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### *Cover*

Mašhad, Kitābhāna-i Āsitān-i Quds-i Raḍawī 300, f. 1v  
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *grec* 1853, f. 186v

C. Genequand, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise. Les principes du tout selon la doctrine d'Aristote*. Introduction, texte arabe, traduction et commentaire, Vrin, Paris 2017 (Sic et Non), 156 pp.

Lost in Greek, the Arabic short treatise *On the Principles of the Cosmos* by (or based on) Alexander of Aphrodisias was edited in 1947 by 'A. Badawī.<sup>1</sup> Some twenty years later, the same scholar provided a French translation.<sup>2</sup> In 2001 the Arabic text was edited again by Charles Genequand, who also translated it into English.<sup>3</sup> Today Genequand offers a new translation, this time into French, of the text as he edited it in 2001 (pp. 52-97).<sup>4</sup> The text and the facing translation are followed by a running commentary (pp. 99-148).

Despite this intense research, the question marks are not yet completely removed from the treatise nor from its Arabic version, first and foremost because the lost Greek original left no trace in Greek philosophical literature, and second because the Arabic is attested in two versions whose mutual relationship is far from being clear. Neither there is scholarly consensus on the relationship of the Arabic text with the earlier Syriac version.<sup>5</sup> All this, coupled with the fact that research on the Arabic Alexander has increased in the meantime,<sup>6</sup> persuaded Genequand to publish the treatise anew, with an updated Introduction (pp. 7-49) and commentary (pp. 99-148).

To begin with an uncontroversial point, *On the Principles of the Cosmos* is surely Alexandrian in inspiration, as shown by two passages in Alexander's *De Mixtione* (extant in Greek), to which Genequand calls attention in his Introduction. In these two passages some points are addressed which are reminiscent of the issue at hand in the *Principles*:

Dans l'un (227, 8-10) Alexandre dénonce ceux qui contredisent Aristote sur la question "du mélange, de l'âme, du destin et de la providence", et continue: "Ainsi que ce qui concerne les principes, Dieu, l'unité du Tout (ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ἕνωσις) et sa sympathie à l'égard de soi-même (συμπάθεια πρὸς αὐτό); car toutes ces choses pour eux sont le Dieu qui pénètre (δευήλων) la matière". Cette énumération correspond précisément à la liste des traités grecs et arabes d'Alexandre (*De Mixtione, De Anima, De Fato, De la Providence*), complétée par ce qui est presque un

<sup>1</sup> 'A. Badawī, *Aristū 'inda l-'Arab. Dirāsāt wa-nuṣūṣ ḡayr manšūra*, Maktabat al-nahḍa al-miṣriyya, Cairo 1947 (Dirāsāt Islāmiyya, 5), pp. 253-77.

<sup>2</sup> 'A. Badawī, *La transmission de la philosophie grecque au monde arabe*, Vrin, Paris 1968 (Études de philosophie médiévale, 56), pp. 121-39.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. Genequand, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Cosmos*, Brill, Leiden - Boston - Köln 2001 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, 44), henceforth designated as "the 2001 edition".

<sup>4</sup> In the "Avant-propos" of the book under review here, Genequand informs that the text is the same as in the 2001 edition, without the critical apparatus. This is understandable; nonetheless, the reader would have been helped by the reproduction of the list of the manuscripts. When, at pp. 14ff., the manuscripts of Damascus, El Escorial, Tashkent, Tehran, and Istanbul are mentioned, the reader is obliged to have recourse to the 2001 edition if he wants to get information about them, their dates and possible relationships; the same is true for the manuscripts of the so-called Version B of this work: see below, n. 16.

<sup>5</sup> In the book under review here, p. 10 n. 2 and 3, Genequand refers to G. Furlani, "Il trattato di Sergio di Rēsh'aynā sull'universo", *Rivista trimestrale di studi filosofici e religiosi* 4 (1923), pp. 257-87 and to E. Fiori, "L'Épitomé syriaque du *Traité sur les causes du tout* d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise attribué à Serge de Reš'aynā. Édition et traduction", *Le Muséon* 123 (2010), pp. 127-58.

