Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in the East
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Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in the East

The Syriac and Arabic translation and commentary tradition

By

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this book is translation—not just the translation(s) of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* the title alludes to but more generally translation as a phenomenon of cultural exchange. Why the choice of medieval translations into Arabic, particularly of this text?

In a series of publications dedicated, among other things, to the history of Islamic philosophy and the transmission of Greek philosophy to an Arabic-speaking audience, examining the “Arabic translation and commentary tradition” needs little explanation. At the core of this transmission process was what has come to be called the “Greek-Arabic translation movement”, a concerted effort to translate the available Greek scientific, medical and philosophical literature into Arabic, carried out between the eighth and the tenth centuries. Initially funded and supported by the authorities, the translation activities soon gained enough momentum to sustain themselves for a period of more than two centuries. As a result, large parts of the Greek scientific and philosophical heritage was transmitted to Arabic-speaking audiences.

The introduction of Greek knowledge had an immeasurable impact on Islamic culture and contemporary societies. The Greek-Arabic translation movement was, both in terms of its scale and its influence, an unprecedented process of cultural transmission and transformation. Working across a substantial linguistic and cultural divide, the translators developed whole new terminologies to describe subjects and disciplines for which there was no equivalent in contemporary Islamic culture. Their work and the subsequent writings of scientists and philosophers were not just an isolated episode in the history of science or philosophy, least of all a mere interlude in the history of “Western” scientific and philosophical activities as it has sometimes been understood. All of these Arabic-speaking scholars contributed to the formation of Islamic culture and, through the medium of Arabic-Latin translations produced from the twelfth century onward, left their mark also on Western medieval science and philosophy.

Given its longevity and impact, the study of the Greek-Arabic trans-
lation movement involves a number of fields and approaches. Even after more than a century of sustained research, many questions remain unanswered. On the level of the individual text, the identification of the sources used by the translators, the dating of translations and the study of translation methods and subsequent revisions of many extant texts is still in its infancy. From the point of view of the history of ideas, we are still only at the beginning of identifying translators and patrons, understanding their backgrounds and motivations and reconstructing networks of scholars and translators who cooperated in identifying texts they wanted to have translated and, once the translations became available, in giving rise to new research agendas fueled by newly available material. At the same time, the political calculations and conflicts that inspired the widespread and persistent financial support for the translation efforts by members of the intellectual, economic and political elite are still poorly understood.

There is no doubt, then, that the study of the Greek-Arabic translation tradition helps us understand many aspects of medieval Islamic society and at the same time serves as a very instructive example for the role of translation as a medium of cultural transmission. But why the *Rhetoric*?

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and its Arabic translation are not the most obvious choices through which to examine the inner workings of the translation movement. While respected in theory, the *Rhetoric* had never been an important text for the rhetorical teaching tradition in antiquity. It was soon replaced by textbooks which were better suited to the practical needs of students of oratory. In contrast to the lack of interest of late antique scholars and commentators, however, Islamic scholars actively engaged with the text. Their interest in this previously somewhat marginal work found its expression in numerous rhetorical treatises and commentaries. Unlike other Aristotelian writings translated into Arabic, the *Rhetoric* came without a ready-made framework for understanding it (e.g. in the form of a set of commentaries). Confronted with the obscurities of a text that is intimately linked to aspects of Greek culture they knew little about, Islamic philosophers assembled their own, highly individual and creative interpretation of the *Rhetoric* and its role in the context of Aristotelian philosophy and beyond.¹

¹ In medieval Islam, the rhetorical tradition we will be discussing in this book did not refer to “oratory” or “public speaking” in general. It meant a specific form of philosophical theorizing based on Arabic translations of Greek rhetorical writings, particularly Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. The term for “indigenous” forms of oratorical activities such as Arabic
The *Rhetoric* is therefore a good example of several levels of involvement with the Greek heritage. As a text, it posed substantial philological problems and, as we will see, taxed the translators’ abilities to and beyond breaking point. As such, it helps us to understand how translators operated by showing how this particular individual applied the whole range of methods and tools at his disposal. As a set of philosophical ideas, the *Rhetoric* illustrates the creative processes of assimilating an unfamiliar subject couched in an even more unfamiliar language into Islamic philosophy through several generations of commentators and philosophers. Posing both philological and philosophical problems, the *Rhetoric* can, I am convinced, throw some light on the larger questions of the Greek-Arabic translation movement outlined above.

Fortunately, the ground is well prepared for a study of the Arabic *Rhetoric*. Research on the Arabic commentary tradition and also its afterlife in the Latin West has been very active for a number of years. To understand this work, its position in the translation movement and its influence on Islamic culture and beyond, our task is therefore to combine these and other strands of research with a thorough study of the Arabic text of the *Rhetoric* itself: we need to situate it in its context as a Greek-Arabic translation, as a philosophical text and as part of a wider historical phenomenon.

Mapping out this context will be at the center of the first two chapters. The first chapter discusses the history of the Greek-Arabic translation movements, its motivations and some of the problems and issues affecting past and current research. In the second, we will focus on the history of the Arabic *Rhetoric* and review the (relatively small) body of information we have about the Arabic translation. The annotations in the margins of the single extant manuscript will lead us to a discussion of the possible role of a Syriac intermediary and the evidence we have for the reception of the *Rhetoric* among Syriac-speaking scholars.

Having assembled the relevant contextual information from the available secondary sources, we then turn to the text of the translation itself. At the center of the third chapter is a detailed analysis of a text sample from Book Three of the Arabic *Rhetoric* and a comparison with the Greek source text. Additional investigations of textual features of a larger text

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*halāqah* whereas “Hellenizing” philosophical rhetoric was taught and studied under the label *ḥabab*. The difference between these two disciplines and their respective terminologies are discussed by Halldén (2005) and Larcher (1998).
sample together with a comparison with other products of the Greek-Arabic translation movement provide us with additional information on the development of terminologies and translation methods during different stages of the translation movement.

The fourth chapter explores the afterlife of the Arabic *Rhetoric* in Arabic and, several centuries later, in Latin. It surveys the Arabic commentary tradition which developed around the *Rhetoric* and describes some of the traces these writings left in the subsequent Arabic-Latin translation tradition.

In the concluding chapter, we will use the information gathered in the preceding chapters to assess the position of the *Rhetoric* as part of the Arabic translation tradition, its methodological underpinnings and the question of the translation’s dating. Also, turning back to the issues raised in the introduction, we will attempt to determine how the study of this text helps us better to understand the translation movement and the intellectual world of ninth century Baghdad.

This book would not have been possible without the support of numerous friends and colleagues. I am indebted most of all to James Montgomery of Cambridge University who supervised the Ph.D. thesis on which this monograph is based. His patience and persistence during what turned out to be trying times for all of us was crucial for my project. Equally crucial was the encouragement and help I received in revising the thesis and turning it into a book by my current supervisor, Ralph Hexter, first at the University of California at Berkeley and now at Hampshire College. I have also benefited from the generosity of many colleagues who gave me invaluable corrections and suggestions or offered their support at critical junctures. Without in any way diminishing the gratitude I feel towards all of them, I would like to single out Fritz Zimmermann, Maria Mavroudi and Dimitri Gutas for their extensive feedback on previous versions of this book and/or their continuing goodwill and encouragement.

Finally, I would not have been able to write this book without the unfailingly generous support of my father.
CHAPTER ONE
“GREEK INTO ARABIC”

Problems of translation history

The study of the Greek-Arabic translation movement is a scholarly field at the crossroads of a number of related subjects. On the one hand, it belongs to the domain of history; it is part and parcel of the political and intellectual history of medieval Islam. On the other, it is the subject of philological research by scholars of Arabic, Syriac and Greek. Other fields with an interest in the translation movement are the history of philosophy and the history of science but also linguistics, particularly the discipline of translation studies. That the character and outcome of past research depended to a large degree on the specific background of the scholars who worked in the field of Graeco-Arabica should therefore not come as a surprise. The same background sometimes also prevented them from asking important questions. Below, we will survey some of the issues that arose as a result of such individual perspectives. Some of them are inevitable and cannot be resolved satisfactorily. For some, however, remedies are available.

The philological perspective

Especially during the first hundred years of Greek-Arabic studies (which started in earnest around the middle of the nineteenth century), the majority of the pioneering scholars involved in the field came from a philological background associated with the Classics and Divinity. Given that they received their training in such an environment, scholars were at least in part motivated by the desire to search Arabic translations and literature for traces of Greek texts, either in order to check and possibly improve readings of extant Greek texts or even uncover such texts that had survived only in Arabic.

Apart from this strong motivation to study the Arabic translations, their background bestowed on some scholars what I would like to call their “philological outlook”: a tendency to look at the translation movement as a philological phenomenon in isolation from its political and
intellectual context. Studying Greek and Islamic science and philosophy in the form of isolated texts and comparing both traditions in a vacuum led to conclusions such as that the latter had to be completely dependent on the former—down to the level of particular terms and phrases.

In addition, this isolating perspective implies static concepts of meaning and translation, among them the (implicit) hypothesis that ideas expressed in a specific linguistic and cultural context retain their meaning unchanged from the moment of their creation and throughout their transfer into different languages. According to this view, there is an immutable semantic content which survives unscathed the history of translation of texts from Greek into Syriac, later into Arabic, later again into Latin and ultimately into the western vernaculars.¹

This implicit stance left little room for the role of adaptation, modification and assimilation of ideas beyond their mere rendering in a new language. It was incompatible with the idea of movement, development and change both on the side of the idealized and essentialized content of texts and the culture into which they were introduced. Incidences of social, cultural or intellectual continuity which require an even-handed appreciation of both pre-existing local cultures and the transmitted material interacting with it cannot be evaluated on the basis of an essentialist concept of the translation movement exclusively relying on texts. This perspective also underestimated the possibility of a diffusion and mutual inspiration of cultures in the Near East, be they Christian and Islamic or Greek and Arabic. The efficient and final causes of cultural interaction had to be textual, monolithic and codified.

The second aspect of what I have termed the “philological outlook” is its tendency to project a particular division of the “intellectual universe” on the medieval Islamic societies that initiated and nurtured the translation movement. Perhaps inevitably, the concept of a divide between science, philosophy and religion that is often taken as a point of departure for the study of the Greek-Arabic translations is our own, that of the contemporary observer. The writings of the eighth-century Islamic philosopher and polymath Abū Yusuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī (d. ca. 870) illustrate very well why such modern distinctions between different intellectual spheres stand in the way of a full appreciation of

¹ In the words of Hans Robert Jauss (1982, p. 9), this crude idealism (which affected not just the field of Graeco-Arabica) sought “the focal point of knowledge in the origin or in the atemporal continuity of tradition, and not in the presence and uniqueness of a literary phenomenon. The recognition of the enduring within perpetual change released one from the labour of historical understanding.”
medieval Islamic scholars and their thought: on the basis of an al-Kindī-
commentary on a mathematical treatise about *The Measurement of the Circle*
by the great mathematician and engineer Archimedes (d. ca. 212 BCE), Roshdi Rashed demonstrates al-Kindī’s reliance on mathematical
proofs as both a “paradigm to be respected and an ideal to be attained”.²

For al-Kindī, the study of mathematics was a necessary prerequisite for
the study of philosophy and science. Philosophical argumentation pro-
vided him the means to reach an understanding of and defend religious
doctrines. Unlike later philosophers, who stressed the role of logic as the
paramount instrument for gaining knowledge, al-Kindī held that math-
ematical proofs supplied the unifying methodological framework for all
intellectual activity, be it “science”, “philosophy” or “theology”.³ The
example of al-Kindī casts considerable doubt on the validity of familiar dis-
tinctions between “science”, “philosophy” and “religion” in the context of
the early translation movement.⁴

Likewise, the relation between science as understood by al-Kindī on
the one hand, i.e. the totality of human intellectual effort, and trans-
lation on the other has often (but not always) been regarded as one of
precedence in time and content: translations spawned “science”. Again,
Roshdi Rashed persuasively argues for a less schematic approach. On the
basis of examples from mathematics and optics, he demonstrates that the
need for specific translations was often caused by previous research. Con-
crete research agendas led to the identification and translation of Greek
texts deemed useful to solve specific scientific problems. Thus, the rel-
ationship between research and translation can be better understood as
dialectical with research promoting translation and translations changing
or giving rise to entirely new research agendas.⁵

Reconstructing transmission, oral and written

One consequence of the “philological outlook” is the centrality accorded
to the textual transmission of Greek thought. Modern scholars concen-
trating on written texts often tend to underestimate the impact of oral

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² Rashed (1993, p. 31).
⁴ The problem of compartmentalizing spheres of thought and expression that were
regarded as a continuum by contemporary observers also affects other genres Arabic writ-
ings. See Montgomery (2006, p. 91ff) with further references on the problematic distinc-
tion between “thought” and “literature”.
communication and reinforce descriptions of the “Islamic scientific enterprise” as a phenomenon that logically depended on the production of translations, predicating the development of “science” on the textual transmission of Greek knowledge. Fortunately, they also now acknowledge the undocumented but far-ranging consequences of oral translation and transmission.⁶

The bias of the historical picture in favor of written texts is all but inevitable, given the scarcity of relevant primary and secondary sources: translation techniques, the identity of translators and information about their life and times have to be inferred on the basis of a limited number of translations and an even more limited number of bibliographical works. These in turn are either useless, such as the pronouncements of the scientist and philosopher Ḥālil ibn Aybak al-Ṣafādī (d. 1363),⁷ to be discussed below, or tied to a specific context, such as Ḥunayn ibn Ishaq’s (d. 870) Risālah,⁸ a letter by the most accomplished of all Greek-Arabic translators to one of his patrons, the Persian courtier and general ʿAlī ibn Yāhū al-Munaḥǧim. It is one of the most valuable sources for the chronology of translations and authors and the only comprehensive source we have on the details of translation methods but applicable only to Ḥunayn and perhaps his associates. Common sense alone tells us that in all probability, Ḥunayn did not invent these methods but only refined and systematized them. But a comprehensive description of the developing methodology of the translators remains a desideratum.⁹ Frequently, judgments about the identity of translators of a given text, their methodology, style and vocabulary are tentative at most. The common practice of revisions complicates matters even further by potentially burying translators’ idiosyncrasies in style and vocabulary under layers of later corrections, leaving the modern scholar with a jumble of sometimes contradictory findings.¹⁰

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⁶ The role and importance of oral channels of transmission have been studied, among others, by Paul Kunitzsch (1975, p. 272 and 1976, p. 116ff) and Kees Versteegh (1979, p. 258 and 1980, p. 10f, 13f). The results of his analysis of the Taṭār (Qur’ān commentary) by Muqāṭīl ibn Sulaymān (d. 767) caused him to qualify his previous claims about Greek sources for the terminology of early Kufan grammarians (cf. Versteegh, 1990, p. 238); still, his overall concept of cultural contacts between Arab conquerors and the Hellenized cultures of Syria and Iraq remains convincing.

⁷ Cf. Matrock (1989, p. 73f).


⁹ Some important work in this direction has already been done. See e.g. Brock (1981) on the development of the Syriac translation techniques that later influenced Arabic translators and Brock (1991) on the impact of this tradition on Hunayn ibn Ishaq.

In addition, by its very nature, oral transmission is extremely difficult to document. Short of filtering the entire corpus of classical Arabic literature for technical terms and ideas that potentially resulted from oral diffusion before or during the translation movement, there is no way to estimate the extent and consequences of oral transmission. Even if such a body of evidence were to be compiled, it would be even harder conclusively to disprove the the influence of (known or unknown) written sources.

Still, the evidence of transmission and cultural exchange that has been brought to light so far seems underdetermined by the corpus of translations, both lost and extant: we cannot explain every Graecism and every instance of terms and ideas apparently inspired by a Greek source, whether directly or indirectly. To understand such phenomena, it is helpful to postulate a certain amount of oral communication across linguistic boundaries and “para-translational” phenomena which leave less conspicuous traces in a literary tradition than the outright translation of texts. Assuming such transmission processes has the added advantage of fostering an understanding of the translation movement that emphasizes the processual character of cultural exchange: instead of contrasting diachronic “before”- and “after”-snapshots of Islamic culture to demonstrate the impact of Greek-Arabic translations, commentators such as Endress describe the translation phenomenon and the unique cultural background it emerged from in a way that allows for numerous parallel, competing and converging channels of transmission and that offers a better and pointedly non-essentialist starting point for the explanation of specific linguistic and cultural phenomena.

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12 As Gutas (1994, p. 4946) convincingly argues, the contents of such oral transmission could hardly have been entire systems of thought or complex doctrines.
13 Oral diffusion of terms, ideas and other disparate pieces of information in the multicultural and multilingual environment of early Abbásid Baghdad does not necessarily deny the possibility and importance of independent intellectual developments Gutas (1994, p. 4948) stresses, let alone the independence and creativity of Islamic civilization. In view of the challenge of documenting oral transmission, it cannot be more than one explanation among many for particular intellectual and literary phenomena. This “minimalist” position may be read as negating its explanatory value, but I am convinced that it has an important role to play as an antidote to excessive reliance on written transmission as the ultimate vector of cultural exchange.
Translation “quality” and “equivalence”

The study of the translation movement, its exponents and its products is intimately linked with a vexing linguistic issue, that of the “equivalence” or, as it has sometimes been framed, the “quality” of translations. Naturally, translation meant different things to different people, not just to a Hunayn ibn Ishāq as opposed to modern scholars but also to modern scholars coming from different fields. We will discuss the issues that arise from differing “modern” understandings of translation below; suffice it to say that some commentators approached the products of the ninth- and tenth-century Greek-Arabic translation movement from a decidedly twentieth-century point of view and tended to regard some of them qua translations as something of a failure.

However, in spite of the obvious problems for a correct understanding of the translated texts this chapter will uncover—in a nutshell, secondary Syriac translations served Arabic translators as a basis for the understanding of a scientific and literary tradition as far removed from ninth- and tenth-century Baghdad as ancient Greece—scholars still frequently commend the products of the Greek-Arabic translation movement for their quality and philosophical subtlety.¹⁴

In part, the perhaps surprising ability of the translators to overcome linguistic and cultural obstacles stemmed from their own experience with and keen awareness of the problems involved in the transfer of ideas between structurally unrelated languages such as Arabic and Greek.¹⁵ Some apparently also realized that there not only existed a linguistic gap between classical Greek on the one hand and Syriac and Arabic on the other—all of which interfered with each other in the process of translation—but that a second gap had opened between the Greek of the philosophical and scientific texts they worked with and the Greek language they had learned as part of their schooling or training as translators. As important is it is for the study of Greek-Arabic translations, this phenomenon has not yet received the attention it deserves.¹⁶

The translators shared their awareness of the problems of translation with their readers, e.g. Islamic philosophers such as Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950) who was in personal contact with translators. Their debates about

¹⁶ Daiber (1980, p. 39–63) documents the various levels of influence exerted by post-classical usage on the Arabic translation of the Placita philosophorum falsely ascribed to Plutarchus of Chaeroneia (d. ca. 127); cf. below, p. 139.
translational problems left traces in philosophical works, e.g. in a fascinating passage in al-Fārābī’s Kitāb al-ḥarīf and his commentary on Aristotle’s De interpretatione in which he gives a lengthy description of the structural and semantic differences between several languages, notably Greek and Arabic.¹⁷ The two problems al-Fārābī discusses in particular are the lack of congruence between the verbal systems of both languages, i.e. the difficulty to express the elaborate system of Greek verbal tenses in Arabic and the lack of an Arabic equivalent for the Greek copula discussed below.¹⁸

That the quality of many translations was not always up to the expectations of readers is illustrated by a long digression on translation in the Kitāb al-ḥayawān (Book of Animals) by the celebrated litterateur ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Ǧāḥiẓ (d. 868/869).¹⁹ He lists a number of minimal qualifications for a translator: he has to be intellectually on a par with the author he is translating; he should be well versed in both source and target language and aware of their different structures, methods of argumentation etc. and the subtle ways those languages influence each other in the process of translation; the translator has to be familiar with the characteristics of different textual genres and the specific problems they pose for him (an amazing insight into a problem still discussed in contemporary translation theory); finally, he must be experienced in textual criticism and have a grasp of the problems manuscripts and their potential corruption can cause. Al-Ǧāḥiẓ mentions several translators by name: Ibn al-Biṭriq (fl. in the first half of the ninth century), Theodore Abū Qurrā (d. ca. 820), ʿAbd al-Masīḥ ibn Nāʿimah al-Ḥimsī (d. around 840), Ibn Fihr and Ibn Wāḥihī. The best known and probably most accomplished translator of his time, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, does not appear—his translations might either not have been well-known by the time of al-Ǧāḥiẓ or the Kitāb al-ḥayawān was written before Ḥunayn produced his translations. The motivation for his detailed remarks might be found in contemporary discussions about the necessity of translating the Qurʾān for the benefit of

¹⁷ Cf. e.g. Mahdi (1969, p. 110–128) and, for the latter, Zimmermann (1981). Since al-Fārābī himself was unable to read Greek, his knowledge of specific linguistic phenomena must have been derived from secondary sources. Walzer (1970, p. 37) assumes that they go back to Hunayn’s discussion of the subject in a lost treatise known to the tenth-century translator and philosopher Abū Bīr Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus al-Qunnāʾī (d. ca. 940) and his associates who transmitted it to their contemporary al-Fārābī.


the non-Arabic speaking population of the Muslim state (especially into Greek and Persian). Al-Gāhīz was apparently vehemently opposed to any such undertaking.²⁰

The one medieval Islamic source that is most often quoted in discussions of translation “quality” and “equivalence” is a classification of translations into word-by-word and sentence-based proposed by the Arab polymath al-Ṣafadī.²¹ He claims that before the time of Hunayn ibn Ishṭāq (i.e. before ca. 850), translators operated on a word-by-word-basis, replacing each Greek word with its Arabic equivalent. Hunayn and his successors read whole sentences and rendered their semantic content, thereby preserving the meaning of the texts.²² An examination of the Arabic translation of the Metaphysics, produced by one of the most productive pre-Hunayn translators, Uṣṭāṭ (otherwise unknown, fl. probably during the first half of the ninth century), flatly contradicts al-Ṣafadī’s claims.²³ The degree of modulation in evidence in earlier translations is on the whole even higher than in later translations. Thanks to the activities of Hunayn and his associates, a complete inventory of technical terms in different disciplines evolved and became standard; additionally, the language of their translations conformed to contemporary literary tastes—which in turn facilitated the acceptance of both terminology and texts by their scholarly audience.²⁴ In a way, it would be more appropriate to describe the translation movement as progressing towards a higher degree of translational restriction—turning al-Ṣafadī’s scheme upside down.²⁵ The rig-


²¹ Mattock (1989, p. 74) observes: “The frequent citing of this passage illustrates quite a common phenomenon: if a quotation is useful, it will become authoritative by virtue of sheer frequency of repetition.” It has become something of a topos in studies of the Greek-Arabic translation movement; whatever an author may think about its validity, s/he has to discuss it.

²² E.g. Walzer (1962a, p. 116, 118f).

²³ This point has been convincingly argued by Endress (1973, p. 154 and 1989, p. 110f), Mattock (1989, p. 74) and Gutas (1998, p. 142).


²⁵ The Syriac translation movement went through a similar development; see Brock (1983). However, the Syriac methodology was explicitly developed in reaction to the need for higher precision in the rendering of religious source texts after the major christological conflicts of late antiquity. Any comparison between these two translation phenomena might therefore be of limited value. The parallel development towards translations that attempted to mirror the source text in ever greater detail in both Greek-Syriac and Greek-Arabic translations is also noted by Hugonnard-Roche (1991b, p. 201) and Gutas (1998, p. 142).
orous stylistic standards of Hunayn’s and later translations left their mark on scholarly writings which adopted a number of stylistic characteristics introduced during the translation movement.²⁶

Al-Ṣafadi’s statement is absurd not only because it contradicts the evidence of extant translations. It also contradicts linguistic common sense: due to the substantial structural differences between Greek and Arabic, divergences between source and target text were unavoidable and automatically render any description of early translations as “word by word-renderings” meaningless.²⁷ As far back as the late sixth century, translators themselves were aware of the need to balance their desire to reproduce the source text as precisely as possible and the necessity to stay within the semantic and syntactical boundaries of the target language.²⁸

The discussion of al-Ṣafadi’s remarks and scholarly positions on the “quality” of translations exemplifies a wider problem: a misleading concept of translation. As noted above, “translation” is often understood as the transfer of an unchanging semantic content from one language into another, an oversimplification that frequently prevents satisfactory explanations for the translational problems encountered in the Greek-Arabic translation movement. At the same time, however, “language” is often regarded with some suspicion: the obvious translation problems encountered in the products of the Greek-Arabic translation movement serve as evidence that “language” (specifically Syriac and Arabic) is an inflexible semantic system unsuited to convey terms and ideas from one linguistic and cultural system to another. Frequently cited examples include the mismatch between terms across languages, cultural and religious notions that influence the reading of texts or sometimes even vague claims about the incompatibility of the Arabic language with certain types of philosophical reasoning.

²⁶ Endress (1989, p. 121). In his comparison of translations of Aristotle’s Metaphysics α by Ustāṭ and Ishāq ibn Hunayn, Mattock (1989, p. 73) credits the latter with greater consistency in style and terminology while the former suffers from a primitive technical vocabulary, eccentricities of syntax and a “general unevenness of quality”.


²⁸ At the end of a Syriac translation dated to the end of the sixth century, the translator writes: “This [treatise] was translated and interpreted from Greek into Syriac word for word without alteration in so far as possible, so as to indicate, not just the sense, but, by its very words, the words of the Greek; and for the most part not one letter has been added or subtracted, provided the requirements of the language have not bindered it in” (Brock 1983, p. 91, my emphasis).
Translating Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* into Arabic was part of a wider process of cultural exchange that led to the adaptation and transformation of large parts of Greek learning to fit the unique religious, intellectual, political and social circumstances of Islamic culture. It is almost impossible to understand the significance of the Arabic translation of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* outside this historical and intellectual context. Our first task will be to trace the history, motivations and consequences of the so-called “translation movement”, a sustained translation effort which spanned ca. two centuries and resulted in the translation from Greek into Syriac and Arabic of the bulk of the Greek philosophical and scientific literature that had become accessible to Arabic-speaking scholars following the conquest of large areas of the Middle East and North Africa by Muslim armies in the seventh and eighth centuries.

The following survey of translations, translators and issues of translation history is far from complete. Its (more modest) aim is twofold: firstly, to present some background information about the history of Greek-Arabic translations to help us contextualize the Arabic *Rhetoric* and, secondly, to describe how various scholars have attempted to explain the occurrence of the translation movement in the first place and how these explanations included an ever widening range of historical factors.

From the very beginning of the study of the Greek-Arabic translation tradition, scholars were fascinated by the role Muslims played in preserving and passing on parts of the Greek philosophical and scientific heritage to the Latin West: the “continuity” of Western thought was regarded as crucial for the study of the translations and the Arabic scientific and philosophical writings they inspired. At least in part, the translations and the Islamic philosophical traditions based on them derived their value from being part of a larger tradition, from preserving rather than extending and developing Greek philosophical thought and deserved attention “for this reason alone”. The emphasis on the transmission rather than as-

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29 Other, much more accomplished scholars have already given as detailed accounts of the Greek-Arabic translation history as is possible at this stage. Among the more comprehensive ones are Endress (1987) and Gutas (1998). Goulet (1989 –), supplemented by Goulet (2003), is an indispensable guide to the Syriac and Arabic translation tradition of Aristotelian works. The most comprehensive and up-to-date bibliographical resource on Islamic philosophy including translations and related texts is Dalbert (1999).

30 E.g. Richard Walzer (1962b, p. 2, 7f), one of the founding fathers of Greek-Arabic studies, who was one of the most important exponents of this perspective.
simulation and development of Greek science in the Islamic tradition was, however, tempered by two factors: firstly, an appreciation of the role of a scholar’s historical circumstances, personal priorities and philosophical background. Modern commentators are fully aware that their historical judgments are necessarily relative, given that any understanding of the past can only proceed from their individual historical situation and experience.\(^{31}\) Secondly, an awareness of the achievements of Arabic translators and Muslim philosophers who, with the help of translated texts, created whole new disciplines—e.g. Islamic philosophy—together with the language to discuss philosophical and scientific ideas.\(^{32}\) 

The impact of the Greek-Arabic translations and the subsequent retranslations of Arabic texts into Latin on the respective receiving cultures was immense. In addition to reviving Greek learning, the translations were instrumental in the very formation of Islamic culture.\(^{33}\) Their impact was so tremendous that they have been likened to the European Renaissance.\(^{34}\) In spite of the obvious differences between these two processes of cultural transformation—for one, on the Muslim side, it would be inappropriate to talk of a “recovery” of a cultural heritage that had been lost—the term conveys a sense of the rapid influx of new ideas and the upsurge in philosophical and scientific activities it brought about.\(^{35}\) Its reach was not limited to those disciplines that were newly established on the basis of translated texts, e.g. philosophy and the natural sciences. In

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\(^{31}\) Walzer (1970, p. 8f).

\(^{32}\) Among others, Walzer (1962a, p. 11) described it as a “‘productive assimilation’ of Greek thought by open-minded and far-sighted representatives of a very different tradition and thus a serious attempt to make this foreign element an integral part of the Islamic tradition.”

There is no doubt that the Arabic translation tradition can be a very useful tool for the study of Greek literature. In the case of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, the Arabic translation was helpful in clarifying issues of textual transmission and even confirm some hypothetical readings of the Greek original; cf. Bottin (1975, 1977).

\(^{33}\) Rosenthal (1965, p. 28) writes: “Ein neues Lebensgefühl, eine geistige Ausrichtung, wie sie zuvor dem Islam fast unbekannt gewesen und nur rudimentär in ihm angelegt war, wurde geboren und damit das, was wir islamische Kultur nennen, erst eigentlich geschaffen.”

\(^{34}\) Cf. Rosenthal (1965, p. 28, 30). Rosenthal’s student Joel Kraemer (1992, p. VII) defines the term “renaissance” in an Islamic context as “a classical revival and cultural flowering within the soil of Islamic civilization” and explains that “[t]he principal expression of this renaissance was a philosophical humanism that embraced the cultural and philosophical heritage of antiquity as a cultural and educational ideal.”

\(^{35}\) Cf. Kraemer (1992, p. 1), who adds that each cultural flowering in history which has been labelled a “renaissance” was based on a different set of ideas and texts: “Each epoch selects and fashions its own antiquity” (p. 4).
spite of sometimes open hostility from some quarters, the knowledge derived from Greek texts permeated almost every field of Islamic thought. Part of the creative achievement of the translators was to devise the very language with which to express the ideas and theories they were translating into Arabic. As the results amply demonstrate, the Arabic language proved to be an ideal medium for the development e.g. of a philosophical terminology which in some cases became the model for technical terms in Western languages through the medium of Latin translations. Often, their precision even surpassed that of the original Greek texts.

In addition to creating a powerful technical language suitable for scientific and philosophical research and preserving Greek texts (even today, Arabic translations represent an important source of manuscript evidence for Greek writings), the Greek-Arabic translation movement sent a much more fundamental message that transcends the narrow confines of particular cultures and historical periods:

its significance lies in that it demonstrated for the first time in history that scientific and philosophical thought are international, not bound to a specific language or culture.

Once it had been passed on to Muslim scholars, Greek scientific and philosophical literature was not just passively transmitted to western, Latin-speaking scholars from the eleventh-century onward. Even before the systematic efforts in the West to find and translate Greek original texts that were a hallmark of the Renaissance, Latin translators had introduced their audience to those versions of Greek texts that had passed

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36 "La pénétration de la pensée grecque fut immense dans tous les domaines de la pensée arabe, même dans ceux où la résistance fut la plus vive: philologie, jurisprudence, et théologie. Le miracle grec a été reconnu par tous" (Badawi, 1968, p. 13).

37 Even before the translation movement got under way, scholars had begun to create or systematize Arabic terminologies in other subjects. To cite but a few examples, Zafar Ansari (1972, p. 29ff) has demonstrated the existence of a complex and precise legal terminology around the middle of the second century AH. Some fascinating examples for subtle terminological distinctions in the Muwatta’, a comprehensive handbook of legal rulings by the Medinese jurisprudent and founder of the eponymous madhab (legal tradition or "school of law"), Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795), can be found in Dutton (2002, p. 40). For kalām, i.e. theology or, more specifically, the religious science that devises discursive arguments to defend religious doctrines, Richard Frank (1994) has shed light on the early development of a highly technical and systematic set of terms by analyzing the evolution of the phrase lam yazal ("was/has been from eternity") in Muslim theological discourse. See also Louis Gardet’s article “Ilm al-kalām” in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition (Gilb 1954–2005, henceforth EI²), vol. 3, p. 1141–1150.

38 Cf. the remarks by Walzer (1968, p. 102–106).

through the filter of Arabic translation and Islamic reception, together with parts of the commentary tradition built on those Arabic versions. These translations helped define the textual and theoretical corpus we know as the “Greek heritage”. This form of cultural influence manifested itself not only through the recovery of works lost in the West. Of equal importance was the transmission of several apocryphal texts that colored the entire reception of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy throughout the Middle Ages.⁴⁰

Numerous studies of the translation movement, its history and its products have made abundantly clear that the Greek-Arabic translations are more than a mere episode in the history of philosophy and the sciences. Also, they are not the exclusive domain of philologists and students of literature. The impact the translations had on all branches of learning in the Islamic world, their political motivations and implications across two centuries (and beyond) and their sheer pervasiveness under the first ʿAbdābāsīd caliphs in the late eighth and early ninth century document their relevance for the historian as much as the literary scholar and the linguist.

Translation history

Thanks to one and a half centuries of historical and philological research, the historical outlines of the “translation movement”, its development and its protagonists are fairly well known. Details, however, are harder to discern; our information about the output of specific translators is limited and a number of extant translations, including the Arabic Rhetoric, have so far resisted attempts to identify their author and historical context.

One important impediment remains the lack of reliable bibliographical and biographical sources. The Risālah (Epistle) of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 870) is one of the most valuable sources for the chronology of translations and authors. It is extant in two diverging recensions and was—as Ḥunayn himself admits—written from memory.⁴¹ Later bibliographical authorities such as the Fibrst (Catalogue) of the Baghdad bookseller Muhammad ibn Ishāq ibn al-Nadim (fl. 987)⁴² and biographical collections such as the Taʾrīḥ al-ḥukmāʾ (History of philosophers) by the histo-


⁴¹ Bergsträsser (1925, p. 1). The Risālah was edited and translated into German on the basis of a single manuscript by Bergsträsser (1925) with additions and corrections from a second manuscript in Bergsträsser (1932). See also Meyerhof (1926) and Strohmaier (1991).

⁴² Edited by Flügel (1871–1872) and translated into English by Dodge (1970).
rian ‘Alī ibn Yūṣuf al-Qīṭī (d. 1248)\(^{43}\) and the ‘Uyūn al-‘ānbā‘ fi ṭabaqāt al-‘aṭībā‘ (The Sources of Reports on the Classes of Physicians) by the historian Ahmad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Abī Usayb‘ah (d. 1270)\(^{44}\) did not always quote their sources correctly. Further complicating the situation are translations credited to the wrong author by copyists who wanted to improve their sales. In many cases, translated texts also show traces of several layers of modifications such as collation(s) and subsequent revision(s). We are often hardly able to determine the share different translators, collators, scholars and copyists had in shaping some of the extant translations.\(^{45}\)

The philological analysis of numerous translations at least allows us to assign specific texts to one of the several groups of translators who worked in close proximity during one or another stage of the translation movement. Thus, in tracing the sequence of events of the Greek-Arabic translation movement, it makes more sense to concentrate on what one commentator has called “complexes” of translators or of texts linked by a common subject matter instead of applying a purely chronological approach. Since each of these complexes operated with its own set of stylistic and terminological conventions, they are much easier to distinguish than individual translators.\(^{46}\) The following historical sketch of the translation movement will concentrate on such “complexes” or groups of translators.

Richard Walzer, whose classification we will follow, distinguished four such groups during the course of the translation movement. The first operated until the accession of the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Ma‘ūn (r. 813–833). Information about its members is scarce; we know little more than their names. The second group spanned the reigns of al-Ma‘ūn and his successor al-Mu‘tasim (r. 833–842). Among others, they produced the translations commissioned by the philosopher al-Kindī. The third such group, Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and his associates in Baghdad, was the mainstay of the translation movement from the reign of al-Mu‘tasim well into the first half of the tenth century. Thereafter, a fourth group of translators centered around a succession of Christian Aristotelian philosophers in Baghdad continued to produce new translations in the tenth and eleventh centuries. For their source texts, they relied almost exclusively on Syriac versions of Greek works originating from the circle of Ḥunayn.\(^{47}\)

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\(^{43}\) Edited by Lippert (1903).

\(^{44}\) Edited by Müller (1884) and Riḍā (1965).


\(^{47}\) Walzer (1970, p. 32, 35). We will discuss the role of translations from Greek into Syriac below.
The members of these groups shared three characteristics. Firstly, their geographical focus: most, if not all translators worked in Baghdad, the political and intellectual center of the ‘Abbāsid state, except those few who were already active before the foundation of the city in the year 762. Secondly, their religious affiliation: a majority of the dozens of translators we know of were Christians. Finally, their linguistic and educational background: for all we know, the Christian translators were largely a product of the church-based Christian educational system that continued to function under Muslim rule. The native language of the various Christian communities from which most of the translator hailed was Syriac.

Before we turn to the groups of translators listed above, we will first delineate the character and role of the Syriac translation tradition for the subsequent translations of Greek literature into Arabic. To get a better understanding of the environment in which the Greek-Arabic translation movement arose and flourished, we will then discuss the beginnings of these translation efforts and in particular the theories that have been suggested to explain why translation became such a prominent phenomenon shortly after the rise of the ‘Abbāsid caliphal dynasty in the middle of the eighth century.

The Syriac translation precedent

In pre-Islamic Palestine, Syria and Iraq, Greek learning was mainly transmitted through the various Christian churches of the area. Many of the Christian scholars trained in the convents and churches that were part of the local educational system(s) were familiar enough with Greek to read Greek literature in the original but their native language was Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic that had become the dominant language of scholars and merchants in the “Fertile Crescent” in the wake of the spread of Christianity. The doctrinal conflicts between local churches and the Byzantine authorities which led to the establishment of several independent denominations with parallel ecclesiastical hierarchies and educational systems deepened the rift between local communities and the secular and religious authorities in Constantinople.⁴⁸ With few exceptions, Syriac became the language of instruction in local schools and convents where a growing number of monolingual speakers of Syriac received their training. To acquaint them with the body of theological and also secular texts

⁴⁸ Syriac also served as the language of liturgy in these new church organizations; cf. Brock (1977, p. 422 and 1999, p. 157ff).
that made up the curriculum in these schools, Syriac translations were needed. Starting with the New Testament, a vast amount of mostly theological literature was translated into Syriac from the third century onward. Secular translations are attested as early as the fourth century and side by side with the bulk of patristic writings, a steady (if much less prominent) stream of secular texts was rendered into Syriac.⁴⁹

The Syriac translation precedent provided both a body of Syriac translations and the know-how and translational expertise that the Arabic translators of the eighth to tenth centuries could fall back on. They operated in a multilingual environment in which translation was a routine method of transmitting information, both orally and in writing. Also, the Arabic translators worked with a textual corpus which had been established long before they started translating it into Arabic: it represented the syllabus of Greek learning as taught and transmitted in Syriac long before the Islamic conquest of the area in the seventh century.

At the time of the Islamic conquest, the centers of Greek scholarship in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and western Persia were Edessa, Nisibis, Seleucia (near Ctesiphon) and Gundislapur (all of them dominated by Nestorian denomination) and Antioch and Amida (predominated by the rival Jacobite denomination). Secular sciences like philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, mathematics, astronomy, music and medicine were taught alongside religious subjects.

Philosophical studies were dominated by Aristotle, especially logic.⁵⁰ The body of Greek-Syriac philosophical translations constituted a substantial part of the “Greek philosophy” Muslim readers were familiar with; it consisted largely of the canon assembled by the philosopher Porphyry (d. 305) and other Neoplatonic commentators of his age and taught in the larger cities of the Byzantine East, including Alexandria, Gaza and Beirut. It included most of the works of Plato and Aristotle and a number of later commentaries and summaries.⁵¹ Among other benefits, Syriac intermediaries of Arabic translations had an important role to play in the practical day-to-day operations of translators: they could either be substi-

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⁵⁰ Badawi (1968, p. 15f) and also Daiber (2001, p. 336–343) with a sketch of the reception of Aristotelian logic in Syriac.

tuted for a missing Greek source or used to cross-check and collate Greek and other Syriac manuscripts of the same text.³²

The relevance and range of secular Greek texts translated into Syriac and their contribution to and importance for the Greek-Arabic translation movement are still debated.³³ When assessing the role of Syriac translations for the Arabic translation tradition, we should keep in mind that the number of Syriac translations of scientific and philosophical texts known to us only tell us part of the story: many Syriac scholars and translators routinely consulted Greek sources which were not translated but read in Greek and used in writing commentaries on other texts.³⁴ Reducing the influence of Syriac translators to the (relatively small) number of attested translations tends to obscure the importance and consequences of this indirect transmission.

In addition, the Syriac scholarly tradition was still alive by the time the first Greek-Arabic translations were produced in the second half of the eighth century, particularly in Edessa, one of the most prominent centers of Greek scholarship.³⁵ At the very least, the activities of Syriac scholars at this point in time suggest that the Syriac scholarly infrastructure—monasteries with their schools and libraries—was still to some extent functional and could have given the first generations of Greek-Arabic translators access to scientific and philosophical scholarship and to Greek texts and Syriac translations.³⁶

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³³ For a pessimistic view, see Gutas (1998, p. 138). Henri Hugonnard-Roche (e.g. 1987, p. 3 and 1990, p. 131f), who concentrates on the tradition of logical texts and translations, tends to see its role in a more positive light. The tradition of rhetorical learning in Syriac and possible influences of the Syriac version of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* has been studied by John Watt (1993a, 1995b, 1998).
³⁴ Hugonnard-Roche (2007, p. 283f) cites the example of George, Bishop of the Arabs (d. 724). His commentaries on Aristotelian works clearly demonstrate that he was familiar with commentaries produced in the school of the Neoplatonic philosopher Ammonius of Alexandria which, to our knowledge, were never translated into Syriac.
³⁵ Drijvers (1999) gives a concise overview of our knowledge about the history of the “School of Edessa” and its impact.
³⁶ Cf. Hugonnard-Roche (2007, p. 290f) and, on the continued existence of the Syriac scholarly tradition up to and beyond the accession of the ‘Abbāsid dynasty in 750, Conrad (1999). Brock (2007, p. 291ff, 305f) points out that the ongoing activities of Syriac monks-scholars in numerous monasteries attest to the existence of well-stocked libraries long after the Muslim conquest. He cites interesting manuscript evidence, e.g. for continuing scholarly work at the monastery of Qartmin as late as the ninth century.
The beginnings of the translation movement

The task of reconstructing the earliest history of translation into Arabic is closely linked with that of determining the intellectual and political factors that generated the need for translation and sustained the practice for more than two centuries. A number of basic historical facts are well established: translation (mostly oral) and the transmission of information between the various languages of the new Islamic state must have been a regular occurrence ever since the conquests of the seventh century brought large areas inhabited by non-Arabic speakers under Muslim control. Of the languages spoken by the new subjects in the formerly Byzantine and Persian territories, three were of particular importance: Greek (in Egypt and the urban centers of Syria and Mesopotamia), Aramaic (in Syria and Mesopotamia) and Persian (in Persia). The “Arabization” of the areas under Muslim control that had been heavily impacted by late antique Hellenism was a long, drawn-out process and the number of Persian and Greek administrative terms that entered into the Arabic language attests to the importance of non-Arabic speaking administrators and the extent of cultural exchanges in the early period of Islamic expansion. However, evidence for the systematic collection and translation especially of Greek scientific and philosophical literature only emerges in the second half of the eighth century. The ’Abbāsid caliphs of the first half of the ninth century, in particular the celebrated al-Ma’mūn and his successor al-Mu’tasim, are credited with instituting state sponsorship of translation and related scientific activities.

Less well established than these historical facts are the motivations of the various people involved, the translators, scientists, philosophers and, most of all, the rulers who took such an active interest in promoting translation. In this section, while tracing the development of the early

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57 Endress (1987, vol. 2, p. 416). Lutz Richter-Bernburg (1989, p. 46) emphasizes the reciprocal influence of Hellenism and local cultures. The cultural environment of early theologians and translators bore traces of indirect and direct Greek influences, it was an amalgamation growing out of a variety of cultural and intellectual roots. In the context of social and political thought, Louise Marlow (1997, p. 44f) stresses the wide diffusion of “Hellenism” in local cultures in Syria and Egypt and states that the influence of “Hellenism” was not restricted to urban environments but adapted to local rural traditions as well. She concludes that “[t]he assimilation of Hellenism into the culture of the eastern Mediterranean in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries foreshadowed the permeation of Islamic thought by Classical Greek and Neoplatonic social ideas”. Michael Morony (1984, p. 7f) presents several theoretical models for cultural exchange and transmission to back up and explain evidence for cultural diffusion in Iraq after the Islamic conquest.
Greek-Arabic translations as reconstructed by various modern scholars, we will survey in some detail their answers to this key question: how and why did systematic Greek-Arabic translations arise? As we will see, they built on and extended each others’ increasingly complex theories about the origins of the Greek-Arabic translation movement.

That translators received support and encouragement from the political elite of the late eighth and early ninth century, notably from the caliphs al-Ma’mūn and al-Mu’tasim, is abundantly attested in Arabic sources. In the 1950s, Richard Walzer maintained that apart from their alleged sympathies for the theological doctrines of the mu’tazilah, the reasons for their remarkable and long-lived interest in Greek science and philosophy were unclear.

To add to existing explanations for the support of the authorities for translation, Franz Rosenthal examines the political background of the translation movement. He maintained that already before the rise of Islam, there existed a certain degree of cultural contact between the Arabian Peninsula and the cities of Palestine and Syria, mainly through the medium of caravan trade. According to Rosenthal, Hellenism quickly became the chief cultural force in these areas and (somewhat later) in the

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58 A theological school originating in the first half of the eighth century which defined itself by its belief in five key doctrines: the oneness of God; the justice of God; the promise of paradise for repentant sinners and, conversely, the threat of eternal hellfire for those Muslims who die unrepentant; the status of a sinning Muslim as a fāsiq (“evildoer”) which puts him between the believer (muʾmin) and the unbeliever (kafir); the Qur’ānic obligation of every Muslim to “command the good and forbid the evil” (al-ʾamr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-naḥbī ʾan al-munkar). Cf. D. Gimaret’s article “Muʿtazila” in EI², vol. 7, p. 783–793.

59 Walzer (1962a, p. 3, 6). The alleged link between al-Maʾmūn’s policies and the theological doctrines of the muʿtazilah have been called into question by more recent research. John Nawas (1994, p. 616f) presents a concise and clear discussion of the reasons for al-Maʾmūn to promulgate the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān and institute—a few years later and just months before his death in 833—the mīḥnah, the prosecution of legal and theological scholars rejecting this doctrine. He shows that al-Maʾmūn’s alleged sympathies for the muʿtazilah cannot be conclusively proven from our sources. Dimitri Gutas (1998, p. 28f, 161, 189–92) agrees that the support of the ’Abbāsid must have been politically motivated and maintains that al-Maʾmūn consciously instrumentalized the muʿtazilah for political ends. As to the reasons for the introduction of the mīḥnah, Josef van Ess (1965–1966, p. 92–96) attributes it to al-Maʾmūn’s desire to unify the Muslim community. It had been torn apart by years of persecution of the proto-iślāmi movements who supported various pretenders against the ’Abbāsid dynasty. He also notes the influence of muʿtazilī theologians at his court and his claim that the caliphal office should provide the community with both political and spiritual leadership—similar to the claims of the various leaders of the ’Alid movements the ’Abbāsid authorities fought against. Cf. also Crone and Hinds (1986, p. 94, 96) and Martin Hinds’ thorough discussion in the article “Mīḥna” in EI², vol. 7, p. 2–6.
Arabian Peninsula. But the influence of Greek science and philosophy remained muted for some time. Under the first caliphal dynasty of the expanding Islamic polity, the Umayyads (661–750), the adoption of Greek thought was, as Rosenthal explains, considered inopportune: the ongoing political and military conflict with the Byzantine empire and the promotion of “Arabism”, i.e. the attempt of the conquering Arab tribes to hold on to their native cultural traditions and prevent assimilation by the older, established and more sophisticated cultures of the Byzantium and Persia, fueled the resistance against the indiscriminate adoption of ideas, texts and other cultural artifacts that had become abundantly available. According to Rosenthal, this resistance occurred even though the Umayyad government, in order to ensure the continuance of government in the newly conquered territories, depended on the services of Byzantine administrators who had stayed on in the formerly Byzantine provinces of the Islamic state: Arabic replaced Greek only from ca. 680 as the chief medium of administrative communication.

The caliphs of the dynasty that succeeded the Umayyads, the ʿAbbāsids (750–1258), were not affected by any politically motivated anti-Hellenistic resentment. On the contrary, their accession after several years of civil war proved auspicious for translation into Arabic. Due probably to their “Persian” background, the first attested translations of the ʿAbbāsid period were possibly produced on the basis of Indian and Iranian sources. Rosenthal conjectures that the first information on Aristotle might have reached an Arabic-speaking audience via Pahlavi translations or abridgements. An additional powerful incentive to make Greek knowledge available was the necessity to study Christian theological arguments for apologetic ends and to obtain argumentative tools for theolog-

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60 Marlow (1997, p. 46) speculates about the emergence of an independent Arabo-Hellenistic “sub-culture” in the course of pre-conquest Arab migration into Syria. On the linguistic level, Greek influences were felt long before the beginning of systematic translation activities. Greek terms infiltrated the Arabic language even before the rise of Islam and left their mark on the very vocabulary of the Qurʾān itself; cf. Andrew Rippin’s article on “Foreign Vocabulary” in the Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān (henceforth EQ), vol. 2, p. 226–237.

61 The implied “cultural control” exerted by the Greek administrators and their backers that supposedly nipped any translation effort in the bud cannot be reconciled with the evidence for the oral diffusion of ideas emphasized by Versteegh (1980, p. 10f) and supported by Endress (1987, vol. 2, p. 417) and Gutas (1998, p. 16, 23).


ical disputes among Muslims. Rosenthal also notes the chronological coincidence between the translation movement, supported by the ʿAbbasid court, and the predominance of religious scholars associated with the muʿtazilah which was adopted as the official theology of the court during the reign of al-Maʿmūn.

Apart from the possible political reasons outlined above, Rosenthal identifies a more general cultural factor for the success and longevity of the translation movement: the Qurʾānic concept of ʿilm, posited by the Prophet as the crucial factor for religious observance and a righteous life. In his opinion, the quasi-religious zeal for the acquisition of knowledge betrayed by the breadth and seriousness of the translation effort was inspired in part by personal piety, at least on the side of its patrons and sponsors.

The Islamic Middle East also offered the necessary human resources to initiate the translation movement: the bilingual, sometimes even trilingual Syriac translators who had inherited both their translation experience and a number of crucial texts from their own, church-based scholarly tradition. The concentration of the translation movement in Baghdad led to the situation that most translators knew Syriac better than Greek (if they knew it at all): before the Muslim conquest, Mesopotamia had been part of the Persian empire. Persian was the language of the Persian administrators while a majority of the population spoke dialects of Aramaic or Arabic. Unlike formerly Byzantine areas such as Syria where Greek continued to be spoken for some time, Greek speakers were few in and around Baghdad. Hunayn’s knowledge of Greek and that of some of the associates of his “school” was probably the exception, not the rule. The linguistic limitations of some early translators were all too obvious, but that did not necessarily turn out to be a disadvantage: they were unen-

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64 Rosenthal (1965, p. 17f.). The author frequently stresses the overwhelmingly practical orientation of the Greek-Arabic translations, i.e. its concentration on material which could be put to practical use, e.g. in Rosenthal (1940, p. 392): “The aesthetic enjoyment of the texts translated, and the unselfish pleasure merely in possessing what the Ancients had possessed, and in regaining their own words as they were spoken by them, are lacking. What was sought was nothing else but the contents and the substance of the texts, the practically and theoretically realizable knowledge they offered”.

65 The role of the muʿtazilah and its relation to both the court and the translation movement is still debated, see our discussion above and Ivry (1974, p. 22–34).


cumbered by the niceties of Arabic literary style and free in their attempts to render source texts into Arabic.\textsuperscript{69}

Thus, under the early ʿAbbāsid caliphs, key conditions for the initiation of systematic translation from Greek and Syriac into Arabic were met: there was a demand for translated texts; strong motivations to spend the requisite time and resources to meet it; and the manpower to do the actual work. Rosenthal reckons that the first translations were produced around the year 800. He rejects claims about translations allegedly produced before this time, e.g. of an alchemical work by a certain Iṣṭifān commissioned by the Umayyad prince Ḥālid, son of the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd I. (r. 680–83), as a later invention; another alleged very early Arabic translation of the Syriac medical encyclopedia of Ahrun (fl. 610–640) ascribed to a certain Māsarḡawayh may also be apocryphal.\textsuperscript{70} In his opinion, the available evidence suggests little beyond the fact that the earliest translations were restricted to practical subjects, especially medicine and alchemy. If translations were produced at all in the Umayyad period, they might not have been more than short notes for private purposes or oral information provided by the numerous native speakers of Greek still available in Syria.\textsuperscript{71}

With a growing amount of documentary evidence, accounts of the early history of Greek-Arabic translation such as Rosenthal’s and Walzers’ which concentrated on political factors gave way to more comprehensive theories that took into account social and economic circumstances. Also, the role of translation before the inauguration of a systematic Greek-Arabic “translation movement” was reappraised. Gerhard Endress points to the coexistence of different cultural, linguistic and ethnic groups as a key element in the reception of the Greek and Iranian heritage already in Umayyad times. It was characterized not only by explicit translations of texts but also by frequent oral communication between exponents of different cultures. During this period, Arabic gradually became the lingua franca and accelerated this process.\textsuperscript{72} According to Endress, informal

\textsuperscript{69} Rosenthal (1965, p. 22f).

\textsuperscript{70} Cf. Baumstark (1922, p. 189) who refers to Müller (1884, vol. 1, p. 109).

\textsuperscript{71} Rosenthal (1965, p. 15f). On the basis of additional evidence, later authors have pushed back Rosenthal’s date by about half a century; cf. p. 27 below.

\textsuperscript{72} Endress (1997, p. 406f). Paul Kunitzsch (1976, p. 108f) connects the linguistic assimilation of the conquered territories to the rise of “Middle Arabic”, a form of the Arabic language derived from the classical ‘arabīyah of the Muslim rulers but heavily influenced by the linguistic and conceptual contributions of the various subject populations, accounting for the extraordinary flexibility of this language and its suitability for translation. The
exchanges and discussions between exponents of different cultures were probably limited to what he terms “popular” and “parascientific” subjects, especially alchemy, but they nevertheless exerted an important influence on the subsequent development of the natural sciences.

In his explanation of the birth of the translation movement, Endress lists three key factors which converged to initiate the large-scale translation efforts we witness in the ninth and tenth centuries: on the linguistic level, the displacement of the languages of the Middle East (chiefly Greek, Aramaic and Persian) through growing “Arabization”; on the social and cultural level, the social promotion of the mawāli, the assimilation of Arabs and non-Arabs in the aftermath of the ‘Abbāsid takeover and the concomitant growth in prestige of the mawāli’s cultural heritage; and on the political level, the necessity of cultural appropriation for the advancement of Islamic culture and the generous support these appropriation efforts received from the authorities.

Like Rosenthal, Endress dates the beginning of a systematic translation movement to the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century. He connects it with the foundation of the so-called ḥiznāt al-ḥikmah (“Repository of Wisdom”, the predecessor of the bayt al-ḥikmah, “House of Wisdom”) by the caliph Hārūn al-Rašīd (r. 786–809), apparently the

sources and emergence of this type of Arabic has been studied, among others, by Blau (1967, 1999).

Endress’ categorization of alchemy as “parascientific” does not do justice to a field which has seen its share of serious scientific attention. In the case of the famous physician and scientist Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 923), Sarah Stroumsa (1999, p. 92) maintains that his “interest in alchemy was part and parcel of his scientific quest” and that his alchemy was “thoroughly experimental, and he clearly regarded it as belonging to the scientific study of the world.”


Pl. of mawāli, a term that denotes various kinds of legal relationships between a client and a patron. In our context, it means “client” or “protegé”, more specifically converts to Islam among the populations of the territories conquered by Islamic armies in the seventh and eighth centuries who had to secure the protection of an Arab Muslim clan or tribe and be assimilated into the tribal structure of early Islamic society to become Muslims. Cf. Patricia Crone’s article “Mawāli” in EI², vol. 6, p. 874–882.

Endress (1987, vol. 2, p. 418). Kraemer (1992, p. 287) stresses the role of contemporary bureaucrats (kuttāb, “scribe”, pl. kutṭāb) with a Persian cultural background and notes that “[t]he early kutṭāb were deeply immersed in the transmission of the ancient Persian and Greek legacies to the world of Islam during the first wave of translation activity”. Heinrichs (1969, p. 407) points out that the first and most obvious source for the administrative know-how of the kutṭāb and their educational ideal was what he termed the “legacy of the destroyed Sasanian empire”; translations from Pahlavi, he claims, started already in the second quarter of the eighth century and formed the basis for the literature and cultural attitudes of the scribal class.
first institution solely devoted to the transmission and study of the scientific heritage. It marked the start of the most productive period of translation, reaching its peak under the reign of his successor al-Ma’mūn.\textsuperscript{77} With the latter, the *bīzānat al-bīkmab* was allegedly extended to a full-fledged academic institution and supported by a staff of bookbinders, scribes and scholars\textsuperscript{78} studying an ever-growing number of scientific subjects. Even philosophical works, ostensibly without any practical value, were translated. According to Endres, the reason was to be found in the theological predilections of al-Ma’mūn who sanctioned the rational exegesis of the Qur’an and the *sunnah*\textsuperscript{79} to strengthen the defence of the Islamic brand of monotheism.\textsuperscript{80} Since, according to Gutas, the range of scientific and philosophical writings transmitted through the Greek-Syriac translation tradition was limited,\textsuperscript{81} Greek sources were consulted already at an early stage of the translation movement for a broader knowledge of Greek thought, a process which involved the outlay of vast sums of money and the efforts of numerous scholars and translators. With growing demands on the skills of the translators and the correctness of translations, older translations were subjected to scathing criticism.\textsuperscript{82}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Endress (1987, vol. 2, p. 423) bases his claim about the supporting staff at the *bayt al-bīkmab* on a quotation from Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist* that mentions a bookbinder among its members (cf. Flügel 1871–1872, p. 10): *Ibn Abī al-Hariš wa-kāna yuqālil li bīzānat al-bīkmab li-l-Ma’mūn*, “Ibn Abī al-Hariš used to bind books in the ‘Repository of Wisdom’ of al-Ma’mūn”. Due to the scarcity of evidence for the functions and structure of the *bayt al-bīkmab*, its role for the translation movement is still debated. Noting the absence of clear evidence for an act of foundation by Hārūn al-Rašīd or al-Ma’mūn, Gutas (1998, p. 54ff, 58f) maintains that it was a library, possibly already established a generation earlier by the caliph al-Ma’ṣūr (r. 754–775) and responsible for the housing of documents and translations relating to the history and culture of the Sasanian dynasty in Persia (226–651) which ended with the conquest of the Persian empire by Muslim armies. Under al-Ma’mūn, it appears to have been a place for astronomical and mathematical activities (in tune with al-Ma’mūn’s alleged “rationalist” orientation). While apparently not directly connected to the translation movement—it is not mentioned in Hunayn ibn Ishaq’s *Riḥlah*—it fostered a climate that supported translation and gave the translation activities, even if only indirectly, a semi-official veneer.
  \item The body of reports about the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.
  \item Nawas and Gutas take a less charitable view of the caliph’s motives, see Nawas (1994, p. 624) and Gutas (1998, p. 54, 82f) on al-Ma’ṣūr and al-Ma’mūn.
  \item Gutas’ pessimistic views on the importance of the Greek-Syriac translation movement will be discussed below.
  \item Not just by fellow translators and scholars but also other leading intellectuals of the time, e.g. the famous al-Ǧāḥiẓ. More on his take on the Greek-Arabic translation activities at the end of this chapter.
\end{itemize}
In conscious opposition to previous, more philologically oriented approaches, Dimitri Gutas stresses the social dimensions of the translation movement and claims that it can only be sufficiently explained as a social phenomenon. Lasting two centuries and involving huge expenditures covered by a diverse group of supporters ranging from merchants to rulers, “it was not the pet project of any particular group in the furtherance of their restricted agenda.” The rigorous scientific standards of the translators and the longevity and quasi-programmatic approach of the translation movement across generations express “a social attitude and the public culture” of early ‘Abbāsid society and cannot be accounted for by stressing one particular factor at the expense of others: neither the scholarly pursuits of Syriac Christians nor the philanthropic tendencies of a handful of “enlightened rulers” conclusively explain the translations; no single faction or class can be identified as the primary backer of the movement. The necessary funding was provided by a group of people cutting across all religious, ethnic and linguistic lines.\(^{83}\)

In his account of the political, social and economic developments which paved the way for the initiation and rapid growth of translation activity, Gutas stresses three fundamental factors:

Firstly, the integration of Egypt, the Fertile Crescent, Persia and parts of India into a single political and economic space following the Muslim conquests facilitated trade and increased agricultural productivity, especially in the former border zone in Mesopotamia, generating wealth for landowners and merchants and raising the general standard of living. Innovative goods such as paper could propagate quickly, scholars from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds could travel freely and exchange knowledge, thereby creating a pool of scientific expertise drawn from different sources. Their multilingualism allowed for the transmission of knowledge without translation.\(^{84}\)

Secondly, the shift of the capital to Baghdad encouraged a more positive attitude to Greek secular learning: influenced by the anti-Hellenistic and anti-secular bias of contemporary Byzantine theological disputes, the Christian administrative elite serving the Umayyads in Damascus was not prepared to support the adoption of Hellenistic secular thought whereas the Christian denominations in Iraq, themselves victims of theological strife with Byzantine orthodoxy, had a less negative view of Hellenistic learning. Paradoxically, the transfer of power from Syria to the east pre-

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\(^{84}\) Gutas (1998, p. 12ff, 16).
served a substantial portion of the classical learning that had largely been consigned to (temporary) oblivion in contemporary Byzantine intellectual circles.  

