A Fragment of the Syriac Translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* Preserved by Jacob Bar Shakko[*]

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The fragment of the Syriac translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* preserved by Jacob (Severus) Bar Shakko (d. 1241) comprises *Poet.* VI 1449b24–1450a10. In spite of its small size, it serves as an important witness both to the Greek text of the *Poetics*, and to the reception of this work in the Christian Orient and, later on, in the Muslim world. The fragment derives from a translation, which most likely appeared in West Syriac circles in the 7th/8th centuries AD and later served as the basis for the Arabic translation of the *Poetics* made by Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus in the 10th century. The present article includes a new edition of the Syriac text preserved by Bar Shakko, which is based on the collation of six manuscripts and is accompanied by an English translation. The article also provides a detailed analysis of the Syriac fragment as compared to the transmitted Greek text of the *Poetics*, on the one hand, and to the Arabic translation of it by Abū Bishr, on the other. This comparison allows an assumption that the Syriac version is most likely based on a Greek manuscript, which may have contained glosses and scholia. A Greek and Syriac glossary is attached at the end of the article.

Keywords: Aristotle's *Poetics*, Syriac translation from the Greek, Arabic translations from the Syriac.

1. Introduction

Since the end of the fifth century, Aristotle's logical works became an integral part of the Syriac educational system.[1] Syrian Christians received the idea of the *Organon* from

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[1] For the Syriac reception of Aristotle, see Baumstark 1900, Bruns 2003, Hugonnard-Roche 1991, 2004 and 2007, Watt 2017.

Alexandria, where its corpus included not only the *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, the *Sophistical Refutations*, and the *Topics*. In the Alexandrian educational system, the *Organon* was enlarged both at the beginning — incorporating the *Introduction* (*Isagoge*) of Porphyry and the *prolegomena*-treatises — and also at the end, including the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. Thus, the adaptation of the Alexandrian form of Aristotelianism in both East and West Syriac schools paved the way for the reception of the *Poetics*.[2] Though no full translation of the *Poetics* into Syriac has survived, a fragment of chapter six, covering the famous definition of tragedy with a few comments on it (1449b24–1450a10), has been preserved by the 13th century scholar Jacob (Severus) Bar Shakko (d. 1241).

The short text quoted by Bar Shakko in all likelihood goes back to a translation produced in West Syriac circles in the 7th/8th centuries and thus based on a Greek manuscript, which is considerably older than the extant Greek witnesses to the *Poetics*.[3] According to the Arabic authors, it was this Syriac version that served as the basis for the later Arabic translation of the *Poetics* prepared in the 10th century by Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus.[4] The preserved Syriac fragment, indeed, supports this statement.

All this has turned the quotation by Bar Shakko, in spite of its small size, into an important witness to the text of Aristotle's *Poetics*, contributing both to the text-critical analysis of the Greek version,[5] and to the reception of this work in the Orient.[6] Most of the modern studies of the Syriac text have been based on David Margoliouth's edition, published in 1887 and drawing on two manuscripts.[7] The "Thesaurus criticus" to Aristotle's *Poetics* — being prepared by a team of scholars under the guidance of Michael Pozdnev — as well as the online publication of the Syriac version of Aristotle's work in the HUNAYN-NET database,[8] served as an impulse for the present author to prepare a new edition of the Syriac fragment and reconsider its significance for the Greek text of Aristotle's work.

2. The quotation by Jacob Bar Shakko

Jacob Bar Shakko was one of the key-figures of the so-called Syriac Renaissance of the 13th century.[9] He was born in Bartella near Mosul and, according to Barhebraeus, studied grammar with the East Syrian grammarian John Bar Zoʿbi and philosophy with the Muslim scholar Kamāl al-Dīn al-Mūsā b. Yūnus.[10] Later, he became a monk and afterwards Bishop (with the episcopal name Severus) of the monastery Mar Mattai near Mosul, where he lived until his death in 1241.

Like Barhebraeus, Bar Shakko composed most of his works in the form of compendia and encyclopedias. The two main encyclopedic treatises of his that have come down

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[2] See Heinrichs 1969, 112–118; Hugonnard-Roche 2003.
[3] Cf. Tkatsch 1928, 5–11.
[4] Cf. Margoliouth 1905; Hugonnard-Roche 1991.
[5] Cf. Bywater 1909, xxxiii–xxxix.
[6] Cf. Tkatsch 1928, 155–157.
[7] Margoliouth 1887, ٧٧ [77] — ٧٩ [79].
[8] URL: https://hunaynnet.oeaw.ac.at/
[9] For Jacob, see Baumstark 1922, 311–312; Schrier 1990; Teule 2007; Rassi 2019.
[10] Barhebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* II, see Abbeloos, Lamy 1872–1877, vol. 3, 409–412. Cf. an English translation in Wilmshurst 2016, 446.

to us are the *Book of Treasures*[11] and the *Book of Dialogues*. While the former deals with theological issues, the latter provides an overview of "profane" sciences. The *Book of Dialogues* consists of two books, the first of which deals with grammar, rhetoric, and poetry.[12] The second book covers philosophical disciplines, starting with logic and ending with metaphysics.[13] The title *Book of Dialogues* reflects the literary form of this work, which is composed as a series of questions and answers. The 3rd *memra* (part) of the first book deals with the art of poetry. Here, Question 20 asks: "What is tragedy?" In answering this question, Bar Shakko suggests a quotation from Aristotle, which turns out to be a rather literal translation of *Poetics* VI, 1449b24–1450a10.

This passage was published for the first time in 1887 by David Margoliouth, who also provided a Latin translation.[14] This edition was based on two manuscripts, containing Bar Shakko's *Book of Dialogues*: London, BL Add. 21454, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh. 528. Martin Sprengling later published photographs of several folios of ms. Harvard, Semitic Museum, 4059, featuring part of Bar Shakko's work focusing on poetry.[15] Since then, other mss. also containing the work of Bar Shakko have come to light,[16] two of which are now freely available in digital form in the online repository of the *Hill Museum and Manuscript Library* (*vHMML*).[17]

The short fragment of the Syriac translation of the *Poetics* turns out to be not only an example of reception of Aristotelian philosophy in Syrian Christian circles, but also an important witness to the transmission of Aristotle's works from Syriac into Arabic. According to Ibn al-Nadīm's *Index* (*al-Fihrist*),[18] the Arabic translation of the *Poetics* was made by Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus (d. 940), working from the Syriac.[19] The Arabic version[20] has come down to us as part of the famous "Paris Organon", ms. Paris BnF 2346.[21]

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[11] See Nau 1896; Teule 2007.

[12] Partial editions and translations: Martin 1879 (the section on poetry); Merx 1889, ܒ [2] — ܣܚ [48] (the section on grammar); Sprengling 1916 (an additional section on poetry). See also Ruska 1897; Bendrat 1968; Watt 1993.

[13] Partial editions and translations: Ruska 1896 (on the quadrivium); Baumstark 1900, ܣܗ [15] — ܠܓ [33], 181–210 (the definition and division of philosophy, presumably based on the work of Stephanus of Alexandria); Furlani 1926–1927 (on logic). See also Havard 1994.

