

ON THE ORIGIN OF JOHN PHILOPONUS'S *DE CONTINGENTIA MUNDI*

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Abstract

The article re-examines the question of the origin of a text by the sixth-century Greek philosopher and Christian theologian John Philoponus, extant only as an epitome in Arabic translation, the so-called *De contingentia mundi*. It analyses the evidence for the existence of an anti-eternalist work by Philoponus in addition to those known in Greek and examines the correspondence between a portion of the Arabic epitome and a Greek fragment of Philoponus's *Against Aristotle* that was preserved by Simplicius. Based on the vocabulary and phraseology of the epitome, the article proposes to attribute the Arabic epitome to the circle of the ninth-century Muslim philosopher al-Kindī. Finally, the article attempts to explain the evidence concerning the transmission of the epitome in milieus as diverse as that early Islamic philosophical circle and the later Christian Arabic tradition, which preserved it.

Key Words

Philoponus; *De contingentia mundi*; *Contra Aristotelem*; circle of al-Kindī;
Christian Arabic tradition



The Arabic tradition has preserved the epitome of an otherwise lost Greek work by the philosopher and Christian theologian John Philoponus¹ (490–570 CE) that is

¹ On Philoponus, see in the *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, publié sous la direction de RICHARD GOULET, vol. VA. *De Paccius à Plotin*, C.N.R.S. Éditions, Paris 2011, the entry by GIOVANNA R. GIARDINA, « Philopon (Jean -) », p. 455–502; and by EMMA GANNAGÉ, « Philopon (Jean -). Tradition arabe », p. 503–563. Contributions on Philoponus and the Arabic tradition also in ROBERT WISNOVSKY, « Yahyā al-naḥwī », in PERI BEARMAN (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill (https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7961, last accessed October 2023); ELIAS GIANNAKIS, « Philoponus, Arabic », in HENRIK LAGERLUND (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*, Springer, Dordrecht 2020² (2011), p. 1469–1473; CRISTINA

conventionally entitled *De contingentia mundi*. The aim of this article is to address two interrelated issues: the origin of its contents and the origin of the Arabic epitome itself. The former was addressed by previous scholarship, but this issue has left room for some scepticism, as will be seen below, thus calling for a fresh assessment. The latter has not received any substantial separate treatment thus far; therefore, a hypothesis will be proposed in this regard.

I. *The transmission of Philoponus's so-called De contingentia mundi*

The text of the epitome is extant in the MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Huntington collection 240, fol. 105v–109v.² The manuscript is a collection of Christian Arabic treatises compiled by an unknown Coptic scholar. It consists of two parts: the older and main part, which includes *De contingentia mundi*, is dated by a colophon to the year 1549 CE, whereas other folios are later additions, likely dating from the early sixteenth century. Philoponus's epitome consists of three extracts (*ma'ānī*). The title of the first extract specifies that they are drawn « from the book of John the Grammarian concerning the proof for the creation of the world » (*min kitāb Yaḥyā al-naḥwī fī l-dalāla 'alā ḥadaṭ al-'ālam*). According to the titles, the three extracts derive from the first, second, and third « discourse » or « section » (*maqāla*), respectively, of the lost work. In 1972, Shlomo Pines published an annotated English translation of the text, showing, at the same time, that a polemical treatise by Avicenna concerning « the proofs of those who affirm that the past has a temporal beginning » refutes arguments that are Philoponian in character and

D'ANCONA, « Philoponus, or 'Yaḥyā al-naḥwī. An Overview », *Studia Graeco-Arabica*, 9 (2019), p. 203–242.

² ALFRED F.L. BEESTON, « An Important Christian Arabic Manuscript in Oxford », *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 19 (1953), p. 197–205; previous mention in LUWĪS MA'LŪF, « Al-Risāla fī waḥdāniyyat al-ḥāliq wa-taṭlīṭ aqānīmīhi, ta'līf Ḥiyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn, 'uniya bi-naṣrihā al-Ab Lūis Ma'lūf al-Yasūī », *Al-Mašriq*, 6 (1903), p. 111–116: p. 111. Before Beeston, Graf also listed the Oxford manuscript, as pointed out by the online catalogue « Fihrist. Union Catalogue of Manuscripts from the Islamicate World » (https://www.fihrist.org.uk/catalog/manuscript_982, last accessed October 2023); however, Graf listed it among the manuscripts preserving the Arabic translation of *Against Proclus*, which is a distinct work: GEORG GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, Città del Vaticano, 1944 (Studi e testi, 118), vol. I, p. 418. Updates to Beeston's description in ADEL SIDARUS, « À propos de deux textes sur la création-contingence du monde transmis dans un recueil médiéval copto-arabe (Yaḥyā al-naḥwī et Abū Šākir ibn al-Rāhib) », *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*, 19 (2010–2011), p. 121–134.

partially akin to those of the epitome;³ in 1984, Gérard Troupeau published the Arabic text of the epitome, accompanied by a French translation.⁴

The text is also extant in a further epitomised form, being embedded within the Christian Arabic theological work *Compendium of the Principles of Religion and the Received Tradition of What Has Been Found to be Certain* (*Maǧmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn wa-masmūʿ maḥṣūl al-yaqīn*), by the Coptic scholar al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. between 1270 and 1286 CE).⁵ Philoponus's text is quoted in Chapter 4, which is devoted to the divine creation of the world, in paragraphs 1–34.⁶ The text from *De contingentia mundi*, as provided by al-Muʿtaman's *Compendium*, is introduced as follows: « Extracts of the three sections of the book by the most illustrious, unique, knowing teacher John the Grammarian, the Jacobite, the *Askalānī*, through which he refuted the upholders of the eternity of the world » (*maʿānī al-maqālāt al-talāṭ min kitāb al-ṣayḥ al-aǧall al-awḥad al-ʿālim Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī al-yaqūbī al-Askalānī, alladī radda bihi ʿalā l-qāʾilīna bi-qīdam al-ʿālam*), with the term *Askalānī* presumably being a corruption of the Syriac *eškūlāyā* (i.e., 'scholastic').⁷ Philoponus is recalled in a very similar wording in the list of biblical and patristic authorities provided in Chapter 1, paragraph 15 of the *Compendium*: « The most illustrious, unique, knowing, wise teacher John the *Askūlānī*, author of the *Book of the creation of the world* [*kitāb ḥadaṭ al-ʿālam*], through which he countered Proclus and Aristotle,

³ SHLOMO PINES, « An Arabic Summary of a Lost Work of John Philoponus », *Israel Oriental Studies*, 2 (1972), p. 320–352 (= ID., *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines II. Studies in Arabic Versions of Greek Texts and in Mediaeval Science*, Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1986, p. 294–326). Since then, Avicenna's work studied by Pines has been published in: *Hudūt al-ʿālam. Afḍal-ad-Dīn [...] Ibn Ḡaylān; al-Hukūma [...] Ibn Sīnā*, ed. MEHDI MOHAGHEGH, Dānešgāh-e Tehrān, Tehrān 1998, p. 131–152.

⁴ GÉRARD TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe du 'De contingentia mundi' de Jean Philopon », in ENZO LUCCHESI, HENRI-DOMINIQUE SAFFREY (eds.), *Mémorial André-Jean Festugière. Antiquité païenne et chrétienne*, P. Cramer, Genève 1984, p. 77–88 (= ID., *Études sur le christianisme arabe au Moyen Âge*, Variorum, Aldershot 1995, V).

⁵ His complete name is al-Muʿtaman Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAssāl; see the following entries: AZIZ S. ATIYA, « Muʿtaman Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAssāl », in AZIZ S. ATIYA (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. VI, Macmillan, New York 1991, p. 1748b–1749a; WADI AWAD, *Al-Muʿtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl*, in DAVID THOMAS, ALEX MALLET (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History, Volume 4: (1200–1350)*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2012 (History of Christian-Muslim Relations, 17), p. 530–537. PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 321, gives an incorrect name, « Hibat Allāh b. al-ʿAssāl », which is really the name of al-Muʿtaman's brother, who was a Christian Arabic theologian himself (his complete name being al-Asʿad Abū l-Faraǧ Hibat Allāh ibn Abī l-Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī Ishāq ibn al-ʿAssāl).

⁶ Critical edition and Italian translation: AL-MUʿTAMAN IBN AL-ʿASSĀL, *Maǧmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn wa-masmūʿ maḥṣūl al-yaqīn* [*Summa dei principi della religione*], ed. AWAD WADI, trans. BARTOLOMEO PIRONE, 6 vols., The Franciscan Centre of Christian Oriental Studies, Cairo – Jerusalem 1998–2002 (*Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographiae*, VIa–VIb, VIIa–VIIb, 8–9).

⁷ Thus GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. I, p. 417, n. 4 (reading *al-Askulānī*); see GANNAGÉ, « Philopon (Jean -). Tradition arabe », p. 503. PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 321, n. 4, read *al-Askalānī*, taking it to mean « of Askalon ».

upholders of the eternity of the world; it is said that he was a Nestorian, although I am not certain about his doctrinal adherence ».⁸

The information provided by al-Mu'taman indicates that he was not familiar with the historical figure of John Philoponus. Apart from the corrupt designation *al-Askalānī/al-Askūlānī* (also employed by al-Mu'taman's contemporary Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a),⁹ several other elements point in the same direction: the hesitation concerning his actual Christological adherence (« Jacobite » or « Nestorian », with the former being substantially correct because Philoponus was a miaphysite); the merging of Philoponus's anti-eternalist works *Against Proclus*¹⁰ and *Against Aristotle*¹¹ into a single book, identified as one *Book of the Creation of the World*; and, finally, the praises associated to Philoponus's name, which entail ignorance of his condemnation as heretic on behalf of his tritheism by the third Constantinopolitan council in 680–681 CE.¹² Additionally, some manuscripts of the *Compendium*, in

⁸ AL-MU'TAMAN IBN AL-'ASSĀL, *Maǧmū'*, ed. WADI, vol. VIa, p. 43.8–10.

⁹ As noticed by PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 321, n. 4. See the open access edition *A Literary History of Medicine - The 'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā' of Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'ah*, ed. EMILIE SAVAGE-SMITH, SIMON SWAIN, GEERT J. VAN GELDER, 5 vols., Brill, Leiden 2020 (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East, 134), vol. II/1, chapter 6.1.1. Cf. the same epithet in the later catalogue of Christian literature by the Coptic Christian Abū l-Barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1324 CE), which is contained in chapter 7 of his work *The Lamp of the Darkness and the Illumination of the Service (Miṣbāḥ al-zulma wa-īdāḥ al-ḥidma)*: WILHELM RIEDEL, « Der Katalog der christlichen Schriften in arabischer Sprache von Abū 'lBarakāt », in *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse*, 5, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, Berlin 1902, p. 635–706: p. 651.11 (= *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma fī īdāḥ al-ḥidma li-l-qass Šams al-Ri'āsa Abū l-Barakāt al-ma'rūf bi-bn Kabar*, vol. I, ed. SAMİR ḤALĪL, Maktabat al-Kārūz, al-Qāhira 1971, p. 301.4).

¹⁰ The Greek text of all the quotations from *Against Proclus* is taken from IOANNES PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, ed. HUGO RABE, in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, Lipsiae 1899 (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana); Rabe's text was reprinted by Scholten, who also had access to MS Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. 236: IOHANNES PHILOPONOS, *De aeternitate mundi / Über die Ewigkeit der Welt*, ed. CLEMENS SCHOLTEN, Brepols, Turnhout, vol. I–II, 2009; vol. III–V, 2011 (Fontes Christiani, 64/1–5). The English translations of the same work are drawn from: PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus On the Eternity of the World*, trans. MICHAEL SHARE et al., 4 vols., Bloomsbury, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney 2004–2006 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle).

¹¹ Collection of the fragments in English translation in PHILOPONUS, *Against Aristotle On the Eternity of the World*, trans. CHRISTIAN WILDBERG, Duckworth, London 1987 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle). Throughout this article, I will refer to the numbering of the fragments of *Against Aristotle* provided by this volume. It should be mentioned that since Wildberg's work, *Against Aristotle* is considered to have consisted of eight books (not six, as previously thought), as indicated by the existence of one Syriac fragment drawn from the eighth book of the work.

¹² *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. Series secunda, volumen secundum, pars prima. Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum tertium. Concilii actiones I–XI*, ed. RUDOLF RIEDINGER, De Gruyter, Berlin 1990, p. 480.14–16: Ἰωάννης ὁ γραμματικός, ὁ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν Φιλόπονος, μᾶλλον δὲ ματαιόπονος, Κόνων τε καὶ Εὐγένιος, οἱ τρεῖς τῆς τριθεΐας τρισκατάρατοι πρόμαχοι (« John the Grammarian,

Chapter 4, provide the name of the Syriac miaphysite (« Jacobite ») Christian Arabic writer Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (893–974 CE), instead of the correct *Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī* (i.e., « John the Grammarian »). This confusion is frequent in the Arabic tradition¹³ and further confirms that John Philoponus was a figure of little renown.

The collation of the Oxford text with the text embedded in al-Muʿtaman's *Compendium* shows that the latter is an additionally shortened version, providing no independent information of its own.¹⁴ Consequently, the following discussion will focus only on the epitome as provided in the Oxford manuscript.

The prologue of the work itself explains its nature:

I have already composed books [*kutuban*] before in order to refute the sophistries and the equivocal statements by means of which Proclus, Aristotle and others among the Eternalists put the case in favour of the eternity *a parte ante* of the world. Now, however, in this book [*kitāb*] I wish to demonstrate that the world is created in time [*muḥdatā*], having come into existence after not having existed. I shall endeavour to make this clear and to validate the reasoning concerning this [matter]. For with respect to a matter which can [only] be known by syllogistic reasoning, one can acquire perfect knowledge only through a combination of two things: one of them being the establishment by demonstration [of the true knowledge] concerning this [matter], and the other the refutation of the sophistries and equivocal statements which prevent the speculative thinker from accepting it. For if we [confine ourselves] to demonstrating the conception which to our mind is the true one and let be the sophistries which prevent this conception from being accepted, we give to what is false and to what is true an equal [status], inasmuch as there are sophistries by which the truth is contrasted¹⁵ which have not as yet been refuted; [accordingly] the speculative thinker is not clear about their being sophistries. On the other hand, if we refute the sophistries which run counter to the [correct] demonstration,¹⁶ but do not demonstrate [the conception], its acceptance is not

nicknamed 'lover of labour', or rather 'vain labourer', as well as Conon and Eugenius, the three thrice-cursed fighters for tritheism »).

¹³ GANNAGÉ, « Philopon (Jean -). Tradition arabe », p. 504.

