

ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE: TWO PROBLEMS¹

The position on the question of divine providence of the Aristotelian commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. c. A.D. 200) is of particular interest. It marks an attempt to find a *via media* between the Epicurean denial of any divine concern for the world, on the one hand, and the Stoic view that divine providence governs it in every detail, on the other.² As an expression of such a middle course it finds a place in later classifications of views concerning providence.³ It is also of topical interest: Alexander's fullest discussion, in his treatise *De providentia* (*On Providence*) (surviving only in two Arabic versions), has only recently been edited and translated,⁴ although some aspects of his position had long been known from other texts preserved in Greek.⁵

Alexander argued (and, characteristically, presented it as the position of Aristotle)⁶ that divine providence extends to the sublunary world in the effect of the complex motions of the heavenly bodies, and particularly the Sun, in ensuring the regularity of coming-to-be and passing away and the continued existence of sublunary species, though not of individuals.⁷ The extension of providence only to species, and not to individuals, removes difficulties over how the divine can attend simultaneously to a multiplicity of details⁸ and over the injustices suffered by some particular individuals.⁹

Aristotle was often presented as limiting the concern of divine providence to the heavens,¹⁰ the beneficial effect of their motions on the sublunary occurring entirely

¹ Details of modern works cited in the notes by author's name only, and of editions of ancient works, will be found, unless otherwise indicated, in the Bibliography. I am very grateful to Dr F. W. Zimmermann for reading an earlier draft of this paper, and also for the comments of Professor A. A. Long and of an anonymous referee; the responsibility for remaining errors is of course entirely my own.

² *De providentia* 1. 1–9. 2 Ruland, cf. 31. 11 ff. (cf. Bibliography). All references to this work are by Ruland's pagination, and unless otherwise indicated are to the *upper* of his two texts; cf. below, n. 14, and nn. 42–4. I should stress that my knowledge of the Arabic versions derives entirely from Ruland's translation and from discussions in the other secondary literature, and that it is on Ruland's German that my translations are based, except where otherwise indicated.

³ Notably in Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, 3. 17. I suspect that the position formulated and attacked at *Nemesius de natura hominis* 44, PG 40. 800a ff. Migne, may owe something to Alexander; cf. especially 804a and the objection, peculiarly appropriate against a Peripatetic, brought at 804b. I hope to discuss this issue more fully elsewhere.

⁴ By Ruland; the outlines of the work were however previously known from references in later literature (notably in Maimonides' *Guide* 3. 16 and 3. 17) and from modern summaries, especially that by Thillet. Cf. Bibliography.

⁵ Especially *quaestiones* 1. 25 and 2. 21 (cf. Bibliography).

⁶ Cf. *quaestio* 2. 21, 65. 19 ff., 70. 24 ff.; *de prov.* 31. 19; and also *quaestio* 1. 25, 41. 10, where *κατ' Ἀριστοτέλην* should be kept, *contra* Bruns (1890), p. 230 (cf. *ibid.* p. 234 and Thillet, p. 318). One may compare Alexander's presentation of his doctrine of fate as Aristotle's, *de fato* (Bruns, 1892), 164. 13, 212. 5.

⁷ *De prov.* 33. 1 ff., 87. 5 ff.; *quaestio* 1. 25 41. 8 ff., 2. 19 63. 15 ff.; fr. 36 Freudenthal.

⁸ Fr. 36 Freudenthal; *de prov.* 15. 15 ff. (cf. 21. 21–23. 6). One may contrast the solution of Proclus, for whom god has definite knowledge of what is indefinite, the nature of knowledge being determined by that of the knower rather than that of the known; cf. Hager, and R. W. Sharples, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias *de fato*: some parallels', *CQ* n.s. 28 (1978), 260–2, and refs. there.

⁹ Cf. fr. 36 Freudenthal; *de prov.* 11. 6 ff., 101. 3 ff.

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Diogenes Laertius 5. 32; Atticus fr. 3. 56 ff., 69 ff. des Places (Paris, Budé, 1977); and H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin, 1929), 592. 11 ff., 20. The relation of the Unmoved Mover to the heavenly spheres is described as 'providence' by Aspasius in *Eth. Nic.*, *Comm. in*

per accidens.¹¹ In saying that divine providence *does* extend to the sublunary, though only to species and not to individuals, Alexander was reacting against such an interpretation.¹²

There are however two problems in the interpretation of Alexander's position, to which this paper will be devoted. First, he clearly insists that providential concern for the sublunary cannot be the *primary* concern of the divine; for that would imply, he argues, that the former was of greater worth than the latter.¹³ But neither can it be purely accidental, for in that case it would not be *providence* at all.¹⁴ How is this dilemma to be resolved? Secondly, there is the problem of the identity of the beings which exercise providence, and of the extent of its objects. Alexander draws a clear distinction between the Unmoved Mover(s)¹⁵ and the souls of the heavenly spheres.¹⁶ Ruland has interpreted him as holding that God, the Unmoved Mover, exercises providence in a primary way only over the heavenly spheres; his providence extends to the sublunary world through the influence of these, but only in a secondary (though non-accidental) way.¹⁷ However, there are passages which suggest that providence is exercised by the heavenly bodies over the sublunary, while the heavens themselves are not *objects* of providence at all.¹⁸ Here then is a second problem; and, since it has a bearing on the first problem, that of a providence which is neither primary nor accidental, it will be convenient to discuss the second problem first.

It should be stressed at the outset that much of the apparent evidence for Alexander's views on providence is contained in sections of the *quaestiones* attributed *Aristot. Graeca* (CAG), 19. 1, 71. 23–31. Cf. A.-J. Festugière, *L'Idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Évangile* (Paris, 1932), pp. 224–62; P. Moraux, 'L'exposé de la philosophie d'Aristote chez Diogène Laërce', *Rev. philos. de Louvain* 47 (1949), 33 f., and idem (1970) (cf. Bibliography), pp. 54 ff.; Pines (1956), p. 26 n. 4; Happ.

¹¹ Aëtius 2. 3. 4; Adrastus of Aphrodisias ap. Theon (cf. Bibliography), 149. 14 f.

¹² Merlan, pp. 90 f. convincingly argues that Alexander is reacting to the criticisms of Atticus in particular.

