

## Alexander of Aphrodisias as a Textual Witness. The Commentary on the *De Sensu*

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Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on Aristotle's *De Sensu* presents readings of obvious interest to an editor of the *De Sensu*. No extant manuscript of the Aristotelian text is older than the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and therefore a famous Peripatetic commentator of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. will certainly have had access to manuscripts now lost, and possibly to a quite different textual tradition. A. Förster explicitly assumes that this is the case.<sup>1</sup> In preparing a critical edition of Aristotle's *De Sensu*, I have made a complete collation of Alexander's commentary, using Wendland's edition (*CAG*. III.1, Berlin 1901).

In this article I will show that, even though Alexander seems to be an excellent textual witness, the commentary can rarely be considered solid, textual evidence on a par with manuscript readings. Both Förster and Ross commit the mistake of treating Alexandrian readings as manuscript readings in their editions. First, I will make some general points about the textual transmission of Aristotle and Alexander; then, I will examine the different parts of Alexander's commentary: lemmata, quotations, paraphrases, and the discussions of *variatio lectionis*; and finally, I will state exactly how I think Alexander's commentary can be used by the editor of Aristotle.

### I. THE TEXTUAL TRANSMISSION OF ARISTOTLE AND ALEXANDER

Some general points concerning the textual transmission of Aristotle and the commentators on Aristotle will be relevant to the use of all the separate parts (lemmata, quotations, paraphrases, etc.) of Alexander's commentary as textual evidence for Aristotle's *De Sensu*.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Förster 1942: X, with stemma.

This Aristotelian text has been preserved in 21 manuscripts from the 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup> A collation of these manuscripts reveals an enormous amount of Alexandrian material that is present side by side with the Aristotelian text. The following list contains the Aristotelian manuscripts with Alexandrian comments:<sup>3</sup>

- *Par. gr. 1921*. The entire Alexandrian commentary written in the margin and as interlinear notes.
- *Ambr. gr. 435 (H 50 sup)*. Extensive marginal and interlinear scholia.
- *Urb. gr. 37*. Some marginal and interlinear scholia.
- *Par. Suppl. gr. 314*. Some marginal and interlinear scholia.
- *Vat. gr. 260*. Some marginal and interlinear scholia.
- *Vat. gr. 1026*. Some marginal and interlinear scholia.
- *Laur. Plut. 87.4*. Some marginal and interlinear scholia.
- *Laur. Plut. 87.20*. Some marginal and interlinear scholia.
- *Vat. gr. 266*. A few marginal scholia.

In addition to this list, it should be noted that, even though no scholia or only irrelevant glosses are found in the other Aristotelian manuscripts, their textual tradition might well at some earlier point have had access to Alexandrian scholia. This is demonstrably the case with e.g. *Marc. gr. Z 209* and *Vat. gr. 1339* (cf. note 4).

This kind of simultaneous transmission of material is not unusual, but textually this is a dangerous cocktail, because having the texts next to each other will almost certainly produce corruptions both ways. In particular, it should be noted that (1) corruption will be more likely to be discovered when it flows from Alexander to Aristotle than vice versa, but (2) if Alexander originally had a different reading than the Aristotelian manuscripts now preserved, a Byzantine scribe might very well have thought that he corrected Alexander's text by introducing the reading found in the Aristotelian manuscripts. Alexandrian intrusions into

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mugnier 1937 and Siwek 1961. In addition, D. Harlfinger (1971: 146-52) has redated *Laur. Plut. 87.21* to the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Wiesner 1981.

Aristotle's text have demonstrably made their mark on several manuscripts.<sup>4</sup> But there is also a positive conclusion following these reflections, viz. that readings peculiar to Alexander should be treated seriously, although not overconfidently. A final general problem for the Aristotelian editor is the uncertainty regarding the Alexandrian text. The entire text of Alexander's commentary is in a state that requires some emendation, a difficulty that should not be dismissed as just a minor annoyance.

## II. ALEXANDER'S COMMENTARY

For the Aristotelian editor Alexander's commentary divides into lemmata, quotations, paraphrases and discussions of textual variants. Editors have felt relatively safe when using the lemmata and the quotations, because as such they should be un-interpreted statements to be exposed to comments. The difficulties of handling the paraphrases have most often been well appreciated, and Alexander's discussions of variants are generally regarded as providing important evidence of the text.<sup>5</sup>

### *Lemmata*

The Wendland edition of Alexander's commentary on the *De Sensu* has 173 pages, in which I have counted 71 lemmata, most of them consisting of 1-3 Bekker lines, rarely more, but quite often just one line or a few words.

