Response to Those who Claim that There Is No Humility Among Men*, better-known as *Antilogia*,³² a number of Gregoras’ letters dealing with astronomical matters, and parts of the *History* as evidence for the polemic over astronomy, harmonics, philosophy between Gregoras and Barlaam the Calabrian and have dated the texts correspondingly. The public debate between the two erudites held at the palace of the *meγas domestikos* John Kantakouzenos which allegedly took place³³ and was later reported by Gregoras in the *Phlorentios* has been dated to the winter of 1331–1332.³⁴ Finally, during the 1330s Gregoras notably emended and commented on Ptolemy’s *Harmonics*.³⁵ Subsequently, Gregoras

provided an account of these events in the first part of his *History*, namely Books I–XI, noting in addition the appearance of numerous astronomical phenomena such as comets, solar, and lunar eclipses. Though Gregoras does not give any indication as to the time when he started writing his *History*, van Dieten argued that the text of the first eleven books was already complete by 1344, while their publication probably took place at some point in 1347.³⁶ In the last two decades of his life, Gregoras entered the so-called ‘Hesychast’ controversy, a theological, political, and social phenomenon which left its mark on mid- and late fourteenth-century Byzantium and has had subsequent repercussions in the development of Orthodoxy up until today.³⁷ During the civil war of 1341–1347, Gregoras supported John Kantakouzenos’ party and kept a neutral stance as to the theological dispute between Gregory Palamas,³⁸ on the one hand, and the supporters of Barlaam the Calabrian and Gregory Akindynos on the other. Gregoras openly stated his views against Palamism only after 1346. In 1347, he became the chief of the anti-Palamite party and opposed the newly-crowned emperor John VI Kantakouzenos. It is in 1347 that Gregoras composed his *First Antirrhethics* against Palamas.³⁹ Despite his opposition to Palamism and to John VI, in 1349, following the death of patriarch Isidore, Gregoras was proposed to ascend the patriarchal throne. Nevertheless, Gregoras refused and was subsequently condemned at the local Constantinopolitan council of 1351, shortly after taking monastic vows. As a result, Gregoras was placed under house arrest at the monastery of Chora until the fall of 1354. Meanwhile, Gregoras continued writing his *History* and one of the last events he described was the death of his opponent Palamas in 1359. Thus, Gregoras’ own death has been dated to ca. 1359 or 1360. He died in Constantinople and according to the testimony of John Kyparissiotēs,⁴⁰ after his death, his corpse was mocked and dragged through the streets of Constantinople.⁴¹

The Text

Historia Rhōmaikē or *Roman History*⁴² was written and circulated in Constantinople in several installments since the 1340s and is preserved today in more than forty manuscripts five of which date to the fourteenth century. Two of them, namely, codd. Vat. gr. 164 and 165 are partially copied, annotated, and revised by Gregoras himself.⁴³ Based on the pinakes and the marginal and chapter titles in both codices, it is clear

that they were designed as an edition of the *Roman History*, Books I–XVII. The title preceding the pinax to *Vat. gr.* 165, written by Gregoras in black ink on the top of f. 1r, for instance, indicates that the volume contains eleven ‘discourses’ or books of the *History*: † νικηφόρου τοῦ γρηγοῤῥᾶ ῥωμαϊκῆς ἱστορίας λόγοι α΄. Further, the pinax entry on f. 6r, l. 14 points to the beginning of the first ‘discourse’ (or book) from the second book (or volume) of Gregoras’ *History* and further specifies that this would be the beginning of the twelfth ‘discourse’ (should we consider the work as a whole): † ἀρχὴ τοῦ α^{οῦ} λόγου τῆς β΄ βιβλίου τῆς ῥωμαϊκῆς ἱστορίας τοῦ γρηγοῤῥᾶ ἤτοι τοῦ β΄ λόγου. And indeed, the title of the beginning of Book XII on f. 249r further corroborates the impression of a multi-volume edition the two Vatican codices were conceived as: † τοῦ αὐτοῦ γρηγοῤῥᾶ ῥωμαϊκῆς ἱστορίας λόγος α΄ ἤτοι β΄ τοῦ ὅλου ὁμοῦ. Ff. 249r–253r, however, do not contain the entire Book XII; thus, *Vat. gr.* 164 opens with the beginning of Book XII and on f. 10v, l. 20 it picks off from where *Vat. gr.* 165 had left. Finally, the pinax entry at the top of f. 1r in *Vat. gr.* 164 indicating the beginning of Book XII, also introduces the first ‘discourse’ in the volume as twelfth in the context of the entire work.⁴⁴

Gregoras’ *Historia Rhōmaikē* covers the history of Byzantium from 1204 until the time of his death (ca. 1359) and consists of thirty-seven books. The text of the *History* is available in two partial Russian translations, a partial translation into modern Greek, and, importantly, in a full German translation. The two Russian translations, by Shalfeev (1862)⁴⁵ and Jashunskiy (2013)⁴⁶ both limit themselves to the first eleven books (1204–1341) of the *History*. The same is true for Dimitrios Moschos’ translation from 1997.⁴⁷ The German translation and commentary were executed for the larger part by Jan Louis van Dieten and were completed after his death by Franz Tinnefeld (1973–2007).⁴⁸ Importantly, however, a modern critical edition of the text is still unavailable,⁴⁹ thus, one ought to bear in mind that the redaction preserved in the partial autographs *codd. Vat. gr.* 164 and 165 differs from the one rendered by the existing edition from 1829–1855.

While Gregoras historiographical output is well-known to students of Byzantium, his philosophical pursuits are less so. Notably, it is his Platonizing dialogue *Phlorentios*, his *Antilogia*, the *Solutions to Philosophical Questions*, and his *Commentary on Synesios’ On Dreams* that have been in the focus of scholarly attention. It has been stated, nevertheless, that “[s]ome of his letters and a few passages of his *Roman History* touch upon philosophical subjects.”⁵⁰ While in my doctoral

dissertation,⁵¹ I argued that there is much more to be said about the philosophical importance of Gregoras' correspondence, in the present article my goal is to lay down the foundations of a larger examination of the philosophical themes he incorporated in the *History*.