[14] Margoliouth 1887, ܥܙ [77] — ܥܛ [79] (Syriac text), 54–56 (Latin translation). In his commentary on the Arabic version of the *Poetics*, Jaroslaus Tkatsch offered a revised Latin translation and a text-critical commentary for the text edited by Margoliouth (Tkatsch 1928, 155–157, see also pp. 230–233). Tkatsch's Latin translation was used by Bywater (Bywater 1909, xxxiii–xxxix). Tkatsch severely criticized Margoliouth's work (see Tkatsch 1928, 14–36), yet Bergsträsser stated that Tkatsch's edition in many ways did not supersede that of Margoliouth (Bergsträsser 1932). Bergsträsser also revised many of Tkatsch's statements concerning the Syriac text (see pp. 58–60).

[15] Sprengling 1916, 305–306 (132a5–133a6).

[16] Cf. Vosté 1929.

[17] URL: https://www.vhmml.org/. Mss. Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs (CFMM) 543 and Mosul, Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese (ASOM) 91.

[18] Flügel 1871, 250.4.

[19] According to the discussion between Abū Bishr and Abū Saʿīd al-Ḥasan al-Sīrāfī (see Margoliouth 1905, particularly p. 114), the Syriac scholar had no knowledge of the Greek language and made all his translations exclusively on the basis of Syriac versions.

[20] Ibn al-Nadīm mentions that Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī also "translated" (*naqala*) the *Poetics*, though it is likely that he rather made a revision or correction of the text prepared by Abū Bishr, cf. Peters 1968, 28–30; Tarán, Gutas 2012, 96.

[21] Now available online, see: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8422956q. The ms. contains eight treatises, which constituted the corpus of the *Organon*. For the structure of this ms., see Endress 2016, 185–188. Cf. Walzer 1953 and Hugonnard-Roche 1992.

David Margoliouth published its text for the first time as part of the same edition, which included the Syriac fragment.[22]

The study of the Arabic text and its relation to the Greek has made apparent the credibility of Ibn al-Nadīm's account. Thus, Jaroslaus Tkatsch in his detailed analysis of the Arabic version of the *Poetics* paid particular attention to the presumed Syriac original from which Abū Bishr made his translation.[23] Comparison of the fragment transmitted by Bar Shakko with Abū Bishr's version has left no doubt that Bar Shakko has preserved for us a small portion of the full Syriac translation of the *Poetics*, which served as the source for Abū Bishr's translation.[24]

The same Syriac version was later used by Barhebraeus (1225/6–1286), another prominent representative of the Syriac Renaissance, who included an epitome of it in his compendium, the *Cream of Wisdom*, completed in 1286.[25] Margoliouth published Barhebraeus' text alongside the fragment preserved by Bar Shakko.[26]

Thus, the Syriac translation of the *Poetics* turns out to have had a major impact on the whole history of the reception of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the Orient in the early medieval period. However, it remains unclear who its author was, and when precisely it was produced. The time of death (940) of Abū Bishr Mattā, who made his Arabic translation on the basis of the Syriac version, serves as a *terminus ante quem*, that is, the Syriac translation must have appeared no later than the beginning of the 10th century.

Omert Schrier has pointed to the fact that Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (808–873) was in all likelihood unfamiliar with the version preserved by Bar Shakko, for his definition of "tragedy" as preserved in the lexica of Bar ʿAli and Bar Bahlul demonstrates that he did not know the Syriac text used by Abū Bishr.[27] As Ḥunayn was particularly interested in Aristotle's texts, this served for Shrier as an indication that the Syriac translation was not yet in existence at the time of Ḥunayn.[28] Thus, according to Schrier, the translation must have been made in the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th centuries. This was precisely the time that Ḥunayn's son, Isḥāq (d. 910), produced most of his translations of Aristotle's writings, and, according to Schrier, it would be natural to assume that Isḥāq was also responsible for the Syriac version of the *Poetics*.[29]

[22] Margoliouth 1887, ١ [1] — ٧٦ [76].

[23] Tkatsch 1928. On Tkatsch's work, see Kutsch 1937.

[24] See especially Schrier 1997; Edzard, Köhnken 2006; Tarán, Gutas 2012, 340–349; Rigolio 2013. Comparison between the preserved Syriac text and Abū Bishr's version shows a considerable number of differences between them, which do not allow us to assume that Abū Bishr's text was based on the text that Bar Shakko has transmitted to us (for the details, cf. particularly Tarán, Gutas 2012, 340–345 and Pozdnev 2020, 185 n. 45). However, these differences do not rule out the evident fact that both versions go back to the same Syriac translation, see Schrier 2016, 324–327.

[25] For a comparison between the fragment preserved by Bar Shakko and Barhebraeus' text, see particularly Schrier 1997, who gives strong arguments in favour of the dependence of the latter upon the former. Gutas states that Barhebraeus "relied mostly if not completely on Avicenna (…), though theoretically he may have consulted a(?) Syriac version" (Tarán, Gutas 2012, 105).

[26] Margoliouth 1887, ١٠٩ [109] — ١٣٩ [139].

[27] Schrier 1997, 264–265.

[28] Gutas supported this conclusion: Tarán, Gutas 2012, 91. However, Schrier's arguments were called into question by John Watt, who suggested that Ḥunayn might have intentionally decided to quote Galen rather than Aristotle, for he was more interested in the former than the latter (Watt 2015, 17–18, n. 37).

[29] Schrier's thesis regarding Isḥāq's authorship finds further support in the *Fihrist*, where Ibn al-Nadīm transmitted a note by Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, according to which Yaḥyā is said to have acquired a codex containing several treatises of Aristotle in translation by Isḥāq. Among these treatises was also a certain text

Though these considerations provide some grounds for attributing the Syriac version to Isḥāq b. Ḥunayn, there is one, though very powerful, counter-argument: the style of the Syriac translation as preserved by Bar Shakko and as reflected in the Arabic translation of Abū Bishr does not correspond to Isḥāq's other translations. The Syriac text turns out to be the product of a translator who had great difficulties both in understanding Aristotle's text and in rendering it into Syriac — characteristics that are generally not applicable to Isḥāq's translation style.[30] Dimitri Gutas proposed to solve this difficulty by assuming that Isḥāq made a revision of an earlier translation,[31] an assumption, which still leaves open the question of the origins of the Syriac *Poetics*.

3. Probable historical setting of the Syriac version

The fragment of the Syriac version preserved by Bar Shakko does not reproduce the exact order of the Greek text of the *Poetics*. Instead, parts of Aristotle's text are freely rearranged and they are mixed with additional commentaries. The fragment by Bar Shakko contains six parts, which may be schematically outlined as follows:

(1) Translation of *Poet*. 1449b24–31.
(2) Addition: alternative definition of tragedy, reference to Ps. 6:7 (Peshiṭta).
(3) Translation of *Poet*. 1450a8–10.
(4) Addition: note on the 6 parts or types of tragedy.
(5) Translation of *Poet*. 1449b32–1450a7.
(6) Translation of *Poet*. 1450a8.

The passage transmitted by Bar Shakko starts with a definition of tragedy on the basis of the *Poetics*. This definition is supplemented by several others with references to anonymous sources ("others say…" and "a wise man said…") and to the Bible. The author quotes the Psalms as poetry *par excellence* and presents David as a tragedian. The nature of part (2) makes it most likely that the fragment preserved by Bar Shakko derives from a Christian work on poetry that included a quotation from the *Poetics*. After the reference to David, the author of this commentary states that, according to Aristotle, tragedy has six parts, or types (4). What follows in (5) is an exposition of this statement, again based on the text of the *Poetics*. The quotation ends with a conclusion in (6), which picks up the idea of the six parts of tragedy.

