

Ancient
Commentators
on Aristotle

GENERAL EDITOR: RICHARD SORABJI

SIMPLICIUS:
On Aristotle On the
Soul 1.1–2.4

Translated by
J.O. Urmson
Notes by Peter Lautner

B L O O M S B U R Y



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Introduction

I

Richard Sorabji

The translation of this commentary in three volumes will provide the first opportunity for a wide readership to assess for themselves the question of its authorship. In 1602 Francesco Piccolomini disputed the ascription to the sixth-century Neoplatonist Simplicius and proposed Simplicius' colleague in the Athenian School, Priscian of Lydia, as the author. In this Piccolomini was followed by F. Bossier and C. Steel, using new arguments, in 'Priscianus Lydus en de *In de Anima* van Pseudo(?)-Simplicius', in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 34 (1972), 761-822. Their arguments were in turn rejected by I. Hadot in an appendix to her *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès et Simplicius*, Paris 1978. As the arguments of Bossier and Steel were published in Dutch, however, many scholars have not had a good opportunity to make an independent assessment. This will be remedied by the publication in our second volume of a new version in English of their view, written by Carlos Steel. That volume will also contain, side by side, a translation of Priscian and of our present author, at a point where they are commenting on the very same part of Aristotle's *On the Soul*, albeit indirectly in Priscian's case. Priscian's comments are indirect in that his *Metaphysics of Theophrastus* is a commentary on the lost reflections of Theophrastus on the subject matter which Aristotle treats in this part of his *On the Soul*.

Meanwhile, the translators and annotators of the three volumes of translation will be contributing to the debate. Already in the introduction to this first volume, J.O. Urmson explains his reasons for doubting that the author can be Simplicius, while Peter Lautner gives a possible reason for questioning the ascription to Priscian. Further views may well be expressed in the second volume by Pamela Huby, the translator of Priscian, and by myself as general editor, and in the third volume by Henry Blumenthal when translating the final book of our present author. It is likely, however, that some contributors will finalise their opinions only as the work on the three volumes proceeds.

This first volume has been translated by J.O. Urmson and annotated by Peter Lautner. An invaluable contribution was also made by

Carlos Steel, who shared with us his exceptional knowledge of this text. He was kind enough to go through the entire typescript and make possible a large number of improvements. The general editor expresses his warmest gratitude to all parties for their collaboration in this exercise.

II

J.O. Urmson

This is a translation of the commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*, attributed to Simplicius, as far as Book 2, ch. 4. The Greek text is that edited by Hayduck in the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 11, Berlin 1882. The text discusses short passages of Aristotle, one after another, each passage being indicated in a lemma, of which only the first few words are sometimes given, in which case I have added the remainder of the passage in square brackets for the convenience of the reader. I have made my own translation of the lemmata in order to ensure uniformity in the vocabulary of text and commentary and in order to conform to the given or implied text used by the commentator when it differs from the received text. It is not recommended on any other grounds.

I am grateful to Dr Peter Lautner and to Professor Richard Sorabji and his assistants for saving me from many errors and infelicities – perhaps more often but for my occasional obstinacy.

Authorship

Coming to this commentary after translating the huge commentary of Simplicius on *Physics* 4, I was immediately convinced, after a couple of pages, that it was not by the same author; the whole style was unfamiliar. I now know that others have shared this belief. I here list some more objective reasons for this intuitive conviction.

(1) The exposition of Aristotle's views in *Physics* 4 is faithful and acute, and, while clearly written by a Neoplatonist, is an honest elucidation of the views of Aristotle. I share the view of Leonardo Tarán that 'its intrinsic high quality makes it the best commentary on the *Physics* even today'.¹ This is the more remarkable since in the two independent discussions of place and time, the so-called Corollaries, Simplicius expresses notably different views in markedly Neoplatonic style. In contrast, as others² have noted, the commentary

1. Tarán, 'The Text of Simplicius' Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*', *Peripatoi*, Band 15, 1987.

2. e.g. Blumenthal, 'Simplicius(?) on the First Book of Aristotle's *De Anima*', *Peripatoi*, Band 15, 1987.

on the *De Anima* is a Neoplatonic treatise, informative, one presumes, on the views of Iamblichus, but totally untrustworthy as an exposition of Aristotle's work. Most notably, while Aristotle is commonly, and rightly, taken to hold the view that the soul is the actuality (*entelekheia*) of the living body, with the exception of contemplative intellect (*theôrêtikos nous*), which he regards as an independent substance, Simplicius(?) ascribes to him the view that there is a soul that is the actuality of the living body, giving it its form (*eidopoiousa*), and another soul that initiates the changes (*kinêtikê*) of the animate body, like the sailor in his boat. This misinterpretation is repeated over and over again throughout the commentary.

(2) In the *Physics* commentary the lemmata are usually of some length, perhaps ten lines. They give the first few words, followed by 'up to' (*heôs tou*) and the closing words. They are always syntactically complete and the commentary is syntactically separate from the lemmata.

In the *DA* commentary the lemmata are sometimes fairly long, in which case only the first few words are given with no indication where they end. Many lemmata are very short, consisting of only a few words and often syntactically incomplete. Sometimes the lemma is syntactically incorporated into the preceding or succeeding commentary. See, for example, 7,17; 15,17; 20,24. Occasionally *phêsi* ('he says') is interpolated into the lemma.

