



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

A pursuit of ontological truth in Aristotle's philosophy

Jin, D.

Citation

Jin, D. (2025, January 15). *A pursuit of ontological truth in Aristotle's philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4176263>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4176263>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

A Pursuit of Ontological Truth in Aristotle's Philosophy

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden
op gezag van rector magnificus prof.dr.ir. H. Bijl,
volgens besluit van het college voor promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 15 januari 2025
klokke 10.00 uur

door
Da Jin
geboren te Xi'an (China)
in 1991

Promotor: Prof.dr. F.A.J. de Haas

Co-promotor: Dr. R.M. van den Berg

Promotiecommissie: Prof.dr. J.W. McAllister

Prof.dr.M.S. van der Schaar

Prof.dr.J.M. Szaif (University of California, Davis)

Prof.dr.M. Bonazzi (University of Bologna)

Table of contents

Abbreviations	5
Introduction	6
1. Why seek ontological truth in Aristotle?	7
2. The structure of the investigation	8
Chapter One	11
The Traditional Interpretation of Truth in Aristotle	11
1. Various discussions about truth	11
2. Aristotle and the classical correspondence theory of truth	13
2.1 The account of truth and falsity in <i>Metaphysics</i> Γ.7	13
2.2 The account of truth and falsity in <i>Metaphysics</i> Δ.7	14
2.3 The account of truth and falsity in <i>Metaphysics</i> E.4	15
3. The classical correspondence theory of truth	17
3.1 The account of truth and falsity in <i>Metaphysics</i> Θ.10	18
3.2 How to interpret the term “correspondence”	20
3.3 The correspondence theory- interpretation criticized	21
4. Conclusion: the truth of statements as truth-values	23
Chapter Two	25
Being in the Strictest Sense in <i>Metaphysics</i> Θ.10	25
1. <i>Metaphysics</i> Θ.10 in modern scholarship	26
2. Texts supporting the ontological reading of truth in <i>Metaphysics</i> Θ.10	28
3. Combinations and separations in <i>Metaphysics</i> Θ.10	29
4. Ontological truth in <i>Metaphysics</i> Θ.10	31
4.1 Incomposites are always true in terms of actualization	32
4.2 Ignorance in <i>Metaphysics</i> Θ.10	36
4.3 Composites changing over time	36
4.4 Always divided and never combined	38
5. Conclusion: “being” in the strictest sense as truth is ontological truth	38
Chapter Three	40
Relations Between Words, Thoughts, and Things	40
1. How modes of being are traditionally spoken by language	40
2. Truth in words	43
2.1 The role of words without combinations: names and verbs	43
2.2 Combinations of words in thoughts with truth-values	44
2.3 Signification: the relationship between words and things in virtue of thoughts	46
3. Truth in thoughts: a representational realism or a direct realism?	48
3.1 Representational realism: “affections of the soul” between words and thoughts	48
3.2 Interpreting “likenesses as affections of souls” in Aristotle.	50

4. A direct realism: truth in thoughts as the form of objects in the soul	52
5. Further evidence for direct realism in terms of actuality and potentiality	54
6. ‘Truth in things’ has ontological priority to ‘truth in thoughts’	56
Chapter Four	58
Categories, Potentiality and Actuality	58
1. Being with reference to categories	58
1.1 Categories and the priority of primary substance	59
2. Being with reference to potentiality and actuality	62
2.1 Motion in terms of potentiality and actuality in <i>Physics</i>	62
2.2 The priority of actuality	64
2.3 Eternal beings and perishable things	67
3. The hierarchy of being in terms of truth	69
4. Conclusion	71
Chapter Five	73
Essences in Demonstrations	73
1. The structure of demonstrations	74
2. Immediate definitions as the indemonstrable first principles of demonstrations	75
3. Syllogistic definitions as a conclusion of a demonstration	77
4. Objects of definitions	80
5. Two kinds of knowledge	83
6. Conclusion	85
Chapter Six	87
The Principle of Non-Contradiction	87
1. The formulation of the principle of non-contradiction	87
2. The logical reading of the principle of non-contradiction	89
3. The principle of non-contradiction as an ontological principle	90
3.1 An ontological reading in <i>Categories</i>	90
3.2 An ontological reading in <i>Metaphysics</i>	92
4. The principle of non-contradiction within the hierarchy of truth	94
5. The principle of non-contradiction performing within the hierarchy of being	96
6. Conclusion	98
Chapter Seven	100
Conclusion	100
1. The route of my journey	100
2. The goal of my journey	102
Bibliography	105
Nederlandse samenvatting	118
Acknowledgement	122
Curriculum vitae	123

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this dissertation:

Aristotle's works:

<i>A.Pr.</i>	<i>Analytica Priora</i>
<i>A.Pst.</i>	<i>Analytica Posteriora</i>
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Categoriae</i>
<i>De An.</i>	<i>De Anima</i>
<i>Int.</i>	<i>De Interpretatione</i>
<i>Met.</i>	<i>Metaphysica</i>
<i>NE.</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>Phys.</i>	<i>Physica</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topica</i>

Reference to Aristotle's works are given in the following form: abbreviated title, followed by book, chapter, page, column, and lines. e.g. *Met.* Δ. 7, 1017a31-1017a35.