The structure of the text outlined above makes it very likely that Bar Shakko did not make use of a full translation of the *Poetics*, but rather copied the whole passage from another source. This source combined the quotation from Aristotle with a reference to Ps. 6:7, which is cited according to the Peshiṭta version, that is, it was written in Syriac. Its author was clearly a Christian, for he felt no need to quote the full text of the psalm, but

on poetry (*faṣṣ al-šiʿr*): see Flügel 1871, 253.3. Cf. the English translation in Dodge 1970, 609 ("a copy of the *Poetry* [*Poetica*]"), and in Tarán, Gutas 2012, 91 ("the text of the *Poets*"). Ibn al-Nadīm, however, does not specify whether Isḥāq's translation was in Syriac or Arabic, and thus his witness does not actually support the attribution of the Syriac version of the *Poetics* to Isḥāq, cf. Heinrichs 1969, 112–113.

[30] Cf. the assessment of Gutas: "We do not know who the original translator and the reviser(s) were; if Isḥāq was indeed (one of) the reviser(s), then he certainly must have been working with uncharacteristic speed and carelessness, or even obtuseness" (Tarán, Gutas 2012, 101).

[31] Tarán, Gutas 2012, 101. Cf. a critical assessment of Gutas' theory in Schrier 2016, 325–327.

simply put "etc." at the end of the quotation, thus assuming that his readers would know the rest of the text by heart, which was quite often the case in Syriac monastic circles.

Rubens Duval was the first to note that the part of Bar Shakko's work that deals with poetry turned out to be nearly entirely dependent on the manual on rhetoric composed by the ninth century West Syriac author Antony (Anṭon) of Tagrit.[32] M. Sprengling provided an extensive list of parallel passages where Bar Shakko quoted Antony either verbatim or in an abridged form, though still very closely.[33] The publisher of the fifth book of Antony's *Rhetoric*, John Watt, confirmed the dependence of Bar Shakko's text on Antony's, and suggested a more comprehensive list of parallels between the two works.[34] Thus it would be natural to assume that the passage on tragedy, which combines quotations from Aristotle with a Christian commentary, derives from the same source.

The few extant copies of Antony's manual on rhetoric do not contain the quotation from the *Poetics*.[35] No other quotations from Aristotle or paraphrases of his works appear in Antony's writings. However, as the passage quoted by Bar Shakko could hardly have been taken from another source, he must have relied on a version of Antony's manual now unavailable. A hint of it appears in the introductory portion of the third *memra* of the *Book of Dialogues*.[36] In the second question, Bar Shakko speaks about various kinds of poetry, among which he also mentions tragedy.[37] The whole of Bar Shakko' text is derivative, and it is undoubtedly based on Antony's work.[38] However, the text of Antony's manual as it has been transmitted does not contain the word "tragedy". It is possible that Bar Shakko himself added it to Antony's text, knowing that a whole passage about this art of poetry was to follow. Still, it is much more likely that both the reference to tragedy in Question 2 and the explanation of tragedy containing the quotation from Aristotle was found by Bar Shakko in the version of Antony's manual which he used for his work.

The element that speaks most strongly in favour of this assumption is part (2) in Bar Shakko's text. Here, tragedy is alternatively defined as "lamentation" (ܐܘܠܝܬܐ), while psalms are presented as the best examples of a "tragic" art of poetry. The same association between poetry, lamentation, and psalms is found several times in Antony's manual. Thus, in the preface to Book 5, Antony writes:[39]

> For look, with the Greeks the three arts of grammar, rhetoric, and poetry exist in a collected and crafted form, but with the Syrians, Persians, and others, scattered and confused. <…> Again, an Arab may praise, blame, or incite to battle, yet may never have learned the fair art of Demosthenes or the details of the study of rhetoric. And Persians, Syrians, Armenians and other nations compose *sogyata*, utter psalms and make comforting laments, yet have not been disciples of Homer nor made (their works) akin to the types of meters. <…> Greek sophists should not make merry over us simple (folk) that we do not and could not have

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[32] Duval 1906, 486. For the Arabic sources of Bar Shakko, see Baumstark 1900, 181–183; Takahashi 2006.
[33] Sprengling 1916, 174.
[34] Watt 1986 (text), xviii–xix.
[35] For the extant copies of Antony's work, see Watt 1986 (text), xi–xxv.
[36] I would like to thank John Watt for bringing my attention to this passage.
[37] Martin 1879, 10, line 17.
[38] Cf. Antony's text in Watt 1986 (text), 64, line 25.
[39] My underlining. Syriac text in Watt 1986 (text), 6–7. The English translation is adapted from Watt 1986 (transl.), 5–6.

the possibility of (this) science and art nor words of poets and orators, for we do have them, although not properly set in order.

Here, Antony speaks about psalms and laments as the Syriac counterparts to the Greek forms of poetry, and the same examples appear in Bar Shakko's fragment. This evidence makes it very probable that the source of the latter was Antony, although such a conclusion need not be inevitable.

Antony's *Rhetoric* dates from the first half of the ninth century,[40] and thus the materials he drew on belong to the time before the activity of Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq and his son. That Antony's source was not known at a later date to the East Syriac translators may be explained by the fact that Antony belonged to the West Syriac (Syriac Orthodox) Church, whose libraries were not always accessible to East Syriac scholars, as the letters of Timothy I — who occupied the office of the East Syrian Catholicos-Patriarch between 780–823 — make apparent.[41]

These letters contain the earliest references to the *Poetics* in Syriac.[42] In 781 or early 782,[43] Timothy wrote to Mar Pethion, the head of the school of the monastery of Mar Abraham at Bashosh near Mosul.[44] The Catholicos asked Pethion to find him some books — which Timothy needed for his scholarly work — in the nearby West Syrian convent Mar Mattai, which possessed a rich library.[45] Petion's inquiries should be made in secret, for Timothy assumed that the West Syriac monastery would not be eager to share its books with an East Syriac Catholicos. Timothy wrote:[46]

> Let your Eminence sagely ask and enquire whether there is some commentary or scholia by anyone, whether in Syriac or not, to this book, the *Topics*, or to the *Sophistical Refutations*, or to the *Rhetoric*, or to the (book) *On Poets* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܥܠ ܦܘܐܛܣ); and if there is, find out by whom and for whom (it was made), and where it is. Enquiries on this should be directed to the Monastery of Mar Mattai — but the enquiries should not be made too eagerly, lest the information, (the purpose of the enquiry) being perceived, be kept hidden, rather than disclosed.

Timothy speaks here not about Aristotle's texts proper, but about commentaries and scholia on them. This may presuppose that he was already acquainted with the *Poetics* and felt the need for a better understanding of its text by means of a commentary. The note of the Catholicos is of particular interest on account of the fact that Bar Shakko's fragment is

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[40] In the *Ecclesiastical History*, Barhebreus makes Antony a contemporary of Dionysius of Tell Maḥre, who died in the middle of the 9th century. See Abbeloos, Lamy 1872, vol. I, 363; Wilmshurst 2016, 126. For the difficulties connected with the evidence of Barhebraeus, see Watt 1986 (transl.), v–vi.

[41] For Timothy I, see especially Berti 2009 and Heimgartner 2012.