<sup>6</sup> A volume was published in 2002 entitled *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba*. Atti del colloquio internazionale Padova, 14-15 maggio 1999 a cura di C. D'Ancona e G. Serra, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2002 (Subsidia mediaevalia patavina, 3), that contains two essays of special importance for the Arabic Alexander: G. Endress, "Alexander Arabus on the First Cause. Aristotle's First Mover in an Arabic Treatise Attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias", pp. 19-74, and M. Geoffroy, "La tradition arabe du Περὶ τοῦ d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise et les origines de la doctrine farabienne des quatre degrés de l'intellect", *ibid.*, pp. 191-231. Other important contributions include at least the French translation of Alexander's treatise *On Providence*, lost in Greek: Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *Traité de la Providence* (περὶ προνοίας), *version arabe d'Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus*, introd., éd. et trad. de P. Thillet, Verdier, Paris 2003, and the English translation of the Arabic remnants of Alexander's commentary on the *De Generatione et corruptione*, lost in Greek: *Alexander of Aphrodisias. On Aristotle On Coming-to-Be and Perishing 2.2-5*, trans. by E. Gannagé, Duckworth, London 2005 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle).

sommaire de notre *Traité des Principes*. (...) L'autre passage (223, 9-14) précise: "Ils ne connaissent pas la cause principale de l'unité du Tout. C'est la nature du corps divin, mù en cercle et éthéré qui entoure toute la substance matérielle, passive et changeante; par son mouvement continu et constant et par sa position relative différente à différents moments à l'égard des corps engendrés, il assure un ordre défini à leur changements les uns dans les autres; il maintient ainsi et préserve le Tout". Cette proposition résume aussi un des thèmes centraux des Principes (...) en attaquant au passage les Stoïciens. Il appert ainsi que ce texte, même s'il n'a pas laissé de trace en tant que tel en grec, s'insère très naturellement, et même nécessairement, dans le programme de l'Exégète (p. 8).

Another uncontroversial point is that the treatise was either translated or adapted into Syriac at an early date: the translator (or adaptor) was Sergius of Reš'aynā,<sup>7</sup> who died in 536. A note of caution is added by Genequand on the idea that this early version might really help to reconstruct the Greek original: he sides with D. King in considering that the Syriac version is heavily adapted, hence his caution apropos the possibility of recovering the lost Greek text on the basis of Sergius' reworking.<sup>8</sup>

The third uncontroversial point is that the Arabic translation is extant in two distinct versions, labelled – here as in the 2001 edition – A and B. On the contrary, on the issue of the relationship between them and with the Syriac version we are on thin ice. Version A, which is the more complete and the one Genequand edits and translates here, as he did in the 2001 volume, is attributed to three different translators in the various manuscripts that attest to it. Version B raises further problems, on which later. Neither overlaps entirely with the Syriac.

Let's for the moment focus on version A. One of its manuscripts credits Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abdallāh al-Našrānī al-Kātib ('Abdillāh in Genequand's spelling) with the translation, and claims that he translated the treatise into Arabic out of the Syriac version made by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 873).<sup>9</sup> Other manuscripts<sup>10</sup> attribute the translation to Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. ca. 910), and another one<sup>11</sup> mentions Ḥunayn as the translator,

<sup>7</sup> On Sergius of Reš'aynā (d. 536) Genequand, p. 10 n. 1, addresses the reader to two essays by H. Hugonnard-Roche: "Note sur Sergius de Reš'aynā, traducteur du grec en syriaque et commentateur d'Aristote", in G. Endress - R. Kruk (eds.), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism. Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences dedicated to H.J. Drossaart Lulofs on His Ninetieth Birthday*, CNWS School, Leiden 1997, pp. 121-43 (repr. in H. Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d'Aristote du grec au syriaque. Études sur la transmission des textes de l'Organon et leur interprétation philosophique*, Vrin, Paris 2004 (Textes et traditions, 9), pp. 123-42, and the entry "Sergius de Reš'aynā", in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, VI, CNRS Éditions, Paris 2016, pp. 214-27; on the treatise at hand Genequand refers to D. King, "Alexander of Aphrodisias' *On the Principles of the Universe* in a Syriac Adaptation", *Le Muséon* 123 (2010), pp. 159-91.

<sup>8</sup> On this and other related points Genequand, p. 11 disagrees with S. Fazzo - M. Zonta, "Towards a Textual History and Reconstruction of Alexander of Aphrodisias' Treatise *On the Principles of the Universe*", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 49 (2014), pp. 91-116.

<sup>9</sup> This information is provided by the colophon of the manuscript Damascus, Maktabat al-Zāhiriyya (Maktabat Asad), 'amm 4871 (see above, n. 4) which Genequand does not publish in the book under review (in the 2001 edition the colophon was published but not translated). The colophon runs as follows in Badawī's French translation (see above, n. 2), p. 139 (text: p. 277.7-11 Badawī = p. 126.3-7 in Genequand 2001): "Fini le traité d'Alexandre sur les principes du Tout selon l'opinion d'Aristote. Il est traduit du syriaque en arabe par Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-lāh al-Našrānī al-Kātib; et du grec en syriaque par Abū Zaid Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq. Je l'ai transcrit de la copie écrite de la main de Tōmā au début de *dhū al-Qi'dah* [sic] de l'année 585 de l'hégire. Que le Dieu des mondes soit loué, et que ses bénédictions touchent notre maître et son prophète Muḥammad et sa famille entière". This translation should be corrected as for the date: as it is said in as many letters in the colophon, p. 277.10 Badawī = p. 126.6 Genequand 2001, and is stated by Badawī himself in the Introduction to the 1947 edition, p. (51), the year of the copy is 558 h, corresponding to 1163 AD.

