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*Stephan of Alexandria, Last of the Neo-Platonists, First of the Medieval Sages*

Stephan of Alexandria has been called the “last of the neoplatonic philosophers of Alexandria” known to us by name. He is generally assumed to have moved from Alexandria to Constantinople on the invitation of Heraclius in the early 7th century to assume the chair of philosophy in the capital. He wrote an extant commentary on *De interpretatione*. The commentary on *De anima* book 3 attributed to Philoponus is generally agreed to be by Stephan. It is possible that Stephan is the author of pseudo-Elias’ commentary on Porphyry’s *Isagoge*. It has also been suggested that Stephen of Alexandria is the same writer sometimes known as Stephan of Athens, the commentator on certain Hippocratic treatises. There exists, moreover, the more legendary figure of an alchemist and astrologer named Stephan who was associated with Emperor Heraclius, and whom we may identify, again, as Stephan of Alexandria. Several alchemical treatises are attributed to him, at least one of which has been accepted as genuine.

There are also indications that Stephan of Alexandria, or rather his personal library, had something to do with the origin of the so-called “Collection philosophique” when Stephan moved from Alexandria to Constantinople, playing, thus, an important role in the transmission of Alexandrian neoplatonician commentaries to Byzantium and the Orient.

How many *Stephanoi* we are dealing with here: one, two, or three? Despite our modern prejudices about what is science and what not, the identification of philosopher, medical writer, alchemist and astrologer (astronomer) is perfectly possible when seen in the cultural context of Late Antiquity/Early Byzantium.

Stephan – Christian – philosopher – medical writer – alchemist – astrologer. This intersection of startling roles gives us a portrait of a dynamic scholar whose teaching activity was a vital link in the transmission of ancient learning to the Middle Ages and beyond.