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At the very basis of the present volume lies a single statement of Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, namely VI.5.1140b17-18: “But the principle does not immediately appear (*phainetai*) to the person who has been corrupted by pleasure or pain” (transl. Fink). Due to the absence of abundant material devoted to this sentence in the later tradition, attention is additionally paid more generally to how *phantasia* was understood. In the introduction J. Fink and J. Moss point to a twofold ambition in publishing this volume: (1) to draw attention to worthwhile additions – or even challenge – to contemporary scholarship on Aristotle’s moral psychology present in the Aristotelian tradition; and (2) to challenge the predominantly intellectual focus on *phantasia* in ancient and medieval interpretations of *NE*.¹ Moreover, they concentrate on the exact meaning of *phainetai* (and related terms) in *NE*, and point out the possibility of either a ‘phantastic’ interpretation or an ‘intellectualistic’ interpretation, with a preference for the former, but without wholly rejecting the latter. They conclude the introduction with a brief survey of the six contributions that follow.

In the first contribution, F. De Haas discusses the views of two ancient Greek commentators, viz., Aspasius and Alexander of Aphrodisias. Based on a careful examination of a few key passages in Aristotle’s *De anima* and *NE*, he insists that for Aristotle we humans, by developing our virtues, do not only acquire a new state of our soul, but also change the way in which the world appears to us – at least in terms of good and bad. He then focuses on two fragments of Aspasius’ commentary (or rather his ‘modest paraphrase’, as de Haas notes) – i.e., related to *NE* II.4 and III.5. In both cases he highlights the significance of the Stoic discussions for Aspasius’ rewordings, even if these remain doctrinally closer to Aristotle than to the Stoics. Aspasius, for example seems to speak, even if briefly, of living a life ‘in accord with nature’ more closely in alignment with the Stoic understanding of this expression than Aristotle’s – according to which virtue is going beyond natural endowments. But Aspasius, in addition, seems to argue against the Stoic view regarding the epistemic priority of the kataleptic appearance, based on Aristotle’s idea of the ‘naturally

¹ Here, and in what follows we will always use the abbreviated form *NE* for *Nicomachean Ethics*; Fink and Moss simply state *Ethics*, based on the fact that in the book no attention whatsoever is paid to the *Eudemian Ethics* because that work remained largely unnoticed, especially after Aspasius (see pp. 7-8).

good one'. In both cases the notion of *φύσις*, 'nature', occupies an important place. It would perhaps be worthwhile to make a systematic analysis of all passages in which this notion occurs in Aspasius' commentary in order to see how he understands it in each case. With regard to Alexander, de Haas discusses three fragments: i.e., *Ethical Problems* 29, *Mantissa* 23, and an extract from *De fato*, which are all related to *NE* III.5. He convincingly shows that Alexander particularly emphasizes man's responsibility in developing their natural endowment of acquiring virtue. But, above all, for Alexander the wise man possesses a power (*exousia*) which allows him to make at all times a choice between two alternatives. This latter affirmation, as de Haas stresses, can only be understood in the framework of Alexander's battle against Stoic determinism.

In the following contribution, F. Woerther focuses on the Arabic tradition, and especially on Averroes' *Middle Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*. She offers a brief, but helpful introduction to the work, preceded by one on the Arabic translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and its reception among Arabic thinkers. Regarding al-Fārābī, she notes that he used in two of his works (i.e., *Harmony* and *Selected Aphorisms*) he utilized a translation of the *NE* which is different from the one extant in the Fez Unicum. It would be interesting to examine whether this is also the case in another of al-Fārābī's works (which is not referred to by Woerther), i.e., *Reminder on the Way to Felicity*, *Kitāb al-tanbih 'alā sabīl al-sa'āda*, where several passages are present that possess a close link with the *NE*. As to al-Fārābī's – largely lost – *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, how 'probable' is it, as Woerther affirms, that Albert the Great in fact knew it, given that only a small fragment, related to its introduction, has been preserved in Latin translation?² Regarding the crucial passage of VI.5, Woerther insists that we have thus far not yet discovered any testimony of the Arabic translation of book VI. Nonetheless, based on the Latin and Hebrew translation of Averroes' *Commentary*, she convincingly argues that the Arabic translation of *NE* VI.5.1140b17-18 was in all likelihood based on a misreading of the Greek, namely reading *διεφθαρμένος* in an accusative instead of a dative form. In line with this mistaken translation Averroes presented a new way of understanding *φρόνησις*, namely as the union of moral excellence and reason. This becomes all the more evident if one looks at the broader context, as quoted by Woerther, which covers *NE* VI.5.1140b11-21. However, she translates in the opening line of the Hebrew translation of Averroes' commentary the expression *yir'at hêt* (translating the Greek term *σωφροσύνη*) as 'temperance', whereas it literally means 'fear of sin'. Later in the volume, C. Meir Neria (pp. 106-108) will translate it in this latter way and will even emphasize that Joseph ben Shem Tov, in an attempt to