<sup>10</sup> List in the 2001 edition, pp. 28-29: three manuscripts are housed in Tehran, one in Tashkent, and one at El Escorial.

<sup>11</sup> Shelfmark in the 2001 edition, p. 27: this manuscript, Istanbul, Süleymaniye kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, is a huge collection of philosophical works, to which attention was called by F. Rosenthal, "From Arabic Books and Manu-

something which is “sûrement un lapsus” (p. 14).<sup>12</sup> According to Genequand, this state of affairs, coupled with the fact that Ibrāhīm is mentioned in the *K. al-Fibrīst* as the person who was in possession of two of Alexander’s commentaries,<sup>13</sup> is best accounted for by the hypothesis that the translation was done by both Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn and Ibrāhīm, in some sort of collaboration. This might also help to explain why two *lemmata* from Aristotle’s *Physics* accompanied by Alexander’s exegesis are included in Version A.<sup>14</sup> All this elicits the following explanation:

On peut dès lors supposer que nous avons affaire ici soit à un travail de collaboration, ou à une révision superficielle (pour ne pas parler d’appropriation) par Ibrāhīm du travail de son prédécesseur plus connu. (...) Que les deux citations du commentaire à la *Physique* aient été interpolées par le traducteur/adaptateur arabe ne fait guère de doute. Or, nous avons vu qu’Ibrāhīm possédait le commentaire d’Alexandre à la *Physique*. Le faussaire semble ainsi tout désigné! Il est vrai que les citations se trouvent aussi dans les manuscrits attribués à Iṣḥāq, mais sans la mention “Alexandre a dit” (*qāla al-Iskandar*), ce qui renforce l’idée d’une collaboration, chacun des deux auteurs ayant ensuite “édité” le texte à sa manière et donné ainsi naissance aux deux branches de la tradition (p. 16).<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the hypothesis favoured by Genequand on the origin of Version A is that Alexander’s treatise was translated into Arabic by Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn and then modified by Ibrāhīm, who added the formula *qāla al-Iskandar* as an introduction to the two passages from Alexander’s commentary on the *Physics* that are included in this version of the *Principles*. Matters are not made easier if one takes into account Version B. This version, which is attested by eight manuscripts,<sup>16</sup> is different from Version A in various respects: first, it is shorter than it and a final sentence claims that the text is incomplete;<sup>17</sup> second, it is attributed to a

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scripts V: A One-Volume Library of Arabic Philosophical and Scientific Texts in Istanbul”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75 (1955), pp. 14-23.

<sup>12</sup> This claim is not argued for. In the 2001 edition, Genequand stated that “Ḥunayn b. Iṣḥāq in the *Carullah* ms. is either a mere slip on the part of the scribe, or the result of a confusion with the Syriac translation ascribed to Ḥunayn by the Zāhiriyya ms.” (p. 27, n. 32), adding later on: “But the term by which his work is designated, *istikbrāj*, might be taken to indicate some editorial task rather than mere translation” (p. 32).

<sup>13</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm (*K. al-Fibrīst*, pp. 252.24-253.16 Flügel, p. 313.8-21 Tağaddud) records an anecdote about two commentaries by Alexander which were in possession of Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Naṣrānī al-Kātib, and were sought for by Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī. One of these is the commentary on the *Physics* (lost in Greek as well as in Arabic), namely the source of the two *lemmata* included in Version A.

<sup>14</sup> The two passages come respectively from *Phys.*, VIII 6, 259 a 6-13 and 259 a 13-19.

<sup>15</sup> A reader of the book under review with no access to the 2001 edition cannot determine whether (a) the two *lemmata* from the commentary on the *Physics* feature in all the manuscripts of Version A, and the Damascus manuscript is the only one to mention Alexander, or (b) the latter is the only manuscript to have the two *lemmata tout court*. At p. 29 Genequand says: “Le cours de l’exposé est alors interrompu par les deux citations dans lesquelles Alexandre (dans le ms. de Damas) est désigné à la troisième personne et ses interventions précédées de lemmes du texte de la *Physique*”. Thus, one may think that only the Damascus manuscript has the interpolated passages. However, the commentary (p. 129) claims that what is found only in the Damascus manuscript is the formula “Alexander said”, thus suggesting that all the manuscripts of Version A have the two passages from the *Physics*. Indeed, this second is true, as becomes clear if one turns to the apparatus of p. 90 in the 2001 edition. Also the allusion to the “deux branches de la tradition” at the end of the passage quoted above sounds somewhat obscure to me, because Version A, as we have been told just before, falls into three subsets: (i) the Damascus manuscript, which attributes the translation to Ibrāhīm; (ii) the various manuscripts which attribute it to Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn; (iii) another manuscript, Istanbul, Süleymaniye kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, which attributes it to Ḥunayn. Be that as it may, from the apparatus of p. 90 in the 2001 edition it appears that *qāla al-Iskandar* is missing also from (iii).