(3) The *Physics* commentary is full of quotations. It is a main source for the Presocratics, and the interpretations of Aristotle by Eudemos, Alexander and others are frequently quoted at length. In the corollaries there are many quotations of later authors such as pseudo-Archytus and Damascius. There are no quotations at all in the commentary on the *DA*. Occasionally the views of Plato and Alexander are discussed but never quoted, not even those of Iamblichus, 'the best judge of truth' (*ho aristos tês alêtheias kritês*).

(4) The *Physics* commentary is full of the caution which Simplicius calls 'philosophical caution' (*philosophos eulabeia*): 'perhaps' (*mêpote*) occurs six times in the commentary on the first chapter of Book 4 alone. The tone of the *DA* commentary is much more didactic.

(5) Without attempting stylistic analysis, one cannot fail to notice differences in the topic-neutral vocabulary. For example, the verb *epexergazesthai* ('study', 'investigate') is common in the *DA* commentary, much more so than the Index Verborum suggests; Hayduck fails to report its occurrence in the first few pages, at 1,9; 2,4; 5,22. Diels' Index does not list it as occurring in the *Physics* commentary, and I have not noticed it there. Similarly the adjective *diexodikos* ('drawn out') is common in the *DA* commentary, but not found in that on the *Physics*. The adjective *anapodeiktos* ('undemonstrated') is listed as

occurring fourteen times in the *Physics* commentary, but apparently is not found in that on the *DA*.

(6) Simplicius in the *Physics* commentary shows a great interest in formal questions. He frequently supplies premises to Aristotle's arguments to make them formally valid, and classifies them as being, e.g., in this or that figure of the syllogism. Simplicius(?) in the *DA* commentary shows no interest in these matters. He is also far less acute on logical and semantical issues. Thus he regularly confuses Aristotle's notion of terms forming series developing in complexity, such as states, geometrical figures and souls with that of terms derived from or contributing to one central case, as, for example, diets, places and complexions may be called healthy on account of their relation to the central case of the healthy person. The relation of the purely vegetative soul of the plant to the highly complex soul of man is not like that of a healthy complexion to a healthy person. It is difficult to imagine such an elementary mistake by the author of the *Physics* commentary.

It is no doubt possible for a writer to change himself radically enough to explain all these differences between the two works. It is unlikely. The commentary on the *De Anima* is of value for the light it sheds on Neoplatonic, and especially Iamblichan, views of the soul; it has useful information about various Pythagorean views; it occasionally has value for elucidating Aristotle on points of detail. But it is not a trustworthy interpretation of the main doctrines of Aristotle.

III

Peter Lautner

Scholarly interest in this commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*, attributed by all the manuscripts to Simplicius, is not new. Paduan Averroists of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries used it to justify the claim that there is no other internal sense pertaining to cognition than common sensation (*koinê aisthêsis*), phantasia and memory. More importantly, they used it to elaborate a theory of the active (or, rather, productive) intellect and thereby rectify the Averroist notion of unified intellect, which rendered the immortality of the individual soul impossible and therefore excluded personal reward and punishment of any kind in the afterlife. They tried to re-interpret this heretical view by drawing on the pagan Neoplatonist tradition, especially on the commentaries on *De Anima*, the most excellent of which, so it was claimed, had been written by Simplicius. Some of these Paduan philosophers, like Agostino Nifo (1469/70-1538) and Marc' Antonio Genua (1490/1-1563) went so far as to admit that Simplicius' doctrine of the intellect and of the way it is connected to

the sensitive soul had been repeated by Averroes as regards the crucial points. Genua attributed even the doctrine of the unity of the intellect to him.³

Unlike the debate on the active intellect, which was a constant source of inspiration to medieval philosophers, the interest in, and even familiarity with, Simplicius' commentary is entirely without precedent. For we do not know of a medieval Latin translation of the text.⁴ At least, no such work has survived. It is Giovanni Pico della Mirandola who is said to have discovered the commentary, perhaps in the late 1480s, and thus to have made it accessible to a Western readership. In 1486, he also summarised the *conclusiones*, basic principles drawn from Simplicius' text, which, to Pico's mind, may have concerned the contemporary dispute on the immortality of the rational soul. Alas, some of the statements were regarded by the Papal authorities as heretical. Most probably, the copy he had in his library was written in Greek.⁵ The *editio princeps* is an Aldine from 1527 by Francesco Asulano. Some years after, in 1544 at Tübingen, Jacob Schegk also edited some portions of the text along with Aristotle's *De Anima*. The Humanist translations known to us were also completed in the sixteenth century. The first is by Giovanni Fasolo (or Faseolo), a disciple of Genua, and came out in Venice in 1543. The second is by Evangelista Longo (Asulano) and was published also in Venice in 1553. The third, a partial one, was made by the Greek Humanist, Michael Sophianus (?-1565) who translated the introductory part of the Prooemium.⁶ There remains, however, some uncertainty whether we have to reckon with a Humanist translation compiled before that by Fasolo. Or we might surmise the survival of

3. Important expositions of the issue have been offered by B. Nardi, 'Il commento di Simplicio a *De Anima* nelle controversie della fine del secolo XV e del secolo XVI', in *Saggi sull' aristotelismo padovano dal secolo XIV al XV*, Firenze 1958, 365-443 (he is speaking of Paduan Simplicians on p. 386) and by E. Mahoney, 'Neoplatonism, the Greek Commentators and Renaissance Aristotelianism', in D.J. O'Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, Norfolk, Va., 1982, 169-77, 264-83. See also his 'Philosophy and Science in Nicoletto Vernia and Agostino Nifo', in A. Poppi (ed.), *Scienza e filosofia all'Università di Padova nel Quattrocento*, Padova 1983, 135-203.

