1. In recent decades, the study of texts bearing the name of Hermes Trismegistus has made, for various reasons, considerable progress. As for the Greek and Latin texts, it was almost exclusively the interest in the religious and philosophical teachings of the "Thrice-Great" that attracted scholars. But beside that, steadily growing attention was being paid to the Hermetic literature in Arabic, which is known in a considerable number of texts. Some of them have already been subjected to minute investigation by scholars such as H. Ritter, J. Ruska, and P. Kraus. They, in their turn, were mainly concerned with the astrological, alchemical, and magical theories laid down in those texts (1). The moment has now come to view the significance of the Arabic Hermetica as a whole.

The problem presents itself to us initially in a twofold form:

(1) What does Arab science owe to the religious-literary movement called Hermetism?

(2) To which degree does Hermetic literature in the Arabic language enlarge and complete our knowledge of the Hermetic heritage in the classical languages?

Both these questions involve another, the answer to which will form the basis and the final aim of our research, namely:

Can an exact definition of the specific character of Hermetism

(*) Enlarged and annotated version of a paper read at the 7th International Congress for the History of Sciences, Jerusalem, August, 1953.

(1) See the present writer’s paper, reported in ZDMG, 81, p. Lxiv f.
be given, so as to serve as a criterion by which the "genuineness" of Hermetic writings can be judged?

That means with regard to our first question:

What is the particular character of the Arabic writings ascribed to Hermes?

And with regard to question two:

Is there any genuine relationship between the Hermetica in Arabic and those in Greek and Latin, on account of which the extension of classical Hermetism by Arabic texts may be regarded as a legitimate one?

2. Thanks to the work of Father A.-J. Festugière, we are now able to pose these questions. In his admirable book *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* (1), he makes for the first time a serious attempt to take the *Hermetica* as a whole, in accordance with opinions already expressed by A. Dieterich, W. Kroll, and J. Ruska. He does not content himself with studying the philosophico-theological writings that are called by him "l'hermétisme savant", but for the first time he analyses the entire bulk of astrological, alchemical, and magical Hermetica in Greek and Latin, which he terms "l'hermétisme qu'on pourrait dire populaire". He insists on the fact that this part of Hermetic literature is by no means "une branche secondaire et tardive de la révélation hermétique", but is "au contraire la production la plus ancienne, celle qui a donné sa forme et servi de modèle, du moins pour une grande part, à l'hermétisme savant" (2). The texts belonging to popular Hermetism are scattered over a vast number of ancient and recent publications and of manuscripts, and are not as easily accessible as those forming the so-called *Corpus Hermeticum* or the excerpts from Hermetic writings preserved by Stobaeus (3). The excellent literary survey of this literature and the penetrating discussion of its


(3) The last-mentioned are now collected in vol. I of W. Scott's *Hermetica*, 1924.
contents, with which Father Festugière has presented us, constitute a very considerable measure of assistance for the student, who is still lacking an up-to-date and comprehensive standard edition of the popular Hermetica comparable to those we already possess of the Corpus Hermeticum (1).

Regarding the nature of popular Hermetism in general, Festugière says:

"Dans ce domaine, Hermès paraît n’avoir été qu’un des prête-noms dont on se sert à l’époque hellénistique pour contenir le besoin de révélation qui travaillait alors un si grand nombre d’esprits... D’un mot, il n’y a pas d’occultisme proprement hermétique, en ce sens que les écrits du Trismégiste sur ces matières n’apportent rien de neuf" (2).

Now, Festugière’s opinion of learned Hermetism is not so much different from that of the popular, which we mentioned before, namely:

"On se trouve en présence de doctrines qui n’offrent aucune originalité, mais sont devenues, depuis l’éclectisme, le bien commun de toutes les sectes... Ces doctrines hermétiques sont diverses et inconciliables parce que l’auteur, souvent dans un même traité, ne fait que suivre les grands courants de l’époque, lesquels ne s’accordent point" (3).

No doubt, the common characteristic of this vast and very inegal literature, which justifies our referring to it as “Hermetic”, in spite of all the divergencies and inconsistencies obviously existing in it, is first and foremost the alleged Revelation, which replaces philosophical argument as well as scientific proof, no matter what the subject under discussion may be, Religion, Cosmology, Ethics, Astrology, Alchemy, or Medicine. In the first treatise of the Corpus Hermeticum, the Poimandres, it is Hermes himself upon whom the revelation is bestowed; in

(2) Révélation, I, p. 354 f.
(3) Ibid., II, p. ix-x; cf. also L’Hermétisme, p. 8 ff.
other writings, Hermes confers it on Asclepius, his son Tat, and others. In other texts again, the pupil obtains heavenly wisdom by discovering a hitherto concealed book, an inscription on a table, and so on.

