THE CHAIN OF CHANGE
A study of Aristotle’s Physics VII

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CONTENTS

Preface.................................................. ix

PART I

Physics vii
Sigla.................................................. 3
Authorities cited.............................. 4

The texts: versions α and β............... 6
Translations....................................... 40

PART II

Analytical table of contents............... 71
1 Introduction.................................... 83
2 Moved movers.................................. 93
3 The varieties of contact................. 121
4 Alteration and reduction............... 152
5 Recapitulation: the two versions...... 240
6 Anti-reductionism: Aristotle and his predecessors on mixture............... 252
7 Unlikely comparisons...................... 263
8 Playing with numbers...................... 300

Bibliography....................................... 337
Index of passages cited..................... 341
General index..................................... 343

vii
PREFACE

The acknowledgement of helpful guidance, suggestions, and conversation marks the only debts one is all too happy to accumulate – intellectual ones. I have been extremely fortunate in my creditors, who have unstintingly given of their time and knowledge to aid me in the exposition of this difficult text in particular and of Aristotle in general. The late G. E. L. Owen introduced me to Physics VII and provided inspiring encouragement throughout the initial stages of my research; I count myself very lucky to have enjoyed his unique influence. Geoffrey Lloyd supervised my subsequent work, tirelessly indicating lacunae in the argument and recommending improvements in the exposition. Nicholas Denyer’s shrewd observations have induced me to clarify the line of thought, especially in ch. 1, and Richard Sorabji’s keen views on reductionism originally stimulated the composition of ‘Aristotle and his Predecessors on Mixture’. My contemporaries who attended Gwil Owen’s graduate seminar have continued to help me in my work, especially Paul Sanford and Christian Wildberg.

The immediate ancestor of this book is my doctoral dissertation. If The Chain of Change is less of a curate’s egg than its parent, that is due in large measure to the patient and acute criticisms of a number of readers. Catherine Atherton, Myles Burnyeat, Christopher Kirwan, Geoffrey Lloyd, Malcolm Schofield and Sarah Waterlow all coped nobly with a rather crabbed and exasperating thesis; where the book makes better sense and expresses it in clearer English, the comments of one or another of these kindly critics are usually responsible. At a later stage Michael Reeve’s scrupulous editorial help was of great value. Catherine Atherton, Michael Reeve and Malcolm
PREFACE

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