CHAPTER FIVE

LOGIC IN THE CLASSICAL SYSTEM OF ISLAMIC SCIENCES

On several occasions this paper, especially its first and fourth chapter, indirectly pointed to the place and significance that logic had within Arabic-Islamic system of disciplines, and to its possible relations with and influence on other disciplines, as well as the influence that these disciplines made on logic itself. However, the specific subject of logic, a clear definition of its objectives and main concepts, that had to have an impact on other branches of philosophy, and then on other disciplines, deserves a more detailed treatment. It is certain that a book of this volume cannot take into account all aspects of this issue, so the author decided to give a brief presentation showing some possible ways for its interpretation and chose to present it from two different angles: firstly, by identifying the place that logic has in the system of disciplines and education system with reference to the most important classifications, and secondly, by defining logic and its articulation as a system and general methodology in relation to other disciplines and sciences.

1. From philosophy as a universal discipline and a unified understanding of world in which philosophy and science were mixed, different disciplines with specific subjects gradually separated, at first classified according to their cosmological or anthropological concerns in Ancient Greece, as the consequence of a special encounter of man with the world and his understanding of totality and its parts. Through this differentiation and specification, philosophy itself developed. At the time of the development of the sciences in the Arabic world, when most of the Hellenic heritage was available in the Arabic language, Arabic scholars faced the issue of the classification of disciplines. Understandably, this issue was not only of a formal character, although it was sometimes approached from a purely formalist standpoint. As seen by Arabic philosophers and scholars, who were inspired by Hellenic

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heritage and faced with ready-made solutions offered especially in the Aristotelian system, which was supposed to be adapted and developed to satisfy the needs of a significantly different social and scientific situation, this issue was even more complex. On the one hand there was the issue of integrating Aristotle within a system that emerged from the conflict between Muslim scholars and Aristotle’s teachings, and on the other, there was the issue of integrating certain elements of Platonism into Aristotelianism.2

Throughout the history of Islam, and especially in Arab history, a lot of attention was paid to the classification of disciplines. This was the topic of numerous studies done by Orientalists and apparently the best results were achieved by G.C. Anawati in his Introduction à la théologie musulmane.3 These classifications were done on the basis of very different criteria, such as: domestic—foreign; theoretical—practical; religious—nonreligious; traditional—rational; appreciative—damaging, etc. This work deals only with those classifications that were present by the mid-16th century, left the deepest impact, and were present in various writings preceding the works by Bosnian logicians, and only with those parts of classifications that point out the place, role and relation that logic had to other disciplines, as observed from within the system itself.

The first significantly comprehensive classifications in the Arabic system were done by al-Fārābī. Several of his works reveal his standpoint in this context.4 We are interested in two of his classifications. The first one, presented in Kitāb at-tanbih ‘alā sabīl as-saʿāda (The Book of Advice on the Way to Happiness),5 divides philosophy into ‘theoretical’ philosophy—including mathematics, physics and metaphysics, and ‘practical’ philosophy—including ethics and politics. As these basic elements show, al-Fārābī, according to Aristotle’s vision, did not include logic, but gave it the place of a discipline that is a prerequisite for

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2 See: A.-M. Goichon, La philosophie d’Avicenne..., pp. 7–53 and: Č. Veljačić, Filozofija istočnih naroda..., p. 56 and further.

For a more detailed study of this issue, see works by Abdelhamid I. Sabre, professor emeritus of the history of Arabic science, Department of the History of Science, Harvard University, given in the bibliography.

3 Also see: G.C. Anawati, “Classification des sciences et structure des Summae chez les auteurs Musulmans”, Revue des études islamiques, XLIV, (Paris) 1976, pp. 61–70.

4 See: М.М. Хайруллаев, Мировоззрение Фараби..., especially “О предмете и классификации наук” [On topics and classification of sciences], pp. 215–239.

5 Haydarabad, 1345/1926–1927.

Another classification that is presented in Risāla fi tahiṣl as-saʿāda, Haydarabad, I 1345/1926–1927.