3. Now, all this equally holds good for the Hermetic literature in Arabic. But, unfortunately, only in a very few cases up to now have quotations from *Hermetica* in classical languages been traced in the Arabic writings ascribed to Hermes or derived from him, and not a single *Hermeticum* as a whole has been preserved in both languages, so far at least as our present knowledge extends.

L. Massignon has added to Festugière’s first volume a list of the Hermetic writings in Arabic, to which he prefixed some remarks on the general characteristics of this literature (1). These remarks summarize a paper read in Ascona at the *Eranos-Tagung* of 1942, but, unfortunately, this paper has not yet been published. Massignon’s remarks merely open the discussion, and indeed cannot be regarded as definitive, as the bibliographical survey on which they are based is, on the one hand, incomplete (2) and, on the other hand, contains some titles of books the Hermetic character of which is still to be proved (3).

Under these circumstances, it is certainly premature to say: “C’est grâce à Hermès-Idris que la tradition hellénistique réclama droit de cité dans l’Islam, alors que la syllogistique et la métaphysique d’Aristote n’y étaient pas encore admises”.

This leads us to repeat our previous questions: Is it only the continuation of a traditional literary manner that presents

---

(2) Add, e. g. (1) the Sayings of Hermes preserved in Ḥunain Ibn Isḥāq’s *Adab al-j aldāsīfā*, part II, ch. 13; (2) the writings of Apollonius examined by the present writer in *Islamica*, IV, p. 551 ff. (add the manuscript Wehbi 892, discovered by H. Ritter); (3) the *K. sirr al-asrār* of ‘Uṭārid al-Bābill, from which forty-five aphorisms are quoted in the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* (*Picatrix*), ed. Ritter, 1933, pp. 319-323.
(3) Among these, I am inclined to count (1) the writings of Pseudo-Empedocles (the *éléments hermétiques*, which Massignon finds in al-Shahrastānī’s account of Empedocles, are in fact general characteristics of Gnostic systems); (2) the theories of Ṭḥmād Kayyāl, as reported by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (the Ikhwān do not quote Kayyāl’s name explicitly, as might be inferred from Massignon’s words; see also al-Shahrastānī, ed. Cureton, p. 138 ff.). I hope to deal with the Pseud-Empedoclean writings shortly.
itself in the Arabic *Hermetica*? Or how far can the contents of these writings prove that they are the true successors of their classical ancestors?

4. Let us review in brief the small number of Arabic *Hermetica* already examined with regard to this question. The most important of them, published in Arabic and fully translated, is *De castigatione animae*, now translated into English and amply annotated by W. Scott (1). One finds in the notes a good many more or less literal parallels from the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum*.

Another attempt was made by H. E. Stapleton, in collaboration with G. L. Lewis and F. Sherwood Taylor. In 1949, these scholars published a translation of all the Sayings of Hermes quoted in the *K. al-mā’ al-waraqī* of Ibn Umail (2), which had previously been edited under Dr. Stapleton’s supervision by M. Turāb ‘Alī (3). For one only out of the thirty quoted sayings were the authors able to produce a Greek text ascribed to Hermes. The other parallels from Greek alchemists were very slight in themselves, and not directly attributable to Hermes.

A considerable number of Arabic *Hermetica* have also been analysed by J. Ruska (4). Of the *Tabula Smaragdina* no Greek source has been found so far. Among the other texts, the most important are the *Secret of Creation* by Apollonius of Tyana and the *Treasure of Alexander*. Ruska’s analyses of these books are not very helpful in solving our problem, as he was more interested in other questions connected with them. On the other hand, the brilliant investigation of the *Secret of Creation* by P. Kraus (5) led not only to the discovery of the time of the author, who lived under the Caliph al-Ma’mūn (813-833

---

(1) *Hermetica*, vol. IV, pp. 277-352. Further Arabic mss. have been discovered by the present writer (Aya Sofia 1843) and by P. Kraus (Cairo, Taimūr, *akhīdāq* 290).

(2) *Ambiz*, III, pp. 69-90.


(4) *Tabula Smaragdina*, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der hermetischen Literatur, 1926.