Prolegomena: the *Letters*

Importantly, Gregoras considered human free will to be a fundamental historical principle, as it made possible to discern a moral action from an immoral one and consequently, to assign judgment and responsibility. Gregoras positioned God and God's providence behind the design of the concordant and harmonized universe. Gregoras, however, attributed great importance not only to divine forethought, but also to the regularity of the celestial movements and to the influence heavenly phenomena exerted on terrestrial events. Moreover, according to Gregoras, history interpreted the meaning of celestial phenomena with respect to contemporary events. Notably, Gregoras' *Historia Rhōmaikē* lists and discusses numerous astronomical events, such as solar and lunar eclipses (e.g., *History, Book IV, 8; Book IX, 12, 14; Book XI, 3*), the observation of comets (e.g., *History, Book XI, 5, 7*), or the configuration of the stars at a particular moment in time (e.g., *History, Book XI, 11*) and despite the technical scientific descriptions characteristic for Gregoras' prose, it interprets the occurrences observed in the sky as either felicitous or infelicitous. At the same time, Gregoras elaborated on the problematics of spontaneity, fortune, and providence in his *History, Book V, 6* (a discussion of divine providence), *Book VII, 4* (definition of divine forethought), and *Book XXVIII, 42–68* (discussion of determinism and free will).

Notably, Gregoras discussed the individual free will also in his correspondence where he noted its role with respect to maintaining friendship and attaining knowledge. At least two other factors, however, exerted influence on human cognitive and ethical effort, namely chance or fortune (*tychē*) and divine providence (*pronoia*). A case in point is his *Letter 134* which was written after a long interruption in the correspondence between Gregoras and Ignatios Glabas, metropolitan of Thessalonike between 1336 and 1341.⁵² According to Gregoras, Aristotle was to blame for said silence since the latter postulated equality as a condition for friendship. Importantly, Gregoras argued, should friendship be possible only for those who are equal, achieving it would become impossible due

to the fact that the souls of the friends-correspondents are governed by no other than *fortune* (*tychē*).⁵³ In the particular case of reestablishing their epistolary friendship after the change in Ignatios' fortune, namely after his ascension to the metropolitan see of Thessaloniki, Gregoras set out to describe how, despite the significant upgrade of Ignatios' situation, the newly appointed metropolitan did not alter either in terms of character, or in terms of his attitude towards Gregoras and, thus, refuted Aristotle and, moreover, demonstrated that *tychē* lacks substance and does not necessarily govern the souls of men.⁵⁴ One ought to note that *Letter 134* relates rather surprisingly Aristotelian theory of friendship with an emphasis on the strong influence *tychē* exerts on human life. Such an understanding of chance, in fact, resembles more the Stoic conception of *tychē*. Within the framework of Stoic universal causal determinism, only an imperfect rational being would perceive *tychē* as a cause, not for other reason, but because due to their imperfect understanding they would not be able to determine the actual cause. Thus, in the Stoic framework, the sage would be invulnerable to *tychē*.⁵⁵ In the closing of the letter, Gregoras argued, much along the same lines, that only the weak-minded, those who yield control of their reasoning and open room for ignorance, are prompt to attribute significance to *tychē*, since they renounce the possibility to judge for themselves the changing flow of events.⁵⁶

Another one of Gregoras' letters helps to further interpret the association of Aristotle's philosophy of friendship with the concept of *tychē* as a governing principle, that is, as a principle of causation, and serves, therefore, as a hermeneutical key for understanding Gregoras' treatment of *tychē* as a historical agent in the *History*. *Letter 42* is a didactic letter in the sense that it renders a solution to a philosophical problem posed to Gregoras by Helene Kantakouzene Palaiologina (1333–1396),⁵⁷ namely as to what is the difference between chance and spontaneity. Gregoras derived his answer from the second book of Aristotle's *Physics* in which Aristotle discusses the causes, in particular the causes that lead to change or rest of some sort (*Physics* II 3, 194b16–194b23). Thus, Aristotle famously defined four types of causes, that is, material, formal, efficient, and final. Having analyzed the latter, Aristotle proceeded by stating that chance (*tychē*) and spontaneity (*to automaton*) are also often referred to as causes and, therefore, one ought to inquire how they relate to the four causes he had previously defined and what chance and spontaneity were (*Physics* II 4, 195b31–195b36). He distinguished between them in the following way: "It is clear then that chance is an accidental cause

in the sphere of those actions for the sake of something which involve choice (*proairesis*). Thought, then, and chance are in the same sphere, for choice implies thought (*dianoia*).⁵⁸ Gregoras followed Aristotle in his differentiation between chance and spontaneity based on whether they pertain to rational or irrational beings. Aristotle, however, postulated in addition that spontaneity is the wider notion,⁵⁹ a relation which Gregoras subsequently reversed,⁶⁰ thus restricting the predication of spontaneity to irrational beings only. Such intellectual maneuver allowed Gregoras to strengthen the correlation between chance and choice and, thus, to increase the responsibility of the rational agent with respect to his or her susceptibility to the influence of *tychē*.⁶¹

The History

Importantly, Gregoras concluded this part of *Letter 42* with a remark as to the influence of chance and spontaneity over the heavenly bodies: “Democritus is wrong when he claims that ‘spontaneously the vortex arouse and a motion which separated the universe in its present order.’⁶² For neither chance, nor spontaneity has a place among those that move according to nature and possess unchangeable motion.”⁶³ The reference to the realm of the heavenly phenomena is important in the context of the present inquiry for two reasons. First, as attested by a passage in Gregoras’ *First Antirrhetics* which is repeated verbatim in the *Roman History*, Aristotle was not the unique ancient authority Gregoras drew upon when establishing his views on chance and spontaneity. Based on a *TLG* search, which in Gregoras’ case renders an incomplete sample, since not all his works are included in the database, Gregoras used the designation for fate or destiny, namely, εἰμαρμένη, ten times (once in the *Roman History*, once in *Letter 38*, two times in his *First Antirrhetics*, and six times in his *Commentary on Synesios’ On Dreams*⁶⁴), while he employed the combination of ‘chance’ and ‘spontaneity’ (τύχη and τὸ αὐτόματον) eight times (four times in the *Roman History* and four times in *Letter 42*). Of interest here is the beginning of a discourse Gregoras delivered on the request of empress Anna with the intention of refuting the arguments of a certain Latin defender of astrology. This passage invoked the notion of fate and in addition to Gregoras’ *First Antirrhetics*, it was employed also in the *History*, Book XIV, 8⁶⁵ in a description of the same episode:

And first, Ptolemy, the excellent, said that 'one should not think that all that happens to men is due to some necessity from above and that the events become unchangeable in accordance with certain fate, but that the unchangeable perpetual movement of the heavens is accomplished according to divine creation and order; indeed that the <change> of the earthly phenomena is administered by nature,' as it always has natural alteration and flux, 'it somehow indeed follows also the cause from above accidentally, thus it is not completely understood by the people.' For it would be agreed upon by all who have their share in mind and thought that sun and moon exercise manifold influence through the air upon the earthly phenomena according to certain 'more general principles'. And that the astrological inquiries and all those things by some people which are expressed in maxims concerning the peculiar constitution of each one; that this, then, is a rather exceedingly irreverent annoyance and a toil—the acquired objective <being> ineffectual and incomprehensible—is the opinion not only of Ptolemy, the excellent one, but also of Basil, the great with respect to the divine matters.⁶⁶

