FROM HERMIPPUS TO PTOLEMY

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

When Plato died after forty years as head of his school, the Academy was a firmly established institution. His own fame was great and undisputed; his death was felt as such important an event that Eudoxus used the year of his death as an epochal year in dating Zoroaster. Plato bequeathed the Academy into the hands of his nephew and other devoted pupils united by a feeling of affinity and identifying themselves with the school. They revered the memory of their Master and were intent on sedulously upholding the fine traditions of the school. The dialogues which Plato had written and made publicly known by recitation in the Academy were carefully kept and not much later united into a Corpus, together with a selection of his letters. Plato's memory was celebrated in pamphlets and biographies. If he had any enemies, they were too unimportant for their voice to be heard. We cannot speak of an anti-Platonic tradition until more than a hundred years after Plato's death.

With Aristotle matters are entirely different. At the age of seventeen he came as a stranger to Athens. He was looked upon as a stranger throughout his life. His father's estate was in Stagira, his mother's in Chalcis; his wife was from Asia Minor. As a non-citizen he was not allowed to possess real estate in Athens. We learn from a letter to Antipater, written shortly before his death, that he felt the inconveniences of this situation: "In Athens the same things are not proper for a stranger as for a citizen; it is difficult to stay in Athens." His relations with the Macedonian court did not make things easier for him. After the fall of Olynthus the anti-Macedonian feelings grew in strength. In the early part of 347 Demosthenes began to be acknowledged as a political leader and soon became the dominant figure in Athens. The city was getting too hot for Aristotle; he followed the invitation of his friend Hermias and withdrew to Atarneus, shortly before Plato's death. Twenty-five years later the situation was repeated: he was accused of impiety — the only honour the city of Athens ever bestowed upon

him — and made a hasty retreat to Chalcis, "because he did not want the Athenians to sin twice against philosophy", as he is reported to have said.

In Athens he had no school of his own. He was one of the young foreigners in the Academy, little known outside the circle of fellow-students and scholars. He was an assiduous worker, reading, annotating and writing, and did not appear much in public. Gradually he may have become more known, especially after he had come forward as an opponent of Isocrates' educational philosophy. But scarcely had he won a certain position as a teacher and philosopher, when he had to leave Athens. He stayed abroad twelve years, spending his time in Atarneus and Assos, Mytilene, and finally in Macedonia, devoting his time to research and investigations, in short, to the life of a scholar.

When in 334, after the destruction of Thebes, he returned to Athens in order to stay there, he did not come as a celebrated philosopher, known to everybody as Alexander's tutor, as has sometimes been said. He was merely one of the old dons of the Academy who returned, a professor among many other foreign professors in Athens. It is justifiable to assume that he enjoyed a certain reputation among his colleagues, friends and rivals; certainly he was a suspect figure in the eyes of the Macedonian party in Athens because of his relations with Philip, Alexander and Antipater. Much gossip was current about his relations with Hermias. The average Athenian was bigoted, conservative, and anti-intellectual; it was easy to stir up hatred against a radical intellectual who moreover was a non-citizen.

Aristotle and Theophrastus soon gathered around them a number of fellow-students and disciples, but they did not establish a school similar to the Academy. Plato's school was a small community of friends, centered around a great personality, formally organized as a *θίασος*, a religious guild. Neither in its organization, nor in its aims or methods or in the spirit by which it was pervaded did it resemble what we call a School of advanced study, let alone a university. To Plato knowledge and insight were profound things, obtained during a long process of maturing, meditation, discussion and intercommunication of minds; he describes this almost mystical process of acquiring insight and wisdom in celebrated passages in the *Phaedrus* and the *Seventh Letter*. Aristotle, on the other hand, followed up the Ionic tradition. In his approach to knowledge, science, and philosophy he was more like Democritus,

Hippocrates, Eudoxus, and Philistion. His conception of knowledge was more rational; he was a born scholar and professor. His passion was to collect facts, to sift and arrange them, to explain them and find what he called "the causes", *φύσει φιλόσοφος δυνάμενος τὰς αἰτίας γνωρίζειν*. If he had had the opportunity to found a school, it would have had the character we later find in Alexandria. But the time was not ripe for that yet; in short, he was too far advanced from Plato to establish an imitation of his school, and too far ahead of his time in his ideas of what methods should be used in order to advance knowledge and learning; the external conditions were extremely unfavourable.

Aristotle and Theophrastus and the circle of scholars and students around them met and lectured in the Lyceum, a public gymnasium open to everybody, since long ago well known as a place where foreign sophists and teachers gave lectures. As the years passed the circle of collaborators and students probably became more closely united, but the Peripatos as a school in the same sense as the Academy was not established until after Aristotle's death.

