Introduction

1 Sergius of Reshaina and his Commentary

1.1 Sergius, a Christian Disciple of Ammonius

Sergius of Reshaina (Syr. *Sargis d-Reš ʿAyna*, or *Rešʿaynaya*; d. 536) is a major figure in Syriac intellectual history[1]. He is the first Syriac author known by name who translated Greek medical[2], scholarly[3], and philosophical works[4] into Syriac and who made a major contribution to the knowledge of Aristotle's logic in Syriac schools (and, by extension, among later scholars writing in Arabic)[5]. If al-Farabi's account of the transfer of philosophical and medical instruction from the late ancient Alexandria, firstly, to Ḥarran in Syria and then further to Baghdad (the "from Alexandria to Baghdad" complex of narratives)[6] has any credibility, Sergius marks the beginning of this process of transition.

Sergius studied with Ammonius Hermeiou in Alexandria and, after his return to Syria, started to adapt and transmit the Alexandrian philosophical and pedagogical model to his Christian audience. In his letter about Syriac translations of Galen[7], Ḥunayn ibn Isḥaq, the most prominent figure in the history of scientific translations from Greek into Syriac and Arabic, makes Sergius his main object of criticism, thereby testifying to his authority as late as the ninth century. Thus, in his life and afterlife, Sergius is revealed to be the crucial link between late ancient Alexandria and the great translation movement of ʿAbbasid Baghdad in the 8th–10th centuries[8].

1 Sergius' role in the history of Syriac culture and philosophy was to some extent overemphasized in the 19th century, as a result of his being credited with a number of philosophical treatises which have come down to us as anonymous; cf., e.g., Renan 1852, Sachau 1870, Wright 1894: 89–93, and Baumstark 1894. A revision of his role and legacy has been made in a series of articles by Henri Hugonnard-Roche, see especially Hugonnard-Roche 1997b and 2004. For an up-to-date assessment of Sergius' place in the history of philosophy, see Watt 2018.

2 For Sergius' translations of Galen, see Degen 1981, Kessel 2016, and Bhayro 2019.

3 For Sergius' translations and adaptations of astronomical works, see Claude-Villey 2012.

4 See a review of Sergius' philosophical writings in Hugonnard-Roche 1997b and Aydin 2016: 10–25.

5 For the afterlife of Sergius in the Arabic world, see Watt 2011.

6 Al-Farabi's account was analyzed by M. Meyerhof who was the first to introduce the expression "von Alexandrien nach Bagdad" (Meyerhof 1930). A number of scholars later questioned the historicity of al-Farabi's description and criticized Meyerhof's literal interpretation of it (see, e.g., Strohmaier 1987 and Gutas 1999).

7 The Arabic text with German translation of Ḥunayn's letter was published in Bergsträsser 1925 and Lamoreaux 2016.

8 For the role of Syrian scholars in the translation of Aristotle and Galen into Arabic, cf., e.g., Hugonnard-Roche 1991 and Tannous 2018. D. Gutas claims that this role has been overemphasized; cf. Gutas 1998: 20–24.

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Nothing is known about the time and place of Sergius' birth. His traditional association with the town of Reshaina[9] is based on the late stage of his career, when, following his return from Alexandria, he became the "main physician" (Gr. ἀρχίατρος, usually transliterated in Syriac) of this town. Our only source of information for Sergius' biography is the Chronicle of Ps.-Zacharias of Mytilene[10], according to which "this man was eloquent and experienced in reading many books of the Greeks", which he studied (lit. "which he read together with a commentary") during the lengthy period he spent in Alexandria[11]. The chronicler turns out to be rather critical towards Sergius, presenting him as a person of low morals, and mentions that Sergius was "a believer through his own will"[12]. It is not immediately clear what Ps.-Zacharias means by this, and it is possible that his point is simply that Sergius pretended to be a Christian. However, it is also likely that the words of the chronicler refer to the fact that, at the time when Sergius first arrived in Alexandria, he was not yet a Christian, and it was during his time in the school of Ammonius that he came to the faith[13]. Since Ps.-Zacharias says nothing about the years which preceded Sergius' coming to Alexandria, we may state only roughly that he was born in the second half of the 5th century. The above-mentioned remark by Ps.-Zacharias leaves open the possibility that Sergius' family was not Christian; however, they must have been wealthy enough to send their son to what was at the time the best place to be educated in rhetoric, philosophy, and medicine.

Since medicine became Sergius' specialty after his return to Syria, it is apparent that he received not only a philosophical but also a medical education in Alexandria,

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9 The town of Reshaina (Syr. *Rešʿayna*, Ar. *Raʾs al-ʿAyn*), which bore the Greek name Theodosiopolis (after Emperor Theodosius I who in 383 granted it a municipal status), was located on the river Khabur close to the border of the Roman Empire; cf. Takahashi & Von Rompay 2011 and Aydin 2016: 40.

10 This work was originally compiled in the late 6th century by Zacharias of Mytilene, or Zacharias Rhetor, a member of the Christian *philoponoi* in Alexandria (discussed below). It is preserved only in the Syriac version, however, whose anonymous author (referred to as Ps.-Zacharias) updated and expanded its contents to include events up until to the reign of Justinian. For the Syriac text of the account of Sergius' life in this chronicle, see Brooks 1921: 136–138. English translation with an extensive introduction and commentary in Greatrex 2011. We find further references to Sergius in the Chronicle of 846, Chronicle of Michael the Great, and in Barhebraeus' *Ecclesiastical History*, which all seem to be dependent on the account found in Ps.-Zacharias.

11 Syr. ܗܘ ܓܒܪܐ (...) ܕܩܪܐ ܒܣܦܪ̈ܐ ܣܓܝܐ̈ ܕܚܟ̈ܡ̈ܐ ܕܐܝܬ̈ܘܗܝ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܥܡ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܐܝܬ̈ܘܗܝ (Brooks 1924: 136.4-8; cf. the English translation in Greatrex 2011: 368). Ps.-Zacharias' remark that Sergius "read together with a commentary" (ܕܩܪܐ ܥܡ ܦܘܫܩܐ) books of various Greek authorities demonstrates author's familiarity with the details of the educational process in Alexandrian schools.

12 Syr. ܒܪܝܫܐ ܒܫܘܝܐ (Brooks 1921: 136.9; cf. the English translation in Greatrex 2011: 368–369). On this passage, cf. Fiori 2014: 62.

