

Received: July 30, 2023 / Accepted: November 15, 2023 / Published online: December 12, 2023  
The © Author(s) 2023. This article is published with open access at Academia Analitica

---

## BOOK REVIEW

# **Nijaz Ibrulj (auth.). Porfirijevo nasljeđe u Bosni (Porphyry's Legacy in Bosnia). Sarajevo: Academia Analitica, 2023, p.450.**

**Mile Babic** <sup>1</sup>

The author Nijaz Ibrulj knows classical languages (Greek and Latin) and modern languages very well, at the same time he thinks penetratingly, which we call insightful, and he is open to the world of life. Thus, we find three types of philosophy with him: the philosophy of the being, the philosophy of thought and the philosophy of language. Being, thinking and language are three realities irreducible to each other. Only if they are in mutual communication and correction, they will be in the service of life, not in the service of destroying life. If we accept the periodization of the history of philosophy as offered by historians of philosophy, we can say that ancient and medieval philosophy talk about being (reality), and modern philosophy about thought (logos, mind, knowledge, consciousness and self-awareness), while 20th century philosophy talks about language. The main representatives of the philosophy of the being, that is, the ontological paradigm in philosophy, are Plato and Aristotle, and this paradigm was accepted and developed in medieval Christian philosophy (in patristics and scholasticism) and in medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy. In the modern paradigm of philosophy, the focus is on man's knowledge of the being. With the help of the Latin word mens (spirit, mind), this paradigm can be called mentalistic. In the 20th century, a linguistic paradigm of philosophy (analytical philosophy) appeared, whose true representative was Nijaz Ibrulj. Wilhelm von

---

<sup>1</sup> M.Babic  
Franciscan Theology Sarajevo  
Aleja Bosne Srebrene 111, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Email: [tajnistvo@franjevackateologija.ba](mailto:tajnistvo@franjevackateologija.ba)

Humboldt already claimed that every language is immanent with one worldview (one thought system), and each thought system is inherent in a certain reality (being), although the opposite can also be claimed. These three realities are not mutually exclusive, but are assumed and included.

Nijaz Ibrulj's book entitled *Porfiri's legacy in Bosnia* consists of three parts. The first part is an introductory study under the title *Transformed logos*, the second part is a study of *Bosna Porphyrian – an outline of the development of logic in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the third part is a bilingual (Greek-Bosnian) edition of Porphyry's famous work *Isagoge* (which means Introduction). Each part was accompanied by an extensive commentary by the author. At the same time, he points out that formal truth is important for logic, and this formal logical truth is based on the formal validity of deducing conclusions from any type of statements that have a truth value. Formal logical thinking rests on the competence for formal argumentation and on the semantic competence for symbolic manipulation; in short, logical and linguistic competence is important; two opposing discourses are important: syllogistic-scientific and dialectic-polemical. Many commentators have dealt with Aristotle's logic. The most important of the Greek commentators is Porphyry (232–309), a student and publisher of the great philosopher Plotinus (205–270). Porphyry's logical work *Isagoga* was accepted, commented on and taught in the Greco-Roman world, in the Jewish-Christian world (Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius /Boetius/, whose contribution is invaluable in the creation of Latin philosophical nomenclature and in the later tradition of commenting on Aristotle's *Categories*), in the Islamic world (Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina /Avicenna/, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Ružd /Averroes/) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Middle Ages to the present day.

In the first part of the book, entitled *Transformed logos*, Ibrulj showed how the concept of logos has been transformed throughout history, and the transformation of this concept long ago left the framework of philosophy and human natural intelligence, and today is carried out in the field of artificial intelligence. In German there is a word *Begriffsgeschichte*, which means the history of the concepts, so that the history of philosophy can be read from the history of its main concepts. In the main educational centers in Phenicia (in whose city of Tire was Porphyry's teacher Origen, the first great Christian systematic theologian); in Athens, Alexandria and Rome, and from Babylon to Rome, different cultures and traditions, different religions and worldviews, different philosophies and theologies met. Nijaz Ibrulj explains this in detail when he talks about Neopythagorism, Plato's "inductive" dialectical semantics, Aristotle's deductive syllogistic apophantics, opposing methods of dialectics and syllogistics, Stoic philosophy of life, allegorical deconceptualization of vocabulary, allegorical and mystical interpretation of logos, and Plotinus' Neoplatonism. This is how the term *logos* made its way from Heraclitus, through Philo of Alexandria and the Stoics, to the Christian Logos who became a man in Jesus of Nazareth.