Thirdly, the influence of pre-ʿAbbāsid translation activities on the translation movement made itself felt in a number of different ways. Gutas takes a pessimistic stance on the role of Syriac translations and notes that the share of secular texts translated from Greek into Syriac before the Greek-Arabic translation movement was rather small.  

Even if Syriac scholars contributed their skills to the translation movement, its initiative, direction and management emanated from the context created by early ʿAbbāsid society.  

Greek-Arabic translations in Umayyad times were limited to politically and economically relevant documents, conditioned by the practical necessities of administration. Still, ad hoc oral translations were a necessity and daily occurrence in the multilingual environment of Umayyad Syria.

In addition to the source languages already mentioned, there were also translations from Sanskrit which apparently took place during the earliest phase of the translation activities. They seem to have focused on astronomical material; some of the texts were probably transmitted through Persian intermediaries.  

Pahlavi texts, partly based on Greek sources, fall into several groups. Some early Greek-Pahlavi translations were commissioned by Persian rulers and justified on the basis of a theological premise, i.e. that all knowledge was ultimately derived from the Avesta, the most important collection of Zoroastrian religious texts. Their relevance lies less in the (comparatively small) amount of texts translated but in the “culture of translation” they documented; according to Gutas, it survived until the ʿAbbāsid era. In the period of Umayyad decline in the 730s and 40s, politically motivated translations into Arabic appeared: sponsored by Persian groups or individuals to further their political interests, especially in connection with the activities of ʿAbbāsid propagandists who undermined the authority of the Umayyads, astrological material was

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85 Gutas (1998, p. 17f, 20), echoing Rosenthal who, as we have seen above, already pointed out the differing attitudes of Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid rulers and courtiers to Greek knowledge.  

86 Unlike Hugonnard-Roche (1989a, p. 7), who reminds his readers of the high esteem Hunayn expressed for at least a part of the translations into Syriac by the prolific translator, philosopher and physician Sergius of Rēšʿaynā (d. 536). The logical tradition in particular was deeply influenced by earlier Syriac translations of the relevant Greek texts (cf. Hugonnard-Roche 1989b, p. 3 and 1987, p. 205).  


consciously used to connect Sasanian imperial ideas with the ‘Abbāsid “ideology”, serving as an important element of their political justification.\(^\text{89}\)

Gutas traces the beginnings of a systematic translation movement back to the reign of the second ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr, a generation earlier than Endress and Rosenthal. With the adoption of Sasanian imperial ideology\(^\text{90}\) as part of his political creed and his support for the translation of astrological works that were used to justify ‘Abbāsid rule as the inevitably ordained successors to the dynasties of the Middle East, he secured the continued loyalty of the above-mentioned Persian faction that had helped sweep the dynasty to power.\(^\text{91}\) His choice of court functionaries and administrators reflected his ideological preoccupations: they were to a large extent drawn from a pool of Persian or Persianized subjects subscribing to the same imperial worldview that was at the heart of his ‘Abbāsid ideological “program”.\(^\text{92}\)

The reign of al-Manṣūr’s son al-Mahdī (r. 775–785) witnessed the first translation of Aristotle’s \textit{Topics}, commissioned by the caliph himself. It signaled the increasing significance of religious polemics as a driving force for translation: with the rise of active proselytism in the course of the ‘Abbāsid revolution and the growing need to defend the ‘Abbāsid interpretation of faith against Christians, Jews, Manichaëans and others, the demand for more sophisticated argumentative techniques for Muslim apologists became more and more pressing. Numerous translations of the \textit{Topics} attest to its importance for inter-faith debates and its role in the conflict with religious and political opponents. The translations of Aristotle’s \textit{Physics} answered a sudden need to study cosmological issues. These came to prominence through theological debates engendered by the conflict between Muslim apologists and the different strands of heresy subsumed under the term \textit{zandaqah}, i.e. Manichaëism, Bardesanism and


\(^{91}\) Gutas (1998, p. 28f, 46, 49f).

\(^{92}\) Gutas (1998, p. 53). His sustained emphasis on political motivations during the initial phase of the Greek-Arabic translation movement tends to obscure some of the other important factors at work during this period. Research into the history of mathematics and astronomy in the Muslim world has thrown light on the connection between religion and the growing interest for Greek mathematics and astronomy, e.g. for the determination of prayer times and direction and the regulation of the lunar calendar; for a concise overview, cf. King (1990). On the basis of numerous sources, Ragep (2001) makes a very good case for the reappraisal of the relation between religion and science in the field of astronomy.
Marcionism. Moreover, cosmology was a vital part of the astrological worldview so important to the ʿAbbāsid, their partisans and their courtiers.

The civil war between the sons of Hārūn al-Rašīd, the murder of the older brother al-Amin (r. 809–813) and the accession of al-Maʿmūn plunged the ʿAbbāsid state into a severe crisis of legitimacy. Al-Maʿmūn was confronted with a number of political and religious interpretations of Islam fostered by the climate of debate his predecessors had allowed to flourish in their attempt to accommodate and co-opt ideological dissenters. To wrest religious authority from these centers of power and centralize them in the person of the caliph and a theological elite dependent on him, al-Maʿmūn instituted the mihnah in the year 833. His efforts to recover religious authority were paralleled by his financial, political and military reforms aimed at centralization and match remarkably well his alleged emulation of the policies of the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, Ardašir I. (r. 224–242).

The translation movement offered al-Maʿmūn support for both objectives, i.e. centralization and proselytism. His upbringing could have been another reason for his fervent support for the translation movement: it took place in an environment that regarded translation as useful, even necessary. His stint as governor in Marw, the capital of the eastern Persian province of Ḥurāsān, only strengthened this attitude by bringing him into contact with the land-owning provincial elite which subscribed to Sasanian imperial values and the appreciation of translation it fostered. In the field of foreign policy, al-Maʿmūn amplified the conflict against the Byzantines to justify his accession and to bolster his Islamic credentials and instigated a propaganda campaign depicting the Byzantines as unbelievers—qua Christians—and unworthy—qua intellectually inferior to the ancient Greeks: anti-Byzantinism as philhellenism.

The term zandaqah was used both as a pejorative term for Manichaeism and, more generally, all kinds of heresy and unbelief. Cf. François de Blois’ article “Zindik” in EI², vol. 11, p. 510–513.


Tayeb El-Hibri (1995, p. 364) argues that the blow the dynasty’s prestige and legitimacy suffered in the wake of the regicide helps to explain al-Maʿmūn’s subsequent autocratic tendencies, including the institution of the mihnah and the adoption of the title ḫalīfat Allāh (“vicegerent of God”) instead of the customary ḫalīfat rasūl Allāh (“vicegerent of the Prophet of God”).


The education of the *kuttāb*, the administrative officials, was to be fashioned along Sasanian lines as well. This included a mastery of theoretical fields like mathematics and their practical application in timekeeping, engineering, surveying etc.—thereby contributing to the expansion of the translation movement and explaining the prominence, in its early stages, of mathematics on the one hand and astronomy and agriculture on the other. After its initiation, the widening and intensification of translation activities beyond the needs of imperial policy was due also to the interests of scholars themselves. After the scientific “community” in Baghdad had reached a “critical mass”, scientists started to figure prominently as patrons for translations. The development of mathematics over and above the practical needs of administrators can be interpreted as an example of translators and scientists interacting in the furtherance of their subject. Medicine, a prominent field of translation from the very beginning, profited from commissions by the famous families of physicians; their fame (and pecuniary rewards) rested on a scientific expertise that had to be continually extended by means of research and translation. In the case of astrology, the demand for translations expressed by ʿAbbāsid caliphs to further their dynastic claims spread to the political class who absorbed the cultural attitudes of their rulers. According to Gutas, similar developments can be discerned for a number of scientific fields in which translations would spawn research which in turn would generate demand for further translation activities.

Philosophy, too, received its share of attention: al-Kindī commissioned translations of numerous philosophical works. He wanted to advance knowledge with the help of the most scientifically and methodically rigorous discipline available, i.e. philosophy, and attempted to integrate his philosophical approach into the religious and theological discussions of his time. His use of translated texts exemplified an attitude apparently widespread among contemporary scholars in Baghdad and beyond.

Even though some religious and/or ethnic groups seem to have participated more actively in the translation movement than others, its flourishing was due to the joint effort of all groups involved. While active support and participation was restricted to the affluent and powerful, its

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101 Gutas (1998, p. 120). Al-Kindī and the translators working for him will be discussed below.
effects “trickled down” to the literate but less well-off strata of society: translated texts were available to anybody with the means to employ a scribe to copy manuscripts—as indicated by the wide diffusion of scientific literature listed in Ibn al-Nadīm’s Fihrist.¹⁰²

Turning to the translators and their background, Gutas presents an outline for the development of translation expertise that, as we have seen, squarely contradicts received wisdom about the seminal role of Syriac scholars in the beginning of the translation movement.¹⁰³ He notes that since the earliest translations from Greek had to be commissioned by the authorities from high-ranking Christian clerics, experts in Greek-Arabic translation were obviously hard to come by at the beginning of the ʿAbbāsid era. Competence and supply of translators increased only with growing demand. Their lack of sophistication and poor style attest to the fact that the sponsors of early translations were, at least in the beginning, willing to put up with a comparably low level of stylistic quality due to high demand. In addition, even though early translators could fall back on older Syriac versions and translation methods, these were, due to the completely different motivation and methodologies involved in the Greek-Syriac translation tradition and the limited range of translated texts, of little help. Their often poor quality (a frequent complaint in Ḥunayn’s Risālah) further diminished their usefulness.

Gutas concludes that Greek culture did not exactly flourish in Syriac monasteries prior to the rise of Islam and that the small number of qualified Syriac-speaking scholars could certainly not satisfy contemporary demand for translation experts.¹⁰⁴ The translation standards re-

¹⁰² Gutas (1998, p. 134f). Although the translation movement, as Gutas points out, rested on many shoulders, the aims of different groups in supporting translators and commissioning texts were many and varied. Apart from genuine scientific and political interests, social advancement could have figured prominently (cf. e.g. Gutas 1998, p. 130f). Also, religio-political factors probably directly influenced the direction of the translation movement. Endress (1997, p. 48) refers to the correspondences between certain translators and the political and religious background of their sponsors; Montgomery (2007, p. 449) hints at links between religious (ḥūrī) tendencies of the sponsors of the translation movement and their interest in philosophical, particularly Neoplatonic material.

¹⁰³ Gutas’ opinion is corroborated by Brock (1982, p. 25) who acknowledges that the number of Greek secular texts translated into Syriac was relatively small. On the other hand, the large number of Greek technical terms that were “acculturated” and became part of the Syriac vocabulary of science and philosophy suggests that their influence—irrespective of the potentially small amount of texts translated—was substantial and lasting.

¹⁰⁴ Gutas (1998, p. 137f). As we have seen above on p. 17, Gutas’ verdict needs to be qualified: the supposedly small number of relevant texts translated into Syriac and available to
quired by rich sponsors and the amount of money they were willing to pay quickly improved the translators’ proficiency: translation, especially if competently done, was a lucrative business. Not only growing experience but improved knowledge of Greek furnished better translations; increasing linguistic abilities in turn were fostered by the high demand and the money at stake in translation.¹⁰⁵

The Kindi-circle

By the time the philosopher al-Kindī around the mid-ninth century, the “infrastructure” of translation was firmly in place. The collection of Greek and/or Syriac manuscripts for translation was put on a semi-official footing early on. In addition to visits to Syriac monasteries and their libraries, translators such as al-Bīṭrīq (fl. in the second half of the eighth century), Sallām al-Abraš (fl. during the reign of Ḥārūn al-Rasīd, 786–803), Ḥūnayn ibn Isḥāq and Qustā ibn Lūqā (d. 912) traveled to former centers of Greek learning. Official missions were sent across the Byzantine border to buy texts, e.g. one equipped by the caliph al-Maʾmūn or another by the wealthy Šākir brothers around the same time. Others were collected as reparations after border conflicts.¹⁰⁶ This put at al-Kindī’s disposal not just a number of translations but allowed him actively to commission a group of translators working in Baghdad during his lifetime to produce new ones.¹⁰⁷

Arabic translators is not a very good indicator of the true influence of the Syriac scholarly tradition. Thanks to fact that many of them were able to read Greek, Syriac scholars did not need translations to access large parts of the Greek philosophical and scientific heritage (cf. Watt 1953a, p. 64f). Through their commentaries and their own philosophical and scientific writings, Arabic translators had at least indirect access to some of this material. Also, Syriac scholarly activity did not die down immediately after the Muslim conquest. On the contrary, we have evidence for the continued existence of some of the Syriac schools well into the eighth century; cf. Hugonnard-Roche (2007), esp. p. 29f, and Conrad (1999).

¹⁰⁶ Badawi (1968, p. 16f).
¹⁰⁷ The philosopher Abū al-Walīd ibn Ruṣd (d. 1198) refers to a translation of Aristotle’s De caelo into Arabic allegedly carried out by al-Kindī. Like previous authors, Endress (1966, p. 106f) rejects the claim that al-Kindī translated any text himself, as he did not know Greek. Among the translators he sponsored were Usṭāṭ who translated the larger part of Aristotle’s Metaphysics and Ibn Naʿimah al-Ḥimṣī who translated a collection of Neoplatonic metaphysical material that became known as the Theology of Aristotle. According to Endress, all of the so-called “translations of al-Kindī” mentioned in various sources were in fact produced for him by others and belong to the output of an earlier generation of translators—which also explains why Ibn Ruṣd repeatedly complains about their deficiencies.
There is also evidence for revisions of older translated texts: the deficiencies in Arabic of most of the Syriac-speaking translators necessitated later revisions and corrections. This practice seems to have become widespread by the time of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and continued afterwards.\textsuperscript{108} Al-Kindī himself apparently revised some translations, albeit probably only in matters of style and vocabulary. Even though few early translations are extant and we have little evidence to assess his role in the early development of the Arabic scientific and philosophical terminology, we find in later literature many of the terms he adopted from translations at his disposal (or even coined himself in his own works).\textsuperscript{109}

The creation of Arabic terminologies was one of the crucial achievements of the older translators working with al-Kindī. They were the first to tackle many philosophical and translatorial issues in the medium of the Arabic language.\textsuperscript{110} To illustrate the terminological problems faced by philosophers, Endress cites the well-known example of the absent copula and the headaches it gave translators working on metaphysical, especially ontological texts. Several terms and even whole groups of expressions, derived from different Arabic roots, were coined in the course of the earliest stage of translation activities and competed against each other.\textsuperscript{111}

According to Endress, what set al-Kindī and his circle apart from earlier and also later groups of scholars was their full-fledged philosophical “program” of research founded on philosophical tenets al-Kindī took from Greek sources: philosophy defines the aims of science in an Islamic soci-

\textsuperscript{108} Badawi (1968, p. 257f). On the basis of his findings from the translation of Aristotle’s \textit{Metaphysics} \textit{α} by Utṣṭāṭ, James Mattock (1989, p. 101) also maintains that successive revisions were accepted and common practice.

\textsuperscript{109} Badawi (1968, p. 29–32).

\textsuperscript{110} Cf. Endress (1973, p. 192f).

\textsuperscript{111} Endress (1989, p. 137f). The fascinating problem of the missing copula and its consequences for translators and Muslim philosophers has been studied by numerous modern scholars, e.g. Afnan (1964, p. 29f, 80f), Kahn (1972) and Shehadi (1975): the Arabic language lacks a direct equivalent to the Greek auxiliary verb \textit{εἶναι}. Of its many meanings, those of attribution (“A is green” [i.e. has the attribute “greenness”]), identity (“A is B” [i.e. is identical to B]) and existence (“A is” [i.e. exists]) figure prominently in philosophical discourse, e.g. in logic, epistemology and ontology. Arabic translations of philosophical texts attest to the ingenuity with which the translators created a whole new terminological vocabulary to replicate the exact meaning of the term whenever it occurred in their source texts. But often enough, they misunderstood it or encountered ambiguities they were unable to resolve.

Whereas the terminology of most disciplines created or affected by the translation phenomenon had reached a high level of consistency by the end of the ninth century, Endress (1989, p. 140) explicitly excludes philosophy and notes its lack of terminological standardization.
ety and at the same time points the way and provides a methodology to accomplish them. One of the key elements of this philosophical “program” of the Kindī-circle was the extraction of theological elements of Platonism, surviving only on the fringes of the late Hellenistic philosophical traditions in Gnostic and Hermetic “subcultures”, as a religion for intellectuals. To that end, al-Kindī portrayed philosophy as part of a universal hikmah (as mentioned in the Qurʾān) by explaining its consistency with revealed religion and, following Hellenistic Platonism, elaborating the concept of blissful rational contemplation as the perfection of man.

Due to government support and generous funding by the urban elites for translators and the “Hellenistic movement”, its exponents—al-Kindī among them—found themselves in active competition with traditionists (ʾahl al-ḥadīṯ) and rational theologians (mutakallimūn) for the backing of the authorities. All sides claimed equal command of the Arabic language and knowledge of the sacred scriptures and traditions and

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112 Cf. especially Endress (1994).
114 Considering al-Kindī’s desire to reconcile revealed and philosophical truths, this can only mean that he intended it as a more “intellectually” attractive description of truths expounded by revelation: a psychological soteriology.
116 For the key role of the concept of hikmah in al-Kindī’s philosophy, cf. Hugonnard-Roche (1991b). Carmela Baffioni (1989) traces the history of the term and its use in philosophical literature. For a comparison of the use of hikmah by al-Kindī and the contemporary author of the anonymous Liber de causis, a collection of Neoplatonic material derived chiefly from Proclus’ (d. 485) Elementatio theologica and Plotinus’ (d. 270) Enneads, see D’Ancona Costa (1995, p. 76ff). In his article on the meaning of hikmah in early Islamic philosophy, Jean Jolivet (1991) maintains that al-Kindī’s adoption of the term in his philosophical and scientific writings illustrates his attempt to establish common criteria for “right” and “wrong” in all scholarly fields. Mathematics prescribe the methods of argumentation; hikmah represents the shared truth criteria.
117 Collectors and transmitters of reports about the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.
118 Cf. n. 37 above.
119 Endress (1997, p. 44ff). In his comprehensive and carefully argued article “Mihna” in EF, vol. 7, p. 2–6, Martin Hinds argues that one of its aims was to rein in popular bāḍīt enthusiasts; the caliph’s interests coincided with those of prominent adherents of the muʿtazīlīs who insisted on the primacy of the Qurʾān as the source of Islamic religious and legal doctrine at the expense of bāḍīt.
vied for mastery in literary expression. Parallel to the various interests and affiliations of their sponsors, translators themselves fell into different, sometimes overlapping communities.¹²⁰

After the reign of al-Maʾmūn in 833 and, 15 years later, the end of the miḥnab, the persecution of theologians whose beliefs conflicted with his alleged sympathies with the muʿtazilah,¹²¹ Greek sciences fell out of favor—the aggressive religious policies inaugurated by al-Maʾmūn and upheld by his successors al-Muʿtaṣim and al-Wāṭiq (r. 842–847) had unleashed a reaction that threatened the stability and cohesion of the state and ultimately discredited the Greek sciences so vigorously promoted by them.¹²²

In this contentious climate, the single most important driving force behind al-Kindī’s activities seems to have been the need of scientists for a justificatory “ideology” “to safeguard their position in an Islamic society” in the face of competition from theologians. While wishing to aid rationalist mutakallimūn to defend reason against the traditionists, he nevertheless rejected their claim to superior explanation and explicitly ex- tols the reasoning of Greek philosophy in comparison to the deficiencies of contemporary exegesis of the scripture. Aided by the previous Hellenization of kalām, “philosophy was to join forces with the defenders of Islam” against Greek gnōsis and zandaqah, dualist Manichaean gnosticism and Mazdakism.¹²³ The ultimate aim: to raise the prestige of the “scientific community” and to bolster its Islamic credentials.¹²⁴ Scientists,

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¹²⁰ Endress (1997, p. 48f) points out that these groups were “definitely ... not ‘schools’ ... but groups held together by various bonds of origin, scientific orientation and, most important, by their patrons”.

¹²¹ Cf. above, p. 19.

¹²² Endress (1987, vol. 2, p. 429). His account of the impact of the miḥnab on the standing of the “Greek sciences” leaves the impression that, after its failure, they were immediately relegated to the fringes of the Islamic scientific enterprise. But they had already left their mark on “traditional” Islamic scholarship and continued to influence the dominant theological and legal discourses (Endress, 1987, vol. 2, p. 401).

¹²³ The term zandaqah was also often used by opponents of certain Shiʿī beliefs which, according to Montgomery (2007, p. 456), were a key element of ninth-century religious, political and intellectual debates and also influenced the course of the Greek-Arabic translation movement.

al-Kindī was convinced, were better equipped to defend rationalism and faith by virtue of their superior methods and rationality.\footnote{Endress (1997, p. 65ff, 75).}

The circle of translators working with and for al-Kindī differed markedly from the earlier translators of the late eighth and early ninth centuries also in their ethnic and cultural background. The latter, consisting mostly of people from Christian Aramaic clans from southern Iran and Iraq, were allied with early astronomers and astrologers with a decidedly Iranian bias. These, in turn, were close to the 'Abbasid caliphs and the ruling class. The slightly later Kindī-circle, on the other hand, comprised people with a Byzantine or Hellenized Near Eastern background. The unique feature of this group seems to have been its focus on philosophical translations, readily explainable by the philosophical interests of the circle’s mentor al-Kindī.\footnote{Connecting the philosophical bent of the Kindī-circle to the wider sphere of contemporary discourses, Endress (1997, p. 49) emphasizes the competition between traditionist and rationalist factions, signalling “the rise of a philosophical rationalist discourse as opposed to the traditionist discourse of the ‘ulum islāmiyya”.}

Philosophy served as a weapon in the hand of Hellenized scientists to validate and vindicate their intellectual contribution. Greek philosophy vied against Iranian court etiquette and princely ethics, Greek science competed against Iranian know-how.\footnote{Endress (1997, p. 50).}

Without the pioneering work of al-Kindī and his circle, Endress concludes, none of his successors would have been conceivable. He helped fashion an Arabic philosophical language without which future generations of translators and philosophers would have been “speechless”. Al-Kindī and his circle started the linguistic process that equipped the Arabic language with the tools for cross-cultural communication, an instrument “to give names to the principles of being and the condition of man” common to both Islamic and Western philosophers.\footnote{Endress (1997, p. 76).}

Hunayn ibn Ishāq and his associates

The next group or “generation” of translators represented the fully mature stage of the Greek-Arabic translation movement. Their methodological accomplishments are linked mainly with the name of the head of the group (or even “school” as it is occasionally but misleadingly called), Hunayn ibn Ishāq. He is routinely singled out for his exemplary mastery of all three languages involved in the translation process (Greek, Syr-
iac, Arabic) and his stylistic and terminological superiority compared to earlier translators.

Apart from producing his own translations, Hunayn is credited with the revision of existing texts. Moreover, tools like glossaries and dictionaries helped to improve the quality of translations at the time and imposed a standard terminology and phraseology that could not be ignored by subsequent generations of translators and scholars.

In his Rīḍālah, a treatise listing his and other translators' Syriac and Arabic translations of the works of the Greek physician Galen (d. 200), Hunayn described his method of establishing a source text before producing a translation: he collated a Greek text from all available manuscripts and, in the case of texts extant in only a single manuscript, postponed translation until he had secured more manuscripts. We can be more or less certain that the methodological standard established by Hunayn was followed by those translators who learned their craft from and closely collaborated with him, chiefly his son Ishāq ibn Hunayn (d. 910) and his nephew Ḥubayš ibn al-Hasan (d. ca. 890). Modern scholars have disagreed as to whether they were also applicable to later translators; if so, we have little evidence to prove it.

Thanks to the work of previous translators, Hunayn already had a wide variety of technical terms and phrases at his disposal and could freely choose between them. One important detail that is often overlooked in tracing the development of the Greek-Arabic translation movement is the fate of those older translations that Hunayn revised or even replaced with better texts: they did not simply disappear. Some of them were superseded by superior translations from Hunayn's workshop, some were merely revised and presumably retained much of their “archaic” terminology and phraseology. But some of them seem not to have attracted Hunayn's or his colleagues' attention at all and remained throughout the translation movement and beyond the "canonical" or even only translations for certain texts. Older translations, even those for which more recent versions became available, continued to be read.

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129 Endress (1966, p. 98f).
130 Endress (1989, p. 104f).
131 Cf. Bergsträsser (1925, p. 5/’arabic).
132 Cf. Walter (1962d, p. 116), qualifying his earlier, more optimistic stance (e.g. in 1962a, p. 6f) and Badawi (1968, p. 18f).
133 The decision-making process of translators—what to translate, what to revise, what to ignore—was undoubtedly influenced by numerous factors including fortuitous ones such as lack of time or personal preferences and tastes of individual translators.
Thus, the reception of Greek thought in the Islamic world as well as the development of a technical terminology in the disciplines covered by the translation movement seems to have been characterized not so much by a succession of terminological systems and textual versions exhibiting a linear growth in quality. Rather, coexistence and competition between terms and texts with changing patterns of sub- and co-ordination on the part of the reading public seems to have been the norm. Extrapolating the collation of manuscripts and the comparison between older and newer translations as well as processes of revision as described in Ḥunayn’s *Risālah* into the work of subsequent generations of translators, the resulting model of translation history suggests a convergence towards a “median” text incorporating traces of all versions available to the author with the number of “source texts”, i.e. Greek and/or Syriac versions and various extant Arabic translations, proliferating over time. At the same time, the terminology may have converged towards a standard enforced by the statistical distribution and the diffusion of a “preferred” set of terms not only via translations, but also a growing number of word lists, glossaries and later dictionaries.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, due to the coexistence of old and new texts and terminologies throughout the history of the translation movement and beyond, complete standardization could not be achieved—and was perhaps not even desired.

The Baghdad Aristotelians

In hindsight, the final phase of the Greek-Arabic translation movement seems one of decline: the standardization of methodology and terminology for most subjects was achieved by the time of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and his circle. Thereafter, translation activities fell off: virtually all important works of the late Hellenistic canon of scientific and philosophical works (but not literary prose and poetry) had been translated. While during the tenth century a group of translators continued to work in cooperation with the Christian Aristotelian philosophers of their time, e.g. Abū Bišr Mattā, Ḥusayn ibn Ishāq ibn Zur‘ah (d. 1008) and Ibn Suwār (d. 1017), the era of translation came, with very few exceptions, to a close after the end of the tenth century.¹³⁵

Those translations that were still being produced were apparently based exclusively on previous Syriac translations instead of the Greek origi-

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¹³⁴ On the translators’ tools, see, among others, Endress (1989, p. 106).
nals; knowledge of Greek was no longer part of a translator’s required qualifications. Like the Islamic philosophers such as al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sinā (d. 1037) and Ibn Ruṣd, their knowledge of Greek philosophy was derived from translations. For later Aristotelian studies and Islamic philosophy however, the texts provided by the circle of Ḥunayn and the revised translations and commentaries by these same Aristotelian scholars in Baghdad connected with Abū Bišr Mattā and Yāḥyā ibn ‘Adī (d. 974) were of the greatest importance.

The most impressive document to emerge from the activities of these later translators is the Organon manuscript which contains the Arabic Rhetoric. It will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. At this point, suffice it to say that it highlights not just their activities as translators—some of the translations gathered in the manuscript were produced by the Baghdad Aristotelians themselves, albeit on the basis of Syriac rather than Greek source texts—but also their role as compilers and commentators. Even though their work may seem less pioneering than that of their predecessors, their achievement is no less important for the Islamic philosophical tradition. They pulled together the available translations, collated and corrected them, linked them with available commentaries and produced a comprehensive panorama of the logical knowledge available to them.

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136 Badawi (1968, p. 18f).
 CHAPTER TWO

THE ARABIC VERSION

MANUSCRIPT AND DATING

Among other treasures, the manuscript ar. 2346 at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris contains the unique extant Arabic translation of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric.*¹ In spite of the importance of the manuscript, there is no comprehensive codicological description including information on its binding etc.² With the exception of the *Rhetoric,* none of the individual texts contains any information that could help us date the manuscript. Of its history, next to nothing is known before the year 1738 when it was acquired by the French consul in Cairo, Benoît de Maillet. Somewhat later, we find it in the French royal library; it is sometimes still quoted with its old shelfmark (ancien fonds no. 882a).³

The Arabic *Rhetoric* in this manuscript forms part of a collection of Arabic translations of the entire Aristotelian corpus of logical writings, the *Organon.* It was compiled at the end of the tenth century by the philosopher Abū al-Ḥayr al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār, also known as Ibn al-­

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¹ Cf. Lyons (1982, vol. 1, p. ii–iv). The text has been edited by Badawi (1959) and Lyons (1982). The former was reviewed by Anawati (1959–1961a); the latter by Heinrichs (1984), who commented in some detail on Lyons’ reconstruction of the transmission history, and Wansbrough (1984). More recently, Panoussi (2000, p. 238–247) compiled a list of some of the deficiencies of both editions, concentrating on Badawi’s text. In his discussion of the shortcomings of Lyons’ edition, he suggests a number of emendations based on the Greek version and the Syriac translation Panoussi claims was used by the collator of the Arabic text.

² A number of scholars have given descriptions of the manuscript which focus on its contents, among them Margoliouth (1897, p. 376f) and (in more detail) Georr (1948, p. 183–200) and Hugonnard-Roche (1992). See also the remarks by Badawi (1948–1952, vol. 1, p. 20–32), and Stern (1956, p. 41–44). Its catalogue entry (de Slane, 1883–1895, p. 411, no. 2346) notes that it consists of 380 paper folios measuring 30 by 43 cm with 21–25 lines of text per page. The author of the catalogue already pointed out that some parts of the text were very difficult to decipher. The deterioration of the manuscript continued throughout the twentieth century, prompting the Bibliothèque Nationale to withdraw it from circulation. At this point, the only way to consult the manuscript is a microfilm produced in 1978 which unfortunately often cuts off the marginal notes (cf. Lyons 1982, vol. i, p. xii and Panoussi 2000, p. 233f).

³ Hugonnard-Roche (2001, p. 21, n. 5); additional information in Tkatsch (1928, vol. i, p. 142f).
Hammār, a student of Yahyā ibn ‘Adī. Ibn al-Nadīm has the highest regard for his achievements:

The translations in this manuscript cover the entire period of Greek-Arabic and Syriac-Arabic translation activities: for the Categories and De interpretatione, the editor chose translations by Ishāq ibn Hunayn (d. 910), the son of Hunayn ibn Ishāq and a highly regarded member of his circle; the Poetics and the Posterior Analytics were rendered into Arabic by Abū Bīšr Mattā, one of the most prominent “Baghdad Aristotelians”; Porphyry’s Isagoge and the Topics were based on versions by another close collaborator of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, Abū ‘Uṯmān Saʿīd ibn Yaqūb al-Dīmaṣqī (d. after 914), the Prior Analytics on a pre-Ḥunayn translation by a certain Tādārī. The Sophistical Refutations appear in three different versions: an old text, attributed to Ibn Nāʾimah al-Ḫimṣī, a translator associated with the Kindi-circle; one by Yahyā ibn ‘Adī; and another version by his student Ibn Zurāḥ, both leading members of the second generation of Baghdad Aristotelians of the tenth century.

In his account of the history of the manuscript which was bound together from texts written by different scribes at different times, Khalil Georr distinguishes five text groups: firstly, the Rhetoric in a copy by Abū ‘Alī ibn al-Samḥ (d. 1027), a translation which Georr dates back to the beginning of the ninth century; secondly, the Poetics, date and copyist unknown; thirdly, the Categories, De interpretatione and Porphyry’s Isagoge, all executed in a large, perfectly readable hand and accompanied by numerous notes and comments; fourthly, the Prior and Posterior Analytics and the first five books of the Topics, written in different hands but at the

4 Ibn al-Nadīm mentions his activities in the fields of philosophy, medicine etc. and credits him with a number of translations on various subjects from Syriac into Arabic (Flügel, 1871–1872, p. 265).


6 Identified by Kraus (1924, p. 3) and Walzer (1962c, p. 68) as the Melkite bishop of Harrān, Ṭāṭīr Abū Qurrah (d. 826). In his discussion of this and other theories about Tādārī’s identity, Lameer (1994, p. 3ff) conclusively demonstrates that none of them can be reconciled with the evidence and suggests that the person in question is a certain Tādārī ibn Basil Aḥṣ Istifān, the brother of another translator (Istifān) who worked with Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq.

same time and consecutively paginated; and, finally, the three remaining books of the *Topics* and three different versions of the *Sophistical Refutations*, also written by different hands but simultaneously: several scribes worked on sections of the same work and different hands reappear in all four texts.⁸

This diversity is matched by differences in the quantity of marginal notes in the manuscript: the editor’s interest in the texts varied widely—at least as far as we can judge from the number and contents of his notes. Each text had its own specific history before being collected and written into the manuscript we now have.⁹ Compared to the generous amount of glosses and notes in the margin of e.g. the *Prior Analytics*, Georr notes the relative scarcity and shortness of such notes in the *Rhetoric*, a fact that even a cursory examination of the manuscript confirms.

In the Arabic *Rhetoric*, the large majority of marginal notes consist of glosses and explanations of single terms and variants (often introduced with *yaʿnī*, “that is” or “it means”) and are, according to Georr, later additions. The copyist furthermore refers in several places to variants, both in another Arabic version and in the Syriac text.¹⁰ Also in the margins of the text, we frequently find *hamzah*-shaped markings, often on the inside of the page. In one of the notes at the end of the text, the copyist reproduces Ibn al-Samḥ’s explanation of these markings which he placed next to lines in which he encountered problematic terms or phrases, particularly those he could not explain on the basis of the second Arabic version he claims to have used or the Syriac text that was his last resource.¹¹ The huge majority of notes is in black ink and by the same hand but there is a number of notes in red ink (allegedly by the same scribe) and some in black that are clearly in a different hand.¹²

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⁸ Georr (1948, p. 184f). Other scholars have suggested different groupings, e.g. Hugonnard-Roche (2001, p. 22), who divides the manuscript into two groups of texts: firstly, the books of the “standard” *Organon* (including the *Isagoge*), copied in similar ways. They are all followed by three successive colophons: the first, written by same hand as the text itself, marks its end while the second and third, written by different hands which remain the same across the various books, document the source of the copy and the collation process. All of these books are explicitly connected with Ibn Suwār. Secondly, the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* which are not codicologically connected with Ibn Suwār and do not have the same colophon structure. They are linked with Ibn al-Samḥ. Stern (1956, p. 41) already noted that the *Rhetoric* probably formed an independent volume which was then bound into the beginning of Paris ar. 2346.

⁹ Hugonnard-Roche (1991a, p. 191ff, 208f).

¹⁰ Georr (1948, p. 188).


Commending the philological acumen of the people involved in collecting and annotating the texts in the *Organon* manuscript, Walzer suggests that the notes were part of an effort to recover a version of the text that was as close and faithful as possible to Aristotle’s original.¹³ In his analysis of the annotations and marginal comments contained in the translation of the *Prior Analytics*, Hugonnard-Roche on the other hand concludes that they were not intended as an exercise in textual criticism but illustrate Ibn Suwār’s and later readers’ concern with understanding the *logical* content of the text. He notes that the rather periphrastic Tadārī-translation of the *Prior Analytics* chosen by the editor would have offered ample opportunity for criticism and correction when compared to the translations produced by Hunayn ibn Ishāq and his son. The glosses and annotations provided by Ibn Suwār and other logicians perusing the manuscript illustrate their “logical” concerns, their efforts to understand and incorporate the logical content of the text into their own thinking.¹⁴ Hugonnard-Roche’s interpretation is based on a text that was much more thoroughly annotated than the *Rhetoric*; for an understanding of the notes added to our text, Walzer’s emphasis on philological accuracy seems a much better fit.

The history of the Arabic translation of the *Rhetoric* in this manuscript remains obscured by the lack of later sources that could help to ascribe it to a specific translator or period. According to the notes we find after the colophon at the end of the anonymous translation (f. 65v), it was copied from a manuscript belonging to the Aristotelian scholar and logician Ibn al-Samḥ in 1027, the year of his death. Like Ibn al-Ḥammār, Ibn al-Samḥ was a student of Yahyā ibn ‘Adī and belonged to the circle of Christian Aristotelians.¹⁵ The copyist of the manuscript carefully transcribed Ibn al-Samḥ’s own notes as he found them in his source manuscript. In two longer excurses appended to the translation, Ibn al-Samḥ describes his procedure in collating the text. Since the first one gives us valuable information about his philological methods and the texts available at the time, it deserves to be quoted in full:

15. Stern (1956, p. 31f).
Taking a somewhat defective Arabic copy as his starting point, Ibn al-Samḥ applied corrections on the basis of another, even less dependable Arabic copy and a "sound" (ṣaḥīḥah) Syriac version. According to Lyons, the copyist of Ibn al-Samḥ’s manuscript added another note to the effect that he compared a certain passage (1477b11) with “the Greek” (al-yūnānī)¹⁷ and found the manuscript’s reading to be correct. These notes suggest that at this stage of the transmission process, even a relatively prominent exponent of the Aristotelian tradition in Baghdad who had been taught by the best philosophers of his time had access only to a relatively small sample of texts due to what he claims was a lack of scholarly interest in the *Rhetoric*. As we will see in the fourth chapter on the Arabic commentary tradition, his statement is somewhat at odds with the substantial philosophical activity surrounding the *Rhetoric* in the ninth

¹⁶ “[N]ot many students of the art of logic have arrived at a study of this book or have investigated it satisfactorily. For that reason, there is not to be found any sound copy or anything that has been corrected. I did find an Arabic copy that was very defective indeed and then I found another Arabic copy less defective than the first. I relied upon this second copy in my transcription of this version and where I found a mistake in the second copy I had recourse to that (other) version. If I found it given correctly there, I would copy down what I found in that version in its correct form, but if I found that it was defective there, too, I would check back on the point to a Syriac manuscript. If I found the (Syriac) manuscript reading to be sound, I would produce an Arabic version to match it, but if it was defective, I would enter it, defective as it was, and mark the line in which it occurs with the following sign [here, the copyist wrote out a *hamesah*-shaped character]. I have checked over this copy and done my best to see that there has been no carelessness. Let all know this, if God wills and to him be His due of praise.”

¹⁷ The emendation al-suryānī, "the Syriac", suggested by Lyons (1982, vol. 1, p. iv), agrees with the information in the two previous notes which do not mention any Greek version as part of the collation process. On the other hand, we are not in a position categorically to exclude the use of a Greek text even as late as the eleventh century just on the basis of the (widely held) notion that the knowledge of Greek had more or less disappeared by that time.
and early tenth century: some of the most prominent “students of the art of logic” read and commented on it.

The note above and the second one describing (in less detail) the collation process are not the only ones appended at the end of the *Rhetoric*; there is a second set at the end of the text and in the margin of the same folio which apparently deals with the translation’s provenance. Only partly legible, these notes contain several dates and names which offer ample room for speculation. We will discuss them in detail below.

Another important source of information is Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist*. The entry on the *Rhetoric* in his chapter on Aristotle’s works reads as follows:

> الكلام على رياضيتوه ومعناه الخطابة يصاص بنقل قدّيم وقيل أن اسسح نقله إلى العربي ونفسه ابراهيم بن عبد الله، فسفر الفارابي أبو نصر رأيت بخط أحمد بن الطيب هذا الكتاب نحو مائة وقرة بنقل قدّيم

The second translator mentioned in this passage, Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh (al-Dimāšqī),¹⁹ puts in two more appearances. On the preceding page of Flügel’s edition of the *Fihrist*, he is credited with the partial translation of another Aristotelian work, the eighth book of the *Topics*. The second reference in the *Fihrist*’s entry on Alexander of Aphrodisias contains another piece of information:

> وقال أبو زكرياء ابن الشمس من ابراهيم بن عبد الله فقس سوسيطيا وفصل الخطابة وفسح الشعر بنقل اسسح بخمسين ديارا فلم يبهها واحره وقت وفاته

The first note lists two, probably even three Arabic translations of the *Rhetoric*: an “old” one (*naql qadīm*), confirmed by a note written by Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Sarāḥī (d. 899);²¹ one by Ibrāhīm ibnʿ Abd Allāh

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¹⁸ Flügel (1871–1872, p. 250); translation: “An account of (the work) *Rīṭūṭīrīg*, which means *Rhetoric*:—it is found in an old translation; it is said that Ishaq b. Hunayn translated it into Arabic and it was translated by Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh. Abū Nasr al-Fārābī wrote a commentary on it. I have seen in the handwriting of Ahmad b. al-Ṭayyib (a note to say): ‘this book is about 100 pages (long) in the old version’ (Lyons, 1982, vol. 1, p. i).

¹⁹ He is credited with numerous scientific works in Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist* (Flügel 1871–1872, p. 244, 249f, 252f, translated by Dodge 1970, vol. 2, p. 588, 600, 1010). His version of the eighth book of the *Topics* has survived and forms part of our manuscript.

²⁰ Flügel (1871–1872, p. 253): “Abū Zakariyya [Yahyā ibn ʿAdi] said that he offered fifty gold coins ... to Ibrāhīm ibnʿ Abd Allāh for a copy of the Sophistic, a copy of the Oratory [Rhetoric], and a copy of the Poetry [Poetica], as translated by Ishaq, but he would not sell them. At the time of his death he burned them.” (Dodge, 1970, vol. 2, p. 609)

²¹ Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Marwān ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Sarāḥī was a student of al-Kindi and himself a noted philosopher. After a distinguished career as teacher, soon
and one by Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn. As the passive qila indicates, Ibn al-Nadīm knows the latter two versions only from hearsay.

The second note, on the plausible assumption that bi-naql Ishāq refers to all the texts listed by Ibn al-Nadīm, would confirm the existence of Ishāq’s translation of the Rhetoric. While explicitly ascribing the fasār of the Poetics to Ishāq, however, the reference can be read in several ways: Ishāq could have been the author of one or both of the Sophistical Refutations and the Rhetoric or of none of these two. The note does not throw any more light on the role of Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh. It would be rash either to identify the text of the Rhetoric mentioned in this context with the translation by Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh listed in the first note or with the earlier version by Ishāq. Ibrāhīm could have been involved in various capacities: as translator, corrector or perhaps only as the owner of the text in question.

This leaves us with three translations, two of which must have been into Arabic.²² In fact, Ibn al-Nadīm does not mention any Syriac version at all. Badawī and Heinrichs date the “old” translation the early eighth century and identify it as the text in our manuscript; Lyons agrees with Badawī who refers to the quality of the translation as falling short of the standards established by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and later translators.²³

There is a consensus on the early, probably Umayyad date of the Rhetoric and its identification with Ibn al-Nadīm’s “old” version. Arguments for the discussion have been drawn from three sources: notes contained in our manuscript, the testimony of the Fihrist and judgements about the purportedly poor quality of the translation. Before accepting these conclusions, we should ask how strong the evidence actually is.

There are some obvious problems with Ibn al-Nadīm’s account: his only first-hand experience seems to have been with the “old” translation. The Ishāq—translation and that by Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh was known to him only from reports from an unnamed source; his authority for the “old” version is a comment about its length by Ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Ṣaraḥṣī.²⁴

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²² Lyons (1982, vol. 1, p. i) persuasively argues that Ibn al-Nadīm’s readers would, unless otherwise specified, always assume a translation to be Arabic.


²⁴ Peters (1968, p. 28) interprets Ibn al-Nadīm’s note as evidence for a copy made by
While it seems justified to accept al-Sarahsi’s remark as confirmation for the existence of an “old” version, Ibn al-Nadim’s testimony leaves much unsaid. A reconstruction of the translation history of the Rhetoric into Arabic cannot trust in his words alone.

The notes in the margin and body of the manuscript also pose problems. Successive scholars have tried to make sense of the partly illegible text and offered readings and interpretations which determined their reconstruction of the text’s history. The progressive deterioration of the manuscript in the course of the twentieth century has made the notes even harder to read. In the following paragraphs, we will limit our discussion to the readings proposed by Lyons, Stern, Georr and Badawi together with my own examination of a microfilm copy of the manuscript.

Lyons reconstructs eight notes, which are below the text towards the bottom of f. 65v (nos. 1–3 below) or in the left margin of the folio (4–8). Their placement on the page is as follows: notes 1–3 are written one after another in separate lines at the end of the text. On the left margin, note 5 is the topmost, followed by note 8 about midway down the page. We find notes 6, 4 and 7 (in this sequence) in the left margin of the bottom third of the page. As previous commentators have pointed out, some of them are exceedingly difficult to make out, especially on microfilm. My observations are therefore tentative at best.

The various notes seem to be written in different hands. This is most obvious in the case of notes 6 and 7 as compared to notes 4, 5 and 8 (which seem to be by the same scribe). Except for note 3, those at the bottom of the page are harder to decipher; my suspicion is that all of them are written in yet other hands, even though notes 2 and 3 could have been added by the same scribe. The microfilm gives no indication that any differently-colored inks were used except for parts of note 4 (see below).

Ibn al-Tayyib or another of al-Kindi’s followers: “this copy of the vetus made by one of his pupils suggests that the Rhetorica was also studied in the circle of al-Kindi; in whose translation is not known.”

His claim about the copy’s origin is very difficult to verify; Peters’ suggestion that the Rhetoric was known to and studied by members of the Kindi-circle sounds more promising. Goulet (1989–, vol. 1, p. 466) presents the material pertaining to writings on the Rhetorica ascribed to al-Kindi and his contemporary Muhammad ibn Mūsā (d. 873). The translation’s relation to the output of the Kindi-circle will be studied in the following chapter. For a succinct presentation of the available material on the Kindi-circle’s interest in the Rhetoric, see Montgomery (2006, p. 99ff).

The first three notes are below Ibn al-Samḥ’s explicit on f. 65v:

1) [In the year three (؟) [...] and nine and [...] thirty according to the reckoning of Alexander, son of Philip]. Square brackets indicate conjectures and manuscript damage.

Badawi can only identify the words ṣawannah and li-Iṣkandar ibn Filibus. The ascription li-Iṣkandar ibn Filibus refers to the Seleucid calendar, the first year of which began in autumn 312 BCE.

27 “In the year three (؟) [...] and nine and [...] thirty according to the reckoning of Alexander, son of Philip”. Square brackets indicate conjectures and manuscript damage.

28 "For the šayb Zafar ibn Mansūr ibn [Yūḥannā] at the date [...] ten and that is the year [...] three hundred and thirty according to the reckoning of Alexander".

29 “Manuscripts were acquired [by] Mansūr ibn [...] at the date [...] and that is the year three hundred and thirty-nine according to the reckoning of Alexander”.

30 Badawi: الذي.

31 “Its collation was achieved at the date [...] [in] the year four hundred and eighteen after the biṭrāib of our lord Muhammad, praise be upon him”.

According to Stern’s reading, the phrase balaqat muqābalab, placed at the beginning of note 3 by Lyons, belongs in the margin of the manuscript, right after li-l-Iskandar. He explains that it should not be joined to the following line and be linked to the second date (as Lyons assumes), but continues the previous line and follows right after the first date. He maintains that it refers to the copying of the manuscript at the time of the first date, not to a collation at a later point. Interestingly, Stern is able to make out in the manuscript (which in this place is badly damaged) the ‘ālīf missing in both Lyons’ and Badawi’s second note. Hence, according to his reading, both dates identical.34

His claim that notes 2 and 3 belong together is plausible, should they indeed refer to the same date in different calendar systems; however, as I have mentioned above, my inspection of the microfilm left some doubts whether they were written in the same hand.35

Going back in time, we are now in the year 209 (or 207), apparently
AH. This marginal note has been variously interpreted: Stern and Georr want to emend the name to read Ibn al-Samḥ which would invalidate the reading of the year and, given that the date is indeed corrupt, possibly duplicate information already contained in note 3., i.e. the fact of Ibn al-Samḥ’s collation. ⁴¹ The term ṭaḥīḥ can refer to a number of activities, among them a “correction” on the basis of the abovementioned manuscript or even the production of an edition. ⁴² Georr contends that the name has been changed through diacritical points in a different handwriting and proposes the same emendation. The microfilm reveals that the diacritics Stern and Georr claim to be later additions are indeed somewhat bigger than the diacritics in the rest of the note. Additionally, the dots above the letters ʾ and ẖ seem to be in a slightly different color than the remainder of the note.

Lyons doubts the necessity of such an intervention and maintains that the person in question is someone other than Ibn al-Samḥ. Read this way, note 4 can be interpreted as an indicator for yet another stage in the transmission of the text, a collation that took place in either 824/5 or 822/3 CE. But without any corroborating evidence, all this, as Lyons reminds us, “must remain mere speculation”.

Some even more interesting scraps of information are to be found in the four remaining notes, written on the margin of the same manuscript page. The first one reads:

اﻟ%ﻄﺎﻗ%ﺔ

This [translates as] “this copy which was written in the hand of Abū al-ʿAbbās to the best of his abilities [lit. ‘according to the ability and effort’] [in the year] three hundred and twenty”.

Another date, 320 AH (932 CE), and another name, Abū al-ʿAbbās. With Stern, one might argue that this snippet, written in the left margin of the page, was copied from Ibn al-Samḥ’s manuscript. ⁴⁵ On the other hand, it seems odd that it was added in the margin like a later addition rather than integrated into the notes at the end of the text body where the scribe quoted the colophon from Ibn al-Samḥ’s text.

⁴¹ Stern (1956, p. 43), Georr (1948, p. 189).
⁴³ Badawi: مهذب
⁴⁴ Badawi: مهذب. The note translates as “this copy from a copy which was written in the hand of Abū al-ʿAbbās to the best of his abilities [lit. ‘according to the ability and effort’] [in the year] three hundred and twenty”.
⁴⁵ Stern (1956, p. 42f).
According to this note, a certain Ibrāhīm al-Dimāšqī al-Yūsufī “studied” the text. More interesting than al-Dimāšqī’s activities is the number 113 written, strangely enough, as a number instead of being written out as a date. Lyons cautiously approves Stern’s interpretation: the earliest year given in these notes, i.e. 113 AH (731 CE), could be taken as the actual date of translation. This would place the Rhetoric at the very beginning of the Greek-Arabic translation activities. With no other evidence to start from than the aforementioned set of notes, Lyons’ carefully worded conjectures have not yet been challenged. Heinrichs finds the argument behind Lyons’ dating not entirely persuasive but still maintains that an Umayyad-era translation remains a distinct possibility.

The last two notes do not add any significant information to our account so far. A certain ʿAbd al-Faqīr Muṣṭafā studied the text at an unspecified date and the manuscript ended up in the library of a Cairene named ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĪsā in the year 509 AH (1115 CE). They read as follows:

As we have seen, the elaborate argument behind the Umayyad dating of the translation of the Rhetoric proposed by Lyons and others rests on a number of assumptions and conjectures, beginning with their reconstruction of the notes discussed above. Choosing to overlook several of their inconsistencies, some of which can be clearly seen in their conflicting interpretations of the notes, Stern’s and Lyons’ account remains at

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66 “Ibrāhīm al-Dimāšqī al-Yūsufī studied it [in] 113”. Georr omits the number even though it is clearly visible on the microfilm of the manuscript and placed right beneath the note in a way that suggests that they belong together.

67 The verbal noun muṭālaʿah can also refer to notes produced during study; cf. Gacek (2001, p. 93, s. v. ṭ–l–ʿ).


69 “ʿAbd al-Faqīr [Muṣṭafā] ibn [...] studied it”. The letters visible in what Lyons marked as the second lacuna seem to form at least two words, possibly additional parts of the name. Neither Badawi nor Georr quote this note.

70 Badawi: om. Translation: “Property of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĪsā, Cairo, [in the] year five hundred and nine”.

71 We should again remind ourselves that their variant readings and interpretations could have been caused by the deterioration of the manuscript.
least highly attractive: it provides a framework for the history of the text and, most importantly, limits the translation timeframe.

Part of its attractiveness lies in the fact that it would place the text before the translation activities collectively classified as the Greek-Arabic translation movement which, according to Dimitri Gutas, did not begin in earnest before the ʿAbbāsid revolution.\textsuperscript{52} It could have preserved traces of a stage in translation techniques and terminological remnants antedating the later, more systematic translation efforts. These considerations should be addressed in any attempt to date our text.

With Ibn al-Nadīm and internal “metatextual” evidence thus weakened, there is only one more source to turn to for the verification of an early date: the translation itself, its formal and textual features. These will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Apart from the translation date, the structure and style of the text can shed some light on another, equally important question of text history: the involvement of a Syriac intermediary. As will be seen below, findings from our translation have been drawn on to argue both for and against the mediating role of a Syriac text in the transmission of Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric} to the Islamic world.

\textbf{The Syriac translation tradition}

In our historical sketch in the previous chapter, we have seen that the history of the Arabic translations is intimately linked to the preceding Syriac translation tradition. The reception of the \textit{Rhetoric} in Syriac was in turn bound up with the transmission of Aristotle’s logical writings, the \textit{Organon}. Contrary to present-day perceptions, both Aristotle’s \textit{Poetics} and his \textit{Rhetoric} were seen as an integral part of the \textit{Organon} by Arabic observers—whence its inclusion in our manuscript which represents, in the words of Dimitri Gutas, “a one-volume encyclopedia of the history of Arabic logic in Baghdad for over a century”.\textsuperscript{53} How did the \textit{Rhetoric} come to be seen as a “logical” treatise and how did this classification influence its transmission into Syriac and Arabic?

\textsuperscript{52} Cf. Gutas (1998, p. 23f).

Aristotle's own remarks about the closeness of the *Rhetoric* to the art of dialectic on the one hand⁵⁴ and politics on the other certainly facilitated the process of assigning the work to the logical arts; this classification was “formalized” around the fifth century by the late antique commentators who added it to the *Organon*.⁵⁵ It was well established in the late Alexandrian tradition, possibly by the time of the Neoplatonic philosopher Ammonius (of Alexandria, d. 517 or 526);⁵⁶ his pupil Simplicius (fl. ca. 530) already takes it for granted.⁵⁷ Statements by these commentators show that both the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* were assumed to describe types of fallacious reasoning, an idea that was taken up and elaborated by Muslim philosophers such as al-Fārābī.⁵⁸ In several of his works, the philosopher expressed contemporary ideas about the classification of the logical disciplines and justified the “logical” relevance of the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* with a variety of arguments, some of which directly reflect late antique thinking about the status and contents of these two books. They depended on a view of Aristotle’s *Organon* which assigned specific roles to each of its components: the first two treatises introduced the basic building blocks of reasoned speech, i.e. terms (in the *Categories*) and propositions (in the *De interpretatione*). On this basis, Aristotle developed a general theory of rational argumentation in his *Prior Analytics*: the syllogism. Subsequent treatises described specific applications of the theory of syllogistic reasoning, namely demonstrative or scientific arguments in the *Posterior Analytics* and dialectic reasoning in the *Topics*. The remaining three books of the *Organon* dealt with flawed or inferior types of rea-

⁵⁴ *Rhetoric* 1354a1. Cf. Brunschwig (1996) on the similarities and differences between the *Rhetoric* and the central Aristotelian work which discusses the theory and practice of dialectics, the *Topics*.


⁵⁷ Heinrichs (1969, p. 107ff), Wölker (1962c, p. 133ff) traces the classification of the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* as logical treatises in the Alexandrian commentary tradition.

⁵⁸ Cf. Boggess (1970, p. 86–89) and Black (1990, p. 1f). The latter source is fundamental for the history of the “logical” interpretation of the two books in antiquity and medieval Islam. The author traces the history and philosophical implications of the inclusion of the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* in the *Organon* under the (somewhat opaque) label “context theory”. The verdict of most of her reviewers was unqualifiedly positive; cf. Rosemann (1991), Leaman (1992), Ormsby (1992) and Würsch (1994).

In his carefully argued and detailed review, Lameer (1993) criticizes some of the philosophical arguments and textual evidence Black cites to support her central claim that Muslim philosophers devised their own theory about the logical relevance of the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* instead of, as Lameer suggests, taking it for granted since it was part of the very same body of late antique commentary sources from which they derived large parts of their interpretation of Aristotle’s logical works.
soning which do not result in incontrovertible truths such as sophistical arguments (Sophistical Refutations) and rhetorical and poetical reasoning (Rhetoric and Poetics).\(^{59}\)

The study of rhetorical reasoning was not just intended to identify and avoid it as a defective, pseudo-logical form of argument, it also served a number of positive purposes: firstly, as al-Fārābī explained, some problems are not amenable to be solved by any of the logical methods that lead to absolute certainty, they can only be argued effectively with lesser methods of reasoning such as rhetorical proofs. Secondly, rhetorical and poetical reasoning play an important role in education, e.g. during those stages in which students do not yet understand methods of reasoning that lead to certainty. Rhetorical proofs and poetic images, he claimed, are constructed on the model of the latter or can at least potentially be transformed into valid proofs. Finally, different audiences require philosophical truths to be couched in different terms corresponding to their level of comprehension: there is an elite of the “initiated”, properly trained in philosophy, who understand syllogistic proofs whereas rhetorical arguments and poetic images are proper for “the masses”. The methods described in the Rhetoric and Poetics are appropriate for “uninitiated” students who have not been exposed to philosophy and are therefore still incapable of understanding higher forms of logical reasoning.\(^{60}\)

The classification of the two works as belonging to logic is an integral part of the Islamic philosophers’ understanding of Aristotle and his works: al-Kindī presents it in his treatment of the order and relevance of the Aristotelian corpus in his Risālab fi kamnīyat kutub Arisṭū.\(^{61}\) It plays a decisive role in a number of works by al-Fārābī, Ibn Sinā and Ibn Ruṣd and left its mark also in scientific encyclopedias and the bio-bibliographical literature.\(^{62}\) The value of a theory of philosophical rhetoric and poetics and the link between these disciplines on the one hand and logic on the other, however, was not obvious to every contemporary observer. In his al-Maṭāl al-sāʿir fi ʾadab al-kātib wa-l-lāʾir, the historian ʿAlī ʾĪzz al-Dīn ibn al-Aṭīr (d. 1233) thoroughly rubbed his ʿInā’s theories of poetry and rhetoric presented in his Kitāb al-ṣifāʾ (The Cure), a multi-volume exposition of all fields of philosophy. Ibn al-Aṭīr reserved particular scorn

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\(^{60}\) Galston (1988, p. 207ff).