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, in 444a15, Alexander (*In Sens.* 98.23-25) writes ἡ τὸ θερμαίνειν τε καὶ διαχεῖν τοὺς περὶ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ψυχροτέρους ὄντας τόπους καὶ εἰς τὸ σύμμετρον ἄγειν paraphrasing Aristotle's ἡ τοῦτο. Marc. gr. Z 209 and Vat. gr. 1026, have incorporated the paraphrase into Aristotle's text. However, the scribe of the latter MS. notes ὡς σχόλιον ἔκειτο τοῦτο in the margin. Similarly, in 447a8 the Aristotelian manuscript Vat. gr. 1339 has incorporated a paraphrase from Alexander (*In Sens.* 135.6).

<sup>5</sup> For more work on Alexander as a commentator, cf. Sharples 1990, Abbamonte 1995 and Donini 1995.

First of all, we must ask whether the lemmata are the work of Alexander himself, or whether some later scribe could be responsible for the insertions to provide clarity to the commentary. It can be established beyond reasonable doubt that Alexander must have used some sort of lemmata. Alexander has a stock of transitional phrases when initiating a comment on a lemma, such as εἰπών, ἀντειπών, δείξας, λαβών, etc., referring to the preceding comment, and followed by a conjugated verb, such as μετελήλυθε, μέτεισι or ἐπάνεισι. In these transitional first sentences, we must almost always understand this as meaning something like: “In the preceding argument Aristotle has done such and such, but *now, beginning with this statement* [i.e. the lemma], he begins to do such and such.” Quite a number of these transitions would, at best, be very difficult to follow if there were no lemmata, and some of them would, I think, be quite unintelligible. Some examples, in the space of just a few pages of Wendland’s edition, will illustrate this.

The lemma (Alex., *In Sens.* 25.1-4) giving the text of the *De Sensu* 438a7-9 is immediately followed by the sentence: δοκεῖ μοι σφόδρα βραχέως εἰρησθαι τὸ λεγόμενον, διὸ καὶ ἀσαφές εἶναι. This would seem to be almost as unintelligible as the phrase he comments on if he had not quoted Aristotle’s own words in advance. A few pages later (Alex., *In Sens.* 36.4-9) the lemma provides the text of 438b8-9, and Alexander begins his comment: εἰπὼν ὁρᾶται δὲ ὥσπερ καὶ ἔξω οὐκ ἄνευ φωτός, οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐντὸς τοῦ δεῖν καὶ τὸ ἐντὸς διαφανές εἶναι αἰτίαν παρατίθεται, ὅτι μή ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ ἡ ὁρατικὴ δύναμις ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ. Even considered out of its context, surely this phrase reads most naturally if regarded as following a lemma. The words ὁρᾶται-αἰτίαν are a characteristic mixture of quotation and paraphrase from 438b6-8 (a phenomenon that we shall consider in more detail below), the passage immediately preceding the lemma, and the obvious way of understanding αἰτίαν παρατίθεται, ὅτι ... is as a reference to the lemma. But even if this is not accepted, there is a clear break of the text on both sides of the lemma. We have just quoted the initial words of this comment. The preceding comment ends by the laconic phrase: ὁ γὰρ ἀήρ

ῥευστός τε καὶ διαπνευστός. There must have been some sort of lemma between these two phrases. Therefore, it seems certain that Alexander himself did use lemmata in the commentary.

I take it that this is not a very controversial conclusion; if it is, then earlier Aristotelian editors should be much embarrassed by their free use of these lemmata. However, the problem can be introduced in another form, which, to the editor of Aristotle, involves almost an equal amount of trouble. Instead of asking if Alexander himself used lemmata, we might ask if the lemmata were originally full quotations or just a few words as a reference to Aristotle's text.

The sources as to the methods of the ancient commentators are too few and uncertain to refute the claim that Alexander used only a brief reference to the Aristotelian text as a lemma,<sup>6</sup> which some scribe eventually turned into a genuine lemma. However, they cannot be used to argue the case either. If, as is generally assumed, the typical ancient commentaries were written separately, while the medieval ones were often written as marginal scholia, then the ancients would actually have had a greater need for lemmata than the medievals. The only possible refuge seems to be statistics. The quotations in the text are certainly embedded by Alexander himself, so if these and the lemmata seem to represent the same textual tradition, the onus of proof is on the view, which states that Alexander did *not* himself write the lemmata, and vice versa.