¹⁴ Both Pines and Troupeau used some manuscripts of al-Muʿtaman's *Compendium*, which was unpublished at the time of their research, in order to improve some readings of the text of the *De contingentia mundi* provided by the Oxford manuscript: PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 320–321 (MS Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ar. 103, fol. 45v–49r; Pines wrongly provides the page numbers 30a–32b); TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 78, n. 9 and n. 13 (MSS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ar. 200, fol. 28v–31v; and ar. 201, fol. 54r–58v). The manuscripts employed by the two scholars are among those employed by Wadi in his edition of al-Muʿtaman's *Compendium*.

¹⁵ TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.7: *yuḍāddu bihā*. Pines originally translated: « inasmuch as there are sophistries (attendant) upon that which is false which have not as yet been refuted ».

¹⁶ TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.8: *al-ḥaqq* (« the truth »); but see p. 79, n. 3 (variant reading *al-burhān*, meaning « demonstration »).

necessary, and it may be [regarded] by the speculative thinkers as uncertain, inasmuch as it has not yet been demonstrated. For this [reason] I considered it as necessary for the correctness of the debate to compose, after the books in which I refuted the arguments of the eternalists, a special [*al.* comprehensive]¹⁷ book [*kitāban*] [devoted to] improving the proof for the temporal creation of the world [*al-dalāla 'alā ḥadaṭ al-'ālam*]. I shall start upon this [task] at this place¹⁸.

The prologue represents the beginning of the first of the three aforementioned « discourses » or « sections », each of which presents one proof against the world's eternity and for creation. The first proof consists of exploiting the tenet that every finite body, including the world, must possess a finite power, so that the world cannot be eternal; even if it acquired eternal duration from a superior divine power, it has been proven to be created by nature. The second proof points out that the total sum of finite temporal durations is finite; the objection that there may be an infinite composed by an infinite number of finite things is refuted in the case of both linear and circular time. The third proof rests on the intraversability of the infinite, showing the impossibility of an infinite succession of past men ever reaching the present moment and the consequent necessity for the series to begin starting from individuals who have come to exist directly in actuality in the past.

II. Authorship of *De contingentia mundi*

The authorship of the contents of *De contingentia mundi* is beyond doubt. In his article, Pines provided doctrinal parallels between the Arabic epitome and *Against Proclus* that confirm this.¹⁹

The prologue also appears to be genuine. In fact, the methodology it describes, namely the necessity of both refuting errors and positively establishing the truth, which leads to the composition of *De contingentia mundi*, is mirrored briefly, as it seems to me, by a passage in *Against Proclus*. There, Philoponus refutes the view, which was upheld by the Middle Platonist Taurus (second century CE), that according to the *Timaeus*, the world was not really generated. Philoponus justifies his lengthy refutation of Taurus by pointing out that as long as some people are convinced by the view of his adversaries, his refutation is necessary and by stating that « we must proclaim the truth free from all obstruction » (δεῖ δὲ πάσης

¹⁷ PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 322, n. 21, states that he reads *kitāb ḥāṣṣ* (« a special book »). TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.9, reads *kitāban ḡāmi'an* (translated as « un livre global », p. 84).

¹⁸ Arabic text in TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.2–10; trans. by PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 321–322, modified.

¹⁹ PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 341–343.

ὀχλήσεως ἐλευθέραν ἡμῖν ἀναδειχθῆναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν);²⁰ this twofold methodological obligation appears consistent with the prologue of *De contingentia mundi*.

The only doubt concerning the authorship of the Arabic epitome was raised by Herbert A. Davidson in his classical monograph on creation in Medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophy. This doubt is limited to the second proof, which in his opinion « is probably attributed to Philoponus erroneously ». He provides the following reasoning:

The argument is that the lives of individuals mark off the time continuum into segments, each of which is finite; and finite segments of time, no matter how many there might be, could not join together to constitute infinite time. By contrast, Philoponus, *De aeternitate [mundi contra Proclum]*, ed. Rabe], p. 9, takes the common sense position that an infinite number of past time segments, each of which was finite, would indeed constitute an infinite past time.²¹

The passage from *Against Proclus* referred to by Davidson does not contradict *De contingentia mundi*; on the contrary, it provides a parallel for its second proof, as indicated by Pines.²² The passage from *Against Proclus*²³ pointed out by Davidson is embedded within a broader set of arguments against eternity and briefly precedes a reference to another anti-eternalist work. There, Philoponus simply states that *if one endorses the view that the world is eternal, then one would have an actual infinite number of time segments marking off the durations of the lives of past individuals, as well as that on the assumption of the world's eternity, one cannot escape this impossible conclusion by taking the contrary stance that their number is finite, because the total sum of finite time segments must be finite as well.* The second proof of the *De contingentia mundi* clearly adopts the same argument based on the actual infinity of past individuals. The same principles are simply laid down differently: if the world is eternal and each individual has a finite duration in time, then past time is composed of finite durations and, thus, the world cannot be eternal. The possibility that there may be an infinite composed by an infinite number of finite things is subsequently raised as an objection; it is refuted on the grounds that time is finite at least at one of its ends, namely the moment before

²⁰ PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus* VI, 21, ed. RABE, p. 189.13–21 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. III, p. 712). The same term ὀχλήσις is used by Philoponus in *Against Proclus* VII, 6 (see below, T3), when affirming that elsewhere he will get rid of the « obstruction » of the difficulties involved in the view that the world is eternal and prove that it cannot be eternal.

²¹ HERBERT A. DAVIDSON, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, Oxford U.P., New York – Oxford 1987, p. 94, n. 54.

²² PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 342.

²³ PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus* I, 3, ed. RABE, p. 9.4–10.2 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 336–338).

the present.²⁴ Therefore, in both works the same assumption of a finite total duration for the lives of past individuals is shown to conflict with the assumption of the world's eternity. As a result, Philoponus is consistent in both works, and we need not reject the authorship of the second proof of *De contingentia mundi*.

III. Traces of a third anti-eternalist work by Philoponus

A separate issue concerns the actual existence of a third anti-eternalist work by Philoponus, in addition to *Against Proclus* and *Against Aristotle*, and whether or not it should be identified with the text that has come down to us as the Arabic epitome called *De contingentia mundi*. The prologue of the Arabic epitome, which is quoted above, states clearly that what follows belongs to a further book (*kitāb*), one composed as a distinct work after the previous works against Proclus, Aristotle and other upholders of the world's eternity. In his article on the epitome, Pines pointed out²⁵ that two scholars, Étienne Évrard and Herbert A. Davidson, based on independent evidence, have argued for the existence of such a further work, one devoted to the proof of creation. Because the arguments of Évrard and Davidson directly touch on the nature of the epitome and the key texts to be discussed below, I shall recall them briefly.

Évrard²⁶ appealed to three texts from Philoponus's *Against Proclus* (T1–3 below) and the prologue of his *De opificio mundi* (T4), all of which, in Évrard's opinion, indicate that Philoponus intended to write a further book on creation.

T1. But that the infinite cannot in any way exist in actuality, whether by existing all at once or by coming into existence bit by bit, we shall, if God permits, in due course demonstrate at greater length in another [work], when, having looked into all of the puzzles surrounding the issue of an everlasting world, we shall finally establish on our own account that it cannot be everlasting [ἐν ἑτέρῳ μὲν προϊόντες θεοῦ διδόντος ἐντελέστερον δείξομεν, ἐπειδὴν πάσας τὰς περὶ τοῦ αἰδίου εἶναι τὸν κόσμον ἀπορίας ἐλέγξαντες αὐτοὶ λοιπὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν κατασκευάζομεν, ὡς οὐκ ἐνδέχεται αὐτὸν εἶναι αἰδίου]. And I shall cite Aristotle himself explicitly arguing this very point – I mean that the infinite can in no manner exist in actuality.²⁷

²⁴ TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 80.12–81.2.

²⁵ PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 337–346.

²⁶ Pines relied on Évrard's unpublished *mémoire de licence*, which he quotes as follows: ÉTIENNE ÉVRARD, *Philopon contre Aristote*, Livre I, Université de Liège, Liège 1942–1943. Since then, Évrard's work has been lost: see ÉTIENNE ÉVRARD, *Études philoponiennes. Philosophe à l'école d'Alexandrie*, textes d'Étienne Évrard réunis et édités par MARC-ANTOINE GAVRAY, Presses Universitaires de Liège, Liège 2020 (Série Philosophie, 8), p. 19. His arguments for the existence of another Philoponian work can be read in the latter volume, at p. 212–213.

²⁷ PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus* I, 3, ed. RABE, p. 9.20–10.2 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 338); trans. SHARE, vol. I, p. 24.

T2. So if these absurdities, and, as we shall demonstrate elsewhere [ὡς ἐν ἑτέροις δείξομεν], many others necessarily arise if the world is ungenerated, it is not possible that the world is ungenerated and without a beginning.²⁸

T3. In regard to the circular movement which the heavenly bodies exhibit, it will be shown more fully, if God permits, in *Objections Against Aristotle On the Everlastingness of the World* [ἐντελέστερον μὲν ἐν ταῖς πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλην περὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ἀιδιότητος ἀντιρρήσειν], that it too is not everlasting; for we shall need to produce additional arguments against this position. However, if it has been adequately demonstrated in the first chapter [of *Against Proclus*] that it is impossible for the generation of the world to be everlasting (something, indeed, which will be demonstrated even more fully on our own account when we have got rid of the obstruction arising from all of the puzzles [ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἐντελέστερον ἰδίᾳ δειχθήσεται, ἐπειδὴν τὴν ἐκ πασῶν τῶν ἀποριῶν ὄχλησιν ἀποσκευασόμεθα]), it is clear that circular movement cannot be everlasting either.²⁹

T4 occurs in the prologue of *De opificio mundi*. After affirming that he has refuted, in several works, the convoluted philosophical fallacies aimed at proving that the world is ungenerated, Philoponus adds the following:

T4. I have also demonstrated that it [the world] has a beginning of existence, arguing for this by means of many efforts [δέδειχα δὲ καὶ ὡς ἀρχὴν ἔχει τοῦ εἶναι, πλείοσιν ἐπιβολαῖς τοῦτο συλλογισάμενος].³⁰

Concerning T4, Pines³¹ notes that the word συλλογισάμενος (also translatable as « using syllogistic reasoning ») finds a correspondence with the prologue of *De contingentia mundi*, which refers to establishing the proof for creation « through syllogism » (*bi-l-qiyās*).³²

²⁸ PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus* I, 3, ed. RABE, p. 11.14–17 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 342); Rabe and Scholten read δείξομεν instead of the correct future tense, δείξομεν, which is the reading of the *editio princeps* (Ἰωάννου Γραμματικοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως τοῦ Φιλοπόνου κατὰ Πρόκλου περὶ ἀιδιότητος κόσμου / *Ioannis Grammatici Philoponi Alexandrini contra Proclum de mundi aeternitate*, ed. VICTOR TRINCAVELUS, Venice 1535, p. 4.1 of the Greek text); trans. SHARE, vol. I, p. 25.

²⁹ *Against Proclus* VII, 6, ed. RABE, p. 258.22–259.6 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. III, p. 840); trans. SHARE, vol. II, p. 96 (modified).

³⁰ JOANNIS PHILOPONI *de opificio mundi libri VII*, ed. GUALTERUS REICHARDT, in *aedibus* B. G. Teubneri, Lipsiae 1897 (*Scriptores sacri et profani*, 1), p. 1.13–14 = JOHANNES PHILOPONOS, *De opificio mundi / Über die Erschaffung der Welt*, ed. CLEMENS SCHOLTEN, 3 vols., Herder, Freiburg – Basel – Wien – Barcelona – Rome – New York 1997 (*Fontes Christiani*, 23/1–3), vol. I, p. 72; my translation.

³¹ PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 240.

³² TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.4.

Évrard's references are supplemented by two further references (T5–6) suggested by Koenraad Verrycken.³³ The former is taken from *Against Proclus*:

T5. That time does indeed have a beginning I shall show elsewhere [ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴν ἔχει ὁ χρόνος, ἡμεῖς ἐν ἑτέροις δείξομεν].³⁴

The latter belongs to Philoponus's analysis of the infinite in his commentary on *Physics*, book III:

T6. But let us consider specifically the more complete argument concerning this [τὸν δὲ περὶ τούτων ἐντελέστερον λόγον ἰδίᾳ ἐπισκεψώμεθα].³⁵

T6 presents us with a problem because in this form, it is simply a transitional passage, providing no cross-references to other works. Verrycken refers to it because he takes the subjunctive verb ἐπισκεψώμεθα to be in the future tense, accordingly construing the sentence to mean « I will consider » or « I will inquire ». The future-tense ἐπισκεψώμεθα, which would make the reference valid, is attested (as indicated by Vitelli's edition of Philoponus's commentary on *Physics*), but only as the reading of Trincavelli's *editio princeps*.³⁶ Trincavelli's reading is tempting because, in the previous lines, Philoponus argues against infinite time on the grounds that an actual infinite can never exist, neither all at once nor bit by bit. He does so in a way that is similar to the section of *Against Proclus* that comprises T1. Moreover, in T6, ἐντελέστερον recalls T1 and T3, and ἰδίᾳ recalls T3 (provided that the verb is in the future tense, the latter may be understood as « on our own account »). Therefore T6, while not providing firm independent evidence, cannot be entirely discarded as a potential cross-reference.

The references agree in stating that « elsewhere » (ἐν ἑτέρῳ T1; ἐν ἑτέροις T2, T5), after solving the puzzles (ἀπορίαι T1, T,3) involved in the view that the world is eternal, Philoponus intended to prove, on his own (αὐτοῖ [...] ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν T1; ἰδίᾳ

³³ KOENRAAD VERRYCKEN, « The Development of Philoponus' Thought and Its Chronology », in RICHARD SORABJI (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, Cornell U.P., Ithaca (NY) 1990, p. 233–274; p. 254 and n. 129.

³⁴ PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus* V, 4, ed. RABE, p. 117.20–21 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 580); trans. SHARE, vol. I, p. 87.

³⁵ IOANNIS PHILOPONI in *Aristotelis Physicorum libros tres priores commentaria*, ed. HIERONYMUS VITELLI, Typis et impensis Georgii Reimeri, Berolini 1887 (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, 16), p. 430.9–10. Translation taken from PHILOPONUS, *On Aristotle Physics* 3, trans. MARK J. EDWARDS, Bloomsbury, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney 1994 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle), p. 97.