[42] Dimitri Gutas provides a very detailed analysis of Timothy's testimony: Tarán, Gutas 2012, 80–88. He reaches the conclusion that the latter offers no proof for the existence of a Syriac version of the *Poetics* "most probably before the middle of the ninth century".

[43] For the date of the letter, see Berti 2009, 50–62; Heimgartner 2012 (transl.), li.

[44] Letter 43, which has been published several times: Braun 1902, 4–11 (Syriac with a German transl.); Pognon 1903, xvi–xx (Syriac with a French transl.); Brock 1999, 235–237 (Engl. transl.); Heimgartner 2012 (ed.), 65–68 (Syriac), Heimgartner 2012 (transl.), 47–52 (German transl.).

[45] Cf. Berti 2007.

[46] Syriac text: Heimgartner 2012 (ed.), 66–67. The English translation is adapted from Brock 1999, 236.

most likely based on the Greek version, which may have contained glosses and scholia, as the appearance of the explanatory particle ܩܘܡܠܐ in the translation of *Poet.* 1450a8 makes decidedly probable.[47]

Timothy refers for the second time to the *Poetics* in another letter written about 10 years later, in 792, and addressed to Sergius (who subsequently became the Mitropolitan of Elam):[48]

> If possible, let a list of the books of the Mar Zina (monastery) be sent to us. For it is likely that there is something among them which we are not aware of. Look at these books yourself and go through every treatise and (literary) form. Maybe you will be able to find among them two parts (of the book) *On Poets* (ܗܢܝ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܥܠ ܩܘܡܠܐ). For we have (only) one of them.

Here, Timothy clearly speaks about the text of the *Poetics* (which must have been in Syriac, though it remains possible that he refers to the Greek version),[49] and not about a commentary on it. In both cases, he uses the title *On Poets*, which has led to some suggestion that the Catholicos was referring to Aristotle's lost treatise Περὶ ποιητῶν.[50] However, the context of Timothy's words, which deals with the texts constituting the expanded *Organon*, and additionally the reference to the *Rhetoric* as the "Book of Rhetors" in Letter 43, make it apparent that Timothy was speaking about the *Poetics*.

Timothy's testimony allows us to conclude that by the end of the 8th century the libraries of the West Syriac convents (Mar Mattai, Mar Zina) possessed some materials on the *Poetics*: both the text and commentaries on it, which could also feature the combined form of a glossed translation. If Timothy was indeed speaking about a Syriac version of the *Poetics* and not a Greek one — which is in fact more probable — his letters suggest a very plausible explanation for why this Syriac version was unknown to Timothy's younger contemporary, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq. Both scholars belonged to the Church of the East, whose members — as the letters of Timothy quoted above demonstrate — had difficulties in gaining access to the rich libraries of the West Syriac convents.

To summarize the evidence briefly outlined above, it is possible to present the following, most likely scenario, which does not however exclude the likelihood of others.[51] On the basis of Timothy's testimony, we may state that a Syriac translation of the *Poetics* was present in the library of Mar Mattai by the late eighth century. It was known to Antony of Tagrit, whose work Bar Shakko might have used for quoting Aristotle's definition of tragedy. The Syriac translation used by Antony was still present in the library of Mar Mattai by the 13th century, when Barhebraeus epitomized it for his *Cream of Wisdom*. It is most likely that Bar Shakko, who was the bishop of the Mar Mattai monastery, was also familiar with the full Syriac translation, although he preferred to extract a short fragment from the manual of Antony, who accompanied Aristotle's text with some Christian elements.

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[47] See the commentary to the Syriac text below. For other examples of the explanatory notes in the Greek *Vorlage* of the Syriac version, see Pozdnev 2020.

[48] Letter 19. Syriac text: Braun 1915, 129. Cf. Pognon 1903, XVI–XX (Syriac with a French transl.). The English translation is mine.

[49] Thus Gutas in Tarán, Gutas 2012, 85–88.

[50] The title appears in the lists of Aristotle's works by Diogenes Laertius (V. 22) and by Ptolemy al-Gharib. See Hein 1985, 415. Gutas rules out this assumption: Tarán, Gutas 2012, 81.

[51] For other scenarios, see particularly Tarán, Gutas 2012, 108–110.

If the proposed scenario is correct, the *terminus ante quem* for the Syriac version of the *Poetics* preserved by Bar Shakko would be 781. The translation into Syriac must have been carried out in West Syriac Church circles, which were interested in Aristotle's logic, but also in some elements of rhetoric and poetics which constituted part of an education in logic.[52] Thus, the Greek *Vorlage* of the Syriac version (Σ, written in uncials)[53] may be dated to the 7th/8th century or earlier.

4. Syriac text and English translation

Sigla:

A   London, BL Add. 21454 (13th c.), fols. 80v–81r[54]
B   Oxford, Bodleian Marsh. 528 (1594), fols. 179r–180v[55]
C   Harvard, Semitic Museum, 4059 (1895), fols. 132v–133r[56]
D   Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs (CFMM) 543 (16th c.), fols. 126v–128v (= pp. 248–251)[57]
E   Mosul, Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese (ASOM) 91 (20th c.), fols. 149v–150v[58]
G   Göttingen, Syr. 3 (Or. 18) (15th c.), fols. 117r–118r[59]
Marg.   Margoliouth 1887 (ed. based on mss. A and B)

The six listed manuscripts containing the fragment on tragedy have served as the basis for the edition below. The quotation from Aristotle's *Poetics* forms only a small portion of Bar Shakko's text. On the basis of the analysis of this portion in the listed manuscripts, it seems impossible to draw up a full-scale stemma for them. However, this analysis allows for several observations:

1) Ms. G holds a special position among the listed codices, for it has preserved several correct readings, which turn out to be corrupted in all other witnesses.
2) Ms. C turns out to be very close to B, except for several orthographic variants, which are unique.
3) Ms. D shares all the variant readings characteristic of A.
4) Ms. E generally follows the variants of A and D, but also contains some specific readings and errors.
5) To sum up, it is likely that mss. [1] A D E, [2] B C, and [3] G belong to different lines of transmission of the text.

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[52] See Tannous 2018, 181–198.
[53] See Tarán, Gutas 2012, 108 and Pozdnev 2020, 183–188.
[54] See Wright 1870–1872, vol. 3, 1165.
[55] See Payne Smith 1864, 642–644.
[56] Published facsimile in Sprengling 1916. Cf. Goshen-Gottstein 1979, 88–89 (Ms. Syr. 126).
[57] Available in the vHMML database: https://www.vhmml.org/ (retrieved on 01.04.21).
[58] Available in the vHMML database: https://www.vhmml.org/ (retrieved on 01.04.21).
[59] For this codex, cf. Merx 1889, 213–215.

Edition:

عܐܪܐ ܕ.ܚܣܦܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܢܚܡ̈ܝ ܓܙܪܐܠ ܕܐ ... ܘܦܐ̈ܪܐ.
ܘܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ... ܐܡܪ.