Dividing the Aristotelian manuscripts into three groups ( $a = EMYC^c$ ;  $b^1 = SWO^d$ ;  $b^2 = LXH^a$ ),<sup>7</sup> the statistics are as follows: Using my own collations of 21 Greek manuscripts and of the two medieval Latin translations, including all registered textual variants involving lemmata (220) and quotations (434), the lemmata agree with  $a$  147 times, with  $b^1$

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wilson 1996: 33-6, for the general view, and Carlini et al. 1980: 234-7 (Carlini's comment), on the details.

<sup>7</sup>  $E$  = Par. gr. 1853,  $M$  = Urb. gr. 37,  $Y$  = Vat. gr. 261,  $C^c$  = Par. Suppl. gr. 314,  $S$  = Laur. Plut. 81.1,  $W$  = Vat. gr. 1026,  $O^d$  = Marc. gr. Z 209,  $L$  = Vat. gr. 253,  $X$  = Ambr. gr. 435 (H 50 sup),  $H^a$  = Marc. gr. Z 214. In the statistics I disregard individual misreadings if the reading of the source can be established.

169 times, and with  $b^2$  172 times. In 2 lemmata (448a23 and 448b2) there is agreement exclusively with  $a$  against  $b^1$  and  $b^2$ , in 22 lemmata with  $b^1$  and  $b^2$  against  $a$ . The quotations agree with  $a$  282 times, with  $b^1$  316 times, and with  $b^2$  313 times. In 17 quotations there is agreement exclusively with  $a$  against  $b^1$  and  $b^2$ , in 49 quotations with  $b^1$  and  $b^2$  against  $a$ . These figures show that both the lemmata and quotations primarily depend on our  $b$  tradition, but there is a great difference between their numbers. The most important difference is that the Alexandrian lemmata almost never agree with  $a$  against the entire  $b$  family, while it is not infrequent as regards the Alexandrian quotations. The numbers are so different that they suggest different sources. At the very least, doubt is cast upon the usability of lemmata.<sup>8</sup>

This in turn serves to explain the passages where the lemma can be shown to differ from another Alexandrian version of the Aristotelian text. Consider, for instance, such passages as 440b27-28 (= *In Sens.* 66.7-8 vs. 66.10) and 442b23-25 (= *In Sens.* 87.5-6 vs. 87.8), which include the lemmata and (part of) their respective comments. In the first passage the Alexandrian lemma omits καὶ φωνῆς, but the comment on the lemma immediately makes it clear that καὶ φωνῆς was also in Alexander's text. Furthermore, it should be noted that φησὶν in the lemma is a commentators (Alexander's?) insertion, suggesting a rather dubious approach, at least from a modern point of view, when quoting the sources. The lemma in the last passage contains the reading τὰ δ' ἄλλα but three lines later Alexander quotes the text in accordance with the

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<sup>8</sup> I must stress the fact that the aim of these statistics is to prove the close relations between Alexandrian lemmata and quotations. As should become clear from the general argument of this article, I do not think that the individual Alexandrian readings can be regarded as variant readings on a par with Aristotelian manuscript readings. Furthermore, I am also aware that mere numbers are apt to distort the truth of the matter. I have, however, investigated every passage, and even though the variants do not all carry equal weight, I believe that the statistics present a true picture.

Aristotelian manuscripts: τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα. A few more examples can be adduced.<sup>9</sup>

Textual corruption is always a possibility as regards ancient texts, but it is rendered somewhat unlikely, partly by the number of passages, in which the manuscripts agree on these readings, partly by the fact that if this phenomenon was due to mere scribal errors at some point in the textual tradition it is very strange that it was not emended, given the existence of other manuscripts, not to mention a batch of Aristotelian manuscripts.

This being the case, the discrepancies are certainly better explained, if Alexander did not himself write the full lemmata. The missing text might have been inserted later by someone else, who was content to elaborate on Alexander's abbreviated text and did not consider the surroundings. However, for this suggestion to be meaningful, the lemmata inserted must still have had some textual source that contained variants not otherwise transmitted in the Aristotelian manuscripts. This would actually make them almost equally interesting, since necessarily the insertion of lemmata would then have been conducted before the textual tradition that we possess was well established.

At least, I refuse to believe that Alexander carefully copied Aristotle's words but forgot the quotation in the space of just a few lines, if it had mattered anything to him. If textual corruption and insertion by another scribe are ruled out (which I am not, however, prepared to do), the only alternative solution is that Alexander merely regarded the lemmata as pointers, not necessarily an exact restatement of Aristotle.

Whichever solution we might favor, editors of Aristotle will find no comfort in it.

