THE NICOMACHEAN ETHICS IN ARABIC, BOOKS I-VI

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It has long been known that the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle was translated into Arabic at an early date. But even the great bibliographer Moritz Steinschneider, in a life-time's work, never came upon a copy, nor have the libraries of Turkey, revealed to Western students through the genial labours of Professor Ritter, afforded a trace of what must be thought of as one of the rarest of Arabic translations from the Greek.

In 1955 Professor Arberry of Cambridge University published a short account of a manuscript of the Nicomachean Ethics in Arabic, discovered by him in the Qarawiyin Library, Fez, during a visit to Morocco in the winter of 1951-52. The manuscript was in 42 folios and contained the text of Books VII-X of the Ethics, written in a clear Maghrībi hand and dated Sha‘bān, 629 = June, 1232. Professor Arberry did not go into the question of the authorship of the translation, but there is no reason to doubt that this manuscript is a torso of the ancient work of Hunain ibn Ishāq or his son Ishāq ibn Hunain (see below), thus first brought to light after the lapse of many centuries.

Years later, while myself in Fez in the summer of 1959, I met the learned librarian of the Qarawiyin, Shaix al-‘Abid al-Fasi, and was greatly surprised to be shown by him a manuscript containing the first half of the Nicomachean Ethics, i.e. Books I-VI. I was able subsequently to obtain photographs of this manuscript through the good offices of Her Majesty's Consul in Fez, John Isherwood, Esq., in liaison with the authorities of the Qarawiyin, to all of whom I am most grateful.

The Arabic text, as it has reached me, consists of 45 folios, one of which (fol. 8) is a duplicate and another (fol. 44) properly belongs elsewhere (it contains Ethics VII, x, 4—xii), written in a clear Western hand, with 23 lines to a page. On the title-page (fol. 1a) in a different hand:

الغاء الأول من كتاب ارسطو في الأخلاق وهو المشهد بقوله باص الأيديوس (9)...

followed by two partially illegible lines of poetry:

The Nicomachean Ethics in Arabic, Books I-VI

\[
\text{النن مرض المحبب \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots} \quad \text{.. حسبا فيها بخاره}
\]

\[
\text{صنا لونا وراق العين حسا} \quad \text{نفاه حكانته في ... نضار}
\]

‘Ali ibn Haridūs (?) here is presumably a former owner of the book, and perhaps his name is the same as that of the Harūdūs or Haraudas family, originally of Guadix, near Granada (Ibn al-Zubair, Ṣīlat al-Ṣīlah, ed. E. Lévi-Provençal, 92; Ibn al-Abbār, Takmilah, ed. of 1956, I, 154).

This manuscript is evidently the first part of the manuscript signalized by Professor Arberry, so that the date of copying is presumably some time before Wednesday, 27 Shaʿbān, 629 = 18 June, 1232, when the other manuscript, or rather the second part of the same manuscript, was completed. The complete manuscript is mentioned in a recent Moroccan publication, where it is said to contain 11 maqālahs and to be dated 619 A.H. (not 629). It appears from this notice that the ethical treatise attributed to Nicolaus (?) of Laodicea recently discussed by Dr. M. C. Lyons forms the last part of the same manuscript.

The manuscript of Books I-VI is not complete. The actual contents are as follows:

\* EN. I, i, 1 (1094a 1)-I, ix, 7 (1099b 26) contained on fols. 1b-9b; 2 fols. lacking;
\* EN. I, xi, 6 (1101b 8)-II, vii, 15 (1108a 35) ... fols. 10a-17a; 1 f ol. lacking;
\* EN. II, ix, 2 (1109a 25)-III, viii, 12 (1117a 6) ... fols. 18a-27b; ½ page lacking;
\* EN. III, viii, 14 (1117a 16)-III, ix, 1 (1117a 30) ... fol. 27a; ½ page lacking;
\* EN. III, x, 10 (1118a 33)-IV, iii, 36 (1125a 30) ... fols. 29b-36b; several fols. lacking; in this lacuna comes
\* EN. IV, vii, 1-10 (fragmentary) ... fol. 28;
\* EN. IV, vii, 16 (1127b 31)-V, v, 11 (1133a 31) ... fols. 38a-43a;
\* EN. V, v, II-V, vi, 4 ending ędzi δικη (1134a 31) ... fol. 37;
\* EN. VII, x, 4-VII, xii (out of place here) ... fol. 44;
\* EN. VI, xiii, 5-8, i.e. the last few lines of Book VI ... fol. 45a.

From this it appears that while the manuscript contains no complete

1 Arberry, ibid., 1.
2 Liste de manuscrits arabes précieux, exposés à la Bibliothèque de l'Université Quaraouyine à Fès, à l'occasion du onzième centenaire de la fondation de cette Université (Rabāṭ, 1960), p. 73 — in Arabic.
3 A Greek Ethical Treatise, Orients 13-14 (1960-61), 35-57.
4 The pagination here, which is based on the numbering of my photographs, after fol. 8 (a duplicate of fol. 2) is presumably one in excess of the pagination in the MS., and I am not sure that the indications for recto (a) and verso (b) always correspond with the facts.