³⁶ Ἰωάννου Γραμματικοῦ ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὰ περὶ φυσικῆς τέσσαρα πρῶτα βιβλία τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους / *Ioannis Grammatici in primos quatuor Aristotelis de naturali auscultatione libros commentaria*, ed. VICTOR TRINCAVELUS, Venice 1535.

T3, T6),³⁷ in a more complete way (έντελέστερον T1, T3, T6), that the infinite cannot exist in actuality (T1) and that the world cannot be eternal (T2; also phrased by saying that its generation cannot be eternal in T3). These references do, indeed, fit the content of the prologue of the Arabic *De contingentia mundi* well.³⁸ However, it should be noted that none of these references explicitly refers to a third work, that is, one beyond *Against Proclus* and *Against Aristotle* (a conclusion also reached by Clemens Scholten concerning the cross-references found in *Against Proclus*).³⁹ On the other hand, remarkably, two of the cross references, T1 and T3, contain a reference to Philoponus's criticism of Aristotle; T3 is especially explicit in referring to *Against Aristotle*, in addition to providing the generic cross-reference to a future refutation of the world's eternity.

I believe that a further reference can be added to those gathered by previous scholars. In *De opificio mundi* IV, 7 Philoponus, after declaring that divine creation must have started from « complete » or « perfect » (τέλεια) individuals, as opposed to « incomplete » or « imperfect » ones (άτελή), affirms that he has « often shown elsewhere » (έν έτέροις πολλάκις έδειξαμεν) that generation cannot reach the present moment through infinite individuals.⁴⁰ While the proof referred to is found not only in *De contingentia mundi*, but also other Philoponian works,⁴¹ one element suggests that *De contingentia mundi* is also meant. The discussion in *De opificio mundi* concerning the fact that creation began with perfect individuals, along with the anti-eternalist argument this evokes, is paralleled by the third proof of *De contingentia mundi*. From the impossibility of an infinity by succession, this proof concludes that the first ancestors were produced perfect and in

³⁷ According to Simplicius's testimony, in proving that every body must possess finite power, Philoponus proceeded in the same way, i.e., both appealing to the Aristotelian argument with a critical aim and providing fresh proofs (δι' οικείων έπιχειρημάτων): SIMPLICII *in Aristotelis Physicorum libros quattuor posteriores commentaria*, ed. HERMANNUS DIELS, Typis et impensis Georgii Reimeri, Berolini 1895 (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, 10), p. 1329.13–19.

³⁸ Other references found in Philoponus's commentary on Aristotle's *Meteorologica* point to *Against Aristotle*, rather than to a third anti-eternalist work: see CHRISTIAN WILDBERG, *John Philoponus' Criticism of Aristotle's Theory of Aether*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 1988 (Peripatoi. Philologisch-historische Studien zum Aristotelismus, 16), p. 175, n. 177.

³⁹ JOHANNES PHILOPONOS, *De aeternitate mundi / Über die Ewigkeit der Welt*, ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. I, p. 163–173.

⁴⁰ PHILOPONUS, *De opificio mundi* IV, 7, ed. REICHARDT, p. 176.29–177.6 = ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 400.

⁴¹ Cf. PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus* I, 3, ed. RABE, p. 10.22–11.2 = ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 340. The idea that creation began from actualised, perfect individuals is also found in Philoponus's commentary on the second book of *De anima*: IOANNIS PHILOPONI *in Aristotelis de anima libros commentaria*, ed. MICHAEL HAYDUCK, Typis et impensis Georgii Reimeri, Berolini 1897 (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, 15), p. 217.4–7. However, there it is not paired with the anti-eternalist argument from the intraversability of an infinite succession of individuals.

actuality, as opposed to imperfect and in potentiality.⁴² However, this new cross-reference, just like the previous ones, does not explicitly mention a third anti-eternalist work.

To sum up, all the cross-references in Philoponus's works are simply too vague to prove the existence of a third anti-eternalist work that is lost in Greek.

Another line of argument in favour of the existence of a third anti-eternalist work is provided by Davidson,⁴³ who exploits the quotations and testimonies contained in the commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* authored by the pagan Neoplatonist Simplicius (480–560 CE), a source hostile to Philoponus's creationism. Davidson holds that Simplicius's commentary on book VIII of Aristotle's *Physics* refutes texts drawn from two distinct Philoponian works: *Against Aristotle*, book VI, comprising both objections to Aristotle and positive arguments for creation, with the latter being closely followed by the conclusion of the discussion of the sixth book (corresponding to Simplicius's commentary, ed. Diels, p. 1182.28–39),⁴⁴ and, later on, limited to a specific section of Simplicius's commentary (ed. Diels, p. 1326.38–1336.34),⁴⁵ another unnamed work or at least an appendix to *Against Aristotle*. Davidson argues as follows: first, in the former of these two sections of his commentary, Simplicius appears to conclude his discussion of *Against Aristotle* VI. Second, the Philoponian quotations in Simplicius's later section, which argue from the finite power of the universe, refer to « book IV of *Against Aristotle* », which is, arguably, an odd way of providing a cross-reference within a single work and, according to Davidson, never found in the previous quotations.⁴⁶ Third, the Arabic

⁴² See the entire third proof, especially TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 83.14–24, for the priority of the perfect over the imperfect at the beginning of creation.

⁴³ HERBERT A. DAVIDSON, « John Philoponus as a Source of Medieval Islamic and Jewish Proofs of Creation », *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 89/2 (1969), p. 357–391: p. 357–359.

⁴⁴ Roughly corresponding to *Against Aristotle*'s fr. 133 Wildberg (= *Simpl. in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1182.28–36). According to Davidson, book VI is discussed up to *Simpl. in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1182.28 (with overall concluding remarks in the following lines).

⁴⁵ A commented English translation of this section was published separately: PHILOPONUS, *Corollaries on Place and Void, with Simplicius, Against Philoponus on the Eternity of the World*, trans. DAVID FURLEY, CHRISTIAN WILDBERG, Bloomsbury, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney 1991 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle).

⁴⁶ *Simpl. in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1329.38 (δεδειχθαι δέ φησιν αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ τῶν πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλει [...]); p. 1333.32 (ὡς ἐδείξαμεν ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ τῶν πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλει); p. 1334.40–1335.1 (ἀλλ' ὅσα μὲν περὶ τούτου γέγραφεν, ὡς φησιν, ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ τῶν πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλει [...]). In fact, Simplicius does report one of Philoponus's cross-references outside the section devoted to the unnamed Philoponian work, that is, within his discussion of *Against Aristotle* book VI; however, in this case, Simplicius only mentions a « fourth book », without adding « against Aristotle » as in the other instances: *in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1175.16–17 (ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ λόγῳ δεδειχέναι φησὶν [...]). This discrepancy may mean that the latter cross-reference, unlike the others, comes from *Against Aristotle* (thus, this reference alone does not specify « against Aristotle »); this may add weight to Davidson's argument in favour of Simplicius's *Physics* commentary dealing with two distinct Philoponian works.

bibliographers list as separate items *Against Aristotle* and an otherwise unknown work: *Book on the Fact That Every Body is Finite, Hence its Power is Finite, One Discourse* (*Kitāb fī anna kull ḡism mutanāhī fa-quwwatuhu mutanāhiyya maqāla*).⁴⁷ Davidson maintains that this title corresponds to the unnamed Philoponian work discussed by Simplicius in the second relevant section of his commentary (ed. Diels, p. 1326.38–1336.34).

Davidson's second argument should be partially corrected. Two out of the three cross-references provided by Simplicius are actually in the third-person singular; thus, in both instances, it is Simplicius who is referring to Philoponus's *Against Aristotle*, book IV. Because Simplicius has previously completed his criticism of books I to VI of *Against Aristotle*, it makes sense that in the later section, when he resumes his polemic against Philoponus, he specifies that he is now referring to book IV of that work. Despite this minor correction, the remaining cross reference indicated by Davidson (ed. Diels, p. 1333.32) still stands.

Building on Davidson's conclusions, Pines argues that the missing Philoponian work titled *That Every Body is Finite, Hence its Power is Finite*, which is supposedly discussed in Simplicius's second section, is identical with the first « discourse » (*maqāla*) of the Arabic *De contingentia mundi* because *De contingentia mundi* contains the same argument from the finite power of the universe.⁴⁸ Therefore, according to Pines, *De contingentia mundi* preserves in epitomised form, either entirely or partially, the contents of the *Book on the Fact That Every Body is Finite, Hence its Power is Finite* that is recorded by the Arabic bibliographers. Pines is aware of the discrepancy between the number of « discourses » (three *maqālāt*) of *De contingentia mundi* and that of the Arabic title provided by the Arabic bibliographers (one *maqāla* only). However, he hypothesises that only the first discourse of *De contingentia mundi* was translated into Arabic in full and, thus, recorded by the Arabic bibliographers, whereas the other two were never translated in full. From this, he infers the possibility that the epitome was initially composed in Greek and subsequently translated into Arabic. This reconstruction, as Pines himself avows, is purely hypothetical.

⁴⁷ IBN AL-NADĪM, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. GUSTAV FLÜGEL, vol. I, Vogel, Leipzig 1871, p. 254.25–26 = *Kitāb al-fihrist li-l-Nadīm Abū al-Faraḡ Muḡammad ibn Abī Ya'qūb Ishāq al-ma'rūf bi-l-Warrāq*, ed. MUHAMMAD R. TAĞADDUD, Markaz-i Našr-i Dānišgāhī, Tehrān 1971, p. 315.5 = *Kitāb al-Fihrist li-Abī al-Faraḡ Muḡammad ibn Ishāq al-Nadīm*, ed. AYMAN F. SAYYID, vol. II, Mu'assasa al-Furqān li-l-tūrāt al-islāmiyya, London 2009, p. 179.7. Same title in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a: see SAVAGE-SMITH, S. SWAIN, VAN GELDER (eds.), *A Literary History of Medicine*, vol. II/1, chapter 6.2 (title no. 28). IBN AL-QIFĪTĪ's *Ta'rīḡ al-ḡukamā'*, ed. AUGUST MÜLLER, JULIUS LIPPERT, Dieterich'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig 1903, p. 356.5–6, has a corrupt text: *Kitāb fī anna kull ḡism mutanāhī wa-mawtuhu* [read *fa-quwwatuhu*] *muntahāhin* [al. *mutanāhin*] *maqāla wāḡida*.

⁴⁸ Cf. respectively TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.20–22 and *Simpl. in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1326.38–1329.19.

To sum up, scholars believe that Philoponus, in addition to *Against Proclus* and *Against Aristotle*, wrote a distinct unnamed text that is lost in Greek and devoted to proving that the world cannot be eternal. Allusions that may or may not refer to the lost text are found in the extant works by Philoponus. Moreover, Simplicius's commentary on *Physics* VIII contains a specific section, arguably refuting that lost text, after the end of his refutation of *Against Aristotle*, book VI. Davidson identifies it with the Arabic title *That Every Body is Finite, Hence its Power is Finite*. Pines followed his lead, adding the hypothesis that the Arabic epitome *De contingentia mundi* preserves part of that missing work. In what follows, I will attempt to add another element to the current reconstruction concerning the provenance of the *De contingentia mundi* and provide a fresh assessment of its origin.

IV. A textual correspondence between *De contingentia mundi* and *Against Aristotle* and its implications

The element I wish to introduce is found in the first section of Simplicius's commentary on *Physics* VIII discussed by Davidson. The section belongs to Simplicius's broader commentary on *Physics* VIII 1, 251b28–252a5, covering p. 1171.21–1182.39 (ed. Diels). Here, Simplicius quotes and refutes the last fragments of *Against Aristotle* book VI, declaring he has completed his criticism of this book at the end of the section. The Aristotelian lemma commented on is devoted to proving that movement is incorruptible and, thus, endless (just as Aristotle has shown above that it must be beginningless).⁴⁹ Consequently, the main set of fragments of *Against Aristotle* provided by Simplicius in this section (fr. 127–131 Wildberg) is aimed at refuting the incorruptibility of movement in order to prove that the world can come to an end.

The key text is listed by Wildberg as fr. 132 of *Against Aristotle*, book VI. It can be analysed as consisting of two parts. In the first part, Simplicius provides a crucial transitional passage:

Having said this, he claims that he will show that the world does not change into absolute nothingness but into something different, greater and more divine. And it is remarkable that on the one hand he believes that the destruction of the world is a change into something which is and is more divine, yet on the other hand says that the generation <of the world> did not take place from what existed. He declares that this world changes into another world which is more divine – a <proposition> he elaborates in the following books – not realising that this is not a destruction of the world but a perfecting. In concluding the arguments against the propositions which show motion to be ungenerated and indestructible he says that he has refuted

⁴⁹ Arist. *Phys.* VIII 1, 251a17–28.

them sufficiently – by this rotten chatter of his. And as if he has refuted these <propositions>, he even dares to demonstrate on his own that it is impossible that motion should be ungenerated.⁵⁰

In turn, this text is clearly twofold. In it, Simplicius informs us of the following:

1) Philoponus had included an eschatological discussion of the transformation of the world into a better state (to be further elaborated on in the following books of *Against Aristotle*),⁵¹ which Simplicius dismisses. The fact that Simplicius mentions, here, that *Against Aristotle* contained an eschatological discussion makes sense if we keep in mind that the text occurs within Simplicius's commentary of Aristotle's proof of the incorruptibility of time.

2) Because Philoponus has now concluded his refutation of the eternity of movement, from now on, he will proceed to prove « also on his own » (καὶ αὐτὸς καθ' αὐτὸν) that movement cannot be ungenerated.

This second point is especially relevant because it appears to mark a transition within book VI of *Against Aristotle* from a *pars destruens* to a *pars construens*.