Let us now return to the comparison with Plato, which is my chief object now. Aristotle began publishing books about 360. He followed the habit of his time, wrote dialogues and "logoi", not by far so artistic as Plato's. There were no faithful disciples who collected them into a Corpus and had copies made. Only two or three became more widely known, and comparatively few survived. Today only scattered fragments are left.

Unlike Plato Aristotle wrote numerous scholarly lectures and treatises; he gathered together a vast amount of written material as fruits of his reading and thinking. If we take into consideration the huge difference between his time and ours in material and technical things, which I need not specify, we must admit that of all great scholars and philosophers Aristotle is one of the most assiduous workers and writers. It is, however, not my intention to discuss here the fate that befell his scholarly writings. I only wish to stress the fundamental difference between him and Plato in this respect, too. Plato's spiritual heritage was handed down through the centuries in an unbroken sequence. His main ideas could not be too much distorted, for his writings were always accessible, much read and much admired, not only by scholars and philosophers but the general public, too. If we turn our eyes to

Aristotle, the picture is entirely different. The old Peripatos died with Straton. He had grave forebodings when he wrote in his Will: "I leave the school to Lycon, since of the rest some are too old, the others too busy with other things." The Peripatetics degenerated, as Antiochus, Cicero, Strabon and Andronicus said; the later history of the school can be described as a series of successive revivals, each with its peculiar character. By the philosophers of the generation after Aristotle his main doctrines were already incredibly distorted; his opponents had an easy task, for except a few dialogues and the *Protrepticus* copies of Aristotle's writings were rare and no Corpus existed until after Andronicus.

Aristotle left Athens in the midst of a political turmoil and died the same year, a lonely man. He had few real friends and numerous enemies.

Some of these were inspired by political hatred. It is true that the whole intellectual elite in Athens in the middle of the fourth century was pro-Macedonian, but owing to his parentage and his close relations with the Macedonian court and his status as a non-citizen it was Aristotle who became the chief target of the anti-Macedonian party. They seem to have concentrated all their hatred and petty slander on him. This politically-inspired hatred has left its traces in the biographical tradition: it is sufficient to mention the names of Theopompus and Theocritus of Chios, who hated Hermias because he had interfered in Chian affairs and transferred their hatred to Aristotle; Demochares, who in his speech 306 used all the accusations directed against Aristotle during his life-time by the anti-Macedonian party; and finally Timaeus, whose hostile attitude has more complex reasons.

Others were inspired by doctrinal antagonism. Already as a comparatively young man Aristotle was involved in a dispute about the aims of rhetoric with Cephisodorus, a follower of Isocrates. Isocrates and the members of his school were influential in Athens, and the lasting feud between them and Aristotle has left its traces in the biographical tradition. Epicurus and his disciples used material from this feud in their polemics against Aristotle. Some members of the Academy, too, bore a grudge against Aristotle; Aristotle had never sympathized with Heraclides of Pontus, a man of eccentric ideas and passing fancies, nor with Speusippus whose somewhat scholastic opinions he often criticized; Speusippus and his followers, on the other hand, regarded Aristotle as a renegade because of his persistent and stubborn opposition to the main doctrine of the Academy, the theory of ideas. The Megarian school was another centre of antagonism, represented in the biographical tradition by Eubulides; the eristics are represented by Alexinus, the so-called Pythagoreans by Lycon. In Timon's Silloi we find a literary expression of this antagonism.

His most bitter enemies, however, are found among the Epicureans. This is very curious, for as a matter of fact Epicurus followed Aristotle closely in many of his principal doctrines. But his conception of philosophy and, above all, his temperament was absolutely different. He posed as an enemy of *παιδεία* and *πολυμαθία* and regarded Aristotle as a wiseacre and busybody, *χαλεπώτατος ἀνταγωνιστὴς τῇ τοῦ βίου σωτηρίᾳ*. Personal hostility between his disciples and the Peripatetics of the second and third generation increased the tension between the two schools. Colotes, Metrodorus, and Hermarchus pursued his campaign against Aristotle, which has left deep traces in the biographical tradition right down to al-Mubashir. His accusations have been revived many times; they were very popular during the Renaissance in writers like Gassendi and Patrizzi; more recently they have been resuscitated by Popper.

The anti-Aristotelian tradition, then, is strong and persistent; it was vigorous in Aristotle's life-time. Aristocles of Messina has transmitted to us a very valuable survey of the early unfavourable tradition.

