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Māshad, Kitābhāna-i Āsitān-i Quds-i Raḍawī 300, f. 1v
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The Syro-Persian Reinvention of Aristotelianism: Paul the Persian's Treatise on the Scopes of Aristotle's Works between Sergius of Rēš'aynā, Alexandria, and Baghdad

Matthias Perkams*

Abstract

This article discusses anew the sources of the treatise by Paul the Persian on the scopes of the writings of Aristotle, transmitted by Miskawayh. A whole row of different sources can be identified: The Syriac Long commentary on the *Categories* by Sergius' of Rēš'aynā as well as different Greek works, including obviously Philoponus' commentary on the *Physics*, a commentary on the *Analytica priora* similar to David and Elias and an introduction into logics which resembles a passage in Boethius. Paul knew Greek and spent time in a Greek context, where he could collect so many different works. Paul arranged his material in an original way and supplemented points left open by Greek authors. Formally, he introduces a very consequent binary division of entities and treatises absent from the extant Greek sources. It is possibly influenced by East Syrian scholastic culture. Regarding the content, he was the first to explain all five types of syllogism. Especially the understanding of the Greek $\mu\theta\omega\delta\epsilon\varsigma$, as a description of the poetical syllogism, as "imagined", which is probably due to him, paved the way for the Arabic theories on poetical syllogisms. By writing this treatise, Paul fulfils a never executed promise of Sergius of Rēš'aynā, namely explaining the aim(s) of all writings of Aristotle. Thus, he gives the first sketch of a purely Aristotelian curriculum of philosophy in late Antiquity, which is introduced by Sergius' magnificent image of Aristotle as the master of all sciences. The reception of Paul's treatise by al-Fārābī and Miskawayh leads to the diffusion of the Aristotelian curriculum, as developed by the two Syro-Persian masters, in Arabic philosophical texts.

I. Introduction

It is well known that the late ancient Neoplatonism had a deep impact upon early Arabic philosophy; the teachings of Plotinus, Proclus and other Platonists shaped thoroughly many important Arabic philosophical theories.¹ In the face of this influence, it is remarkable that already for early Arab thinkers not Plato – as it had been in late Antiquity –, but Aristotle was the philosopher *tout court*, and that he retained this role for centuries, in classical Arabic philosophy as well as in the Western Middle Ages. Recent studies have pointed to the role played by Syriac

* This article would not have been possible without the generous help of Dimitri Gutas, who provided me with the two editions of the text. Further thanks go to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for funding partly the necessary research, to the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha for giving me access to their precious manuscript, to the anonymous reviewer for important remarks and, last not least, to the peer-reviewers and editors of *Studia graeco-arabica* for their patience with me.

¹ Cf. e.g. C. D'Ancona, "La filosofia della tarda antichità e la formazione della *falsafa*", in C. D'Ancona (ed.), *Storia della filosofia nell'Islam medievale*, Einaudi, Torino 2005 (Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi 285-286), vol. 1, pp. 5-47.

enthusiasts of philosophy regarding this re-emergence of an “Aristotelianism”,² but still the details of this process and its influence upon the Arabic sources remain in part enigmatic.

One text utterly neglected in recent studies is a treatise on the scopes of all works of Aristotle transmitted in Miskawayh’s *The Order of Happiness* (*Tartīb al-sā’āda*) and ascribed to the 6th century author Paul the Persian. Already some decades ago Shlomo Pines highlighted the remarkable praise of Aristotle at its beginning, without, however, being able to assign a source for it.³ Somewhat later, the text has been labelled by Dimitri Gutas a “milestone” between Alexandria and Baghdad.⁴ Gutas argues, that ‘Paul’ – I use for the moment the inverted commas to designate the text, in order to analyze it without prejudices about its authorship – 1) relies largely upon an Alexandrian source and 2) that it is a source for al-Fārābī’s *Catalogue of Sciences* (*Iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm*).⁵ According to Gutas, its main source is a text similar to Elias’ introduction to his commentary on the *Categories*: 8 of the 15 paragraphs, into which Gutas divides the work, are close to this Greek text, even if the similarity is in part rather weak, as is indicated by Gutas with “cf.”. 8 further paragraphs (including 15 subsections) are similar to the *Iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm*, and 2 paragraphs show neither a connection with the Greek texts nor with al-Fārābī.⁶ Furthermore, ‘Paul’ contains some comments upon 10th-century Arabic translations of Aristotle, which must be due to an Arabic redactor, most probably the translator of our treatise. He is identified by Gutas as a Christian Aristotelian from the generation of al-Fārābī’s teachers.⁷ Gutas does not discuss the question whether or not he might be responsible for further additions and changes to his model.

Gutas’s hypothesis has been challenged by Deborah Black. She observes that ‘Paul’ and the *Iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm* are the first texts which explain the epistemological weakness of the poetic syllogisms by their alleged dependence upon imagination – a theory, which we do not find in any extant Greek text, whereas it is widespread among Arabic authors. Black concludes that it is more probable that ‘Paul’ has borrowed this theory from an Arabic source, most probably the *Iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm*.⁸ However, she has neither a clear argument for this opinion, nor does she respond to Gutas’s

² Important studies include for example S. Brock, “The Syriac Commentary Tradition”, in Ch. Burnett (ed.), *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts*, Warburg Institute, London 1993, pp. 3-18; 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); J.W. Watt “From Sergius to Mattā: Aristotle and Pseudo-Dionysius in the Syriac Tradition”, in J. Lössl – J.W. Watt (eds.), *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity. The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition between Rome and Baghdad*, Ashgate, Farnham - Burlington 2011, pp. 239-57; E. Fiori, “Un intellectuel alexandrin en Mésopotamie. Essai d’une interprétation d’ensemble de l’œuvre de Sergius de Reš‘aynā”, in E. Coda - C. Martini Bonadeo (eds.), *De l’Antiquité tardive au Moyen Age. Études de logique aristotélicienne et de philosophie grecque, syriaque, arabe et latine offertes à H. Hugonnard-Roche*, Vrin, Paris 2014 (Études Musulmanes, 43), pp. 59-90; D. King, *The Earliest Syriac Translation of the Categories. Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2010 (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, 21), pp. 1-95; D. King, “Logic in the Service of Ancient Eastern Christianity. An Exploration of Motives”, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 97 (2015), pp. 1-33; S. Aydin, *Sergius of Reshaina, Introduction to Aristotle and his Categories, addressed to Philotheos. Syriac Text, with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2016 (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, 24), pp. 1-90.

³ S. Pines, “Aḥmad Miskawayh and Paul the Persian”, *Irān – Shināsi* 2 (1971), pp. 121-9 [= Sh. Pines, *Studies in the History of Arabic Philosophy*, Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1996, pp. 208-16].

⁴ D. Gutas, “Paul the Persian on the Classification of the Parts of Aristotle’s Philosophy: A Milestone between Alexandria and Baḡdād”, *Der Islam* 60 (1983), pp. 231-67.

⁵ Pines, “Aḥmad Miskawayh and Paul the Persian” (above, n. 3); Gutas, “Paul the Persian” (above, n. 4), p. 251 states that Miskawayh quotes verbally from the annotated Arabic translation of that text.

⁶ Cf. the scheme in Gutas, “Paul the Persian” (above, n. 4), p. 237.

⁷ Gutas, “Paul the Persian” (above, n. 4), pp. 250-5.