4. As is shown by the table on *Mediaeval Latin translations of Aristotle's works and of Greek and Arabic commentaries, drawn up by B.G. Dod in his 'Aristoteles Latinus'*, in N. Kretzman, A. Kenny and J. Pinborg (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Mediaeval Philosophy*, Cambridge 1982, 47-79, esp. 74-9. On the medieval and Humanist translations of Simplicius' commentaries, see F. Bossier, *Filologisch-historische Navorsingen over de Middleeuwse en Humanistische Latijnse Vertalingen van de Commentaren van Simplicius*, Part I (Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, Fakulteit van de Wijsbegeerte en de Letteren, doctoral proefschrift), 1975. My thanks are due to Prof. Carlos Steel for making the relevant portions of this unpublished study accessible to me.

5. For further references, see Nardi, op. cit., 373-4.

6. Preserved in *Ambrosianus*, D 465 *inf. fasc.* 12, see Hayduck's introduction, p. VII, and *Suppl.* IV on p. XIV and F. Bossier, op. cit., 15.015ff. This text may have served as additional material to his translation of the *De Anima*, published in Venice in 1574.

a medieval translation. The references in Agostino Nifo's *Collectanea super libros de anima*, written in 1498 and published in 1503, might strengthen our suspicion about its existence,⁷ though Nifo may have been informed by Giovanni Pico and his knowledge of Greek also helped him to get access to the text. But he cites extensive passages in accurate Latin translation the style of which differs from his other references to the same subject a great deal. Differences in terminology may also go to show that the translation he was looking at had been completed in the Middle Ages.⁸ A further piece of evidence that weighs with us is that Nifo's teacher and predecessor in Padua, Nicoletto Vernia (1420-1499) seems to have read Simplicius' work at the end of 1480s.⁹ His notes on John of Jandun's treatise show that he was acquainted at least with some passages of Simplicius' commentary itself and that his knowledge was not derived from the *conclusiones* alone. Being Greekless, he must have relied on a translation which has been lost by now. It cannot be excluded that both Nifo and Vernia made use of the same translation.

The commentary was continuously studied in the sixteenth century, and was taken as by Simplicius. At the end of this century and at the very beginning of the next, however, this attribution became a matter of dispute. Doubt was cast by Francesco Piccolomini (1523-1604) in his *Expositio in tres libros Aristotelis de anima*, published in Venice in 1602.¹⁰ One group of his arguments was based on a comparison of the style and length of this text with that of Simplicius' commentaries on *Physics* and *De Caelo*. While the *in Phys.* and the *in De Caelo* are extensive (*latus*), diffuse (*effusus*), contain detailed expositions, as well as digressions against the main adversary, Philoponus, and cite or paraphrase long passages from Alexander of Aphrodisias, the Peripatetic commentator of the early third century

7. Cited by Nardi, *op. cit.*, 378-9.

8. There are very literal translations of 128, 2-11 (in *Collectanea* II, t c 65, f. 102vb); 136, 20-8 (*Coll.* II, t c 74, f. 107vb); 160, 17-19 (*Coll.* II, t c 108, f. 120vb); 209, 11 (*Coll.* II, t c 156, f. 138ra), see F. Bossier, *op. cit.*, 15.009-15.011; discussion of the whole issue is on pp. 15.004-15.015. In excluding the possibility that Nifo could have undertaken this work, Bossier calls it a translation by a certain Anonymous. In the light of these passages, the verdict by Nardi (*op. cit.*, p. 373), that even though there was such a translation it must have been loose and unreliable, seems to be exaggerated.

9. See E. Kessler, 'The Intellectualive Soul', in C.B. Schmitt, Q. Skinner, E. Kessler and J. Kraye (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge 1988, 485-534, esp. 494, and E. Mahoney (1983), 164-6. Vernia himself says at the end of the second book in his copy of John of Jandun's *Questiones super libros de anima* that he had completed Book 2, where his marginal notes witness his knowledge of Simplicius, on 6 August 1487; see E. Mahoney (1982), 268. Nardi does not discuss Vernia.

10. See f. 216r. Re-edited in his *Commentarii in libros Aristotelis De caelo, ortu et interitu; adjuncta lucidissima expositione, in tres libros eiusdem de anima, nunc recens in ludem prodeunt*, Mainz 1608. Some relevant portions of the text have been quoted by Nardi, *op. cit.*, 431-2.

A.D., just in order to reveal dissent from his views in each particular case, the commentary on the *De Anima* is laconic and without exhaustive references. The other group of arguments is devoted to establishing a close affinity to Priscian of Lydia's *Metaphrasis of Theophrastus' De Sensu*. For example, the account of light and colours at *in DA*. 2 is expounded in the *Metaphrasis* too. Moreover, Priscian makes mention of his commentary on *De Anima*. Both authors follow Iamblichus, as is clearly stated in the Prooemium of the *in DA* (1,18-20) and, in the *Metaphrasis*, in the first chapter which discusses *phantasia* (23,13 ff. *CAG Suppl.* I,2). Finally, in both works, there are frequent references to Plutarch, son of Nestorius, who founded the school of the Athenian Neoplatonists.¹¹ It seems, however, that no response was given to Piccolomini's hypothesis, which may be partly due to the fact that philosophers of the age no longer held problems like the immortality of the rational part of the soul to be significant, at least not in the way it was taken to be by the Schoolmen. They therefore abandoned studying the relevant texts, including Simplicius' commentary.¹² Slowly, the treatise came to be neglected. References to it by later philosophers are extremely scarce. In discussing problems concerning the soul, Malebranche mentions Simplicius in the company of other philosophers, but this does not mean that he read this commentary.¹³

The next edition, on which the present translation is based, appeared only in 1882, as part of the monumental project of the Berlin Academy of publishing the ancient commentators on Aristotle. The editor, Michael Hayduck, relied considerably on the preparatory work of Adolf Torstrik.