Thus, in *Letter 42* Gregoras stated that the heavenly phenomena which are characterized by their perpetual and unchangeable movement are not subjected to chance and spontaneity. In the *First Antirrhetics* and the *History* Gregoras added that the movements of the heavenly bodies result from the divine design and order, and thus, by extension, they are governed only by divine providence. Second, the sublunary realm of terrestrial phenomena which includes the sphere of human affairs is administered by nature and as, in addition, everything administered by nature is subject to spontaneity, while when it pertains to animate and rational beings, it is also subject to chance. Both claims are inserted in an argument against astrology which relies on two authorities, namely, on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* and on Basil of Caesarea's *Sixth Homily of Hexaemeron*.⁶⁷

According to Basil, the determinism implied by astrology could not be reconciled with the Christian doctrine of free will and, moreover, it rendered the concepts of virtue and vice, or in other words, the idea of moral responsibility obsolete.⁶⁸ Criticism against the determinism implied by the concept of fate was not reserved for Christians only as it is clear by Plotinus' essay *On Destiny* (*Ennead* III.1) which was read in the Palaiologan period as well, notably by Gregoras' mentor Theodore Metochites who borrowed the Plotinian arguments in constructing his own position on the value of astronomy and its connection with astrology.⁶⁹ In his grand astronomical opus *Elements of Astronomy* (*Stoicheiosis* 1:5),⁷⁰ in addition

to the Plotinian argumentation, Metochites also referred to Ptolemy, and, in particular, to his *Tetrabiblos*, similarly to Gregoras.⁷¹ Bydén has argued that, in Metochites' time, the *Tetrabiblos* itself was quite difficult to obtain and thus, Metochites himself did not own it; instead, he used a paraphrase of the text, falsely attributed to Proclus and preserved today in *Vat. gr.* 1453.⁷²

In the passage from the *First Antirrhethics* and the *Roman History* I discussed above, Gregoras cited *Tetrabiblos* I. 3.⁷³ He made, however, a number of significant alterations. While following Ptolemy's vocabulary rather closely, especially in the second part of the passage, namely the one discussing the terrestrial phenomena administered by nature, Gregoras altered some key terms in the first part of the quotation, namely the one dealing with the heavenly bodies and their movements. Importantly, Gregoras dissociated the notions of divinity and fate, thus, rendered necessity and fate unsubstantial, that is, they are neither causes nor divine commands. According to Ptolemy,

we should not believe that separate events attend mankind as the result of the *heavenly cause* (ἀπὸ τῆς ἄνωθεν αἰτίας) as if they had been originally ordained for each person *by some irrevocable divine command* (ἀπὸ τινος ἀλύτου καὶ θείου προστάγματος νομοθετημένα) and destined to take place by necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀποβησόμενα) without the possibility of any other cause whatever interfering. [italics mine]⁷⁴

When Gregoras quoted this passage, however, he substituted “the heavenly cause” and “irrevocable divine command” with “necessity from above” and fate: “One should not think that all that happens to men is due to some *necessity from above* (ὑπὸ τινος ἄνωθεν ἀνάγκης) and that the events become unchangeable in accordance *with certain fate* (καθ’ εἰμαρμένην τινὰ) [...]” [italics mine]. Further, in both Ptolemy's and Gregoras' texts the heavenly bodies and their movements are referred to as divinely administered. According to Ptolemy, the heavenly bodies' movement is in accordance with fate: “Rather is it true that the movement of the heavenly bodies, to be sure, is eternally performed *in accordance with divine, unchangeable fate* (καθ’ εἰμαρμένην θεῖαν καὶ ἀμετάπτωτον) [...]” [italics mine].⁷⁵ In Gregoras' rendering of this passage, however, it is divine creation and order that govern it: “the unchangeable perpetual movement of the heavens is accomplished according to *divine creation and order* (κατὰ γένεσιν θεῖαν καὶ τάξιν ἀποτελεῖσθαι) [...]” [italics mine]. Thus, as

an object of study, the heavenly bodies and their motions have a special status and consequently, the astronomical knowledge carries a particular amount of certainty physics, for instance, does not as it is occupied with the mutable and instable natural world. Certainly, Gregoras added, the celestial bodies influence the terrestrial events, but in this manner, they are only accidentally a cause and, moreover, they do not affect personal choice and action, but larger and more general phenomena, in such way as, for instance, the moon causes the tides, which is an example Gregoras will employ elsewhere.⁷⁶

The second reason for the importance of the reference to the realm of the heavenly phenomena relates Gregoras' views on spontaneity, chance, influence of the divinely administered heavenly movement, and divine providence to his views on history. Importantly, the preface to Book I of the *Roman History* links the celestial bodies and their eternal movements with the value of history:

For, on the one hand, like silent heralds of the divine magnificence, they (i.e., the heaven and earth, God's first and greatest creations) exist always, as they summon perception only as a witness. History, on the other, a living and a speaking voice and, as it is both really vivid and loud messenger of the same (i.e., the divine magnificence) passes through time, having always shown, like in a picture of the universe, the past events to the generations coming afterwards [...] ⁷⁷

And it seems to me that the glory of heaven and earth becomes more glorious through the history and, in a manner of speaking, the splendor <becomes> more splendid by far. For, if there were no history, wherefrom had people known how the sky, since the beginning, as it is always moving according to precisely the same unaltered movement, invariably wheels about <the> sun, moon and all stars towards an orderly and rhythmical variety and equally, describes God's glory, during day and night for eternity. ⁷⁸

History told the story not only of people, cities and empires, but also of the heavenly movements and thus, provided knowledge of the past, which in turn, together with the ability to read the celestial signs divine providence furnished, assured that people could make predictions about the future: "But now it <history> makes those who come next prophets [...], since they guess the future events based on the past." ⁷⁹

Thus, Gregoras argued against astrology, but, nevertheless, admitted, as, for instance, in his *Letter 69*, that by virtue of their movement the heavenly bodies, chiefly the sun and the moon, can accidentally cause earthly phenomena:

You did not limit the boundaries of your thinking to the grass, to the flocks of sheep, to the frontiers of the earth, but you went up to the vault of the sky, studying the relation which naturally <unites> the celestial and terrestrial phenomena, the secondary causes of those, and whence the principles of generation descend, <the principles> <that> mystically nurture the terrestrial beings.⁸⁰ [...] I shall collect for you from elsewhere the remaining <things> like in a bright *theatron*, so that you know from there how the earthly phenomena are linked to the celestial and <that> the same concordance and arrangement unites them at each end in one and the same thing like in perfection.⁸¹ [...] For this I wanted <for you> and to show you how great the causes of the rest of the stars are on earth and how many the effects of their activity, during day and night, in order for you to recognize the greatness of God the creator and how great is the power of science and moreover, so that you would appear to yourself better-pleased with the aim and the desire for science.⁸²

The most substantial discussion in Gregoras' œuvre of the relationship between spontaneity, chance, and divine providence, on the one hand, and human free will, on the other is preserved in *Book XXVIII*, 42–68 of the *Roman History*.⁸³ It consists of a long discussion between Matthew Kantakouzenos (ca. 1325–1383),⁸⁴ the son of the emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, and Gregoras and in it Matthew is portrayed as someone who attempts to justify his father's political and military conduct through a deterministic theory, thus exculpating the latter.

