Vladimír Marko: *Four Ancient Arguments about Future Contingencies* Comenius University in Bratislava, 2017, 369 pp.[1]

An interesting monograph by Vladimír Marko, dedicated to ancient logic and entitled *Four Ancient Arguments on Future Contingencies* (in Slovak: *Štyri antické argumenty o budúcich náhodnostiach*), saw the light of day at the end of the previous year. Marko decided to analyse four selected ancient logical arguments that form the *loci communes* of the ancient, medieval, and even contemporary discussions of logicians, philosophers, and thinkers in general that are interested in the formal aspect of our thinking about the world. This is a rare publication in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and indeed the wider Central Europe region, because only a handful of authors from it deal with ancient logic.[2] One can read between the lines in the *Preface* that Marko's ambitious aim is to use this book to make ancient logical arguments popular, and even revive their spirit and thus integrate them into the mysterious process of initiating the young to study logic. In this review, I try to estimate the prospects of Marko's book when it comes to fulfilling this aim.

The publication, which is described at the very beginning—and rightly so—as a "scientific monograph", is approximately 370 pages long. Marko presents here the results of his many years of research in ancient argumentation. The book is equipped with two indexes while the extensive bibliography gives separate lists of historical sources, the newest critical editions of Ancient Greek, Roman, and even some Medieval and Byzantine authors and the texts by modern authors. It contains also the index of the acronyms—those mostly used in the renowned dictionaries and critical anthologies of the source texts—what permits easier orientation in the otherwise complicated pile of bibliographical references.

In addition to the *Preface* and the *Introduction*, the book is composed of core chapters dedicated to particular ancient arguments. The introductory chapter is of great methodological importance, because it points to possible difficulties in the

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[2] To give an example, let us mention F. Gahér with his important works on Stoic logic, namely Gahér (1994, 2006).

interpretation, study, and teaching of ancient logical theories. Marko draws our attention to several possible scientific approaches towards the source texts, and he comparatively considers the advantages and disadvantages of every methodological approach. Above all, he tries to demonstrate that ancient texts in general cannot be read and interpreted as isolated and individual units. According to Marko, this is a mistake made by both students and some researchers when they insufficiently take into consideration many relevant layers of the text that should be approached in terms of the so-called "principle of charity" (Wilson 1959; Davidson 1974; etc.). I consider this part of the text to be an especially valuable and useful methodological manual for anyone who deals with ancient sources. It does not matter whether they are texts with a totally logical focus and whether the interpreter approaches them with the motivation to undertake a logical analysis. I recommend Marko's *Introduction* to all students of philosophy, logic, and the history of thinking in general—especially at postgraduate level—as well as to any philologists who want to approach the subject of their own research interest in a truly scientific fashion.

In terms of length, the first chapter considerably exceeds the others; it has a sort of mini-monographic character supplemented with a summary and even an appendix. The extent of this part of the book corresponds to the seriousness, importance, and notorious reputation of its subject area—reflections of *Aristotle's tomorrow's sea battle*. The second chapter, humorously called *Looking for the Lazy Argument Candidates*, deals with a lesser known but all the more academically attractive "Lazy Argument" or "Idle argument" (ἀργὸς λόγος). It is trying to prove, from the viewpoint of the logically driven fatalism, how our efforts are in vain, for example, when taking care of our own health or even in the fulfilment of duties required to get credits. I consider this part of the book to be exceptionally attractive and accessible to readers and students, since the use of formal logical means to analyse the argument is reduced to a necessary minimum. That is why I recommend incorporating the Lazy Argument as a possible topic into specialized courses on ancient philosophy or the history of logic. A philosophically interesting part of the chapter is the subchapter *Many Faces of Fatalism* (pp. 144-172), where Marko discusses different interpretations of fatalism—not only those originating from the ancient times but also those provided by present-day authors. Another important chapter of the monograph—the third and the shortest one—deals with a lesser known ancient argument known as "The Reaper". The chapter's title, *Some Sketchy Notes on the Reaper Argument*, corresponds to the reduced extent of this part. It is a refreshing intermezzo before the stirring finale of the official part of the work. It provides an extensive analysis of Diodorus' *Master Argument* (περὶ δυνατῶν). Apart from the interpretation of the ancient argument itself, it contains quite an

extensive (I do not know whether complete, but definitely "exhausting" for readers) list of pioneering reconstructions of the argument in question. I must admit that in this part, the analytically not-so-well oriented reader can get lost, and this is why I recommend it only to logically proficient readers. The book also contains two appendices—one dedicated to an argument on the rival grammatical conceptions of the anomalists and the analogists and another one dealing with Cicero's attempts to translate the term ἀξίωμα.

Marko's analysis of particular ancient logical arguments is very complex, systematic, and thoroughgoing. It reveals his historical and philosophical thoroughness as well as the *acribia* of the logical and analytical approach. Functional references and quotations of the source texts (in Greek and Latin) are not merely emblematic decorations of the text—as it sometimes happens, unfortunately—with works from ancient times; rather, they demonstrate that Marko does in fact work with the original sources and consults the respectable critical editions of ancient authors.

The reviewer is traditionally required to express some objections or criticism, or to reproach the author for mistakes in the assessed work. When I admit that I was looking for mistakes in Marko's text only with greatest difficulties, I do not mean just to flatter the author. I do not dare to judge the details of the formalized analysis of particular ancient arguments—I will gladly leave this task to other, more analytically focused, reviewers. As a Classical philologist, I was vainly looking for mistakes in Ancient Greek and Latin, terminological misunderstandings, and ambiguousness. In the whole publication, I found only one typo in Greek, specifically in the phrase δι ᾽ ἑνός λήμματος λόγος on p. 194. One thing I do not understand is why Marko mostly used only Latin transliterations of ancient Greek terms and original passages in the chapter on "The Reaper". This question is more pressing, because right in this chapter the philological dimension of the text is perhaps most noticeable. According to my opinion, the use of Latin transliteration instead of the Ancient Greek polytonic alphabet is not appropriate here.[3]

I know that with this review I did not live up to the expectations of the readers of *Organon F*, who expected that I would dive into an erudite criticism of Marko's formalized analyses of ancient judgement-based schemes. I repeat that I will gladly leave this task to other more qualified peers. My aim was rather to emphasize what

[3] The argument that we commonly come across transliteration in newer books of Anglo-Saxon provenance is not fully persuasive. To transcribe ancient Greek in Latin script is the same barbarianism as using speakers at a classical concert. Marko's ancient logical symphony does not deserve such a thing.

makes Marko's publication useful for a less analytically erudite reader. I also wanted to answer the question of whether Marko's ambition expressed in the *Preface* is well grounded—we learn in between the lines that by this book he would also like to enrich the teaching of the history of ancient philosophy and the history of logic. My conclusion is that at least some parts of the book—especially the methodologically oriented *Introduction* and some analytically less demanding parts (in the chapter on "The Lazy Argument")—can certainly be used in teaching the subjects in question. Finally, I would like to ask Marko for something unusual. It would be helpful if some of the future editions of his book were adapted to the needs of non-analytically focused readers, particularly students. A much larger audience would then be able to enjoy his *opus magnum*—if not in the form of a grand symphony of logic, then at least in the form of its piano transcription.

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