¹³ *De prov.* 19. 3 ff., 53. 1 ff., 63. 8 ff., 67. 7 ff.; cf. 25. 1 ff. *quaestio* 2. 21, 68. 19 ff., 70. 9 ff. cf. Theon 149. 10 ff. 'Primary' (προηγούμενος, cf. Sharples, 'Responsibility, Chance and Not-Being', *BICS* 22 (1975), 49) and *per se* are equivalent in this discussion; cf. *quaestio* 2. 21 66. 5, 68. 2. That the Arabic 'alā al-qaṣd al-awwal, 'according to the first intention' (e.g. *de prov.* 63. 7 f.), renders προηγούμενος is suggested by P. Merlan, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, Metacosmicness* (The Hague, 1963), p. 72 n. 2, and by K. Gyekye, 'The terms "prima intentio" and "secunda intentio" in Arabic logic', *Speculum* 46 (1971), 32–8. A. Neuwirth, 'Abd al-Latīf al-Baghdādī's Bearbeitung von Buch Lambda der aristotelischen Metaphysik (Wiesbaden, 1976), pp. 186–91, argues that in Alexander's *de providentia* and elsewhere there is a distinction between 'according to the first intention' at one extreme, 'per accidens' at the other, and 'according to the second intention' ('alā al-qaṣd al-thānī, e.g. *de prov.* 57. 13 f., below n. 26; δευτέρως?) to express the intermediate notion of a providence that is neither primary nor *per accidens*, the notion that Alexander is seeking to establish. Pines (1956), pp. 18 f. argues that 'according to the first intention' sometimes renders πρώτον, πρώτως or κυρίως; cf. Pines (1959), p. 298 and n. 20, and Ruland 136, 142. (I am grateful to Dr Richard C. Taylor for drawing my attention to the discussions by Gyekye and by Neuwirth.)

¹⁴ *Quaestio* 2. 21, 65. 25 ff., *de prov.* 63. 2 ff. (Ruland's *lower* text makes Alexander argue that the influence of the heavens on the sublunary is accidental; cf. Ruland 142). With the identification of the accidental and not-being at *quaestio* 2. 21, 65. 27 compare Sharples, above n. 13, p. 48 and nn. 106, 110 f.

¹⁵ Alexander appears to recognize a plurality of Unmoved Movers; but the question whether there is one Unmoved Mover or several does not directly affect the issue discussed in (1) below, whether providence is exercised by *any* being above the rank of the souls of the heavenly spheres, and I have accordingly relegated discussion of it to the Appendix. Meanwhile, references to 'the Unmoved Mover' in the singular, for convenience' sake, should not be taken as excluding the possibility of a plurality.

¹⁶ Below, n. 86.

¹⁷ Ruland 136, 142, and cf. his nn. on *de prov.* 57. 11–59. 3.

¹⁸ *Quaestio* 1. 25, 41. 4–9, 2. 19, 63. 15 ff.; *de prov.* 61. 7 ff. cf. further below.

to him, and that some of the *quaestiones* may well not be his own work, but rather that of pupils and associates.¹⁹ Nevertheless, there are sufficient similarities between the approach of these texts and that of the *de providentia* itself to justify considering them in the context of an 'Alexandrian' theory of providence, initially at any rate. It will be argued that there are in fact *certain* differences between the approaches adopted by different texts; but there does not seem sufficient evidence to decide whether these are to be explained by development in Alexander's own views or by the attribution of some at least of the *quaestiones* to pupils whose opinions differed from those of Alexander himself. For convenience' sake I will generally use 'Alexander' to refer to the authors of all these texts, without thereby necessarily implying any definite claim on the question of authorship.

I

That it is the heavens that exercise providence over the sublunary, and that they are not in turn themselves the objects of any providence, seems to be clearly indicated by the conclusion of *quaestio* 1. 25. Alexander here argues as follows. If (a) everything that is moved on account of something else is the object of its providence, both the heavens and the sublunary will be the objects of the providence of the first, unmoved substance (41. 4–8). But if (b) the exercise of providence involves the performance of some activity *for the sake of* the object of the providence, then only the sublunary will be the object of providence, since it is for the sake of its orderly change and preservation in species that the lower spheres have their own motions in addition to that of the whole heaven²⁰ (41. 8–19). The implication seems clearly to be, not that these are two equally valid ways of regarding the matter, but that (b) is a more accurate way of speaking than (a). And it follows from (b) that (i) it is only the heavenly spheres²¹ that exercise providence, and not the Unmoved Mover; and also that (ii) it is only, strictly speaking, the sublunary that is the object of providence, and not the heavens. That it is the spheres, rather than the Unmoved Mover, that exercise providence for Alexander is the interpretation of Bruns, on the basis of the present passage,²² and of Hager.²³ And, as regards (ii), it is asserted both in *quaestio* 2. 19 (63. 15 ff.) and in the *de providentia* (61. 7 ff.) that the heavenly spheres, being eternal in their own nature, do not need providential care to ensure their permanence, as does the sublunary.

Ruland, however, interprets Alexander in the *de providentia* as holding that God (i.e. the Unmoved Mover) exercises providence in a primary way over the heavenly spheres.²⁴ It may be doubted, however, whether this interpretation is correct.²⁵ The passage must be examined in some detail.

¹⁹ cf. Bruns (1892), i–xiv, Moraux (1942), 19–24 (but cf. also his remarks at *Hermes* 95 (1967), 161 n. 2); R. B. Todd, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Alexandrian *Quaestiones* 2. 12', *Philologus* 116 (1972), 293–305.

²⁰ For the connection between the complex motion of the heavens and sublunary coming-to-be cf. Aristotle *de caelo* 2. 3, 286a31 ff., *de gen. et corr.* 2. 10–11, especially 336a32, and *metaph.* A 6 1072a10; Moraux (1967), 159 n. 3.

²¹ And perhaps, strictly speaking, only the lower, planetary spheres, and not the *primum mobile*; cf. further below. For the connection between the complex motion of the *lower* spheres and the preservation of kinds cf. *quaest.* 1. 25, 40. 30–41. 4 (below, section II) and *de principiis* 132. 4 ff. (Cf. Bibliography; all references to the *de principiis* are to page and line of Badawī's French translation.)

²² Bruns (1890), p. 230.

²³ Hager, p. 179 n. 34.

²⁴ Above, n. 17.

²⁵ At least as far as the *upper* text is concerned; for the lower text cf. further below.

Alexander illustrates the happy and trouble-free life which the divine must enjoy, even while exercising providence, by the example of health, which has beneficial effects without itself *acting* (55. 6 ff.). He then continues:

'His (God's) life is however the happiest possible. Providence for the other things and their preservation, as well as for that which is dependent on them on the earth, is a secondary result of the overflow' (sc. 'of God's grace', Ruland; 57. 11–14).²⁶

For 'the other things' (*al-bāqiya*) Pines suggests emending to read 'the permanent things' (*al-thābita*), that is the heavenly bodies.²⁷ But, whichever reading one follows, in neither case does there seem to be a contrast between primary providence for the heavens and secondary providence for the earth; the contrast is rather between God's own activity and its effect on other things, the heavens and the earth alike.

Alexander continues by saying that God feels no jealousy, and that it is proper that everything which is dependent on the gods in a primary way and follows directly after them in rank should be a result of their will (57. 14–59. 3).²⁸ Ruland glosses this as referring to the primary providence which has the heavens as its object;²⁹ but to take these lines as containing a definitive statement of Alexander's own view may be to anticipate. For it is only *after* this that Alexander states the question: how is providence constituted, according to the opinion of Aristotle, and how far does it extend (59. 3–5)?