The conversation is framed as part of Matthew Kantakouzenos' visit of Gregoras' residential quarters in which the latter was confined at the time. Matthew is presented as entreating Gregoras on behalf of his father and mother to return to court, "especially now that it happened that they are completely flooded by many violent waves of events and tossing motion of chance".⁸⁵ Matthew proceeded by asking Gregoras to give him an answer as to whether chance and spontaneity prevail over human will:

But if chance and spontaneity secretly govern our affairs and have an absolute command over our will and we act unwillingly and are subjected by necessity [...], then in the future I shall not desire to charge with anything

else, nor to move boundaries subjugated to necessities, but I shall suspect and beware of the inevitability [...]”⁸⁶

According to Gregoras, Matthew was hoping to be convinced that chance and spontaneity indeed prevailed, the reason being Matthew’s willingness to refute all those who blamed his father John for the current misfortunes of the Byzantine state and people.⁸⁷ Matthew claimed, moreover, that those people unknowingly annulled the role of divine providence and did not provide for the necessity of chance that ran through the events.⁸⁸ For, Matthew argued, since everything is known by God in advance, by necessity it also follows that everything which is foreknown by the divine providence will also be done as it is already known by it.⁸⁹ Moreover, he stated, it was possible to hear without hindrance the divine providence being called spontaneity and chance not only by the wiser brethren of the Hellenes, but also by some Christian thinkers. Thus, one ought to approve of the actions of his father who was “led by the divine providence and enslaved by the inescapable necessity”.⁹⁰

Gregoras responded by giving an extensive speech whose main points pertaining to the present inquiry I shall summarize in what follows.⁹¹ Importantly, Gregoras stressed that not the foreknowledge was the cause of evil and evil things did not occur because they were previously known by God.⁹² In fact, it would be safer to say that something is known by God and in no way foreknown. For God sees our future deeds in the same way as the present ones, as he remains eternally in the state of his own simplicity, even if he stays in the present which never changes. And he does not interfere with change or coerce human will as the latter is free.⁹³ Therefore, Gregoras concluded, people are responsible for their own affairs and not God, nor his foreknowledge, nor some sort of necessity which absolutely controls the rudder of life, but free will.⁹⁴ Correspondingly, it is not divine foreknowledge that forces sinners to sin.⁹⁵ Gregoras also made an important point concerning divination, as he related it to the fear of the future. The need for divination followed the anxiety of those who were aware of their mistakes and, thus, were weary of the future. Similarly, he pointed out, if people would not fall to sickness, they would not need doctors and, correspondingly, if they would not sin, divination would have no appeal to them.⁹⁶

Conclusion

The present inquiry pursued two main research directions, namely, first, to examine and reconstruct Gregoras' views on spontaneity and chance, free will and divine providence; and second, to discuss the employment of his philosophical treatment of these concepts for the purposes of explaining historical causality in his *Roman History*. In order to achieve the first goal, I surveyed two of his letters, namely *Letters* 134 and 42. *Letter* 134, on the one hand, argued that chance by no means did govern human souls, except in the case of weak-minded people who do not control their own intellect. *Letter* 42, on the other, defined spontaneity and chance in Aristotelian terms as accidental causes, but at the same time restricted the predication of spontaneity to irrational beings only, thus, leaving only those with a soul and an intellect as possible subjects to *tychē*. Moreover, the discussion in *Letter* 42 related spontaneity and chance to the heavenly bodies and their movements which according to Gregoras were not subjected to spontaneity and chance, nor fate, but to divine creation and order. In addition, Gregoras argued against astrology and divination. However, due to his endorsement of a theory of cosmic sympathy governed by divine design and providence, he allowed for the heavenly phenomena to indicate events in the sublunary realm as divine signs and even to cause accidentally terrestrial phenomena of general character such as the ocean's tides. Importantly, Gregoras related his concept of the value of history to the movements of the heavens. With respect to the historical causation, however, as the example of Book XXVIII of the *Roman History* demonstrates, Gregoras rejected any role of fate or necessity and even of divine providence in coercing human free will and, therefore, in (pre)determining the outcome of one's actions.

NOTES

- ¹ Moravcsik, "Klassizismus in byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung".
- ² Hunger, "On the Imitation (ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature".
- ³ Scott, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography".
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.
- ⁷ On George Pachymeres emulating Thucydides in his analysis of historical cause and effect, see Macrides, "The Historian in the History", 210.
- ⁸ On Thucydides' employment of the concept of *tychē* as principle of historical uncertainty and of its relation to *gnōmē* and *technē*, see Edmunds, *Chance and Intelligence in Thucydides* and Luginbill, *Thucydides on War and National Character*. On Polybius and his appropriation of the Stoic concept of *tychē*, see Brouwer, "Polybius and Stoic *Tyche*", especially 125: "Thus according to Polybius the task of the historian is to explain the role of *tyche* in relation to human beings in a particular time frame. [...] In what I called the epistemological approach, Polybius's *tyche* functions as a last resort: if no explanation of an event can be found, it is admissible to refer to *tyche*. At the same time, in what I coined the physical approach, Polybius uses *tyche* to convey the point that the world is governed by an encompassing force and can hence be explained from the perspective of order [...]"
- ⁹ Scott, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography", 62.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.
- ¹¹ Erich Trapp et al., *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, no. 518 (hereafter: *PLP*).
- ¹² George Akropolites and Macrides, *George Akropolites: The History*, 54: "For Akropolites *tyche* is not a significant factor in the way events transpire [...]"
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 55.
- ¹⁴ *PLP* 10973.
- ¹⁵ Kazhdan, "L'histoire de Cantacuzène en tant qu'œuvre littéraire", 321–323.
- ¹⁶ For a survey of Byzantine authors' treatments of the role of *tychē* as a cause of events, see Medvedev, *Vizantijskij gumanizm*, 128–144.
- ¹⁷ *PLP* 4443. For arguments concerning the dates of Gregoras' life, see Beyer, "Eine Chronologie der Lebensgeschichte des Nikephoros Gregoras". See also Greco, "Das Geburtsjahr des byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibers Nikephoros Gregoras". For a comprehensive, though outdated, account of Gregoras' life, see Guillard, *Essai sur Nicéphore Grégoras*. One of the most useful biographical accounts, however, a catalogue, and a concise description of Gregoras' works are found in Gregoras, *Rhomäische Geschichte*, vol. 1, 1–62. For useful bibliography of primary source literature, see Moschos, *Platōnismos ē christianismos?*. For updated bibliography on

