

Ancient
Commentators
on Aristotle

GENERAL EDITOR: RICHARD SORABJI

‘PHILOPONUS’:
On Aristotle On the
Soul 3.9–13 *with*
STEPHANUS:
On Aristotle On
Interpretation

Translated by
William Charlton

B L O O M S B U R Y



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Preface

The earlier part of the commentary by 'Philoponus' on Aristotle's *On the Soul* is translated by William Charlton in another volume in this series. This second volume includes the latter part of the commentary along with a translation of Stephanus' commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. It thus enables readers to assess for themselves Charlton's view that the commentary once ascribed to Philoponus should in fact be ascribed to Stephanus.

The two treatises of Aristotle here commented on are very different from each other. In *On Interpretation* Aristotle studies the logic of opposed pairs of statements. It is in this context that Aristotle discusses the nature of language and the implications for determinism of opposed predictions about a future occurrence, such as a sea-battle. And Stephanus, like his predecessor, Ammonius, brings in other deterministic arguments not considered by Aristotle ('The Reaper' and the argument from God's fore-knowledge). In *On the Soul* 3.9-13, Aristotle introduces a theory of action and motivation and sums up the role of perception in animal life.

Despite the differences in subject matter between the two texts, Charlton is able to make a good case for Stephanus' authorship of both commentaries. He also sees Stephanus as preserving what was valuable from Ammonius' earlier commentary *On Interpretation*, while bringing to bear the virtue of greater concision. At the same time, Stephanus reveals his Christian affiliations, in contrast to Ammonius, his pagan predecessor.

January 2000

Richard Sorabji

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Introduction

1. The problem of authorship

The commentary on *de Anima* 3 translated here appears in the manuscripts as a continuation of commentaries on *de Anima* I and 2 by John Philoponus. In a later hand, however, in the twelfth-century codex *Parisinus* 1914, and in the fifteenth-century *Estensis 3 F 8*, it is said to be 'from the voice of Stephanus', and Michael Hayduck in the Preface to his 1897 edition attributes it, though with some diffidence, to the Stephanus of Alexandria who is the author of a commentary on the *de Interpretatione*. We have a Latin translation by William de Moerbeke of a lost Greek commentary on *de Anima* 3, chapters 4-8 (referred to below as the *de Intellectu*) which is generally agreed to be by Philoponus, and which is completely different from the commentary on these chapters in our Greek *in de Anima* 3. This tells against Philoponus' authorship of the latter, though not decisively. For Philoponus could at different times have written two different commentaries on the same work, and if the Greek *in de Anima* 3 is by someone else, it is a mystery what happened to that other author's *in de Anima* 1 and 2, for the commentary on the third book does not begin as if it were a work standing on its own.

Since 1897 the issue has been the subject of a fair amount of discussion. Among those who are substantially of Hayduck's opinion are:

Raymond Vancourt, *Les derniers commentateurs alexandrins d'Aristote. L'école d'Olympiodore. Étienne d'Alexandrie*, Lille 1941.

H.J. Blumenthal, 'Neoplatonic elements in the *de Anima* commentaries', *Phronesis* 31 (1976), reprinted in *Aristotle Transformed*.

H.J. Blumenthal, 'John Philoponus and Stephanus of Alexandria: two Neoplatonic Christian commentators on Aristotle?' *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, ed. D.J. O'Meara, Albany 1982.

L.G. Westerink, *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, Amsterdam 1962.

Wanda Wolska-Conus, 'Stephanus d'Athènes et Stephanus d'Alexandrie. Essai d'identification et de biographie', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 47 (1989).

Mossman Roueché, 'The definitions of philosophy and a new fragment of Stephanus', *The Philosopher, Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 40 (1990).

Among dissentients are:

- É. Évrard, *L'école d'Olympiodore et la composition du 'Commentaire à la Physique' de Jean Philopon*, Ph.D. dissertation, Liège 1957.
 W. Bernard, 'Philoponus on self-awareness', *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, ed. R. Sorabji, London 1987.
 P. Lautner, 'Philoponus, in *de Anima III*: quest for an author', *Classical Quarterly* 42 (1992).