This portion of the commentary deals with the views of Aristotle's predecessors, as does Aristotle in the *De Anima*, and contains some general remarks concerning the intellect and the soul, which are peculiar to the Athenian Neoplatonists who were heavily influenced by Iamblichus.¹⁴ Moreover, here is the proper place to lay down the

11. Some of the arguments crop up in a far more sophisticated form in F. Bossier and C. Steel, 'Priscianus Lydus en de *In de anima* van Pseudo (?) -Simplicius', in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 34 (1972), 761-822. The authors appreciate the work of Piccolomini on p. 762. An English version of their paper is to be published as an introduction to Simplicius on Aristotle's *De Anima* 2,4-10 in this series.

12. The process has been depicted by B. Nardi, 'La fine dell' averroismo', in his op. cit. in n. 1, 443-55.

13. Cf. *De la recherche de la vérité*, Paris 1674. My reference is to the reprint in *Malebranche: Oeuvres*, Tome I, Paris 1962, 291. Leibniz seems to have known only Simplicius' commentary on the *Enchiridion of Epictetus*. See G.W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, vol. VI,3, Berlin 1980, pp. 343, 347.

14. This aspect has been well explained by H. Blumenthal, 'Simplicius (?) on the First Book of Aristotle's *De Anima*', in I. Hadot (ed.) *Simplicius: sa vie, son oeuvre, sa survie*, Berlin-New York 1987, 91-112, and 'The Psychology of (?) Simplicius' commentary on

principles whereby things of different kinds are to be explained in the right way. In Simplicius' view, the right interpretation depends on what kind of thing is under examination. Divine or supreme entities require, or allow, an investigation which is different from that appropriate to inferior ones. In discussing this method, he uses the term *endeixis* (allusion) and its cognates many times. In his view, Democritus was speaking allusively of the intellectual reality (*noera ousia*), and the Pythagoreans were discussing the divided substance (*merizomenê ousia*) of the soul. It may be of some interest that, following Syrianus, the author of this commentary employs the term *endeixis* also when discussing soul and intellect. As he says, we can refer allusively to the intellect, as well as display the nature of the soul as being between undivided being and the reality which is divided into bodies.¹⁵

But the term is far from being unusual in Plotinus, Iamblichus and the Athenian Neoplatonists. Its use was coloured by the fact that in the Middle Platonic period some of Plato's dialogues, notably the *Protagoras*, had been classified as *endeictic* dialogues though the meaning of the term changed gradually over successive generations of Neoplatonists.¹⁶ In Plotinus, it is used to allude to three hypostases and the Good.¹⁷ Porphyry relates it to a picture or image (*eikonisma*).¹⁸ Iamblichus was the first to attribute this kind of interpretation to the Pythagoreans. Supposedly, it was their habit to clarify the subject under examination through similitudes and images and then to add the unsayable allusion (*aporrhêtos endeixis*) to it, which functions by means of symbols. This is the nature of the myths, too, which are intended to allude to things through symbols.¹⁹ Similarly, we can only hint at the productive principles in the cosmos or at the benefits

the *De Anima*', in H. Blumenthal and A.C. Lloyd (eds), *Soul and the Structure of Being in Late Neoplatonism: Syrianus, Proclus and Simplicius*, Liverpool 1982, 73-94; discussion is on pp. 94-5.

15. Except 3,31 where he uses it in the sense of 'mathematical demonstration', he takes it as meaning 'allusion' (or 'indication', 'illustration'), cf. 22,13; 26,11-19; 28,19; 30,5; 34,14; 40,9; 46,14; 49,31-5.

16. Cf. Albinus, *Prologus*, 3, 148,32; 6, 151,10; and also D.L. III. 49. For further references and bibliographical details, see O. Nüsser, *Albins Prolog und die Dialogtheorie des Platonismus*, Stuttgart 1991, 62, 85; and H. Tarrant, *Thrasyllos Platonism*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1993, 52-3.

17. V. 1, 10, 2-3; VI. 8, 13, 48, cf. also III. 6, 12, 25 and VI. 7, 1, 30.

18. See *Sent.* XLIII, p. 55,9 Lamberz: *hôs exô ontos eikonismatos endeiknumenon*. For *endeiknumenon* Mommert puts *endeixin* (p. 42,4 in his edition). Image and allusion are correlated also in Anonymous' *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* (ch. 27, 221,28 Hermann = 42,41 Westerink-Trouillard-Segonds), a Neoplatonist introduction to Plato, written probably in the sixth century A.D.