- Gregoras, see Dunaev, “Nicephorus Gregoras”. Bydén dates Gregoras’ birth to ca. 1293 or 1294, while Paraskeuopoulou refers to a dating around ca. 1295 in one of the most recent publications dealing with Gregoras’ hagiographical and homiletic works. See Bydén, “The Criticism of Aristotle in Nikephoros Gregoras’ *Florentius*”; Paraskeuopoulou, *To agiologiko kai omilētikō ergo tou Nikephorou Grēgora*.
- 18 PLP 8609. On John of Hērakleia, see Laurent, “La personnalité de Jean d’Héraclée”.
- 19 PLP 4271.
- 20 PLP 17982.
- 21 PLP 21436.
- 22 Concerning the importance of calculating the date of Easter, see Kuzenkov, “Correction of the Easter Computus. On the dating of Gregoras’ proposal for a calendar reform, see Barlaam de Seminara, *Traité sur les éclipses de Soleil de 1333 et 1337*, 151; Theodore Metochites, *Two Poems*, 7. Krumbacher has dated the reform proposal to 1325, while Nikolaidēs pins it to 1326. See Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, 293–4; Nikolaidēs, *Science and Eastern Orthodoxy*, xvi. More recently Tihon has expressed certain doubts concerning the dating of the treatise. See Tihon, “Barlaam de Seminara. *Traité sur la date de Pâques*”, 402.
- 23 PLP 21181.
- 24 On Gregoras’ diplomatic mission, see Schreiner, “Die Gesandtschaftsreise des Nikephoros Gregoras nach Serbien (1326/27)”; Id., “Viaggiatori a Bisanzio: il diplomatico, il monaco, il mercante”; Karpozilos, “Ἐ Makedonia kata tēn epochē tōn Palaiologōn”.
- 25 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Nicephori Gregorae epistulae*, vol. 2 (hereafter: Gregoras, *Letters*). Gregoras, *Letter* 114, lines 55–63: Ἐφόδια δέ μοι πρὸς τοῦργον αἰ συχναὶ τῶν πολλῶν συνωθήσεις καὶ ἰκεσίαι γεγένηνται τὰ τε ἄλλα προτείνουσαι δίκαια καὶ ὅτι καθάπαξ πάντας ὁ χρόνος φθάσας παρείλετο καὶ οὐδαμῆ γε οὐδένα τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἀφήκεν Ἑλλήνων, ὃς τὸ κυριώτατον τῆς φιλοσοφίας, τὴν τῶν μαθημάτων δηλαδὴ τετρακτύν, ἀκοαῖς ἀνθρώπων παράσχοι καὶ ψυχᾶς πεινώσας ἐμπλήσειε, καὶ κίνδυνον ἐντεῦθεν μάλα πρόχειρον εἶναι ζημιοῦσθαι τὸ γένος, χρῆμα πάντων χρημάτων, ὅποσα γῆ παρέσχευ ἡλίω θεᾶσθαι τὸ κάλλιστον. διὰ τοι τοῦτο καὶ διδασκαλεῖον αὐτὸς ἀνέφραξ καὶ κόποις ἐκδέδωκα ἐμαντόν [...] See also Bydén, *Theodore Metochites’ Stoicheiosis astronomike*, 37.
- 26 Ševčenko, “Some Autographs of Nicephorus Gregoras”; Barlaam de Seminara, *Traité sur les éclipses de Soleil de 1333 et 1337*, 151.
- 27 Metochites, *Two Poems*. *Poem* 4, lines 1–3: Φίλα Νικηφόρε μοι κεφαλὰ, τὸν ἔγωγ’ εἴραμαι κατ’ ἄρ ἐμᾶς σοφίης, ἥτις ποτ’ ἂν ἔη, λιπέσθαι ἐξ ἄρα διάδοχον [...]; cf. *Nicephori Gregorae byzantina historia*, vol. 1, 309, lines 6–11 (hereafter: Gregoras, *History*); Metochites, *Two Poems*, 13.

- 28 For Ševčenko's dating of Gregoras' commentary on Synesios' *On Dreams* to the period between 1330 and 1332, see Ševčenko, "Some Autographs of Nicephorus Gregoras". Importantly, recently Börje Bydén revisited Ševčenko's identification of the original dedicatee of Gregoras' commentary as John Kantakouzenos and, consequently, proposed an earlier date for the composition of the commentary, namely before May 1328. I am grateful to the author for this reference. For Bydén's arguments in favour of an earlier dating, see Bydén, "Nikephoros Gregoras' Commentary on Synesios, *De insomniis*".
- 29 *PLP* 21437.
- 30 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Fiorenzo o intorno alla sapienza* (hereafter: Gregoras, *Phlorentios*); Bydén, "The Criticism of Aristotle in Nikephoros Gregoras' *Florentius*".
- 31 Tihon, "Les sciences exactes à Byzance", 380–434; Barlaam de Seminara, *Traité sur les éclipses de Soleil de 1333 et 1337*, 156; Bydén, "The Criticism of Aristotle in Nikephoros Gregoras' *Florentius*", 111.
- 32 P. L. Leone, "Nicephori Gregorae 'Antilogia' et 'Solutiones quaestionum'".
- 33 On whether the debate between Gregoras and Barlaam actually happened, see Gregoras, *Phlorentios*, 32. While Leone considers the *Phlorentios* purely fictional, Medvedev disagrees. Medvedev, *Vizantijskij gumanizm*, 15.
- 34 Bydén, "The Criticism of Aristotle in Nikephoros Gregoras' *Florentius*", 111. Paraskeuopoulou also points to a date of 1331, see Paraskeuopoulou, *To agiologiko kai omilētiko ergo tou Nikephorou Grēgora*, 30.
- 35 For the edition of Ptolemy's *Harmonics*, as well as of Gregoras' additions to it, see Ptolemy, *Die Harmonielehre des Klaudios Ptolemaios*. For an English translation and a commentary, see Ptolemy, *Harmonics*, trans. by Solomon. Compare it with the translation and commentary in Barker, *Greek Musical Writings*, vol. 2, 276–391. For a German translation and commentary, see Düring (ed.), *Ptolemaios und Porphyrios über die Musik*. On the dating of Gregoras' emendations, see Tihon, "Numeracy and Science", 809.
- 36 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Rhomäische Geschichte. Historia Rhomaïke*, trans. J. L. van Dieten, vol. 2, 16.
- 37 On hesychasm and the anti-palamite controversy, see Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*; Id., *Byzantine Hesychasm: Historical, Theological and Social Problems*; Id., *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*; Id., "Is 'Hesychasm' the Right Word?"; Conticello and Contoumas-Conticello, *La théologie byzantine et sa tradition*; Russell, "Palamism and the Circle of Demetrius Cydones"; Rigo (ed.), *Gregorio Palamas e oltre*; Krausmüller, "The Rise of Hesychasm"; Cañellas, *La résistance d'Akindynos à Grégoire Palamas*.
- 38 *PLP* 21456.
- 39 Ierodiakonou, "The Anti-Logical Movement in the Fourteenth Century", 221.