13 Similar transformation that happened to Severus, the future patriarch of Antioch and the leading figure in the Anti-Chalcedonian movement of the early 6th century, is described in the *Life of Severus* written by Zacharias Rhetor.

as the chronicle of Ps.-Zacharias also mentions[14]. By the late 5th century, the Alexandrian *iatrosophists* had developed a systematic approach to the study of the works of Hippocrates and Galen that included some elements of the philosophical education with which it could be combined[15]. It is thus unsurprising to find a reference to Galen in Sergius' Prologue to the commentary, which speaks of Galen as the reason to turn to the study of logic (§§2–3).

Ps.-Zacharias further reports an embassy to Rome and Constantinople in which Sergius took part, as well as his death in Constantinople in 536[16]. Based on this evidence, it is traditionally assumed that the time he spent in Alexandria fell in the last decades of the 5th century and that his subsequent literary activity, including the composition of his commentary on the *Categories*, may be dated to the early 6th century. At this time, Alexandria was, alongside Athens, one of the main centers of philosophical education, one particularly attractive to Christian students, as the study of philosophy there was not so closely associated with pagan religious elements as was the case in Athens[17].

Sergius' education in Alexandria coincides with the period of the teaching activity of Ammonius Hermeiou (435/445–517/526)[18], a pupil of Proclus who began giving philosophy classes in one of the Alexandrian schools at some time after 470. Ammonius was the teacher of several prominent philosophers, including Philoponus, Simplicius, and Damascius, as well as (indirectly) Olympiodorus, David and Elias, who appear as the last representatives of the Alexandrian philosophical tradition, which, by the mid-sixth century, was deemed acceptable for Christians after the transformation of the philosophical curriculum that had taken place in the late 5th century.

Christian students were apparently not rare in the school of Ammonius, probably the most famous among these being John Philoponus (*ca.* 490–575), who became one of the editors of Ammonius' lectures[19]. It is obvious that some elements of philosophical education in Alexandria, including first of all the doctrine of the eternity of the world, but also religious elements associated with the Chaldean Oracles and Orphic texts, were problematic for Christian hearers of Ammonius' classes. Some of them, who labelled themselves *philoponoi* ("industrious")[20], were eager to counterbalance these

14 Ps.-Zacharias writes that Sergius studied "books (βιβλία) of medicine" (ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܕܐܣ̈ܝܘܢ) (Brooks 1921: 136.9; cf. the English translation in Greatrex 2011: 368).

15 For the system of medical education in Alexandria in the late 5th century, see Overwien 2018 and Overwien 2019.

16 Brooks 1921: 136–138. Cf. the English translation in Greatrex 2011: 369–371.

17 For the forms of philosophical education in Athens and Alexandria in the late 5th century, see Watts 2006.

18 For Ammonius and his school, see Blank 2010, Griffin 2016, and Chase 2020: 1–11.

19 On Philoponus as a Christian student of philosophy, see Verrycken 1990, Zachhuber 2020: 145–169.

20 The *philoponoi* was a socially active group of Christian laymen closely connected with the monastery of Enaton, which was situated close to Alexandria and whose monks had an active anti-

elements by suggesting Christian students of philosophy adopt an alternative course of reading, which, besides the Bible, also included works by Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus[21].

The tension between Christian and pagan students of philosophy in Alexandria led to an open conflict in 486[22]. It was resolved by recourse to a compromise between the two groups, one with important consequences for philosophical education in the following decades. Among these was that by the end of the 5th century Ammonius had become the leading Alexandrian teacher of philosophy. In addition, the compromise between Alexandrian Church authorities and Ammonius most likely included alterations to the program of philosophical education that would make it more acceptable for Christian students[23].

In his pedagogical activity, Ammonius generally followed the principle of combining Aristotelian and Platonic writings (introduced originally by Porphyry and becoming a general principle in the Neoplatonic schools) into a homogeneous curriculum[24]. While Ammonius apparently maintained interest in Platonic dialogues, on which he gave lectures, it was Aristotle's writings, especially his *Organon*, that dominated in the first part of the cursus of education[25]. Thus, Aristotle's *Categories* (together with Porphyry's *Isagoge*) served as the first philosophical text read by students of philoso-

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Chaledonian position. Edward Watts stressed the role, which the *philoponoi* of Alexandria played in the transformation of the philosophical curriculum in Alexandria in the late fifth century, in a series of publications, see particularly Watts 2005 and Watts 2006: 211–230. Watts' arguments were largely criticized by Alain-Philippe Segonds (see Segonds *et al.* 2011: 461–462) and Ilsetraut Hadot (Hadot 2015: 20–25).

21 This program of substitution of traditional Greek authorities with the works of Church Fathers developed by the Alexandrian *philoponoi* is described in the *Life of Severus* written by Zacharias Rhetor, who himself belonged to this group. The *Life* has been preserved in Syriac and published with a French translation in Kugener 1904. An English translation: Ambjörn 2008.

22 The attack on the pagan philosophical schools was initiated by the *philoponoi* and monks of the monastery of Enaton near Alexandria, who were supported by the patriarch of the city, Peter Mongus. As a result, many philosophers were forced to flee from the city, thus leaving Ammonius as Alexandria's preeminent teacher of the philosophical curriculum. See Watts 2006: 216–225; cf. Hadot 2015: 18–21.

23 Ammonius' agreement with Alexandrian Christian authorities is reported in rather scornful fashion by Damascius; see his *Life of Isidore* (Athanassiadi 1999: 280). For various interpretations of Damascius' text and the historical events that underpin it, see Sorabji 2005, who states that the agreement concerned primarily Ammonius' "refraining from the open support of pagan ritual" (p. 204). Cf. Segonds et al. 2011: 463 and Hadot 2015: 21, who both admit that the agreement was primarily focused on financial issues and on increasing the number of Christian students in Ammonius' school rather than on the philosophical curriculum.

24 On the tendency to harmonize Plato and Aristotle in Middle Platonism which resulted in the educational synthesis by Porphyry, see particularly Karamanolis 2006 and Hadot 2015. On Porphyry's contribution to the Neoplatonic curriculum, see Chase 2012: 1374–1376. For Ammonius' system of teaching, cf. Griffin 2016: 396–398.

25 On Damascius' witness to Ammonius' interest in Plato, see Hadot 2015: 15–20; cf. Chase 2020: 1–3.

phy, preceded only by a general introduction to philosophy and logic centered on various preliminary questions (Greek τὰ προλεγόμενα, i.e. subjects discussed before a study of certain text)[26]. Among these questions, we find a general division of philosophy reflecting the educational system established in the school of Ammonius, a discussion of the role of logic as an instrument rather than a part of philosophy, and the correct division of Aristotle's writings[27].

