Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity

Edited by

Andrea Falcon

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Contents

Acknowledgements IX
Notes on Contributors X

Introduction 1
Andrea Falcon

PART 1
The Hellenistic Reception of Aristotle

1 **Aristotle and the Hellenistic Peripatos: From Theophrastus to Critolaus** 13
David Lefebvre

2 **Aristotle and the Garden** 35
Francesco Verde

3 **Aristotle and the Stoa** 56
Thomas Bénatouïl

PART 2
The Post-Hellenistic Engagement with Aristotle

The Peripatetic Tradition

4 **Andronicus of Rhodes and the Construction of the Aristotelian Corpus** 81
Myrto Hatzimichali

5 **Aristotelianism in the First Century BC** 101
Andrea Falcon

6 **Peripatetic Ethics in the First Century BC: The Summary of Didymus** 120
Georgia Tsouni

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7 **Aristotelianism in the Second Century AD: Before Alexander of Aphrodisias** 138
Inna Kupreeva

8 **Alexander of Aphrodisias** 160
Cristina Cerami

Beyond the Peripatetic Tradition

9 **The Reception of Aristotle in Antiochus and Cicero** 183
John Dillon

10 **The Appropriation of Aristotle in the Ps-Pythagorean Treatises** 202
Angela Ulacco

11 **The Reception of Aristotle in Middle Platonism: From Eudorus of Alexandria to Ammonius Saccas** 218
Alexandra Michalewski

12 **Galen's Reception of Aristotle** 238
R. J. Hankinson

13 **Plotinus' Reception of Aristotle** 258
Sara Magrin

14 **The Ancient Biographical Tradition on Aristotle** 277
Tiziano Dorandi

15 **Aristotle in the Aëtian *Placita*** 299
Jaap Mansfeld

PART 3
Aristotle in Late Antiquity

16 **Porphyry and the Aristotelian Tradition** 321
Riccardo Chiaradonna

17 **An Intellective Perspective on Aristotle: Iamblichus the Divine** 341
Jan Opsomer

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18 **Themistius** 358
Arnaud Zucker

19 **Syrianus and Proclus on Aristotle** 374
Pieter d'Hoine

20 **Ammonius and the Alexandrian School** 394
Michael Griffin

21 **Simplicius and Philoponus on the Authority of Aristotle** 419
Pantelis Golitsis

22 ***Aristoteles Latinus*: The Reception of Aristotle in the Latin World** 439
Christophe Erismann

23 **Early Christian Philosophers on Aristotle** 460
George Karamanolis

Index of Ancient Names 481
Index of Passages 484

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CHAPTER 7

Aristotelianism in the Second Century AD: Before Alexander of Aphrodisias

Inna Kupreeva

1 The School and its People

The second century AD sees a revival of Aristotelianism. Its culmination is the activity of Alexander of Aphrodisias whose monumental literary legacy provided later commentators with an authoritative school reading of Aristotle. Presence of Aristotelian ideas is also perceived in the works of philosophers of other schools, such as Stoics, Platonists, and Epicureans, who debate with Peripatetics,[1] and outside school philosophy, in scientific and medical writings such as the works of Galen and Ptolemy, where we find both adaptation and criticism of various Aristotelian doctrines. Peripatetic philosophy is popular with the Roman elite.[2] Its ideas and characters make it to the jokes of urban wits.[3]

Still, despite all these signs of revival, a detailed history of the Peripatetic school is not easy to trace. Late Neoplatonic sources name Andronicus of Rhodes and Boethus of Sidon as the last Peripatetic διάδοχοι (successors), and there is no extant record of successions for the Imperial period.[4] The process of

1 Stoics: Cleomedes, *Lectures on Astronomy* 1.1.81; Platonists: Atticus frr. 4, 5, 7 Des Places; Epicureans: Diogenes of Oenoanda fr. 5 cols. 1.11–3.1.

2 The people Galen describes as Peripatetics include, apart from Eudemus and Alexander of Damascus, who were teachers, also two consuls (at different times), Flavius Boethus and Severus, and the prefect of the city Sergius Paulus (see *On Prognosis* [*De praecog.*] XIV 605–613 and 624–630 K; *My Own Books* [*Lib. Prop.*] XIX 11–16 K; *Anatomical Procedures* [*De anat. admin.*] II 215–216 K).

3 E.g. Lucian, *Demonax* 56.

4 Elias, *On Aristotle's Categories* 113.19–20 and 117.22 mentions Andronicus as the eleventh "successor" after Aristotle; Ammonius, *On Aristotle's On Interpretation* 31.12–13 names Boethus as the "eleventh after Aristotle" (not using the term "successor"). The difference may have to do with the method of counting (whether Aristotle is included). The source of these reports may be the catalogue of Aristotle's works attributed to a Ptolemy al-Gharīb, which in turn contains some earlier school material (see Kupreeva forthcoming).

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decentralization of philosophy underway already in the late second century BC[5] reaches its climax in the crises of the first century BC when the classical successions in Athens are broken, not to be restored until the second half of the 1st century AD, in a very new socio-economic context of the Roman rule. We have some remains from the work of Peripatetic philosophers active in the first century AD, namely Aristocles of Messene (*ca.* 50 BC–50 AD), whose circumstances are not known, but no Athenian connection has been attested, and Alexander of Aegae, Nero's teacher at Rome.[6] We have very little information about the Athenian school until Marcus Aurelius' edict of 176, which gave state endowment to the four chairs of philosophy in Athens: Peripatetic, Platonic, Stoic, and Epicurean.[7] Alexander of Aphrodisias, in the proem to his treatise *On Fate* addressed to the emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla (AD 198–211) speaks of himself as appointed teacher of Aristotelian philosophy, and after the publication of the Aphrodisias' inscription we are now in a position to speak of Athens as the location of his school and chair.[8]

Most of our evidence for Peripatetic doctrines before Alexander of Aphrodisias is contextualized in philosophical commentaries, mostly on Aristotle, and on one occasion (Adrastus) on Plato's *Timaeus*. The main source for Peripatetic philosophers of this age—Adrastus, Aspasius, Herminus, Sosigenes, Aristotle the Younger—is citations in the later commentary tradition. The earliest extant commentary on Aristotle, Aspasius on *Nicomachean Ethics*, also belongs to this period. It is natural to suggest that the commentary was becoming the way of doing philosophy. It is more difficult to tell, without further evidence, whether the lost commentaries took the form of line-by-line discussion of Aristotle's text, or selected notes, or that of a monograph devoted to a particular topic. Even a reported discussion of Aristotle's work is a commentary. In using the word "commentary," I am not making any suggestion about the form of the literary work.