(1) ܕܐ̈ܝܠ ܓܙܪܐܬܐ ܘ̈ܢܦܐ ... ܘܐܬܚܫܒܢ̈ܐ ... ܘܪܩܢܝܘܬܐ
... ܘܩܪܝܬܐ ... ܕܐܢܝܢ ... ܠܩ ܝ̈ܬܪ ...
ܘܚܫܘܫܬܐ ... ܡ̈ܝܢ ... ܕܝ ... ܟܠ ܣܕ ܣܕ ... ܘܩܝܪܐ ... ܩܬܘܢ̈ܐ   5
ܘܚܬ̈ܡܝ ... ܘܠܐ ... ܘܪܩܢܝܘܬܐ ... ܐ̈ܠܟ ... ܪܘ̈ܦܠܬܐ.
ܘܐ̈ܟܕܐ ... ܠ̈ܢܩܐ ... ܘܚܬܪܐ ... ܘܪܩ̈ܡܠܝ ... ܕܢܝܫ̈ܥܡ ... ܘܚܬܪܐ.
ܠܩܝܐ ... ܗܝ. ... ܘܠܠܐ ... ܚܫ̈ܘܫܬܐ ... ܠܩ ... ܐܪܝܬ ... ܘܐܪܝܗ ...
ܘܐ̈ܩܢܝܐ ... ܘܢܩܘܐ ... ܠܩ̈ܢܐ ... ܕܝ ... ܕܠ̈ܬܐ ... ܐܟܪ̈ܬ ... ܕܢܩ̈ܠܠ
ܘ̈ܩܝܨܐ ... ܢܦܩܬܠܠ ... ܠܩ ... ܘ̈ܢܩܬܐ ... ܘܘܦ̈ܐ ... ܘܩ̈ܢܪܐ ... ܐܪ̈ܫܝܬ ... ܘܕ̈ܢܕ   10
ܡܢ̈ܠܐ ... ܕܪ ... ܗܢܝ. ... ܚܬ̈ܡܝ ... ܠܩ ... ܠ̈ܩܚܬ̈ܐ ... ܘ̈ܩ̈ܒܬܪܐ ...

(2) ... ܐ̈ܢܬܠܐ ... ܘܐ̈ܬܚܬܡܝ ... ܕ.ܙ ... ܘ̈ܩܦܬ ... ܘ̈ܩܦ̈ܒܠܬܐ.
ܘ̈ܠܢ ... ܘܐ̈ܝܠ ... ܚܫ̈ܐܘܬܐ ... ܚܣ, ... ܕ.ܐ̈ܪܐ ... ܕ.ܚܒ̈ܕ ... ܕ.ܚܒܬ ... ܐ̈ܪܬܠ̈ܒܠܬܐ.
ܐ̈ܚܬܠܐ ... ܘ̈ܢܩ̈ܙܪ ... ܘ̈ܢܚ̈ܣܟ ... ܚܕ̈ܬ ... ܠ̈ܝܠܐ ... ܚܫ̈ܐܘܬܐ ... ܢܩ̈ܬܦ ... ܕ.ܚ̈ܟܐ.
ܠܩ̈ܡܚܕܝ ... ܕܝ ... ܚ̈ܘܩ̈ܣܟ ... ܘ̈ܢܩ ... ܕܝ ... ܘܘ̈ܗ ... ܡܢ̈ܥ ... ܘ̈ܩܪ̈ܝܕܝ ... ܕ.ܘ̈ܢܐܬ   15
ܗܪ̈ܢ̈ܥܟ. ... ܘ̈ܩܦ̈ܦܐ ... ܐ̈ܝܠ ... ܚܫ̈ܐܘܬܐ ... ܚܣ, ... ܕܪ ... ܐ̈ܚ̈ܬܪ ... ܘ̈ܩ̈ܚܦ̈ܒ̈ܦܝ. ... ܐ̈ܠܟ
ܘ̈ܚ̈ܒ̈ܬ̈ܝ̈ܣ. ... ܟ̈ܪ̈ܝ ... ܗܝ, ... ܕ.ܚ̈ܬܚ̈ܬ̈ܟ, ... ܚ̈ܝ̈ܣ̈ܒ̈ܬ, ... ܘ̈ܩ̈ܦ̈ܦ̈ܥܟ ... ܘ̈ܦ̈ܝ̈ܪ̈ܐ ... ܘ̈ܢ̈ܥ̈ܒ̈ܬ̈ܪ̈ܐ.

(3) ... ܐ̈ܟ̈ܪ̈ܬ ... ܕ.ܗܝ ... ܚܫ̈ܐܘܬ ... ܘ̈ܐ̈ܝ̈ܠ ... ܚ̈ܫ̈ܐܘܬ ... ܘ̈ܩ̈ܦ̈ܬ̈ܐ ... ܘ̈ܩ̈ܦ̈ܚ̈ܕ̈ܐ ... ܐ̈ܟ̈ܪ̈ܬ ... ܕ.ܗ̈ܢ ... ܐ̈ܝ̈ܠ ... ܗ̈ܢ ... ܘ̈ܢ̈ܚ̈ܬ̈ܥ̈ܟ̈ܡ.
ܘ̈ܥ̈ܒ̈ܝ̈ܣ̈ܒ ... ܘ̈ܩ̈ܡ̈ܚ̈ܕ ... ܘ̈ܚ̈ܒ̈ܕ̈ܐ ... ܚ̈ܝ̈ܒ̈ܐ ... ܘ̈ܩ̈ܦ̈ܒ̈ܥ̈ܪ̈ܬ ... ܘ̈ܩ̈ܦ̈ܢ̈ܥ̈ܒ̈ܪ̈ܬ̈ܟ̈ܬ̈ܐ ... ܘ̈ܢ̈ܝ̈ܟ ... ܗ̈ܢ̈ܒ̈ܥ̈ܟ̈ܡ ... ܘ̈ܚ̈ܟ̈ܚ̈ܬ̈ܐ
ܗܢ̈ܒ̈ܥ̈ܟ̈ܡ.   20

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1 ܕ.ܚܣܦܝ ADE: ܩܢ̈ܝܫܣܟ BCG   2 ܘܐܚܪ̈ܢܐܠܐ ABCDE:
ܘܐܚ̈ܪ̈ܢ̈ܐܠܐ G   3 ܓܙܪܐܬܐ codd.: ܓܙܪ̈ܐܬ Marg.   4 ܘ̈ܢܦ̈ܠܐ
ABDEG: ܘܢ̈ܦ̈ܠܬ C   6 ܐ̈ܝܟ] om. G | ܐܢ̈ܘܐ] + ܣܕ G   8 ܘ̈ܩܝܪܐ
ABCDE: ܘ̈ܩܪܐ G   10 ܢܦܩܬܠܠ ABCDG: ܢܦ̈ܚܬܦ E   13 ܘ̈ܐܝܠ ADEG:
ܘ̈ܐ̈ܝܠ BC   14 ܢ̈ܩܦ BCG: ܢ̈ܩܣ ADE   15 ܘ̈ܩܪ̈ܝܕܝ ABCDG:
ܘ̈ܩܪ̈ܝܕܝܐ E   16 ܘ̈ܩܟ CG: ܗ̈ܢ ABDE | ܘ̈ܩ̈ܦ̈ܚ̈ܕ̈ܐ ABCDE: ܘ̈ܩ̈ܦ̈ܚ̈ܕ̈ܬ G
ܘ̈ܐܝܠ ADEG: ܘ̈ܐ̈ܝܠ BC   17 ܘ̈ܚ̈ܒ̈ܝ̈ܣ̈ܒ ADG: ܘ̈ܚ̈ܒ̈ܝ̈ܣ̈ܒ̈ܬ BCE
18 ܐ̈ܝ̈ܟ ABCDG: ܘ̈ܐ̈ܝ̈ܟ E | ܘ̈ܢ̈ܒ̈ܥ̈ܟ̈ܡ ABCDG: ܘ̈ܢ̈ܥ̈ܒ̈ܟ̈ܡ E   19 ܚ̈ܒ̈ܕ̈ܬ
ADE: ܘ̈ܡ̈ܚ̈ܕ̈ܬ BCG