² See Frédérique Woerther, *Le plaisir, le bonheur, et l'acquisition des vertus: Édition du Livre X du Commentaire moyen d'Averroès à l'Éthique à Nicomaque d'Aristote, accompagnée d'une traduction française annotée, et précédée de deux études sur le Commentaire moyen d'Averroès à l'Éthique à Nicomaque* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018), 32-36, where the fragment is edited, together with a French translation, and is indicated as existing in two manuscripts. In the introduction (*ibid.*, p. 3, n. 14), Woerther refers to a possible knowledge of al-Fārābī's *Commentary* in Latin translation by Albert in terms of 'peut-être' ('maybe'), which looks in the actual state of affairs more appropriate than 'probable'.

Judaize the *NE*, consciously opted for this specific expression. Therefore, it is regrettable that Woerther does not explain, at least in a note, her preference for ‘temperance’ as translation of the Hebrew expression.³ After analysing six other passages, Woerther concludes that Averroes did not devote a specific passage to the role played by *φαντασία* in an ethical context. She insists that Averroes limits himself to specify this kind of *φαντασία* as involved with the perception of sensibles and its being closer to the senses than to the mathematical perception that is analogous to it. Hence, Averroes seems to establish a link with Aristotle’s natural philosophy, and thus might suggest a willingness to consider a route to the *Ethics* that originated in Aristotle’s natural philosophy, as Fink and Moss suggest in their introduction.

M. Trizio deals with the medieval Greek (Byzantine) tradition, more specifically with Eustratius of Nicaea. After offering a brief though substantial survey of *NE* in Byzantium from the end of the 11th. through the 15th. century (including major thinkers as e.g., Michael of Ephesus, George Pachymeres and George Scholarius), he observes that Eustratius is the only one useful witness for approaching *NE* VI.5.1140b17-18. From his commentary (of which Trizio offers an English translation), it is obvious that Eustratius does not interpret Aristotle’s affirmation as referring to *φαντασία*, but rather to *φρόνησις*, understood (related to *NE* VI.12.1144a28-31) as a disposition evolving from *δεινότης* (cleverness) with the aid of ethical virtues. At first sight, despite a fundamentally different approach, this interpretation of *φρόνησις*, insofar as it poses a link between reason and the ethical virtues, shows great similarities – without being fully identical – with the one presented by Averroes. But only an in depth comparative study can clarify how far this similarity reaches, in which it would be crucial to determine whether *φρόνησις* is effectively involved in the peculiar perception of the end or goal in moral agency, as Trizio (p. 73) suggests; moreover, the way Eustratius presents *φρόνησις* in his commentary on *NE* VI.8.1142a25-30 ([partially]translated on p. 74) – in spite of being not connected to the exegesis of 1140b17-18 – undoubtedly deserves serious attention. Trizio insists that *φρόνησις* perceives a single individual circumstance as such, but, unfortunately, does not further comment on it. Very convincing is Trizio’s identification of the ‘eye of the soul’ with reason (and, in 1144a28-31, more specifically with practical intellect) as well as his pointing out the introduction of Platonic and Christian elements in Eustratius’ interpretation.

