

The Abridgement and the Summary in Ibn Rushd's *Epitome of Aristotle's Logic*

BENNACEUR Hadja¹, Zhor HAMEUR LAINE²

¹Ibn Khaldun University of Tiaret - Algeria
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Laboratory of Philosophical Studies and Issues of the Human Being and Society in
Algeria Email: hadja.bennaceur@univ-tiaret.dz Email: zhor.hameurlaine@univ-tiaret.dz ;

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Abstract:

The translation of Greek works played a significant role in the convergence of Arab-Islamic and Western Greek methodologies, thereby enriching civilisational thought in general, whether through contributing to its dissemination or through summarising and commenting upon it to facilitate the understanding of its subject matter. Among the translated and abridged works is Aristotle's *Organon*. Abū al-Walīd Ibn Rushd's *Epitome of Aristotle's Logic* is considered one of the most important abridged writings that contributed to enhancing the understanding of the *Organon* and of the questions it addresses concerning the methodology of inquiry. It also gave rise to epistemological and methodological issues related to epistemic and methodological specificity, which are connected to the nature of the subject and to the anthropology of the study. Therefore, in this research paper, we seek to examine the various methodological aspects adopted by Ibn Rushd in his reading of the manuscript's "M", "F", and "L", which dealt with the *organisation*. In doing so, we focus on interrogating and analysing the symbols he employed by answering the following questions:

- What method did Ibn Rushd adopt in writing on the *Organon*?
- What did the linguistic and symbolic abbreviations employed signify? Are they sufficient to ensure scholarly integrity?

Keywords: Ibn Rushd; Aristotle's Logic; Organon; Abridgement; Summary; Marginalia.

Introduction

The *Organon* is regarded as the first body of writings to theorise the science of logic, through which Aristotle sought to establish the principles governing the operation of reason and to demonstrate that reason thinks according to rules, namely, the rules of logic. It is worth noting, however, that Aristotle, known as the First Teacher, did not themselves write the *Organon*; rather, it was written by his Peripatetic disciples. These disciples, foremost among them Theophrastus and Andronicus of Rhodes, worked approximately 40 BCE to collect the writings of their masters, especially those concerned with logic. This occurred because the logical studies were objective and concerned only with the activity of thought in an abstract and objective form, unmixed with social and psychological factors. This resulted from what Greek thought had come to, namely, attempts which, in the view of both Plato and Aristotle, had corrupted Greek thinking when man was made the measure of all things. This made

knowledge relative, a fluid relativism that enabled the subject to bear two contradictory sides whenever the source of knowledge differed. In contrast, the demand of the founder of the Academy and of the founder of the Lyceum, namely, Aristotle, was that knowledge belongs to no one; rather, it is absolute, fixed, and one. Added to this is the sophistic claim concerning the impossibility of attaining knowledge, since if understanding is impossible, and if understanding is possible, it cannot be expressed; thus, knowledge was ultimately confined within the enclosure of language. For this reason, the *Organon* played a major role in establishing an intellectual method as an instrument that protected thought from falling into error.

The Organon

The word “*Organon*” means “instrument”. In logical terminology, it refers to the collection of Aristotle’s books, which in Western thought number six. These are the *Categoriae*, that is, the *Categories*. This work, in very brief terms, describes what a thing may be, and these are ten. Ibn Rushd states, “The simple expressions that signify simple meanings necessarily signify one of ten things: either substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, possession, action, or passion” (Ibn Rushd, 1996, p. 3). Ibn Rushd explains these categories. However, what is worth noting is Ibn Rushd’s statement at the opening of this book: “The purpose of this discourse is to summarise and establish the meanings contained in Aristotle’s books on the art of logic, as far as we are able, according to our usual practice in the rest of his books” (Ibn Rushd, 1996, p. 3). The second book is *Peri Hermeneias*, or the Book of Interpretation; it is followed by the two books of *Analytics*, the first and the second, and the two books of fallacy and dialectic, namely, the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Refutations*. What we observe here is that Ibn Rushd also preserves the Greek term *Katêgoria*, which would later become the Latin *Categoria*. This was done for the sake of regulating the term so that it would convey its definitional meaning as it appeared in the original sense.