⁵⁰ PHILOPONUS, *Against Aristotle*, trans. WILDBERG, p. 143–144, modified. See also the translation in SIMPLICIUS, *On Aristotle Physics 8.1–5*, trans. ISTVÁN BODNÁR, MICHAEL CHASE, MICHAEL SHARE, Bloomsbury, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney 2012 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle), p. 76. Simpl. in Phys., ed. DIELS, p. 1177.38–1178.9: Ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἐπαγγέλλεται δεῖξιν, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς ἀνυπαρξίαν παντελεῖ, ἀλλ' εἰς ἄλλο τι κρεῖττον καὶ θεϊότερον ἢ τοῦ κόσμου μεταβολὴ γίνεται. καὶ θαυμαστόν, ὅτι τὴν μὲν φθορὰν τοῦ κόσμου μεταβολὴν εἰς ὃν τι καὶ θεϊότερον οἶεται, τὴν δὲ γένεσιν οὐκ ἐξ ὄντος ἔχειν φησίν· ἐνδείκνυται δέ, ὅπερ ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς βιβλίοις πραγματεύεται, ὅτι ὁ κόσμος οὗτος εἰς ἄλλον τινὰ κόσμον μεταβάλλει θεϊότερον, οὐκ ἐφιστάνων ὅτι τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστι φθορὰ τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλὰ τελείωσις, συμπεριαινόμενος δὲ τὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγένητον καὶ ἄφθαρτον τὴν κίνησιν δεικνύοντας λόγους ἐπιχειρήματα, ἱκανῶς αὐτοὺς ἀπελεγχθῆναι φησιν ἐκ τῶν οὕτω σαθρῶν αὐτοῦ τερετισμάτων. καὶ ὡς ἐκείνους διελέγξας τολμᾷ καὶ αὐτὸς καθ' αὐτὸν ἀποδεικνύει, ὅτι ἀδύνατον ἀγένητον εἶναι τὴν κίνησιν.

⁵¹ DAVIDSON, « John Philoponus as a Source », p. 358, n. 9, avows that the reference to the following books is unclear to him because he believed that *Against Aristotle* consisted of six books only. However, since then Simplicius's allusion has become clear due to Wildberg's contributions showing that there were actually at least eight books (in addition to his collection of the fragments of *Against Aristotle*, see CHRISTIAN WILDBERG, « Prolegomena to the Study of Philoponus' *Contra Aristotelem* », in RICHARD SORABJI [ed.], *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, Duckworth, London 2010² [1987], p. 239–250). That Philoponus included a treatment of his eschatological views in *Against Aristotle* is confirmed by a heresiological source, *On the Readmission of the Heretics*, by Timothy of Constantinople, fl. around 600 CE or in the early eighth century: the earlier date is provided by CHRISTIANE SCHMIDT, « Timotheus von Kostantinopel », in SIEGMAR DÖPP, WILHELM GEERLINGS (eds.), *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur*, 3rd ed., Herder, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 2002, p. 696; English trans.: CHRISTIANE SCHMIDT, « Timothy of Constantinople », in SIEGMAR DÖPP, WILHELM GEERLINGS (eds.), *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, Herder and Herder, New York 2000, p. 579; the later date is suggested by FILIPPO CARCIONE, « Il 'De iis qui ad ecclesiam accedunt' del presbitero costantinopolitano Timoteo. Una nuova proposta di datazione », *Studi e ricerche dell'Oriente cristiano*, 14 (1991), p. 309–320. See *Patrologia Graeca*, 86/1, 61c3–15.

The text quoted above is followed immediately by an exposition of Philoponus's own proof, constituting the main part of fr. 132 Wildberg of *Against Aristotle VI*. This is the second text I wish to discuss. Such a proof found in *Against Aristotle*, as noted both by Richard Sorabji and Davidson,⁵² is very similar to a piece of the third proof of *De contingentia mundi*. For this reason, Sorabji has expressed scepticism concerning the provenance of the Arabic epitome, which is « suspiciously close in some ways to the *contra Aristotelem* ».⁵³ This is also the likely reason why Davidson concedes that *De contingentia mundi* may not be a separate work after all but, rather, « an appendix » to *Against Aristotle*.⁵⁴ More recently, an article by Cristina D'Ancona on Philoponus in the Arabic tradition lists both *De contingentia mundi* and *Book on the Fact That Every Body is Finite, Hence its Power is Finite* in a section featuring a question mark: « Other (?) writings on creation in time vs eternalism ».⁵⁵

A comparison shows that the Arabic of the third proof can be considered a veritable translation of the Greek preserved in Simplicius, although the degree of closeness between the two text varies.

SIMPLICIUS, <i>On Physics</i> , ed. DIELS, p. 1178.9–1179.12 (modified: see footnotes); trans. Wildberg (PHILOPONUS, <i>Against Aristotle</i> , p. 144–145)	PHILOPONUS, <i>De contingentia mundi</i> , ed. TROUPEAU, p. 81.25–83.24 (modified: see footnotes); trans. Pines, modified (« An Arabic Summary », p. 330–336)
<p>ἀξιώματα δὲ πρὸς τὴν ἀπόδειξιν προλαμβάνει τρία, ἓν μὲν, ὡς εἶ τι τῶν γινόμενων ἀναγκαίως δεῖται προϋπάρχοντός τινος, ἵνα γένηται, οἷον ναῦς ξύλων, οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο μὴ προγενομένων ἐκείνων· δεύτερον ὅτι ἀριθμὸν ἄπειρον ὑποστῆναι ἐνεργείᾳ ἀδύνατον ἢ διεξελθεῖν τινα ἀριθμοῦντα τὸν ἄπειρον, καὶ ὅτι μείζον εἶναι τοῦ ἀπείρου ἢ αὐξηθῆναι τὸ ἄπειρον ἀδύνατον· τρίτον ὡς, εἴ τινος εἰς γένεσιν ἄπειρα δέοι προϋποστῆναι ἓν ἐξ ἐνὸς γινόμενον, τοῦτο ἀδύνατον</p>	<p>قال يحيى: ينبغي أن نقدم أمام حجتنا هذه ثلاثة أصول متعلّمة متعارفة غير مدفوعة ولا مشكوك فيها ولا في صحتها: (١) الأصل الأول منها أن كل شيء يحتاج في وجوده إلى شيء فأنه غير ممكن أن يوجد إن لم يكن يتقدمه وجود ذلك الشيء الذي يحتاج إليه مثل السفينة والخشب، وذلك أنه إذا كان يحتاج في وجود السفينة إلى أن يتقدمه وجود الخشب فغير ممكن أن تكون سفينة إن لم يكن قد تقدم السفينة وجود الخشب. (٢) والأصل الثاني أنه غير ممكن أن يكون عدد بالفعل لا نهاية له وإن كان العاد له يعدّه عدًا سرمديا، وذلك أن كل شيء يقف عليه منه فهو</p>

⁵² See RICHARD SORABJI, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum. Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Duckworth, London 1983, p. 228–229; DAVIDSON, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God*, p. 94.

⁵³ SORABJI, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum*, p. 199.

⁵⁴ DAVIDSON, « John Philoponus as a Source », p. 358; ID., *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God*, p. 93.

⁵⁵ D'ANCONA, « Philoponus, or 'Yaḥyā al-naḥwī' », p. 227.

<p>γενέσθαι⁵⁶. “ἐκ τούτου γάρ, φησί, καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῇ Περὶ γενέσεως⁵⁷ ἔδειξεν, ὅτι ἀδύνατον ἄπειρα εἶναι [καὶ]⁵⁸ κατ’ ἀριθμὸν τὰ τῶν σωμάτων στοιχεῖα, εἴπερ ἐξ ἀλλήλων αὐτοῖς ἡ γένεσις; τὸ γὰρ ἄπειρον ἀδιεξίτητον, ὥστε οὐ φθάσει τὸ πῦρ, εἰ τύχοι, γενέσθαι, εἰ ἀπείρων προγενομένων γένοιτο ἄν. Τούτων οὖν, φησί, προωμολογημένων, εἰ ἡ τοῦδε τοῦ πυρὸς μερική κίνησις ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ πέρασ ἔχει, ἵνα δὲ αὕτη γένηται, ἔδει πρὸ αὐτῆς ἄλλην γενέσθαι κίνησιν, καθ’ ἣν ἐξ ἀέρος φέρε μεταβάλλοντος ἔδει τὸ τοῦ πυρὸς σῶμα γενέσθαι, καὶ πάλιν πρὸ τῆς τοῦ ἀέρος κινήσεως τοῦ εἰς πῦρ μεταβληκός προὑπήρξεν ἕτερα κίνησις ἡ τοῦ ὕδατος, εἰ τύχοι, καθ’ ἣν εἰς ἀέρα μετέβαλε, καὶ πρὸ ἐκείνης ἄλλη καὶ τοῦτο ἐπ’ ἄπειρον⁵⁹, εἴπερ οὐκ ἔσχεν ἀρχὴν οὔτε ὁ κόσμος οὔτε ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων εἰς ἄλληλα μεταβολή, ἀπείρους ἄρα ἔδει προὑπάρξαι κινήσεις, ἵνα τότε τὸ πῦρ τὸ μερικὸν γένηται· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐγένετο, εἰ μὴ ἄπειροι προὑπήρξαν, διὰ τὸ πρῶτον, ὡς λέγει, τῶν ἀξιομάτων. εἰ οὖν ἀδύνατον</p>	<p>محدود متناه لظهوره بالفعل، وما لم يخرج منه الى الفعل فهو بالقوة غير متناه، وقد تبين ذلك أرسطاطاليس في المقالة الثالثة من كتاب سماع الكيان. (٣) والأصل الثالث أن كل شيء يحتاج في كونه الى أن يتقدمه كون أشياء متقدمة غير متناهية غير ممكن وجوده، ومثال ذلك أن الألف ان كان غير ممكن أن تكون موجودة دون أن يتقدم وجودها وجود الباء، والباء غير ممكن أن تكون موجودة دون أن يتقدم وجودها وجود الجيم، والجيم غير ممكن أن تكون موجودة دون أن يتقدم وجودها وجود شيء آخر، وذلك الشيء غير ممكن أن يكون موجودا دون أن يتقدم وجوده وجود شيء آخر وهذا صاعدا الى ما لا نهاية له، فغير ممكن أن تكون الألف موجودة لأنها تحتاج الى أن يتقدمها وجود أشياء لا نهاية لعددتها بالفعل، ووجود أشياء لا نهاية لعددتها بالفعل يستحيل. وبهذه الحجة احتج أرسطاطاليس في المقالة الثانية من كتاب الكون والفساد في أن الاستقسات الطبيعية متناهية فانه غير ممكن أن تكون لا نهاية لها، وذلك أن النار ان كانت تتولد من الهواء باستحالة الهواء اليها، والهواء يتولد من الماء، والماء يتولد من الأرض، والأرض تتولد من شيء آخر ويكون صاعدا بلا نهاية، فمحال أن تتولد إلا⁶⁰ النار من الهواء دون أن يسلك التولد في الأجسام غير متناهية التي تتقدم تولد النار من الهواء، وما لا نهاية له فليس يمكن أن يسلك ويقطع حتى يؤتى على آخره</p>
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⁵⁶ A second quotation occurs below, at *Simpl. in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1180.34–36, which includes an addition at the end: εἴ τινος, φησίν, εἰς γένεσιν ἄπειρα δεοὶ προὑποστῆναι ἐν ἑξ ἑνὸς γινόμενον, τοῦτο ἀδύνατον γενέσθαι, ὅτι ἀπείρους αὐτῆς κινήσεις ἀναγκαῖον ἦν προὑπάρχειν.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Simpl. in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1181.4–5: ὁ δὲ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ τῆς Περὶ γενέσεως, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἐκείνων οὗτος ἐμνήσθη [...].

⁵⁸ Deleted by Wildberg based on the *editio Aldina* (PHILOPONUS, *Against Aristotle*, trans. WILDBERG, p. 144, n. 233).

⁵⁹ A paraphrastic second quotation in *Simplicius* also mentions the fourth element, earth, just as in the Arabic: *Simpl. in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, 1181.12–16: τοῦτο δὲ ἀκολουθεῖ τοῖς λέγουσιν οὐκ ἐπ’ ἄπειρον ἀπλῶς, ὡσπερ ἡμεῖς λέγομεν, ἀνακυκλούμενα τῷ εἶδει, ἀλλὰ κατ’ εἶδος ἐπ’ ἄπειρον ἐξ ἀλλάττεσθαι τὰ γινόμενα ἐπ’ εὐθείας προϊόντα, οἷον ἐκ πυρὸς ἀέρα καὶ ἐξ ἀέρος ὕδωρ καὶ ἐξ ὕδατος γῆν καὶ ἐκ γῆς ἄλλο τι καὶ ἐκείνου πάλιν ἄλλο ἐπ’ ἄπειρον [...].

⁶⁰ The Oxford manuscript reads *illā l-nār* (« unless fire »); Pines accepts this reading (PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 331, n. 175); Troupeau corrects the text by inverting the order of the two words.