(4) [Syriac text]

(5) [Syriac text]   5

[Syriac text]   10

[Syriac text]   15

(6) [Syriac text]   20

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1 [Syriac]] + [Syriac] G   2 [Syriac] BCG: [Syriac] ADE   3 [Syriac] G:
om. ABCDE   4 [Syriac] ABCDG: [Syriac] E   6 [Syriac] BCG: [Syriac] ADE   7 [Syriac]
ABDEG: [Syriac] C | [Syriac] ABDEG: [Syriac] C   9 [Syriac]
ABCDE: [Syriac] G   10 [Syriac] ABCDG: [Syriac] E   12 [Syriac] ADE: [Syriac] BC:
[Syriac] G | [Syriac] om. BC   15 [Syriac] ADEG: [Syriac]
BC   16 [Syriac] ADEG: [Syriac] BC   17 [Syriac] G: [Syriac] ABCDE | [Syriac]
BC   16 [Syriac] ADEG: [Syriac] BC   17 [Syriac] G: [Syriac] ABCDE | [Syriac]
ABCDG: [Syriac] E | [Syriac] ABCDE: [Syriac] G   18 [Syriac]
ABD: [Syriac] C: om. G   19 [Syriac] ADEG: [Syriac] BC   20 [Syriac] BCEG:
[Syriac] AD   21 [Syriac] ACEG: [Syriac] B

Translation:

Question 20: What is tragedy?
Answer:

(1) Aristotle says: [1449b24] "Tragedy is an imitation of a keen [b25] and accomplished action, which has greatness, in pleasant language, apart from each one of the species that act in the parts, and not through promise, but by means of compassion and fear mixes the passions and produces purification of those who are suffering. And what produces this is pleasant language, which has greatness, harmony, and melody. And concerning that it is besides [b30] species which are because of the measures, the parts will become accomplished for this. And, also, the other things, when they are repeated by means of melody, accomplish the imitation of actions."

(2) Others say that "tragedy" should be interpreted as lamentation and (that someone) is called "tragedian" because he has written lamentations. As a wise man wrote: "Mourning is associated with tragedy and laughter with comedy." Thus, David, the cittern-player of the Holy Spirit, is called tragedian because, while he speaks and plays the cittern, he wails and is sights, like this: [Ps. 6:7] "Through my crying I make my bed wet…" etc.

(3) So, [50a8–10] "there are six types, that is, parts, of tragedy: the story, the custom, the speech, the thought, the vision, and the sound of melody."

(4) These six types are deduced in accordance with Aristotle's opinion as follows:

(5) [49b32] "It is necessary that decoration of the face should be some part relating to tragedy. It is also in them, i. e. in the producing of melody and in speech, for through them imitation is accomplished. By 'speech' I mean the composition of [b35] meters, and by 'producing of melody' the apparent faculty which everyone possesses. Because it is an imitation of an action, it is narrated by those who narrate it, those for whom it is necessary to be a certain kind of people in their customs and thoughts. For it is by means of these that we say [50a1] what kind of narratives they are; and naturally, there are two reasons for narratives, i. e. thought and custom. Thus, they (i. e. narratives) are also found in accordance to them, and all of them either succeed by means of them or fail. So, imitation is the story of the narrative. By 'story' I mean [a5] the composition of actions, while by 'customs' such things according to which those who narrate exist and are spoken of, who demonstrate that they are of a certain kind in their thoughts, and who appear to have a certain kind of understanding."

(6) Thus, [50a8] "the whole tragedy necessarily has six parts," — about which we have said above, — "according to which tragedy is of a certain kind".

5. Relation to the transmitted Greek text

The following commentary is based on the Greek text and critical apparatus of the forthcoming edition by M. Pozdnev *et alii*.[60] In the textual notes, I use the Latin terms

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proposed by D. Gutas for the analysis of the Syriac and Arabic versions of the *Poetics*.[61] On this basis, I refer to the Greek source of the Syriac translation as Σ. The abbreviation "Syr." stands for the Syriac version preserved by Bar Shakko. In many cases, the Syriac translation does not allow to draw conclusions on the precise wording of the Greek text, which the translator had in front of him. Rather, it is an attempt to show how the Syriac translator understood and interpreted it. The abbreviation "Arab." refers to the Arabic version of Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus as preserved in ms. Paris BnF 2346 and published by Tkatsch.

1449b24 οὖν] om. vel non vert. Syr.

It is likely that the particle was present both in the Greek ms. (Σ) and the Syriac translation, but omitted by the compiler of the source, cf. *fa-* in Arab.

49b25 ἑκάστῳ] ἑκάστου Syr.

Together with Riccardianus 46, or B, and a large number of further Greek witnesses, the Syriac version reflects the variant ἑκάστου. It is possible that the Syriac translator interpreted χωρὶς as a preposition, and not as an adverb (and consequently changed the Greek form), but it is most likely that the variant ἑκάστου was already in Σ.

49b26 (χωρὶς ἑκάστου) τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις δρώντων ut interpr. Syr.

Syr. has connected the participle δρώντων with the previous sentence and associated it with τῶν εἰδῶν.

49b26 ἀπαγγελίας] ἐπαγγελίας ut vid. Syr.

Syr. ܐܫܘܩܒܐ may have the meaning "solemn announcement, promise", which would reflect the reading ἐπαγγελία represented also in the Greek ms. B, as well as in several *recentiores*. However, it is also possible that the Syriac translator decided to render thus the word ἀπαγγελία.

49b27 δι᾽] ἀλλὰ δι᾽ Syr.

Arab. has *wa-*, which reflects the Greek. It is thus possible that the Syriac form is an addition (coursed by the structure of the clause which starts with ܘܠܐ) that appeared at the stage of the transmission either of Bar Shakko's text or of his source and thus does not reflect Σ.

49b27 ἐλέου] pl. Syr.

Syr. has ܐܬܘܡܝ in plural, which most likely does not reflect the Greek original, but appeared in the translation for stylistic reasons. It is also possible that the two dots marking the plural form (*seyame*) are derived not from the work of the translator, but rather they appeared in the course of transmission.

49b27 (δι᾽ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου) περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν] paraphr. Syr.

The translator has tried to paraphrase the passage, finding it difficult to translate literally. He rendered the verb περαίνω through hendiadys: "…by means of compassion

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[61] Tarán, Gutas 2012, 307–308. Cf. Gutas 2010, 93–101.

and fear *mixes* the passions *and produces* purification of those who are suffering". The pronoun τοιοῦτος is interpreted as referring to persons, though an implicit reference to the emotions may also be present in the translation: "those who are suffering (*sc.* these feelings)". Syr. does not allow much to be said about the underlying Greek text, except that it confirms the variant παθημάτων, and not μαθημάτων, as is found in the oldest extant Greek ms. Parisinus 1741, or A, and in a number of its descendants.