<sup>16</sup> The issue of Version B is dealt with at p. 17 in the book under review, and here (n. 1) we are told that “Tous les mss. sauf un remontent au même archétype et sont relativement tardifs”. The reader is advised to refer to the 2001 edition, where (p. 30) a list of eight manuscripts is found and the claim that all but one depend upon the same archetype is argued for.

<sup>17</sup> “Les manuscrits terminent en indiquant que ‘c’est la fin de ce qui subsiste de ce traité’ (*hādā ābir mā wuġida min*

different translator: Abū 'Uṭmān Sa'īd ibn Ya'qūb al-Dimašqī.<sup>18</sup> Apropos the relationship of Version B with Version A, Genequand says:

Tout ce qu'on peut affirmer est que les ressemblances textuelles entre les deux versions sont trop nombreuses et trop précises pour qu'il n'y ait pas eu utilisation de l'une par l'autre. Le plus probable est que le texte incomplet (B) est antérieur, le caractère plus tardif de A ressort aussi du fait qu'il manifeste une islamisation plus poussée de la terminologie. On sait d'autre part qu'al-Dimašqī a traduit les livres I-VII des *Topiques* et Ibrāhīm le livre VIII. La notion d'une sorte de succession des deux traducteurs apparaît ainsi assez naturelle. La difficulté, si l'on admet l'idée d'une collaboration entre Ishāq et Ibrāhīm pour la version longue et plus tardive, est qu'al-Dimašqī semble bien être mort après Ishāq. C'est donc l'attribution à al-Dimašqī qui devrait probablement être remise en cause (p. 17).

To sum up, there are various hints pointing to the fact that Version B came first and Version A was a later reworking which included more material; however, the fact that al-Dimašqī was active at a bit later date than Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn and Ibrāhīm seems to go against this reconstruction. The solution tentatively advanced by Genequand is to downplay the value of the information provided by the manuscripts of Version B about the authorship of al-Dimašqī. However, the latter plays so an important role in the transmission of the true and false Alexander in Arabic, that in my opinion one must try and find an explanation of the available data that includes al-Dimašqī in the picture.

In order to substantiate the claim that al-Dimašqī was a key figure in the circulation of the Arabic Alexander, suffice it to refer to the authoritative entry by Gerhard Endress alluded to above.<sup>19</sup> Here Endress recalls the data on the twin transmission of the Arabic Proclus and Arabic Alexander that he had provided in his 1973 *Proclus Arabus*.<sup>20</sup> It is useful for present purposes to have a summary of these data ready to hand. The manuscript Istanbul, Süleymaniye kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279 attests Version A of the *Principles* and credits Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq with the translation.<sup>21</sup> In this same manuscript, a series of *Questions* by Alexander in Arabic translation is present which includes also, still under Alexander's name, some propositions from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. The collection is entitled *What Alexander*

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*hādihī al-maqāla*), formule standard pour indiquer que le texte est incomplet" (p. 17). Genequand, *ibid.*, adds the remark that this formula may refer not to the translation itself, but to Version B: "La tournure est néanmoins ambiguë et ne permet pas de décider si c'est l'original grec (ou syriaque) qui était incomplet, ou l'ancêtre commun aux copies que nous possédons".