<p>ἀπείρους κατ' ἐνέργειαν γεγονέναι κινήσεις διὰ τὸ τῶν ἀξιωματῶν δεύτερον, οὐδὲ ἄρα τὴν τοῦ μερικοῦ πυρὸς ὑποστῆναι κίνησιν δυνατὸν ἦν διὰ τε ταῦτα καὶ διὰ τὸ τρίτον ἀξίωμα τὸ λέγον, ὅτι οὗ⁶¹ πρὸ τῆς γενέσεως ἄπειρα προϋποστῆναι ἀνάγκη, τοῦτο οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο. εἰ οὖν ἡ τοῦ μερικοῦ πυρὸς κινήσεις γέγονεν, οὐκ ἂν προϋπήρξαν αὐτῆς ἄπειροι κινήσεις κατὰ τὴν τῆς σὺν ἀντιθέσει ἀντιστροφῆς ἀνάγκην, (ὡς φησιν οὗτος ὁ καὶ τὴν σὺν ἀντιθέσει ἀντιστροφῆν, ἣτις ποτέ ἐστιν, ἀγνοῶν, ὡς ἔδειξα οἶμαι τὰ πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον τῆς Περι οὐρανοῦ ῥηθέντα αὐτῶ βασανίζων) εἰ οὖν διὰ πεπερασμένων, φησί, κινήσεων ἦλθεν ἡ φύσις, ἵνα τὴν τοῦ μερικοῦ πυρὸς ποιήσῃ κίνησιν, ἔστιν ἄρα τις πρώτη κινήσις, ἣς μὴ προϋπήρξεν ἄλλη, καὶ ἐπὶ ἄλλων τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα κινήσεων ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος, καὶ τοῦτο, φησί, τῶ φυσικῶ λόγῳ σύμφωνόν ἐστι. τὰ γὰρ τέλεια τῶν ἀτελῶν καὶ τὰ ἐνεργεῖα τῶν δυνάμει πρῶτὰ ἐστίν. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐπ' ἄπειρον ἡ ἄνοδος γένοιτο, οὔτε τὰ τέλεια τῶν ἀτελῶν οὔτε τὰ ἐνεργεῖα τῶν δυνάμει προηγήσεται, εἰ δὲ πεπερασμένα, ἡ πρώτη δηλονότι ἅμα τῶ παντὶ συνυποστᾶσα ἐκ τοῦ ἐνεργεῖα⁶² καὶ τοῦ τελείου τὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν ἐξῆς πεποιήται κινήσεων. εἰ δὲ τῶν μερικῶν, φησί, κινήσεων ἀρχὴ τίς ἐστι καὶ οὐχ οἷόν τε ἐπ' ἄπειρον ἄλλην πρὸ ἄλλης ἐπινοεῖν κίνησιν, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὴν ἐγκύκλιον τῶν</p>	<p>لأنه لا آخر له⁶³، وإذا كان هذا هكذا فغير ممكن أن يصح تولد النار من الهواء، وكذلك القول في تولد كل واحد من الاستقسات من الاستقس الذي يليه، وقد صح وثبت تولد الاستقسات بعضها من بعض، فالاستقسات اذن متناهية. فراجع بعد هذا الى الذي قدمناه من هذه الأصول الثلاثة فنقول: ان كان العالم قديما لم يزل فان أشخاص الحيوان لم تزل فيه تتناسل بعضها من بعض، انسان من انسان و فرس من فرس و ثور من ثور، وكان وجود الأب من هذه الأشخاص متقدما لذاته لوجود الابن. وإذا كان هذا هكذا فقد تقدم لا محالة وجود سقراط وجود أبيه، وقد تقدم وجود أبيه وجود الأب الذي كان قبله، وكذلك يجري القول في أب قبل ابن الى ما لا نهاية له، وان كان هذا هكذا فقد تقدم كون سقراط كون آباء لا نهاية لعددهم تناسل بعضهم من بعض وكان جميعهم قبل أن يكون سقراط، وكانوا علة لكونه، فاذن يحتاج سقراط في وجوده الى أن يتقدمه آناس لا نهاية لعدددهم. وقد قلنا في الأصل الأول من الأصول الثلاثة التي قدمنا ذكرها ان كل شيء يحتاج في وجوده الى وجود شيء آخر فليس بممكن أن يكون موجودا حتى يتقدم وجوده وجود ذلك الشيء الذي يحتاج اليه في وجوده. وقلنا في الأصل الثاني انه غير ممكن أن يكون شيء بالفعل لا نهاية لعددده، فان كان آباء سقراط لا نهاية لعدددهم، ويستحيل وجود سقراط دون أن يتقدمه وجود آباءه الذين يحتاج في وجوده اليهم فغير ممكن اذن أن يكون آباء سقراط البتة لا نهاية لعدددهم. وقد قلنا في الأصل الثالث ان كل شيء يحتاج في وجوده الى وجود أشياء لا نهاية لعدددها نتقدمه انه لا يمكن أن يوجد أبدا، وسقراط قد وجد وإذا لم يمكن أن يكون الناس الذين كانوا قبل سقراط في وجودهم وهم علة لكونه لا نهاية لعدددهم فهم اذن</p>
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⁶¹ οὗ is a correction introduced by Wildberg (PHILOPONUS, *Against Aristotle*, p. 145, n. 234), whereas Diels's edition reads οὐ.

⁶² τοῦ ἐνεργεῖα is a correction introduced by Wildberg (Philoponus, *Against Aristotle*, trans. WILDBERG, p. 145, n. 237), whereas Diels's edition reads τοῦ ἐνεργεῖα.

⁶³ Troupeau prints *lā aḡzā' lahu* (« having no parts »); however, the correct reading must be *lā āḥir lahu*, as reflected in Pines's translation « ultimate end » (PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 332).

<p>οὐρανίων κίνησιν ἀπό τινος ἀρχῆς ἄρξασθαι πρότερον οὐκ οὔσαν. οὐ γὰρ ἐνδέχεται τὸν μὲν οὐρανὸν ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν, τὰ δὲ ἐντὸς γενητὰ καὶ φθαρτὰ μὴ ἐν τῷ γίνεσθαι καὶ φθειρεσθαι τὸ εἶναι ἔχειν.”</p>	<p>ذو نهاية، وما كان له نهاية فله ابتداء، وإذا كان هذا هكذا فليس العالم اذن غير ذي ابتداء، لا بل أيّ حال توهمنا فيها وجد أنّ العالم قبل كون سقراط فيه، فلا بدّ من أن يكون واحد من آباء سقراط قد كان موجودا فيه، وإذا كان واحد من آباء سقراط قد كان فالعالم له ابتداء، وواجب أن يكون الأب المبتدأ من آباء سقراط إنّما كان وجوده من انسان، فكذا القول في سائر الأشخاص من الحيوان والنبات. وهذا القول هو الحقّ وهو شبيه بالأقوال الطبيعية، وذلك أنّ الأشياء التامة هي الأشياء الكائنة بالفعل، والأشياء الناقصة هي الأشياء الكائنة بالقوة، وإذا كان هذا هكذا فالأشياء التامة ينبغي أن تتقدّم الأشياء الناقصة، والأشياء التي بالفعل ينبغي أن تسبق الأشياء التي بالقوة إذ كانت عللا لها، وذلك أنّ الأشياء التي بالقوة تبطل ببطلان الأشياء التي بالفعل، ولا تبطل الأشياء التي بالفعل ببطلان الأشياء التي بالقوة، وذلك أنّ الأشياء التي بالفعل إذا لم تكن لم يكن الانسان الذي بالقوة، فان كان العالم ليس بذئ ابتداء لم يكن الانسان الذي بالفعل متقدّما للانسان الذي بالقوة، لأنّه لا يجب أن يكون كلّ انسان من آباء سقراط قد كان في الآباء الذين بالقوة قبله فيكون ليس أحداً⁶⁴ من آباءه موجودا بالفعل تاما من غير أن يكون كان بالقوة، وهذا خارج عما في الطبايع، لأنّ الأمر الذي في الطبايع هو الانسانية التامة التي بالفعل تتقدّم الأشياء الناقصة أعني التي بالقوة، لأنّها هي العلل المحركة المخرجة لها من القوة الى الفعل.</p> <p>وإذا كان العالم محدثا له ابتداء فمع ابتدائه نجمت فيه الأشخاص التي هي آباء لما يتولد عنها من سائر أشخاص الحيوان والنبات، وتلك الآباء هي التي ظهرت بالفعل تامة كاملة، فكانت أصولها⁶⁵ تتولد عنها هذه الأشخاص التي تكون بالقوة في أشخاص مثلها ثمّ تظهر بالفعل.</p>
<p>For this proof he assumes three axioms beforehand. One is that if in order to be</p>	<p>John has said:</p>

⁶⁴ Reading *laysa ahadan* with al-Mu'taman's *Compendium*: AL-MU'TAMAN IBN AL-'ASSĀL, *Maǧmū'*, ed. WADI, vol. VIa, p. 101.10. Troupeau corrects the manuscript reading to *kull wāḥid* (« everyone, each one »).

⁶⁵ Reading *uṣūlūhā* with the manuscripts, instead of correcting to *uṣūlan* with Troupeau.

<p>generated, each of the things generated necessarily needs something which pre-exists, as for instance a ship <needs> wood, <then> it cannot be generated if those things have not been generated before. The second is that it is impossible for an infinite number to exist in actuality, or for anyone to traverse the infinite in counting, and that it is also impossible that <anything> should be greater than the infinite, or that the infinite should be increased. The third one is: If it were necessary for the generation of something that an infinite <set of things> should pre-exist, one generated out of another, <then> it would be impossible for that thing to be generated.</p> <p>“For Aristotle himself”, he says, “showed from this in the <i>de Generatione</i>⁶⁶ that it is impossible that the elements of bodies should be infinite in number, if indeed one is generated out of the other. For the infinite cannot be traversed, so that fire, for example, would not be generated if it were generated <only> after an infinite <number of things> had been generated before. Let these <axioms>”, he says, “be granted beforehand; now if the particular motion of this fire possesses a beginning of existence and an end, and if in order that this <motion> might be</p>	<p>It is necessary⁶⁷ that we set forth in the first place, before (we expound) our argument, these three principles (which are generally) known and recognized, (which cannot) be refuted, and (cannot) be doubted, nor can their soundness.</p> <p>The first of these principles is that it is impossible for anything which requires in order to exist (another) thing to exist, if its (existence) is not preceded by the existence of the thing which is required. (Thus), for example, a ship and wood. For if it is requisite for the existence of a ship that it should be preceded by the existence of wood, then it is impossible that there should be a ship, unless the existence of wood precedes the ship.</p> <p>The second principle is that it is impossible that there should be an infinite number in actuality, even supposing that someone should (go on) counting for ever. For it would be limited and finite, because of its manifestation in actuality, whatever the point in the numbering might be at which he would stop. (On the other hand) that in it which does not become actual is infinite in potentiality. Aristotle has explained this in the third treatise of the book <i>De Auditu Naturali</i>⁶⁸.</p>
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⁶⁶ Arist. *Gen. corr.* II 5, esp. 332b30–32, according to Troupeau; II 4, according to PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 331, n. 168.

⁶⁷ Pines reads *mablaġī* (« my objective ») instead of *yanbaġī*, as printed by Troupeau and followed here.

⁶⁸ The reference is to Arist. *Phys.* III 7, 207b1–12, as indicated by PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 331, n. 158.

<p>generated, another motion had to be generated first as a prerequisite for the generation of the body of the fire, from, say, air that was undergoing change, and again, if there was another motion before the motion of the air which changed into fire, <say> the <motion> of water in virtue of which the <water> changed into air, and if before this <motion> there was another one and so on <i>ad infinitum</i> – provided that neither the world nor the change of things into one another possessed a beginning, it was, then, necessary that an infinite <number of> motions existed first, in order that this particular fire might be generated. For it would not have been generated unless an infinite <number of motions> existed first, because of the first axiom,” so he says. “Now if it is impossible for an infinite <number of> motions to have come to be in actuality because of the second axiom, it will then not have been possible for the motion of the particular fire to exist, both because of this and because of the third axiom, which says that that thing will not be generated for the generation of which an infinite <number of things> must pre-exist. If, then, the motion of the particular fire came to be, an infinite <number> of motions surely did not exist first – according to the necessity of the conversion with negation.” (So he says, though ignorant of what conversion with negation is, as I have</p>	<p>The third principle is that the existence of any thing for whose (coming into) being it is requisite that it be preceded by the coming into being of an infinite (number of) things that precede (it), is impossible. For example, if it is impossible for <i>alif</i> to exist, unless its existence is preceded by that of <i>bā'</i>; and if it is impossible for <i>bā'</i> to exist, unless its existence is preceded by that of <i>ġīm</i>; and if it is impossible for <i>ġīm</i> to exist, unless its existence is preceded by that of some other thing; and if it is impossible for that thing to exist, unless its existence is preceded by that of some other thing, and so on <i>ad infinitum</i>; then it is impossible for <i>alif</i> to exist, for it is requisite that it be preceded by the existence of things whose number is infinite in actuality; but the existence of things whose number is infinite in actuality is absurd. This proof is used by Aristotle in the second treatise of the book of <i>Generation and Corruption</i> (in order to show) that the natural elements⁶⁹ are finite, for it is impossible that they should be infinite. For if fire is generated from air, the air being changed into it, and if air is generated from water, and water from earth, and earth from some other thing, and this is continued <i>ad infinitum</i>; then it is impossible that there should be only a generation of fire from air,</p>
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⁶⁹ *ustuqussāt* according to Troupeau's text (here as well as in the other instances); *uṣṭuqusāt* according to Pines's transliteration (PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 331, n. 169).

<p>shown, I think, when I examined what he said against the first <book> of the <i>De caelo</i>.)⁷⁰</p> <p>“So if nature”, he says, “went through a limited <number of> motions in order to create the motion of the particular fire, there exists therefore some first motion which was not preceded by <any> other <motion>. And the same account <applies> in the case of the other individual motions, <u>and this is in agreement with the physical account. For complete things are <prior> to incomplete, and actual prior to potential.</u> So if on the one hand the ascent took place <i>ad infinitum</i>, complete things would not precede the incomplete, and the actual not the potential; but if on the other hand <the motions> are limited <in number>, then the first <motion>, which evidently exists together with the universe, has made a beginning which starts from something actual and complete for the subsequent motions. But if there is some beginning,” he says, “of the particular motions, and if it is not possible to conceive of one motion before the other <i>ad infinitum</i>, then it is necessary that the circular motion of the things in heaven, too, had a beginning <and> did not exist before. For it is impossible that the heavens are always in the same state, whereas the generable and destructible things inside do not have their being in being generated and destroyed.”</p>	<p>without the occurrence of generation in infinite bodies preceding the generation of fire from the air. It is (however) impossible that (generation) should not have stopped until its ultimate (end) was reached; for it has no ultimate end. If this is so it is impossible that it be correct that fire is generated from air. And this discourse (also applies) to the generation of every one of the elements from the element which is close to it. It is however correct and established (as true) that the elements are generated from one another. The elements are therefore finite.</p> <p>After this we shall go back to what we have previously set forth (concerning) these three principles. We shall accordingly say:</p> <p>If the world is eternal a parte ante (and) has never ceased (from existing), (then) the individuals of living beings (must) have never ceased from being procreated in it from one another, a man from a man, a horse from a horse, and a bull from a bull. (As regards) these individuals the existence of the father essentially precedes the existence of the son. If this is so, the existence of Socrates must be indubitably preceded by the existence of his father; the existence of his father being preceded by that of the father who was before him. One can speak in this manner about</p>
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⁷⁰ The reference is to SIMPLICII *in Aristotelis de caelo commentaria*, ed. IOHANNES LUDOVICUS HEIBERG, Typis et impensis Georgii Reimeri, Berolini 1894 (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, 7), p. 28.12–30.26, as indicated by Wildberg (PHILOPONUS, *Against Aristotle*, trans. WILDBERG, p. 145, n. 236).