\(^{62}\) Black (1990, p. 2).
for the idea that rhetorical and poetic texts do or should conform to the structure of logical syllogisms.\footnote{al-Ḥūfī and Ṭābānah (1959–1962, vol. 2, p. 5f), quoted and translated by Heinrichs (1969, p. 110f).}

Obviously, the assignment of the *Rhetoric* to the field of logic had a huge impact on its translation and interpretation: almost without regard to the relevance of its subject matter to the study of literature, the text was relegated to the field of philosophical inquiry.\footnote{Heinrichs (1969, p. 105f, 106).} Commentators and translators from late antiquity to Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Sinā and Ibn Ruʿīd expended a considerable amount of energy on discovering the “logical” relevance of both the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. Translations and commentaries eloquently testify to their immense efforts to match the text to their preconceptions.

The previous Syriac reception of the *Rhetoric* was equally affected by the late antique interpreters and their insistence on the book’s logical affiliation. Potentially, Syriac translation(s) of this text and the other components of the *Organon*, not to mention kindred texts such as summaries and commentaries, would have been an obvious transmission channel for this and other ideas.\footnote{On the basis of the correspondence of the Nestorian Catholicus Timothy I (d. 823), Berti (2007) illustrates the relegation of the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* to Aristotle’s *Organon* in the Syriac philosophical tradition.} To assess the likelihood of a Syriac intermediary for the Arabic *Rhetoric*, we will now turn to the history of the Syriac translation tradition.

Strikingly, evidence for the existence of rhetorical literature in Syriac seems to be exceedingly sparse. Apart from a Syriac translation of the *Rhetoric* of uncertain date (more on which below), the first conspicuous example of a rhetorical text appears relatively late: a rhetorical treatise by Antony of Ṭagrit, placed in the ninth century by the prolific scholar and writer Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286) and epitomized in Jacob (or Severus) bar Šāko’s (d. 1241) *Book of Dialogues*.\footnote{Cf. Watt (1967) on Antony’s *Rhetoric* and possible Greek and Latin sources for his theory of rhetorical figures; Watt (1997b, p. 6f) lists some of the finer points of Antony’s rhetorical thought which he inherited mostly from Hellenistic rhetorical authorities instead of the classical Greek rhetorical literature. His work, the only of its kind in Syriac literature, intended to be a guide to the practice of rhetoric rather than its theory; cf. Baumstark (1922, p. 278).} Antony’s work was apparently not influenced in any way by Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* but already exhibits the same link between rhetoric on the one hand and political life on the other that was to be such a prominent element in al-Ḥūfī’s rhetorical
thought.\(^6^7\) Watt notes an apparent lack of interest in rhetorical learning in Syriac writings but also maintains that rhetorical concepts were assimilated continuously into Syriac literature between the fourth and the ninth centuries and explicitly singles out theological works, particularly the sermon genre, as a fertile ground for the application of rhetorical knowledge.\(^6^8\)

Logical texts, on the other hand, found a receptive Syriac audience. The importance of logic was recognized early on, e.g. by the sixth-century scholar Sergius of Roṣaynā who maintained that it was an indispensable tool for the study of philosophy and science.\(^6^9\) Not only that, theologians soon realized that it could be forged into a powerful weapon against dissenters and heretics.\(^7^0\) Studies of Greek logic were undertaken mainly in the seventh century in the monastery of Qennešrin under the influence of Severus Sébōḥt (d. 667). His pupils, Athanasius of Balad (d. 686) and Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) and Jacob’s friend and student George, Bishop of the Arabs, were among the most important translators of the Organon into Syriac.\(^7^1\) A glance at the known translations of and commentaries on Aristotle’s logical works shows that late antique Syrian scholars concentrated their efforts on three key texts: the Categories, De interpretatione and the Prior Analytics. In addition, they translated and commented on Porphyry’s Isagoge, often added to the Organon as a general introduction to Aristotelian logic.\(^7^2\)

Contemporary interest in logic was not just limited to secular (philosophical and scientific) learning; much more importantly, theological studies, specifically the need for a conceptual framework to formulate and debate theological doctrines, provided a motivation to study logic outside the small circles of scholars engaging in philosophical and scientific research.\(^7^3\) Many theological scholars of the time were also trained physi-

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\(^6^7\) Watt (2005, p. 9f). He also speculates that al-Fārābī’s ideas on the political role of rhetoric could have been inspired by the Christian Baghdad Aristotelians who were the heirs of the same tradition that inspired Antony of Tāgrit, a topic he treats in more detail in Watt (1995b); cf. also Watt (1995b) on further parallels between Antony and al-Fārābī.

\(^6^8\) Watt (1994, p. 244, 246ff). For examples of indirect transmission of rhetorical and rhetorico-political concepts into Syriac and then on into Arabic literature, cf. Watt (1995a, p. 67f, 71–75).


\(^7^0\) Cf. Würsch (1991, p. 5).

\(^7^1\) Hugonnard-Roche (1990, p. 138).


\(^7^3\) The theological dimension of logical studies found one of their most vivid expressions in the introduction to a commentary to the Prior Analytics by George, Bishop of
icians. Since logic was an integral part of the medical curriculum at late antique schools (e.g. in Alexandria), there was a certain demand for the translation of logical texts into Syriac. The connection between theological, medical and logical studies was so close that we often find the same scholars translating both theological and logical writings.\textsuperscript{74}

Apart from the works listed above, the \textit{Rhetoric} also seems to have received some attention in Syrian scholarly circles: in a seventh-century letter to a fellow scholar, Yaunan the Periodiētēs,\textsuperscript{75} Severus Sēbōht refers to some problems discussed in the \textit{Rhetoric}. According to Lyons, his remarks might not help us to identify a Syriac source for our Arabic translation but they provide at least some evidence for the existence of a Syriac version as early as the seventh century.\textsuperscript{76} If not for any other reason, the \textit{Rhetoric} may have been translated because it was regarded as a logical work and part of the \textit{Organon}.

Taking a closer look at the letter, however, Gerrit Reinink establishes that the problems Severus examines all relate to logic, in particular to Yaunan’s understanding of issues treated in \textit{De interpretatione} and in the \textit{Prior Analytics}. No reference is made to the \textit{Rhetoric}, not even in Severus’ answer to Yaunan’s question regarding the arrangement of Aristotle’s logical works.\textsuperscript{77} The evidentiary value of Severus’ scholia to the \textit{Rhetoric} has been called into question by Heinrichs who cites the existence of Arabic notes and smaller writings on the \textit{Poetics} even before its translation by Abū Bīš Mattā and argues that we do not have any conclusive evidence for Syriac translations of the \textit{Rhetoric} or the \textit{Poetics} prior to the rise of Islam.\textsuperscript{78} To underline the need for new sources on the question of an early Syriac translation of the \textit{Poetics}, he presents two conflicting arguments, both of which apply equally well to the \textit{Rhetoric}: firstly, the inclusion of both the \textit{Poetics} and the \textit{Rhetoric} into the \textit{Organon}, firmly established in the Alexandrian tradition since at least the beginning of the sixth century, could have been introduced into Syriac scholarly circles by Sergius of Rēš’aynā who studied in Alexandria. Assuming that Syriac translators

\begin{itemize}
\item the Arabs, in which he outlines a complex web of symbolical correspondences between philosophy and theology; cf. D’alber (2001, p. 340).
\item \textsuperscript{75} Cf. Rescher (1964, p. 16).
\item In the Syrian churches, the \textit{periodiētēs} was an itinerant priest who inspected the rural clergy for the local bishop.
\item Reinink (1983, p. 10ff).
\item Heinrichs (1969, p. 126). There is sufficient evidence to show that a Syriac translation of the \textit{Poetics} at least must have existed in the second half of the eighth century, cf. Berti (2007, 312f) and Schrier (1997).
\end{itemize}
and philosophers, as much as their later Arabic-speaking counterparts, endeavoured to have the entire *Organon* at their disposal in spite of their problems in understanding the subject matter of both works, it is not unlikely that the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* were at some point translated into Syriac.

Secondly, on the other hand, the study of the *Organon* in Christian schools was for religious reasons apparently restricted to certain parts of the corpus which could have excluded both texts from the early wave of translations of logical texts. This phenomenon, which has a direct bearing on the Syriac reception of the *Rhetoric*, deserves some attention.

Several Muslim historians and physicians have preserved reports about the alleged transmission of philosophical and medical learning from late antique Alexandria to Islamic Baghdad. This group of purportedly historical accounts, called the “Alexandria to Baghdad” narrative, is extant in different versions transmitted in sources written between the tenth and the thirteenth century. The most famous, reported in Ibn Abi Usaybi’ah’s *Ṭabaqāt al-ʾatibbāʾ*, is quoted on the authority of the philosopher al-Fārābī. He traces the history of philosophical instruction down from the time of Aristotle (d. 332 BCE) to the lifetime of his own teacher Yuḥannā ibn Ḥaylān. The element of the story we are interested in and that also forms part of the other versions of the narrative is the assertion by al-Fārābī that sometime after the advent of Christianity (which, he claims, led to the cessation of philosophical teaching in the city of Rome), the Christian authorities stepped in and reformed the philosophical curriculum in Alexandria: they restricted the teaching of logic by removing those parts of the *Organon* from the official curricula which they considered “harmful” to Christianity, including everything that followed after the discussion of the assertoric syllogism in the *Prior Analytics*. This meant that parts of the *Prior Analytics* (after the seventh chapter of Book One) and the *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations* in their

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80 Müller (1884, vol. 1, p. 134f), translated into English by Rosenthal (1992, p. 50f). This particular version of the narrative has been commented on by numerous scholars. For the most recent and comprehensive interpretation and a detailed discussion of previous attempts to understand the report, cf. Gutas (1999) who is the main source for my own remarks.

81 As Daiber (2001, p. 334) notes, there never was an ecclesiastical decree restricting logical teaching in Alexandria. Given the relatively peaceful co-existence of Christians and pagans in contemporary Alexandria, such an intervention would have been highly unlikely. On the Christian teaching tradition in Alexandria, its institutional structure and its historical background, cf. van den Broek (1995).
entirety, called “the part that is not studied” by al-Fārābī, were not officially taught any more. He adds that this restriction was lifted only after the Muslim conquest; more specifically, he credits his own teacher and his generation with expanding logical teaching to include the neglected texts. None of the extant reports mentions the Rhetoric or Poetics but it would not be too far-fetched to assume that they were also affected: considered part of the Organon, late antique scholars listed them right after the Sophistical Refutations in their registers of Aristotle’s logical writings.

The historicity of al-Fārābī’s account (and that of the other versions of the report) is debatable but he is not our only evidence for a change in logical teaching in late antique Alexandria. In a twelfth-century treatise on syllogistics, the scientist and logician Ahmad ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 1153) refers to the branches of logic that follow the assertoric syllogism as “the part which is not read”, a label he ascribes to late antique Alexandrian scholars. Also, Pines points to the existence of Syriac manuscripts which only contain the first seven chapters of Book One of the Prior Analytics and maintains that the text was not translated into Syriac in its entirety before the ninth century—i.e. only with the advent of the Arabic-Greek translation movement. The Syriac commentary tradition also reflects the distinction between the first chapters of the first book and the rest of the text: already at the time of the sixth-century translator and commentator Prōḥā, commentaries of the Prior Analytics stopped after the seventh chapter of Book One. The shortened Prior Analytics also found its way into Arabic logical literature: at the very beginning of the Arabic logical tradition, the kātib (court official) and translator Ibn al-Muqaffā’ (d. 756) penned a paraphrase of Aristotelian logic which also stops with Prior Analytics I.7, informing the reader that this is the end of the book.

On the basis of a thorough analysis of all versions of the narrative

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83 As is the extent to which Syriac and early Arabic logical literature reflect any limitations on the texts which were studied and commented upon; there is also no evidence for it in the Greek sources which formed the basis for the Syriac reception. If anything, the noticeable focus of Syriac and early Arabic scholars on the first seven chapters of Book One of the Prior Analytics more likely resulted from practical considerations, e.g. the fact that these chapters presented a self-contained discussion of the three types of syllogisms which were most useful as instruments in contemporary theological debates and the justification of church dogma; cf. Daiber (2001, p. 334f).
85 On this interesting text which had long been assumed to be translated from Persian, see Hein (1985, p. 41–46) and Lameer (1994, p. 11f). It has been edited by Dāneš-Pāžūh (1978).
(which differ on some important details), Gutas isolates two distinct developments that were conflated by the sources of the various “Alexandria-to-Baghdad” reports: the first one, affecting the Greek teaching tradition, is a reform of the Greek medical and logical curriculum in Alexandria in the sixth century. In an effort to streamline medical education, certain texts (including a number of treatises of the Organon) were not officially taught any more but could still be studied in private. The second, two centuries later, concerned Syriac logical teaching and involved its expansion to include those texts that had not officially been taught before. The confusion of the different versions of this narrative centers on which texts exactly where taught in which tradition (Greek or Syriac) in the course of medical and logical training. The relegation of some texts to “what was not read/studied” left its traces in the Syriac and (at least at its beginning) the Arabic translation and commentary tradition: we know of several Syriac translations and commentaries for each of those texts that were officially taught but virtually none for the rest. If we take the same to apply to the Poetics and Rhetoric (and it has to be repeated that the above evidence is indirect at best), the case for an early Syriac translation of the Rhetoric would look very weak indeed.

So far, all we can say with some assurance is that Syriac authors were probably acquainted with the text but that does not require the existence of written or textual knowledge. As it is, the only reliable witness for the existence of a Syriac translation—which we are not in a position to date—is the Arabic Rhetoric itself. There are two types of evidence that have been derived from the Arabic translation: Ibn al-Samḥ’s marginal notes referring to a Syriac version; and terminological features of the translation that point to a Syriac source text. We will look at both of them in turn.

Like the other translations of logical works included in our manuscript, the Rhetoric contains several marginal notes which seem to indicate the existence of a Syriac version. These notes are partly anonymous and most of them, due to their re-translation into Arabic by Ibn Suwār or some other commentator, cannot be identified and assigned to concrete translations or authors, but they are sufficient to confirm the existence of a Syriac version at the time of the eleventh-century collator of the text, Ibn al-Samḥ.**

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* Cf. the lists compiled by Brock (1993).

John Watt’s research on the major Syriac compendium of Aristotelian philosophy, Bar Hebraeus’ Butyrum sapientiae (Cream of Wisdom), has opened up a new perspective on the question of a Syriac intermediary for the Arabic Rhetoric. The Butyrum, completed shortly before its author’s death in 1286, covers the entire sweep of Aristotelian philosophy including the Rhetoric. In the first section of the book which deals with logic, Bar Hebraeus takes up the writings of the Organon according to the canonical sequence established in late antiquity and adopted by Muslim philosophers, starting with Porphyry’s Isagoge and ending with Aristotle’s Rhetoric and Poetics. He mainly paraphrases the corresponding sections of Ibn Sīnā’s Kitāb al-īfāʾ, supplementing it with material from additional sources. The section on the Rhetoric consists of a paraphrase which depends both on Ibn Sīnā and the text of the Arabic Rhetoric. Where Bar Hebraeus only paraphrases the translation (e.g. sections of the text which Ibn Sīnā passes over), he remains very close to the Arabic translation: indeed, closer to the Arabic version than to any Greek text we know. On the other hand, he often transcribes Greek terms where the Arabic translation (and also Ibn Sīnā) use genuinely Arabic equivalents. Assuming that the Syriac text contained in the Butyrum was not translated from the Arabic version (a very unlikely possibility), these findings can be explained in two different ways: either the Arabic translation was effected on the basis of the Syriac version or both the Arabic and Syriac Rhetoric were produced from very similar Greek source texts. A combination of the two explanations would also be plausible: the Arabic translator, working from the Greek, may have consulted the same Syriac version which was subsequently used in Bar Hebraeus’ Butyrum. Whatever the case, the evidence from the Butyrum suggests that a Syriac translation of the Rhetoric antedates Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq since it is at least as old as—if not older than—the Arabic translation.⁸⁹

The terminology of the Arabic Rhetoric is the second important source of information about a potential Syriac intermediary. In his remarks on some of the quirks of the text, Malcolm Lyons takes the existence of such an intermediary more or less for granted.⁹⁰ His position on the existence and use of a Syriac translation in the production of our Arabic version has found widespread acceptance.⁹¹ In support of a Syriac Vorlage, Es-

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⁹⁰ Lyons (1982, vol. 1, p. i, xvi); cf. also Panoussi (2000, p. 234) for examples of translated terms that, according to the author, strongly suggest a Syriac source text.
tiphan Panoussi cites the evidence of transcribed names, some of which, he claims, can only be explained on the basis of a Syriac source text. As convincing as the evidence may look, it is far from conclusive. Syriacisms can have entered a text at different stages of translation and transmission. In the case of the Rhetoric, Ibn al-Samh’s collation procedure is as likely a source for the alleged Syriac terminology as the translator himself. Even if a closer analysis of the Arabic Rhetoric should uncover more evidence for a Syriac intermediary, Fritz Zimmermann’s advice still applies:

We must bear in mind that a Christian translator accustomed to Syriac routines of literary expression might commit Syriacisms even when translating from Greek. Only in very special cases does a peculiar turn of phrase in a Graeco-Arabic text point unequivocally to a Syriac substratum.

In the end, the textual evidence may be sufficient to make a Syriac intermediary “likely”, but it does not amount to conclusive proof. Irrespective of Watt’s arguments for a Syriac translation of the Rhetoric antedating Hunayn ibn Ishāq and its potential role in the production of our Arabic version, the contribution of the Syriac translators to the Aristotelian rhetorical tradition in the Islamic world seems negligible beyond faint echoes and vague influences. Was this because the Rhetoric was relegated to “what was not read” in late antique educational institutions? We have no way to tell.

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92 Cf. Panoussi (1989, p. 196ff, 200). He also speculates about the existence of a Pahlavi intermediary between the Greek source text and the Syriac translation.

93 Heinrichs (1984, p. 313f), echoed by Aouad (2002, vol. 1, p. 1, n. 2) and Watt (2005, p. 7). An instructive example for the role given to Syriacisms in arguing for a Syriac intermediary of an Arabic translation is Dunlop et al. (2005, p. 104–107). Dunlop compiles an impressive list of transcribed names in the Arabic Nicomachean Ethics which, he claims, originated from a Syriac text. At the end, he acknowledges that the role of a Syriac source text is difficult to demonstrate, only to maintain that it was “evident” since at the time this translation was produced, the use of Syriac intermediaries was a common occurrence.

CHAPTER THREE
COMPARING GREEK AND ARABIC

Introduction

Now that we have shed some light on the background of the Arabic Rhetoric as an individual translation and as part of a wider translation tradition that links Greek, Syriac and Arabic cultures, we are in a better position to approach its text. Our focus will be on two questions: firstly, what can it tell us about the process of translation and the methods of the translator? And secondly, how can it help us supplement and specify our historical knowledge about the Greek-Arabic translation tradition and the position of the Rhetoric as part of this tradition?

Instead of the entire text of the Arabic translation of the Rhetoric, the following analyses (including the subchapters on translation methods, terminology and phraseology) only cover a sample amounting to about one sixth of the work. A study of such a substantial part of the Rhetoric will provide enough data to extrapolate findings and apply them to the rest of the text. Additionally, concentrating on a limited portion of the work enables us to apply a wider range of analytical methods and allows us to evaluate and consolidate a range of results which we can then compare to relevant data from other translations.

One decisive advantage of the slice of text we have chosen, the first half of Book Three of the Rhetoric, is its manageable size. Also, it represents a more or less self-contained and sustained discussion of a single subject: the role and use of style in speech. The book falls into three parts with subdivisions: the introduction (Chapter 1), the treatment of λέξις, i.e. word choice and sentence structure (Chapters 2–12) and Aristotle’s discussion of τάξις, the arrangement of the parts of a speech (Chapters 13–19). Thus, the first half (which we will focus on) consists of the introduction and Aristotle’s account of λέξις. The Arabic text at our disposal is somewhat shorter than the Greek source: due apparently to a missing leaf, the Arabic translation breaks off at 1412a17 and recommences at 1415a4,¹ cutting off Chapter 12 and the much of Chapter 11.

From a comparative perspective, Book Three shares an important part of its subject matter and terminology with the *Poetics*, which the sample we will examine below explicitly refers to. The *Poetics*, extant in a translation produced by Abū Bišr Mattā, belongs to a later stage of the Greek-Arabic translation activities than the *Rhetoric* and provides an interesting insight into the development of the vocabulary of literary theory. Moreover, it helps us to appreciate the problems both our translator² and Abū Bišr Mattā in the early tenth century had to face while attempting to translate the wealth of literary quotations liberally sprinkled over both the discussion of Greek stylistic phenomena contained in the first half of Book Three of the *Rhetoric* and corresponding passages in the *Poetics*.³

The procedure we will follow in this chapter consists of the following steps: in the first part, we will concentrate on the introduction to Book Three of the *Rhetoric*, contrasting the Greek source text with the Arabic translation and an English rendering of the Arabic version.⁴ This English translation aims to reflect the structural and terminological features of the Arabic text as closely as possible. Each of the subdivisions we will identify, labelled “texts” and “sections”, will be prefaced with a short sketch of its contents and the structure of the arguments pursued in the Arabic version.⁵ In addition to terminological and syntactic phenomena, we will comment on textual problems.

² References to “the translator” should not be construed as glossing over problems of authorship, redaction and instances of correction and addition to the translated text. The translation we find in the Paris manuscript is anonymous and contains glosses, notes and additions by later readers. In addition, it might have undergone modifications at the hand of collators and copyists. “The translator” only serves as a shorthand for a long process of translation and tradition possibly involving several scholars.

³ For a study of literary quotations in the *Rhetoric* and their handling by the translator, see Lyons (2002). None of the quotations Lyons examines occur in the sample we will analyse in depth below.

⁴ The introduction corresponds to the first chapter of Book Three (1403b–1404a39) according to the chapter divisions introduced by George of Trebizond in the fifteenth century, which in most cases represent relatively self-contained logical units (Kennedy, 1991, p. 13).

⁵ Both the terminology for textual units as well as elements of our approach are inspired by a set of text analytical tools developed by Basil Hatim and Ian Mason. They define a text as “a coherent and cohesive unit, realized by one or more than one sequence of mutually relevant elements, and serving some overall rhetorical purpose” (Hatim and Mason, 1990, p. 178). Whereas elements as the smallest rhetorically relevant unit (roughly coinciding with clauses or sentences) and sections (made up of one or more elements) only provide building blocks and cannot in themselves fully express rhetorical purposes (they only contribute to their formulation), texts represent rhetorically “complete” parts of linguistic phenomena.
At the same time, we will attempt to reconstruct the argumentative structure of both versions and identify sources of disagreement between them. In addition, we will analyse the translator’s handling of a sample of Greek connective particles which, in the absence of graphical clues for the argumentative structure of the text, guided him in tracing and remodeling the arguments of the Greek text in his translation.

Secondly, we will introduce a comparative perspective by contrasting the first half of Book Three of the *Rhetoric* and a number of other translations spanning several phases of the Greek-Arabic translation movement, examining several terminological and lexical issues across the texts.

As we will see in our discussion of the Arabic translation, the translator had a hard time recreating Aristotle’s arguments. In some places, mistranslations lead to substantial reshuffling and restructuring of the reasoning contained in the source text. The proposed analysis of the Greek and Arabic versions of the *Rhetoric* involves reconstructing the structure and sequence of arguments in the Arabic translation and its comparison with the structure of the Greek source. The resulting divisions frequently disagree with what we assume to be the argument and structure of the Greek text, exposing an important source of disagreements between the two versions.

The application of this approach to our sample serves several purposes. It allows us to retrace the argumentative steps Aristotle takes by isolating discrete arguments and determining their structure, clarifying which points Aristotle wants to make and how he goes about making them. Together with the findings of a similar analysis of the Arabic translation, the insight into the logical structure of both versions form an important step in translation analysis and assessment. They signal structural differences and divide the sample into smaller units for an in-depth analysis of semantical and syntactical disparities between source and target text. Evidence collected during this comparative step points towards strengths and weaknesses of the translator’s methods. It provides information about his motivation, the cultural and intellectual background and linguistic abilities he brought to bear on the *Rhetoric*. Lastly, it suggests the influence of external factors such as stylistic expectations of his audience and political and theological considerations on his work. This cultural contextualization must, however, remain tentative due to factors such as potential scribal interventions and the vagaries of textual transmission.

Hatim’s and Mason’s model is explicitly geared towards the analysis of translations and their comparison with source texts.
Before we focus our attention on the Greek and Arabic texts, we would like to point out some of the factors influencing and sometimes impeding the extraction of a coherent set of arguments from the Arabic translation.

Firstly, as we will see below, the translator deals with a work that often overstrains his linguistic abilities. In many places, an obscure subject matter and the abundance of references to an unfamiliar literary background seriously undermine his understanding of the text. His degree of comprehension of certain passages often corresponds to the size of his basic translation unit. Where he encounters problems, he translates isolated phrases and even words, imitating the Greek word order as closely as possible. Yet, we find instances of perfectly straightforward passages which do not seem to accord with the halting literalness of its Arabic translation. Placed under these constraints, the overall argument of the Greek text is the least of the translator’s concerns. It is mostly this factor which effectively prevents him from accurately reconstructing the source text’s reasoning and reproducing it in his translation.

Secondly, his manuscript posed their own problems—scribal mistakes, the state of repair of the material, the quality of other translations (if any) he consulted to establish and/or verify his source text. Taken together with the translation issues and oversights we find in the Arabic version, they complicate his and our task even further. It is therefore not surprising that the translation frequently fails to reproduce Aristotle’s line of thought. On the contrary, the true surprise is the amount of information our translator is able to relay under these difficult circumstances.

Thirdly, how could he be expected to make sense of the purported “logical” content of the Rhetoric? Not only does the textual tradition and its specific problems stand in his way, he has to contend with philosoph-

6 Renate Würsch (1991, p. 6f) notes the changing focus of education in late antiquity away from literature and rhetoric towards the more practically minded Bildungsideal of the ἰατροσοφιστής, the philosophically educated physician. Owing to the scholarly concerns of late antiquity and probably due to the existence of a highly developed Arabic literary tradition, classical Greek literary genres such as drama or poetry did not figure on the translator’s list of priorities.

7 A translation unit is the smallest translated textual unit of a text, e.g. the single word in so-called “literal” translation or sentences or even larger-scale divisions in "meaning-based" translation. The applicability of categories such as "word-by-word" or "literal" versus "meaning-based" or "free" translation in the case of languages as structurally different from each other as Arabic and Greek will be discussed below.

8 A good example of literalism forced on the translator by his unfamiliarity with the subject under discussion would be Section 4 of Text II, cf. below p. 89.
ical problems beyond his reach. This becomes more apparent when we consider the later Islamic reception of the work: as we will see in the next chapter, brilliant philosophical minds such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Ruṣd grappled with the relation between the Poetics and the Rhetoric and the remaining writings of the Organon.

In what follows, we present the Greek text according to the edition prepared by Rudolf Kassel, followed by the Arabic translation edited by Malcolm Lyons and my English translation of the Arabic text. The English rendering reflects the wording and structure of the Arabic as closely as possible. All three versions are divided into parallel smaller, numbered passages. The system we have employed is similar to the arrangement John Mattock devised for his comparison of samples from different translations of Aristotle’s Metaphysics α.

Text comparison and analysis

Text I: Aspects of speech

The first text contains the introduction to the subsequent discussion of specific aspects of speech in Texts II and III. In Section 1, we find a list of aspects of speech: πίστεις (al-taṣdīqāt), λέξις (al-ʾalfāz) and πῶς χρὴ τὰξintégrᾳ (nasm ʿaw nasq) are named in turn. Section 2 reminds the reader of previous discussions of the aforementioned aspects, concentrating on πίστεις (al-taṣdīqāt). It is treated in more detail in Elements 2.1f. Somewhat abruptly, 2.3 introduces ἑνθυμιασματα (al-tafkīrāt), a category not mentioned in the preceding list.

Section 3 proposes λέξις (al-lafẓ wa-l-maqālāb) as the subject of the following passage. After a remark on the insufficient attention previously paid to λέξις in Element 3.1, its importance is explained in 3.2.

Throughout Text I, the Greek and Arabic versions remain close to each other, down to the very word order. The translator obviously had no problem translating the passage, even if he seems to have been less than consistent with his terminology (e.g. in translating περὶ τὴν λέξιν first as allāti tustāʾmal fi al-ʿalfāz and then as fi al-lafẓ wa-l-maqālāb).

9 Kassel (1976).
10 Lyons (1982). The punctuation marks have been reproduced as they appear in both editions.
11 In the footnotes, I have added Lyon’s translation of problematic passages.
12 (Mattock, 1989). Here and in the glossaries, variant readings refer to Badawi (1959), Margoliouth (1897) and Sālim (1967).
Section 1: Three central factors of speech

(i) Aristotle said: that which we have to discuss according to the arrangement of the art [falls into] three [parts], (2) the first of which is the explanations about which things the confirmations derive from, (3) and the second is the account of the things that are utilized in expressions, (4) and the third: how we should organize or arrange the parts of speech.

(i)–(2) The referent for the plural enclitic hunna is the preceding relative pronoun allāti, which the translator uses strikingly often (in this case to translate the neuter plural) where one would expect the singular. As will be seen, the translator regularly uses feminine plural to render Greek neuter plural. Apart from some amplifications, probably necessitated by Aristotle’s terseness (e.g. the substitution of περὶ τὴν λέξιν with dikr allātī tusta’mal fī al-ʿalfāz), and the placement of the nominal predicate at the end of the introductory main clause, the passage presents a literal and at the same time highly readable and stylistically apt translation.

Section 2: Previous discussion of these factors

Element 2.1: Previous discussion of “confirmations”

(i) περὶ μὲν τῶν πίστεων ἔγραψα, (2) καὶ ἐκ πόσων, (3) ὅτι ἐκ τριῶν εἰσι, (4) καὶ ταῦτα παῖα, (5) καὶ δὲ τί τεσσαῦρα μόνα.

(i) Famā al-mutadidin qabīl fīhā (2) [على] ١٥ كم وجه تكون، (3)
(i) Concerning the confirmations, they have been discussed (2) and it has been clarified in how many forms they come, (3) and that they come in three forms, (4) and what forms these are, (5) and on account of which thing they all are, and whether they are these only.¹⁶

The phrase διὰ τί τοσαῦτα µόνα has been expanded, perhaps to present both possible interpretations of the Greek passage: the (indirect) question why there are only three ʾawǧuh (“forms”) of taṣdīqūt, and an explanation that accounts for their existence.

Element 2.2: Excursus on the sources of “confirmations”

(i) ἢ γὰρ τῷ αὐτῷ τι πεπονθέναι οἱ κρίνοντες, (2) ἢ τῷ ποιοῦς τινας ὑπολαβάνειν τοὺς λέγοντας, (3) ἢ τῷ ἀποδεδεῖχθαι πείθονται πάντες. (1) For if they take an argument from the judges, (2) or through it being thought that the speakers are in that state, (3) or through them [sc. al-taṣdīqūt] being confirmed in a manner which persuades them all.¹⁷

(i) Lyons suggests that the reading ἢ γὰρ τοιοῦτο (τι) πεπονθέναι might be behind the apparent amplification contained in the Arabic translation, which adds ḥāḏā al-naḥw.

(i)–(3) The translator misinterprets the subject, πείθονται πάντες, which occurs at the very end of this long period; he attaches it to the third clause, interpreting οἱ κρίνοντες as the subject of the first clause, τοὺς λέγοντας as the logical subject of the passive construction of the second and finally πάντες as the subject of the third.

Element 2.3: Previous discussion of “considerations”

(i) ἐφηται δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐνθυμήματα τόθιν δὲ πορίζεσθαι. (2) ὅστι γὰρ τὰ µὲν ἐνδιὰ τῶν ἐνθυμήματων, (3) τὰ δὲ τότε.

¹⁶ Lyons: “(5) because of what they all are and whether they are these alone.”
¹⁷ Lyons: “(3) in a way which convinces them all.”
Furthermore, it has also been discussed from where the considerations should be derived; (2) and that there are species of thoughts (3) and topics (conventions? occasions?).

The translation of ἐνθυμήματα with al-taʾfkhīrāt might aim for its root meaning “thought” or “argument”.¹⁸ As a technical term in Aristotelian logic, it denoted a non-demonstrative argument drawn from probable premises, something that could be called “consideration”.¹⁹ Conveniently, al-taʾfkhīr covers both meanings of “thought” and “consideration”. One of the scribes and collators of the manuscript added the unhappy gloss al-ʿusqūṣāt (“the elements”) in the margin on the occasion of an earlier occurrence of the term (146/6).

Section 3: The discussion of “expression”

Element 3.1: “Expression” still to be discussed…

(1) περὶ δὲ τῆς λέξεως ἐχόειν ἐστιν εἰπεῖν.

(1) This is the place to discuss expression and speech;

Aristotle’s application of the term λέξις is not entirely unproblematic. In general, it denotes how something is expressed in contrast to λόγος, what is expressed. George Kennedy notes the use of the word in the Greek text to express the general notion of how thought is put into words or the more specific concept of word choice. He adds that translation has to vary

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¹⁸ The use of the II. form to denote a logical procedure is, as Würsch (1991, p. 24) explains, a common phenomenon. Examples in our text are e.g. ταδινγυτά for πόντος, τάβιτ for ἀποδίδωσιν or διδωσὶν or al-taʾfχιτ for σημέια.

¹⁹ Aouad and Rashed (1997, p. 71, n. 49) note that damīr became the “standard” translation in the later philosophical tradition, e.g. Ibn Sīnā.

M. F. Burnyeat (1996, p. 91, 96) has persuasively argued that συλλογισμός as a technical term should be understood as “valid argument” instead of “syllogism”, which necessarily evokes the technical apparatus of syllogistics; hence, Aristotle’s linking ἐνθυμήματα with συλλογισμός should not be read as a syllogistic category, e.g. an abbreviated syllogism or one based on probable instead of necessary premises.

²⁰ Badawi: Rather instead of حضر. In Hermannus Alemannus’ Latin translation, we find instat locus dicendi (“[there] follows the place of speaking”), translating mawålī literally. Instat suggests that Lyons’ reading is more probable than Badawi’s.
with the context; in his own translation, he prefers to retain the Greek term and leave its interpretation to the reader.²¹

In our text sample, we find that maqālāb and lāfṣ seem to be used interchangeably. Interestingly, synonymic expressions such as al-lāfṣ wa-l-maqālāb in this passage invariably contain the singular lāfṣ, whereas single-word renderings of λέξις are framed as either maqālāb or the plural ʾalfāẓ, never the singular lāfṣ.²²

Element 3.2: …because speech varies in effect according to its “expression”

(1) οὐ γὰρ ἀπόχρητὸ ἔχειν ἃ δεῖ λέγειν, (2) ἀλλ’ ἀνάγκη καὶ ταῦτα ὡς δεῖ ἐπιτεύ, (3) καὶ συμβάλλεται πολλά περὶ τὸ φανῆναι ποιόν τινα τὸν λόγον.

(1) فأنه ليس يكفي بان يكون الذي ينبغي ان يقال عندها, (2) بل يحتاج

(1) for it is not sufficient that which is to be spoken be at hand, (2) but it is absolutely necessary that this is spoken according to what should be, (3) and [of the things in] which proof shares [is] that it should be from one kind of speech and not another.²⁵

(1)–(3) In the Greek text, the reasoning behind Aristotle’s stress on the importance of λέξις appears to fall into two distinct arguments with the second subordinate to the first: 1) one has to know how to say something and 2) all this (the Greek πολλὰ either refers to the entire previous clause ταῦτα ὡς δεῖ ἐπιτεύ or is adverbal) contributes to give the speech a certain appearance or effect. The translator might have noticed the residual ambiguity and dissolved it (and subtly changed the text’s meaning) by subordinating both arguments to the main clause: yaḥtāq ... ʾilāʾ an yuqāl dālīkaʾ alā mā yanbaḡ, wa-mimmā yuṣākūl... His paraphrase of this

²² Lyons (1982, vol. i, p. xxx) quotes maqālah, maqūl and maqūl wa-kalām as the corresponding renderings of λέξις in Abu Bāṣr Mattī’s translation of the Poetics, illustrating the fact that the two translations belong to different stages in the terminological development of the translation phenomenon.
²³ Margoliouth, Sulaim: بل بل.
²⁴ Badawi: om.
²⁵ Lyons: “(3) and it accords with demonstration that it should follow this manner of speech rather than that.” The status of this passage is somewhat ambiguous: it might introduce λέξις as the subject of the following remarks or list it as one more necessary element of the art of rhetoric.
not entirely unproblematic passage nevertheless manages to convey its meaning fairly well.

(3) The main clause introduced by mimmā can be read in two different ways, depending on the vocalization of al-taḥbīt. Reading it as nominative (as we have done above), the sentence invites the following comments: the middle συμβάλλεται is read as passive, whereas the subject πολλά seems to have been dropped; to make up for the missing subject, the translator introduces al-taḥbīt, which he takes to be the topic of the passage, continuing on from Element 2.3. The pronominal suffix referring back to the subject one would expect after the conjunction ʾannā was apparently suppressed.

Reading al-taḥbīt as an accusative, mā becomes the sentence’s subject and renders πολλά, al-taḥbīt translates τὸν λόγον and al-naḥw min al-kalām has to be interpreted as an explanatory amplification of ποιόν τὸν. The only drawback of this interpretation is the awkward position of al-taḥbīt, which in my opinion strongly suggests the first explanation; it would have felt more in tune with the second version if al-taḥbīt would have been placed inside the conjunctional clause. In this case, we would end up with a slight modification in the passage’s meaning: the Greek version notes in general terms the influence of how something is said on the way it is being understood, whereas the Arabic version claims that some ways of speaking are more appropriate for proof (al-taḥbīt) than others. Lyons’ assumption that al-taḥbīt is somehow derived from πρὸς τὸ φαίνομαι (a passive aorist infinitive of φαίνομαι) is not entirely convincing; it would be more plausible if the Greek text contained an active infinitive. Moreover, φαίνομαι has been translated with any number of Arabic equivalents such as qīla, ruʿiya, zabara, zūna or imaḥana; tabbata is not one of them and, surprisingly and in spite of his own suggestion, did not even merit inclusion into Lyons’ own glossary under the entry φαίνομαι.

Text II: The subject of “delivery”

Compared to the relatively clear-cut structure of Text I, it is much harder to impose any conceptual unity on Text II apart from the fact that, for the most part, it deals with the subject of al-ʿaḥd bi-l-wuḡūb, the meaning of which will be discussed below on p. 78. Part of the confusion can be traced to mistranslations in key passages and a thorough re-structuring of the Aristotelian text through conjunctions and connectors. It will become obvious that our translator had only an imperfect grasp of the text’s meaning and resorted to word-for-word translation in many places.
According to my reconstruction, Text II falls into six separate sections. At the beginning, we find a second list of three aspects of speech: the sources of persuasion in Element 1.1, λέξις in 1.2 and a third, unnamed aspect in 1.3.

In Section 2, we are introduced to the subject of al-ʿaḥd bi-l-wuḡāb, an “art” or “craft” which was only developed recently (2.1) and first used by poets (2.2). The text then explains the importance of the subject for rhetoric and poetry in Element 2.3 and mentions Glaukon of Tēos as an authority in 2.4.

After this excursus on the historical background of al-ʿaḥd bi-l-wuḡāb, we learn about one of its important practical aspects, the voice, in Section 3. The passage explains its connection to emotions (Element 3.1) and lists several factors of vocal practice (3.2).

The following section, no. 4, suffers from the translator’s misunderstanding of the term τὰ ἄθλα (“contests”, “prizes”). Both in the Greek and the Arabic version, it concludes the first part of the text’s treatment of al-ʿaḥd bi-l-wuḡāb.

In the next section, the references to the subject we are dealing with are sometimes oblique enough to undermine its thematic unity. At the beginning (Element 5.1), we read that a “craft” of al-ʿaḥd bi-l-wuḡāb has not yet been developed. The reason, as 5.2 explains, is the late invention of λέξις, maqālab. Moreover, 5.3 adds, the subject is “burdensome”. What looks like a straightforward, if somewhat obscure argument is cut short in Element 5.4 with a series of apparently disjointed observations, starting with the relation between rhetoric and “opinion”. Element 5.5 states that delivery (the Greek term λέξις covered this sense as well) requires care. The following three elements (5.6ff) introduce an argument for the rejection of emotional appeals in speech, enjoining the reader to contend about things themselves and, puzzlingly, “stratagems” (ḥīlah). The passage closes with the conclusion that emotional appeals and rhetorical tricks “corrupt” the listener.

The final section is somewhat easier to follow. Its subject is λέξις (maqālab), which here means both “expression” and “delivery”. It is, we read in Element 6.1, a necessary part of all teaching and influences the clarity of speech (6.2). A mistranslation in Element 6.3 causes the translator to claim that maqālab should be used to appeal to listeners’ “imagination”. After noting in 6.4 that serious subjects such as geometry are not practised with the help of maqālab, the text states that it employs “acting” to achieve its aims (6.5). The topic of acting re-occurs after a
short digression on the theoretical treatment of *maqālah* (6.6): it is contrasted with the “stratagem” of *maqālah*. The former is classified as “natural”, the latter as “artificial”. What purports to be an argument for this claim—a master of *maqālah* becomes a “contestant” (6.8)—is again due to a mistranslation of the Greek term τὰ ἀθλα. The confusion sown in the preceding sections ruptures the connection between this and the last element (6.9), which argues that speeches derive their efficacy from *maqālah* rather than thought.

Section 1: A second list of central factors of speech

Text II starts with a second introductory passage that again lists three topics which have already been or are still to be discussed. While functionally covering the same ground as Text I, the list of issues it introduces is not identical to the first one. The Greek source was the main culprit for some of the problems of the Arabic text.²⁶ One of the main reasons for the apparent rift between Books One and Two on the one hand and Book Three on the other is the history of the work: the *Rhetoric* was put together from two formerly independent works, i.e. a “manual” of rhetoric (τίτχεν ἐπιστορικῆ) comprising the first two books of the *Rhetoric* and an independent treatise on style (περὶ λέξεως). It probably took place during Andronicus of Rhodes’ redaction of Aristotle’s writings in the first century BCE.²⁷

In Element 1.1, we read about the sources of persuasion as the first element of our list. The second subject mentioned in 1.2, still to be discussed, is its (perhaps referring to the ʿiqnāʿ of the previous section) stylistic arrangement. Element 1.3 should contain the third item on Aristotle’s list; due to our translator’s decision to interpret the adverb οὔπω as the starting point of the next section, however, it slips off the list.

*Element 1.1: The first factor—the “sources of persuasion”*

(1) τὸ μὲν οὖν περὶ τῶν ἡξυστήθη κατὰ φύσιν, (2) ὡσπερ πάνυ περὶ πρῶτον, (3) αὐτὰ τὰ σεβάγματα (4) ἐκ τίνων ἢ μὲν το πιθανόν

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²⁶ This is not the only example of the text’s somewhat lax dealings with triadic lists, which are frequent in the *Rhetoric*. Brunschwig (1996, p. 47) cites among others the lack of congruence between the tripartite division of πίστεις contained in Chapters 2 and 3 of Book One.

Concerning those first [matters], we have already put forward our investigation of them according to the order of nature (in the context of nature), because it [sc. tilka al-ʾīlā] is shaped by nature to come [into existence] first, I mean that we investigate things themselves, from whence their persuasive force derives.

(i) The adverb πρῶτον is translated as a substantive, disregarding the impersonal passive verb ἐζητήθη. The entire passage has been rendered personal (qaddanā, nanzur).

(ii) Taking τὸ in (i) to be the article of the aforementioned πρῶτον, the translator loses the referent of the following relative pronoun ὅπερ. Its translation as li-ʾanna suggests that he might have had its absolute use (equivalent to ὅποιος) in mind.

(iii) The redesignation of τὸ keeps interfering with the translator’s rendering of the text. Deprived of the subject of the sentence, he fails to identify τὸ περιγραμματα as the nominal predicate belonging to τὸ. While the structure of the Greek sentence is lost, he manages to salvage some of its sense by amplifying it to an appositional clause which seemingly refers to the entire preceding passage. In spite of the confusion engendered by the unclear referent of the ‘α’ini-clause, it becomes clear that the subject of investigation at this point is the source of persuasive force.

(i)–(iv) Unsurprisingly, our translator operates on the assumption that his text is a stringent whole. His attempt to coordinate the tacked-on transition between Books Two and Three and subsequent arguments by referring to tilka al-ʾīlā leaves the following structure unconnected; it is not at all clear what tilka al-ʾīlā refers to. He might try to connect it to the previous clauses (ʾalā mā ... wa-mimmā). On the other hand, he might go straight back to the first list (1403b6ff = 171/1–4). In this case, tilka al-ʾīlā would be equivalent to the first element of that list, viz. min ‘āyy al-ʾaṣyā’ takūn al-taṣdiqā. This point will be discussed in greater detail below.

Element 1.2: The second factor—“expression”

(i) λιὰν τὸν τὸ παῦσα τῇ λέξιν διαλογισμοῖν.

(1) وأما الثانية، فوضع ذلك في الفضفظ أو المقالة:
(i) and concerning the second [matter], the place of that is in expression or speech.

(i) To clarify the connection between this passage and the contents of the rest of the *Rhetoric*, one of the readers or copyists of the manuscript (possibly Ibn al-Samh himself) saw fit to insert a longer marginal note on *al-tāniyāb* referring to issues discussed in the first two books. It reads:

You should know that he [sc. Aristotle] discussed the first kind [sc. min 'ayy al-'a'yā' takūnu al-taṣāliqāt, cf. Section I.1 on p. 67] in the first two books, I mean from where the confirmations are taken, and that he discusses the two other kinds [sc. allātī tusta'amal fī al-ʾal-fāz and kayfa yanbā' an nanzīm 'aw nansuq 'ażīdā' al-qawl, cf. text I.1 on p. 67] in this book, I mean the stratagem of expressions/style and the structure, i.e. the arrangement in composition.

The note refers to the first list of issues appearing in Text I. Its author perceived the apparent rift between Text I and Text II as keenly as our translator and might have felt compelled to help the translator bridge it. He adds a twist to the discussion of the two triads of rhetorical issues by relating them to the triad of books making up the *Rhetoric*.

*Element I.3: The third factor (which remains unnamed)*

(1) τρίτον δὲ τούτων, (2) ὃ δὲν αὔων μὲν ἔχει μεγίστων, (1) and concerning the third [matter], it is these (things), (2) and it has an immense power,

(i) According to Lyons, the Arabic translation suggests that the translator read Τοῦτο instead of Τούτων. This would explain the Arabic version, which interprets that pronoun as the predicate of the subject τεῖτων. With subject and predicate thus identified, the translator did not need to look further for the rest of the clause, which happens to contain the true predicate ἐπικεχείρηται and an apposition specifying the referent of the subject, τὰ περὶ τὴν ὑπόκρισιν. For him, the sentence ends after the relative clause.
This oversight caused numerous problems for his understanding and translation of the subsequent text. After following the structure of the Greek text faithfully in the course of Text I and most of the first section of Text II, the versions begin to drift apart. The Greek text continues the list of important aspects of speech in the next passage, while on the Arabic side, the list is cut short before the translator reaches the third item on Aristotle’s roster. In the Arabic version, the missing item becomes the starting point for the next section.

(i) The pronoun ḍāḏībi remains without a referent. It does not appear helpful to interpret it as a cataphoric reference to the following ḥīlah, this would seem rather far-fetched in view of the intervening ḡ ayr ‘anna. Alternatively, we would have to go back as far as Element 2.3 of Text I (on p. 68 above) for a suitable referent. In the margin of the folio, ḍā-biya ḍāḏībi was glossed as follows:

This is that, i.e. the arrangement, because the arrangement also belongs to the stratagem of expressions/style.

As with the previous note, its author attempts to reconcile the lists in Sections I.1 and II.2 by simply matching them. Unfortunately, the lists are not identical. Whereas it might be tempting to equate ἐκ τίνων αἱ πίστεις ἔσονται (“whence the proofs derive”) with ἐκ τίνων ἔχει τὸ πιθανόν (“from what their persuasive force derives”) and the difference between [τὸ] περὶ τὴν λέξιν (“what deals with style”) and τὰ περὶ τὴν ὑπόκρισιν (“what deals with acting”) seems to be one of degree rather than substance, it requires some ingenuity to identify τῶς χρὴ τάξιν τὰ μὲν τοῦ λόγου (“how one should arrange the parts of speech”) with τὰ περὶ τὴν υπόκρισιν (“what deals with acting”). But the translator has already paved the way for his identification of those items with his translation of the last component of the second list—as we have seen, a simple scribal mistake such as substituting τοῦτο for τοῦτων might have allowed him to drop the crucial element τὰ περὶ τὴν υπόκρισιν, which would have stood in the way of a synchronization of both lists.

Some of the translator’s misunderstandings seem to be based on his belief in the identity of both lists, a belief he shares with the author of the marginal note. His attempt to merge the lists fails not only on account of the obvious problem he has with their respective third items. Equating the first items on both lists requires him to eradicate a distinction both
Aristotle and the translator are careful to maintain, that between πίστις and πιθανόν, reproduced in the Arabic text as тҔҦҞ and ʾiqnā.²⁸

(i) The list discussed above also illustrates some aspects of the translator’s treatment of Greek particles. Aristotle structures his enumeration of issues with the particles μέν as the introductory particle and δέ as marker for subsequent elements of the list. The translator replicates and emphasizes this structure with the use of ʾamnā ... ʾa-constructions, introduced with ʾa for the first item and connected with wa for subsequent items.

Section 2: “Delivery” in speech

Apart from the structural mismatch caused by the translator’s decision to detach ὑπόκρισις from its position at the end of the list above, the next passage does not particularly suffer from the problems introduced in the translation of Section 1. The straightforward Greek account has been closely matched in terms of word order, but is plagued by a number of lexical problems starting with our translator’s puzzling rendering of ὑπόκρισις (alʾaḫḏ bi-l-wuǧūh). In Element 2.1, we learn about the late development of the “art” or “stratagem” of alʾaḫḏ bi-l-wuǧūh, explained in 2.2 with its recent appearance in literary genres such as tragedy and rhapsody. Its relevance for rhetoric and poetry is stressed in 2.3; Element 2.4 relates in a very general way previous theoretical treatments of the subject and refers to Glaukon of Tēos.

Element 2.1: The discussion of “delivery” is a recent phenomenon

(i) οὔπω δʼ ἐπικεχείρηται, τὰ περὶ τὴν ὑπόκρισιν.

(1) غير أن الحيلة ²⁹ في الاحذ بالوجوه لم تبتدد ³⁰ ان تظهر بعد.

(i) but the stratagem in the taking of faces had not begun to appear yet,

(i) Having concluded the previous section, i.e. the list of rhetorical issues, the translator now expects a structural hint pointing to the beginning of a new argument. He assumes δὲ to be the marker he is looking for (it might indeed be read as marking a departure from the μέν ... δέ-construction, referring back to τὸ μὲν οἷον περὶ τῶν in 1403b18 = 171/17) and signals his readers in the strongest possible terms—gayr ʾanna—that a new stage

²⁹ Badawi: ﻦﻴﺒﺪ ("natural disposition").
³⁰ Margoliouht, Salim, Badawi: ﻦﻴﺒﺪ ﻦﻴﺒﺪ. 
in the argument has been reached. Unfortunately, he disrupts the Greek text’s structure by severing the passage quoted above from its place in the list and using it as an introduction to the following section on al-ʾaḥd bi-l-wuğāb. The Greek text lacks such an introductory passage; after presenting the list of speech aspects, it proceeds directly to an excursus on the subject of the third element of the list, ὑπόκρισις.

The appearance of ḡayr ‘anna at this point strongly indicates the translator’s reliance (lacking any structural elements such as punctuation or paragraphing in his manuscripts) on certain Greek particles to trace the text’s logical structure—even where the Greek version does not support the resulting restructuring of the text’s argument. The consequences of the modifications introduced by the translator are substantial: shortening the first section of Text II, the translator has to leave the third item on the list of speech aspects open. The passage excised from the first section is appended to the second section and serves as an introduction to the subject matter of the subsequent discussion. The smooth transition between both sections of the Greek text, which depends on the clear identification of the third list element as the subject of the following argumentation, is lost. After the incomplete list, the reader of the Arabic version is abruptly confronted with al-ʾaḥd bi-l-wuğāb, a topic seemingly unrelated to the preceding text.

(i) The insertion οὔτω ἐπικεχείρηται (Lyons gives οὔτω δ’ ἐπικεχείρηται, which is not attested in the variants listed in Kassel’s edition) ends up as the beginning of a new period, whose subject is τὰ περὶ τὴν ὑπόκρισιν. Lyons notes that ἐπικεχείρηται in the Arabic translation comes out as a form of ἐπιφαίνειμαι rather than ἐπιχειρέω. The modification introduced by cutting off οὔτω δ’ ἐπικεχείρηται, τὰ περὶ τὴν ὑπόκρισιν from the previous section makes itself felt: taking the passage as an independent main clause, the translator inadvertently shifts the focus from what has not yet been discussed in the Rhetoric to discussions going on in the field of rhetoric as a whole.

(ii) This is the first encounter in this chapter with the expression al-ʾaḥd bi-l-wuğāb, used to render ὑπόκρισις. The problems of the Arabic expression and the ambiguous status of the Greek source term warrant a short digression.

³¹ Daiber (1980, p. 367) mentions the opposite tendency in the translation of the Placita philosophorum and other texts: neglecting certain particles because of their marginal semantic content. Both the translator of the Placita and the Rhetoric often ascribe to particles a purely emphatic function.
Translating al-ʾabḍ bi-l-ʿuqāb literally, as we have done throughout, as “the taking of faces”, it seems to imply both neutral aspects of “dressing up” and “masquerading” implicit in theatrical performances and negative aspects such as “mimicking” and “deception”. As such, it might only stress connotations already inherent in ὑπόκρισις interpreted as “acting”.

The verb ὑποκρίνομαι initially signified “explain” or “interpret” and “answer”; consequently, the derived substantive ὑπόκρισις could mean “answer” in the Ionian dialect. The nomen agentis, on the other hand, was almost exclusively used for “actor”. It is probably derived from the initial meaning “explain” instead of “answer”: the actor “explains” or “interprets” the work he performs. An actor’s most important activity was the “ declamation” of a text. Unsurprisingly, the art of “delivery” also belongs to the field of rhetoric. Figuratively used, ὑποκρίνομαι was applied e.g. to describe human existence as “acting” on the stage of life. Negative connotations were not far: the stage is a dream world, the actor a swindler. In this context, the verb could also mean “pretend” and “feign”. Interestingly enough, in spite of its documented use in such a negative sense, ὑποκρίσιμον remained in classical usage a vox media without negative moral connotations. The negative sense acquired prominence only in Byzantine literature under the influence of Christian usage inspired by the New Testament.

In contrast to classical literary habits, ὑποκρίνομαι occurs in both the literature of the Jewish diaspora and the New Testament exclusively in its pejorative sense. In Jewish texts, it denotes “blasphemy” in the form of the renunciation of God and his laws. The ὑποκρίτης is not the “hypocrite” who pretends to be someone other than he is, he is “godless” without any pretence to the contrary. The step from “actor” to “blasphemer” is not immediately obvious and cannot be conclusively traced in the available sources. On the basis of the scant evidence provided by Jewish, Zoroastrian and Greek texts, Ulrich Wilckens ventures the following explanation:

Wer böse ist, spielt die Rolle des Bösen. Er verstell sich, indem er sich aus einem Gerechten, der er nach dem Gesetz Gottes sein sollte, zu einem Freiler macht. ... Diese Verstellung ist eo ipso böser Trug, Widerstreit gegen die Wahrheit Gottes. Wieso freilich dieser als Schauspielerei bezeichnet werden konnte, bleibt gleichwohl rätselhaft.¹³

¹² This and the following paragraphs draw extensively on the detailed and highly informative article on the term and its cognates in the Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Friedrich, 1969, vol. 8, p. 558–569).
Additionally, he assumes that the rejection of actors and acting by pious Jewish circles as blasphemous heathen institutions and the incorporation of that sentiment into early canon law could have played a role. Actors might have been perceived as prominent perpetrators of blasphemous acts tolerated by heathen authorities.

In the New Testament, the meaning “hypocrite” gains prominence. Whereas ὑπόκρισις and ὑποκριτής are still applied according to Jewish usage, they now frequently denote “insincerity” and “hypocrisy”. The new use of the word is a striking feature especially in the Gospel according to Matthew; it is evident most prominently in the speech against the Pharisees, in which they are repeatedly singled out for their insincerity:

Οὐαι [δὲ] ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί (Mat. 23/13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29).

“Hypocrisy” and perhaps even more generally “evildoing” might have been the meanings our translator had in mind when he read ὑπόκρισις. In addition to its apparent moral overtones, the Arabic phrase al-ʾaḫḍ bi-l-wuḡāb seems to reveal an awareness of the theatrical meaning of ὑπόκρισις, i.e. the “wearing of masks”. His negative view on “the taking of faces”, not only perceptible in the connotations we are tempted to impute to his puzzling translation, will become clearer in the course of this analysis. In view of the opprobrium reserved for actors and acting in pious Jewish and Christian circles, we should not expect to find a more casual attitude to such a disreputable activity in this translation. It should be noted that, contrary to these medieval precedents, the expression ʾaḥād waḡḥan nowadays means “to acquire a good reputation”.

On the margin of the manuscript, we find the following gloss pertaining to al-ʾaḫḍ bi-l-wuḡāb:

الخيلة بالوجه ما يكون من الخيلة في تصديق القول بالصوت والصمت والتمثل بالأشكال المختلفة

The stratagem with the faces belongs to the stratagem in the confirmation/corroboration of speech with the voice, silence and the imitation of different forms

Undoubtedly, what the author of the note describes is acting. Assuming that he understood what our translator wanted to relay with the strange

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34 The Poetics, translated into Arabic by the Nestorian ʿAbū ʿBīr Mattā ibn Yūnus, offers a similar example of later Greek usage “contaminating” the Arabic translation: the translator’s choice of the term munāfiq reflects New Testament rather than Aristotelian usage.
expression *al-ʿaḥḍ bi-l-wuḡāb*, it is entirely possible that the translator himself and parts of his audience were able to draw the same conclusion. The fact that the need for a gloss was felt nevertheless indicates that some readers might have found the concept difficult to understand.\(^{35}\)

**Element 2.2: “Delivery” was first applied by the poets**

(1) καὶ γὰρ εἰς τὴν πταχωμαν καὶ ἑαυτῶν οὐ παρήλθεν. (2) ὑπεκρίνοντο γὰρ αὐτοὶ τὰς τραγῳδίας οἱ ποιηταὶ τὸ πρῶτον.

(1) and they did it in the tragedies and rhapsodies only recently, (2) and they used to employ the taking of faces in the tragedies, I mean the poets, in these first [matters].

(1) *Trāḡūdiyāt* was (falsely) glossed as follows: *al-ṭrāḡūdiyāt šīb al-ʿaragīz bi-l-Rūm wa-l-rafas al-qūmūdiyāt* (“tragedies for the Rūm are similar to Raḡaz-poems, the same applies to comedies”).\(^{37}\)

(1) The expression *οὐ παρήλθαν* (subject: “it”, i.e. *ὑποκρισις*) has been changed to *fuʿ inna-mā fuʿalā ... aḥiran* (subject: “they”, i.e. the creators of *al-ṭrāḡūdiyāt wa-l-rafṣūdiyāt*). The influence of this paraphrase on the meaning of the passage seems to be very slight.

(2) Again, the adverb *τὸ πρῶτον* has been misunderstood (cf. 1403b18 = 171/17); the addition of the preposition *fi* allows the translator to fit the phrase into his text.

(2) Both the singular form *al-fyūʿīti* for the Greek plural *οἱ ποιηταὶ* and the fact that the word is transcribed instead of being translated (as done in the Arabic *Poetics*) comes as something of a surprise. There is no precedent for this and the other transcriptions for *οἱ ποιηταὶ* and related terms we

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\(^{35}\) To illustrate the various uses of *taṣdiqār* in our text, Würsch (1991, p. 24) proposes a number of renderings depending on its use from the perspective of the *speaker* on the one hand and the *bearer* on the other. The somewhat unwieldy German equivalent she arrives at, *Glaubhaftmachung*, i.e. “make something believed or believable”, fits in perfectly well with the understanding the author of the note had of the effects of *al-ʿaḥḍ bi-l-wuḡāb*: to make something believed or believable with the help of acoustic or gesticular hints—in a word, to *act*.

\(^{36}\) Hermannus translates *ipse poete* (“the poets themselves”).