19. *In Tim.* fr. 5,9-15 Dillon. Although Iamblichus explicitly states that the Pythagoreans were adherents of such an interpretation, this does not mean that they named this procedure *endeixis*.

passing into the universe from the gods.²⁰ Following Iamblichus, Syrianus also assigns *endeixis* to the Pythagorean and he takes a further step by saying that the concepts (*logoi*) in the soul are indicative of intelligible things, as being their images.²¹ His most renowned pupil, Proclus, offers a more detailed and clear-cut exposition. He regularly connects this method of interpretation with images and symbols. Superior things are to be explained by the aid of *endeixis*. For secret things must be handed down secretly and no one is entitled to blab out unsayable notions concerning the gods.²² The appropriate way of teaching about such beings is symbolic, *endeictic* and enigmatic, which fits the nature of the most secret tenets.²³ It is contrasted to the tentative (*epikheirêmatikos*) method, which refers either to the dialectical proof in Aristotle (*Top.* 8.11, 162a16; *De Mem.* 2, 451a19) or, in general, to discursive argumentation. Allusion is pictorial, not affirmative (*In Remp.* 2,8,12) or particular²⁴ and sometimes we hint at the supernatural by means of what is contrary to nature (*to para phusin*).²⁵ One of Proclus' successors, Damascius, the last head of the Academy at Athens, followed in the wake of his teacher.²⁶ One chapter of his *De Principiis* is given over to this subject.²⁷ We can allude to something which is entirely undetermined (*adioristos*), that is, to what is beyond determination. On the other hand, this is a method which excludes analogical thinking (*kat' analogian theôrein*).²⁸ Elsewhere, indeed, he applies the term when

20. *In Tim.* fr. 10,15 Dillon; cf. fr. 4,3; 33,13-4; 37,12 (with reference to Plato) and *in Pram.* 23,14-15.

21. See his *in Metaph.* 10,10; 83,19 CAG VI,1.

22. *dei gar ta mustika mustikôs paradidonai, kai mê dêmonsieuein tas aporrhêtous peri tôn theôn ennoias.* See in *Parm.* 928,7-9, cf. 928,15 Cousin; in *Tim.* I. 7,29-30; 30,8 Diehl. Notice that *aporrhêtos* means here rather 'what it is not advisable to divulge' (though it could be divulged) and not 'inexpressible on its own'. For a very useful discussion of verbal adjectives ending with *-tos* in Hellenistic texts, see J. Barnes, *The Toils of Skepticism*, Cambridge 1990, 17-20.

23. *In Parm.* 1027,27-30; cf. 1038,14; 1074,6.15; 1075,35. For *endeixis* and cognates as indirect indication of divine beings, see in *Remp.* I. 5,8; 56,3; 61,9; 72,9; 84,12.28; 93,14; 113,6; II. 7,27 Kroll; in *Tim.* I. 7,29-30; 8,22; 15,14-15; 17,13; 19,8; 24,19; 29,23; 30,1.8.15; 32,24; 50,25; 53,2; 54,10; 75,5; 76,11; 80,25; 84,14; 102,7; 130,10; 165,12; 178,31; 188,24-5; 190,10; 196,29; 223,24; 365,21-2; III. 73,21; 230,34 Diehl; *Theol. Plat.* I. 4, 19,4; I. 28,121,3-4; II. 39 Saffrey-Westerink; in *Euclidem* 110,8-13; 291,15-17 Friedlein.

24. Contrasted to 'particular approach' (*merikê epibolê*) at *in Parm.* 1074,15.

25. *In Remp.* I. 77,25.

26. *In Philebum* 16,19; 145,6; 209,2; 249,1; 250,4 Westerink; *De Princ.* I 88, vol. II, 6,3-4, 7,14, 11,18, 12,8; I 93, vol. II, 13,6; I 97, vol. II, 19,15 Westerink-Combès; in *Phaedonem* I 282,2; 418,2; 420,4; 557,3; II 76,5; 151,3 Westerink.

27. I 85.

28. Vol. I, p. 129,3-4, and see also vol. II, 6,14. Damascius uses the term *kata endeixin* that is probably his own invention, as has been maintained by L.G. Westerink in his remarks to the entry *endeixis*, in id. (ed.), Damascius, *Lectures of the Philebum*, Amsterdam 1959, 132, where he claims also that the noun and the verb are used in a

speaking of higher entities, such as principles,²⁹ and of how to name them. For him, there is no appropriate name for the One. The name 'One' is appropriate only by way of allusion, *kata endeixin*, and 'One' and 'Good' are indicative (*endeiktikos*) of one and the same reality.³⁰ Attempts to understand these entities should proceed by dialectical thought, which starts from divine enigmas unfolding the inexpressible truth in them, or strives toward them and rests in the symbolic allusions to them.³¹ Moreover, in line with his inclination toward negative theology, Damascius claims that we must at least hint at the inexpressible by way of complete negation (*pantelês apophasis*) and exclusion of every kind of cognition (*tês gnôstikês hapasês anaireseôs*).³²

Thus it can be seen that when Simplicius dealt with the notion of *endeixis*, it had already had a chequered career and a distinctive terminology attached to it. What he says about it elsewhere does not differ from the views of Proclus and Damascius. But he both refers to the notion and uses the vocabulary.³³

All this is relevant to the authorship of the *De Anima* commentary translated here. Whoever the author may be, he also applies the term *endeixis* and related terms. Furthermore, following Syrianus, he uses it when discussing psychological matters. By contrast, this is missing in Priscian's *Metaphrasis* since Priscian neither applies the method nor uses the vocabulary. This is surprising for both the methodological introduction and a large part of the account of the intellect have survived. This does not conclusively disprove the hypothesis of Priscian's authorship of our commentary, since other reasons might be found for the omission. One might be that Theophrastus' theory did not give an opportunity to Priscian to deploy his whole Neoplatonic armoury.³⁴ But why did Aristotle's theory, to which Theophrastus' treatise owed so much, give such an opportunity to our commentator? Or one could suppose that Priscian, if the author of our text, wrote it at a different stage of his life.

special sense of symbolical expression of realities that are beyond language. This is partly true, but see my n. 22.

