

Theory and History of Ontology ([www.ontology.co](http://www.ontology.co)) by Raul Corazzon | e-mail: [rc@ontology.co](mailto:rc@ontology.co)

## Alexander of Aphrodisias' metaphysics: Annotated bibliography of the studies in English: A - Faz

### Contents of this Section

#### The Neoplatonic Commentators of Aristotle

This part of the section [History of Ontology](#) includes the following pages:

#### [The Neoplatonic Commentators on Aristotle's \*Metaphysics\*](#)

##### [General Bibliography on the Neoplatonic Commentators](#)

##### [Bibliography on the Neoplatonic Commentaries to Aristotle's \*Metaphysics\*](#)

Alexander of Aphrodisias' metaphysics: Annotated bibliography of the studies in English:

[A - Faz \(Current page\)](#)

[Fla - Kra](#)

[Kup - Sch](#)

[Sha - Z](#)

Alexandre d'Aphrodise: bibliographie annotée des études en français:

[A - Guy](#)

[Has - Z](#)

[Alessandro di Afrodisia: bibliografia annotata degli studi in italiano](#)

[Alexander von Aphrodisias: bibliographie der deutschen Studien](#)

#### On the Section "[History of the Doctrine of Categories](#)"

##### [Ancient Greek Commentaries on Aristotle's \*Categories\*](#)

## Selected bibliography on the Ancient Greek Commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*

### Index of the Pages on Ancient Philosophy until Hellenistic Period

[On the website "History of Logic"](#)

### Alexander of Aphrodisias' logic: Annotated bibliography

#### Bibliography on Alexander of Aphrodisias

1. Adamson, Peter. 2018. "Dialectical method in Alexander of Aphrodisias' treatises on fate and providence." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* no. 54:279-308.  
 "The second century was a time of philosophical diversity.  
 (...)  
 Philosophers of a more 'dogmatic' orientation were under pressure to show how the methods of their favoured school could resolve philosophical dispute. The challenge was, negatively, to offer a convincing refutation of rival views, and positively, to show that one's own school doctrines rested on sound foundations.  
 In what follows, I will show how the most famous Aristotelian of the second century, Alexander of Aphrodisias, rose to this challenge.  
 I will do so with reference to two works, neither of which is among Alexander's famous commentaries on Aristotle. They are instead independent treatises devoted to the closely related notions of fate and providence. Whereas *On Fate* has survived in its original Greek version,(3) *On Providence* is known to us only in two medieval Arabic translations.(4)" (pp. 279-280)  
 (3) For text, translation, and commentary see R. W. Sharples, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Fate* [*Alexander on Fate*] (London,1983); cited by page and line from the edition of I. Bruns in *Supplementum Aristotelicum*, □. 2.1.2 (Berlin, 1887 and 1892), reprinted by Sharples. I quote from Sharples' translation with occasional modifications; all other translations in the paper are mine, unless otherwise noted.  
 (4) I will be drawing in this paper on the version most scholars take to be more complete and reliable, namely the later one produced by Abū Bishr Mattā. For the Arabic text(s) and translations into three languages see H.-J. Ruland, 'Die arabische Fassungen von zwei Schriften des Alexander von Aphrodisias: *Über die Vorsehung und Über das liberum arbitrium*' (Ph.D. thesis, Saarbrücken, 1976); S. Fazzo and M. Zonta, *Alessandro di Afrodisia: La provvidenza* [*Provvidenza*] (Milan, 1998); and P. Thillet, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise: Traité de la providence* (Lagrasse, 2003). For the influence of the work in early Arabic thought see S. Fazzo and H. Wiesner, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias in the Kindi Circle and in al-Kindī's Cosmology' ['Kindi Circle'], *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 3 (1993), 119-53.
2. Avotins, Ivars. 1980. "Alexander of Aphrodisias on vision in the atomists." *The Classical Quarterly* no. 30:429-454.  
 "In discussing the atomists' theory of vision modern accounts have quite neglected to take into account two sections of Alexander of Aphrodisias on this topic.(1)" (p. 429)  
 (...)  
 "In conclusion, a more general question. In his two accounts Alexander has supplied us with material partly attested elsewhere, partly found only in him.  
 In view of scholars' interest in Alexander's reliability,(91) what can be said about the over-all accuracy of his testimony on atomist philosophy? Wherever we can test him

against other material he, or his sources, cannot be accused of outright error or gross distortion. The one possible exception seems to be his intimation that there were atomists who believed that vision of external objects could occur without idols. One could wish that Alexander had introduced atomist doctrine in the form of statements rather than obliquely by questions because in the latter case it is more difficult for the reader to decide whether a doctrine is being asserted or only inferred. In our two accounts it cannot be clearly demonstrated whether or not the question form has impaired Alexander's veracity or accuracy.

To sum up, the examination of the content and method of presentation of these two accounts shows that Alexander's evidence can neither be accepted nor discarded a priori. Each datum has to be scrutinized separately." (p. 454)

(1) P. Wendland (ed.), 'Alexandri in librum de sensu commentarium', *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, III.1 (Berlin, 1901), pp. 56.6-58.22 (henceforth *De sensu*) and I. Bruns (ed.), 'Alexandri Aphrodisiensis

praeter commentaria scripta minora. De anima liber cum mantissa', *Supplementum Aristotelicum*, II.1 (Berlin, 1887), pp. 134. 28-136.28 (henceforth *Mantissa*).(...)

(91) Above, n. 4.

3. Baghdassarian, Fabienne. 2023. "De mixtione IX–X: Promoting the Aristotelian Causal System." In *Studies on Alexander of Aphrodisias' On Mixture and Growth*, edited by Guyomarc'h, Gweltaz and de Haas, Frans A.J., 122-143. Leiden: Brill. Abstract: "In *De Mixtione IX–X*, Alexander considers the theory of total blending from the perspective of its metaphysical value. He examines whether it can provide a satisfactory account of the being, unity and stability of things and he provides an explicit argument in favor of the Aristotelian causal system, against the Stoic theory of principles informed by total blending. He purposefully and methodically substitutes one causal system for another: in chapter IX, hylomorphism is preferred to total blending to account for the constitution of beings; in chapter X, the motion of the heavens and the formal cause are preferred to the cohesive function of pneuma. By doing so, Alexander does not aim solely at rejecting Stoic materialism in favor of a number of immaterial causes. He also wants to put forward a positive philosophical claim about the nature of reality: since in his eyes Stoic materialism leads to a pervasive ontological confusion, Alexander wants to re-establish the fact that individual substances are ontologically fundamental and primary."
4. Baltussen, Han. 2016. *The Peripatetics: Aristotle's Heirs, 322 bce–200 ce*. New York: Routledge. Contents: Sources and abbreviations viii; Preface xi; 1 Aristotle's Heirs 1; 2 The natural world and its (hidden) foundations 27; 3 Things and words: language, logic, and reasoning 55; 4 Ethics and politics: on morality and citizenship 80; 5 Continuity and criticism in the Peripatos 106; 6 Intellectual context: rivals and devotees 127; 7 Epilogue: from Theophrastus to Alexander of Aphrodisias 158; Appendix A: Known Peripatetics 322 bce–250 ce 165; Appendix B: Modern editions and commentaries on the Peripatetics 171; Index 174-177. "This book is about the Peripatetic school after Aristotle (d. 322 bce) down to Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 200 ce). Since a recent and accessible account of the Peripatetics in English is still not available (Lynch 1972 is still useful, but now out of date; Grayeff 1974, ch. 2–4 is in some respects flawed), this book fills an existing gap in the scholarly literature by synthesising the new scholarship of the past four decades. The account offered here is not intended to be comprehensive (an impossible task), but may serve as a good starting point for those who are interested in Hellenistic philosophy, while it suggests further readings for anyone wanting to pursue detailed analysis on specific topics or individuals. A useful companion volume is R. Sharples' sourcebook (Routledge, 2010), which covers roughly the same period (200 bce–200 ce), but has a greater range of materials with some commentary." (*Preface*, p. XI)  
References  
Grayeff, F. 1974. *Aristotle and His School* (London: Duckworth).