Providence, he says, is the concern of the gods for that which is primary in nature (59. 6 ff.). But providence is spoken of in two ways.³⁰ The distinction that Alexander goes on to draw, however, is not so much between two *kinds* or *degrees* of providence, as between the region *where* providence is exercised and that *over which* it is exercised. He wants to apply to his own position the statement that 'providence extends as far as the moon'; and this is most naturally taken as an expression of the earlier view which *denied* providential concern for the sublunary.³¹ When we say that providence extends as far as the moon we are referring, Alexander rather implausibly claims, to the region *where* providence is exercised, not to that *over which* it is exercised.³² The heavenly spheres themselves are in no need of providential care to ensure their permanence, in the way that the sublunary world is (61. 7 ff.).³³

There seems no suggestion *here* of a higher type of providence exercised by the Unmoved Mover with the heavenly spheres as its object.³⁴ And indeed Alexander goes

²⁶ 'Secondary': literally 'according to the second intention', '*alā al-qaṣd al-thānī*' (above, n. 13; Pines (1959), p. 298). An anonymous referee suggests for the last clause rather: 'is clearly supererogatory and secondary for it (sc. God's life)'. This does not affect the point at issue, however.

²⁷ Pines (1959), p. 298 and n. 17; he comments that 'the permanent things' (which, interpreted as referring to the heavenly bodies, certainly gives a better contrast with the following reference to things on earth) *could* be the meaning of *al-bāqiya*, but is easier with the emendation. Ruland renders *al-bāqiya* by 'all things'.

²⁸ cf. Pines (1959), p. 298.

²⁹ Ruland 60, n. on 59. 1–3.

³¹ Above, n. 10.

³⁰ cf. Ruland, upper text, 60 n. 1.

³² 59. 12–61. 6; cf. Pines (1959), pp. 296 f. This answers Happ's worry (82 n. 45) over Maimonides' report (465. 3 ff. Pines) that Alexander allowed providence to extend only as far as the sphere of the moon; Maimonides himself qualifies this in what follows (465. 9 ff.). Cf. Plotinus 3. 3, 7. 7; when we speak of 'providence above', we are speaking of it *in relation* to what is below. If Plotinus is drawing on Alexander here, he is characteristically transforming the latter's spatial distinction into a purely metaphysical one; cf. P. Merlan, 'Plotinus *Enneads* 2. 2', *TAPhA* 74 (1943), 184.

³³ cf. *quaestio* 2. 19, 63. 15 ff. (above).

³⁴ It is true that in introducing the two ways of speaking of providence (above, n. 30, upper text) Alexander does say that providence extends *also* to the sublunary. But this should be

on to argue that (i) the providence of *the heavenly body* for the sublunary is not accidental, but (ii) the providence of *the gods* (for the sublunary)³⁵ is not primary (63. 2–9).³⁶ It seems clear that these represent two halves of a single dilemma, so the providence exercised by the heavenly spheres and the providence exercised by the gods must be equivalent.³⁷

This may indeed provide a clue to the understanding of the whole passage. Alexander here seems to lay emphasis simply on the contrast between the sublunary region, where there is coming-to-be and passing away, and the divine heavenly region; he seems to be examining the providential influence of the latter on the former without being concerned to specify the relation between *different members* of the class of divine, heavenly entities – the spheres and their souls on the one hand and the Unmoved Movers on the other. It is true that 57. 11–14, cited above, does involve consideration of *three* classes of beings – God, the heavens and the sublunary – and asserts that the first-mentioned exercises providence over the latter two; but even here no *contrast* is drawn between God's providence over the heavens and his providence over the sublunary, and in what follows, it would appear, the distinction between God and the heavens drops out of sight. The reference to the heavens in 57. 11–14, moreover, is only implicit without Pines' emendation.³⁸ Alexander regularly speaks of the heavenly bodies as divine,³⁹ and elsewhere too he contrasts the divine, eternal and superlunary on the one hand with the mortal, perishable and sublunary on the other, without always distinguishing clearly between the various aspects of the former.⁴⁰ But it may be doubted whether he would have been so unclear in the *de providentia* on the question whether or not the heavens are themselves the object of the providence of the Unmoved Mover, if *quaestio* 1. 25 had preceded; the question of the relative chronology of these two texts is one to which we shall later return.⁴¹

Discussion so far has been confined, however, to only one of the two Arabic versions of the *de providentia*, that which Ruland prints as his upper text. The lower text, which generally seems to give a less faithful rendering of the content of the original Greek,⁴² does distinguish between two types of 'management' or 'organization' (*tadbīr*): one that of (i.e. that which governs) the heavenly bodies, the other that of the sublunary.⁴³ The former of these is here derived from the First Mover, who, I have argued, is not understood in the light of what follows; providence is present in the heavens, as well as in the sublunary, only in the rather quixotic sense that it is there that it is exercised. (Thus Thillet p. 320 line 20 has 'providence' in scare-quotes.)

³⁵ Ruland's supplement (p. 64).

³⁶ For providence exercised by the heavenly bodies cf. also 61. 14 ff., 95. 16 ff.

³⁷ At 65. 9 ff. it is the providence of *the gods* that is not accidental.

³⁸ Above, n. 27.

³⁹ *Quaestiones* 1. 1, 4. 2; 1. 25, 40. 10; 2. 3, 50. 22; 3. 5, 89. 21; 3. 12, 89. 21; *de fato* 169. 24, 195. 17, 203. 22; *de mixtione* 223. 10, 33, 229. 7; *in metaph.* (CAG 1) 373. 8; *de princ.* 122–8 passim.

⁴⁰ *Quaestiones* 2. 21, 65. 19, 70. 13 (τὰ θεῖα). At Alexander *in meteor.* (CAG 3. 2) 6. 4–7 τὸ θεῖον, τὰ θεῖα and τὸ θεῖον σῶμα are all referred to as caring for the sublunary, and are clearly equivalent; so too in *quaestio* 2. 3, which discusses the influence of τὸ θεῖον σῶμα (47. 30), τὰ θεῖα (49. 29), and τὰ θεῖα σώματα (49. 31). Alexander's references are usually to 'gods' in the plural (e.g. *quaestio* 2. 21, 60. 22, 25, *de prov.* 53. 3 ff., 64. 8, 66. 11); when he uses the singular it may be explained as generalizing (*de fato* 201. 31, *quaestio* 2. 21, 69. 10, 13, *de prov.* 53. 11 ff.), but the alternation suggests principally that the question 'one god or many?' is not of great importance for him.

⁴¹ *Quaestio* 2. 19 links a reference to the Unmoved Mover closely with the observation that the heavens are not themselves in need of providential care (63. 20 f.); it therefore seems likely that it too, like *quaestio* 1. 25, is later than the *de providentia*.

⁴² cf. Ruland 137 ff., and above n. 14.