The events which took place in Alexandria in the 480s are known to us mainly from the *Life of Severus* by Zacharias Rhetor[28]. Both Zacharias and the eponymous Severus, the future patriarch of Antioch, had belonged to the *philoponoi* of Alexandria and were supporters of their philosophical and apologetic program. The latter is reflected by another treatise composed by Zacharias, a dialogue *Ammonius*, that describes a discussion between an unnamed Christian philosopher and Ammonius, who, at the end of the debate, is brought to silence and thus shown to be defeated by Christian arguments[29]. It would be a reasonable assumption that Serigus of Reshaina was also a member of the *philoponoi* during his stay in Alexandria. Although we have no direct evidence for this[30], we do find in Sergius' work one of the earliest attempts to present Aristotle's philosophy not only as acceptable but as fundamentally necessary for Christian education.

In his *Commentary*, Sergius stresses several times that logic should be considered an instrument[31] necessary for Christian education, since without it "neither will one be capable of studying the books on medicine nor will the arguments of the philosophers be comprehensible", nor even will "the divine books" be correctly interpretable, unless a person is illuminated from above (see the concluding §450). Aristotle's natural philosophy too is presented by the Syriac scholar as indispensable for education and compatible with Christian views. Sergius writes (§256) about his plans to "sufficiently explain everything what we have learned not only from this man (i.e., Aristotle), but also from other philosophers and from our Christian writers who have diligently searched for truth", thus presenting non-Christian and Christian philosophers to be in

26 As Elias remarks in the introductory part of his commentary on the *Categories* (*In Cat*. 107.24–26), the traditional set of the *prolegomena*-questions goes back to Ammonius' teacher, Proclus. For the genesis and formation of the tradition of the study of *prolegomena*, see Hadot 1990 and Mansfeld 1994. For the development of this tradition in the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic worlds, see Hein 1985.

27 For the structure of philosophical curriculum in the school of Ammonius as reflected in the introductory treatises that derive from it, see Westerink 1990, Hadot 1990, Hadot 1991, and Hoffmann 2012.

28 Ed. Kugener 1904; English translation in Ambjörn 2008.

29 Ed. in Colonna 1973, English translation in Dillon, Russel, and Gertz 2012. Another pagan figure who appears in this dialogue is the medical philosopher (*iatrosophist*) Gessius, which makes apparent that medical education in Alexandria in this period was connected with similar debates between Christian and non-Christian students characteristic of the school of Ammonius.

30 Cf. Fiori 2014: 86–88.

31 See the extensive discussion of whether logic is a part of philosophy or its instrument in Sergius' *Commentary*, §§30–48.

some sort of agreement acceptable for his fellow believers. Thus, in Sergius' *Commentary* we find the same apologetic bias as in, e.g., the works of Severus of Antioch, one characteristic of the approach of the Alexandrian *philoponoi*, which Sergius in turn suggests as the pedagogical template for Syriac schools.

The term *philoponoi* turns out to play an important role in the history of the West Syriac (Syriac Orthodox) anti-Chalcedonian movement pioneered by Severus[32]. The intellectual elite of the West Syriac Church, who were interested in the study and translation of the Greek philosophy and who were associated mainly with the monastery of Qenneshre, took over this label, either using the Greek word or a Syriac calque[33]. In so doing, the Syriac scholars of the 6th–7th centuries presented themselves as the hairs of the Alexandrian Christian laymen who first sought to Christianize the essentially pagan philosophical program and to adapt it for Christian schools largely associated with monasteries.

1.2 Sergius' Commentary on the *Categories*

The treatise by Sergius edited in this volume (henceforth *Commentary*) is in many aspects a product of the exegetical method established in the school of Ammonius by the end of the 5th century. Sergius composed his *Commentary* probably shortly after his return from Alexandria, having adapted it from written notes that he brought with him. Given that such notes by students "from the voice" (ἀπὸ φωνῆς) of their teacher formed the basis of the commentaries on the *Categories* and *Prior Analytics* ascribed to Ammonius himself (as the titles of these works make clear[34]), we cannot state with certainty whether Sergius' own notes were made by him personally for his private use, or whether he had access to some "official" version of Ammonius' lectures prepared by someone else.

Indeed, many passages in Sergius' treatise are very similar to (sometimes verbatim reproductions of) the text of the commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristo-

32 On Severus' promotion of the apologetic program of the *philoponoi* in the Syriac milieu, which resulted in the appropriation both of the program and of the term in West Syriac intellectual circles, cf. Arzhanov 2019: 152–174.

33 The 8th century author Phocas called Athanasius of Balad and Jacob of Edessa, the famous Syriac translators of Aristotle's works who were connected with the monastery of Qenneshre, "lovers of toil" (ܪܚܡܝ ܥܡܠܐ), using a calque of the Greek φιλόπονοι (see the text in Wright 1871: 494). The only Syriac manual on rhetoric composed in the 9th century by Antony of Tagrit, was addressed to a certain Syriac *philoponos* (ܦܝܠܘܦܘܢܐ), according to a later note by Barhebraeus (see Abbeloos & Lamy 1872: 363).

34 See Ammonius, *In Cat.* 1.1–2 and *In An. Pr.* 1.1–2. Among the works ascribed to Ammonius, only his commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation* is considered to be written by him personally, while his other commentaries on Porphyry and Aristotle are compositions of his students (cf. Blank 2010: 661–662 and Griffin 2016: 402–404).

tle's *Categories* ascribed directly to Ammonius, as well as to Philoponus' commentary on the *Categories* likewise written on the basis of Ammonius' lectures, suggesting that these works all derive either from multiple individual sets of notes taken in the classroom or from some official version of them authorized by Ammonius himself. As such, the Greek texts, containing parallels to Sergius' *Commentary* are quoted *in extenso* in the footnotes to the English translation. Although we cannot take for granted that Sergius' text has any direct relation to them beyond a common source in Ammonius' lectures[35], they contain the Greek terminology that Sergius most certainly had in mind while composing his commentary, allowing us better to understand the technical vocabulary of the published work[36].

The structure of Sergius' treatise clearly reflects the Alexandrian approach to the *Categories*, that considered this book not merely the first part of the *Organon*, but indeed, the very first text to be read by the student of philosophy (albeit accompanied by Porphyry's *Introduction* and other introductory materials, as mentioned). Sergius himself stresses that he has composed his treatise (Syr. *maktbanuta*, "writing, book") with a specific structure in mind, speaking of its seven parts as *memre* (sg. *memra*, "treatise, part"), each of which is generally dedicated either to a single issue or to a group of questions pertaining to such a single issue (Syr. *šarba*, "subject matter")[37].

