

CHARLES H. LOHR, *THE ARISTOTELIAN TRADITION (1200–1650): TRANSLATION, THEMES AND EDITIONS*, ED. CHRISTOPH LÜTHY, ANDREA ALDO ROBIGLIO; VOL. I: *FROM ARISTOTLE VIA LULL TO THE RENAISSANCE. SELECTED ESSAYS*, ED. ANDREA ALDO ROBIGLIO; VOL. II: *LATIN ARISTOTLE EDITIONS (1450–1650)*, ED. CHRISTOPH LÜTHY, DAVIDE CELLAMARE, SISMEL–EDIZIONI DEL GALLUZZO, FIRENZE 2023 (CORPUS PHILOSOPHORUM MEDII AEVI. SUBSIDIA, 19), XIII + 249 PP., XXI + 216 PP., ISBN: 9788892902305.

EVA DEL SOLDATO
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



Posthumous collections of essays are typically a risk, since they could end up encapsulating more of the personality and the taste of the curators, rather than the preferences and the actual point of view of the late author. In these cases, certain choices could indeed be rebuked as arbitrary: why a certain essay should enter the collection in place of another, in a book that wants to be a celebration of a scholar's 'greatest hits'?

But all of this cannot be said of the two volumes by Charles H. Lohr, edited – with deep affection – by Andrea Robiglio and Christoph Lüthy. Volume I, curated by Robiglio, is in fact a collection of essays chosen by Lohr himself as his best and most representative. Volume II, edited by Lüthy together with Davide Cellamare, offers to the readers Lohr's *Catalogue of Latin Aristotle Editions (1450–1650)*. This would be already enough to celebrate the appearance of these volumes, in terms of defining the legacy of one of the greatest scholars of the twentieth century and giving life and circulation to an enterprise, the catalogue, he was not able to complete in his final years. But the volumes offer even more than that.

Volume I (*From Aristotle via Lull to the Renaissance*) is enriched by a series of articles that not only explains the genesis of these two books, but also allows a reader, not necessarily acquainted with Lohr's scholarship and biography, to situate the contributions presented in the two volumes. These include the preface by Andrea Robiglio, who asked Lohr to identify his most representative works now collected in the volume; an essay of Paul Richard Blum on Lohr as a scholar; an essay co-written by Pietro B. Rossi and Luca

Bianchi on the history of the *Aristoteles Latinus* project, in which Lohr's catalogue is rooted; and, finally, an essay by Fernando Domínguez Reboiras on Lohr and Lull, one of the authors to which the Jesuit scholar devoted large part of his research. This same essay also shows the influence Friedrich Steigmüller – the founder of the Lull Institute – had on Lohr in inspiring his cataloguing achievements, while doing an effective job in introducing Lohr's essays in their reciprocal connections.

Lohr's essays, the culmination of this volume, are indeed a wonderful selection. « Aristotelianism », originally published in the 1990 *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, is an exemplar work that should be read in any introductory course of history of philosophy. With remarkable liveliness and synthesis, Lohr analyses here the vicissitudes of Aristotelianism throughout the centuries, highlighting its complicated relationship with Platonism and devoting a significant large section to the Arabic reception. The following piece, « Introduction to Psellus », zooms in on the Byzantine thinker whom Lohr had already singled out for a pioneering yet failed attempt at applying Aristotelian philosophy to the Christian dogma (p. 60). Here he focuses on Psellus's work as a commentator and offers a bibliographical tour-de-force on his early modern circulation. The essay was in fact the introduction to the photographic reprint of Giovan Battista Camozzi's translation of Psellus's *Physics*. The long essay « Metaphysics » – from the *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* – is the heart of the collection, and in many ways the jewel of the crown, embracing all the main directions of Lohr's research. It opens up with the ambiguous status of metaphysics in Aristotle ('first philosophy' and 'divine science') and shows how this ambiguity played out in a Christian context. Lohr follows therefore two paths, looking at the reception of metaphysics as science of God, and metaphysics as first philosophy. The first part is devoted to metaphysics as the science of God and starts with Lull, focusing on his *Ars Generalis*, the discussion of the Trinitarian principle, and his missionary apostolate: this already exemplifies the transition from a static metaphysics to a dynamic one, which reflects the social situation of the medieval Mediterranean. Lohr follows Lull's ideas in their *translatio* to a different, but equally dynamic context, Veneto, that rejected an abstract idea of science. The symbol of this movement, Venetian humanism, is indeed Petrarch, but in a wider perspective the contacts with the Greeks were decisive to suggest an alternative form of culture which unified philosophy and literature, and emphasized mathematics. Veneto is precisely where a few decades later