In the Introduction to my translation of the Latin version of the *de Intellectu* I argue that the author of the Greek commentary on *de Anima* 3, G3 for short, is not Philoponus. To my arguments there I shall add only one point. G3 twice refers to observations on the *de Anima* by Ammonius (473,10; 518,32). The only recorded commentary by Ammonius is the one written up by Philoponus. If these references are to Philoponus' commentary, and G3 calls the author of that commentary Ammonius, G3 can hardly himself be Philoponus. But is he Stephanus?

2. Stephanus

Philoponus was a prolific polymath. His surviving commentaries on Aristotle run to more than three thousand pages of the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*. He also produced an abundance of works of his own on medicine, astronomy, cosmology, theology and grammar. For a short account of his life and work, the reader may be referred to Richard Sorabji's chapter 'John Philoponus' in *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, ed. R. Sorabji, London 1987. Stephanus, by comparison, is a shadowy figure. I know of little that has been written about him in English, though there are secondary sources in Latin and French: Hermann Usener, *De Stephano Alexandrino Commentatio*, Bonn 1880, *Kleine Schriften* Bd 3, Leipzig 1914, pp. 247-323; and two works cited above, R. Vancourt, *Les derniers Commentateurs*, and W. Wolska-Conus, 'Stephanos d'Athènes et Stephanus d'Alexandrie'.

The name Stephanus appears a number of times in sources for the history of philosophy in the sixth and seventh centuries. John Moschus (Migne, *PG* 87 2929d) reports attending lectures by a 'sophist' Stephanus in Alexandria between 581 and 584. The ninth-century Syrian author Dionysius Telmahrensensis refers to a 'sophist' Stephanus who was encountered in Alexandria at about the same time by Probus and John Barbur and who held controversial views on the Hypostatic Union (see J.- B. Chabot, *Historiae Ecclesiae auctore Dionysio Telmahrensi Fragmentum*, in E.W. Brooks, *Historiae Ecclesiae Zachariae Rhetori vulgo ascripta*, Louvain 1953, pp. 151-4; K.-H. Uthemann, 'Stephanos von Alexandrien und der Konversion des Jacobiten Probus, des späteren Metropoliten von Chalcedon', in C. Laga, J.A. Munitz and L. van Rompay (eds), *After*

Chalcedon. Studies in Theology and Church History. Offered to Professor Albert van Roey for his Seventieth Birthday. Leuven 1985, pp. 381-99.) The prologue of the seventh-century Theophylact Simocatta to his History bears witness to a restoration of higher education at Constantinople after the death of Phocas in 610, and Usener (op. cit. p. 251) makes the conjecture (accepted by many scholars, including Richard Sorabji in his General Introduction to the Commentators) that to revive philosophy the Emperor Heraclius summoned Stephanus from the chair of philosophy in Alexandria and gave him an official title, a salary, and a dozen assistants. Certainly in the later years of Heraclius' reign there was at Constantinople a Stephanus of Alexandria who wrote on astronomy, astrology and alchemy. The commentary on the *de Interpretatione* mentioned above is attributed to a Stephanus in the sole manuscript of it that we possess (*Parisinus Graecus* 2064) and so is our commentary on *de Anima* 3 in the two manuscripts to which I have referred. Mme Wolska-Conus attributes commentaries on the *Categories* and *Prior Analytics* to the author of the *de Interpretatione* commentary on the basis of his 2,11-12; 30,17; 45,23-4 and 54,1-2, and although I do not think that these passages need be taken to refer to actually existing commentaries on these works by Stephanus, she assembles evidence of various attributions to a Stephanus of commentaries not only on them but on the *Sophistici Elenchi*, the *de Caelo* and Porphyry's *Isagoge* (op. cit. pp. 9-10, notes). Finally commentaries on some medical works, notably the *Prognosticon* and *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates and the *Therapeutic* of Galen, are attributed to a 'philosopher' Stephanus whom one manuscript (*Ambrosianus* S 19) calls 'Stephanus of Athens'.

There is wide consensus that our commentaries on *de Anima* 3 and the *de Interpretatione* are by the same man, and that this man is identical with the writer on astronomy and astrology who was in Constantinople in the time of Heraclius and who is given in manuscripts referred to by Usener (op. cit. pp. 248-9) as 'great teacher', 'catholic teacher' and 'ecumenical teacher'. Mme Wolska-Conus wants to show that he is identical also with the Alexandrian sophist of John Moschus and Dionysius Telmahrensis, with the medical Stephanus of Athens, and with Pseudo-Elias, the author of the commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* formerly attributed, it is now thought wrongly, to the sixth-century Alexandrian commentator Elias. This single individual, she thinks, came originally from Athens, between 580 and 610 lived in Alexandria, where he was called 'Stephanus of Athens', and after 610 lived in Constantinople where he was called 'Stephanus of Alexandria'.

To show that Stephanus of Alexandria and Stephanus of Athens are the same, she says: 'Different as are their subject-matters, the medical commentaries on Hippocrates and the philosophical commentaries on Aristotle raise questions in the same manner, have the same formulas for introducing and closing a discussion, use the same modes of reasoning with pedantic exact repetitions, both have frequent recourse to the posing

of problems to which they offer several solutions, and finally reproduce each other in several places in their teaching and interpretation' (p. 34). And she illustrates this claim by comparing what is said in the commentaries on the *Prognosticon* and on *de Anima* 3 about sleep, locomotion in animals and imagination. She also cites a number of passages from the commentary on *de Anima* 3 (588,10-12; 452,32-453,1; 462,15-17; 487,9-12; 501,1-26; 595,20-2) to show the author's interest in medicine. While I have not examined the medical commentaries very thoroughly, my first impression is that the commentary on the *Prognosticon*, at least, shows the same traits of personality and style as the *in de Anima* 3 and the *in de Interpretatione*.

The identification of the commentator on Aristotle with the sophist visited by John Moschus and the theologian mentioned by Dionysius seems to me plausible enough, though Mme. Wolska-Conus' positive evidence for it is slight. As to Pseudo-Elias, she claims that Stephanus is the author, not only of the commentary on the *Isagoge* which we possess, but also a variant commentary on the same work which is among the sources of the *Dialogues* of Severus bar Sakku (op. cit. p. 69). Unfortunately she offers no external evidence for these last identifications. Mossman Roueché (op. cit.) finds a difficulty for them in the inferior philosophical capacity revealed in Pseudo-Elias.

Mme Wolska-Conus proposes the following biography for her composite figure. Stephanus was born in Athens in 550-55, when the city was still echoing with the philosophy of the closed Platonic school. On completing his secondary education at the age of seventeen or thereabouts, he went to Alexandria, where Olympiodorus has just been succeeded in the chair of philosophy by Elias, and Philoponus, long occupant of the chair of grammar, may still have been alive. He followed Philoponus both in the breadth of his interests and in adopting monophysite views, though he later returned to the orthodox theological fold. After 610 he removed to Constantinople, perhaps summoned by the Emperor as Usener suggested. He taught, among others, Tychikos, teacher of the Armenian Ananias of Shirak (whose autobiography is translated by H. Berberian, in *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 1 (1964), pp. 189-91), and died before 638. This story, though conjectural, seems to me perfectly credible.

Of those who dispute the attribution of *in de Anima* 3 to Stephanus, Bernard does not offer any arguments, limiting himself to a long sceptical footnote, but Évrard and Lautner are more expansive.

Évrard points out that the arguments of Hayduck are inconclusive. If, he says, there were differences in doctrine and not just in form between the Greek and the Latin commentaries on *de Anima* 3, they could not be ascribed to the same thinker, but Vancourt has shown there are no such differences. And resemblances of style between *in de Anima* 3 and Stephanus' *in de Interpretatione* would have probative force, but no such resemblances have been identified. Blumenthal in his 1982 article men-

tioned above and I in my introduction to the *de Intellectu* try to meet the demand for differences in doctrine, and I shall speak below about resemblances in style, but Évrard draws the conclusion that the authorship of *in de Anima* 3 remains uncertain.

Lautner's conclusions are more decisive. Against Stephanus' authorship he marshals the following considerations. (1) At 541,24-6 G3 seems to speak of the pre-existence of the human soul. An Alexandrian Christian of Philoponus' time could have accepted this doctrine, but Stephanus, writing after Justinian's edict of 543, and teaching in Constantinople, centre of theological orthodoxy, could not. (2) At 457,24-5 we read: 'The unit is not a number, as was demonstrated in the arithmetical discourses.' There is no evidence that Stephanus wrote on arithmetic, as distinct from astronomy and astrology. (3) G3 alludes to work of Philoponus and Ammonius without mentioning them by name (458,25-6; 481,27-9; 571,17-18; 528,35), which shows that he was in close contact with them, to say the least, whereas Stephanus at *in de Interpretatione* 5,13; 21,38; 66,1 and 67,17 refers to Ammonius by name or as 'our teacher'. (4) Blumenthal argues that G3 is other than Philoponus on the ground that he refers more often to other commentators by name than does the author of *in de Anima* 1-2. If G3 is Stephanus, 'why do we *not* find any sign of this attitude in his *in de Interpretatione* as well?' (p. 515) These 'items of evidence', Lautner says, 'are perhaps sufficient to establish that Stephanus cannot be the author of the *in De Anima* 3'. Furthermore, (5) G3 postulates a pneumatic body in which the common sense-ability resides (481,18-20; 482, 11-12); the same doctrine appears in Philoponus' commentary, 52,6; 158,7-34; 161,19-21; 201,31; 433,34-5. Lautner concludes that G3 is either Philoponus himself or a pupil of Philoponus other than Stephanus.

I am not convinced. Talk of pneumatic body (5) is not peculiar to Philoponus; it pervades Neoplatonic commentaries (for some references, see H.J. Blumenthal, 'Neoplatonic elements in the *de Anima* commentaries', in Richard Sorabji, ed., *Aristotle Transformed*, London 1990, pp. 310-11), and the whole Alexandrian school was influenced by Neoplatonism. At 541,24-6 (1) the pre-existence of the soul appears as something presupposed not by G3 but by unnamed difficulty-raisers. The reference at 457,24-5 (2) may be to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 14, not to some later treatise. (3) Similarly 458,25-6; 481,27-9; 571,17-18 and 528,35 need not refer to anyone beyond Aristotle. (Incidentally 'our teacher' in *in de Interpretatione* 5.13 is surely *contrasted* with Ammonius.) (4) Stephanus' commentary on the *de Interpretatione* contains plenty of references to other writers by name: Theophrastus, Galen, Iamblichus, Porphyry, Proclus and, as Lautner himself observes, Ammonius.

Évrard and Lautner are right that we cannot say that G3 is the Stephanus responsible for our *in de Interpretatione*, simply on the ground that both divide their commentaries in Divisions (*tmēmata*) and Lectures (*praxeis*), and both employ the technique of double exposition, first a

continuous exposition (*theôria*) of a substantial length of text, and then comments on particular gobbits of this text (*lexis*). These practices go back to Philoponus if not to Ammonius, and seem to be standard in Alexandria from the time of Olympiodorus (head of the philosophy school roughly from 540 to 565). But I think that anyone who reads the two commentaries in Greek will, like Hayduck, feel there is a strong similarity of personal style. The *in de Interpretatione* is said to be ‘from the voice of Stephanus’. This means that it is written by someone who attended his lectures, not by Stephanus himself, and the *in de Anima* is given a similar proximate source. We do not know at what speed the lectures were delivered. C. Hignett used not only to dictate his lectures on Greek History in the Hall of Hertford College, Oxford, but to walk up and down between the tables to make sure everyone was taking him down correctly. It must not be thought that unless lecturers at Alexandria did likewise, no inferences can be drawn from style. Even if a lecturer speaks fast, some idiosyncrasies of vocabulary and sentence-structure are likely to be preserved in notes, and the general cast of the lecturer’s mind ought to come through.

Perhaps the most prominent trait of G3 is a liking for order and clarity. This appears in several ways. He tells us what he is going to do before he does it, sometimes sketching the plan of a *theôria* in advance, and imposing a tight structure on texts that in themselves are loose or discursive (477,23-31, 506,20-507,9; 553,22-4; 594,27-32), and he also tells us when he has finished doing something he has been engaged in – ‘that is the problem’ he will say, having stated it, and ‘that is the solution’ e.g. 448,29-30 and 449,6; 455,18 and 455,25). He lists and numbers points (*kephalaia*, 534,20-535,1), problems (*aporiai*), differentiations (*diakriseis*, 494-6), arguments (*epikheirêmata*), things had in common (*koinôniai* 509,9; 516,22-517,3), pleas (*sunêgoriai*, 563,22-564,18) and so forth. He provides ‘divisions’ (*diaireseis*), systematic classifications of things that fall under concepts, of cognition (*gnôsis*) 490,20-34, the indivisible (*adiaireton*) 544,4-15, imagination (*phantasia*) 589,35-590,4, cf. 500,23-5. No doubt he used the work of predecessors for these divisions (see, e.g., Sophonias 116,30-117,36, possibly preserving Philoponus), but he probably made them neater and shows a strong taste for them. And we have explicit remarks like these: ‘Such is the whole problem, but because of the lack of clarity, let us go over it again briefly (527,18-19). ‘We raised certain other matters in the *theôria* but since we looked at them superficially it seems best to take up the discussion again. It is better to cover the same ground twice than to miss anything out’ (570,5-7). ‘See how, though the text looks like a single continuum, we have cut it into four proofs’ (582,27-9). As it happens, *de Anima* 3 contains some of the least clear chapters in Aristotle. The whole section on the intellect (chapters 4-8) is extremely difficult, and modern readers despair of finding a consecutive train of thought in chapters 6 and 7, but regard them as collections of jottings. The

regimentation which G3 imposes on them in the *theōriai* 542,21-547,22; 553,19-556,7 and 562,18-563,7 is truly impressive.

Of a piece with this enthusiasm for clarity and order is a fondness for logic. There is a logical digression at 590,17-20. He readily uses logical terminology like *lēmna* ('assumption' 474,16), *sunēmmenon* ('conditional proposition' 447,20 etc.), *prosdiorismos* (literally 'further differentiation', i.e. 'quantifier' 476,3-4). He makes frequent use of the tactic of casting an argument into fairly rigorous syllogistic form: so 447,16-19; 485,25-9; 487,21-2; 494,19-22; 496,29-497,2; 500,12-17; 502,10-12; 579,25-6; 580,1-3; 586,20-2; 590,22-4; 593,26-8; 603,2-12; 603,28-604,2. Occasionally he states a syllogism that is plainly fallacious, e.g. 603,29-30, but there is no reason to think he is unaware of the fallacy.

Next, G3 likes direct speech. His commentary is peppered with the words 'look!' and 'see!' (*idou, hora*). He presents the debate on whether the heavenly bodies have sense-perception (597,2-598,6) almost as a dialogue. He apostrophises Aristotle (464,13; 563,27.34), Alexander of Aphrodisias (471,2; 537,19; 537,33-4), Empedocles (487,25), Marinus (537,19), Plato (575,1) and an unnamed objector (526,2), and he makes Empedocles (452,7) and Homer (486,23) address Aristotle. This produces a pleasant air of briskness and vivacity.

These three traits contribute to making a good teacher, and so does G3's tendency to make a meal of what is readily intelligible, and keep away from conceptual morasses. He deals briefly and firmly (note especially 535,1-2) with the notoriously difficult chapter 5; he explains with limpid clarity (576,8-577,32) why purposive movement cannot be due to the powers of the vegetable soul, but not how it can be due to the soul at all; and he lingers affectionately on such intriguing but slightly unphilosophical topics as heavenly bodies (595,33-598,6), zoophytes (600,13-601,3), the lethal potentialities of various kinds of sense-object (602,7-20, cf. 472,4-20, 476,18-25) and the psychology of animals (488,34-489,6, 496 27-497,10), but avoids confusing us with such questions as how Aristotle can hold that the intellect comes to be identical with the objects of thought. 564,25-565,6 skirts delicately round the hard sayings at 431b21-4. If he had set an examination on *de Anima* 3 for his pupils, even the dimmest of them should have got good marks. Could this be why the titles associated with the name Stephanus (see Usener, op. cit. 248-9) speak of him as a teacher and not just as a philosopher?