The earliest reaction known to us against the malicious gossip spread during Aristotle's life-time and immediately after his death is found in Philochorus. In his *Atthis* Philochorus dealt with the events of 306 B. C., when Sophocles carried his law directed against the Peripatos. This gave him an opportunity to deal retrospectively and at some length with the relations of the Peripatos to the Academy. The careful account of the chronology of Aristotle's life, which we possess in three different versions, is ultimately derived from Philochorus. He also refuted some of the accusations brought forward against Aristotle: it was not true that Aristotle was an *ὀψιμαθής*, and he had not seceded from the Academy or opened a school rivalling that of Plato. The value of this early refutation is apparent. Another early writer whose work must have had an apologetic tendency is Eumelus, but unfortunately he is otherwise unknown, and the small fragment we possess is unimportant.

Then of course we must assume that the inner circle of the Peripatos did what they could to lessen the effect of the unfavourable tradition. Unfortunately we must rest content with a general assumption; we

possess a few fragments of Dicaearchus and Aristoxenus, but undoubtedly much of the material used by later writers must be derived from early Peripatetic sources, now lost. Towards the end of the third century Ariston, then head of the Peripatos, published a kind of biography. No fragments have survived under his name except the important note in Diogenes that Straton's Will was transmitted "in the Collections of Ariston of Ceos". From this it has been inferred that Ariston's work was based on the archives of the Peripatos and the oral tradition, and that it contained the four Wills which we now possess. It is also probable that Hermippus, who found the text of Aristotle's Will in Ariston and included it in his biography, derived other material from the same work.

The third century saw the rise of a new kind of literature whose aim was to entertain. Early representatives are Antigonus of Carystus and Hieronymus of Rhodes. We know the names of numerous later Hellenistic writers who wrote belletristic books on local history, including biographic material, anecdotes about famous personalities of the past and stories on other topics which could arouse the curiosity of the reader. Some of the material found in the later biographic tradition must be derived from this kind of literature, the remains of which are now found in the florilegia of Gellius, Aelian, Athenaeus and Stobaeus, and in the digressions of writers like Strabon, Pliny and Pausanias. Our three biographers, Hermippus, Diogenes and Ptolemy, of course also used this material. We recognize it by its tendency: the object of the writer is to entertain; he is in principle unbiassed, and we cannot therefore speak of an "unfavourable" or "favourable" tradition. These writers were the journalists of antiquity, and this attitude characterizes their contributions to the biographical tradition.

The earliest biography of Aristotle of which we can obtain some idea was written by Hermippus towards the end of the third century. Hermippus called himself a Peripatetic. His biography is consequently characterized by a favourable disposition towards Aristotle, the founder of his school. But it is neither a eulogy, nor a product of critical scholarship. Hermippus was a typical representative of his age, fond of anecdotes and gossip. The fragments prove that he did not abstain from transmitting slanderous material from the unfavourable tradition; with this he hoped to entertain his readers.

In one respect, however, he has had a great influence on the biographic tradition: he wanted to extol Aristotle as the founder of the Peripatetic school in the Lyceum. In the biographical material he had found a story told by Aristoxenus: when in 361/360 Plato was in Sicily some young men had started a school in rivalry of the Academy; later calumniators had substituted the name of Aristotle; a legend was in the making. This legend suited Hermippus well; he wanted to show that already as a young man Aristotle had been a philosopher in his own right; "he seceded from the Academy, while Plato was still alive", *ἀπέστη Πλάτωνος ἔτι περιόντος*. When Speusippus died, Aristotle ought to have been elected head of the school "but he was absent on a mission to Philip on behalf of the Athenians". When he returned from Macedonia, he "founded his own school in the Lyceum". This legend, together with the aetiological explanation of the name "Peripatetics", is Hermippus' chief contribution to the biographical tradition.

All attempts to reconstruct his biography must be highly conjectural; I am myself in principle sceptical towards reconstructions of this kind; in particular we know nothing about the disposition of his work. It is more essential for us to determine the tendency and general character of a work. Nevertheless I venture to present the following sketch as a summary of conclusions drawn in my comments on the *disiecta membra* of the biographical tradition. I omit references to late echoes in Ptolemy's biography and include only a few references to other late writers. The evidence is found in my comments on the passages referred to.

1. Descent, family, DL 1. Plato's most genuine disciple, DL 1. Notes on his personal appearance, DL 1, T 49 b. Nicomachus was Aristotle's son by Herpyllis, T 9 bd, T 12 c.

2. Aristotle seceded from the Academy, while Plato was still alive, DL 2, T 37 ab. Anecdote, "he kicked me", DL 2, T 37 ab. He was ungrateful, (uncertain origin), T 35, T 37 a, T 58 j.

3. Speusippus successor of Plato, T 3.

4. Xenocrates elected head of the Academy while Aristotle was in Macedonia, DL 2, T 71 a. Founded his school in the Lyceum, DL 2. "Morning-lectures", explanation of the name of the school, DL 2, T 71 a, T 76 f. "Afternoon-lectures", he began teaching rhetoric, DL 2, note on T 32. Rivalry with Isocrates (misunderstood by Diogenes), DL 3, T 32 a.

5. He went to Hermias in Atarneus, DL 4. His friendship with Hermias, stay in Assos, T 15 cdf, T 16. Hermias' death, T 15 ei. Callisthenes' Encomion on Hermias, T 15 e. Aristotle's epigram, DL 6, T 15 g. The Hymn, DL 7, T 15 f, T 17. Thanks to Didymus, this is by far the best attested part of Hermippus' biography.

6. Aristotle summoned to Macedonia as Alexander's tutor, DL 4. Asked Philip to rebuild Stagira, DL 4, T 27. Laws for Stagira, DL 4, T 27 i.

7. Returned to Athens, leaving Callisthenes in Macedonia as his successor, DL 4–5, T 28 a. Stayed in Athens 12 years as head of his school DL 5.

8. Accused by Eurymedon he fled to Chalcis, DL 5. Dicta on leaving Athens, "difficult to be a non-citizen", Philochorus VM 12, 41–42; T 1 f, T 44.

9. Different opinions about the causes of his death. According to Eumelus he died like Socrates by drinking aconite, DL 5–6, T 46 a. He died watching the tidal currents in the Euripus, T 48, or, as others said, from a stomach disease, T 50 c. —He reached the age of 63 and was 17 when he joined Plato DL 9–10, VM 9–12. Chronology of his life, note on T 1 e.

10. The story about his selection of a successor, T 47.

11. The epigram of Theocritus of Chios, DL 11, T 15 h, T 58 k, T 65. Timon, DL 11.

12. The Will, DL, T 12 c.

13. Anecdotes from Lycon, DL 16, T 58 i, T 64.

14. The Index librorum, DL.

15. Apophthegms? It is impossible to ascertain whether Hermippus included some of the anecdotes and apophthegms reported by Diogenes and later authors.

Hermippus refers by name to the following writers: Eumelus, Bryon (from whom he quotes Theocritus of Chios), Timaeus, Timotheus, Lycon, Timon. It is a well-known fact that many ancient writers like to quote their subsidiary sources but keep silent about their principal sources. Hermippus worked in the library of Alexandria and was a diligent compilator. It is reasonable to assume that he had access to a rich material, not only of books published in the usual manner, but also of records and other unpublished material which had reached the

library from the archives of the Peripatos. The Catalogue of Aristotle's writings which he included in his biography is best explained as an inventory of the books in the possession of the Alexandrian library.

The Hellenistic biographic literature in the two centuries after Hermippus was very rich, but in most cases only the titles of these works are known. It is likely that a small standard biography of Aristotle crystallized in what we use to call the *κοινὴ ἱστορία*, corresponding to our encyclopaedias. Dionysius of Halicarnassus refers in general words to the *κοινὴ ἱστορία* and to "those who have written about the life of Aristotle". No certain fragments of these biographies are known.

Some fragments of other Hellenistic literature give us glimpses of what we have lost. A valuable fragment of Apollodorus' *Chronica* on the chronology of Aristotle's life is preserved by Dionysius and Diogenes. Aristocles tells us that Apellicon wrote a book on Aristotle's relations with Hermias. It is tempting to assume that Artemon used some of the letters which Apellicon had bought from Aristotle's heirs in Scepsis in his collection of Aristotle's correspondence (in no less than eight books). But most of the letters in his collection were probably faked, which did not prevent later writers from quoting them as genuine. Philodemus is generally held to be the author of the *Index Academicorum philosophorum Herculanensis*, containing precious information from old reliable sources. In his *Volumina Rhetorica*, written about 75 B. C., he deals at length with the Epicurean attacks on Aristotle.

At about this time Cicero was in Athens, listening to lectures held by Antiochus of Ascalon and other reputed professors. Cicero's letters and philosophic treatises testify to his great interest in Aristotle, and I do not doubt that it was Antiochus who stimulated this interest. With Antiochus begins the revival of Aristotle; according to him the Peripatos after Straton had degenerated; it was his ambition to resuscitate the old Peripatetic tradition. The final result of this revival is Andronicus' edition of Aristotle's scholarly works.

As an introduction to his edition Andronicus wrote a book *On Aristotle's writings* which I have characterized as a "catalogue raisonné". It is superfluous to repeat here what I have said in the chapter on the Roman edition of Aristotle's works about the ideas which inspired Andronicus. It is nowhere attested that his book contained a biography of Aristotle. Hermippus' Life of Aristotle remained the standard work.

We are now in the period of the *μέγα βιβλία*, commentaries, encyclopaedic lexica, and the entertainment-literature called *ποικίλη ἱστορία*. Didymus' commentary on Demosthenes has preserved extracts from Hermippus on Aristotle's relation with Hermias. Strabon was personally acquainted with Andronicus and Boethus and transmits some valuable biographical material in his digressions. Similar digressions are found in Pliny's *Natural History*. The earliest example of a large collection of the type *Varia historia* is Pamphila's work, written in the middle of the century, and almost contemporary is Pamphilos' encyclopaedia. Neither of these works figures in my testimonia, but they were used by later writers, such as Phavorinus, Gellius, Aelian and Athenaeus, and also by the rhetor Dion Chrysostomus, all of whom provide a rich harvest of biographical notices, anecdotes and quotations from Hellenistic writers. I hesitate to mention Plutarch's name in this connexion, a writer infinitely superior to those just mentioned in erudition, general culture and in style. But much of the material which he contributes to the biographical tradition on Aristotle is of the same kind as the fragments handed down in the *varia historia*, a mixture of fiction and facts, often puzzling, sometimes fascinating. Many of these fragments are anecdotic and of little value, figuring under the heading "Hellenistic fabrication", but he has also preserved some precious fragments from good old sources. It has been one of my aims in this book to investigate this rich material and sift the wheat from the chaff.

The scholarly and often polemical literature of the philosophic schools in the second century has contributed some very valuable testimonia. Atticus is a representative of the revolt against the late Hellenistic syncretism of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoa. Numenius incidentally provides us with a valuable fragment shedding more light on Aristotle's controversy with Cephisodorus. Aristocles, finally, contributes a highly interesting survey of the early invectives against Aristotle. Among the rhetors and journalists of the period, mention should be made of Aelius Aristides and Lucian. Lucian's scurrilous but witty story in *Philosophers for Sale* shows that the conception of the two Aristotles, one exoteric in the dialogues and one esoteric in the scholarly treatises, is now current opinion. We are now on the threshold of the second revival of Aristotelian studies in the time of Adrastus and Alexander of Aphrodisias.

Diogenes Laertius stands quite apart from this development. His book has nothing to do with the genre called *ποικίλη ἱστορία*, nor is it a work of critical scholarship. Schwartz rightly characterized it as Hellenistic, only less refined. It is remarkable that it has left no traces whatever in the extant commentaries on Aristotle[1]) or in Ptolemy's biography. This confirms the conclusion drawn from its general character, namely that it is the work of an erudite amateur, isolated and without personal connections with the contemporary schools of learning. It is a miracle that it has survived. I need not repeat here what I have said in my comments on its merits and deficiencies.

The *Life of Aristotle* current in the neoplatonic schools was written by a certain Ptolemy. The identification of this Ptolemy, the character and scope of his biography, the relationship of the numerous late epitomes to the original work: all this is very problematic.

We possess three neoplatonic epitomes, all from the fifth century, Vita Marciana, Vita vulgata, and Vita Latina; the two Syriac Vitae are probably from the same period; the Arabic tradition is represented by an-Nadim's *Fihrist*, transcribed by al-Qifti, and by the extracts in al-Mubashir and Usaibia; there are also some scattered fragments of other writers; the entire Arabic tradition goes back to a translation (or epitome) of Ptolemy's Life of Aristotle, presumably made by Ishaq ibn Hunayn towards the end of the ninth century.

All the material handed down to us in these nine Vitae is very uniform in its general character, in spite of differences in details. But sometimes, even in small details, their agreement is complete, as I have shown in my comments. I do not for a moment doubt that these nine Vitae ultimately are derived from the same common source, Ptolemy's Life of Aristotle. I have found no vestiges of any other independent source. This conclusion is confirmed by the neoplatonic prolegomena. The biographical material in these prolegomena (and incidentally in the commentaries) shows such close relationship with the Vitae and with Ptolemy's Catalogue of Aristotle's writings that there is no room for doubt.

[1]) I cannot see that there is any evidence supporting Bledl's assumption, *Studi e Testi 184*, p. 44, and I do not think that he has interpreted correctly what A. Adler says in her article *Suidas*, *RE* IV A, col. 710. In a few cases the commentators have used the same sources as Diogenes, that is all.

The examination of the three Greek and Latin Vitae has led to the result that they are three independent versions of the same original epitome. This epitome was used as the basis of oral instruction in the school of Ammonius Hermeiu and by his disciples Olympiodorus, David and Elias. It was also used by Philoponus and Simplicius, and after the time of Elias and David by the anonymous professor called Pseudo-Elias: thus by three generations of students from about 480 A. D. until the middle of the following century.

The Syriac Vitae are very meagre in content and not derived directly from any of the existing epitomes; they too must be regarded as independent versions of the same original. They may have been current in the school of Ibas of Edessa, but it is also possible that they are products of the seventh century used in the schools of Bishop Sebocht of Qennesrin or Jacob of Edessa.

