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**Aristotle on Causation (F.) Fronterotta (ed.) *La scienza e le cause a partire dalla Metafisica di Aristotele. (Elenchos 54.)* Pp. 457. Naples: Bibliopolis, 2010. Paper, €50. ISBN: 978-88-7088-582-8.**

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it may be somewhat difficult for the reader to judge completely the points being drawn from the text without flipping forward to try to search for those passages. But there is no ideal organisational solution for such a highly annotated edition as this.

Despite these problems of organisation, V.d.M. has rendered a valuable service and gathered much scholarship together, and though some may think before any such analysis could reasonably be undertaken that the fragments of the Aristotelian text themselves should first be put on the solid ground of proper delimitation, before anyone can hope to characterise its methodology of argumentation or show how it fits in the protreptic genre; yet these fragments have been argued over now for 150 years and probably never will yield any consensus definition of what is truly Aristotelian. V.d.M. has produced a book which will be very useful for those interested in this very significant lost work of Aristotle.

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## ARISTOTLE ON CAUSATION

FRONTEROTTA (F.) (ed.) *La scienza e le cause a partire dalla Metafisica di Aristotele*. (Elenchos 54.) Pp. 457. Naples: Bibliopolis, 2010. Paper, €50. ISBN: 978-88-7088-582-8.

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This collection of essays examines Aristotle's views on causation across a wide range of texts, from the *Metaphysics* to the *De anima* to the biological treatises. Causation is a core topic in philosophy; Aristotle is a central thinker in antiquity; the contributions are by international experts in this area of research: there is much to recommend in the volume. It is a valuable addition to research in ancient philosophy and in causation. It will appeal also to those interested in the history of metaphysics.

The Editor's introduction frames the essays in the context of a recent and ongoing debate on Aristotle's and Plato's theories of causation. One side argues that the only genuine instances of causation are those in which efficient causes are in play, and that the best way to understand all the other causes Plato and Aristotle posited (e.g. the final cause) is by explanatory ascent – to use a Quinean expression. In other words, non-efficient causation has no metaphysical underpinning; only efficient causation does. The other side (which includes the reviewer) reckons Aristotle's four causes are *real* causes; hence, the interpretative challenge is to show that Aristotle provided an adequate account for the metaphysics of the four causes.

In the Introduction F. presents the former, reductive line of interpretation in detail but describes the other side only very briefly and in terms of its programmatic stance. This leaves the reader wanting to hear more about the arguments in support of the realist approach to non-efficient causation. On what basis do the non-reductionists assume that non-efficient causes are real ones? What realist accounts of non-efficient causation are there in the literature? How are we to assess their soundness? Perhaps F.'s Introduction promises too much when suggesting that the essays will advance the debate; the contributors merely assume one side or the other, without assessing the arguments.

It is an interesting feature of the volume that although the thematic focus is on Aristotle's theory of causation, some of the essays engage with Plato's theory as well. The volume opens with two essays that look at Aristotle's criticisms of Plato with respect to the causal role of the Forms, with reference to the first Book of the *Metaphysics*. There, Aristotle argues that Plato's Forms cannot be causally efficacious with respect to the sensible world because of their separation from it. F. Ferrari argues that Aristotle takes Plato to hold that the Forms exist in separation from the sensible world and the sensible world exists in separation from the Forms. And if this *were* the case for Plato, Aristotle's criticism would hold. But – Ferrari argues – this is not in fact the case; if the Forms are to be causes, their relation to the sensible things must be asymmetrical, and this is how Plato intended it. Additionally, Plato understands the causal efficacy of the Forms to be at once formal, final and efficient. Thus, if Aristotle accepts that the Forms can be causally efficacious at least *qua* formal causes, they are *ipso facto* causally efficacious as final and efficient causes as well. (This latter conclusion does not, however, follow from Ferrari's arguments.)

Within the same context of Aristotle's criticisms of Plato, F. argues that Aristotle's response to the problem how Forms can have causal efficacy is to postulate that causal contiguity – whether physical (i.e. spatiotemporal) or logical – is required to warrant causal efficacy. (The reader remains unclear as to what causal logical contiguity involves.)