### *Quotations*

As regards quotations, the editors are faced with a different but equally difficult set of problems. Like lemmata, quotations should ideally be an

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<sup>9</sup> For more conflicting passages, cf. Alex., *In Sens.* 88.4-6 vs. 89.8-10; 92.17-19 vs. 92.21 (probably); 113.7-8 vs. 113.13; 123.1-2 vs. 123.15-16.

exact restatement of the wording of the source, and indeed the first impression one receives when approaching Alexander's commentary is that he accurately prepares the reader with a kind of warning when he is quoting Aristotle. A few examples will suffice.

Commenting on the lemma giving 441b23-25 (Alex., *In Sens.* 77.8-10.), he says: εἰπὼν δὲ τοῦ τροφίμου πάθος εἶναι τοὺς χυμοὺς προσέθηκεν [= the warning] ἢ στέρησις [= the quotation], λέγων [= marking the end of the quotation and the beginning of the exegesis] τοῦ τροφίμου στέρησιν, τουτέστι τοῦ γλυκέος. This is, in my opinion, a fine example of clarity on the part of Alexander, and if this were his standard way of introducing, executing and ending a quotation, things would look very bright for the editor of Aristotle. Thus, Wendland confidently prints the quotation with spaced types. Another example is the following comment (Alex., *In Sens.* 105.8-9.): εἰπὼν δὲ τῷ ἀκουστῷ, ἀντὶ τοῦ προσθεῖναι καὶ τῷ ὁρατῷ εἶπε τῷ διαφανεῖ. εἰπὼν, ἀντὶ and εἶπε all do a wonderful job telling us what the Aristotelian text reads.

But the case is not always as clear-cut as these examples might lead us to believe. Consider another passage, following just upon one of our examples (Alex., *In Sens.* 105.10-11.): εἰπὼν δὲ ταῦτα, προστίθῃσιν ὅτι ἄρα καὶ εὐλόγως ἐκ τοιούτων καὶ οὕτω γίνεσθαι τὰς ὁσμάς εἰρήκαμεν. Once again we have the warning (προστίθῃσιν), but this time it is unclear what we are being warned about. The Aristotelian text (445a13-14) has only καὶ εὐλόγως and the surroundings are very different. However, Wendland confidently prints καὶ εὐλόγως with spaced types and states in the apparatus that some Aristotelian manuscripts omit καὶ. But it seems much more reasonable to characterise this as a paraphrase, and say that Alexander is merely using a phrase, which fits the context, and which incidentally he had just seen - in the Aristotelian text.

A slightly more elaborate example is the passage quoted above, which, in Alexander's words, ran as follows:

εἰπὼν ὁράται δὲ ὥσπερ καὶ ἔξω οὐκ ἄνευ φωτός, οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐντὸς τοῦ δεῖν καὶ τὸ ἐντὸς διαφανὲς εἶναι αἰτίαν παρατίθεται, ὅτι μὴ ἐστὶν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ ἡ ὁρατικὴ δύναμις ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ.



Consider next the text in Aristotle's version:

ὁρᾶται δὲ ὥσπερ καὶ ἔξω οὐκ ἄνευ φωτός, οὕτω καὶ ἐντός·  
διαφανὲς ἄρα δεῖ εἶναι. [...] οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐσχάτου ὀμματος ἡ ψυχὴ  
ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ αἰσθητικόν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι ἐντός.

Alexander carefully quotes the passage until οὕτω καὶ, but the following ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐντός for ἐντός is not found in any of the Aristotelian manuscripts, and the phrase is an obvious clarification of the Aristotelian text, that is, a paraphrase. The rest of the sentence is pure paraphrase. The words εἰπὼν and παρατίθεται seem to limit the exact quotation, but ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐντός ought then to be considered a quotation and therefore a genuine variant reading. Therefore, it cannot be established exactly when he is quoting, and this gravely diminishes the value of using Alexander's quoted variant readings as the basis of the Aristotelian text.

Editors of Aristotle might try to do what Wendland does: Text, presented by Alexander as quotations and actually found in the Aristotelian manuscripts, should be considered quotations, and when Alexander no longer presents a text that has an Aristotelian manuscript parallel, it should be regarded as a paraphrase. This paraphrase cannot be used as evidence for the Aristotelian text. Such a procedure seems simple and manageable, but in the passages where no warnings are given it will not suffice.

