The derivation from Byzantium is suggestive in that it emphasizes a central aspect of Byzantine civilization: the degree to which the empire's administrative and intellectual life found a focus at Constantinople from 330 to 1453, the year of the city's last and unsuccessful defense under the 11th (or 12th) Constantine. Diocletian's tetrarchy, statue of Diocletian's tetrarchy, red porphyry, c. 300 CE, taken to Venice 1258. Alinari/Art Resource, New York. The means they adopted to In Byzantium there were no institutions of higher education in which philosophers could be trained as philosophers. The main purpose of institutional higher studies was to train civil servants. The figure of the Byzantine philosopher, therefore, emerges as somewhat of a polymath and an erudite scholar, who, moreover, might make use of his knowledge and rhetorical skill to play an active role in the political life of his times.

The study of Aristotle in Roman and late Roman times is well known, but the Byzantine period, comparatively neglected, also witnessed the vitality of Aristotelian scholarship, especially as applied to Christian doctrine.

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