The Arabic tradition is rich in facts which are not found at all in the Greek and Syriac Vitae, and in many cases when the Greek Vitae merely contain a hint or a simple fact, we find a more elaborate account in the Arabic tradition. The Arabic tradition has been unduly neglected; as I have shown in my comments, it contains much valuable material of undoubtedly Greek origin; the Arabic elaborations, distortions and embellishments stand out clearly, and in most cases we can easily detach them. The Arabic text of Aristotle's Will affords an excellent criterion, since we can directly compare the Greek and the Arabic text paragraph by paragraph. The result is that there is a remarkable agreement between Diogenes' text (derived from Hermippus, probably *via* Phavorinus), and the Arabic text (derived from Andronicus, *via* Ptolemy, *via* Ishaq's translation and other possible intermediate sources). As a matter of fact, the Arabic text of the Will is in certain respects superior to that given by Diogenes. This should warn us not to be too suspicious of the Arabic tradition. The criteria that I have used in my scrutiny of the Arabic sources are these: agreement in substance with Greek sources, agreement in language of such a kind that it is possible to recognize typically Greek idioms behind the Arabic text, and finally, agreement in tendency.

Ptolemy's biography has a clear tendency: it is a glorification of Aristotle, based on some typically neoplatonic conceptions. Aristotle is *δῖος Ἀριστοτέλης*. He was entrusted to Plato in compliance with an oracle of the God in Delphi. He made an extraordinary impression

on Plato, and when Plato went on his second visit to Sicily, he deputized as head of the school. He was held in great honour by Philip and Alexander and was very influential in political affairs, "using philosophy as an instrument". He dissuaded Alexander from attacking Persia, telling him that the omina were unfavourable. He was great as a benefactor, both towards individuals and cities. The inhabitants of Stagira honoured him in many ways after his death. They believed that "their coming to the place where Aristotle's remains were buried would purify their minds". It is said that a swarm of bees was found around the urn containing his ashes. And so forth.

It is further characteristic of Ptolemy's biography that he frequently refers to Aristotle's correspondence as evidence. It is probable that he used Artemon's collection of letters and the additional collection made by Andronicus as principal sources. The section on chronology is probably taken from Hermippus; the fact that Aristotle was not elected head of the Academy after Plato's death is explained in exactly the same way as by Hermippus: "Aristotle was on a mission to Macedonia". Other facts are of such a nature that it is impossible to determine whether he has taken them from Hermippus or from the *κοινὴ ἱστορία*. Although his tendency to glorify Aristotle forbids us to speak of critical scholarship, it cannot be denied that his biography is a scholarly work, based on extensive investigations and a thorough knowledge of the biographical tradition. He wanted to find material likely to extol Aristotle and present him as an almost divine personality, and he found it. If suitable for his purpose, he transferred to Aristotle qualities, honours, and actions orighnally ascribed to other persons. Philip, Alexander and Antipater were honoured by the Athenians after the battle of Chaeronea with statues on the Acropolis and the status of *proxenoi* — Ptolemy felt no scruples in transferring this to Aristotle, perhaps using faked letters as evidence; other examples of similar transfers are cited in my comments. The habit as such is old; a short time after Aristotle's death the historian Eumelus is already describing Aristotle as a second Socrates. Ptolemy is really critical only when he refutes stories which, if believed, could damage the memory of his idol.

The general character of Ptolemy's biography, as described here, implies that we can never trust him. We must always suspect that his statements are biassed by his apologetic zeal. But it would be unjust to overlook the fact that incidentally he transmits facts which are

valuable additions to the biographical tradition. Piecing together the information contained in the nine epitomes of his work we get the following picture. The disposition is arbitrary.

The title is reported by Elias (T 75 p 3), the *Fihrist* 19, al-Qifti (p. 208), and Usaibia 1, with small variant readings. The exact title cannot be determined, but it must have been something like "*On the Life of Aristotle, his Will, and A Catalogue of his Writings*". On the possible dedication to Gallus, see my comments, p. 210.

1. Descent and family. All sources agree. New in comparison with Hermippus and Diogenes is the epigram.

2. Proxenus, VM, VV, VL, Usaibia 3.

3. Aristotle's early years, VM, VV, VL; curious elaboration in Mubashir 3—4; *ἐλευθέρων παιδεία* VM 4, VV, VL; *ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία* Mubashir 4.

4. Seventeen years old, VM, VV, VV; VS II; Mubashir 9. Oracle in Delphi, VM, VV, VL; VS I 4; *Fihrist* 4; Usaibia 3. He joined the Academy when Eudoxus was scholarch, VM 11, VL. Twenty years with Plato, all agree.