In Ibn Rushd’s epitome of the *Organon*, we also perceive the influence of his environment and culture. Unlike the Western division of the book into six parts, Ibn Rushd’s division consists of eight, since he added both rhetoric and poetics to it, that is, the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*. This is because rhetoric was concerned, in its first part, with the structures of speech, namely, the science of meanings, and with the meaning it sought to attain through the science of eloquence, as found in al-Jāhiz’s *al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyīn*, and before him al-Bashīr ibn Rustum (210 AH), the Mu‘tazilī al-Rummānī (316 AH), the author of *al-Šinā‘atayn*, al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, who died in 395 AH, ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, who died in 411 AH, and in his book *Dalā‘il al-I‘jāz*, Fakhr al-Rāzī, and others.

Their interest in rhetoric was not merely an interest in correcting expression and its structure to manifest the meaning of speech. Rather, the attention given by all of them to the construction of discourse according to the requirements of the situation led to an interest in the logical structures to which the orator turns to attain his aim. For this reason, the Arabs made the books of *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* an integral part of the *Organon*.

Marginalia

Notably, Aristotelian logic was the sacred book of the Middle Ages; according to it, the books of the Gospel were regulated; indeed, it was made the basis of error and correctness,

upon which reward and punishment, and thus Paradise and Hell, were made to depend. Because of this absoluteness with which Christian clergymen invested it, on the one hand, and because of the formal logical idea, on the other hand, it stood as an obstacle to scientific progress. Whoever among the scholars opposed it opposed the Church and was thus led to the Inquisition. However, the Renaissance, which would culminate first in the philosophy of man, witnessed a translation movement that resulted in a deeper knowledge of Aristotelian logic, surpassing what had been attached to it in the Church. It was translated from Syriac and from Arabic. Hence, Ibn Rushd is considered, as is mentioned in the nineteenth century, the culmination of research into Aristotle's return to the intellectual arena and the role of the Arabs in that return, in his major book *Averroes and Averroism*.

Manuscript

The manuscript played an important role in preserving the heritage and culture of nations. We call a manuscript a manuscript because it is written by hand. Şālih ibn Mūsā al-Qarnī, director of the Manuscripts Department at King Saud University, said, with reference to the manuscript, despite the multiplicity of its definitions: "Everything written by hand, whether a book, a document, or a letter, and whether in Arabic or in another language. However, the early Arabs did not circulate this term; they used to refer to manuscripts as mother books, authored works, and books of origins. It appears that the term manuscript emerged after the age of printing in order to distinguish between the printed and the handwritten" (Şālih ibn Mūsā al-Qarnī, 2009). Perhaps what distinguishes the manuscript from the other sources that reach us printed or digitised, as is the case today, is that the manuscript allows us to enter into a direct relationship with the text, as although one were addressing the author and interrogating his ideas. Indeed, the colour of the paper, the form of the script, and the paper itself also prompt one to investigate, scrutinise, and attempt to encompass the sciences of the age in order to interrogate the manuscript. It even leads one to interrogate its marginalia as well, given the importance of the latter, which we shall mention. Here, we see that the marginal note adds to the manuscript its aesthetic dimension, resulting from the psychological effect produced by this kind of outwards aspect of the text, one of power and astonishment, especially if more than eleven centuries have passed. It is as although the marginal note were the official spokesman, or the first spokesman, of the manuscript.