Adrastus of Aphrodisias. His dates are so far uncertain, apart from his *floruit* before AD 193 based on Galen's reference to Adrastus' commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*.[9] Adrastus' works included also the treatise *On the Order*

5 Sedley 2003.

6 See Chiesara 2001: XIX–XX.

7 Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 82.31.3.

8 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Fate* 164.14–15. On the inscription, see Chaniotis 2004 and Sharples 2005.

9 Galen, *My Own Books* XIX 42.10–43.1 K. Cf. Moraux 1984: 295n9, Sharples 1990a: 6n28.

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of Aristotle's Writings,[10] commentaries on Aristotle's *Physics*,[11] on Theophrastus' *Characters* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*[12] and on Plato's *Timaeus*.[13]

The remains of the treatise *On the Order of Aristotle's Writings* show the continuity of Peripatetic interest in the study of Aristotle's work as a system of philosophy, of composition and structure of the *corpus aristotelicum*. According to Simplicius, Adrastus ordered the logical corpus by increasing certainty: from the mostly descriptive *Categories* and the *Topics* which operates with dialectical reasoning to the rigorous theories of demonstration and syllogism in the *Analytics*.[14]

Aspasius. His *floruit* before or around 143/4 is based on Galen's report.[15] Aspasius must postdate the Platonist Eudorus of Alexandria (second half of the first century BC),[16] and also Alexander of Aegae, since he apparently took over his interpretation of a passage from Aristotle's treatise *On the Heavens*.[17] Alexander of Aphrodisias reports that he found the explanation given in the seminar by Herminus also in Aspasius' commentary on Aristotle's *On the Heaven*.[18] Aspasius' commentary on *Nicomachean Ethics*, books 1–4, 7, and 8 is

10 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Physics* 4.12; *On Aristotle's Categories* 16.2; 18.16.

11 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Physics* 122.3–125.9.

12 Athenaeus, *Sophists at Dinner* 15.673 E–F.

13 See Porphyry, *On Ptolemy's Harmonics* 96.1–6 Düring; cf. ibid. 7.24–8.5. Many excerpts quoted by Theon of Smyrna and Calcidius, as well as Achilles Tatius and Proclus (Moraux 1984: 298 and n17, Petrucci 2012).

14 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Categories* 15.30–16.13; 18.16–21. On this work as evidence of the activity of organization of the Aristotelian corpus beyond the first century BC, see chapter 4 (Andronicus of Rhodes and the Construction of the Aristotelian Corpus).

15 "At this time [*ca.* 143/4] another fellow-citizen of ours returned from a long stay abroad, a pupil of Aspasius the Peripatetic, and after him another from Athens, an Epicurean. For my sake my father examined the way of life and doctrines of them all, going to them with me" (*The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Affections and Errors Peculiar to Each Person's Soul* [*De an. aff. dign. et cur.*] 8 = V 42.1–5 K).

16 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics* 59.6–8.

17 Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.6, 288b22–27.

18 Alexander of Aphrodisias *apud* Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 430.32–431.11.

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extant. Lost commentaries include *On Aristotle's Interpretation*,[19] *Categories*,[20] *Physics*,[21] *Metaphysics*,[22] *On the Heavens*,[23] *On the Senses*.[24]

Sosigenes is described by Alexander as his teacher.[25] We do not possess any further prosopographical information about him. He had a typically broad range of interests, from logic to philosophy of nature. The works attributed to him include commentaries on *Categories*,[26] *Prior Analytics*,[27] treatises *On Counteracting Spheres*[28] and *On Sight*,[29] which contained at least eight books.

Herminus. Alexander of Aphrodisias refers to Herminus as his teacher.[30] Lucian reports a joke made about Herminus by Demonax, whose dates are roughly 80–175/180.[31] In Alexander's treatise on motion against Galen preserved in Arabic a certain *'rmyws* is mentioned as an addressee of Galen's letter containing criticisms of Aristotle's theory of motion. Shlomo Pines emended

19 All *testimonia* for this commentary are found in the two editions of Boethius' commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. Boethius' main source is Porphyry who probably draws on Alexander of Aphrodisias' lost commentary).

20 Galen, *My Own Books* XIX 42.10–43.1 K.

21 The main source is Simplicius' *Physics* commentary. See also Moraux 1984: 235–9.

22 *Apud* Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics* 41.21–28; 58.31–59.38; 378.28–379.3.

23 Alexander of Aphrodisias *apud* Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 607.5–7. Cf. n. 18 above.

24 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's On Senses* 9.24–10.6.

25 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Meteorology* 143.13; cf. Themistius, *On Aristotle's On the Soul* 61.23.

26 Our source for Sosigenes' commentary is Dexippus, who most likely draws on the lost commentaries by Porphyry and Iamblichus (see Dillon 1990: 9–15).

27 Philoponus, *On Aristotle's Prior Analytics* 126.20–22, [Ammonius], *On Aristotle's Prior Analytics* 39.24.

28 See Proclus, *Exposition of Astronomical Hypotheses* 4.98 (130.17–23 Manitius); cf. Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 505.1–11.

29 See Themistius, *On Aristotle's On the Soul* 61.23; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Meteorology* 143.12–14; cf. Sharples 2010a: 26D.