In discussing the theory that the eye is made of fire Alexander writes (*In Sens.* 15.9-11): καὶ ὅθεν ὀρμηθέντες ὑπολαμβάνουσι τὴν ὄψιν πυρὸς εἶναι, λέγει· διὰ τὸ πάθους τινὸς γινομένου περὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἀγνοεῖν τὴν αἰτίαν. The last part of the passage is taken directly from the *De Sensu* 437a23, but the words γινομένου περὶ τὴν ὄψιν are *not* part of the original Aristotelian text. Again, there can be no doubt that the words constitute a clarification, that is, a paraphrase of Aristotle's laconic style, but this is rather alarming, because it means that Alexander may give all appearance of quoting literally from Aristotle, when, in fact, he has no scruples adding words. If his purpose is to explain and clarify the text, there is no reason why he should not perform this and similar manoeuvres

(such as altering the word-order,<sup>10</sup> replacing words or phrases with more common ones etc.<sup>11</sup>).

In the passage just mentioned it may have been obvious that the added words were Alexander's comment, but in 441a23 the manuscript reading, transmitted with slight variations in the Aristotelian manuscripts, is λεπτότατον γὰρ πάντων τῶν ὑγρῶν τὸ ὕδωρ ἐστί. However, two inferior Aristotelian manuscripts (Vat. gr. 258 and Vat. gr. 266) read λεπτότατον γὰρ πάντων τῶν οὕτως ὑγρῶν τὸ ὕδωρ ἐστί, and this is also the reading of an Alexandrian quotation (*In Sens.* 70.24-71.1). Further support is, apparently, provided by an Alexandrian paraphrase (*In Sens.* 71.4-5) reading τοιούτων ὑγρῶν.

The traditional manuscript reading is difficult, because water is *not*, according to Aristotle, the thinnest of the wet substances; air is thinner.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, οὕτως might be thought to qualify ὑγρῶν appropriately meaning "this particular sort of wet substances". However, it is not at all clear that οὕτως should limit ὑγρῶν in this way. Actually, οὕτως does not make good sense in the Aristotelian text, but is only appropriate in Alexander's commentary, because he can explain the phrase, commenting τουτέστι τῶν ἀναπληστικῶν in the middle of the quotation. This is wrong, but Alexander felt the difficulty in calling water the thinnest wet substance, and therefore tried to "quote" and explain the passage in a way that would limit the meaning of the phrase.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For a probable example, cf. Alex., *In Sens.* 157.4-5, quoting 448b18, where ἐνδέχεται ἢ οὐκ has replaced the Aristotelian ἢ οὐκ ἐνδέχεται.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. e.g. Alex., *In Sens.* 136.13 = 447a17-18, where Alexander has replaced ἀπλοῦ ὄντος with ἀμιγοῦς καὶ ἀκράτου καὶ καθ' αὐτὸ ὄντος in the middle of a quotation.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Arist., *GC.* II.3 (on air), and, secondarily, Arist., *Pr.* 959b13-14 (on oil).

<sup>13</sup> Alexander probably had *GC.* 329b34-330a4 in mind: ἐπεὶ γὰρ τὸ ἀναπληστικόν ἐστί τοῦ ὑγροῦ διὰ τὸ μὴ ὥρισθαι μὲν εὐόριστον δ' εἶναι καὶ ἀκολουθεῖν τῷ ἀπτομένῳ, τὸ δὲ λεπτὸν ἀναπληστικόν (λεπτομερές γάρ, καὶ τὸ μικρομερές ἀναπληστικόν· ὅλον γὰρ ὅλου ἄπτεται, τὸ δὲ λεπτὸν μάλιστα τοιοῦτον), φανερόν ὅτι τὸ μὲν λεπτὸν ἔσται τοῦ ὑγροῦ τὸ δὲ παχὺ τοῦ ξηροῦ. Alexander's explanation, though not οὕτως, is found above the line in two Aristotelian manuscripts (Ambr. 435, H 50 sup, and Par. gr. 1921).

Furthermore, Aristotle is ambiguous on the precise qualities of air,<sup>14</sup> and finally, other Aristotelian passages show that, under normal circumstances, he will naturally identify τὸ ὑγρόν and watery substances, which would exclude air.<sup>15</sup> Thus, it is clear that Alexandrian quotations cannot be treated as quotations in the modern sense of the word. This can be further supported by a number of passages.<sup>16</sup>

### *Paraphrases*

The Alexandrian paraphrases can be dealt with more briefly. Obviously, the paraphrase will do nothing to solve such problems as questions of word order or the particular case of a given word. Not even if the Alexandrian reading presents a completely different word than the Aristotelian manuscripts can we typically make any case for adopting his reading, since such a change of words is also an obvious part of paraphrasing and commenting on a text.