³ Chaim Meir Neria recognizes explicitly that he had access to Woerther’s translation, and that he even quotes it, although with a few modifications. One wonders whether he has informed Woerther of this, given that she offers no reference to his paper and, moreover, presents no justification whatsoever for her – at least, at a literal level – somewhat unusual translation. Perhaps she opted for it on the basis of Berman’s observation that “the Hebrew expression (being rendered by him as ‘fear of sin’) most likely can serve as an example of of the secularization of the Bible and understanding it in ‘neutral’ political and ethical ways”, see Lawrence V. Berman, “*Σωφροσύνη* and *Ἐγκρατεία* in Arabic, Latin, and Hebrew: The Case of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle and its *Middle Commentary* by Averroes”, in *Orientalische Kultur und Europäisches Mittelalter*, edited by A. Zimmermann and I. Craemer-Ruegenberg (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1995), 274-287, especially 283.

I. Costa concentrates on a somewhat larger passage of *NE* VI.5.1140, namely b11-21, which he labels the ‘goal’s destruction (or disappearance) passage’ (GDP). Before dealing with three Latin commentators – i.e., Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and Radulphus Brito – he first highlights how the passage, and especially the notion of *φρόνησις*, must be understood in the context of Aristotelian psychology. He offers textual evidence that for Aristotle *φρόνησις* fully knows the end, is imperative compared to both the means and the end, and is not distinct from moral virtue concerning its object, but only concerning its subject. On the basis of this threefold consideration, Costa concludes that the appearance, or the disappearance, of the goal-principle in GDP does not mean a purely epistemological act, but rather the capacity of practical reason (or the lack of it) in feeling the imperative strength of a virtuous goal (p. 84). He, moreover, insists not only that the vicious person cannot see the principle, but that this can be the case, at least temporarily, for the incontinent person as well. Having briefly outlined the different translations of *NE* in Latin, Costa starts with Albert the Great’s introduction of the practical syllogism in his *Lectura cum questionibus*, and this is in order to explain how pleasure and pain corrupt ‘prudentia’ (*φρόνησις*). Albert insists that pleasure does not destroy the major, which expresses the imperative of the goal, but offers a corrupted minor, and hence completely destroys the conclusion, given its having destroyed the link between the major and the minor. Costa herein detects a reading of GDP as a description of incontinence, and finds further confirmation for this interpretation in a passage of VII.2 (quoted in Latin on p. 96, n. 19 and partially translated on pp. 86-87; however, I am inclined to read at the beginning: “if scientific knowledge is so [i.e. perfect] in [*est tantum in*] the universal, or major proposition”, instead of “... only concerns the universal...; and somewhat later “and mostly in (*et partim in*) the particular, or minor proposition” instead of “and partly in relation to ...” – but these comments in no way affect Costa’s argument in favour of Albert’ interpretation of GDP in terms of ‘incontinence’; on the contrary, they rather fortify it). As to Thomas Aquinas, Costa detects a reading of GDP in terms of vice rather than incontinence, as was the case with Albert. Most interesting is Costa’s pointing out how Thomas, in *De Malo* 15.4 – i.e. in his ‘theological’ treatment of lust (*luxuria*) – saves *φρόνησις* as a general condition of virtue and had GDP in his mind when he mentions the ‘blindness of mind’. Regarding Radulphus Brito, in spite of his offering no plain explanation of GDP in either of the two redactions of his commentaries on *NE*, Costa convincingly shows that in Q. 166-167 of the second redaction (several passages of which are quoted according to the provisory critical edition he was preparing and the publication of which is now announced by Brepols for 2022) that Brito, *inter alia*, presents continence in the light of GDP, uses the practical syllogism in a way that is similar to Albert’s use and distinguishes between two types of impediments for acting virtuously, i.e. psychological and related to incontinence – this latter being more deeply rooted and possibly definitive.

