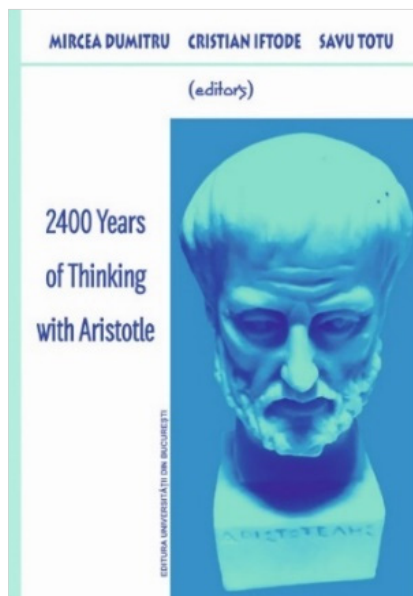


BOOK REVIEW

**Mircea Dumitru, Cristian Iftode, Savu Totu (eds.),
2400 Years of Thinking with Aristotle,
Editura Universității din București, București, 2020**

Published in 2020 at Editura Universității din București (University of Bucharest Publishing House), the book "2400 Years of Thinking with Aristotle" gathers together the contributions of participants at the International Conference 2400 Aristotle, hosted by Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest in 2016, celebrating "Aristotle Anniversary Year", announced by UNESCO. This volume represents a generous contribution to the western philosophical cultural, its horizon opening opportunities for a more precisely form of Stagirite's discourse, covering theories and concepts of political philosophy, ontology, logic, ethics, aesthetics, anthropology and cosmology.

The editors Mircea Dumitru, Cristian Iftode and Savu Totu have successfully created a strong and fluid structure of Aristotelian exegesis, each one of the twenty-one articles coming as a consolidation of the whole intellectual character of the paperwork. It



is gratifying to see that the Romanian philosophy is updating and highlighting the meaning and destiny of Aristotle's way of reasoning, in a time when the society is facing public approaches of truth full of negligence, superficiality and a wane of inspirational approaches.

In this way, the current volume is marking a fresh shade of the intellectual speech on various sides of reality, a celebration of lucidity, a disclosure of depths, a courageous act emerged as a result of a duty towards our psychological, moral and social manhood. In Aristotelian key, the life of every individual includes the relationship this one has with values, with meanings and its purposes. To a large extent, this capacity to reflect on the meanings of his existence is of a great importance for his own process of individuation, also for his dedication to the world. In so far as the horizon of knowledge is penetrated by the limpidity of pure reflection, the man begins to assert

himself as self-centered, free, self-determined, stimulating *energeia* to become excellency, *entelecheia*.

Being able to recognise the particular shades of reality is not easy and it's not to be done in any conditions. The philosophy of the Stagirite is similar to a rigorous design of concepts where *dynamis* becomes *energeia*, a living organism of reason, *prima materia* for any future step. This freshness and boldness of reason is very much present in this volume. Its editors detach themselves from the corrupt and obscure deep sense, engaging in an original search, often using strong bibliographic resources, relevant for a wider understanding of the great Greek philosopher's mind. I would dare to say that the volume is showing off as an act of awe for the things we forgot ourselves to surprise with. We are turning way too fast the act of philosophizing into a verdict, trying to save resources and to rationalise the tools and effort. The haste replaced the systematic reflection, exactly the one that touches the spirit of the self-thinking reason.

This volume releases the eyesight territory in order to reconsider obsessive interrogations, making them accessible to the reader, challenging him to explore meanings and to engage himself into a free philosophical speech. In this way, the thirst to conquer increases and it can be seen as a sparking technique for mental liberty, free of any biases, meticulously shaped to look for symbolic meanings of the analysed world. The book's guides, passionate and dedicated researchers on Stagirite's philosophy, propose a process rather than a product. Instead of highlighting the accuracy of language in giving a verdict, they are paving the ways

towards wisdom with a sincere, responsible wish, like a *pathemata mathemata*, a deepening in itself with the aim to overcome the impersonal, public thinking. Thus, the authors approach, similar to the Greek philosopher's, becomes a purposeful search, and not a mentally comfortable way to publish an anomalous verdict. The tone of research is not indifferent, however is specifically addressed, and the courageous energy manages to fill in the pages of the volume. Therefore, the reader will be pleased to discover various research that belong to philosophers who appreciate the authenticity and the value of Aristotelian contributions for the history of philosophy. We can enjoy a beautiful work on Aristotle's view on *philia* and substance, contemplation and happiness, a brilliant interpretation of Aristotle's *Categories* in the Middle Ages of the scholastic theology of Thomas Aquinas, a questioning of Aristotle as a political philosopher, or some interesting studies of his semantics, syllogistics and biology considerations.