The paraphrase on its own cannot reveal exactly what Alexander's copy of Aristotle wrote, but sometimes it might inspire scholarly conjectures. One trivial example to illustrate the procedure will suffice. In 442b20 the traditional Aristotelian manuscripts have πολυγώνων (misspelled πολυγόνων in a few of them), but Alexander uses πολυγωνίων in his paraphrase,<sup>17</sup> and this reading is also found in the Aristotelian manuscripts Vat. gr. 258, Laur. Plut. 87.20, and Par. gr. 1921, admittedly not the best Aristotelian manuscripts. Nevertheless,

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<sup>14</sup> Thus, the *De Generatione et Corruptione* generally disagrees with the *Meteorologica* as regards the description of air, and, as an illuminating parallel, GC. 334b35-335a1 claims that water is the only element which is εὐόριστον, but in *Cael.* 313b6-21 air is said also to possess this quality.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. e.g. *An.* 423a24-26 and *PA.* 650b18-33.

<sup>16</sup> For some examples, cf. Alex., *In Sens.* 82.10-12 vs. Arist., *Sens.* 442a25-27; Alex., *In Sens.* 97.12-14 vs. Arist., *Sens.* 444a5-7; Alex., *In Sens.* 136.9-11 vs. Arist., *Sens.* 447a16-17; Alex., *In Sens.* 147.23 vs. Arist., *Sens.* 448a25-26.

<sup>17</sup> Alex., *In Sens.* 86.16, 18. There is some textual corruption in this passage, but πολυγωνίων seems to be a sound.

πολυγωνίων is certainly a reading that should be carefully considered.<sup>18</sup> Similar examples could easily be given.<sup>19</sup>

The paraphrases, then, will provide support to the readings of the lemmata, quotations and readings known from Aristotelian manuscripts, but even this is a criterion that is difficult to handle properly. Let me provide just one example. In 443a5-6 Aristotle certainly wrote αὐτὰ ἀναπνέοντα, which most of the manuscripts have, but a small group of manuscripts have αὐτοὶ ἀναπνέοντες. Alexander (*In Sens.* 90.15-16.) also has αὐτὰ ἀναπνέοντα in his paraphrase, and this naturally leads Förster to state in his apparatus that Alexander's paraphrase supports the reading, but this is a doubtful inference. The corruption in some of the manuscripts has probably occurred because the explanative term ζῶα is crucially lacking from the Aristotelian manuscripts, but Alexander clarifies this in his paraphrase: ὅτι γὰρ ὅσα πνεύμονα τῶν ζώων οὐκ ἔχει οὐκ ἀναπνεῖ, δέδεικται αὐτῷ ἐν ἄλλοις.

This should not be misunderstood. I agree with Förster that it is very likely that Alexander had a manuscript with the reading αὐτὰ ἀναπνέοντα, but I cannot agree that Alexander's paraphrase shows this beyond any reasonable doubt; that his manuscript did, indeed, read this is rendered most likely but nothing more.

Two passages will illustrate further the difficulties of using the paraphrases. In 437a20 one branch of the Aristotelian tradition reads ἔνιοι, while the other has νῦν. Alexander paraphrases the passage (*In Sens.* 14.18-22) using τινάς, lending clear support to the *meaning* given by the first but not to the exact *wording*. Similarly, in 441a15 part of the Aristotelian tradition reads κειμένους, while the other part has κινουμένους. Alexander paraphrases (*In Sens.* 69.26-29) using μείναντα, again lending factual support to a manuscript reading but nothing more.

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<sup>18</sup> Thphr., *Sens.* §66 used πολυγωνίων. Cf. also Förster 1938 for some interesting textual suggestions based on the Alexandrian paraphrases.

<sup>19</sup> For just a few more examples, cf. e.g. 436a13 (πέντε for τέτταρες), 436b11 (ταύτη for τούτῳ), 437a21 (εἰς for πρὸς), 444a23 (ἀπ' αὐτῶν for ἐν αὐταῖς b, περὶ αὐτάς a).

### *Variatio lectionis*

Editors have rightly regarded the examples of *variatio lectionis* as the most valuable textual evidence. The Aristotelian passages involved are the following: 436b17, 437b18(?), 444b5, 446b15, 448b21 and 449a2. To illustrate how these passages fit in with the work of an Aristotelian editor I will provide the content of two of them.

The most interesting is 436b17,<sup>20</sup> which has also attracted some scholarly attention.<sup>21</sup> Alexander certainly read ὁ χυμός ἐστι τοῦ γευστικοῦ μορίου πάθος,<sup>22</sup> which is also the reading that he prefers, but having interpreted it he notes: γράφεται καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ γευστικοῦ μορίου τοῦ θρεπτικοῦ μορίου πάθος, noting that this was the interpretation of the earlier commentator Aspasius. Finally, he says that there is even a third variant reading (γράφεται καὶ οὕτως): τοῦ γευστικοῦ θρεπτικοῦ μορίου πάθος.