Continuing the engagement with Plato's theory of causation, S. Broadie investigates the *Timaeus*' account of what causes living beings to be in existence. She finds Plato's position 'essentially unstable'. The reason is this: 'The fact that an animal reproduces itself in its offspring raises the very lively possibility that it too was formed by an animal just like itself; and so on back *ad infinitum*. And if in every case an animal was formed by an animal, we need not invoke divine demiurgy to explain some supposedly prototypical formation of the specific organs. Indeed, we not only need not: we cannot; for there was no first generation and therefore no prototypes' (pp. 82–3).

The following two essays, by G. Fine and M. Crubellier, investigate how Aristotle's theory of causation plays out in his account of knowledge in the *Posterior Analytics*. Fine elucidates Aristotle's view that knowledge is justified true belief, that is, true belief for which one can provide an account of the reasons why the belief is true. Crubellier examines Aristotle's claim that it is possible to provide a causal account only of events in the past, *post factum*; there cannot be predictions in science because with respect to the future a causal account can provide only the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions with respect to a certain phenomenon.

W. Leszl's essay argues that when investigating the causes of substance in the central books of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle is following a merely logical approach; that is, he is looking for explanations, and not for the metaphysical causes that make substances what they are.

One might think that Plato's and Aristotle's teleology are widely different: for Plato the universe is teleologically ordered because a demiurge with a providential plan set it to be that way, while for Aristotle the universe has eternally been teleologically ordered (without the intervention of any divinity). D. Sedley engages critically with this received view, and drawing on *Metaphysics* 12 argues that Aristotle in his most accomplished thoughts on theology finds himself rather aligned with Plato in thinking that there is a global nature that has cosmic goodness and is

causally governed by the unmoved mover. Is this in tension with Aristotle's commitment that teleology is intrinsic to nature? Sedley argues that there is no tension, but two different viewpoints in play: at the level of the sensible particulars the goal of each individual and species is self-preservation and self-fulfilment; this is not incompatible with the fact that at a more general level the individual's and the species' goal is to contribute to the well-being of the whole universe. Hence there must be divinity that aims at the good of the whole and oversees its achievement.

According to a traditional and well-received interpretation, the prime mover is a final and efficient cause at once. E. Berti re-examines the textual ground for this interpretation by looking at whether in the *Metaphysics* there are other cases besides the prime mover where the final and the efficient cause coincide. This survey's results are that the efficient and the final cause are never numerically one, even if in some cases they can be of the same species, for example in the case of parent and offspring.

P.-M. Morel tackles the challenging topic of mental causation: how does the soul of a living being move the body? There is evidence in the *De anima* and in the biological treatise *De motu animalium* that Aristotle posits an intermediate mover in between the soul and the body: the *pneuma* in the body that is moved by the soul and in turn moves the body. Morel's essay is helpful in drawing attention to a topic that has not received due attention by Aristotelian scholars and is of paramount importance in Aristotle's philosophy of mind. But the nature and the workings of this intermediary principle between the soul and the body are problematic, and require further investigation.

M. Vegetti investigates causation in Aristotle's biological works. In the case of living beings Aristotle does not show interest in individuating four types of cause; but, Vegetti argues, this is only a shift in the focus of the inquiry and not a discrepancy from the *Physics*.

This is an interesting and multifaceted volume. Readers, whether beginners or veterans, will be both informed and challenged.

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## ARISTOTLE AS POET

FORD (A.L.) *Aristotle as Poet. The Song for Hermias and Its Contexts*. Pp. xx + 243. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Cased, £30. ISBN: 978-0-19-973329-3.

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Aristotle was not just a critic of poetry but also a practitioner, and it is to this often forgotten side of the philosopher that F. dedicates attention in this book. Not much of Aristotle's poetry has survived. Altogether we have five fragments: two incipits of hymns, one hexameter and one elegiac; a seven-line elegiac fragment said by Olympiodorus to be an encomium of Plato; a pair of elegiac couplets which, according to Diogenes Laertius, were inscribed on a statue, dedicated at Delphi by Aristotle in honour of Hermias of Atarneus; and a sixteen-line (according to Page's colometry) *Hymn to Virtue* in honour of the same Hermias. F. touches on all these fragments in the course of his study, but his focus is on the longest and best known, the *Hymn to Virtue*. The book is divided into nine chapters: