

Ancient
Commentators
on Aristotle

GENERAL EDITORS: RICHARD SORABJI
AND MICHAEL GRIFFIN

AMMONIUS:
Interpretation of
Porphyry's Introduction
to Aristotle's Five Terms

Translated by
Michael Chase

BLOOMSBURY



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GENERAL EDITORS: Richard Sorabji, Honorary Fellow, Wolfson College, University of Oxford, and Emeritus Professor, King's College London, UK; and Michael Griffin, Assistant Professor, Departments of Philosophy and Classics, University of British Columbia, Canada.

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Conventions

- [...] Square brackets enclose words or phrases that have been added to the translation for purposes of clarity, as well as those portions of the *Isagôgê* which are not quoted by Ammonius.
- (...) Round brackets, besides being used for ordinary parentheses, contain transliterated Greek words.
- <...> Angle brackets enclose conjectures relating to the Greek text, i.e. additions to the transmitted text deriving from parallel sources and editorial conjecture, and transposition of words or phrases. Accompanying notes provide further details.
- {...} Braces or curly brackets are used to contain words that are not included in some of the major manuscripts.

Abbreviations

<i>An. Post.</i>	<i>Analytica Posteriora</i>
<i>An. Pr.</i>	<i>Analytica Priora</i>
<i>Anth. Gr.</i>	<i>Anthologia Graeca</i>
CAG	Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, 23 vols (Berlin: Reimer, 1882–1909)
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Categoriae</i>
DA	<i>de Anima</i>
GC	<i>de Generatione et Corruptione</i>
<i>Int.</i>	<i>de Interpretatione</i>
<i>Isag.</i>	<i>Isagôgê</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press)
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)
<i>Metaph.</i>	<i>Metaphysica</i>
MS	manuscript
MSS	manuscripts
<i>Phys.</i>	<i>Physica</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>
SVF	H. von Arnim, <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> , 4 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–24)
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topica</i>
Vat. gr.	Greek manuscript of the Vatican Library

Introduction

Ammonius Hermeiou

The life and times of the Neoplatonist Ammonius Hermeiou (c. 445–517/526) have been well studied, and several of his works have already been translated in the *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* series.¹ Head of the Neoplatonic School at Alexandria, he is thought to have been the teacher of most of the last generation of Neoplatonist professors of philosophy in late antiquity: Philoponus, Simplicius, Damascius, Olympiodorus, David, and Elias. Son of Hermias, a Neoplatonic philosopher who, like Proclus, had studied under the Athenian Syrianus, and of the pious pagan Aidesia, who took him to Athens to study under Proclus, Ammonius taught Plato, Aristotle, mathematics, and astronomy² at Alexandria. He seems to have preferred Aristotle over Plato;³ yet, as was to be the case for all his students, he viewed the study of Aristotle as a mere preliminary for the study of Plato.⁴

The Alexandrian school, probably one of several private institutions in the city in which the professors made their living from honoraria paid by their students,⁵ was the scene of lively, and sometimes violent, interactions between pagans and Christians.⁶ The revolt of Illus (484–8), which was supported by some pagans,⁷ and the ensuing clashes between students in the school of Horapollo ushered in a period of persecution by the ruling Christians against the pagans. After the beating of a Christian-inclined student by pagan students, several pagan professors, including Horapollo, were arrested and tortured, and in this dangerous atmosphere Ammonius seems to have entered into some kind of agreement with the Christian authorities. For this agreement, Damascius sharply criticized him, accusing Ammonius, who may have been in financial difficulties,⁸ of unlimited greed.⁹ Financial considerations aside, the concessions which Ammonius made to the Christian Patriarch Peter Mongus¹⁰ may have included a promise to refrain from mentioning theurgy – although he would probably not have discussed this topic anyway in the context of a commentary

addressed to beginning philosophy students¹¹ – and the worship of the pagan gods.¹² Yet there clearly were Christians present in Ammonius' classroom, and there are indications that Ammonius – if indeed he can be considered the 'author' of our commentary (see below) – may have adjusted his teaching accordingly. There are, for instance, numerous references to angels in our commentary,¹³ and while angels did play a role in Neoplatonism as well, it was hardly prominent enough to justify the inclusion of angels alongside human beings, dogs, and horses as examples of substances. Even more tellingly, perhaps, the author of our commentary leaves open the question of whether or not the universe had a beginning,¹⁴ perhaps the single issue which most divided pagans and Christians at the end of antiquity. Similarly, he expresses uncertainty as to whether the celestial bodies are animate and rational or not,¹⁵ another key point of pagan-Christian controversies. Whether out of deference to his Christian students, fear of the Christian authorities, personal inclination, or a combination of all three, Ammonius(?) seems to be anxious to avoid sectarianism and to render his teaching acceptable to a multiconfessional audience.

It is hard to determine, however, to what extent Ammonius' alleged agreement and the generally precarious nature of Ammonius' position may contribute to explaining other differences between the philosophical 'system' one finds in his surviving works and those of other contemporary Neoplatonists, especially those of the Athenian school. Some of these differences – Ammonius' apparently simplified philosophical system and the fact that the highest principle he mentions is the Demiurge,¹⁶ rather than the One – may be due to the more or less accidental fact that all we have from Ammonius are his commentaries on Aristotle, which were directed to students at a less advanced stage in their philosophical career. Ilsetraut Hadot has pointed out,¹⁷ for instance, that one major doctrine often taken to be an innovation by Ammonius – the idea that Aristotle's Prime Mover is both a final and an efficient cause – is already to be found in the writings of Themistius (317–c. 390), and may even pre-date the latter.¹⁸ Yet several recent studies tend to show, largely on the basis of the extant commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* by Ammonius' student Asclepius, that Ammonius' basic metaphysical scheme was not very different from that of such Athenian Neoplatonists as Syrianus and Proclus.¹⁹

Another important feature of Neoplatonic teaching that may have been initiated as early as Porphyry, but was canonized by Iamblichus, is that of the

skopos and the correct order in which the works of Aristotle and Plato are to be read. The doctrine of the *skopos* asserts that each philosophical work by the Ancients has a single goal (*skopos*, literally ‘target’), to which all other features of the work are subordinate. Closely related to it is the doctrine of the reading order (*taxis tês anagôseôs*), which Ammonius(?) also discusses in the context of the preliminary questions to the study of the *Isagôgê*; it states that neither Plato nor Aristotle is to be read and studied in just any old way. In post-Iamblichean Neoplatonism, after preliminary ethical purification, provided by the study of the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, the speeches of Isocrates and Demosthenes, or the *Manual* of Epictetus, the novice student was to begin with Porphyry’s *Isagôgê*, then proceed to study Aristotle’s *Organon*, in the order *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, and *Sophistical Refutations*. He then moved on to Aristotle’s works on ethics, politics, and psychology, before completing the study of Aristotle, sometimes referred to as the ‘Lesser Mysteries’, by the study of the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*. The student then concluded his studies with the ‘Greater Mysteries’, a selection of twelve Platonic dialogues, codified by Iamblichus, which began with the *First Alcibiades* and ended with the *Timaeus* and, finally, as the ultimate revelation of the highest philosophy, the *Parmenides*.²⁰

Porphyry, *Isagôgê*

Porphyry’s *Isagôgê*²¹ thus occupied a key position as the first philosophical work read and studied, under the guidance of a teacher, by aspiring students of Neoplatonism at the end of Greco-Roman antiquity. This explains the presence in all the commentaries on the *Isagôgê* of a prologue discussing the nature of philosophy, a tradition which seems to have been initiated by Ammonius.²²

Brief and concise, the *Isagôgê* consists primarily in a discussion of the so-called ‘five words’ (*quinque voces*) or technical terms – genus, species, difference, property, and accident²³ – which were considered necessary for understanding Aristotelian logic. At the same time, the work’s very brevity and conciseness left plenty of work for subsequent commentators. Famously, Porphyry had refused to go into the question of whether genera and species are self-subsistent or exist only in the mind, providing the ultimate source for the medieval

quarrel between Nominalists and Realists. Ammonius(?) shows no such reticence, providing a long and interesting account of the positions of each of the parties involved. Perhaps the most famous passage in the commentary is the discussion of the triple universal²⁴ (11,24 ff., and especially 39,14 ff.), with its analogy of (i) a signet ring that imprints an images of Achilles into (ii) a piece of wax, from which (iii) an observer forms an image of Achilles in his thought. Stage (i) corresponds to what the medievals would call the universal *ante rem*, or the intelligible form present in the mind of God or the Demiurge,²⁵ the study of which is reserved for (Platonizing) metaphysics or theology; stage (ii) to the universal *in re*, the form present in matter as studied in (Aristotelian) physics; and stage (iii) to the universal *post rem*, which we form in our minds by abstraction and which is the object of the study of logic. Ammonius(?)’ clear exposition of this topic displays, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the fundamentally Neoplatonic structure of his metaphysics and ontology, and also develops what was probably Porphyry’s original intent: a means to harmonize Plato and Aristotle. Whereas Aristotle appears to contradict Plato and deny the existence of separate intelligible forms, in fact, it is claimed, he is merely talking about class (ii) of the universals, whereas Plato was talking about (i). On Ammonius(?)’ interpretation, the *Isagôgê* as a whole discusses philosophy only ‘in a manner appropriate to the subject-matter of logic,’²⁶ so that one should not expect to find in it discussions of Platonic forms, or even, for that matter, of the nature of physical reality.

Posterity of the *Isagôgê*

As the first work studied in the philosophical curriculum, the *Isagôgê* was, for many centuries, a massively popular work, as is shown by the number of surviving Greek manuscripts that preserve it today (over 170), and by its large number of translations: into Latin (twice, by Marius Victorinus and Boethius), Syriac (also twice), Arabic, Armenian, and Georgian. This popularity extended to its commentaries. In the Greek tradition, the commentary by Ammonius(?) is the earliest to have survived; it was followed by those of Elias, David, and several anonymous Byzantine works. Its influence on the medieval Latin West was immense,²⁷ and its impact on the medieval Arabo-Islamic tradition,

although less thoroughly studied, was just as important.²⁸ The influence of the *Isagôgê* on medieval Jewish thought seems to have been mediated by the commentaries by al-Fārābī, which were translated into Hebrew at least four times in thirteenth–fourteenth century Spain and Provence.²⁹

Ammonius(?)’ commentary on the *Isagôgê*

It has sometimes been maintained that Ammonius was the first to comment on the *Isagôgê*, but this seems wrong. He clearly is responding to an established series of objections to the treatise.³⁰ The commentary attributed to Ammonius is, in many ways, a standard representative of the Neoplatonic commentary tradition of late antiquity. After a general introduction on the nature and divisions of philosophy, it proceeds (21,5–24,1) to discuss the traditional *kephalaia* or preliminary questions discussed before the study of every philosophical work: goal, usefulness, authenticity, order of reading, reason for the title, division into chapters, and to which part of philosophy it belongs. It then goes on to discuss the text of the *Isagôgê* lemma by lemma. The commentary does not, however, exhibit the later division into *lexis* and *theôria*, at least not in its fully explicit and systematized form. Yet some elements of the commentary seem to assume relatively advanced knowledge on the part of its audience: thus, Ammonius(?) assumes that his students are familiar with Euclid’s *Elements* and with elementary geometry,³¹ and, rather surprisingly, expects them to be able to understand a discussion on whether or not Porphyry has used a circular proof (74,5 ff.), which seems to presuppose some knowledge of logic. Similarly, our author presupposes (84,9 ff.) that his audience will understand him when he expounds upon the difference between homonyms and synonyms, although this doctrine is not studied until the introductory part of the *Categories*. When adducing the Aristotelian doctrine that there is no definition nor knowledge of individuals, the author adds (85,9) ‘as has been shown (*dedeiktai*) in the <science of> demonstration’, which might be taken to imply that his audience is familiar with the *Posterior Analytics*. Likewise, he takes it for granted that they are aware of the rule that predicates must have an extension greater than or equal to that of their subjects (88,20 ff.). Although it is true that many of these doctrines are latent in the *Isagôgê* itself, the fact that

they seem to be considered self-evident in the commentary on the *Isagôgê* might be interpreted as additional evidence of the composite, heterogeneous nature of the commentary, at least in its later parts.

The reader may well judge that the most interesting part of our commentary is to be found in its earlier sections, which are also the most coherent, and, in my view, the parts most likely to go back more or less directly to Ammonius himself. The introductory section, with its five definitions of philosophy (1,5–9,24) and its divisions (10,10–16,10), provides precious insight into how philosophy was conceived in late antiquity.³² Also interesting from the viewpoint of the history of philosophy are the account of the cognitive ascent from the sensible to the intelligible and the formation of the categories (17,1–20,10); the arguments in favour of the thesis that being is not a genus (29,14 ff.) and in particular not the genus of the categories (81,15 ff.); and the differences between Aristotelian and Platonic dialectic (34,16 ff.), with its division of Platonic dialectic into division, definition, demonstration, and analysis, the beginnings of which can be found in Middle Platonism. Also worthy of mention are the amplification of the Aristotelian idea that what is prior by nature is posterior to us, and vice versa (52,1 ff.); the excursus on the difference between definition and description (54,6 ff.); and the excursus on constitutive and divisive differences (58,1 ff.). Noteworthy from the point of view of Greek humanism and the history of racism is Ammonius(?)’ remark, made in passing (96,8–9), that ‘although someone is hook-nosed or black, he is no less of a human being’, for (97,9–10) ‘a human being is not more human than a <nothor> human being, or more rational’.

Is the commentary really by Ammonius?

To what extent are we even entitled to speak of a commentary by Ammonius on the *Isagôgê*? The question is legitimate, and it can be raised with regard to most of Ammonius’ surviving work, which – with the notable exception of the commentary on the *De Interpretatione*, a polished literary production written by Ammonius himself, evincing a very high degree of philosophical sophistication – all consist of notes taken by students in his classes. Often these class notes were taken, and later published, by John Philoponus, who was of

course a highly gifted, albeit sometimes recalcitrant, student.³³ Other students in Ammonius' classes will, of course, have been less gifted or less attentive. If there were any doubt that this is the case with the present work, it is dispelled by the following passage (105,13–14):

We have already stated everything in advance, and the rest of the text is clear. Let us read it, then, and if anything should come up, we will clarify it.

Clearly, the student scribe has dutifully and ingenuously transcribed here, word for word, the oral comments of his teacher, who, when he reached the first definition of the difference, announced how he intended to proceed from then on.³⁴ Was this teacher Ammonius, rather than any other representative of the centuries-long tradition of Neoplatonic teachers? There seems to be no overwhelmingly decisive reason to believe so. As the text proceeds, we find, with increasing frequency, instances where various sets of comments are given on the same text from the *Isagôgê*;³⁵ some of these comments are stupefyingly banal, and therefore hard to reconcile with Damascius' assertion that Ammonius was 'the greatest commentator who had ever lived',³⁶ while other key passages are left without comment at all. Elsewhere (97,16), a series of differing interpretations are offered of the same Porphyrian text, each alternative introduced by *kai allôs* 'and otherwise': this is a procedure typical of scholia, where various opinions and explanations are merely juxtaposed, without the author expressing any preference for one of them.

At least with regard to this last part of the work, therefore, it seems unwarranted to speak of a commentary on the *Isagôgê* by Ammonius. Clearly, the latter played a key role, if not in initiating, then at least in consolidating and disseminating the traditions of commentaries on the *Isagôgê*. But it would be a mistake to regard every word contained in the text as we have it today as Ammonius' *ipsissima verba*. The latter part of our commentary seems instead to consist of a collection of scholia of indeterminate date and authorship.

The text

This state of affairs is, moreover, reflected in the textual state of the work, which is highly complex, not to say inextricable. The editor Busse has made the best

he could of a difficult situation, but a new critical edition is a desideratum.³⁷ Busse athetized large portions of the text which he read in his principal manuscripts. Sometimes he was clearly right to do so, since the text in question reappears, and is more at home, in the commentaries of Elias or David. At other times it is not clear why Busse has omitted a given text. I have in general followed him, but sometimes modified his choices, partly by consultation of the MS Vaticanus graecus 207 (fourteenth century), which Busse³⁸ consigned (without explanation) to his *codices deterrimi*, but which sometimes presents valuable readings. In any case, I include in an appendix a selection of some passages that Busse relegated to his apparatus.

Our commentary was translated into Latin by Pomponius Gauricus and published in Venice in 1539.³⁹ I know of only one complete translation into a modern language, contained in a Paris doctoral dissertation, defended in 2013, by Min-Jun Huh, ‘Le premier commentaire de Boèce à l’Isagogè de Porphyre: introduction, traduction et commentaire.’ I warmly thank Dr Huh for sharing his excellent work with me.

