

P. Gregorić and F. Grgić (eds.),
Aristotelova Metafizika: Zbirka rasprava,
[Aristotle's Metaphysics: A Collection of Papers]
 KruZak, Zagreb, 2003, xii + 497 pp., ISBN 953-6463-37-7

Croatian readers have recently become richer for an important volume published by the prominent Croatian publisher, KruZak. Two philosophers from Zagreb who work on ancient philosophy translated some of the most substantial articles that shaped our understanding of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In Slovenia, for instance, we were for a long time forced to follow philosophical production in other republics of the former Yugoslavia. With Slovenia's independence the situation got a bit better. But the collection of papers edited by Pavel Gregorić and Filip Grgić reminds us that it is still worthwhile to visit foreign bookshops – for one thing, to buy this excellent collection of papers.

In their introduction, the editors note, rather picturesquely, that if Aristotle came into a bookshop today and picked the volume entitled *Aristotle: Metaphysics*, he would have no clue what he would find between the covers. This is because the volume as we have it is thought to contain treatises selected, ordered, and entitled by Andronicus of Rhodes in the first century BC. Similarly, the editors of this collection selected and ordered 18 scholarly papers following several different criteria. First, the selected papers follow the pattern of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, since the papers discuss various topics roughly in the order they show up in books of the *Metaphysics*. Second, the papers are relatively recent, written within the last forty years, except Jan Łukasiewicz's classic piece on the Law of Contradiction. Third, the papers are written by the leading Aristotelian scholars from five different countries. Also, there is a tendency to include some authors and texts that belong to the continental tradition, broadly conceived. The result is a large and coherent collection of papers on almost 500 pages which provides a thorough introduction into the basic topics of the *Metaphysics*. The collection is also technically flawless with reliable translations and helpful editorial notes and clarifications. There is also a note on contributors, an extensive bibliography, and three indices.

In the 'Foreword', the editors explain their criteria of selection and the need for a collection of that sort. 'Introduction' gives introductory remarks on the

Metaphysics and each one of the papers included. Jonathan Barnes canvasses main issues of the *Metaphysics* in his fresh and provocative introductory piece from *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. His main claim, to put it in Aristotelian fashion, is that metaphysics is said in many ways and thus lacks a unity required for a science. Günther Patzig's article 'Theology and Ontology in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*' ('Theologie und Ontologie in der *Metaphysik* des Aristoteles') elaborates his well-known claim that metaphysics is a doubly paronymous science.

In his article 'Metaphysics and Logic', Alan Code deals with Aristotle's 'metaphysical' methodology, in particular his research into axioms and the principle of contradiction, mainly in book Gamma. In doing so, the author relies on the *Posterior Analytics* and argues that metaphysics is methodologically close to demonstrative sciences: we have principles at the top, from which we demonstrate theorems. Exactly the opposite is claimed by Pierre Aubenque in his article 'On the Aristotelian notion of aporia' ('Sur la notion aristotélicienne d'aporie'). Aubenque wants to constrain metaphysics to dialectic as Aristotle develops it in his *Topics*, by focusing on book Beta.

In his classic paper 'Aristotle on the Law of Contradiction' ('Über den Satz des Widerspruchs bei Aristoteles'), Jan Łukasiewicz finds three distinct formulations of the law in book Gamma, and he claims that Aristotle cannot differentiate between them, i.e. that the 'arguments' for them are incomplete. Also, the principle of contradiction as the highest logical law is incompatible with Aristotle's idea of syllogism: both are independent of one another.

The next contribution is G.E.L. Owen's influential paper 'Aristotle on the Snares of Ontology'. In this paper Owen mainly deals with problems of homonymy of the term 'to be'. He shows that the verb 'to be' in existential use usually implies predication. To say 'A is' is to say that 'A is something or other'. Aristotle fails to distinguish clearly the two uses of the verb 'to be', let alone the use Owen detects in statements concerning time, place, and the like. The next article is about being in accidental sense. In 'Aristotelian Accidents', Theodor Ebert compares the doctrine of accidental being in *Metaphysics* with that in the first book of *Topics*, and demonstrates how they differ. He also indicates that the *Topics* view won the day because Porphyry relied on it in his hugely influential *Isagoge*.

Michael Frede and Günther Patzig deal with book Zeta. The paper 'Ousia in *Metaphysics* Zeta', which is a section from their introduction to the German edition of book Zeta, reaffirms the ancient view that forms are individual. In the very next article, 'Form, Species and Predication in Aristotle', Michael J. Woods gives arguments for the view that forms are universal.

