

Oral presentation

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The function of memory and its disturbances according to Aristotle Charalambos Ierodiaconou

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Aristotle, the Greek philosopher of the 4th century B.C. was a keen observer of human nature. With an astonishingly penetrating thought he studied intrapsychic dynamics and came down to conclusions about memory that are analogous to modern psychological and sometimes psychoanalytical findings.

He spoke of the importance of the senses for the production of images, which are repressed and retained as the (subconscious) material of memory. Imprinting of stimuli, retaining them as images and recalling them as a memory are 'processes of the mind through the body', said Aristotle, thus adopting a psychobiological approach. He also put the rules of recollection bringing many examples from everyday life. He noticed that events in life are related in a sequence, are kept in the mind in a series (even unconsciously) and in the same way are recalled in memory (thus coming very close to the psychoanalytic idea of free-association).

Aristotle in addition described in detail many memory disturbances, such as those in anxiety, depression, dementia etc.