A final personal trait I think we can discern is an interest in grammar. He uses words like 'hyperbaton' (514,16; 531,1; 548,28; 568,11; 606,1) and *makroapodotos* ('with the main clause long delayed', 582,32) which would startle a philosophical audience in the English-speaking world today, and see 474,34-475,5; 475,29-476,7; 490,15-16.

To turn to more linguistic points, G3's Greek seems to me easier and more transparent than that of other ancient commentators on the *de Anima*, and it has certain idiosyncrasies. He likes adverbs which are fairly

uncommon formations from nouns or adjectives, and might be compared with the ‘-wise’ formations that were popular some years ago, for instance: *anupokritôs*, *holikôs kai kosmikôs*, *holotelôs*, *kentrikôs*, *morphôtikôs*, *horikôs*, *spermatikôs*, *toioutotropôs*, *tupôtikôs*. He also likes unusual compound verbs: *anakhlyzein*, *katamathêmatikeuein*, *kuriolektein*, *pareistrekhein*, *prokharattein*, *prophantazesthai*, *prothesaurizein*, *sunupakouein*, *hupainittesthai*. The words *dusthêratos*, *laburinthôdês*, *homokhronos*, *philenklêmôn*, *têlaugôs*, are also characteristic of him. He uses the word *exôthen*, literally ‘from outside’, to say that an argument is taken from outside Aristotle’s works: 503,9; 525,25; 526,29; 578,6; 578,34; 583,6. When he wants to say that Aristotle attends to a point later he uses *parakatiôn*; 493,24; 519,6; 519,13; 522,7; 563,12. He favours the word *gumnazein* for trying out or setting out an argument, 463,34; 467,15; 472,21-7; 480,20-4; 481,8, and also likes to flag *porismata*, ‘corollaries’: 470,19; 472,4 (*bis*); 475,9; 475,11; 475,14; 476,8; 547,15; 566,20. Some constructions are conspicuous too. ‘Whence is it clear?’ *pothen dêlon*, he often asks, that something claimed is in fact the case: 447,23; 450,4; 450,6; 454,13-14; 494,30; 496,28; 496,32; 497,2; 603,5; 603,8. He often introduces a further reason for something with the words ‘and because’, *kai hoti*: 478,11; 483,7; 519,5; 535,24; 535,26; 537,21; 546,22; 571,8; 573,2; 575,31; 577,37; 578,10; 578,20; 591,18; 596,3-4; 601,30, cf. 584,15.

G3’s love of order and clarity is conspicuous in Stephanus’ *in de Interpretatione*. Stephanus sketches the plan for a coming *theôria* at 24,13-18, 39,28-32 and 53,4-10. He likes numbering sections, reasons, arguments, proofs etc and telling us when he has come to the end of each, for example 26,21-32; 31,12-26; 34,34-5; 63,22-65,26. We are given ‘divisions’ of predicates (11,9-21), of sentences (17,29-18,3), of kinds of potentiality (61,8-21). The pat lists of things from which it is clear that names are not natural and of things signified by *onoma* (9,27-9; 11,26-8) recall G3’s list of ways in which an opinion can come unstuck at 502,27-33. Aristotle is told what he ought to have said at 60,1 in tones like those of G3 at 451,7-15.

A commentator on the *de Interpretatione* may be assumed to have some interest both in logic and in grammar. Stephanus, however, shows particular affinity with G3 in setting out arguments with syllogistic rigour (e.g. 1,15-17; 15,29-30; 67,35-68,2) and in raising certain gratuitous linguistic points, for instance at 23,37-24,6 (on the lack of a word *antiprotasis*, with which we may compare 474,32-475,5) and 26,35-27,9. He also thinks it worthwhile to point out a difference between the usage of philosophers and that of grammarians at 12,9-13, and between the interests of grammarians and rhetoricians at 19,3-6.

The *de Interpretatione* does not provide much opportunity for enlarging on unphilosophical topics (though a dry text does not prevent the Stephanus who commented on Hippocrates’ *Prognosticon* from telling a long, racy story about Antiochus’ love for his stepmother at 58,21-62,5); but Stephanus shows himself pupil-friendly by the amount of space he gives

to determining the full number of formally different propositions that are possible at 24,37-25,39, 39,32-40,17 and 54,13-55,22 and by his enthusiasm for tables; he offers three tables of modal propositions, where no one else provides more than two. We hear little about animals, but camels appear as an example at 10,11, as they do at 450,7.