⁴³ cf. *de princ.* 136. 34 ff., especially 138. 32. The lower text regularly speaks of 'management', *tadbīr*, whereas the upper text refers to 'providence', *ināya* (Ruland, 143).

clearly mentioned at the corresponding point in the upper text (59. 6 ff.) at all. The lower text is however generally abbreviated at this point by comparison with the upper text, as Ruland has pointed out.⁴⁴ In general it concentrates on the analysis of the dependence of the sublunary on the heavens, giving less attention than the upper text to issues related to other aspects of the whole topic of divine providence. It is still possible, I suppose, that the lower text has here preserved one part of Alexander's argument which is missing from the upper text; but it also seems possible that the contrast in the lower text between two types of 'management' is simply a distorted reflection of the contrast between two types of providence in the upper text, with the reference to the First Mover being introduced as a piece of standard Peripatetic doctrine. It is after all orthodox enough to speak of the *effect* of the Unmoved Mover on the heavenly spheres; the point at issue is only whether it is right to speak of *providence* in this context. And, as has been seen, even *quaestio* 1. 25 is prepared to do so, in the looser, improper sense (a).

Certainly Maimonides interpreted Alexander in the *de providentia* as saying that divine providence gives permanence to the heavenly spheres, 'overflowing'⁴⁵ from them to ensure the permanence of sublunary species;⁴⁶ but as has been seen Alexander expressly *denies* that providence ensures the permanent existence of the spheres.⁴⁷ Maimonides was naturally more concerned than Alexander to emphasize the exercise of providence by a transcendent God superior in rank to the heavenly spheres as well as to the sublunary world.

Support for the view that it is *only* the sphere-souls, and not the Unmoved Mover, that exercise providence might at first sight be derived from a fragment of Alexander published by Vitelli:⁴⁸

Plato thinks that the first god is incorporeal, and says that he remains in his look-out post and in his activity of thinking, while it is the secondary gods who are in charge of the coming-to-be and being of the other things; and what Aristotle has said, too, is in accord with this.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Ruland, 107. Ruland's lower text omits the first third of *de prov.*, the criticisms of rival views, and includes only the subsequent positive exposition.

⁴⁵ *Contrast* the use of 'overflowing' in *de prov.* 57. 11–14 (above).

⁴⁶ 465. 12 Pines.

⁴⁷ *De prov.* 61. 7 ff., *quaest.* 2. 19, 63. 15 ff.; cf. above. In *quaest.* 2. 19 Alexander actually says that the heavens are in no need of providence either for their being *or* for their well-being. He has indeed just indicated that their motion is caused by emulation of the Unmoved Mover (63. 20 f.); they must therefore be dependent on it for their motion, even if not for their existence, but this dependence is apparently not considered a matter of *providence*. (I hope to discuss elsewhere other problems that the dependence of the heavens on the Unmoved Mover raises for Alexander.) Maimonides, it may be noted, cites Alexander's treatise under the title *fī'l tadbīr* (Pines (1956), p. 27 n. 2).

⁴⁸ Vitelli (1902), 93. 9 ff.; cf. Vitelli (1895), and E. Montanari, 'Per un' edizione del *peri kraseos* di Alessandro di Afrodisia', *Atti dell'Accad. toscana La Colombaria* 36 (1971), 27 and n. 2. I am grateful to Professor Todd for first drawing my attention to this text.

⁴⁹ The image of the 'look-out post' is from Plato *Politicus* 272e; though in the *Politicus* myth the subordinate gods too cease to exercise providential care when the supreme god withdraws. Closer to the position attributed to Plato by Alexander here is *Timaeus* 41 a ff. Admittedly the Demiurge is there concerned with the *initial* creation of at least a part of the universe – of the heavens and of the rational parts of human souls; and Alexander did argue that the beginning of the world in the *Timaeus* was intended literally by Plato (Simplicius in *de caelo* (CAG 7), 297 f., Philoponus *de aet. mund.* 213–16 Rabe; cf. K. Praechter, 'Tauros', *RE 2* Reihe 5. 1 (1934), 68, and M. Baltes, *Die Weltentstehung des Platonischen Timaios* (Leiden, 1976), i. 71–6). One may also compare the position of the Middle-Platonist Albinus (Alcinous), whose First God, like Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, is not concerned with the world at all (*Didasc.* 10. 164. 16 ff. Hermann; cf. J. M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (London, 1977), p. 282).

However, Alexander goes on to contrast Plato's view with that of the Stoics,⁵⁰ whom he attacks here as elsewhere for involving the divine *directly* in the sublunary world;⁵¹ consequently his approval of Plato here cannot be certainly pressed to the point of claiming that he does not wish the Unmoved Mover to be concerned with the world *at all*.

Alexander's connection of providence with the preservation of sublunary species by the motion of the heavens does provide a point of contact with Middle-Platonist discussions of providence. For it is in these terms that secondary providence is interpreted in the doctrine of three providences referred to in [Plutarch] *de fato*, Apuleius *de Platone*, and Nemesius *de natura hominis*.⁵² If Ruland were right in finding a distinction in Alexander's *de providentia* between primary providence, with the heavens as its *object*, and secondary providence, the parallel would be even closer.⁵³ Where Alexander's position certainly does differ from the middle-Platonist one is in its denial of anything corresponding to the Platonists' tertiary providence, exercised by *daemones* and concerned with the events of individual men's lives.⁵⁴

II

The problem of how divine concern for the sublunary can be neither primary nor yet *per accidens* is the central theme of *quaestio* 2. 21. This *quaestio* is unique among the works attributed to Alexander in being cast in the form of a reported dialogue, with some attempt at verisimilitude in the dramatic setting.⁵⁵ Regrettably it is incomplete. The part that we have consists of dialectical discussion designed to show that the question whether providence is primary or *per accidens* is badly put, since the alternatives are not exclusive;⁵⁶ but the work breaks off just where Alexander's positive exposition of the Aristotelian position is about to begin.⁵⁷ It may well never have been finished. However, the dialectical suggestions that we do have may provide hints of the way in which the discussion would have developed. It seems reasonable that in advancing them Alexander had in mind the actual explanation that he intended to give; and indeed he indicates as much, by posing the question which of the three ways he has indicated (in which taking thought for something may be neither primary nor yet *per accidens*) is appropriate to divine providence (70. 10 f.).

These three ways are the following:

⁵⁰ Vitelli (1902), 93. 15 ff., cf. 93. 8.

⁵¹ cf. *de mixtione* 226. 24 ff., *mantissa* 113. 12 ff.; Todd (1976), pp. 226 f.

⁵² [Plutarch] *moralia* 572F; Apuleius *de Platone* 96. 9 ff. Thomas; Nemesius *nat. hom.* 44, PG 40. 793b Migne.

⁵³ Apuleius expressly says that it is *secondary* providence that preserves the heavenly order; Plato does not state this explicitly in the *Timaeus*, but could be so interpreted (cf. 42e). Nemesius *does* attribute concern for the heavens to primary providence, with no indication that it is confined to their creation rather than their maintenance. But his account of primary providence is something of an *omnium gatherum*; cf. W. Telfer, *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa* (London, 1955), p. 434 n. 3.

⁵⁴ Derived not from the *Timaeus* but, no doubt, from *Republic* 10. 620d (or, as an anonymous referee has suggested, from *Phaedo* 107d. But for the importance of the *Republic* myth in the Middle-Platonist doctrine of *fate*, cf. Sharples, above n. 8, 244 n. 13 and references there). Cf. Alexander, *de prov.* 29. 12–31. 10.