Thus, the first half of Sergius' treatise, which includes the Prologue and Books I and II, focuses on the traditional preliminaries (*prolegomena*) discussed prior to Porphyry's *Isagoge* and to Aristotle's *Categories*. At the end of Book II, Sergius briefly outlines the first chapter of the *Categories* dealing with homonymy, synonymy, and heteronymy (the *antepraedicamenta*) and in this way embarks upon the second half of his work. This half in general follows the text of the *Categories* and hence may be designated a commentary, although it does not include *lemmata* from Aristotle's text. Books III to VI are dedicated to the *praedicamenta*, the four primary categories discussed at length by Aristotle himself: substance, quantity, relation, and quality. The last Book VII deals with the rest of the categories (the *postpraedicamenta*)[38]. The contents of Sergius' work can be outlined as follows:

35 Furlani claims that Sergius used Philoponus as his source ("dipende in tutto"): Furlani 1922: 172. This assumption, however, turns out to be rather unlikely for chronological reasons, cf. Aydin 2016: 56–57.

36 Cf. an attempt at reconstructing the Greek terms that underlie the epitome of Sergius' *Commentary* in Aydin 2016: 295–302.

37 Cf. the opening paragraphs to Books II–VII, i.e. §§49–50, 122, 234, 313, 353, and 405.

38 Such division of the *Categories* into three parts is discussed by Ammonius in *In Cat*. 14.3–4 and is assumed by Sergius, cf. *Commentary*, §406.

Introduction to philosophy and logic	Prologue	Praise of Aristotle as a collector of all sciences.
	Book I	Introduction to philosophy: Division of philosophy; division of Aristotle's writings; logic as instrument of philosophy.
	Book II	Introduction to logic: The goal of logic; the sequence of Aristotle's writings; the reason for the obscurity of Aristotle's language; the scope of the *Categories*; genera and species; the ten primary genera; kinds of speech. Synonyms, homonyms, heteronyms, and polynyms.
Commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*	Book III	Substance and accident; universal and particular; types of properties; types of division; primary and secondary substances; definition of substance based on its properties.
	Book IV	The sequence of the categories; divisions of quantity: number, language, line, surface, body, place, time; definition of quantity based on its properties.
	Book V	Properties of the genus of relatives; relatives that are simultaneous; definition of relatives.
	Book VI	Quality; its kinds and properties; division of the ten categories; definition of the remaining six categories.
	Book VII	Change; opposition; priority and posteriority; simultaneity; motion; conclusion of the treatise.

As becomes apparent from this overview, Sergius' work is not limited to the text of Aristotle's *Categories*, but has a much broader task, i.e., giving a general introduction to philosophy. As he notes, Aristotle's treatise is "an introduction into and a beginning of the study of logic" (§449), addressed to those who are "at the beginning of their learning" (§64)[39]. It is thus possible that Sergius designed his work as a manual for students who might have limited their education in philosophy to an introductory course and not be interested in further study or in other Aristotelian works[40].

In the Prologue to the *Commentary*, Sergius reports a dialogue between him and his disciple Theodore[41] (to whom he addresses the treatise as a whole) concerning

39 Cf. §186 and §275.

40 Cf. §60, where Sergius describes various parts of the *Organon* and proceeds to Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. Having enumerated all these treatises, however, Sergius stresses that his main focus will be the *Categories*.

41 According to Ḥunayn b. Isḥaq's *Letter*, Theodore at certain point of his career became bishop of the town Karḫ Ǧuddan, see Bergsträsser 1925: 12.22. Cf. Hugonnard-Roche 1997: 124 n. 13 and Aydin 2016: 10 n. 1. Theodore was a disciple of Sergius (see *Commentary*, §§4–7) and assisted him in translating the works of Galen into Syriac, revising Sergius' raw translations and correcting their style (see §2). Several translations of the Greek astronomical and medical works made by Sergius (e.g., the treatise *On the*

Galen (§2). Theodore had inquired as to the source of the clear logical structures found in Galen's works, and Sergius replied that the famous doctor had learned the science of logic from Aristotle, who holds a special position in the history of philosophy, given that it was Aristotle who had brought together all of human knowledge into one coherent system (§3). In the following paragraphs (§§4–7), Theodore begs Sergius to teach him this science which underlies Galen's works. Notwithstanding the artificial character of the described dialogue, the Prologue gives us an idea of Sergius' purposes with his treatise, which was clearly not intended *prima facie* to be a line-by-line commentary on the text of the *Categories*: rather, it is meant to explicate more general questions of the role of Aristotle's philosophy and particularly of his logic.

From Sergius' brief remarks scattered throughout the *Commentary* we may deduce that he had a much broader audience in mind than just his disciple Theodore (cf. §240 where Sergius says explicitly that he is addressing "many"). In the beginning and the concluding paragraphs of nearly every book, Sergius stresses his constant concern for those who are going to read his treatise[42], for whom he did his best to make his explanations as clear as possible, "so that even little children might not to be confused by our answers" (§234). While addressing Theodore on one occasion (§418), Sergius writes: "This is how you can clearly explain and make apparent to the students the teaching on the six kinds (of change) which have been discussed thus far." It is thus possible that he was also thinking of teachers who could use his work for an introductory course in philosophy, since in §380 he mentions those who will "listen" to what he is writing. However, his primary audience was evidently the students themselves: it is these he has in mind when discussing such questions as which kinds of speech exist, what makes a definition, in how many ways a division is possible, etc.

Thus, in terms of methodology, Sergius first of all intended to compose a manual containing a general introduction to philosophy and logic. The Alexandrian tradition of commentary on the *Categories*, with its extensive *prolegomena* and general excurses into basic philosophical questions, provided Sergius with a useful framework that, however, required further adaptation to suit the needs of Syriac schools. This necessarily involved shifting the focus from Aristotle's text itself to the more general philosophical topics treated within it. As a result, what distinguishes Sergius' work from the Alexandrian tradition that served as his model is the near total absence of Aristotle's *ipsissima verba*. The text of the *Categories* is quoted neither systematically by way of full *lemmata* nor in the abbreviated form which would have allowed readers to follow Aristotle's text. It is only sporadically that we find any quotations from the *Categories* at all — even these, however, derive not from Aristotle's treatise, but most likely from the Greek commentary tradition that Sergius made use of (see 1.3, below).

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Influence of the Moon and Galen's *On Simple Drugs*) are dedicated to Theodore, who is called "a priest" (ܩܫܝܫܐ), i.e. has not yet at that time received the position of a bishop.

