**(Re)writing commentaries: Alexander on *Metaphysics* V 2 and Simplicius on *Physics* II 3**

**Appendix**

**A. Simpl. *in Phys*. 316.8–11 (commenting on 195a2**–**3):**

αὐτὰ [*sc*. τὰ ὄργανα] δὲ τῆς ὑγιείας, ὡς μὲν ὁ **Ἀλέξανδρός φησι**, ποιητικὰ αἴτια. μήποτε δὲ ὀργανικὰ λέγειν ἄμεινον ταῦτα. καὶ γὰρ καὶ **αὐτὸς ὁμολογεῖ** τὰ μὴ πρῶτα τῆς κινήσεως αἴτια ὀργανικὰ εἶναι, ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ ποιητικὰ κυρίως.

They are, as **Alexander says**, the ‘productive causes’ of health. However, perhaps it is more correct to call them ‘instrumental’. For **he** (Alexander) **himself agrees** that those that are not the primary causes of the motion are ‘instrumental’, but not productive in the strict sense.

Alexander does not explicitly call the instruments of health ‘productive causes’ in his comments (350.9–10),[[1]](#footnote-1) even though Simplicius has rephrased Alexander to that effect a few lines above (316.2–3).[[2]](#footnote-2) Simplicius likely felt justified in doing so because Alexander had mentioned instruments as an example of the productive cause in an earlier passage (349.35). When he now claims that Alexander ‘agrees’ (Simplicius again uses the termὁμολογεῖ) that non-primary efficient causes are instrumental, he most likely refers back to his own interpretation, as Alexander does not say anything on this in his comments *ad loc*.

**B. Simpl. *in Phys*. 316.15–17 (commenting on 195a2-3):**

**ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος** οἶμαι ποιητικὰ **εἶπεν** εἰς τὰ μετ’ ὀλίγον ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους λεγόμενα ἀπιδών, ἐν οἷς τὸ πονεῖν ποιητικὸν τῆς εὐεξίας φησί. [195a9-10]

‘I think that **Alexander called** them “productive” with an eye to what Aristotle says a little later, where he says that working is the productive cause of well-being.’

A few lines later, and like an afterthought to passage A, Simplicius suggests that Alexander talked about ὄργανα with a view to *Physics* 195a9-10, where Aristotle speaks of exercising as the efficient cause of wellbeing (while wellbeing is the final cause of exercising). This explanation is somewhat far-fetched. That Simplicius adds this thought may indicate that he is looking for further justification for his own over-interpretation of Alexander. In any case, Simplicius is invested in having Alexander as authoritative voice for the concept of the instrumental cause.

**C. Simpl. *in Phys*. 317.23- 28 (commenting on 195a3)[[3]](#footnote-3):**

καὶ οὕτως ἡμῖν ἀνεφάνη τὸ ὀργανικὸν αἴτιον, ὅπερ ἐστὶ κινούμενον μὲν ὑπ’ ἄλλου, κινοῦν δὲ ἕτερον. Καὶ σαφῶς ἐπὶ τῆς τεχνικῆς ποιήσεως ὁρᾶται· τὸ γὰρ σκέπαρνον συναίτιόν ἐστιν, διότι κινούμενον κινεῖ, τοιαύτη δὲ καὶ ἡ φύσις ἥ τε ὅλη καὶ ἡ μερική, ὡς καὶ **Ἀλέξανδρος ὁμολογεῖ** καλῶς ἐπιστήσας, ὅτι τὸ κυρίως ποιητικὸν αἴτιον χωριστὸν εἶναι χρὴ καὶ ἐξῃρημένον.

‘And so the instrumental cause became clear to us, which is both moved by another and moving something else. And it can be clearly seen in the production of artefacts. For, the axe is an auxiliary cause, because it moves while being moved. Such is also universal nature and particular nature, as also **Alexander agrees** when he rightly adds that the productive cause in the strict sense is necessarily separate and transcendent.’

This passage comes from Simplicius’ presentation of the Platonic theory of causes, and the instrumental cause is again justified with the help of Alexander. Simplicius repeats his (unacknowledged) rephrasing of Alexander that he had given in the initial passage, lines 315.10-11. Alexander did say that the primary cause is external to what comes into being (τὸ δὲ πρῶτον … ἐκτὸς τοῦ γινομένου 349.36-37) but did not make that a necessary condition for something to be a productive cause.

**D. Simpl. *in Phys*. 321.8-11 (commenting on 195a21-23):**

τὸ δὲ σπέρμα μέσον πως τοῦ τε ποιητικοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὑλικοῦ ἐστιν, εἴπερ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ μεταβολῇ καὶ γινόμενον ἅμα ποιεῖ, τοῦ κυρίως ποιοῦντος, ὡς καὶ **Ἀλέξανδρος ὁμολογεῖ**, ἐξῃρῆσθαι τοῦ γινομένου ὀφείλοντος.

But the seed is, in a way, intermediate between the productive and the material (*sc.* cause), since through a change of itself it at the same time produces something; the producer in the strict sense, as also **Alexander agrees**, must transcend the product.

Once more, as in passage C, Simplicius ascribes to Alexander the thesis that the true productive cause must be separate from the product.

1. Alex. Aphrod. *in Metaph*. 350.9–10 καὶ πάντα ὅσα τοῦ τέλους χάριν μεταξὺ γίνεται ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιοῦντος τὸ τέλος τοῦ τέλους γίνεσθαι χάριν. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Simpl. *in Phys*. 316.2–3 καὶ πάντα τὰ μεταξὺ τοῦ τε ποιητικοῦ αἰτίου καὶ τοῦ τέλους. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For the preceding text see section III.i.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)