⁵⁵ *Quaestio* 1. 4 is also a dialogue, but in dramatic, not reported form, with speakers identified simply as 'A' and 'B' and with no attempt at a realistic setting. (It is noteworthy that *mantissa* 170. 3 apparently refers to a school-discussion; cf. Sharples, above n. 13, 41 f.).

⁵⁶ cf. 65. 21 ff., 70. 12–17.

⁵⁷ cf. 70. 7 ff., 24 ff.

(1) if the beneficial effect, though not the primary purpose of one's action, is foreseen and willed;⁵⁸

(2) if one's concern for the thing is ultimately with a view to benefit accruing to oneself;⁵⁹

(3) if one's concern is for the universal, in which case concern for the individuals is not *per accidens*, since the universal has its being in the particulars.⁶⁰

The relevance of (3) to Alexander's theory of providence for species, as expounded in the *de providentia* and elsewhere, is immediately apparent. However, (3) may not be intended to provide the entire solution in itself; for (3) alone provides no answer to the objection that, even if individual men are not of more worth than the gods, it is still implied that man as a species is; which seems doubtful.

As for (1), Alexander does insist, both in the *de providentia* (63. 2–7, 65. 9 ff.) and elsewhere,⁶¹ that the gods must have *knowledge* of the beneficial effects of their providence. (This takes care of a possible objection to Alexander's comparison of divine providential care for the sublunary to the effect of a fire that warms things without acting for their sake.⁶² For, while it is an essential property of fire that it warms things, it would seem to be purely accidental, as far as the fire is concerned, that a particular thing is near it and so is warmed. Divine knowledge of influence on the sublunary, however, shows that the analogy is not a strict one.)⁶³ But this raises the problem of how such knowledge is to be reconciled with the orthodox Aristotelian view that the Unmoved Mover is the sole object of its own thought – a position which one at least of the writings attributed to Alexander does seem to accept.⁶⁴

Norman has recently suggested that 'thought of oneself', as attributed to the Unmoved Mover in *Metaphysics* A 9, simply indicates abstract thought (whether human or, as in this case, divine) directed to forms that are already present in the mind

⁵⁸ 66. 33–67. 22; cf. 66. 25–33, and Sharples (above n. 13) 56 n. 74, 59 n. 106. For 'foreseen and willed' cf. *de prov.* 67. 1 ff.

⁵⁹ 67. 30–68. 4; cf. 66. 22 ff. and 67. 22–4 (the latter deleted by Bruns; cf. next n.).

⁶⁰ 68. 5–11, cf. 67. 24–9. Bruns deletes 67. 22–9 as an inappropriate anticipation of what follows. It may be noted that, while 68. 9 asserts that the universal is other than the particulars, 67. 27 states the opposite.

⁶¹ *De princ.* 130. 42 ff., 135. 27 ff.; below, nn. 77–8.

⁶² *De prov.* 69. 3–11; Ruland compares the example of health at 55. 6 ff. One may also compare the use of the example of the sun in the Neoplatonic tradition to argue that providence does not involve activity on God's part, or is not burdensome to him, or that concern with earthly things cannot pollute him; Plotinus 5. 1, 6. 28 (with an analogy to fire), 5. 3, 12. 39–44, Sallustius *de diis* 9, 16. 21 ff. Nock, *Nemesius nat. hom.* 44, *PG* 40. 805a, Theodoret *de prov.* 10, *PG* 83. 748 f., Ammonius *in de int.* (*CAG* 4. 5) 132. 19 ff., 134. 16 ff., Simplicius *in Epict. Ench.* 104. 14 ff. Dübner. That mortal things cannot pollute the divine sun's rays is a thought already present at Euripides *Heracles* 1231 f. Cf. Happ, p. 83 n. 47.

⁶³ In *quaestio* 2. 21 Alexander attacks the argument that providence is as essential to the divine nature as heat is to fire (69. 3–16). However, this is in the context of his criticism of a theory that makes the gods of less worth than mortals. Further, it seems likely that the example here appears in a citation from the Platonist Atticus (Merlan 90; *quaestio* 2. 21, 69. 7–10 = Atticus fr. 3 bis (?) des Places); Alexander might well have criticized the analogy when it was used to support a rival view, and then – in the missing positive section of *quaestio* 2. 21 – have gone on to re-use it in the context of his own.

⁶⁴ *Mantissa* 109. 24 ff. Alexander *de fato* 30 allows that the gods may have foreknowledge of what is necessary, as opposed to what is contingent; but he is arguing dialectically, in an abstract and schematic way, and it is not clear that he is himself claiming that the gods have foreknowledge of necessary *sublunary* events. Cf. Sharples, above n. 8, 260 and n. 186, and also 248. That the extent of the divine intellect's knowledge of things outside itself was a topic of dispute among Peripatetics is indicated by Plotinus 6. 7, 37. 2 f. (J. M. Rist, 'On tracking Alexander of Aphrodisias', *AGPh* 48 (1966), 86.)

and hence do not require to be abstracted from matter.⁶⁵ And Sorabji has suggested that non-discursive thought – such as that of the Unmoved Mover⁶⁶ – includes all thought of definitional truths, these being regarded as identity statements.⁶⁷ The Unmoved Mover will thus have knowledge of the definitions, and hence of the essences, of sublunary species;⁶⁸ and this *might* be supposed to imply knowledge of the effect of the heavenly motions in preserving them.⁶⁹ Further, since the Unmoved Mover is pure intellect without matter, and where there is no matter intellect and its objects are identical,⁷⁰ the sphere-souls in apprehending it will presumably apprehend its thoughts too.⁷¹

There are however difficulties in supposing that, for Alexander, the thought of the Unmoved Mover includes thought of the definitions of sublunary species.⁷² The whole emphasis in his account of intellect in the *de anima* is on the contrast between the forms of material things, which require to be abstracted from their matter by the intellect that knows them, and pure transcendent forms, which are intellects in their own right.⁷³ And this has led some scholars to argue that the objects of God's thought for Alexander are not the forms of sublunary beings – a Platonist doctrine which it would be odd to find in the Peripatetic Alexander⁷⁴ – but the series of Unmoved Movers,⁷⁵ each of the Unmoved Movers thinking itself and all the others.⁷⁶ This may be to build, on the basis of Alexander's statements, a structure which goes beyond what he himself consciously envisaged; but it seems more plausible than to suppose that he identified the objects of the Unmoved Mover's thought with the forms of sublunary beings.

There remains the possibility that the sphere-souls might have knowledge of the effect of their motions on the sublunary region, and exercise providence over it, even if the Unmoved Mover does not. The *de providentia* does not draw a clear distinction

⁶⁵ R. Norman, 'Aristotle's Philosopher-God', *Phronesis* 14 (1969), 63–74; cf. G. Movia, *Alessandro di Afrodisia tra naturalismo e misticismo* (Padua, 1970), p. 75 n. 1.

⁶⁶ Aristotle *Metaph.* A 9 1075a5 ff.; cf. R. Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause and Blame: Aspects of Aristotle's Theory* (London, 1980), 218 n. 26.