- Lynch, J. P. 1972. *Aristotle's School. A Study of A Greek Educational Institution* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Sharples, R. W. 2010. 'Peripatetics from 100 bce to 200 ce'. In Lloyd Gerson (ed.) *Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*. 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), ch. 8.
5. ———. 2017. "The Aristotelian tradition." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic*, edited by Richter, Daniel S. and Johnson, William A., 581-594. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 37.2.3 *Alexander of Aphrodisias*, pp. 585-587.
- "Until recently we had no precise dates for Alexander's working life, since his dedication of *On Fate* to emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla allowed only an estimate between 198 and 211 CE ( the death of Septimius Severus).(29) Our knowledge was supplemented in 2004 by epigraphic evidence from Aphrodisias with publication of a honorary inscription dedicated to his father (also a philosopher) which confirms his status as *diadochos* and provides his full name, which he shares with his father: Titus Aurelius Alexandros.(30) Arguably the commentator par excellence, at least in the Aristotelian tradition, Alexander became the model for the running commentary on Aristotle's esoteric writings for several centuries. His appointment to the chair of Peripatetic philosophy in Athens was significant-one of several chairs set up by emperor Marcus Aurelius (*Philostr.* VS 2.2 [566])." (pp. 585-586)
- (29) Dedication: De Jato 1.164.1-3 (=Sharples 2010a, chap. 1, text Ab).
- (30) Inscription found in Karacasu and dated to ca. 200 CE: see Chaniotis 2004, 388-389 and Sharples 2005.
- References
- Chaniotis, A. 2004. "New Inscriptions from Aphrodisias (1995-2001):' American Journal of Archaeology 108: 377-416.
- Sharples, R. W. 2005. "Implications of the New Alexander of Aphrodisias Inscription:' *BICS*, 48: 47-56.
- Sharples, R. W. 2010a. *Peripatetic Philosophy 200 BC-CE 200: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation*. Cambridge.
6. Barnes, Jonathan. 2015. "Alexander, *Ethical Problems* 22." In *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia: (« Questioni etiche » e « Mantissa »): metodo e oggetto dell'etica peripatetica*, edited by Bonelli, Maddalena, 87.114. Napoli: Bibliopolis.
7. Benevich, Fedor. 2019. "The Priority of Natures against the Identity of Indiscernibles: Alexander of Aphrodisias, Yahyā b. 'Adī, and Avicenna on Genus as Matter." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* no. 37:203-233.
- Abstract: "When one studies the history of universals in late antiquity and in the Arabic and Latin Middle Ages, the key notion is 'nature.' Natures are notions like 'redness qua redness,' which are neither universal nor particular in themselves, but are immanent either in universals, which exist only in the mind, or in extramental particulars. All recent studies agree that Alexander of Aphrodisias probably developed the idea of 'nature.' Then it travelled either directly or via the Baghdad Peripatetic Yahyā b. 'Adī, to Avicenna. From Avicenna, it was transmitted to thinkers of Latin Scholasticism, for instance, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. In this paper, I will show that this historical reconstruction of the inheritance of the notion of 'nature' neglects an important shift in the middle of the historical chain: natures are ontologically prior to their instances in Alexander and Ibn 'Adī, but posterior in Avicenna.
- This crucial difference will be shown on the basis of the parallel between (a) natures and universals, and (b) the material and generic aspects of common notions. We will see that Avicenna's reason for disagreeing with the previous tradition on this parallel was a concern regarding the compatibility of the priority of natures with the principle of the identity of indiscernibles."
8. Betegh, Gábor. 2023. "De mixtione I–II: Alexander's Dialectical Method." In *Studies on Alexander of Aphrodisias' On Mixture and Growth*, edited by

Guyomarc'h, Gweltaz and de Haas, Frans A.J., 28-57. Leiden: Brill.

Abstract: "The chapter aims to show that the task of the first two chapters of *De Mixtione* is to set the dialectical strategy for the entire treatise and to indicate the principles of Alexander's methodology. Contrary to what is customarily supposed, Alexander does not seek to debunk the Stoic theory already at the outset, but rather shows why, its basic flaws notwithstanding, Chrysippus' theory shares crucial features with the Aristotelian theory, and why it requires thorough critical analysis. The discussion of the pluralist theories, and in particular that of Democritus and Empedocles, highlights that only the Stoic and the Aristotelian theories have the theoretical resources to countenance the 'unification' of matter, which, for Alexander, is a central feature of blending. Moreover, in the review of alternative views, Alexander is relying on a sceptical diaphōnia used also by Sextus. Yet, Alexander deploys this doxographical material not with the aim of reaching a sceptical conclusion, but for the purposes of an Aristotelian-type dialectical investigation. This reading of the initial chapters also shows that Alexander's dialectical methodology in the *De mixtione* is close to the one he applies in *De fato*, and in *On providence*. In these chapters, Alexander spells out further central elements and key terms of his methodology, which also evince his methodological consistency across treatises."

9. Bloch, David. 2003. "Alexander of Aphrodisias as a textual witness: the commentary on the « De Sensu »." *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin* no. 74:21-38.  
 "Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on Aristotle's *De Sensu* presents readings of obvious interest to an editor of the *De Sensu*. No extant manuscript of the Aristotelian text is older than the 10th century A.D., and therefore a famous Peripatetic commentator of the 2nd or the 3rd century A.D. will certainly have had access to manuscripts now lost, and possibly to a quite different textual tradition. A. Förster explicitly assumes that this is the case.(1) In preparing a critical edition of Aristotle's *De Sensu*, I have made a complete collation of Alexander's commentary, using Wendland's edition (CAG. III.I, Berlin 1901).  
 In this article I will show that, even though Alexander seems to be an excellent textual witness, the commentary can rarely be considered solid, textual evidence on a par with manuscript readings. Both Förster and Ross commit the mistake of treating Alexandrian readings as manuscript readings in their editions. First, I will make some general points about the textual transmission of Aristotle and Alexander; then, I will examine the different parts of Alexander's commentary: lemmata, quotations, paraphrases, and the discussions of *variatio lectionis*; and finally, I will state exactly how I think Alexander's commentary can be used by the editor of Aristotle." (p. 21)
10. Blumenthal, Henry J. 1987. "Alexander of Aphrodisias in the later Greek commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima*, II." In *Aristoteles. Werk und Wirkung, Paul Moraux gewidmet, II: Kommentierung, Überlieferung, Nachleben*, edited by Wiesner, Jürgen, 90-106. Berlin: de Gruyter.  
 "Of the commentators on Aristotle whose works survive in other than partial or fragmentary form Alexander is unique in that he worked before the new Platonism of Plotinus and his successors came to dominate Greek philosophy: I use "successors" in the temporal and therefore not necessarily philosophical sense. With the exception of Themistius he is also alone in that he wrote more or less unbiased commentaries on Aristotle,(1) commentaries that were on the whole an honest, and generally successful - though this is admittedly now controversial - attempt to set out what Aristotle thought." (p. 90, two notes omitted)  
 (1) For Themistius cf. my *Themistius, the last Peripatetic commentator on Aristotle?*, in: *Arktouros, Festschrift Knox* (1979) 391-400; for another view cf. E.P. Mahoney, *Neoplatonism, the Greek commentators, and Renaissance Aristotelianism*, in: *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, ed. D.J.O'Meara (Albany 1982) n. 1, on 264-266.

11. Bobzien, Susanne. 1998. "The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem." *Phronesis. A Journal for Ancient Philosophy* no. 43:133-175. Reprinted in R. Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted: New Findings on Seven Hundred Years of the Ancient Commentators*, New York: Bloomsbury 2016, pp. 125-159. Abstract: "In this paper I argue that the 'discovery' of the problem of causal determinism and freedom of decision in Greek philosophy is the result of a combination and mix-up of Aristotelian and Stoic thought in later antiquity; more precisely, a (mis-)interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy of deliberate choice and action in the light of Stoic theory of determinism and moral responsibility. The (con-)fusion originates with the beginnings of Aristotle scholarship, at the latest in the early 2nd century AD. It undergoes several developments, absorbing Epictetan, Middle-Platonist, and Peripatetic ideas; and it leads eventually to a concept of freedom of decision and an exposition of the 'free-will problem' in Alexander of Aphrodisias' *On Fate* and in the *Mantissa* ascribed to him."
12. ———. 2014. "Alexander of Aphrodisias on Aristotle's theory of the Stoic indemonstrables." In *Strategies of Argument: Essays in Ancient Ethics, Epistemology, and Logic*, edited by Lee, Mi-Kyoung, 199-227. New York: Oxford University Press.  
 "In her important 1979 paper "Aristoteles über Syllogismen 'aufgrund einer Hypothese,' (1) Gisela Striker provided an in-depth analysis of these vexing and perplexing Aristotelian arguments. She showed that they were Aristotle's way of providing a logical vehicle for inferences based on other than term-logical relations; that the "hypothesis" that gives them their name is best understood as a rule that is not based on a relation of terms,(2) rather than as a premise; and that in those arguments "the thing taken instead" (τὸ μεταλαμβάνόμενον) is an assertion that is used instead of the dem onstrandum.(3) It was upon reading this paper that I realized that the (then) prevalent interpretation of later ancient texts on hypothetical syllogisms as presenting the Stoic theory of indemonstrables needed a thorough revision. For it is possible to show that, starting from Aristotle's "syllogisms based on a hypothesis," a specifically Peripatetic (and from the third century CE also partly Platonist) development can be traced through the centuries up to the late ancient passages on hypothetical syllogistic in Philoponus and Boethius. Although the Stoic indemonstrables undoubtedly played a role in this development, the various theories of hypothetical syllogisms over the centuries are all Peripatetic (and sometimes a little Platonist) in form, function, and terminology.(4) The present paper looks at Alexander of Aphrodisias' role in this development." (p. 199)  
 (1) Striker [1979]. See now also Striker [2009], 174–8, 201, 237–238.  
 (2) Striker [1979], 46.  
 (3) Ibid., 43.  
 (4) Here I am in agreement with Maroth [1989]. The arguments the Stoics called hypothetical syllogisms were completely different from those the Peripatetics called hypothetical syllogisms: see my [1997].  
 References  
 Bobzien, S. [1997] "The Stoics on Hypotheses and Hypothetical Argument," *Phronesis* 42(3), 299–312.  
 Maroth, M. [1989], *Ibn Sina und die peripatetische "Aussagenlogik"* (Leiden: Brill).  
 Striker, G. [1979] "Aristoteles über Syllogismen 'aufgrund einer Hypothese,'" *Hermes* 107, 33–50. [English translation: *Aristotle on Syllogisms 'from a Hypothesis'* in G. Striker, *From Aristotle to Cicero: Essays on Ancient Philosophy*, New York: Oxford niversity Press 2022, pp. 1-17]  
 Striker, G. [2009] *Aristotle, Prior Analytics: Book I* (Oxford: OUP).
13. Bodnár, István M. 1997. "Alexander of Aphrodisias on Celestial Motions." *Phronesis. A Journal for Ancient Philosophy* no. 42:190-205.  
 "After identifying the contribution of the nature of the celestial spheres with that of their soul, Alexander follows Aristotle in setting out a celestial hierarchy, on top of which there is or there are the separate unmoved mover(s), which move(s) by being object(s) of striving and desire for the less perfect entities of the heavens. This much

