David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism*. Philosophia Antiqua: A Series of Studies on Ancient Philosophy, v. 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2007)

This book, which “was originally a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen, in 2006”, consists of several parts. (1) Beyond the Acknowledgments and Preface, Bloch provides a new edition and translation of Aristotle’s *de Memoria et Reminiscentia* (pp. 1-51); the book concludes with a series of textual notes for this chapter (Chapter 5, pp. 229-243). (2) Bloch provides an extended essay on Aristotle’s conception of memory and recollection that considers Aristotle’s own view, modern treatments of this topic, i.e., memory, and their differences from Aristotle, and an analysis of “Memory’ Words in the Rest of the Corpus Aristotelicum” (pp. 53-135). (3) The final substantive chapter reviews the history of “Aristotle’s Theories of Memory and Recollection in the Latin West (pp. 137-228). A bibliography (pp. 245-254) and three indices (pp. 255-276) complete the volume.

(1) Bloch makes a persuasive case that a new edition of this work is in order and provides a clear account of the manuscripts he uses and the principles he follows (pp. 1-19). (*A stemma Codicum* is included in the back cover of the book.) He also explains the principles of his new English translation: “The English translation that accompanies the text is meant as an aid to understanding the Greek text; it is *not* a literal translation in the usual sense of ‘literal’, and it certainly will not find favour with all scholars... What I strive for in all cases is to reproduce both the content and the style of the treatise, but if both cannot be done..., I focus attention primarily on the content” (p. 18). The text and translation are on facing pages, as too are two sets of notes: a critical apparatus appears below the Greek text and a series of notes, alternate translations, and references to other texts below the English translation. The textual notes at the end of the volume further bolster the details of the decisions noted in both these sets of notes and, as far as they go, are very useful. Disagreements in such matters are, perhaps, inevitable; but this text and translation seem superior to anything currently available and make this volume a significant contribution to scholarship in this area. The accompanying notes further enhance the value of this volume as a working part of any library on Aristotle.

(2) Bloch makes the aims of his investigation clear: to establish Aristotle’s views concerning memory and recollection and to ask what follows from his views for our own contemporary concerns. (p. 54) His investigation begins with remarks on the importance of memory as a topic and the place of the *de Memoria* within the Aristotelian corpus. (pp. 55-58) The latter is important for several reasons, most particularly that Bloch has “assumed without argument one single but essential

doctrine, *viz.* that definition of the soul as the form of a living body.” (p. 57) Memory involves a host of other mental categories, primarily awareness of the passage of time and imagination. While memory has clear links to perception, which supplies memory with its content, Aristotle wishes to dissociate it from thinking (at least in part because thinking is identified entirely with recollection). (p. 59, 61, 72-75) *Prima facie*, the *de Memoria* divides into two parts (and two chapters), the first of which concerns memory and the second recollection. And Bloch recognizes this division. (p. 77) He claims, however, that “although chapter 2 of the *De memoria* contains notoriously difficult passages, the general philosophical ideas of the treatise are found primarily in chapter 1.” (p. 73, cf. 74) This claim takes him to the question of why memory and recollection are treated in a single treatise (because as Bloch has it they do not substantively go together as we have them here) and he concludes that Aristotle “treats memory as the philosophically interesting subject, recollection as a useful tool.” (p. 77) As a result, the burden of Bloch’s analysis concerns memory and not recollection. And about memory he reaches somewhat disappointing conclusions: Aristotle’s concept of memory “does not correspond precisely with any modern theory of memory... [and it] is a narrow one compared to modern theories...” (p. 79) Indeed, on Bloch’s reading, Aristotle’s account of memory is less than thin: “The state of having an image and viewing it as representing something from the past is all there is to memory!” (p. 83; cf. p. 109) His analysis of Aristotle’s account is followed by a linguistic account of the definitions and grammar of “memory words” in the *De memoria*; for this reader, this account is the most valuable and helpful part of Bloch’s treatment of the text. (pp. 84-109) The remainder of Chapter Three takes up modern views of the *De memoria* and of memory, including those of Sorabji and Annas. (pp. 110-118) Two appendices complete the chapter: (1) a consideration of “Memory” Words in the Aristotelian Corpus” (pp. 122-127) and (2) “The 21st Century Concept of Memory” that looks forward from the claim “that Aristotle’s theory of memory is not like any present-day conception of memory.” (p. 128; cf. 128-135)

(3) Chapter Four, the last substantive chapter of this book, turns to the history of the *de Memoria* in the Latin West. Again, Bloch states his own conclusion unambiguously: “Clearly, minor thinkers of the 12th-14th centuries may have accepted without question the narrow Aristotelian theory, if they came to understand it. But the great thinkers of the period did not accept it, and therefore the somewhat controversial conclusion of this essay is that Aristotle was not, despite appearances, the major influence on the medieval philosophical conception of memory.” (pp. 142-143) This “controversial conclusion” is supported by brief reports of the views of Avicenna (pp. 145-153), Averroes (pp. 153-162), Augustine (pp. 168-169), Dominicus Gundissalinus (pp. 169-171), John Blund

(pp. 172-175), Two Early Anonymous Treatises on the Soul (pp. 175-178), Albert the Great (pp. 179-195), Thomas Aquinas (pp. 195-207), Peter of Auvergne (pp. 207-219) and John Duns Scotus (pp. 220-225). This chapter, and so Bloch's substantive analysis, ends with special praise for Scotus: "thus, there are many reasons why the medieval theories of memory were bound to look different from Aristotle's. Still, Scotus is the only philosopher among those that I have examined in this essay who takes a giant leap towards a modern theory of memory. The remaining theories are better viewed as theories that are integrated in a thoroughly Peripatetic framework, even if the concept of memory itself always caused the interpreters some difficulties." (pp. 227-228) Textual notes, a bibliography, and three indices complete the volume.

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