⁸ D.L. Black, *Logic and Aristotle’s Rhetorics and Poetics in Medieval Arabic Philosophy*, Brill, Leiden - New York 1990

arguments in favour of the opposite position. These hypotheses can be checked today against the background of some new evidence. Not only are some Syriac philosophical texts of the same period better known and Gutas's "Elias" has been restituted recently with strong arguments to his fellow David – hence I will call him in what follows "David/Elias",⁹ because the debate on the authorship is still open –, but also a second edition of Paul's treatise, not yet used in Gutas's 1983 article, is available.

I shall undertake in what follows a new analysis of 'Paul', its structure, its sources, and its relationship with al-Fārābī. Principally, I will confirm Gutas's findings. However, by supplying the source for its first paragraph and by reevaluating those of the other sections, I will argue that the text combines elements from diverse contemporary Syriac and Greek philosophical sources with some personal ideas by al-Fārābī. It will become clear that especially this combination could have inspired, via al-Fārābī, the Aristotelianisms of the subsequent centuries. I shall start with some philological observations (II.), before discussing the structure and the single sections of the texts in detail (III.-IV.). I will then collect my results in a conclusion (V.).

II. The editorial situation

Our only extant source for 'Paul' is Miskawayh's *Tartīb al-sa'āda*. We have good reasons for assuming that Miskawayh transmitted the entire treatise, because a preface ascribed to 'Paul' is immediately followed by sections which describe, in the way of a catalogue, the different works of Aristotle and their scopes.

It is not clear whether 'Paul' was translated from Syriac or from Middle Persian.¹⁰ Given Paul's Christian faith (which does not play any role in our treatise) and the dedication of the work to Ḥusraw Anūšīrwān, there are reasons for both assumptions. The dedication to Ḥusraw is not crucial in this regard, because different usages at his court seem possible. For example, the treatise may have been translated orally for the king, as it is attested for king Manfred of Sicily,¹¹ or maybe the king himself read Syriac, one of the main languages of his kingdom. The problem does not only concern 'Paul', but also other texts connected with Ḥusraw: the treatise by Paul on Aristotelian logics, the *Solutions of the Questions of King Chosroes* by Priscianus of Lydia, the original of which was probably written in Greek,¹² and also a lost *Mēmra* of John of Beth Rabban, one of the

(Islamic Philosophy and Theology, 7), pp. 44f. With this claim, she returns to the theory by Pines, "Aḥmad Miskawayh and Paul the Persian" (above, n. 3), pp. 122f, which had been criticized by Gutas. The link between poetic syllogisms and imagination is not mentioned by al-Kindī, *Fi kammiyat kutub 'Aristūṭālīs*, in *Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyā* ed. M.'A. Abū Ridā, Dār al-fikr al-'arabī, I-II, Cairo 1950-1953, vol. I, pp. 362-384, in part. p. 368 (Engl. trans. P. Adamson - P. Porrmann, *The Philosophical Works of al-Kindī*, Oxford 2012, p. 283). Cf. Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetorics and Poetics*, p. 2.

⁹ Cf. Ch. Helmig, "Die jeweiligen Eigenheiten der Neuplatoniker David und Elias und die umstrittene Autorschaft des Kommentars zur Kategorienschrift", in B. Strobel (ed.), *Die Kunst der philosophischen Exegese bei den spätantiken Platons- und Aristoteles-Kommentatoren*. Akten der 15. Tagung der Karl und Gertrud Abel-Stiftung vom 4. bis 6. Oktober 2012 in Trier, W. de Gruyter, Berlin - Boston 2018, pp. 277-314.

¹⁰ Two further treatises by Paul are transmitted in Syriac, but there are arguments for assuming that they go back to Pahlavi originals. Cf. Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d'Aristote du grec au syriaque* (above, n. 2), pp. 234f.; Id., "Paul le Perse", in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* [henceforth: *DPhA*], Va, CNRS-Éditions, Paris 2012, pp. 183-7, in part. p. 185; Id., "Sur la lecture tardo-antique du *Peri hermeneias* d'Aristote. Paul le Perse et la tradition d'Ammonius. Édition du texte syriaque, traduction française et commentaire de l'Élucidation du *Peri hermeneias* de Paul le Perse", *Studia graeco-arabica* 3 (2013), pp. 37-73.

¹¹ Cf. the quotation of the letter by R.A. Gauthier, "Notes sur les débuts du premier 'averroïsme'", *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 66 (1982), pp. 321-74, in part. pp. 327f.

¹² Cf. M. Perkams, "Priscien de Lydie", in Goulet (ed.), *DPhA*, Vb, CNRS-Éditions, Paris 2015, pp. 1514-21, in part. p. 1516.

directors of the School of Nisibis, which has been transmitted orally at the court of Ḥusraw.¹³ The treatise of Miskawayh has been published several times, sometimes in editions of other works; there is a partial French translation of ‘Paul’ by Mohammed Arkoun.¹⁴ For the present paper, I could rely upon three sources, representing two different branches of the transmission, which I will call C and T:

1) C (= the Cairo tradition) is attested by the edition of ‘Alī al-Ṭūbġī in 1335 h./1917.¹⁵ Luckily, Dimitri Gutas provided me with a copy of his collations with ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Hikma* 6 M, ff. 210r-217r. A further witness of this tradition is ms. Gotha, Pertsch 1158, ff. 163r-166v, which I collated myself for § I-XIII. All three witnesses are close to each other; the Ṭūbġī edition shows correspondences to each manuscript, such that it has probably not been made directly from the Dār al-kutub codex,¹⁶ which is by far the best of these three sources.

2) T (= the Teheran tradition) is represented by the edition of Abūlqasīm Emāmī from 2000.¹⁷ It is based, according to its introduction, upon ms. Teheran, Maġlis-i Šūrā-i Islāmī, 7001 (7551?), and the texts which have been included in the margins of 1) the *Makarem ol-ablaq* and 2) the *Mabda’ u-ma’adi Molla Sadra*, both printed in Teheran 1314 h.š./1935.¹⁸ Emāmī indicates (all?) variants of these three witnesses, but he does not give a stemma, nor does he assign the date of the manuscript.

T and C are totally independent, non contaminated traditions of the same text. They show sensible discrepancies (*Trennfehler*), but none, which would point to different redactions of the original text. In the relative short text of § I-XIII, T contains three important passages of 2-3 lines, which are missing in C due to *homoioteleuton*. C, in turn, supplies two omissions of T¹⁹ and has some clearly superior readings. In my quotations, I chose always the reading that seems most convincing to me.

III. The structure of Paul’s treatise

‘Paul’ is a structured list of most of Aristotle’s writings, which explains, for each of them, what has been Aristotle’s aim in writing it. To begin with, I give a schematic overview, which shows what I think to be the identifiable sources for or at least close parallels to the 15 paragraphs listed by Gutas:²⁰

¹³ Cf. Barḥaḍbšabbā, *Cause of the Foundation of Schools / Causa foundationis scholarum*, p. 388.10 Scher.

¹⁴ M. Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe au IV^e/X^e siècle. Miskawayh philosophe et historien*, Vrin, Paris 1982² (Études musulmanes, 12), pp. 71f., pp. 226-33.

¹⁵ *Kitāb al-sā’ādā li-Ibn Miskawayh fī falsafat al-aḥlāq* [...] li-ṣāḥib ‘A. al-Ṭūbġī al-Suyūṭī, al-Madrassa al-Ḍā’iyya al-Ilāhiyya, Cairo 1335h./1917.

¹⁶ Given the correspondences between the Gotha ms. and the al-Ṭūbġī ed., it seems probable that both do not belong to the descendants of Cairo ms. Also Arkoun’s translation seems to belong to C.