	<p>fathers before sons ad infinitum. If this is so, Socrates's having come into existence (must have) been preceded by the coming into existence of an infinite number of ancestors who were procreated by one another; all of them (must) have come into existence before Socrates and have been a cause for his having come into existence. It would therefore be [requisite] for Socrates in order to exist to be preceded by an infinite number of people. We have (however) said in the first of the three principles which we have mentioned above that it is impossible that any thing that requires in order to exist the existence of (some) other thing, should exist, unless its existence is preceded by that of the thing required for its existence.</p> <p>In the second principle we have said that it is impossible that there should be a thing in actuality whose number is infinite. If then Socrates's ancestors are infinite in number, and if it is impossible for Socrates to exist unless his (existence) is preceded by that of his ancestors, which is requisite for him in order to exist, it is then altogether impossible that Socrates's ancestors should be infinite in number.</p> <p>In the third principle we have said that it is impossible for any thing which in order to exist requires the existence of an infinite number of things which (must) precede it, ever to (come into) existence. Socrates (however) did come into existence. It</p>
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	<p>is therefore impossible that the people who existed prior to Socrates and were the cause of his coming into existence should have been infinite in number. Therefore, they (must) have been finite (in number). And what is finite has a beginning. If this is so, then the world is not without beginning. To put it even more strongly: whatever state (of things) we might imagine, it would be found that before Socrates was (in existence) in the world, there (must) necessarily (always) have been in existence in it some ancestor of Socrates. And if one of the ancestors of Socrates did exist, then the world has a beginning. And it is necessary that the existence of the commencing ancestor among the ancestors of Socrates (has proceeded) from a man. (The same applies) to the other individuals (which are) animals or plants. <u>This statement is true; it is similar to physical statements.</u> For the perfect things are those which exist in actuality, and the imperfect things are those which exist in potentiality. If this is so, <u>the perfect things must precede the imperfect, and the things which (exist) in actuality must come before the things which (exist) in potentiality,</u> for (the former) are the causes of (the latter), inasmuch as the things which (exist) in potentiality cease (to exist) with the cessation (of the existence) of the things which (exist) in actuality; (whereas) the things which (exist) in actuality do not cease (to exist) with the cessation (of the</p>
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	<p>existence) of the things which (exist) in potentiality. For if the things which (exist) in actuality had not existed, the man who (exists) in potentiality would not come to exist. If (however) the world had no beginning the man who (exists) in actuality would not precede the man who (exists) in potentiality. For it must not (be the case) that every man from among the ancestors of Socrates has been among the ancestors who have existed in potentiality prior to him in such a way that none of his ancestors would have existed in actuality in a perfect way without having existed in potentiality. This (however) is (contrary) to what is in nature. For the thing that is in nature is perfect humanity, (which) precedes in actuality the imperfect things, that is, those that (exist) potentially. (This is) because (the former) are the causes which moves (the latter) making them go over from potentiality to actuality. If the world has been created in time, it had a beginning; and the individuals which are the ancestors of the other animal and plant individuals born of them sprung simultaneously with its beginning. These ancestors are those which became manifest in actuality complete and perfect. Accordingly from their roots those individuals are born that exist in potentiality in individuals that are similar to them and afterwards appear in actuality.</p>
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The two sources appear to refer to one and the same text. However, if this is so, neither Simplicius nor the Arabic epitome can be taken as entirely faithful testimonies of their source. On the one hand, Simplicius can be proven to have paraphrased to some extent. After quoting fr. 132 Wildberg of *Against Aristotle*, he goes on to refute Philoponus. In so doing, he occasionally quotes some sentences anew. On two occasions, the second quotation rephrases Philoponus's words in a way that has an even closer correspondence in the Arabic. Thus, in the second quotation,

1) Simplicius specifies that the passage of Aristotle's *On Generation and Corruption* put forward by Philoponus is found in the second book of that work,⁷¹ as also reported in the Arabic epitome;

2) Simplicius adds a mention of the fourth element, earth, in the sequence of the reciprocal transformation of the four elements;⁷² this element is also mentioned by the Arabic epitome.

This proves that the Arabic version is not necessarily responsible for the discrepancies between the parallel texts. On the contrary, the Arabic preserves a feature that is likely to go back to Philoponus's original formulation: the correct reference to Aristotle's *Physics* (III 7, 207b1–12) as a counterproof of the second initial axiom.

On the other hand, however, the Arabic text cannot be said to preserve the original text without any changes either. The most likely trace of change in the Arabic is the simplification of the argument set forth in the third axiom with reference to Aristotle's *On Generation and Corruption*. The Arabic argues that fire can only be generated through a finite succession of elemental changes, whereas the Greek argues that the *movement* of fire can only be generated in this way. The latter version of the argument is more likely to be adherent to Philoponus's original formulation, both because it corresponds to Simplicius's preliminary statement, as seen above, that Philoponus is about to prove on his own « that movement is ungenerated » (ὅτι ἀδύνατον ἀγένητον εἶναι τὴν κίνησιν) and because it preserves the link with the Aristotelian argument on the incorruptibility of movement that it aims to refute; as seen above, it is the Aristotelian lemma containing that argument that prompts Simplicius to refute the corresponding Philoponian criticism. Therefore, it is plausible that, in this instance, it is the Arabic formulation that has simplified the argument.

After the text quoted in the table above, the Greek fr. 132 Wildberg, Simplicius goes on to add a fourth point and a fifth point, aimed at further proving the impossibility of ungenerated movement. The fourth argues from the impossibility

⁷¹ Simpl. in *Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1181.4–5.

⁷² Simpl. in *Phys.*, p. 1181.12–16.

of an increase in the infinite, which would take place through the addition of future movements to past ones; the fifth argues from the impossibility of the multiplication of the infinite, an idea illustrated through the different velocities of the revolutions of the stars.⁷³

After quoting Philoponus, Simplicius goes on to refute him. Finally, Simplicius explicitly concludes his discussion of *Against Aristotle*, book VI (fr. 133 Wildberg). Among his concluding remarks on the subject, Simplicius incidentally says of Philoponus: « Having proceeded as far as the aforementioned remarks, however, he considered that he had completed his counter-argument against the everlastingness of motion » (μέχρι δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων προελθῶν τέλος ἔχειν ἐνόμισεν αὐτῷ τὴν ἀντιλογίαν τὴν πρὸς τὴν ἀιδιότητα τῆς κινήσεως).⁷⁴

To sum up, the relevant section of Simplicius's commentary contains, in the following order: a discussion of fragments 127–131 Wildberg of *Against Aristotle* VI; a mention of the fact that they were followed by an eschatological discussion (further developed in the following books); an allusion to the transition from Aristotle's refutation to Philoponus's own arguments showing that movement cannot be ungenerated; a Philoponian proof closely corresponding to the third and last proof of the Arabic *De contingentia mundi*; Simplicius's criticism of it; and his final comments, including the fact that he is now concluding his discussion of *Against Aristotle*, book VI.

How should the Greek-Arabic correspondence be explained? One possible explanation for the close similarity between the Greek text in Simplicius and the third proof of *De contingentia mundi* is that the latter stems from *Against Aristotle* VI. This would explain why the Greek parallel to the Arabic epitome occurs within Simplicius's broader discussion of book VI of *Against Aristotle*. In this hypothesis, the Arabic epitome would not be the remnant of a third anti-eternalist work, but of *Against Aristotle* VI. Such a hypothesis is not contradicted by Philoponus's aforementioned references, which have been used by scholars to infer the existence of a third anti-eternalist work, because such references, as pointed out above, are actually vague and simply state that proofs against the eternity of the world will be provided « elsewhere » (ἐν ἑτέρῳ or ἐν ἑτέροις). Indeed, if those references are to be used at all, they may even corroborate the hypothesis put forth here because some of them also recall *Against Aristotle*; moreover, they are formulated in a way that is close to Simplicius's testimony, seen above, according to which Philoponus, after refuting Aristotle, goes on to demonstrate the opposite view « even [...] on his own » (καὶ αὐτὸς καθ' αὐτὸν) in *Against Aristotle*. One can compare this to the analogous expressions αὐτοί [...] ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν and ἰδίᾳ found in the relevant Philoponian cross-references put forward by previous scholars. If one

⁷³ Simpl. in *Phys.*, p. 1179.12–26.

⁷⁴ Simpl. in *Phys.*, p. 1182.32–33.

accepts this hypothesis, the first two proofs of the Arabic epitome do not appear in Simplicius simply because he left them out. Indeed, it may even be argued that Simplicius's reference to a « fourth » point and a « fifth » point, immediately following the Greek-Arabic correspondence, adds plausibility to the provenance of the Arabic from *Against Aristotle*, book VI. In fact, these two points, showing the impossibility of an increase in or a multiplication of the infinite, are independent from the previous reasoning, which is based on the three axioms and rests on the intraversability of the infinite. Therefore, the numeration « fourth » and « fifth » may, more naturally, refer to the fact that these points were preceded by three arguments, the same making up the three proofs of *De contingentia mundi*.

On the other hand, the main difficulty in supposing that *De contingentia mundi* stems from *Against Aristotle* is the prologue of the Arabic epitome. There are no reasons to doubt that it is genuine; indeed, as seen above, it can be argued that it is consistent with Philoponus's original works. If the prologue is genuine, as I believe, it is difficult to reconcile its explicit definition of *De contingentia mundi* as a separate « book » (*kitāb*), following the « books » (*kutub*) against Proclus and Aristotle with the possibility that it is drawn from *Against Aristotle*, book VI.

Of course, an alternative explanation for the Greek-Arabic correspondence would be that Philoponus repeats relevant portions of the same argument word by word both in *Against Aristotle*, book VI, and a separate work, subsequently epitomised as *De contingentia mundi*. It is true that Philoponus repeats several of his arguments in different works.⁷⁵ This can be verified in *De contingentia mundi* itself, which contains several parallels matching *Against Proclus*, as indicated by Pines; overall, even a certain doctrinal and terminological consistency can be conceded to Philoponus's repeated treatments of similar topics.⁷⁶ However, neither these nor, to the best of my knowledge, other parallels in Philoponus's works are phrased as similarly as the one seen above. Therefore, this explanation, while not impossible, is not as natural as it may appear at first sight.

One may attempt to reconcile the conflicting evidence by making *De contingentia mundi* neither a properly separate work nor an ordinary part of *Against Aristotle*, book VI, but, rather, something halfway, an « appendix » of *Against Aristotle* VI, as tentatively suggested by Davidson. One could exploit, to this end, Simplicius's transitional passage introducing fr. 132 Wildberg (the transition from a *pars destruens* to a *pars construens*, i.e., from Philoponus's refutation of Aristotle concerning the eternity of movement to Philoponus's own arguments against it).

⁷⁵ See the remarks in JOHANNES PHILOPONOS, *De aeternitate mundi / Über die Ewigkeit der Welt*, ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. I, p. 218–219.

⁷⁶ Cf., for example, the above references (n. 40 and 41) to PHILOPONUS, *De opificio mundi* IV, 7, ed. REICHARDT, p. 176.29–177.6 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 400); PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus* I, 3, ed. RABE, p. 10.22–11.2 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 340); and Philoponus's *De anima* commentary, ed. HAYDUCK, p. 217.4–7.

Still, the compromise would be unsatisfactory because, once again, it would mean downplaying the statement in the prologue of the Arabic epitome to the effect that its contents form a separate work, a « book » (*kitāb*), indeed perhaps even a « special book » (*kitāb ḥāṣṣ*), according to Pines's reading of the Oxford manuscript.⁷⁷

The only way to avoid these difficulties would be to suppose that *De contingentia mundi* is a collage of texts of different provenances, namely, both *Against Aristotle* and the third anti-eternalist work; however, this solution is doomed to remain entirely speculative and is not particularly economic. As a result, it appears preferable to leave the entire issue open. While avowing that I am not able to account for the claim, in the prologue of the Arabic work, that it contains materials from a separate book, I am inclined to believe that the epitome has *Against Aristotle* as at least one of its sources.

Finally, one may wonder where the Arabic title *Book on the Fact That Every Body is Finite, Hence its Power is Finite*, in one « discourse » (*maqāla*), fits into this picture. If such a work existed at all in Philoponus's intentions and was not simply extrapolated from his works in the Arabic tradition, the above analysis suggests that we should be careful in identifying it with *De contingentia mundi*. As mentioned above, according to Davidson, the work *That Every Body is Finite* may be identical with a section of Simplicius's *Physics* commentary (ed. Diels, p. 1326.38–1336.34). The proximity indicated by Pines between the Philoponian quotations in Simplicius's relevant section and the topic of the first proof of *De contingentia mundi* does not necessarily mean that they should be traced back to one and the same work. First, as avowed by Pines himself, *De contingentia mundi* has three « sections » (*maqālāt*) whereas *That Every Body is Finite* has one section. Additionally, as mentioned above, Philoponus does repeat his arguments throughout his works. This can also be proven for the argument from the finitude of bodily power, which is repeated with different nuances not only in *De contingentia mundi* and Simplicius's relevant section but also in *Against Proclus* and *Against Aristotle*.⁷⁸ In conclusion, it is uncertain whether *De contingentia mundi* was originally identical to *That Every Body is Finite*.

⁷⁷ See the text of the prologue quoted above and n. 17.

⁷⁸ See, respectively, PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus* VI, 29, ed. RABE, p. 235.2–19 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. III, p. 796); Simpl. *in Cael.*, ed. HEIBERG, p. 142.22–25 (forming a part of *Against Aristotle*, book IV, fr. 80 Wildberg). Philoponus's conclusion in *De contingentia mundi* (TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.23–80.5) that the world, though preserved by divine power, is perishable by nature is echoed, in addition to Simplicius's relevant section (*in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1331.7–10), as well in the aforementioned passage of *Against Proclus* VI, 29 (ed. RABE, p. 235.2–237.15 = ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. III, p. 796–800; this is one of the parallels already pointed out by PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 341 and n. 276).

V. *A hypothesis on the milieu that produced the Arabic De contingentia mundi*

Thus far, I have discussed the source of the Arabic epitome. Now, I wish to turn to the question of who translated the Greek materials into Arabic, how they did so, and when they did so.

As seen above, Pines hypothesised that only the first proof of the Greek original of *De contingentia mundi* was translated into Arabic in full and circulated with the title *Book on the Fact That Every Body is Finite, Hence its Power is Finite*, whereas the remainder of the work was never translated in full. Therefore, in order to explain the existence of the epitomised Arabic *De contingentia mundi*, Pines had to appeal to a Greek epitome that was subsequently translated into Arabic. However, Pines's initial assumption that *De contingentia mundi* stems from the same Greek text as *That Every Body is Finite* is hypothetical, and it has no special plausibility, as I have attempted to show above. Consequently, the ensuing reasoning is not compelling either (as mentioned, Pines himself admitted that it was purely hypothetical).

Another hypothesis was set forth by Marwan Rashed in a 2013 article.⁷⁹ Rashed hypothesised that the Greek original of *De contingentia mundi* was part of the now missing pages at the beginning of the MS Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z. 236 (coll. 754), dating back to the ninth century and containing Philoponus's *Against Proclus*. The manuscript also contains some annotations in Arabic alphabet, a fact that according to Rashed suggests a circulation in an Arabic-speaking milieu. However, as Rashed himself affirms elsewhere, the annotations in Arabic alphabet, almost illegible today, are probably in Turkish language.⁸⁰

Given the unverifiable nature of the previous hypotheses, I shall attempt to investigate the origin of the translation on other grounds. This will lead me to an alternative hypothesis: I would like to suggest the possibility that the Arabic *De contingentia mundi*, based on its style and vocabulary, originated in ninth-century Baghdad, within the circle of translators gathered around the Muslim philosopher al-Kindī (d. before 252 H./ 866 CE).⁸¹ I will argue for this through a comparison of

⁷⁹ MARWAN RASHED, « Nouveaux fragments antiprocléens de Philopon en version arabe et le problème de l'origine de la théorie de l' 'instauration' (*ḥudūth*) », *Les études philosophiques*, 105/2 (2013), p. 261–292 (on p. 268–271).