also Nicholas of Cusa would likely ‘meet’ Lull, from whom he would recover the same kind of dynamic metaphysics. At that point also the Platonic tradition was re-appearing and further complicating metaphysical debates in the Latin world. Ficino will operate a ‘metaphysical turn’ of Platonism that will be opposed by another reader of Lull, Pico della Mirandola. The second section is instead devoted to metaphysics as science of being, an approach that was more sympathetic to Aristotle’s static views. Yet, a number of developments imposed to rethink the status and the realm of metaphysics. Scholastics embraced Aristotelianism because it was not only logically sound in a deductive system, but also efficiently supported apologetics. But the relationship between philosophy and theology was, over the centuries, hardly an easy one and the debates on the immortality of the soul caused a separation between metaphysics and natural science. This provoked a tug-of-war about the status of the science of the soul (that the Jesuit Pereira strongly maintained under the metaphysical umbrella) and more generally about the subject matter of metaphysics. These struggles favored a reform of the curriculum in Spain, in which metaphysics eventually reconquered its position in the arts curriculum, and were very much present in the Protestant world. It is hard to explain the richness of this essay in a few lines. Lohr’s ability in intertwining general ideas, precise examples, and historical transnational circumstances in short paragraphs is simply extraordinary. « Aristotelian *scientia* and the Medieval *artes* » is one of the latest contributions by Lohr. With the usual clarity it articulates the shifting from *scientiae* to *artes*. The final essay, « The Arabic Background to Ramon Lull’s *Liber Chaos* (ca. 1285) », goes back to Lull, showing how Arabic sources (and apologetic needs) influenced his writings. Some of the conclusions in Lull’s *Liber Chaos* point already toward Nicholas of Cusa (an association, we have seen, already present in the essay « Metaphysics »). In spite of their different purposes and focuses, the five essays reveal a remarkable internal coherence, which make it easy to understand why Lohr selected precisely these texts for the collection. The dialogue, reception, or rejection of the different contexts in which Aristotelianism and Aristotelian metaphysics were discussed and modified represent the *fil rouge* and the core of Lohr’s lifelong interests. And his incomparable bibliographical knowledge provided the backbone on which these texts were masterfully written.

Volume II, as said, is the *Latin Aristotle Editions* repertory. Initially conceived as a task Charles Schmitt had to complete, while Lohr was

collecting Aristotelian Renaissance commentaries, the catalogue was left unattended because of Schmitt's untimely demise. Lohr, who had in the meantime completed and published his commentaries repertory, decided therefore to provide also the other part of the work, coming close to achieve it through several sleepless nights. Lüthy, who assisted him when his health did not allow him this kind of efforts anymore, was asked by Lohr to complete and publish the catalogue. And, with the help of Cellamare, Lüthy had delivered a splendid, even if imperfect, instrument. Lüthy's notes make in fact very clear what one can and cannot expect to find in the catalogue, highlighting for example the torturous selection of the texts to be included in it (which respects Lohr's latest directions, and features only texts typically attributed to Aristotle, for which we have a Greek original, or texts which are not likely to be genuine, but for which we have the Greek text). Yet, in the Renaissance period the label of 'Aristotelian' was used in a more liberal way. Another significant problem is represented by the internal order of each entry, based on the names of the translators. What to do, in fact, in the case of revised versions of translations, which simply modified pre-existing renditions? And how to classify those editions which offer in juxtaposition two different translations? Moreover, as Lüthy mentions several times, another missing presence in the catalogue is the vernacular translations of Aristotle, at the center of a recent transnational scholarly interest. And obviously, even if Lohr contemplated the idea, manuscripts are not included. And yet, in spite of these issues, the catalogue offers an invaluable access to the oscillations in the reception of several Aristotelian texts, *in via quantitativa*, aside from offering valid indications of which translations were especially successful, and in which periods. One can only commend Lüthy and Cellamare for their painstaking work on Lohr's floppy disks, decrypting the abbreviations he used to describe each entry in his database.

The story of how the catalogue was finally printed, as charmingly recounted by Lüthy, has a moral that can be easily extended to both these Lohrian volumes: doing research is at once an individual and collective effort, one that is built across generations and decades, in order to make future advancement of our knowledge possible. And this awareness certainly drove Father Lohr in all his enterprises.