\(^{37}\) For the raḡaz-metre and the often ironic and coarse poetry associated with it, the *ʿarḡāzah*, cf. Wollhart Heinrich’s article “Radjaz” in *EF*, vol. 8, p. 375–379. In his translation of the *Poetics*, Abū Bīrī identifies it in a similar vein as *ḥāṭa*, a genre of satirical poetry. For this and other misunderstandings caused by the translators’ and philosophers’ ignorance about drama and theater, cf. Heinrichs (1969, p. 108f).
find throughout the Arabic *Rhetoric*. They might echo Syriac terminology transcribed from the original Greek terms.\(^{38}\)

(1)–(2) The passage’s problems arise for the most part from our translator’s determination to imitate as closely as possible the surface structure of the Greek text. It could be argued that with his structural lapse in the preceding section and his inability to understand the meaning of ὑπόκρισις, he chose a literal translation as the safest course of action. Apart from his desire to retain the Greek word order (which he has to suspend anyway at the beginning of the clause to render the Greek verb παρῆλθεν), there seems to be no compelling reason for transforming the subject οἱ ποιηταί into an apposition to the implicit subject of ḥaʿalū. The use of ʿaʾnī, however, suggests that he recognized οἱ ποιηταί as nominative.

**Element 2.3: The relevance of “delivery” for rhetoric and poetry**

(i) ḫīlōn ʿwī ʿtī kai ṭīrī tīn ἤποτόηκην ἐστὶ τὸ γατοῦτον (2) ὡσπιε γαὶ πεῖρι τὴν παντηκοῆν.

(1) It is known that this comes [about] in rhetoric too, (2) just as it occurs in poetics,

(1) The transcription al-rūṭūrīyah might be taken to indicate that the translator was uncertain about its meaning. Its first occurrence at the beginning of the first book of the *Rhetoric* (i/3) prompted the scribe or collator to add the gloss ṣiʿnāʿ at al-ḥaṭābah on the margin of our manuscript. That our translator probably at least partly understood the term is amply illustrated by his choice of the term ḏalāṯ for both ἤποτοηκῆς in 85/20 = 1079a2 and 119/19 = 1388b18. The situation was similar at the time of Ibn al-Nadīm, who knew the term, but glossed it for a less widely-read audience: al-kalām ʿalā rīṭūrīqā wa-maʾnaḥu al-ḥaṭābah.\(^{40}\)

Renate Würsch maintains that the term *Rhetoric*, denoting Greek and more specifically Aristotelian rhetoric, was—on the basis of the Syriac

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\(^{38}\) I am indebted to Fritz Zimmermann for pointing out the oddity of the transcription and its possible Syriac roots.

\(^{39}\) Flügel (1871–1872, p. 250). S. A. Bonebakker (1970, p. 75f) notes the distinction between the terms ḏalīṯaḥ and ḥaṭābāb in Arabic literature. The former is derived from the verb ḏalāṯa, “to reach”, and the term is interpreted as the art of “reaching a listener” in conveying one’s idea or “reaching perfection” in style and content of a text. The latter term, translated as “oratory”, exclusively denotes the “spoken word” in public addresses.
rendering—at first transcribed as riṣūrīqā. This is indeed the term we find not only in the Fihrist’s note on the translation⁴¹ but also in the title of Ibn Sīnā’s early treatise on the subject, Kitāb al-maḏmūʿ ʿaw al-ḥikmab al-ʿaṭrīyab fi maʿānī kitāb riṣūrīqā. But it is not the transcription we find thrice in the Arabic text of the Rhetoric itself, which gives us riṣūrīyab (7/10, 172/6 and 172/22). This and her unquestioning acceptance of Lyons’ stance on the question of a Syriac intermediary throws some doubt on her claims about the terminological development away from a purportedly Syriacized transcription towards the genuinely Arabic expression hiṭābah.⁴³ The regular use of the transcribed term might therefore be consistent with the assumption that its meaning was supposed to be known to a sufficiently well educated readership.

Element 2.4: Glaukon’s contribution to the development of “delivery” ¹⁴⁰₉b₂⁶f ₁⁷₂/₆ff

(i) ὅπερ ἕτεροι τινς ἐπερχομενως (2) καὶ Γλαύκων ὁ Τήϊος.

(i) and even though other people have taken on the burden of discussing this [matter], (2) (but) Glaukon in particular did so, because he was [a] more appropriate [person] for it.⁴⁴

(i) The combination faʾ inna-hu waʾ in provides an example of our translator’s occasionally idiosyncratic use of connectors unmotivated by the Greek text.

(2) Instead of the more appropriate wa, the translator’s lākinna highlights Glaukon’s contribution in the field (which the translator in all likelihood did not know anything about). The same can be said about the amplifications he subsequently introduces (bāṣatan faʾala, liʾanna kān ʿawala bi-dālika). There is no basis in the Greek text for this intervention. Lyons proposes that ὁ Τήϊος has been corrupted to a form of ἀξίος. Another possible explanation would be to read ʿawwalam instead of ʿawlā; the resulting amplification would at least not sound as strong as the first reading, but it would raise the question why the translator dropped ὁ Τήϊος altogether.

Occasional deletions of Greek textual elements occur here and there in the Arabic Rhetoric. In addition to removing isolated words (e.g. 1410a22:

⁴¹ Flügel (1871–1872, p. 250).
⁴² Cf. the following chapter on Ibn Sīnā’s (and others’) commentaries on the Rhetoric.
⁴⁴ Lyons: “(2) for he had a better right to that.”
Section 3: The role of the voice in “delivery”

The text now embarks on an excursus on the role of the voice and aspects of its use in \( \text{al-} \text{abd bi-} \text{l-} \text{wuq\u00edd} \). Remarking on its importance and its connection to emotions in Element 3.1, it then lists three aspects of voice and its use in 3.2. Faced with a number of technical terms related to acoustical phenomena, the translator chose the field of music as his source for Arabic equivalents.

1403b27f
172/8ff

Element 3.1: The voice and emotions

\( 1 \) ἐστι δὲ αὐτὴ μὲν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ, \( 2 \) πῶς αὐτῆ δὲ χρῆσθαι πρὸς ἕκαστον πάθος,

(1) and among that [sc. \( \text{al-} \text{abd bi-} \text{l-} \text{wuq\u00edd} \)] is that which comes [about] through the voice, (2) and this belongs to what should be used\(^\text{45}\) with each one of the affections,

(2) An interesting feature of our translation is the unconventional application of the proposition \( \text{πρός} \) to render \( \pi\varepsilon\gamma\varepsilon\delta\varepsilon \); it sometimes seems to take the place of \( \text{li} \) or \( \text{bi} \). Here, it carries the intelligent implication of “on the occasion of”.

1403b28–32
172/10–14

Element 3.2: Musical aspects of voice

\( 1 \) ἄτο τῶν μεγάλη καὶ τῶν μικρῆ καὶ μέση, \( 2 \) καὶ τῶν τῶν τῶν, 
\( 3 \) ἀτο ἰδία καὶ βασικα καὶ μέση, \( 4 \) καὶ ἐνθάμοις τίνα πρὸς ἰκαστα, 
\( 5 \) ἔρμα γάρ ἦν οἰστι περί ἀ σκόποιαν. \( 6 \) ταῦτα δὲ ἦν ἀ τῶν μέγα ἀ ληθεία ἐνθάμοις.

(1) and among that\(^\text{46}\) of the voice, (2) that being one of the things which should be used.

\( 45 \) Lyons: “(1) part of this is what comes about through the voice, (2) that being one of the things which should be used.”

\( 46 \) Sālim, Badawi: ḍuḥuqāt. 

\( 47 \) Sālim, Badawi: ḍuḥuqāt. 

\( 48 \) Sālim, Badawi: ḍuḥuqāt.
(i) and sometimes one should employ the loud and sometimes the soft and the medium, (2) and it is like that which is used in the camel-driver songs, (3) I mean the high-pitched, the deep and the medium, (4) and some of the tones (sounds) and the stresses (intonations/cadence); (5) for those about which they speak lightly or ... [consist of] three [things], (6) and they are magnitude and adaptation and interval.

(2) The term ḥādiyāt is unclear; it might be derived from the verb badā, the “driving of camels with songs”. The semantically related root b-d-w might offer some help: according to Fadlou Shehadi, the humming or singing to camels matching the animal’s movement, called budā’ (derived from the verb badā, “to lead” or “drive on camels”), was connected to the discovery that animals respond to vocal music.\(^5\) Amnon Shiloah places the genre at the very beginning of the history of Arabic music.\(^6\) Sālim’s and Badawi’s reading al-bādimāt (“the destroying”) seems to make even less sense.

(i)–(6) We encounter numerous musical terms in this passage (e.g. naḡm, nabrah, ḍādd, taqīl). This observation is shared by the author of a gloss to al-ṣağiwa wa-l-wusṭā, who comments on the margin of the text: kull bādā min ‘asmā’ al-naḡm fī al-mūṣiqā (“all of these are terms for [kinds of] melodies in music”\(^7\)).

A second gloss comments on šay’ min al-naḡm. It reads:

\[
\text{ مثل الرحمة والغضب وكم يرفعه یخفض الصوت وغضبه يرفع الصوت وما أشبه ذلك}
\]

Such as compassion and anger just as it raises it (according to Lyons’ reading: “in compassion”) the voice is lowered and in anger the voice is raised and what is similar to that

\(^{48}\) Sālim, Badawi: "the serious [sc. voice] or”.

\(^{49}\) Badawi: [al-ṣağiwa] ("the serious [sc. voice] or").

\(^{50}\) Or, in view of the missing connector wa between al-ḥaddah and al-taqtal: “the high-pitched and deep, and the medium”.

\(^{51}\) Shehadi (1995, p. 60).

\(^{52}\) Shiloah (1995, p. 3f).

\(^{53}\) Lyons: [brāhima].
The musical references in this short passage allow us some insight into our translator’s handling of culturally problematic terms and warrants closer attention.

The central term and subject of this section of the text is ἡ φωνή from the preceding passage, the “tone” or “sound”, especially the sound of a voice. The translator chose an Arabic term with a very similar semiotic range, sawt, which also covers both vocal and more general acoustic phenomena: “sound”, “voice”, occasionally even “song”. Aristotle proceeds to list basic volume levels, using the neutral terms µεγάλη, µικρά and µέση. Each of these generic expressions signifies qualitative or quantitative degrees of size for both concrete and abstract objects. The same holds true for their Arabic counterparts, al-kubrā, al-ṣuğrā and al-wusṭā. The referent of the Greek adjectives is clearly ἡ φωνή; puzzlingly, the translator associates the masculine term sawt with feminine adjuncts.

The confusion is only partly dispelled by the first marginal gloss quoted above, it identifies two of the three expressions in question as technical terms belonging to the theoretical field of mūṣiqā. While Shiloah insists on a clear differentiation between the fields of musical theory, labelled mūṣiqā in adaptation of the Greek µουσική, and practised art music, ġinā’, Shehadi notes that at least as early as the Ḥwān al-ṣafā’,⁵⁵ the terms were used interchangeably. In addition, al-Kindī used it in several treatises on theoretical aspects of music.⁵⁶ It is in this sense that we encounter mūṣiqā in Gābir ibn Ḥayyān’s writings.⁵⁷ He defines the term as follows:

almūṣiqā is simply harmony between the voice, the melody and the plucking of the string in its time/rhythm and the quality of its sound, part after part

To learn it, one has to master a variety of fields:

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⁵⁵ “Brethren of purity”, a tenth- and eleventh-century group of philosophers of uncertain identity and origin. They left a body of writings on philosophy and the sciences that is known under the title Rasā’il Ḥwān al-ṣafā’, Epistles of the Brethren of Purity and was heavily influenced by Neoplatonism.
⁵⁷ Most of the works ascribed to him probably date from the ninth and tenth century; even the dates of his life are unclear, he apparently flourished around the mid-eighth century. Cf. Paul Kraus’ and Martin Plessner’s article “Djābir b. Ḥayyān” in EI², vol. 2, p. 357ff.
One is only able to learn al-mūṣiqā after [mastering] the science of prosody and correct grammatical expression and the science of the [musical] note[s] and rhythm and the sciences of poetry and its creation and the knowledge of (airy?) metres.

Obviously, the author of the gloss understands the terms al-kubrā, al-suğrā and al-wuṣṭā in a technical sense; perhaps the translator also wanted them to be understood that way.

The next musical term in the passage is ὤ τόνος. The Greek expression denotes a voice’s “pitch accent”, which is then specified with three adjuncts again referring back to ἡ φωνή, i.e. ὀξεῖα (with an acute accent), βαρεία (with a grave accent) and µέση (with a circumflex accent). On the Arabic side, we find the word al-bādiyāt (discussed above) and the adjuncts al-bāddab, al-taqilab and al-unsafe, referring to al-bādiyāt. The status of these terms is unclear; for example, we encounter al-bādd as the name of the last and highest string of the ‘ūd, whereas the term al-taqil is used in the names of several rhythmic modes listed by al-Kindī. Given the problems we have in discovering the origins of these words as technical terms, it might be worthwhile to return to their non-technical meaning: classifying certain types of singing as “vivacious” (ḥādd), “serious” (taqil) or “intermediate” (uwait) would make perfect sense.

The paraphrase šay’ min al-naqm aw al-nabarāt for the plural form of ἐὐθρός, possibly caused by his omission of πρός ἐκποντα and his reading of ποσι without an accent, sufficiently illustrates the translator’s predicament. Introduced by the phrase šay’ min, he throws together two terms which have—except for the fact that they are both musical terms—not much to do with each other. Today as well as in the time of the Umayyad caliphs, al-nabrah denotes musical intervals. In his Kitāb al-iʿāqānī (Book of Songs), Abū al-Farağ al-İsfahānī (d. 967) employed the term in this sense and quoted Ibn Surayğ (d. 726), who used the word in a similar way. Farmer traces the historical development of the terms nağmab and nağam, which are alternately used with the meaning “note”, e.g. by authors mentioned

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59 A pear-shaped string instrument similar to a lute.
61 In his translation of the Poetics, Abū Biş Mistā chooses a different “musical” term, labn (Lyons, 1982, vol. 1, p. xxx).
62 Farmer (1929, p. 70, 73).
in the *Fihrist* such as al-Ḥalīl ibn Ahmad (d. 791) and al-Kindī, or with the meaning “mode” or with both meanings, e.g. by Abū al-Farāq in the *Kitāb al-ʿagānī*, by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī (d. 940) in the *Kitāb al-ʿiqd al-farīd* (*Book of the Unique Necklace*) or in the *Risālat Iḥwān al-ṣafāʾ* (*Treatise of the Brethren of Purity*). The *Kitāb al-ʿagānī* also lists its use in the sense of “melody” in the title of a book by Yūnus al-Kātib (d. 765). Its modern use covers the more general notions of “melody” or “sound”.

In spite of its apparent greater semantic flexibility, the translator settles for the less suitable *nabrah* to render the second occurrence of ῥυθμός in this passage. The remaining Greek expressions, µέγεθος and ἁρμονία, have been translated literally as ʿiẓam and taufiq. To the best of my knowledge, neither belongs specifically to the field of musical theory.

In sum, both versions profess to discuss the use of voice, but the Greek text discusses pronunciation in *speech*, the Arabic text qualities of *vocal music*. The speech-related concepts in the Greek version, e.g. accents and pitch, do not have suitable Arabic equivalents. They are part and parcel of Greek phonology and could not but be misunderstood or mistranslated. The peculiar translation of the above passage testifies therefore either to the lack of understanding on the part of the translator or his attempt to transpose the subject matter into categories accessible to his readers. Given the terminological overlap between descriptions of voice in speech and singing, music must have suggested itself as the natural choice for terms in this rather unsuccessful attempt at acculturation.

Frequently, our translator’s treatment of *realia*, terms and concepts specific to the source culture (excluding proper names), betrays a lack of background knowledge. This is a problem that frequently affects his translation. Encountering such technical terms, he more often than not resorts to transliteration or synonymic transposition, i.e. the employment of doublets intended to cover as much semantic ground as possible. His translation of ῥυθμός and ἁρμονία are cases in point: ῥυθμός is rendered with the doublet al-naṯm wa-l-nabarāt, musical terms which fail to reproduce the semantic scope of the Greek term; this also applies to the second occurrence of ῥυθμός, translated with the shorthand al-nabrah.

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64 It could be argued that the poetic harmony treated in the *Poetics* stresses a slightly different aspect of this concept than the *Rhetoric*, explaining the terminological differences between the texts. Abū Bīr Mattā uses naṯm, ʿiqāl and, most often, ʿulūf, perhaps in order to underline the formal and structural slant of Aristotle’s usage. For µέγεθος, the *Poetics* uses the more specific term ἁρμονία (*Lyons, 1982*, vol. 1, p. xxviii, xxx).
(5) To explain the puzzling occurrence of *yahzilūn* where one would expect *yanẓūrūn* or some such expression, Lyons suggests that the translator might have read *skūptanon* instead of *skopōsīn*. In spite of various reconstruction attempts, the missing word indicated by the lacuna (...) has not been conclusively identified. It is tempting to fill it with the term *yaḡiddūn*, evoking the polarity of *ǧidd* ("earnest") and *hāzūl* ("jest").

Section 4: Competent delivery helps winning "contests"

After the translator’s slip at the beginning of Section 2, both versions remain in step with each other, at least up to this point. Section 4 starts off with a serious mistranslation, apparently caused by a lack of cultural background knowledge. Aware of his problem, the translator proceeds with extreme caution for the rest of the section, resorting to as literal a rendering as he could possibly produce. The result is a sequence of disjointed clauses that must have been more or less incomprehensible to contemporary readers.

(i) τὰ μὲν οὖν ἁθλα σχεδὸν ἐκ τῶν ἀγώνων οὗτοι λαμβάνουσιν, (2) καὶ καθάπερ εἰκά μὴ οὖν ὄντα τών ποιητῶν οἱ ὑποκριταί, (3) καὶ κατὰ τοὺς πολιτικοὺς ἀγῶνας (4) διὰ τὴν μοχθηρίαν τῶν πολιτειῶν.

(i) and concerning those that engage in dispute, they use this in disputes and contests; (2) and as they were more potent and powerful there, so they are the same [sc. *ʾaqwā wa-ʾaqdar*] here, I mean such poets as take faces,⁶⁶ (3) and it is like that which occurs in political disputes (4) because of the difficulty of these politics,⁶⁷

(i) The term ἁθλα has been wrongly understood as “contestants”. According to Lyons, τὰ μὲν οὖν ἁθλα has apparently been read by the translator as οἱ μὲν οὖν ἁθλικταί; cf. also 1404417 below. Ignoring the Greek

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⁶⁶ Lyons: "(2) and whenever they are stronger and more powerful there, the same is true of them here, I mean the actors from amongst the poets."

⁶⁷ Many basic terms such as *πολιτικός* and *πολιτεία*—for which later translations use genuine Arabic equivalents—are transcribed in our text. They could be interpreted as indicators for an early translation date, preserving a state of translation technique antedating the establishment of a stable terminology and the composition of translation tools such as word lists and glossaries.
subject ὠντα, the translator uses the phrase as the subject of the first clause. Aware of the difficulty of this passage, the translator modeled his translation of its remainder as closely as possible on the Greek word order, compounding the confusion engendered by the mistranslation of τὰ ἄθλα. In spite of his efforts, he fails to make any sense of this section.

(2) As before, the author attempts to emulate the Greek word order and, in order to accommodate the position of the subject οἱ ὑποκριταί at the end of the clause beginning with καὶ καθάπερ, paraphrases it in an ʾaʾni-excursus. The possibility that the clause’s subject may be confused with the previous clause’s ʿdawū al-munāʿaḥ forces him to insert the rather cryptic ʿaʾnī-excursus. The possibility that the clause’s subject may be confused with the previous clause’s ʿdawū al-munāʿaḥ forces him to insert the rather cryptic ʿaʾnī-excursus. Again, the author feels compelled to imitate the original as closely as possible in places where he cannot grasp its meaning.

(2) The comparative sense of the expression µέζον δύνανται νῦν τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ ὑποκριταί is lost with the translator linking τῶν πολιτειῶν to the subject οἱ ὑποκριταί as a genitive object.

(4) In his translation of the term µοχθηρία with ʾuʿūbah, the word µόχθος (“labour”, “pain”) seems to have misled our translator.

(4) Lyons states that the Arabic transcription al-fyūlīṭiyah at the end of the passage points towards πολιτήων instead of πολιτῶν (as he and Spengel assume) as the translator’s reading of his manuscript. Kassel and Freese, the editor of the Loeb edition of the Rhetoric, opt for πολιτῶν.⁶⁸ This would mean that the general abstract al-fyūlīṭiyah mistranslates the more specific Greek term, further confirmation for the problems the translator had in understanding the text.

Section 5: The “craft” of the “taking of faces”

One of the conspicuous features of this long and complicated passage is the fact that its subject is at no point explicitly spelled out. Before we can start to sum up the passage’s content, we have to pause for a moment to establish that subject.

The Greek text presents the reader with exclusively pronominal references to the elusive theme; in Arabic, operating with only two grammatical genders instead of three, the reader has to deal with an even higher degree of ambiguity. Looking more closely at the pronominal references in Section 5, we find that the subject of the passage is referred to several times with the enclitic feminine singular ʾādā and once, at the beginning of

the section, with ḏālika. The enclitica cover instances in which the subject of the Greek clause is contained in the verbal expression but needs to be made explicit in the Arabic version. ḏālika, on the other hand, was used to render αὕτων. The situation is complicated by the conjunction ḡayr 'anna, which indicates transitions between arguments and textual sections. Apart from the problems caused by the use of pronomina in the Arabic version, the following facts emerge: the subject of the passage remains unclear; a being referred to by ḏālika, the translator switches his references to the expression al-ṣināʿab 'aw al-ḥilab fi ḏālika (the anchor for the enclitica). We can only speculate that the topic of the preceding section, i.e. al-ʿabd bi-l-wuḡāb, is the referent of ḏālika and, mediated by the circumscription al-ṣināʿab 'aw al-ḥilab fi ḏālika, the enclitic pronouns.

Establishing the topic is, however, not the only problem in this section. In Element 5.1, we are informed that the “art” or “stratagem” (our translator refuses to resolve the ambiguity of the term τέχνη with its positive and negative connotations by rendering it into the doublet al-ṣināʿab 'aw al-ḥilab, reproducing both aspects of the Greek expression) of “that”, i.e. al-ʿabd bi-l-wuḡāb, was developed late due to the late invention of artifice in speech (5.2). The translator now switches to al-ḥilab, emphasizing negative aspects such as “artifice” and “trickery”.

The next element (5.3) opens a string of arguments with a proposition that, due to our translator’s idiosyncratic use of connectors, is almost impossible to reconstruct. The puzzling occurrence of ḥīna in 5.4 cannot be reconciled with the Greek text and undermines any attempt to make sense of the passage. Without a major intervention in the Arabic text, we have to proceed on the assumption that the translator wanted to indicate that, firstly, “artifice”, correctly understood, constitutes a burdensome and negative aspect of speech and that, secondly, “artifice” is somehow geared towards conjecture and opinion (in contrast to established knowledge). Conjecture and opinion are then identified in Element 5.4 as the subject matter of rhetoric.

Elements 5.5–5.8 offer what purports to be arguments for this proposition, strung together by repeated occurrences of li-ʿanna: 5.5, a highly literal and garbled version of the lucid reasoning contained in the Greek text, states that “it”, possibly referring to speech (maqālah), not only has to be done correctly, but carefully as well—the connection to the preceding proposition is, to put it mildly, tenuous—while 5.6 maintains that one should employ only “speech” (kalām; the meaning of this prescription will be discussed below) and refrain from manipulation, qualified by
5.7, an exhortation to dispute only about the things themselves. In Element 5.8, he concludes his notes on the *hilab* of *āl-ʿābd bi-l-ʿawāqīb* with an appeal to disregard the apparent effectiveness of rhetorical trickery.

The whole argument seems to fail on account of two factors: unable to grasp the reasoning of his Greek source, probably due to both lexical and syntactical problems, our translator imitates the Greek word order of doubtful passages, obscuring rather than clarifying Aristotle’s thinking; secondly, his hesitation to spell out the subject matter of the passage clearly illustrates his own failure to identify it. Part of the problem was the Greek terminology: the translator had to deal with terms such as *tīqīn*, *λέξις* and *λόγος* which even Aristotle sometimes failed to distinguish properly and whose meaning our translator obviously only partly understood.

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*Element 5.1: A “craft” was not yet developed…*

(i) *οὔπω δὲ σύγκειται τέχνη περὶ αὐτῶν,*

(1) غيِّر أن الصناعه أو الحيلة في ذلك لم تَرْكَب بعد,

(i) *but the art or stratagem in this had not yet been composed,*

(i) *As in 1403b21 = 172/1, the translator picks out *δὲ* as a structural marker signalling the beginning of a new argument and translates it with the strong adversative conjunction *gayr inna*. The opposition may be stronger than the Greek source warrants. The translator could have been misled by the appearance of *οὔπω*, which figures in the aforementioned passage as well.

(i) *The translator does not seem to be aware that *τίχνη* also means a concrete written “manual” in addition to the abstract category of “craft”. From this point onward, we sense a shift in the texts’ attitude. The Greek text talks neutrally about an “art” or “treatise” dealing with “acting” (*ὑπόκρισις*). The use of the doublet *al-ṣināʿab ʿaw al-hilab* points towards the translator’s awareness of the multivalence of the Greek term. He nevertheless decides to put a potentially negative slant on the discussion by subsequently choosing the term *al-hilab* (“stratagem”).*

The negative impression suggested by the choice of *al-hilab* is strengthened by the translator’s rendering of *ὑπόκρισις, al-ʿābd bi-l-ʿawāqīb*. The meaning and relevance of this expression have been discussed above. The terminological choices the translator has made at this point do not seem to have any influence on the argumentative structure of the text, but they exert considerable influence on other terminological and structural deci-
sions down the line. A handful of translation decisions early in the text, two of which we find in the passage above, give the discussion a flavour that inexorably pulls the translator away from Aristotle’s text and tells us more about his own ideas and preconceptions than about Aristotle’s intentions.

Element 5.2: … because “delivery” only matured recently

(i) ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ περὶ τὴν λέξιν ὀψὲ προῆλθεν.

(i) because the stratagem in speech as well only matured recently,

Element 5.3: … and because the subject is “burdensome”

(i) καὶ δοκεῖ φορτικὸν εἶναι, (2) καλῶς ὑπολαμβανόμενον.

(i) and it is as if it [sc. al-ḥlab] is something that overwhelms (2) when taken (used?) correctly.

(i) In the translator’s opinion, the phrase καὶ δοκεῖ marks the start for a new argument in his current train of thought which ultimately leads to his rejection of rhetorical trickery. He notes the efficiency of rhetorical devices but maintains that, since delivery is directed towards mere “opinion” and “conjecture”, its use is fraudulent and improper (cf. below p. 94f).

(i) Both expressions min al-taqīl and its Greek counterpart φορτικόν stress the essentially negative character of delivery, but whereas Aristotle belittles it, the translator overemphasizes it by introducing the notion of “trouble” and “burden”. The term taqīl might also stress the moment of imposition of impressions and emotions on an audience implied by the expression al-ḥab bi-l-wuǧūb. It is tempting to read the translation of φορτικόν as evidence for the shift in attitude between the Greek and Arabic versions. With a range of perhaps more appropriate single-word translations at his disposal, the translator still decides to use the somewhat unwieldy expression šay’ min al-taqīl. In the light of some more

\[\text{Badawi:} \text{ضمن}
\]

\[\text{Lyons: “(2) when it is taken well/properly”} \]

\[\text{The term φορτικόν is the only occasion for Abu Bišr in the translation of the Poetics to transcribe instead of translate a word that has been straightforwardly rendered in our text (cf. Lyons, 1982, vol. 1, p. xxxi).} \]

\[\text{Lyons: “(2) when it is taken well/properly”.} \]
obvious examples for our translator’s attitude in the text below, it is a
distinct possibility that his choice at this point is already influenced by
his own reading of the text’s stance towards ὑπόκρισις.

(2) Translating ʿidda ʿ阿拉伯 ḥēdū-ḥā, our author apparently misses the
non-literal use of ὑπολαμβάνω at this point and opts for a more literal trans-
lation which is unfortunate from a stylistic point of view and further
obscures the meaning of an already obscure clause.

Element 5.4: Rhetoric is bound up with “opinion”

(i) ἀλλὰ ὅπως συγχρος οὐδεὶς τῆς πραγματείας (2) τῆς περὶ τῆν ἐγκατά

(1) ولكن حين تكون كله مصروفة إلى الظنون أو الآراء (2) التي هي من شأن

الريوطية

(i) but since all of it is directed at conjectures or [individual] views

(2) which are of the matter of rhetoric

(i) With his rendering of ἀλλὰ with wa-lākin, our translator schematically
substitutes Greek conjunctions and particles in a way that obfuscates the
relation between sentences and arguments.

(i) The unexpected appearance of the causal conjunction ḥīnā suggests
that the translator had problems reconstructing the flow of argument.
According to his translation, the ḥīnā-clause is causally and perhaps tem-
porally linked to the previous clause. The Greek text does not indicate
any such relation; on the contrary, the clause introduced by ἀλλὰ partly
refutes the idea that the treatment of delivery is unimportant.

(i) The translator fails correctly to identify the elements of the Greek
sentence and misunderstands their function. Following the Greek word
order, he removes the genitive object τῆς πραγματείας from its refer-
ent ὅπως συγχρος and attaches it as a relative clause to οὐδεὶς. In his version,
not “the whole business of rhetoric” is connected with “opinion” or “ap-
pearance” but “opinion” and “appearance” become the business of rhetoric.
The translator’s negative stance towards aspects of rhetoric such as “act-
ing” taints his perception of the entire subject.

(2) The imitation of the Greek word order by placing the relative clause
allātī biya min laʾān al-riṣūrīyab at the end of the passage next to al-zunūn
ʿaw al-ʿārā introduces an ambiguity which could have been avoided by

72 Lyons: “(i) but since it is all turned to ideas or thoughts (2) which are the concern
of rhetoric.”

placing it nearer to the verb; as it is, *allati* is read as referring to *al-zunān 'aw al-'ārā*. The epistemological pessimism our translator professes in regard to rhetoric becomes more prominent; the ambiguities in the Greek text mentioned above allow him to read his perspective into it and serve to strengthen his belief in the essentially negative verdict Aristotle returns on the merits of rhetoric and its capacity to access truth.

**Element 5.5: “Delivery” requires diligence**

(i) οὔκ ἐφθασε ἐγκντὸς (2) ἀλλ' ἂς ἀναγκαίον τὴν ὑπεύθυνον ποιήσεων,

(1) λέσσαν άρ σε αυτήν την τρισαίον, 

(2) θαλάτται, (3) κατὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐπικοινωνίαν,

(i) it is not the case that it [sc. *al-zinā'ūb 'aw al-bilāb*] must do that correctly or justly, (2) but it is like that which one is obliged to do with carefulness and earnestness/serious effort.

(i) The first half of this passage illustrates the density of the Greek text: the Arabic rendering of the three words *οὔκ ἐφθασε ἐγκντὸς* comprises no less than twelve words.

**Element 5.6: Appealing to emotions is inappropriate in speech…**

(i) ἐπεὶ τὸ γε δίκαιον μηδὲν πλεῖον ἔχει περὶ τὸν λόγον (2) ή ὡς μηδὲν λυπεῖν καὶ εὐφραίνειν.

(1) λανὲν σοὶ τὸν λόγον ἄλλοτι τοιοῦτον (2) καὶ ὡς μηδὲν λυπεῖν καὶ εὐφραίνειν.

(i) because justness requires that one seeks nothing more than speech alone (2) and that the evocation of joy or sorrow are not to be employed.

(i) *Kalām* here apparently contrasts to *bilāb*, perhaps representing *true* words instead of *deceptive* speech; the second category appears in the next passage: *λυπεῖν* and *εὐφραίνειν*, i.e. the use of emotions.

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74 Omitted by Badawi.

75 Badawi: ذاكل.

76 Lyons: “(i) not because it has to do that correctly or rightly, (2) but like one who is compelled to it (or: that which one is compelled to do) in respect of concern and seriousness.”

77 Lyons: “(i) since it is right that one should not investigate anything more than speech at all, (2) and that one should not employ what causes joy or sorrow.”
(2) In spite of his usual careful attention to the Greek word order, our translator here switches the positions of λυπεῖν and εὐφραίνειν.

(1)–(2) The phrase περὶ τὸν λόγον has been construed as ἐκ τοῦ λόγου; according to the Arabic text, al-taḥżin and al-tafrīb belong to the devices employed in speech. Aristotle on the other hand warns against entertainment or offence as purpose or prominent feature of speech, the end of which should always be to present an argument.

Reflecting on the treatment of emotional appeals in speech in the Rhetoric as a whole, it does not come as a surprise that the translator should feel obliged to clarify his understanding of this slightly ambiguous passage. As Jacques Brunschwig has pointed out, Aristotle accepted such an appeal only as long as it was based on the speech itself—i.e. by certain arguments—instead of extraneous means—e.g. by producing weeping children, gesturing, crying etc.\(^{78}\) What stuck with the Arabic translator was the general impression that emotional appeals were placed beyond the pale of legitimate rhetorical procedures.

Element 5.7: …because it should be confine to the things themselves

(1) λίκαιον γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἀγωνίζεσθαι τοῖς περάγμασιν, (2) ὡστε τὰλλα ἵπτω τοῦ ἀποδείξαι περιεργά ἐστιν.

(1)因为它应该只争论于事情本身，（2）而其他属于虚伪的东西，

(i) Lyons explains the double rendering of αὐτοῖς as both la-hum and ʾanfusi-hā with the assumption that the translator either found the word twice in his text or imputed to it a double sense, i.e. he might have wished to resolve the syntactical ambiguity of the pronoun by offering both possible constructions.

(ii) The term al-bīyal is not found in the Greek text; it was perhaps intended as an explanatory amplification of τὰλλα. Alternatively, the translator may want to suggests that rhetorical devices belong to the subject matter of rhetorical disputes (tanāzu'). In this case, the term al-bīyal might be read as an amplification of τοῖς περάγμασιν: to argue about

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\(^{78}\) Brunschwig (1996, p. 46).

\(^{79}\) Lyons: “(i) it is proper for them ... in the affairs themselves.”
περίεργα might, in his view, include contending “over” or “with” ḥiyal. This reading would oblige us to accept that the translator substantially modified Aristotle’s proposition by either allowing the use of both “facts” and “stratagems” in an argument or by naming both as the subject matter of disputes—in a dispute, both facts and rhetorical procedures can become bones of contention—while Aristotle only wanted facts to count. In spite of its apparent far-fetchedness, the reading has several factors in its favor: in addition to the position of the term in the sentence and Lyons’ punctuation, which groups al-ḥiyal with al-ʾumur ʾinfusi-hā, it is clear that, according to our translator, al-ḥiyal are not “extraneous to proof”: as Elements 5.1 and 5.2 state, a bilab of “acting” and of “speech”, both important factors in argumentation, have been late to develop.

(2) The phrase dawāt al-muʿārabah stresses the note of moral disapproval which plays a less prominent role in the more neutral Greek term. Περίεργα can mean “elaborate” as well as “superfluous” (neutral) or even “meddling” (negative). The translator’s choice for an Arabic term seems to have been influenced by his negative judgement on rhetorical manipulation. The Greek text facilitates the introduction of such interpretations with its wealth of ambiguous and semantically rich terms. Our translator again renders the neuter plural περίεργα as feminine plural; his lack of consistency in the translation of neuter plural terms can be seen in his handling of τἆλλα, which he renders as kull mà.

Element 5.8: Rhetorical devices corrupt the audience

(1) ἀλλ’ ὃμως μίγα δοῦναται, (2) καθάπερ εἴρηται, διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀκροατοῦ μοχθηρίαν.

(1) although it is often possible to [achieve] great things with them, (2) such as the effect which these distressing things often have of dissatisfying/deceiving [better: “corrupting”] the listener; ⁸⁴

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⁸¹ Margoliouth, Sālim, Badawi: ﻋﻦ.
⁸² Badawi: ﻋﻦ.
⁸³ Lyons: “(1) but because of these one is able to do great things, (2) like what is done by those distressing things in disappointing the hearer.”
(1) Since ἀλλά is normally translated as wa-lakin(na), the occurrence of ǧayr ʾanna-bu seems surprising. How unusual it really is can only be answered on the basis of a larger text sample.\(^\text{85}\)

(1) The use of feminine plural pronouns to render neuter plural is a recurring feature of our translation. The referent here is dawāt al-muʿārabah. For the translator’s use of feminine plural pronouns, cf. above p. 67.

(2) To make sense of a sentence he misunderstood, our author added qad tafʿal al-mubazzināt as an explanatory amplification. His reading turns Aristotle’s reasoning upside down: he suggests that the use of rhetorical devices “corrupts” an audience whereas Aristotle clearly places the responsibility for the effectiveness of rhetorical trickery on the pre-existing corruption of the audience.

The essentially negative character of rhetorical means of persuasion has now been firmly established. In spite of the degree of misunderstanding the Arabic version betrays at this point, the translator follows the direction he has taken early on and stresses the negative consequences of devices which fall outside the scope of rational argument. They are, as we have read in the preceding passage, dawāt al-muʿārabah, the use of which leads to “corruption” (tabḥīṭ) of the listener.\(^\text{86}\)

On the basis of our reading of the preceding passage, we seem to be confronted with two categories of rhetorical devices, i.e. the “stratagems” (ḥiyal) on the one hand, which form an important part of rhetoric and which can become the objects of a dispute (together with the facts of a given case) and on the other hand those devices which do not belong to rhetorical argumentation. Their use is, in spite of their effectiveness, strongly discouraged. The distinction the translator introduces here is not derived from the Greek text, but a result of a combination of translation problems and his interpretation of the Greek text. While the second category of devices does not figure again in our sample, the translator does not conceal his suspicions about the first category, the ḥiyal. Whether legitimate or not, he continues to view rhetorical devices with a wary eye.

(2) The edited Greek text helps us to avoid the trap our translator has fallen into by placing a comma between ἐίρηται and διά. In the translation, the insertion καθάπερ είρηται is not recognized (according to my reading of the text, it is used to mark the beginning of the following section) and the verb apparently read as ἐργάζεται, explaining the appearance of tafʿal.

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\(^{85}\) In our sample, ǧayr ʾanna occurs twice more, each time translating an adversative δέ: 1403b21 = 172/1 (p. 77) and 1403b35 = 172/18 (p. 92). Cf. below p. 135.

\(^{86}\) Our reading is based on Lyons’ emendation tabḥīṭ.
It is then used as the predicate of the clause resulting from the conflation of καθάπερ εἴρηται and διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀκροατοῦ μουθηνίαν.

Section 6: “Expression” and “delivery”

The terminological confusion caused by the Greek text carries over into this section. Aristotle discusses λέξις, which here includes not only style of speech, but its delivery as well. The translator continues to refer to λέξις as maqālah. After the first element which connects his subsequent remarks on the subject with his previous notes on al-ʾaḥd bi-l-uwāğhūb, he refrains from explicitly repeating it in Elements 6.2ff.

Starting in 6.1 by subsuming the “taking of faces” under maqālah, the text claims that some small but necessary aspect of speech is in “all teaching”; this could mean that either the teaching of any subject employs speech to a certain degree—a truism—or that, more specifically, maqālah should play a role in the teaching of rhetoric. It then states in Element 6.2 that the shape of proof (ṣabīt) has an influence on its clarity. Depending on the reading imposed on the damaged place indicated by asterisks, the text proceeds to argue that speech (al-qawl) should be moulded in a way that is advantageous to dālikā al-liyā′, possibly proof, to address the listeners’ “imagination”. The mistranslation of ἀλλά leads to a statement which stands in marked contrast to the Greek text: it advises the reader to fashion speech in order that either the speech (interpreting kāʾanna-bu as referring to al-qawl) or the intended proof (with kāʾanna-bu denoting al-ṣabīt) appeal directly to the listeners’ “imagination” (mutaḥayyal ʾaw mutawahham), adding in Element 6.4 that nobody would practice geometry in this way.

The following element (6.5) claims that this stratagem, whenever it occurs, works by al-ʾaḥd bi-l-uwāğhūb. It does not dispel the mounting sense of confusion, equally felt by the translator who keeps stringing on word after word, burying the overall argument he seems unable to grasp.

With the “historical” sketch in Element 6.6, we reach firmer ground. The translator, still stepping gingerly through a minefield of unfamiliar terms, correctly identifies the passage as a short reference to previous theoretical treatments of his subject. It is unclear whether he was able to understand the title of Thrasymachos’ work as a metatextual reference to another text or interpreted it simply as his area of expertise.

The following change of topic appears as abrupt in the Arabic translation as it does in the Greek source. Now that Aristotle explicitly lists the concepts he wants to attend to, the translator has to follow suit and name
his subjects. In Element 6.7, he calls al-ʿabd bi-l-wuḡāb a “natural” (ḥabīʿ) and “non-artificial” (ṭayr sīnāʾ) activity. Artifice in speech, on the other hand, is “artificial” (ṣināʾ). From this premise, he concludes in 6.8 that those mastering this hadīṣ are—again mistranslating ḥālā—“contestants” (al-munāẓẓīn ʿaw muḥābidin) and similar to rhetoricians who are obliged to employ al-ʿabd bi-l-wuḡāb. Viewed in isolation, this deduction does not make any sense—if we are not prepared to assume that munāẓī and muḥābid evoked some meaning in this context.

Before it embarks on an account of the history of style (maqālah) in Text III, the Arabic text appends a note (Element 6.9) that has, thanks to the confusion of the preceding paragraphs, lost its connection to the previous discussion of delivery and al-ʿabd bi-l-wuḡāb. Whereas Aristotle argued that written speeches (when read out) derive their effectiveness from style rather than argumentative consistency and validity in order to support his main argument about the importance of style in speech, the remark has lost that relevance in the translation. Without the main line of thought it is intended to support, it stands isolated at the end of a rather confused and confusing text.

Element 6.1: “Expression” and “delivery” are necessary in teaching

(1) τὸ μὲν οὖν τῆς λέξεως ὅμως ἔχει τι μικρὸν ἀναγκαίον ἐν πάσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ.

(2) Φηδάζεται οἵτινες μὲν πάντα μεταξύ τῶν λέγοντος, ἔχει τι μικρὸν ἀναγκαίον (τε) καὶ κατὰ τῆς ἡγομένης ἐν πάσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ.

(i) this, then, belongs to what often comes about through speech, and in speech there is something small [and] necessary in all teaching.

(ii) The clause fi-hādā mimma qad yakūn bi-l-maqālah is another addition not found in the Greek text. Lyons proposes the reading τὸ μὲν οὖν τῆς λέξεως ὅμως ἔχει τι μικρὸν ἀναγκαίον (τε) as a possible way out. The passage marks the transition from Aristotle’s previous discussion of delivery (ὑποκριτική) to a short note on λέξις, here including delivery as well.

(2) The cataphoric position of the prepositional object fi al-maqālah before the sentence’s subject imitates the Greek text.

87 Badawi: With his reading, the passage would translate “(2) And in speech, there is something that is small in necessity [i.e. unimportant] in all teaching.”

88 Lyons: “(i) this is one of the things that happen through speech (2) and in speech there is something small and necessary.”
**Element 6.2: Clarity varies with “expression” and “delivery”**

(i) διαφέρει γάρ τι πρὸς τὸ δηλῶσαι ὡδὶ ἢ ὡδὶ εἰπεῖν.

(1) And proof often differs as has been made clear that it is like this or like that;

(i) The translator specifies the Greek infinitive εἰπεῖν as only meaning proof (taḥbit). With taḥbit as the referent of the conjunctival clause after ‘an yakūn, it becomes obvious that he has modified the meaning of the whole sentence: according to his version, it is not the way of speaking which makes a difference in terms of clarity, but the way of demonstration, i.e. the arrangement of arguments instead of the arrangement and choice of words and sentences as intended by Aristotle.

**Element 6.3: “Expression”, “delivery” and the “imagination”**

(i) οὐ μέντοι τοσοῦτον, ἀλλ’ ἀπαντά, φαντασία τοῦτ’ ἐστί καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀκροάτην.

(1) Perhaps triggered by the appearance of φαντασία in this and γεωμετρεῖν in the next section and the complex syntactic structure of the passage, the translator leaves the tracks of Aristotle’s text and, by ignoring the intervening καὶ and conflating the two predicates φαντασία ... ἐστί and πρὸς τὸν ἀκροάτην [ιστὶ], presents us with an argument all of his own. While

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89 Lyons’ reading bayn would force us to accept taḥbit as translation of δηλάω, an unconvincing suggestion. The latter was used to cover a number of Greek terms, mostly those derived from different forms of δείκνυσιν or πείθω. Conversely, forms of the verb ἀνάρα were rendered in our sample with the verbs bayyana, ‘awdaba, daila and ‘anāra.

90 Sālim, Badawi: om.  ἐστιν

91 Sālim, Badawi:  ἐστίν.
Aristotle concludes his short note on λέξις in the sense of “expression” by claiming that its purpose is to affect an audience and that it is consequently not suited for subjects as self-evident and incontrovertible as geometry, the translator advises the reader to appeal to his listeners’ imaginative faculty; the information given in the sort of speeches he envisages are non-intuitive and have therefore to be processed by the listeners’ imagination. The connection between this statement and the following section on the teaching of geometry is as smooth as in his source text: in both versions, geometry is not taught with the help of “expression” because the latter appeals to φαντασία. Geometrical knowledge does not need to be channeled through people’s imagination: it is already self-evident.

The translator’s choice to render φαντασία gives us some hints about the text’s chronological relation to other translations. As Rüdiger Arnzen points out, later translations (after Hunayn ibn Ishāq) introduce a distinction between φαντασία as a process of simple reproductive imagination (“bloß reproduzierender Vorstellung”), translated as ḥayāl, and one of imagination that abstracts through visualization (“durch mentale Visualisierung abstrahierender Vorstellung”), translated as wahm, i.e. a mental faculty that actively operates on mental images.⁹² The terminology of the Kindī-circle was less subtle: most texts use wahm or tawabhum for φαντασία or φάντασµα in spite of the connotations those terms carried (“speculative” or “false opinion”, “deceptive imagination” or “hallucination”). Al-Kindī himself preferred (perhaps for this reason) the transcription fantasiesā, also found in Ustāṭ’s translation of the Metaphysics. With and after Hunayn, the translators settled for ṭabḥīl or ṭabḥayyul instead of wahm or tawabhum.⁹³ The Rhetoric chose what Arnzen calls a “Mittelweg”, the doublet mutabayyul ‘aw mutawabham.

Several explanations come to mind: conscious choice, which situated him at the terminological crossroads between the Kindī-circle and Hunayn’s group; on the other hand, it would be equally possible to interpret it as the result of a revision by a later translator or perhaps a gloss that has made its way into the text at some point. In that case, we would probably expect the gloss to be added after the term to be glossed rather than before it. Without wanting to make too much out of a detail that could

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⁹³ Arnzen (1998, p. 113). Heinrichs (1978, p. 261f) adds that from early translations to the Hunayn tradition and afterwards, ḥ–y–l was commonly employed to translate φαντάζοµαι with ṭabḥayyul becoming the stock translation for φαντασία. The root w–ḥ–m on the other hand was often used in pre-Hunayn translations and later transformed into a purely psychological term.
have been caused by any number of random factors, it is tempting to use this and other phenomena we will discuss below to classify the translation as belonging to the output of the Kindi-circle.

(1) ‘Inda relays only a part of the meaning of πρός here. It does not convey the affective meaning (“intended to affect”) but brings out the consequences of the affect “in” the listener’s mind by suggesting a physical relation between mutawaṣṣal ‘aw mutawabbaṭ and al-sāmī’.

Element 6.4: Nobody practices geometry in this way

(i) ἐκεῖνη μὲν ὄν τῶν ἔλεγεν (2) ταύτῳ ποιήσει τῷ ὑποκριτικῷ,

(ii) and there is nobody who engages in geometry or ... in this manner,

(i) Badawi’s suggestion yafʿal for the gap after yubandis is probably out of place in what seems to be one of our translators numerous double expressions connected with ‘aw. Lyons opines that the translator read γεωμετρεῖ ή διδάσκει instead of γεωμετρεῖ διδάσκει, which would let us expect tuʿallim. A near-synonym of yubandis may be more likely.

The distinction between knowledge that has to be taught by appealing to the imaginative faculty and immediately self-evident knowledge is a shared motif in both philosophical traditions.94 The importance of “geometrical” knowledge comes to the fore in al-Fārābī’s dictum on the merits of various forms of knowledge, contained in his Faḍilat al-ʿulām wa-l-ṣināʿāt (Excellence of the sciences and crafts). He distinguishes between three criteria which are, separately or in combination, characteristic for “supreme” knowledge (faḍilat al-ʿulām wa-l-ṣināʿāt): an exalted subject matter, incontrovertible proofs or the extent of benefits it provides. Geometry falls into the second category: waʾammā mā yafʿul ʿalā ẓayrī-bi li-stiqāʿ al-barāḥin fi-bi fa-ka-l-bandaib (Jéhamy, 1998, p. 943).

Element 6.5: “Expression” and “delivery” employ “acting”

(i) but this [sc. “stratagem”], when it occurs, (2) will have such an effect through the taking of faces.

94 Barnes (1995, p. 25) stresses the role geometry played for Aristotle as a model for other fields of knowledge.
Throughout our sample, the Greek ὁὖν is translated as ʾammā . . . fa or just fa. Lākinna seems out of place, the more so since ὁὖν here only marks the next stage of argument without implying any adversative relationship. The fronting position of tilka al-ḥīlah is again due to our author’s preference for closely matching word order between Greek and Arabic. In his translation, Kennedy gives the dative τῇ ὑποκριτικῇ (somewhat unusually) a comparative sense. More natural would be the option our translator chose, a straightforward instrumental or sociative dative. Lyons adds that the translator apparently read τοῦτο instead of ταὐτό and interpreted τῇ ὑποκριτικῇ as an instrumental dative qualifying ταὐτό.

Element 6.6: Previous discussions of “expression” and “delivery”

(i) ἐγκεχειρήκασι δὲ ἐπ᾽ ὀλίγον περὶ αὐτῆς εἰπεῖν τινες, (2) ὅσον Θερσίμαχος ἐν τοῖς ἐλέοις.

(i) and people would begin to say this and that about it [sc. al-ḥīlah], (2) like the treatise of Thrasymachos on what causes anxiety (what makes one concerned).

(i) The adverbial ἐπ᾽ ὀλίγον seems to have been wrongly translated as ʾay’ baʿid ʾay’. (2) Here as in other cases when Aristotle quotes another work, it is not entirely clear if the translator understood the phrase ἐν τοῖς ἐλέοις correctly as a metatextual reference to a concrete work (and only translates the title to give his readers an idea of the treatise’s content) or if he merely interpreted it as a more general reference to a subject Thrasymachos wrote about.

Element 6.7: “Acting” is natural, “expression” and “delivery” artificial…

(i) καὶ ἐστὶ φύσεως τὸ ὑποκριτικὸν εἶναι, (2) καὶ ἀτεχνότερον, (3) περὶ δὲ τὴν λέξιν ἐντεχναὶ.

(i) καὶ ἐστὶ φύσεως τὸ ὑποκριτικὸν εἶναι, (2) καὶ ἀτεχνότερον, (3) περὶ δὲ τὴν λέξιν ἐντεχναὶ. ⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Margoliouth, Sālim: “natural”; this does not seem to be in line with the sense of the passage.

⁹⁶ Margoliouth, Sālim, Badawi: “natural”; this does not seem to be in line with the sense of the passage.
Furthermore, the taking of faces is natural, and it is in addition non-artificial; as for stratagem in speech, it is artificial.\footnote{Lyons: “(i) as for the device used in speech, it is artificial.” The somewhat awkward term “artificial” (ṣināʿī) refers to something that is brought about by a “craft”, a learned and trained ability instead of a “natural talent” (termed tabīʿī by the translator), which can be utilized without prior training.}

Element 6.8: …because their master becomes a “contestant”

(i) διὸ καὶ τοῖς τοῦτο δυναμένοις γίγνεται πάλιν ἰθλικ, (2) καθὼς καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν ὑπόκρισιν ἔφθασαν.

(i) and therefore those who are able to do this could not but become contestants or contenders;\footnote{Badawi: ام.} just as that which is found to happen to these rhetoricians who employ the taking of faces.

(i) As in Section 4, the translator misunderstood the term ἰθλικ, a mistake we already noticed in 1403b32 on p. 89. I doubt his translation made much sense to his audience. Unfortunately, the logical connection between this and the following passage depends on a correct understanding of the term and its relation to γίγνεται ... τοῖς κατὰ τὴν ὑπόκρισιν ἔφθασαν: prizes are won in contests, in which speeches are normally delivered orally on the basis of a written manuscript—whereas the listener might have found it difficult and tedious to follow an intricate argument he may have been able to comprehend in reading, he appreciated stylistic competence in oral presentation.

Without the clues provided by the Greek text, the next passage appears to be isolated and unconnected to the preceding discussion; moreover, the reader of the Greek text readily understands Aristotle as talking about written speeches which are orally delivered. The Arabic text might have suggested that written speeches as such (i.e. even when privately read) worked on the basis of style rather than argument, a claim diametrically opposed to Aristotle’s proposition.

Element 6.9: …and because speech is effective through them

(1) οἱ γὰρ γραφόμενοι λόγοι μείζον εἰσέχουσι (2) διὰ τὴν λέξιν ἢ διὰ τὴν διάνοιαν.

\footnote{Lyons: “(i) those who are able to do this are competitors or contestants.”}
Furthermore, speech which is written down is often more powerful (2) on account of the style (or “what is said”/“the words”), not on account of the meaning.\

Text III: The subject of “style”\

With Text III, our task becomes somewhat easier. Dealing with the history and development of style (maqālāb), it presents an account first of the beginnings of poetic style in Section 1 and proceeds to outline the changing stylistic preferences of contemporary tragedians and poets in Section 2, wrapping up the chapter with a mention of relevant material in the Poetics in Section 3. The number and severity of lexical and syntactical problems decrease sharply. Relatively straightforward exposition as that contained in Text III poses less of a challenge to our translator than the involved theoretical argumentation pursued in the preceding text.

Section 1: The development of “style”\

The first section deals with the invention of style (maqālāb). In Element 1.1, the contribution of poets as pioneers of style, more specifically poetic style, is noted. The text then (1.2) identifies the “mimetic” (mumaṭṭil ‘aw mušabbih) properties of words and the voice as sources for the development of arts concerned with style such as rhapsody and rhetoric, listed in Element 1.3.

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Element 1.1: Poets were the first to create their own “style”...

(i) ἤρξαντο μὲν ὁι κινῆσαι τὸ πρῶτον, ὡσπερ πέφυκεν, οἱ ποιηταί.

100 The term maʿnā was adopted early on to denote various forms of mental phenomena and activities such as σηµαινώ (Ustāṭ, Metaphysics), λόγος and νόηµα (Ishaq ibn Hunayn, De anima), σύµµα (Ishaq ibn Hunayn, De Interpretatione) or θεώρηµα (Abū ʿUtmān al-Dīmāsquī, Topics). Interestingly, it was not normally used to render διάνοια: the term of choice from Ustāṭ onward was a form of ῥῤῥ (Afnan, 1964, p. 112, 115). In his translation of the Poetics, Abū Bišr departs from the majority usage in favor of ḏīb (Lyons, 1982, vol. 1, p. xxviii).

In his study of the use of maʿnā in Arabic grammatical literature, Richard Frank (1981, p. 314–319) identifies four meanings of maʿnā: firstly, the “intent of the sentence”; secondly, the “referent” of a noun or verb; thirdly, the “semiotic equivalent” of a word, phrase or sentence, i.e. its “interpretative rephrasing or analysis (al-taʿallu);” and fourthly, the “content or conceptual significate” of a word, phrase or sentence. The translator’s use falls under the first category.
And those who began with moving those [things] which are first in natural order were the poets,

(i) The translator’s rendering of the metaphorical κινῆσαι with ṭabrik drops the metaphorical meaning of the Greek term and probably did not much to help his readers understand what Aristotle was getting at.

(i) To retain the Greek word order, the translator paraphrased the Greek verb with kāna and two interlocking relative clauses. He then attempted to accommodate both Arabic grammar and Greek word order by transforming the subject ὁ ποιηταί into a nominal predicate a kāna and added a relative pronoun to fill the subject slot. The position of the phrase ‘alā mağrā al-ṭabi‘ab invites two interpretations: it could either be an adjunct to al-fyu‘īṭiyin—“they, according to nature, began to move those things which were first”—or, as Lyons suggests, it modifies tilka allatī al-ʿulā: “they began to move those things which were, according to nature, first.”

Assigning ‘alā mağrā al-ṭabi‘ab to al-fyu‘īṭiyin suggests that the poets were somehow “naturally endowed” to “move” this first matter; in the second case, this matter would be first “by nature”. It is not clear at all what this “first matter” could be. Without any conclusive identification of the phrase’s referent, it seems prudent to follow Lyons’ lead and connect ‘alā mağrā al-ṭabi‘ab to tilka allatī al-ʿulā.

(i) As before (1403b18 = 17/17, 1403b24 = 172/5), the adverb τὸ πρῶτον has been translated as an object to κινῆσαι. It is tempting to interpret this and the other occurrences of tilka al-ʿulā as references to the first element of the two lists at the beginning of our sample (e.g. Section I.1. on p. 67 and Element II.1.1 on p. 73): the sources of persuasion. That would mean that the translator did not regard the distinction between taṣdiq and ʿignā‘ as sufficiently important to warrant separate translations. In view of his consistency and diligence in reproducing variations in Aristotle’s terminology, this would be surprising.

The problems with the adverbial τὸ περῴτων are foreshadowed in Element II.1.1; in the sentence (i) τὸ μὲν ὡν περῴτων ἐληθίθη κατὰ φύσιν, (2) ὅτε πτερυκὶ περῴτων, (3) αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα, both readings (adverbial and objective) make sense. The similarities between this passage and

101 Margoliouth, Sālim: بحريت تلك التي الأولى على مجرى الطبيعة, translating as “And those who expressed by moving”.
102 Sālim, Badawi: الفيودي،
103 Lyons: “(i) to move those things that are first in accordance with nature.”
subsequent occurrences of τὸ πρῶτον may have been a strong incentive to stick to the translational choice made at that point. In the course of his reinterpretation of τὸ πρῶτον, the translator apparently misreads ὅπερ for ὡσπερ and transforms the adverbial phrase ὡσπερ τύφυξεν into a relative clause dependent on τὸ πρῶτον.

An additional consequence of his consistent reinterpretation of τὸ πρῶτον as an object and a reference to the aforementioned list is the emergence of an independent network of references only loosely based on the Greek text. In conjunction with his consistently negative interpretation of rhetoric and its procedures, one can begin to consider the translation a quasi-independent work, based on motifs of the Greek source, expressing ideas that, inadvertently or not, seem to have originated with the translator rather than his source text.²⁰⁴

Apart from outright mistranslations or problems of understanding, other factors may have played a role in the development of his understanding of the text.²⁰⁵ As Peter Adamson has argued in the case of the Theology of Aristotle, whose adaptor worked in an intellectual environment suffused with a variety of philosophical ideas derived from Plotinus, Plato, Aristotle and their commentators,²⁰⁶ the translator may have unconsciously or intentionally adapted the translation to different sources, e.g. the negative assessment of rhetoric and poetics expressed in several of Plato’s dialogues.²⁰⁷

Element 1.2. ...because of the “mimetic” nature of words and voice

(i) τὰ γὰρ ὀνόματα μοιμάτα ἐστὶν, (2) ὑπῆρξε δὲ καὶ ἡ φωνὴ πάντων μοιμικώτατον τῶν μορίων ἴσην.

²⁰⁴ Aristotle’s own attitude is, as Jonathan Barnes (1995, p. 260–263) remarks, more complex. On the one hand, he operates on the assumption that aspects of rhetoric can be neutrally treated as an “art” with its own set of technical precepts; on the other hand, he seems to envisage a “philosophical” rhetoric purified from less respectable ingredients such as emotional appeals.

²⁰⁵ Pierre Hadot (1995, p. 75f) notes the role of misunderstandings and mistranslations not only as a source for sometimes very elaborate exegetical work in an attempt to bring a text into line with the commentator’s expectations. They can and often enough were the occasion for “important evolutions in the history of philosophy. In particular, they have caused new ideas to appear.”