I have also provided what amounts to a complete translation of the *Isagôgê*. On the occasion of each lemma in the commentary, text from the *Isagôgê* which Ammonius(?) has omitted is supplied between square brackets [. . .].

Notes

- 1 G. Matthews and M. Cohen, *Ammonius. On Aristotle Categories* (London: Duckworth, 1991); D. Blank, *Ammonius. On Aristotle On Interpretation 1–8* (London: Duckworth, 1996); D. Blank and N. Kretzmann, *Ammonius. On Aristotle On Interpretation 9 with Boethius On Aristotle On Interpretation 9* (London: Duckworth, 1998). For a survey of the translations of Ammonius in the Ancient Commentators on Aristotle series, and on his life and thought in general, see R. Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted: New Findings on Seven Hundred Years of the Ancient Commentators* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), especially pp. 46 ff.
- 2 Damascius, *Philosophical History*, test. iii, p. 340, in P. Athanassiadi, *Damascius. The Philosophical History* (Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999). See Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted*, pp. 55–6. On Ammonius as the greatest geometer and astronomer of his time, see Damascius, *Philosophical History* fr. 57C.
- 3 We know, however, that Ammonius also wrote or lectured on Plato’s *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Theaetetus*; see Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted*, p. 46.

- 4 I. Hadot, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism and the Harmonization of Aristotle and Plato* trans. M. Chase (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 16.
- 5 Hadot, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism*, p. 23.
- 6 E.J. Watts, *Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).
- 7 Watts, *Riot in Alexandria*, pp. 72 ff.
- 8 Hadot, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism*, p. 19.
- 9 Damascius, *Philosophical History* fr. 118B. On this incident and the issue of Ammonius' compromises, see E.J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 222–5; Watts, *Riot in Alexandria*, pp. 76 ff.; R. Sorabji, 'Divine Names and Sordid Deals in Ammonius' Alexandria', in A. Smith (ed.), *The Philosopher and Society in Late Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Brown* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005), pp. 203–13.
- 10 Whether the Patriarch in question was Peter Mongus or Athanasius II is open to debate; see M. Tardieu, *Les paysages reliques* (Louvain and Paris: Peeters, 1990), p. 20, n. 4. I thank Álvaro Fernández Fernández for pointing this out to me.
- 11 Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted*, p. 47.
- 12 Hadot, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism*, p. 19. Modern commentators debate whether Ammonius' concessions represent a more or less disgraceful caving in to outside pressure (Watts, *Riot in Alexandria*, p. 71), or instead did not go against his principles (Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted*, p. 47). David Blank, 'Ammonius Hermeiou and His School', in L. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 654–66, at p. 660 even doubts the historical reality of Ammonius' agreement with the Christian authorities.
- 13 Ammonius(?), in *Isag.* 18,20; 19,1; 32,14.19; 40,15; 62,15; 70,17; 97,14; 100,14; 103,18; 114,7.
- 14 Ammonius(?), in *Isag.* 87,9 and note ad loc.
- 15 Ammonius(?), in *Isag.* 97,15.
- 16 In the context of the present commentary, however, the principle responsible for creating individual living things (40,4) and even genera and species, is not so much God or the Demiurge, but a hypostasized Nature, which creates rationally, even if it does not know what it makes (44,5 ff.). Similarly, for Ammonius(?) it is Nature, not Plato's name-giver or Porphyry's Council of Sages, who imposes names on things (50,17 ff.). Three pages later, however, he is happy to talk about 'the first imposers of names' (53,12). On the contrast between the doctrine of Ammonius and his teacher

