

create, hence to be behind all sexual unions whether well or ill-fated.<sup>32</sup>

The vase will have been fashioned to represent two famous, heroic, marriages which met contrasting fates. It was itself in all probability a wedding-gift to some noble, maybe even to an imperial, personage of the Augustan period.<sup>33</sup> Its secrets were, and are, capable of decipherment, using the 'visual aid' of the rebus or pun. The result is a simple, balanced and verifiable (from iconography as well as by the puns) interpretation of the two sides of the vase.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> C. Kerényi, *The gods of the Greeks* (London 1958) 154; O. Kern, *Religion der Griechen* (Berlin 1926) iii 127 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Haynes, *The Portland vase*<sup>2</sup> 21.

<sup>34</sup> I am grateful for the comments and encouragement of John Boardman, Brian Cook and Roger Ling, though none of them is to be held to endorse everything that is found here. Part of the above argument, that relating to Side B, has appeared in 'Achilles and Helen on White Island in the Euxine Pontus' (in Russian), *VDI* (1994.3) 121-6.

### Theophrastus in Bessarion\*

There is no denying that Theophrastus ranks among the most prolific Peripatetic philosophers. Diogenes Laertius lists 225 items in his bibliography, some of them perhaps twice—first as an independent treatise, then as part of a larger work.<sup>1</sup> As time went on, this vast *oeuvre* suffered the usual vicissitudes: the overwhelming majority of it has been partly or entirely lost. In sharp contrast to the Frankish West, where, despite great losses, more texts were in circulation under Theophrastus' name than was justified, in the ever shrinking Byzantine world we find comparatively few references to him. But this surely does not mean that the small number of references are unreliable. It is because of the continuity between Byzantium and ancient Greece up to the 12th century, and perhaps even beyond, that we are entitled to assume in the case of Theophrastus that his thoughts were faithfully transmitted.<sup>2</sup> To remain with the contemporaries of Bessarion, mention can be made of Andronicus Callistus, in whose *Defensio Theodori Gazae* there is a passage attributing to Theophrastus the view that movement is the distinctive characteristic of

\* The bulk of the paper was written in the Warburg Institute and I am extremely grateful to Pamela Huby, Jill Kraye, Luc Deitz, Bob Sharples and the anonymous referee for their generous help. All of the remaining shortcomings are of course mine.

<sup>1</sup> D.L. v 42-51 = Test.1 *FHSG*.

<sup>2</sup> The continuity up to the 12th century has been pointed out by Ch. Schmitt, 'Theophrastus in the Middle Ages', in *Viator* ii (1971) 251-271. Concerning this issue, my debt to his works is evident. One example may be Michael Psellus who was conversant with some of Theophrastus' works on physics, see 77.27 (O'Meara, Leipzig 1989) and 33.57-73 (Duffy, Stuttgart-Leipzig).

physical objects.<sup>3</sup> This is a rather general statement, but its fidelity can be proved by the aid of earlier indirect sources.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, in a letter to Theodore Gaza, Bessarion himself also discusses the ways of interpreting Aristotle and Theophrastus.<sup>5</sup>

The testimonies in Bessarion can be divided into two groups. On the one hand, there are brief remarks hinting at a given treatise of Theophrastus, such as *De Plantis*<sup>6</sup> or his *Physics*;<sup>7</sup> these, however, does not contain very much information, and indicate only that he was familiar with these works. But we know from other sources as well that he himself owned a copy of the *De Plantis*.<sup>8</sup> The other group consists of longer passages which are doubtless quotations from reports in late antique philosophers, or else paraphrases of them. The best example comes from the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. The text runs as follows:

καὶ Θεόφραστος, ὁ τῶν τοῦ [scil. Aristotelis] ἀκροατῶν γνησιώτατος, ἀρχὴν τε κινήσεως τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἔμψυχον ἐν τοῖς Περὶ Οὐρανοῦ τίθειαι λέγων "εἰ γὰρ θεῖος ἐστὶ καὶ τὴν ἀρίστην ἔχει διαγωγὴν, ἔμψυχός ἐστιν. οὐδὲν γὰρ τίμιον ἄνευ ψυχῆς". (152.20-23 Mohler)

'And Theophrastus, the most excellent among Aristotle's disciples, claims in the *De Caelo* that the soul is the principle of movement and the heavens are ensouled, as he says: "if it is divine and has the best mode of existence, it is ensouled, since without soul there is nothing to be honoured".'

Without naming his source, Bessarion may be quoting here from Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus*.<sup>9</sup> We

<sup>3</sup> 188.15 ff. (L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann* iii, Paderborn 1942). It is highly likely that here Andronicus Callistus is dependent on Theophrastus, Test.143 *FHSG* = Simplicius, in *Phys.* 20.17-26. For this point I am indebted to Bob Sharples.

<sup>4</sup> Motion is considered in each category, cf. Test. 153 ABC (all in Simplicius' in *Phys.*); involves divisibility, cf. Test. 155 AB (from Themistius' in *Phys.*) and C (in Simplicius' in *Phys.*).

<sup>5</sup> *Ep.* 7, PG clxi, col. 685.

<sup>6</sup> *Epistulae* 34, 36. In the following, though some of Bessarion's works are also found in PG clxi, my references, whenever it is possible, will be to the page and line of L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann* ii (Paderborn 1927) and iii (Paderborn 1942).