²⁰⁷ His views are most forcefully expressed in the Gorgias (e.g. Socrates’ unflattering definitions, 462b8–463c7) and the Phaidros (e.g. the claim that contemporary rhetoric dealt in appearances instead of truth, 272d2–273c5). For an analysis of the passage and a good summary of Plato’s criticism of contemporary rhetoric, cf. Rapp (2002, vol. 1, p. 212–223).
(1) The comparative meaning conveyed by ὑπῆρξε...πάντων μορίον seems to have been lost in translation. The translator interprets πάντων...τῶν μορίων as genitive object to μορίον, as well as misunderstanding the term τῶν μορίων. Mūshabbih...li-kull ḡuzʿ min al-ʾaḏḏāʾ might be misconstrued as “representing” or “representative for all the limbs”. Moreover, the superlative sense of μορίον is lost.

(2) The ambiguous status of ʿinda-nū—relating either to mūshabbih ʾaw mumattil (“for us”) or to the following li-kull ḡuzʿ (“our”)—might have been avoided by appending the personal pronoun to ʾaḏḏāʾ. The position of ʾinda-nū strongly suggest that it belongs to mūshabbih ʾaw mumattil.

Element 1.3: Thus, the arts were born

(1) διὸ καὶ αἱ τέχναι συνέστησαν, (2) ἢ τε ραψῳδία καὶ ἡ ὑποκριτικὴ καὶ ἄλλαι γε.

(1) and in consequence the arts came to be, (2) I mean rhapsody and acting and all of the others,

(2) Ibūqrāṭīyah as a transcription of ὑπόκεισθε occurs only once in the whole translation. Why the translator should have felt the need to transcribe a term he on other occasions confidently translates as al-ʾaḥḍ bi-l-wuḏāb remains to be explained, particularly since contemporaries would probably have read it as “Hippocratic”, a reference to the Greek physician Hippocrates of Cos (d. ca. 370 BCE). Perhaps the translator desired to mark rhetoric in the context of this list of τέχναι as a discipline specific to Greek culture.

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108 Margoliouth, Sālim, Badawi: نشر ("the annoying").

109 Badawi: متنير ("desiring"/"longing").


111 Abū Bīr Mattā translates مَيْسَرَة (i.e. the Syriac equivalent meddamyānā) in most cases with the doublet tahlīb wa-mubākāt (cf. Heinrichs, 1978, p. 256). The connection between مَيْسَرَة and its derivatives and the Arabic root ḥ-b-h seems to have been commonplace from the very beginning of the translation movement.
Transliterations and synonymic transposition seems to be the translator’s favorite strategy when in doubt about a term’s meaning. Interpreted in a more favorable light, the use of transliterations could point towards our author’s cautious approach: rather than taking the risk of unwittingly modifying the meaning of the text through indiscriminate translation of technical terms into doubtful Arabic equivalents, he might have consciously chosen to retain transliterated Greek terms—perhaps to emulate the high degree of literality of late Syriac translations or to give his translation a “scientific” flavour in keeping with the elevated subject matter.

Section 2: Poetic “style”

Poetic style is the subject of the following section, starting with an appreciation of its effect. Earning their reputation through its application, poets are credited with the invention of a specifically “poetic”, i.e. “adorned” (muṣayyān ‘aw muṣahraṯ), style in Element 2.1; Gorgias’ influence is explicitly mentioned. The impact of that style on the undiscerning is outlined in 2.2. In the following element, riddled with problems, the text seems to state that the audience’s approval is misplaced and that the aforementioned stylistic adornments would be more appropriate for other genres. The terseness of Aristotle’s wording and especially the interjection δηλοῖ δὲ τὸ συµβαῖνον perplexed our translator sufficiently to render this section almost unreadable.

The following elements (2.4f) read deceptively easily. Unfortunately, our translator stumbles over a preposition and translates Aristotle’s statement into its complete opposite: in his version, artists dropped colloquial elements from their works. Aristotle on the other hand means to say that everything that went against the grain of colloquial expression was discarded. Reaching the end of the chapter, the translator is back on track again and adds in Element 2.6 that the imitation of poetic style now looks ridiculous. Finally, as Section 3 states, the matter does not have to be discussed any further; the reader should turn to the relevant portions of the Poetics for a more detailed treatment.

Element 2.1: Poets and “style”

1. ἐπεὶ δ’ οἱ ποιηταὶ λέγοντες εὐθῆ (2) διὰ τὴν λέξιν ἐδόκουν πορίσασθαι τὴν [δὲ] δόξαν, (3) διὰ τοῦτο ποιητικὴ περὶ ἐργάτω ἐργάτω λέξις, (4) οἶον ἡ Γοργίαν.
(1) the poets used to talk in simple or common [expressions]¹¹³
(2) and they thought that they earned acclaim on account of their speech. (3) And through this, those first words became poetic, (4) such as the speech of Gorgias.

(i) Without modifying the general meaning of the clause, the translator paraphrases the apparently unambiguous phrase καὶ τῶν παντοκράτηρ ἐγένετο λέξις; Aristotle talks about the emergence of poetical style, our translator about the fact that “those” (silka) first words became poetic. Lyons suggests inserting a ἥ between παντοκράτηρ and πρώτη to bring Greek and Arabic into line again.

Element 2.2: Poetic “style” still valued

(1) καὶ νῦν ἔτι οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀπαιδεύτων (2) τοὺς τοιούτους οἴονται διαλέγεσθαι κάλλιστα.

(i) Furthermore, even now many of those who have no education⁰¹¹⁴ often assume (2) that they hit the mark when they speak with this kind [of speech] in an ornamented or adorned way.¹¹⁵

(2) The enclitic pronoun hum could refer both to alladina là ’adab la-hum or the poets discussed before.

(2) The pronominal reference at the end of the passage seems to have been read as τὸν τοιούτον instead of τῶν τοιούτων, referring to “speech” instead of “speakers”. Furthermore, the translator expands the terse pronominal expression by reminding his readers of the kind of speech the speakers referred to use: muzayyan ’aw muzalıraf.

¹¹² This is probably a scribal mistake; Lyons proposes the emendation ﬁóeﬁe.¹⁰³³
¹¹³ Lyons: “(1) talking in simple or common language.”
¹¹⁴ According to Afnan (1964, p. 91), ’adab and its derivatives came into use at an early date to denote various forms of παιδεύω; Usût already translates ἀπαιδευσία as qillat ’adab and ἀπαιδεύτοι as ἓλα ὅγρ ἰριγη ἐκ ἀδα. Introduced by early kutaḥ, the term ’adab was virtually ignored by al-Kindi but later taken up by al-Farabi and became an established philosophical term.
¹¹⁵ Lyons: “(1) they think (2) that they achieve their aim when they use this type of speech, ornamented or adorned.”
To appreciate the disagreement between Greek and Arabic caused by the adverbial phrase *muzayyanan 'aw muzahraf'an*, we have to look back to the preceding section for the referent of *bādā al-nabw min al-kalām*. There, we are told that the poets used to employ “simple” or “common” expressions. Here, we learn that poets can apply those very expressions in an “ornamented” and “adorned” way—a surprising transformation. Aristotle, on the other hand, only informs us that a florid style such as that of Gorgias is still widely admired by the uneducated.

Element 2.3: Its trappings are more appropriate for other “styles”

(i) τούτο δ' ὁυκ ἦστιν, (2) ἀλλ' ἐνίγμα λόγου καὶ ποιήσεως λέξει ἦστιν. (3) δῆλον δὲ τὸ συμβαίνον.

116 Lyons: “(1) this is not permissible (2) except for other branches of speech apart from poetry, (3) I mean that a description should be given in whatever words occur.”

(i)–(2) After a stretch of structurally matching passages from Element 1.2 to 2.2, we have reached another serious divergence. The substantial modifications found in this and the following passages begin with the translator misreading the double genitive *λόγου καὶ ποιήσεως* belonging to *λέξις*, perhaps, as Lyons suggests, on the basis of a reading such as *ἑτέρου λόγου*.

(j) The translator compounds his error by misunderstanding the phrase *δῆλον δὲ τὸ συμβαίνον*, which he attaches as a comment to the previous passage. He consequently overlooks the fact that Aristotle at this point introduces his reason for the claim that the style of speech and poetry are not the same and misses the context in which the following notes on conversational and poetic style are placed. As we can see, the translator ends up with a substantially different text structure and—as we will find out below—a conclusion which directly contradicts Aristotle’s reasoning.

Element 2.4: Poetic “style” should not be applied

(i) οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ τὰς τραγῳδίας ποιοῦντες (2) ἠτὶ χρῶνται τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, (3) ἀλλ' ἐνίγμα καὶ ἐν τῶν τυπομετρητῶν εἰς τὸ ἰαμβικὸν

(i)–(2) A stretch of structurally matching passages from Element 2.1 to 2.2, we have reached another serious divergence. The substantial modifications found in this and the following passages begin with the translator misreading the double genitive *λόγου καὶ ποιήσεως* belonging to *λέξις*, perhaps, as Lyons suggests, on the basis of a reading such as *ἑτέρου λόγου*.
When they compose tragedies also, (2) they do not (should not) use this sort [of speech] itself. (3) As they composed in tetrameters [lit. “the quartered meter”], (4) so that it can be similar to those other meters, so they composed in tragedies as well;¹¹⁷

(1) The causal connection established by the Greek γάρ in the next clause disappears in the Arabic version, perhaps due to the problems the translator had with the previous phrase which expressly introduces the following passage as an argument for Aristotle’s previous claim.

(3) The next passage beginning with wa-ka-mā ṣana‘ū presents several problems. Ἀλλὰ is not expressed in the Arabic version, thereby distorting the relationship between this and the previous clause. The phrase εἰς τὸ ἰαβεῖον disappears and the intransitive verb μετίβησαν is mistakenly translated as ṣana‘ū.

(4) The problems caused by the previous clause become obvious in the phrase li-yakūn ṣāhiban bi-tilka al-ʿawzan al-ʿuḥar. To force some sense into the otherwise meaningless clause, our translator resorts to drastic measures. The key element τῷ λόγῳ is discarded; to make up for his excisions, our translator adds the explanation ka-dālika ṣana‘ū fī al-ṭrāġūdiyāt ‘aydan, which leads him further away from the Greek text. In the process, the superlative ὁ μοιότατον is reduced to the positive šabīb. According to Lyons, the apparent disappearance of εἰς τὸ ἰαβεῖον could be due to its substitution by ka-dālika ṣana‘ū fī al-ṭrāġūdiyāt ‘aydan.

The resulting translation falls into disjointed pieces of argument, strung together by the generic connector wa which the translator substitutes for the more specific Greek particles.

**Element 2.5: Poets have dropped conversational speech**

(1) οὖσα καὶ τῶν ἱναμάτων [ἀφικασίων] (2) ὅσα παρὰ τὴν ἴδιακοτῶν ίστον, (3) αἱ γ’ οἱ πρώτοι ἴκλησιν, (4) καὶ ὅτι νῦν οἱ τὰ ἰδῖκαμετα ποιοῦντες, ἀφικασίων.

¹¹⁷ Lyons: “(3) as they composed in tetrameters, (4) in order that this should be like those other meters, so they composed in tragedies also.”
for they have abandoned of nouns and expressions whatever belonged to current speech\(^{120}\) such as that which their predecessors used as ornament and adornment. (4) Moreover, those who compose hexameters now also have dropped [what is] like that.

\(^{118}\) The new start indicated by \textit{fa-ʾinna-bum} does not correspond to the Greek \textit{oὕτω} which merely continues the previous argument.

\(^{119}\) By mistranslating the preposition \textit{παρά}, which means "from" only in conjunction with a genitive, the translator reverses the meaning of the passage. Aristotle credits later composers of tragedies with dropping whatever did not belong to colloquial speech.

\(^{120}\) \textit{Πρῶτον} continues to cause trouble. To interpret \textit{al-ʾawā’il} as an adverb would correspond better to the Greek text, even though one would expect \textit{ʾawwalan}; it might on the other hand represent an idiosyncratic use of the plural (instead of \textit{al-ʾawwalān}, which would be the appropriate form to denote people). Lyons refers to the emendation \textit{ṣi ʾawrūs}, proposed by Roemer,\(^{121}\) to support this reading. The translator, determined not to read \textit{ʾawrūs} as an adverb, might have chosen to read a nominative plural instead of having to contend with an object he could not fit in.

\(^{121}\) Of the two roots our translator uses for \textit{ἐκόσμουν}, \textit{z–y–n} has made its way into the Arabic \textit{Poetics}: Abū Bīr uses \textit{zīnah} for \textit{kosmōs}, in the narrow sense of "literary ornament". Another occurrence of \textit{kosmōs}, denoting "harmonious order" or "arrangement", is translated as \textit{ǧamāl wa-bum}, a doublet which conveys the æsthetic component of the term.\(^{122}\)

\(^{122}\) The translator has found a firm footing again. Unfortunately, the fresh start after \textit{fa-ʾinna-bum}, which translates \textit{oὕτω}, interrupts the flow of argument.
Further, therefore the imitation of these [poets] belongs to that which deserves to be laughed at since they themselves did not use this type [of speech].\footnote{Badawi: om. \textsubscript{1\textsuperscript{23}}} (i) Mimma yastabiqq 'an yudhak min-bu: an elaborate paraphrase for γελοῖον which correctly expresses the word's meaning. The ṣa ... ḫan-construction might have been chosen to capture the sense of ḥālo.\footnote{Badawi: \textit{m}}\footnote{Lyons: "(4) but to the extent to which we are discussing that."}

\section*{Section 3: This has been dealt with in the \textit{Poetics}}

(i) \textit{woste} faneiron (2) ὰτι σχι ἀπαντα ὡσα περι λέξεως ἐστιν εἰπτιν, (3) ἀκήβαλογντιον ἥμιν, (4) ἀλλ' ὡσα περι τοιαύτης ὅιας λέγομεν. (5) περι δ' ἐκλήνης ιερηται ἐφανται ἐν τοῖς περὶ ποιητικῆς.

(i) so that it becomes clear (2) that not all that can be said concerning style (3) has to be discussed by us, (4) but [only] to the extent that we are speaking of it here,\footnote{Badawi: \textit{n} (the type)/"sort".}\footnote{Lyons: "(4) but to the extent to which we are discussing that."}

(i) \textit{Kay} renders the Greek \textit{woste} incorrectly; \textit{woste} here serves to conclude the whole preceding discussion of style. In the Greek text, there is no indication of causation suggested by the Arabic \textit{kay}.\footnote{Badawi: س.}\footnote{Badawi: \textit{n} (the type)/"sort".} (q) The mention of the \textit{Poetics} at the end of this section has apparently been correctly understood as a metatextual reference.
Even in this relatively short sample of text, we find numerous instances of structural modifications. According to their impact, we can group them into two categories:

Firstly, modifications which have a direct and immediate influence on the structure of the passage they occur in and the following text; “local” changes, so to speak. The most prominent examples discussed above consists of either syntactical or lexical problems, i.e. the translator misinterprets syntactical features of the Greek text or misreads or mistranslates specific Greek words.

Secondly, modifications which do not necessarily lead to an immediate restructuring of the corresponding Arabic text, but affect the translator’s attitudes on issues dealt with in the Rhetoric and guide long-term structural decisions which only become obvious at a later point. The condemnation of rhetorical practices belongs to this category.

Both phenomena are equally instrumental in shaping the Arabic version: whereas the former group of modifications tends immediately to affect the sense of the text and is therefore readily identifiable, the latter leads not only to the introduction of an explicit stance only alluded to or even nonexistent in the source text (e.g. the translation’s views on rhetorical devices and acting), it subtly informs the process of reconstructing the Greek text’s arguments in a way which allows the translator to apply his preconceptions in the first place.

Before we turn to a discussion of formal aspects of the text, we will summarize the content of our text sample and determine where the translation diverges from the Greek text.

For Text I, our task is simple: the translator reproduces the list of aspects of speech Aristotle presents and follows him in explaining some points relating to two of them, “confirmations” and “thoughts” (or “considerations”). Both versions then introduce “expression” and argue for its importance for the present discussion.

On the subject of “delivery”, which is the focus of Text II, the texts start to disagree: we find the first two items of the second list of aspects of speech, “persuasion” and “expression”, in both texts. The Greek version, however, adds “delivery” as the third important factor; the translation, on the other hand, detaches this bit of information and assigns it to the following passage, leaving the third item unnamed.

Apart from disrupting the list, the disagreement does not have any
more serious immediate consequences: the Arabic text only starts its
treatment of delivery slightly earlier than the Greek text, which passes
on to its account of delivery in the following passage. Both texts agree
that delivery was first used by poets and that it is relevant for both poetry
and rhetoric, concluding the section with a reference to Glaukon of Teos.

Next, the role of “voice” in delivery is discussed. The translator follows
Aristotle’s lead and relates the connection between voice and emotions
and outlines technical aspects of the use of voice. A mistranslation leads
him to change the subject to competence in delivery and its role in “con-
tests”. The Greek text adds a note on the function of voice and delivery
in contests.

The versions converge again in the next section, which deals with de-
livery. The Greek text, however, uses the neutral term “craft” in relation
to delivery, whereas we find the negatively connoted term “stratagem”
on the Arabic side. In what follows, the texts explain that the craft or
stratagem of delivery has not yet been worked out owing to the late de-
velopment of expression. Aristotle claims that this is due to the subject’s
“vulgarity”, while the translator calls it “troubling” or “burdensome”. The
use of different terms in this context strengthens the impression that the
Greek and Arabic texts have a different attitude to this aspect of speech.
Finally, both versions note the relation between rhetoric on the one hand
and personal “opinion” on the other. The translator introduces a notice-
able shift in meaning by making opinion the object, if not the aim, of
rhetoric while Aristotle only points out the relation between them.

The translation again falls into line with the Greek text by reminding
its readers of the need for diligence in delivery and by enjoining them
 to eschew emotional appeals in speech in favor of facts. In the following
passage, the texts diverge once more: Aristotle explains that demonstra-
tion should be effected only through facts. The translator claims that one
should argue about facts and rhetorical procedures.

Both texts conclude by stressing the negative side of fraudulent rhetori-
cal means. A mistranslation leads to two very different thoughts: Aristotle
finds the reason for the effectiveness of rhetorical tricks in the audience’s
“corruption”. The translator on the other hand identifies rhetorical trick-
ery as the very reason for the audience’s corruption.

Next, the texts shift the discussion to the subject of expression and
delivery (which in our sample both versions fail clearly to distinguish).
Its necessity for teaching is noted. Aristotle then records its influence
on the clarity of speech, whereas the Arabic text slightly departs from
his reasoning and maintains that “demonstration”, not speech in general, varies in clarity according to differences in expression and delivery.

In the next passage, we encounter a more serious divergence: Aristotle categorizes expression and delivery as a form of outward show; the translator directs the reader to appeal to his listeners’ “imaginative faculty”, apparently motivated by the opposition between non-intuitive and self-evident knowledge. Why the translator decides to introduce these issues becomes clear in the following passage, which refers in both versions to “geometry” as not being taught by rhetorical means.

Both texts then establish the relation between delivery and “acting”. Mentioning together with Aristotle previous treatments of expression and delivery, the translator classifies acting as “natural” and expression and delivery (on the Greek side) or the “stratagem” of it (on the Arabic side) as “artificial”. The translator apparently refers to the distinction between ʿṭabʿ and ʿṣināʿāb in Arabic literary theory discussed above (cf. the note on p. 105).

Another mistranslation causes some trouble in the following two passages. According to Aristotle, expression and delivery help winning “contests” owing to the fact that the oral presentation of written speeches is successful thanks to expression and delivery rather than the cogency of its reasoning. The translator claims that someone mastering it becomes a “contestant”. He then misinterprets the reference to written speeches and disrupts the logical connection between the two passages.

Text III, which discusses “style”, proves to be more manageable for the translator. He is able to replicate Aristotle’s reasoning much more closely than before. On the development of style, both texts credit poets with its invention, explaining their pioneering role with the “mimetic” character of words and the voice. This was, according to Aristotle and the translator, the basis for the birth and development of the arts.

After explaining that poets acquire fame through their specific style and that this style is valued among the uneducated, the versions drift apart again. Aristotle distinguishes between poetic and prose style, the translator states that “adornment” would be more appropriate for other styles than the poetic and adds that “description” in speech should be effected with expressions which are “at hand”, i.e. commonplace and not far-fetched.

What the translator interpreted as the continuation of the discussion of poetic style constitutes an independent passage in the Greek version which maintains that prose genres prefer “conversational” language to
poetic style. Having attached this stretch of text to the preceding passage, the Arabic version misses the logical connection between this and the previous passage and merely remarks that other styles are now preferred over the poetic.

While the Greek text continues its argument about the respective merits of prose and poetic style, the translator begins a new passage which explains that “conversational” speech, which poets allegedly used before to adorn their works, was subsequently dropped. Several misunderstandings lead him to a conclusion which contrasts sharply to Aristotle’s ideas.

Both texts converge again by concluding that poetic style cannot be taken seriously. Finally, both refer to the more detailed discussion of style in Aristotle’s Poetics.

Studying the respective texts’ line of thought, we can conclude that, firstly, the translator seriously strives to capture and replicate Aristotle’s reasoning; he does not intentionally modify the source text’s content. Due to a number of problems he had with the text, he diverges at several points from the Greek version, only quickly to return to its train of thought. The resulting accumulation of mistranslations and misunderstandings, however, makes itself felt throughout as an additional factor in the translator’s interpretation of the text.

Secondly, neither the Greek nor the Arabic text present a fully structured and cogent “argument” in the strict sense: both alternate between purely explanatory passages analysing concepts or describing relations between them and short argumentative stretches setting out their reasons for adopting a certain idea or justifying their position on certain concepts. Argumentation is clearly a minor issue in both versions: the main thrust of Aristotle, followed as faithfully by the translator as his source text and his abilities allowed, was didactic. The role of style and delivery in speeches is to be expounded from a position of authority, not dialectically argued against some imaginary exponent.

While Aristotle formulates his account of the rhetorical craft from the position of a teacher who sets out to synthesize and improve on what he saw as flawed theories of rhetoric, the translator takes the authority of the text for granted qua Aristotle’s authorship. This leaves no room for arbitrary interventions on his part in the first place and supports our contention that any modification the translator happens to introduce cannot have been intentional: they must be the result of technical problems (the quality of his manuscripts, scribal mistakes etc.) or his apparent lack of experience in handling a text as demanding as the Rhetoric.
Sources for structural mismatches

To illustrate the problems the translator had with Aristotle’s style and his terse and difficult syntax, we will take a closer look at a few examples of syntactical and lexical problems from the part of our text sample we have not analysed in detail above. We will start with an instance of misreading and mistranslation of single terms or expressions and then take a closer look at different types of syntactical problems.

Turning to the subject of “urbanities” (τὰ ἀστεῖα), Aristotle makes the following remark (1410b6f = 198/20f):

εἰπὼν δὲ διώρισται περὶ τούτων, πῶς εἶναι τὰ ἀστεῖα καὶ τὰ εὐδοκημοῦντα λεκτέον.

The intervening καὶ between τὰ ἀστεῖα and τὰ εὐδοκημοῦντα has disappeared, the translator conflates both terms into the compound al-maqāl al-ḥisān al-munḡiḥāt. By combining two distinct topics into one, the translator causes some slight structural confusion; the reader could miss the switch from one topic to the next in the following discussion.

On the subject of good prose style, Aristotle stresses the importance of ordinary language as a stylistic tool (1404b24f = 176/5ff):

κλέπτεται δ’ εὖ, ἐάν τις ἐκ τῆς εἰωθυίας διαλέκτου ἐκλέγων συντιθῇ. ὡσεὶ Εὐριπίδης ποιεῖ.

The clause border modern editors have indicated between συντιθῇ and ὡσεὶ has slipped one word to the left. Misunderstanding Aristotle’s metaphorical use of κλέπτεται, the translator ends up with a rather cryptic statement. One factor in his reading of κλέπτεται, as we have seen above, may have been his negative attitude to rhetorical procedures.

In his subsequent remarks on the character of metaphors and epithets, Aristotle observes (1405a1of = 177/1ff):
The confusion apparent here is in part caused by translation problems encountered prior to this quotation. The translator reacts by paraphrasing: Aristotle’s assertion about words used in the construction of metaphorical expressions is shaped into a directive for their construction; the antecedent of the elliptical conditional structure αὐτὰρ ἢ ταῦτα is amplified and negated, perhaps on account of the repeated negation οὐχ ᾗ καλὸν ἢ οὐχ ᾗ αἰσχρόν.

Elliptical expressions prove to be major stumbling blocks on more than one occasion. Failing to supply the element left out in the Greek version, the translator has a hard time making any sense of the sentence in question. In this example, contained in the chapter on the appropriateness of stylistic devices, Aristotle warns against deceiving the listener by emphasizing certain words with facial expressions and vocal clues (140b18ff = 191/7ff):

λέγω δὲ αὐτὸν ἵνα τὰ ἀνόματα σκληρὰ ἢ, μὴ καὶ τῇ φωνῇ καὶ τῷ προσώπῳ [καὶ τοῖς] ἀμφιττούσαιν.

The translator misses the conditional construction after ἵνα and misreads the predicate σκληρὰ as an adjectival adjunct to τὰ ἀνόματα, making up
for the missing predicate by adding yustaʿmal. Additionally, he puts the clause border between µή and καί. The negation is then read as an elliptical substitute for the opposite of τὰ ὀνόματα σκληρά. The second Greek clause, resting on the elliptical predicate µή []='

The long and complex conjunctural clause framed by ὅτι and ἀπείσται has been split into three independent sentences introduced by wa-qad, fa-ʾammā and ʾammā respectively. What should have been a unified reminder of issues already treated in previous chapters of the Rhetoric becomes a string of coordinate propositions. According to the Arabic version, only the last part, i.e. al-nabarāt wa-bi-ʾayyat ḥāl takūn fi al-ʾawzān, has been discussed before.

In the following example, both clause border and connector pose a problem. At the start of Aristotle’s discussion of “urbanities” and “popular sayings” (τὰ ἀστεῖα καὶ τὰ εὐδοκία), we find the following reasoning (1410b9–12 = 198/23–199/3):

The translator misses the pause after αὕτη, remodelling the following passage into a subordinate conjunctural clause. Apart from the struc-
turally irrelevant disappearance of the adverbial φύσει, he furthermore “downgrades” the coherence of Aristotle’s syllogistic argument by translating the strongly resultative connector ὥστε with the weaker τα.

Insertions and comments interspersed in the text are another source of confusion. Without graphical hints as to the relation of comments to the surrounding text such as the καθάπερ εἴρηται πρότερον of the next example, it can become extremely difficult to identify the appropriate syntactical relations. We are in the middle of Aristotle’s treatment of similes (141ob17f = 199/7ff):

έστι γὰρ ή αἰκών, καθάπερ εἴρηται πρότερον, μεταφορά διαφέρουσα προθέσει. διὸ ἦττον ἵνα, ότι μακρότερως.

والمثال على ما قد وصفنا من قبل، فاما التغييرات التي تختلف في الفروتامانس فهي

 لذلك اقل لذادة، لأنه تكون اطول

Here, the comment καθάπερ εἴρηται πρότερον has been applied only to the portion of the clause occurring before it; the rest (μεταφορά διαφέρουσα προθέσει) now becomes an independent main clause. The consequence of the statement punctuated by our comment, which Aristotle applies to the entire proposition from ἦττον to προθέσει, only relates to the second portion in the Arabic text after fa-`ammā al-tagyrāt.

The next two examples are part of a passage listing reasons for the popularity of rhetorical devices. The first instance deals with style (141ob28f = 199/21f):

κατὰ δὲ τὴν λέξιν τῷ μὲν σχήματι, ιδιαν ἀντικαμιλώνος λέγεται

وأما الفظ والمفاهنة فان شكله ان يكون بالخلف

The second instance treats word choice (141ob31f = 199/24f):

τοῖς δὲ ὁνόμασιν, ιδιαν ἄρα μεταφοράν

وفي الاسماء أيضا تغيير

Both examples depend on the antecedent providing the predicate of each list member, τὰ τοιαῦτα εὐδοκίματι. Again, the translator is stumped by the Greek text’s elliptical style. Without an appropriate predicate, he has to work with what he finds in both passages. In both cases, he additionally drops the conditional particle ἵνα. He conflates the two clauses of the first example into an `ammā … fa- construction and, in the second example, reads the optative ἄρα as indicative and uses it as the missing predicate for the clauses.
It is obvious that the translator has expended a lot of energy to understand and transfer Aristotle’s reasoning as faithfully as possible. In spite of the high level of linguistic competence he demonstrates in many places in the text, several stylistic and syntactic phenomena he encounters overstrain his abilities. In a number of cases, Aristotle’s terseness and his tendency to make full use of the syntactic flexibility of the Greek language are the most likely explanation for the translation failures we find in the Arabic version. A second factor is ambiguities and even outright mistakes caused by the Greek manuscript tradition, e.g. the lack of graphical markers to delimit sentences or larger textual units and of course scribal lapses. It is equally obvious that the translator sometimes does not let grammatical and syntactical obstacles stand in the way of the interpretation he has placed on the source text once he has made up his mind about the syntactical makeup and meaning of the passage he is translating.

The use of connectors and particles

Comparing the argument structure of the Greek and Arabic versions and highlighting translation issues the translator had to cope with, we found that he relied on a relatively small number of connectors and particles to comprehend and reconstruct Aristotle’s thinking. Considering the importance of argument-structuring particles such as γάρ, μέν and δέ for the translation process and their role in clarifying logical relations between clauses, sentences and larger textual units, it is time to have a closer look at Greek particles and the way the translator employed the resources of the Arabic system of connectors and particles to replicate them.

The task of re-creating the argumentative subtleties achievable through competent use of Greek particles in Arabic is by no means an easy one. We will have to investigate whether the translator was aware of and able to deal with their semantical and functional flexibility. They can be used in a variety of contexts to express a wide range of logical and syntactic relationships. Handling them calls for a thorough understanding of both the Greek and Arabic system of connectors and particles and a high degree of flexibility and translational variation—unlike semantically less varied items such as nominal and verbal phrases, particles and connectors are not suited for schematic approaches such as word-by-word translation or the constant substitution with one and the same Arabic term.
Structural particles

Structural particles\(^{127}\) are an ubiquitous feature of the Greek language. Almost every sentence in a Greek text is connected to the previous sentence by means of such a particle. They share one basic feature that sets them apart from most other particles: in grammatical terms, they are post-positives, i.e. they cannot occur as the first word of a sentence or phrase.\(^{128}\) There are of course more structural particles than the four we chose for closer scrutiny, \(\gamma\dot{a}r\), \(\delta\dot{e}\), \(\mu\dot{e}n\) and \(\omega\dot{e}n\). Taken together, however, they cover a majority of occurrences of structural particles in our text and provide us with a representative sample of Greek particles and their treatment by the translator.

In functional terms, they serve two basic purposes. Firstly, they connect grammatical and textual elements of equal weight, i.e. phrase to phrase, clause to clause or even argument to argument. Secondly, they introduce nuances of tone and emphasis affecting those elements. As such, they verbalize and underline logical connections between elements which in other languages sometimes may only be indicated by variations of tone and voice (in declamation), hence their significance for the translation process.\(^{129}\)

Not the most frequent but certainly the most prominent and one of the most important structural particles for translation purposes is \(\gamma\dot{a}r\). It expresses what Denniston terms the “confirmative” aspect of connection. Out of the eight distinct uses of \(\gamma\dot{a}r\) (which, as he points out, are sometimes closely related), we are interested mainly in the following:

1. “confirmatory” and “causal”, giving the ground for belief or the motive for action;
2. “explanatory”, explaining a preceding clause:\(^{130}\) this use of structural particles could be interpreted as a more general form of the causal type;

\(^{127}\) This category is equivalent to what Denniston (1954, p. xliii–l) calls “connecting particles”.

\(^{128}\) As with many phenomena of Greek grammar, this rule is not without exceptions, cf. Denniston (1954, p. lviii–lxi).

\(^{129}\) Denniston (1954, p. xxxix) notes that this emphasis often “cannot be appropriately translated into a modern language”. As we will see below, this often applies to our translation as well. To illustrate the emphatic function of particles, Denniston points to parallels in musical notation: “the particles may be compared to the marks of expression in a musical score, which suggest interpretation rather than dictate it.”

\(^{130}\) Denniston (1954, p. 58).
3. “anticipatory”, the order of arguments is reversed and the γάρ-clause precedes instead of follows the clause it explains:¹³¹ a positional variation of the explanatory type;

4. “progressive”, mainly in answers, marking the transition to a new point in an argument with the speaker either suggesting a new hypothesis after discarding the one previously discussed or concluding one topic and progressing to another.¹³²

Except in combination with μὲν or τι for intensification, γάρ invariably occurs as the second word in a sentence.¹³³

Compared to other particles, the translational variation for γάρ in the Arabic Rhetoric is relatively small. Out of nearly 137 occurrences on the Greek side of our sample, 34 (not counting mistranslations, deletions and paraphrases) are translated with a combination of ʾinna with or without pronominal enclitics, mostly preceded by ʾa (27 times), rarely ʾa (3 times). The translation thus corresponds closely to the first three uses of γάρ listed above, the presentation of a reason for a preceding clause or argument, e.g. as in 1404b18 ff = 175/18–176/1:

καὶ μὴ δοκεῖν λόγῳ τυπλασμένως ἀλλὰ πεφυκότως, τοῦτο γάρ πιθανόν

Less frequently, we find γάρ translated as simple ʾa (20 times) or ʾa (17 times). The causal use of the particle in the first example and its explanatory character in the second have been somewhat reduced in translation by the use of ʾa and ʾa, respectively; whereas ʾa captures part of the causal relation expressed by the first γάρ in the following example, the second has been rendered as what Reckendorf terms an “erläuternde Beiordnung” (1406asf = 181/3f):¹³⁴

καὶ «κυανόχρων τὸ τῆς θαλάττης ἔδαφος». πάντα γάρ ταύτα ποιητικὰ διὰ τὴν ἁπάνων φαίνεται.휘

In 18 cases, the causal component of γάρ seems prominent enough to the translator to warrant the strong translation li-ʾanna. Its use in this case

¹³¹ Denniston (1954, p. 68).
¹³² Denniston (1954, p. 81).
¹³⁴ Reckendorf (1977, p. 316, 324).
is purely causal and not much different from other examples in which it has been rendered as fa-/wa-ʾinna; the translator might have considered the argument important enough to add some emphasis (1408b30f = 192/17–193/1):

διὸ ῥυθὸν δεῖ ἔχειν τὸν λόγον, μέτρου δὲ μὴ. ποίημα γὰρ ἐσται.

Veddy is that the translation as [pause]... is not really different from other examples in which it has been rendered as fa-/wa-ʾinna; the translator might have considered the argument important enough to add some emphasis (192/17–193/1):

Another frequent translation is qad (15 times) with the mudāriʿ (imperfect/present tense) in combination with either fa (8 times) or wa (7 times). The following two examples can be found at 1407b5 = 187/8ff and 1410b21ff = 199/13ff:

τέταρτον, ὡς Πρωταγόρας τὰ γένη τῶν ὀνομάτων διῄρει, άρρενα καὶ θήλεα καὶ σκεύη. δεῖ γὰρ ἀποδιδόναι καὶ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς.

And the following two examples can be found at 1407b5 = 187/8ff and 1410b21ff = 199/13ff:

διὸ οὔτε τὰ ἐπιπόλαια τῶν ἐνθυμάτων εὐδοκεῖ (ἐπιπόλαια γὰρ λέγεν τὰ παντὶ ἤπα, ...)

And the following two examples can be found at 1407b5 = 187/8ff and 1410b21ff = 199/13ff:

ولذلك ما لا ينجح أيضا الذين يقولون التفککرات السخيفه، وقد اعني بالسخيفه

A comparison of these two examples with the two instances of γάρ translated only with fa or wa above reveals distinct parallels: in the first case, we find fa as the vehicle for the explanatory function of γάρ; in the second, wa introduces a parenthetical explanation for a term, explicitly marked by the use of the verb ʾaʿnī. It is very difficult to decide which purpose qad fulfils in our examples above apart from mere emphasis.

Usually, the particle qad has two main functions: together with perfect forms of the verb, it reinforces the conclusiveness of an action completed in the past. It moreover stresses the “factuality” of that action in accordance with or against previously held expectations. Together with imperfect forms of the verb, it either limits the scope of a proposition, e.g. qad yaḍuq = “he (sometimes or often) tells the truth” or simply emphasizes the verb. Additionally, Georg Graf quotes several examples of a “facti-

136 Cf. Reckendorf (1977, p. 301f). Wright (1967, p. 286) lists “sometimes” or “perhaps” as possible English equivalents, noting its use to indicate rarity or paucity on the one hand (li-l-taqdīl), but on the other hand also frequency (li-l-taktīr).
tive” use of qad with imperfect verbal forms from early Christian Arabic literature.¹³⁷

The translator uses qad very frequently. Interestingly enough, the main use, i.e. qad with the perfect, occurs only in about a quarter of cases: out of 128 instances of qad followed by a verb, only 34 appear in conjunction with a perfect form. 15 of these instances occur in the context of literary quotes Aristotle uses for illustration, most of which have been translated as literally as possible. There remains a surprising 94 instances of qad in conjunction with imperfect verbal forms. As we will see below, qad plays an important role in the translation of other Greek particles as well.

Less frequent translations for γάρ in our sample are wa-/fa-ʾammā ... fa (5 times), wa-ḏālika ʾanna (4 times) and wa-/fa-ʾinna-mā (twice). In addition, we find isolated renderings such as ʿumma and lākinna. Compared to other particles, the number of instances in which γάρ has been left untranslated is comparably small (5 times).

So far, we can draw the following conclusions: the importance of the particle γάρ is borne out by the small range of lexical variation in the Arabic version. Except for a small number of isolated translation variants, most cases are covered by just five Arabic equivalents. In addition, non-translation happens so rarely that it seems, unlike other particles we will treat below, to be regarded as too important by the translator to be ignored. He moreover pays special attention to the particle’s causal connotations: in a number of cases, they are stressed with the strong Arabic connector li-ʾanna. Looking at the distribution of fa and wa, either as isolated translation of γάρ or used in combination with the other Arabic renderings, we notice a strong tendency to use fa (58 cases) instead of wa (30 cases); while not exclusively causal in character, fa provides added stress on progression in temporal, spatial or logical relations.

Greek complements to γάρ such as µέν (7 instances) and τε (4 instances) seem to have a negligible influence on the translator’s procedure. In combination with µέν, appositive γάρ retains its explanatory character but ceases to function as a conjunction.¹³⁸ Since the phrase’s semantic content remains the same, the grammatical difference between single γάρ and the collocation µέν γάρ does not prompt the translator to differentiate between the two.

With γάρ at one end of the semantic and functional spectrum of particles insofar as it fulfils a function that has to be made explicit in the

¹³⁷ Graf (1905, p. 34).
¹³⁸ Denniston (1954, p. 67).
translation and cannot be ignored, μὲν belongs to the other end of the spectrum. In isolation, it serves to emphasize and affirm an idea or focus attention on it. This function is especially prominent in the combination μὲν οὖν.\(^{139}\) Occurring mostly in conjunction with a following οὖν, its main purpose is to introduce the first element in a list of balanced or contrasted items.\(^{140}\) These items always have to be structurally parallel; the terms, phrases or larger units connected by a μὲν ... οὖν-construction also have to be of equal grammatical weight. As a consequence, μὲν in such a construction does not connect the element it relates to to any preceding grammatical or syntactical item: it looks forward to the next instance of οὖν as its necessary complement. As Denniston points out, the strength of the contrast indicated by a μὲν ... οὖν-construction can vary substantially between the poles of mere coordination and strong antithesis.\(^{141}\)

Both μὲν and οὖν can occur with or, more frequently, without article. In spite of slightly differing translations, the construction’s function remains the same: to present disjunctively parallel or contrasting items of equal (grammatical) weight.\(^{142}\) In addition, μὲν can be complemented by other particles. We have already seen that, in combination with γάρ, any independent semantic or functional role μὲν might play in isolation is, apart from general emphasis, absorbed by the semantically and functionally more potent γάρ. Accordingly, Arabic translations of the cluster μὲν γάρ do not show any difference to translations of solitary instances of γάρ.

Out of 83 instances of μὲν in our sample, 10 appear in combination with an article; they will be treated below. Of the remaining 73, 8 occur in conjunction with γάρ, 19 in conjunction with οὖν. The most frequent translation for the remaining instances of μὲν is, interestingly enough, omission: 16 times, the particle has been ignored altogether. The following example taken from the beginning of our sample shows how the translation of the corresponding instances of οὖν has been toned down accordingly. Here, the μὲν ... οὖν-set expresses coordination instead of an antithetical relationship between clauses. Μὲν is dropped, the two instances of οὖν rendered as \(\text{wa} (1403b7f = 171/2ff):\)

\[
\text{ἐν μὲν ἐκ τίνων αἱ πίστεις ἔσονται, δεύτερον δὲ περὶ τὴν λέξιν, τρίτον δὲ τῶς χρῆ τάξει τὰ μέρη τοῦ λόγου}
\]

\(^{139}\) Denniston (1954, p. 359).

\(^{140}\) This use is called "preparatory" by Denniston (1954, p. 369).

\(^{141}\) Denniston (1954, p. 370).

\(^{142}\) Denniston (1954, p. 370f).
Combinations of ʾinna follow in second place (7 times), preceded equally frequently by ʿwa or fā. The translator has been at pains to explicate the logical structure by supplying particles and amplifications where the Greek version prefers a more succinct phrasing. The example shows the translator using fā-ʾinna to separate the preceding point from the co-ordinated list Aristotle presents in this passage. In this and other cases, it would probably be more appropriate to interpret fā-ʾinna as a device introduced by the translator to distinguish the entire μέν ... δέ-construction; this would mean that he does in fact omit μέν and, correctly recognizing the coordination expressed by the construction, render δέ as ʿwa (1407b29ff = 188/15f):

If μέν in τῷ λόγῳ ή αἰσχρόν, τούσμα λέγειν, ἓν δὲ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι, τόν λέγον.

Next is the translation ʿwa with 5 instances. Similar to ignoring the particle, ʿwa sheds any specific structural content μέν might impart and narrows its meaning to its connective function. In this example, recurrent and interlocking μέν ... δέ-constructions have caused some slight confusion: the translator marks a new argumentative step between μέν and the following δέ, which is emphasized and rendered as ʿwa-ʾammā. One possible interpretation for the apparent rift between μέν and δέ in this example could be the translator’s expectation that a reader would supply the missing ʾammā at the beginning of the passage and thereby reinstate the coordinative sense it has in the Greek version (1410a26ff = 198/3f):

καὶ ἄρχῃ μέν ἀλὶ τά ὀνόματα, ἢ δὲ τελευτὴ τὰς ἐσχάτας συλλαβὰς

and the principles in which they are made (the names) and the conclusions that result from the arguments.

Independent instances of μέν have been translated with ʾammā ... fā-constructions only three times. Its relatively infrequent use for isolated μέν contrasts with its more prominent role in translating μέν in conjunction with γάρ or οὖν, which we will examine below (1403b9ff = 171/3f):

περὶ μέν τῶν πιστῶν ʿερταν, καὶ ἐκ πόσῳ, ὡς ἐκ τριῶν ἔστι.
Decidedly less common are translations with *wa* (twice) and singular instances of e.g. *lākinna* or *wa-dālika ‘anna*. Without *mēn*, *oun* has been variously translated as *fa* (5 times) and combinations of *‘inna* (3 times) and *‘ammā* (twice); the translator’s renderings reflect the transitional and progressive sense of the isolated particle (1404b1 = 174/22):

> *ēsōn oun ikeina tēsēphimēna.*

Only once in our sample does *ōn* take on its second function as an adverb of time. The translator rises to the occasion (1410b9 = 198/23):

> *ēnīmēn oun kai ounēmēnēmēta.*

As with combinations of *mēn* and *γάρ*, the particle *oun* seems to have next to no influence on the way the translator works with *mēn*. In semantic and functional terms, he probably regards *oun* as even weaker than *mēn*, its

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143 Denniston (1954, p. 418, 425f).
function reduced to a general form of (weak) emphasis he could not or does not see fit to replicate in Arabic.¹⁴⁵

The remaining group of instances of µέν are occurrences of ὅ µέν followed by ὁ δέ. Functionally, ὅ µέν and its complement are similar to their use without articles: they structure lists of equivalent items, this time by taking on the role of pro-forms denoting the items themselves.¹⁴⁶ Out of 10 occurrences, 4 are covered by the isolated translations tilka, minus, ḍālika al-nahw and wa-ʾammā ʾanna. The rest is accounted for by combinations of baʿḍ and the use of ḍāka (1406a13 = 181/12f):

ἐν δὲ λόγῳ τὸ µέν ἀπρεπέστερα, τὸ δὲ, ἂν ἡ κατακεφαλή, ἐξελέγχει

The translator is able to distinguish between the particles in the sentence and to identify and translate their different use (1405a24f = 178/8f):

ταῦτα δὲ ἀμφω μεταφορά, ἢ µέν ἐνυπανότων ἢ δὲ τοιχωρίον.

As we can see above, the translator regards µέν mostly as a marker for a generic step or a transition in an argument or, in combination with other particles, an indicator of emphasis. Arabic equivalents are varied, it is even left untranslated in a number of cases. In conjunction with other particles, it is mostly ignored in favor of the semantically stronger complement. Together with ὅ, it seems to constitute part of a group of particles signaling temporal and/or argumentative transition and progression. They are without a fixed Arabic equivalent and can be rendered into almost every Arabic particle which marks an argumentative step without specifying the nature—e.g. causal, temporal, adversative—of the connection between two elements. Unfortunately, the translator loses sight of one important function of µέν in the process: while in itself not connecting backwards, it in most cases signals the beginning of a new cluster of elements hinging on µέν and subsequent instances of δέ.

Both in terms of its frequency and its functional variety, δέ is by far the most important structural particle. Apart from its role in µέν ... δέ-constructions discussed above, it can be used as a “copulative” particle

¹⁴⁵ According to Denniston (1954, p. 472), it could be argued that µέν is no more “essentially connected” with ὅ than is in the former combination with ἐκεῖ and that, for µέν ὅ, “the transitional force ... resides in ὅ alone”.

connecting clauses and sentences (“and”/“also”) (Denniston’s “continuative” function); as an “adversative” connector (“but”) or, in apodoses, as “affirmative” particle (“therefore”/“in fact”). The first two uses are what interests us most. In the words of Denniston, “[a]s a connective, δέ denotes either pure connexion ... or contrast ... with all that lies between”.¹⁴⁷

Owing to its importance and functional variety, δέ occurs very often in our sample. Even though the particle has, like µέν, been translated with 10 different Arabic terms and phrases—not counting its nominalized form and omitting mistranslations, paraphrases and deletions—, most appearances can be accounted for with just a small number of Arabic equivalents. Out of 185 instances, roughly one third (60 occurrences) has been substituted with simple wa. In this example, both instances of δέ serve a purely coordinating function between clauses and are accordingly rendered as wa (1405a10ff = 177/11ff):

δέ δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐπίθετα καὶ τὰς μεταφορὰς ἁρμονούσας λέγειν. τὸτο δὲ ἐστὶν ἵνα τοῦ ἀνάλογον. διὰ δὲ µέν, ἀποφέρει φανερῶ

In the next example, the µέν ... δέ-structure has been slightly flattened to fa followed by two instances of wa (1405b30ff = 180/14f):

ἀντὶ µέν χρυσίου χρυσιδάριον, ἀντὶ δὲ ἰματίου ἰματιδάριον, ἀντὶ δὲ λοιδορίας λοιδορήµατιν

The emphasis on a sequence or list of items called for in many instances of µέν ... δέ-constructions is provided by the second most important translation covering the second third of instances of δέ (59 occurrences), i.e. combinations of ’ammâ, especially ’ammâ ... fa-structures (49 cases). The second enumeration of aspects of speech in the first chapter of our sample provides a good example for the translator’s treatment of such lists. The introductory µέν is accentuated by fa, the following parallel ’ammâ ... fa-structures are added with connecting wa (1405b18–21 = 171/17–172/1):

τὸ µέν αὐτὸν περὶ τὸν ἑρμήνητη κατὰ φύσιν, ὧν πᾶσα περὶ πρώτων, αὕτω τὰ περάγματα ἐκ τῶν ἦχο τὸ παθεῖν. ἔστησα δὲ τὸ ταύτα τῇ λέξι διαθέσαι. τότε δὲ τούτων

¹⁴⁷ Denniston (1954, p. 162).
Added emphasis, here at the beginning of a chapter introducing a new subject, is achieved through addition of ʾ inna. The translator takes his clue not exclusively from the Greek sentence, which would suggest a less pronounced transition than the structure he employs. It seems as if he wants to stress the thematic progression beyond what Aristotle himself saw fit (1408a10f = 189/13f):

τὸ δὲ πρέπον ἡ λέξις, ἐὰν ἡ παθητικὴ τε καὶ ήδηκ

In third place follows qad (24 times), preceded almost exclusively by wa (21 times) rather than fa (twice). As we have seen on p. 127, qad with the mudāriʿ can both qualify an action expressed with the verb or emphasize it. It does not directly translate the particle but conveys its emphatic component and works in combination with the preceding connector and the following verb. The following quote not only illustrates the use of qad related to δὲ, it also contains all the occurrences of ʾimmā … fa-constructions standing in for δὲ in our sample (1408a16–19 = 189/20–23):

παθητικὴ δὲ, ἐὰν μὲν ἡ ὦφεις, ἀργυροψάλτῃ λέξις, ἐὰν δὲ ἀσιβη καὶ αἰσχρή, δυσχεραίνοντος καὶ ἐκλαυδεμένου καὶ λέγειν, ἐὰν δὲ ἱπατικά, ἀγαμώνος, ἐὰν δὲ ἰλισνά, ταπινῶς, καὶ ἑτε τῶν ἄλλων δὲ ὀμοίως.

Solitary fa plays only a minimal role in translating δὲ (14 times). Adding up occurrences of wa and fa in isolation or in combination with other terms translating δὲ, we arrive at a proportion of ca. 3:1 in favor of wa (wa 12.4 times, fa 45 times). The translator seems to regard the purely connective function of δὲ as its most important feature. This does not, however, automatically mislead him into ignoring other aspects of δὲ altogether. In the following example, he detects the affirmative and causative connotations of δὲ and translates accordingly. Explaining the characteristics of periodical style, the text concludes (1409b1f = 195/7f):

ἡδεῖα δὲ ἡ τοιαύτη καὶ εὐμελής,
Outright non-translation is an option the translator chooses comparatively rarely. The majority of cases occur in contexts which prove to be problematic to the translator and which he chooses to treat by way of paraphrase rather than word-by-word translation.

As we have seen above, the copulative aspect of δέ, which is most prominently displayed in the combination δὲ καί, is in a small number of cases reproduced with tumma. This example is drawn from the first chapter; Aristotle lists the aspects of speech already discussed elsewhere (1403b13f = 171/10f):

εἰρηται δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐνθυμήματα, πόθεν δὲ πορίζεσθαι.

Of the remaining translations of δέ—’inna (7 times), lākinna (5 times), ’immā (4 times), ’inna-mā (3 times) and gayr ’anna (twice)—lākinna and gayr ’anna merit some attention. Both strongly reflect the adversative sense of δέ and substantiate our claim that the translator is well aware of the multifunctional nature of δέ and the need to modulate his translation according the context. The first example again illustrates the high level of grammatical competence our translator bringsto bear on the text. The second δέ and the following γάρ are translated with semantically strong terms to bring out their respective strong adversative and causal overtones (1406b24f = 183/23-184/1):

χρήσιμον δὲ ἡ εἰκὼν καὶ ἐν λόγῳ, ὀλιγάκις δὲ. ποιητικὸν γάρ.

The connector gayr ’anna has been discussed before in the structural analysis of the first chapter of Book Three (cf. p. 77); except for the two appearances in the first chapter, it does not occur again in the entire sample. We have already noted that in both cases, gayr ’anna disrupts the argumentative structure of the Greek version. Its coincidence with the negative adverbial particle οὔπω followed by δέ, both times correctly rendered as lam … ba’d, might be accidental; nevertheless, this might have played a role in prompting the translator to introduce gayr ’anna in spite of its negative impact (1403b21f = 172/1f and 1403b35f = 172/18f):

οὔπω δὲ ἐπικεχείρηται, τὰ πιέ τὴν ὑπόκρισιν.
In the case of nominalized ἦν, the situation is similar to that of nominalized µέν. The translator's preferences on its 8 occurrences are again for combinations of baʿḍ (3 times), followed by ḥāḏā and ḫāḏā (twice each) and a single instance of biya. The following example is especially intriguing and deserves to be quoted in full: Aristotle discusses the complementary character of connecting particles in general and µέν and δέ in particular, something the translator comprehends well enough in his practical work but which he fails to grasp when he finds it explained in his source. As we can see, he does not realize that Aristotle discusses the alternation of µέν and δέ:

πρῶτον µέν ἐν τοῖς συνδέσµοις, ἄν ἀποδιδῷ τις ὡς πεφύκασι πρότεροι καὶ ὕστεροι γίγνεσθαι ἀλλήλων, οἷον ἔνιοι ἀπαιτοῦσιν, ὡσπερ ὁ µέν καὶ ὁ ὕγω µέν ἀπαιτεῖ τὸν δέ καὶ τὸν ὁ δέ.

In general, the particle δέ is less frequently omitted than µέν and seems to show a slightly smaller range of variation in terms of its Arabic equivalents. Nevertheless, the translator seems to regard it as part of a class of generic particles which in many cases leave the exact relation between the connected elements unspecified.

With few exceptions, δέ remains without Greek complements (or is at least translated as an isolate) and only rarely undergoes translational modifications due to its being combined with semantically stronger particles. The slight degree of variation away from standardized renderings, i.e. combinations of wa, fa, ’inna, ’ammā and ’immā, can be explained by the translator's correct identification of overtones inherent in the specific context of the particle in the source text. He is in most cases able to detect the particle's adversative or conjunctive aspect (e.g. in lists as opposed to adversative arguments) and chooses his Arabic counterpart accordingly.

Some of the stronger equivalents (most prominently ǧayr ’anna) underline the importance of structural particles such as γάρ, µέν and δέ for the translator in his attempt to understand the argumentative flow of the
source text and adequately to reproduce the relations between Aristotle’s arguments.

The frequency of \( \mu\encion \ldots \epsilon\encion \)-structures and their evident importance for Aristotle’s argumentative procedure might hold the key to the confusing case of \( \hat{g}ayr \ '\ann\a \): in a highly structured text such as the \textit{Rhetoric}, replete with instances of independent \( \mu\encion \) and \( \epsilon\encion \) and frequent \( \mu\encion \ldots \epsilon\encion \)-constructions, the translator was probably extremely tempted to interpret adjacent instances of both particles as belonging to such a construct, especially where he had problems grasping a passage’s meaning which, properly understood, would have enabled him to interpret the particles correctly. Thus, he may have related both occurrences of \( \epsilon\encion \) he puzzlingly translated with \( \hat{g}ayr \ '\ann\a \) to previous instances of \( \mu\encion \) as part of what he saw as an expansive \( \mu\encion \ldots \epsilon\encion \)-construction.

**Morphology and terminology**

In this subchapter, we will switch to a comparative perspective and study how a number of Greek terminological and morphological features have been handled across different Greek-Arabic translations. The issue we will discuss illustrates particularly well a recurrent translatorial problem of the Greek-Arabic translation movement: the treatment of affixes and compounds in a language that does not offer comparable morphological mechanisms. The substantially different morphological systems of Greek and Arabic represent just one of a class of “systemic” dissimilarities affecting translations between Greek, Arabic and Syriac. In the case of compounds and affixes, their frequency in Greek texts irrespective of subject matter and their independence of specific terminologies make them particularly suitable for a comparison across translated texts on a wide variety of topics. Apart from their relevance for the creation of Arabic terminologies in different fields, a closer examination of this and related phenomena improves our understanding of translation methods, their differences and development over time in various texts.

A (relatively modest) sample of five Arabic translations of Greek scientific and philosophical texts covering different stages of the Greek-Arabic translation activities will serve to supplement the information we have gathered from the \textit{Rhetoric} and to contextualize our findings with the help of evidence from other texts. The texts in question are as follows:

The Arabic translations of three of Aristotle’s zoological works, i.e. the \textit{History of Animals}, \textit{Generation of Animals} and \textit{Parts of Animals}, formed part
of a collection usually called Kitāb al-ḥayawān (Book of Animals). It was the work of a single translator which Ibn al-Nadīm’s Fihrist identifies as Yahyā (or Yuhanna) ibn al-Bītriq. We have already encountered this translator, a close contemporary and collaborator of the philosopher al-Kindī. While Ibn al-Nadīm’s identification has been discredited, the editors of the Kitāb al-ḥayawān have been unable to come up with an alternative name.

Drossaart Luluofs and Brugman, who consider the available bio- and bibliographical information insufficient to identify the translator, quote Gerhard Endress on the similarities between the language of the Kitāb al-ḥayawān and translations by Ustāṭ. Citing the diligence the latter usually applied to his task, they dismiss the idea that he was the translator of a text characterized by numerous deviations from the Greek source and frequent instances of literalism, amplification, deletion and paraphrase. On the basis of a more detailed comparison of the textual evidence, they rate the translation as the work of a beginner compared to Ustāṭ’s mastery. Taken together with the striking similarities between the translations, they venture two hypotheses: the translation was either the work of an inexperienced Ustāṭ at the beginning of his career or of a member of the same group of translators, applying that group’s set of shared characteristics and formulae.

Remke Kruk suggests a third possibility: while perhaps not member of the same group of translators, the author of the translation shares a similar background and received his training in the same surroundings. Its primitive style and conspicuous Syriacisms point to a Syriac-speaking Christian living in the first half of the ninth century. She rejects his identification with Ibn Nāʿimah al-Ḥimṣī, another member of the Kindī-circle; in spite of some resemblances between the Kitāb al-ḥayawān and a translation of Aristotle’s Sophistical Refutations ascribed to Ibn Nāʿimah, the differences between the two translations are too glaring to be ignored. She also disagrees with the ascription of the text to a much later translator and member of the Baghdad Aristotelians, Ibn Zur’ah, made on the basis of a note in the Fihrist. Ibn Zur’ah’s substantial competence as a translator is inconsistent with the numerous problems posed by the Kitāb

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¹⁴⁸ The parts corresponding to the Generation and the Parts of Animals have been edited by Drossaart Luluofs and Brugman (1971) and Kruk (1979). The latter edition was reviewed by Mattock (1980).
¹⁴⁹ Endress (1966, p. 131ff).
¹⁵⁰ Drossaart Luluofs and Brugman (1971, p. 2ff).
¹⁵¹ Drossaart Luluofs and Brugman (1971, p. 10).
Finally, she questions the necessity of a Syriac intermediary which Drossaart Lulofs and Brugman had taken for granted: apart from a strong influence of Syriac on the language of the translator, the apparent Syriacisms of the text do not help in identifying the translator. Her conclusion is negative: the question of authorship remains unresolved. The analysis of the translation’s language, however, does not leave us completely empty-handed: its undeveloped technical vocabulary, inconsistent rendering of basic Aristotelian philosophical terms and the prominence of grammatical features belonging to Middle Arabic prompt her to place the text in the first half of the ninth century.

The second text, the *Placita philosophorum*, was translated slightly later. It is a doxographical compendium on the Presocratics falsely ascribed to the historian and philosopher Plutarchus of Chaeroneia. Again, the *Fihrist* is our first source of information. It credits Qusṭâ ibn Lūqâ, a Syrian Christian of Greek extraction and contemporary of al-Kindî and Ḥunayn ibn Ishâq, with the work and commends his translation competence and excellent command of the Arabic language. Daiber cites a number of reasons why the testimony of Ibn al-Nadîm can be trusted: in addition to similarities to other translations ascribed to Qusṭâ ibn Lūqâ, the text’s terminology suggests a high degree of proximity to Ibn al-Bīṭrīq and his colleagues and to al-Kindî, putting him close to the the Kindi-circle. The resulting dating of the translation towards the mid-ninth century fits in well with Qusṭâ’s authorship. Additionally, some of his terminology is easy to explain with his Christian background while the recurring Syriacisms of the text tally well with his knowledge of Syriac.