<sup>18</sup> The most comprehensive account to date on this key figure of the Graeco-Arabic culture in 10<sup>th</sup>-century Baghdad has been provided by G. Endress, "Sa'īd b. Ya'qūb al-Dimašqī", *EP*, VIII (1995), coll. 858b-859b, where we learn that he was one of the most famous doctors of his age, appointed chief physician and supervisor of the hospitals at Baghdad, Mecca, and Medina. Most of his translations are of medical works (chiefly by Galen), but he also translated Pappus' commentary on the *Elements of Euclid* (lost in Greek), and some important philosophical works: books I-VII of Aristotle's *Topics*, parts of the *Physics* (at least Books IV and VII), the *De Generatione et corruptione*, and the ps.-Aristotelian treatise *Fī faḍā'il al-nafs*. On the basis of his earlier ground-breaking work *Proclus Arabus. Zwanzig Abschnitte aus der Institutio Theologica in arabischer Übersetzung*, Imprimerie Catholique, Wiesbaden-Beirut 1973, in the *EP* entry Endress is in a position to state that "Of particular interest, and indicative of Abū 'Uṭmān philosophical leanings, is a number of treatises by (or attributed to) Alexander of Aphrodisias; some of these were translated by himself, but others were collected by him from earlier work done by a circle of translators around al-Kindī, and transmitted as Abū 'Uṭmān's work in later copies. (...) in view of Alexander's role as a mediator between Peripatetic and Neoplatonic thought and due to the inclusion of excerpts from the *Elements of Theology* by Proclus in the Arabic *Theology of Aristotle* drawn upon by Abū 'Uṭmān, it may be said that the latter contributed to the integration of Hellenistic philosophy in the Aristotelianism of the *falāsifa*". Further scholarship on Abū 'Uṭmān Sa'īd ibn Ya'qūb al-Dimašqī includes F.W. Zimmermann, "Proclus Arabus Rides Again", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 4 (1994), pp. 9-51.

<sup>19</sup> See the preceding note.

<sup>20</sup> Endress, *Proclus Arabus* (above, n. 18), pp. 59-60.

<sup>21</sup> See above n. 11 and 12.

extracted from *Aristotle's Theology*, and the translation of this material into Arabic is attributed to al-Dimašqī. Endress has convincingly demonstrated that this is not the case; rather, the language and doctrinal adaptations of the items (based on both Alexander and Proclus) included in *What Alexander extracted from Aristotle's Theology* bear the typical features of the translations of the circle of al-Kindī.<sup>22</sup> Later on, Endress' reconstruction was endorsed by F.W. Zimmermann, who coined the label "Kindī's metaphysics file" for a set of translations of post-Aristotelian works that include Alexander's, Plotinus', and Proclus', all of them heavily adapted. Zimmermann also sided with Endress' suggestion that if al-Dimašqī features in the manuscripts<sup>23</sup> as the translator of parts of *What Alexander extracted from Aristotle's Theology*, it is in all likelihood because he collected a series of texts that had been already reworked within the circle of al-Kindī.<sup>24</sup> Even more germane to the present purpose is the fact that the detailed terminological research that led Endress to disprove al-Dimašqī's authorship of *What Alexander extracted from Aristotle's Theology* led him also to highlight the similarity between the *Principles* and other translations of Alexander attributed to al-Dimašqī.<sup>25</sup> All this invites us to put a note of caution before discarding the attribution of Version B to al-Dimašqī.

A survey of the structure and contents of the Arabic *Principles* is useful at this point. Following Genequand's lead, one may single out four blocks in the text:

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<sup>22</sup> Endress, *Proclus Arabus*, p. 185: "Terminologie, Übersetzungstechnik und Stil der arabisch übersetzten Abschnitte aus Proklos' *Institutio Theologica* zeigen zahlreiche und charakteristische Parallelen zu anderen Texten der griechisch-arabischen Übersetzungsliteratur, die insgesamt der ersten Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts angehören. In den Übersetzungen des Abū 'Uṭmān ad-Dimašqī (um 900), der in der handschriftlichen Überlieferung einiger der Texte als Übersetzer genannt wird, finden wir nur sehr wenige dieser Charakteristiken; seine philosophische Terminologie entspricht vielmehr den Normen, welche von Ishāq ibn Ḥunain (z.T. schon von dessen Vater Ḥunain) und anderen Übersetzern seines Kreises geschaffen wurden".

<sup>23</sup> Endress, *Proclus Arabus* (above, n. 18), pp. 34-40 lists several manuscripts in addition to that of Istanbul, where the Arabic version of some propositions from Proclus' *Elements of Theology* under Alexander's name is attributed to al-Dimašqī. At pp. 64-67 Endress provides a list of Alexander's *Quaestiones* in Arabic translation, some of them attributed to al-Dimašqī; see also pp. 75-76, and below n. 25.