<sup>7</sup> 214.4 Mohler. Bob Sharples has pointed out to me that the mediator is Simplicius (in *De Caelo* 564.24 Heiberg = Theophrastus, test. 238 *FHSG*).

<sup>8</sup> See L. Labowsky, 'Theophrastus' *De Plantis* and Bessarion', in *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* v (1961) 132-154, and ead., *Bessarion's Library and the Bibliotheca Marciana. Six early inventories* (Rome 1979) 193, for other works by Theophrastus in Bessarion, see *ibid.*, pp.221-3; E. Mioni, 'Bessarione bibliofilo, filologo', in *RSBN* n.s. v (1968) 61-83, and see also *id.*, 'Bessarione scriba e alcuni suoi collaboratori', in *Miscellanea marciana di studi bessaronie*, (Padova 1976) 263-318, esp. pp.286, 299.

<sup>9</sup> ii 122.10-7 Diehl. This is a part of Test. 159 Fortenbaugh et al. See also Proclus, *In Tim.* iii 136.1-2 Diehl, and *Theol. Plat.* I 64.17-8 Saffrey-Westerink. The references in his works show that Bessarion had extensive knowledge of Proclus, see Mioni 1976 (n. 8) 279-80, 283. There is a codex containing Proclus' *In Tim.* (Marc. gr. 195) where scholia by Bessarion are to be found, cf. Mioni, 1976 (n. 8) 284 and the *Praefatio* by E. Diehl to his edition of Proclus' commentary (vol. i, p.viii). And

can trust Proclus that Theophrastus endowed the heavens (οὐρανός) with a soul, for the problem was raised by his master, Aristotle, who believed that the prime mover caused motion as the object of desire (ὄρεκτόν).<sup>10</sup> And because it directly moves the outer sphere, a plausible inference is that the heavens, which were equated with it, are ensouled since desire is a capacity of the soul. In his short metaphysical treatise, Theophrastus also considers whether the eternal revolving of the outer sphere is due to the desire implanted in it by the prime mover, which in turn would mean that this sphere is endowed with a soul.<sup>11</sup>

The cuckoo's egg in this classification is a passage from the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. The text is worth quoting in full:

οὐ γὰρ ἐγγενῶσθαι τῷ σώματι τὸν νοῦν Ἀριστοτέλης φησίν, ἀλλ' ἐγγίνεσθαι. "ὁ δὲ νοῦς, φησιν, εἰκὲν ἐγγίνεσθαι οὐσα τις οὐσα, καὶ οὐ φθειρεσθαι". ὅπερ ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ τῶν Περὶ Ζῴων Γενέσεως "θύραθεν εἰσιέναι" φησί. ταῦτα δὲ Θεόφραστος καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος, Θεμιστίος τε καὶ Ἀβεροῦς οὕτω νοοῦσιν, ὡς κοινὸν τινος ὄντος, ἐξ οὗ ἕκαστος ἀνθρωπος ἅμα τῷ γεννηθῆναι νοῦν ἐαυτῷ προσλαμβάνει, καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀποδοθέν τε καὶ οἰκειωθὲν αὐτῷ μέρος θνήσκων οὕτω καταμιμπάνει εἰς τὸ κοινόν, ὥσπερ καὶ γενόμενος ἐμπεριελήφει, οὐκ ἄλλως ἢ ὡς ἂν τις γεννηθεῖς μετέχειν λέγοιτο τοῦ ἡλίου, ἀποθανῶν δὲ στερεῖσθαι καὶ ὁ ἔλαβε φῶς ἤδη καταλιπεῖν. θύραθεν γὰρ καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἡλίου φῶς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἔπεισιν μῆτε γινόμενον μῆτε φθειρόμενον, ἀλλ' ἀφθαρτον καὶ ἀγήνητον. κοινὸν δ' ὅμως τοῦτο γε ἀγαθὸν ἐγγίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὐδεὶς ἀρνεῖται. οὐχὶ ὅν μερικὴν τινα ψυχὴν εἶναι τὴν θύραθεν ἐπεισιούσαν ἐκείνοι βούλονται, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ ἀπειλημμένην κατ' ἐξιδίωσιν. καὶ εἴ τις δὲ παραδέξαιτο τὴν τοῦ ἐναντίου λέξιν ἐκείνην τὴν ἐγγενῶσθαι, ἐν ἣ ὀλεται μεγάλην ἰσχὺν ἐγκείσθαι, οὐχ ἔπειτα ἀπλῶς ἀρχεσθαι τοῦ εἶναι τὸν νοῦν ἅμα τῷ σώματι, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἐν τινι ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ᾧ μὴ ἦν πρότερον, ὡς τὴν ἀρχὴν ταύτην καὶ τὸ ἀρχεσθαι οὐ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ νοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος αὐτοῦ εἶναι. (408.16-34 Mohler, my emphasis [P.L.] )

he had autograph notes on a copy of *The Platonic Theology* as well (Monacensis graecus 547), see H.D. Saffrey, 'Notes autographes du cardinal Bessarion dans un manuscrit de Munich', in *Byzantion* xxxv (1965) 536-563.