The structured logic of all the articles are chasing a well-defined contextual drawing. Thereby, concreteness and coherency rules the volume, and the author's honesty treats and spreads away the anguish of meaninglessness. This small gathering of wisdom lovers resembles the Greeks polis, a living organism, effervescent, governed by specific laws to which existence must participate different parties. The main necessity of this dialectic form is to find what is proprium to the nature of things. The antipodes and the finitude cannot be dissolved, however revealed, lifted to the surface of the mind in order to be discussed, a fundamental feature of the Greeks way of thinking.

The space of thought, so well highlighted in his volume, is that special place in which the philosopher is not dissolved into the black void of abstraction. On contrary, the discretion of reflection is a fortified privacy that opens its gates to the others under the form of a particular cultural destiny. Therefore, in each and every argument we discover a world of logos who puts aside the borrowed metaphors and gained exemplarity. With the aid of different conceptual systems present in this paper, arouses a new essence of truth and a rationality which is revealing itself both vertically- by stepping into all stages of seeking the meanings- and horizontally, containing a various particular expression of exploring knowledge. With Aristotle, it is allowed to move freely into an original way of thinking and it is clearly highlighted the fluidity between physics and metaphysics.

By the way, the authors express the exemplarity of Stagirite's thinking; we can broadly identify the logic core of his speech. It is clear that Aristotle stood out in philosophy as a systematic mind. Each analysis done in the name of science must be developed under the form of an axiomatic system, a kind of geometry in which the analysis and the ordering of elements are part of research's ethos. The methods, premises and the terminology of the Stagirite's philosophy are carefully selected and analysed by the authors, with any skipping stage. In this way, the authors managed to create a frame to reference and a comprehensive approach of a more complex structure of reason.

This is a clear evidence of cognitive efficacy, which allows the reader to easily go in the Aristotelian interests, such as his distinction of categories, the logical syntax of language, the concepts of continuum, time,

substrate, form and final cause or the notion of being and that of substance. In this way, the volume touches all the key elements of the Stagirite's interests, like: reality and truth, the meaning of political activity, logic and the structure of science, arts and psychology. Thus, the light of knowledge sparkles, and takes the reader to a deeper personal search of the true nature of things. The methods, the arguments and the conceptual soil of each article leads to a disciplined understanding, released from the pressure of a kidnaped thinking, without any destination.

The Aristotelian reason, successfully represented through the articles of the volume "2400 Years of Thinking with Aristotle" is aiming to foresee its limits and options, its comprehension mechanism and its own freedom territory. We might often encounter questions that, at first glance, seem more ambitious than the mind's capacity to understand. Therefore, we are drawn into a wide range of inquiries by an irresistible force, a kind of strange obsession to go beyond cognition, into a state of logos undressed by impotence and confusion. This mighty mechanism of self-improvement is the core element of Aristotelian destiny of mind. Self-fulfillment is *summum bonum*, and the reason, *prima materia*, is the inducement of conquering the unknown.

Apart from convenience, inertia and volatility, the art of Aristotle's reflection encourage us to research, to become an active part of a well-grounded hermeneutics. This selection of articles makes a strong and useful addition to the literature on Aristotle's range of research, as it brings together the components of a wide research perspective, originally shaped. The stylistics are miscellaneous, technical or narrative, with an obvious

lexical diversity, where rhetorical interrogations are being balanced by stringent arguments, highlighting the true meaning of terms, with a high interest on maintaining a standard intellectual attire.

Fluctuating between critical function, neutral or controversy of the affective message of the articles, this volume manages to go through along with the reader, diverse positions from the presented ideas, without arousing partisanship or ignoring thesis and principles. In this way, the elegant and scientifically expressive note of the paper is maintained, and the stylistic subtlety manages to enrich and ennoble the content of the volume.

What remains after reading this volume is a sincere appreciation for the diligence and effort of each editor and author of structuring their contributions in a set of notions, thoughts and paradigms, orderly, structured and strong fundamented. It is comfortable to know that you can venture to unknown places of self along with partners who can maintain the certainty of a liberating and dignified intellectual path. Obvious as it is, we are troubled at every step by overwhelming and confusing temptations, by humiliating seductions of things, of moments of empty time of ridicule and boredom. The terrible prospect of agony and a

sleepwalking personal movement in the world can frighten and overwhelm us alike. Chaotic, indefinite thoughts are always presented to our minds, and getting to know reality is often a difficult task for a distracted mind. It is therefore necessary to enter into a nourishing dialogue with the world of meanings in order to embrace them in a worthy way. The Stagirite's thinking is an oriented one, which wants to get somewhere and it's looking for valid options, well-anchored, to perfect itself. This volume reveals an active participation, full of passion and boldness, in the process of overcoming all the narrative and practical elements that fragment and undermines our possibilities. Last but not least, the volume suggests a conduct released from the pressure of haste and sensationalism, a kind of being specific to the explorer of the unknown, whose quality as a witness of the truth empowers and exalts him.

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