30 Alexander of Aphrodisias *apud* Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 430.32–33: Ἑρμίνου δὲ ἤκουσα.

31 Lucian, *Demonax* 56: "Herminus, he said, you truly deserve ten accusations" (ἄξιος εἶ τῶν δέκα κατηγοριῶν).

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'rmyws to *'rmnws* suggesting that Herminus was Galen's addressee.[32] Herminus commented in some form on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*,[33] *Categories*,[34] *Prior Analytics*,[35] *Topics*,[36] *On the Heavens*.[37]

Aristotle the Younger (*Aristotle of Mytilene* (?)). Several ancient texts mention Aristotle the teacher of Alexander. They include Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *On Heavens*,[38] two passages in Cyril of Alexandria,[39] and the treatise *On the Intellect*, from the school collection (*Mantissa*) attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias.[40]

A tradition going back to the Humanist textual criticism replaced the reading Ἀριστότελης in these texts with Ἀρίστοκλης. It was argued that in the treatise *On Intellect* the reading Ἀριστοτέλους, taken to refer to Aristotle of Stagira, is chronologically impossible and therefore should be changed to Ἀριστοκλέους.[41] This has been conclusively refuted after the studies by Paul Moraux and Paolo Accattino drew attention to the fact that the teacher of Alexander by the name of Aristotle is mentioned as clearly distinct from Aristotle of Stagira in the texts of Alexander himself and later Aristotelian commentators.[42]

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32 Pines 1961: 23. It is unclear whether Herminus is identical with Galen's Peripatetic teacher, a student of Aspasius (n. 15 above), as suggested by Marmura and Rescher (1965: 1), doubted by Moraux (1984: 362–3).

33 Reported by Ammonius and particularly Boethius, who says that Herminus wrote his commentary (Boethius, *On Aristotle's On Interpretation* 2a, 293.27–294.4). Both probably draw on Alexander's lost commentary on *On Interpretation*.

34 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Categories* 1.14. See Moraux 1984, 364–365; Griffin 2009, 340–341.

35 See Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Prior Analytics* 72.26–74.6; 89.30–90.6; [Ammonius], *On Aristotle's Prior Analytics* 39.31–40.1.

36 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Topics* 569.3–5; 574.22–26.

37 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 380.3–5 and 430.32–431.11.

38 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 153.16–18: "Alexander set out the text in a general way, after his teacher Aristotle, as he says, in the following way" (συνῃρημένως δὲ ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος, ὥς φησι, κατὰ τὸν αὑτοῦ διδάσκαλον Ἀριστοτέλην οὕτως ἐξέθετο τὴν λέξιν).

39 Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Julian* 2.596A: "Now, Alexander the pupil of Aristotle writes in this way in *On Providence*" (γράφει τοίνυν Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Ἀριστοτέλους μαθητὴς ἐν τῷ περὶ προνοίας οὑτως); and ibid. 5.741: "And at any rate Aristotle's pupil Alexander says in the treatise on providence concerning particulars" (καὶ γοῦν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλους μαθητὴς Ἀλέξανδρος ἐν τῷ περὶ καθ' ἕκαστα προνοίας λόγῳ φησίν).

40 Alexander of Aphrodias, *Mantissa* 110.4: "I heard on intellect from without from Aristotle" (ἤκουσα δὲ περὶ νοῦ τοῦ θύραθεν παρὰ Ἀριστοτέλους).

41 Nuñez n. 26 at 73–74, Zeller 814n1, Heiland 1925: 1, 16–23 (= Testimonia III–V).

42 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics* 166.18–21: "[Aristotle] himself proved that causes cannot be infinite proceeding in this way; and our own Aristotle

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Thus, it can be considered as established that Alexander had a teacher called Aristotle. That this Aristotle had a cognomen "of Mytilene" is a scholarly conjecture identifying Aristotle the teacher of Alexander with Aristotle of Mytilene mentioned by Galen in *On Habits* as "a man in the forefront of Peripatetic study" (that is the only reference to this full name in the Greek corpus to date).[43] The Younger Aristotle commented in some form on *Aristotle's On Heavens* and the *Metaphysics*, and it has been suggested (although there is still no consensus) that he is the author of some parts of the theory of intellect presented by Alexander in his treatise *On the Intellect*.

This brief overview of philosophers and their work gives us an initial idea of a broad range of subjects taught and discussed in Peripatetic schools in the second century AD, from logic to philosophy of nature, to psychology and ethics. As we shall see in the selective survey of the teachings, much of the Peripatetic discussion in this period is motivated by the search for doctrinal consistency between different works of Aristotle. At the same time, it will be clear that the Peripatetics active in the second century AD in keeping up with the school tradition of open-mindedness are ready to introduce new theories into the traditional Peripatetic curriculum.

2 Logic and Ontology

In the second century AD logic and ontology gain a special significance in Peripatetic curriculum in general, providing conceptual framework to all

himself too sketched out a proof to this effect" (αὐτὸς μὲν οὕτως ἐφοδεύσας ἔδειξεν ὅτι μὴ οἷόν τε ἄπειρα εἶναι τὰ αἴτια· ὁ δὲ ἡμέτερος Ἀριστοτέλης καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπιχειρῶν ἐδείκνυεν). Syrianus, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics* 100.6–7: "The younger Aristotle, the commentator of Aristotle the Philosopher, being wary of this, said that the philosopher meant the other way around" (ὃ δὴ καὶ εὐλαβηθεὶς ὁ νεώτερος Ἀριστοτέλης ὁ ἐξηγητὴς τοῦ φιλοσόφου Ἀριστοτέλους, ἀνάπαλιν ἔφη λέγειν τὸν φιλόσοφον); Elias, *On Aristotle's Categories* 128.10–13: "That not only Aristotle the Stagirite was so called, but there were also other Aristotles in his own time, such as the gymnastic master also called "Story," and after that, as the teacher Alexander; for he ought to have been since he was as it were the second Aristotle" (ὅτι οὐ μόνος Ἀριστοτέλης ὁ Σταγειρίτης οὕτως ἐκαλεῖτο ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλοι Ἀριστοτέλεις ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ αὐτοῦ, ὡς ὁ παιδοτρίβης καὶ ἐπίκλην Μῦθος, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος Ἀλέξανδρος· ἔδει γὰρ αὐτὸν οἷον δεύτερον ὄντα Ἀριστοτέλην.) The text is problematic, and Moraux suggested that Elias' source must have read ὁ διδάσκαλος Ἀλεξάνδρου instead of ὁ διδάσκαλος Ἀλέξανδρος. See Moraux 1967 and 1985, Accattino 1985. Cf. Moraux 1942: 143–9.

