

# RIIN SIRKEL

University of Vermont  
Department of Philosophy  
70 South Williams Street,  
Burlington, VT 05401

Email: riin.sirkel@uvm.edu  
Tel: (802) 503-5960

**AREA OF SPECIALIZATION:** Ancient Philosophy, including the Ancient Greek Commentators

**AREAS OF COMPETENCE:** Medieval Philosophy, Metaphysics

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of Vermont (August 2018–): **Associate Professor**

University of Vermont (August 2012–2018): **Assistant Professor**

University of Alberta (2010–2012): **Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Postdoctoral Fellowship**

## EDUCATION

**University of Western Ontario (2006–2010): Ph.D. in Philosophy**

Dissertation: *The Problem of Katholou (Universals) in Aristotle*

Committee: Henrik Lagerlund, Devin Henry, John Thorp, Karen Nielsen, Verity Harte (external)

**University of Tartu, Estonia (2002–2005): M.A. in Philosophy**

Thesis (in Estonian): *The Question of Ousia (Substance): Aristotle, Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas*

Advisors: Henrik Lagerlund, Andrus Tool

**University of Tartu, Estonia (1997–2002): B.A. in Philosophy**

Thesis (in Estonian): *The Commented Translation of Thomas Aquinas' Treatise On Being and Essence (De Ente et Essentia) into Estonian*

Advisors: Andrus Tool, Marju Lepajõe

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books and Edited Volumes

***Philoponus: On Aristotle's Categories 1–5.*** (2015) Translated, with notes, by Riin Sirkel, Martin Tweedale, and John Harris. *The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle*. New York, London: Bloomsbury.

*My role in the authorship:* 75% contribution. The initial translation of the text (app. 100 pages) was a combined effort of Martin Tweedale, John Harris, and I. I revised our initial translation in light of comments from reviewers, wrote app. 170 endnotes, and wrote a glossary of translated terms.

***Aristotelian Metaphysics: Essence and Ground.*** (2014). Edited by Riin Sirkel and Tuomas Tahko. Special issue of *Studia Philosophica Estonica*, Volume 7.2.

The special issue is available online at: <http://www.spe.ut.ee/ojs/index.php/spe/index>

***Thomas Aquinas: De Ente et Essentia.*** (Forthcoming) Translated into Estonian, with commentary, by Riin Sirkel. Series *Bibliotheca Philosophica*, Tallinn University Press.

The translation, including parallel Latin text, with notes (22 300 words) is accompanied by a commentary (27 578 words). The commentary aims to explain some of the central terms and arguments in Aquinas's treatise, and their background in Aristotle and Aristotelian philosophy.

## Peer-Reviewed Papers

“Essence and Cause: Making Something Be What It Is.” (2018) In *Ancient Ontologies, Contemporary Debates*, edited by Riccardo Chiaradonna, Filippo Forcignanò, Franco Trabattoni. *Discipline Filosofiche* 28. Macerata: Quodlibet, pp. 89-112.

“Porphyry on Eating Animals.” (In Estonian) (2017) *Vikerkaar* 9, pp. 121-29.

Available online at <http://www.vikerkaar.ee/archives/22077>

“Philoponus on the Priority of Substances.” (2016) *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 54, pp. 351-72.

“Alexander of Aphrodisias's Account of Universals and Its Problems.” (2011) *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 49, Issue 3, pp. 297-314.

“Ontological Priority and Grounding in Aristotle's *Categories*.” (Forthcoming) In *Grounding in Medieval Philosophy*, edited by Magali Roques. Leiden: Brill. (Invited; 15 719 words)

“Porphyry on Justice Towards Animals: Are Animals Rational and Does it Matter for Justice? (Forthcoming) In *The Reception of Greek Ethics in Late Antiquity and Byzantium*, edited by Anna Marmodoro and Sophia Xenofontos. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Invited; 9329 words)

## Book Reviews

Review of *The Quest for the Good Life: Ancient Philosophers on Happiness* by Øyvind Rabbås, Eyjólfur K. Emilsson, Hallvard Fossheim, and Miira Tuominen (eds.). (2016) *Notre Dame Philosophical Review*.

Available online at <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/67724-the-quest-for-the-good-life-ancient-philosophers-on-happiness/>

Review of *Aristotle's Metaphysics Book Z: A Contemporary Debate* by G. Galluzzo and M. Mariani. (2009). *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia*, Volume 10.