The *in de Interpretatione* does not reveal the free use of apostrophe so conspicuous in the *in de Anima* 3 but that should rather be counted a difference in literary style than an indication of a difference in the author's personality. We have the occasional *idou* (14,39; 25,16 etc.) and other traces of plain speaking, e.g. 'But that is not true.' (21,32).

The two commentaries show linguistic similarities, but these are limited. Hayduck in his Preface to the *in de Anima* (p. v) says: 'Whereas in the first two books Philoponus' painstaking verbosity (*verbosia industria*) is everywhere apparent, there is peculiar to the third book a certain ascetic, attenuated conciseness (*ieiuna quaedam et exilis brevitatis*).' This does not seem to me an apt description of *in de Anima* 3; I think Mme Wolska Conus is nearer the mark when she speaks of 'pedantic exact repetitions' ('des symmetries pédantes et répétitives'); and I suspect Hayduck was applying to the *in de Anima* 3 the impression he received from the *in de Interpretatione* which is indeed closely pruned, especially in comparison with the commentary on the same book by Ammonius. The *in de Interpretatione* is considerably more concise than the *in de Anima*. The lectures (*praxeis*) are less than half the length. But this may well be because it was taken down by a different student who preferred to be concise. (Mme Wolska-Conus ventures the surmise that students at Constantinople were not of the same calibre as students at Alexandria; if that is right, one might assign the *in de Anima* to Alexandria, and the *in de Interpretatione* to Constantinople.)

But although the *in de Interpretatione* differs from the *in de Anima* 3 in these ways, there is not such a dearth of stylistic resemblances as would constitute a reason for thinking it has a different source. We have *pothen dêlon* questions at 5,16; 35,9; 66,29 and 67,34. Stephanus uses *parakation* at 3,6; 16,25; 18,27; 20,1; 21,35; 30,38; 43,13; *gumnazein* at 44,18; 45,8; 64,35-65,1; 67,28. He begins a sentence *kai hoti* at 3,9, and derives a *porisma* at 32,25. Considerations drawn from outside Aristotle's works are called *exôthen* (34,34; 36,9). There are some noticeable compounds, e.g. *sunupakouein* (19,17), *prosupakouein* (13,32; 19,16), *arkhoeidesteros* (13,33), *aperilêptos kai akatalêptos* (53,15) and (a word that caught Stephanus' eye in Ammonius) *dusantibleptotatos* (66,7-8).

The *de Interpretatione* and *de Anima* 3 are so different in subject matter that one cannot expect to find in commentaries on them many significant agreements or disagreements in philosophical doctrine. It may be worthwhile, however, to note that imagination, which according to Philoponus (*de Intellectu* 61,84-5; 62,9-63,23) impedes contemplation of God and is generally a nuisance, is given an important role in acquiring knowledge of God by G3, at 563,38-564,14, and by Stephanus at 35,27-8; and Stephanus,

though a Christian, shares (38,29-30) G3's realism about universals, mentioned below.

While I must repeat Hayduck's warning that from these things a certain conjecture cannot be made (*certain ex his rebus de illo scriptore coniecturam capi non posse*), I personally am persuaded that G3 is the Stephanus of the *in de Interpretatione*, and will take the liberty of referring to him as Stephanus below.

3. The *in de Anima* 3

It is difficult for scholars today to imagine what academic life was like in the sixth and seventh centuries. In Britain, perhaps, it was non-existent. Stephanus was a contemporary of St Augustine of Canterbury, and the society which Bede describes Augustine as finding in Kent was certainly not one in which commentaries on Aristotle were in high demand. How different things must have been in Alexandria. For nearly nine hundred years it had been the greatest centre of higher education in the world. Endowed by the Ptolemys with its Library and Museum, it had included among its teachers Euclid, Aristarchus the astronomer and his namesake the grammarian, and among its pupils Archimedes and Galen. It had founded geometry, edited the classics, and measured the Sun and the Moon. Under the Roman Empire it became famous first for Jewish and then for Christian theology: the home of Philo and Origen, the see of Athanasius and Cyril. But by the sixth century the fires seem to have been burning low, both in Alexandria and in Greece, and in Alexandria they were destined to be finally and violently extinguished when the city fell to the Arabs in 640.