¹⁷ Abū ‘Alī Miskawayh, *Tartīb al-sā’ādāt wa-manāzil al-‘ulūm*, ed. A. Emāmī, in ‘A. Owjābi (ed.), *Ganjine-ye Bahārestan* (A collection of 18 treatises in logic, philosophy, theology and mysticism) 1, Teheran 1379h./2000, pp. 101-27.

¹⁸ The Mullā Šadrā edition is probably the same, which is mentioned by Gutas, “Paul the Persian” (above, n. 4), p. 231, n. 1, but is obviously more recent than the Ṭūbġī edition, because the year indicated is that of the Persian solar calendar, whereas Gutas understands it according to the Islamic lunar calendar. The *Makarem ol-ablaq* is not mentioned by Gutas. Emāmī mentions in a footnote also the second edition of Ṭūbġī, al-Qāhira 1928, which is also described by Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe* (above, n. 14), pp. 107f.

¹⁹ The place of these omissions is indicated in scheme 1 by curly brackets. In § VII, the Gotha and Cairo manuscripts retain in p. 123.6 Emāmī (§ VII) after “*al-aqāwīl al-murakabā*” the words “*allati tadillu ‘alā l-mā’ qūlāti l-murakkabati*”, which are missing in both editions.

²⁰ The scheme has to be compared with Gutas, “Paul the Persian” (above, n. 4), pp. 233-7.

Paragraph number according to Guais	Miskawayh ed. Emān	Miskawayh ed. Tūbḡī	Topic	Parallels in ancient sources
A. Introductory Paragraph				
I	117.6-10	58.11-17	Introduction	Sergius of Res'ayma, <i>In Cat. ad Timotheum</i> , prooem.
B. Enumeration of all Beings				
II	117.11-17	58.17-59.9	Theoretical and Practical Philosophy; basic bipartite division of all beings	cf. Simpl., <i>In Phys.</i> 1.14-2.2; Elias, <i>Procl.</i> 27.28f.; 27.36-28.5; David, <i>Procl.</i> 58.1-12
III	118.1-9	59.9-60.2	bipartite division of the natural beings	Philop., <i>In Phys.</i> 1.16-22 (cf. also XI)
C. Introduction to Logics				
IV	118.11-119.4	60.2-61.2 {om. 118.13-15 Emānī}	Logics is the art, by which man knows, in which cases he may err and in which not, such that it is a precondition for acquiring true knowledge	cf. principally Boeth., <i>In Isag.</i> , Ed. 2, p. 139.14-18 Brandt; very vague parallels: Philop., <i>In Cat.</i> 10.9-28; David/Elias, <i>In Cat.</i> 117.9-14; Paul, <i>Logica</i> , f. 56r beneath.
V	119.6-19	61.2-62.1	A comparison of logics with grammar and rhetoric	cf. Boeth., <i>In Isag.</i> , Ed. 1, p. 10.19-11.1 Brandt
VI	119.19-120.16	62.1-63.4	The two aims of logics: to be convinced by plausible statements, and to reject implausible ones	cf. Boeth., <i>In Isag.</i> , Ed. 2, p. 138.10-139.18 Brandt
D. The Parts of Logics				
VII	120.17-121.2 {om. 63.10-12 Tūbḡī}	63.4-15	"Analytic" enumeration of the parts of logics, part I: the five species of syllogism, without giving the names of the book	David, <i>In Anal. pr.</i> , lectio I, § 3 (p. 34.1-10 Topchyant); Elias, <i>In Anal. pr.</i> 139.5-12 Wessierink.
VIII	121.4-123.2 [122.4-10:19E]	63.15-66.10 {om. 121.5-7 Emānī} [65.2-12:66.3-5]	a) longer explanation of the five books, in which Aristotle treats the species of syllogism [the passages in brackets regard Arabic translations and cannot be part of the original treatise]	a) no parallels found
IX	121.4-122.21	63.15-66.5	b) continuation of the enumeration of logical topics: Conclusions have to be studied after phrases, and phrases after words (without names of books)	b) Ammonius, <i>In Cat.</i> 5.9-13; Ammonius, <i>In Peri Hermeneias</i> 1.24-2.4
X	122.21-123.2	66.5-10	"synthetic" explanation of the eight books of logics in the order in which they have to be studied (including the titles of all the eight books)	David/Elias, <i>In Cat.</i> 11.6.31-11.7.9; David, <i>In Anal. pr.</i> , lectio II, § 2 (p. 40.17-42.9)
XI	124.1-13	67.15-68.14	a) 124.1-2	b) David/Elias, <i>In Cat.</i> 11.6.29-11.7.8; cf. also Philop., <i>In Cat.</i> 5.8-14.
XII	124.3-6	67.15-68.4	b) Three books precede the <i>An. post.</i> , four books follow upon it	a) and c) no exact parallels in Greek sources
XIII	124.6-12	68.4-14	a) and c) the exceptional character of <i>An. post.</i>	
E. The other books of Aristotle				
XIV	1) 124.14-18	68.14-69.17	a) Introduction: why we have to approach the beings without matter starting from physical beings	1) Ascl., <i>In Metaph.</i> 1.8-14
XV	2) 124.19-125.4	{om. 124.23-125.2 Emānī} [69.15-17]	b) The books of natural philosophy	2) Philop., <i>In Phys.</i> 1.22-2.6; cf. also Simpl., <i>in Phys.</i> (2.27-3.12; Simpl., <i>In Cael.</i> 2.16-3.8; David/Elias, <i>In Cat.</i> 11.5.21-11.6.11
XVI	3) 125.5-8 [125.8E]		c) The books <i>On the Soul</i> and the <i>Metaphysics</i> [including a note on the Arabic translations of the <i>Metaphysics</i>]	3) Simpl./Prisc., <i>In De An.</i> 2.29-3.6
XVII	125.10-17 [125.15-17]	69.17-70.10 [70.8-10]	Bipartite division of the parts of practical philosophy, to be divided in specific (ethics) and outward relations (politics, economics)	cf. Elias, <i>Procl.</i> 34.3f.; David/Elias, <i>In Cat.</i> , 11.6.15-28 (much longer than in Paul); extant in many versions in Greek literature.
XVIII	125.18-21 [125.19E]	70.10-15 [70.12E]	[Including a note on Arabic translations]	
XIX	125.18-21 [125.19E]	70.10-15 [70.12E]	The letters and further writings of Aristotle [including remarks of the Arabic translator]	cf. Philop., <i>In Cat.</i> 3.8-4.22; cf. David/Elias, <i>In Cat.</i> 11.3.24-34.
F. The Student and the Aim of Philosophy				
XIV	126.2-13	70.15-71.14	The education of the wise man, the conditions for it and its length	Usually, the preconditions and the order of the writings is discussed in the introductions to the <i>Categories</i> , but in a much shorter way.
XV	126.14-127.12	71.14-73.4	The aim of Aristotle's philosophy: The unification with the object of intellect	According to Philop., <i>In Cat.</i> 5.34-6.2; David/Elias, <i>In Cat.</i> 11.9.30-31: to demonstrate the first cause

As can be seen in the right column, ‘Paul’ does not rely upon one Alexandrian source, but upon a wide diversity of texts; however, some parts, especially in § V, VIII and X, practically have no parallels at all and could be independent developments by Paul the Persian.

As can be seen further, ‘Paul’ has a clear tripartite structure. After an introduction (A.) follows a list of books and subjects (B.-E.) and a philosophical curriculum (F.). The substructure of the second part is rather complicated in detail. The division of the entities themselves (B.: § II-III) is separated from the list of books treating them (§ XI) by the rather long sections on logics (C./D.). However, the division of all beings in B. corresponds closely to the division of the physical and metaphysical books in § XI, whereas § XII and § XIII do not deal with these entities. The subdivision of the logical part will be discussed below.