29. *In Phil.* 16,10; 23,3; 62,9,12; 98,5,7; 103,1; 246,1; *in Phaed.* I 420,4; 526,2; II 15,8; 76,5; *De Princ.* I 95, vol. II, 16,15; 19,15.

30. *De Princ.* I 199, vol. II, 23,16-17; *in Phaed.* I 516,6. He also says that certain words are indicative of forms at *in Phaed.* I 53,5.

31. *In Phaed.* I 165,1-3.

32. *De Princ.* I 92, vol. II, 11,8.

33. Cf. *in Cat.* 1159,6; *in Phys.* 147,15-16.

34. Provided he was willing to exploit it at all. As his other work known to us, the *Solutiones ad Chosroem* (*CAG Suppl.* I,2), shows, he is modest about exploiting such possibilities.

Textual Emendations

Textual emendations, notes of discrepancies between the text of Aristotle as given or implied by our author and that printed by Ross in his edition, and other comments on the text appear as follows:

- 3,17 *phutikou* for *phusikou*.
5,37 *phutikas* for *phusikas*.
15,5 *hautôn* for *autôn*.
18,34 *hestôsi* for *hestôsai*.
21,33 (DA 403b2) *ho men gar logos hode tou pragmatos* for *ho men gar logos, ho de tou pragmatos* (as Ross).
22,24 (DA 403b9-10). Accepting *ou gar esti tis, phêsin, ho peri ta...*; but *ê ouk estin heis ho peri ta...* in Ross.
24,20 Supplying *kai to aïsthanesthai* (Torstrick).
28,14 Supplying *exetasei* (Torstrick).
30,19 *tên aph' heautês eis heautên anelixin kai ek diastaseôs hama sunagôgên* (Torstrick).
33,35 *kinousan* for *kinoumenên*.
35,27-8 Replacing the full stop after *kinêthêsetai* by a comma; inserting a semicolon after *kinoumenon*.
43,37 (DA 407a12-13) Accepting *epeidê gar apeiroi, dêlon...*; but *ei men oun kata stigmên, hautai d'apeiroi, dêlon...* in Ross.
44,27 (DA 407a19) Accepting *kai*; but *ê* in Ross.
48,24 (DA 407b5) Accepting *legein*; but *legesthai* in Ross.
49,10 *ka'keinêi* for *ka'keinôi*.
50,18 (DA 407b9) Accepting *legei*; but *legetai* in Ross.
50,36 Adding *mê* before *anapempêi*.
58,7 (DA 408b7) Accepting *tôi*; but *to* in Ross.
60,13 *sumphthinousas* for *sumphtheiromenas*.
61,19 *sunekheis haplôs eipein monas* for *sunekheis kai haplôs eipein monas*.
65,32-3 Accepting *arithmon kai kinêsin*; but DA 409b12 (Ross) has *kinêsin kai arithmon*.
68,24 *autêi* for *auta*.
71,14 *koinon* for *koinêi*
77,22 Accepting *ê to exêirêmenon ekhousa pros tas loipas*; but perhaps *hêi* for *ê*.

- 79,29 Accepting *allêlais*; but DA 411b26 (Ross) has *allêlois*.
- 80,4 Accepting omission of *ou* before *diairetêi*; but DA 411b27 (Ross) has *ou diairetêi*.
- 80,20 Accepting *hêlôn*; but DA 411b26 (Ross) has *allêlois*.
- 91,13 *kinoumena* for *kinoumenai*.
- 92,33 Deleting the comma after *phusika*.
- 94,6 Accepting *toionde esti sôma*; but DA 412b27 (Ross) has *toiondi*.
- 95,5 *ek merous* (Hayduck) for *merous*.
- 96,2 (DA 413a8-9) Accepting *hê psukhê hôsper*; but *hê psukhê <ê> hôsper* in Ross.
- 96,3 *eniôn hê entelekheia* for *eniôn entelekheia*.
- 99,33-4 *autenergêta* for *autenergêton*.
- 105,1 *hugieiai* for *hugeiai* (misprint).
- 107,8 Supplying *phamen* before *phusin*.
- 108,23 *tines* for *tinou*.
- 109,23 (DA 415a19-20) Accepting *kata logon*; but *kata ton logon* in Ross.
- 110,12 (DA 415a26-7) Accepting *tôn en tois zôsin ergôn*; but *tôn ergôn tois zôsi* in Ross.
- 111,22 (DA 415b18) Accepting *kai kata phusin*; but *kai* omitted in Ross.
- 112,4 (DA 415b22) Accepting *hê psukhê*; but only *psukhê* in Ross.
- 112,17 Possibly *kai kata tên kata topon* for *kai tên kata topon*.
- 113,22 Following marginal correction in A: ...*oimai oude sôma phusikon aitiaton, alla logos psukhikos*....
- 115,14 (DA 415b20-5) Maintaining *epei d'esti tria...hê trophê* (b20-3) before *epei d'apo tou telous...hoion auto* (b23-5); Ross, following Torstrik, transposes these sentences.

Simplicius

On Aristotle On the Soul 1.1-2.4

Translation

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The Commentary of Simplicius on Book 1 of Aristotle *On the Soul*

The primary and most important object of concern is the truth about things themselves, both about other things and concerning the soul, which is the most relevant of all for us. Second to this is awareness of the opinions of those who have reached the summit of scientific knowledge.¹ That is why I think it necessary to study very carefully Aristotle's work *On the Soul*. Indeed, many divine insights about the soul have been handed down by Plato also; but these have been studied and clarified by Plato's interpreters sufficiently and with unanimity. But, while Aristotle brought the study of the soul to completion, as is the opinion of Iamblichus,² that excellent judge of truth, there is much dissension among those who explain his work, not merely about the interpretation of Aristotle's text, but also greatly about the subject-matter itself.³

That is why I myself decided to investigate and write of the consistency of the philosopher both with himself and also with the truth. I shall avoid rejoinders to others, but confirm my views on doubtful matters from the clear opinions and statements of Aristotle. Everywhere I shall strive to the uttermost for the truth about things in accordance with the teaching of Iamblichus in his own writings about the soul. That is my sole concern. And now, under the Guide who is the cause of all souls and all reasoning, let us start upon the projected work.

Its scope is manifest; it is about the soul. Later we shall consider whether it is about all soul, and why it seems that he makes no mention of that of the heavenly beings.⁴ But first let us consider whether the study of soul belongs to natural or to the higher philosophy. For settling whether the soul is natural, or superior, or in some way both, contributes to the grasp of its essence. So, since Aristotle does not merely report on the results of his investigation of this matter, but also demonstrates them, adding their grounds, in Book 1 of *On the Parts of Animals*,⁵ we must insert and examine what is said there. Taking for granted that the natural scientist must consider not only matter but also form, elsewhere and in animals, he continues: 'If this <form> is soul, or a part of the soul, or not without soul (for when the soul has gone it is no longer an animal and none

of its parts remain the same, except in shape alone, like those in fable
 10 turned to stone) – if this is so, it would be the task of the natural
 scientist to discuss and have understanding about the soul, and, if
 not all of it, in that respect through which an animal is an animal,
 both what the soul or that same part is, and about the attributes of
 such a substance. This is especially so since nature is spoken of as,
 and is, matter, yet also essence. Also nature is both the source of
 15 change and its goal. In the case of animals this is either the entire
 soul or a part of it. Therefore the natural scientist should discuss soul
 rather than matter, in proportion as their matter is their nature
 because of soul rather than the reverse. For wood is a bed and a stool
 because it is potentially both.

‘But one might raise the problem, in the light of this statement,
 whether it is the province of natural science to discuss all soul or some
 20 soul. For, if all, there is no philosophy left beyond natural science. For
 the intelligible is the object of the intellect, so that knowledge of
 nature would be all-embracing. For it belongs to the same philosophy
 to study intellect and the intelligible, since they are correlatives, and
 there is a single study of all correlatives – sensation and sensible
 25 things, for example. Or is it not the whole of soul that is the principle
 of change, nor all its parts, but of growth the same as in plants, of
 qualitative change the sensitive, of travel⁶ still another, and not the
 intellectual part? For travel is common to other animals, but thought
 not to any other. So it is clear that we are not to speak of all soul; for
 not all soul is natural, but some one or more parts of it.’

In that passage it is determined that something in the soul is
 30 studied by natural philosophy – those elements that are a form of
 animality marking off animals as animals (he debates whether to call
 this soul, a part of the soul or not without soul), and that concerned
 with growth and sensation, and that which is the cause of change of
 place. But whatever is intellectual⁷ is the province of first philosophy,
 3,1 which is cognisant of the intelligible and of the intellect which
 contemplates the intelligible – not only transcendent intellect but
 also that in us. For things THERE⁸ are intelligible to intellect in us,
 and the intellect and the intelligible, being correlatives, are studied
 by one and the same discipline, as are the sensitive and the sensible.
 5 So the study of the soul is neither simply natural nor simply meta-
 physical, but belongs to both, as was determined by Aristotle in the
 passage quoted.⁹ For Aristotle seems to take both natural science and
 metaphysical philosophy in a broad sense,¹⁰ so as to include the soul,
 extending the first up, the second down.¹¹ For it is clear that the soul
 10 is not an essential determination among the natural forms of body;
 for they are forms of body, but it is more a form of animals, and they
 are principles of undergoing change, the soul of initiating it. It is a
 property of the ensouled to be moved by themselves, as is said in

Physics, Book 8.¹² But neither is the intellective element in the soul like the supernatural, purely indivisible, wholly unchanging and clear. So, if one were marking off the limits of the philosophies, on one side natural, on the other metaphysics, that of the soul will be between the two; it itself is seen in breadth, or rather in depth, to the extent that the intellective element of the soul is distant from sensation and vegetation.¹³ It is clear that scientific knowledge of the soul is like that, since the *status* of the soul is such as to be between the supernatural and the natural, and such as to have something in common with the supernatural, something descending into the natural. Or, it may be put in another way, which the text will make clear, when Aristotle also investigates the same matter: summing up, Aristotle, in the passage before us says: 'So it is clear that we (natural scientists, obviously) are not to speak of all soul; for not all soul is natural, but some one or more parts of it.'¹⁴ Since he himself includes the intellect of the soul in his discussions and not only the natural parts, it is clear that the investigation of the soul is not entirely natural. So let that be our conclusion.