The third text is the translation of twenty propositions from Proclus Diadochus’ *Institutio or Elementatio theologica*. While anonymous and in

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152 Kruk (1979, p. 19).
153 Kruk (1979, p. 22f).
154 Kruk (1979, p. 30).
156 Daiber (1980, p. 3f).
159 Daiber (1980, p. 10ff, 14).
parts ascribed to the much younger translator Abū 'Uṯmān al-Dimašqī (d. ca. 900), it has been associated with an older colleague of Qustā ibn Lūqā who also authored the translations of the zoological texts listed above, Ibn al-Bīṭrīq. On the basis of a thorough analysis of the secondary sources and the text itself, Gerhard Endress tentatively assigns the translation to Ibn al-Bīṭrīq; as with all such ascriptions, the evidence is not conclusive, but the text can at least safely be included among the output of the Kindī-circle.¹⁶¹

The fourth text, Themistius’ commentary on Aristotle’s *De anima*, poses less of a problem in terms of its authorship. According to the manuscript heading, the version edited by Malcolm Lyons represents the second translation of the Greek text produced by Ishāq ibn Hunayn (d. 910).¹⁶² The testimony of the *Fihrist*, while ambiguous, seems to point in the same direction. It credits Hunayn with a Syriac translation of Aristotle’s *De anima* and his son Ishāq with the subsequent Arabic translation of the Syriac text and apparently that of Themistius’ commentary as well.¹⁶³ Strong resemblances between Ishāq’s translation of *De anima* and the language of the commentary confirm this theory; in addition, Lyons notes the text’s high translation standards and its clarity.¹⁶⁴

Finally, another translation usually ascribed to Ishāq ibn Hunayn is the Arabic version of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹⁶⁵ Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist* is our most important witness for his authorship. In his entry on Aristotle’s ethical works, he refers to a “Book of Ethics” (*Kitāb al-ʾaḥlāq*) and a commentary by Porphyry, translated by Ishāq.¹⁶⁶ The parallel report by the later historian Ibn al-Qifi (d. 1248), while largely agreeing with Ibn al-Nadim, credits Ishāq’s father Hunayn ibn Ishāq with the translation. The author of the recent edition of the text, Douglas Dunlop, sides with Ibn al-Nadim, arguing that he is the earlier and better authority and that Ishāq ibn Hunayn is known for his translations of philosophical texts whereas his father made his name mostly with translations of medical

¹⁶⁴ Lyons (1973, p. vii). For additional background information on the commentary and the reception of Aristotle’s *De anima* in general, see Frank (1958–1959) and Gätje (1971).
¹⁶⁵ Dunlop et al. (2005).
¹⁶⁶ The *Fihrist* passage (Flügel, 1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 242) is ambiguous and could be read to mean that Ishāq was the translator either of the commentary or the “Book of Ethics”—or both.
Irrespective of the association of this text with father or son, there is a consensus that it is the product of the mature phase of the Greek-Arabic translation movement.

In sum, our sample consists of five translations, three of them emanating from the circle of al-Kindi during the early decades of the ninth century and two produced toward the end of the century by one of the most prominent members of Hunayn ibn Ishāq’s so-called “school” of translators, Ishāq ibn Hunayn. In comparing the handling of specific aspects of these texts, the following qualifications apply:

Except for the relevant part of the Rhetoric, for which we have compiled an exhaustive index, we rely on the thoroughness of the respective editors. Regarding the amount of references, both Daiber and Drossaart-Lulofs/Brugman and to a smaller extent Kruk offer ample material for comparison. The zoological translations edited by Drossaart Lulofs and Brugman and by Kruk form part of a collection of Aristotelian zoological works collectively translated by the same person or group of persons, enabling us to examine their terminology in conjunction. Endress’ edition of the Institutio theologica comes with a detailed Greek-Arabic glossary which also often provides information about the context of key terms.

In spite of the sharp criticisms leveled against it by its reviewer Manfred Ullmann,¹⁶⁸ the—admittedly incomplete—index for Lyons’ edition of the Themistius-paraphrase still seems to be substantial enough to warrant its inclusion. The glossary of Dunlop’s edition of the Nicomachean Ethics is, as the author freely admits, very selective and only covers key philosophical terms. Unfortunately, its selectivity greatly reduces its value for the sort of statistical analysis of the texts’ terminology attempted below.

Likewise, the editors had different ideas about the shape of their indices, resulting in different degrees of normalization and standardization of index items. Fortunately, this poses not much of a problem for us: those aspects of terminology and morphology we survey are independent of technical terminology employed and subjects treated in our texts and remain unaffected by normalization. Additionally, even if the sample of terms supplied by the indices does not cover the entire terminology of given texts, it constitutes a representative terminological cross section large enough to yield pertinent data.

¹⁶⁷ Dunlop et al. (2005, p. 26f).
¹⁶⁸ Ullmann (1977b, p. 134) questions the usefulness of a glossary that is incomplete and operates exclusively with unvocalized Arabic roots; worse, Lyons ignored the context of lemmata and did not include information about the phraseology of the text.
In spite of our efforts to collect as large a terminological sample as possible, the amount of data on which we base the discussion of this and other textual aspects remains comparably small. Both the size of the sample and the way we operate with it certainly do not qualify as proper statistical procedure. On the other hand, what we intend to present are readily perceptible tendencies and trends, not precise statistical facts.

On a more general note, terminological comparisons between translations such as ours will always be beset by substantial problems. Remke Kruk warns of the hazards of identifying a text’s translator on the basis of an analysis of its vocabulary and explains that a text’s wording was often changed by copyists in line with their personal preferences.¹⁶⁹ This also applies to a certain extent to less specific characteristics such as a text’s assignment to certain periods of translation activity. While Kruk was able to verify some of the characteristics of the Kitāb al-ḥayawān with the help of a second manuscript, her note of caution is even more appropriate for our study of the Arabic Rhetoric, extant in only a single manuscript.¹⁷⁰

Negative composites

A privativum or the Greek negative composite is a pervasive morphological phenomenon frequently occurring in Greek prose irrespective of its formal character and its subject matter. As a prefix of nominal, verbal and adjectival forms, it expresses opposition or negation.

To translate a privativum, Arabic offers a considerable number of lexical and syntactic instruments. They can be roughly classified as follows:

- Terms denoting the direct opposite of the negated word or a semantically loosely related term expressing the absence or deficiency of a given property, thus dispensing with the need for a particle to indicate negation.

¹⁶⁹ Kruk (1979, p. 23).
¹⁷⁰ Kruk echoes the cautionary remarks by Helmut Gätje (1971, p. 32), who lists a number of important issues that affect analyses of a text’s terminology as a basis for ascriptions. Conscious or unconscious linguistic variation on the part of a translator, developments in his translation technique and terminological practice and variations in the character of a translator’s source texts leading to changes in his language can cause substantial problems. In addition to these “personal” causes for linguistic variation, technical factors can influence the terminological configuration of a text: modifications introduced by later translators, problems related to false ascriptions in secondary literature and other issues can make the identification of a text’s translator difficult, if not impossible. More often than not, the evidence only allows negative verdicts: we can only exclude candidates rather than name an author.
• The negation particles là and laysa. According to their combination with either nouns, verbs or adjectives, they fall into several sub-classes, the most prominent of which are là with indicative verbs and lam with verbs in the apocopate; là in absolute negation; là or laysa with the preposition bi and là or laysa with adjectives or participles.
• Periphrastic expressions with ġayr and nouns, adjectives or, most prominently, participles.
• Periphrastic expressions with terms other than ġayr, e.g. nouns such as 'adam or participles such as mufāriq.

As we have seen above in the case of the Rhetoric, doublets¹⁷¹ are a regular occurrence. This also applies to the other translations in our sample.¹⁷² Unsurprisingly, they occur in the context of negated terms, too. It is not, however, the case that negation particles are shared between elements of doublets, they can be mixed or even dropped from the second element. Since we are interested in the frequency of certain particles and translation methods, each single element of a doublet is counted separately according to the negation method employed.

Our text sample from Book Three of the Rhetoric contains 28 unique Greek negative composites, translated with 45 unique Arabic renderings. We thus arrive at a term:translation ratio of ca. 1:1.6. Compared to the term:translation ratio of the entire terminological sample, which has 200 terms translated into 433 unique Arabic equivalents, the Rhetoric’s ratio is substantially lower than the average of ca. 1:2.2.

Taking negated doublets into account, we arrive at 50 negated terms, distributed over the four basic types of negation as follows: 16 occurrences or 32% for là, 5 occurrences or 10% for laysa, 13 occurrences or 26% for ġayr and 16 occurrences or 32% for opposites. The là group in turn consists mainly of là and lam+verb (7 times), là+adjective or participle (3 times), two absolute negations, two bi-là constructs and, interestingly, the only true “compound” we find in our terminological sample:

¹⁷¹ Or Synonymhäufungen ("synonym clusters"), a somewhat more precise term coined by Gerhard Endress (1973, p. 155): the translation of a Greek term with two or more semantically related Arabic terms. The phenomenon has recently been discussed by Thillet (1997), who has assembled a wide range of examples from different stages of the translation movement.
¹⁷² With the apparent exception of Dunlop et al. (2005); this does not mean that the translation contained no double renderings at all, only that the key terms Dunlop chose to include were not translated with such doublets.
There is not a single case of periphrastic expressions constructed with terms other than \( \text{lā} \).¹⁷³

We now have an outline of translation practices regarding \( \alpha \) privativum in our sample of Book Three of the Rhetoric. The next step is to study the other translations in our sample and to compare the data.

The largest slice of our terminological sample comes from the Generation of Animals and the Parts of Animals. With 78 unique Greek terms to 165 unique Arabic equivalents, the texts display a ratio of Greek to Arabic terms of 1:2.1, close to the average of 2:2.

Doublets push the number of negated Arabic terms to 186, shared between the categories as follows: paraphrases and opposites, found 82 times in both texts together, account for 44% of all negated terms. Compared to the other texts whose respective shares come in between 30% and 33%, this represents a significant divergence. With only 48 occurrences and a quota of 26%, \( \text{lā} \) comes in a distant second. The proportion of \( \text{gayr} \), the smallest group of terms with 25 items, amounts to a mere 13%. Thus, we find not only the smallest portion of \( \text{lā} \) of all texts; in addition, the share of \( \text{gayr} \) amounts to not more than half of what the two texts with the next highest rates, the Rhetoric and the Placita, contain. On the other hand, the quota of \( \text{laysa} \), which features 31 times in the zoological texts and accounts for 17% of the negated terms, far outstrips the respective shares in the other texts, which come in at 10%, 1% and 9%.

The zoological books rely primarily on verbal expressions, which make up three quarters of the 48 instances in the \( \text{lā} \) category. Absolute negations follow with only 7 out of 48 occurrences, the remaining 5 instances consisting of various other types. Opposites stand out as the largest group inside the category of paraphrases and opposites. With 39 out of 82 members of the category, they cover 21% of the entire sample of negated expressions in the zoological books. Their proportion is virtually identical to that in the Placita at 21% and significantly lower than the respective count for the Rhetoric at 32%.

The Placita philosophorum features the same number of unique Arabic equivalents as the De anima (112) but a lower number of unique Greek terms (66). The resulting ratio of 1:1.7 is lower than the average but similar to the Rhetoric. As we will see, these are not the only parallels between the Placita and the Rhetoric.

¹⁷³ “Non-temporal”; it translates the adjective \( \alpha \)\( \chi \)\( \alpha \)\( \gamma \)\( \alpha \)\( \gamma \)\( \zeta \), “ill-timed” or “unseasonable”.

¹⁷⁴ For some examples of different translation methods applied to negative composites, cf. Panoussi (1989, p. 198f).
Due to a number of doublets, the actual count of negated Arabic terms reaches 123, distributed in a manner very similar to the *Rhetoric*. With 43 occurrences, *lā* covers 35% of the sample. Paraphrases and opposites follow with 35 items, yielding 29%. With 32 occurrences and 26%, *gayr* ranks third. Last is *laysa*, appearing 11 times (9% of the recorded cases). The similarity to the distribution of the same categories in our *Rhetoric* sample stands out: the respective shares for it are 32%, 32%, 26% and 10%.

A breakdown of the paraphrase category reveals that opposites account for 25 out of 35 items. The resulting percentage of 21% falls short of the corresponding 32% for the *Rhetoric*; furthermore, the remaining 10 items are made up of structures such as nominal or adjectival *'lāfah*-constructions which do not figure at all in the *Rhetoric*’s treatment of negative composites. Similarly, the constructions listed under the rubric *lā* show conspicuous dissimilarities. With 15 out of 43 occurrences, verbal combinations with *lā* and *lam*—the mainstay of the same category for the *Rhetoric*—play an important role; absolute negations, however, which rarely occur in the *Rhetoric*, account for the majority of cases (20 out of 43). The remaining 8 items cover several other constructions such as *lā* with adjective or participle or *bi-lā*.

The number of Greek negative composites listed in the glossary of the *Institutio theologica* is comparatively small (20). Adding up the Arabic equivalents, we arrive at 45 unique terms, resulting in a comparably high ratio of 1:2.25 Greek to Arabic terms.

The breakdown of the Arabic terminology is as follows: *lā* accounts for 30 negative composites or 65.2%, the largest proportion of all the texts. There are no translations involving *laysa*; the proportion of *gayr*, used nine times (15.2%), is similar to that we observed in the *Kitāb al-bhayāwīn*. Opposites make up the remainder of the small terminological sample, they occur 9 times (19.6%).

In almost half of the 30 cases in which *lā* is used to render the negations, it occurs in conjunction with a verb (14 times or 46.7%). Absolute negations make up 36.7% (11 occurrences) of the *lā* category, *bi-lā* is used twice (6.7%) and *lā* with an adjective or participle accounts for the remaining 3 cases (10%).

The Themistius-text includes substantially more unique negated Greek terms than our sample of the *Rhetoric*. The 86 words in question have been translated into 112 unique Arabic phrases. The rate of 1.3
Arabic to each Greek term is thus significantly lower than the average and the quota we arrived at for the *Rhetoric*.

Including an additional term contained in the single doublet used to translate a negated term, the 113 Arabic counterparts are spread across four of our groups, i.e. *lā* with 33 items (29%), *gayr* with 42 items (37%), 20 opposites (18%) and 17 paraphrases in conjunction with elements other than *gayr* (15%). An important difference between this text and the *Rhetoric* is the virtual absence of *laysa*, which accounts for only one translation of *α privativum*. The share of *laysa* has been inherited by *gayr*, which takes up a percentage almost one and a half times higher than that of the *Rhetoric*.

Taking a closer look at occurrences of *lā*, we notice additional discrepancies: most prominent here are absolute negations, which account for almost two thirds of the 33 items (19 cases). Verbal constructions with *lā* and *lam* play a significantly less important role (9 cases). Likewise, opposites occur less frequently at only 18% (20 items) as opposed to the *Rhetoric*’s 32%. Conversely, we find a commensurately higher share of non-*gayr* paraphrases, absent in the *Rhetoric*, which account for 17 translations (15%).

Thanks to its short and selective glossary, the sample of negative composites from the *Nicomachean Ethics* only contains 7 Greek terms with 20 Arabic equivalents. The resulting ration of 1:2.86 puts it somewhat outside the range of the other texts, as do the numbers in the detailed breakdown of the negations covered by the index. Since the sample is too small and unrepresentative for any useful analysis of the methods employed to translate *α privativum*, it will not be used below.

**The numbers in context**

The first thing we notice about this data is the wide discrepancies between term/translation ratios between texts: the *Rhetoric* comes in at the lower end of the surveyed texts; earlier translations seem to offer a larger variety of renderings to terms, whereas later ones are apparently somewhat more restricted. The *Institutio theologica* and the *Kitāb al-hayawān*, probably the earliest in the group of texts we are comparing with the *Rhetoric*, exhibit the widest range of translations for a number of central technical terms. In the former, we find words such as *ἄπειρος* translated by seven and *ἀµερής* by five different Arabic words and phrases, the latter displays an equally wide range of equivalents e.g. for *ἀγώνος* (9 different renderings),
ἀδιόριστος (8) or ἀπεψία (6). At the same time, both texts show the highest incidence of doublets in translating Greek negative composites.

Seen in isolation, the marked prominence of doublets is not sufficient to establish relative dates of texts. They can on the one hand indicate a certain terminological immaturity of texts: the translator supplies two terms where he himself is unable to make a binding decision for a suitable Arabic term. On the other hand, they might point to a higher degree of translational sophistication: the translator employs two terms in order to transmit the semantic scope of a Greek expression as fully as possible.¹⁷⁵ In the case of a high degree of variation in the translation of specific terms, we can assume that the text hails from an early stage in the translation phenomenon in which the technical terminology had not yet been standardized and unified. To find this phenomenon side by side with a high incidence of doublets lends some credibility to the assumption that texts combining these two phenomena belong to an early stage of the Greek-Arabic translation movement.

Comparing the texts in our sample in terms of the quota of the different translational alternatives for negative composites, we can draw the following (very tentative) conclusions:

We find that the use of uninflected laysa as negation particle equivalent to َلا, which Graf and Blau identify as one characteristic of Middle Arabic,¹⁷⁶ loses ground from its high point of 16% in the zoological texts, registering at only 9% in the Placita and virtually disappearing by the time Ishāq translated Themistius’ De anima-commentary. The apparent development between these translations might be read to support the scholarly consensus about the sophistication of translation techniques and the linguistic quality of the translations produced by members of the circle associated with Hunayn ibn Ishāq which, with the help of competent native speakers of Arabic and a general increase in the linguistic experience of the translators, has succeeded in weeding out some of the more objectionable grammatical phenomena introduced by Aramaic and Syriac.

¹⁷⁵ Daiber (1980, p. 30) tentatively interprets such doublets as symptoms for the translator’s uncertainty in the handling of certain terms. Kruk (1979, p. 24) refrains from qualitative judgments and maintains that they served to emphasize a term or to specify its meaning. According to Endress (1973, p. 155), doublets are evidence for a translator’s attempt to cover as many shades of meaning as possible for a Greek term for which there was no satisfactory Arabic equivalent. For a comparative analysis of the occurrence of doublets in the translations of Proclus-texts, see p. 155–162. More recently, Pierre Thillet (1997) has discussed this phenomenon in some detail and developed a taxonomy of doublet types on the basis of examples pulled from a large variety of translated texts.

usage. The *Institutio theologica* on the other hand does not seem to operate with *laya* at all and apparently contradicts this seemingly clear-cut trend.

Together with the depreciation of *laya*, we observe a marked rise in the use of translations relying on *gayr*. Its share in the overall sample of translated negative composites grows from 13% in the *Kitāb al-bayawān* and 15% in the *Institutio theologica* to 26% in the *Placita philosophorum*, reaching 37% in the Themistius-commentary. Parallel to the growing importance of *gayr*, we notice a gradual decline in the use of other periphrastic expressions. Accounting for 44% of cases in the zoological works, they drop to a share of slightly less than a third at the time of the *Placita*-translation and remain at that level in the Themistius-text.

If we consider phrases negated by *lā* or *lam*, we find even more evidence for a directional development in the treatment of *a privativum*. In each of the texts, verbal phrases and absolute negations make up the bulk of phrases negated with either *lā* or *lam*. Both the *Kitāb al-bayawān* and the *Institutio theologica* show a marked preference for verbal phrases, accounting for three quarters of all translations for the former and almost half in the latter. Their share then sinks continually to only slightly more than a quarter in the Themistius-translation. Conversely, the quota of absolute negations grows from a mere 15% to 47% in the *Placita* and 58% in the *De anima*-commentary with the notable exception of the *Institutio theologica* in which they account for ca. 37% of all phrases negated with *lā*.

The situation is somewhat different for opposites and the various types of paraphrases. Opposites as translations for Greek negated terms are a prominent feature of all our texts. They cover 48% of all expressions subsumed under the opposites/paraphrases-section in the zoological texts. They play an equally important role in the latest text, Themistius’ *De anima*, accounting for 54% of the items in the same category. Their share peaks, though, in the *Institutio theologica* (100%) and the *Placita* (71%). The remarkable prominence of opposites is accompanied by an equally conspicuous difference between the texts regarding the distribution of noun+noun transcriptions, the second largest group of phrases in the category under consideration. While the difference between the *Kitāb al-bayawān* (27%) and the Themistius-text (24%) is too small to detect any significant developments between the texts, those texts stand in stark contrast to the *Institutio theologica* and the *Placita* with its pal-
try respective share of 0% and of 9% for the same type of noun+noun paraphrases.

Where does the Rhetoric fit into all of this? Starting with the ratio between unique Greek terms and unique Arabic translations, we have seen that the Rhetoric is situated at the lower end of the sample, between the Placita and the text with the lowest ratio, the Themistius-commentary. The breakdown of translation alternatives for a privatum reveals a number of similarities between the Rhetoric and the Placita philosophorum: both rely mainly on combinations of là and lam with verbs with shares of 32% for the former and 35% for the latter on the one hand and opposites/paraphrases with shares of 32% and 30% respectively on the other. For both groups of renderings, the Rhetoric falls between the Placita and the De anima-commentary. Unlike the latter, however, the Rhetoric has not yet shed laysa and uses it to translate 10% of the Greek terms under consideration, almost on par with the Placita with its share of 9%.

Looking again at instances of phrases negated with là and lam, we discover that the Rhetoric does not always conform to the precedent set by the Placita. Absolute negation, a feature that becomes widespread over the period marked by our set of text, plays a comparatively small role in the Rhetoric with a rate of only 13%, even lower than but very similar to the lowest limit of our comparative sample marked by the zoological works (13%). The quota of verbal constructions for our text, which amounts to 44%, is closest to the Institutio theologica (47%); at the same time, it places the Rhetoric between the Kitāb al-bayawān at 75% and the Placita at 37%. Interestingly enough, the puzzling peaks in the distribution of the two most important classes of the opposites/paraphrases-category we have found in the Placita, i.e. opposites and noun+noun paraphrases, re-occur even more extremely in the Rhetoric and the Institutio theologica. In both texts, the entire category consists of occurrences of opposites and excludes any form of paraphrase altogether, somewhat similar to the findings in the Placita (71% and 9%, respectively).

If we accept the relative dating of the texts in our comparative sample as it emerges from internal evidence and bio-bibliographical sources and if we accept that the findings presented above, which in some cases tally surprisingly well with the datings and which place the texts on a temporal scale starting with the Kitāb al-bayawān and the Institutio theologica, progressing to the Placita philosophorum and culminating in Ishāq ibn Hunayn’s translation of the De anima-commentary, re-inforce and supplement that dating pattern, we are now in a position to use our compar-
ative data from the *Rhetoric* to situate it tentatively on that chronological scale. The respective numbers for the *Rhetoric* oscillate around the data provided by the *Placita*, falling more often on the side of the Themistius-text than the zoological treatises. On the basis of the remarkable number of similarities between both texts in their handling of negative composites, we are tempted to place it in both temporal and geographic proximity to the *Placita*-translation.

Both our findings and their interpretation, however, still depend very much on the quality of the data we have used and the wide variations in the subject matter and terminology of the texts. The numbers we pulled from the *Institutio theologica* are a case in point: the terminological sample is substantially smaller than that of the other texts and possibly not representative. This might explain why it sometimes seems to contradict the findings from the other translation ascribed to the same person, the *Kitāb al-hayawan*. Also, again echoing the concerns expressed by Kruk and Gätje about using such terminological evidence to argue for the dating of a text, it could be argued that terminology was often subjected to manipulations by later readers and copyists. The relative dating proposed above therefore cannot be more than a hypothesis to be checked against other textual and extra-textual evidence. This will be our next task.

**Transcription of proper names**

Transcription in the Arabic *Rhetoric*

Thanks to Aristotle’s habit of illustrating his discussion with abundant quotes from philosophy and literature, our sample contains its fair share of proper names. The extent of the material allows us to characterize the transcription methods of the translator of the *Rhetoric* as follows:

The translator dealt with proper names and some technical terms with the help of a “standard” transcription. The relative scarcity of exceptions suggests that he either took great care with his transcription or, more likely, that he applied pre-existing and widely used transcription standards:

- \( \gamma \Rightarrow \gamma \): Γλαύκων ⇒ ḡlawqūn; but: ḡarḥiyās (Γοργίας)
- \( \delta \Rightarrow \delta \): Δημοσθένης ⇒ ḍimūsānāis
- \( \theta \Rightarrow t \): Θεσσαλοχώσ ⇒ ṯrūmāḥūs
The phonetic quality of the letter ξ, compounded of the distinct phonemes [k] and [s], gives rise to different transcriptions: ξ ⇒ sh (Εὔξενος ⇒ Ωύσινος) or h (Σίξις ⇒ Χήθις) or ks (Ἀναξανδρίδης ⇒ Ανάξανδρίδης).

Interestingly enough, the transcription is invariably based on the nominative form of the name (or in some cases flawed reconstructions of it). The accuracy with which the translator identified the correct form is remarkable; together with the generally consistent transliteration of consonants, it points towards a high level of experience and routine.

The spiritus asper is uniformly suppressed, e.g. Ἡράκλειτος ⇒ Ηράκλειτος or Ηρόδοτος ⇒ Ηρόδοτος, Ὅµηρος ⇒ Ωμήρος. According to Hans Daiber, the phonetic difference between spiritus asper and lenis had disappeared in the fifth century, explaining its inconsistent transcription or sometimes outright deletion in Syriac (where it is often transcribed as b) and Greek sources.¹⁷⁷

Some terms undergo a certain degree of Arabization. Most prominent are two procedures: the addition of tāʾ marbūṭah to feminine placenames and the use of Arabic plural forms or paraphrases to denote people. Examples for the former phenomenon are Ἑλλάς ⇒ Alāḏah or Aladah, Ἀξένα ⇒ Aḡīnah or Σικελία ⇒ Siqēliya. Our section of the Rhetoric also has an example for the transposition of the Greek adjective Μελανίππιδης, derived from the name Μελανίππος, with the corresponding Arabic mechanism to derive adjectives from nouns, the nisbah, resulting in the transcription Mīlānīfīṭ.

In a number of cases, the translator deviated from this pattern, e.g. by using Isāmānāb instead of the previous form Isāmūs for τὰ Ἰσθμια or the "unarabized" form ʿUbbā for Ἡβοια.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, the translator shows remarkable competence in other places: in the case of ʿabl al-Buwūḥiyah, he reconstructs the appropriate placename from οἱ Βοιοωτοί,

¹⁷⁷ Daiber (1980, p. 45).
¹⁷⁸ Incidentally, the voiced pronunciation of β as represented by the Arabic w reflects post-classical and modern Greek usage.
leading him to the “proper” Arabized form. Moreover, the use of ṭāʾ marbūṭah does not depend on obvious markers such as the feminine endings of the a-declination, e.g. Σαμίς ⇒ Salaminab, even though the awkward consequences of appending the ṭāʾ marbūṭah to Σαμίς forces him to compromise and add the suffix to the word stem.

To translate names of persons or peoples, the translator opted for paraphrase more often than outright “pluralization”. Thus, we encounter numerous expressions on the lines of ṭahl Bābīl for ḫabṣūdūn, ṭahl Sāmīs for Σαμίς or, as quoted before, ṭahl al-Buṣūṭīyah for οἱ Βοιοωτοί. This apparently also applies to singular adjectives such as Δημάκριτος ὁ Χῖος ⇒ Ταύριττος ἀλλαδὶ ἐμὲ ἀβλ Κιὐς— in marked contrast to cases like Ἡρόδοτος Ἰρῳῦς, confidently rendered as Ἰρῳῦς Ἀθηναῖοι, which becomes Ἀθῆναι ὁ Αἴας for Αἴας ὁ Αἴας ὁ Αἴας Ἐρωταὶ, where we encounter plural forms such as Ἁθηνάι ⇒ Ἁθηναί or Ἀθηνᾶ for Ἄθηνᾶ, they seem to point to prior knowledge on the part of the translator: there is no obvious reason to Arabize the Athenians and Spartans to the exclusion of all other Greeks appearing in our text except the fact that they are names one would in all likelihood encounter in many different Greek scientific and philosophical texts and therefore familiar enough to be assimilated.

In spite of his diligence, our translator frequently misses the mark. In a curious case of cross-linguistic “reverse engineering”, he analyses a Greek term into supposed Arabic article and word body: Λάκων becomes Ἀθηναῖοι, the adjective Ἰρῳῦς is treated in analogue manner and, interpreting the ἐ at the end of the stem as a nisbah, appears as Ἀθῆναι. Simple misreadings or manuscript problems might be the source of translations such as εἰς Ἀχαϊκοὺς ⇒ [Alqiyāḍīn] and Δημάκριτος ⇒ Ταύριττος or the transcription Ἀσφώς for Ἀσφώς. This particular reading does not need to be as unusual as it looks at first sight, later translations (e.g. the Nicomachean Ethics) sometimes transcribe the name as Ἀσφώς. More common are derivations based on flawed nominative forms. Examples range from Ἰρῳῦς for Πολύευκτος Ἀθῆναι Ἑρωταῖ in place of Ἀθηνᾶ.

A handful of names appear over and over again. In spite of their frequency, their transcription sometimes varies, even if they are repeated in close proximity to each other. The city of Σηστός, transcribed as Sīsīṭus, changes to Sīsīṭus only a few words down the line. Πολύευκτος is introduced as Fūlīqūṣ, only to become Fūlīqūṣ a short while later. The

¹⁷⁹ The substitution of Θεόκριτος for Δημάκριτος suggests a misreading of the Greek source text.
transliterations of Ἐὔξενος, Ὑσήνιος and Ὑσήνιος, are only one line apart in Lyons’ edition. Non-standard transcriptions such as these (which occur only twice in our sample) could be regarded as rare cases of misreading or perhaps carelessness. They are not that rare, though. According to Lyons’ reading, Ἀλκιδάμας occurs once as Ἀλκιδάμις, once as Ἀλκιδάμαις and twice as Ἀλκιδάμαι. We find slightly less variation in the case of Ἐρισδόντος, appearing once as Ἐρισδίδιτῑς and twice as Ἐρισδίδιτῑς (read once by Sālim and Margoliouth as Ἐρισδίδιδιτῑς). For Πγρίας, we find Πγρίȝɑs four times and only once Πγρίȝɑs. The position of these vocalic variations in the middle of words indicates that they are not caused by varying case endings in the source text. This is borne out by a look at the original: the names cited above are transcribed from nominative forms, even where the Greek term is in a different case. The most likely reason for the variations, it seems, would be a combination of inattention on the part of the translator and scribal mistakes.

Or would it? The dwindling of quantitative differences between some vowels such as ο and ο in postclassical Greek meant that they were frequently confused—with consequences not just for Greek manuscripts, but also translations based on them. In addition, the phonemic values of υ, η and ι became less and less distinguishable before and around the time Arab translators started to work with Greek texts.¹⁸⁰ These and other features of the postclassical pronunciation they most likely learned during their training or from contemporary informants could also have influenced their reading of the Greek sources and caused the seeming inconsistencies in the transcription of Greek vowels.

Also, it is not inconceivable that the translators, for the most part native speakers of a Semitic language with a consonantal alphabet (Syriac) who were working in another such language with a consonantal alphabet (Arabic) regarded the consonantal skeleton of a transcribed word, its rasm,¹⁸¹ as more important than its vowel structure. If we simply posited that fluctuations in the vowels of transcribed terms illustrate a supposed lower standard of translation and a general lack of meticulousness by an older, less experienced group of translators, we would be hard pressed to explain the fact that those fluctuations occur with similar frequency in later, allegedly “better” translations, including those that form part of our comparative sample of texts discussed below.

¹⁸⁰ Daiber (1980, p. 43f).
¹⁸¹ Among other things, the term rasm denotes a stroke or line produced with a pen and, by extension, the shape of the unvocalized word (Gacek, 2001, p. 55, s. v. r–s–m).
The peculiar transcription Ġurğiyaš deserves some attention. As we have seen, Greek γ is invariably transliterated with Arabic ġ except in the case of Γοργίας. Occurrences of the name in the Rhetoric outside our sample conform to this transliteration; apart from one variant (Ǧāūrğiyaš, 207/15), we find two more instances of the usual Ġurğiyaš at 218/10 and 222/8. The very occurrence of a transcription that ignores rules our translator so stringently adheres to together with the relative stability of the transcription—we noted in the preceding paragraph that the name is more immune to graphological mishaps than other frequently occurring names—invites the assumption that our translator had access to translations or word lists in which the name Ġurğiyaš appeared in this particular form. In this context, transliterations of other proper names which are part of the translators’ daily bread and butter such as Πλάτων could be revealing. Unfortunately, we only come across his name three times in the entire Arabic translation of the Rhetoric, once as Aflāṭūn (75/22), once as Flāṭun (153/8) and a third time as Flāṭūn (184/9).

Another interesting phenomenon should be mentioned in passing: in one place, the Greek adjective Ὀλυνθιακός is correctly transposed into the corresponding noun: περὶ τὸν Ὀλυνθιακὸν πόλεμον is paraphrased as al-ḥarb allatī kāna bi-Ḫūnṭūs.

Our short survey of transcribed terms and names in the Arabic Rhetoric has given us enough evidence to establish that our translator applied a consistent and transparent system of consonantal transliteration, taking Greek nominative forms as his starting point. On the other hand, many transliterated names exhibit a high degree of variation in their vocalic structure, possibly obscuring their relation for contemporary readers. These imprecisions aside, on the basis of the findings presented above, it looks more and more unlikely that the Arabic version of the Rhetoric dates back to the earliest days of the Greek-Arabic translation tradition. The evidence strongly suggests that our translator applied a pre-existing system of transliteration and a set of stock transcriptions of proper names. It has to be seen if this claim is borne out by findings on other aspects of translation methodology.

The comparative perspective

In his article on the Arabic translation of Aristotle’s History of Animals, Johannes den Heijer adds an important qualification to Zimmermann’s warning against the interpretation of so-called Syriacisms in transcrip-
tion; he maintains that, rather than the interference of spoken Aramaic on the language of the translations, the most likely source for the retention of transcriptions based on Syriac models was the translators' familiarity with Syriac texts, replete with transcribed Greek words. With this in mind, we will now turn to the question of how our translation fits into the transcription practices of the other translations in our sample.

Den Heijer classifies transcription alternatives as either following the Syriac example or innovating in line with the Arabic phonetic system. In the *History of Animals*, traditionally ascribed to Ibn al-Bīṭrīq, den Heijer finds evidence for both conservatism and innovation: with one exception, Greek π is transcribed as b, its nearest phonetical equivalent. The “conservative” rendering would have been f, the etymological and visual counterpart of Syriac p; since the pronunciation of f is not suitable to render π, it was subsequently supplanted by b. Thus, the *Rhetoric*, in marked contrast to the *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, consistently follows the conservative line. This cannot be said for the *Placita philosophorum* which, with few exceptions, adopts b as the standard transcription for π. One exception is the name Πλάτων. Possibly due to the weight of translational precedents, it is invariably transcribed with an f, irrespective of other variations (i.e. the lengthening and shortening of vowels or the addition of auxiliary ‘alif at the beginning). Historical precedents are probably not at the root of the transcriptions for much less prominent names such as Πλούταρχος (Flūṭārḫus) and Πυθέας (Fūṯāʾaš). Such precedents might be influencing the translator’s choice only in the case of Πυθαγόρας (Fūṯāḡūras). One is still tempted to explain this seeming inconsistency to a certain fluidity of transcription procedures preceding the standardization of transcription, committing future translators to use b as the fixed equivalent for π.

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184 Endress (1973) does not contain transcribed names. The only transcription we find is qaṭīfīḥs, used twice for κατάφασις (cf. p. 148 for examples from *De caelo*).
185 His analysis is based on the ideas of Rudolf Macúch (1982) and Joshua Blau (1967).
186 For a discussion of Ibn al-Nadīm’s ascription, cf. below p. 138.
188 Hans Dalber (1980, p. 17) maintains that there is no need to posit an Aramaic intermediary to explain the substitution of π with Arabic f. He argues with the different graphemic inventories of Greek and Arabic: the lack of an Arabic grapheme corresponding to π/[p] forced the translators to choose between either b and f. This nevertheless does not invalidate den Heijer’s suggestion that the choice for f over b in spite of the latter’s relative phonetic proximity to π can be more easily explained on the basis of Syriac precedents.
But does our sample really support a hypothetical standardization away from \( f \) and toward \( b \)? The Themistius-commentary, considerably younger than the translations discussed above, stands out on account of its consistency in transcribing \( \pi \) as \( f \)—the alleged “conservative” choice. Even though this text is in all likelihood the product of the same translator who is responsible for the Arabic version of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, their transcription methods often differ. For \( \pi \), the latter text alternates between \( b \) (13 occurrences) and \( f \) (10 occurrences), sometimes even for the same name, e.g. \( \text{Νεοπτόλεμος} \) (\( \text{Nāūṭūlēmūs} \) or \( \text{Σπεύσιππος} \) (\( \text{Asfūsīpūs} \).\(^{189}\) On the basis of this—admittedly limited—sample, we are not in a position to posit a straightforward development of the transcription of \( \pi \) from \( f \) to \( b \).

The translator of the *Rhetoric* takes a less conservative stance in his treatment of Greek \( \chi \). As den Heijer explains, Syriac translators customarily rendered it as Syriac \( k \), covering the phonetic value of \( \chi \) with the conditional aspirated pronunciation \([x]\) of the Syriac letter. The etymological equivalent of Syriac \( k \), however, is Arabic \( k \), which only offers one pronunciation, \([k]\). Traditional transcription on Syriac lines would still render \( \chi \) via Syriac \( k \) with Arabic \( k \); the alternative, leaving the well-trodden paths of Syriac translators, is \( h \), which also happens to reflect the letter’s medieval and modern Greek pronunciation. Regarding \( \chi \) in our translation sample, with the one exception mentioned above, prefers \( h \) to \( k \), similar to the *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*.\(^{190}\) As before, the *Placita* reveals a higher degree of inconsistency than the *Rhetoric* and the zoological works. Together with the preponderant transcription \( h \), the text has two cases transcribing \( \chi \) as \( ṣ \): \( \text{Ἀρχέλαος} \) (\( \text{Aršālēūs} \) and \( \text{ὁ Χῖος} \) (\( \text{mīn 'abl Šiyūs} \).\(^{191}\)

Again, it seems inappropriate to ascribe the transcriptions to the prominence of the names and their frequent appearance in this guise in Syriac or Arabic texts. Fritz Zimmermann explained the occurrence of \( ṣ \)

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\(^{189}\) One of the fascinating aspects of the Arabic translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is that the ten books of the Greek original have been supplemented by an eleventh book that the medieval editor of the manuscript inserted between Books Six and Seven. In Dunlop et al. (2005, p. 55–62), Dunlop discusses the formal features and contents of this additional treatise and suggests that it might have been derived from Porphyry’s commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. He also points out the prominent terminological and stylistic differences between this book and the rest of the text and concludes that it could have been the product of a translator other than that of the remainder of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. To avoid terminological contamination between these two different constituents of the Arabic text, I have taken into account only the terminological and stylistic data from the *Nicomachean Ethics* "proper" ascribed to Ishāq ibn Hunayn.

\(^{190}\) den Heijer (1991, p. 102).
in the *Theology of Aristotle* and the translation of Aristotle’s *Sophistical Refutations* (ἐντελέχεια ⇒ anatalaśyā and Ἀχιλλεύς ⇒ Ašilū) in geographical terms: they are linked to another collaborator of the Kindī-circle, Ibn Nā‘īmah al-Ḥimṣi, a Syrian by birth; the local Syrian pronunciation of χ in certain combinations might be behind this transliteration.\(^{191}\) However, in this and other cases of transcriptions which seem to conflict with our expectations, the phonetic differences between classical and medieval Greek offer a much more straightforward explanation. Among others, Hans Daiber pointed out that ṣ faithfully reflects the contemporary pronunciation of χ when preceded by ε or ι.\(^ {192}\) As well as time and progress in translation methods, the linguistic, geographical and cultural background of a translator and, of course, his own translation experience have a direct bearing on his transcription practices. Finally, both the *De anima*-commentary and the *Nicomachean Ethics* use ḩ for χ.

The customary Syriac transcription of Greek γ, ġ, again offers two different pronunciations, palatal [כ] and velar [γ], corresponding to Arabic ġ and ǧ, respectively.\(^ {193}\) Whereas the *Kitāb al-bayāwān* opts for ġ throughout, the *Rhetoric*, as seen above, prefers ġ while keeping ǧ in the case of Ǧurğiyās.\(^ {194}\) The *Placita* largely conforms to the standard usage but we find a number of exceptions. Names such as Αἰγὸς ποταμός, Διογένης, Ἐπιγένης and Σταγειρίτης are not sufficiently important and frequent in other translations to warrant special treatment. Their transcription might therefore again be due to the translator’s inconsistency, in marked contrast to the Themistius-commentary and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which employ ġ without exception. These findings disagree with the rule laid down by Georg Graf on the basis of a Christian Arabic manuscript from the end of the ninth century: he claimed that γ occurring before ι, η and ε would be transcribed with ǧ, otherwise as ġ.\(^ {195}\)

Greek τ and κ are normally rendered as ṭ and q. Both straightforwardly reflect the adherence to Syriac modes of transcription in the face of the phonetically more suitable candidates t and k. In the first case, the Syriac translators choose Syriac ṭ over t because of t’s conditional pronunciation [θ]; in the second case, Syriac k is equally unsuitable thanks to its alternative pronunciations [k] and [x].\(^ {196}\) It still appears on one occa-
sion in the zoological treatises, *Θφάξας* for *Itrākiyāb*. The word is also one of two examples for *θ*, usually transcribed as *t*, substituted with *t*. Apart from the three examples for occurrences of *t* for *τ* cited above, the *Rhetoric* as well as the *Placita* conform to this pattern. Again, we find two examples for non-standard transcriptions for *τ* utilizing *t* and even *d* (*ibn Mādun for *ṭ*Mērtawās*), but they are drowned out by the overwhelming frequency of the standard variety *ṭ*. Additionally, the single occurrence of *d* might be blamed on a scribal mistake or a damaged spot in the Greek text; *d* being employed as the *Placita*‘s stock transcription for *δ* suggests that he could have read *δ* in this place as well. Conversely, *θ* is rendered as *t* with *t* occurring in two places.

The impression of a certain carelessness is strengthened by these and other exceptions in his treatment of *κ*. In addition to the standard *q*, we find *k* on three occasions. With matchless consistency, the *De anima*-commentary and the *Nicomachean Ethics* opt for *t* to transcribe *τ*. In its transcription of *κ*, both consistently uses *q* with the exception of three occurrences of *k* (out of a total of 38) in the latter. In both translations, *θ* is invariably substituted with *t*.

As with the *Rhetoric*, the letter *ξ* poses something of a problem for the authors of the other translations in our sample. Its composition from two distinct phonemes forces them to adopt several two-letter renderings, none of which is consistently employed. In the *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, *ks* is the preferred transcription. The only two exceptions in the *Parts of Animals*, *Anaqaqūrās* in place of *Avakqūrās* and *Nãoqīs* for *Nāqīs*, might be due to scribal errors. This curious treatment of *ξ* is the preferred variant in the *Placita* which has only one variant with *ks* instead of *qξ*: *Ksānīfīnīs* for Ἐξοφάνεις. The translator of the Themistius-commentary and the *Nicomachean Ethics* consistently transcribes *ξ* with *ks*.

The two remaining important consonants treated differently at different stages of the Greek-Arabic translation movement are *d* and *σ*. In the *Rhetoric*, Greek *δ* is uniformly transcribed as *d*. The *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* displays an even greater degree of consistency than the *Rhetoric* which switches in its transcription of Ἐλλάς *t*o *Alādaḥ* to Alādāb. The very slight graphical difference between the two Arabic versions, differentiated only by a diacritical dot, could have been due to misreading or scribal mistake. The rule is reversed in the *Placita* which transcribes *δ* with *ḏ*, reflecting the spirantized post-classical pronunciation of the letter.¹⁹⁷ The alternative *d* occurs in three transmissions. As for *σ*, we find it consistently...

transcribed as s in the Rhetoric. The zoological treatises also have s as the standard transcription, departing from it only in the Generation of Animals by varying the transcription twice in a single word: Νάβος, Lāzbiṣ. At least the first of them can be explained by contemporary Greek pronunciation: before voiced β, σ was also voiced.

The Placita follows the example set by the Rhetoric with an unusual degree of consistency. In the case of the De anima-commentary, its usual thoroughness is not substantially diminished by the only transcription exceptions we find in the text. While using d throughout the text to render η, in one place the translator transcribes Εὐδηµος with Ūḏīµ. We only find d in the Nicomachean Ethics. For σ, the regular transcription in both texts is s—with some interesting exceptions: ᾮηρος becomes Umiru in the De anima-commentary and, with some variation of the vowel structure, the Nicomachean Ethics. Πυθαγόρας is transcribed as Fūṯāḡūrāš in the former, the latter uses Fūṯāḡūrīšiyn for Πυθαγόρειοι. Both are well-known names; their unorthodox form in these markedly consistent texts strongly suggests scribal intervention or the influence of other texts. This would have to be borne out by a comparison of several translations from the period, an undertaking beyond the scope of the present study. In addition, the Nicomachean Ethics has two more examples of non-standard transcriptions of σ, e.g. the interesting Ūṯūs for Σάτυρος and Ūṯūn for Σόλων.

The following table contains our findings so far (letters in brackets represent exceptions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th>Kitāb al-ḥ.</th>
<th>Placita</th>
<th>De anima</th>
<th>Nic. Ethics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>γ</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δ</td>
<td>d (d)</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>d (d)</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ</td>
<td>t (t)</td>
<td>t (t)</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>κ</td>
<td>q (κ)</td>
<td>q (κ)</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>q (κ, f)</td>
<td>q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ξ</td>
<td>b (b, ks)</td>
<td>ks (qs)</td>
<td>ks</td>
<td>ks</td>
<td>ks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>π</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b (f)</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>b, f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σ</td>
<td>s (s, ś)</td>
<td>s (s, ś)</td>
<td>s (s)</td>
<td>s (ś)</td>
<td>s (ś)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τ</td>
<td>t (t)</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>t (t, d)</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>χ</td>
<td>b (k)</td>
<td>b (k)</td>
<td>b (ś)</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While not overly useful in isolation to help us resolve the dating issue, this information can assist us in grouping texts and clarifying relations be-
tween them. Thus, the table shows that in terms of transcriptional consistency, the translation of Themistius’ De anima-commentary and, with the exceptions noted above, the Nicomachean Ethics tower head and shoulder over the rest of the texts. They are clearly the product of a translator who consciously strives for consistency and was in all probability trained in an environment which put great store on it. The Placita philosophorum on the other hand displays a remarkable degree of inconsistency. As will be seen below, its transcription problems do not end with numerous exceptions in the rendering of individual letters. The translators of the Kitāb al-bayawān and the Rhetoric occupy the middle ground between these extremes. The number and character of exceptions to transcription rules do not detract from the overall coherence of their respective products.

Ignoring the exceptions for a moment, the agreement between all texts in their choice of Arabic equivalents for Greek letters is striking. In spite of possible interference by oral or written Syriac (and potentially Greek) usage, the consensus on a standardized system of transcription seems to emerge very early on. In our list, we note disagreement on the choice of Arabic equivalents only for two letters, δ and π.¹⁹⁸ The choice between b and f to substitute π has been discussed above; considering the purportedly “traditional” variety f chosen by Ishāq in favor of the allegedly more “modern” b which has to be qualified anyhow in light of the transcription methods applied in the Nicomachean Ethics, we cannot but agree with den Heijer who doubts the validity of claims about a translation’s age or a possible Syriac Vorlage on the basis of transcription methods.¹⁹⁹

As is the case with the Rhetoric, the transcription of names does not only consist in uniformly substituting a Greek letter with an Arabic one. Translators take a few more steps to fit names into schemata familiar to their Arabic-speaking audience. Two procedures which are employed equally in all translations we have been looking at so far are the derivation of transcriptions from nominative forms of the names in question—with varying degrees of success and consistency in different texts.²⁰⁰ Another phenomenon which has been mentioned above is the suppression of the spiritus asper. In our entire translation sample, we only find two exceptions to this rule: in the Generation of Animals, the nomen gentis ὁ Ἡρακλεώτης

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¹⁹⁸ The letter ξ with its two phonetic components did not lend itself easily to transcription standardization; our sample does not provide us with enough information to identify kis as the definitive rendering.


was rendered into *min Hiraqlab* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, one of the three occurrences of the name Ἡράκλειτος is transcribed as *Hiraqlīṭus*.

Several names are directly translated into their Arabic equivalent. An example we find in three out of our translations is Ἀἴγυπτος, uniformly reproduced as *miṣr*. Ἀἰθίοψ is matched in the *Generation of Animals* quite fittingly with ḥabašī, while the *Placita* generalizes the term into *zān* after correctly translating Αἴθωσ with ʿard al-ḥabašāb. In the same text, we find the names of Greek gods substituted with their corresponding planet name, e.g. Ἄρης (*al-mirrīḫ*), Ἀφροδίτη (*al-zuharah*, also found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*) or Κρόνος (*zuḥal*). Others are both translated and transcribed, e.g. Ἑρµῆς, whom we encounter as *Irmīs* and ʿuṭārid, or Zeūs, transcribed as *Zāūs* (or Zū and Dīyā in the *Nicomachean Ethics*) and translated into *al-muṣṭari*.²⁰¹

One translation Daiber discusses in some detail is ḥunafāʾ for *oi Δαναοί*. He traces it back to the identification of Greeks with pagans in Christian discourse until the rise of Byzantium and transmitted to Syriac Christian circles. Consequently, we often find the term Ἔλληνες translated into Syriac as *ḥanē* (pagans). Daiber interprets ḥunafāʾ as one more piece of evidence for Qustā ibn Lūqāʾ’s authorship of the *Placita*-translation.²⁰² It has to be added, however, that Qustā shared the Christian outlook implicit in this term with any number of Christian Syriac translators.

One issue that apparently was not resolved in the earlier translations is the handling of feminine (place) names (or other terms the translators took to be feminine). Unfortunately, the Themistius-text does not offer any comparative material except for one occurrence of Σικελία, which

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²⁰¹ Equating Greek gods with their corresponding planets was a frequent practice of translators, e.g. to “defuse” the polytheistic contents of their source text; cf. Strohmaier (1968, esp. p. 135f). Walbridge (1998) lists other strategies employed by Muslim writers to deal with references to Greek gods in philosophical and scientific works. Although they did not pose any substantial spiritual threat anymore, some scholars felt the need to explain such incidences in works that were too useful for them to dismiss out of hand as the scribblings of polytheists (p. 402f).

²⁰² Daiber (1980, p. 10). Some background information on ḥanif can be found in W. Montgomery Watt’s article “Ḥanif” in *EI*, vol. 5, p. 165f. The translator’s use of the term is very much at odds with its Islamic usage: in the Qurʾān, it denotes “monotheists” (particularly Abraham) as opposed to “idolaters”, *muʾārikān*. The ḥanif is understood to be a true monotheist and a predecessor of the Muslims, with which he shares a “pure monotheism”. In Islamic literature, it retains this meaning and is occasionally used as the equivalent of *muslim*. Christian literature employed the term as a polemical appellation of Muslims; its interpretation as “heathen” or “pagan” stems from its Syriac cognate ḥanīf which has the same meaning. In some Aramaean circles, the word was often used for people with a Hellenistic education. Both aspects of “paganism” and “Hellenistically educated” were probably intended in the *Placita*.
is transcribed as Siqilīyab with final tā’ marbūṭab. The name was in all likelihood familiar to the translator and even before the actual conquest of Sicily, the island had been known under its fully Arabized name. The Nicomachean Ethics, on the other hand, exclusively operates with non-arabized transcriptions such as ‘abl Aṭīniyā for Aθναίοι, ‘abl Sqūṭiyā for Σκύθεις and even al-ʾAhlāq al-niqūmāḥiyā for Ἱππώκαλα Ἐιππόκαλα.

In the earlier texts, we find both the semi-Arabization obtained by adding tāʾ marbūṭah and an “unassimilated” transcription with final ā. In addition to the findings for the Rhetoric discussed above, both varieties occur in the zoological texts in contexts which indicate a certain degree of insecurity in handling geographical references. A few examples, first of “unassimilated” transcriptions: terms such as min Qrūṭūniyā are straightforwardly derived from the corresponding noun ὁ Κροτωνιάτης, likewise Ἀρκάδια (Ἀρκαδία) and Ἄρκαδαι (Ἠθικά Νικ)(μάχεια). The situation is less clear in the case of Ἡρακλεώτης which the translator apparently misunderstands as a place name and transcribed as Sawrumāṭā. The nomen gentis Σκύθαι is transcribed as Isqūṭiyā or translated as Türk. Arabized transcriptions occur more frequently, e.g. Ἰταλία, Ἡθικά Νικ(μάχεια). In the Placita, both varieties coexist without any clear preference for one or the other. The names of countries appear in both guises: we read Bρεττάνια as well as Ἰταλία for Ἡθικά Νικ(μάχεια). The criterion at work here does not seem to be the degree of familiarity of a given name with more widely known names appearing in an Arabized form; we would be hard pressed to come up with an explanation for the transcription Ἀραβία for Ἀραβία, a place name one would have thought familiar enough to be translated rather than transcribed. Daiber cites several reasons for the apparent inconsistencies in the Placita’s transcription system: lapses of the translator or mistakes of scribes, the difficulties of reproducing certain sounds with the Arabic graphemic inventory and perhaps the translator’s attempt to take the different phonetic situation of the contemporary Greek κοινή into account.

With the notable exception of Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn’s translation of the De anima-commentary, each text is affected by two other types of transcription lapses. The first concerns the derivation of placenames from adjectives. Similar to the Rhetoric, they are present in both the Kitāb al-hayawān and the Placita. Whereas the number of cases seems to be rather small in the zoological works, they are a regular feature of the Placita.

e.g. min 'abl Qīţ for ḏ Kūţūs, min 'abl Aqrāqantīnā for ḏ ḍawqantīnūs or min 'abl Mīlīṭyāb for ḏ Mīlītībūs. In the case of ḏ Iων, the translator cleverly avoids the pitfalls of geographical ignorance and nonchalantly describes them as firqaṭ al-yūnānīyīn.²⁰⁴ Even though it is ascribed to the same translator who worked on the De anima-commentary, the Nicomachean Ethics is not entirely free from such lapses. Examples are 'abl Milāsūs, derived from Mīlāsūs and Sīfūnīyūs from Σικυώνιοι.

The second type of transcription lapse consists of wrongly derived nominative forms of placenames, a problem that affects the Kitāb al-bayāwūn and the Placita to the same degree. Thus, we read Atīnās for ḏ Athēnēs or Bīrimūs for ḏ Perūnūs in the Generation of Animals and ḏ Aīdūn for ḏ Adūnūs or 'abl Sāmīyūs for ḏ Sāmīsūs in the Placita.

The last aspect of transcription is its consistency, in its repeated rendering of names across each text. Again, the Themistius-text is almost uncannily precise in its handling of names. We do find variants even here but they confirm Ishāq’s transcriptional reliability instead of detracting from it: the variant Arīstu occurs only once compared to seven occurrences of the standard Arīṣūlūs. The standard transcription for Σωκράτης, Suqrāṭūs, appears no less than ten times, its variant Suqrāṭīs only once. Δημόκριτος is transcribed four times as Dimuqrīṭus and only once as Dimuqrāṭus. The exactitude of Ishāq’s work is thrown into even sharper relief when we consider the relative fluidity of vowels: the switch between short and long vowels to replace their Greek counterparts is common in the other translations. Ishāq, on the other hand, works with an established set of stock transcriptions. It is therefore very tempting to explain transcriptions in the De anima-text which do not conform to Ishāq’s standard with transmission problems.

In terms of its terminology and consistency, the Nicomachean Ethics differs to some degree from the De anima-commentary: whereas the Themistius-commentary relies on Arīṣūlūs as its transcription of choice with only one variant, this very variant is standard in the Nicomachean Ethics which uses Arīṣū throughout (16 occurrences). The same applies to the two transcriptions for Σωκράτης, Suqrāṭūs (preferred in the De anima-commentary) and Suqrāṭīs (3 out of 4 occurrences in the Nicomachean Ethics). Above, we have seen that this translation also alternates between b and f in its transcription of τ, leading to variant transcriptions for one and the same name. Lastly, like the Themistius-text, this translation displays a certain flexibility in the use of long vowels to reproduce Greek vowels.

²⁰⁴ Interestingly, yūnānī is originally derived from the term ḏ Isōn, the Ionians.
In sum, it is remarkably less consistent in its transcription methods than the De anima-commentary.

The variability of transcription is somewhat higher in the zoological texts. Out of 34 unique personal and placenames in the Generation and Parts of Animals, 11 appear in more than one form in the Arabic text. Most of them only consist of small variations in the vowel structure of words, e.g. Andrūniqis and Andrūniqis for Ἀνδρόνικος. A few involve more substantial mutations, e.g. Irūduṭūs, Irūduṭūs and Yirūduṭūs for Ἡρόδοτος. Interestingly enough, such variations do not play a role in the Placita; whatever one might think about other aspects of the translator’s transcription system, his consistency in regard to this particular detail is exemplary.

Endress mentions the transcription rules applied in all three Arabic versions of Aristotle’s De caelo only in passing. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether the information he provides applies equally to all three versions in spite of their age difference. While in general similar to the transcription system we found in the Rhetoric, the texts alternate between b and f for Greek π, Δ, especially in the second version (which Endress identifies as a revision by Ibn al-Bitrīq of his own earlier translation), becomes both d and ḏ—another reflection of the two possible pronunciations of Syriac d, [d] and [ḏ]. Moreover, the translators sometimes transcribe the grammatical form they find in their text instead of “normalizing” them to their respective nominative forms. It is difficult to draw any safe conclusions from our author’s preference for nominative forms. Two hypotheses spring to mind: instead of choosing the easier solution of transcribing the form as he found them in his source, he expends some effort to reconstruct the nominative as his starting point—perhaps an indicator of a more careful attitude to his task. Moreover, his more or less competent references to nominative forms might indicate a higher level of linguistic knowledge and/or translation experience.

Returning to the issue we began with, the comparative position of the Arabic Rhetoric in terms of the transcription of technical terms and names, we have to admit that even with a thorough characterization of the transcription system of this and other texts—at least as small a sample as we have studied—we are not necessarily better prepared to answer the two key questions: when did our translation come into being and what was the language of the source text? Unable to demonstrate any necessary link between transcription practices on the one hand and source languages and

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205 Endress (1966, p. 73f).
translation dates on the other hand, we have to consider both in isolation for the time being.\(^{206}\)

**The terminology**

In addition to the marginal notes (discussed above)\(^{207}\) which contain important information for dating the translation, its purported deficiencies and its allegedly ancient terminology are regularly cited to support a very early translation date.\(^{208}\) Most commentators confine themselves to general remarks about the text’s defects and allegedly undeveloped terminology which seems to correspond only too well with the dating suggested by the marginal notes.

In what follows, we will examine a terminological sample drawn from the *Rhetoric* and compare it to the control group of translations we already consulted, i.e. the *Kitāb al-bayawān*, the *Institutio theologica*, the *Placita philosophorum*, the *Nicomachean Ethics* and Themistius’ *De anima*-commentary.

As in the previous subchapters, a number of qualifications apply. Firstly, the differences in the indices put certain restrictions on our comparative data. Especially quantitative data on the distribution of translation variants is not always included. Secondly, the texts deal with a wide variety of subjects and necessarily display substantial differences in vocabulary. The sample therefore does not only contain examples for rhetorical or philosophical terms but a wider sample of terms with varying fields of application. The glossaries of the Proclus-text and the *Nicomachean Ethics* in particular were less helpful than expected. Their subject matter and the relative shortness of the *Institutio theologica* sharply limit the terminological data available from these texts.

For purposes of dating and terminological comparison, our sample is undoubtedly quite small. What we have is three texts from the same translation tradition, i.e. the *Kitāb al-bayawān*, the *Institutio theologica* and the *Placita philosophorum*, all of them produced in the so-called Kindī-circle,

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\(^{206}\) Unfortunately, the two most important dictionaries devoted to the language of the Greek-Arabic translations, Gerhard Endress’ and Dimitri Gutas’ *A Greek and Arabic lexicon: materials for a dictionary of the medieval translations from Greek into Arabic* (Endress and Gutas, 1992–) and Manfred Ullmann’s *Wörterbuch zu den griechisch-arabischen Übersetzungen des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Ullmann, 2002–), cannot help us with transcriptions: at this point, neither traces Greek proper names.

\(^{207}\) Cf. p. 50.

\(^{208}\) A representative sample of quotes can be found in Goulet (1989–, vol. 1, p. 455f).
and two translations prepared by the son of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, the *Nicomachean Ethics* and Themistius’ commentary on Aristotle’s *De anima*. While sufficient for a number of general observations, the indices of the last text unfortunately contains the least amount of information. Quantitative relations between different renderings of a single Greek term are not indicated. Moreover, the apparent translational consistency suggested by the pairing of one Arabic for one Greek term might not entirely be due to superior lexical tools and better training available to members of Ḥunayn’s circle; Lyons’ tendency to normalize index items could have led to the exclusion of translations other indices list separately.