IV. The individual sections and their sources

Let’s now take a closer look into the individual paragraphs:

Section A: § I is inspired by the beginning of Sergius of Rēš‘aynā’s long commentary on the *Categories* to Theodorus:²¹

Sergius of Rēš‘aynā, <i>Commentary for Theodore on the Categories</i> , Prologue ²¹	‘Paul’, p. 58.12-17 Ṭūbḡī = p. 117.6-10 Emāmī (bold words indicate direct borrowings from Sergius)
<p>Aristotle was the beginning and the cause of any education. [...]</p> <p>Until the time, when nature brought this man into the abode of human beings, all the parts of philosophy and education, like simple medicaments, were dispersed and cast in confusion and without knowledge, among all the writers. Then he alone, like a wise doctor, collected all these works, which were dispersed, and he put them together, in the way of an art and a science, and from them he prepared one perfect remedy of his teaching, in order to uproot and put an end to the grave maladies of ignorance from the souls of those who carefully approach his writings. In the same way as those who make a statue forge each single one of the parts of the image in itself, for itself and by itself, and then put them together one after another, as the order of workmanship demands, to a complete statue, thus also he put together, ordered, and arranged all single parts of philosophy in the order that nature demands, and forged them in all his writings one perfect and wonderful form of the knowledge of all beings.</p>	<p>“It is the wise Aristotle who ordered and classified wisdom and made it a path leading from the beginning to the end, as is mentioned in what he wrote to Anūširwān. He says:</p> <p>“Wisdom was dispersed before this sage, like the dispersion of the other useful things, which God has created, and the use of which has been trusted to the talent of the human beings and to all ability, which he had given to them; like the medicaments, which can be found dispersed in the countries and mountains, but from which, if they are collected and united, results a useful remedy. And in the same way, Aristotle collected anything of wisdom which was dispersed, and put together all single things to their form, and he arranged them at their place, such that a perfect remedy results out of them, by which the souls are cured from the maladies of ignorance”.</p>

²¹ The text has been constituted and translated from mss. Birmingham, *Mingana* 606, f. 52rv and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *syr.* 354, f. 2r-v; cf. the French translation by H. Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d’Aristote du grec au syriaque*, pp. 168-70.

Section B: § II runs as follows:

The theoretical (part of wisdom) is either about things which are in matter, or about things which are not in matter. And each of these two parts consists also of two parts: for to the things which are in matter, belong some which are subject to generation and corruption, and some which are not subject to generation and corruption. And to the things which are not in matter, belong some which are separated from matter, and their being is in the mind (*wahm*), and they have no being outside [the mind], and some which are not separated from matter, but have essential being outside the mind. And these are the four primary parts, in which the theoretical part is divided.

The three Greek parallels mentioned in our scheme are also divisions of all beings, but they distinguish, contrary to the quadripartition (or better: double bipartition) in the quotation, only three types of being: one which is totally inside matter, one which is totally outside matter, and one which is in one respect inside and in another respect outside matter. This division corresponds to the three parts of theoretical philosophy according to Aristotle, i. e. physics, mathematics, and metaphysics (e.g. *Metaphysics* VI 1, 1026 a 18f.), which is mentioned in these sources, but is lacking in ‘Paul’. Paul the Persian in his *Handbook of Logics* presents also the tripartition (“To the theory belongs something on intellectivity, and something on sensitivity, and something on what is between them”²⁵), but he mentions only mathematics by name, whereas for metaphysics and physics he limits himself to describing their contents. The change from three to four subdivisions and towards a binary classification of all beings must have been a conscious deviation from the tradition for the present context.

A double bipartition of all beings can indeed be found in Barḥaḍbšabbā’s *Cause of the Foundation of Schools*, an important witness for the practices used in the school of Nisibis:

Everything what is, is either a generated being (*hāwya*) or an ungenerated one (*lā hāwya*). And as in the case of what is generated, that what was is prior to that what is – and it is the cause of it –, likewise in the case of that what is ungenerated, that what is an eternal being is prior to that what is, and it is the cause of that what is.²⁶

This passage, while being different in many respects, is close to ‘Paul’ not only in its binary structure, but also because of including the difference between “generated” and “ungenerated” beings. This is noteworthy because of the historical vicinity of the two texts: *The Cause of the Foundation of Schools* has been written ca. 30 years after the death of Ḥusraw Anūšīrwān, in that East Syrian school context,²⁷ to which Paul the Persian, as an East Syrian Christian in Persia, probably was affiliated. Both texts are further connected by quoting at an early date the same text of Sergius of Reš‘aynā (§ I of ‘Paul’) and by a general interest in philosophy, especially logic. Thus, one has to assume some sort of connection between them, which, however, cannot be specified for the moment: Barḥaḍbšabbā could have elaborated upon ‘Paul’ or a similar source for his own purposes (as he does with Sergius

²⁵ Paulus Persa, *Al matānūtā mliltā d-‘Aristūtālis filosofā/De opere logico Aristotelis philosophi*, ed. J. P. N. Land, Brill, Leiden 1875 (Anecdota Syriaca, 4), pp. 1-30 (lat.), pp. 1-32 (syr.), in part. pp. 5.2-12 Land (syr.).

²⁶ Barḥaḍbšabbā, *Cause of the Foundations of Schools*, p. 334.8-11 Scher. For the translation cf. especially Scher’s translation at the same page. Scher, however, thinks that the passage deals with words. The translation in Becker, *Sources for the History of the School of Nisibis* (see below, n. 27), p. 102, misunderstands the syntactic structure.

²⁷ Cf. A.H. Becker, *Sources for the History of the School of Nisibis*, Translated with an introduction and notes, Liverpool U.P., Liverpool 2008, p. 86.

of Rēš'aynā),²⁸ or the structure of our text may have been influenced by East Syrian School practices. Thus, the parallel is an argument for Paul the Persian being really the author of 'Paul'.

Section B: § III, a further division of the physical beings will be treated below together with § XIIb).

Section C.: This section does not contain any close parallel to the extant Greek commentaries on Aristotle. Obviously, the Greek commentators felt no need to explain at length the utility of logic. Their introductions into that subject, which can be found regularly at the beginning of their commentaries on the *Analytica priora*, treat always only the different parts of logic, which 'Paul' treats in section D., and the well-known question, if logic is an instrument or a part of philosophy,²⁹ which 'Paul' omits. It is plausible that a Christian philosopher in the Persian empire, like Paul the Persian, recommended the study of logic at some length, because of the necessity to convince his auditors of its utility. Indeed, we find a similar recommendation in Paul's *Handbook of Logic*, where he stresses the necessity of distinguishing true from false statements.³⁰ This argumentation shows, however, as far as I can see, no clear parallels, neither with Greek material nor with 'Paul'.