- 40 *PLP* 13900.
- 41 John Kyparissiotis, “Palamiticae transgressiones”, in *PG*, vol. 152, 733, 736.
See also Russell, “Palamism and the Circle of Demetrius Cydones”, 158.
- 42 Gregoras, *History*.
- 43 See, for instance, Bianconi, “La biblioteca di Cora tra Massimo Planude e Niceforo Gregora”, 416.
- 44 I am currently preparing for publication the results from my study of *codd. Vat. gr.* 164 and 165 which was sponsored by New Europe College and the Black Sea Link fellowship scheme.
- 45 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Nikifor Grigora. Istoriya* [Никифор Григора. История], trans. Shalfeev.
- 46 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Istoriya romeev* [История Ромеев], trans. R. Yashunskiy.
- 47 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Rōmaikē istoria: Periodos I: 1204–1341: Kephalaia 1–11*, trans. Moschos.
- 48 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Rhomäische Geschichte = Historia Rhomaike*, ed. J. L. van Dieten and F. H. Tinnefeld.
- 49 See Foteini Kolovou’s project entitled *Nikephoros Gregoras: Rhomaike Historia. An edition for the Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, Series Berolinensis*, currently underway at Leipzig.
- 50 Ierodiakonou and Bydén, “Byzantine Philosophy”, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- 51 Manolova, “Discourses of Science and Philosophy in the Letters of Nikephoros Gregoras”.
- 52 *PLP* 4222.
- 53 Gregoras, *Letter* 134, lines 14–26: πρὸς γὰρ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔλεγε καὶ δεῖν μὴ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ἀγαθῶν τοῖς φίλοις συνεύχεσθαι· τὴν γὰρ οὖσαν ὑπερβάντας τύχην ἦκιστ’ ἔχειν τὴν ὁμοίαν ἔτι δύνασθαι φιλίαν. ποῦ γὰρ ἂν εἶη ‘κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων’ ἔτι, τῆς τύχης οὐκ οὔσης κοινῆς; ποῦ δὲ ‘ψυχὴ μία’ καὶ τρόπος εἷς, τυραννουμένων τῶν ψυχῶν ὑπὸ γε τῆς λειποτακτοῦσης τύχης κἀν συλλόγοις καὶ καθέδραις τε καὶ στάσεσι πλεῖον ἔχειν τοῦ καθεστῶτος ἀπαιτούσης ἐν πᾶσιν αἰεὶ; ‘ισότης’ γὰρ φησι ‘φιλότης’· τούναντίον δ’ ἀνισότης μήτηρ διαστάσεως. ῥᾶστα γὰρ εἴωθεν αὕτη ἀναμοχλεύειν τὴν γνώμην καὶ καπηλεύειν τὸ ἦθος καὶ ὑποψίας ἀναβακχεύειν, ὁπόσαι καὶ οἶα μὴ μάλα ἀρμόττουσαι τῇ φιλίᾳ πεφύκασι. ταῦτα λέγων, ἐπήγετο καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλέα συμμαχοῦντα τῷ δόγματι καὶ ‘τὸ ὁμοῖον τοῦ ὁμοίου ἐφιεσθαι’ φάσκοντα.
- 54 *Ibid.*, lines 40–52: ἐπεὶ δὲ σὺ καλῶς καὶ βεβαίως ἐρριζωμένος καὶ ἠδρασμένος τῷ καλῷ θεμελίῳ τοῦ πνεύματος ἔμεινας ἐπὶ τῶν ὄρων ἐκείνων ἰστάμενος ἀκλήνης καὶ ὄφρως καὶ τύφου παντὸς ἐλεύθερον τὸ φρόνημα καθάπαξ τετήρηκας ἐν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ μεγέθει τῆς τύχης, καὶ ὡσπερ ἂν τὸ ἀντίστροφον εἰ ἐξ ὕψους τινὸς ἐς βυθοῦς θαλαττίους αὐτὸς κατηνέχθης, οὕτω τὴν γνώμην διέθηκας, πολλὴν ἐμοὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν κατὰ τῶν Ἀριστοτέλους ἐχαρίσω δογμάτων καὶ δριμυτέρους ἤδη κατὰ τῆς ἐκείνου κεφαλῆς τοὺς ἐλέγχους ἐξώπλισας. σημείον γε μὴν ἐποίησάμην τοῦ

