
This work constitutes volume no. 15 of Aristoteles Semitico-Latinum founded by H. J. Drossaart Lulofs. The project envisages the publication of the Syriac, Arabic and Hebrew translations of Aristotle's works, of the Latin translations of those translations, and of the mediaeval paraphrases and commentaries made in the context of this translation tradition. The author of this volume is a lecturer in the faculty of Policy Studies, Chuo University, Tokyo Japan. The work is originally his Ph.D dissertation from Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University, Frankfort-Main. The work consists mainly of translating the Syriac text of the book on mineralogy and meteorology into English.

The first book covers subjects on the formation of mountains and springs, formation of stones, earthquakes, mineral bodies, categories of minerals, the habitable world, the natural position of the earth, climates of various regions, causes of heat and cold and matters concerning the sea. The book on meteorology covers subjects of clouds and their formation, rain, dew, frost, snow, hail, fog and mist, winds and their kinds, thunder and lightning, stars and comets, deluges, plants and animals, among other things.

The translation is followed by a commentary on each chapter and ends with an annotated bibliography and some indices.

Gregory Abū al-Faraj Bar ‘Ebrāyā (Gharīghūryūs Abū ‘l-Faraj Ibn al-’Ibri) (623–685/1225–1286), known in the West as Barhebraeus is one the most eminent scholars of Syriac. He belongs to the period of Syriac Renaissance of the 12th–13th centuries. He was a Syrian Orthodox Christian. His scholarly interest covered a large number of fields such as biblical exegesis, dogmatic as well as moral-mystical theology, jurisprudence, philosophy, historiography literature, grammar, lexicography, the exact sciences and medicine. He wrote mainly in Syriac and partially in Arabic. He took Arabic or Persian books as his model and patterned his own works after them. He used to incorporate in his works materials taken from Arabic and Syriac sources. He came under the influence of some Muslim thinkers such as Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (450–505/1058–1111), Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Ibn Sinā (380–428/980–1038) and Abū Ja’far Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (597–672/1201–1274).

The book is divided into four major parts: logic, natural sciences, metaphysics and practical philosophy. The book on minerals consists of 5
chapters, 17 sections and 72 theories. The book on meteorology consists of 5 chapters, 17 sections and 77 theories.

The structure of the work and its contents resemble *Kitāb al-Shifā* of Ibn Sinā. But it is not simply a translation or a summary of *al-Shifā*. There is also a resemblance in the major divisions which are logic, natural sciences, metaphysics and practical philosophy.

The main objective of Barhebraeus was to revive scientific learning in Syriac. His work is a part of his literary activity in this regard. His intention was not really to produce an original piece of writing but to present scientific materials in clear and readable language in Syriac. The aim is to revive Syriac as a language of natural sciences. He succeeded in selecting essential points from the original sources. His main task was the creation of a new scientific vocabulary in Syriac.

Some of the valuable features of the book are:

1. It is a good tool to reconstruct the lost compendium of Nicolas Damascenes.
2. For Islamic philosophy, the work is valuable insofar as it reveals the impact of Ibn Sinā, Muḥammad b. ‘Umar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (544–606/1150–1210) and Hibat Allāh b. ‘Ali b. Malkān Abū ’l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. ca. 560/1165) on Syriac scholarship.
3. For Syriac Lexicography, the work offers fresh material for the meaning of words in addition to the new vocabulary introduced by Barhebraeus into Syriac, and a linguistic model for creation of new words.
4. The work is an important document in intellectual history in general and in the history of Syriac language and culture in particular. The author has made a great effort to revive Syriac as a scientific language, and create a new type of philosophical-scientific writing in Syriac by translating and transferring the contents of the best philosophical-scientific literature available in his line from Arabic into Syriac.
5. Barhebraeus’ efforts have their value also in giving a good model for the revival of scientific language and it can be helpful in reviving scientific language in modern Syriac societies as well as in the modern Arab society.

The last observation to make, here, is the heavy reliance of Barhebraeus on Muslim authors. He relies mostly in his treatment of mineralogy and meteorology on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s work *Kitāb al-Mabāḥith al-Mashrīqīyyah*. In his discussion of geography he relies mostly on Abū Rayhān Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī (262–440/974–1047). These authors for him represented the most up-to-date scientific material on the subject in 13th century. Barhebraeus accepts as sound the theories embodied in the works of al-Rāzī and al-Bīrūnī and actually builds the framework of his works around
the original structure of al-Rāzī and al-Bīrūnī. The impact of Arabic sources on
his work is indeed great and highly impressive. He followed the order of Ibn-
Sina in *al-Shifa* and al-Ghazālī in *Ihya’ Ulūm al-Din* and Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar
(468–538/1075–1144) in *al-Mufaṣṣal* and al-Ṭūsī in *Tadhkirah fī IIm al-Hay’ah*.

Barhebraeus acknowledges this impact of Arabic Scientific thought when
he says:

There arose among them (the Arabs) philosophers, mathematicians and
physicians who surpassed the ancients in the subtlety of their intellect. Placing
them not on another foundation, but on Greek basements, they perfected the
buildings of the sciences which were great on account of their clear diction, and
their most studious investigations, so that we, from they received knowledge
through translators — all of whom were Syrians — are now forced to ask them
for it.  

Muhammad Khalifa Hasan Ahmad

Suma Din. *Turning the Tide: Reawakening the Woman’s Heart and Soul.*

*Turning the Tide* is a book for women that can touch the inner recesses of our
beings. As it explores the various outer and inner facets of a woman’s life, we
are guided on the careful and meticulous path of the remembrance of God. In
many ways, it serves to challenge our sentiments, bring focus to confused
ideas, and inspire new aspirations. Its conceptual fountainhead springs from
the eternal sources and thus the prevailing motif arises from a realization of
*tawḥīd* and a striving for *taqwā*.

The book has an interesting format that invites the reader to think about
ages and stages of life in a variety of ways and metaphorical images. First, it
lays out the chapter topics: the soul, childhood, youth, knowledge, the heart,

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1 See *Barhebraeus Chron.* [Bedjan] 98. 13–18, quoted in Hidemi Takahashi, “The Greco-Syriac
and Arabic Sources of Barhebraeus’ Mineralogy and Meteorology in *Candelabrum of the