42 Cf. *Commentary*, §§29, 138, 239, 261, 380, etc.

This state of affairs is unsurprising if placed in the context of the pedagogical aim pursued by Sergius, i.e., to give a general introduction to philosophy. It also explains the author's remark at the end of the *Commentary* (§449) that he could have composed his treatise even if Aristotle's work were not at his disposal. While Sergius on several occasions (§§60 and 450) discloses his plans to write commentaries on further parts of the *Organon*, meanwhile, no such works have come down to us. Although two East Syriac authors, Timothy I and ʿAbdishoʿ bar Brikha, refer to Sergius' commentaries in the plural[43], they may have meant short logical treatises transmitted under Sergius' name[44].

There is little doubt that two expositions of logical figures based on Aristotle's *Analytica Priora* and attributed (either by medieval scribes or by modern scholars) to Sergius do not really belong to him[45]. Another short work bears the title *Natural demonstration by the chief physician Sergius*, having come down to us in the same codex (London, BL Add. 12155) that contains a selection from Sergius' *Commentary* (ms. E, see 2.2, below)[46]. This collection of various definitions may indeed ultimately derive from Sergius, although it must have been revised and reshaped by the compilers of the codex that contains it (cf. the extent of the revisions to Sergius' *Commentary* in the collection of excerpts appearing on the next folio of the same codex, discussed in 2.2, below).

Two further treatises on logic, on the other hand, may with good reason be attributed to Sergius, although, as in the previous case, their texts may have undergone revision at the hands of later Syriac scholars. Ms. London, BL Add. 14658, which opens with Sergius' *Commentary* (ms. L in the present edition, see 2.1.1, below), contains on fols. 124v–129r a short work with the title *On Genus, Species, and Individuality*, which is attributed to the "priest and chief physician Sergius" and which contains an exposition

43 The East-Syriac Catholicos Timothy I (d. 823) refers in *Epistle* 19.20 to "commentaries on the books of logic" (ܦܫܩܐ ܕܢܛܘܪ ܣܗܕܐ ܕܣܝܡ ܣܪܓܝ), which he attributes to the authoritative Greek philosophers Olympiodorus, Stephanus, and Alexander, mentioning also Sergius (ed. Heimgartner 2021a: 105.2; transl. Heimgartner 2021b: 80). The plural form used by Timothy may thus be explained by the fact that he referred to multiple authors and not to multiple works by each individual author. In his catalogue of Syriac writers, ʿAbdishoʿ bar Brikha (d. 1318) also uses the plural when referring to Sergius, noting that he "composed commentaries on logic" (ܕܥܒܕ ܦܫܩܐ ܠܢܛܘܪ ܣܗܕܐ), see Assemani 1725: 87 (cap. LXIV). The compressed expression of ʿAbdishoʿ in all likelihood goes back to Timothy's letter, however.

44 See two reviews of philosophical works which are for some reasons attributed to Sergius in Hugonnard-Roche 1997b: 126–129 and Aydin 2016: 10–17.

45 These consist of a *scholion* on the term "scheme" preserved in ms. BL Add. 14660 and explicitly attributed to Sergius (unpublished, an Italian translation in Furlani 1926a), as well as a treatise *On Three Conversions* in ms. BL Add. 14658, which has been identified by D. King as the second part of the commentary on *Prior Analytics* traditionally ascribed to Proba.

46 Unpublished; Italian translation in Furlani 1926a.

of the Tree of Porphyry[47]. Another treatise preserved in three different versions (in mss. BL Add. 14658, DS 27, and DS 28) bears in the BL codex the title *On the Division of Substance*. While not being explicitly ascribed to Sergius, it may in fact go back to him[48].

If the three aforementioned treatises may indeed be considered to derive from Sergius, they may all be characterized as very general introductions to logical issues that have clearly been designed for school use. All three of them are associated either with Aristotle's *Categories* or with Porphyry's introduction to this treatise and thus corroborate the assumption that Sergius' commentary on the *Categories* was designed not as the first part in a series of expositions of all parts of the *Organon*, but rather as an independent work that primarily served as a general introduction to philosophy.

It is in keeping with Sergius' approach that one of the logical treatises ascribed to him bears the title *Natural Demonstration*, even though it focuses primarily on logical categories. Sergius discusses natural philosophy in various parts of his *Commentary*, another distinct feature that differentiates his work from the mainstream Alexandrian tradition. Indeed, in Book IV (see §256 and further) he goes so far as to depart completely from the text of the *Categories*, turning instead to Aristotle's *Physics*. While the Greek commentators, including Ammonius, also referred to the *Physics* as proper source of information on space and time, Sergius goes much farther in incorporating large portions from this work directly into his treatise (sometimes in the form of periphrases and sometimes as quotations).

Thus, in spite of Sergius' multiple statements (see §§27, 240, and 256) that he plans to comment on Aristotle's works on natural philosophy on some other occasion, he clearly considered it necessary to include at least some elements of these works in his commentary on the *Categories*[49]. It would be a reasonable assumption that the Syriac scholar was thinking of those teachers and students of philosophy who might never turn to further philosophical subjects, confining their teaching and training to a general introduction to philosophy, which ought properly to count among its indispensable components some elements of physics[50].

Sergius' *Commentary* proved to be an influential text in the history of Syriac philosophy. We find revisions of it and quotations of various length taken from it in a number of later works:

47 Unpublished; Italian translation in Furlani 1925. This work has been traditionally considered a genuine work of Sergius; cf. Furlani 1925, Hugonnard-Roche 1997b, Aydin 2016.

48 Unpublished. This treatise includes several parts, which appear in different order in the three versions and one of which goes back to Ammonius' commentary on the *Isagoge*.

49 Cf. §261 where Sergius anticipates and refutes a possible criticism of this approach.

50 Cf. further examples of the combination of *Categories*-derived logical notions with natural philosophy in Arzhanov 2021a: 24–25.

(1) Shortly after Sergius' death, some parts of his *Commentary* were integrated into the introduction to philosophy written by Paul the Persian, who is traditionally dated to the mid-6th century, being active at the court of the Sasanian king Khosraw I Anushirvan (reigned in 531–578)[51].
(2) At the end of the 6th century, the East Syriac author Barḥadbshabba, who received his education in the famous school of Nisibis, made use of the introductory part of Sergius' *Commentary* in his treatise *The Cause of the Foundation of the Schools*[52].
(3) Around 600, parts of the *Commentary* dealing with the Pythagorean philosophy of numbers and with Aristotle's main categories were quoted by another East Syriac author, Gabriel Qatraya, in his commentary on the Eucharist[53].
(4) A number of divisions and definitions deriving from the *Commentary* were included in the treatise *On the Division of Substance*, preserved, as mentioned above, in three different versions, one of which dates from the 7th century[54].
(5) The 8th-century apologetic compendium preserved in ms. E includes a large selection of periphrastic quotations from Sergius' work, probably reflecting its use in the West Syriac schools[55].
(6) The East Syriac author Theodore Bar Koni (late 8th century) includes lengthy quotations from Sergius' treatise in his *Book of Scholia*[56]. This compendium is dated to the year 792[57] and is an example of a manual written for those beginning their study of theology in East Syriac schools.
(7) Sergius' *Commentary* is one of the sources for the *Book of Definitions*, compiled in East Syriac school circles around the year 900[58] and traditionally ascribed to Mi-

51 Paul composed several introductions to philosophy and logic as well as a commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*; see on him Hugonnard-Roche 2000, 2011, and 2018. It is not clear whether he wrote in Syriac or in Persian. His treatise on logic preserved in Syriac is published in Land 1875: 1–32. Fragments from his introduction to philosophy preserved in Arabic by Miskawayh are analyzed and translated into English in Gutas 1983. For a parallel between Paul's text and Sergius', cf. Gutas 1983: 233 and *Commentary*, §3.