seems to be firmly settled. A number of further issues, however, call for detailed examination. In this paper first I set out to clarify the contributions of the striving of the different celestial spheres, then I turn to describing the interaction between the various motions of the celestial system, and I discuss whether the theory Alexander propounded could have been a fundamental revision, or rather an alternative exposition of the original, Aristotelian celestial theory deploying homocentric spheres." (p. 191)

14. ———. 2014. "Alexander's unmoved mover." In *Nature et sagesse : les rapports entre physique et métaphysique dans la tradition aristotélicienne: recueil de textes en hommage à Pierre Pellegrin*, edited by Cerami, Cristina. Leuven: Peeters.
15. ———. 2023. "De mixtione XV: the Aristotelian Account Vindicated." In *Studies on Alexander of Aphrodisias' On Mixture and Growth*, edited by Guyomarc'h, Gweltaz and de Haas, Frans A.J., 212-230. Leiden: Brill.  
Abstract: "This chapter gives further confirmation of the account worked out in chapters XIII and XIV by stressing that a proper blend neither contains the original ingredients in actuality, nor is there a generation of these ingredients in the proper sense of the word when these original constituents are recovered from the mix. Indeed, the recovered constituents are not the original batch of constituent material. Furthermore, such processes of dissolution are in need of a trigger—some slight fermentation in the case of must, a heated stone to separate milk into cheese and whey, and a sponge, to extract the water from wine mixed with water. In addition to this, the chapter sets out how the divisibility of the ingredients contributes to their ability to be blended, how such a preparatory phase facilitates the interaction of the ingredients leading to blending."
16. Bonelli, Maddalena. 2010. "Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Science of Ontology." In *Interpreting Aristotle's Posterior Analytics in Late Antiquity and Beyond*, edited by de Haas, Frans A.J., Leunissen, Mariska and Martijn, Marije, 99-122. Leiden: Brill.  
"Conclusion  
In this article, I have tried to show how Alexander conceived of the science of being as being as constituting a demonstrative science. In particular, I have tried to show that Alexander thought it possible to apply the scientific conditions codified by Aristotle in the *Posterior Analytics* to ontology. Although it is difficult to discern the precursors of this theory, it is easy to see the great success this model of philosophy had in the history of philosophy after Alexander. The conception of metaphysics as a demonstrative science that I discern in Alexander actually had a fundamental influence on the philosophical tradition: we might mention not only Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, but also Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, as well as certain developments in so-called 'analytic' philosophy." (p. 121)
17. Castelli, Laura Maria. 2013. "Collections of « topoi » and the structure of Aristotle's « Topics »: notes on an ancient debate: (Aristotle, Theophrastus, Alexander and Themistius)." *Antiquorum Philosophia* no. 7:65-92.
18. ———. 2015. "Alexander of Aphrodisias: Methodological Issues and Argumentative Strategies between *Ethical Problems* and Commentary on the *Topics*." In *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia. (Questioni etiche e Mantissa). Metodo e oggetto dell'etica peripatetica*, edited by Bonelli, Maddalena, 19-42. Napoli: Bibliopolis.
19. Caston, Victor. 2012. "Higher-order awareness in Alexander of Aphrodisias." *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* no. 55:31-49.  
Abstract: "Alexander of Aphrodisias discusses higher-order awareness in perception twice: in *Quaestiones* 3.7, where he offers a detailed exegesis of Aristotle's arguments at the beginning of *De anima* 3.2 on how we perceive that we see, as an explanation of what Alexander calls 'sunaisthesis'; and in Alexander's own systematic treatise, the *De anima*. In the *Quaestiones*, Alexander develops an interpretation of Aristotle that has since become dominant, the moderate capacity

reading, according to which the same faculty that enables us to see also enables us to perceive that we are seeing. But he also makes the provocative claim that higher-order awareness is itself a necessary consequence of perceiving and is entailed by some of Aristotle's central doctrines. It is difficult to make good on this claim, though, and Alexander avoids making it in his own *De anima*, which offers a more nuanced and defensible position on the question."

20. ———. 2023. "Alexander of Aphrodisias' Emergentism: Hylomorphism Perfected." In *The History of Hylomorphism: From Aristotle to Descartes*, edited by Charles, David, 154-173. New York: Oxford University Press.

"Emergentism, to our ears, has obvious ramifications for concerns about reductionism and mental causation. But for Alexander it is primarily a way of understanding and spelling out what is involved in hylomorphism. It allows him to make precise the relation a form has to the matter that underlies it, and to see how this relation is recursively iterated at various levels, resulting in a layered conception of reality. Since the matter of a hylomorphic compound might itself be a hylomorphic compound, it may have a form and matter of its own, which in turn may again be a hylomorphic compound, until we finally hit bottom with prime matter. Therefore, there are forms all the way down, so to speak, in matter at every level except the lowest, a feature which is significant for Alexander because of the distinctive efficient causal role he assigns to form. As a consequence, even material explanations will make essential reference to form, insofar as distinctive types of matter possess forms of their own, which makes any given matter the kind that it is and explains why it is suitable for the functions required for the form above it. And it is the form at each of these levels that figures in causal explanations.

Alexander does not, then, merely gesture at a rough and ready distinction between form and matter, or the fact that it 'stacks' and iterates hierarchically.

His emergentism allows him to offer a highly specific version of hylomorphism, making clear exactly what the distinctive contributions of form and matter are, as well as their relation to one another." (pp. 154-155)

21. Cerami, Cristina. 2016. "Alexander of Aphrodisias." In *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, edited by Falcon, Andrea, 150-179. Leiden: Brill.

"Our Greek, Arabic, and Latin bibliographical sources attribute a great number of writings to Alexander. Not all of them are authentic. Among the authentic ones, the treatises *On Mixture*, *On Fate*, and *On the Soul* are extant in the original Greek. Some writings are preserved only in Arabic translation. Among them, there are the treatises *On the Principles of the Cosmos*, *On Providence*, and *Against Galen on Motion*. Moreover, Alexander wrote philosophical commentaries on several Aristotelian works. His commentaries on the *Prior Analytics* (book 1), *Topics*, *Meteorology*, and *On the Senses* are extant. His commentaries on the *Posterior Analytics*, on the *Physics*, and on the treatise *On the Heavens* survive only in fragmentary form.<sup>(3)</sup> A complete commentary on the *Metaphysics* is transmitted under his name, but only the first five books are genuine. Finally, his philosophical production included concise expositions on particular exegetical questions prompted by the text of Aristotle's writings or linked to questions debated by other contemporary philosophical schools. These expositions are collected in three books of *Natural Questions*, one book of *Ethical Questions*, and a book that is traditionally known as *Mantissa* ("makeweight"), which is concerned with psychology.

A complete presentation of Alexander's philosophical production would go beyond the limits of this chapter. In the pages to follow, I will try to assess Alexander's unique place in the Aristotelian tradition by singling out what is distinctive in his reading of Aristotle." (pp. 160-161)

(3) Collection of extant testimonies in Moraux 1979 (*Posterior Analytics*), Rescigno 2004 and 2008 (*On the Heavens*), and Rashed 2011 (*Physics 4–8*).

References

Moraux, 1979. *Le commentaire d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise aux Seconds Analytiques d'Aristote*, Berlin/New York, W. De Gruyter.