⁶⁷ Sorabji, 217–19; cf. E. Berti, 'The intellection of "indivisibles" according to Aristotle, *de anima* 3. 6', in *Aristotle on Mind and the Senses, Proceedings of the seventh Symposium Aristotelicum*, eds. G. E. R. Lloyd and G. E. L. Owen (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 141–63.

⁶⁸ Professor Sorabji has informed me that this is his interpretation; for the forms of sublunary entities (considered apart from their matter) as indivisibles cf. Berti 147 f. and nn. 32, 36. However, Norman (above n. 65), while arguing that God's thought does not differ from abstract human thought in that both are 'thought of oneself', does allow that it may differ from human thought in the purity of its objects (71); which might suggest that it does not include knowledge of sublunary species.

⁶⁹ Perhaps; but statements of necessary properties are scarcely *identity*-statements and, if they are reached by scientific deductions from the essences of the things involved, appear to involve *discursive* reasoning and an object of thought that is not simple. (Cf., however, Sorabji 219.)

⁷⁰ Alexander *de anima* 87. 24 ff., especially 88. 9 f.; *quaestio* 1. 25, 39, 29 ff.

⁷¹ This is suggested, for our intellects, by Merlan (*Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, 1967, p. 118); though as he recognizes it goes beyond Alexander's explicit statements.

⁷² I have endeavoured to survey recent interpretations of Alexander's theory of intellect – human and divine – in section 10 of 'Alexander of Aphrodisias: Scholasticism and Innovation' (cf. Bibliography).

⁷³ *De anima* 87. 24 ff., 90. 2 ff.

⁷⁴ J. H. Loenen, 'Albinus' metaphysics: an attempt at rehabilitation', *Mnemosyne* 4. 9 (1956), 314 n. 1, speculates on the possible connection in the *Platonist* Albinus between the doctrine that the Forms are God's thoughts and the question of God's knowledge of the world.

⁷⁵ P. L. Donini, *Tre studi sull'aristotelismo nel 2 secolo d.C.* (Turin, 1974), p. 28; cf. Merlan (above n. 12) 17, 38–41, and idem (above n. 62), 118; and, for Aristotle, H. J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik* (Amsterdam, 1964), pp. 159–73. On the plurality of the Unmoved Movers in Alexander see below, Appendix.

⁷⁶ Donini, 29–35.

between the sphere-souls and the Unmoved Mover in asserting that the divine must have knowledge of its beneficial effect on the sublunary. One passage in another treatise of Alexander's surviving only in Arabic, the *de principiis* (*On the Principles of the Universe*), clearly attributes knowledge of their providential effect on the sublunary to the souls of the lower spheres, without mentioning the Unmoved Mover;⁷⁷ elsewhere in the same work it is indicated that the Unmoved Mover is aware of the effect of the heavenly motions on the sublunary,⁷⁸ although this remark – if indeed it is genuine – is made very much in passing and out of context, and no further explanation is given.

As far as (1) is concerned, then, it seems clear that Alexander does want to insist that the divine has knowledge of the effects of its providential care, though less clear what account he would give of this knowledge. (2), the suggestion that care for something else may be exercised in one's own ultimate interest, might seem to be entirely inappropriate to divine providence. Indeed Alexander argues in *quaestio* 2. 21 that it would be absurd to say that the gods receive some benefit from mortals, in the way that masters do from their slaves (68. 28–70. 1). Nevertheless, he does seem to treat it as an entirely open question which of (1)–(3) applies to divine providence (68. 19, cf. 70. 10 f.); and the objection forms part, not of the discussion of (2), which is one of the intermediates between primary and accidental providence, but of Alexander's arguments against primary, *per se* providence (68. 19–70. 6).⁷⁹

Moreover, there are a number of passages in the corpus of works ascribed to Alexander which do suggest that the divine heavens derive benefit from the preservation of the sublunary. In *quaestio* 1. 25 the fact that the motion of the heavens is complex rather than simple is explained as follows:

The reason for (the inferior spheres) having this double motion is that there must be some other [sort of] body, too, besides that which is eternal and divine – [namely], that which is subject to coming-to-be and passing away – *since this sort of body, too, contributes to their eternal rotation*; and that this sort of body cannot remain eternal in kind unless it is governed by their complex movements (40. 34–41. 4).

And an explanation of this seems to be given by a passage in *de principiis* which argues that the heavens require some thing – the earth – round which to rotate.⁸⁰ 'Preservation of sublunary kinds' will after all include the fact that, in the mutual interchanges of the 'elements', earth that is destroyed will always be replaced; indeed it is precisely the mutual interchanges of the elements that are regularly cited as the result of the complex heavenly motions.⁸¹

This argument, it may be noted, occurs only in *quaestio* 1. 25 and *de principiis*,⁸²

⁷⁷ *De princ.* 130. 42 ff. Cf. however below, n. 82.

⁷⁸ *De princ.* 135. 27–9.

⁷⁹ cf. above, n. 63.

⁸⁰ *De princ.* 127. 42–128. 4: 'The body which moves in a circle must have, at the centre, some thing around which it revolves, for all that moves in place needs an unmoved thing from which its movement proceeds or around which it moves itself. And into this category there enters the earth, which is a body which is unmoved and fixed...'. Cf. also *quaestio* 1. 23, 36. 22 f., '[for the earth not to exist] is impossible; for the universe would not exist, either, if that around which it moves were done away with'. Adrastus of Aphrodisias argued that, if the uniform rotation of the universe is to take place, earth must remain at rest at the centre; Theon 149. 15–19; E. Zeller, *Phil. d. Griech.* 3. 1⁴ (Leipzig, 1903), p. 811 n. 2.

⁸¹ Alexander in *meteor.* (CAG 3. 2), 6. 16, *quaestio* 2. 3, 50. 7 ff.; Aristotle *de caelo* 2. 3, 286a31 ff., *de gen. et corr.* 2. 10, 337a3 ff.; Moraux (1967), pp. 159 n. 4, 166 f.

⁸² *De princ.*, however, may represent an intermediate stage. For at 123. 34 f. Alexander apparently says that the heavens have no need of knowledge of things other than themselves for their preservation. This need not be a complete denial that they have such knowledge (which

and, by implication, in *quaestio* 2. 21, but *not* in the *de providentia*. It has already been suggested on other grounds that *quaestio* 1. 25 may be later than the *de providentia*;⁸³ it now appears – if my suggestion about how argument (2) might have been taken up in the continuation of *quaestio* 2. 21 is correct – that this may apply to *quaestio* 2. 21 as well. The suggested line of argument applies more naturally to providence exercised by the heavenly spheres than to that exercised by the Unmoved Mover; it would be difficult to argue that the latter was dependent for its continued activity on the existence of the earth, or indeed derived any benefit from it at all. This restriction of the argument to providence exercised by the sphere-souls is in accord with the suggestion, at the end of section 1, that there is a move in the writings attributed to Alexander towards suggesting that providence is exercised only by the sphere-souls and not also by the Unmoved Mover.

