



Jednota filozofická Olomouc



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Aristotle and Aristoxenus on the Science of Harmonics

Aristoxenus was born to a professional musician, Spintharus, in Tarentum, Italy. In addition to studying under his father, he studied under Lamprus of Erythrae and Xenophilus, the Pythagorean, until he, at last, arrived at Aristotle's Lyceum to study under Aristotle himself. Here, he developed a significant theory of music, a science of Harmonics, much of which was inspired by Aristotle's texts *An. Post.* and *Metaphysics*. Aristoxenus' goal is to generate an independent science, one that would have its own genus – a view even different from that of Aristotle. He was most inspired by Aristotle's concept of *dynamis*. Repeatedly in *Harmonics*, Books I and II, Aristoxenus states that the faculty of hearing is insufficient to render Harmonics into a science. In itself, hearing or the perceptive capacity of hearing, cannot be the foundation of the science of Harmonics. The only affirmation that this can make are the sizes of the intervals. Instead, the constitution of a melodic system depends on what he calls the *dynamis*, the functionality of the diverse components, such as the leading note, the dominant, or the tonic of a scale. The *dynamis* cannot be perceived by the capacity of hearing. Thus, another faculty is requisite to render Harmonics into a science: namely, reason. "The enterprise depends two things, hearing and reason (*dianoia*), for through hearing we judge the sizes of the intervals, and through reason we apprehend their *dynamis*." (*Harmonics* 33.4-9) This is developed carefully in *Harmonics*, Book II, in light of his reference to Plato's esoteric teachings on the Good, II.30-31.



Stránky: jednota-filozoficka.cz

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