But the scope of the investigation seems to include only the soul of mortal animals.¹⁵ For he seems to take no account of the soul of the heavenly beings, except so far as in his strictures on the mathematical demonstrations about it in the *Timaeus*.¹⁶ Perhaps he was satisfied with the Platonic insights about it as sufficient, merely commenting that one should not rely on what appears from mathematics. Perhaps also he judged that it was fit to refer to the heavenly soul by what was said about the sublimity of our intellect. 'For', he says, 'it is clear that he <Plato> intends the soul of the universe to be such as is the so-called intellect. For it is not like the sensitive or desirous element.'¹⁷ For the soul of the universe is pure and intellective reason, wholly and throughout unmixed with secondary lives, because it does not itself come to belong to bodies, but they <come to belong> to the soul, while it remains at rest in itself. Therefore its travel is circular because of its reversion, whole to whole, upon itself.¹⁸ Also he clearly is not concerned with the various destinies of the human soul nor most of the choices among ways of life, knowing that the account of these matters has been sufficiently worked out by our leader.¹⁹ But he does not take the soul to be inseparable from the body; for he gives the explanation of our not remembering separated life in Book 3, clearly as existing before our arrival into bodies.²⁰

Studying primarily the soul of mortals alone, he leaves not one of its powers and character uninvestigated. But first he gives the formal cause of their bodies, all together, not as bodies, but as living tools. For nature, not soul, is the formal cause of bodies, but that which informs them as living tools is either soul or a part of soul or not without soul. This is the formal cause, through which that which is

vitaly informed with life is able to move. That by which it is moved is something else. For the animal is moved by the soul as the ship is by its pilot; for the sailor also is counted an actuality.²¹ This soul which moves in a living way is, as we shall learn, somehow other than that in terms of which that which is so moved is defined, since that which moves is not the same as that which is moved, but is divided off in relation to it. It is not the body as such, but the living body, that is moved in a living way, such as walking, flying and breathing. It is living because of the life in it, so that it is moved in a living way through this life. So, since the soul is also the moving principle in the animal, is it the same soul as that through which the animal moves, or is that impossible? For the whole animal would be informed by it, both the moving principle and the moved, and it would not, as Aristotle thinks, be the soul that moves and the animal that is moved. But also the tool is different from its user; also the characterising form of the tool is different from the user. Also the user is an actuality like the sailor in his boat; for the actuality is double, one in virtue of which it is a boat, the other as the sailor.²²

So first, as has been said, he assigns a common cause for all the souls of mortal animals which gives them their form, and is double. Then he goes through them, one at a time, giving an account of their differences and at the same time he observes the distinctive way in which what is common to all belongs to each, as demonstrative knowledge dictates, and sees those more leaning towards being tools and those that are allied to the user. He lays down that every soul is an actuality of the organic body, but not every soul according to every power it has. For clearly the intellect is described as maintaining no body²³ and as not using the body as a tool. So intellect is not blinded from intellection of greater things by the sight of lesser as sense perception is, through the senses using the body as an organ.

He distinguishes sufficiently also concerning the intellectual power of souls, seeing one that is practical and making use of imagination, a bodily form of life in accordance with the particular premise.²⁴ The other is theoretical, and that double: one, through the activity proceeding from being, is either incomplete or made complete. It falls away into first potentiality through being incomplete, or it holds firm as more complete potentiality, or even in actuality.²⁵ This makes no use of imagination, but has it in its train as excited together with a contemplative active proceeding and withdrawing from being. The other consists in that activity that is at rest and that concentrates its activity into one as identical with being. In this it imitates even the transcendent intelligence, and it is activity in its essence. In this state of rest it is immortal, since it is thus in contact with the eternal and is everlastingly at rest, pure in its separated life, but departing in a way from itself in its inclination to the secondary way of life, but not

so as never to be at rest.²⁶ So it is even then unchanging in a secondary way; but what inclines outside is not immortal,²⁷ since it is variable and not present in the separated life. He also distinguished the desiderative powers of the soul from the cognitive, and investigates the nature of the powers that animals have to change their place. 20

All this theorising occurs in Books 2 and 3. In Book 1 he first determines the scope of the inquiry and sets out the number and nature of the problems about the soul to be investigated. He also determines the method of investigation, which starts from opposites and ascends to its essence through the medium of its activity. He then recounts the opinions of earlier men about the soul, accepting some and refuting others, and locates the soul as cognitive and a source of change, incorporeal, indivisible and impervious to bodily changes. He shows that it is neither bodily harmony nor composition nor a formula of mixture, and that it is a principle not as an element or composed of elements but as a rational form. He holds that there is a single soul in each animal, and in rational animals also, that possesses all vital natures and powers, through which it strives rationally and spiritedly and appetitively, and through which it has knowledge, intellectually, or scientifically, or as opinion, or as imagination, or as sensation, as well as having finally the vegetative²⁸ powers. 25 30 35

Also, in Book 3, he sees our soul as being in a mean between the extremes of living things in respect of the rational faculty. At times he likens it to the sensitive, at times to the intellective: at times descending to copy the sensitive, at times ascending to a likeness of the intellective: at times concentrated into the indivisible as far as possible and remaining wholly in itself, when it copies the intellect that transcends it, at times somehow leaving itself as it inclines outside, acting outwardly and proceeding into fragmentation: but never altogether departing from the opposite.²⁹ For its fragmentation is with its concentration into indivisibility, and its projection is with its return into itself, and its self-desertion is with its rest in itself, which is weakened when it inclines to the external. So our soul is at the same time at rest and being transformed because of its intermediate position between those that remain wholly at rest and those that are transformed altogether, having some kinship with both extremes, as it is in a way divided and, as if indivisible, simultaneously comes to be and is present ungenerated, in a manner passes away and is preserved imperishable. So we shall not posit that some part of it remains always unchanging and pure, as Plotinus does,³⁰ nor that it proceeds altogether in a tendency to coming to be.³¹ But it proceeds as a whole and remains in purity in its inclination to secondary being. But the examination of the whole of the discussions will make these things clearer as being the opinions of Aristotle and 40 6,1 5 10 15