From the images of the two manuscripts before us, as for the first, we shall not claim to know it or the letters in which it was written, even if they appear to be Arabic letters. As for the image of the second manuscript, which we place before you, we observe that Ibn Rushd placed paragraphs explaining what was written in the main body on the four sides of the text. Perhaps Ibn Rushd intended thereby to clarify the meaning that goes beyond verbal complexity towards the communication of thought. Between the compilation and classification of the *Organon*, which is usually traced back to the first century CE, and the twelfth century CE, there were concepts that had disappeared, while others retained from their genealogy only the sum of their letters and their linguistic meaning, with little of their technical meaning except what had been inherited in writing or orally, for language takes on color according to the sciences of its age.



“A”

[https://galica.Bnf.Fr/ork:/12148/btv1b84229569\(f370 item\)](https://galica.Bnf.Fr/ork:/12148/btv1b84229569(f370 item))



“B”

[https://galica.Bnf.Fr/ork:/12148/btv1b84229569\(f370 item\)](https://galica.Bnf.Fr/ork:/12148/btv1b84229569(f370 item))



“C”

[https://galica.Bnf.Fr/ork:/12148/btv1b84229569\(f370 item\)](https://galica.Bnf.Fr/ork:/12148/btv1b84229569(f370 item))

Thus, we observe that what appeared in detail in the main text as a result of the translation movement was accompanied by marginalia that explained it and clarified its ideas in a concise and simple language, avoiding prolixity and entry into details that might disperse the principal idea because of the ramifications that arise during the act of writing. What is evident to us regarding Abū al-Walīd Ibn Rushd is his awareness of the state in which the author may find himself, namely, the uninterrupted flow of ideas that may reach the point of digression. For this reason, the marginalia came as summarising and explanatory notes, expressed in simple terms, concerning what appeared in the body of the text. We observe, for example, his statement in the upper marginal note on the left-hand side of the manuscript, in which he

defines the simple noun: “It is that which signifies a simple meaning.”
[https://galica.Bnf.Fr/ork:/12148/btv1b84229569\(f370\) item](https://galica.Bnf.Fr/ork:/12148/btv1b84229569(f370) item)

The Marginal Note and Its Importance in Tracing Differences

We also observe, on the upper side of this manuscript, page “A”, on the right, and likewise on the right-hand margin, an explanation of the meaning of the noun. This is no longer merely a summary, for the Arabs, in the period preceding the Renaissance, were accustomed to presenting the various opinions that explained a given statement in order to trace precise difference, to mention its causes and to identify what was common among them to establish it, while opening the field of independent reasoning concerning matters in which they differed and strengthening the continuity of thought so long as no blemish affected it, up to the writing of the commentary.

Through our observation of a number of the books of Abū al-Walīd Ibn Rushd, we noticed that they contain marginalia in their manuscripts, although we were unable to view them except through library platforms, such as the BnF platform and the National Library of France. These include marginalia that are translated, explanatory, summarising, and at times detailed, especially when a word occurs in the main text in a manner that differs from common understanding. The necessity of verification here precedes the necessity of summarisation. The aim of verification must be the precise examination of knowledge, “where seriousness, objectivity, and careful, sustained work must prevail” (Fāṭima Shāblī, 2023, p. 515). Such marginalia are capable of pursuing precise understanding, or that which is closest to precision, as intended by its author. Indeed, marginalia may bear the times at which the author wrote, across different stages, so that we may become aware of a change in the author’s opinion, of his renewed and sound understanding, or of an addition intended to expand that understanding. They may also contain a new branch through which the intended science is completed, revealing its elements and topics, such as the addition of the topic of inference and embellishment to the science of meanings and the science of eloquence, as found in *Miftāḥ al-‘Ulūm* by Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sakkākī and the topic of embellishment alone in *Jawāhir al-Balāgha* by Aḥmad al-Hāshimī.

In the search for verification, the author, in the marginia of his work, resorts to tracing the various opinions written on this subject, refining them, and scrutinising them. Through this, we come to know the reason why the author, in the main body of his work, adopts this opinion rather than another, and we come to know the points at which he goes beyond it.