- τοῖς τῆς φιλίας ἐκείνης ἐμμένειν σε τρόποις καὶ νόμοις, οὐχ ὅπως τὸ ζητεῖν σε γραμμάτων ἡμετέρων νιφάδας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ δι' ἔργων πειραῖσθαι γοητεύειν τὴν ἡμετέραν γνώμην καὶ χεῖρα, πρὸς γε τὸ μὴ χαρίζεσθαι τῶν ῥαθυμιῶν καὶ τῶν ὀκνῶν οὐδέσιν ἡμᾶς.
- 55 Brouwer, "Polybius and Stoic *Tyche*", 114.
- 56 Gregoras, *Letter* 134, lines 52–59: χάριτας οὖν σοι μὴ μόνον τῶν ὄλων ὁμολογησάμην ἔνεκα, ὅτι μὴ μᾶλλον τῆς συμμαχίας τοῦ πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλην πολέμου. ἔδειξας γὰρ οὐκ οὐσίαν οὖσαν τὴν τύχην τινά, ἀλλ' ὄνομα μόνον περιῖον καὶ πλανώμενον καὶ ταῖς τῶν κουφοτέρων ἀκοαῖς ἐνοχλοῦν· ὧν δὴ τοῦ λογισμοῦ τὰς ἡνίας ὁπόσοτε ἐνδιδόντων καὶ κρίσιν ἡγεμονικὴν οὐδαμῆ χαριζομένων τῇ τῶν κινουμένων ἄλλοτ' ἄλλως πραγμάτων ἐπιστασία, χώραν λαμβάνειν ἐντεῦθεν τὴν ἄγνοιαν καὶ οὐτωσί πως τὸ τῆς τύχης παρεισάγειν ὄνομα, καθάπερ σκότος μεθισταμένου φωτός.
- 57 *PLP* 21365.
- 58 Tr. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye, in Aristotle, *Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 1, 27. Aristotle, *Physics* II 5, 197a5–197a7: δῆλον ἄρα ὅτι ἡ τύχη αἰτία κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ἐν τοῖς κατὰ προαίρεσιν τῶν ἔνεκά του. διὸ περὶ τὸ αὐτὸ διάνοια καὶ τύχη· ἢ γὰρ προαίρεσις οὐκ ἄνευ διανοίας. Aristotle, *Physica*, ed. W. D. Ross.
- 59 Aristotle, *Physics* II 6, 197a37–197b1: τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀπὸ τύχης πᾶν ἀπὸ ταῦτομάτου, τοῦτο δ' οὐ πᾶν ἀπὸ τύχης. Aristotle, *Physica*, ed. W. D. Ross.
- 60 Gregoras, *Letter* 42, lines 52–53: ὡς οὐκ ἐπίσης τύχη καὶ αὐτόματον. τύχη μὲν γὰρ αὐτόματον ἔποιτ' ἄν, τοῦναντίον δ' οὐκ ἄν εἴη.
- 61 For a detailed analysis of the argumentation in *Letters* 134 and 42, see my "Epistolography and Philosophy".
- 62 Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* II 4, 196a26–28: ἀπὸ ταῦτομάτου γὰρ γίνεσθαι τὴν δίνην καὶ τὴν κίνησιν τὴν διακρίνασαν καὶ καταστήσασαν εἰς ταύτην τὴν τάξιν τὸ πᾶν.
- 63 Gregoras, *Letter* 42, lines 66–70: κακῶς δ' ἔφη Δημόκριτος 'ἀπὸ ταῦτομάτου τὴν δίνην καὶ κίνησιν γίνεσθαι, ἢ πρὸς τήνδε τὴν τάξιν διέκρινε τόδε τὸ πᾶν'. ἐν γὰρ τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν ἰοῦσι καὶ ἄτρεπτον κεκτημένοις τὴν κίνησιν οὔτε τύχη οὔτ' αὐτόματον ἐσχίκει χώραν.
- 64 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Nicephori Gregorae Explicatio in librum Synesii "De insomniis"*.
- 65 Gregoras, *History*, vol. 2, 723, line 12–724, line 6.
- 66 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhethika I*, ed. H.-V. Beyer, Oration 1, section 7, 165, lines 3–16: καὶ πρῶτον, ὁ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ πᾶνυ φησίν, ὡς .Οὐχ ἅπαντα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑπὸ τινος ἄνωθεν ἀνάγκης συμβαίνειν οἰεσθαι χρῆ καὶ ἄτρεπτα γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην τινὰ τὰ γινόμενα, ἀλλ' αὐτὴν μὲν τὴν τῶν οὐρανίων κίνησιν ἐξ αἰῶνος ἄτρεπτον κατὰ γένεσιν θεῖαν καὶ τάξιν ἀποτελεῖσθαι, τὴν γε μὴν τῶν ἐπιγείων ὑπὸ φύσεως μὲν διοικεῖσθαι, συμφυεῖς τὸ τρεπόμενον τε καὶ ῥέον ἐχούσης αἰεί, ἔπεσθαι γε μὴν ὁπόσοτε καὶ τὴν ἄνωθεν αἰτίαν κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς, οὐ μὴν ὡς ἐπίπαν ἀνθρώποις καταληπτὴν· πολὺχουν μὲν γὰρ ἔχειν τὴν δύναμιν διὰ τοῦ ἀέρος ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην πρὸς τὰ ἐπίγεια κατὰ τινὰς λόγους

- ,καθολικωτέρους', πᾶσιν, οἷς νοῦ καὶ φρονήσεως μέτεστι, σύμφωνον ἂν εἴη. Τὰς γε μὴν γενεθλιαλογικὰς ἐπισκέψεις καί, ὅσα παρ' ἐνίων γνωμολογεῖται περὶ τῆς ἐκάστον ιδιοτρόπου συγκράσεως, τοῦτο δ' ὄχλον εἶναι μάλα τοι σφόδρα μάταιον καὶ μόχθον, ἀνήνυτον καὶ ἀκατάληπτον κεκτημένον τὸ πέρασ, οὐ Πτολεμαῖω μόνω τῷ πάνυ δοκοῦν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ τὰ θεῖα πολλῷ Βασιλείω.
- 67 For more on Gregoras' views on astrology, see Tihon, "Astrological Promenade in Byzantium in the Early Palaiologan Period".
- 68 Basil of Caesarea, *Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron*, ed. Stanislas Giet. Sixth homily, section 7, lines 1–60.
- 69 Bydén, *Theodore Metochites' Stoicheiosis astronomike*, 351.
- 70 Bydén, *Theodore Metochites' Stoicheiosis astronomike*.
- 71 *Ibid.*, 352.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 352.
- 73 Ptolemy, *Claudii Ptolemaei Opera quae exstant omnia*, ed. W. Hübner, F. Boll, and E. Boer, vol. III, 1, Apotelesmatika, Book I, chapter 3, section 6, line 1–section 7, line 4: ἔπειθ' ὅτι μηδ' οὕτως ἅπαντα χρῆ νομίζειν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀπὸ τῆς ἄνωθεν αἰτίας παρακολουθεῖν ὥσπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀπὸ τινος ἀλύτου καὶ θείου προστάγματος καθ' ἕνα ἕκαστον νενομοθετημένα καὶ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀποβησόμενα, μηδεμιᾶς ἄλλης ἀπλῶς αἰτίας ἀντιπρᾶξι δυναμένης, ἀλλ' ὡς τῆς μὲν τῶν οὐρανίων κινήσεως καθ' εἰμαρμένην θεῖαν καὶ ἀμετάπτωτον ἐξ αἰῶνος ἀποτελουμένης, τῆς δὲ τῶν ἐπιγείων ἀλλοιώσεως καθ' εἰμαρμένην φυσικὴν καὶ μεταπτωτήν, τὰς πρώτας αἰτίας ἄνωθεν λαμβανούσης κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς καὶ κατ' ἐπακολουθήσιν, καὶ ὡς τῶν μὲν διὰ καθολικωτέρας περιστάσεις τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συμβαινόντων, οὐχὶ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας ἐκάστου φυσικῆς ἐπιτηδεϊότητος [...]
- 74 Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. F. E. Robbins, Book I. 3, 23–25.
- 75 *Ibid.*
- 76 See for instance, Gregoras' *On the Number Seven*. Sbordone, "L' ebdomadario di Niceforo Gregora". Cf. with the *Histories* of Laonikos Chalkokondyles. Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *Laonici Chalcocandylae Historiarum Demonstrationes*, ed. J. Darkó, vol. 1, 88, line 14–90, line 7. See also Akisik, "Self and Other in the Renaissance", 76–77.
- 77 Gregoras, *History*, vol. 1, 4, lines 9–14: τὰ μὲν γὰρ καθάπερ σιγῶντες κήρυκες τῆς θεῖας μεγαλοουργίας, τὸν ἅπαντα διαγίνονται χρόνον, αἴσθησιν προκαλούμενα μάρτυρα μόνην. ἢ δ' ἱστορία, ζῶσα τε καὶ λαλοῦσα φωνὴ διαπερᾶ τὸν αἰῶνα καθάπερ ἐν πίνακι παγκοσμίῳ δεικνύουσα τὰ προγεγονότα τοῖς ἐπιγινομένοις ἀεὶ [...]
- 78 *Ibid.*, line 20–5, line 4: δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ τὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς δόξαν ἐνδοξοτέραν διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας καθίστασθαι, καὶ, ἵν' εἶπω, λαμπροτέραν πολλῶν τὴν λαμπρότητα. ποῦ γὰρ ἂν ἤδεσαν ἄνθρωποι, τῆς ἱστορίας οὐκ οὔσης, ὡς ὁ μὲν οὐρανὸς τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ἀρχῆθεν ἀεὶ καὶ ἀκίνητον κινούμενος κίνησιν, ἤλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ πάντας ἀστέρας διηλεκτῶς ἐξελίττει πρὸς ποικιλίαν ὁμοίως εὐτακτὸν τε καὶ εὐρυθμον, καὶ ὁμοίως τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ διηγεῖται δόξαν ἐφ' ἡμέρα τε καὶ νυκτὶ δι' αἰῶνος·