Available online at <http://www.ut.ee/klaskik/sht/2009/10.R.4.html>

Review of *Aristotle and Other Platonists* by Lloyd Gerson. (2008) *Theoria*, Volume 74, Issue 1, pp. 91-95.

## Papers In Manuscript

“Aristotle on Scientific Knowledge of Particulars.” Under review. (14 572 words)

“A Question of Fit: Aristotle's Metaphysics and Gender.” In progress. (7000 words)

“Difficulties with Differentiae.” (5000 words)

Translation of Philoponus’ Commentary on Aristotle’s *Prior Analytics* 1.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

### Refereed Presentations

“A Question of Fit: Aristotle’s Metaphysics and Gender.” 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy (SAGP) with the Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science (SSIPS), Fordham University, October 2016.

“Aristotle on the Ontological Priority in *Categories*.” 33rd Annual Meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy (SAGP) with the Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science (SSIPS), Fordham University, October 2015.

“Plato and Aristotle in Agreement.” The Annual Conference of Estonian Philosophy *Disagreements*, Tartu, Estonia, September 2014.

“One and Many in Aristotle.” The Annual Conference of Estonian Philosophy *The Pluralism of Truth, Knowledge, Norms, and Values*, Tartu, Estonia, August 2011.

“Knowledge of Particulars in Aristotle.” Meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, APA Pacific, San Diego, April 2010. (Published in the *Newsletter for the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy*, 2010, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 17-26.)

“Essentialism and Ontological Interdependence in Aristotle’s *Categories*.” The 33rd Ancient Philosophy Workshop (in memoriam Steven K. Strange), University of Texas at Austin, March 2010.

### Invited Presentations (since 2012)

“Porphyry on Justice Towards Animals: Two Puzzles.” Tartu Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, University of Tartu, December 2018.

“Essence and Cause: Making Something Be What It Is.” Work-In-Progress Seminar in Ancient Philosophy, NYU, December 2017.

“Essence and Cause: Making Something Be What It Is.” Tahoe Ancient Philosophy Conference, Granlibakken Conference Center, May 2017.

“Aristotle on Knowledge of Particulars.” Saturday Colloquium run by Stephen Menn, McGill University, February 2017.

“Aristotle and Grounding.” Workshop *Grounding in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, Salle Denis de Rougemont, Université de Genève, July 2016.

“A Question of Fit: Aristotle’s Metaphysics and Gender.” Upper Canada Society for Ancient and Medieval, University of Western Ontario, May 2016.

“Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione* 12–14.” New York Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, NYU, May 2016.

“Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*” (In Estonian). Poster displayed at the exhibition “Aristotle – 2400 years of philosophy” in the University of Tartu Library, April–June, 2016.

“Aristotle on the Ontological Priority: Two Recent Proposals.” Workshop on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and Epistemology, NYU, December 2015.

“Harmonization in Action: Philoponus on the Priority of Substances.” Proctor Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, Wellesley College, February 2014.

“Is Protagoras a Relativist?” Departmental Colloquium, University of Tartu, November 2014.

“Aristotle on Ontological Priority.” Analytic Philosophy Summer Camp, Hirvemäe Holiday Centre, Estonia, June 2013.

“Essentialism in Aristotle’s *Topics*.” Ancient Philosophy Workshop, Dartmouth College, February 2013.

“Ontological Priority and Interdependence in Aristotle’s *Categories*.” Dartmouth-UVM Conference, University of Vermont, November 2012.

“Harmonization in Action: Philoponus and Ammonius on the Priority of Substances.” Western Workshop on Ancient Epistemology, Western University, October 2012.

“Aristotle on Knowledge of Particulars.” Departmental Colloquium, Duke University, March 2012.

“Having his Platonic Cake and Eating it: Aristotle on Knowledge of Particulars.” Departmental Colloquium, University of Alberta, February 2012.

### **Comments (since 2012)**

“Comments on Nathanael Stein, ‘Definition and the Epistemology of Natural Kinds in Aristotle.’” 2017 Hylomorphism Conference, Banff Centre, May 2017.

Comments on David Bronstein, *Aristotle on Knowledge and Learning: The Posterior Analytics*, Author-Meets-Critics, Eastern APA, Baltimore, January 2017.

“Comments on Christopher Buckels, ‘Tropes without Substance in Plato’s *Phaedo*.’” A Workshop on Plato’s *Phaedo*, Harvard University, October 2015.