The third possibility (γευστικοῦ θρεπτικοῦ) should be immediately dismissed. Either γευστικοῦ or θρεπτικοῦ was at one point written, probably above the line, as an interpretative gloss on the other word, and interestingly the Aristotelian manuscript tradition has also divided, reading respectively θρεπτικοῦ and γευστικοῦ. With the exception of Förster, editors have hitherto favoured θρεπτικοῦ.

The other example is a comment on 444b5-6,<sup>23</sup> where Alexander quotes the passage, and interestingly quotes it differently from all the Aristotelian manuscripts. Instead of writing just ὥσπερ, he has καὶ ὅλως, ὥσπερ. But he immediately adds: καὶ φέρεται ἔν τισιν ἀντιγράφοις ἡ γραφή χωρὶς τοῦ καὶ ὅλως, καὶ ἔστιν οὕτως ἔχουσα καταλληλοτέρα καὶ φανερώτερον ἔχουσα ἡ γραφή. The only possible difficulty concerning these variant readings would be if it turned out that some of them were in fact later additions to Alexander's commentary, but this is not likely.

<sup>20</sup> Alex., *In Sens.* 9.18-10.11.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Moraux 1984: 244-5, and Moraux 2001: 397-8.

<sup>22</sup> I ignore the problem of word order, although Alexander is not clear on the location of πάθος. The important term, for our purpose, is γευστικοῦ.

<sup>23</sup> Alex., *In Sens.* 100.23-101.6.

There can be no question about the authenticity of the comment on 436b17. It is thoroughly embedded, and provides information of a kind (Aspasius) that would not be easily accessible to later commentators. Furthermore, even though Aspasius was not unknown as a Peripatetic commentator,<sup>24</sup> and even though the earliest surviving commentary on any work by Aristotle is Aspasius' commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (CAG. XIX.1, Berlin 1889), his name is not the one most likely to be interpolated by scribes. On the contrary, if he is mentioned it is really most likely to be by Alexander himself, who definitely knew and used his commentaries on other Aristotelian works as well. The later commentators, such as Simplicius and Philoponus, did not know Aspasius' commentaries well. It is sometimes uncertain whether they quote Aspasius from the lost commentaries of Alexander or from another source, but they hardly knew the original commentaries.<sup>25</sup>

The other passages, in which Alexander discusses variant readings, should also be considered genuine.<sup>26</sup>

A related feature of Alexander's commentary also belongs under the heading of *variatio lectionis*. In two passages Alexander indicates that he is unhappy with the manuscript reading and suggests an emendation. Thus, commenting on 448a16 (*In Sens.* 145.21-3) he states that the passage would be clearer and grammatically better if we were to read τοῦ λευκοῦ. In the preceding lemma the text reads τὸ λευκόν, and this is also the text of all the relevant Aristotelian manuscripts except two (Vat. gr. 253 and Marc. gr. Z 214), which read τοῦ λευκοῦ. This is certainly helpful, but the only thing it proves for certain is that Alexander did *not* read τοῦ λευκοῦ in his manuscript(s). The common ancestor of the two Aristotelian manuscripts may well have taken the clue from Alexander.

The other passage is in Alexander's comment on 448b29, focusing on 449a2 (*In Sens.* 162.7-11). It is part of a quite extensive discussion of a

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Moraux 1984: 226.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Sharples 1990: 87-8, with the relevant references.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. also Moraux 1984: 244-5n62.

*variatio lectionis* (*In Sens.* 161.4-162.11), and the emendation does not add to our knowledge of Alexander's text.

### III. ALEXANDER AS A TEXTUAL WITNESS

Supported by the investigation conducted above, I will now proceed to describe the value of Alexander's commentary as a textual witness to Aristotle's *De Sensu*. It will be seen that I am far more restrictive than Förster (1942) and Ross (1955). On the other hand, Siwek (1963) and Mugnier (1965) do not cite Alexander very often, and they do not distinguish between lemma, quotation, paraphrase and variant discussions. Such a distinction I believe to be important because of their different value as textual witnesses. As sigla I prefer the same as the ones used by Förster and Ross:

Alex<sup>l</sup> = Alexander's lemma.

Alex<sup>c</sup> = Alexander's citation (quotations).