- 79 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 5, lines 14–16: ἀλλὰ νῦν γε πρὸς τούτοις καὶ προφήτας [...] τοὺς μετιόντας ποιεῖ, ἐκ τῶν φθασάντων στοχαζομένους τὰ μέλλοντα.
- 80 Gregoras, *Letter* 69, lines 30–35: οὐ γὰρ ἄχρι χλόης καὶ ποιμνίων καὶ ὀπόσα γῆς ὄρια τοὺς ὄρους ὠρίσω τῆς σῆς διανοίας, ἀλλ’ ἄχρι καὶ οὐρανίων ἀψίδων ἀνῆλθες, τὴν κοινωνίαν εὐφυῶς τῶν ἄνω καὶ κάτω ζητῶν καὶ τὰ μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον αἷτια τουτωνὶ καὶ ὅθεν οἱ τῆς γενέσεως κατιόντες λόγοι βόσκουσι μυστικῶς τὰ ἐπίγεια.
- 81 *Ibid.*, lines 45–48: ἐγὼ σοι λοιπὸν λαμπρὸν ἐτέρωθεν συγκροτήσω τὸ θέατρον, ἵν’ ἐντεῦθεν γνοιῆς ὅπως τοῖς οὐρανίοις συνάπτεται τὰ ἐπίγεια καὶ μία τις ἁρμονία καὶ σύνταξις ἐκατέρωθεν ἐς ἑνός τινος ἔργου συνίσταται τελεσφόρημα.
- 82 *Ibid.*, lines 108–112: ἐβουλόμεν γὰρ ταυτὰ τε καὶ ὅσα τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων αἷτια πρὸς γῆν καὶ ὀπόσα ἐφ’ ἡμέρα καὶ νυκτὶ τὰ τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν, ἔστιν ἅ σοι δηλοῦν, ὡς ἂν τῆς τε σοφίας τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ τεχνίτου θεοῦ τεκμήριο καὶ ὅσον τὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης κράτος, καὶ ἔτι σὺ σαυτῷ φανείης τοῦ σκοποῦ καὶ τοῦ τῆς ἐπιστήμης ἔρωτος ἡδίων.
- 83 The only discussion of this passage in the secondary literature, to my knowledge, is offered by Alexander Kazhdan in his “L’histoire de Cantacuzène en tant qu’œuvre littéraire”, 320–3.
- 84 *PLP* 10983.
- 85 Gregoras, *History*, Book XXVIII, 45, vol. 3, 205, lines 21–22: καὶ μάλιστα νῦν ὅτε συχνοῖς περιαντλεῖσθαι συμβαίνει βίαιοις πραγμάτων κύμασι καὶ σάλῳ τύχης αὐτοῦς·
- 86 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 46, vol. 3, 206, lines 7–13: εἰ δὲ τύχη καὶ τὸ αὐτόματον ἄγει τὰ καθ’ ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν ἡμῶν ἐξ ἀφανοῦς ἐπιτίθεται τυραννοῦσα θέλησιν, καὶ ἄκοντες δρῶμεν καὶ πάσχομεν ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης [...], σοὶ μὲν οὐκ ἐγκαλεῖν οὐδὲν ἔτι οὐδ’ ὄρους κινεῖν ὑπεξευγμένους ἀνάγκαις βουλήσομαι τοῦ λοιποῦ, ἀλλ’ ὑπόψομαι καὶ φυλάξομαι τὴν ἀδράστειαν [...]
- 87 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 46–47, vol. 3, 206, line 15–207, line 23.
- 88 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 48, vol. 3, 207, line 23–208, line 1.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 208, lines 2–5.
- 90 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 50, vol. 3, 209, lines 12–14: δέον οὖν ἐπαινεῖν ὅτι τῇ θεῖᾳ προνοίᾳ καὶ ὁ ἐμὸς ἀγόμενος πατήρ, καὶ ἀφύκτω δουλεῶν ἀνάγκη [...]
- 91 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 51–65, vol. 3, 210, line 5–220, line 6.
- 92 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 51, vol. 3, 210, lines 15–17.
- 93 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 51–52, vol. 3, 210, line 19–211, line 1.
- 94 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 58, vol. 3, 214, lines 13–18.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 215, lines 7–8.
- 96 *Ibid.*, Book XXVIII, 59, vol. 3, 216, lines 3–10.

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