43 Galen, *On Habits* 11.4–12 Müller (= Sharples 2010a, IZ), Moraux 1967. In the treatise written during the rule of Marcus Aurelius, Galen describes as a recent event this philosopher's illness and death, so we would have the *terminus post quem non* as AD 180.

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fields of study, from logic and metaphysics to natural and moral philosophy. The discussions of theories of meaning and essence show continuity with the agenda set by the earlier commentators on the *Categories*.

Thus Adrastus draws on the *Categories* to explain Aristotle's criticism of Parmenides in *Physics* 1.3, which says that "it is necessary for him [i.e. Parmenides] to assume not only that 'is' has the same meaning, of whatever it is predicated, but that it means what just is (ὅπερ ὄν) and what is just one (ὅπερ ἕν)."[44] Adrastus distinguishes two classes of things: (a) subjects (ὑποκείμενα) and (b) things that belong to the subjects and are predicated of them. Subjects in the strict sense are Aristotle's πρώται οὐσίαι ("this man," "this stone"), but in a broader sense the subject can mean any subject of predication.[45] Adrastus further distinguishes between two types of predication: "synonymous," when predication expresses the essence of the subject, and "accidental," when the predicate is accidental rather than essential. The former kind corresponds to the case when the subject can be said to be ὅπερ the predicate: "Socrates is a rational mortal animal" is a synonymous predication because Socrates is just this, "rational mortal animal."[46] Adrastus then distinguishes the accidents that are constantly inherent in the subject, such as Socrates' snubnosedness, from those that are removable, such as "sleeping" and "walking." The accidental predicates, either removable or constant, cannot become a part of synonymous predication. Even if Socrates' snubnosedness is his constant concomitant, it is not a part of the definition. With regard to Aristotle's analysis of Parmenides' thesis, Adrastus explains that since according to Parmenides being is one, there is no subject of which it could be predicated accidentally; so understood in this way being will always be said to be ὅπερ ὄν and ὅπερ ἕν, since it is the only possible subject of both these predications. "Being" can work as accidental predicate only if the plurality of beings is allowed.[47] Adrastus' *Categories* commentary seems to have produced a robust conceptual framework for more sophisticated discussions of subjecthood and essence.

Peripatetic commentators of the second century AD discussed the opening of *On Interpretation*, which Andronicus saw as inauthentic: "And just as written marks are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of—affections of the soul—are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of—actual things—are also the

44 Aristotle, *Physics* 1.3, 186a32–34.

45 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Physics* 123.2–9.

46 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Physics* 123.10–124.1.

47 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Physics* 124.33–125.9.

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same."[48] Herminus finds the problem with Aristotle's sameness thesis since it fails to account for the cases of ambiguity,[49] so he weakens it, reading "these" (ταῦτα) instead of "the same" (ταυτά).[50] In this form, the thesis describes the psychological mechanism of signification: words are tokens for soul's affections while these latter are likenesses of things. Herminus' approach to the interpretation of this passage seems in agreement with the theory of signification which informs his interpretation of the *Categories*, where he also is arguing for the direct application of categories to the kinds of being, no special role reserved for the concepts.[51]

Herminus' discussion of *differentia* may be a part of the same anti-conceptualist strategy in his ontology. Herminus does not consider the so-called constitutive *differentiae* to be *differentiae* in a proper sense, and wants to retain this title only for the divisive *differentiae*.[52] Thus, the *differentiae* "ensouled" and "perceiving" are not proper with respect to the genus "animal," whereas the *differentiae* "rational" and "irrational" are, insofar as they divide the genus into species.[53] Herminus' interpretation of *Categories* 3, 1b15–16, where Aristotle says that the *differentiae* of the two genera not subordinate to one another are different in kind (ἑτέραι τῷ εἴδει) seems consistent with this view. Aristotle means that the *differentiae* of two *unrelated* genera (e.g. "living being" and "knowledge," to use Moraux's example) are different in kind.[54] Herminus takes the meaning of the passage to be that the two kinds not subordinate to each other but subordinate to a common genus, such as "winged" and "footed," may have some *differentiae* in common, such as "biped" and "quadruped," and these respective *differentiae* will be different in kind (εἴδει) in the two subordinate genera, although identical in their relation to the superordinate

48 Aristotle, *On Interpretation* 1, 16a5–8: καὶ ὥσπερ οὐδὲ γράμματα πᾶσι τὰ αὐτά, οὐδὲ φωναὶ αἱ αὐταί· ὧν μέντοι ταῦτα σημεῖα πρώτων, ταὐτὰ πᾶσι παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ ὧν ταῦτα ὁμοιώματα πράγματα ἤδη ταὐτά. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Prior Analytics* 160.28–161.1; Ammonius, *On Aristotle's On Interpretation* 5.28; 7.13.

49 Boethius, *On Aristotle's On Interpretation* 2a, 39.25–40, 1 (= Sharples 2010a: 11E *partim*).

50 At both 16a6 and 16a8. None of this should be seen as frivolous: both readings are attested in the textual tradition.

51 Cf. Moraux 1984: 375; Ebbesen 1981: 159; Griffin 2012; Griffin 2015: 203.

52 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Categories* 55.22–23.

53 Moraux suggests that Herminus here follows Boethus who argued that the *differentiae* are not subordinate to genus, but to species because they belong to all members of species, but not to all members of genus (Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Categories* 97.28–34, Moraux 1984: 368).

54 Moraux 1984: 368.

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genus.[55] This view, which makes *differentia specifica*, a part of the definition of a given species, dependent for its ontological characteristics on the species being defined, is criticized by Alexander of Aphrodisias in the treatise *De differentiis specificis* preserved in Arabic.[56]

3 Cosmos: Heavens, Planets, and Providence

Cosmology is a traditional Peripatetic subject. In the second century special attention is given to the questions of the nature and pattern of planetary motions, in light of the new astronomical material. The discussion of providence, which became a part of Peripatetic agenda in the Hellenistic period, remains important as well.