Stephanus was perhaps the last senior scholar of Alexandria. The *in de Anima* 3 gives us a view, as through a narrow window, of a world in which there is no presentiment of impending disaster, but something of a sunset atmosphere. An intense conservatism prevails. Literary quotations are mostly from Homer, and never from anyone later than Euripides. And as there might have been no literature in the last thousand years, so history might have stood still. There is no mention of any historical event after the time of Plato or reference to any social or political institution, such as the Roman Empire, the Byzantine civil service, or the Christian Church, that was unknown to the fourth century BC (being dragged to court, 582, 18-19 was a classical phenomenon). Stephanus often discusses other commentators from Alexander of Aphrodisias onwards, and takes issue with them in a way recognisably similar to that in which a modern writer takes issue with rival interpretations. But about what lies outside the limits of the professional study of Plato and Aristotle, his lips are sealed.

This conservatism shows itself particularly in the examples, as if there were a strong preference for examples that had been used many times before, and a convention not to seek examples outside certain areas. When

there is a moral conflict, with reason advocating one course and passion, or the lower side of our nature, another, the only thing that passion finds pleasant is sex (560,5-6; 576,12); the other deadly sins are all eclipsed by lust; and the sole object of lust envisaged is a prostitute (*pornê*, 583,26; 590,14). The only alternative attractions reason can offer are philosophy tutorials and prayer (590,14; 579,4; cf. also 555,19-20; 562,13-14). There is no mention of politics or commerce as possible fields of moral conflict, and only a brief and unrealistic mention of war (578,15-16). If Stephanus had been lecturing to clerical students at a seminary, this narrow range of examples might have seemed appropriate, but I suspect that showing a closer knowledge of the world would have been thought undignified in a philosopher. The most a philosopher could do was to modify an example to suit his auditors; if you wanted an example of forethought and deliberation, making a coat to protect oneself against the cold (Sophonias 142,20-5) might be less convincing for Egyptians than constructing a roof to shelter from the sun (585,8-13).

The tradition of the Alexandrian school was Neoplatonist (for detailed justification of this statement, see essays 1, 13 and 14 in *Aristotle Transformed*), and although Stephanus himself was a Christian, his departures from Neoplatonism are minimal. He retains, for instance, the Neoplatonic doctrine that we have three bodies, one 'of luminous form' (597,18), one of pneuma (481,20) and one earthy or shell-like (482,12). Westerink says (*Aristotle Transformed*, p. 340): 'he accepts unquestioningly the authority of Christian dogma and of the Bible', but the passages he cites do not provide strong support for these claims. To show Stephanus' unquestioning acceptance of Christian dogma, he refers us to 527,29-32, which runs: 'But since that God is intellect is the view neither of Plato nor of pious doctrines [*eusebesi dogmasin*] – for God is superior to intellect, for which reason he is also called 'Providence' [*pronoia*], as coming before intellect, – come, let us resolve the problem in another way.' The unquestioning acceptance of the authority of the Bible is supposed to appear from 547,11-14: 'That is why it is said "He said, and it came to be". But this saying [*logion*] may be interpreted in two ways: what he knows, he also says, and this also comes about [sc. we have three independent facts]; or because his activity is all at once, and that is why it is said "He said, and it came to be".' Westerink is also a little misleading when he says (*ibid.*) that the 'old tenets' of the eternity of the world and the fifth substance, the pre-existence of the human soul, and the rationality of the heavenly bodies 'continue to reappear' in him; he certainly does not commit himself to their truth. Westerink is right, however, that 'there is no attempt at a wholesale revision of the traditional material from a Christian point of view' and Stephanus seems happy to accept a Neoplatonic psychology with three bodies, a heavenly, a spiritual or pneumatic and a material or shell-like, and a division of the soul that attaches sense and imagination to the pneumatic body. He also seems to take a Neoplatonically realistic view of