

Al-Farabi, unlike Ibn Ruṣd (Averroes), wrote only two kinds of commentaries in Arabic on the writings of Aristotle. He studied the works of Aristotle with his Christian teacher Abū Ḑiyār Mattā b. Yūnus. His commentary on some of the works of Aristotle has been called "Sharḥ", commentary, but his "notes" on some other Aristotelian works have also been mentioned as "Sharḥ", such as Sharḥ Kitāb al-Maqūlat li-Aristotelis 'alā jihat al-Ta'ālīq", commentary of the book on Categories by Aristotle by way of notes. To explain further, reference may be made to "Sharḥ Kitāb al-ibārah li-Aristotelis", Al-Farabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Peri Hermeneias (De Interpretatione), published by W. Kutsch and S. Marrow at Beirut, 1961, which is a commentary or Sharḥ in its true sense. But his "Sharḥ Kitāb al-Maqūlat li-Aristotelis", published by D. M. Dunlop under the caption "Al-Farabi's paraphrase of the categories of Aristotle", in Islamic Quarterly, vol. IV (1958), pp. 168-97; vol. V (1959), pp. 21-54, represents Al-Farabi's short Commentary which gives his remarks and explanatory notes on certain topics dealt with in the book of Aristotle.

Professor Nicholas Rescher is to be congratulated for publishing "Al-Farabi's short Commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics" in English. In his Introduction he has categorically stated, "Al-Farabi wrote commentaries on the entire Aristotelian logical Organon (including the Rhetorica and Poetica), treating much of it in the triplicate manner typical of the Arabic Commentators (Epitome=Short Commentary, Middle Commentary, and Great Commentary).
following in Alexandrian footsteps" (p. 12). In the whole history of Arabic Philosophy Averroes (Ibn Rushd) alone occupies a unique position for writing commentaries in triplets. As stated above, we have no evidence to show that al-Farabi ever wrote a Middle Commentary. His Short Commentary is, again, different in nature from the Epitome written by Ibn Rushd. In fact, what is called a "Short Commentary" in the case of al-Farabi is in reality an independent work on the subject which incorporates the views of the ancient thinkers including those of Aristotle. The work under reference itself bears a testimony to its being an independent study which explains Syllogism, its various kinds, and Syllogistic arts, not strictly in the manner of Aristotle, as has been acknowledged by the author himself.

The Arabic text of the work under reference was edited for the first time by the Turkish Orientalist, Mlle Mubahat Türker from four manuscripts preserved in Istanbul and was published together with other two logical treatises of al-Farabi with their Turkish translations under the title "Farabinin bazıı mantık eserleri", in the Journal of the Faculty of Languages, History and Geography, University of Ankara, vol., 16 (1959), pp. 165-286.

Students of Philosophy, in general, and those of Muslim Philosophy, in particular, would feel indebted to Prof. N. Rescher for making available to them al-Farabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics in English and thereby facilitating their understanding of the great master.

KARACHI

M. S. H. MA'SUMI


The hard-bound edition of this work appeared in 1958 and was widely appreciated in scholarly circles for the lucid treatment of Islamic political thought as expounded by al-Mawardi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Jamah and Ibn Taymiyyah. Other writers noticed include Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn al-Muqaffa, Ibn Baijah, and al-Dawwani. Even a cursory glance at the contents of the book will easily show how much labour and time has gone into its preparation. At the time of reprinting, the author was afforded the opportunity of correcting misprints and errors and of rephrasing a few sentences. It was, however, expected that the opportunity thus offered would be utilized by Dr. Rosenthal for including a critical appreciation of the literature published on the subject after 1955 when the final copy of the book was prepared for publication. Whose reluctance in filling this gap was responsible for a mere reissue, a students' edition, of this excellent work cannot be said. This book deserves to be read and digested by all students of Islamics who will find ample food for thought in its crowded pages. We wish that, if still another opportunity offers, the author will take full advantage of it for incorporating fresh material that he may have come across or adding fresh chapters on the actual working of the political system in the lands of Islam in medieval times and the reasons, if any, for the departure