

Sascha Salatowsky. *De Anima: Die Rezeption der aristotelischen Psychologie im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert.*

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The present volume, which is the revised version of the author's PhD dissertation at the University of Berlin, deals, as the title indicates, with the reception of

the Aristotelian *De anima* in the late Renaissance and early modern period. The book is divided into four parts: the first contains the introduction, while the last three are concerned with the work of selected commentators on *De anima* in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Portugal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The introduction starts with general reflections about the rise of the new philosophy in the seventeenth century, which triumphed over scholastic Aristotelian philosophy. With the establishment of the new, some aspects of the old — which are worth remembering, as Salatowsky holds — got lost. One of these seems to be the “Aristotelian philosophy of mind,” which was superseded by the “Cartesian philosophy of subjectivity” (5). The author takes the thesis that the school philosophy of the sixteenth and seventeenth century produced a “new quality of this philosophy of mind” (10). The aim of the work is rather highly formulated and one may doubt whether it could be realized in a single volume: to reconstruct “the reception of Aristotelian psychology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with special references to the relevant schools in antiquity and the Middle Ages — Alexandrism, Neoplatonism, Averroism, and Thomism” (29). This ambitious aim presupposes a careful and well-founded selection of texts and authors from the numerous commentaries. It requires also a plausible method and a diligent and clear presentation of the varied and extensive subject. Neither requirement seems to have been realized in a satisfactory manner.

Surprisingly, Salatowsky starts his investigation about the reception of the Aristotelian psychology with Luther and Melanchthon (part 2). Through an analysis of the *Heidelberger Disputation* from 1518 the author tries to show, that the position of Luther — that the immortality of the soul can not be shown by means of Aristotelian natural philosophy but only through principles of faith — gets some support by the position of Alexander of Aphrodisias, who maintains that in accordance with Aristotelian natural philosophy, the human soul has to be thought of as mortal. Melanchthon’s interpretation of *De anima* is considered in the Neoplatonic tradition, for which reason Salatowsky inserts an excursus on Simplicius. But the author cannot detect much benefit in Melanchthon’s eclectic interpretation of the *De anima*, which tries to combine a philosophical approach with the Christian dogma of the immortality of the soul.

The third and longest part of the book is devoted to “Catholic Renaissance Aristotelianism,” which Salatowsky divides into two groups: the “radical Aristotelians” on the one side — which means here the Paduan philosophers, mainly Jacobus Zabarella and Simone Portio — and the “Jesuits” on the other, represented by Franciscus Toletus and the commentaries from the Jesuit college at Coimbra. The results of this chapter do not seem to offer any new insights: based on the well-known printed texts of the authors mentioned, Salatowsky agrees with Charles Schmitt’s certainly true, but nowadays somewhat trivial, insight that “Renaissance Aristotelianism was no monolithic entity” (277), but contained various different positions. Neither can the reader be surprised by the judgment that the Jesuits tried to conciliate the Aristotelian view of the soul with the Christian

position concerning the soul's substance, while the natural philosophers of Padua reclaimed the independence of philosophical investigations from Christian dogma.

In the fourth, and probably most original, part of the book, the author investigates the reception of Catholic Renaissance Aristotelianism within the Lutheran school philosophy of the seventeenth century, concentrating on Jacob Martini, Sigismund Evenius, Christoph Scheibler, Johann Conrad Dannhauer, Martin Leuschner, Julius Pacius, and Clemens Timpler. For Salatowsky, the reception of the Paduan natural philosophers, such as Zabarella, within the Lutheran school philosophy bore a specific historical opportunity for the development of both disciplines, since a theological position with an emphasis on the borderlines between philosophy and theology met a philosophical position that emphasized, although from the opposite perspective, the same. Unfortunately, in Salatowsky's view most Lutheran thinkers did not take the opportunity to bring these positions together, but preferred to argue in the line of the Jesuits. Nevertheless, Salatowsky sees in the analyzed text the beginning of a new philosophy of mind which came out more fully in the work of Georg Gutke, who will be the subject of a further investigation of the author.

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