3.1 *Regularity of Heavenly Motion*

The question of the nature of heavenly motion came to light already in the first century BC, when Xenarchus of Seleucia criticized Aristotle's theory of aether.[57] In the first century AD Alexander of Aegae, and in the second century AD Aspasius and Herminus, discuss Aristotle's argument for the regularity and constant speed of the heavenly motion in *On the Heavens* 2.6.[58]

Aristotle's argument consists in a refutation of all possible cases where the motion of the first (outermost) heavenly sphere would not be at a regular speed, but would be either (i) slowing down for an infinite time and after that accelerating for an infinite time; or (ii) either only slowing down for an infinite time or only accelerating for an infinite time; or (iii) alternating between acceleration and deceleration.[59] Herminus, Aspasius, and Alexander of Aegae are cited by Alexander of Aphrodisias in connection with the refutation of the first of the three options. Alexander of Aphrodisias says that these earlier commentators were unaware of the tripartite structure of Aristotle's argument and took the option (i), whereupon if heavenly motion is irregular, then either its acceleration or its deceleration will have to take place infinitely, to be a separate argument. Aspasius, followed by Herminus, paraphrases the argument as saying that (a) a deceleration of the heavenly motion means that the slower

55 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Categories* 57.22–58.7.

56 See on this Rashed 2007: 104–126.

57 See chapter 5 (Aristotelianism in the First Century BC) for Xenarchus of Seleucia and his criticism of this theory.

58 Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.6, 288b22–27.

59 Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.6, 288b22–289a8.

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motion follows upon the faster motion, and (b) just as the slower motion will have to continue in infinity because there is no power to restore the incapacity of the first mover that lapsed into the deceleration, (c) in the same way the faster motion that always precedes the slower motion, will continue as faster motion in infinity, and the infinite deceleration will be the slowing down of the faster motion that is faster in infinity. (d) This, however, involves an impossibility: the faster motion which is in accordance with nature will have an equal (viz. infinite) duration with the slower motion which is contrary to nature. (e) Hence, the deceleration cannot take place.[60] Several key points of Aspasius' interpretation (there is no source from which to restore the power of the first mover if the latter is weakened and the acceleration being natural as a manifestation of power is superior to deceleration which is a weakness and thus counternatural for the first mover) are borrowed from the interpretation of Alexander of Aegae.[61]

Herminus also commented on Aristotle's argument that heavenly motion is eternal, effortless, and not necessitated by any external constraint.[62] Herminus' view is presented as a reply to what looks like a school problem to do with a tension in Aristotle's explanation of heavenly motions, which seems to appeal to both the properties of the heavenly body, αἰθήρ, and the thesis that heavens are ensouled: "We inquired, [Alexander of Aphrodisias] says, when we got to this part of the second [book of *On the Heavens*], with what movement the soul moves the body that moves in a circle, if it moves in a circle by its nature. The enquiry is necessary and most certainly deserves to be set as a problem; we must consider the solutions. Julianus of Tralles' opinion was that the soul was responsible for its movement being to the right and even and orderly. Herminus said that the soul was responsible for its moving to infinity; for no finite body possesses, by its own nature, a power of movement to infinity."[63] The approach taken in the school to resolve this tension apparently involves the explanation of different functions of heavenly bodies by different

60 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 430.32–431.11.

61 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 430.12–21 (= fr. 145a Rescigno *partim*). "[Alexander of Aphrodisias] gives the interpretation mentioned previously, that the slowing down must necessarily be infinite because there is nothing to restore the power of the prime mover and rectify its loss of power, as [being] that of Alexander of Aegae." Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 430.27–33 (= fr. 145a Rescigno *partim*). Rescigno suggested that the commentary was delivered in oral form in seminars, where Aspasius might have been attending (Rescigno 2004: 58–61).

62 Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.1, 284a15–b5.

63 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 379.32–380.5 (= Rescigno fr. 129d12–22). Cf. Sharples 2010a: 21J. See also Sharples 2002: 4.

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causal factors.[64] Herminus refers to the soul for the explanation of the infinite character of heavenly motion alluding to Aristotle's demonstration that the infinite power cannot reside in a finite body.[65] Alexander objects to Herminus' account that it is the prime mover that is responsible for the infinite character of the heavenly motion. This suggests, as Rescigno points out, that Herminus treats the heaven as a complete self-moving entity constituted by a mover, which is the soul, and the moved, which is its body.[66] This solution, although it does generate problems with regard to the role of final causation, might have been dictated by desire to eliminate tension between the explanation of heavenly motion in *Physics* and in *On the Heavens*, so once again the question of doctrinal consistency is linked to the question of consistency between the texts of the corpus.

3.2 *Planetary Motions*

Aristotelian theory of planetary movements presented in *Metaphysics* 12.8 and based on concentric models of Eudoxus and Callippus was considered outdated already by Hellenistic astronomers because it could not account for a number of phenomena such as the varying size of planets and the retrogradations. Theon reports a view that considers the motion of planets to be voluntary ("chosen and unforced") and criticizes "all the philosophers who unite the planets with the spheres as if [the planets] were inanimate and introduce multiplicities of spheres for the circlings [of the planets], as Aristotle thinks it right to do, and of the astronomers Menaechmus and Callippus, who introduce some [spheres] that carry [the planets], others that unwind [these]."[67] Adrastus, in his *Timaeus* commentary, seems to introduce some significant modifications into Aristotle's concentric theory. He replaces it with the model based on the idea of epicycles that goes back to Apollonius of Perga. According to Adrastus, each planet is attached to a solid sphere whose diameter is set between the lower and upper concentric spheres (centered at the center of the universe still). The motions that describe the motion of the planet are as follows: (a) the westward motion of the sphere of the fixed stars around the axis perpendicular to the celestial equator; (b) the eastward, or slower westward (Adrastus says that both hypotheses can explain the appearances), motion of the concentric hollow sphere around the axis perpendicular to the plane

64 Sharples 2010a: 191.

65 Aristotle, *Physics* 8.10, 266a24–b27.

66 Rescigno 2008: 144, cf. Moraux 1984: 398; Bodnár 1997: 190n1.

67 Theon of Smyrna, 201.20–202.2 Hiller. The text is attributed to Adrastus himself in Sharples 2010a: 21N. But cf. Petrucci 2012: 14 and n. 49.

