

**ADDRESS OF THE RECTOR OF ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF  
THESSALONIKI, PROFESSOR IOANNIS MYLOPOULOS**

It is a great pleasure for me today to address the official opening ceremony of the “Interdisciplinary Centre for Aristotle Studies”.

I would like to share with you a little secret. The seed for the establishment of this Centre, the idea for the establishment of this Centre, was born sixteen years ago, in chilly Canada, at York University in Toronto Ontario, when I was on a sabbatical, which coincided with the same time period that Professor Demetra Sfendoni-Mentzou was on a sabbatical, too.

It was therefore the great opportunity of my life, besides benefitting that year by the Sabbatical at York University, to become initiated into the secrets of Aristotle. And while being there, in the faraway North, I came to understand that my homeland Greece, Macedonia and my city Thessaloniki, all have a great importance, but especially my University. A University, which bears the name of this great Greek philosopher.

Demetra, I think that that winter, the harsh winter of '94-'95 in Toronto Canada – I was an Assistant Professor, you were an Associate Professor, if I recall correctly – was born in me the idea of the need to make our University known by means of the most important “product” that it has to export abroad, which is our great tradition, which is our philosophical tradition, which is our name: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Hence, today, dear Demetra and I, each from different positions, feel proud to have made real something, which I believe constitutes an imperative need, especially in our times, especially in an age, that is to say, of economic and social crisis that we are going through, the need to deal with seriously, to study and promote our cultural heritage, that is at the same time also the heritage of the civilized world.

And the truth is that when you go away from your homeland, you can realize its true value. Only when you get outside your own system and look from above, you can really understand, what it is that has value in your own microcosm.

We should not, of course, forget that Aristotle is one of the pillars of our Greek heritage. Upon his work has the intellectual edifice of Europe and the entire civilized world been built. The philosophy of Aristotle shaped the West's way of thinking in the field of logic, in the field of moral and political philosophy and had an intense presence in the Hellenistic tradition, in Arabic philosophy, in the Christian Scholastic West and throughout the course of Byzantium.

The massive work that Aristotle left has an enormous range. It covers all key areas of philosophy and also lays the foundations of the main branches of science as we know them today. With his work he thus offers the basis for the unification of knowledge and for the interdisciplinary approach to issues that concern us today. Moreover, the study of Aristotle's work may contribute to the understanding and solving of contemporary problems, in as much in our moral and political life as in theoretical thinking.

And we all realize, feel and acknowledge, what importance this has especially in our time.

By creating, therefore, the "Interdisciplinary Centre for Aristotle Studies", which was established by the Senate of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki during the previous academic year, the way is open to make known and make use of Aristotle's work on a world wide scale.

With this initiative of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, which today becomes a reality in a particularly difficult period, Aristotle University opens with an extroverted motion the doors wide with an undertaking, which, as has already been demonstrated merely by the response to the announcement of the commencement of the operation of the Centre, exceeds the boundaries of our University and acquires a national, but also a world wide dimension.

Moreover, the Centre has the unique privilege to operate in the University which bears its name while at the same time is situated in the centre of a triangle, which is formed by Stagira, Aristotle's birthplace, Mieza, place of his teaching, having as a student Alexander, and Lesbos, where Aristotle conducted his biological and natural investigations.

I would like to thank the President of the Centre, Professor of Philosophy of Science, Demetra Sfendoni-Mentzou, the members of the Board and Scientific Committee, but also the members of the Senate, who helped create this very significant, I believe not only for our university but also for our country, “Interdisciplinary Centre for Aristotle Studies”.