<sup>10</sup> *Metaphysics* xii 7, 1072a26 ff.; cf. *Physics* i 9, 192a16-7. For further references, see W.D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics: a revised text with introduction and commentary* (Oxford 1924) *ad. loc.*

<sup>11</sup> 6a5-15 Ross-Fobes. There are different readings of the passage, of course, but they do not alter the line of thought essentially; for these readings, see also G.W. Most, 'Three Latin translations of Theophrastus' *Metaphysics*', in *RHT* xcvi (1988) 169-201. It may be that Bessarion also translated this treatise into Latin and this was the version printed by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples in his edition of Argyropylos' translation of the first twelve books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and of Bessarion's translation of the whole work, as it was suggested by J.A. Fabricius, *Bibliothecae Graecae liber iii: de scriptoribus qui claruerunt a Platone usque ad tempora nati Christi sospitatoris nostri* (Hamburg 1716) 242, referred to by G.W. Most, *op. cit.*, p.191 who casts doubt on this view.

'For Aristotle does not say that the intellect is born with the body, but rather that it comes into it. As he says: the intellect seems to come into it, being a kind of independent substance which does not perish. Concerning this intellect he says in the second book of *De Generatione Animalium* that "it comes in from without". This is the view of Theophrastus and Alexander, Themistius and Averroes as well; they regarded it as *something common* from which each human being takes an intellect at the moment of birth. Assigned and appropriate to him, this part returns to *the common* [intellect] when the individual dies, just as he took over it when he was born. This is exactly as if we said that after birth we partake of the sun and, after death, are deprived of it and the light which we possessed has left us. For the light of the sun arrives to men *from without*, since this light is not created and corruptible, but rather imperishable and uncreated. Nevertheless, no one denies that this *common* [intellect], which is good, comes into men. Since they do not claim that the soul *coming in from without* is particular, but rather that it was *torn out from the common* [intellect] in the process of becoming particular. Even if someone accepted the opposite interpretation, that the soul is born with the body, which seems to be very persuasive, it does not follow that the intellect begins to exist simultaneously with the body, but rather that it is in some indivisible entity in which it had not been before, as it is the principle, and the beginning not of the intellect, but of its completion.'

Obviously, this passage is too long and informative to be assigned simply to the first group; but at the same time we do not know of any ancient source which ascribes such a view to Theophrastus.

In order to come closer to Bessarion's line of thought, it may be of some use here to touch briefly upon the debate between Byzantine scholars which provoked him to write this work. In 1438-39 Georgius Gemistus Plethon composed a philosophical invective which charged Aristotle with corrupting the Greek spirit and therefore, indirectly, being responsible for the miserable situation of the Byzantine empire. One of the targets of his criticism was denial of the immortality of the soul. He blames Averroes for interpreting Aristotle as believing in the mortality of the soul, but thinks Aristotle was ambiguous on the issue: supporting immortality in *De Anima* but failing to emphasize in the *Nicomachean Ethics* the rewards and punishments of the afterlife, which would be consequent on any theory of the imperishability of the individual soul. Plato's claim, namely, that soul was an incorporeal and non-composite reality, not subject to passing away, was rejected by Aristotle. Gemistus Plethon saw a great decline in this rejection and his treatise initiated the controversy over the superiority of Plato to Aristotle. The controversy engendered a series of interesting and, in some cases, quite important works and exposed a great number of Platonic, Neoplatonic and patristic texts.<sup>12</sup> The number

<sup>12</sup> The *editio princeps* of the *De Differentiis* is from Venice, 1540. On the controversy, see J. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: a biography and a study of his rhetoric and logic* (Leiden 1976) 201-230, and P.O. Kristeller, 'Platonismo bizantino e

of Greeks who felt it urgent to defend Aristotle was great and the most fanatical of them was, no doubt, George of Trebizond, who fled from Crete to Italy where he then pursued a colourful career. He worked as an interpreter and translator of Plato's *Laws* including the *Epinomis* for Pope Nicholas V, and, at the request of Nicholas of Cusa, but at the same time with some hesitation, he translated Plato's *Parmenides* into Latin. In his *Comparationes phylosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* published in 1458 and printed in Venice in 1523, he aimed to demonstrate not only that Plato was inferior to Aristotle but also that the Platonism represented by Gemistus Plethon was nothing other than paganism. He also denied the view that Plato and Aristotle could be reconciled, regarding all attempts to harmonize their doctrines as based solely on the authority of Simplicius.<sup>13</sup> But in some cases he seems to be rather quick-witted. Thus one of the surprising conclusions he comes to is that Plato's idealism led to Epicurus' materialism, Platonic Eros led to Epicurean hedonism and the union of these two by Muhammad led to the paganism of Gemistus Plethon. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. Furthermore, George objected to Plato's style as well, saying that it was too complicated and ornate and, for this reason, it invalidated his arguments.<sup>14</sup> George's accusations touched Bessarion in a sore spot for two reasons. First, he could not agree with an appraisal of Aristotle which was detrimental to Plato;<sup>15</sup> still less could he accept an accusation against Gemistus Pletho, whose disciple he was in his youth at Mistra, the capital of the Greek Despotate of Morea, where Gemistus had founded a private school. The school imitated Plato's Academy and Gemistus was especially fond of calling himself the 'Second Plato'. Bessarion spent several years there and his later letters also witness his appreciation of his teacher.<sup>16</sup> His reply to the criticisms of George of

Trebizond, the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, was not published until 1469; it appeared in Latin but we know of three Greek versions which had been composed in previous years.<sup>17</sup> As a general feature of this work, we may say that, instead of attacking Aristotle, Bessarion tried to bring him into harmony with Plato, saying that their differences were only verbal and not doctrinal.

