

that it is hot in the greatest degree. But fire, since it is the cause of heat in hot things because it is itself also hot, is for this reason hot in the greatest degree.

148,1 [So too], then, the causes of things that are beings in the greatest degree, since they are themselves beings, are beings to an even greater degree than the former because they are their causes, and they are even more true; for we posited that each thing participates in truth to the extent that it participates in being (*to on*). Inasmuch therefore as I call 'eternal' both the things that exist forever and their causes, to this extent the former are called 'true' in the same way (*sunônumôs*) with reference both to one another and to their causes; but inasmuch as causes of the being of certain things are
5 beings to a greater degree [than their effects], to this extent among eternal things the causes are more true than [the things they cause]. Consequently, the knowledge that is in the greatest degree directed toward truth must be knowledge that deals with causes of the things that [are true].⁴⁴ For if the things that are forever beings, those that are the object of theoretical knowledge, are forever true because they exist forever, then certainly among these things too the causes are true to a greater degree than their effects, since the former are prior and the latter posterior – not of course in time (both of them
10 are eternal) but by nature; for the cause is by nature prior to the things of which it is the cause.

There is nothing paradoxical in saying that [one] true thing differs from [another] true thing, if it is indeed the case that truth depends on being and that the objects known have different [degrees of] being, since some of them are objects of scientific knowledge,⁴⁵ others of opinion; for as Aristotle will say in what follows, matter (*hulê*) must necessarily belong to things that are in motion.⁴⁶ For not all beings can be known scientifically, although [all] beings are
15 true, but truth is the knowledge of being (*to on*) as it is in reference

⁴⁴ 148,6, *toioutôn* must be taken with *tôn*, 'things of this sort', i.e. true. The argument is that the first causes are pre-eminently true because they are the source of the truth found in other things. The following lines reinforce this point.

⁴⁵ 148,12-13, *epistêta*. Alexander sometimes uses this term of things that can be known in general, but also of those that are known demonstratively (see n. 67 to my translation of his commentary on Book 1). Here the contrast with *doxasta* indicates the latter, more technical sense. The same contrast is found at 164,20 below.

⁴⁶ 148,12-13. The reference is to *Metaph.* 994b25, *tên hulên kinoumenên noein anankê*, where however there is a textual problem. See 164,15ff. below, and the notes to that section. But it is difficult to understand the implication here that material things subject to motion can be the objects only of opinion and not of scientific knowledge, for that would be to deny the possibility of a true philosophy of nature (cf. in *Metaph.* 1, 123,12-13: 'if movement is destroyed, the whole theoretical inquiry about nature is also destroyed'). Perhaps Alexander is simply contrasting the variable and contingent status of material substances with the immutability and necessity of eternal things.