

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM & LIBRARY

ARISTOTLE: FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE MODERN ERA

On View September 10, 2021 – January 2, 2022

Selected PR Images

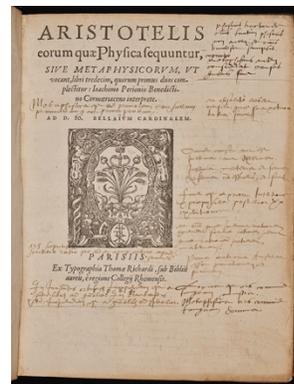
The New-York Historical Society presents *Aristotle: From Antiquity to the Modern Era*, an exhibition showcasing more than 30 rare books and manuscripts—many on public view for the first time—from the collection of Martin J. Gross. The display's centerpiece is the multi-volume edition of Aristotle's works in Greek by the noted printer and publisher Aldus Manutius of Venice, who died in 1515. Copious annotations to the books and manuscripts reveal how scholars in early modern Europe (1500-1800) wrestled with and transmitted the philosophy of Aristotle of Stagira (384-322 BCE), which had remained almost uniquely influential over the centuries as one of the great philosophers of Ancient Greece.

Aristotle

Eorum quae Physica sequuntur sive Metaphysicorum, ut vocant, in libri tredecim. Paris: Thomas Richardus, 1564

Courtesy of Martin J. Gross

This copy of Aristotle's Metaphysics lets us peer over the shoulders of a 16th century scholar and teacher. Through his annotations we can observe the teaching methods and techniques of an academic in Renaissance Europe.



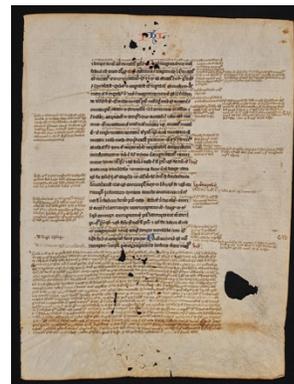
Aristotle

"De physica," France, 13th century

Manuscript on vellum

Courtesy of Martin J. Gross

This single leaf is from a decorated medieval manuscript on vellum written in Latin around the third quarter of the 13th century. It contains a translation of part of book vi of the Physics and must have been transcribed from a high-quality, accurate university copy. It is a witness to the rediscovery of Aristotle in Spain and Italy.



Aristotle

Opera (5 volumes, in Greek)

Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1495–98

Courtesy of Martin J. Gross



A classical scholar by training, Aldus Pius Manutius resolved to merge his knowledge of the ancient authors with his desire to print books containing the classical literature of the ancient world. He proceeded to print and publish the known Greek and Roman corpus in their original languages, thus making available for the first time the entire literature of the classical world. His edition of the works of Aristotle was especially important and exceptionally difficult and expensive. The five volumes in Greek are a landmark in the history of printing, and this copy is notable for the extensive commentary left by three different readers responding to Aristotle.

Columbanus Parent (17th century) and Antonius Chassé (17th century)

Octo libri Physicorum ad mentem D. Thomae; Commentarius in duos Aristotelis libros De generatione et corruptione; Tractatus in Metaphysicam Aristotelis; Commentarius in quatuor Aristotelis libros De coelo; Disputationes in tres libros Aristotelis De anima

Saint-Amand Abbey, France, 1664–65

Manuscript on paper

Courtesy of Martin J. Gross



The Church kept a watchful eye on university professors. But Benedictine scholars isolated at Saint-Armand Abbey in France avoided such scrutiny, giving them more leeway to investigate the implications of modern science. This manuscript contains lecture notes for courses on Aristotle's Physics and Metaphysics taught by Benedictine professors Columban (Columbanus) Parent and Antoine (Antonius) Chassé. The lectures also accept the new discoveries in optics, which let scientists explore man, nature, and the cosmos more deeply. But, although bold, they still don't fully embrace Copernicus's heliocentric universe, remaining faithful to Aristotle—and the Church.

Aristotle

Duodecim libri Metaphisice

Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, 1503

Courtesy of Martin J. Gross

Aristotle's Metaphysics describes the physical world, then discusses ideas such as the law of non-contradiction, actual and potential states of being, the nature of substance, and the nature of causality—concepts still debated today. This edition of the Metaphysics offers an interesting example of “interleaving,” that is, alternating blank and printed pages. Scholars used the blank leaves to record their observations.



John Manners (1609–1695)

Disputationes in octo libros Physicorum

Perugia, Italy, 1647

Manuscript on paper

Courtesy of Martin J. Gross

The life of John Manners illustrates the itinerant destiny of English intellectuals remaining in the Catholic Church. Born in London, Manners was educated in Flanders, then relocated to the University of Perugia as a lecturer in philosophy after being ordained as a Jesuit. In 1649, Manners moved to the English College at Rome as its rector and director of studies. His student, Franciscus Pavetius of Cantiano, is credited as the scribe of this manuscript, including its 55 diagrams illustrating aspects of physics.