Ibn Rushd’s Text of the Epitome of Aristotle’s Logic

Arab thinkers, philosophers, and theologians preserved the *organisation* and wrote extensively on it, thereby seeking to build all forms of knowledge upon the correct form. In the preface to the second edition of the *Organon*, Gérard Jihāmī states, “That mental instrument which protects thought from error and excess, first towards the fields of sophistry and fallacy, and second towards those related to the natural and metaphysical sciences. The subject, then, is both ancient and new. We mean the pursuit of certainty through reason and logic in particular” (Ibn Rushd, 1996, n.p.).

Gérard Jihāmī introduced the *Organon* with a preliminary introduction, which he called an analytical introduction, and which functions like the marginalia in a manuscript. He states

that he provided it “to help the reader form a comprehensive idea of Ibn Rushd’s commentary on Aristotle’s logic. After our long reading of the text, we found it to be intricate in wording, difficult in meaning, ramified in its questions, and broad in its dimensions; therefore, we deemed it appropriate to provide a guide” (Ibn Rushd, 1996, p. 17).

The guide prepared by Gérard Jihāmī resembles the work of those who sought to verify manuscripts on Aristotelian logic, such as ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, in his reading of it from the transmission “of Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus al-Qannā’ī into Arabic from the transmission of Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn into Syriac”,^μ as well as the book *Logic According to al-Fārābī*,¹ in which Majid Fakhry presents Aristotelian logic from al-Fārābī’s manuscripts and mentions that he relied on seven manuscripts in doing so.

By comparing the indexes of the three books before us, namely, Ibn Rushd’s *Text of the Epitome of Aristotle’s Logic*, edited by Gérard Jihāmī; *Logic According to al-Fārābī*, edited by Majid Fakhry; and *Aristotle’s Logic*, edited by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, we found that there is a difference between them. This difference may be due, first, to the difference between the manuscripts. Ibn Rushd’s division appeared clearer, since he separated the section of the idea into several paragraphs, each of which carried a single element of the subject. It thus came as a detailed treatment of what was general in the manuscript of Abū Bishr ibn Mattā.

فهرس كتاب اناالوطيقى الثانية
او كتاب البرهان لابن رشد

	المقالة الاولى
٣٦٩	ضرورة المعرفة المتقدمة الوجود
٣٧٣	القول في العلم والبرهان
٣٧٧	ابطال بعض الاخطاء الواردة في العلم والبرهان
٣٨٠	تعريف الحمل على جميع الشيء والحمل بالذات والحمل على الكل
٣٨٤	الاطفاء الواردة في برهان الحمل على الكل
٣٨٨	لقول في ان مقدمات البرهان يجب ان تكون ضرورية واساسية
٣٩٢	قول في ان البرهان يقوم على النتائج الثابتة
٣٩٤	

مكتايب
أبي نصر محمد بن رشد
ابن طلحة ابن ابي اذليخ المسروقت
بالمفسر اذليخ
كتاب البرهان

	١٧	
في الأمور الخاصة التي يحصل بها كل صنف من أصناف المعارف	١٩	الفصل الأول
في اليقين وأقسامه	٢١	
القول في البرهان وأصنافه	٢٣	الفصل الثاني
في العلم اليقيني وأقسامه	٢٥	
في البرهان المطلق	٢٦	
في المحمولات الذاتية	٢٨	
في التأليفات البرهانية وغير البرهانية	٣٣	
في المتقدم والمتأخر	٣٩	

*See ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badaouī’s *Aristotle’s Logic*, 1st ed., Dār al-‘Ilm, Beirut, 1980.

¹ We wish to point here to al-Fārābī’s addition of the *Isagoge* as an introduction to logic, or what is known as the logical compilation, which was included in the first book, namely, the *Categories* and *On Interpretation*, whereas Ibn Rushd did not include the *Isagoge*.

