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***Aristotle's Apostasy: From the Thinking God of METAPHYSICS Lambda
to the Divine Fifth Element of ON THE HEAVENS***

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In *Metaphysics* Lambda 6-7, the ancient Stagirite from Northern Greece offers powerful arguments for an eternal immaterial Unmoved Mover. On almost all historical accounts starting with the commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias (3rd century CE), the Mover is identified with a god that has a blessed life and that thinks *of itself* thinking for all eternity. This Mover grounds the contingent physical universe, with the heavenly ensouled outer spheres desiring the Mover and thus moving eternally themselves. Later theologians like Thomas Aquinas base proofs for the existence of a Christian god on Aristotle's arguments, leaving aside both the incongruity of the entity being immaterial while leading a blessed life and the god being so narcissistic that it cannot even be aware of the universe, much less mortal human beings. *A fortiori* it cannot be providential, which greatly annoyed Cicero. Other dilemmas in Lambda are similarly legion and have exercised philosophers, classicists and theologians since Alexander.

Scott demonstrates, however, that Alexander was the first to attribute the narcissistic god to Aristotle, with no previous philosopher for 500 years *even discussing it* much less embracing it. Only Theophrastus, Aristotle's friend and successor as head of the Lyceum, mentions an unmoved mover in an *aporia* ("puzzle"). However, even he does not accept the doctrine and, worse for the modern tradition, does not identify it with a thinking god. Aristotle allows *material* prime unmoved movers like the 55 outer spheres in Lambda 8 and the rock-hitting man of *Physics* VIII 5. Moreover, Theophrastus and the later Peripatetics, including Strato, Critolaus, and Xenarchus of Seleucia, all seemingly accept a type of "metaphysical primitivism," according to which the universe moves eternally *in virtue of its own nature*, even though their details may differ. For the Stagirite, the weightless fifth element or "ether" and the ethereal outer spheres that changelessly and perpetually circle are explicitly the *divine* primary ontological entities in *On the Heavens*.

Modern specialists such as W. Jaeger, W.K.C. Guthrie, S. Broadie, S. Menn, L. Judson, G. Botteri and R. Casazza still explicitly attribute souls to the ethereal outer spheres for the Northern Greek, or are committed to that position, all of which is as absurd as attributing souls to instances of the other four elements—fire, air, water and earth—despite the academics' creative attempts at a reconciliation. Scott demonstrates that Aristotle instead believed in ensouled spheres only when youthfully Platonic but that he evolved to the fifth element. Thus, Alexander gravely distorts Aristotle's metaphysics, and there is no need for individuals to continue exploring the issues of Lambda for theological insights, unless they are concerned with the Northern Greek's early thought or its history.

Freely available conference presentations at the University of Ottawa, November 2024, and the University of Lisbon, July 2025, which provide some of the basics and background of the book, are at the following URLs (the latter includes the debate in Lisbon between Scott and Claudio William Veloso):

www.epspress.com/NTF/Ottawa2024.pdf

www.epspress.com/Lisbon2025/Lisbon2025-ScottAndVelosoDebate.pdf

A previous Announcement had indicated that Scott's *Aristotle's "Not to Fear" Proof for the Necessary Eternality of the Universe* (2019) would be combined with subsequent digital extensions and published as a larger Edition 2. However, given the new research and conferences, *Aristotle's Apostasy* will subsume the digital extensions and both supersede and replace Edition 2, extending the findings of *Aristotle's "Not to Fear" Proof*.

Other Related Publications and Presentations by Scott

(reverse chronological order)

"Reply to *Xenophanes in the Pseudoaristotelian De Mundo* [originally "Xenophanes' God and the Aristotelian *Νόησις Νοήσεως*]," by Sylvana Chrysakopoulou, University of Ioannina, Greece: Presentation to *Aristotle across Boundaries*, June 8-9, 2023, Verbania, Lago Maggiore, Università del Piemonte Orientale.

The URLs for all eight digital extensions of Aristotle's "*Not to Fear*" *Proof for the Necessary Eternality of the Universe* (2019) are listed towards the end of the last one, "Critolaus, Atticus, and the Conclusive Evidence that Aristotle Dropped the Unmoved Mover" (2022), at: www.epspress.com/NTF/CritolausAndAtticusOnAristotle.pdf

"Alcmaeon of Croton, *Phaedrus* 245c-e, and Aristotle," Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, Aristotle: Works in Progress, Zoom session, 6 March 2021.

Aristotle's "Not to Fear" Proof for the Necessary Eternality of the Universe (New York City: ExistencePS Press) 2019. Hardcover ISBN-13: 9780999704974 Softcover ISBN-13: 9780999704967.

"Aristotle on the Infinite Past: Why Averroes was Right and Philoponus Wrong," Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, Fordham University, New York City, October, 2014.

Invited speaker, Philosophy Department, Kutztown University, PA, May, 1998: "Aristotle, Big Bangs, and Creationism."

"Anaxagoras: Eleatic Pluralist, or The First (Infinite) Fractal," American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, Boston, MA, December, 1994.

"Aristotle's "*Not to Fear*" Proof for the Eternality of the Universe [without the Unmoved Mover]":

- SSIPS Conference, SUNY Binghamton, NY, 1994.
- 17th Annual Southwest Ancient Philosophy Conference, University of Texas, Austin, 1994.