There is, however, a contemporary parallel for 'Paul's § IV and probably § VI far away from Persia, in the introduction to Boethius' *second commentary* on the *Eisagoge*:

While inquiring into those things, there is necessarily very much which leads astray, during the progression, the researching mind from the right way. [...] For not everything which the course of language has invented, is also fixed by nature. For that reason, it was necessary that those people were deceived who inquired into the nature of things without paying attention to the science of argumentation. If one has not reached first the science (1) about which reasoning holds the true path of disputation, (2) which one is the probable path, and has not understood, which one is reliable and (3) which one may be suspected, the unhampered truth about the things may not be grasped by arguing. Thus, the ancients often concluded on the basis of many errors something false and contrary to each other in argumentation [...] and it was unclear which was the argumentation one should believe. Therefore it seemed right to look first into the true and unhampered nature of argumentation itself. As soon as it has been understood, one can also comprehend, if that which has been found by argumentation, could be accepted as truth. From there on, the experience of the discipline of logic took its start, which prepares the modes of argumentations and the reasoning itself as roads of distinction, in order to understand, (1) which reasoning is sometimes false, sometimes true, (2) which is always false, and (3) which never is false.³¹

Confer this passage with the following extracts from § IV and VI of 'Paul':

[IV] And it became necessary – because one has spent much effort on rectifying the opinions (*ārā'*) about all of these things, and on establishing certainty (*al-yaqīn*) and the sufficient persuasions about them and on being safe from error and fault regarding those intelligibles – to study the degrees of persuasions (*marātib al-iqnā'āt*) and to look (1) into those things about which it is totally impossible for a human

²⁸ Cf. on all these points Perkams, "Sergius de Rēš'aynā" (above, n. 22).

²⁹ Cf. P. Hadot, "La logique, partie ou instrument de la philosophie?", in Simplicius, *Commentaire sur les Catégories*. Traduction commentée sous la direction de I. Hadot, *Fascicule I: Introduction, Première partie* (p. 1-9, 3 Kalbfleisch), Brill, Leiden [etc.] 1990 (*Philosophia Antiqua*, 50), pp. 183-8.

³⁰ Paulus Persa, *Logica*, p. 1.9-3.6; 5.17-20 Land.

³¹ Boethius, *Commentum in Isagogen. Editio secunda*, § 2: Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii *In Isagogen Porphyrii commenta*, ed. Schepss- F. Tempsky - G. Freytag - S. Brandt, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien - Leipzig, 1906 (CSEL 48), pp. 132-248, in part., *prooem.*, § 2, pp. 138.10-12; 138.23-139.18.

being to err: what are they? And (2) into those things about which the souls can be quiet, even if they are not of the degree mentioned before: what are they? And (3) into those things, about which it is possible to err without noticing that one falls into deception them, if one thinks that something is true: what are they? And one has systematized also this degree, and one has created an art and rules for it, by which one informs about the degrees of those things and about the ranks of certainty or of its defect. Thus, the human being shall be directed towards the path of correctness regarding every problem. And if not, he goes astray in his judgements, on the way of the friends of the estimations (*maḍāhib*) because of imagination (*taḥyīl*) and arbitrariness. Those people sometimes erred and did not remark it, and sometimes they remarked it and moved from opinion to opinion. [...] And this is the art of logic. [...] [VI] Some people accept some things without conviction, and repudiate some things without comprehension, and get right on some things without knowing on which grounds approve them, and do not believe in what they accept today, such that reject it tomorrow [...] And once an opinion seems right to somebody, he will accept it; and once she finds it doubtful, he rejects it.³²

Both texts explain why logic has been invented, and they do so in similar ways. The obvious problems in grasping the things themselves made it necessary to establish first the rules of argumentation. By knowing those rules, one may be confident in distinguishing reliable from problematic conclusions, whereas, without logic, we cannot trust our own judgments. By the help of logic, we can distinguish three modes of apprehension: one in which we cannot fail, one in which we fail, and one in which we sometimes fail.

In the light of all these parallels in two authors of different languages, who cannot have been in any direct contact, we must assume that both elaborate upon the same, presumably Greek tradition. Unfortunately, we do not know much about Boethius's sources, so that it is difficult to specify the tradition in question. Usually, one assumes that he draws here on earlier materials than his contemporary Alexandrian scholarship, for example on Porphyry.³³ This is, of course, possible also for 'Paul', but he may have found these ideas also in more recent Greek sources which we do not know any longer.

The texts quoted can also be compared with al-Fārābī's treatment of the same issue in the *Catalogue of sciences*:

And the **art of logic** generally gives **rules**, which aim at correcting the intellect and guiding the human being towards the correct method and towards truth in all intelligibles, about which one may err. [...] For among **the intelligibles** there are some about which **it is totally impossible to err** [...] and other **things about which one may err** and deviate from truth to what is not truth.³⁴

This quotation confirms Gutas's observation that some passages in the *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm* are abbreviated and stylistically improved borrowings from 'Paul' with many verbal correspondences (in bold letters). In the present case, al-Fārābī names only two of the three degrees of certainty in 'Paul'

³² 'Paul', p. 60.2-12; 61.2; 62.4-6. 12-14 Ṭūbḡī = p. 118.11-19; 119.3f.; 120.2f. 9f. Emāmī. The omission of C (cf. the scheme) renders the series of the three "what are they"-questions unintelligible (cf. e.g. the translation by Arkoun); T omits "and some things he repudiates without comprehension".

³³ Cf. St. Ebbesen, "The Aristotelian Commentator", in J. Marenbon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2009, pp. 34-55, in part. pp. 44-9.

³⁴ This treatment is to be found, *pace* Gutas, at Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*, ed. A. González Palencia, Madrid - Granada 1953, p. 21.12-23.9 = al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*, ed. U. Amine, Cairo 31968, pp. 67.5-68.3 (quotation p. 21.12-22.12 González Palencia = 67.5-68.1 Amine).

and Boethius, omitting the middle degree, which may be either true or false. On the other hand, he provides examples for the two steps mentioned, which are lacking in both earlier authors (and are also omitted in my quotations). The correspondences with Boethius against al-Fārābī confirm that 'Paul' precedes the latter and transmits earlier materials of a Greek origin.

For § V of 'Paul' I did not find any ancient parallel. Boethius states similarities between logic on the one hand and grammar and rhetoric on the other hand,³⁵ so that 'Paul' might have replaced the rhetoric, which he will treat afterwards as a part of logic, by prosody.

Section D. is, from a historical point of view, a very important passage, because it transmits the five types of syllogisms to al-Fārābī and introduces the idea that poetic syllogism is about premises taken from imagination. I shall first outline the general composition of and the available parallels with of its and then discuss the crucial points by selected quotations.

Most sections are very close to Alexandrian materials: § VII, a list of the five types of syllogism, without mentioning the respective books, is very close to David's commentary on the *Analytica priora* and to Elias's fragment on the same book. There is also a rather loose parallel in a Syriac scholion, which names five types of statements which are either openly or in a hidden way true and false, adding some examples.³⁶ § VIII b), which continues this list, has literary parallels only in Ammonius. § IX, which explains the order of the eight books of the *Organon*, is again close to David's *In Analytica priora*, even if 'Paul's' account is somewhat more structured. There is also a much shorter parallel section in the Syriac scholion mentioned above, which names, however, only the first five books of the *Organon*. § Xb), describing the respective roles of the eight books of the *Organon* – three are preceding the *Analytica posteriora*, four are following it – is very close to a further passage in David/Elias *On Categories*, which elaborates in turn upon a text in John Philoponus (cf. scheme 1). These passages contain the doctrine that there are five types of syllogism in the form that we find in Greek only in David and Elias.

§ VIII a), however, – a detailed list of the five types of syllogism, as they are supposed to be contained in *Analytica posteriora*, *Poetics*, *Topics*, *Sophistici Elenchi*, and *Rhetorics* – as well as § Xa) and c) – are unparalleled in Greek texts:

– § VIII a) supplies an explanation for the five syllogisms mentioning also the names of the Aristotelian writings treating them, which lack in David and Elias and also in the Anonymus Heiberg from around 1000 A.D. (cf. below). David and Elias enumerate the five syllogisms and the respective books, but they continue by stating that one could speak equally of only three types of syllogism (apodeictic, dialectic, sophistic). By proceeding like this, they refer to the teaching of Ammonius, who abstained deliberately from acknowledging the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* as syllogistic treatises;³⁷ but their own assumption that there are five types of syllogism remains without explanation. As a result, their texts give the impression of an uncomplete, hybrid theory. Paul's § VIII a), to the contrary, closes this gap by an unprecedented explanation of the specific nature of the five syllogisms.