To reduce the impact of the indices’ different approaches, we will focus only on the most obvious findings. A more detailed terminological survey including a large number of texts from different periods of the Greek-Arabic translation phenomenon is still lacking. We hope that the inclusion of some additional relevant information from Gutas’ and Endress’ *GALex* and Ullmann’s *WGAU* will fill some of the unavoidable gaps in this terminological survey.

Any attempt to use terminology for dating purposes relies on certain assumptions about terminological development. One of them presupposes an evolution from high terminological volatility towards a stable and less varied set of translations for technical terms. A second hypothesis posits the gradual substitution of transcribed terms and calques from Syriac in a process of continuous “Arabization”. At the end of it, we find the highly detailed and specialized terminology of Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Ruṣd. Both claims and the more basic idea that we can distil any information about terminological developments from extant texts in the first place in spite of the problems associated with textual history and manuscript traditions are open to criticism. While it seems prudent to view conclusions drawn from the evidence we are dealing with with a sceptical eye, we are not convinced that generations of scribes and well-meaning commentators have entirely eradicated traces of earlier terminological and phraseological strata in an attempt to “modernize” texts which did not seem to conform to contemporary grammatical and terminological standards.

On the contrary, except for attempts at improving on some of the more obvious stylistic and grammatical idiosyncrasies of earlier translations, I would hold that there probably never was any systematic attempt to

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²⁰⁹ *Greek and Arabic Lexicon*, Endress and Gutas (1992–).
Manipulate translations short of re-translation, i.e. older versions, even though their deficiencies were acknowledged continued to circulate in spite of their shortcomings unless supplanted by newer, improved translations. Without denying the influence of copyists, commentators and readers on the form of the text as it has reached us, I am very hesitant to give up one of the few tools we have to classify and date texts.

We will now review the issues brought up by a terminological comparison. They relate mainly to degrees of terminological variation and continuity of terms across texts.

Comparison

The first conspicuous phenomenon we encounter is the high degree of terminological variation in the Rhetoric. Striking examples are the Greek terms ἀνάλογος, δῆλος and παράδειγμα. In the first case, the translator relies mainly on participles and verbal nouns derived from the root ʿ-d-l such as muʿādalab, ʾtidāl, muʿāḍil and muʿṭadil. We moreover find several collocations: ʿalā wazn wa-miqdār, ʿalā wazn ʿaw al-martabab, istiwāʿ al-maqāḍir wa-ʿtidālu-bā and muʿādalab wa-wazn. This proliferation of renderings contrasts with the Kitāb al-ḥayawān which employs forms derived from the verb lāʿana and the participle muwafiq. The vocabulary of the Placita is even more limited: the translator confines himself to the phrase ʿalā tilka al-munāsabab and munāṣib, both forms from the same stem of the root n–s–b. With the De anima-commentary, the range of equivalents becomes again somewhat more varied: naẓīr, qiyās, muʿāḍil, fi qiyās and ma nābaʿ an serve to translate forms of ἀνάλογος.

The contrast between the Rhetoric and the other texts is more pronounced in their respective treatment of the adjective ḥayawān. The Rhetoric operates with a wide range of terms and roots. Most prominent are expressions based on the roots b–y–n and w–d–b: we find the verbs bayyana, tabayyana and istabāna together with the collocations bayyin wāḍib and its inverse wāḍib bayyin as well as istabāna wa-wadāba. The second root is represented by the participle wāḍib and the verb ʿawdāba. Participles from different roots are for example muḥaqqaq, muʿlām and zābir; we also encounter several other collocations (maklūf bayyin, maʿlūm wāḍib), the verb istahbarā and the phrase bi-lā šakk. The zoological treatises display some of the terminological richness of the Rhetoric: the Arabic equivalents the

²¹¹ Cf. some of Hunayn ibn Ishāq’s acerbic remarks on the merits of his predecessor’s Arabic and Syriac translations. Especially Sergius of Rēʾaynā is repeatedly taken to task for his allegedly poor performance (Bergsträsser, 1925, p. 5f, 7f).
The translator has chosen are mabsūṭ, mabsūṭ maʿrūf, zābir, bayyin and, again, the verb istabāna. The Proclus-translation, in which forms of δῆλος only occur twice, translates it with the collocation bayyin wūḏīh and, in conjunction with the particle δή, departs from the precedents set by the other translations by choosing lā muḥālab ḫaḍan. The Placita-translation has the verb zābara and its active participle zābir, whereas the verbs bayyyana and tabayyyana are the preferred Arabic renderings for δῆλος in the De anima-commentary. As we can see, the concentration on a single root for the translation of the word δῆλος apparently takes place already in the Kindī-circle. To appreciate the remarkable difference between the Rhetoric and the other texts, we have to keep in mind that the Greek term in question is less a semantically restricted technical term than a non-technical adjective with a fairly wide field of application. This example suggests that the tendency towards a less flexible translational approach seems to set in at a relatively early date for a number of terms.

Our last example is παράδειγμα. The terminological proliferation evident in the Rhetoric is reduced to a single term, miṯāl, in the remaining translations. Interestingly enough, this Arabic translation which has been adopted as the standard rendering of παράδειγμα in our entire sample is conspicuously absent from the Rhetoric. Its translator tries his hand at several translations: aside from single-word renderings such as burhān and dalālah, he displays a marked preference for collocations such as taṯbīt ʿaw waṣf and dalālah wa-burhānīyāt. Neither of them seems to satisfy him; the use of doublets suggests that he might have felt unsure about the exact meaning of παράδειγμα and/or its use in the Rhetoric.

Terminological proliferation is not a phenomenon unique to the Rhetoric. We find examples for terms with a wide range of Arabic renderings in one text compared to less variation in the other translations in each of the texts we are studying. They are, nevertheless, less frequent than in the Rhetoric and, more importantly, the differences between the texts are less pronounced in those cases. Two prominent examples in the Kitāb al-ḥayawan are the compound ʿμαζωνὶς and the noun πὲρας. The former is paraphrased with mutasāwī fi al-/Foundation/ in the Rhetoric. The Kitāb al-ḥayawan uses different paraphrases, we find ʿabīb bi-/Foundation/-bi, mūnāṣib bi-l-/Foundation/-gīs, mutaṣaf ʿabīb bi-l-/Foundation/-gīs and nāṣib bi-l-/Foundation/-gīs. With the Placita, translations move away from paraphrases towards single-word translations, in this case muṣīb and muḡānis. The De anima-commentary reduces the pool of available translations to one term, muṯānis. Apart from its interest as an example of gradual decline of terminological variation, the transla-
tors’ respective handling of ἀμερής illustrates a second characteristic of terminological development between the texts: the assimilation of a loan word, in this case ġinu, into the morphological apparatus of the Arabic language.

The term πέρας in the Kitāb al-ḥayawān represents another interesting example of a text leaving the terminological mainstream for a completely different solution. Except for the Kitāb al-ḥayawān, the term is unanimously translated as nibāyab. The translator of the zoological treatises, on the other hand, experiments with terms such as ʿāḥir, maḥdūd and ġāyab, singly and in combination (ġāyāt wa-ʿawāḥir).

Apart from some of the negative compounds discussed above, the Institutio theologica offers few examples for conspicuous terminological variation. Whether due to its subject matter (and limited vocabulary), its comparative shortness or some other reason, the terminology of the text is remarkably stable. Even the few instances of variation—e.g. ἀπειρός, which is translated in seven different ways across the text—mostly consist of choosing different nominal and verbal forms rather than verbal roots, in this case n–b–y: it is translated with phrases such as lá nibāyāb la-bu, lá muntahā la-bu, lá ntiḥā la-bu, ṣayr di nibāyab or verbal forms such as lá yatanābī. Of the 20 occurrences of the term, only one departs from this pattern (lá ġāyab la-bu). In its use of the root n–b–y, the Institutio theologica follows the examples set by previous translations. Translations of the adjective ἀμερής, of which there are four, rely equally on forms derived from the roots q–s–m and ǧ–z–ʾ: lá yaqbal al-qismah wa-lá al-taǧżi’ab, lá ṣaṭāqṣaṭ, lá yaqbal al-qismah and lá ġuz’ab la-bu. The second of these two roots predominates also in the other two translations in which the term ἀμερής occurs, the Placita and the Themistius-commentary. These two are the only examples of Greek terms in the Institutio theologica with more than three different translations.

Prominent instances of terminological variation in the Placita philosophorum are also relatively hard to come by. In fact, the degree of restraint the translator practices with his vocabulary is even higher across the range of terms included in our terminological sample than that displayed by the later De anima-commentary. Where we find an apparently wider range of renderings of a Greek term, it turns out to be variations of a single root. The adjective ἀνικός has been translated as manṭiqī in both the Rhetoric and the Kitāb al-ḥayawān. The De anima prefers Ṽuṭqī and nāṭiq. All of them are found in the Placita too, which has Ṽuṭq and qiwat al-Ṽuṭq in place of ἀνικός as well as Ṽuṭqī, nāṭiq
and manṣiq. The root n-t-q, moreover, was employed exclusively for a small number of terms derived from the noun λόγος such as ἄλογος and λογικός: the root has, at least in the Placita philosophorum, become the standard source for very specific technical terms.

The Nicomachean Ethics contains a noticeably higher proportion of terms with a variety of Arabic equivalents. One remarkable example is the word λόγος for which the translator picked forms from no less than eight different roots. In order of their frequency, they are n-t-q (nuṭq, 5 times), f-k-r (fikrah, 5 times), m-y-z (tamyīz, 3 times), k-l-m (kalimah, 3 times), q-w-l (qawl, twice) and one occurrence each for ʿ-q-l (ʿaql), ʿ-l-m (ʿilm) and q-y-s (qiyyūs). However, such variability should not come as a surprise. Firstly, it is matched by some of the other translations, most prominently the Kitāb al-ḥayawān and the Placita which also rely on a large number of verbal roots to translate λόγος. Secondly (and more importantly), the term λόγος has such a wide semantic range that it would be very strange not to a correspondingly wide variety of Arabic translations. On the contrary, it would reflect badly on the competence of a translator if he attempted to reduce the diverse meanings of the term to one or two Arabic roots in the interest of terminological uniformity.

There are few suitable examples of terminological variation in the De anima-commentary. Its slightly higher degree of terminological flexibility compared to the Placita only becomes obvious when we look at terms with just one Arabic translation in the Placita. For a number of them, Ishāq uses two or even three equivalents. The noun φωνή is such a term. Its standard translation, ṣawt, already appears in the Rhetoric in addition to the less frequent lafẓ. While the other two texts rely exclusively on ṣawt, the De anima-commentary again takes up lafẓ as a minor equivalent for φωνή and varies its main translation ṣawt to taṣwīt.

We have seen that if there is a tendency towards a reduction of variety in the translation of numerous terms in our sample, it seems not particularly pronounced. While some earlier translations apparently already exercise some restraint in terms of terminological variation, the Nicomachean Ethics seems to buck the trend to some degree by introducing a level of terminological variation that contrasts with the terminological economy of the De anima-commentary. According to our findings, the fault line between terminologically promiscuous and fastidious texts cannot be drawn between pre-Ḥunayn translations on the one hand and those produced by one of Ḥunayn’s associates on the other. In terms of their degree of variation, it would be more appropriate to group Ishāq’s translation of
the Themistius-commentary together with the *Placita philosophorum* and set them apart from the *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*. The *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Institutio theologica* would fall somewhere between those texts. Before we determine the *Rhetoric*’s place in this schema, it seems worthwhile to assemble the numerical distribution of terminological variants for a number of terms in our texts in a table.

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Given the relative infrequency of terms with a higher degree of variation in the *Placita*, the *De anima* and to some extent the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Rhetoric* clearly stands out. Even in comparison with the least terminologically consistent member of our control group, the *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, the *Rhetoric* still displays a remarkably high degree of variation. If we would associate terminological variation with an early stage in terminological development or with a lack of technical sophistication on the part of the translator, we would have to classify the text as either a very early product of the Kindī-circle (to which we have tentatively assigned
the *Rhetoric*) or as a text antedating the efforts of al-Kindī and his team of translators altogether.

The results of this short survey can also serve as another reminder of how difficult it is to assign translations to translators or argue for a certain dating on the basis of terminological evidence. To compare terminological samples from texts that deal with such a wide range of subjects is always problematic, because very few technical terms are sufficiently unambiguous in their meaning and field of application. The Arabic translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is a good example for a text in which technical terms are transposed onto a very different terrain. Matching these terms inevitably smacks of comparing apples and oranges.

In addition, the criterion of terminological variation in different texts has its own set of problems. First of all, it is not always true that less variation can be used as an indicator for a better translation (and/or one produced at a later stage of the Greek-Arabic translation activities). Ignoring for the moment the possibility of terminological interference by later readers and copyists, terminological variation can sometimes be a mark of a better translator. To convey the nuances of a text, it is often necessary to pick and choose from a range of possible Arabic roots and forms. Operating with eight different roots to translate λόγος, the translator of the *Nicomachean Ethics* demonstrates a much better grasp of the language than one who would attempt to cut back on terminological choices in this case. There are of course some technical terms with a sufficiently small semantic range for which less terminological variation can be a measure for translational competence but they have to be carefully distinguished from a number of multivalent terms (such as λόγος) for which the opposite is true.

In the case of the term λόγος, the variety of translations we found in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is outnumbered not by *Rhetoric* which already displays a wide range of Arabic renderings but the *Kitāb al-ḥayawan*. In addition to collocations (kalimah wa-mablaṯ al-ʿaql), it makes use of a wide variety of terms derived from an equally wide range of roots: ḍawāb, ḥaḍṭḥāb, ḍikr, ḍawāḇ, ṭaḥab, ʿaql, ʿilm, qawl, maʿnā, qiyās, kalimah, kalām, mulāʾim and nauː. Other examples of terms unspecific enough to require several renderings in both earlier and later texts are ḫa江山, eidos, κύριος, μέγας, πάθος, σώμα, τρόπος and φανερός.

To shed some more light on the relations between our texts, we will now examine evidence for terminological continuity, exemplified by a
sample of technical and non-technical terms and their respective Arabic equivalents:

αἰσθάνοµαι, αἰσθησις: Translated in all texts (except the Institutio in which they do not occur) with both forms I and IV of the root ḥ–ṣ–ṣ. The Rhetoric adds šaʿara on one occasion to translate the verb, the noun is rendered once with the collocation al-ḥiss wa-l-μuʿāyanah in the Kitāb al-bayawān and the more specific expression ʿalāt al-ḥiss in the Placita.²¹²

αἰτία, αἴτιος: The texts switch between ʿillah and sabab, both of which already occur in the Rhetoric. Whereas the Kitāb al-bayawān remains undecided between the two alternatives, the Institutio and the Placita come down on the side of ʿillah and the Nicomachean Ethics and De anima prefer sabab.²¹³ Thus, at least in our sample, there seems to be a tendency of older translations to opt for ʿillah whereas later ones largely rely on sabab. Additional evidence confirms this hypothesis: ʿillah is the preferred translation in the group of early translations Endress studied and compared with the Institutio theologica.²¹⁴

ἀριθµός: With ʿadad as the standard translation across the sample,²¹⁵ the only variations we find are the collocation ʿadad wa-nihāyah in the Rhetoric and the nouns ʿiddah in the Kitāb al-bayawān and ʾiḥṣāʾ in the De anima.²¹⁶

γένος: All our texts opt for ǧins.²¹⁷

²¹² Cf. also WGAU, p. 84 and WGAU Suppl., p. 77.
²¹³ Comparing several translations ascribed to Ibn al-Bitriq, Arnzen (1998, p. 151) records the following findings: the second translation of Aristotle’s De caelo (Endress, 1966) employs ʿillah except for one example of ʿillah wa-sabab; the pseudo-Galenic In Hippocratis de septimanis commentarium also uses ʾillah with one occurrence of ʾillah wa-sabab and two cases of sabab; the anonymous De anima-paraphrase has only ʿillah. A last text, the translation of Aristotle’s Meteorology, displays enough deviations in terminology and phraseology to doubt Ibn al-Bitriq’s authorship but it clearly belongs to the output of the Kindi-circle; it uses ʿillah as well.
²¹⁴ Cf. Endress (1973, p. 141ff) and, for additional examples from Galen, WGAU, p. 84 and WGAU Suppl., p. 78. The GeLex, vol. 1, p. 57 also records some periphrastic renderings involving min ʾaql in the Kitāb al-bayawān.
²¹⁵ Except in the Nicomachean Ethics, where the term does not appear.
²¹⁶ Cf WGAU Suppl., p. 166.
²¹⁷ The term ǧins is the preferred rendering in two of Arnzen’s Ibn al-Bitriq-translations as well, the De caelo and the De anima-paraphrase. The Meteorology has one occurrence each of ǧins, ṣinʿ and nāw, pseudo-Galen uses ǧins twice and possibly ṣinʿ on two other occasions (Arnzen, 1998, p. 152). The term does not occur in the Institutio theologica. Cf. also WGAU, p. 177f with numerous examples and WGAU Suppl., p. 240.
Aside from the main translation qūwab which is the preferred choice in the *Institutio theologica*, the Placita, the Nicomachean Ethics (with one exception where it is translated as 'a'wān) and the De anima, the Rhetoric introduces qudrab and ḍund and the doublets qūwab 'aw bās and qūwab wa-qadr. In the Kitāb al-ḥayawān, qūwab occurs on one occasion as part of the collocation qūwab wa-ṣtātāb. Already in the Rhetoric, the conflict between qūwab and nouns derived from the root q-d-r seems more or less settled in favor of the former.²¹⁸

The Rhetoric offers both fiʿl and faʿʿāl with a marked preference for the latter. The decision between both terms seems to be in the balance in the Kitāb al-ḥayawān; the remaining two texts drop faʿʿāl and concentrate exclusively on fiʿl. The Institutio also has the collocation al-fiʿl wa-l-ʿamal.²¹⁹

In the majority of cases, these terms are translated by either the definite Allāh or the indefinite ʾilāh.²²⁰ The Rhetoric on one occasion uses the interesting expression rūḥānī which we also find in a number of early translations, e.g. the *Institutio theologica*. There, it translates both θεός and ἀσώµατος; it occurs in the same places in other early translations such as the body of Proclian texts examined by Endres. He links the appearance of the term rūḥānī in earlier translations with the Christian Syriac (and perhaps also Qurʾānic) usage.²²¹ The Placita in which both Greek words appear in more technical contexts than the Rhetoric eschews Allāh in favor of ʾilabī for θεός and more specific phrases such as al-ḡawbar al-ʾilābī or al-ʿumīr al-ʾilābīyāb; Allāb nevertheless figures as translation for θεός. The Nicomachean Ethics relies on two main translations for θεός, al-ʾilāb (also in the plural ʿālibāb) and Allāb with two occurrences of the term al-mutaʿālibān ("those who are deified" or "deify themselves"), apparently in order to circumvent the theological problems caused by translating the plural ἅπλος θεός.²²² In the De

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²¹⁸ The GalEx gives an example from Galen’s *In Hippocratis de officina medici* which translates the term with the doublet qūwab wa-ṣtār. Cf. also WGAU, p. 208f and WGAU Suppl., p. 296f.


²²⁰ Numerous examples for these translations are recorded in the GalEx, vol. 1, p. 307–316.


²²² Cf. Dunlop et al. (2005, p. 144, n. 97).
anima-commentary, we find both Allāh for θεός and ʿilābi for θεῖος, together with samawi for the latter.²²³

λογικός: As we have seen above, this adjective is rendered as mantiqī in both the Rhetoric and the Kitāb al-bayāwān. Remaining committed to the root n–ṭ–q, the Placita and De anima display more variation by picking different terms derived from the same root: qiwat al-nuṭq, nutq, nutqī, nāṭiq and mantiqī in the former and nuṭqī and nāṭiq in the latter text.²²⁴

λογισµός: The preference of renderings based on the root n–ṭ–q for terms derived from λέγω/λόγος has its exceptions. This expression, which does not appear in the Kitāb al-bayāwān, is translated as either fikr (Placita and De anima) or alternately as fikrāb or fikr (Rhetoric and Nicomachean Ethics).²²⁵

νοῦς: Already in the Rhetoric, we find ʿaql as the standard translation which remains the exclusive term in all our texts. The Institutio theologica stands out, because νοῦς has both a psychological and a theological component. While ʿaql remains the standard translation, proposition 167 also uses terms derived from the root ʿ–l–m, e.g. ʿālim, ʿilm or ḍū al-ʿilm.²²⁶ This terminological continuity is broken by an occurrence of fāhm in the Rhetoric.²²⁷

όνοµα: We find the same unanimity in respect to the term ōnoma. The Rhetoric uses the only non-standard translation, the collocation ism ʿaw laf, in addition to the main translation ism.²²⁸

παράδειγµα: Except for the Rhetoric, every text uniformly substitutes παράδειγµα with mītal. In what can perhaps be described as continuous experimentation, the Rhetoric uses burbān, dalālāb and the collocations taḥbit ʿaw wasf and dalālāb wa-burbāniyah. The text’s

²²³ In addition to terms derived from the root ʿ–l–b, the GALex has ʿabādi (vol. 1, p. 10f). Cf. also WGAU, p. 292 and WGAU Suppl., p. 45f, 460.

²²⁴ The glossaries of the Institutio theologica and the Nicomachean Ethics do not have any entries for this term.

²²⁵ Cf. also WGAU Suppl., p. 638.

²²⁶ Cf. Endress (1973, p. 138–141) for a discussion of the usage of the Institutio theologica and the rest of his comparative sample; he explains the partial deviation of the translator as an ad-hoc terminological decision on the basis of the context of this particular section of the text.

²²⁷ The more technical sense with which it is used in Galen’s De anatomicis administrationibus has been rendered as dīhm, cf. WGAU, p. 438.

²²⁸ Again, there are no entries for the Institutio and the Nicomachean Ethics. Cf. also WGAU Suppl., p. 774f.
translation for the adjective παραδειγματωδής, burhānī, might indicate the translator’s preferences in his apparently inconclusive search for a satisfactory translation. The term chosen by the other texts, mitāl, also occurs in the Rhetoric, but as one of several translations for sīkān. Mitāl is moreover the standard rendering for sīkān in the De anima. We also encounter it in the Placita, which has širab, mitāl and timīṣāl for sīkān.\(^{229}\)

πείθω: This is one of the terms which best illustrate the differences in terminological variation between the Rhetoric and the other texts. Each of them relies on derivatives of the root q–n–r: the Kitāb al-ḥayawān has qāna‘a, the Placita ṣaqna‘a and the De anima uses the noun qanā‘ah. Forms of the same root figure prominently in the Rhetoric as well—we encounter ṣaqna‘a, ṣīnā‘ and ṣaqā‘ample frameworks such as fa‘ula al-ṣīnā‘ and tawallā al-ṣīnā‘. Additionally, the text features more “exotic” renderings such as ṣāḥibata, ṣa‘a, qabilā or collocations, e.g. ṣaddana ‘aw qa‘na‘a or qabilā ‘aw niḥān ṣā‘a.\(^{230}\)

πέρας: One example of a term rendered more variably in a translation other than the Rhetoric. The Kitāb al-ḥayawān has ṣā‘īr, maḥṣūd and ṣā‘yab in addition to the doublet ṣā‘yab wa-‘awābir whereas the rest of the texts restrict themselves to the use of niḥāyab, plus an occurrence of ṣā‘r in the De anima.\(^{231}\)

ποιητής: The development from transcription to translation can be seen in the handling of this term. In Book Three of the Rhetoric, it is transcribed as ṣū‘īṭī;\(^{232}\) ṣā‘r occurs in the other two books. Both the Kitāb al-ḥayawān and the Placita use ṣā‘r, while the De anima, in keeping with its different subject matter, has the more general fa‘il: the ποιητής in question is a maker of all sorts of things, not just poetry.\(^{233}\)

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\(^{229}\) The term does not occur in the Institutio and the Nicomachean Ethics.

\(^{230}\) There is no entry for the term in the glossaries of the Institutio and the Nicomachean Ethics.

\(^{231}\) This term is also absent from the Institutio and the Nicomachean Ethics. The WGAU, p. 513 has ṣā‘īl (a common translation, cf. GALex, vol. 1, p. 234) and ṣīnā‘ from the two translations of Galen’s De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus. There are also numerous examples for the more common renderings derived from the root ‘–ḥ–r, cf. GALex, vol. 1, p. 118f.

\(^{232}\) See above for the potential significance of the transcription as a marker for a Syriac source.

\(^{233}\) No entries for the Institutio and the Nicomachean Ethics.
στέρησις: Apart from the Rhetoric's single use of ‘idām in Book Three, the standard rendering of the term in all our texts is ‘adam.²³⁴

στοχεύω: For the translator of the Rhetoric, the standard translation ‘uṣṭaqūṣus is only one of a number of possibilities, the most prominent of which seems to be ṣakl. We find it separately or in collocations such as ṣakl ‘ay ‘uṣṭaqūṣūb, ṣakl wa-‘asl, ‘uṣṭaqūṣus ‘aw ṣakl and al-ḥurūf wa-l-ḥiǧā. With the exception of the Placita which has a single occurrence of ‘unsur, ‘uṣṭaqūṣus is the standard translation in the remaining texts.²³⁵

σύνθεσις: The term (which does not appear in the Institutio, the Placita and the Nicomachian Ethics) has been translated as tarkīb throughout.²³⁶

σχήμα: The translational consensus for this term seems to emerge early on, ṣakl is the rendering of choice for each text. Slight variation is introduced by the doublets ṣākīl wa-ṣākīl (Rhetoric) and ṣākīl wa-ṣūrāb (Kitāb al-ḥayawān). The one occurrence of ṣakl in the Nicomachian Ethics is supplemented by one occurrence of taṣākkul.²³⁷

τίχον: As with some of the other terms, the Rhetoric already contains all the Arabic renderings which become standardized in other texts. Aside from the expressions mibnab, ḥilab and sinā’ab, it provides the collocation sinā’ab ‘aw/wa-ḥilab. The Kitāb al-ḥayawān opts for mibnab, the other texts favor sinā’ab.²³⁸

φαντασία: To translate φαντασία, the Rhetoric employs expressions derived from different roots, most prominently ḥ–y–l and w–b–m, e.g. taḥṭayyul and waḥm and the doublets muṭaḥṭayyul ‘aw muṭawababm and taḥṭayyul ‘aw taṭawabm. We also find a single occurrence of

²³⁴ Except the Nicomachian Ethics.
²³⁶ According to Arnzen’s sample, the De caelo and the De anima-paraphrase also employ ṣakl. In the Meteorology, the translator renders the term twice as ṣinā’āb and adds one occurrence each of the doublet ṣakl wa-ḥayawāb and the noun qadr (Arnzen, 1998, p. 156). The term does not appear in the Institutio. Examples from medical texts in WGAU, p. 663 show that ṣakl was the predominant translation also in this field.
²³⁷ Ibn al-Bīrīq’s translations are slightly more consistent, he uses sinā’āb in all texts compared by Arnzen. In the Meteorology, it is collocated with mibnab to mibnab wa-sinā’āb; in the De anima-paraphrase, both sinā’āb and waḥm appear (Arnzen, 1998, p. 156). No occurrence of the term is listed in the glossary of the Institutio. The WGAU, p. 673 lists some examples from the Sententiae of Menander which were translated with mibnab, sinā’āb and once with ḥilab.
The choice between the roots ٣-٥-٠ and ٣-٧-٠ is settled in favor of the former in the Placita and the De anima (φαντασία does not occur in the Kitāb al-ḥayawān). Both texts use the verbal noun of the V. form introduced in the Rhetoric together with ٣ḥyyil (Placita) and ٣ḥayāl (De anima). ²³⁹ Interestingly, the Nicomachean Ethics prefers the transcriptions ٣فوش٣ and ٣ف٣وض٣ (3 occurrences) to the more regular terms ٣ṭḥayyul and ٣yaṭḥayyal (a single occurrence each). ²⁴⁰

φύσις: A standard term for φύσις apparently only emerges with Ḥunayn and his associates, Ishāq replaces the relative profusion of renderings in the other three texts with the single expression ٣ṭḥab in the De anima. A certain degree of variation is still observable, though, the Nicomachean Ethics alternates between ٣ṭḥab and ٣ṭاب. The term ٣ṭḥab already figures in the Rhetoric, but is accompanied by the form ṭibāʿ and included in the collocation ٣ṭاب ٣ṭibāʿ. The Kitāb al-ḥayawān favors ṭibāʿ and, infrequently, ḥal and taqwām. In the Institutio, we find ٣ṭḥab as the preferred translation with one occurrence of ٣ɡawbar. The Placita uses both ٣ṭاب and ٣ṭḥab. ²⁴¹ Part of the reason for the apparent terminological instability is the range of contexts in which φύσις occurs. Adverbial uses such as φυσικά and κατά φυσικά are frequent in Aristotle’s writings and widen the scope of the word’s application far beyond its use as a technical term of natural philosophy. ²⁴²

φωνή: The terminological consensus focuses on ٣φωνή already at the time of the Rhetoric, the Kitāb al-ḥayawān and the Placita-translation. The second rendering in use in the Rhetoric, ṭafū, is again taken up in the De anima-commentary together with ṭafūṣ. ²⁴³

Naṣṣ: Naṣṣ is the standard translation ٣ناص in each of our texts. ²⁴⁴ Greek

²³⁹ So also in Galen’s De elementis, cf. WGAU, p. 722.
²⁴⁰ The treatment of the term in translations produced in the Kindi-circle and later texts is discussed on p. 102.
²⁴¹ According to David Pingree and Syed Nomanul Haq, the authors of the article “Tabiʿa” in EI (vol. 10, p. 25–28), the terms ٣ṭḥab, ṭibāʿ and ٣ṭاب are functional equivalents in Islamic science, philosophy and theology.
²⁴² Arnzen records ٣ṭḥab for each of the three texts he credits Ibn al-Bīrūnī with. The Meteorology mostly uses ٣ṭḥab as well, but also has kiyān (twice) and ٣مداد (once). We also find four occurrences of ٣ṭاب without attestable Greek equivalents (Arnzen, 1998, p. 157). The WGAU, p. 750f has numerous examples from the medical literature which operate with translations such as ٣ṭḥab, ٣ɡawbar and also ṭibāʿ.
²⁴³ Neither the Institutio nor the Nicomachean Ethics have entries for this term.
²⁴⁴ As it is for the Arabic translator of Menander’s Sententiae, cf. WGAU, p. 785.
terms derived from ψυχή, e.g. ἄψυχος and ἐµψυχος, emphasize the role of nafs and the root n–f–s: we encounter negations such as lā nafs la-hu in each text for the first of these two terms. The Rhetoric adds some variation with phrases such as bi-lā nafṣāniyah and ḡayr al-nafṣāni. The second term is translated as ḏū al-nafṣ in the Rhetoric, the remaining translations shift to the V. form and employ muṭanaffis. The abstract noun nafṣāniyah remains in use throughout the time covered by our sample, it figures equally in the earlier Institutio and the later Nicomachean Ethics.

Overall, we noticed a very high degree of terminological variation in the Rhetoric not only with derivatives from a single root; its translator often experiments with a number of different roots to translate Greek terms in different contexts. A certain amount of terminological proliferation is also evident in the Kitāb al-ḥayawān; it decreases once more in the Institutio and is absent in the Placita and De anima, while playing only a secondary role in the Nicomachean Ethics. Interpreting these results, we will have to make allowances for the fact that not all of the terms we have examined are technical terms with a restricted field of application.

Bearing this qualification in mind, we still have to conclude that the results do not support a developmental schema of increasing terminological discipline leading from the Rhetoric via the Kitāb al-ḥayawān, the Institutio and the Placita towards the Nicomachean Ethics and the De anima. What we arrive at is a group of texts deploying a very restricted set of renderings for the terms we have studied (the Placita, the Nicomachean Ethics, although with some qualifications, and the De anima), one text displaying an extremely high degree of variation in its terminology (the Rhetoric) and two texts falling between those two poles (the Kitāb al-ḥayawān and the Institutio).²⁴⁵

In spite of its apparent terminological inconsistency, numerous standard terms are anticipated by the Rhetoric, often mixed with translations which were dropped in other texts. In many cases, we notice complete agreement between the Rhetoric and the other texts, even though the former is often less consistent in the application of terminological standards. The Rhetoric substantially departs from the terminology of the other translations on only a few occasions; the same phenomenon is, at least to a certain degree, also evident in the Kitāb al-ḥayawān.

²⁴⁵ The classification of the last text is for the reasons listed above—specialized subject matter, restricted vocabulary, relative shortness—only tentative.
The transition from transcription to translation of technical terms is not a very prominent feature of the terminological sample under consideration. If we add evidence from other terms not included (i.e. those not occurring in all of our texts), it is more conspicuous in the *Rhetoric* than in any other text.

If we adopt the (problematic) assumption that degrees of terminological variation indicate chronological stages in the evolution of the translation movement, we have to conclude that the *Rhetoric* represents a level of terminological development that precedes not only the *Institutio*, the *Placita*, the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *De anima*, but clearly also the *Kitāb al-bayyān*. Apparently unguided by the compass of a fully developed terminology, the translator moves through his difficult source text with a fair amount of experimentation. The fact that he surprisingly often settles for translations that are part of the standardized terminology of other texts suggests that he was probably not entirely helpless: the *Rhetoric* in all likelihood marks not the beginning of terminological evolution for the majority of the Greek terms we have studied but represents an already highly developed stage of it. Moreover, the parallels in vocabulary we have found between the *Rhetoric* and the other translations produced in the Kindī-circle strongly suggest more than pure coincidence.

In sophistication and consistency, it clearly cannot compete with the *Institutio* or the polished *Placita*-translation, let alone the much superior texts ascribed to Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn. Even the *Kitāb al-bayyān* with its frequent inconsistencies and occasional terminological lapses is overall a better translation. Before rashly condemning the translator of the *Rhetoric*, however, we should remember that he tried his hand at a very difficult text. We can only speculate how much additional problems such as the condition of his Greek manuscript(s) or the quality of whatever Syriac translation he might have consulted complicated his task. Keeping these factors in mind, the evidence seems to confirm our previous hypothesis that the *Rhetoric* belongs to the output of the Kindī-circle (cf. p. 150). My initial chronological placement of the *Rhetoric* in proximity of the *Placita*-translation is, however, not borne out by our results. On the basis of the evidence we have collected so far, it seems more prudent to limit ourselves to the more general claim that the translation belongs to the output the Kindī-circle without attempting to place it in a relative chronology of translations produced by members of this group.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE RECESSION OF THE ARABIC TRANSLATION

Introduction

Although crucial for the process of transmitting knowledge from one culture to another, the translation of a text is only a first step. Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, the process stalls and translations leave little or no traces in the literature of the target culture: new ideas do not address the concerns of contemporary readers; the original author or the contents of a text are regarded as alien or suspected of challenging or undermining native traditions; or a translation is simply too flawed or obscure to attract any attention. To some degree, all of these points applied to the Arabic Rhetoric. The text discussed issues that clearly lay outside the cultural frame of reference of its audience—there was no immediately obvious Islamic equivalent to the rhetorical genres Aristotle discussed. At the same time, the Rhetoric was associated with the field of logic, one of the domains of the philosophers and as such highly suspect in the eyes of many scholars of the time. It also encroached on the nascent field of Islamic rhetoric, balāğah. Lastly, its very obscurity and translational deficiencies limited its appeal.

In spite of these substantial problems, the Arabic Rhetoric found an audience and was read, commented on and incorporated into Islamic philosophical, scientific and even theological thought. Interestingly enough, this text, which had not been as extensively commented on in antiquity as most other Aristotelian writings, experienced quite a renaissance in the Islamic tradition.¹ As we will see, the cornerstone of this reception process was less the translated text itself than a number of commentaries written by the major philosophical figures of the tenth to twelfth centuries, al-Fārābī (d. 950), Ibn Sinā (d. 1037) and Ibn Rušd (d. 1198). To understand their procedure, the character of the commentaries they produced and the impact they had on subsequent Islamic scholars and their use of Aristotelian rhetoric, we introduce this chapter with a few remarks on the forms Arabic philosophical commentaries took.

¹ Aouad and Rashed (1997, p. 43f).
The art of writing philosophical commentaries and the different forms involved were transmitted to Muslim philosophers by way of the same tradition that gave them the original texts: late antique Hellenism. Mostly uninterrupted by the Muslim conquests of the seventh century, the Christian educational system in Syria where the (mostly Christian) translators of antique philosophical and scientific works were schooled also preserved the texts and methods of the Greek scholars of Alexandria and other centers of scientific and philosophical teaching. Thus, the translators and, through them, later philosophers and scientists inherited a centuries-old system of reading and interpreting such texts.² For two important reasons, however, the character of and terminology for commentary genres remained in flux throughout the period we are looking at: firstly, logic (which included rhetoric) was taught outside formal educational institutions which would have enforced a certain level of standardization in terms of terminology and genre; and, secondly, without the restrictions imposed by a rigidly enforced tradition, philosophers were unencumbered by precedents and experimented freely with different literary forms. Therefore, while we are still able to discern a number of relatively stable genres of commentary writings, they frequently overlap and are often known by different names.³

Among the Arabic writings on the Rhetoric, these are the most important genres we encounter:

- The Long Commentary, often called šarḥ (or, more generically, tafsīr), a genre that ranges from long, detailed commentaries closely following the wording of the original text to shorter, paraphrasing interpretations.⁴
- The Medium Commentary or talḥīṣ, an exposition of the subject matter of a text, later understood to mean a summary. Dimitri Gutas points out that the difference between this genre (especially in the understanding of Ibn Rušd, who frequently uses this and related terms) and the ḡawāmiʿ (“summary”, see below) is one of purpose rather than form: the former denotes an exposition (purpose), the latter a compact summary (form). This explains why Ibn Rušd occasionally uses both terms for the same text.⁵

³ Gutas (1993, p. 31f).
⁵ Gutas (1993, 38–43).
The abridgement, often called muḥtaṣar, a textual genre of variable length that largely adheres to the wording of the original text. The boundaries between a short šarḥ and a muḥtaṣar are not always obvious; most of the time, the label was applied by later scholars trying to categorize the writings of the commentators.⁶

The Short Commentary or ǧawāmiʿ, at first used only in connection with the works of Galen and later in a more general fashion for short verbatim extracts or summaries of works.⁷

In addition to explicit commentaries in these and other forms, the Arabic Rhetoric has left its imprint on a substantial number of original writings on subjects as varied as rhetoric, political theory, literary criticism and even theories of prophecy. The following survey will concentrate on some of the most important figures in the Muslim reception of the Arabic Rhetoric and its subsequent transmission into other languages, specifically Hebrew and Latin. It is arranged by centuries, concentrating on the works of the major philosophical authorities of the day and tracing their influence on their contemporaries and successors.

The ninth century: first encounters

The evidence presented in the previous chapters indicates that the Arabic translation of the Rhetoric was a product of the ninth century, possibly the work of a translator belonging to or at least working around the same time as the members of the so-called “Kindi-circle”. The members of this loosely-knit group of translators, focusing mostly on philosophical texts, produced the corpus of Arabic translations used by the philosopher al-Kindi.⁸

In spite of the similarities between the Arabic Rhetoric and the translations of the Kindi-circle and the likelihood of a link between its author and the translators sponsored by al-Kindi, however, the works of the latter give us no reason to think that he knew of the translation (or an Arabic epitome of the text) or was even much interested in it. Commentaries on or summaries of the Rhetoric or on an alleged antique commentary on the Rhetoric by Alexander of Aphrodisias (d. early third century)⁹ he was

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⁸ For an in-depth study of this circle, its members and their role in the formation of Islamic philosophy, see Endress (1997).
credited with had been identified long before Rescher’s time as misreadings of a manuscript of al-Qiftī’s Ta’rīḫ al-ḥukmā’ caused by a misplaced leaf. There is no evidence to support the idea that another treatise mentioned in the bio-bibliographical sources entitled Risālah fi sīfāt al-balāqāb (Treatise on the characteristics of eloquence) had anything to do with the subject matter of the Rhetoric.

If anything, al-Kindī’s interest in logic was secondary and always subordinated to his other philosophical and scientific interests. The very perfunctoriness of his remarks on the Rhetoric in a short treatise on the number and contents of Aristotle’s works demonstrates that he had little (if any) knowledge about the work above and beyond its name and a rough idea of its contents.

The bio-bibliographical sources record another potentially relevant but unfortunately lost text by a close contemporary of al-Kindī, Muḥammad ibn Mūsā, entitled Kitāb ‘alā ma‘yīyat al-kalām (On the Essence of Speech). Its author was one of the famous Banū Mūsā, three brothers who became generous sponsors of translations and scientific research in ninth-century Baghdad. The interpretation of the book’s title is disputed and does not necessarily refer to Aristotle’s Rhetoric, even if the historian al-Qiftī mentions his activities in collecting works on “logic” (to which the Rhetoric was thought to belong).

Equally unconfirmed is the existence of a handful of other potentially relevant texts: commentaries on (or better: summaries of) the Rhetoric and Poetics among the corpus of ninth to tenth-century treatises associated with the alchemist, physicist and philosopher Abū Mūsā Ġābir ibn Ḥayyān (d. ca. 815).

The little evidence we have about the contents and even existence of these and other allegedly “rhetorical” writings suggests that in the ninth century, knowledge of the Rhetoric was still limited. Extant texts (such as al-Kindī’s Risālah fi kāmniyāt kutub Aṛisī) and the titles of other,

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10 E.g. by Nicholas Rescher (cf. 1963, p. 45 and 1964, p. 110).
13 A fact Rescher (1963, p. 45) freely acknowledges.
14 His Risālah fi kāmniyāt kutub Aṛisī mentioned above.
15 He lists the book as the “seventh of the books on logic” and translates the (transcribed) title of the Rhetoric as “persuasive speaking”. According to al-Kindī, it dealt with oratory, especially the three types of “persuasion” applied in courts of law, public assemblies and in “praise and blame as they go together in eulogy” (Rescher, 1963, p. 53, 57).
lost works we know of strongly suggest that the Arabic translation of the *Rhetoric* was not yet available. Whatever the case, the study of Aristotelian rhetoric began in earnest only with the appearance of al-Fārābī a generation later.¹⁸

The tenth century: laying the foundation

Considering the lack of evidence for the availability of the Arabic translation or any serious study of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* before his time, al-Fārābī’s role in the reception history of the text was of paramount importance. As we will see, his writings inspired the other two key commentators of the text, Ibn Sinā and Ibn Rušd, either by suggesting interpretations that they adopted and extended or by serving as a foil to present their own rhetorical and logical thought. Unlike the reception of other components of the *Organon*, that of the *Rhetoric* was not mediated through or facilitated by extant late antique commentaries. Its readers could not rely on the help of generations of commentators in their attempt to understand its sometimes obscure language and overcome its frequently substantial translational problems. Al-Fārābī alone deserves credit for making this text accessible to future generations of Islamic scholars and initiating the process of study and appropriation of the *Rhetoric*.¹⁹

Even though rhetorical concepts played an important role in many of al-Fārābī’s writings, especially those dealing with his political thought and his theory of prophecy, we find the most sustained discussion of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in two central works: the *Kitāb al-ḫaṭṭāḥab* (*Book of Rhetoric*)²⁰ and in a part of what seems to have been a Long Comment-

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¹⁸ An interesting example for a relatively early Arabic text that was strongly influenced by the Arabic *Rhetoric* is the so-called *Kitāb al-fawâʾid al-liriyab*, the *Book of Poetic Gleanings*. Ascribed to Alexander of Aphrodisias and allegedly translated by Hunayn ibn Ishāq, the short text forms part of a collection of writings attributed to Alexander. Zimmermann (1994b) analysed the text and concluded (p. 318) that it is most likely an Arabic compilation from Arabic sources by an author who had access to the Arabic *Rhetoric*; its style also resembles that of the translation.

¹⁹ So also Grignaschi (1968, p. 176).

²⁰ There are a number of editions and translations. A first edition and French translation by Langhade (1968, reviewed by Vajda 1969) was replaced only three years later by an almost identical edition (Langhade and Grignaschi, 1971) combining the edition and French translation of the *Kitāb al-ḫaṭṭāḥab* with an edition of the *Dhulawilā* (see below). It was positively reviewed several times by Gätje (1972), Najjar (1973), Vajda (1973), Zimmermann (1974) and Ullmann (1977a). In addition to Langhade’s edition, we also have editions by Sālim (1976) and, more recently and as part of a collection of al-Fārābī’s logical writings, Dāneś-Pužāh (1988–1990, vol. 1, p. 436–492).
tary on the *Rhetoric*, extant only in a Latin translation, the *Didascalia in Rethoricam Aristotilis ex glosa Alpharabii*.\(^{21}\)

The first of these two rhetorical texts, the *Kitāb al-ḥatābah*, consists of a commentary on a small sub-set of the *Rhetoric*. Following the sequence of the second chapter of Book Two of the source text (with a number of references to other passages of the *Rhetoric*), it presents al-Fārābī’s ideas on a number of key rhetorical concepts.\(^{22}\) In this chapter, Aristotle summarizes the contents of the *Rhetoric*, paying particular attention to issues of argument and proof. The limited scope of the *Kitāb al-ḥatābah* together with the ambiguity of the information provided by the bio-bibliographical literature has led some scholars to believe that the extant text is incomplete.\(^{23}\) This assumption has been laid to rest by recent research; the current consensus is that the book is a complete and self-contained treatise.\(^{24}\)

Limiting himself to this part of the work at the expense of the remainder of the *Rhetoric* might have been dictated by the philosopher’s desire to concentrate on the aspects of the text that were of particular relevance to him, namely logical matters and the theoretical basis of rhetorical proof. In this regard, the *Kitāb al-ḥatābah* closely resembles other texts in a group of al-Fārābī’s logical works on the *Organon* sometimes called the “Bratislava series” after one of the extant manuscripts in which they were collected. In spite of a number of formal differences between these treatises, they share a pronounced emphasis on the logical principles explained in the respective source texts and their theoretical roots—while downplaying Aristotle’s remarks on the practical application of these principles. Thus, in the case of the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*, al-Fārābī concentrated on those chapters in which the principles of rhetoric and poetry are explained while more or less ignoring the bulk of the texts which dealt with their application.\(^{25}\)

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\(^{21}\) Edited by Langhade and Grignaschi (1971). Thanks to a number of excellent articles on the reception of the *Rhetoric* by Maroun Aouad, we need not rehearse the often confusing bio-bibliographical evidence for al-Fārābī’s rhetorical writings. Langhade and Grignaschi (1971, p. 126–131) and Grignaschi (1972, p. 45–60) have collected the relevant textual material which has been untangled and extensively discussed by Aouad (1998b, p. 170–173). His arguments for the existence of a Long Commentary on the *Rhetoric* seem entirely convincing.


\(^{23}\) E.g. Langhade and Grignaschi (1971, p. 9f, 23).

\(^{24}\) The case has been convincingly argued by Aouad (1992, p. 134–143).

\(^{25}\) Galston (1988, p. 198f, 201f).
Instead of merely re-stating Aristotle’s ideas, however, al-Fārābī expands the discussion with a number of notions that are either only implicit in or not at all part of Aristotle’s exposition.²⁶ One of his central concerns is the concept of bādi’ al-raʾī al-muṣṭarak ("immediate, common opinion").²⁷ Apparently, the systematic use al-Fārābī made of it not only allowed him to resolve some of the textual difficulties of the admittedly often obscure Arabic Rhetoric, it also helped him answer two central questions posed by the text itself and by the Alexandrian commentators: firstly, what role or position does Aristotle assign to the art of rhetoric, especially compared to dialectics? And, closely related to the first question, what was the role of the Rhetoric in the Organon?²⁸

In spite of the terminology used by some scholars,²⁹ the Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah seems to be both more and less than a commentary: more, insofar as a summary of Aristotle’s Rhetoric serves the author as a backdrop for elaborating his own, often independent thinking about rhetoric; less, insofar as it is limited to a small portion of the Aristotelian source text. The genre of the second text, the Didascalia in Rethoricam Aristotilis, is much easier to pinpoint.³⁰ Only extant in Latin, it consists of several parts: an introductory section that discusses the nature of rhetoric and lists its divisions and a commentary section that quotes the Arabic version of the very beginning of the Rhetoric (1354a1–4): a general commentary and then a detailed, phrase-by-phrase commentary.³¹ "The introductory section is in all probability identical to the so-called Ṣadr li-kitāb al-ḥaṭābah (Prologue to the Book of Rhetoric) listed in the bio-bibliographical sources.³²

²⁷ I.e. those shared opinions and unexamined notions a majority of people would immediately and unquestioningly assent to. Maroud Aouad deserves ample credit for demonstrating its importance for al-Fārābī and later philosophers and tracing its development during the history of Islamic philosophy in numerous publications. The centrality of this concept in the Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah becomes immediately obvious in his comparison between its text and the relevant passages of the Rhetoric (Aouad, 1992, p. 136–143).
²⁹ E.g. Galston (1988, p. 193), who classifies the text as a Short or Middle Commentary.
³⁰ The text is extant in a single manuscript in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. latin 16697. It was edited together with the Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah by Langhade and Grignaschi (1971). Cf. above, p. 185, n. 20 for information on the reviews. A "conflated excerpt" was printed in Venice in 1481 and 1515 under the title Declaratio compendiosa per viam divisionis Alfarabii super librum retoricae Aristotelis (Boggess, 1971, p. 227f, 235).
³² Aouad (1998b, p. 174f) and Langhade and Grignaschi (1971, p. 127); it was already tentatively identified as such by Steinschneider (1869, p. 59).
The text is the product of Hermannus Alemannus (fl. 1240–1256), a Latin translator specializing in Arabic versions of Aristotelian texts (among others, he is the creator of the Latin version of the Arabic Rhetoric) and Arabic commentaries, and was published around 1256. We now know that it is just the beginning of a Long Commentary on the Rhetoric, unfortunately lost in Arabic. Only recently, Arabic fragments of the Prologue have come to light in a work by the Cairene physician Abū al-Hasan Āli ibn Ridwān (d. 1061 or after 1068), to be discussed below. We also know that al-Fārābī’s commentary broke off before the end of Book Three of the Rhetoric: in a note at the end of chapter nine of Book Three of his Latin translation of the Arabic Rhetoric, Hermannus writes: Huc pervenit glosa Alpharabii.

The importance of this lost commentary must have been immense. In his writings on the Rhetoric, Ibn Sinā explicitly refers to it in a way that demonstrates his knowledge and use of the full text. Ibn Rušd also undoubtedly used the commentary, even though he does not refer to al-Fārābī by name. He does, however, allude to commentaries he consulted in his own research in the colophon to Book Three of his own Middle Commentary on the Rhetoric, particular one by a commentator he deemed “satisfactory” (man yurtaḏa min al-mufassirīn). Aouad has shown that this “satisfactory” commentator is none other than al-Fārābī, whose Long Commentary must have been one of Ibn Rušd’s most important sources. We will return to Ibn Rušd’s commentary below.

Al-Fārābī’s efforts to make Aristotle’s Rhetoric accessible to his contemporaries and to integrate rhetorical concepts and ideas into his own philosophical thought thoroughly transformed the reception process. What is more, the Rhetoric started to leave its imprint also outside the limited circles of philosophical experts. Among the works which exemplify a growing contemporary interest in Hellenistic rhetoric in the tenth century, two stand out: the Kitāb al-burhān fī wuǧūb al-bayān by the Arab šīʿī theologian Ishāq ibn Wāhīb al-Kātib (fl. during the first half of the tenth century) and the Kitāb al-saʿādāb wa-l-ʾisʿād, frequently ascribed to the Persian sunni theologian and philosopher Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-ʾĀmīrī (d. 992).

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Unfortunately, we know next to nothing about the life of the first author, Ibn Wâhâb. His family seems to have had connections to ʿAbdābāsid rulers and we find some of his ancestors among the officials at the caliphal court.³⁸ His treatise, the Kitâb al-burhān, was often attributed to the ninth-century literary critic Qudāmah ibn Ḳaʿfar (d. 873);³⁹ it contains an extensive discussion of rhetoric, style and the prerequisites and accomplishments required of state officials and represents a striking synthesis of Greek philosophy on the one hand and ʿšīʿī and sunnī religious thought on the other. It is both strongly influenced by and very critical of a ninth-century text similarly focussed on rhetoric and style in philosophical and theological contexts, the Kitâb al-bayān wa-l-tabyin (Treatise on Clarity and Clarification) by the celebrated littérâteur al-Ǧâḥiẓ.⁴⁰ Ibn Wâhâb’s work is replete with references to Aristotelian texts, especially the Rhetoric and the Poetics, but also the Topics.⁴¹ It gives us a glimpse not just of a particular stage of the early reception of the Rhetoric in particular and Aristotelian philosophy in general; also, Ibn Wâhâb’s writings (like the next work discussed below) speak of an intellectual climate in which scholars were able freely to appropriate whatever source they deemed suitable to support their particular philosophical or theological argument while constantly reminding their audience of the universal value of logical and rhetorical knowledge.⁴²

As suggested above, the identity of the author/compiler of the Kitâb al-saʿâdah, which used to be listed among the works of the philosopher al-ʿÂmirî, is still disputed.⁴³ The only information provided by the single

³⁹ Edited by Maṭlûb and Ḥâdîṭî (1967). For an exhaustive discussion of the evidence against Qudâmah’s and for Ibn Wâhâb’s authorship, see p. 19–28. The editor of Qudâmah’s most important work on literary criticism, the Kitâb naqd al-šiʿr, Bonebakker (1976, p. 17f), notes that the Kitâb al-burhān shows no sign of being influenced by this or other works written by Qudâmah, even though they discuss a number of literary issues in a similar way (examples on p. 18ff).
⁴⁰ Cf. EI², supplement, p. 402 with additional sources; Maṭlûb and Ḥâdîṭî (1967, p. 28f); and Gutas (1998, p. 132 and n. 34). Montgomery (2006) is an excellent introduction to the Kitâb al-bayān, focussing on its reception of rhetorical thought and the historical and intellectual context of the text and its author.
⁴³ The arguments for an against al-ʿÂmirî have been summarized and evaluated by Wakelnig (2006, p. 35–39). Like another eminent authority on al-ʿÂmirî and his thought, Everett Rowson (1988, p. 15ff), she remains sceptical: while not implausible, the evidence cited in favor of al-ʿÂmirî is insufficient to establish his authorship of the Kitâb al-saʿâdah beyond reasonable doubt.
manuscript of the work is what purports to be the name of the author, a certain Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Abī Darr, otherwise unknown. Assuming that he is not identical with al-ʿĀmirī, the contents of the Kitāb al-saʿādab at least suggest that he lived at around the same time and came from a similar educational and intellectual background.⁴⁴

The Kitāb al-saʿādab is an anthology of theological, historical and philosophical material in six parts. The first two deal with ethics, the next two with politics and the last two contain aphorisms on a range of topics, e.g. the proper conduct of state functionaries or more general advice on the proper forms of religious and intellectual life.⁴５ Unlike the Kitāb al-burābān, this text does not present a structured argument; rather, it consists of a compilation of snippets from a range of sources which have a bearing on the ethical or political issues under discussion.⁴⁶ This is exactly what the author himself had in mind—in one place, he explicitly states that he wants to present the opinions of different peoples side by side to demonstrate how little disagreement there is between them.⁴⁷

Given its subject matter and the compilatory and comparative bent of its author, the book is a veritable treasure trove of quotations from a considerable number of Greek-Arabic translations, most prominently the Nicomachean Ethics and the Rhetoric. Since quotations are not always clearly marked and an exhaustive analysis of the Kitāb al-saʿādab is still lacking, we are not yet in a position to assess the range and character of its sources, including the question whether its author used any commentaries on the latter.⁴⁸ It is clear, however, that the number of quotations in the book considerably exceeds those already signaled in the secondary literature. The Rhetoric is quoted and referenced four times; very likely, there are many more unreferenced quotations.⁴⁹ In addition, the book antedates the manuscript of Aristotle’s Organon that is our only source for the complete text of the Arabic Rhetoric and is therefore the earliest known witness for the translation.⁵⁰

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⁴⁴ There are two editions of the book, one a facsimile of a transcript taken by Minovi (1336 AH), the other a printed version by Ṭīyah (1991). Both are based on the only extant manuscript in Dublin, ms. Chester Beatty no. 3702.


⁴⁶ Dunlop et al. (2005, p. 19) call it “a collection of material rather than a fully digested philosophical work”.


⁴⁹ Pohl (1997, p. 21ff) compares three such quotations with the text of the Arabic Rhetoric and shows that the author of the Kitāb al-saʿādab used the same translation.

The interest of the *Kitāb al-saʿādab wa-l-ʿiʿād* lies not so much in its creative use of those sources — its author prefers to present the texts side by side and let them speak for themselves rather than to comment, let alone indulge in philosophical innovation. Together with the *Kitāb al-burḥān*, it is the product of the period immediately following the zenith of Greek-Arabic translation activities. Like the somewhat earlier works of al-Kindī, they are both representatives of a first wave of texts illustrating the appropriation of translated material and its combination with Islamic religious and literary traditions. Greek philosophy and Islamic religious literature are not the only sources the author draws on: the *Kitāb al-saʿādab* is also the first known literary work that draws equally on Persian and Greek wisdom literature.⁵¹

**The eleventh century: elaboration and extension**

For the eleventh century, the bio-bibliographical literature records a flurry of activity around Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. Mere titles is all we have in many cases. Among the scholars credited with writings on the *Rhetoric* are the Andalusian logician and mathematician Ibn Badr (d. ca. 1020), who allegedly penned a series of summaries on the “Eight Books” of logic, including the *Rhetoric*, but excluding the *Poetics*.⁵² Less certain are both the range of writings and even identity of another author of an alleged series of summaries on Aristotelian logic, this time on the “Seven Books”. It is unclear whether the “Seven” include the *Rhetoric*;⁵³ moreover, the identity of its author, Ibn al-Hayṭam, has yet to be established: of the two scholars known under the name, he has long been identified as the noted mathematician and scientist of the same name (d. 1039), but recent scholarship sees in him a less well-known contemporary of the mathematician, the philosopher and physician Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Hayṭam (born around 965).⁵⁴

Until quite recently, the philosopher, theologian and physician Abū al-Faraĝ ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043) was credited with a Long

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⁵³ Rescher (1964, p. 145) thinks they do not whereas Goulet (1989, vol. 1, p. 462) seems to agree with the earlier opinion of Steinschneider (1960, p. 78), who listed the *Rhetoric* as one of the works summarized by this author.
⁵⁴ Goulet (2003, p. 221). For the opposite view (that the entries in the *Fihrist*, the *Ṭaʿrīḥ al-ḥukamā*, the *ʻUyān al-ʻanbāʿ* and other such works refer to one and the same person), see Sabra (1998).
Commentary on the *Rhetoric*, known to (and criticized by) both Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Ruṣd.\(^{55}\) Besides an entry in Ibn Abī Usaybi‘ah’s *Ṭabaqāt al-ʿaṣībāt*, another important source for information about the work are two extant logical commentaries by the same author on the *Isagoge* and *Categories*.\(^{56}\) On closer examination, however, it turns out that the only tangible piece of evidence for the existence of Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s Long Commentary on the *Rhetoric* is its mention in the *Ṭabaqāt al-ʿaṣībāt*—the rhetorical doctrines discussed in the Long Commentaries on the *Isagoge* and the *Categories* do not necessarily refer to another Long Commentary on the *Rhetoric*, but seem to be drawn from Greek sources (summaries rather than the full text of the *Rhetoric*) or are his own, original ideas.\(^{57}\) Since this alleged Long Commentary probably never existed, its identification with the “unsatisfactory commentary” referred to by Ibn Ruṣd in his own Middle Commentary on the *Rhetoric* is also very much in doubt.\(^{58}\) Equally in doubt is the existence of a second text by Ibn al-Ṭayyib on the *Rhetoric*, a summary similar to those that complemented his other Long Commentaries. The evidence for such a summary is even slimmer than that for the existence of the Long Commentary itself.\(^{59}\)

According to our (scant) information, all three of these authors wrote what could be termed “conventional” commentaries, if not on the *Rhetoric*, then at least on some of the other texts of the *Organon*. From their titles, we can infer that they usually took the form of summaries, paraphrases or lemmatized commentaries that fit the scheme of Short, Middle and Long Commentaries. The boundaries between these genres start to blur with the philosopher Abū ʿAlī al-Husayn ibn Sīnā. As part of the Aristotelian *Organon*, the *Rhetoric* plays a role in all of Ibn Sīnā’s writings on logic,\(^{60}\) but he reserved his most extensive discussions of rhetorical is-

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\(^{56}\) Aouad and Rashed (1997, p. 49–57) list the relevant passages.
\(^{58}\) Aouad and Rashed (1999, p. 98f).
\(^{59}\) Rescher (1964, p. 155) and Gyekye (1979, p. 20) base their argument for the existence of the summary exclusively on the proven existence of such summaries for other logical texts on which Ibn al-Ṭayyib wrote a Long Commentary. Having discredited the evidence for the Long Commentary itself, Aouad and Rashed (1997, p. 58f) add that none of the bio-bibliographical and other sources contain even a hint of information on such a text which could support Rescher’s and Gyekye’s claim.