Now we can turn to the text. This section forms part of the long interpretative tradition of Aristotle's *De Anima* iii 5. It is true that for Aristotle, soul, as the structure or form responsible for the various functions of the living body, cannot escape death. Yet one living function, intellect, seems to be an exception: in Aristotle's view, thinking is not the function of a particular living bodily organ. Intellect thus seems to have a claim to immortality. However, Aristotle is at his most obscure when treating this point. His cryptic and puzzling remarks state the problem in a new form rather than solving it. Either because the aporetic character of Aristotle's treatment was too daring for later commentators or because the change in the philosophical climate had advanced so far that later thinkers spent more time on questions like this, or perhaps because of both factors, the clarification of what νοῦς ποιητικός precisely (*intellectus agens*) is and how it functions became an urgent concern for Post-Aristotelian philosophers, including not only late antique authors but several mediaeval and Renaissance ones as well.<sup>18</sup> Besides Theophrastus, Bessarion enumerates three later commentators, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius and Averroes, who all thought about this issue in the same way. All of them were regarded as Aristotelians and this fact was also exploited by Bessarion as an argument against George of Trebizond's claim that Aristotle had believed in the immortality of individual soul in a way which was completely compatible with Thomist doctrine. All these commentators believed that each human being obtains his intellect at the moment of birth, that is to say, we receive it from without. This intellect or soul is not, however, particular to individuals.<sup>19</sup> The process of acquiring an intellect is not therefore to be conceived by postulating discrete intellects which, like discrete numbers, cluster in the deepest recesses of the universe, with one of them somehow falling into us as we come into the world. It is rather the case that there is a common intellect, uncreated and imperishable, from which, at the moment of our nativity, shafts flow into us just as beams of light radiate out from the Sun. Although

fiorentino e la controversia su Platone ed Aristotele', in A. Pertusi (ed.), *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Firenze 1966) 103-16. On Gemistus, see recently C.M. Woodhouse, *Gemistus Plethon: the last of the Hellenes* (Oxford 1986). The passages relevant to *De Differentiis* are 193-214.

<sup>13</sup> See Simplicius, in *Cat.* 7.23-32. But this was a view that, to some extent, most of the Neoplatonist commentators accepted.

<sup>14</sup> 'Verborum enim ornatus et compositionis pompa si latius confluat et quasi luctator nudos in harena lacertos ostendet iactetque, omnem gravitatem suam infringit.' Cf. J. Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana: texts, documents and bibliographies of George of Trebizond* (Binghamton, NY 1984) 303-4, in George's preface to Cardinal Nicolaus Cusanus for the translation of Plato's *Parmenides*, passage (2).

<sup>15</sup> As he says: 'Εμὲ δὲ . . . φιλοῦντα μὲν Ἰσθι Πλάτωνα, φιλοῦντα δ' Ἀριστοτέλη, καὶ ὡς σοφωτάτω σεβομένω ἑκατέρω. *PG* clxi, *Ep.* 8, col.689 = *Ep.* 49 Mohler, iii 512.27. On his irenic attitude, see also J.W. Taylor, 'Bessarion the Mediator', *TAPA* lv (1924) 120-27 along with the edition of Bessarion's short criticism of Gemistus' attack on Aristotle's theory of substance.

<sup>16</sup> He thinks Pletho is σοφός τε καὶ μεγάλης τῷ ὄντι εὐφύτα, *PG* clxi, *Ep.* 8, col.688 = *Ep.* 49 Mohle, iii 511; see also the distichon he intended for Pletho's epitaph, *PG* clxi, *Ep.* 10 col.697 = *Ep.* 22 Mohler, iii 469. Some important events in his youth have been examined by E. Loenertz, 'Pour la biographie du Cardinal Bessarion', in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* x (1944) 116-49. The best summary I know of Bessarion's life and activity is given by L. Labowsky, 'Bessarione', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Roma 1967) 686-96.

<sup>17</sup> On the different versions, see J. Monfasani, 'Bessarion Latinus', in *Rinascimento* (2a ser.) xxi (1981) 165-213, and *id.*, 'Still More on "Bessarion Latinus"', in *Rinascimento* (2a ser.) xxiii (1983) 217-37.<sup>18</sup> The later mediaeval and Renaissance theories have been summarized by Z. Kuksewicz, 'The potential and the agent intellect', in *Cambridge History of Later Mediaeval Philosophy* (Cambridge 1982) 595-602, and by E. Kessler, 'The intellectual soul', in *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge 1988) 485-535 respectively.

<sup>19</sup> I think Bessarion takes νοῦς and ψυχή as being interchangeable here, which is rather baffling. One reason for this manoeuvre may be that his aim here was to point to an imperishable element in the human existence. Therefore, what was important to him is to find such an element in the soul, which might have made him possible to talk figuratively about the immortality of the soul by means of the immortality of the intellect.