فهرس الكتاب

كتاب التحليلات الثانية « كتاب البرهان »
صفحة

تقل أبي بشرمتى بن يونس ٣٢٩ - ٤٨٥

المقالة الأولى من كتاب البرهان

(نظرية البرهان) ٣٢٩ - ٤٢٦

(١) ضرورة المعرفة المتقدمة الوجود ٣٢٩ - ٣٣٢

(٢) العلم والبرهان ٣٣٢ - ٣٣٧

(٣) تدبعض الأغلط في العلم والبرهان ٣٢٧ - ٣٤١

(٤) تعريف ما هو الكل وبالذات

The Difference between the Indexes According to the Divisions Adopted by Ibn Rushd, Yūnus ibn Mattā, and al-Fārābī

For example, in the discussion of the necessity of the antecedent premise in existence, we find it recorded across three and a half pages, that is, comprising more than fifty lines, whereas it is written in twenty-two lines in *The Text of the Epitome of Aristotle's Logic* and exceeds sixty lines in *Logic According to al-Fārābī*, not to mention the addition of Ibn Bājja's comments on it in al-Fārābī. What concerns us here is not the prolixity and detail found in Ibn Rushd, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Mattā but rather the manner of division and simplification and the extent to which the title contains a specific idea in itself. This has assisted us as researchers. Since my study of logic, I have found Gérard Jihāmī's edition to be the clearest, most concise, and most simplified presentation of Aristotelian logic. Indeed, we find it clearer than Gérard Jihāmī's *Complete Logic*, published in 1999. This clarity may be due to the editor Gérard's broad mastery, which led him to elaborate on his explanation and enter into depth that he would not have entered into his book and edition of *The Text of the Epitome of Aristotle's Logic*. This does not deny that we find some paragraphs in this book clearer than in the other, whether in relation to the two books edited by Gérard Jihāmī or those edited by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī or Majid Fakhry, even though each of them deliberately divided the study according to what he considered easier to understand and more complete in knowledge.

Gérard Jihāmī sought to place the reader within the historical context of Ibn Rushd's text. For this reason, in the first volume, which we view in its entirety as marginalia that facilitates immersion in Aristotle's logic through its simplicity, ease of expression, and sound division, he provided a framework in which he addressed the following:

1. A brief account of Ibn Rushd himself, his life, biography, and works.
2. His distinctive methodology in treating Aristotelian logic in both form and content.
3. An overview of Aristotle's commentators whom he used in preparing his epitome of logic.
4. His particular conception of this logic and the principles, foundations, and theories he used in explaining and developing it (Ibn Rushd, 1996, p. 17).

Indeed, Gérard Jihāmī also guides us toward the manner in which we should approach the *Organon* through this book and toward the relation of our understanding to it. He recommends that the two introductions be read twice: once before the organisation is read and once after it is read. Through the first reading, we become acquainted with the general sections and the basic general ideas of logic. With respect to the second reading, the subsequent reading functions as the introduction to which every researcher returns after completing his research. In this way, we follow the steps of the editor Gérard Jihāmī and understand what we did not interrogate in the first reading. The idea then becomes clearer, the concept becomes established, the horizon of interpretation expands in relation to what is to be interpreted, verification is achieved in relation to what is to be verified, and scrutiny is applied to what is obscure and ambiguous.

Ibn Rushd's Method

Upon reading *The Text of the Epitome of Aristotle's Logic*, the reader of Aristotelian logic, finds that Ibn Rushd preserved Aristotle's text without even adding to it, as al-Fārābī had previously done by adding the *Isagoge*, or the *Introduction*. Ibn Rushd dealt with this content through epitomisation, as indicated in the title. The epitome he drew upon is not merely a summary of the subject but also an abridgement of the steps that required abbreviation. We find this, for example, in the *Categories*, where he states that "the purpose of this discourse is to summarise the meanings" (Ibn Rushd, 1996, n.p.). He summarises the totality of what appears in the *Categories* and divides the book as a whole into three parts:

"The first part is in the position of a preface to what he wishes to state in this book, since it includes the matters that proceed, in relation to what he wishes to state in this book, according to the course of posited principles and definitions.