\(^{60}\) Some of his works have not yet been edited and might contain additional relevant material; cf. Goulet (1989–, vol. 1, p. 468f), where the author also discusses the rhetorical section of Ibn Sīnā’s *Kitāb al-naqāt* (*The Salvation*) and concludes that they do not qualify as a "commentary". See also Aouad (1999a) on rhetorical concepts, especially concerning rhetorical syllogisms, in his late *Kitāb al-ʿilārāt wa-l-tanbihāt* (*Pointers and Reminders*).
sues for two larger works which cover the entire breadth of philosophy as it was known from the Aristotelian tradition. The first and earlier of the two is the *Ḥikmah al-ʿarūḍiyab* (Philosophy for ʿArūḍî, also known as *Kitāb al-mağmūʿ*, The Compilation) in which he comments on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in two chapters entitled *Fī maʿānī kitāb riṭūriqā* and *Fī al-ʿablāq wa-l-infīlālāt*. Years later, during what has been termed the “mature period” of his philosophical activities, he undertook a voluminous exposition of all branches of philosophy, the *Kitāb al-ṣifāʾ*, starting with logic; among them, the chapter entitled *al-ḥāṭābāb* contains the most extensive presentation of Ibn Sinā’s thought on the *Rhetoric*.

Even though they are separated by another chapter (on the *Poetics*) in the unique Uppsala manuscript, the two chapters *Fī maʿānī kitāb riṭūriqā* and *Fī al-ʿablāq wa-l-infīlālāt* belong together. They form part of the first section of the *Ḥikmah al-ʿarūḍiyab* which deals with Aristotle’s logical corpus. The book, allegedly commissioned by a neighbor of the then only twenty-one year old Ibn Sinā, is considered his first work and attempts to cover systematically all branches of Aristotelian theoretical philosophy. Together, the two chapters on rhetoric only cover part of the contents of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*: the first sums up Book One (except the last chapter), the second those of Book Two which deal with the passions and their manipulation by orators. The wording of the two chapters makes it clear that the text relies on the same translation used by al-Fārābī before him and Ibn Rušd after him. But unlike al-Fārābī (and, as we will see, Ibn Rušd), Ibn Sinā does not single out the second chapter of

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61 “On the meanings of the Book of Rhetoric”, edited by Sālim (1944); the edition was reviewed by Anawati (1954).
64 “Rhetoric”; the chapter (or rather, book) was edited by Sālim (1944); so far, we only have a translation of the first of four parts into German, prepared by Würsch (1991, p. 140–174). In his detailed and positive review, Aouad (1993) suggests a number of improvements and corrections for the translation itself and Würsch’s introduction and discussion of Ibn Sinā’s rhetorical thought. Cf. also Aouad (1997a) and Goulet (2003, p. 221).
66 Anawati (1957, p. 171). Gutas (1988, p. 87) calls it “the first medieval philosophical summum which can be said to have signaled the beginning of scholastic philosophy”.
67 See Gutas (1988, p. 87–93) on the sequence of subjects, the sources and the relation of the work to the other writings of Ibn Sinā.
Book One for special treatment; rather, his concise summary of the parts of the *Rhetoric* that could be put to immediate practical use by Islamic orators resembles something of a handbook or manual of rhetoric.⁷⁰

The relevant chapters of the *Kitāb al-ṣifāʾ*, on the other hand, cover the entire text of the *Rhetoric*.⁷¹ Ibn Sinā wrote the *Ṣifāʾ* following a request by his students in Hamadān to rewrite those of his books that were inaccessible to them because they had been lost or were in the hands of scholars in remote places. Instead of merely reproducing these texts, i.e. writing the sort of commentaries which his students expected, Ibn Sinā decided to create a “running exposition” of all fields of philosophy “according to his own opinion”. Thus, the work represents a break with the late antique commentary tradition and its forms on which philosophical writings on Aristotelian texts had been modeled so far.⁷²

Structurally, the *Ṣifāʾ* follows a similar path as the *Ḥikmah al-ʿarūḍiyah*: its first part discusses logic with the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* relegated to the end.⁷³ The section on *al-ḥaṭābah* (rhetoric) falls into four parts (called *maqālah*). The first one is a free discussion of the contents of the first two chapters of Book One of the *Rhetoric*; it clearly shows the influence of al-Fārābī’s similar discussions in the *Didascalia* and his *Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah*. However, Ibn Sinā restructures the material and develops a number of new ideas and interpretations, especially on the theory of the *enthymeme*.⁷⁴ The other three parts cover the remainder of the *Rhetoric*. Formally, they are more akin to a conventional Middle Commentary: Ibn Sinā paraphrases or directly quotes and then explains passages of the *Rhetoric*.⁷⁵ However, the author frequently intervenes to restructure the text and insert his own interpretations. The composition of a separate *maqālah* with his commentaries on the first two chapters of Book One together with his remarks on the connection between rhetoric and logic is a prime example for this tendency.⁷⁶

While he uses the same Arabic version of the *Rhetoric* as everyone else, Ibn Sinā’s attitude is quite critical. He frequently corrects passages that

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⁷³ For an outline of the subjects and texts treated in the *Ṣifāʾ*, see Gutas (1988, p. 102).
make no sense or contradict what he considers to be Aristotle’s “true" ideas.\textsuperscript{77} He does not quote other sources, even though he obviously knew (and used) al-Fārābī’s commentaries.\textsuperscript{78} Their treatment of the \textit{Rhetoric} turns out to be quite different—for one, al-Fārābī is not at all interested in the practical aspects of rhetoric.\textsuperscript{79} Given his re-arrangement of the text, criticisms and corrections of the translation and deviations from the formal framework of the late Alexandrian commentary tradition, it is not unlikely that Ibn Sīnā’s rhetorical section in the \textit{Kitāb al-šifa’} is the “unsatisfactory commentary” referred to by Ibn Rushd.\textsuperscript{80}

A generation later, the pioneering work of al-Fārābī on logic in general and the \textit{Rhetoric} in particular was taken up again by the Cairene physician Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Riḍwan.\textsuperscript{81} Among the numerous works he is credited with in the bio-bibliographical literature, there are several texts on logic.\textsuperscript{82} For our purposes, the most interesting one is his \textit{Kitāb fi al-mustaʿmal min al-manṭiq fi al-ʿulām wa-l-ṣanā’i’} (On what is used from logic in the sciences and arts).\textsuperscript{83} In the form of a manual, the book covers the entire \textit{Organon} with separate chapters dealing with each of its components (including Porphyry’s \textit{Isagoge}).\textsuperscript{84} Ibn Riḍwan’s purpose is eminently practical: as the title of the book suggests, he wants to identify and explain those parts of logic and logical concepts that are relevant to the sciences and arts. According to the author, the \textit{Rhetoric} in particular should be read and used not only by philosophers, but also scholars in Islamic disciplines such as \textit{balāgah} and Islamic law. This is an idea we already find in Ibn Wahḥ’s \textit{Kitāb al-burḥān} discussed above; both authors stress in sim-

\textsuperscript{77} Würsch (1991, p. 120–127) has collected a sample of evidence for Ibn Sīnā’s use of the same Arabic \textit{Rhetoric} that is still extant. For examples of his corrections, see p. 114–117; there is also a concordance of the Arabic \textit{Rhetoric} and all four maqālāt on rhetoric on p. 218ff.

\textsuperscript{78} Goulet (1989–, vol. 1, p. 468).

\textsuperscript{79} Langhade and Grignaschi (1971, p. 24ff) with a useful summary of the contents of the rhetorical section of the work.

\textsuperscript{80} This, at least, is the conclusion of Aouad and Rashed (1999, p. 113) based on their detailed discussion of the evidence (p. 98–113). For additional information on Ibn Sīnā’s rhetorical thought, see Würsch (1993) and Aouad (1997a, 1999a).


\textsuperscript{82} Aouad (1998b, p. 180f).

\textsuperscript{83} The \textit{Kitāb fi al-mustaʿmal} has not yet been edited. It is extant in the Escorial in Madrid, ms. Derenbourg no. 649, fol. 173v–202v. Aouad (1998b) has edited the chapter on rhetoric (f. 200r–202r); in addition, he has compiled, translated and analyzed rhetorical material from other parts of the book in Aouad (1997b, 1998a), including a comparison of the relevant passages with al-Fārābī’s \textit{Didascalia}.

\textsuperscript{84} Aouad (1998b, p. 182f).
ilar terms the universal benefit of rhetorical knowledge which transcends the narrow limits of Hellenistic falsafah.\(^{85}\)

In addition to the short chapter on rhetoric, Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* plays an important role in the rest of the *Kitāb fi al-musta‘mal*. Textual similarities and verbatim parallels between the frequent rhetorical quotes in the book and al-Fārābī’s *Didascalia* demonstrate its importance for Ibn Ridwān.\(^{86}\) In fact, those passages of the book which correspond closely with the Latin text represent the only known Arabic fragments of al-Fārābī’s Long Commentary on the *Rhetoric*, more specifically the Șadr or “Prologue”.\(^{87}\) However, Ibn Ridwān also used his sources to develop rhetorical doctrines which differ profoundly from those of al-Fārābī or any other of the Arabic commentators.\(^{88}\) These differences make it unlikely that the *Kitāb fi al-musta‘mal* was derived from the full text of the Long Commentary of which the *Didascalia* represents only the Prologue. More likely, Ibn Ridwān made extensive use only of this Prologue (which might already have circulated as a separate text) while adding his own ideas.\(^{89}\) His treatment of the subject matter of the *Didascalia* left some traces in later philosophical literature, e.g. a letter by the Andalusian physician and philosopher Abū Bakr al-Ṣāʾiğ ibn Bāğghah (d. 1139) to his friend and student Abū al-Ḥasan ibn al-Imām.\(^{90}\)

The twelfth century: the return to Aristotle

With Ibn Bāğghah, we are already in the twelfth century, dominated by the towering figure of Abū al-Wālīd ibn Ruṣd, the Averroes of the Latin tradition. As the example of Ibn Bāğghah shows, however, he is not the only Islamic scholar of this century who showed an interest in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and his other logical writings. In his *Kitāb al-mu‘tabar fi al-hikmah*, the philosopher and physician Abū al-Barakāt Hibat Allāh ibn Mālāk al-Bāğdādī (d. after 1165)\(^{91}\) devotes a chapter to rhetorical syllogisms which heavily depends on Ibn Sinā’s treatise *Fi ma‘ānī kitāb riṣūlīqā*\(^{92}\) He


\(^{86}\) Aouad (1998h, p. 169f).

\(^{87}\) Aouad (1998h, p. 207f).

\(^{88}\) Aouad (1997b, p. 163).

\(^{89}\) Aouad (1998h, p. 216).

\(^{90}\) Aouad and Rashed (1999, p. 9ff and n. 21).

\(^{91}\) On Abū al-Barakāt, his works and philosophical thought, cf. Shlomo Pines’ article “Abū al-Barakāt” in *EL*², vol. 1, p. 11ff.

\(^{92}\) The chapter can be found in Abū al-Barakāt (1357–1358 AH, vol. 1, p. 269–276).
often quotes it verbatim but introduces some interesting terminological variations.\footnote{Cf. Goulet (2003, p. 221f); see Würsch (1991, p. 11, 63, 77, 79, 217) for examples of quotations and close correspondences between both authors.}

Two works by Ibn Rušd on Aristotelian rhetoric are extant: his Middle Commentary on the \textit{Rhetoric}\footnote{Cf. Goulet (2003, p. 222). Before the first complete edition of the Middle Commentary, a part of Book One was edited by Lasinio (1875–1878); Sallam (1952) edited and translated Book Three into English. The first full edition was the work of Badawi (1960); in his (mostly uncritical) review, Anawati (1959–1961b) follows Badawi in wrongly claiming that Ibn Rušd used a translation of the \textit{Rhetoric} other than the extant Arabic version. This and the later edition by Sālim (1967) have now been replaced by the magisterial edition and French translation prepared by Aouad (2002).} and his Short Commentary (or \textit{ǧawāmī’}).\footnote{Cf. Goulet (1989–, vol. 1, p. 469). Together with the Short Commentaries on the \textit{Topics} and \textit{Poetics}, it was edited and translated into English by Butterworth (1977) on the basis of several manuscripts in which the Arabic text was transcribed with Hebrew letters. The verdict of its many reviewers seemed to depend on their own background and approach to Ibn Rušd and the Aristotelian commentary tradition: more philologically and logically minded scholars such as Badawi (1979–1980) and Zimmermann (1979) dismissed it, pointing to the numerous misreadings and flaws of the (reconstructed) Arabic text and its underlying Hebrew transcription. Those interested in the political and philosophical dimensions of the Short Commentaries such as Berman (1981), Gueguen (1978), Harvey (1980), Motzkin (1981) and Vajda (1979) viewed it in a more positive light without ignoring some of its shortcomings. Leaman (1980) took the editor and other interpreters of Arabic philosophical texts to task for their tendency to view philosophical works mostly as expressions of the conflict between philosophers on the one hand and Muslim theologians on the other while ignoring a much more straightforward reading of the texts as genuine contributions to largely philosophical debates such as the purpose and procedures of Aristotelian logic. Schoeler (1980) commented in some detail on some of the editor’s flawed notions about the inclusion of the \textit{Rhetoric} and \textit{Poetics} among the \textit{Organon} (p. 291f); the classification of syllogisms (p. 296f); and the methods of persuasion and their alleged origin in al-Fārābī’s \textit{Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah} (p. 297–300). Finally, similar to Leaman (1980), he criticizes the editor’s claim that the relation between politics, philosophy and religion, especially Ibn Rušd’s alleged critique of dialectical theology, is the central issue discussed in the three Short Commentaries (p. 300f).} The Short Commentary formed part of a whole series of such commentaries on the various works of the \textit{Organon} which concentrate on the theoretical principles of the logical subject matter discussed in each work. This “textual context” helps explain why the emphasis of the \textit{ǧawāmī’} on the \textit{Rhetoric}, written before 1159, is the relevance of Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric}.\footnote{Cf. Goulet (1989–, vol. 1, p. 469).}
for the wider field of logic. The (relatively short) text focuses on the second chapter of Book One of the Arabic Rhetoric, reading it through the lense of al-Fārābī’s Kitāb al-ḥāṣibah. Like the latter, it explains the theoretical principles of rhetoric while at the same time determining its position and rank in comparison to other logical disciplines. Its relative independence from the text of the Rhetoric suggests that Ibn Rušd wrote it while still under the influence of al-Fārābī and before he then returned to the Aristotelian text itself and interpreted it afresh.⁹⁶ As for the other commentaries on the Rhetoric discussed above, Maroun Aouad has shown the importance of the concept of bādī’ al-ra’i al-muṣṭarak in rhetorical arguments, inherited from al-Fārābī, also for this Short Commentary.⁹⁷

Completed in 1175, almost twenty years after the Short Commentary, the Middle Commentary shows how Ibn Rušd emancipated himself from the Arabic commentary tradition and developed a more “Aristotelian” understanding of the Rhetoric and other Aristotelian works he commented on later in his life. Like his Short Commentary, it is part of a series of commentaries covering the entire Organon.⁹⁸ Thanks to its relative closeness to Aristotle’s rhetorical thought, some scholars have even suggested that the Middle Commentary, allegedly devoid of innovative ideas, “slavishly” followed Aristotle’s text.⁹⁹ Recent scholarship, especially the publications of Maroun Aouad, has prepared the way for a more nuanced appreciation of this work. Formally, Ibn Rušd follows the conventions of a Middle Commentary: instead of quoting and then explaining the Arabic Rhetoric line by line, he directly explains the intention of the author, i.e. he concentrates on the sense of the text rather than its wording. This does not keep him from quoting the Rhetoric where suitable in unmodified or modified form; thus, his procedure somewhat resembles that of Ibn Sīnā in the Šifā’, except that Ibn Rušd’s interventions are less fre-

⁹⁶ Cf. Goulet (1989–, vol. 1, p. 469) and Aouad (2002, vol. 1, p. 7). In addition to listing the correspondences between the Arabic Rhetoric on p. 276f, Aouad (1994, p. 293–298) shows how closely Ibn Rušd followed the sequence of al-Fārābī’s thought with a synoptical presentation of the text of the Short Commentary, the Kitāb al-ḥāṣibah and the Arabic Rhetoric. Ibn Rušd’s shift away from the Islamic philosophical tradition and back to the “original” Aristotelian teaching has been persuasively argued by Schoeler (1980).

⁹⁷ Cf. Aouad (1994). See also al-Ṣanāʿī (1999) on one of the key questions the concept was designed to answer, the distinction between dialectics and rhetoric in Aristotle’s logical system and its interpretation by Ibn Rušd.


⁹⁹ Cf. e.g. Thillet (1978, p. 105f).
quent and radical. The differences between the Middle Commentary and al-Fārābī’s Kitāb al-aḥādīb are more pronounced. Ibn Rušd follows the structure of the *Rhetoric* in its entirety while al-Fārābī develops his own, creative rhetorical thought (much of which has no equivalent in Aristotle’s text) on the basis of a small sample of the Arabic *Rhetoric* that matches with his main concern: logic and the role rhetoric plays in it.

Like his predecessors, Ibn Rušd relies on Ibn al-Samḥ’s text of the *Rhetoric*, i.e. the extant Arabic version—only that the text he had at his disposal was apparently superior to that which was incorporated in the *Organon* manuscript now at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Also, his text, while derived from the same source as the extant translation, is perhaps closer to the version read and translated into Latin by the thirteenth-century German translator Hermannus Alemannus. Apart from a number of minor divergences, the main difference between these two texts is their length: the text used by both Ibn Rušd and later by Hermannus Alemannus for his Latin translation of the *Rhetoric* is slightly shorter, an *exemplar decurtatum* that lacks chapters 15–17 of Book Two.

Apart from the translation, Ibn Rušd also made use of several commentaries on the *Rhetoric*, chiefly those of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. In a revealing note in the colophon at the end of Book Three of his Middle Commentary, the author mentions that for one part of the commentary, he could not refer to any commentary “by the satisfactory commentator” (*li-man murtaḍā min al-mufassirīn*). This offhanded remark tells us a number of things: firstly, that he did use other commentaries in the first place; secondly, that there must have been at least two, one by the “satisfactory” commentator, one by another commentator who apparently did not pass muster. The wording of the passage also tells us that the commentaries in question must have been at least Middle Commentaries, if not Long ones. Above, we have already identified these two commen-

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100 Aouad (1999b) has compared the different methods of commenting on the text in Ibn Rušd’s Short and Middle Commentary.
102 Cf. Goulet (1987–, p. 470); as mentioned above, the previous editor Badawi (1960) and his reviewer Anawati (1959–1961b, p. 262) still erroneously thought that the commentary was based on a different translation, supposedly by Ishāq ibn Hunayn or (Badawi’s preference) Ibrahim al-Dimašqī. They are mentioned in Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist* and in the marginal notes in the manuscript of the *Rhetoric*, respectively.
taries: the “satisfactory” commentator al-Fārābī and his Long Commentary on the *Rhetoric* found Ibn Rušd’s approval, Ibn Sīnā’s chapter on rhetoric in his *Kitāb al-īṭāf* did not.¹⁰⁵

Many scholars have attempted to clarify Ibn Rušd’s understanding of rhetoric and its purpose in relation to political philosophy.¹⁰⁶ Butterworth sums up Ibn Rušd’s idea of rhetoric as an art of persuasion on any given subject aimed at the masses or those who are unwilling or unable to follow the complicated reasonings of the philosophers.¹⁰⁷ We have encountered some of the key differences between Aristotle’s and Ibn Rušd’s understanding of rhetoric before, e.g. Ibn Rušd’s view of rhetoric as a logical art; the requirement that an orator has to be a competent logician and even philosopher; the requirement that an orator has to have political knowledge exceeding that of an audience which thinks in terms of received, unexamined opinions; and, finally, his idea that an orator has to be a master of theoretical knowledge in addition to his practical skills emphasized by Aristotle.¹⁰⁸

**Beyond the twelfth century**

The writings of Ibn Rušd marked the peak of the reception of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in Arabic. For all we know, the number of works concerned with Aristotelian rhetoric fell off after his death. In addition, they referred not to the text of the *Rhetoric* itself anymore. Instead, most post-Ibn Rušd writings on rhetoric merely summarized previous Arabic commentaries by al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rušd with varying degrees of addition and adaptation.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ For a survey and a thorough analysis of the evidence, see Aouad and Rashed (1999, p. 91–113).

¹⁰⁶ E.g. Blaustein (1992), who examines the role of political considerations in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and Ibn Rušd’s Middle Commentary and the consequences this has for the scope of rhetoric and the rhetorical means that an orator can employ in communicating with the masses.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. Butterworth (1992, p. 187). See the rest of the article for the author’s interpretation of Ibn Rušd’s political philosophy as expressed in his Middle Commentary and his commentary on Plato’s *Republic*.


Yūsuf ibn Muhammad ibn Ṭumlūs (d. 1223), an Andalusian physician and logician, was a close contemporary and perhaps also student of Ibn Rušd. He is the author of a Madḥal ʿilā sināʿat al-maʿntiq (Introduction to the art of logic) in several parts, the largest of which consists of a Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah. This chapter on rhetoric is a detailed summary based mostly on Ibn Rušd’s Middle Commentary which Ibn Ṭumlūs occasionally quotes verbatim. In addition to its indebtedness to Ibn Rušd, whose Short and Middle Commentaries figure prominently, the Madḥal relies on several previous summaries and commentaries, namely al-Fārābī’s work of the same title and Ibn Sinā’s rhetorical parts of the ʿṢifāʾ. The author skillfully combines the strands of the previous reception of Aristotle’s Rhetoric in a synthesis that is in this form unprecedented in the Arabic rhetorical tradition. Interestingly, like Ibn Rušd before and Hermannus Alemannus after him, Ibn Ṭumlūs also used the shortened exemplar decurtatum of the Arabic Rhetoric.

The rhetorical treatises of the physician and philosopher Muwaffaq al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Latīf al-Bagdādī (d. 1231), also known for a number of other writings on Aristotelian philosophy, are not extant. Several suggestive book titles listed by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah amply document his interest in the rhetorical tradition, both Aristotelian and Islamic. On the basis of our available, albeit scant information, they have been interpreted as more or less extensive summaries.

A little later, the physician and theologian Ibn al-Nafīs (d. 1288) made extensive use of al-Fārābī’s Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah for the chapters on rhetoric in his Kitāb ṣārb al-wurāyqāt. Finally, the rhetorical chapters of Ibn Sinā’s ʿṢifāʾ were the source of an anonymous and undated philosophical text extant in a manuscript now at the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha.


The Madḥal was edited by Assin (1916), re-printed in 2000 by the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt. Aouad (2006) has prepared a separate edition and French translation of the Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah which I have not been able to consult.

Cf. Aouad (2002), vol. 1, p. 211f lists the correspondences between the Middle Commentaries and the Kitāb al-ḥaṭābah of Ibn Ṭumlūs’ Madḥal.


While the interest in Aristotelian rhetoric in the Muslim world apparently leveled off during the thirteenth century and authors turned exclusively to well-established commentaries instead of the text of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* itself, it did not seem to die out completely. Further north, however, the reception of the *Rhetoric* only began during the thirteenth century. Until the mid-twelfth century, scholars in the Latin West only knew those Aristotelian logical works which had been translated by Boethius (d. 524 or 525), i.e. the *Categories*, *De interpretatione*, the *Prior Analytics*, *Topics* and Porphyry’s *Isagoge*. Starting around 1150, new Aristotelian sources became available in substantial numbers, first Greek, then Arabic.¹¹⁹

The reception and assimilation of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* before the creation of William of Moerbeke’s (d. 1286) complete translation from Greek around the year 1270 happened in several stages. During the earliest of these, represented by Dominicus Gundissalinus (fl. ca. 1150) in Spain and Albertus Magnus (d. 1280) in Germany, scholars became aware of the Arabic tradition of the *Rhetoric* through secondary sources, mainly al-Fārābī’s *Kitāb ḳibāʾ al-ʿulām* (*The enumeration of the sciences*). This short treatise, known since the end of the twelfth century, had been translated twice into Latin under the title *De scientiis*, first by John of Seville (fl. eleventh century)¹²⁰ and then by Gerhard of Cremona (d. 1187).¹²¹ The secondary literature also familiarized Latin scholars with the notion of the “enlarged” *Organon* including the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*.

During the next stage, represented by Roger Bacon (d. 1294) and his *Opus maius*, we find the first mention of the text of the *Rhetoric* itself (i.e. the translation of Hermannus Alemannus mixed with material from al-Fārābī’s *Didascalia*).¹²²

We know little about the life of the translator: he was born possibly in 1202; in the mid-thirteenth century, he apparently worked in Toledo, at least according to notes in his translations which put him there in 1240

¹¹⁹ Kummerer (1989, p. 19). See Green (1994) on the various strands of rhetorical thought which existed before the re-introduction of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in the West and how they influenced the translation, transmission and interpretation of the Latin *Rhetoric*.


¹²¹ A prolific translator of both Greek and Arabic literature, cf. Steinschneider (1956, p. 16–32).

¹²² The text Hermannus used consists of the same *exemplar decuratum* available to Ibn Rušd, a product of the textual tradition of which the extant Arabic translation forms part, but it represents an earlier, superior version (Aouad, 2002, vol. i, p. 9).
and 1256. He is probably the same person as the later bishop of Astorga in Leon between 1266 and his death in 1272. His translation method apparently involved a second person and seemed to have been word-for-word from an intermediary oral translation into the Castilian vernacular given by an Arabic speaker who translated the Arabic text, also word for word.\footnote{Kummerer (1989, p. 27f).} To make sense of the many obscure passages of the Arabic Rhetoric, Hermann occasionally inserts translated passages derived from al-Fārābī’s Long Commentary (of which, as we have seen, the Didascalia formed the Prologue), the relevant chapters of Ibn Sinā’s Šifā’ and Ibn Rušd’s Middle Commentary.\footnote{Cf. Aouad (2002, vol. 1, p. 9) and Goulet (1989–, vol. 1, p. 468). Boggess (1971, p. 239–244, 246f) lists quotations from Ibn Rušd.}

Even though Bacon was in direct contact with Hermann, he never directly quotes either the Latin translation of the Rhetoric nor the Didascalia which he might not have read; on the contrary, he deplores the fact that both the Poetics and Rhetoric, allegedly the “two best books on logic”, were unavailable to a Latin-speaking audience.\footnote{Dahan (1998, p. 65).} The only texts he quotes are al-Fārābī’s Thāḥa’ al-‘ulūm, parts of Ibn Sinā’s Šifā’ and the logical part of al-Ġazālī’s Maqāṣid al-falāṣifāb (The Intentions of the Philosophers), known to him in a Latin translation entitled Logica al-Gazeli\footnote{Steinschneider (1956, p. 45).} by the same John of Seville who was responsible for one of the translations of al-Fārābī’s Thāḥa’ al-‘ulūm.\footnote{Cf. Rosier-Catach (1998, p. 11of).}

Roger Bacon’s writings mark a key stage in the reception of the Rhetoric in Latin: it had just become available, but had not been integrated into the university curricula. Rhetoric as a scholarly discipline was already established before the first Latin translation of the Rhetoric; like much of post-Aristotelian rhetoric in antiquity, it relied much more on Cicero and Quintilian than on the (relatively neglected) Aristotelian text.\footnote{Cf. Dahan (1998, p. 66).} A first, thirteenth century translation from the Greek which may have antedated Hermannus’ version had been more or less ignored. William of Moerbeke’s translation (which was used extensively by Thomas Aquinas) only became available around 1270 but quickly replaced the Arabo-Latin text which in fact never made its way into the universities.\footnote{Rosier-Catach (1998, p. 97) and Kummerer (1989, p. 25).} Considering its deficiencies and obscurity, some of it undoubtedly just a product of
the shortcomings of its Arabic source, it does not come as a surprise that Hermannus’ translation was quickly abandoned.¹³⁰

More successful than the Latin translations of the Arabic Rhetoric were those of Ibn Rušd’s Middle Commentary on the Rhetoric. After getting a taste of the commentary in the form of passages quoted in Hermannus’ translation of the Rhetoric, Latin scholars received the full text through a Hebrew translation by Todros Todrosi of Arles (fl. in the fourteenth century), finished in 1337, which served as the source of a Latin translation produced by Abraham of Balmes (d. 1523). It was frequently printed during the Renaissance.¹³¹ Ibn Rušd’s Short Commentary was translated into Hebrew at least twice, once by Jacob ben Maḥir in the thirteenth century; also, there was a sixteenth-century Latin translation.¹³² With these texts and the subsequent Latin commentaries written on the Rhetoric, we leave the history of the Arabic translation and reception of Aristotelian rhetoric.

¹³² Harvey (1986, p. 616f).
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Having reached the end of the reception of the Arabic Rhetoric and the Islamic philosophical tradition by Latin Renaissance scholars, it is time to look back and assess our results. What do we now know of the Arabic Rhetoric? Did our approach avoid some of the problems described in the first chapter? We will confine ourselves to a general outline; details can be found in the respective chapters.

The division of the text into smaller units has uncovered a number of structural and rhetorical differences between the Greek and the Arabic versions of the Rhetoric. In some cases, they decisively influence the translator’s understanding of a passage as well as his interpretation of other ideas and arguments in the Greek text. Especially longer and intricate stretches of argumentation cause the two texts to diverge: translation issues and misinterpretations reinforce each other and occasionally led to translations which have little in common with the Greek.

Structural discrepancies were, as we have seen, not only caused by problematic translations or technical issues such as damaged manuscripts. Preconceived notions played an important role in the translator’s reading of the Greek text. Accordingly, structural modifications fall into two groups: those that have an immediate and obvious impact on a given passage and those which predispose the translator to a specific interpretation of terms or ideas while not necessarily leading to immediate modifications. The former are very often caused by syntactical and stylistic phenomena, e.g. the segmentation of the continuous text into sentences and clauses; Aristotle’s often elliptical and terse style; or by technical difficulties such as misreadings and manuscript problems. The necessity to simplify intricate, longer syntactical structures in the process of translation also influenced the Arabic target text. Finally, parenthetical insertions in the Greek text proved to be a major stumbling block for the translator.

A more general factor impacting the translator’s reading of the Rhetoric is his belief in the consistency and coherence of his Greek source.¹ His

¹ The translator’s trust reflects the attitude of many antique commentators, cf. Hadot (1995, p. 73f).
attempt to reconcile the two lists of important aspects of speech he finds in Sections I.² and II.³ led to substantial structural divergences between the Greek and Arabic texts. Key terms such as φαντασία seem to have triggered interpretive schemata such as the contrast between tawabhum and taḫayyul on the one hand and bandasab on the other (cf. above p. 101).

In sum, the structural analysis suggests that not only the Greek text but also the translator’s preconceptions affected his work. Often enough, the Aristotle’s prose was simply beyond the translator’s grasp. On occasion, he had to resort to extremely close imitations of the Greek text’s word order in an attempt to squeeze some sense out of a passage. This happened frequently when extensive background knowledge about Greek literature, history and geography was required to understand the text. This knowledge was often not available to the translator. In combination with other issues, his unfamiliarity with much of the subject matter discussed in the Rhetoric caused substantial departures from the Greek text, e.g. in his puzzling argument about “acting” and “contestants” in Elements II.6.⁴ Metaphorical expressions were often translated literally meaning of such phrases, resulting in statements which must have confused both the translator and his readers. On occasion, he resorted to paraphrase or outright deletion to cope with difficult passages.

Lack of background knowledge or the obscure subject matter demanded considerable creativity and flexibility. In one case, the translator transposed Aristotle’s excursus on the use of the voice in speech into the field of music which he could expect his audience to be more familiar with than aspects of the Greek accent system.⁵

In spite of his troubles, he nevertheless proved himself comparably adept at handling complex syntactical constructions and creatively adapting Aristotle’s demanding text for an Arabic-speaking audience. Where he failed, we have not only the translator’s linguistic competence or the deficiencies of his sources to blame. He was equally often defeated by the difficult subject matter, the complicated structure and language of the text and the wide range of literary material it contains.

To cope with these challenges, he had to rely even more on the only formal markers of argumentative progression in the Greek text, particles. As we have seen, he displayed a remarkable subtlety and flexibility in

² On p. 67.
³ On p. 73.
⁴ On p. 104f.
⁵ Cf. Section II.3, p. 84.
uncovering the complex network of connectors and structural particles the Greek version is dotted with. Even so, some constructions eluded him: overlapping μέν ... δέ-constructions and clusters of particles as well as structures connecting distant textual elements marked the limits of his syntactic grasp.

In his handling of morphological features of the Greek language, specifically negative composites, the translator used the full range of instruments the Arabic language put at his disposal. In comparison to the other translations we have examined, the Rhetoric displays an average degree of terminological consistency; in terms of its treatment of negated terms and its coherence, the text exhibits numerous similarities with the translation of the Placita philosophorum.

Transcription is another field in which the Rhetoric shows a remarkable degree of consistency, notwithstanding some variation in the vocalic structure of many names. While features of the transcription system applied in different translations are ill suited to help us date a text, they at least reflect similarities in the approach taken by different translators and assists us in grouping translations. In comparison with the control group of texts, it becomes obvious that the translator of the Rhetoric applied a fully developed and consistent system of transliteration.

In terms of its terminology, the Rhetoric stands out, thanks to its high degree of variation in the translation of Greek technical terms. In spite of such apparent inconsistencies, the Rhetoric already contains the very range of expressions which became standardized in subsequent translations. This circumstance suggests once more that the text did not emerge in a terminological and methodological vacuum. Where we detect problems, e.g. in his frequent recourse to doublets, the explanation is often found in ambiguities in Aristotle’s own terminology. Moreover, doublets do not necessarily point to a translator’s lack of sophistication: they may also reflect his desire for terminological precision or illustrate his efforts in making the text more comprehensible for his audience.

Our analysis took only a small number of textual features and a small comparative sample of translations into account. On the basis of the findings outlined above, we are not in a position make a positive judgement about its translator(s). However, it provides us with enough material to place the text in close proximity to the Kindi-circle. The evidence clearly does not support an early, eighth century dating but suggests a translation date sometime in the first half of the ninth century. Whichever member or associate of the Kindi-circle took on this task, it shows the mark of a
comparatively inexperienced translator who had problems not only with
the language of the *Rhetoric* but also with the cultural background re-
quired to understand it.

Conceptual issues loomed large in our historical survey of the Greek-
Arabic translation movement, e.g. the subtle and not so subtle influence
of preconceived notions about the nature of language and the translation
process. Among them were the effects of what we have called the “philo-
logical outlook” such as a tendency to look at translations outside their
historical and intellectual context. Also prominent was the problematic
status of oral transmission, the transfer of information (terms, phrases,
ideas) through alternative channels which preceded or took place along-
side the systematic written translation of entire texts.

It hardly bears repeating that translation is a process that involves much
more than the transfer of content from one medium into another. It de-
depended (and depends) on many variables such as a translator’s education
and experience, his cultural background, contemporary intellectual, re-
ligious and political circumstances, the distinctive features of source and
target language, the character of the source text and the quality of the
material (manuscripts etc.) available to the translator.

On the linguistic level, echoes of the translators’ struggle with complex
Greek syntactic constructions and its complicated verbal system can be
heard in each extant translation, especially the *Rhetoric*. In spite of such
problems, the translators, sometimes together with their revisers, made
masterly use of the abundant resources provided by Syriac and Arabic to
produce readable and understandable texts.

In addition to linguistic issues, the translators had to bridge an entire
millenium and to understand and convey ideas originating in a cultural
context which could not have been further removed from their contempo-
rary concerns. Their task was alleviated to a certain degree by the vestiges
of Greek and Byzantine scholarly institutions still active at the time of the
Islamic conquest, e.g. Syrian educational institutions. Scholars trained in
such institutions transmitted the core of the texts which formed part of
the late antique scholarly curriculum and translated a number of central
works into Syriac. While some of this textual heritage made its way into
the hands of the Arabic translators, readings and interpretations of these
texts had undergone major changes. The effect of Neoplatonic thought
on the commentary tradition is one factor which had a substantial im-
 pact on the translators’ understanding of their texts. Their concerns had
moreover been shaped by their Christian faith. These and other factors
left their mark on the translations produced in the course of the Greek-Arabic translation movement.

The way the *Rhetoric* was understood by the translator and Islamic philosophers is a good example of the impact of interpretations inherited from translated literature. The classification of the *Rhetoric* as a logical treatise was a given and the text was translated and read in this light.

This and other aspects of a translator's work have the potential to change substantially the way we look at Greek-Arabic translations. The decisions translators took during their work were considerably more complex than to pick one of two basic approaches ("literal" or "free") and then to select suitable Arabic equivalents for a given Greek word or phrase. A great many of these decisions were involved in the production of a translation, some of them conscious, some taken unconsciously on the basis of their education, training and experience and a host of other factors guiding their judgement.

The complexity of this process calls for a reconstruction and appreciation of as many of these factors as possible in order to understand the resulting text as fully as the available information allows. It also calls for a rethinking of simplifying categories of translation such as mistranslation, translational competence etc., all of which depend on outdated concepts of language and translation. What we are beginning to learn is that the texts produced during the Greek-Arabic translation movement are independent literary facts: they are based on Greek and/or Syriac source texts but they often enough put forward arguments and make points which differ from what we would expect on the basis of our carefully collated and thoroughly annotated and researched Greek editions.

This is not to absolve the translator or scribe from their lapses. On the contrary, these often enough marred the process of translation and transmission—something the translators themselves were acutely aware of—and have to be pointed out as such. It is, however, to raise our awareness of the constraints under which translators were working and to increase our appreciation for the admirable results they produced under often adverse conditions.

Even more importantly, it is to emphasize the status of translations as literary creations in their own right. What we perceive as a fault and misunderstanding might and, in all probability, will have been read as a valid idea or argument by contemporary readers. It could have made its way into contemporary discussions and writings and developed a life of its own, independent of the translation it was derived from. Any aware-
ness of a translation’s shortcomings which might have cautioned readers tends to be lost once these ideas have successfully “escaped” into the intellectual world. Thus, however inadequate we consider a translation, it was probably read and understood as a substantial contribution to specific literary traditions. This phenomenon is akin to the appearance and utilization of spurious texts or whole groups of texts and the influence they had on several disciplines and subjects of Islamic thought. Probably the most prominent example of such texts are pseudo-Aristotelian writings, chiefly the *Theology of Aristotle*, which had such a formative impact on Islamic philosophy and theology.⁶

The distinction between “literal” and “free” translations frequently mentioned above proved to be particularly persistent in the secondary literature. Its attractiveness for the Greek-Arabic translation movement is obvious: firstly, it offers two mutually exclusive categories to classify translations both qualitatively and, according to several commentators, chronologically and secondly, its authoritative status as a distinction originating inside Islamic discourse on translation is assured by the testimony of al-Ṣafādī. We have seen that, quite apart from the question of its applicability to the translations he so confidently writes about, his claims cannot be corroborated by any authoritative source contemporary to and familiar with the translation movement. It had come to a close three centuries before al-Ṣafādī’s death.⁷

What, then, do we mean when we talk about “literal” translation? A synonym frequently used in the context of early Greek-Arabic translations is “word-for-word” or *verbum-e-verbo* translation: the linear substitution of a source language word with a target language word. This typology of translation has a long and venerable history.⁸ Considering the case of a “literal” translation between cognate languages such as French and Italian, it works reasonably well: the process of mechanical substitution of one French term for an Italian one will, owing to the high degree of syntactic similarity between the languages and semantic congruity between terms, lead to a text that is comprehensible, even though it probably would, in the eyes of a native speaker, not make for a very pleasant read or necessarily convey the same set of meanings.

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⁷ Similar sentiments have been expressed by Gutas (1998, p. 142).
Things are substantially more complicated between unrelated languages such as Greek and Arabic. Mechanical substitution fails not only on account of widely differing syntactic and stylistic standards. Also, the assumption of terminological congruity fails us most of the time. Thus, word-for-word transposition, were it possible, would result in texts which were not only unreadable but incomprehensible. Obviously, it does not make much sense to posit a clear-cut distinction between literal and free translations in the context of the Greek-Arabic translation movement. We can, however, still talk about relative degrees of literalness as long as we specify what feature of a source text has been reproduced “literally”. The Retorick contains numerous examples of relatively close imitations of the source text’s word order. We have already pointed out that this specific form of “literalness” coincides with passages which the translator apparently has not understood very well, if at all.

Without its counterpart, it does not make sense to talk about “free” translations as well: however early or flawed a translation from Greek to Syriac or Arabic may appear to us, it must by necessity be “free” to qualify as a translation in the first place, to relay meaning from one linguistic medium into another.

The resources which translators used in understanding and translating texts comprised not only obvious elements such as their Syriac Christian background and ability to draw on the collective experience embodied in the Greek-Syriac translation tradition or their training with other translators and their access to source texts and other Arabic translations. They lived in a cultural milieu that was suffused with ideas and concepts from a variety of sources. Diffusion relied only in part on written texts and was probably often achieved through oral communication. Ideas, theories, even certain terms were offered on the intellectual marketplace of the time and either accepted or discarded. Some of the material brought into circulation by these processes of diffusion found its way to the translators and influenced their reading of texts: it suggested interpretations, offered parallels and might even have provided some of their terminology. That is to say, attempts to reconstruct influences on a translator’s output on the basis of written texts without acknowledging the potential impact of non-textual diffusion leads to numerous problems: it invites misleading

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9 (Morony, 1984, p. 10) reminds us that Iraq in particular was a region which, on account of its cultural diversity, had a decisive influence on the shaping of early Islamic civilization: “Iraq was a place of cultural creativity and a center for cultural diffusion. Changes that were taking place there make the region unique during late antiquity but characteristic of Islamic civilization”.

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reconstructions of translation traditions, gives rise to flawed chronolog-
cal classifications and it deprives us of an important factor which can help
to explain terminological decisions and interpretations.

The translation of the *Rhetoric*, even though obviously an early product
of the translation movement, already shows a surprising degree of consist-
tency and standardization in areas such as transcription and terminology.
Without evidence for a preceding *textual* tradition from which standards
such as these could have been derived, oral diffusion of concepts and terms
should not be excluded as a potential source for this kind of lexical and
linguistic knowledge.

In addition to these more general considerations, some methodolog-
ical issues associated with the study of Greek-Arabic translations have
emerged in the course of this study.

The first one has, thanks to the healthy scepticism of more recent
research, lost some of its urgency, i.e. the tendency to construct sweeping
generalizations and elaborate historical reconstructions on the basis of
a handful of sources. The most striking example for this tendency is
the subject of the *bayt al-ḥikmah*, its history, structure and role in the
translation movement. As tempting as it is to detect traces of something
comparable to modern research institutions behind the scant references
in our sources, the material is simply not trustworthy and substantial
enough to allow any such inferences.

The second one is more complex and harder to resolve: the identi-
fication of “Syriacisms” and other evidence for alleged Syriac intermedi-
aries, an important part of translation analysis ever since the beginnings of
systematic research into the Greek-Arabic translation tradition. In some
cases, the Syriac origins of an Arabic translation can be plausibly sug-
gested on the basis of philological criteria and the evidence provided by
marginal notes and/or information derived from secondary sources. In
other cases, we do not have corroborating evidence outside the texts them-

The interpretation of often ambiguous textual findings quickly
becomes a guessing game: there are a number of different explanations
for the existence of Syriacisms, e.g. a translator’s deficient command of
Arabic; contaminations introduced by later scribes and commentators;
misreadings and defects of manuscripts transmitted through the ages;
or—finally—the sought-after Syriac source text used by a translator for
the production of an Arabic version. Where corroboration from outside
sources is not forthcoming, it is possible to cite any number of them to
explain the terminology and phraseology of a given text without having to posit a hypothetical Syriac source.

Nevertheless, the existence of a Syriac intermediary as the source for specific translations instead of a Greek text seems to be the default choice for some commentators. The *Rhetoric* is a good example for the interpretation of textual and secondary evidence influenced by the expectation of a Syriac intermediary. The mere reference to a Syriac translation in Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist* in combination with alleged Syriacisms in the text of the *Rhetoric* have led Lyons to assume as a matter of course rather than proof that the translation was produced on the basis of a Syriac text. This assumption has not been borne out by our text analysis. The marginal notes in the manuscript which refer to a Syriac version do not indicate more than the use of a Syriac version of uncertain date in the *collation process* of the extant manuscript. While it does not conclusively prove the central role of a Syriac source in the translation process, it at least corroborates the testimony of Ibn al-Nadīm regarding the existence of such a Syriac *Rhetoric* (or parts of it).

As with many a generalization we encounter in the secondary literature, the only possible course of action seems to be to present the sources as we have them, to evaluate their relevance and to interpret them with caution. In the end, agnosticism probably serves us better than speculation.

Are there, apart from thorough philological analyses and a comprehensive study of all available sources to establish the context of specific texts, any additional instruments which could help us to add to and improve our knowledge about Greek-Arabic translations? I think there are.

The study of the translation movement is one of the fields in which the conscientious application of philological methods has enabled us to make the most out of a relatively small collection of extant texts and scattered references in the bio-bibliographical literature. After careful philological analysis combined with a meticulous examination of secondary sources and the various translation fragments distributed over a vast amount of philosophical and non-philosophical literature, we are able to draw a surprisingly detailed picture of the history of the translation movement, its exponents and methods. Without the work of the authors whose writings we have explored in the first chapter, our understanding of the translation movement would still be in its infancy.

Chronologically parallel to the activities of these and other scholars in the field, translation as a more general phenomenon of linguistic and cultural exchange has been the focus first of linguistics and, since the early
1970s, the independent discipline of translation studies. Even though sub-
stantial amounts of research in this field have focused on modern trans-
lation between related languages, some of the concepts and analytical
methods developed in translation studies can be fruitfully applied to the
Greek-Arabic translation movement.

One important addition to our analytical equipment is the ability to
analyse and compare textual units which fall outside the scope of philolo-
gical analysis, i.e. units larger than a sentence. Since we are, in the context
of Greek-Arabic translation, mostly dealing with sources which do not
give us any graphical indications for such larger units, we have to divide
the text according to semantic criteria. The model applied in this study
to a sample from Book Three of the *Rhetoric* is one such approach. A text
is split up into smaller units along lines drawn by the rhetorical purpose¹⁰
of a text and the steps an author or translator takes to achieve this pur-
pose. The division of texts into rhetorical units allows us to retrace the
rhetorical structure of a source text and a translation, compare them and
identify such modifications as occurred in the process of translation. The
resulting insight into the way a stretch of text is rhetorically organized and
the way rhetorical purposes are given expression and arranged provides us
with a wealth of comparative data: how does the translator render dis-
crete arguments? Does he understand and accurately reproduce relations
between arguments? Does he perceive standard figures of persuasion and
successfully transfer their rhetorical import, if not their actual structure?
Does he grasp the overall rhetorical purpose of a text and bring it out
in his translation? As we have seen, these modifications can be serious
enough to alter substantially the meaning of the Arabic version.¹¹

In addition to the ability to study higher-level textual units, text lin-
guistics and translation studies could provide our field with a number of
other helpful methodical tools. The division of texts as demonstrated in
our sample is only a preliminary step: in a second analytical stage which
we have not undertaken in this study, argumentative relations between
textual units would be examined to identify patterns which in turn would
lead to the classification of a text sample according to “text types”, e.g.
“argumentation” or “exposition”. Without going into further detail, it

¹⁰ In this paragraph, the term “rhetorical” is used in its technical meaning in the field
of translation studies. Hatim and Mason (1990, p. 243) define “rhetorical purpose” as
“The overall intention of a text producer, as instantiated by the function of a text, e.g.
to narrate, to counter-argue”. To employ a technical term used in speech-act theory, it
denotes a text’s “illocutionary force” (Hatim, 1997, p. 118f).

¹¹ Cf. above p. 124.
is obvious that this approach would afford the study of the translation movement an additional classificatory matrix which could play a role in text comparisons. Moreover, it would help us to identify cross-cultural differences between text type structures and their influence in the process of translation between Greek, Syriac and Arabic. On a more general level, the introduction of methods developed in the context of text linguistics and translation studies would act as a powerful antidote against simplified conceptions of translation such as those we have encountered in the course of this study.
The following indices are based on the section of the *Rhétorique* we have analysed in some depth in the third chapter, i.e. the first half of Book Three which corresponds to 1403b6–1412a16 in Kassel's edition of the Greek text and 171/1–204/3 in Lyons' Arabic edition. Omissions, mistranslations and damaged sections of the manuscript have complicated things a bit; terms without any identifiable equivalent in the other version as well as obvious mistranslations have, with few exceptions, been excluded. Arabic nouns and participles with articles are reproduced with it in both indices.

For the highly frequent Greek terms αὐτός, γίγνομαι, δεῖ, ἔχω, εἴρω, λέγω, ποιέω, χράω and χρῆσις, the index contains only a representative selection of occurrences to avoid repetition. For a discussion of some of the central Greek philosophical terms and their terminological development across several Greek-Arabic translations, see p. 173–179.

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5 Badawi: Αλλάχινος.
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4 According to Lyons, the word was apparently misread as ἀνάμα.
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5 Margoliouth, Silim: Ἀνκόσανδρινος.
ἀντιστάω 09b21 ἀντισταθή

κορω γρήγορα μετά τη στάθη.

ἀντίστροφος 09a26f ταῖς ἀντιστροφῖς

κορω των ἀντιστροφῶν

ἀνωθεν 1θα15 τῷ ἀνωθεν

Επάνω σε ένα μικρότερο μέγεθος.

ἀνώνυµος 09α36 τὰ ἀνώνυμα

τοιχογραφία με τα κεφαλαία.

ἀντιστρόφος 09b21 ἀντιστρωθή

κορω των ἀντιστροφῶν

ἀνωθεν 1θα15 τῷ ἀνωθεν

Επάνω σε ένα μικρότερο μέγεθος.

ἀνώνυµος 09α36 τὰ ἀνώνυμα

τοιχογραφία με τα κεφαλαία.

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ἀπολέεσθαι ο9b23f ἀπολείπουσι

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Badawi:
Lyons suspects that the translation of the term is based on the reading ἀχορόν.

9 Badawi: بابل.
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ἐπιφέρω ο5α19 ἔπιφερόντων

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19  Hermannus Alemannus transcribes “Abruclitis”.
20  Margoliou, Sālim: ῥαυθός  ῥαυθός.
21  Badawi: ῥαυθός  ῥαυθός.
22  Om. Badawi.
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25 Badawi: استمالوس.
| Ιφικράτης | οσα20, άδιο, b2 Ιφικράτης | 178/2, 200/15, 201/19 |

**K**

| καθίστημι | οφ335 καταστητάντων | 196/16 |
| καθοράω | ομ332 καθοράν | 195/3 |
| κακός | οσα16 ἀπὸ τῶν χειρόνων | 177/19 |
| κακόν | οφ317 ἱπτον | 179/21 |
| κακόν | οφ329 τὸ κακόν | 180/13 |
| κακόν | οφ617 κακόν | 181/17 |
| κακώς | οφ610 κακώς | 183/10 |
| κακων | οφ815 κακων | 189/7 |
| κακών | οφ812 κακών | 191/16 |
| κακά | οφ628 κακά | 196/9 |
| κακά | οφ628 κακά | 196/9 |
| κακόστη | οφ629 κακόστη | 196/10 |
| κακός | ιωα23 κακός | 197/10 |
| κακός | ιωα34 κακός | 198/12 |
| κακός | ιωα335 κακός | 198/12 |

**κακουφεσώ**

| κακουφεσώ | οφ319 κακουφεσώ | 177/1 |
| καλώ | οφ24, 26 καλώσι | 178/7 |
| καλεσι | ιωα24 ἱκαλεσι | 201/9 |

**Καλλίας**

| καλλίας | οφ320 Καλλίαν | 178/2 |
| καλλίας | οφ320 ο δὲ [sc. Καλλίας] | 178/4 |
| τὸ κάλλος | οφ66 κάλλος | 179/9 |
| κάλλος | οφ614 κάλλος | 179/18 |
| κάλλος | ιωβ16 πολὺ κάλλον | 202/13f | 24 Perhaps misread by the translator as καλως.
| καλώς | οφ337 καλώς | 172/20 |
| καλώς | οφ427 καλώστα | 174/8 |
| καλών | οφ66 καλών | 179/9 |
| καλών | οφ616 καλών | 179/20 |
| καλών | οφ618 ἀπὸ καλών | 179/22 |
| καλών | οφ612 καλών | 183/12 |

24 Perhaps misread by the translator as καλως.
25 Badawi: emend. حسنين.
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26 Margoliouth, Slightly: قيفيسودوطيوس.
| κολοβός | o9a18 κολοβόν | 194/8 قصيراً |
| κορδακικός | o8b16 κορδακικότερος | 193/8 اكتر [ملاحظة أو ...] |
| κοσμίω | o4a34 ἐκέσμουν | 174/15 بدونونه وبدونه |
| κοσμίων | o4a14f κοσμίων | 177/17 تخمس |
| ὁ κόσμος | o8ai4 κόσμος | 189/17 بالنهائه |
| ἡ κραυγή | o5a33 κραυγήν | 178/17f صرخة و كشيشا |
| ἡ κραυγήθεα | 12a14f κραυγήθεαν | 204/2 الملاق |
| κρινός | o3b1i oἱ κρινότες | 171/8 الحكام |
| Κρίσις | o7a38 Κρίσις | 186/21 فريسسوس |
| ἡ κτήσις | o7a35 κύκλω | 186/18 بالكرة |
| κτήσει | o7b27 κύκλων | 188/12 الدائرة |
| τὸ κυνιδίον | o6b27i τοῖς ... κυνιδίοις | 184/4 الجرائ |
| κυφίσις | o5b66 τά κύφια | 175/4 المستلى |
| κυφίσια | o5b31 τό ... κυφίαν | 176/14 المستلى |
| κυφίσιοι | o4b35 τοῖς κυφίοις | 176/10 المستلى |
| κυφία | 177/3 مستلىان |
| κυφίτευν | o5b11f κυφίτευον | 179/15 المستلى |
| κυφίτια | 199/3 افىتة |
| ὁ Κύων | 11a24 ὁ Κύων | 201/10 قبون |
| τὸ κύλιον | o5b31f κύλιος | 195/16 الوصل |
| κύλιον | o5b17, 10a23 τὰ κύλια | 195/19, 197/21 الوصول |
| κύλιος | 196/14 الوصول |
| κύλιον | o5b16 τῷ κύλιῳ | 196/17 الوصول |
| κύλιον | 198/1f الوصول |
| ὡς κωμιδία | o8ai4 κωμιδία | 189/17 [قومودية] |
| ὡς κωμιδόσπουσ | o6b7 οἱ κωμιδόσπουσ | 183/6 الدنى يضعون القوموديات |

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27 Margoliouth, Salim: فلوسوس.
28 Badawi: الفقدمون.
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03a28 λαβεῖν
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03b9, 13 εἰρήται
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04a38 λέγομεν
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εἴρηται
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τοὺς λέγοντας
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06a30 λέγοντες
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06b14 τὰ εἰρημένα
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07a37 λέγομεν
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ο9a35 λέξιν
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29 Expression misunderstood by the translator.
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30 Badawi: [القوفرن].
31 Expression misunderstood by the translator.
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| Name erroneously translated. |
Lyons suggests a confusion of two Syriac roots behind this translation.
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41 Badawi: اَحْسِينِسِ.  
42 Badawi: اَخْيَلِوُسِ.  
43 Margoliouth, Salim: اَرْدَطَوِس، Badawi: اَرْدَطَوِس.  
44 Badawi: اَرْدَطَوِس.  
45 Hermannus Alemannus transcribes “Abruclitis”.  
46 Badawi: اَضْمَيْنِ.  

**ARABIC-GREEK GLOSSARY**
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47 Badawi: افيدارووس
48 Badawi: [الفريدوس].
49 Badawi: الامور.
50 Badawi: emend.
51 Expression misunderstood by the translator.
08a23 τὰ πράγματα
07a35 Ἐκμηδοκλῆς
10a32 ἐντύσιν
07b8 θῆρα
06b27 Ἀνδροτίων
06a35 ο ... ἀνθρώπων
06b12 ἀνθρώπων
08a24 πολλά
08b34 τὸν πολλὸν
11b16 τῶν ἀνθρώπων
07a9 Ἀντισθένης
08a18 Ἀναξανδρίδου
10a32 Ἀντισθένης
04b99 τοὺς πολίτας
05b30 τοῖς Βασιλιάνοις
07a4 τοὺς Βασιλιάνοις
10a12 πολίτας
04b32 τὸ οἰκεῖον
04b35 τοῖς οἰκεῖοις
05b12 οἰκειότερον
07a31 οἰκείος
08a31 οἰκεία
12a10 οἰκεῖον
11a9 Εὐβοίαν
06b30 Ἡθοδομάς
08b26 τὸ ... ἀφεθῆμιν
04b25 Εὐφρίππος
05a29 Εὐφρίππος
06b30 Εὐφρίππος

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52 Margoliouth, Salim: Ανκσαντρινος.
53 Badawi: بابل.
54 Badawi: [شومادوس].
55 Badawi: أوريجوس.
56 Badawi: أوريجوس.
57 Badawi: emend. أوريجوس.
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58 Badawi: emend. ἀσιμβείους
59 Badawi: ἀσιμβείους
10β2 αἱ ... ἀφεξαὶ 198/16 μίαδες
11α6 στουδάλιοντος 200/11 βδλ. ποιότητα
ο6α15 ἐξαλάττυ 181/14 βδλ.
ο4β8 τὸ ... ἐξαλάτται 175/7 θέτησις και τεμπέρα
ο4β31 ἐξαλάττυ 176/12 θέτησις και τεμπέρα
ο6α28 τὸ σῶμα 182/8 βδλ. ανάπτυγμα
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تنعع 6

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60 Expression misunderstood by the translator.
61 Badawi: emend. αλασυντόσμου.
62 Badawi: αληθινος.
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The translator misunderstood Aristotle's quotation.

According to Lyons, the word was apparently misread as ἔναι µα.

Expression misunderstood by the translator.
Lyons suspects the reading ἀχόρον behind the translation of the term.
Lyons suspects the reading ἄχορδον behind the translation of the term.
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71 Om. Badawi.
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75 Badawi: emend. قلياس.
76 The α privativum has not been translated.
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أنا مساعد مفيد. إذا كنت تحتاج إلى مساعدة، فأنا هنا لمساعدتك.  

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10528 τή λέξιν
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أ. مارجوليوث، سليم: قيفيسادوتروس والكتابskyline3}.Margoliouth, Sālim: Qīfīṣaduṭrus.
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لا يمكنني أن يكون في وزن الدثرامو

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تكون كاملة

يكون معرفا

يكون

كانوا فيما

من أهل كيوس

كيموس

لازن

فيذيننا

[النلتث]

نانا

البلينت

اللبن

بلحا

لحن أو خطا في الكلام

اللبن

الحصا

لذ

اللذيمة

الديدان

[الديدان]

لذيمة

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نيل لذيمة

لذيمة

لذيمة

لذيمة

إلى لذيمة

ليس بلذيم

يبلوم أو يشكل

يبلوم أو يشكل

أكيمة

اللازميات

لازن

فيذيننا

[النلتث]

نانا

البلينت

اللبن

بلحا

لحن أو خطا في الكلام

اللبن

الحصا

لذ

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الديدان

[الديدان]

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لذيمة

نيل لذيمة

لذيمة

لذيمة

لذيمة

إلى لذيمة

ليس بلذيم

يبلوم أو يشكل

يبلوم أو يشكل

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0632 αἱ ... γλώτται
0325 αἱ γνώσεις
0331 κύκλοπται
0428 γλώτταις
0647 γλώτταις
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79 Badawi: ألف صحيح
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**Notes:**
- Aristotle’s quotation has been misunderstood.
- Name erroneously translated.
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ο9477 τῶν χύδιν
ο591 τῷ εὐδοκιμοῦντι
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