

Gilles MALONEY, *Moi, Aristote (À propos)*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2020, 15,2 × 22,8 cm, IX-648 p., ISBN 978-2-7637-4698-2

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significations politiques dont ces représentations sont les témoins. Elle veut réhabiliter une autre image que l'image récente, plus sulpicienne, du « bon pasteur ». Elle s'en prend aussi à une dichotomie qui, dit-elle, parcourt et grève l'histoire de l'art concernant l'image du Christ: il y aurait le bon pasteur comme présence fraternelle, douce, docile, consolante, anti-impériale; s'y opposerait l'image du Christ en gloire pro-empire. Elle entend démontrer que l'opposition est factice et que diverses formes de pouvoir (depuis le Moyen Orient ancien jusqu'au début du Moyen Âge) ont eu recours, pour se penser et se représenter, à l'image du « bon pasteur ». Sans en exposer de justification méthodologique, elle marie analyses d'images, interprétations de textes (peu de pratiques) et questions culturelles. Elle conclut que pour la période impériale, ancrée dans le passé biblique et moyen-oriental, on a eu recours à l'image et à la métaphore du « bon pasteur » pour lui faire porter l'idée de stabilité, d'autorité, de force et pour renforcer l'idée que le chef (roi ou empereur) était un élu de Dieu pouvant unifier le divers, le vivant, le divin, même les morts (p. 160). Elle termine son ouvrage par quelques sondages rapides pour le XIX<sup>e</sup> et le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle pour mener les lecteurs là où elle avait débuté son ouvrage: les figurines du « Precious Moment » du dernier quart du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, histoire de rejeter cette image « à l'eau de rose » (« saccharine »), produite dans le sillage d'images romantiques du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Les illustrations sont bien choisies et ne se limitent pas aux représentations usuelles et elles sont bien intégrées dans le texte qui y fait référence et les explique.

La présentation des philosophes grecs (Platon et Aristote) sur la question du berger s'en tient, malheureusement, à des généralités. C'est le recenseur, professeur de philosophie, qui s'en plaint. Car l'approfondissement des ouvrages de ces auteurs, dans leurs différences fondamentales à ce sujet, auraient pu éclairer la question du pouvoir et en complexifier les enjeux quant à la représentation et à la mise en discours! Il faut peut-être penser qu'après le début du Moyen Âge, moment où le recours à l'image du « bon pasteur » s'estompe lentement dans son lien avec le pouvoir, une nouvelle idéologie du pouvoir n'a plus besoin de celle-ci.

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Gilles MALONEY, **Moi, Aristote** (À propos), Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2020, 15,2 x 22,8 cm, IX-648 p., ISBN 978-2-7637-4698-2.

Aristotle is perhaps the most commented philosopher. Gilles Maloney's *Moi, Aristote* represents in some sense an attempt to 'uncomment' on Aristotle, to let him speak for himself. In the *avant-propos* to his *biographie romancée* of Aristotle, Maloney promises to remain faithful to the vocabulary and thought of the philosopher. He delivers on this promise. Given that Aristotle's *opera* consist largely of lecture notes, Maloney does not have too much difficulty in finding a model for Aristotle's voice. It is the voice of a calm teacher and a philosopher for whom the beginning of philosophy is in wonder – the Greek *thauma*.

Gilles Maloney is a retired member of the Literature Department at Laval University. A classicist distinguished by his contributions to scholarship on the Hippocratic corpus, Maloney's knowledge of ancient science is evident in his patient integration of Aristotle's biological works into *Moi, Aristote*. In fact, the biography includes almost exhaustive references to Aristotle's works. Maloney manages in his biography of the philosopher to summarize with a light hand a broad range of key Aristotelian doctrines. The reader is introduced to (or reminded of) Aristotle's accounts of psychology, ethics, politics, animal movement, as well as theology. Moreover, we encounter a broad cast of characters in this book, including, amongst others, Aristotle's family, students and associates. Maloney clearly has the scholar's eye for accuracy and completeness. Yet, Maloney is also an excellent writer. His literary skill is evidenced in the deftly executed structure of the work.