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of planet's path along the ecliptic circle, and (c) the regular westward motion around its own center of the small solid sphere inscribed in the hollow sphere, i.e. the epicyclic motion proper. Adrastus says that the planet completes a full epicycle "either [i] in a time equal to that in which the hollow [sphere] of the planet [either] goes round the [sphere] of the fixed [stars] travelling in the opposite direction or is left behind [by one complete revolution], or [ii] more quickly, or [iii] more slowly."[68] The case [i] corresponds to the motion which has no retrogradations, such as that of the sun and the moon. In both other cases, [ii] and [iii], we can observe the "irregularities" of planetary motions. The epicyclic motion of the planet means that its distance from the earth varies, and its path is not concentric with the system of spheres, but eccentric. Adrastus recognizes this, but says that eccentricity is an accident rather than an inherent feature of planetary motion.[69]

Sosigenes in his monograph *On the Counteracting Spheres* (Περὶ τῶν ἀνελιττουσῶν), discusses both the concentric theory and the theory that introduces the epicycles and eccentric spheres, pointing out the rationale for each theory and the difficulties they incur. In the end of his discussion, he possibly proposed some sort of a synthetic theory combining the strengths of both alternative approaches. Paul Moraux suggested the following reconstruction of the structure of Sosigenes' work. The treatise opens with the introductory chapter that contains *inter alia* an important piece of evidence coming from Eudemus' *History of Astronomy* concerning Plato's program of theoretical foundations of astronomy and the task he set for the astronomers.[70] The first part of the treatise was devoted to the exposition and criticism of the concentric systems of planetary motion (Eudoxus, Callippus, Aristotle); the second part dealt with the more recent theories of epicycles and eccentrics. From Simplicius' report it is clear that Sosigenes' main concern is that concentric systems fail to "save the φαινόμενα," such as the inequality of planetary distances from the center of the earth, multiply attested in ordinary experience (he mentions changing of the size by Venus and Mars which "in the middle part of their course appear many times bigger," with use of measuring devices, and from observation (here the occurrence of annular-shaped solar eclipses is cited).[71]

68 Theon of Smyrna, *On Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato* 181.12–182.25 Hiller (= Sharples 2010a: 21M).

69 Theon of Smyrna, *On Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato* 184.5 Hiller (discussion in Sorabji 2007: 581–583).

70 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 488.18–24 (= Sharples 2010a, 21L); for Sosigenes' use of Eudemus, see Zhmud 2006: 230–237.

71 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 504.17–506.3. Cf. Sharples 2010a: 21K.

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It is remarkable that Sosigenes apparently wants to exempt Aristotle himself from these criticisms of the concentric theory when he says that the problem of inequality of sizes is raised by Aristotle himself in the *Natural Problems*.[72] In support of this apologetic move, he cites the text from *Metaphysics* 12.8: "For now we say what some of the astronomers say, in order to give an idea, so that there may be some definite number [of movements] to grasp in one's thought; but for the future we must make our own investigations into some things and enquire about others from those who investigate them, and if anything contrary to what has been now said should be apparent to those who deal with such matters, we should respect both parties, but believe those who are more accurate."[73] This may give us an idea of the way Sosigenes is hoping to reconcile Aristotelian astronomy with the post-Aristotelian developments. In particular, it is important that he takes Aristotelian doctrine to be open to revision in light of new facts and arguments and that he takes it to be a necessary part of the method to give a proper hearing to all parties in the discussion.

Simplicius also reports Sosigenes' objections against the theories of epicycles and eccentrics. Having summarized both hypotheses and remarked that they are simpler and preserve the phenomena better than the concentric theories, Simplicius goes on to cite the criticisms which he attributes to Sosigenes.[74] Sosigenes points out that the μεταγενέστεροι do not preserve Aristotle's principle according to which each body moving in a circle must move around the center of the universe.[75] Further, the new theories apparently violate Aristotle's principle of balance, according to which the single outermost sphere of the cosmos carries indefinitely many fixed stars, whereas in the region closer to the center each planet is carried by several spheres.[76] Simplicius then cites the replies to both these objections; it is not clear who the respondent is, but we cannot rule out the possibility that some material of the replies comes from Sosigenes' discussion of the difficulties which he conducts in his preferred form of *in utramque partem*.

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72 As Sharples explains, there is no such evidence in the extant collection of the *Problems* (Sharples 2010a: 186n15).

73 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 12.8, 1073b11–17 (= Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 505.30–506.3). As Sharples notes, "the form of the quotation is . . . tendentious, for it gives the impression that it reflects doubts on Aristotle's part about the theory of concentric spheres itself, whereas Aristotle's passage relates specifically to the number of the heavenly movements" (Sharples 2010a: 186n17).

74 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 509.16–19.

75 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 509.19–21.

76 Simplicius, *On Aristotle's On the Heavens* 509.22–26.

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3.3 *Providence*

Adrastus' views on providence, from what little evidence we have, seem to be in line with the position attributed in the sources to Critolaus, according to which divine providence does not extend beyond the realm of heavenly bodies.[77] Commenting on the *Timaeus*, Adrastus says that the way the processes in the sublunary cosmos are caused by the heavenly bodies does not need to be understood in the sense that heavenly bodies exist for the sake of the sublunary world, but can be understood "on the basis that the former are always as they are on account of what is finest and best and most blessed, while things in our world follow them accidentally."[78] This formulation is close to the way Aristotelian position is stated in Aëtius 2.3.4 (cf. 22H Sharples), but Adrastus provides some further details about the nature of the accidental link between the upper and the sublunary cosmos. It seems to be explained in the first instance by the location of the sublunary cosmos around the center of the universe, which makes the whole sublunary world a part of the necessary condition of heavenly rotation. Adrastus attributes to necessity some further characteristics of the sublunary cosmos, namely the location of earth in the lower and fire in the upper parts of this cosmos, and the intermediary location of water and air between the two extreme elements. He also says that change is due to necessity because the matter of the sublunary things is changeable and has opposite potencies in it: this change is said to be brought about by the complex motion of planets. Presumably, the necessities which characterize the sublunary world depend on the motion of the ecliptic circle, which accounts for the change of seasons, the most global form of elemental change. A similar position is developed and argued in greater detail by Alexander of Aphrodisias.