University College London

R. W. SHARPLES

APPENDIX – SPHERE-SOULS AND UNMOVED MOVERS

Alexander regarded the heavens as ensouled.⁸⁴ Their regular motion is caused by their desire to emulate the changelessness of the Unmoved Mover.⁸⁵ The Unmoved Mover is clearly distinguished from the souls of the spheres,⁸⁶ though Simplicius complicates this by attributing to Alexander two grounds for arguing that the first mover is itself unmoved – the distinction between Unmoved Mover and sphere-soul, and the claim that the cause of motion of the first sphere is located throughout its circumference – apparently presented as *alternatives*.⁸⁷

It also seems that a separate Unmoved Mover should be postulated for each sphere, so that there is a separate soul *and* a separate Unmoved Mover for each of the heavenly spheres. This is after all the most plausible interpretation of Aristotle *Metaphysics* A 8, where the initial question ‘whether it should be supposed that there is one being *of this sort* or several’ (1073a 14) is naturally taken as referring to the incorporeal Unmoved Mover, the object of the heavens’ desire, discussed in the previous chapter, and not as referring to the sphere-souls. Alexander’s acceptance of the existence of a plurality of Unmoved Movers is suggested by passages from *de principiis*.⁸⁸ It is true that he does there raise the problem of how a plurality of movers, having no matter, would contradict the passage cited in n. 68 above; but would Alexander have written thus if he had already worked out the application of both (1) and (2) to the problem of divine providence?

⁸³ cf. above at n. 41.

⁸⁴ Simplicius *in phys.* (CAG 10), 1261. 30 ff., Alexander *quaestio* 1. 1, 3. 10 ff., 1. 25, 40. 10, *de princ.* 124. 7 ff. Cf. S. Pines, ‘*Omne quod movetur necesse est ab aliquo moveri*’, *Isis* 52 (1961), 43 ff.

⁸⁵ *Quaestio* 1. 1, 3. 14 ff.; 1. 25, 40. 10 ff., especially 40. 17, 21; 2. 18, 62. 27 ff.; 2. 19, 63. 18 ff.; *de princ.* 124. 7 ff.

⁸⁶ *Quaestio* 1. 1, 4. 1 ff., 1. 25, 40. 8–10; Alexander ap. Simplicius *in de caelo* (CAG 7) 380. 5 (criticizing Herminius). Cf. next n., and Zeller (above n. 80), 817 n. 1, 827 n. 5, 828 n. 2, W. D. Ross, *Aristotle: Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1924), pp. cxxxvi f. Alexander sometimes speaks as if the heavenly bodies were a unity endowed with a single soul; cf. Pines (above n. 84), 44 nn. 99, 106, and 46 n. 116.

⁸⁷ cf. Simplicius *in phys.* (CAG 10), 1261. 33 ff., 1354. 16 ff., 26 ff.; Zeller locc. cit., and also Simplicius *ibid.* 1355. 23 ff.

⁸⁸ For the plurality of Unmoved Movers and the distinction between these and the sphere-souls one may also compare [Alexander] *in metaph.* (CAG 1) 707. 1 ff., 12 ff. And, for the plurality of Unmoved Movers, cf. above at nn. 73–6, even if it is doubtful how far Alexander’s references to pure forms in the plural are to be pressed. (Cf. my forthcoming discussion referred to in n. 72.)

can be distinct from one another (130. 44 ff.), and might be taken to be denying the possibility of such a plurality. This however would be wrong; for subsequently it is argued that such entities can be related to one another in priority and posteriority (132. 11 ff., cf. 132. 21 ff.), without this involving the presence in them of contraries, as had been objected earlier (131. 13 ff.). The passage at 130. 44 ff. thus appears only to be Alexander's statement of the problem, not an expression of his final position.

Furthermore, Alexander's acceptance of a plurality of Unmoved Movers seems to be indicated by Simplicius, in *phys.* 1261. 30–3:

Alexander says that the souls in the 'wandering' spheres are moved *per accidens*, but not by themselves; rather, [they are moved *per accidens*] by the [sphere] which moves their bodies, because they are in these [bodies] which are moved not in the same directions as those in which [the spheres] are moved *by the unmoved [entities] in them*.

It is true that the souls of living creatures can be described as unmoved *per se* (Aristotle *de anima* 1. 3 405b31 ff.; Alexander *de anima* 17. 10, 21. 24) or as unmoved movers (Aristotle *Phys.* 8. 6 258b20–2; but cf. *ibid.* 8. 2 253a11 ff., 8. 6 259b6 ff.), and Simplicius has himself just before described the souls of the spheres as unmoved (*in phys.* 1261. 16). But would Alexander have used 'unmoved entities' to refer to the sphere-souls, rather than the Unmoved Movers, when he has already referred to the sphere-souls in the same sentence? When Simplicius cites Alexander as suggesting that the cause of motion of the first sphere is separate from it, while all other souls are inseparable from their bodies (*in phys.* 1262. 3), the reference may be not so much to the movers of the inferior spheres as to Alexander's notorious denial of the immortality of the human soul.⁸⁹

Finally, a plurality of Unmoved Movers seems also to be suggested by a passage from *quaestio* 1. 25 (40. 23–30), which deserves to be considered in some detail, though I am far from confident that I have solved all its problems.

The first and outermost [sphere] is moved in a simple and single motion by desire for that being (i.e. the Unmoved Mover).⁹⁰ But the seven⁹¹ after it are (i), on the one hand, each of them moved by desire and appetite for some being⁹² of the sort by which that before them is moved. (ii) However, they are not only moved with this motion,⁹³ but [they are moved] of themselves,

⁸¹ That the Unmoved Mover of the *first* sphere was regarded by Alexander as located in the circumference is indicated both in the present context and in Simplicius *in phys.* 1354. 16 ff. (above, n. 87). W. Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of his Development* (tr. R. Robinson; ²Oxford, 1948) 361 + n. 1 does regard Simplicius *in phys.* 1261. 30 ff. as indicating only that there is *one* Unmoved Mover, that of the outermost sphere, that is distinct from the soul of its sphere.

⁹⁰ Bruns (1890), pp. 230–2 showed that the first part of the discussion, from 39. 9 to 40. 8, does not belong with what follows. But the desire of the heavens to emulate the Unmoved Mover has been the object of discussion since 40. 10.

⁹¹ That is, one sphere for each of the 'wandering' heavenly bodies (five planets, moon and sun). One might have expected Aristotle's 55 spheres. The passage *might* reflect modifications in the light of later astronomical theory; cf. Adrastus of Aphrodisias ap. Theon 180. 22 ff.; Zeller 3. 1⁴, 811 n. 3; S. Sambursky, *The Physical World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1962), p. 138. However, Simplicius *in de caelo* (CAG 7), 503. 33 implies, at least *ex silentio*, that Alexander in his commentary on the *Metaphysics* confined himself to elucidating the account presented by Aristotle; so too [Alexander] *in metaph.* A 8. Cf. also Simplicius *in de caelo* 32. 1–5. Simplicius *in phys.* 1357. 11 ff. says that the whole heaven can be regarded as a single sphere as well as *eight* (7 + 1), rather than as well as 56 (55 + 1); so too Simplicius *in de caelo* 552. 3, 5.