- Rashed, 2011. *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d'Aristote (Livres IV–VIII). Les scholies byzantines*. Berlin/New York, W. De Gruyter.
- Rescigno, A. 2004. *Alessandro di Afrodisia: commentario al De caelo di Aristotele. Frammenti del primo libro*. Amsterdam, Hakkert.
- 2008. *Alessandro di Afrodisia: commentario al De caelo di Aristotele. Frammenti del secondo, terzo e quarto libro*. Amsterdam, Hakkert.
22. Chaniotis, Angelo. 2004. "Epigraphic evidence for the philosopher Alexander of Aphrodisias." *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* no. 47:79-81.  
 "Inscriptions often provide information about great figures of ancient literature. This applies to Arrian, Plutarch and Tacitus no less than to the poet Nikandros of Colophon or Aristotle.  
 A new find from the city of Aphrodisias in Asia Minor in 2001 now adds some important biographical information on the city's most known author and one of the greatest philosophers of the Imperial period. This new inscription will be published together with other recent epigraphic finds from Aphrodisias in a forthcoming issue of the American Journal of Archaeology; as the news about this text has already spread among scholars interested in the history of ancient philosophy, it seemed appropriate to present this text as soon as possible in a journal more likely to be read by scholars interested in classical literature." (p. 79)
23. ———. 2004. "New Inscriptions from Aphrodisias (1995-2001)." *American Journal of Archaeology* no. 108:377-416.  
 Abstract: "This article presents 33 Greek inscriptions found at Aphrodisias between 1995 and 2001. They include an honorary decree, honorary inscriptions of other types, statue bases, dedications, building inscriptions, epitaphs, and a sundial. The most important new text is an honorary inscription on a statue base set up by the prominent philosopher Alexander of Aphrodisias for his father (4).  
 A n unusually early inscription is a posthumous honorary decree for a prominent local citizen (1), which records his achievements probably during the wars and diplomatic exchanges of the first century B.C. The other new texts provide information about cults (Thea Eleutheria: 8; Zeus Nineudios: 11; Hephaistos: 15), the date of the Civil Basilica (14; under Domitian?), gladiatorial competitions (21-22), the prosopography of the city, occupations (11 a bronze-smith; 28: an agent of Fulvia Cervidia Vestina, member of a senatorial family, who probably owned land near Aphrodisias), and the relations between Aphrodisias and the Roman provincial administration (23 and 26)."
24. Chase, John Michael. 2025. "Summing up the universal. Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius and Simplicius on the formation of universals." In *Wie der Universalienstreit begann. Koina/universalia in der spätantiken Philosophie*, edited by A. V. Alván León, A V. and Mesch, W., 1-22. Leiden: Brill.  
 Preprint: the volume has not yet been published.  
 "Conclusion  
 If I were to attempt a *sunkephalaiôsis* of the preceding discussion, I'd say that our quest for the origins of the Peripatetic doctrine of the formation of universal concepts has led us back, by sometimes tortuous paths, to a period when Academic, Peripatetic, Stoic, and Epicurean views still shared many doctrinal elements, although they were struggling to demarcate themselves from one another. As we tried to track down the nature and function of "summation" (*kephalaiôsis*, *sunkephalaiôsis*) in this doctrine, we saw that it appeared as a component in the logical scheme of analysis and synthesis, where it served to designate the "upward path" of synthesis, by which species discovered through analysis or division are "summarized" or "recapitulated", and then added to the genus in order to form a definition of the essence of an object. In an epistemological context, we found that the same terminology could be used by the Peripatetics and others to denote the way in which individual sensations, memories and experiences are somehow "summed up" and "recapitulated" by the rational faculty in order to form universal concepts, and we saw some motives to suspect this may have been the case for the shadowy

medical sect of the Empiric physicians as well. This last hypothesis, would, of course, require confirmation by further research." (pp. 21-22)

25. Cheng, Wei. 2018. "Alexander of Aphrodisias on Pleasure and Pain in Aristotle." In *Pain and Pleasure in Classical Times*, edited by Harris, William V., 174-200. Leiden: Brill.

"Instead, I aim to draw attention to a similar, yet basically ignored debate in antiquity over the obscure relation of supervenience between pleasure and activity in which both Alexander of Aphrodisias and other interpreters of Aristotle, probably his colleagues, students, and even some of his predecessors, took part.(13) This exegetic debate is hidden in Alexander's theoretical criticism of some anonymous 'hedonists' in the *Problemata Ethica* (PE)—a collection of short and unsystematic notes about ethical issues.(14) I shall argue that Alexander develops his anti-hedonistic argument mainly based on the Extrinsic Reading of Aristotle's supervenience-based interpretation of pleasure, whereas the 'hedonists' criticized by him are those who advocate a pleasure-friendly and an Intrinsic Reading of the supervenience in question, or those who try to verify the goodness of pleasure by appealing to Aristotle in this way. In light of this dialogic situation, many of Alexander's argumentative moves are presumably reactions to, and influenced by, the proposal of his opponents who base their theories likewise on a reading of Aristotle." (pp. 176-177)

(13) This hypothesis does not necessarily commit us to believe that the debates in question happened between Alexander and his opponents in an established institution (as the hedonistic debates among the Academics in the Academy), because (due to the fact that there is no information about any of his immediate pupils) whether and in what sense Alexander had a school is still an open question (cf. Sharples 1990b). Rather, I simply want to argue that the main target at which Alexander aimed was the Aristotelian tradition. For my detailed discussion, see below.

(14) For discussions of this collection, see Madigan 1987; Sharples 1990a. The collection edited by M. Bonelli: *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia (Questioni etiche e Mantissa): Metodo e oggetto dell'etica peripatetica* (Naples, 2015) awaits further examination given that it was published after I finished the main part of my manuscript. As a remedy, I have added a few footnotes to reflect some of the discussions that arose in that volume, in particular the contributions of L. Castelli and C. Natali.

#### References

Bonelli, M. (ed.), *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia (Questioni etiche e Mantissa): Metodo e oggetto dell'etica peripatetica* (Naples, 2015).

Madigan, A., "Alexander of Aphrodisias: the Book of Ethical Problems", ANRW II, 36, 2 (Berlin and New York, 1987), 1260–79.

Sharples, R. W., *Alexander of Aphrodisias. Ethical Problems* (Ithaca, 1990). (1990a).

Sharples, R. W., "The School of Alexander?", in Sorabji 1990, 83–111. (1990b).

26. Coda, Elisa. 2012. "Alexander of Aphrodisias in Themistius' Paraphrase of the *De Caelo*." *Studia greco-arabica* no. 2:355-371.

Abstract: "This paper examines some fragments of Alexander of Aphrodisias' lost commentary on Aristotle's *De Caelo* preserved in Themistius' paraphrase of this work. Its aim is to make available the list of Themistius' explicit quotations of Alexander on the basis of the Hebrew text of the paraphrase, checked against the manuscript Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.II.528. It also examines in detail a selection of these passages. It will appear that some of Alexander's fragments, as preserved by Themistius, can be recovered in their original wording and meaning only on the basis of the Hebrew text. The first two passages, discussed in section 1, are meant to substantiate this claim. The third passage, discussed in section 2, raises a doctrinal question. In the Appendix, I provide a list of Alexander's passages explicitly quoted by Themistius. For each quotation, the reference to the folios and lines of the Florence MS is given. This is especially

- necessary, in consideration of the differences between the Hebrew text as edited and as preserved in the MSS."
27. Corcilus, Klaus. 2023. "De mixtione XIII: Finally, the Truth about Mixture." In *Studies on Alexander of Aphrodisias' On Mixture and Growth*, edited by Guyomarc'h, Gweltaz and de Haas, Frans A.J., 168-191. Leiden: Brill.  
Abstract: "Chapter XIII of *De mixtione* makes a start with Alexander's exposition of what he takes to be the only theory of blending that makes sense, namely Aristotle's hylomorphic theory of blending. Alexander defends the theory mainly on three grounds: it alone preserves our common preconception of mixture, it alone accounts for the corresponding phenomena, and it alone can explain the shortcomings of all the other theories of blending. In this chapter I argue that, according to Alexander, all other theories of blending, including the Stoic theory, are of a reductive character. They are reductive in that they do not accept the existence of a qualitative fusion of natural bodies as a physical reality; instead, they reduce blending to other kinds of interaction between bodies all of which fall short of qualitative fusion. Alexander, by contrast, defends Aristotle's realism about blending as philosophically superior: blending is not just an epiphenomenon or a subjective impression but a physical reality, and only Aristotle's realist theory is capable of explaining blending in a satisfactory way."
  28. Corrigan, Kevin. 1996. *Plotinus' Theory of Matter-Evil and Question of Substance: Plato, Aristotle, and Alexander of Aphrodisias*. Leuven: Peeters.  
"This work attempts to do three things: first, to examine all of Plotinus' major works on matter-evil as individual treatises in their chronological order and as representatives of a cumulative, 'developing' theory; second, to situate these works in the context of questions concerning both the generation of lower matter and the nature of intelligible matter in relation to intellect and the One; and third, to complete the first two parts of the enquiry by locating the whole problem of matter-evil within the context of what Plotinus means by substance, thereby providing a new answer to the problem of substance and matter in Plotinus in the light principally of Plato, Aristotle, and Alexander of Aphrodisias. Chapter 1 is an introduction and Chapters 2 to 5 are extended commentaries on the major works on matter-evil." *Preface*, p. XI)
  29. Cranz, F. Edward. 1958. "The prefaces to the Greek editions and Latin translations of Alexander of Aphrodisias, 1450 to 1575." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*:510-546.  
"THE present article is primarily a descriptive catalogue, using both quotation in extenso and summary, of the prefaces to the early modern Greek editions and Latin translations of Alexander of Aphrodisias. Its first purpose is to make the prefaces, which are often unpredictable in content and difficult to locate, more accessible to historical study, and it further attempts to suggest some of the points at which they illuminate the thought of their epoch. An index of names is appended which includes all contemporaries mentioned in the prefaces, together with very brief biographical and bibliographical information. A short account of the fortuna of Alexander may serve to place the prefaces in their historical context. Alexander flourished toward the end of the second century after Christ, and he quickly won a position of great authority in the late Greek and Byzantine philosophic tradition. Similarly in the Moslem world, his writings were early translated into Syriac and Arabic, and here too Alexander exercised an important influence on philosophic thought, notably through his interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine of the intellect. In the Latin West, however, Alexander played no significant role during the late ancient and medieval periods. His works were not translated into Latin, and his very name was soon forgotten." (p. 516, a note omitted)
  30. Dalla Valeria, Lisa. 2013. "Alexander and the Aristotelian formula of the principle of excluded middle in *Metaphysics*  $\Gamma$  7." *Lexicon Philosophicum* no. 1:193-215.  
Abstract: "Alexander of Aphrodisias' comment to the arguments on the principle known as of excluded middle, held by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*  $\Gamma$  7-8, seems to

