

# Studia graeco-arabica

*Studies dedicated to Rüdiger Arnzen on His Sixtieth Birthday*

Edited by Yury Arzhanov

10

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### *Cover*

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

# *The Neoplatonic Epistle on the Divine Science*

## *The Text, Three Translations, and an Index*

Cristina D’Ancona

### *Abstract*

One of the works derived from the adapted translation of parts of *Enneads* IV-VI is the *Epistle on the Divine Science* attributed to al-Fārābī. The *Epistle* appears in two manuscripts, of which only one was known to previous editors (1940 and 1955). It is edited here also on the basis of the second manuscript, discovered in 1955. The translation into Italian is added to the French translation by Paul Kraus, who first discovered the *Epistle* in the 1940’s, and to the English translation by Geoffrey Lewis, who translated it together with the other works derived from the Arabic Plotinus. The terminological index records the Arabic terms and their Greek antecedents.

Since his outstanding edition of a Neoplatonic Arabic paraphrase of the *De Anima*,<sup>1</sup> Rüdiger Arnzen has taught us to explore every inch of a translation if we want to reach sound conclusions, and even more so if, as is the case with the paraphrase mentioned above and with the *Epistle on the Divine Science*, its origins are uncertain. As a token of gratitude, this edition of the pseudepigraphic *Epistle on the Divine Science* is dedicated to a scholar and friend who was always generous with his knowledge, time, and advice during the time of his contribution to the ERC project “Greek into Arabic” and afterwards.<sup>2</sup>

We had the privilege to have Rüdiger Arnzen as one of the scholars involved in the search for and analysis of the manuscripts of the ps.-*Theology of Aristotle*, the main text issued from the Arabic translation of Plotinus and one of the most influential works created within the stream of the Graeco-Arabic translations of the early ‘Abbāsīd times. Some 100 manuscripts have been identified by the ERC project in the libraries of non-European countries, and have been analysed by Rüdiger Arnzen in a series of memorable workshops under the heading “Some Dates for the – allegedly or truly – Undated Manuscripts of the *Theology*”. The edition of the ps.-*Theology* which we soon hope to make available to the scholars working in the field would not have been possible without this research, let alone without Rüdiger Arnzen’s patient reading of my proposals. A special note of thanks is therefore due to a scholar who, in addition to contributing an outstanding chapter on “al-Suhrawardī and the Arabic Plotinus” to the first volume of the forthcoming edition, has always been generous with his knowledge and time in the complex task of establishing the text.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Concetta Luna and Issam Marjani for their corrections and remarks.

<sup>2</sup> R. Arnzen, *Aristoteles’ De Anima. Eine verlorene spätantike Paraphrase in arabischer und persischer Überlieferung. Arabischer Text nebst Kommentar, quellengeschichtlichen Studien und Glossaren*, Brill, Leiden - New York - Köln 1998 (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, 9).

<sup>3</sup> ERC ADG 249431 “Greek into Arabic. Philosophical Concepts and Linguistic Bridges” (2010-2015).

<sup>4</sup> R. Arnzen – E. Coda – C. D’Ancona – D. De Smet – M. Di Branco – G. Endress – M. Geoffroy (†) – H. Hugonnard-Roche – J. Janssens – C. Martini Bonadeo – M. Sebti – E. Wakelnig, *Pseudo-Theology of Aristotle. Text, Translation, History, and Doctrine*. Vol. I. *Prolegomena*. Vol. II. *Philological Introduction, Arabic Text, French Translation, Commentary, Indexes*.



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