<sup>24</sup> F.W. Zimmermann, "The Origins of the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*", in J. Kraye - W.F. Ryan - C.B. Schmitt (eds.), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: the Theology and Other Texts*, The Warburg Institute, London 1986, pp. 110-240, esp. pp. 184-5: "Thanks to Endress' studies of the distinctive language of those around Kindī, we are today in a position to assign certain anonymous and pseudonymous texts of the Graeco-Arabic tradition to the Kindī circle with some confidence. (...) Endress' admirable survey of the MS evidence (*Proclus Arabus*, pp. 33-40) reveals the following suggestive facts: (1) In nine out of the ten manuscripts described, passages from Proclus are transmitted (singly or in batches of varying composition) under the name of Alexander and/or in the company of pieces more suitably attributed to Alexander. (2) These tend to include pieces attributable, on stylistic grounds, to the Kindī circle as well as pieces attributable, on grounds of both style and ascription, to the translator Dimashqī. (3) Props. 15-17 are inscribed 'Translated by Abū 'Uṭmān al-Dimashqī' in MSS C, G, L, H, Tk, M, but not in D, R, Z. Instead, Z (dated to AD 1163) carries a note saying that its Alexander pieces were copied from a copy taken from an original in the hand of Dimashqī. That note, as Endress points out, explains how al-Dimashqī came to be mistaken for the translator of props 15-17. (...) These observations suggest to me that all the Proclus and most of the Alexander transmitted in these manuscripts derives from a collection \*D by Dimashqī of treatises supposedly by Alexander, which included items previously translated by others alongside items freshly translated by Dimashqī himself".

<sup>25</sup> Endress, *Proclus Arabus*, p. 190: "Als echte Übersetzungen Abū 'Uṭmāns können wir aber, nach den aus den *Topica*, der *Isagoge* und dem *Kalām al-Iskandar* (*quaest.* I 11a, 21, 22) gewonnenen Ergebnissen (...) die weiteren unter seinem Namen laufenden Alexanderversionen anerkennen (...): *Mabādi' al-kull* – namely, our *Principles* – *R. fi l-Istiṭā'a* und *R. fi r-radd 'alā Ḡālīnūs*".

- (i) a section on the celestial movements and their cause: the desire to imitate the eternal perfection of the Unmoved Mover;<sup>26</sup>
- (ii) a section on Intellect;<sup>27</sup>
- (iii) a section on divine causality, or the “spiritual force” (*quwwa ruḥaniyya*) reaching the whole cosmos;<sup>28</sup>
- (iv) a conclusion.<sup>29</sup>

Section (i) features in Version A and only in part in Version B; sections (ii) and (iii) are missing in Version B as well as in the Syriac version, a fact that suggests that they are a posterior addition.<sup>30</sup> The nature and origins of this addition obviously capture the attention of the reader interested in the reception of Greek philosophy in the Arabic-Islamic world. It is Genequand’s conviction that both sections were added out of the intention of providing a complete account of the causality of the Unmoved Mover. In fact, the nature and modes of this causality are outlined, but not fully expounded in section (i).

As for section (ii), on Intellect, its presence is best accounted for, in Genequand’s view, in the light of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*:

La raison la plus probable que l’on peut invoquer pour l’adjonction de cette section à cet endroit est la volonté de se conformer au plan et au contenu du livre *Lambda* de la *Métaphysique*, dans lequel les chapitres 7 et 9 sont consacrés à l’intellect, et de compléter en ce sens le traité essentiellement physique sur le mouvement (p. 32).

In its turn, section (iii) was included out of the intention of accounting for the pervasiveness of the First Principle’s causality, that reaches even the sublunar world:

La dernière partie du texte avant la conclusion concerne le rapport entre les mouvements célestes, dont la cause et le mécanisme sont désormais considérés comme établis, et le monde sublunaire. Alexandre y introduit, de manière assez problématique, une nouvelle instance qu’il appelle “puissance” (*quwwa*) ou “nature” (*ṭabīʿa*) divine, qui provient des astres ou de leur mouvement et infuse le monde sublunaire (p. 33).

This wording suggests that in Genequand’s view what was added to the original treatise was genuine Alexandrian material. Indeed, the notion of the “spiritual force”

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<sup>26</sup> § 1-85 = pp. 52-77, commentary, pp. 99-127; this part, “que l’on peut considérer comme le noyau de l’ouvrage et constituant probablement à l’origine, avec la conclusion (§ 144-151) un traité en soi” (p. 17) is devoted to a typical point of Alexander’s cosmology, namely the attempt to account for Aristotle’s allusion in Book *Lambda* of the *Metaphysics* to the final causality of the Unmoved Mover (ὡς ἐρώμενον). Genequand aptly comments, pp. 24-25: “Alexandre tente ainsi de combler ce qui reste incontestablement lacunaire dans les développements aristotéliens, à savoir d’expliquer comment un désir ressenti à l’égard d’une entité immatérielle et immobile peut s’exprimer par un mouvement. La réponse est qu’un mouvement continu et régulier est ce qui ressemble le plus à l’immuabilité immatérielle du Premier moteur dans un monde qui reste malgré tout de nature matérielle comme celui des corps célestes. Que cette notion d’imitation soit plus platonicienne qu’aristotélienne, comme il a été suggéré par plusieurs chercheurs, est probable; elle exprime néanmoins une tendance profonde de la pensée du Stagirite. (...) La téléologie diffuse qui imprègne la philosophie naturelle d’Aristote trouve ainsi une formulation et un ancrage plus précis et qui répondait, comme on l’a vu, à un souci ancien de l’école remontant au moins à Théophraste”.