52 Ed. with a French translation in Scher 1908, English translation in Becker 2006. For the parallels between Barḥadbshabba and Sergius, see Perkams 2019.

53 On Gabriel Qatraya and his work, see Brock 2014. The text of Gabriel's treatise is partially edited in Neroth van Vogelpoel 2018. The passage dealing with Pythagoras and Aristotle (cf. *Commentary*, §§129–130) is published with an English translation in Brock 2016: 146–147.

54 On one of the mss. containing it (London, BL Add. 14658), see 2.1.1, below.

55 On ms. E, see 2.2, below.

56 Ed. in Scher 1954, French translation in Hespel & Draguet 1982. The discussion of logical topics, starting with a definition of "substance", appears in Theodore at the beginning of Book VI, which focuses on the New Testament. Cf. Scher 1954: 9–14 and *Commentary*, §§217–231; Scher 1954: 14–15 and *Commentary*, §§138–149; Scher 1954: 16–17 and *Commentary*, §§98–107; Scher 1954: 17–18 and *Commentary*, §§203–212 (Theodore's version is in most cases a summary of Sergius' text).

57 For the dating of Theodore's work, see Griffith 1981: 162.

58 For the dating of this compilation, see Abramowski 1999.

chael Badoqa[59]. Similar to (5), the *Book of Definitions* is addressed to those just beginning their studies.

(8) The 10th-century Baghdad scholar Ḥasan Bar Bahlul made use of the *Commentary* in compiling his *Lexicon* (Syr. *Leksiqon*)[60], although it is possible that his knowledge of Sergius' treatise was second-hand.

(9) An epitome of the *Commentary* is preserved in ms. Berlin, Petermann I. 9, dated to the 13th century (on which see 2.3, below)[61]. The epitome must thus have been produced sometime prior to the composition of the Berlin codex itself by an anonymous Syriac scholar.

The transmission history of the *Commentary* does not belong only to the medieval period. Its latest stage dates from the early 20th century, when the youngest manuscript containing it was commissioned by Alfonse Mingana. This manuscript, Mingana Syr. 606, was copied in Alqosh in 1933 by the famous scribe Mattai bar Pawlos (d. 1947) on the basis of ms. B (on the Erbil group of mss., see 2.1.3, below). This manuscript was produced 11 years after the first scholarly article analyzing Sergius' work had been published.

In 1922, Giuseppe Furlani made a brief summary of the contents of the *Commentary* in an article published in Italian, including lengthy quotations taken mainly from books I–IV and based on the version of the *Commentary* preserved in ms. L[62]. Furlani's article has until now remained the only general presentation of the whole text of Sergius' *Commentary*, although some parts of it have been translated into other European languages. In 1997, Sebastian Brock made an English translation of a short fragment from the Prologue[63]. Henri Hugonnard-Roche, who dedicated a number of articles to the figure and legacy of Sergius, published a French translation of the Prologue and Book I[64]. John Watt translated a large portion of Book II into English[65]. These scholars all supplied their translations with extensive commentaries that made apparent both the dependence of Sergius' treatise on the philosophical school of Ammonius and its value for the history of the Syriac philosophical tradition. The recent edition of the

59 Ed. in Furani 1922. Since Furlani knew Sergius' treatise from ms. L, he pointed to a number of parallels between the two texts in the commentary to his edition of the *Book of Definitions*.

60 See the entry "Aristotle" in Duval 1901: 290, containing a quotation from the *Commentary*, §59.

61 Published in Aydin 2016.

62 Furlani 1922. On ms. L, which is the earliest witness to the *Commentary*, see 2.1.1, below.

63 Brock 1997. Brock's quotations were taken from the very beginning of the treatise and from the last part of it. Brock's translation has been quoted several times in other publications, see, e.g., Penn et al. 2022: 278–279.

64 Hugonnard-Roche 1997c and Hugonnard-Roche 1997d. The translation was based on mss. M and P (see 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, below).

65 Watt 2014. The translation was based on mss. L, M, and P.

epitome by Sami Aydin[66], which contains multiple references to the *Commentary*, reveals further parallels to the Alexandrian commentary tradition and attempts to contextualize it in the history of Syriac philosophy.

1.3 The *Commentary* and the Syriac Aristotelianism in the Early 6th Century

The Syriac philosophical tradition[67] has much to do with the reception of and attitudes towards Greek philosophy, and thus is sometimes considered secondary to it, since the philosophical contributions specific to Syriac are either translations from the Greek or attempts to follow Greek models of philosophy[68]. It is characteristic that the early period of Syriac literature started with the two figures, Bardaiṣan and Ephrem, who held the opposite views on the Greek culture. Bardaiṣan, the first "Aramaic philosopher", was eager to introduce some elements of Platonism into his writings, so that in the *Book of the Laws of the Countries* he appears as Socrates in a Platonic dialogue[69]. Ephrem, on the other hand, was active in criticizing it, making first of all Platonic ideas the object of his criticism[70].

In the late 5th century, a new period in Syriac reception and adaptation of Greek philosophy starts which is characterized by the interest in Aristotle rather than Plato and which appears to be closely associated with the tradition of Neoplatonism known to us from the Alexandrian school. Sergius of Reshaina who received his philosophical and medical education in Alexandria in the late 5th century marks the beginning of this period. Sergius turns out to be the first Syriac scholar known to us by name who introduced the main features of the Alexandrian exegesis of Aristotle into the Christian education in Syria. First, his interest in both Aristotle and Galen, and secondly, his focus on producing commentaries on the Organon which served as a general introduction to philosophy and logic, are two features which become characteristic of Syriac philosophy in the pre- and early Islamic period.

