THE TEXT OF THE ARABIC PLOTINUS
PROLEGOMENA TO A CRITICAL EDITION

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1. Introduction

The Arabic translation of Plotinus’s *Enneads* IV–VI was made during the first half of the ninth century AD and subsequently spread throughout the Islamic world in various forms and under different names: predominantly under the name of Aristotle – in that particular collection of Plotinian passages known in Arabic as the *Theology of Aristotle* – but also under the names of Plato, al-Fārābī, “the Greek Sage”, and even anonymously.1 Sporadic research on these Plotinian texts in Arabic, to which it has been customary to refer as the Arabic Plotinus source (AP), has been conducted in the West since the middle of the 19th century, but its pace has accelerated dramatically in the past few decades. In view of this heightened interest, it is deplorable that the main instrument for the study of this subject, a critical edition of AP, is still not available to the scholarly world.2 There is accordingly no need to justify undertaking such an edition. In what follows I will

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2 The two editions of the shorter recension of the *Theology of Aristotle* by Dieterici (1882) and Badawi (1955), and the recent edition of its Book I and VII by D’Ancona (in her *La discesa dell’anima*), reproduce the most corrupt stage of the transmission of the text (as will be discussed below) and are not useful for the study of the questions about the text listed in the next paragraph.
remark on the editorial approach best suited to the peculiarities of the text and on some salient aspects of it.\textsuperscript{3}

There is also hardly any need to reiterate the complexity of the transmission of the text from Greek into Arabic and later within the Arabic tradition. Despite the significant advances in recent research, virtually every aspect of the transmission remains unclear: the Greek tradition from which the translation was made; the precise nature of the Arabic translation itself and its relation to the Greek – to say nothing of the identity of the translator; the nature and author of the interpolations and omissions in the Arabic translation; the origin, sources, and dates and places of composition of the various texts that derive ultimately from the Arabic Plotinus source, including the different versions of the short \textit{Theology}, the short and long recensions of the same, the Sayings of the Greek Sage, and the “theological” (divine science) text attributed to al-Fārābī; and the textual transmission, within Arabic, of the shorter and longer recensions of the \textit{Theology} – to name but the most significant questions that need to be answered. Accordingly, an edition of AP must take into consideration the needs of all these questions and present itself in a way that would make it accessible to scholars working on all these problems. For the reasons that will be given below, the edition of the Arabic text must necessarily include, in addition to the Arabic text with its apparatus, an edition of the Greek text and its apparatus, an English translation of the Greek with philological annotation, and an English translation of the Arabic with philological annotation.

2. \textit{Edition of the Greek Text}

The Greek edition of the passages from \textit{Enneads} VI–VI that were translated into Arabic will follow the text and apparatus of the \textit{editio maior} of Henry-Schwyzer (Paris 1959–73 = H-S\textsuperscript{1}) and incorporate the corrections and improvements suggested in their subsequent \textit{editio minor} and \textit{corrigenda} (Oxford 1977–82 = H-S\textsuperscript{2} and H-S\textsuperscript{3}). It will also incorporate the suggestions of A. H. Armstrong in his Loeb translation, as

\textsuperscript{3} I would also like hereby to invite colleagues, while thanking them in advance, to share with me any comments or suggestions they might have with regard to these remarks <dimitri.gutas@yale.edu>.