⁹² Bruns (1890), pp. 225 f. emended the MSS reading *τινὸς οὐσίας* 'some being' here to *τῆς οὐσίας* 'the being', objecting to Zeller's interpretation of the genitive as subjective, referring to the sphere-souls, rather than as objective, referring to the Unmoved Mover (Zeller 3. 1⁴, 827 f. n. 5). But the genitive can still be interpreted as objective with *τινὸς*, and this reading accords better with *ὁποίας*.

⁹³ Bruns (1890) 226 read *μόνη τῇδε* 'by this being'; but in his 1892 edition he reverted to the MSS *μόνην τήνδε*.

each of them, (iii)⁹⁴ with a motion in which they are moved and carried round in the opposite direction to that [outermost sphere], through having the sort of position and arrangement that they do. (iv) But [each of them] is also moved in a second motion by the first [sphere], being carried round with the same motion as it.

It seems clear that (ii) and (iii) relate to the independent motions of the inferior spheres from west to east; in which case both (iv) and (i) must relate to the daily motion of the whole heaven from east to west. It is, admittedly, most odd that the Unmoved Movers are mentioned in (i), in connection with the daily motion shared by all the spheres, rather than in (ii) in connection with the peculiar motions of the lower spheres. One might have thought that the daily motion of the lower spheres could be explained simply by their being carried round mechanically by the outermost sphere, as indeed is suggested by (iv), or by their sharing the desire of the outermost sphere to emulate *its* Mover. Indeed Simplicius in *phys.* 1357. 6–9 cites Alexander as explicitly holding that the motion which the lower spheres share with the outermost is caused, not by the outermost sphere, but by *its* Unmoved Mover;⁹⁵ in *de principiis* 132. 4 ff. it is the *proper* motions of the lower spheres that are dependent on the plurality of Unmoved Movers. On any interpretation the passage from *quaestio* 1. 25 seems to leave the proper motions of the lower spheres oddly unexplained; Alexander does indeed go on immediately to say that the reason for the proper motions of the lower spheres is the preservation of the sublunary,⁹⁶ but are we to suppose that this is the only reason for their proper motions, as opposed to the daily motion which they all share with the outermost sphere?

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On *quaestio* 1. 25 cf. I. Bruns, 'Studien zu Alexander von Aphrodisias – 3: Lehre der Vorsehung', *Rh.Mus.* 45 (1890), 223–35; and on 2. 21 cf. P. Merlan, 'Zwei Untersuchungen zu Alexander von Aphrodisias', *Philologus* 113 (1969), 88–91. *Quaestio* 2. 3 is devoted to discussion of the nature of the influence of the heavens on the sublunary; it is discussed by Bruns in *Rh.Mus.* 45 (1890), 138–45, and by P. Moraux in *Hermes* 95 (1967), 159–69. Moraux regards it as an early work (163 f. n. 2).

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The *de principiis* (*On the Principles of the Universe*) was edited by A. Badawī, *Aristū'inda l-'Arab*

⁹⁴ Both in his 1890 article (226) and in his edition Bruns begins a new sentence here; but this seems both awkward and unnecessary, since he too takes (ii) and (iii) to refer to the same motion.

⁹⁵ cf. also *de princ.* 130. 14 ff., 41 f., 132. 20 f. 130. 17 ff. – 'Chacun de ceux-ci conçoit aussi le premier moteur en acte, et se meut d'un mouvement circulaire qui lui est propre et qui correspond à son mouvement' (Badawī's translation) – might seem to suggest that the *proper* motion of each of the lower spheres was the result of its desire to emulate a *single* Unmoved Mover, that of the first sphere, in its own individual way; but should the relative clause here perhaps apply to the mover rather than to the motion?

⁹⁶ *Quaestio* 1. 25, 40. 34–41. 4, cited above in section II.

(*Dirāsāt islāmīya* 5), Cairo 1947, 253–77, and translated into French by the same author in his *La transmission de la philosophie grecque au monde arabe* (Paris, 1968), pp. 121–39. Part of the work is also translated by F. Rosenthal, *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam* (Zürich, 1965), pp. 201–6; translated as *The Classical Heritage in Islam* by E. and J. Marmorstein (London, 1975), pp. 446–9.

Two fragmentary texts of Alexander are also relevant to the question of divine providence: fr. 36 in J. Freudenthal, 'Die durch Averroes erhaltenen Fragmente Alexanders zur Metaphysik des Aristoteles', *Abh. kön. Akad. Wiss. Berlin* (1884), phil.-hist. Kl., no. 1; and fr. 2 in G. Vitelli, 'Due frammenti di Alessandro di Afrodisia', in *Festschrift Theodor Gomperz* (Vienna, 1902), pp. 90–3 (cf. also idem, 'Frammenti di Alessandro di Afrodisia nel cod. Riccard. 63', *Stud. Ital. Filol. Class.* 3 (1895), 379–81). Important, too, are the remarks of Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3. 16 f. (cited according to the translation by Pines, cf. above).

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I have endeavoured to survey recent scholarship on all aspects of Alexander's work, and to provide a full bibliography, in 'Alexander of Aphrodisias: Scholasticism and Innovation', forthcoming in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase, Teil II *Principat*, section 'Philosophie und Wissenschaften'.

ADDENDUM

When this article was written I had not yet seen Professor A. C. Lloyd's *Form and Universal in Aristotle* (Liverpool, 1980; *ARCA, Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs*, 4), in which issues considered in section II above are dealt with at pp. 17–20 (Aristotle) and pp. 56–9 (Alexander). With regard to Aristotle, Lloyd considers the possibility that the content of the Unmoved Mover's thought includes the forms of sublunary species (above, nn. 65–8), but inclines to the view that both for Aristotle and for Alexander the Unmoved Mover's thought is of pure forms, the other Unmoved Movers (above, n. 75). He describes the argument in Alexander *quaestio* 2. 21 that I have labelled (3) as a 'sophistical half-truth', and supposes that Alexander might well have gone on to point out its shortcomings (Lloyd, p. 56). He also suggests that, if the sphere-souls are aware of their effect on the sublunary (above, n. 77), Alexander might have argued that the Unmoved Mover will be too, in the following way (Lloyd pp. 57–9): since the sphere-souls apprehend the Unmoved Mover, and where there is no matter intellect and its objects are identical, and the Unmoved Mover is itself pure intellect, the thoughts of the sphere-souls will be identical with those of the Unmoved Mover. (Cf. above at nn. 70–1.) But since identity is a symmetrical relation, it follows that its thoughts will be identical with theirs; accordingly, if they are aware of their providential effect on the sublunary, so will it be. However, while claiming that Alexander himself might well have accepted such an argument, Lloyd himself criticizes it on the grounds that it is only if the sphere-souls' thoughts are solely of the Unmoved Mover that they will be identical with it.