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*Alexander Aphrodisiensis, De anima libri mantissa: A New Edition of the Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* by Robert W. Sharples

Peripatoi 21. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008. Pp. viii + 269. ISBN 978-3-11-019644-3. Cloth €82.24, \$136.00

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Alexander of Aphrodisias (*flor. ca* AD 200) was the last ancient commentator on Aristotle's works to write as an Aristotelian rather than as a Platonist. An index of his later stature is his being referred to by his successors in this line of philosophical business simply as 'The Commentator'. In addition to his extensive commentaries, we still possess a considerable number of other treatises. The mss containing his *On the Soul* present as its second book what are really a series of 25 short and loosely related pieces on psychological, physiological, and moral topics. The title *Mantissa*—literally 'Makeweight'—or *Supplement* is due to Freudenthal and was adopted by Ivo Bruns for his 1887 edition as part of the monumental Berlin edition of the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*.

Broadly speaking, these short tracts divide into lists of arguments against theses held by rival schools such as the Stoics on the one hand and a rather heterogeneous group of discussions of topics familiar from other treatises by Alexander, on the other. An example is provided by the second tract or section, the *On the Intellect*, which develops Alexander's most influential theory (identifying Aristotle's active intellect with God), and the treatment of the same subject in *On the Soul* [Brunns 1887, 80–92]. There are certain differences between the two accounts which are perhaps best explained—as argued persuasively by Paolo Accattino [2001]—by seeing *Mantissa* 2 as an earlier tract. In other cases, however, the relation seems to be the reverse, that is to say, what we have in the *Mantissa* represents a reworking of discussions on the same topics offered by Alexander elsewhere. It is not even certain that everything assembled in the

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ISSN 1549-4497 (online)

ISSN 1549-4470 (print)

ISSN 1549-4489 (CD-ROM)

*Aestimatio* 7 (2010) 43–44

*Mantissa* is by Alexander himself. In any case, the collection may be a reflection of the teaching of Alexander's school about which, in spite of his later renown, we know almost nothing. Still, the text offers valuable glimpses of the philosophical 'scene' of Alexander's day with its discussions between Peripatetics, Platonists, and Stoics.

This edition by the late R. W. Sharples is based on a comprehensive and meticulous study of the manuscript traditions (including the Arabic one) and represents a considerable improvement over that of Bruns, from which it diverges in 132 places. Bruns, moreover, had to work in a hurry and, as Sharples shows, his apparatus is riddled with mistakes. Indeed, Sharples' edition is an impressive work of scholarship of a kind that has become rare. The introduction and excellent comments included in this volume are based on those accompanying Sharples' translation [2004] in the well-known Aristotelian commentators series published by Duckworth. Readings followed in Sharples 2004 have here been changed in 15 places (listed in 28n67).

For the historian of science, the *Mantissa* is perhaps most interesting for its relatively extensive dealings with the physiology of vision [§§9–16]. In addition to Aristotelian mind-body theorizing (hylomorphism) there are also discussions of fundamental physical concepts such as body and the elements.

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