⁸⁰ MARWAN RASHED, « Nicolas d'Otrante, Guillaume de Moerbeke et la 'collection philosophique' », *Studi medievali*, 43 (2002), p. 693–717, on p. 707 and n. 38 (= ID., *L'héritage aristotélicien. Textes inédits de l'Antiquité*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2007 [Anagôgê], p. 513–541, on p. 527 and n. 38).

⁸¹ On al-Kindī's circle and its philosophical project, see GERHARD ENDRESS, « The Defense of Reason: the Plea for Philosophy in the Religious Community », *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*, 6 (1990), p. 1–49; ID., « The Circle of al-Kindī. Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy », in GERHARD ENDRESS, REMKE KRUK (eds.), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism: Studies on the Transmission of*

the Arabic epitome with Endress's reference study of the translation technique of the circle of al-Kindī.⁸² In so doing, I will be following in the footsteps of an analogous previous study by Ahmad Hasnawi, who linked two Arabic paraphrastic translations of Philoponus transmitted under the name of Alexander of Aphrodisias to the Kindian circle.⁸³ At the same time, I will occasionally supplement the comparison with references to further lexicographic resources and to other Arabic texts translated within this circle.⁸⁴ Of course, in this case, the Greek-Arabic lexical correspondences that can be deduced from the texts compared in the table above are very few; however, they are supplemented by the correspondences between the phraseology of the epitome and that of the translations stemming from the circle of al-Kindī.

A) Vocabulary

1) *Individual terms.* Two renderings indicated by Endress as typical can be verified by comparing the Arabic epitome and Simplicius:

- *tāmm* = τέλειος. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 1.05, p. 115–117. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 83.14: *al-ašyā' al-tāmma* = Simpl. in *Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1179.3: τὰ [...] τέλεια.

Greek Philosophy and Sciences, Research School CNWS, Leiden 1997 (CNWS Publications, 50), p. 43–76.

⁸² GERHARD ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus. Zwanzig Abschnitte aus der Institutio Theologica in arabischer Übersetzung*, Steiner Verlag in Kommission, Wiesbaden – Beirut 1973 (Beirut Texts and Studies, 10).

⁸³ AHMAD HASNAWI, « Alexandre d'Aphrodise vs Jean Philopon: notes sur quelques traités d'Alexandre 'perdus' en grec, conservés en arabe », *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 4 (1994), p. 53–109.

⁸⁴ In addition to MANFRED ULLMANN, *Wörterbuch zu den griechisch-arabischen Übersetzungen des 9. Jahrhunderts*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, vol. I, 2006; vol. II, 2007, and the entries available thus far in GERHARD ENDRESS, DIMITRI GUTAS (eds.), *A Greek and Arabic Lexicon*, Brill, Leiden 1992–ongoing (*GALex*), the online resources *Glossarium Graeco-Arabicum* (<https://glossga.bbaw.de/>) and *G2A Web App* (https://g2a.ilc.cnr.it/Teologia_Wapp/Home.xhtml) were consulted (last accessed October 2023), as well as GERHARD ENDRESS, *Die Entwicklung der Fachsprache*, in WOLFDIETRICH FISCHER (ed.), *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie*, vol. III (Supplement), Reichert, Wiesbaden 1992, p. 3–23, and the glossaries and indexes included in the following volumes: ARISTOTELES' *De anima. Eine verlorene spätantike Paraphrase in arabischer und persischer Überlieferung*, ed. Rüdiger Arnzen, Brill, Leiden – New York – Köln 1998 (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, 9); PLOTINO, *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi (Enn. IV 8 [6]). Plotiniana arabica (pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, capitoli 1 e 7; "Detti del sapiente greco")*, ed. CRISTINA D'ANCONA et al., Il Poligrafo, Padova 2003 (Subsidia Mediaevalia Patavina, 4); PLOTINO, *L'immortalità dell'anima IV 7[2]. Plotiniana Arabica (pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, capitoli I, III, IX)*, ed. CRISTINA D'ANCONA, Pisa U.P., Pisa 2017 (Greco, Arabo, Latino. Le vie del sapere, 5).

- *istihāla* = μεταβολή. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 1.07, p. 122–124. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 82.14: *bi-stihāla* = Simpl. in *Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1178.22–24: μεταβάλλοντος or μεταβεβληκός.

2) *Use of hendiadys*. Another typical feature of the Kindian translations is the Arabic use of a hendiadys for the rendering of one single Greek term (ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.11, point b, p. 158–162). Several of them are found in the Arabic epitome; although their Greek counterparts cannot be verified, two of them are identical to expressions listed by Endress as idiosyncratic:⁸⁵

- *tāmm kāmil* = τέλειος. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 1.05, p. 115–117. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 80.9; 80.10; 83.23.

- *ǧayru mumkin [...] al-batta* = simple negation in Greek. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.11, p. 159. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 83.6.

3) *Further compatible terms*. Several terms in the Arabic epitome, though lacking a Greek counterpart, are consistent with the typical translation vocabulary of the Kindian circle:

- *dahr* or *dā'im* = αἰών, αἰώνιος. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 1.08, p. 124–126. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 79.12–13 (*taḥfazū dātahu ḥifẓan dā'imān sarmadiyyan*); 79.15 (*taf'aluhu fi'lan dā'imān*); 79.24 (*taḥfazuhu fi l-musta'naf ḥifẓan dā'imān sarmadiyyan*); 79.3; 79.9; 80.4; 80.5; 80.12 (*ahl al-dahr*).

- *'illa* = αἰτία, αἴτιον. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 1.16, p. 141–143. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 83.1; 83.9; 83.16; 83.21.

- *nayl* or *istifāda* = μεθέξις. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 1.18, p. 144–148. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 79.26; 79.27; 80.1 (forms of *nāla*); p. 80.1 (*yastafīdu*).

- *qadīm* = αἴδιος. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 1.20, p. 148–149. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 82.19 (*qadīman lam yazal*).

⁸⁵ Some hendiadys do not have an exact correspondence among the translation texts from the circle of al-Kindī. However, similar expressions can be found for the following:

- *al-baqā' wa-l-dawām* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 80.11). Cf. Aristotle's *pseudo-Theology* (without counterpart in the original Greek): *al-dā'ima al-bāqiyya* and *tabqā wa-tadūmu* (PLOTINO, *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi*, ed. D'ANCONA et al., p. 235.7 and p. 252.5); *bāqiyya dā'ima* and *bāqin dā'im* (PLOTINO, *L'immortalità dell'anima*, ed. D'ANCONA, p. 405.3 and p. 451.9); Arabic translation of *De caelo* II 3, 286a9 (versio B by Ibn al-Bīṭrīq): *dawām wa-baqā'*, rendering ἀθανασία (source: *Glossarium Graeco-Arabicum*).

- *al-tanāsul wa-l-tawālud* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 80.10). Cf. Aristotle's *pseudo-Theology*: *bi-l-kawn wa-l-tanāsul*, without Greek counterpart (PLOTINO, *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi*, ed. D'ANCONA et al., p. 252.5).

Two further terminological correspondences between *De contingentia mundi* and translations traceable to the Kindian circle should be mentioned, even if they concern terms not listed in Endress's *Proclus Arabus*. They are as follows:

- *duṭūr*, i.e., « extinction » (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 80.3): this term and other forms of the same root are also found, e.g., in the Arabic *Liber de causis* and the Arabic Plotinus.⁸⁶
- the title *Samā' al-kiyān* for the *Physics* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 82.6), as opposed to the alternative Arabic title *al-Samā' al-tabī'i*: the form *Samā' al-kiyān* is also employed by one of the Arabic adaptations of Philoponus analysed by Hasnawi.⁸⁷

B) Syntax

Hypothetical construction with elliptical protasis. ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.22, point b, p. 171. Cf. ed. TROUPEAU, p. 80.10: *wa-lawlā dālika, la-[...]* (« were it not [so], then [...] »).

C) Phraseology

The relevant section for comparison is ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.3, p. 171–185.

1) Introductory formulas (ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.31, p. 171–174)

- *qad taqaddamtu fa-waḍa'tu (kutuban)* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 79.2).
- *fa-ammā al-āna urīdu an uqīma al-burhān* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 79.3).
- *fa-aqūlu* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 79.11).

⁸⁶ *Die pseudo-aristotelische Schrift ueber das reine Gute bekannt unter dem Namen Liber de causis*, ed. OTTO BARDENHEWER, Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, Freiburg im Breisgau 1882, prop. 4, p. 67.5, 69.3; prop. 5, p. 71.4, 71.5; prop. 10, p. 81.7; prop. 26, p. 107.2, 107.5, 107.7; prop. 27, p. 109.3; prop. 31, p. 116.6 (corresponding to *Al-Aflātūniyya al-muḥḍata 'inda al-'arab*, ed. 'ABDURRAḤMĀN BADAWĪ, Dār al-qalam, Bayrūt 1977² [al-Qāhira 1955], prop. 4, p. 8.6, 7.10; prop. 5, p. 9.10, 9.11; prop. 10, p. 13.15; prop. 26, p. 27.2, 27.5, 27.6; prop. 27, p. 28.3; prop. 31, p. 32.4). For the Arabic Plotinus see, for example, the instances listed by the « Indice dei termini arabi » in PLOTINO, *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi*, ed. D'ANCONA et al., p. 487; and PLOTINO, *L'immortalità dell'anima*, ed. D'ANCONA, p. 665.

⁸⁷ HASNAWI, « Alexandre d'Aphrodise vs Jean Philopon », p. 78. The text (D9, *Treatise by Alexander Concerning the Fact That Actuality is More General Than Movement According to Aristotle's View*) is published in: *Aristū 'inda al-'arab*, ed. 'ABDURRAḤMĀN BADAWĪ, Maktaba al-naḥḍa al-miṣriyya, al-Qāhira 1947, p. 293–294; the relevant reference is found on p. 293.9 (corresponding to PHILOPONUS, *Against Proclus*, IV, 4, ed. RABE, p. 65.7 = ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. II, p. 468). The Arabic text also refers to the alternative title *al-Samā' al-tabī'i* (ed. BADAWĪ, p. 293.4); however, this is an introductory section without a counterpart in the Greek and is, thus, not necessarily indicative of the translation technique of the circle of al-Kindī.

- *yanbağī an nuqaddima* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 81.25: for *nuqaddima* cf. the Greek προλαμβάνει in *Simpl. in Phys.*, ed. DIELS, p. 1178.9).
- 2) *Hypothetical clauses as formulas adding demonstrative cogency* (ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.32, p. 174–178)
- *wa-īdā kāna hādā hākaḏā* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 79.17; 80.14–15; 82.17; 82.22; 83.10, 83.15); *wa-in kāna hādā hākaḏā* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 82.23).
 - *inna hādā idā kāna ‘alā mā waṣafta* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 80.18); *wa-īdā kāna hādā ‘alā mā waṣafnā* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 81.14).
 - *lā maḥālata* in apodosis (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 80.15; 82.22).
- 3) *Return to the main topic after a digression* (ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.33, p. 178–180)
- *fa-narğī‘u ba‘d hādā ilā allaḏī qaddamnāhu [...] fa-naqūlu* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 82.19).
- 4) *Formulas concluding demonstrations* (ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.34, p. 180–183)
- *wa-hādā muḥāl ‘alā mā bayyannāhu* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 81.2).
 - *wa-qad ṣaḥḥa wa-ṭabata* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 82.18).
- 5) *Formulas expressing objection and answer* (ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.35, p. 183–184)
- *fa-in qāla qā’il [...] qulnā* (ed. TROUPEAU, objection p. 79.23, answer p. 79.26; ed. TROUPEAU, objection p. 80.16, answer p. 80.18). Cf. also the following formulas: *wa-ḏālika muṣabbih li-qā’il yaqūlu* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 81.4); *qad yustankaru qawl man qāla* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 81.10; 81.10–11); *qawl al-qā’il* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 81.11).
- 6) *Explanatory formulas* (ENDRESS, *Proclus Arabus*, § 2.36, p. 184–185)
- *al-ašyā’ al-nāqiṣa a’nī allatī bi-l-quwwa* (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 83.21). *A’nī bi-* occurs in two more instances (ed. TROUPEAU, p. 79.14; 79.16); however, in those instances, it does not have an exegetic value (« namely », « that is »), but it is found at the beginning of a sentence as an introduction for a definition (« by x I mean [...] »).

These elements, especially Section C (phraseology), indicate that *De contingentia mundi* is compatible with the features of the translations produced in the circle of al-Kindī. By contrast, such features are not found at all in the extant Arabic fragments of *Against Aristotle*, that are preserved by other Arabic sources, namely

al-Fārābī (d. 339 H./ 950–951 CE),⁸⁸ the *Selection of the Repository of Wisdom* (*Muntaḥab ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, 586–639 H./ 1191–1241 CE)⁸⁹ and the *Book of Benefit* (*Kitāb al-manfaʿa*) by ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī (d. after 1052 CE).⁹⁰ Therefore, if *De contingentia mundi* does indeed preserve materials stemming from the lost *Against Aristotle*, its origin is independent from the translation or translations quoted by these sources. Circumstantial arguments can also be made in favour of the provenance of *De contingentia mundi* from the circle of al-Kindī. Several works and proofs by Philoponus were known within this circle. As mentioned above, Hasnawi has shown that two short Arabic treatises attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias by the manuscript tradition are actually adaptations of Philoponus's *Against Proclus* stemming from this circle.⁹¹ More recently, Elvira Wakelnig has published an Arabic version of the first eight arguments of Proclus's so-called *De aeternitate mundi* (that is, the work quoted in full and refuted in *Against Proclus*), which is likely to go back to the circle of al-Kindī.⁹² Again, one of the two Arabic versions of Alexander of Aphrodisias's *On Providence*, which was produced within the Kindian circle, introduces, in its paraphrasis of Alexander's text, the Philoponian argument for creation that argues from the finitude of bodily power.⁹³ Moreover, as far as al-Kindī's original works are concerned, it has long been observed that several of

⁸⁸ Published by MUHSIN MAHDI, « The Arabic Text of Alfarabi's *Against John the Grammarian* », in SAMI A. HANNA (ed.), *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honor of Aziz Suryal Atiya*, Brill, Leiden 1972, p. 268–284; translation in MUHSIN MAHDI, « Alfarabi Against Philoponus », *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 26/4 (1967), p. 233–260.