Alex<sup>p</sup> = Alexander's paraphrase (paraphrase and interpretation).

Alex<sup>v</sup> = Alexander's discussion of a textual variant.

First of all, unlike Förster, I do not find it very useful to quote Alexandrian readings when Alexander's own manuscript tradition has been corrupted. When the Alexandrian manuscripts differ, readings should only be recorded if there can be no controversy over the choice of reading. Förster's method of recording Alexandrian variant readings in his critical apparatus only solves the problem, if the editor also provides the reader with the relevant information as regards the value of the different Alexandrian manuscripts.

The lemmata (Alex<sup>l</sup>) and the quotations (Alex<sup>c</sup>) can generally be treated as recording the probable Aristotelian text, as read by Alexander, but some restrictions is imposed on the editor. Thus, if no paraphrase supports a reading from a lemma or from a quotation, I would regard it as "probably a faithful reproduction of Alexander's Aristotle", not as "Alexander's Aristotle". Even though neither of them holds great authority, lemmata and quotations have often be cited in the apparatus, and, I believe, with good reason: partly because their reading sometimes

have interesting philosophical implications, partly because the reader must have these readings at his disposal to make up his own mind about the Aristotelian text. However, Alexander's readings can never be the deciding factor. Thus, I have not found a single Alexandrian reading provided by lemma or quotation, which I would be willing to accept without further evidence or manuscript support. I have, however, carefully examined all his readings.<sup>27</sup>

The Alexandrian paraphrases (Alex<sup>p</sup>) are not solid textual evidence, and generally they cannot be used, unless they clearly agree with other Alexandrian textual evidence. The editor may, however, still want to cite interesting readings in the apparatus, when they can be thought in some way to give rise to scholarly conjecture, and when they clearly seem to support a particular reading of a lemma or a quotation.<sup>28</sup>

The few instances where Alexander discusses textual variants (Alex<sup>v</sup>) can be used freely by an Aristotelian editor and without the restrictions imposed on the other Alexandrian quotations. This means that when the apparatus records two Alexandrian variants in the same passage, and one of them is a discussed variant (Alex<sup>v</sup>), the corresponding Alex<sup>c</sup> in the same passage is also textually reliable as a manuscript reading, since that quotation will also have been discussed by Alexander. Therefore, the passage 436b17 discussed above allows the editor to treat both θρεπτικοῦ and γευστικοῦ as textual variants on a par with manuscript readings. In

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<sup>27</sup> A few examples. In 436b2 Förster (1938: 467) defended the reading τῆς τε ψυχῆς based on Alexander's quotation (*In Sens.* 7.15), although, apparently, he changed his mind before publishing the text in 1942 and omitted τε with all the valuable Aristotelian manuscripts. Ross (1955) printed τῆς τε ψυχῆς. Besides the Alexandrian quotation, the reading is supported only by two inferior manuscripts (Vat. gr. 258 and Vat. gr. 266) and should not be accepted. An exact parallel from the Alexandrian lemmata (*In Sens.* 8.14-15) is found in 436b9. A more interesting example is provided by 441a23, discussed above in the section on quotations. Based on Alexander's reading, and only secondarily on the two inferior manuscripts, Förster and Ross both print οὕτως ὑγρῶν. However, as argued above, this reading is actually not superior, and it is certainly lacking in manuscript authority. Thus, it should not be accepted.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, the Alexandrian text of 437a26-29 (Alex., *In Sens.* 16.4-16) gave rise to Förster's text, cf. Förster 1938: 460-1. Cf. also the discussion of paraphrases above.



these instances Alexander is a prime source, because his securely based testimony is 700-800 years older than the oldest Aristotelian manuscripts.

The passages in the commentary concerned with emendations of the text does not, of course, constitute textual evidence, but they can be used on a par with every intelligent conjecture.

Thus, in a critical apparatus on Aristotle's *De Sensu* an Alexandrian reading only has the strength of a manuscript reading when it is Alex<sup>v</sup> or the corresponding Alex<sup>c</sup>. The editor will take the Alexandrian readings into consideration, because in pure form they ought to present a very early textual tradition. However, as has been shown, Alexander's lemmata, quotations and paraphrases can almost never with certainty be taken as pure forms of Aristotle's text. Therefore, when it is time to make the final decision as to which reading to adopt in a particular passage, we will have to take refuge to that old judge: Philosophy herself. I fear that using Alexander as the foundation editors tend to forget this judge in the seemingly clear-cut passages, even if Philosophy had, in fact, something to say.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> I am grateful to Sten Ebbesen for criticising several drafts of this article and for making a number of valuable suggestions.

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