A. D.), but also showed close parallels between "Apollo-
nius" and his contemporary, Job of Edessa, who wrote in Syriac, as
well as the indebtedness of the writer of the Secret of Cre-
tion to the De natura hominis of Nemesius of Emesa (about
400 A. D.), who wrote in Greek, or to its source. As for the books
of Krates the Sage and al-Ḥabib, both published in M. Berthelot's
La Chimie au Moyen Age, I tried to show that they were later
than the Turba Philosophorum, the Arabic original of which
goes back to the tenth century (1). Some other texts may be
left unmentioned (2).

5. Since Massignon's survey appeared several Hermetic
texts have been discovered, and that in an Oriental language in
which no such texts had been known up to then, i. e. in Coptic.
The library of Chenoboskion, which was unearthed by fellahs
of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt in 1946, contains, among
others, five Hermetic treatises, four of them hitherto unknown,
the fifth being the famous Asclepius, until now only known
in Latin translation (3). This discovery, by which the founda-
tions of our study of the Hermetic tradition may well be greatly
altered, can at present only be registered, with expression of
the hope that the new texts may very soon be made accessible.

In order to make clear what may be hoped for from further
investigation of these texts, two examples will be presented
here, the first illustrating the relationship between Arabic and
Greek tradition, the second showing the influence of Arabic
Hermetica on the development of science.

6. Abū Ma'shar, the famous astrologer (d. 886 A. D.), relates
in his K. al-ulāf as follows: (4)

---

(1) Cf. for the time being my Amsterdam paper of 1950: The Place of the Turba Philoso-
phorum in the development of Alchemy, which is simultaneously appearing in Isis.
(2) I wish, however, to draw attention to G. Levi della Vida, La Dottrina e i Dodici
Legati di Stomathalassa, uno scritto di ermetismo oppolare insiriac e ina rabico, 1951 (Accad.
(3) H. Ch. Puech, Les nouveaux écrits gnostiques découverts en Haute-Egypte, in Coptic
(4) The account translated here is preserved in Ibn Abī Uṣāibī, 'Uyūn al-anbīḍ',
p. 16 f. Some readings have been corrected from Ibn al-Qīṭṭī, Ta'rīkh al-ḥukam, p. 6 f.,
346 ff.
"He (i. e. Asclepius) was a pupil of Hermes the Egyptian. Abū Ma'shar says: There were three persons called Hermes. Hermes the First, he upon whom the threefold Grace was conferred, lived before the Flood. The meaning of Hermes is appellative, as is the case of Caesar and Khusraw. The Persians, in their historical books, call him Hōshang (1), that is, the Righteous, and it is he whose prophecy the Harrānians mention. The Persians say that his grandfather was Kayōmarth, i. e. Adam. The Hebrews say that he is Akhnūkh (Enoch), i. e. Idrīs in Arabic.

"Abū Ma'shar says: He was the first to speak of upper things, such as the motions of the stars, and his grandfather, Adam, taught him the hours of night and day. He was the first to build sanctuaries and to praise God therein, the first to think and speak of medicine. He wrote for his contemporaries many books of rhythmic poems, with rhymes known in the language of his contemporaries, about the knowledge of terrestrial and celestial subjects. He was the first to prophesy the coming of the Flood and saw that heavenly plague by water and fire threatened the Earth. His domicile was the Sa'id of Egypt, which he selected for himself, and he built there the sanctuaries of the Pyramids and the temple towns. It was because of his fear that wisdom might be lost that he built the temples, namely, the mountain known as al-Barbā, the temple of Akhmim (Pano-polis), engraved on their walls drawings of all techniques and their technicians, made pictures of all the working-tools of craftsmen, and by inscriptions indicated the essence of the sciences for the benefit of those who were to come after him (2). In doing so, he was guided by the desire of preserving science for later generations and by fear that its trace might disappear from the world.

(1) The identification of this name, mis-spelt in the manuscripts, is due to C. F. Seybold, in ZDMG, 57, p. 807.

(2) A fine collection of such drawings may be found in The Legacy of Egypt, 1942. It is easy to see how from accounts like this later stories of supernatural wisdom contained in the hieroglyphic texts developed.
"In the tradition handed down from the ancestors it is stated that Idris was the first to study books and to think about sciences, and that Allah revealed to him thirty pages (of the Heavenly Book). He was the first to sew clothes and to wear them. Allah exalted him to a high place (1).