Bessarion does not state it explicitly, we can add confidently that in this process the common intellect is not diminished and that the shaft of intellect does not differ essentially from the substance out of which it has come. Furthermore, the text reveals that by being separated from the common source this shaft becomes the intellect of a particular individual; and we will not overstrain the term (κατ' ἐξιδίωσιν) if we say that, simultaneously with leaving its origin, the shaft becomes peculiar and specific, insofar as it begins working on the basis of sense impressions proper to the individual into whom it has descended. Death means the reversal of this process.

Easily the best way of checking the reliability of this testimony is to see whether this statement is in line with what we know of Themistius, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes from other sources.

Themistius, whose writings on Aristotle's works resemble precise and reliable paraphrases rather than the extensive commentaries made by the later Neoplatonists, devotes a separate digression to the productive or agent intellect.<sup>20</sup> Among other issues, he sets out to decide whether it is unique or multiple.<sup>21</sup> His attempt to settle the matter starts by taking the example of light. Light is one insofar as its source, the Sun, is one. The common light, which never passes away, becomes visible to living beings and leads their sight from bare potentiality towards actuality, actual existence, without being entirely apprehended, for living beings are incapable of grasping its inexhaustible nature. We are connected to the eternity of the productive intellect in the very same way.<sup>22</sup> This simile also suggests that the common intellect is not split up at the outset so that later on, at birth, one of these distinct intellects can become part of a human soul.

As regards Alexander of Aphrodisias, though the Peripatetic commentator utters some words about the intellect coming from outside (νοῦς θύραθεν) in his own *De Anima*,<sup>23</sup> for our purposes it is more useful to turn to the *Mantissa*, where he treats the activity of intellect in a separate treatise.<sup>24</sup> Of course he appeals to Aristotle, who compared the activity of the productive intellect to that of light.<sup>25</sup> But, to avoid any misunderstanding, it must be made clear that in the appropriate chapter of his *De Anima* what Aristotle says is only that light actualizes colours—and nothing more.<sup>26</sup> He is not speaking of the activity of sight; still less does he allude

to any common light analogous to the common intellect. Returning to Alexander, he also considers this intellect to be immortal and to think exclusively about itself, a notion which he took from Aristotle, whose God was also wrapped up in his own thoughts.<sup>27</sup> The productive intellect cannot encapsulate any potentiality and for this reason is immaterial (ἀυλος), unmixed (ἀμιγής) and simple (ἀπλοῦς),<sup>28</sup> contrary to our own intellect (ὁ ἡμέτερος νοῦς), which is compound; moreover, one component of our intellect is said to be the tool or organ (ὄργανον) of that divine intellect which functions eternally.<sup>29</sup> It is this intellect that brings about and activates our thought, just as light is responsible for the activity of our sight. Whatever we think of the analogy between light and the productive intellect used by Alexander, it is an analogy which, strangely enough, differs a great deal from Aristotle's, but has some affinity to that proposed by Themistius.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, if the productive intellect is separated (ἐκκρίνεται) from the body with which it previously constituted a mixture, the body itself will perish.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, it is natural to infer that when death sets in, the productive intellect, after having dwelt in us, returns to its divine origin. But because the divine intellect is always pure and unmixed, the eternal part of our soul cannot be regarded as particularized or individual. There is a complication, however, in that Bessarion here attributes to Alexander the view that the intellect enters each person at the moment of birth. But this view was rejected by Alexander who reports it as someone else's explanation of how intellect comes from outside. Here Bessarion, or his source, may not have distinguished between different sections of the *De Intellectu*.<sup>32</sup>

The most detailed and influential exposition of the problem was put forward by Averroes, though here it is not necessary to discuss his views at length. In his *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De Anima* he distinguishes several intellects, one of which is the eternal agent intellect.<sup>33</sup> This intellect is related to universals as light is to colours.<sup>34</sup> But he links the explanation of this intellect to the more comprehensive problem of the immortality of soul, much discussed in the Middle Ages. He interprets the immaterial nature of the soul as indicating that it cannot be individuated at all. The soul is eternal only as a species: after having left their respective bodies, individual souls become absolutely one with each other. Moreover, as he writes

<sup>20</sup> In *De Anima* 8.13-109.3 CAG v,3 Heinze. The text has been translated into English and annotated by R.B. Todd in F.M. Schroeder & R.B. Todd, *Two Greek commentators on the intellect* (Toronto 1990).

<sup>21</sup> 103.20-105.12.

<sup>22</sup> 103.24-30.

<sup>23</sup> 90.11-91.16 CAG Suppl. ii,1 Bruns.

<sup>24</sup> 106.19-113.24 CAG Suppl. ii,1. English translation and commentary are by F.M. Schroeder in the work cited above at n. 20. He doubts whether this section of the *Mantissa* is actually by Alexander, see pp.6-22. But the text was certainly taken to be genuine in the Middle Ages. For another dubious section, now of the *Quaestiones*, see *Alexander of Aphrodisias, Quaestiones 1.1-2.15* tr. comm. R.W. Sharples (London/Ithaca NY, 1992) 5 n.126 (to the *Quaestio* 1,11).

<sup>25</sup> 107.30-1; this illuminationist doctrine has been treated by F.M. Schroeder *op. cit.*, pp.64-6.

<sup>26</sup> iii 5, 430a15-17.