49b28 λέγω δὲ

Syr. translates the two Greek words as "what produces this" (ܡܚܕܐ ܠܗܘ). There could be two reasons for this variant:

(1) The Greek text was corrupt, and it is impossible for us to reconstruct it. It is probable in this case that the translator, who was not able to understand his source, suggested a variant of his own, considering it fitting in the context.

(2) This is a mistake, which appeared at a very early stage of transmission of the Syriac text. All preserved witnesses contain it, and if it was really a mistake, it was already in the copy of the text, which served as the source for Abū Bishr (who translated this passage as *wa-yaʿmalu ammā li-hāḏā*), and in the one used by Bar Shakko.

The second scenario seems more probable. The correct translation of the Greek text would have looked like the following: ܗܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܝ. If it was written in the cursive *Serto* script with little space between the words, it could easily have been misread by a copyist, who made ܠܗܘ ܡܚܕܐ out of it.

49b29 ῥυθμὸν] μέγεθον Syr.

As with the previous case, several explanations would be valid:

(1) It is possible that the Syriac translator found this variant in Σ (Σ may also have been corrupt at this point).

(2) The Syriac translator has copied his own translation from 49b25.

(3) Arab. translates the Greek word correctly (*laḥn*), and thus it is likely that the Syriac variant goes back not to the translator, but to an error of a later copyist.

Explanation (3) seems most probable.[62]

49b29 καὶ μέλος] habet Syr.

49b29-30 χωρὶς τοῖς εἴδεσι] χωρὶς τῶν εἰδῶν Syr.

As with a number of Greek witnesses, Syr. interprets χωρὶς as a preposition rather than an adverb, and reflects the genitive form τῶν εἰδῶν, which was most likely found in Σ. It is noteworthy that here the translator has made use of a different Syriac preposition from that used in b25-26. He has not copied the earlier text but found a new variant.

49b30 μόνον] om. Syr.

The Syriac translator rendered ἔνια μόνον περαίνεσθαι as ܠܗ ܡܬܓܡܪܢ ܡܢܘܬܐ "the parts will become accomplished for this". Thus, he decided to make ἔνια explicit as referring to particular parts of the tragedy. The form ܠܗ could hardly have been a rendering of μόνον. Rather, it picks up the beginning of the sentence ... ܗܝ ܠܗ ܡܬܓܡܪܢ ܡܢܘܬܐ "And con-

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[62] Cf. Schrier 2016, 327. Schrier argues against Gutas (cf. Tarán, Gutas 2012, 100–101).

cerning that … the parts will become accomplished for this". Thus, Syr. actually omitted μόνον, as did the Arabic translation based on it.

49b31 καὶ πάλιν ἕτερα διὰ μέλους ἐπεὶ (δὲ) πράττοντες ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν] ut interpun. Syr.; δὲ] non vert. Syr.

Syr. combined the last part of the previous sentence with the beginning of the next one. The result of this combination was a rather mechanical translation of the Greek words, which significantly altered the original meaning of the Greek text (Syr. puts ἕτερα in connection with the ἔνια in the 49b30). Also, the translator most likely either decided to omit or found it unnecessary to render the particle δὲ, which probably did not fit into the structure of the Syriac sentence.

49b31 πράττεται] paraphr. Syr.

The Syriac verb ܠܗ means "to recite, narrate". This was likely the way the translator understood the Greek, and he decided to bring this interpretation directly into his text.

After this, Syr. inserted a passage with an alternative definition of tragedy (2) and a quotation from 1450a8–10 (3) with a note of various types of it (4). After this intermission, the fragment by Bar Shakko returns to the text at 49b31.

1449b31–32 πρῶτον μὲν] non vert. Syr.

The new portion of the Syriac translation starts with the words ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἄν. It is not surprising that a fragment of the Greek text fell victim to the structure of Bar Shakko's fragment. The Arabic has it (*fa-l-yakun awwalan*) and thus it is most likely that the omission was not originally in Syr., but should rather be explained by the structure of the fragment.

49b33 μόριον] + ἐν τούτοις vel sim. Syr.

The addition of ܚܡܠܒ may be explained be the appearance of ܡܚܡܠܒ (= ἐν τούτοις) later on in the text and probably does not reflect Σ.

49b36 δὲ] om. vel non vert. Syr.

49b38 τὸ ἦθος καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν

In Syr., both nouns received the possessive suffix of the 3rd person plural ("their customs and their thoughts"). This appears to be a stylistic furnishing, which derives from the translator and does not reflect Σ.

50a2 καὶ κατὰ ταύτας] κατὰ ταῦτα γὰρ ut vid. Syr.

In Syr., the demonstrative pronoun refers to the preceding expression "customs and thoughts", and thus reflects the variant ταῦτα found in the Greek ms. B.[63] Syr. has the particle ܓܝܪ, which corresponds to the Greek γὰρ, and it is possible that the latter was found in Σ.[64] However, it is also imaginable that the translator rendered the Greek καὶ thus.[65]

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[63] Cf. Tarán, Gutas 2012, 341–342.
[64] Thus Bergsträsser 1928, 60, who refers also to Bywater.
[65] Thus Tkatsch 1928, 232, n. 11. Gutas speaks in favor of the variant ταῦτα καὶ (Tarán, Gutas 2012, 341–342).

50a3 τυγχάνουσι καὶ ἀποτυγχάνουσι πάντες] paraphr. Syr.

    The Syriac translator had certain difficulties either in understanding these two verbs or in finding Syriac equivalents to them. This uncertainty resulted in an awkward construction in Syriac and an even less clear translation in Arabic.

50a3 μὲν] om. vel non vert. Syr.

50a4 τῆς πράξεως ὁ μῦθος ἡ μίμησις

    It is obvious that the Syriac translator took ἡ μίμησις for the subject of the sentence and connected the genitive form τῆς πράξεως with ὁ μῦθος, and this interpretation has resulted in the version which we find in Syr. and in the corresponding Arabic translation. It seems that there is no reason to assume the absence of ἡ in Σ, as is the case in the Greek ms. B.[66]

50a4 γὰρ] δὲ Syr.

50a4 τοῦτον] om. Syr.

50a5 ὃ ποιούς] ὁποίους ut vid. Syr.

50a6 εἶναί φαμεν] εἶναι καί φαμεν ut vid. Syr.

    The introduction of the particle "and" (ܘ) into the text could have been the result of:
(1) a stylistic correction by the translator, who in general had difficulties in understanding this passage;
(2) a later addition in transmission, which, however, is present in all mss. of Bar Shakko's text;
(3) an otherwise unattested error in Σ.

50a6 ἐν ὅσοις] habet Syr.

    As noted above, the Syriac translator seems to have had certain difficulties in understanding the text of 50a5–7 (τὰ δὲ ἤθη … καὶ ἀποφαίνονται γνώμην). This, first of all, has resulted in minor modifications of the text (probably the case with the insertion of the particle "and" in 50a6 described above). Another result of the translator's confusion was an attempt to translate the obscure Greek text word for word, without paying much attention to the meaning of the Syriac sentence. Thus, although Syr. remains unclear in general, it allows particular elements of the Greek text to be identified behind the translation. D. Gutas' attempt at such identification led him to the conclusion that the words ἐν ὅσοις remain unrepresented in Syr. and also in the Arabic version, which in this passage clearly demonstrates its dependence on Syriac.[67] Though the latter conclusion is important for the evaluation of Bar Shakko's witness, it seems that the former assumption is not necessary. Cf. the passage ܐܝܟܢ̈ܐ ܗܠܡ ܚܣܘܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܟܘܬܐܝܬ "…who demonstrate that they are of a certain kind in their thoughts". Here, the expression ܐܝܟܢ̈ܐ ܗܠܡ may be interpreted as an attempt to render ἐν ὅσοις, for otherwise it would correspond to no ele-

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[66] Thus Gutas in Tarán, Gutas 2012, 343. Gutas admits that this assumption is not necessary. Cf. Bergsträsser 1928, 60.