5. Friendship with Plato, VM 6—7, VV, VL; Mubashir 10. *Ἀναγνώστης* VM 6, VV, VL. *Νοῦς τῆς διατριβῆς* VM 7, VL; VS I 5; Mubashir 11; Usaibia 29. Aristotle deputized as head of the Academy during Plato' second visit to Sicily, *Fihrist* 5, Mubashir 13, Usaibia 4, *cf.* VS II 5.

6. Chronology of Aristotle's life, ultimately from Philochorus; VM, partly in VV, VL. From Hermippus?

7. Calumniators, VM 11, VL; *ὀψιμαθής* VS I 6, *Fihrist* 6, Usaibia 12. Epicurus, Lycon, Mubashir 5, transcribed by Usaibia.

8. Speusippus, Plato's successor, VM, VV, VL; VS II 4. Omitted by Ammonius and Olympiodorus in their oral instruction. Not found in VS I and the Arabic tradition.

9. Aristotle was in Macedonia and could not be elected, VM 14, VV, VL. From Hermippus?

10. Honoured by Philip with a statue; used philosophy as an instrument, VM 15 and 46, VV, VL.

11. Benefactor towards individuals, VM 15—16, VV, VL; *Fihrist* 12, Mubashir 26, Usaibia 24, elaborated in the Arabic tradition.

12. Benefactor towards cities. Stagira rebuilt, VM 17, VV, VL; Fihrist 13, Mubashir 27, Usaibia 25. Month *Σταγειρίτης*, festival *Ἀριστοτέλεια*, VM 17, VV, VL. Drew up a code of laws for Stagira,

(not in the Greek Vitae, but in DL 4, from Hermippus); VS I 7, Mubashir 27, Usaibia 14.

13. His ashes brought from Chalcis to Stagira, VM 18, VL, (not in VV); VS I 10, Mubashir 29, Usaibia 13, 30—31. The place called *Ἀριστοτέλειον* VM 18, VL; VS I 10, Mubashir 29—30, Usaibia 13.

14. Eressus rescued, VM 19, VV, VL.

15. Benefactor towards the Athenians, VM 20, VL, (not in VV); much more in Usaibia 17—20, on his statue on the Acropolis, inscription, decree of proxeny, Himeraeus, Stephanus.

16. Benefactor towards mankind, VM 21, VV, VL; Fihrist 12, Mubashir 25—26, Usaibia 16 and 24. His book to Alexander *On kingship* VM 21, VL, VV 22; *Fihrist* 9 is an elaboration of this.

17. After Plato's death Aristotle went to Hermias, Mubashir 17, Usaibia 5. Neither the Greek Vitae, nor the prolegomena contain a word about Hermias.

18. Philip summoned him to be Alexander's tutor, VM 14, VV, VL; Mubashir 18, Usaibia 6.

19. Arabic tradition: When Alexander became king, Aristotle returned to Athens, *Fihrist* 10, Mubashir 19 and 24, Usaibia 6 and 23. He left Callisthenes with Alexander as his successor, Mubashir 19 (from Hermippus or the *κοινὴ ἱστορία*). The Greek tradition is different: He accompanied Alexander to Persia, VM 23, VL, VV 23. He dissuaded him from attacking Persia, the omina being unfavourable, only in VM 23. After the war he returned to Athens, VM, VV, VL, after Alexander was dead, VM, VV. The Greek sources, reflecting the oral instruction, are confused in comparison with the Arabic tradition. I assume that Ptolemy's original contained this: (a) When Alexander became king, he decided to attack Persia, (b) Aristotle dissuaded him, the omina, (c) left Callisthenes, (d) returned to Athens.

20. Aristotle was held in high honour by kings and princes, VM 23, VL, VV 21; *Fihrist* 8, Mubashir 28, Usaibia 15.

21. Aristotle and Xenocrates succeeded Speusippus in the Academy and the Lyceum respectively, VM,VV, VL. The Arabic tradition merely says: Aristotle founded his own school in the Lyceum, omitting Xenocrates as they had omitted Speusippus, VS II 5, *Fihrist* 11, Mubashir 14 and 25, Usaibia 4 and 23. Explanation of the name Peripatetics, VS II 5, *Fihrist* 11, Mubashir 14, Usaibia 23. Not in the Greek vitae, but very well elaborated in the neoplatonic prolegomena.

22. Aristotle and Plato, the altar with inscription, VM 26, VV, VL. In my comments on T 34 c I have ventured the hypothesis that Ptolemy quoted the fragment of the Elegy, which Olympiodorus has preserved to us, and that the passage in the Greek Vitae is a blurred epitome. Nothing in the Syriac or Arabic tradition about this.

23. Aristotle praises Plato in his letters, too; only in VM 27. Letters of introduction, VM 16, VV, VL. Correspondence with Alexander, *Fihrist* 9, cf. Mubashir 37.