<sup>27</sup> In Aristotle, see *Metaphysics* xii 7, in Alexander, *Mantissa* 108.28-109.1.

<sup>28</sup> 109.29-30.

<sup>29</sup> 122.19-29.

<sup>30</sup> On the analogy, see Schroeder, *op. cit.*, p.19.

<sup>31</sup> 112.31-113.1.

<sup>32</sup> 112.5-113.12, esp. 112.21. According to P. Moraux, 'Aristoteles, der Lehrer Alexanders von Aphrodisias', *AGPh* xlix (1967) 169-182, Alexander refers to Aristotle of Mytilene. F.M. Schroeder rejects this view at *op. cit.*, p.30. For details and references, see R.W. Sharples, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias: scholasticism and innovation', in *ANRW* ii 36.2. 1176-1243, esp. p.1212. I owe this point to Dr Sharples.

<sup>33</sup> On the division, see e.g. *CCAA* vi,1 389.71-82 Crawford. Reference to the *Averroes Latinus* seems to be appropriate also because we have no evidence that Bessarion could cope with the Arabic text.

<sup>34</sup> 234.99-100.

in the *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, if immortality means that the soul does not die when the body passes away, or that it has an immortal part, then, after having left the body, it must form a numerical unity. Consequently, this unity means that the souls of two living persons, in Averroes' example, those of Zaid and Amr, are identical in form. This identical form, however, inheres in a numerical, i.e. a divisible, multiplicity, but only through the multiplicity of matter.<sup>35</sup> Averroes thus belongs to the populous group of mediaeval philosophers who believed that the individuating principle is the matter, not the form. But in the intellect, the most noble part of the soul, he says, there is no individuality whatever.<sup>36</sup>

One point that may also arouse our suspicion concerning the reliability of Bessarion's testimony is his use of the term *κατ' ἐξιδίωσιν*. I would not to claim that this phrase, or even the noun *ἐξιδίωσις*, was coined by Peripatetic philosophers, nor can it be demonstrated that the term was used by Neoplatonists in order to give an account of the descent of the soul or intellect into body. If the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (CD-ROM D) can be trusted, we can establish that there is no trace of *κατ' ἐξιδίωσιν* or *ἐξιδίωσις* in Aristotelian, Hellenistic or pagan Neoplatonic texts. The *Patristic Lexicon* of Lampe registers only one occurrence of this terminology, in a relatively late author, Arethas, a disciple of Photius and later archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (c.850-944), who uses the verb *ἐξιδιούσθαι* in his commentary on the Book of Revelation to mean 'be peculiar to'.<sup>37</sup> He uses it in a passage treating the Trinity and its persons as they are distinguished from one another. Although this commentary incorporates early material and Arethas was well versed in the works of early Christian authors such as Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr, his direct knowledge of the pagan Neoplatonists seems to be very limited. But he owned a copy of the *Didascalicus* of Alcinous, an elementary exposition of Plato's philosophy, probably prepared in the Middle Platonist period.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, this means only that his knowledge was restricted to a schoolbook

compiled before the time of Plotinus. The noun *ἐξιδίωσις* also occurs only once, in a *catena*, a collection of excerpts from the writings of biblical commentators, mostly from the Fathers, strung together like the links of a chain. This *catena* ascribes the noun to Arethas. The meaning is 'peculiar characteristic'. It is most probable, then, that Bessarion came upon the term in the writings of the Fathers, or in later texts, and thought that it would be appropriate in this context. It cannot be excluded either that he found this word in Arethas, who employed it when dealing with strictly theological matters. This fact does not mean, however, that Themistius or Alexander were not interested in describing the way in which divine intellect gets in touch with, and becomes part of, human nature, but simply that they expressed the process in different terms. Themistius employed *μερισμός*, an accepted term among philosophers of his age,<sup>39</sup> while Alexander, in comparing perception and thinking, states that though *stricto sensu* thought itself cannot suffer any influence either as whole or in its individual parts, it will necessarily be determined and characterized in a particular manner (*ὀρίζεται, χαρακτηρίζεται*) because of the ideas it takes on.<sup>40</sup>

As Bessarion's testimony seems trustworthy in relation to Themistius, Alexander and Averroes, we can now turn to Theophrastus himself, in order to examine whether it contradicts what he said elsewhere, e.g. in the second book of his *De Anima*, which may be the same as the fifth book of his *Physics*, as they are known to us from other sources. Apart from the mediaeval evidence, one of our main sources for Theophrastus' notion of intellect is Themistius; the other is the Athenian Neoplatonist, Priscian of Lydia, who wrote a separate paraphrase of Theophrastus' *De Anima*, which, alas, has survived only in fragmentary form and in which it is not always easy to distinguish Theophrastus' words from Priscian's glosses.<sup>41</sup> What do they say on this issue? First of all that Theophrastus also accepted the existence of an intellect in activity or actuality (*ὁ ἐνεργεῖς νοῦς*).<sup>42</sup> One of our sources, Themistius, says that he tried to define to what extent the intellect comes from

<sup>35</sup> See Averroes' *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (*The Incoherence of the Incoherence*) tr. S. van den Bergh (London 1954) 55, 356-357. As regards the light simile, see 16.

<sup>36</sup> 356 van den Bergh, and 448.145-449.155 Crawford.

