Modern philosophy began with a rebellion against the Aristotelianism of the Scholastics and has, to a large extent, always been defined by it. To be sure, even in the work of the early moderns, the rejection of Aristotelian ideas was not always thoroughgoing. For instance, the Scholastic holdovers in the systems of Descartes and Locke are well-known, and Leibniz was keen to synthesize as much of previous thought as he could. But the obsolescence of the core doctrines of Aristotle’s metaphysics and philosophy of nature – such as hylemorphism, the theory of act and potency, and the doctrine of the four causes – would eventually become something like settled wisdom in post-Cartesian Western thought.

In recent decades, there has been within academic philosophy a small but growing challenge to this anti-Aristotelian near-consensus. The revival of Aristotelian themes in ethics in the work of thinkers like Alasdair MacIntyre (1981), Martha Nussbaum (1986), Philippa Foot (2001), and Michael Thompson (2008) is, of course, well-known. But neo-Aristotelian ideas have been getting attention even in the philosophy of science and in metaphysics. In the former discipline, there is the “new essentialism” of writers like Brian Ellis (2001, 2002) and Nancy Cartwright (1992, reprinted in 1999). In the latter there is the revival of the notion of causal powers and the manifestations toward which they are directed in the work of thinkers like George Molnar (2003), C.B. Martin (2008), and John Heil (2003). (Not that these developments are entirely independent. See Mumford 2009 for a useful overview of the history and themes of both lines of thought.)

There are also, in general metaphysics, the revival of interest in Aristotelian conceptions of substance, essence, and the like in the work of writers like Kit Fine (1994a, 1994b) and E.J. Lowe (2006); and in Aristotelian teleology in writers like John Hawthorne and Daniel Nolan
Even a full-throated Aristotelian-Scholasticism is not without representatives in contemporary analytic philosophy (Haldane 2002; Oderberg 2007; Novak, Novotny, Soudek, and Svoboda 2012).

While it would certainly be an overstatement to say that a full-scale revival of Aristotelianism is currently underway, it does seem that some of the various strands of thought alluded to are at least beginning to coalesce into something like a self-conscious movement. That, at any rate, is something one might reasonably infer from the titles and contents of the recent anthologies *Contemporary Aristotelian Metaphysics*, edited by Tuomas Tahko (2012), and *Powers and Capacities in Philosophy: The New Aristotelianism*, edited by Ruth Groff and John Greco (2012); and from major conferences like *Metaphysics: Aristotelian, Scholastic, Analytic*, held in Prague from June 30 – July 3 in 2010, and *Aristotelian Themes in Contemporary Metaphysics*, held at Boise State University in Idaho, from April 16–18 in 2011.

If there is such a movement underway, perhaps the present volume can contribute something to it. Though grounded in careful exegesis of Aristotle’s writings, the book aims to demonstrate the continuing relevance of Aristotelian ideas to contemporary philosophical debate.

The first three chapters in the volume are concerned with the questions of what metaphysics is and what method is appropriate to it. In “The Phainomenological Method in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*,” Christopher Shields considers the role that appearances (*phainomena*) – what seems to be the case – play, for Aristotle, in determining what is the case, whether in metaphysics or in other contexts. As Shields explains, Aristotle is committed to a “Principle of Phainomenological Conservatism” according to which the fact that something appears to be true provides considerable evidence for believing that it is true, though not infallible evidence.

Stephen Boulter’s “The Aporetic Method and the Defence of Immodest Metaphysics” defends the traditional view that metaphysics is indispensable to philosophy, that at least some substantive metaphysical claims can be justified without appealing to science, and that some accepted interpretations of mature scientific theory can justifiably be rejected on metaphysical grounds. Central to his defence is an appeal to what Aristotle called “aporia” – real or apparent conflicts between claims that we have independent reason to accept, and which must therefore be resolved in some way.

In “Metaphysics as the First Philosophy,” Tuomas E. Tahko addresses the question of what it is for metaphysics to be “the first philosophy” (as the Aristotelian tradition characterizes it), and examines its relationship