Furthermore, Ibrulj presented in detail the life and work of Porphyry of Phenicia, who, among other things, wrote the work *Evidence Against Christians*, better known under the title *Against Christians* (it was burned in 448 by order of Emperor Theodosius II). Porphyry influenced all those who commented on the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus after him. He was known for his allegorical interpretation of Homer, Hesiod and Greek tragedies. His mother tongue was Syrian (Armenian, that is, Syrian-Armenian), and he had a perfect command of Greek. He got to know the mystical teachings of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Christians, Gnostics and Magi because he lived with them. Porphyry praised clear knowledge. He was educated in Athens, then joined Plotinus in Rome and thus entered public life and met influential people of his time. From Rome he goes to Sicily, where he probably wrote the *Isagoge* in response to the Roman senator Chrysarius, who asked Porphyry for help in understanding Aristotle's work on the *Categories*. Porphyry published Plotinus' *Enneads* and wrote Plotinus' biography. After Plotinus' death, he returns to Rome and takes over his school. It is not known when and where he died: some give Mr. 305, some 304, and some 309 as the year of his death. The eclectic philosopher Celso (Greek: Κέλσος, Latin: Celsus) and the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate (the Apostate) also wrote against Christians. It should be noted that Christianity was a persecuted religion in the Roman Empire until 313, and that year Emperor Constantine declared it a permitted religion (*religio licita*). Famous Christian authors wrote against Porphyry, starting with Methodius of Olympia, through Eusebius of Caesarea, to St. Jerome and St. Augustine. Porphyry tried to harmonize his own life with his philosophical ideas. The French historian of philosophy and philosopher Pierre Hadot believes that Porphyry's originality is manifested in his commentary on Plato's work *Parmenides*.

When it comes to Porphyry's originality, it should be kept in mind that until the new century, the guarantors of truth were tradition and authorities, with human reason only in third place. Only in the new century does the human mind become the main guarantor of truth, while tradition and authorities are ignored or even harshly criticized. Until the new century, people wrote commentaries and catenas in patristics. This was the case in philosophy and theology, but also in all areas of knowledge. The fact that everything human is fallible is ignored: both tradition, and authorities, and the human mind. That's why we need to critically examine everything and learn from each other. Immanuel Kant also wrote about this when he talks about the infallibility of enlighteners on the one hand, and on the other hand about the infallibility of mystagogues who refer to their private revelations. G. W. Fr Hegel also wrote about it saying that some appeal to their mind, which they want to differentiate themselves from others, and others to their feelings, because they are convinced that the truth flows from their heart unmistakably and inviolably.

Nijaz Ibrulj presented Porphyry's metaphysical "system", at the center of which is the concept of the Demiurge, whom Porphyry calls the hypercosmic soul. Porphyry wrote,

as already mentioned, an extensive commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*, at the center of which is the concept of substance (the original substance is an individual being). For Plato, the idea (the universal, the general, that is, the spiritual reality) is a substance: the general, therefore, has priority over the individual. Porphyry wrote seventy-five writings, but only some of them have been preserved. At all medieval universities, professors taught old logic (*Logica Vetus*), which consisted of Aristotle's *Categories* and Aristotle's work *On Interpretation* (*De Interpretatione*), which Boethius translated into Latin, as well as Porphyry's *Isagoge*. William Ockham also interpreted Aristotle's *Sophistic Refutations* (*Sophistici Elenchi*), which, together with Aristotle's *Topic*, expand the old logic into the new (*Logica Nova*). Among all the comments, Porphyry's *Category* was the clearest. Ibrulj points out that Porphyry harmonized dialectic and syllogistic. Porphyry's concepts in the writing of *Isagoga* (γένος / lat. genus / genus; εἶδος / lat. species / type; διαφορία / lat. differentia / difference; ἴδιον / lat. proprium / property, property; συμβεβηκός / lat. accidens / accident, belonging, adverb) were used in every definition: *Definitio fit per genus proximum et differentiam specificam* (the definition is formed by the closest genus and by qualitative difference). The question of universals (what is truly real), whether general or individual, runs all the way to contemporary philosophy and logic, from Cantor and Dedekind to Frege, Russell and Quine. The Bosnian philosophical reception also contains Porphyry's work *Isagoge* in two languages: in Latin by professors of Christian theology and in Arabic in the works of muftis, kadis and educated ulema. Ibrulj also lists translations into Syriac, Arabic and Armenian languages, as well as commentaries on that work in Greek, Latin and Arabic.

In the text *The Principle of Logic*, Ibrulj heuristically thinks about the problem of describing the conceptual scheme and about problems related to epistemology. He highlights the work written by Dr. Senadin Lavic, a philosopher and sociologist, the work of academician Muhamed Filipović, his own work on logic, and the work of Nedžad Dukić on fuzzy logic. *Academia Analitica* brings together a group of researchers who are interested in artificial intelligence, cognitive science and fuzzy logic, which was manifested in the book by Dr. Zikrija Avdagic entitled *Fuzzy logic in engineering applications*. Finally, he mentions the book by Dr. Kenan Sljivo, which deals with the philosophy of Robert Brandom. In 2002, Ibrulj selected and translated sixteen significant texts from the field of analytical philosophy by the following authors: Gottlob Frege, W. V. O. Quine, Hilary Putnam, John P. Searle, John L. Austin, Donald Davidson, Robert B. Brandom. He added *Terms in Arabic* to his translation of Porphyry's works, and this glossary was compiled by prof. Dr. Munir Drkić. In addition, he furnished the book with his very instructive comments. In the Table of Contents, he listed the titles in ancient Greek, Latin and Bosnian. He listed all bibliographic references, which include 162 units, then the register of names in the Bosnian language and the register of Greek terms and names.

The book is primarily intended for the humanities and the academic community, as well as for educated readers outside the academic sphere and for all those who are eager to gain new knowledge, because it discusses important questions of logic, language and life in a modern and critical way.