Sergius opens his *Commentary* with a short Prologue[71], in which he praises Aristotle for having brought all sciences into a coherent system and compares him to a wise

66 Aydin 2016.

67 On the Syriac philosophical tradition in general, see Endress 1987, Daiber 2012, Hugonnard-Roche & Watt 2018.

68 For Syriac attitudes towards Greek culture, see the classical study of Brock 1982.

69 For the figure and legacy of Bardaiṣan, see Drijvers 1996. Ilaria Ramelli has explored the reception of Platonic ideas by Bardaiṣan in detail in Ramelli 2009. See also Jurasz 2019.

70 For Ephrem's attitude towards Greek philosophy, see Possekel 1999.

71 The Prologue has become an object of interest in several recent studies. It was first (partly) translated into English in Brock 1997. A French translation with an extensive commentary was published in Hugonnard-Roche 1997c. I made an edition of the Syriac text of the *Prologue* (unfortunately on only a

doctor (an image which appears fitting in context of Sergius' reference to Galen) who has mixed a number of simple drugs into one perfect remedy[72]. On a number of occasions (see particularly §§54 and 450), Sergius reiterates the value of Aristotle's philosophy in general and of logic in particular. These persistent attempts make clear that the place of Aristotle and his writings in Syriac schools in the early 6th century had not yet been settled[73].

The period when Sergius was writing his *Commentary* was a tumultuous one characterized by intense theological debates that, following the Council of Chalcedon (451), had begun to integrate Aristotle's logical terminology more extensively[74]. Although Church authorities never mentioned Aristotle in this context, the terms which they applied in their exposition of the Trinity and the two Natures of Jesus Christ ("substance", "nature", "hypostasis") ultimately go back to the *Categories* and the Neoplatonic commentaries on this treatise, which thus had a significant impact on early Christian theology[75]. We may hardly doubt that Sergius had these theological discussions in mind when working on his *Commentary*. It is worth noting that Book III, which deals with the term "substance", is longer than any other part his treatise, due probably to the importance of this term and the number of questions connected with its application[76].

The reception history of the *Commentary* makes apparent that Sergius' work was subsequently integrated into theological discussions, sometimes as a substitute for the *Categories* itself. One of the earliest textual witnesses to the *Commentary* has come down to us in the form of a collection of excerpts from it preserved in an 8th-century florilegium composed with the purpose of providing help in theological debates (ms. E, see 2.2, below). This collection has two subtitles. In the first one, the sixth book of the *Commentary* is pointed out as the direct source of the quotations. The second part of the collection, however, is called plainly an exposition of Aristotle's *Categories*, which in fact contains extracts from Sergius' *Commentary*. This polemical florilegium, thus, gives good reasons to assume that Sergius' treaties was read and used in the context of

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limited ms. basis) for the volume published by D. Gutas (Gutas 2022: 224–227). An English translation of this text was made by D. King (Gutas 2022: 189–192).

72 This image goes back in all probability to a *topos* that presents Plato as the one who brought together all the sciences for the first time and that was most likely created in the Academy of Athens. Cf. the quotation from the 2nd-century head of the Athenian Academy, Atticus, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* XI.2.2–4.

73 See general overviews of the reception of Aristotle in Syriac schools in Baumstark 1900, Daiber 2001, Bruns 2003, King 2010: 1–17.

74 For the role of Aristotle's logic in the Christological debates, see Bradshaw 2004: 154–186, Krausmüller 2011, Karamanolis 2013: 117–143, Edwards 2019: 129–148, and Zachhuber 2020.

75 See Edwards 2019: 129–146.

76 Cf. the remark by G. Furlani on the importance of Book III in context of the current theological debates in Furlani 1922: 163.

theological debates, and not simply as a commentary on Aristotle, but, in a sense, as a replacement for him.

It was not only the philosophical education in the school of Ammonius that gave Sergius an impulse to promote Aristotle's logic in Syriac schools. Like his fellow Christian students, the *philoponoi*, Sergius was eager to make Greek philosophy part of Christian intellectual discourse[77], stressing in his *Commentary* the role of Aristotle's logic not only in medicine, but also in other parts of human knowledge (see §450). The increasing post-Chalcedonian trend of incorporating philosophical terms into Christian theology in turn prompted Sergius to provide a systematic exposition of Aristotelian logic that might be applied in theological debates of his time.

Sergius was, however, not the first Syriac intellectual to attempt this expository work. Several passages in the *Commentary* give good reason to assume that Aristotle's logical works were known to Syriac scholars before Sergius, although the tradition of their study had not yet achieved a rigid scholastic form. In §293, Sergius gives an example of certain differences between the terms used by the "ancients", i.e., the Greek philosophers of the past, and those used by their Syriac commentators:

> Now, we shall consider that of things that are said, some exist primarily and in the strict sense, and some of those things that are said exist secondarily and accidentally. In the Syriac language, we are accustomed to call these two kinds "truly" (*šarrira'it*) and "seemingly" (*ša'ila'it*), so that what the ancients named "strictly" (*ḥattita'it*) and "primarily" (*qadma'it*) we usually call "truly" (*šarrira'it*), while what we designate as "seemingly" (*ša'ila'it*) they referred to as "accidentally" (*gedšana'it*) and "secondarily" (*trayyana'it*). Thus, there are quantities in the true and strict sense, namely those which have been divided and discussed thus far, and there are those of another kind, seeming and derivative, of which we say that they are quantities only in belief and not in reality.

This is an example of nuances which Sergius finds in rendering the two Greek terms, κυρίως and κατὰ συμβεβηκός, that appear in *Cat*. 5a38–39. The point that Sergius makes is rather general, i.e., that there are various ways of understanding and translating the Greek terms. But in so doing, he also gives us an example of the development of the Syriac logical lexicon in the period that precedes his work, as he speaks of an established custom of using particular terms.

On other occasion, Sergius appears more critical. He comments several times on the Syriac translation of the Greek term ποιότης, "quality". The first comment comes in §99:

> We have just now spoken about sweetness and bitterness, and about all colours and shapes. <...> All such (words) he (i.e. Aristotle) subsumed under one universal genus which he called *pw'ṭws*

77 Another *philoponos*, Severus of Antioch, was likewise particularly eager to apply the philosophical knowledge acquired in Alexandria in his polemical writings that formed the basis of anti-Chalcedonian theology in the West Syriac (Syriac Orthodox) tradition; cf. Zachhuber 2020: 119–144.

> (ποιότης, "quality"). As for us, we call it sometimes *ḥayla* ("capacity") and sometimes *muzzaga* ("mixture"), since up to this time we haven't found among Syriac names one which would suit it perfectly.