The medieval Hebrew tradition is treated by C. Neria. Similar to Costa, he discusses the enlarged passage *NE* VI.5.1140b11-25 (not just b16-17, as suggested by the title of the contribution), while he adds at the end a small section devoted to *NE* I.2.1002b9-11. Regarding 1140b11-25, he quotes a modified version of Woerther’s English translation (see

above) of Samuel ben Judah of Marseille's Hebrew translation of Averroes' *Middle Commentary* (dated 1321). He insists (following Berman) that *yir'at hēt*, "fear of sin", is foreign to the Aristotelian world, but he (*pace* Berman) sees in this a sign of an intention to Judaize the *NE* rather than to secularize the Bible. He bases this claim of Judaization on Joseph b. Shem-Ṭob's commentary on Rabbi Don Meir Alguades' (early 15th century) Hebrew translation (which is based on Grosseteste's Latin translation) of the *NE*, where several passages explicitly mention an important conformity between Aristotle's thought and the Bible. In this way Joseph opened the way for a large reception of Aristotle's *NE* in Jewish thought, largely facilitated by a very popular homelitic work, i.e. *The Binding of Isaac*, by Rabbi Isaac 'Arama, a young member of his generation. In a kind of appendix (although not presented as such by him), Neria emphasizes that Joseph b. Shem-Ṭob, in his commentary on *NE* I.2.1002b9-11, poses a direct link between one's way of life (i.e., virtuous or vicious), and what one experiences in one's dreams (inspired by but going further than Averroes), and the possibility for the prophet (and him alone) to use the active intellect while sleeping (against Averroes). He concludes that Joseph combined elements of technical commentary with an explicit linking of *NE* to outspoken Jewish texts – thus creating a new discourse, namely by lending his commentary a dimension of novelty and theological daring. Here, one wonders if – and, if so, to what extent – Joseph b. Shem-Ṭob has not found an important source of inspiration in the *Guide of the Perplexed* of Maimonides. Finally, it must be stressed that the Hebrew *NE* is either a Greek-Arabic-Hebrew or a Greek-Latin-Hebrew translation, but never a direct Greek-Hebrew translation, and in the Hebrew commentarial tradition one sees Arabic (Averroes) and Latin (Thomas Aquinas) influences, which became both influential from the 15th century on, as attested by Joseph b. Shem-Ṭob. This complicates any judgment concerning the real originality (or not) of a Hebrew commentator, but everything indicates that Neria, in his contribution, succeeds in valorizing in an appropriate way these different elements.

In the last chapter, J. Fink concentrates on contemporary Aristotelian scholarship. The focus is no longer on the intellectual aspect of *φρόνησις*, as was the case in the major part of the ancient and medieval traditions, but on the physiological mechanisms underlying it. With regard to the central terms 'appears' and 'pleasure and pain', Fink underlines *inter alia* that for Aristotle a *φάντασμα* has a causal power in the body similar to the causal power of the perception from which it originates and that tactile perceptions are an animal's first and most immediate means of discriminating pain and pleasure. His textual indications for both ideas are relatively strong, and hence convincing. Certainly interesting, though not having the same strong textual basis as the two claims just mentioned, is his qualification of the *φαντασία βουλευτική* as the expression of a morally neutral deliberation, which can neither be reduced to desire exclusively, as Aristotle explicitly says, nor to reason exclusively – here Fink specifies 'according to what I think' (in addition, he recognizes [on p. 141] that his translation of *De anima* III.11.434a5-12 – the crucial, but, as Fink rightly observes, difficult passage about "deliberative phantasia" – involves a good deal of interpretation already). According to Fink, "deliberative phantasia" makes moral situations and moral principles appear to an agent as they do. It provides a framework for deliberation

and, moreover, produces unified phantasmata with more or less attraction. In addition, he notes that pleasure is the first motivating factor that explains why some acting appears attractive to an agent. Following Corcilius, Fink ascribes to Aristotle a 'motivational hedonism'. But, he insists – in a largely innovative way – that *φαντασία* is implied in character formation; that an agent is only virtuous in the truest sense of the word if moral virtue and *φρόνησις* are successfully integrated in him; that *σωφροσύνη* (temperance) preserves *φρόνησις*; and that the corrupted agent lacks any genuine moral principle, not because he is intellectually weak-sighted, but because his sense perceptual affective disposition does not allow him to discriminate anything that could motivate him to act, hence implies a failure with respect to his *ἦθος*. Fink, albeit inspired by contemporary studies, expresses a few new ideas regarding Aristotle's ideas on moral deliberation and character formation. They clearly deserve serious attention. And I think the same remark applies to all contributions of this outstanding volume.