- Xa) and c) are less spectacular, because their explanation of the crucial role of Aristotle's *Kitāb al-burhān/Analytica posteriora* is more extended than its Greek parallel, but does not contain new ideas, which would be helpful for our discussion.

³⁵ Boethius, *Commentum in Isagogen, Editio prima*, § 2, p. 10.19-25 Brandt.

³⁶ Unfortunately, I could inspect only the French translation of this scholion in Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d'Aristote* (above, n. 2), p. 122. Hugonnard-Roche notes the parallel with 'Paul' *ibid.*, p. 109.

³⁷ Cf. Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetorics and Poetics* (above, n. 8), pp. 31-44.

It is highly improbable that § VIIIa) was taken from a lost Greek source. First, Paul the Persian could hardly have used Greek material which left no traces in David and Elias, because the three of them were contemporaries: Ḥusraw Anūšīrwan, the dedicatee of ‘Paul’, died in 579, and David/Elias were students of Olympiodorus, who died around 565.³⁸ Second, David, Elias and the Anonymus Heiberg would surely have given an explanation of the five syllogisms, if they had known one, so that probably there was no good explication for them available in Greek sources of the early and middle Byzantine times. Consequently, § VIIIa) must be a product either by Paul the Persian in the 6th or by the Arabic translator in the 10th century.

Let us therefore look somewhat more closely at those passages which contain the idea that the *Poetics* is about “imagination”. They can be found in § VIIIa), where a Greek source is improbable, and in § IX, which is close to several roughly contemporary texts. To begin with, I will therefore quote text which we can compare with Greek and Armenian parallels:

And the eighth (book of logic, that is the *Poetic*, is) a book, in which Aristotle mentions the rules of the fancied expressions (*al-alfāz al-muḥayyala*), and the outmost of all (*aqṣā’ ḡamī’*), what is perfect on it, is this art; and he divided it into its genera and its species, and he called it *Poetics*, that is *šī’r*.³⁹

The parallel passages in David/Elias, in Elias’s and David’s commentaries on the *Analytica priora* and in the Anonymus Heiberg are the following:

Elias: “Either the premises are always true, and an apodeictic (syllogism) is produced; or they are totally false and fictitious (ψευθεῖς καὶ μυθώδεις), and a poetic one is produced”.⁴⁰

David/Elias: “The premises, from which the syllogisms can be taken, are five: for either the premises are totally true and produce the apodeictic syllogism, or they are totally false and they produce the poetic one, the fictitious (τὸν ποιητικὸν τὸν μυθώδη)”.⁴¹

David: “And one should know that there are five species of syllogism, the demonstrative, the dialectical, the rhetorical, the sophistical and the poetical, which is also fictitious”.⁴²

Anonymus Heiberg: “The (syllogisms) from totally false (premises) are totally false, and they have been called poetic and fictitious (ποιητικοὶ καὶ μυθώδεις) (syllogisms)”.⁴³

In these texts, the poetic syllogism is always characterized by the Greek μυθώδης, which may have referred initially to a certain genus of poetry.⁴⁴ The word itself, however, does not mean simply *mythical*, but it has in late ancient texts regularly the meaning *fictitious*, *fabulous* with the connotation of being unsubstantiated or, in other words, *imagined*, *fancied*. I bring only

³⁸ Cf. L.G. Westerink, “The Alexandrian Commentators and the Introductions to their Commentaries”, in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed*, Duckworth, London 1990, pp. 325-48, in part. 328-39.

³⁹ ‘Paul’, p. 67.15 Tūbḡi = p. 123.1f. Emāmī. The quotation follows C, which correctly retains *ḡamī’* (omitted in T).

⁴⁰ Elias, *In Analytica priora* frg., ed. L.G. Westerink, “Elias on the *Prior Analytics*”, *Mnemosyne* 4 (1961), pp. 126-39, in part. p. 139.6-8.

⁴¹ David/Elias, *In Categorias*, ed. sub titulo Eliae (olim Davidis) *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, ed. A. Busse, Reimer, Berlin 1900 (CAG XVIII.1), pp. 105-255, in part. p. 117.1-4.

⁴² David, *In Analytica priora*, ed. by A. Topchyan: cf. David the Invincible, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Prior Analytics*. Old Armenian Text with an English Translation, Introduction, and Notes, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2010 (Philosophia Antiqua, 122), in part. ch. 1, § 3, p. 34.2f.

⁴³ Anonymus Heiberg, i.e. Anonymi *Logica et quadrvium, cum scholiis antiquis*, ed. J.L. Heiberg, Hoest, København 1929, lib. I, § 64, p. 48.10f.

⁴⁴ Cf. F. Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2015, col. 1368c.

two examples: the Christian Gregory of Nyssa calls “the mythical/fancied fictions and the false tricks” (τὰ μυθώδη πλάσματα καὶ τὰ ψευδῆ τερατεύματα) as equally mistaken productions of human creativity (ἐπίνοια).⁴⁵ Even earlier, the pagan Plutarch described the interpretation of the myth of Isis and Osiris as “neither irrational nor mythical” (οὐδὲ ἄλογον οὐδὲ μυθώδες), as it could be explained in an allegoric way.⁴⁶ Given this pejorative connotation of μυθώδης, one may suspect that the characterization of the *Poetics* with this word reflects a – rather un-Aristotelian – understanding of poetry as imaginative fiction unrelated to the truth.⁴⁷ *Mutahayyal* is, then, an understandable translation of a Greek expression describing, rather inadequately, Aristotle's *Poetics*, which has not to be explained by Arabic influences. Probably, also the Syriac or Pahlavi original of ‘Paul’ contained an expression of that meaning.

Let's now look into § VIIIa), where the corresponding passage runs as follows:

Regarding the syllogism, which is always false, it is (*fa-*) what is imagined (*yuhayyal*) about something, that it is of a certain form (*šūra*), whereas in reality it is not of it (= this form), similar to what happens to the eye while seeing. Indeed, to the soul in seeing the intelligible happens what happens to the eye while seeing the sensible, and sometimes the human being imagines about something a corruptible imagination. Then, he hurries to reach this, such that his acts become wicked and ugly. And Aristotle composed about this also a book about the aspects (*wuḡūh*) of these imaginations (*tahayyulāt*): From where do they come about and how do they come about? And he called it ‘Book of Poetry’ (*Kitāb al-šī'r*) or ‘Book of the poetic art’ (*Kitāb al-šīnā'a al-šī'riya*).⁴⁸

This looks like a free explanation of intellectual errors, which combines some conventional parallels between sense-perception and reasoning somehow with imagination. This has not much to do with Aristotle's *Poetics*, such that we have no reason to suspect that the author had access to that work, which was obviously rarely studied in late Antiquity, but translated apparently in the 9th century into Syriac and in the 10th into Arabic.⁴⁹

The same holds true for al-Fārābī, whose much more elaborated account shows clear similarities to our text, as can be seen from a short extract of his rather long elaboration on poetic syllogisms:

And the poetic expressions are those which are composed from things for which it is the case that they are imagined from something. [...] And it **happens** to us, while being concerned with the poetic expressions from imagination, [...] something similar in our **souls** to **what happens while** we are **seeing something** that is similar to what we contest – and it is imagined by us immediately about that thing that it is something which we contest.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, I-II, ed. W. Jaeger, Gregorii Nysseni Opera 1, Weidmann, Berlin, 1921, lib. II, § 187, p. 278.27 Jaeger. Cf. also Elias, *Prolegomena in philosophiam*, ed. A. Busse, Reimer, Berlin 1900 (CAG XVIII.1), pp. 1-104, in part. p. 12.1f. Busse.