24. It is doubtful whether Ptolemy's biography contained anything like a doxography. The doxographies in the Greek Vitae are all derived from the oral instruction in the neoplatonic schools. Possible traces of an original doxography in Mubashir 6—9, Usaibia 28.

25. Aristotle's *μετριότης*, VM 31, VV, VL; Usaibia 26. Plato's *γνησιώτατος μαθητής*, the greatest of all Greek philosophers, *ὑπερβέβηκεν ἀνθρώπινα μέτρα*, VL 41, VV 25; *Fihrist* 7.

26. Revolt in Athens against Aristotle, he was accused of impiety by Eurymedon, VM 40, VV, VL, Mubashir 20, Usaibia 7—9. His retreat to Chalcis, VM, VV, VL, Mubashir 20, Usaibia 8. "being frightened of the fate that befell Socrates", VV 19, VS II 3, Mubashir 20. Dicta on leaving Athens, VM, VV, VL, "difficult to be a stranger in Athens", VM 42. Not true that he wrote an apology, Usaibia 10.

27. His death in Chalcis, VM, VV, VL, VS II 7, Mubashir 23, Usaibia 11, "watching the Euripus", VS II 7, Mubashir 22, "during the reign of Ptolemy, son of Lagos", *Fihrist* 15. "A swarm of bees", only in VS I 9.

28. Personal appearance, Mubashir 38, Usaibia 36, mostly Arabic elaboration.

29. His Will, VM, VL, VS I 11, *Fihrist* (the whole text, transcribed by al-Qifti), Mubashir 33—34, Usaibia (the whole text).

30. Children, disciples, VM, VL; VS II 6, Mubashir 31—32, transcribed by Usaibia 33—34. Hermippus and Andronicus (my conjecture), Mubashir 31 and Usaibia 33. Theophrastus his successor, Mubashir 32, Usaibia 34, also *Fihrist* 16.

31. Number of his writings, VM, VL. Index librorum, al-Qifti and Usaibia. Mubashir's account is based on the prolegomena.

I do not want this to be regarded as a "reconstruction" of Ptolemy's Life of Aristotle. It is merely a collection of facts, transmitted to us

in the nine epitomes and probably all derived from Ptolemy's biography. But we must remember that each of these epitomes contains a selection only of these facts. The three Greek Vitae (I include the Greek original of the Vita latina) were epitomes intended for a very special purpose, namely to serve as introductions to school-editions of Aristotle's Organon in the schools of Ammonius and his disciples. This determined the selection of facts from the original biography. The Arabic writers, on the other hand, were not interested in Speusippus and Xenocrates; they also omitted the last section of the Will with the provisions concerning statues. Both the Greek and the Arabic epitomators might have omitted parts of the biography.

Who was this Ptolemy and when did he live? The identification with Ptolemaios Chennos should in my opinion be discarded. The general character of the Vita tells us that the author was a neoplatonist, writing after Porphyry's time. A neplatonist named Ptolemy is mentioned as disciple of Porphyry and Iamblichus, Stobaeus I 378 Wachsmuth; he might well be our Ptolemy. But the name was indeed very common, especially in Alexandria. A curious detail in *Fihrist* 15 is the dating of Aristotle's death to "the beginning of the reign of Ptolemy, son of Lagos". An Arabic writer can hardly have invented this; it must be derived from Ptolemy; it would be natural for an Alexandrian scholar to use the Alexandrian List of Kings instead of or parallel with the Athenian List of Archons. This is admittedly a weak argument, but it points to Alexandria. So does the scholarly character of the biography. My conclusion, then, is that Ptolemy was a member of Porphyry's and Iamblichus' school and that he wrote his Life of Aristotle in the first half of the fourth century. I base this conclusion mainly on the general tendency of the biography.

Two problems, in themselves of little importance, must be left open: the alleged dedication of the biography to a certain Gallus, and the name Ptolemy-el-Garib. The simplest solution is to accept both facts as true. Dedications of books to Roman noblemen was a common habit; Porphyry is a good example. It is possible to translate el-Garib with "the unknown", and explain it as a surname given to him by Ishaq to distinguish him from the well-known Ptolemy, the author of Al-Magest. Other possible explanations are discussed in my comments on al-Qifti.

With this my brief survey comes to an end. After Ptolemy no ancient

writer is k /n who has made an independent or original contribution to the biographical tradition.

The biographical tradition on Aristotle is interesting from two quite different points of view. Part of this material is important because it is true and gives us knowledge about the historical Aristotle, about the events of his life and about his personality. His Will is one of the most precious documents that antiquity has preserved to us. Another part of the fragments and the biographies is interesting because it provides us with material for a history of Aristotelianism. But it is not my object in this book, either to write a Life of Aristotle or a history of the changes in the conception of his personality and importance as a philosopher and scholar, but rather to provide a source-book for such work.

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