"Hermes the Second was one of the inhabitants of Bābil (Babylon). He lived in the town of the Chaldeans, Bābil. He lived after the Flood in the days of Nazîr bâlî (?), who was the first to build the city of Bābil after Nimrūd b. Kūsh. He excelled in medicine and philosophy and was acquainted with the properties of the numbers. His pupil was Pythagoras the arithmetician (2). This Hermes renewed medicine, philosophy and arithmetic as studied at the time of the Flood. This town of the Chaldeans is the town of the philosophers among the people of the East, and its philosophers were the first to mark frontiers and make laws.

"Hermes the Third lived in the city of Mîṣr (Egypt) and was after the Flood. He is the author of a book on poisonous animals. He was a physician and a philosopher, acquainted with the properties of deadly drugs and noxious animals. He was walking about the land and circumambulating it, and expert in setting up towns, in their properties and in those of their populations. He wrote a fine and precious work on the art of alchemy, which has bearings on many techniques, such as the manufacture of glass, glass-ware, clay and the like. He had a pupil called Asclepius, who lived in Syria”.

An account similar to the above in some striking points is given in the Treasure of Alexander, Ruska’s analysis of which I mentioned before. According to the introduction of this book, the knowledge contained in it was originally deposited by king Hermes the Great in a subterranean passage near the sea, as he knew all that was going to happen to mankind, and also the coming of the Flood. Other versions occur in the prefaces

(1) Sura XIX, 57.
(2) According to Ibn al-Qiftî, Hermes was, on the contrary, the pupil of Pythagoras.
to two alchemical books in Latin, where, however, only the account of the three persons named Hermes and the reference to the Flood are preserved, and the motif of preventive measures against loss of the books of wisdom is omitted (1).

7. It is obvious that these stories are but variants of the same archetype. Abü Ma'shar’s account is the earliest of them, and I shall now turn to analysing it.

Let us take first the enumeration of the activities of the first Hermes. The very order in which they appear proves their origin from different sources, otherwise astronomy and medicine would have been placed together, and architecture either at the beginning or at the end, not in the middle. In fact, all of these three activities were originally attributed to three different persons.

Astronomy plays a considerable part in the apocryphal Book of Enoch (ch. LXXII-LXXXII), and according to the Genesis (V, 23) Enoch lived 365 years, which is the number of days of a solar year, as has been observed long ago. Activity as an architect is ascribed to Enoch’s father Cain, who builded a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch (Genesis IV, 17). Enoch is Adam’s grandson, like Hôshang and Akhnûkh in Abü Ma’shar. On the other hand, al-Tabârî relates (2) that Hôshang ordered his contemporaries to build mosques, and founded two cities which were the first cities on Earth, Bâbil and al-Sûs (Susa). The revelation of medicine is attributed to Noah (Jubil. X, 10-13), and it is curious that a late echo of this attribution is found in three medieval Hebrew texts about the Book of Noah, which were made known by A. Jellinek (3).

The first of these three texts is closely related to ch. X of the Book of Jubilees, and has an appendix describing the later development of medical tradition down to Asaf the Jew (9th

(2) Cairo, 1326, I, p. 84.
(3) Bet ha-midrasch, III, p. 155 ff. and p. xxx.
cent. A. D. ?), to whose book it forms a kind of introduction. According to it, Noah obtains medical knowledge from the archangel Raphael, writes it down in a book and hands the book over to his eldest son, Sem. — In the second text, Noah receives from Raphael the book itself. It had formerly been in the hands of Enoch, who read it in the cave, where it had remained concealed since the time of Adam. He, in his turn, had received it from the angel Raziel. But while Adam had drawn from the book chiefly the knowledge of future events, it served Enoch for instruction in astronomy, and Noah for advice on building the Ark. From Noah it was transmitted by Sem to Abraham and later generations. — The third text is the one most directly relevant to the subject. It introduces a book called Book of Raziel, allegedly one of the secret books which were communicated orally to Noah by the angel Raziel in the year he entered the Ark, before he entered it. It was written on a sapphire. It contained, in addition to the several subject matters which are attributed to the book in the two other versions, instruction in the choice, by astrology, of the right time for every kind of human activity. Noah put it in a golden chest and took it with him into the Ark. After he left the Ark, Noah used it during his whole life, and in the hour of his death handed it over to Sem. In the course of time, it eventually came to king Solomon.

The interesting point in this last account is that Noah preserved the book in the Ark itself, although it was written on a stone. The author of Jub. X, 13 certainly had in mind a more comfortable writing material, such as papyrus or parchment. Abū Ma‘shar’s Hermes had left inscriptions on walls. In the Treasure of Alexander, Hermes deposited his wisdom in a subterranean passage, the writing material not being specified. It is clear that any account which speaks of the preservation of wisdom in the Ark itself, whatever the writing material, is an alteration of the original form of the story, if the feature of the Flood is to have any importance.