⁴⁶ Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, ed. W. Sieveking, in Plutarchi *Moralia* II, edd. W. Nachstädt - W. Sieveking - J.B. Titchener, Teubner, Leipzig 1953, fasc. 3, in part. § 8, p. 7.4 (= p. 353E Stephanus).

⁴⁷ At least according to A. Schmitt, cf. *Aristoteles. Poetik. Übersetzt und erläutert*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 2008, p. 56.

⁴⁸ ‘Paul’, p. 131.10-15 Emāmi = p. 64.1-9 Tübgi.

⁴⁹ Cf. R. Goulet, “Aristote de Stagire. La *Poétique*”, in Goulet (éd.), *DPhA*, I, pp. 448-51, in part. p. 449; Schmitt, *Aristoteles. Poetik*, p. xvii.

⁵⁰ Al-Fārābī, *Ihṣā' al-'ulūm*, § II, p. 83.4-9 Amine = p. 43.1-9 González Palencia. The whole passage goes from p. 83.4-85.8 Amine = p. 43.1-45.3 González Palencia.

One can see from this extract once more both the points demonstrated by Gutas for other passages: al-Fārābī uses some formulations from ‘Paul’, but he integrates them in a larger and more complex theoretical framework – such that his treatment is obviously later than that to be found in ‘Paul’. The same holds true for the praise of the *Analytica posteriora* in Xb), which is much more elaborated in al-Fārābī.⁵¹ The order of the syllogistic books in ‘Paul’s § VIIIa) corresponds to § IX, but differs from that in al-Fārābī, such that the unity of ‘Paul’ is plausible also in this regard. ‘Paul’ is consequently the earliest extant text in which we find the link between imagination and poetic syllogism, and probably the word originated as a translation of the Greek $\mu\upsilon\theta\omega\delta\epsilon\varsigma$.

Should we assume, then, that Paul the Persian wrote § VIIIa) and c), or are they rather additions of the Arabic translator? The explanation of the five types of syllogism fills an evident gap left open by the Greek commentators, so that any intelligent person working on this topic will have felt the need to explain the five types of syllogism. As for Paul the Persian, his original mind and his interest in the $\sigma\kappa\omicron\pi\omicron\iota$ of the Aristotelian logical treatises was demonstrated convincingly by Henri Hugonnard-Roche.⁵² Thus, Paul the Persian is a totally plausible candidate for having supplied the explanation of the five syllogisms. There are no reasons for coming to another conclusion regarding § Xa) and c), given that ‘Paul’s remarks here do not go significantly beyond the statements of David/Elias. Consequently, such remarks do not need to be a product of the 10th enthusiasts of the *Analytica posteriora* like al-Fārābī.⁵³

Section E. is a relatively short explanation of Aristotle’s other treatises.

In its part b), which enumerates the books on natural philosophy, the text of T is much more complete than C, as it mentions Aristotle’s *Meteorology* and *De Metallis* (= *Meteorology* 4) – thus covering a lacuna in C which had been suspected by Gutas. T mentions both Arabic titles of Aristotle’s *Physics*, whereas *sam’ al-kiyān* is missing in C. This title, which is based upon the Syriac *kyānā* = nature, may be read as a further indication for a Syriac original behind ‘Paul’.⁵⁴

For this part, at least four Greek parallels are extant: at the beginning of Philoponus’ and Simplicius’ commentaries on the *Physics*, and also in the commentary on the *De Caelo* by the latter, and in David’s/Elias’s *Categories* commentary. However, David/Elias is particularly far away from ‘Paul’, because only this text offers a tripartition of Aristotle’s works,⁵⁵ whereas “Paul” follows the bipartition which is also used in the other three parallels. Especially Philoponus’ text is very close to ‘Paul’:

⁵¹ Cf. e.g. al-Fārābī, *Ihṣā’ al-‘ulūm* II, p. 89.6-12 Amine = pp. 50.10-51.4 González Palencia.

⁵² Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d’Aristote* (above, n. 2), pp. 233-73; Id., “Sur la lecture tardo-antique du *Peri hermeneias* d’Aristote” (above, n. 10), pp. 40-45.

⁵³ As reported by al-Fārābī himself in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, ed. I. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (=A. Müller), Cairo - Königsberg, 1882-1884 (repr. F. Sezgin, Frankfurt a. M. 1995, *Islamic Medicine*, vol. 1-2), p. 559.3f.

⁵⁴ Cf. P. Kraus, “Zu Ibn al-Muqaffa”, *Rivista degli studi orientali* 14 (1933), pp. 1-20 (= Id., *Alchemie, Ketzerei, Apokryphen im frühen Islam. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, herausgegeben und eingeleitet von R. Brague, Olms, Hildesheim et al. 1994, pp. 89-109), in part. p. 7, n. 2. On the rendering of Aristotle’s *Physics* by *Sam’ al-kiyān* and its Syriac background see Y. Arzhanov - R. Arnzen, “Die Glossen in Ms. Leyden or. 583 und die syrische Rezeption der aristotelischen *Physik*”, in Coda - Martini Bonadeo (eds.), *De l’Antiquité tardive au Moyen Age* (above, n. 2), pp. 415-64, esp. pp. 425-9.

⁵⁵ David/Elias, *In Cat.*, p. 115.27-33 Busse (*CAG* XVIII.1); cf. the scheme in Gutas, “Paul the Persian” (above, n. 4), p. 262.

<p>'Paul', pp. 118.1-5; 124.19-125.4 Emāmī = 59.9-14; 69.3-8 Ṭūbġī</p>	<p>Philoponus, <i>In Phys.</i>, p. 1.12f.; 16-18; 22-26 Vitelli (trans. by C.Osborne, Bloomsbury, London [etc.] 2006, p. 23)</p>
<p>III: Now, from the things, which are in matter, there is something, which is common to all of them, and there is something which is specific for some of them. And from what is specific for some of them, there is something which is specific for the eternal things among them, and there is something specific for the generated things. And from what is specific for the generated things, <u>there is something, which is common to all of them, and something, which is specific for some of them.</u> And from that which is specific for some, there is something which is specific for those which are above the earth, and something which is specific for those which are on the earth. [...]</p> <p>XI, b): He [Aristotle] composed a book, in which he names those aspects, which are common to all the natural things, those subjected to generation and corruption, and those not subjected to generation and corruption, and he called it: <i>Kitāb al-samā' al-ṭabī'i</i> and <i>sam' al-kiyān</i> [i.e. the <i>Physics</i>]. And he composed a book on what is specific for the things not subjected to generation and corruption, and he called it <i>Heaven and Earth</i>. Then he divided the things subjected to generation and corruption, and he made on this a book on that which is common to all things of generation, and he called it <i>Book on Generation and Corruption</i>.</p>	<p>In order to illustrate this it would be a good thing if we made a list of the adjuncts that accompany natural things [...]. Some adjuncts are common to all things; others accompany some in particular. Of the ones that accompany some in particular, some belong to eternal things in particular, others to those involved in generation and corruption. Of those belonging to things involved in generation and corruption, some belong in particular to things above the ground, others to things on the ground [...].</p> <p>Aristotle, then, wrote about things that belong to all natural things in common, namely in the work before us; about those that belong to eternal things in particular in the <i>De Caelo</i>; and about adjuncts that universally accompany all things involved in generation and corruption in the <i>De Generatione et Corruptione</i> [...].</p>

'Paul' and Philoponus share two points: a) Formally, the natural books and their subjects are arranged in a binary system of partition, and the whole enumeration of the natural beings precedes in both texts the entire enumeration of Aristotle's books. Simplicius and David/Elias, on the contrary, give always the title of the book immediately after describing its topic. b) As for the content, the two lists are, apart from small terminological items, totally identical, with two exceptions: 'Paul' mentions explicitly the underlined bipartition tacitly implied by Philoponus, and Philoponus adds a more detailed division, not quoted here, of the zoological writings.⁵⁶ Thus, we must assume that Philoponus or a very similar text – this means: probably a reportation of Ammonius's lecture course on the *Physics* from the beginning of the 6th century – is 'Paul's' source in this paragraph.