⁸⁹ JOEL L. KRAEMER, « A Lost Passage from Philoponus' *Contra Aristotelem* in Arabic Translation », *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 85/3 (1965), p. 318–327.

⁹⁰ MARWAN RASHED, « The Problem of the Composition of the Heavens (529–1610): a New Fragment of Philoponus and Its Readers », *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement*, 83 (2004), p. 35–58.

⁹¹ HASNAWI, « Alexandre d'Aphrodise vs Jean Philopon ».

⁹² ELVIRA WAKELNIG, « The Other Arabic Version of Proclus' *De Aeternitate mundi*. The Surviving First Eight Arguments », *Oriens*, 40 (2012), p. 51–95.

⁹³ Following the list of Alexander's works in ALBERT DIETRICH, *Die arabische Version einer unbekanntenen Schrift des Alexander von Aphrodisias über die Differentia specifica*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1964 (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen I. Philologisch-historische Klasse, 2), p. 92–100, this text is usually indicated as D15. Edition in HANS-JOCHEN RULAND, « Die arabischen Fassungen von zwei Schriften des Alexander von Aphrodisias. Über die Vorsehung und Über das liberum arbitrium », Ph.D. Diss., Saarlandes University, Saarbrücken 1976. The argument, occurring on p. 89.7–91.4 (version D15), can be compared to *De contingentia mundi*: cf. TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.20–22 and to *Against Proclus* VI, 29, ed. RABE, p. 235.2–237.15 (= ed. SCHOLTEN, vol. III, p. 796–800). Remarkably, the former two texts include the reference to the first book of *De caelo* on the finitude of the body of the world, whereas such a reference is not provided in the parallel version of the argument found in *Against Proclus*.

them contain proofs for creation and against eternity, which are clearly reminiscent of Philoponus's own.⁹⁴

In addition to the known echoes of Philoponian arguments, I could only find a very small hint that al-Kindī may have known *De contingentia mundi* specifically. In two of his works, al-Kindī provides a proof for the finiteness of the body of the world, with a view to proving that the world cannot be eternal, thus, in a context which is reminiscent of Philoponus's anti-eternalism. Al-Kindī phrases the proof in a similar way in both instances. In both the Kindian works, the proof is introduced in a way reminiscent of the way in which the third proof of *De contingentia mundi* is introduced, by announcing and setting out a list of several preliminary self-evident principles. Thus, al-Kindī in chapter 2 of his major metaphysical work, *On First Philosophy*, writes as follows: « Among the first, true premises which are conceived without any intermediary is the fact that [...] » (*inna min al-muqaddimāt al-uwal al-ḥaqqiyya al-ma'qūla bi-lā tawassuṭ anna [...]*).⁹⁵ Analogously, in his work *On the Oneness of God and the Finiteness of the Body of the World*, he writes as follows: « The first, clear premises which are conceived without any intermediary are that [...] » (*inna l-muqaddimāt al-ūlā l-wāḍiḥa l-ma'qūla bi-ḡayri tawassuṭ anna...*).⁹⁶ These statements can be compared to the *incipit* of the third proof in *De contingentia mundi*: « It is necessary that we set forth in the first place, before [we expound] our argument, these three principles [which are generally] known and recognized, [which cannot] be refuted, and [cannot] be doubted, nor can their soundness » (*yanbaḡī an nuqaddima amāma ḥuḡḡatinā hāḍihi ṭalāta uṣūl muta'ālima muta'ārifa ḡayr madfū'a wa-lā maškūk fihā wa-lā fī ṣiḥḥatihā*, paraphrasing the Greek ἀξιώματα).⁹⁷

⁹⁴ RICHARD WALZER, « New Studies on al-Kindī », *Oriens*, 10/2 (1957), p. 203–232: p. 218–224 = ID., *Greek into Arabic. Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, Harvard U.P., Cambridge (MA) 1962 (*Oriental Studies*, 1), p. 175–205: p. 190–196; DAVIDSON, « John Philoponus as a Source », p. 370–373; ID., *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God*, p. 106–116.

⁹⁵ *Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyya*, ed. MUḤAMMAD 'A. ABŪ RĪDA, Dār al-fikr al-'arabī, al-Qāhira 1950, p. 114.12 = *Oeuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'al-Kindī. Volume II. Métaphysique et cosmologie*, ed. ROSHDI RASHED, JEAN JOLIVET, Brill, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1998 (*Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies*, 29/2), p. 29.8–9. Ivry's commentary on al-Kindī's *On First Philosophy* usefully analyses the Kindian proofs for creation by providing parallels with individual Philoponian passages that are extant in Greek: *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics. A Translation of Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī's Treatise "On First Philosophy" (fī al-Falsafah al-Ūlā)*, ed. ALFRED L. IVRY, State University of New York Press, Albany 1974 (*Studies in Islamic Philosophy and Science*), p. 147–164; on al-Kindī's proofs for creation, see also KEVIN STALEY, « Al-Kindī on Creation: Aristotle's Challenge to Islam », *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50/3 (1989), p. 355–370.

⁹⁶ *Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyya*, ed. ABŪ RĪDA, p. 202.4–5.

⁹⁷ TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 81.25; modified translation taken from PINES, « An Arabic Summary », p. 330. Cf. the preliminary propositions in the first proof, which are also said to be true in a primary way that does not require any demonstration: TROUPEAU, « Un Épitomé arabe », p. 79.14–19.

Once again, at first glance, the main difficulty in attributing *De contingentia mundi* to the circle of al-Kindī is the content of the prologue. As shown by Endress,⁹⁸ the circle of al-Kindī endorsed creation *ex nihilo* and philosophical arguments in its favour, within a harmonising view of the history of philosophy. According to such a view, which was aimed at easing the introduction of philosophy into the Islamic world, the Greek philosophers, especially the foremost philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, did not contradict one another, but, rather, substantially agreed in upholding a monotheistic and creationistic worldview, which was consistent with the revealed religion of Islam. It is in this vein that the Philoponian arguments reworked within this circle were either adapted by eliminating some polemical references and re-attributed to Alexander or presented as genuinely Aristotelian in spirit.⁹⁹ The prologue of *De contingentia mundi* may appear not to fit into this picture, both because it is correctly attributed to Philoponus and not to some proxy identity and because it openly presents this work as opposing the views of some eternalists, who explicitly included Proclus and Aristotle. However, it seems to me that the objection is not decisive. As a matter of fact, not every text stemming from the circle of al-Kindī must fit in the program outlined by Endress. For example, Endress himself attributes to the same circle a paraphrastic Arabic translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias's *Treatise on the Principles of the Universe*, which not only openly endorses the eternity of the world but even includes an explicit final addition, one without counterpart in the other extant Arabic version, to the effect that God, being wise, cannot will the ungenerated world to perish.¹⁰⁰ Given this and in light of the above linguistic and stylistic correspondences, it

⁹⁸ ENDRESS, « The Defense of Reason »; ID., « The Circle of al-Kindī ».

⁹⁹ See, respectively, HASNAWI, « Alexandre d'Aphrodise vs Jean Philopon », p. 86–92; and SILVIA FAZZO, HILLARY WIESNER, « Alexander of Aphrodisias in the Kindī-Circle and in al-Kindī's Cosmology », *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 3 (1993), p. 119–153; p. 134 and n. 38.

¹⁰⁰ GERHARD ENDRESS, « Alexander Arabus on the First Cause. Aristotle's First Mover in an Arabic Treatise attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias », in CRISTINA D'ANCONA, GIUSEPPE SERRA (eds.), *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodizia nella tradizione araba. Atti del colloquio La ricezione araba ed ebraica della filosofia e della scienza greche Padova, 14-15 maggio 1999*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2002 (Subsidia Mediaevalia Patavina, 3), p. 19–74 (the addition is found at p. 74.6–8). For the other Arabic translation see ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS *on the cosmos*, ed. CHARLES GENEQUAND, Brill, Leiden – Boston – Köln 2001 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, 44); ALEXANDRE D'APHRODISE, *Les principes du tout selon la doctrine d'Aristote*, ed. CHARLES GENEQUAND, Vrin, Paris 2017 (Sic et Non). An earlier Syriac adaptation by Sergius of Reš'aynā (d. 536 CE) is also extant: EMILIANO FIORI, « L'épitomé syriaque du *Traité sur les causes du tout* d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise attribué à Serge de Reš'aynā. Édition et traduction », *Le Muséon*, 123/1–2 (2010), p. 127–158 (previous Italian translation by GIUSEPPE FURLANI, « Il trattato di Sergio di Rêsh'aynâ sull'universo », *Rivista trimestrale di studi filosofici e religiosi*, 4/1 [1923], p. 1–22); an analysis of the doctrinal adaptations, including creationistic ones, is found in DANIEL KING, « Alexander of Aphrodisias' *On the Principles of the Universe* in a Syriac Adaptation », *Le Muséon*, 123/1–2 (2010), p. 159–191.

seems to me that the making of *De contingentia mundi* in the circle of al-Kindī is tenable and that the text, despite the polemical thorns of the prologue, could have served as a sort of working material for assimilating the creationist arguments necessary to al-Kindī's philosophical project.

VI. Final Remarks: From falsafa to Christian Speculative Theology

Subsequent potential traces of the Arabic circulation of *De contingentia mundi* are no longer found in the Islamic philosophical tradition but, rather, in Christian sources. The first examples of the Christian circulation of *De contingentia mundi* are most likely to be found within a circle of Christian Arabic philosophers and theologians, also referred to as the « Baghdad school », which flourished in the tenth century and in the first half of the eleventh century.¹⁰¹ The main piece of evidence from within the Baghdad circle is a short treatise by the Christian Ibn Suwār (d. 1017 CE), entitled *That the Proof of John the Grammarian for the Creation of the World is Preferable to the Proof of the Theologians* (with « theologians » being the *mutakallimūn*, i.e., the Islamic dialectical theologians).¹⁰² The treatise provides the Philoponian proof from the finitude of bodily power cast in a syllogistic form, adding that « John deduced the creation of the world from many proofs » (*wa-qaḍ istadalla Yaḥyā bi-ʿidda adilla ʿalā ḥadaṭ al-ʿālam*),¹⁰³ a formulation that may be reminiscent of the Arabic title of *De contingentia mundi*. The same proof from the finitude of bodily power was known to Ibn Suwār's master, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (d. 974 CE), based on his answer to one of the questions asked of him by a Jew from Mosul named Ibn Abī Saʿīd, dating from 952 CE. However, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī only mentions the proof briefly and states that it is found in an unspecified « treatise » (*maqāla*).¹⁰⁴

Finally, as seen at the beginning of this article, it is the later Christian Arabic tradition that transmitted this text to us. If the hypothesis that *De contingentia*

¹⁰¹ On the Baghdad circle, see GERHARD ENDRESS, CLEOPHEA FERRARI, « Die Bagdader Aristoteliker », in ULRICH RUDOLPH, RENATE WÜRSCH (eds.), *Die Philosophie in der Islamischen Welt. Band 1: 8.-10. Jahrhundert*, Schwabe, Basel 2012 (Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie), p. 290–362; English trans.: « The Baghdad Aristotelians », in ULRICH RUDOLPH, ROTRAUD HANSBERGER, PETER ADAMSON (eds.), *Philosophy in the Islamic World. Volume 1: 8th-10th Centuries*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2017 (Handbook of Oriental Studies, 115, 1), p. 421–525.

¹⁰² Edition in *Al-Aflātūniyya al-muḥdaṭa ʿinda al-ʿarab*, ed. BADAWĪ, p. 243–247. Translation in BERNHARD LEWIN, « La notion de *muḥdaṭ* dans le kalām et dans la philosophie. Un petit traité inédit du philosophe chrétien Ibn Suwār », *Orientalia Suecana*, 3 (1954), p. 84–93.

¹⁰³ *Al-Aflātūniyya al-muḥdaṭa ʿinda al-ʿarab*, ed. BADAWĪ, p. 246.17.

¹⁰⁴ *Maqālāt Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī al-falsafiyya / YAḤYĀ IBN ʿADĪ, The Philosophical Treatises*, ed. SAḤBĀN ḤALĪFĀT, al-Ġāmiʿa al-Urdūniyya, ʿAmmān 1988, p. 319.9–320.5 (Ibn Abī Saʿīd's question) and p. 332.7–9 (Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī's answer). On the epistolary exchange, see SHLOMO PINES, « A Tenth Century Philosophical Correspondence », *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 24 (1955), p. 103–136.

mundi stems from the circle of al-Kindī is correct, one should wonder why Philoponus's Arabic epitome, though it originated in an Islamic intellectual environment, appears to have left later echoes especially in the Christian tradition, as well as why it has been transmitted exclusively by Christian sources. I believe the answer lies in the fact that after the initial project on the part of al-Kindī and his collaborators, the mainstream Arabic Islamic *falsafa* abandoned the notion of creation as entailing a temporal beginning of time and came to embrace either the Aristotelian view of the eternity of the world or the Neoplatonic view upholding its perpetual duration, dependent on an eternal cause for its existence. Therefore, Philoponus's arguments either did not generate much interest in Islamic philosophy or mostly a polemical interest,¹⁰⁵ as attested to by Avicenna's work against « those who affirm that the past has a temporal beginning ». On the other hand, such arguments were well-received in both Muslim dialectic theology (*kalām*)¹⁰⁶ and the Eastern Christian tradition, which saw the divine creation of the world out of non-being as a non-negotiable, time-honoured theological tenet. The historical oblivion of Philoponus's theological misdeeds as a tritheist and a proponent of his own theory of resurrection, an oblivion attested to by the mistakes and hesitations concerning Philoponus in al-Mu'taman ibn al-'Assāl's *Compendium*, removed the only potential obstacle in this regard and helped a severed fragment of Philoponus's imponent anti-eternalist enterprise to survive in Arabic until today.

¹⁰⁵ In addition to DAVIDSON, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God*, see the more recent article by MICHAEL CHASE, « Philoponus' Cosmology in the Arabic Tradition », *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*, 79/2 (2012), p. 271–306.

¹⁰⁶ As observed by ENDRESS, *The circle of al-Kindī*, p. 75. On Philoponian arguments in Islamic theology, see HARRY A. WOLFSON, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Harvard U.P., Cambridge, MA-London 1976 (Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza, 4), p. 374–382 and p. 410–434.

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