- Proclus on the question of names and the name-giver(s), see Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted*, p. 55.
- 17 Hadot, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism*, p. 28, pp. 93 ff.
- 18 Likewise, Hadot remarks that the tendency to harmonize Plato and Aristotle dates from well before him: it is, in particular, an important feature of the teachings of Porphyry (c. 234–c. 305).
- 19 Hadot, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism*, p. 39, citing the studies of R. Loredana Cardullo.
- 20 This reading order has been thoroughly studied in a number of publications by Hadot; see, for instance, I. Hadot et al., *Simplicius. Commentaire sur les Catégories. Fascicule I: Introduction, première partie* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), especially pp. 12–35 on the *Isagôgê*; J. Mansfeld, *Prolegomena. Questions To Be Settled before the Study of an Author, or a Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).
- 21 For a study with complete bibliography, see R. Chiaradonna, ‘Porphyre de Tyr, *Isagôgê*’, in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, vol. Vb (Paris: Presses du CNRS, 2012), pp. 1335–43.
- 22 Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted*, p. 48. For translations of the introductions to philosophy by Elias, David, and Olympiodorus see S. Gertz, *Elias and David. Introductions to Philosophy, with Olympiodorus. Introduction to Logic* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).
- 23 cf. Aristotle, *Top.* 1.4, 107b17–26.
- 24 A doctrine which goes back at least to Proclus; see Proclus, in *Eucl. I*, 50,16–51,9, translated in R. Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200–600 AD. A Sourcebook. Volume 3. Logic and Metaphysics* (London: Duckworth, 2004), pp. 136–7.
- 25 See Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted*, pp. 53–4, who emphasizes the innovative nature of Ammonius’ claim that the highest Forms are not transcendent.
- 26 Ammonius(?), in *Isag.* 53,2; 69,1 ff.
- 27 See C. Erismann, ‘*Isagôgê*: la tradition latine médiévale’, in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, vol. Vb (Paris: Presses du CNRS, 2012), pp. 1344–9.
- 28 Some fifty authors of Arabic commentaries are known from the period 850–1550. See H. Hugonnard-Roche, ‘Porphyre de Tyr: Tradition arabe’, in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, vol. Vb (Paris: Presses du CNRS, 2012), pp. 1453–60.
- 29 Hugonnard-Roche, ‘Porphyre de Tyr’, p. 1456, with reference to scholarship by the late Mauro Zonta.
- 30 Ammonius(?), in *Isag.* 26,17 ff.; 31,5 ff.; 71,25 ff. Also, see especially 72,14 ff.: ‘All of the exegetes were at a loss for a defence against this <argument>, and they

- say . . . ; 111,7: ‘Some problems are customarily (*eiôthe* (. . .) *aporeisthai*) raised against the present definition’; 113,25: ‘They also raise problems (*aporousi de kai*) about baldness . . .’. Many other topics addressed by Ammonius(?) were also no doubt traditional by his time. Asclepius (*in Metaph.* 142,34–7) reports a comment by Ammonius on Proclus’ great admiration for a point made in the *Isagôgê* (Porphyry, *Isag.* 13,20–1), but this need not imply that he produced a written commentary on the work.
- 31 cf. the excursus on whether or not a square is made up of triangles, Ammonius(?), *in Isag.* 72,13 ff.
- 32 Such Alexandrian definitions of philosophy were influential on Arabic philosophical and theological thought as well, both Christian and Arabic; see E. Wakelnig, ‘What Does Aristotle Have To Do with the Christian Arabic Trinity? The Triad “Generosity-Wisdom-Power” in the Alexandrian Prolegomena and Yahyā ibn ‘Adī’, *Le Muséon* 130.3–4 (2017), 445–77.
- 33 On the early date at which Philoponus begins to express disagreement with Ammonius, and more generally on the thorny issue of Philoponus’ intellectual development, see Sorabji, *Aristotle Re-Interpreted*, pp. 70 ff.
- 34 Porphyry, *Isag.* 11,2. This example leaves one dubious about the student’s level of discernment and overall intelligence, to say the least.
- 35 Ammonius(?), *in Isag.* 51,5 and note ad loc.; 59,4 ff.; 61,2ff. and note ad loc.; 71,12ff. and note ad loc.
- 36 Damascius, *Life of Isidore* fr. 57C.
- 37 At least 96 manuscripts (partial or complete) of the work exist today, more than twenty in the Vatican Library alone. Busse whittled these down to five, relying primarily on D, the MS Laurentianus Plut. 10.25, which he dated to the thirteenth century.
- 38 A. Busse (ed.), *Ammonii in Porphyrii Isagogen sive quinque voces*, CAG 4.3 (Berlin: Reimer, 1891), p. xxxv.
- 39 It has recently been republished with a useful Introduction by R. Thiel and C. Lohr (eds), *Ammonius Hermeae. Commentaria in quinque voces Porphyrii* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2002).