4 Intellect

One of the most influential theories that came from the school of Alexander, the theory of intellect, owes some of its inspiration to the discussion of Aristotle's theory by the Peripatetics of the second century AD. In the school treatise *On the Intellect* [*De intellectu*] attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias,

77 Critolaus as preserved in Epiphanius, *Against the Heresies* [*Panarion*] 3.508.4–15 Holl (=fr. 15 Wehrli. Cf. Sharples 2010a: 22O).

78 Theon of Smyrna, *Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato* 149.4–150.4, Hiller (= Sharples 2010a: 22I2).

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we find a report of the doctrine of a certain Aristotle,[79] who says that the reasons that moved the Stagirite to develop the doctrine of the intellect from without included the analogy with sense-perception, where sense objects that cause sensation exist in actuality, and the general principle according to which in order for something to come to be from potentiality to actuality, there has to be a cause that exists in actuality and which can bring the potential X to the state of actual X (110.4–24 = B1).

The object of thought of our intellect is sensible things, none of which is intelligible in actuality, but only in potentiality. In the activity of human intellect, two operations are distinguished: the production of the intelligible by abstraction and the apprehension of these intelligibles when they are already produced.[80] Our intellect is assisted in this activity by the intellect which is "by nature" and "from without," which is the only thing that is intelligible in its own nature. It is immortal and its role is to produce the disposition in the material intellect which enables it to think.[81]

This account is followed by a report of the original response by Aristotle of Mytilene to the critics of the Peripatetic doctrine of the "intellect from without,"[82] who pointed out that νοῦς θύραθεν cannot either be in a place or move from one place to another,[83] and by implication, cannot make a contact with the human intellect which is material. Aristotle of Mytilene responds to this by explaining that νοῦς θύραθεν is present "in matter as a substance in a substance, in actuality, and performs its activities always."[84] Whenever the divine intellect comes across the right kind of elemental mixture which produces a body capable of having a thinking disposition, it produces the human disposition to thought. In these cases the divine intellect acts as a craftsman working with an instrument, whereas at other times, when bodies present no suitable matter, it acts as a craftsman in accordance with his craft but without instruments. The criticism is probably coming from the second century AD

79 Paul Moraux and Paolo Accattino take him to be Aristotle of Mytilene (Moraux 1985, Accattino 1985 and Accattino 2005); Opsomer and Sharples 2000 argue that the part of the report at 110.4–112.5 may be a paraphrase of the doctrine of Aristotle of Stagira by the author of the treatise *On the Intellect*. Sharples (2010b: 152) points out that the two parts of the argument (110.4–112.5 = Sharples 2004 B, and 112.5–113.12 = Sharples 2004: C1) may come from two different sources.

80 *On the Intellect* 111.15–18 (= Sharples 2004: B2 *partim*).

81 *On the Intellect* 111.29–32.

82 *On the Intellect* 112.5–113.12 (= Sharples 2004: C1).

83 *On the Intellect* 112.6–8.

84 *On the Intellect* 112.11–12.

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Platonist Atticus.[85] The Peripatetic reply attributed to Aristotle of Mytilene has a number of Stoicizing elements: the idea that intellect pervades matter, that human thinking depends on the divine intellect meeting with the right 'blending' of the bodies, and even the comparison of the suitable bodily disposition as 'fire or something of that sort' (112, 12).

The author of the treatise *On the Intellect* (perhaps Alexander himself) criticizes the theory of his master.[86] His objections are: (i) according to this theory the divine intellect is found in the basest things (this is also the Stoic view) (113.12–14); (ii) according to it, the divine intellect and providence are present in the sublunary world, even though the right (presumably, Peripatetic school) view is that providence in sublunary world comes about in accordance with relation of things here to the heavenly motions (113.14–16; the view goes back to Critolaus); (iii) on the view presented by this theory, our thinking is not up to us (μὴ ἐφ'ἡμῖν) and not our own function (ἔργον), but is a condition and activity of the potential and instrumental intellect produced by the divine intellect directly as we come to be (113.16–18). These are typical anti-Stoic objections, with Stoics explicitly mentioned in (i). The author of the treatise concludes by offering his own solution to Atticus' objection, different from the one given by his teacher. But this argument attributed to Alexander's teacher shows that the idea of interpreting the active intellect of *On the Soul* 3.5 as external is already present in the school tradition prior to Alexander's own influential interpretation. We can notice also that the expression νοῦς θύραθεν, clearly used technically in the report, comes from *Generation of Animals* 2.3, 736b28–29 and indicates that this account of the active intellect is based on a synthetic reading of the Aristotelian corpus.

5 Ethics

Ethics also belongs to traditional Peripatetic subjects. From the first century BC, we have a number of Peripatetic texts and reports which show how the systematization of Aristotelian doctrines takes place side by side with the appropriation of new themes from the Hellenistic agenda.[87]

Our main source for Peripatetic ethics in the first half of second century AD is Aspasius' extant commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, books 1–4

85 Cf. fr. 7.75–81 Des Places; Donini 1974: 51; Rashed 1997: 189–91; Accattino 2001: 55.

86 *On the Intellect* 113.12–25 (= Sharples 2004: C2).

87 See chapters 5 (Aristotelianism in the First Century BC) and 6 (Peripatetic Ethics in the First Century BC: The Summary of Didymus).