interpret that text in a predominantly logical and philosophical perspective, and considers the subsequent research carried out in different fields. This perspective emerges from the particular importance that the exegete gives to not only the concepts of true and false with respect to the principle's formula ("For neither can there be anything intermediate of a contradiction, but of one thing we must either affirm or deny one thing, whatever it is" 1011b 23-24) and its first proof, but also to the axioms and the concept of contradiction. The attribution to the principle of a meaning closely related to those concepts can, moreover, be traced back to Alexander. The reason for Alexander's interpretative choice could be found in his own conception of first philosophy as a demonstrative science, which seems to discover a consistent criterion for truth in the principle, thus establishing the existence of something true and how to find it. However, such a requirement would be purely Alexandrian, because in Aristotle, as can be demonstrated by the texts, the truth is nothing more than the discourse which describes reality as it is. In fact, the truth expresses a relationship between terms, and this relationship may be said to subsist, in the case of the affirmative statement, or not subsist, in the case of denial."

31. de Haas, Frans A. J. 2014. "Presuppositions of Moral Action in Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias." In *Fate, Providence and Moral Responsibility in Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Thought: Studies in Honour of Carlos Steel*, edited by D'Hoine, Pieter and Van Riel, Gerd, 103-116. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- "Conclusion  
Although the list of modifications undertaken by Alexander is much longer, we are now in a position to give an affirmative answer to the question whether the changes in the interpretation of Aristotle's *De anima* that Alexander is famous for were spawned by ethical concerns (among others). Alexander works hard to create the largest possible distance between the chains of antecedent causes that define Stoic determinism on the one hand, and Aristotle's causal chain of animal locomotion in *De anima* and *De motu animalium* on the other—despite (or because of?) the possible historical relations between Aristotle and Stoic determinism. Alexander denies Aristotle's chain every necessity, and tries to remove any impression that each of the links is itself a motion or a moved mover. As perfections or activities (ἐντελεχεῖαι) they are exempt from motion. Only in this way, Alexander must have thought, could Aristotle's moral psychology be a worthy adversary of 2nd century Stoicism." (p. 116)
32. ———. 2021. "Deduction and common notions in Alexander's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* A 1-2." *History of Philosophy & Logical Analysis* no. 24:71-102.
- Abstract: "In this paper I explore the ways in which Alexander of Aphrodisias employs and develops so-called 'common notions' as reliable starting points of deductive arguments. He combines contemporary developments in the Stoic and Epicurean use of common notions with Aristotelian dialectic, and axioms. This more comprehensive concept of common notions can be extracted from Alexander's commentary on *Metaphysics* A 1–2. Alexander puts Aristotle's claim that 'all human beings by nature desire to know' in a larger deductive framework, and adds weight to Aristotle's use of the common understanding of the notion of 'wisdom'. Finally I will indicate how these upgraded common notions are meant to play an important role in the general framework of metaphysics as a science."
33. ———. 2023. "Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Ancient Debate on Hylomorphism and the Development of Intellect." In *The History of Hylomorphism: From Aristotle to Descartes*, edited by Charles, David, 174-196. New York: Oxford University Press.
- "The aim of this inquiry is to reconstruct rival approaches to hylomorphism which helped shape Alexander's version of it, and to show how Alexander's hylomorphism enabled him to expand the scope of the doctrine to the development of intellect. The reconstruction of rival approaches to hylomorphism offers us a glimpse of the long-

standing concern for the general theory of hylomorphism, over and above its important application to the relation between body and soul.(8)

In section 1, I shall discuss interpretations of the relation between form and matter that Alexander considers to be mistaken as a first encounter with the ancient debate on hylomorphism. In section 2, I shall highlight Alexander's discussion of more positive suggestions on how to conceive of the relation between form and matter. In section 3, I shall briefly discuss which Aristotelian ingredients Alexander added in order to develop his full account of hylomorphism that we find in *De An.* 1–26.

Finally, in section 4, I shall show how Alexander's brand of hylomorphism allowed him to apply it to the development of human intellect." (pp. 175-176)

(8) Sharples (2009) speaks of a sharp decline of interest in the general theory of hylomorphism between Aristotle and Alexander. This chapter may serve to provide some evidence to the contrary.

#### References

Sharples, R.W. 2009. 'The Hellenistic Period: What Happened to Hylomorphism?' In *Ancient Perspectives on Aristotle's De Anima*, edited by Gerd van Riel and Pierre Destrée, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy: De Wulf-Mansion Centre. Series I, 155–66. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

34. ———. 2023. "De mixtione V–VI: Common Notions and Bodies Receiving Bodies." In *Studies on Alexander of Aphrodisias' On Mixture and Growth*, edited by Guyomarc'h, Gweltaz and de Haas, Frans A.J., 83-99. Leiden: Brill.  
Abstract: "In this paper I first set out the role of common notions in the structure of Alexander's argument in *Mixt.* V–VI. Furthermore, I argue that a series of topics discussed in *Mixt.* V–VI, *Mant.* XIV and *Quaest.* II.12 concern the initial stages of Stoic as well as Peripatetic blending rather than the resulting blend. The presence of certain types of (filled) pores and changes in density both facilitate mutual division; mutual division and coextension go hand in hand until a degree of juxtaposition of ingredients is reached which easily allows for the specific interaction that creates the final blend: interaction of qualities for the Peripatetics, tensional dynamics for the Stoics. In addition, I show that a list of stock examples used by Alexander also raises serious questions concerning changes in density and volume, which Aristotle, Alexander and the Stoics had to deal with. I suggest that the role of pores found in *Meteorology* IV may have been part of the solution for some of Alexander's contemporaries. Throughout the arguments in the chapters V–VI, indeed throughout the *De mixtione*, Alexander consistently tries to replace a comprehensive materialist metaphysics of interacting bodies by his own equally comprehensive brand of hylomorphism—even if not every argument is equally convincing."
35. ———. 2024. "Alexander of Aphrodisias on Concepts." In *Conceptualising Concepts in Greek Philosophy*, edited by Betegh, Gábor and Tsouna, Voula, 368-383. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
"The numerous works transmitted under the name of Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. 200 CE) show a rich vocabulary denoting concepts, thoughts, and universals,(1) and an equally rich collection of verbs denoting the human activities of abstracting or constructing concepts, whether they be simple (individual, genus, species) or complex (definitions, propositions). Within the confines of this chapter, I would like to focus on a number of interesting occurrences of the terms *ennoia* and *noēma* in Alexander's texts. I shall deal with Alexander's interrelated views of concept formation as the development of potential intellect, divine intellect in us as *noēma*, *ennoiai* as concepts under construction, and human intellect as a unity of concepts. Alexander not only draws on Aristotle's works and the Aristotelian tradition, but also on centuries of polemics against Aristotle by the Stoics and Platonists, which have led to new ways of engaging with Aristotle's legacy. Often terms of Stoic or Platonist origin have become part of the common parlance in the philosophical debates of the first centuries of our era. One example that we shall come across below is the use of 'common notions' as starting points of valid arguments, which Alexander believes is in perfect agreement with Aristotelian dialectic. When Alexander elaborates on the extent of the human capacity to acquire some universal

concepts by nature, and others by teaching and study, he always intends to confirm the Aristotelian rejection of innate knowledge." (p. 368)

(1) One term does not play a role in Alexander's own thought: *ennoēma* occurs only in Alex., in Top. 359.13-16 where it echoes the Early Stoic notion of a 'figment of the mind' (cf. Diog. Laert. 7.61.1-3); cf. LS 30 C and D with commentary.