8. Now, the origin of any story in which the Flood appears
must lie outside Egypt. The method of preserving wisdom by inscribing it on a material which, because of its weight, cannot be transported in large quantities, leads automatically to Babylonia. In cuneiform texts no account has been found, so far, which may be regarded as the archetype of the Arabic stories. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (tablet XI, l. 85), Utnapishtim says only: “All the craftsmen I made go aboard”; and B. Meissner explains: “Um diese ununterbrochene Kontinuität der Überlieferung von den Göttern her zu beweisen, wurde... betont, dass... Ut-napischti auch ‘die Handwerker zu der Arche hinaufgeführt habe’, wo sie also dem allgemeinen Verderben der Sintflut entgangen seien” (1). But the account of Berossus (ca. 290-280 B. C.) has preserved a more elaborate version, which is obviously the source of the stories on Hermes quoted above. According to it, Kronos commanded Xisouthros, before he boarded the Ark with his family and nearest friends, to write down “the beginning, the middle and the end of all things” and to bury the records in Sippar, the city of the Sun-God. It was, he said, to be the destiny of this group of people from Sippar to transmit the records to mankind. After the Flood, they dug the records up again, founded many cities, and rebuilt the sanctuaries (2).

This story derives from genuine materials. Assurbanipal speaks of antediluvian stones which he read, and we have also magic precepts which are attributed to old antediluvian sages (3).

9. The origin of the Arabic stories on Hermes is no doubt Babylonian, and we should have to suppose this even if we had not the report of Berossus, because only in Babylonia there were the natural conditions for telling such stories. But we have still to answer the last and most important question: How, where,

---


(2) P. Schnabel, *Berossos und die babylonisch-hellenistische Literatur*, 1923, tr. 34 (pp. 264-66). Is it only a curious coincidence that the *Treasure of Alexander* claims to have been presented to Antiochus I Soter, who deposited it in a safe building in Amorium, Phrygia, where it remained until the caliph al-Mu’tasim (833-842 A. D.) conquered the town and discovered the *Treasure*? It was this Antiochus I to whom Berossus dedicated his *Babyloniaca*!

(3) Schnabel, p. 175.
and when was the Babylonian story transformed so as to serve as a model for the Hermetic "tradition" of Muslim authors? It is self-evident that the missing link has to be found in a Greek text dealing with Aegyptiaca. For, according to Abū Ma’shar, Hermes the First lived in Egypt, and as is generally known, in Egypt Hermes was identified with Thot, who was credited with the invention of wisdom, exactly as Hermes in Abū Ma’shar’s report.

In view of these facts, we are justified in regarding as the missing link a well-known passage in a letter falsely ascribed to Berosus’ younger contemporary, Manetho, who dedicated his Aegyptiaca to Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-247). For our purpose, it does not matter whether the letter is authentic or not. I quote Waddell’s translation:

"It remains now to make brief extracts concerning the Dynasties of Egypt from the work of Manetho of Sebennytus. In the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus he was styled high-priest of the pagan temples of Egypt, and wrote from inscriptions in the Sēriadic land (Egypt), traced, he says, in sacred language and holy characters by Thôt, the first Hermes, and translated after the Flood... into hieroglyphic characters. After the work had been arranged in books by Agathodaemôn, son of the second Hermès (Trismegistus) and father of Tat, in the temple-stories of Egypt, Manetho dedicated it to the above king Ptolemy II Philadelphus in his Book of Sōthis, using the following words”.

No explanation is required of the non-Egyptian character of this or of any other story taking into account the Flood. The non-existence of a Flood in Egypt even serves Plato in different places as an argument for explaining the uninterrupted tradition of primeval Egyptian wisdom, as compared with the lower standard of other peoples, who, after the Flood, had to begin afresh. No doubt, therefore, that the introduction of

---

(1) Manetho, ed. Waddell (Loeb), 1940, p. 208 f.; analysed by Scott, Hermetica, III, p. 491 f., and by Festugière, I, p. 74 f.; the latter dates the text probably before Varro.
the Pseudo-Manethonian letter derives, directly or indirectly, from the Babylonian stories quoted above. I only wish to point out the further possibility that allusions to Hermes the Babylonian and his migration from Babylon to Egypt, which are found in Arabic Literature, may be a literary expression of the fact that an essentially Babylonian myth has been transplanted into Egyptian soil, where the myth of the Flood is out of place. Be that as it may, we have here at any rate an example of the transmission of Greek Hermetic tradition to the Arabs; and if its derivation from Babylonian sources can be maintained, we are now in possession of another case of survival of Babylonian ideas in Islam.