<sup>37</sup> *τίς ὁ ἀνιστατῶν λόγος ὁ πάντα τὰ θεοπρεπῶς λεγόμενα ἐπὶ τῆς ὑπερουσίου Τριάδος μὴ καθ' ἑκάστης λέγων τῶν τριῶν ὑποστάσεων ἐξιδιούσθαι καὶ ἐναρμόττεσθαι, πλὴν ταῦτα ἃ τὴν προαγωγὴν τούτων ἡγοῦν τὴν ὑποστατικὴν γνώρισιν ἐμποιοῦνται, ἀλλ' ἀποτεταγμένως κατατολμῶν εἰς ἐξιδιάζουσσαν ἑαυτῇ θείαν ἐνέργειαν ἐκάστη ὑπόστασιν τῶν τριῶν μεταχωροῦσαν παραληρεῖν.* PG cvi. 508A-B.

<sup>38</sup> The manuscript copied by John the Grammarian from this codex is now in Vienna (Cod. Vindob. philosophicus gr. 314), see J. Whittaker, *Parisinus graecus* 1962 and the writings of Albinus', *Phoenix* xxviii (1974) 320-54, 450-56. For Arethas' activity, see H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich* (München 1959) 591-94. His minor works are also indicative of his knowledge of the pagan Platonic tradition; see L.G. Westerink (ed.), *Arethas: scripta minora* i-ii (Leipzig 1968-72). As for pagan Neoplatonists, his knowledge of Hierocles' Commentary on the Golden Verses is witnessed by his scholia in the same manuscript, see B. Laourdas & L.G. Westerink, 'Scholia by Arethas in Vindob. Phil. Gr. 314', *Hellenika* xvii (1962), 105-131.

<sup>39</sup> 103.28, cf. 26.39. The term is also applied by Aristotle (*Metaphysics* vi 4, 1024b30) and Simplicius attributes it to Eudemus, see in *Phys.* 97.15, 29; 131.9. So Theophrastus may have used it too. As regards later Neoplatonists, see e.g. Damascius, *De Principiis* ii 68.23-4 Combès-Westerink (130 Ruelle), and Simplicius, in *Cat.* 61.25; 62.8; 75.16; 218.15; 374.16; 423.33, in *Phys.* 561.10; 644.27; 774.14.

<sup>40</sup> *Mantissa* 111.5-14.

<sup>41</sup> Edited by I. Bywater in *CAG Suppl.* i,2. The mediaeval references have been examined by P.M. Huby, 'Mediaeval evidence for Theophrastus' discussion of the intellect', in W.W. Fortenbaugh, P.M. Huby & A.A. Long (ed.), *Theophrastus of Eresus: on his life and works* (New Brunswick, NJ-Oxford 1985) 165-84. See also P.M. Huby, 'Stages in the development of language about Aristotle's Nous', in H. Blumenthal and H. Robinson (ed.), *Aristotle and the later tradition* (Oxford 1991) 129-42, where she points out that Theophrastus had a limited noetic vocabulary, though perhaps not so limited as she thinks, as I try to show. Her assumption has been criticised by D. Devereux, 'Theophrastus on the intellect', in W.W. Fortenbaugh & D. Gutas (ed.), *Theophrastus: his psychological, doxographical and scientific writings* (New Brunswick, NJ & London 1992) 32-43. He also admits the existence of a productive intellect in Theophrastus.

<sup>42</sup> Themistius, in *De Anima* 107.31 ff. (Test. 307A), Priscian, *Metaphrasis* 26.7 (Test. 307B).

outside and to what extent it comes into being at the individual's birth, and concluded that it is separate (*χωριστόν*) and cannot suffer any influence.<sup>43</sup> This point is worth making, for the idea of a productive intellect—or a separate intellect of any kind—was not generally accepted in Peripatetic circles: there is, for example, Strato of Lampsacus, head of the Lyceum between 288/5-270/67 BC, who seems to have denied the possibility of any psychic entity separated from the body, though the evidence in Simplicius is ambiguous.<sup>44</sup> In contrast to him, as we have seen, Theophrastus surely posited the existence of such an entity, even if he did not name it 'productive' and our sources provide only a few details about its nature. What they say is that after distinguishing two sorts of intellect, actual or active and potential (*δυνάμει*), Theophrastus was mainly engaged in discussing the potential intellect. In doing so, however, he was clearly not speaking of two intellects diametrically opposed to each other, but, rather, of two stages reached by one and the same intellect. It may be only after the descent into humans that the intellect becomes potential and therefore ready to receive forms, possibly new ones. He raises several problems regarding what 'potentiality' and 'capacity to be influenced' actually mean in this instance;<sup>45</sup> but he explicitly maintains that this intellect comes into the human soul from outside (*ἐξώθεν*).<sup>46</sup> At the same time, he is said to insist that it is to be considered both additional (*ἐπιθετόν*) and connate (*συμφυής*); but he finally denies that intellect is superimposed; rather, it enters the soul at its first birth (*ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ γενέσει*).<sup>47</sup> The intellect is the principle of everything (*ἀρχὴ πάντων*) and its sole activity, thinking, arises from itself and is not dependent on something prior to it.<sup>48</sup> There is no mention made of the productive intellect being individual, but this would clearly be impossible. We can arrive at this conclusion by pointing to the fact that the intellect is supposed to be the principle of everything. Although a principle can be unique, it cannot be individual in a way similar to those entities of which it is the principle. Mediaeval authors assign a third sort of intellect to Theophrastus,

<sup>43</sup> Themistius, in *De Anima* 108.13-18 (in Test. 307A).

