Proclus’ interest in Aristotle can already be traced back to the time when he studied in Alexandria under a certain Olympiodorus. As we learn from his biographer Marinus, the Neoplatonist must have been a brilliant student with an exceptional memory. For, coming from a lecture, Proclus could literally repeat everything that was said there. What is more, he easily learned by heart all of Aristotle’s logical writings, although these works are, as Marinus underlines, rather troublesome for their readers. Later, after his arrival in Athens, Proclus, together with

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1. Proclus, a Neoplatonic Student of Aristotle

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Syrianus, had a close reading of Aristotle’s *De anima* and Plato’s *Phaedo* under the supervision of Plutarch of Athens. After Plutarch’s death, Syrianus and Proclus even read the whole of the Aristotelian corpus together in less than two years. Much of the criticism of Aristotle that Syrianus and Proclus share may go back to these discussions.

It is, I think, remarkable that Marinus lays such an emphasis on Proclus’ knowledge of Aristotle, while we are comparatively less well informed when it comes to Proclus’ studies of the Platonic dialogues, although he must have known most of them, if not all, from memory. One possible explanation is certainly that Marinus wants to show that Proclus’ *paideia* was in accordance with the Neoplatonic curriculum where Aristotle was studied as an introduction to Plato. However, it is very unlikely that Proclus would have started to read Plato only after he had read all of Aristotle.

Be that as it may, from the evidence Marinus reports one can safely infer that Proclus’ familiarity with Aristotle must have been astounding. Therefore, it is very likely that Proclus composed several commentaries on Aristotle’s works. The evidence, however, is so scarce that Beutler in his monographic treatment of Proclus in Pauly-Wissowa’s “Realencyclopaédie” did not mention a single commentary on Aristotle in his otherwise comprehensive list of extant and lost Proclean works. This was later corrected by L.G. Westerink, who in the preface to his edition of the *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* collected the remains of an *Introduction to the Categories* and of commentaries on *De Interpretatione*, and on the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*. As we have seen, all of these works Proclus had learned by heart as a young student. Moreover, as Westerink points out, there is evidence for a *Commentary on Porphyry’s Isagoge*.

That the *Posterior Analytics* were of special interest to Proclus becomes clear from the comparatively numerous instances where the Neoplatonist—directly or indirectly—refers to this work and quotes from it. In the wake of his teacher Syrianus, it is first and foremost the basis of Aristotle’s system of sciences that is criticised by Proclus, and here more

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5 Marinus, *Vita Procli* § 12, 9–11 (Saffrey/Segonds).
6 Marinus, *Vita Procli* § 13, 1–4 (Saffrey/Segonds).
7 Beutler (1957), 190–208.
8 Westerink (1962), xii with note 22. Cf. also Saffrey/Westerink (1968), lv and Reale (1989), 21 and 129.
9 On Syrianus’ criticism of Aristotle see now Helmig (2009).