

Selene BRUMANA, *La scienza del divino nel Περί  
κόσμου Ps.-Aristotelico*

Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2023 (Temi metafisici e problemi del pensiero  
antico, n°150), 396 pages, ISBN : 9788834352823

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## REFERENCES

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- 1 The Περὶ κόσμου was considered a central text in the study of Aristotle's corpus in both the ancient and medieval worlds. However, despite a small revival of interest in the text in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholarship has somewhat set the Περὶ κόσμου aside, considering it merely to be a work of poetical and theological rather than philosophical import. Selene Brumana's *La scienza del divino nel Περὶ κόσμου Ps.-Aristotelico* aims to address this lacuna in the literature, and to show how the author of the Περὶ κόσμου makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of ancient debates regarding not only the notion of the divine, but also the methodological aspects of approaching and discussing theology as a philosophical discipline.
- 2 The book is laid out in the following manner. Brumana begins with an extensive introduction which does an excellent job not only of summarizing the literature and laying out the central debates, but also establishing the goals and general approach of the book. Although Brumana gives extensive treatment of the views of Giovanni Reale and Abraham Bos about the text's authorship by Aristotle himself, Brumana considers the Περὶ κόσμου a work of the peripatetic school, without singling out any name in particular. However, this does not mean that Brumana's work is not for scholars of Aristotle as well. Brumana's analogy to the Capella degli Scrovegni, a composite work of Giotto and his workshop, is apt: one who wishes to study the work of Giotto is still

interested in those faces which were painted not by Giotto himself, but by his students. This is a useful illustration because it allows Brumana to open up questions about what is or is not an idea of Aristotle (particularly with respect to his lost works) regardless of the fact that the text may not be by Aristotle himself.

- 3 The author's interpretation of θεολογῶμεν is discussed briefly in the introduction but is fully outlined in the first chapter of the book. This establishes a key theme in the monograph which makes the reader question the divisions between what is literary, theological, scientific and properly "philosophical" – insofar as these divisions were not set in stone in the ancient world.
- 4 The book proceeds with two further short chapters, first of all to discuss (chapter 2) the many meanings of the term "cosmos," and (chapter 3) the substance (οὐσία) and power (δύναμις) of the divine principle. The book then systematically continues to address the nature of the divine in itself (chapter 4), the meaning of the names which are assigned to God, and the mythological/allegorical themes utilized in the text (chapter 5). A final chapter (chapter 6) then addresses the causal efficacy of the divine. The monograph finishes with concluding remarks, followed by an extensive bibliography, indices of ancient and modern names, as well an index locorum.
- 5 This monograph does an excellent job not only of systematizing the philosophical content of a difficult text, including analysing the influences on it and the philosophical and theological context in which it was composed, but – as we mentioned above – it offers a particularly nuanced study of the text insofar as it applies a method of deconstructing modern notions of what is and is not "philosophy" in order to show the relevance and importance of this work so long overlooked – considered to possess only "beaucoup d'enthousiasme, de piété et de littérature, mais bien peu de philosophie" (to quote Brumana, p. 285, quoting Duhot 1990, p. 223). Thus, the present work is an invaluable tool in approaching a study of the Περὶ κόσμου, but perhaps even more importantly it also invites us to reconsider our own biases when approaching and attempting to categorise ancient texts.

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