<sup>27</sup> § 86-96 = pp. 76-81, commentary, pp. 127-32.

<sup>28</sup> § 97-143 = pp. 80-95, commentary, pp. 132-45. Both sections (ii) and (iii) are lacking in the Syriac version, as stated at pp. 10-11 of the Introduction.

<sup>29</sup> § 144-151 = pp. 94-97, commentary, pp. 145-8. The conclusion is present also in the Syriac version, as stated in Genequand’s commentary, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup> “La section sur l’intellect divin et l’intellection semble constituer une adjonction ultérieure (...). Elle n’a pas de correspondant dans le traité syriaque de Sergius, et la question ne figure pas dans le plan des *Principles* donné au § 3” (p. 31).



peut sembler peu aristotélicienne, et même à certains égards difficilement conciliable avec le reste du traité. Elle est suspecte, de plus, en ce qu'elle n'est pas réellement annoncée dans le sommaire du § 3. Elle a néanmoins des parallèles nombreux et précis dans d'autres textes de l'Exégète (p. 34).<sup>31</sup>

According to Genequand, this does not imply that this mix of texts by Alexander had already been done in Greek.<sup>32</sup>

Ces convergences avec d'autres textes d'Alexandre ne suffisent toutefois pas à démontrer que ce passage<sup>33</sup> se trouvait à cette place dans un original grec des *Principes*. On pourrait aussi légitimement soupçonner ici, comme à propos de l'intellection, un bricolage dû aux traducteurs arabes ou à un 'éditeur' contemporain. (...) Les § 1-85 des *Principes* constituent un ensemble cohérent exposant une théorie générale du mouvement et l'appliquant au cosmos. Le parallélisme avec le traité syriaque de Sergius atteste au moins qu'il existait déjà sous cette forme ou sous une forme très proche avant l'époque arabe. (...) La question demeure donc de l'origine de ce qui s'interpose entre les citations du commentaire à la *Physique* et la conclusion qui doit appartenir au texte original puisqu'on la retrouve dans le traité syriaque de Sergius. Ce passage (§ 92-143) suit en gros le plan des chapitres 8 à 10 du livre *Lambda* de la *Métaphysique*, complétés par des éléments tirés du *De Mundo* pseudo-aristotélicien et de la *Quaestio* II 3 d'Alexandre (pp. 37-40).

Thus, the hypothesis advanced by Genequand is that the Arabic *Principles* are

une fabrication des traducteurs arabes, peut-être Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdillāh, à partir de matériaux divers, et suivant de manière approximative la structure de la seconde moitié de *Métaphysique* Λ (p. 40).

If however one turns to another well-known Arabic fabrication of the same period, the *Liber de causis* – a pseudo-Aristotelian treatise created within the circle of al-Kindī out of propositions of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* – one is struck by an 'air de famille' much more pronounced than with *Metaphysics Lambda*, 7-10. Proposition 29 of the *Liber de causis*<sup>34</sup> claims that the substances are hierarchically arranged depending upon their different relationship with eternity and time, and that the continuity of the whole cosmos is granted by the fact that between the substances falling under generation and corruption and the eternal substances there are other substances. These are the substances whose mobile eternity grants the perpetuity of the cosmic system: exactly the same doctrine that features in the *Principles*, Version A.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> At variance with Sh. Pines, "The Spiritual Force Permeating the Cosmos According to a Passage in the *Treatise on the Principles of the All* Ascribed to Alexander of Aphrodisias", in *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*, vol. II, Id., *Studies in Arabic Versions of Greek Texts and in Medieval Science*, The Magnes Press - Brill, Jerusalem - Leiden 1986, pp. 252-5, Genequand (pp. 34-6) argues that this doctrine, far from being inspired by the pervasiveness of the Stoic *logos/pneuma*, was part and parcel of Alexander's attack on the Stoic doctrine.

<sup>32</sup> On this issue Genequand, p. 39 n. 5 n. 25 parts company with D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition. Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Brill, Leiden-Boston 2014, pp. 247-8, who claims that the *Principles* are a late Antique compilation.

<sup>33</sup> The allusion is to the section on divine causality (see above n. 21).

<sup>34</sup> English translation by R.C. Taylor in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Causes* translated by V.A. Guagliardo - Ch.R. Hess - R.C. Taylor, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 1996, pp. 167-8.

<sup>35</sup> For the sake of this comparison I am quoting Genequand's English translation as published in the 2001 edition, pp. 85 and 113; in the book under review, § 80 is translated at p. 74, and § 127 at p. 90.