Certain elements of ring composition can be discerned in the references to Aristotle's interests. For example, Aristotle's early fascination with movement is crowned by an almost mystical awareness of the unmoved mover towards the end of the book. The theme of rhetoric, introduced early on in relation to Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's work at his teacher's Academy, reaches a climax in the final pages with an account of the drafting of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the context of his own school, the Lyceum. Moreover, the great orator Demosthenes is prominent throughout *Moi, Aristote*. In fact, Maloney quotes directly from many of his speeches. In fact, Demosthenes personifies Athenian resistance to Macedonian ascendancy. And, although Aristotle's life path provides logic and cohesion to the book, political events provide most of the forward movement. That is, the dramatic arc of *Moi, Aristote* traces the rise and fall of Macedonia and its relations with Athens. This political background is structured in a diptych of sorts.

Throughout roughly the first half of the book, Philip of Macedonia makes regular appearances both as political leader and as Aristotle's friend and associate, while in the second half it is Aristotle's pupil Alexander the Great who plays the role of communicating the political realities of the day to the reader and binding that larger world to Aristotle himself. The general question of the political is, however, introduced already towards the beginning of the book as Aristotle is made aware of Plato's involvement with politics in Syracuse.

Maloney delicately puts Aristotle's ethics into relation with Aristotle's first-person accounts of the characters we encounter in the work, above all of Philip and Alexander. Although he does not obscure what are for modern readers Aristotle's completely unacceptable views on gender and slavery, Maloney does represent Aristotle as a kind and generous person both in his relations to women and slaves. Although the plot is driven largely by political events, these do have a direct impact on his peripatetic existence and his emotional life. For example, Aristotle witnesses the unhappy aftermath of the destruction of his hometown at the hands of Philip's forces. And, in a sense, Aristotle's marriage was made possible by a move from Athens to avoid the dangers of anti-Macedonian sentiment. Aristotle suffers the loss of loved ones – his young wife, his nephew. Yet, although, the pain of these episodes is communicated to the reader, affairs of the heart and family relations are ultimately accessory to the main current of the book. Aristotle's first mover is his almost child-like curiosity and desire to know nature.

Unlike those of other *biographies romancées* of ancient figures such as Marguerite Yourcenar's *Memoirs of Hadrian* or Robert Graves' *I, Claudius*, the fictionalized elements in *Moi, Aristote* are very limited. Maloney clearly wanted his book to emerge as faithfully as possible from the authentic works of Aristotle. Accordingly, Maloney does not speculate about Aristotle's views concerning the goings on around him. Indeed, Maloney's Aristotle remains remarkably neutral in the face of the political events which rocked the Greek world of his day. The philosopher's inner thoughts and feelings concerning his powerful friends – Philip and Alexander – remain rather distant and largely unexplored in *Moi, Aristote*. Indeed, the Aristotle of *Moi, Aristote* does not enter into any real conflict. His move away from Plato is not a break. His relationship with Alexander is not vexed. This Aristotle is always characterized by that most important of virtues which he so insightfully analyzed, namely, friendship. Maloney does not attempt to recreate a complex inner life of his protagonist. Rather, the *moi* here is closer to that of a diarist who records events and activities but does not commit existential considerations to the page.

Maloney's fictionalized biography illustrates the idea that for the ancient Greeks philosophy was a way of life. The repeated appearances of the Cynic Diogenes in *Moi, Aristote* underline this theme. But Maloney's Aristotle is, above all, a researcher with an unrelenting interest in discovering the whole of the world around him. How else can we explain his Aristotle's detailed observations concerning dreams, language, fish and insects? But unlike some researchers who may be driven by any range of passionate ambitions, Maloney's Aristotle is a paragon of virtue and moderation. His research aims not at recognition or power, but at *theoria* or 'contemplation.'

This is a very enjoyable read. Moreover, because it is so historically accurate, it is also a useful work. Philosophy students will find in it a wonderful overview of Aristotle's works, his friends and his world. The reader does hear in *Moi, Aristote*, the philosopher speaking for himself and recognizes the voice of the author of *ta ethika*, *ta physika*, etc. Maloney deserves praise for his careful, comprehensive, both ambitious and modest work, that provides a new yet faithful perspective on Aristotle.

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Nolen GERTZ, *Nihilism* (The MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series). Cambridge MA, The MIT Press, 2019, 13,7 × 21,3 cm, 224 p., 21,90 \$USA, ISBN 978-0-26253-717-9.

Nolen Gertz's *Nihilism* is intended, according to its back cover, to offer an "examination of the meaning of meaninglessness: why it matters that nothing matters." As a part of the *Essential Knowledge* series, Gertz's book is intended to offer a concise and accessible introduction to the topic, and on the whole it succeeds. The book is focused and highly readable, clearly written for those new to the topic and in need of a clear idea of what the concept means. On the other hand, the brief length and broad scope