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World Logic Day: An Endorsement from the Perspective of Medieval Byzantium

Logic is woven into the fabric of our human existence and how we reflect on it. The ancient Greeks knew this: from the same root come the words for counting as well as for speaking.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle in the fourth century BCE was the first to identify ‘logic’ as a way of thinking, of making sense of the world through a chain of argumentation. His ideas and the terminology he introduced reverberate through the middle ages to the present day.

Even medieval Byzantium, which was a deeply Christian society, theologians found the toolbox of Aristotelian logic indispensable when they argued about the nature of Christ. Byzantine monks copied and re-copied the texts of Aristotle by the hundreds, and erudite bishops wrote commentaries to make his works accessible to their peers and explain them to their students.

In the Byzantine Middle Ages, people understood that logic and theology do not have to be at odds, but that logic and rational thinking are essential if we wish to understand not only the real world around us but also the spiritual world—and this remains true then as much as now.

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