Montgomery Furth's paper 'Transtemporal Stability in Aristotelean Substances' explores the idea that the central books of *Metaphysics* form a theoretical foundation of Aristotelian biology. He looks at the difference between the ontology of the *Categories* and that of the *Metaphysics*, and shows that only the notion of form in book Zeta succeeds in explaining heterogeneous nature of the world, organic units, and living creatures. To complement that view, and stress the biological perspective of the *Metaphysics*, the editors included John Cooper's paper 'Metaphysics in Aristotle's Embryology'. Cooper argues that Aristotle's embryology in fact does not require universal forms. But in this case it seems that he understands forms as individual: all essential characteristics of a specific species are already included in them. Socrates' form carries not only characteristics, distinctive of humans, but also characteristics which distinguish him from other living creatures and which at the same time make him similar to his parents. So Furth's and Cooper's papers contribute to the debate on the status of Aristotelian forms.

The next discussion moves onto the issues of actuality and potentiality. In his paper 'Aristotle's Notion of Potentiality in *Metaphysics* Theta', Michael Frede answers the dilemma whether any immaterial being exists along with material or substantial beings. In this case they will have to exist potentially. Frede concludes that potentiality is a passive 'ability' for change: it is not enough to say that we can build a house from a certain material and that this is, potentially, a house. This material must have a passive ability to be a house: we have to have real material, which has to be in good shape and so forth. The next chapter also deals with the issue of actuality and potentiality, but from the point of actuality. Aryeh Kosman argues in 'Activity of Being in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*' that the Aristotelian claim that matter is potentially *F* and form actually *F* should be understood based on the difference between activity (*ἐνέργεια*) and movement or change (*κίνησις*). In the latter, the realization of certain potentiality and the objective are different (for instance, building a house), while they coincide in the former.

Nicholas White discusses two properties of being: singularity and sameness. The main thesis of the article 'Aristotle on Sameness and Oneness' is that sameness (numerical, specific, and generic) is determined by his understanding of oneness. Aristotle supposedly took this over from Plato: ideas are individual and uniform, because they are unchangeable, while perceptible objects are, changeable and in a sense multiple, but they still maintain their identity through singularity. That is why Aristotle, according to White, is not interested as much in synchronic as in diachronic identity, and that is also the reason why he does not have to stick to Leibniz's Law.

The following two discussions are dedicated to the famous book *Lambda*. Joseph G. DeFilippo's paper 'Aristotle's Identification of the Prime Mover as God' argues against the usual construal of Aristotle's argument: the first mover is god, hence it must be alive; since thinking is the activity worthy of a divine living being, god must be an intellect. The correct sequence, DeFilippo argues, is this: the first mover is the object of thought and desire and, by a sequence of further premises, this implies that it is an intellect; because it is an intellect, it is alive, and only then can it be identified as god. Klaus Oehler deals differently with the problem of the first unmoved mover in his paper 'Unmoved mover as thought thinking itself' ('Der unbewegte Beweger als sich selbst denkendes Denken'). He focuses on the reflectivity of *νόησις νοήσεως* and argues that self-awareness is an essential characteristic of the identity of mind and its object.

The last two contributions are dedicated to the last two, mathematical books of the *Metaphysics*. Julia Annas in her 'Mathematical Objects in Aristotle' (originally published as 'Die Gegenstände der Mathematik bei Aristoteles') introduces a discussion of the ontological status of mathematical objects and Aristotle's theory of abstraction. This theory does not imply that mathematical objects are mind-dependent, but only that they depend on sensible objects as their properties which have to be abstracted (taken away) by the mathematician. In 'Platonism and Mathematics: A Prelude to Discussion' Myles Burnyeat deals with the Stagirite's relation to his teacher. According to Burnyeat, books Mu and Nu do not deal with the ontological status of mathematical objects, but with a wider question: What are the principles of things? With a comparative discussion of Plato's *Republic*, in particular the allegories of the line and the cave, he wants to prove that the fundamental question that arises from this is the status of knowledge and science, mathematics and dialectics.

The special significance of this book for Croatia and the region is that it introduces some of the most prominent names in the Anglo-American ('analytic') tradition of interpretation of ancient philosophy where they are grossly underrepresented. But the cogency of selection and organisation of papers collected in this volume transcends regional significance. There are few, if any, companions to Aristotle's magnum opus quite like this in existence.

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