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and 7–8, which is also the earliest extant commentary on Aristotle. Aspasius discusses the question of the place of ethics in the study of philosophy and argues that from the point of view of necessity, the study of ethics has a priority over theoretical philosophy, even if in the absolute sense theoretical philosophy is prior. One must first educate one's character before continuing to further studies, since otherwise, if one's rational power is overcome by emotions, it is difficult to make accurate judgements. He points out that this position is supported in the tradition by both Socrates and the Pythagoreans, none of whom could be suspected of neglect toward the cultivation of 'divine' theoretical subjects, and yet both started by teaching morality.[88] Aspasius is here proposing the third of the three Peripatetic positions with regard to the starting point of the study of philosophy mentioned in the later ancient sources, the other two being Andronicus (one should start with logic) and Boethus (one should start with physics).[89]

Defending Aristotle's view that external goods are necessary for happiness, Aspasius engages with both the Stoics who deny this (being committed to the thesis that virtue is sufficient for happiness) and Critolaus, the Peripatetic scholarch of the second century BC who taught that happiness is completed by the three kinds of goods, namely goods of the soul, goods of the body, and the external goods.[90] According to Aspasius, external goods are necessary for happiness (contrary to the Stoic view); however, they are necessary not as parts or as things that complete it but rather as instruments (contrary to Critolaus).[91] Aspasius explains Aristotle's claim in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.7, 1097b16–20 that happiness is the most choiceworthy not as a part of reckoning adducing the argument from *Topics* 3.2, which establishes that ends are not included in the same counting with their means.[92]

Aspasius examines the meaning of Aristotle's claim in *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.2 that "each emotion and each action is accompanied by pleasure and pain, and therefore virtue has to do with pleasures and pains."[93] Some unnamed philosophers understood that this meant a division of all emotions (πάθη) into

88 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 2.5–11 (discussion in Karamanolis 2011).

89 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 5.33–34. Cf. Philoponus, *On Aristotle's Categories* 5.16–34 and chapter 5 of this volume.

90 Critolaus *apud* Stobaeus, *Selections* 2.7, 46.6–9 (= fr. 19 Wehrli), Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* [*Stromata*] 2.31.129.10, 1–3 (= fr. 20 Wehrli), discussion in Sharples 2007: 627–9.

91 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 24.3–4.

92 Aristotle, *Topics* 3.2, 117a18 (discussion in Sharples 2007: 632).

93 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.2, 1104b14–16: παντὶ δὲ πάθει καὶ πάσῃ πράξει ἕπεται ἡδονὴ καὶ λύπη καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἂν εἴη ἡ ἀρετὴ περὶ ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας.

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the two highest genera, pleasure and pain, and these latter would subsume all the particular emotions.[94] Aspasius says that this approach has credibility, but also runs into several difficulties, which he offers to overcome before arriving at a very similar classification of his own. First, there is a problem of relation between the generic pleasure and pain and particular pleasures and pains (such as the pleasure taken in the well-being of oneself and one's friends, and pain experienced on account of some misfortune). The latter will have a status of species not being different from the genus in either definition or name. The solution Aspasius apparently recommends is that the definition of pleasure ("unimpeded activity in accordance with nature") should apply to the generic pleasure, and the specific pleasures should be derived by *diairesis* constructed using the method of *ekthesis*, i.e. each specific emotion being treated as a particular example of a genus.[95] A further problem has to do with the states which involve a combination of pleasure and pain, such as desires (ἐπιθυμίαι). Aspasius may be thinking of various mixtures of pleasure and pain discussed in Plato's *Philebus*. In order to resolve these problems, he suggests turning to the definition of emotion (πάθος), in order to see that perhaps the suggested division into the two genera and many species is optimal. Here Aspasius cites and criticizes the definitions of πάθος given by the Stoics and earlier Peripatetics. The Stoic definition "vehement impulse or irrational impulse contrary to the right reason" is criticized on the ground that not every emotion is vehement and not every emotion is contrary to the right reason.[96]

The definition of Andronicus, "emotion is an irrational movement in the soul on account of a supposition of something bad or good, taking irrational not in the Stoic sense of "contrary to the right reason," but as referring to this part of the soul"[97] is criticized for the inclusion of the word "supposition" (ὑπόληψις), which Aspasius seems to interpret as Stoic term "assent" (συγκατάθεσις).[98] He points out that many emotions come about on the basis of appearance alone, without a mediating assent, and some even come about on the basis of pleasure alone, without a mediating appearance.[99] Boethus' definition of emotion, "irrational movement of the soul with a certain magnitude"[100] is designed to exclude any movements "that are not

94 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 42.27–32.
95 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 43.11–14.
96 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 44.12–19.
97 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 44.21–24.
98 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 45.2.
99 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 45.1–10.
100 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 44.24–25.

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long-lasting appropriations and alienations."[101] Aspasius retains the core formula of both earlier definitions of emotion, suggesting his own as "motion of the irrational part of the soul caused by pleasure or pain" (45.13–14). The striking feature of Aspasius' account of emotion its anti-cognitivism, as Richard Sorabji noticed.[102]

Aspasius' overall philosophical position does not lend itself to an easy classification. In the *Ethics* commentary, we find arguments that make it closer to the Stoics, such as denying the degrees of virtue.[103] Even more frequent are overlaps with middle Platonic theories, notably, in the points where these theories are close to the Aristotelian position.[104] Still, Aristotelianism prevails, both in the overall conceptual framework of the commentary and in the background: Aspasius' familiarity with Aristotle's doctrines and arguments and especially the application of the doctrines from across the corpus in the discussion of ethical problems, point to his Peripatetic allegiance.

6 Conclusion

The surviving texts and reports show continuing engagement of the Peripatetic philosophers of the second century AD with a philosophical agenda set by Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic philosophical school as well as growing interest in the new scientific discoveries and theoretical developments. The general aim of such engagement, as seen in several examples considered above, is most typically to establish, review, defend, or rationalize the Aristotelian position in light of new theoretical challenges. The most striking feature of this period, not documented before, is a thorough and detailed knowledge that all the Peripatetic philosophers have of the Aristotelian corpus. Most often dialectical engagement with problems or criticisms happens in the course of interpretation of an Aristotelian text or argument, and search for solution usually mobilizes the full theoretical arsenal of Aristotle's logic and ontology, whether the problem under discussion belongs to physics, logic, or ethics, to use the Hellenistic classification. The prevalence of Aristotelian method and Aristotelian ontology in all these areas puts Hellenistic agenda in a new perspective. This is the same approach that is documented much more fully in the work of Alexander of Aphrodisias, and it is possible to say that it has been formed during the second century AD.

101 Aspasius, *On Aristotle's Ethics* 44.27–28.

102 Sorabji 2007: 623; cf. Sedley 1999.

103 Ierodiakonou 1999.

104 See Donini 1974, 1982, and 2005.

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