LS = A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, 1987, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

36. Di Giovanni, Matteo, and Primavesi, Oliver. 2016. "Who Wrote Alexander's Commentary on *Metaphysics* Λ? New Light on the Syro-Arabic Tradition." In *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda – New Essays: Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the Karl and Gertrud-Abel Foundation Bonn, November, 28th–December 1st, 2010*, edited by Horn, Christoph, 11-66. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- "It seems, then, that "Alexander's" commentary on Book Λ as expounded and quoted in Arabic by Ibn Rušd cannot be ascribed directly to the historical Alexander of Aphrodisias, but rather to an unknown Greek reviser of an original work by Alexander of Aphrodisias. For we have shown that the main part of "Alexander's" commentary on Book Λ 1–7 as quoted by Ibn Rušd must belong – pace Freudenthal – with the same translation of a Greek original into Syriac as the book-by-book analysis expounded in Part III of Ibn Rušd's proem, and that this analysis cannot be attributed – pace Bouyges – to the historical Alexander of Aphrodisias without qualification. The bad news is that the authenticity of the quotations from "Alexander" interspersed in Ibn Rušd's commentary on Book Λ 1–7 will probably have to be examined afresh, as well as the conclusions to be drawn from that evidence with regard to the Greek commentary ascribed to Michael of Ephesus. The good news, however, is that the book-by-book analysis expounded in Ibn Rušd's proem has turned out to be a document pertaining to the ancient reception of the *Metaphysics* – partly by Alexander of Aphrodisias, partly by one of his successors." (p. 62)
37. Donini, Pierluigi. 2010. "Alexander's *On Fate*: Questions of Coherence." In *Aristotle and Determinism*, 159-176. Leuven: Peeters.
- Original edition: "II de Fato di Alessandro. Questioni di coerenza," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 36.7 (1987), pp. 1244-1259.
- "The Aim of the Treatise
- None of the major problems of philosophical coherence posed by *On Fate* - those I have thought necessary to illustrate in the above pages - relates directly to Stoicism and the discussion of Stoic theses. All instead arise from Alexander's relation to Aristotle's philosophy. If we take into account the remarkable effort (which, as we have seen, is up to a point successful) involved in reinterpreting Aristotle's doctrines so as to incorporate them coherently within the debate on determinism, the common view of *On Fate* as basically a polemical tract against Stoicism, and of the Stoics as the single adversary Alexander has in mind throughout, should seem less adequate to the situation than ever. I am of course fully aware that it would be foolish to deny that Stoicism plays a very large role in Alexander's treatise and in his polemic; but, beside the polemic against Stoicism, another crucial preoccupation of Alexander's should be evident: that of giving a coherent account of Aristotelianism as an indeterminist philosophy. More than to reiterate the usual arguments, I think the thoughts developed above serve to support the idea that Alexander's treatise offers a comprehensive and general reflection on the problem of determinism. It was logical that the Stoics should capture a great share (not all) of the author's polemical attention here, but this polemic is not all-important: what was at least equally important for Alexander was to grapple with what seemed to him (almost always with good reason) the problematical aspects of Aristotle's philosophy in the face of a looming and by now unavoidable issue." (p. 176, a note omitted)

38. ———. 2010. "Natural Endowments, Habits and Character in Alexander's *On Fate*." In *Aristotle and Determinism*, 177-190. Leuven: Peeters.  
Original edition: "Doti naturali, abitudini e carattere nel *de fato* di Alessandro," in *Polyhistor: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ancient Philosophy presented to Jaap Mansfield*, ed. K. Algra, P. Van der Horst, and D. Runia (Leiden-New York-Koln: Brill, 1996), pp. 284-299.  
"Among the works of Alexander of Aphrodisias, his treatise *On Fate* is thus far the only one to which Jaap Mansfield has devoted an entire essay(1), I will be considering here a small suggestion found in his essay which in my view is extremely fruitful, and can help ease a substantial interpretive difficulty I had raised myself some time ago." (p. 177)  
(,,)  
"There is no need to criticize Alexander any further by insisting on the fact that even after thus explaining, as he attempts to do in *On Fate*, how virtuous and vicious characters are formed, his case in defense of the autonomy and power of self-determination of men becomes no stronger; for even after we have granted that an original choice in favor of the good and of virtue is possible, we are nevertheless still faced with the problem that the character of the phronimos, once constituted as such, turns out to be no less binding than that (considered the expression of "fate," that is, of nature) of the multitude of people who are not wise.  
There is nothing more to add here to what has already been remarked in previous studies on the problem of determinism in Aristotle, and more specifically in *On Fate*." (p. 190, a note omitted)  
(1) "Diaphonia: The Argument of Alexander *De Fato* Chs. 1-2," *Phronesis* 33 (1988) 188-207. I address how this essay's thesis contributes to clarifying the nature and the aims of *On Fate* in Donini (1994) 5043 n. 54.  
References  
Donini (1994) = P.L. Donini, "Testi e commenti, manuali e insegnamento: la forma sistematica e i metodi della filosofia in età postellenistica," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 36. 7, 5027-5100.
39. Ebbesen, Sten. 2020. "Alexander of Aphrodisias, Brito and Jandun: Comments on Aurélien Robert's Paper." In *Philosophical Problems in Sense Perception: Testing the Limits of Aristotelianism*, edited by Bennett, David and Tohivanen, Juhana, 213-221. Cham [Switzerland]: Springer.  
Abstract: "This chapter discusses Alexander of Aphrodisias' explanation of the relational nature of perception and analyses John of Jandun's and Radulphus Brito's views concerning the same issue. The chapter includes a critical edition of a question from Brito's commentary on *De sensu*."
40. Echeñique, Javier. 2021. "A Peripatetic Argument for the Intrinsic Goodness of Human Life: Alexander of Aphrodisias' *Ethical Problems* I." *Apeiron* no. 54:367-384.  
Abstract: "In this article I argue for the thesis that Alexander's main argument, in *Ethical Problems* I, is an attempt to block the implication drawn by the Stoics and other ancient philosophers from the double potential of use exhibited by human life, a life that can be either well or badly lived. Alexander wants to resist the thought that this double potential of use allows the Stoics to infer that human life, *in itself*, or *by its own nature*, is neither good nor bad (what I call the Indifference Implication). Furthermore, I shall argue that Alexander's main argument establishes that human life, despite exhibiting a double potential of use, is *by its own nature* or *intrinsically* good. Finally, given that this is not a conclusion that the Stoics are likely to accept, I shall also contend that the argument should be regarded as conducted for the most part in *foro interno*, as a way of persuading the Peripatetics themselves of the falsity of the Indifference Implication, precisely because of the risk that such an implication be derived from their own theoretical framework.
41. Eichner, Hedrun. 2002. "Ibn Rušd's *Middle Commentary* and Alexander's Commentary in their relationship to the Arab commentary tradition on the *De*

*generatione et corruptione.*" In *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba*, edited by D'Ancona, Cristina and Serra, Giuseppe, 281-297. Padova: Il Poligrafo.

"The history of the reception of Aristotle's *De Generatione et corruptione* in the Arab world is marked by the fact that Arab/Islamic culture generally had a strong interest in science, and in the beginning gave great prominence to ancient texts dealing with 'science'. Subsequently, works like *De Gen. corr.*, which were rather a sort of development of speculative thought, became outdated because the achievements of empiric research made them superfluous. In the case of *De Gen. corr.*, the lack of interest in later centuries even resulted in the loss of the Arabic text of the translation; therefore, a very important link between the Greek text and the Arabic works dealing with this topic is missing. The Middle Commentary by Ibn Rusd somehow in the Arabic tradition is the text which comes closest to the Aristotelian text, and a comparison between it and the other surviving testimonies is a way to regain some features of the lost Arabic tradition. In my paper I would like to show some possible starting points for such a comparison and thus try to settle the position of Ibn Rusd's Middle Commentary with respect to the other texts." (p. 281)

42. Ellis, John. 1994. "Alexander's Defense of Aristotle's Categories." *Phronesis. A Journal for Ancient Philosophy* no. 39:69-89.

"One aspect of the story of the attempt to challenge Aristotle's categories in late antiquity has already been told. Richard Sorabji has shown us how Philoponus, in the *contra Proclum*, came to consider prime matter as 'the three-dimensional', which he also called a substantial quantity.(1)"

(...)

"By Philoponus' time, in fact, there was already a long standing tradition in place. We can see this in part from the way that Philoponus argues for the notion of a substantial quantity by referring to the already accepted idea that there are substantial qualities.(3)

In this essay I shall be dealing with two problems in this area, both probably issuing from the hostile work against Aristotle Categories by Lucius and Nicostratus.(4) One, which I shall call 'the hylomorphic problem', has to do with the question of whether form is an accident of matter. The other has to do with the problem of 'substantial' (συσσωδης) qualities, viz., are there certain kinds of qualities that make up or complete the substance (τα συμπλήρωτικα τής ούσιας) of what they inhere in? For example, is the whiteness of snow an example of a 'substantial' quality?"