[67] Tarán, Gutas 2012, 343–344.

ment in the Greek text, which is unlikely due to the mechanical character of the Syriac translation of this passage.[68]

50a6-7 λέγοντες] om. vel paraphr. Syr.

There is no direct equivalent of the verb λέγω in Syr., unless we take the form ܐܬܟܬܒܘ for a periphrastic rendering of it.

50a7 τι ἢ] om. vel non vert. Syr.

50a8 οὖν] δὲ ut vid. Syr.

It is possible that the Syriac particle ܕܝ was not a mechanical translation of the Greek δὲ, but a translator's variant for οὖν, though the former option seems more likely since the particle ܕܝ appears both in part (3) and (6).

50a8 πάσης τῆς τραγῳδίας

The Syriac expression ܟܠܗ ܠܝܕ ܠܛܪܓܘܕܝܐ means "the whole tragedy" (the attachment of the possessive suffix to ܠܝ allows for no other interpretation) and thus reflects the Greek τῆς τραγῳδίας.[69]

50a8 μέρη] εἴδη ἤτοι μέρη vel sim. Syr.

The passage πάσης τῆς τραγῳδίας μέρη εἶναι ἕξ in 1450a8 appears twice in the fragment preserved by Bar Shakko, in parts (3) and (6). This turns out to be a deliberate tactic by the compiler of the fragment, who introduces the whole part (5) with a definition of tragedy in (3). Later on, in (6), he stresses once again that part (5) served as an explication of the definition suggested in (3), and briefly quotes the passage from 1450a8 again. The two versions of 1450a8 are generally identical save for one detail, and this detail turns out to be of particular value not only for understanding the Syriac translation, but also for the history of the transmission of the Greek text. In (6), Syr. follows the Greek closely, while in (3) the word μέρη is rendered as ܐܕܫ̈ܐ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܚܢ̈ܩܬܐ, "types, that is, parts". The particle ܐܘܟܝܬ has the function of introducing an explicative gloss,[70] and its presence in Syr. permits the assumption that such a gloss was present either directly in the Greek text used by the translator, or it was attached to this text between the lines or in the form of a marginal note. Traces of this interpretative gloss are thus present in Syr., though it remains unclear why in (6) we have a Syriac equivalent to μέρη, in (4) to εἴδη, and in (3) to both of these, if we assume that all three cases are based on the same Greek text. However, this inconsistency may reflect the state of the Greek *Vorlage* of Syr., where the passage in 1450a8 was supplied with a gloss, which Syr. incorporated into the main text of the translation.[71]

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[68] Thus Tkatsch 1928, 233, n. 18. The words ἐν ὅσοις are present in A, in the Latin translation of Moerbecke and, as it seems, in the Arabic version as well; the reading of B ἐν νόσοις is an attempt to make sense of a mechanical corruption in its source.

[69] For the use of ܠܝ, see Nöldeke 2001, 171–172 (§ 218). Cf. Tarán, Gutas 2012, 344–345.

[70] Cf. the definition of this particle in the lexicon of R. Payne Smith as an equivalent to Latin *scilicet*, and *hoc est*, corresponding to the Greek ἤγουν and ἤτοι (Payne Smith 1879–1901, vol. 1, 63). Cf. the examples of the use of this particle in the so-called "Syriac Patristic Masora" in Loopstra 2020, 79 and 131.

[71] I would like to express my deep thanks to Michael Pozdnev, who provided me with most valuable advice concerning the possible Greek *Vorlage* of this passage. Cf. Pozdnev's recent article, where he elaborates his arguments, also touching upon the Syriac version of the text: Pozdnev 2020.

50a8 ὃ ποιά] ὁποία ut vid. Syr.

50a9–10 καὶ … καὶ … καὶ … καὶ … καὶ] non vert. Syr.

This omission may be due to the selection work of the compiler and may not reflect the original Syriac translation.

6. Greek and Syriac glossary

The glossary includes those terms, which directly correspond to particular Greek words. It does not include periphrastic and interpretative renderings of the Greek text outlined above. The glossary lists nouns, adjectives, adverbs and a number of particles, but not pronouns. The lexicographical forms of the Syriac words are based on Sokoloff 2009. The English translations in the third column correspond to the Syriac terms, rather than to the Greek, and have the aim of providing a better understanding of the Syriac version published above.

Greek	Syriac	English
αἴτιον	ܥܠܬܐ	reason
ἀνάγκη	ܐܢܢܩܐ, ܐܠܨ	necessary
ἀποδείκνυμι	ܚܘܝ	demonstrate
ἀποφαίνω	ܐܬܚܙܝ	appear
ἁρμονία	ܐܪܡܘܢܝܐ	harmony
γνώμη	ܡܕܥܐ	understanding
διὰ c. acc.	ܒܝܕ	by means of
διὰ c. gen.	ܡܛܠ	because
διάνοια	ܬܪܥܝܬܐ	thought
δράω	ܥܒܕ	act
δύναμις	ܚܝܠܐ	faculty
δύο	ܬܪܝܢ	two
εἶδος	ܐܕܫܐ	species, type
εἰμί	ܐܝܬ, ܗܘܐ	be
εἶτα	ܐܦ	also
ἕκαστος	ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢ	each one of
ἔλεος	ܪܚܡܐ	compassion
ἕξ	ܫܬ	six
ἐπαγγελία (ἀπαγγελία?)	ܫܘܘܕܝܐ	promise
ἐπεί	ܡܛܠ ܕ	because
ἕτερος	ܐܚܪܢܐ	other
ἔχω	ܐܝܬ ܠܗ, ܩܢܐ	have, possess
ἡδύνω (ἡδυσμένος)	ܗܢܝ (ܡܗܢܝܐ)	pleasant
ἦθος	ܥܝܕܐ	custom
κάθαρσις	ܬܕܟܝܐ	purification
κατά c. acc.	ܠܩܘܒܠ	according to
κόσμος	ܨܒܬܐ	decoration
λέγω	ܐܡܪ	say, mean
λέξις	ܡܡܠܠܘܬܐ	speech
λόγος	ܡܠܬܐ	language

Greek	Syriac	English
μέγεθος		greatness
μελοποιία		sound (producing) of melody
μέλος		melody
μέρος		part
μέτρον		measure, meter
μίμησις		imitation
μόριον		part
μῦθος		story
ὄψις		face; vision
πάθημα		passion
πάλιν		also
πᾶς		all, each one, whole
περαίνω		accomplish
ποιέω		produce, accomplish
ποιός		a certain kind of
πρᾶγμα		action
πρᾶξις		action; narrative
πράσσω		narrate
σπουδαῖος		keen
σύνθεσις		composition
τέλειος		accomplished
τις		something, somebody
τραγῳδία		tragedy
φανερός		obvious
φόβος		fear
φύω (πέφυκα)		naturally possess
χωρίς		apart from, besides

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