For parts a) and c) of § XI, there are parallels in two Greek commentaries on the *De Anima* and on *Metaphysics*, as indicated in the scheme. In studying philosophy, we have to start from material beings, because they are familiar to us, in order to reach the immaterial beings, whereas our soul, which is treated in *De Anima*, is in the middle between these two realms. One may discuss if this scheme is in line with the division of beings in section B./§ II. There 'Paul' divides immaterial entities

⁵⁶ The details for Philoponus are: *In Aristotelis Physicorum libros tres priores commentaria*, ed. G. Vitelli, Reimer, Berlin, 1887 (*CAG* XVI), p. 1.16-22 (division of physical beings), pp. 1.22-2.6 (equivalent list of writings on natural philosophy), p. 2.6-13 (additional division of the books on animals). The schemes in Simplicius are similar for the content, but contain some personal reflections by the author.

in some which are totally free from matter, and others which exist in *wabm*, a word which, thanks to its closeness to *φαντασία*, fits better mathematical beings than the soul; in this regard, the parallelism of the two parts is not complete.

For § XII, the division of Aristotle's works on practical philosophy, there are many Greek parallels, but 'Paul' has a special structure: First, he divides practical philosophy into two parts (ethics and the rest), and then he divides the rest into economics and politics. Again, we find a double bipartition, where all Greek parallels known to me offer a tripartition.

Thus, the tendency to arrange all parts of philosophy in a strictly binary scheme can be seen as an important stylistic feature of 'Paul'. This tendency may be due to East Syrian school practices or with Syriac forms of philosophical works in general. At least we know that divisions of philosophical subjects have been widespread and popular in Syriac circles interested in philosophy, for example in connection with the Syriac scholion on logic mentioned above (p. 125) and in the *Cause of the Foundation of Schools*.⁵⁷

§ XIII mentions shortly the other writings of the Aristotelian corpus, which are usually mentioned in the Alexandrian commentaries.

I omit here § XIV and XV, because these sections exceed the lists of Aristotelian works, which can easily be compared with Greek material. These paragraphs would require a separate study. Instead, I go on to formulate my conclusions.

VI. Conclusion

First, one may safely confirm the authorship of Paul the Persian for most of the treatise on the works of Aristotle transmitted under his name. The treatise relies upon one Syriac and a whole row of Greek sources, among them Sergius' of Rēš'aynā's long commentary on the *Categories* as well as texts with close similarities to Philoponus' commentary on the *Physics* and to a commentary on the *Analytica priora* close to David and Elias and to the recommendation of logics in Boethius. Thus, the author combines sources from the first third of the 6th century (Ammonius/Philoponus/Sergius), from the middle third (Olympiodorus/David/Elias) and a probably earlier introduction on logic, different from what can be found in Alexandrian commentaries. This wide range of sources may well have been available to a Syro-Persian philosopher of the 6th century like Paul the Persian, so that there is no reason to doubt Miskawayh's attribution.

From this authorship we can conclude some points, which have been tentatively formulated by Henri Hugonnard-Roche:⁵⁸ Paul had obviously a sound knowledge of Greek and spent some time in a Greek scholarly environment. For all of his sources can hardly have existed in the mid 6th century in Syriac or Pahlavi translations – we do not even know of Syriac Aristotelica before 550 other than Sergius's commentaries on the *Categories*!⁵⁹ Probably, Paul spent some time in Alexandria, where he had access to the material used in his treatise. We have other testimonies for similar travels.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d'Aristote* (above, n. 2), pp. 101-22; Becker, *Sources for the History of the School of Nisibis* (above, n. 27), pp. 172-80.

⁵⁸ Hugonnard-Roche, "Sur la lecture tardo-antique du *Peri hermeneias*" (above, n. 10), p. 39.

⁵⁹ This should roughly be the time of the first Syriac translation of the *Categories*, which comes after Sergius's work: King, *The Earliest Syriac Translation* (above, n. 2), pp. 30-5.

⁶⁰ For example, the famous Mār Ābā/Patricius according to *Vita Mār Ābae*, ed. F. Jullien, Peeters, Leuven 2015 (CSCO Syr. 254/55), § 7, p. 9f. (syr.), 10f. (fr.).

Some points in our text, especially the quotation of Sergius and the predilection for the rather scholastic strict bipartition of topics in the text, support the idea that 'Paul' had also contacts in the East Syrian schools, where we find similar texts and phenomena. From this point of view, Paul's identity with other East Syrian namesakes, for whom travels to the Roman empire are well attested, should be discussed anew.⁶¹ The question of whether or not he wrote this treatise in Syriac cannot be decided with all certainty, but there are at least noteworthy indications in this direction and no unequivocal arguments for a Pahlavi original.

Paul's authorship is especially well established for those passages, for which direct Syriac and Greek antecedents can be identified. But also for parts without identifiable sources, especially the explanation of the five syllogistic books in VIIIa) and the praise of the *Analytica posteriora* in Xb), Paul the Persian is a totally plausible author: His treatise *On the scope of the Peri Hermeneias* shows his interest in the subjects of the Aristotelian writings on logic, as well as his ability to invent new solutions in comparison with the Greek ones. Thus, it is plausible that he invented the description of the poetic syllogism by its dependence from imagined premises. In fact, the Arabic *mutahayyal* goes probably back to a translation of a well-known late antique meaning of $\mu\omega\theta\tilde{\omega}\delta\epsilon\varsigma$ into a Syriac or Pahlavi word for "imagined", which was later on translated into Arabic. By this translation, the fifth syllogism got connotations which inspired an intense reflection on the topic in the subsequent centuries.

However, Paul's importance is even greater than this detail. His text takes up a promise given, but not fulfilled, by Sergius of Rēš'aynā, namely an explanation of the scope(s) of all of Aristotle's works. The presence of § I, a *de facto*-quotation of Sergius' magnificent praise of Aristotle as the master of all sciences, shows that this is no coincidence. Obviously, Paul shares Sergius's conviction that Aristotle, and not Plato, is the master of all philosophical sciences. This common strategy must be regarded as an intentional reshaping of philosophy by the two Syro-Persian authors. Both declare that it is sufficient to study the works of Aristotle for reaching the perfection made possible by philosophy. Paul is in this respect even more explicit than Sergius, who combines Aristotelian philosophy with a Christian mystic inspired by Evagrius Ponticus:⁶² the Persian author claims straightly that the study of the branches of the Aristotelian books is in itself sufficient for reaching this goal, leaving aside both Plato and Christianity. This may be called indeed a reinvention of Aristotelianism in philosophy.

⁶¹ Gutas, "Paul the Persian" (above, n. 4), pp. 238f., n. 14.

⁶² Fiori, "Un intellectuel alexandrin en Mésopotamie" (above, n. 2).

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