(...)

Alexander, the Aristotelian commentator *par excellence*, set himself the task of responding to many of these hostile objections. In this paper I shall be concerned with Alexander's answers to these two difficulties and how his solutions save Aristotle's categorical scheme. His response will be compared with Porphyry's, who *prima facie* is trying to save the categories as well and heal the quarrel(6) between the Platonists and Aristotelians. Porphyry is standardly credited with making the *Categories* palatable for Platonists so that it becomes the introductory text to Platonic metaphysics. As we will see, however, his "cure" in these cases exacts too high a price from the Aristotelian perspective.

My discussion will be divided into three sections. In the first I provide some background to the hylomorphic problem in Aristotle; the second focuses on Alexander's solution to the problem; in the third, I shall look at Porphyry's attempt to solve the substantial qualities problem." (pp. 69-71)

(1) See Sorabji 1988, ch. 2.

(3) e.g., consider *contra Proclum* 424,4-11(...)

(6) So Dillon 1977, p. 236, puts it.

References

Dillon, J. 1977. *The Middle Platonists*, London: Duckworth.

Sorabji, R. 1988. *Matter, Space and Motion*, London: Duckworth.



43. Endress, Gerhard. 2002. "Alexander Arabus on the First Cause. Aristotle's First Mover in an Arabic Treatise attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias." In *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba*, edited by D'Ancona, Cristina and Serra, Giuseppe, 19-74. Padova: Il Poligrafo.
- "Late Hellenistic science had to offer its own contribution, which, though based on the general principles of the Platonic and Peripatetic paradigms, sought to cover the data of observation and calculation. Thus a Hellenistic, and *a potiori* a mediaeval reader, had to deal with the models of professional astronomy which, through Ptolemy and his Arab disciples, had developed a high level of observation and mathematical sophistication, but had discarded Aristotle's model of planetary movement.
- It was the work of the commentators - starting with Alexander of Aphrodisias in the second century - to bring the works of natural philosophy (the *Physics* on the processes of natural motion, the *De Caelo* on the celestial body, the *quinta essentia* in perpetual circular motion, and the *De Anima* on the phenomena of sense-perception and thought) into a logically argued system.
- One of the prominent figures in this scene was Alexander of Aphrodisias, the chief representative of a tradition of literal commentaries influential far beyond the Peripatetic school, regarded as the arch-Peripatetic, and a household name coming in conveniently whenever the contradictions, aporias and lacunae in Aristotle required an authoritative interpreter. Yet in this process, the Arabic Alexander grew to be another virtual text, covering a variety of authentic translations, compilations, and pseudepigraphy accompanying the Peripatetic, Neoplatonic and Gnostic Aristotle who had emerged from the first century of Arabic translation and reception. I am going to present a text transmitted under Alexander's name which is exemplary for this process." (p. 38)
44. Fazzo, Silvia. 2004. "Aristotelianism as a Commentary Tradition." In *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries (Vol. One)*, edited by Adamson, Peter, Baltussen, Han and Stone, M.W.F., 1-19. London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London.
- III. Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Aristotelian commentary tradition 6; IV. The fortuna of Alexander and other Greek commentators 11-14.
- "We have seen that it was only in the twentieth century, after the two World Wars, that the study of *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* began to come into its own as a field of research.(44) Among the first to make profitable use of the CAG were those Orientalists, chiefly from Germany, who were interested in Greek-Arabic connections and translations.
- In the case of Alexander, the availability of critical editions of the texts made it possible to identify the Greek counterparts of many short pieces transmitted in Arabic under his name but with titles different from those familiar to us.
- A first list of Arabic texts attributed to Alexander was drawn up by A. Dietrich in 1964, and supplemented by J. Van Ess in 1966.(45) Still, items included in this list were heterogeneous and mixed up. By the end of the century, further advances enabled scholars to distinguish, at least in a majority of cases, between genuine and spurious works, between whole texts and extracts, between single texts and groups or collections of texts, between literal translations and free adaptations. As for these latter - which turned out usually to be early versions, originating from the circle of al-Kindī in the ninth century - it was furthermore possible to detect the underlying working methods, and to relate them to the specific cultural inclinations that had motivated the translators." (p. 14)
- (44) Extensive use of the CAG lies at the foundation of the first general history of Greek Aristotelianism, Moraux 1973-2001 (Paul Moraux was the founder of the *Aristoteles-Archiv* at the Free University in Berlin; his early monograph is a pioneer work on Alexander: Moraux 1942). Moraux 1973-2001, vol. 3, devoted to Alexander, was published posthumously under the editorship of J. Wiesner in 2001, accompanied by a chapter on ethics and determinism and an extensive and up-to-

date bibliography (618-650), both by R. W. Sharpies. For a general summary of Alexander's philosophy see Sharpies 1987.

(45) See Dietrich 1964, esp. 92-100; van Ess 1966, 148-168 (hence the reference system in use for the Arabic Alexander, with 'D' or 'vE' followed by an index number). These contributions have been a useful starting point but they are now severely outdated: as mentioned above, many items turned out not to be Alexander's at all; in some cases different translations were made of the same Greek original (and different translations might have been revised versions of one another); some items are not single texts but groups or collections of texts: for details and bibliography see Goulet and Aouad 1989 with Fazzo 2003a. A new reference system is therefore an obvious *desideratum*.

#### References

Dietrich 1964 = Dietrich, A. 'Die arabische Version einer unbekanntenen Schrift des Alexander von Aphrodisias über die Differentia specifica', *Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl.* (1964) 85.

van Ess 1966 = van Ess, J. 'Über einige neue Fragmente des Alexander von Aphrodisias und des Proklos in arabischer Übersetzung', *Der Islam* 42 (1966) 148-168.

Fazzo 2003a = Fazzo, S. 'Alexandros d'Aphrodise', in Goulet 2003, 61-70.

Goulet and Aouad 1989 = Goulet, R. and Aouad, M. 'Alexandros d'Aphrodise', in Goulet 1989, 125-39.

Goulet 1989 = Goulet, R. (ed.) *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, ed. R. Goulet (Paris 1989).

Moraux 1942 = Moraux, P. *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, exégète de la noétique d'Aristote*, 'Bibliothèque de la faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'université de Liège' 99 (Liège - Paris 1942).

Moraux 1973-2001 = Moraux, P. *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen. Von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias*, 'Peripatoi' 5, 6, 7/1, 3 vols so far (Berlin 1973, 1984, 2001).

Sharpies 1987 = Sharpies, R. W. 'Alexander of Aphrodisias: scholasticism and Innovation', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II. 36.2 (Berlin 1987) 1176-1243.

45. ———. 2012. "The *Metaphysics* from Aristotle to Alexander of Aphrodisias." *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* no. 55:51-68.  
Abstract: "The article explores (alleged) evidence concerning the *Metaphysics* from Aristotle to Alexander of Aphrodisias, casting doubt on the idea that the work was assembled in its current form by Andronicus of Rhodes. No ancient source supports this claim, nor can we be certain that the collection as it now stands was already available in the first century BC. By contrast, Alexander seems to be well-acquainted with the *Metaphysics* as we have it today. The article also reconsiders the role that Eudorus of Alexandria, Nicolaus of Damascus, Aspasius may have played in the tradition of commentary on the *Metaphysics*."
46. ———. 2016. "Unmoved Mover as Pure Act or Unmoved Mover in Act? The Mystery of a Subscript Iota." In *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda – New Essays*, edited by Horn, Christoph, 181-206. Berlin: De Gruyter.  
"In my present contribution, I will suggest the hypothesis that the theory of the Prime Mover as pure act, no doubt a main tenet of Aristotelianism in modern accounts, in fact originates from the plain statement that the Prime Mover must be in act; it slowly took its actual shape much later than it is supposed to have done. The process cautiously began with Alexander of Aphrodisias, then developed in a Neoplatonizing atmosphere, partly in Greek, partly in Arabic.(1) In Greek, this happened during a time when scribes and scholars were less and less equipped to make full sense of the most ancient manuscripts, written in *scriptio continua* and uncial script. In such scripts, the subscript iota – which makes the difference between 'in act' (or 'in activity', ἐνεργεία in the dative with subscript iota) and 'act' (ἐνέργεια in the nominative without subscript iota) – was not recorded in the

majority of cases. Thus, ἐνέργεια written in capital letters can signify either ἐνέργεια or ἐνεργεία. This happens in many more recent copies as well, namely in minuscule manuscripts, as extant manuscripts usually are.(2) For this reason, it is commonly admitted that changes in the subscript iota hardly count as emendations, both in general and especially when dealing with manuscripts from the Aristotelian tradition.(3)" (p. 181)

(1) See below, Appendix 1. "The first principle as ἐνέργεια in Michael of Ephesus, Plotinus and Averroes".

(2) Other minuscule manuscripts have the iota but not as a subscript iota. Hence some further cases of ambiguity, see for example 1051b31 and *ad loc.* note 10 below.

