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LIFE AND WORKS OF ARISTOTLE. . (H.) Flashar
Aristoteles. Lehrer des Abendlandes. Pp. 416, ills,
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apart from J. Barnes's edition of *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (1984), and an anthology of selected Aristotelian texts, it only includes volumes of the Clarendon Aristotle Series. The first choice represents an unnecessary limitation for a book that is likely to meet an international public with varying linguistic skills. The second one is unfortunate given that the series does not cover all important Aristotelian texts, and given that other valuable translations have appeared.

The volume is not meant as an introduction to Aristotle, and it does not aim to develop a global interpretation of his thought. In this last respect, a comparison with G. Fine's *The Oxford Handbook of Plato* (2008) is significant. Although the character of the individual contributions is similar between the two books, the *Handbook of Plato* opens with a dense introduction by the editor, which explains the general plan of the work and comments on each essay, stressing its relevance for the project as a whole. *The Handbook of Aristotle*, by contrast, has only a two-page preface, and looks more a collection of essays on disparate topics than an attempt at unitary interpretation.

A gain in scope, however, compensates for this lack of unity. The work succeeds remarkably well in providing a vast panorama of the heterogeneous issues that occupied Aristotle and currently occupy Aristotle scholars. The quality of the contributions is high. And while the bulk of the volume and the degree of sophistication of some contributions risk making it intimidating for beginners, it will prove an invaluable tool for readers already acquainted with ancient philosophy, who wish to familiarise themselves with the interpretative difficulties connected with a particular Aristotelian theme. The many challenging views set out by the contributors are likely to stimulate reflection and debate.

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LIFE AND WORKS OF ARISTOTLE

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'Fast könnte man meinen, das Werk des Aristoteles sei "überforscht", so wie Meere "überfischt" sind und dann nichts mehr hergeben'. This statement from the opening of F.'s preface not only draws attention to the fact that an abundance of scholarly literature has been published on Aristotle, but also implicitly raises the question why yet another introductory book on this topic is needed and how it differs from already existing ones. F. responds to these concerns by claiming that existing introductions are written from a philosophical point of view, whilst the present monograph is written by a philologist. Furthermore, the present introduction is aimed at both an expert and a non-expert audience, but with particular attention to the latter. Despite the challenge of covering such a vast field for two different types of audience, F., Professor Emeritus at the University of Munich and editor of the *Deutsche Aristoteles-Gesamtausgabe*, manages to do just that by offering a series of concise insights into Aristotle's life and works.

The first two chapters present Aristotle the man and outline the sources for his life and the transmission of his works. The rest of the book discusses Aristotle's works thematically, starting with ethics and then proceeding to politics, rhetoric, poetics, logic (together with language and dialectic), metaphysics, physics, cosmology and biology, each of which is treated in a separate chapter. The book concludes with a chapter on the reception of Aristotle's ideas. The continuity established by this organisation of topics allows readers

to deepen their knowledge not only of Aristotle's individual works, but also of his ideas more generally. F. manages to create a thread with which he guides the reader progressively through the various themes in order to demonstrate Aristotle's larger influence on western culture, as indicated in the title of the book. In-depth discussions of passages are incorporated within the individual chapters, each of which treats one particular work or a set of closely related works such as the *Organon*. A typical chapter starts with a background section, 'Grundlagen', providing information about the origin, the surviving state and the transmission of the texts. It is followed by a section in which existing conceptions of the topic before Aristotle are treated. The main part of each chapter is a sequential discussion of the work(s). Topics and sections are marked by subtitles which announce the focal theme(s). Finally, a summary, 'Résumé und Ausblick', not only restates the main arguments, but also describes the reception of Aristotle's ideas by scholars from antiquity, through the Renaissance, up until modern times.

F. combines paraphrase/summary of Aristotle's works with critical analysis of them. The latter in particular displays F.'s expertise. Whilst covering the most prominent philosophical issues, F.'s discussions, as promised in the book's introduction, also address philological issues. These include textual problems, intertextuality and the structure of texts. In addition to engaging critically with some of the most influential secondary literature on Aristotle, F. develops his own views. The resulting balance makes the book a well-rounded treatment of each topic and serves not only as a good introduction to Aristotle's works, but also as an excellent basis for further research. F.'s lucid style of writing (with some details relegated to endnotes rather than footnotes), together with the general use of transliteration and translation of Greek, makes the book suitable to be read within a wide range of contexts. Detailed explanations are presented in a way which is helpful to a non-expert audience while remaining of interest to scholars. The extensive bibliography (though of predominantly German works) is a valuable resource for both researchers and general readers.

Despite these qualities, one drawback, as with many other introductions, is the imbalance between the vastness of the topic and the amount of space available for its investigation. Conscious of this limitation, F. is forced to make difficult decisions about what to include and exclude. Whilst the selection of passages and issues to be discussed inevitably has a subjective element, F. aims to accord each work and topic an amount of space which adequately reflects the current state of scholarship. The chapter on rhetoric, for example, is a short, compact summary of the main concepts, but without much analysis. That on poetics, on the other hand, is much longer and includes a more thorough discussion of the work. This discrepancy in treatment is less an indication of the importance of the subject within Aristotle's works than a reflection of the current state of scholarship. Excellent though the book is, it inevitably cannot provide more than a glimpse into Aristotle's works and philosophy.

The volume fulfils F.'s aims and makes a useful contribution to an already crowded field. The combination of philosophical and philological perspectives allows F. to strike a balance which will appeal to both expert and non-expert audiences. The book's clear structure, style of writing and extensive bibliography all contribute to its value.

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