“Comments on Corinne Gartner, ‘On the ‘Idle’ Spheres in *Metaphysics* XII.8.’” Proctor Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, Wellesley College, February 2014.

“Comments on David Ebrey, ‘Distinguishing Matter from Lack in *Physics* I.’” Central APA, Chicago, February 2014.

“Comments on Seth Bordner, ‘...And Justice for All?: Rethinking the Reciprocity of the Virtues in the *Republic*.’” Pacific APA, San Francisco, March 2013.

### **TEACHING**

**University of Vermont** (2/3 load):

PHIL 010: Introduction to Philosophy: Selected Problems

PHIL 101: History of Ancient Philosophy

PHIL 205: Philosophy of Aristotle

PHIL 205: Medieval Philosophy

**Independent studies:**

Porphyry's *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (Summer 2017)

Metaphysics: Categories and Mereology (Spring 2016)

Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* (Spring 2015)

Advisor for Brendan Van Tuinen's poster presentation "Are Aristotle's Metaphysical and Socio-Political Views Compatible?", UVM Student Research Conference (Spring 2017)

Advisor for Lizzy Schimenti's poster presentation "Aristotle on Slavery: Examining the False Justification of Slavery in Aristotelian Philosophy", UVM Student Research Conference (Spring 2016)

Co-supervisor (with Toomas Lott) of a BA Thesis "Lists in the *Meno* and the *Euthyphro*" by Mark Hallap from the University of Tartu in Estonia (Spring 2015)

**University of Alberta:**

Aristotle and Hellenistic Philosophy (Spring 2012)

**University of Western Ontario:**

Evil (Spring 2010)

**University of Tallinn:**

Thomas Aquinas: *De Ente et Essentia* (Spring 2006)

A History of European Civilization I-II: Philosophy (2004-2006)

**University of Tartu:**

Relativism in Ancient Philosophy (with Toomas Lott, Fall 2014)

Introduction to the History of Philosophy (Fall 2004 and 2005)

**SERVICE**

**University of Vermont:**

Member of the RPT Revisions Committee, Department of Philosophy, January-May 2018.

Member of the Dean's Lecture Series Committee, College of Arts and Sciences, March 2014-2016.

Philosophy department representative for academic advising at August Orientation, August 2015.

Member of the Gender Imbalance Committee, Department of Philosophy, January-August 2014.

Member of the Hiring Committee, Department of Philosophy, September 2013-March 2014.

Member of the Chair Search Committee, Department of Philosophy, October 2013–November 2013.  
Philosophy department representative at CAS Open House on Parents' Weekend, 2012 and 2013.

### **Professional:**

Co-organizer (with Toomas Lott), *Tartu Workshop in Ancient Philosophy*, University of Tartu, December 14-15, 2018.

Co-organizer (with Mark Johnston, Michael Griffin and Sean Coughlin), *Third Canadian Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy*, McMaster University, October 14-16, 2016.

Co-organizer (with Michael Griffin and Sean Coughlin), *Second Canadian Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy*, University of British Columbia, May 2-4, 2014.

Local organizer (co-organizers Michael Griffin and Sean Coughlin), *First Canadian Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy*, University of Alberta, May 2012.

Organizer, conference *Language and Philosophy*, University of Tartu, Spring 2002.

Co-organizer, conference *What Do We Talk about When We Talk about Estonian Philosophy*, University of Tartu, Spring 2000.

Editorial board member, *Metaphysics: Journal of the Canadian Metaphysics Collaborative*, since 2017.

Editorial board member, *Bibliotheca Philosophica* series (Tallinn University Press), since 2010.

Associate of Canadian Metaphysics Collaborative, since 2017.

Member of Upper Canada Society for Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, since 2007

Reviewer for Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) grants.

Referee for *Ancient Philosophy*, *Dialogue*, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*.

### **AWARDS AND GRANTS**

SSHRC Conference Grant (13 250 CAD) for organizing the *First Canadian Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy*, 2012

APA Conference Grant (2000 USD) for organizing the *First Canadian Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy*, 2012

Ontario Graduate Scholarship (5000 CAD per term), 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011

Stipend award for writing a commentary on Thomas Aquinas's treatise *De Ente et Essentia* (*On Being and Essence*), Cultural Endowment of Estonia, 2010.

Mark of Distinction, History of Philosophy Comprehensive Exam, University of Western Ontario, September 2008

Scholarship for Doctoral Studies at the University of Western Ontario, Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia, 2007–2009