(3) M. Burnyeat, 'Kinesis vs. Energeia: A much-read passage in (but not of) Aristotle's *Metaphysics*', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Volume XXXIV (2008) 219–92: 256. For an example, see e.g. Bruns' critical apparatus of Alexander's *Quaestio* 1.1 at p 4.11, with my note 15 below.

47. ———. 2023. "Aporiai with Mutiple Solutions in Alexander of Aphrodisias " In *Ancient Greek Dialectic and Its Reception*, edited by Mouzala, Melina G., 277-286. Berlin: de Gruyter.

"Alexander's so-called *Quaestiones*, in Greek ἀπορίαὶ καὶ λύσεις,(1) are of special interest for scholars thinking of Aristotelianism as an exegetical tradition.

In Alexander, an aporia is a peculiarly philosophical kind of problem.(2) Typically, more than one solution can be offered for a single aporia, i.e., for a single exegetical and/or theoretical problem." (p. 277)

(...)

"This makes Alexander's aporiai paradigmatic in a sense, because after Alexander philosophical exegesis became the proper way of making philosophy based on Aristotle's texts. Multiple solutions often arose on the part of different philosophers whose names became famous in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Nonetheless, in Alexander's aporiai, the different solutions are not attributed to other authors. Does this mean that Alexander produced all of them? Or rather that a canon was built in Alexander's time as a given standard system on Aristotle's name? Up to now, it seems that the way aporiai were produced and intended to work still requires investigation.(4) The issue is relevant for that part of the history of ancient dialectics which is concerned with the use of philosophical questions. For the present purpose, I will initially frame my argument rather more widely." (p. 278)

(1) Reference edition by Bruns (1892). Translation by Sharples (1992–1994). For a more comprehensive

inquiry, see Fazzo (2002), with special reference to pp. 25–29.

(2) Aporiai or Quaestiones? The so-called "minor works" (*Opera Minora*) by Alexander, which bear in Greek the title of Aporiai and lyseis, are better known, if ever, as Quaestiones, which is the title of their first print in the 16th century:

"Alexandri Aphrodisiensis quaestiones naturales, de anima, morales" (Venetiis, Zanetti 1536). Since this title appears in catalogues of manuscripts as well, this implies

a frequent confusion between Alexander's Quaestiones and pseudo-Alexander's.

(4) See also Kupreeva (2018), p. 228, n. 1, "Much still remains to be done" (my italics), and Fazzo (2002).

References

Fazzo, Silvia (2002): *Aporia e Sistema: la materia, la forma, il divino nelle Quaestiones di Alessandro di Afrodizia*. Pisa: ETS-

Kupreeva, Inna (2018): "Aporia and Exegesis: Alexander of Aphrodisias". In George Karamanolis, George and Politis Vasilis (Eds.): *The Aporetic Tradition in Ancient Philosophy*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 228–247.

48. Fazzo, Silvia, and Wiesner, Hillary. 1993. "Alexander of Aphrodisias in the Kindi-Circle and in al-Kindi's cosmology." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* no. 3:119-153. "How do the heavenly bodies physically affect the sublunary world?"

On this topic, similar accounts can be found in four groups of texts: (1) a few fragmentary statements in Aristotle; (2) Greek works of the Aristotelian commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. ca. 200 A.D.); (3) Kindi-circle Arabic versions of the same writings; and (4) the cosmological works of al-Kindi. Across the centuries of transmission and transformation of Aristotle's thought, we observe a gradual expansion from latent possibilities introduced by his own partial or allusive statements, to philosophical justifications of celestial influence in the Greek writings of Alexander, to more specific astrological models in the Kindi-circle's Arabic Alexander, which al-Kindi himself reworks with further astronomical and astrological details. In fact, this is a subject on which al-Kindi's cosmology relies explicitly on Alexander, or better, on the transformed Alexander. But the relationship was circular. While the Kindi-circle's Alexander was closely followed by al-Kindi on certain points, al-Kindi exerted a reciprocal influence on the Arabic Alexander, who was largely a product of his own group of translators." (p. 119)

49. Fazzo, Silvia, and Zonta, Mauro. 2014. "Towards a Textual History and Reconstruction of Alexander of Aphrodisias's Treatise On the Principles of the Universe." *Journal of Semitic Studies* no. 59:91-116.  
Abstract: "Among Alexander of Aphrodisias's works, a key-role is played by his treatise *On the Principles of the Universe*. It contains Alexander's exegesis of Aristotle's theory of the unmoved mover, as in *Metaphysics Lambda* and in *Physics VIII*. Its original Greek text is lost, but a sixth-century Syriac version and two tenth-century Arabic ones are still extant. All these versions have already been published, and two of them have been rendered into modern languages (English, French, Italian) in the last ninety years, but a really deep textual comparison between them, aiming at the reconstruction of the lost Greek text, has not yet been made. Usually, a key-role is given to the second, later Arabic version of it, mostly since it is more complete than the other ones. Here, a philological re-examination of the history of the textual transmission of Alexander's work is given, and some new conclusions about it are suggested, according to which the role of the first Arabic version, and that of the Syriac one in particular, are found to be more important than hitherto suspected."
50. ———. 2015. "Toward a critical translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De Principiis*, based on the indirect tradition of syriac and arabic sources." *χώρα. Revue d'Etudes anciennes et médiévales* no. 13:63-101.  
Abstract: "One of the main philosophical works by Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De principiis*, is lost in its original Greek text, but it is preserved in three extant Medieval Semitic versions, one in Syriac and two in Arabic, which were written in the Near East between 500 and 950 AD. These versions are not totally identical and, as we have tried to show in another article of ours (2012), they are in a rather complex textual relationship. Like we will show in this article, a tentative reconstruction of the lost text cannot be based upon a critical edition of only one of the two extant Arabic version, as we have observed elsewhere, but through an attentive and point-to-point comparative analysis of at least some aspect of all three versions of it – a way we have tentatively called "critical translation"."  
References  
S. Fazzo and M. Zonta, «Towards a Textual History and Reconstruction of Alexander of Aphrodisias's Treatise On the Principles of the Universe», *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 59 (2014), pp. 91-116.
51. ———. 2016. "The first account of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in fourteen books: Alexander of Aphrodisias' fragment Zero." *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* no. 4:985-995.  
Abstract: "1. The scope of this article.  
The overall scope of this article is to highlight the historical significance of textual findings made by the authors in 2014, namely the confirmation that a large section

of Averroes' introduction to *Metaphysics Lambda* comes from a corresponding text by Alexander of Aphrodisia.

To this end, we reproduce at the end of this paper our original Tables 1 and 2.

The section is to be added to Freudenthal's 1885 collection of Alexander's fragments as preserved by Averroes.(2) For quick reference, we call it 'Fragment Zero'. Since Freudenthal 1885 scholars has been aware that Averroes was still able to use Alexander's commentary on Aristotles' *Lām* – the Arabic name for *Metaphysics* book *Lambda* –, even though the Greek had already been lost in Averroes' times. This was possible because, before disappearing, Alexander's commentary had been translated in the 9th c. from Greek into Syriac by Hunayn ibn Ishāq (808-873) and in the early 10th c. from Syriac into Arabic by Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus (d. 940). On this latter basis it was adjusted and rearranged into a summarized form by Averroes (1190 ca.).

The significance of our findings is twofold. Firstly, a standard view, namely a legacy of the late 19th century edition of Alexander's fragments in Averroes (Freudenthal 1885), is revised; additional proof can be integrate into our previous research on the textual history of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, thus confirming Alexander as a safe *terminus ante quem* for the final assemblage.

This leads to a different issue. This terminus is remarkably later than usually assumed.

According to a widespread vulgate, Andronicus of Rhodes had already made it available in the 1st century BC. Yet, this standard view is no longer convincing, based on our previous results and developments in this same direction and research path, as summarized by Fazzo in 2012(4). Instead, Alexander turns out to be the first safe source of our current arrangement of the books. In this revised frame, one can best make sense of our present point – namely, that a description by Alexander of our *Metaphysics* in fourteen books underlies the one by Averroes. As a result Averroes becomes the witness of a lost text by Alexander, possibly a part of Alexander's introduction to his lost commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* book *Lambda*. This tallies with extant traces of Alexander's *Lambda* commentary within the Arabic tradition: before disappearing from view, Alexander's commentary on *Lambda* was translated into Syriac (probably in the in the 9th century, by Hunayn ibn Ishaq), then into Arabic (in the 10th century, by Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus)5. Only later on (late 12th century), was it adjusted and rearranged into a summarized form by Averroes." (pp. 985-986, some notes omitted)

(2) J. Freudenthal, *Die durch Averroes erhaltenen Fragmente des Alexanders zur 'Metaphysik' des Aristoteles*, Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1885 (the conference was held in 1884).

(4) S. Fazzo, *The Metaphysics from Aristotle to Alexander of Aphrodisias*, «Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies», 55 (2012), pp. 51-68.

### Pages in PDF format

[Chronology of Aristotelian Commentators Prior to Aquinas](#) by Erik Norvelle (PDF)