10. Let us turn to the second example. In 1933, H. Ritter published the Arabic text of the *Ghāyal al-ḥakīm*, known in its Latin translation as *Picatrix* (11th cent.), a comprehensive textbook of Magic on an astrological basis. A translation by the present writer which had already been printed, was destroyed in the printer's store during the last war, but is now being set up again in print for early publication. The book contains many excerpts from Hermetic books, some of which are also preserved separately. Now, the dependance of *Picatrix* upon Hermes goes far beyond what is expressly stated as being derived from the Thrice-Great's works, as will be made clear by the following specimen.

*Picatrix* contains an enumeration of the 28 Lunar Mansions, their mathematical boundaries and their natural properties as well as indications of their being favourable or unfavourable for various purposes and for the making of certain talismans (p. 14-24). The author or his source mentions only one of his authorities, the "Indians", but adds the word "chiefly", thus admitting that he has drawn on others, too. A quite different list of the Lunar Mansions and their indications is incorporated in the *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity (1), whose strong in-

fluence on *Picatrix* in many other respects has already been shown by Ritter (1).

The Brethren’s list is explicitly stated to derive from a certain book of Hermes named *al-Isāfās*, a copy of which exists in Paris (2), and the list of the Mansions there agrees, in fact, with the text given by the Brethren, except for the usual variant readings and some additions. On the other hand, the famous astrologer, Ibn abi ‘r-Rižāl, known to the West as Haly filius Abenragel, a contemporary of the author of *Picatrix*, gives a list (3) which generally agrees with that of *Picatrix*, and here the indications of each mansion are carefully assigned to two sources, the “Indians” and the Greek astrologer Dorotheus Sidonius.

Now, Abenragel’s distribution is corroborated and completed by a manuscript in the British Museum, (4) where the indications of the “Indians”, of Dorotheus and of the Brethren of Purity are written in separate rubrics. Also in two other manuscripts of the British Museum (5) the Hermetic list as preserved by the Brethren occurs in full. With the help of these materials it has become possible to identify a definite contribution of the Hermetic list to all Mansions of the list in *Picatrix*. This contribution, it is true, is rather small, and was, therefore, previously believed to be merely a trifling addition made by the author himself and not derived from an independent source. Only the discovery of the London manuscripts has led us to become aware of the distinct character of these small additions. For lack of space, I abstain from giving here a specimen of textual analysis, and refer to the forthcoming translation of *Picatrix* and to a further volume, which will contain a detailed examination of these and other problems.

(2) *Al-Uṣṭūṭas*, Paris, ms. ar. 2577. Another version of the text with the same title is preserved in the ms. Leiden, *Catalogue*, n° 1168.
(4) Add. 23,400.
(5) Or. 5709, at the end, and Or. 5591, attributed to Hermes, fol. 3 v-18 r.
11. These two examples, I hope, will show how far the analysis can be carried and how many sources can be regained or identified, if we patiently search the texts available. Now that we possess Father Festugière’s studies on scientific Hermetism, it will be all the easier to gain a clear idea of the Hermetic tradition in Arabic, that will not only throw new light upon an essential branch of the History of Science, but also help to justify, or possibly to modify, Massignon’s statement concerning the part played by “Hermes” in the development of Islamic thought. If, as we believe, the answers to our two initial questions are positive in principle, both the history of Greek tradition and the research on Hermetism as a whole will considerably benefit from the study of Arabic *Hermetica*, and thus a movement will be better understood which, for so long, deeply influenced human thought. We only hope that a sufficient number of Arabists and Scientists will be found who will devote themselves to the difficult task of editing and explaining the existing texts. Fortunately, the number of these texts seems large enough to supply ample evidence, and to enable us to arrive at reliable results.

M. PLESSNER.

(Jerusalem)

ADDITIONAL NOTES


P. 58, n. 4: This MS, the title-page of which is missing, contains the same work as the MS Berlin, Pet. I 676, i. e. the *Safinat al-aḥkām* of a certain Ḥaḍrat al-Neṣairi (not mentioned in Brockelmann; *cf. C. A. Nalline, Raccolta di scritti*, V, 1944, p. 259).