<i>Liber de Causis</i>	<i>Principles</i>
<p>Báb 29. Every substance originated in time is either perpetual in time and time is inseparable from it because it and time were equally originated; or it is separate from time and time is separate from it because it was originated in a certain moment of time. For, if originated things follow one after another and the higher substance follows only the substance similar to it and not the substance dissimilar to it, then the substances similar to the higher substances (namely the originated substances from which time is not separate) are before the substances that are &lt;not&gt; similar to the perpetual substances (namely the substances not continuous with time and originated in certain moments of time). For it is impossible for substances originated in certain moments of time to be in contact with perpetual substances, because they are not at all similar to them. The substances perpetual in time are, then, those which are in contact with perpetual substances and are intermediate between the fixed substances and the substances that are not continuous with time. It is impossible for perpetual substances above time to follow temporal substances that are not continuous with time except through the mediation of temporal substances perpetual in time. And these substances came to be intermediate because they share in perpetuity with higher perpetual substances and they share in time with temporal substances that are not continuous &lt;with time&gt; through generation. For, although they are perpetual, their perpetuity is through generation and motion. Substances perpetual with time are similar to perpetual substances above time in perpetuity and dissimilar to them in motion and generation. As for substances that are not continuous with time, these are in no way whatsoever similar to perpetual substances above time. And if they are not similar to them, then they cannot receive them or be in contact with them. It is therefore necessary that there be substances that are in contact with perpetual substances above time so that they are in contact with substances that are not continuous with time. So through their motion they join temporal substances that are not continuous with time and perpetual substances that are above time. Through their perpetuity they join substances that are above time and substances that are under time, i.e., falling under generation and corruption. [In this way] they join noble substances and ignoble substances, lest ignoble substances destroy noble substances and so destroy all beauty and all goodness and not have any persistence and fixity (trans. Taylor).</p>	<p>(§ 80) This is the state in which all &lt;these bodies&gt; must be, since their motion is an eternal, continuous and regular motion. Such is also the case with the bodies that are generated and perish: their permanence and duration are only eternal in species, corresponding to the eternity in number of the others; for it would not have been possible for the former to be numerically eternal if their had not been such specifically, nor would it have been possible for the latter to be specifically eternal without the former's numerical eternity and this continuous circular motion following this course.</p> <p>(§ 127) Since the First Mover is as we have described it, and the things moved by it without intermediary are also in that state, there follows from the motion of these things the generation and change of the perishable bodies having matter, according to the power of those &lt;heavenly bodies&gt; reaching them according to &lt;the former's&gt; diversity, and according to the assimilation of those different things which we have mentioned, because of the change and diversity of their motion, as we said before. This nature and power are the cause of the unity and order of the world (trans. Genequand).</p>

Against the backdrop of these parallel texts, one can advance a reconstruction of the relationship between Version B and Version A that takes into account al-Dimašqī and his interest for the works of the circle of al-Kindī – an interest on which Endress' *Proclus Arabus* shed light.

All in all, it is not impossible that the sections of the Arabic *Principles* with no correspondance in Syriac have something to do with that 'Alexander' which was available to, and at times reworked by, al-Kindī and his *socīi*. The striking similarity between the passage of the *Principles* and that of the *Liber de Causis* in the table above suggests that Version A of the *Principles* was originally laid down within the circle of al-Kindī, that al-Dimašqī reworked it, and that Ibrāhīm added the finishing touches when he included the two quotations from Alexander's commentaries. Should this be the case, this would also entail the conclusion that if Version B is shorter and defective, this is due to its textual transmission.<sup>36</sup> All this is obviously speculation: other explanations are possible and even required to account for all the details of this complex tradition – most importantly, the mention of Ishaq (and Hunayn) in the various manuscripts of Version A.

Speculative as it might be, the idea that al-Dimašqī had a role in the transmission of the Arabic Proclus, coupled with the parallel between the two passages quoted above, is based on the fact that the cosmos of the Arabic Alexander embedded in the *Principles* and that of the Arabic Proclus embedded in the *Liber de causis* are ruled by the same law. This law is that of the hierarchical continuity among substances, that allows the divine power to be transmitted from the highest level of being till the sublunar world whose inhabitants fall under coming-to-be and passing away.

The reader interested in the transmission of Greek philosophical works to the Arabic-speaking world is grateful to Charles Genequand for having updated and translated into French his edition of *On the Principles of the Cosmos*, even though on several issues this reader is obliged to have recourse to the edition of 2001 if he wants to get clearer into Genequand's account of the intricacies of this short but important Graeco-Arabic treatise.

Cristina D'Ancona

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<sup>36</sup> Put otherwise, this would entail that a lack in the textual transmission that created Version B – a possibility that is not ruled out by Genequand: see above n. 17.