In the second part, he mentions the ten categories, category by category, defines each one by its own definition, divides it into its well-known species, and gives its well-known properties. The third part defines the general concomitants and common accidents that attach to all the categories, or to most of them, insofar as they are categories" (Ibn Rushd, 1996, p.).

This is a concision that we regard as comprehensive concision, despite the limited space in which it is written. We find that he begins by determining the concepts and the principles posited for them, including subject and predicate, affirmation and negation, existence and nonexistence. He then determines how they ought to be and how discourse ought to be stated concerning them or how the subject may be, as summarised in the ten categories previously mentioned. However, every science has concomitants imposed by the nature of its subject. What, then, are the inquiry and the method of inquiry logic and its logical mechanisms? Thus, in the final part of this book, he treats the various accidents that attach to these categories and the states associated with them. What appears in abridged form in the three parts is then treated with a certain degree of detail in each part. We find that the first part, following the same method of dividing the general into sections, is divided into five chapters. The second part contains an explanation of the ten categories in ten sections. The final part of this book also consists of five chapters concerning opposition, contrariety, the prior and the posterior, the meaning of simultaneity and possession, and motion. The question that may confront us in our analysis of Ibn Rushd's writing is as follows: Why is there this variation in the commentaries in terms of depth and surface, length and brevity, indication and concentration?

This ebb and flow in his book *The Text of the Epitome* is due to several reasons, which Gérard Jihāmī mentioned in his analytical introduction under the title “Ibn Rushd’s Methodology in Epitomising Aristotelian Logic”. These are:

- a. The importance of the subject initially derives from its position for its author; the extent to which he elaborated, detailed, and explained it determined the extent to which his followers would explain it.
- b. Aristotle’s logic received considerable esteem following the translation movement because of what it urges in terms of order in thinking, the correction of corrupt thought, and the distinction of the true from the false.
- c. The number of manuscripts that recorded this subject, with their marginia, as well as the translations, also plays an effective role. A book composed of one or two manuscripts differs from one written from a greater number, since this leads to the examination of several opinions, their comparison and scrutiny after their exposition, and the justification of the author’s position toward them, especially after the spread of kalām and Islamic philosophy, with their doctrinal schools, particularly those connected with metaphysics as a form of knowledge that did not itself free itself from logic, just as logic did not free itself from it. Logic is “an important subject treated by Arab thinkers from the moment it reached them through translations. When Ibn Rushd dealt with it, he necessarily had to attend to the role that logic at that time played in kalām, dialectic, and the defence of religion” (Ibn Rushd, 1996, p. 17). Indeed, some thinkers considered the translation of Greek thought to be tantamount to unbelief, yet their consideration and criticism of it were carried out by using logic. Ibn Taymiyya’s *Refutation of Logic* is nothing but evidence of this, since he criticised logic through logic, and the philosophers succeeded one another through the use of logic, as did *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*.

The Method of Writing through Gérard Jihāmī’s Critical Edition

Gérard Jihāmī showed in the margin of the text that Ibn Rushd does not confine himself to the literalness of Aristotle’s text, as in the commentary, that is, in *The Commentary on the Metaphysics*. He expressed that this is not the case in his commentary on the *organisation*, which led him to establish a numbering system through which he distinguished Aristotle’s statement from Ibn Rushd’s statement. He says, “Ibn Rushd sometimes confines himself to citing the word ‘he said’ or ‘Aristotle said’ at the beginning of the text, then attaches his interpretation to it so that one can no longer distinguish between Aristotle’s words and Ibn Rushd’s commentary unless one is already familiar with the Aristotelian text. This is what prompted us to place special numbering for the corresponding paragraphs in his text and in Aristotle’s text according to Tricot so that the reader may more easily compare the two texts... However, when the commentary becomes lengthy, we see Ibn Rushd restoring to each its due status, when we find him specifying his own view with the phrase ‘I said’ or what we intended.”