<sup>44</sup> Fr.74 Wehrli, *ap. Simplicius in Phys.* 965.7-17. In his commentary, Wehrli takes it as indicating a denial of Aristotle's theory of *νοῦς* (*Die Schule des Aristoteles v: Straton von Lampsakos* [Basel 1950] 62), *cf.* also Frr. 123-128, displaying arguments against the immortality of the soul. For this controversial aspect of Strato's psychology, see also M. Isnardi-Parente, 'Le obiezioni di Stratone al "Fedone" e l'epistemologia peripatetica nel primo ellenismo', *RFIC* cv (1977) 287-306, now reprinted in a revised form in her *Filosofia e scienza nel pensiero ellenistico* (Naples 1991) and L. Repici, *La natura e l'anima: saggi su Stratone di Lampsaco* (Torino 1988) 33-38. Against Wehrli, Repici denies that this evidence is decisive.

<sup>45</sup> *Ap. Priscian, Metaphrasis* 27.8-14, 28.13-29.1 (Test. 307C-D).

<sup>46</sup> *Ap. Themistius, in De Anima* 107.32 (Test. 307A).

<sup>47</sup> *Ap. Themistius, in De Anima* 107.32-108.1 (Test. 307A). E. Barbotin, *La théorie aristotélicienne de l'intellect d'après Théophraste* (Louvain-Paris 1954) 248-9 (who takes this passage as fr.1), followed by Todd, *op.cit.*, p.113, thinks that Theophrastus hints at the *γένεσις* of the embryo; but I think that we can understand this phrase as also referring to the 'birth' of the human soul itself.

<sup>48</sup> *Ap. Priscian, Metaphrasis* 27.13-14 (Test. 307C).

which is called *speculativus* and which is composed of

the first two, as well as a fourth, called *adeptus*, 'acquired'—perhaps equivalent to *ἐπικτητός*<sup>49</sup>—though it seems that the inventor of this latter term was Alexander of Aphrodisias.<sup>50</sup> There is no mention of a fourfold classification of the intellect in the reports of Themistius and Priscian, but the former may have had in mind 'acquired' intellect when denying that the potential intellect was simply additional.<sup>51</sup> Bessarion is also silent about this division, but his silence is not to be taken as evidence against his reliability. Neither Themistius, nor Priscian seem to have been acquainted with Theophrastus' alleged theory of the four intellects.<sup>52</sup>

For all these reasons, the testimony found in Bessarion seems to be worth noticing. It is not at odds with other testimonies of similar content and reflects ideas which can be attributed to Theophrastus on plausible grounds. Furthermore, we cannot identify it as being derived from either Themistius or Alexander, at least not from works known to us. The remaining possibilities are that Bessarion either read it in one of Theophrastus' works which was still extant in his time or that he came upon a reference to it in a treatise by a later author (which has not been preserved) or in an independent doxography.<sup>53</sup> If compelled to choose, I would suggest that Bessarion relied on a doxography which in turn did not rest upon detailed investigation of all the writers included. This is particularly clear in the case of Alexander. But in any case, Bessarion's testimony cannot be simply dismissed and adds something new to our present knowledge of Theophrastus.

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<sup>49</sup> Most clearly in Albertus Magnus, *de Anima* 3.2.5, p.183.84-184.13 (included into Test. 314A). The text has been examined by P.M. Huby, 1985 (n. 41).

<sup>50</sup> *De Anima* 82.1, see P.M. Huby, 1991 (n. 41).

<sup>51</sup> See P.M. Huby, 1991 (n. 41) 169. She contrasts *συμφυής* and *ἐπικτητός* but does not draw a parallel between *ἐπιθετός* and *ἐπικτητός*.

<sup>52</sup> In a forthcoming commentary volume to *FHSG*, Pamela Huby points out that, when interpreting Aristotle's words about Orphism at *De Anima* I 5, 410b27-31, Iamblichus (in his *De Anima*, in Stobaeus, *Anthology* i 49.32, vol.i 366.25-367.2 Wachsmuth) referred to a doctrine of Aristotle, exposed perhaps in the *De Philosophia*, which said something of this kind, that there is a single external soul from which parts split off. If Iamblichus, or Stobaeus, is reliable, then any full-blown development of Aristotle's theory of the intellect by Theophrastus would be ruled out. On the other hand, knowing the relation of Theophrastus to Aristotle, in this way we may have a tiny evidence for the thesis that in following his master Theophrastus represented such a doctrine. This question is different from the problem of who the ultimate source for Iamblichus or Stobaeus was. I am indebted to Dr Huby for sending me the relevant part of her commentary.

<sup>53</sup> It may be helpful to take account of the libraries in the late Byzantine period, but, to my knowledge, there is no comprehensive study on Plethon's library at Mistra, which must have been well stocked with works on philosophy and theology. N.G. Wilson ('The libraries in the late Byzantine period', *GRBS* viii (1967) 53-80) examines three provincial libraries only: Otranto, Patmos and Athos.