As for when he addresses the commentaries that were added to Aristotle’s text throughout history, he presents them objectively and with complete detachment, assigning each to its own name” (Ibn Rushd, 1996, p. 37). He follows the analytical method, which is the method appropriate for commentary. Ibn Rushd also recognises the importance of Aristotle’s

commentators and their additions to the text. For this reason, he placed them in the marginalia, such as Theophrastus (372–288 BCE), Alexander of Aphrodisias among the Greeks, and, among the Arab commentators, al-Fārābī (870–950 CE), Abū ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā (980–1037 CE), and others.

At the Language Level

Among Ibn Rushd’s marginalia in the *Book of Interpretation* is his treatment of logic in the Arabic tongue: “If Aristotle devoted the *Book of Interpretation* to analysing nouns, statements, and propositions, as we have mentioned,” then Ibn Rushd seized this opportunity to acquaint us with the differences between the structures of the two languages, focusing on the singularity of the Arabic language in certain grammatical aspects that were not originally presented in the Greek tongue (Ibn Rushd, 1996, p. 89).

Necessity of Differences between Manuscripts

As for Gérard Jihāmī’s marginal note on linguistic abbreviations, he used it to show the various manuscripts upon which he relied. He indicated the French manuscript with the letter “F” and stated that it is complete, as is the complete Leiden manuscript. As for the third manuscript, the Mashhad manuscript was not complete because it stopped at the *Second Analytics*. This enables us to understand that the remainder of the *organisation* would be commented upon according to only two manuscripts. Perhaps one of the factors in the success of manuscript studies is the scarcity of commentary, since the more the manuscript commentary increases, the more numerous the commentators on the manuscripts become, and consequently, the more facts become confused.

He also explained that, instead of using certain words as they appeared either orally or in writing, he wrote them as they are today, for example, *three* instead of *thre*, except where a form was repeated extensively, and except where there was an omission in the manuscript.

He also says, concerning the way he dealt with marginal notes: “We took into consideration the notes that appeared in the margins in order to clarify the meanings of the text, but they were not recorded literally except when necessary. As for the words corrected and explained in the margins, we included them among the variants” (Ibn Rushd, 1996, n.p.).

Conclusion

In this research paper, we have attempted to present a reading of the marginia of the manuscript. Since we were unable to access it at the moment of writing, we relied on the first volume of Gérard Jihāmī’s book, in which he explained the method of writing the *Organon* in both body and margin, attempting at times to separate Ibn Rushd from Aristotle and at other times to immerse him in, and assimilate him to, Aristotle, while also taking into account differences in language, environment, culture, and belief. Ibn Rushd was aware that Aristotle did not write the *organisation*. We have shown his distinctiveness in establishing a division of his own, unlike the divisions of Jules Tricot, al-Fārābī, Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus, Ibn Zur‘a, and others.

Gérard Jihāmī made a considerable effort to interrogate the marginia of the text because, as we have mentioned, Ibn Rushd adhered to the text except where he added to it in his commentary. For this reason, he indicated in the margins of his study the opinions of those who preceded him and clarified linguistic differences whenever necessary.

We write and read, yet we do not cease to place a phrase or a sentence in the margin of our text, because treating it in the body of the text takes us away from the subject and our complete ignorance of it, or our treating it as a common concept when it is not so, causes a kind of ambiguity to surround the text, according to the degrees of commonality of the concept at the level of the mind or according to the degree of its obscurity. We believe that writing the text according to its marginia helps to establish and clarify the idea. Perhaps this is what led Muslim scholars to take an interest in marginalia in their writings. It is an idea belonging to the deep text rather than to the apparent text, and it must be recorded because it establishes an immanent knowledge that serves the understanding of the text and determines the manner of its reception.

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