Here, Sergius refers to a custom that has not been fully established, since he gives examples of various attempts at rendering the Greek term. Further remarks on this topic appear at the beginning of Book VI, which focuses on the category (or genus, as Sergius often puts it) of quality. In §§354–355 (see also §365), we read:

> So, first of all, you ought to know that concerning this genus there has been no established teaching and knowledge among those who spoke the Syriac tongue in the old days, since their notions of it are quite different everywhere. Also, those who earlier translated particular writings from the Greek language into the tongue of the Syrians interpreted the name of this genus in many different ways, sometimes calling it *ḥayla* ("capacity") and sometimes designating it as *zna* ("quality"), while some of them who as it seems to me were completely ignorant of the meaning of this name rendered it as *muzzaga* ("mixture"). For myself, I am sure that one term seems to be particularly suitable for rendering it, so that I will call it *zna* ("quality").

Sergius remarks later on that he sees no need to quarrel about words but rather to pay heed to the meaning of the Greek terms underlying them. In spite of this generally conciliatory tone, though, he is eager to stress that the diversity in rendering a given Greek term stems from misinterpretation and that the use of a single, set term (*zna*) will facilitate proper understanding.

Again, Sergius' notes make apparent that at the time when he wrote his *Commentary*, there was an established tradition of exegesis of Aristotle's logical writings, although no representatives of this tradition prior to Sergius are known to us by name[78]. In the period shortly following Sergius' death (i.e., the mid-6th century), however, we know of two Syriac authors, Paul the Persian and Proba, who had similar philosophical interests to Sergius. Paul the Persian, who was active at the court of the Sassanian king Khosraw I Anushirvan (reigned 531–578), composed several introductions to philosophy and logic and a commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*[79]. One of his introductions, which has not been preserved in its original language, but appears in

78 ʿAbdishoʿ bar Brikha wrote in his catalogue of Syriac authors (Assemani 1725: 85, cap. LXI) that "Ibas, Kumi, and Proba translated from Greek into Syriac the books of the Interpreter (*i.e.* Theodore of Mopsuestia) and the writings of Aristotle" (ܐܝܒܐ ܕܡ ܣܘܪܣܝܐ ܘܐܦ ܥܠ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܕܦܫܩܢܐ ܕܐܪܣܛܘ). Based on this evidence and on the fact that Ibas was bishop of Edessa in the early 5th century, some scholars formerly assumed that philosophical studies and translation of Aristotle's works took place already in the 5th century in what was traditionally called the "school of Edessa" (cf., e.g., Vööbus 1965: 12–24). This assumption, however, has been refuted by S. Brock, who gives solid arguments for separating both Proba and his work on Aristotle from the two other figures who were interested in Theodore of Mopsuestia's writings (see Brock 2011).

79 On Paul, see Hugonnard-Roche 2000 and Hugonnard-Roche 2011.

Arabic in the form of quotations by Miskawayh[80], contains passages that clearly go back to Sergius' *Commentary*[81] and testify to the broad dissemination of the latter work shortly after Sergius' lifetime. Proba in all likelihood also belongs to the mid-6th century[82]; he was the author of a commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and on Aristotle's *On Interpretation* and *Prior Analytics* I.1–7, all of which proved very popular in Syriac schools[83]. Both Paul and Proba belonged to the next generation of Syriac teachers of philosophy, who shared Sergius' interest in general introductions to Aristotle and similarly depended on the Alexandrian exegetical tradition.

Sergius' remarks on the Syriac translation of the Greek ποιότης, "quality", quoted above include a reference to translations from Greek into Syriac which were made apparently before or during his lifetime. Indeed, further evidence for a prior tradition of translation from Greek to Syriac may be represented by two anonymous Syriac translations of logical treatises (Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories*, respectively) belonging to the 6th century, although it remains a matter of debate whether their composition was prior, posterior, or contemporary relative to Sergius' career. Both translations have been preserved in the same codex now located in the British Library of London, Add. 14658, which also contains Sergius' *Commentary*. The translation of the *Isagoge*[84] has sometimes been considered to be a product of Sergius himself[85]. However, the only quotation from the *Isagoge* (12.24–25) that Sergius includes (in §160) differs in many aspects from the anonymous translation and thus does not speak to any connection between them. There is similarly no apparent link between Sergius' *Commentary* and the early Syriac translation of the *Categories*[86].

While Sergius' work focuses on and comments on the text of Aristotle's treatise, this text itself, as it has been already noted above, is basically absent from the *Commentary*. Unlike his contemporary Greek commentators (Ammonius, Philoponus, Simplicius), Sergius does not include *lemmata* from Aristotle's text (either in full or in abbreviated form) be explained by his subsequent commentary. In fact, although his exposition generally follows the order of the topics in the *Categories* such that we are able to indicate (as it is done in the margins of the present edition) the assumed passages in the Greek text to which Sergius' comments refer, it is not always clear to which exact passage from the *Categories* his discussion corresponds, and so these

80 See the analysis and English translation of the quotations from Paul in Gutas 1983.

81 See Gutas 1983: 233 and §3 of Sergius' *Commentary*.

82 On Proba and his legacy, see besides Brock 2011, also Suermann 1990 and Hugonnard-Roche 2012a.

83 See Van Hoonacker 1900, Hugonnard-Roche 2012b and Hugonnard-Roche 2017.

84 Ed. Brock 1988; cf. the online edition at: https://hunaynnet.oeaw.ac.at/isagoge.html (retrieved on 20.08.23). On this version, see Brock 1989, Hugonnard-Roche 1994, Hugonnard-Roche 2012c.

85 This attribution was suggested by Renan 1852: 27, but was rejected by later scholars.

86 Ed. King 2010; cf. the online edition of this version at: https://hunaynnet.oeaw.ac.at/categoriae.html (retrieved on 20.08.23). For the differences between the two editions, see Arzhanov 2021b. On this Syriac translation of the *Categories*, see Hugonnard-Roche 1987.

indications in many cases turn out to be rather conjectural. At the end of the *Commentary* (see §449), moreover, Sergius makes a remark that reflects his general attitude towards the text of the *Categories*: "Even if I had not this treatise at my disposal while I was writing down these things, I would still have urged you to meditate about them…" The remark may be understood to describe a merely hypothetical scenario, but one can also interpret it to mean that Sergius in fact *did not* have the text of the *Categories* at his disposal while writing down the *Commentary*, neither the Greek original nor the Syriac version of it[87].

Even if Sergius did have access to the separate text of the *Categories*, he did not make much use of it, since in the *Commentary* we find very few passages where Sergius actually quotes Aristotle. Rather, in most cases (see §§231, 293, 296, etc.[88]), Sergius simply paraphrases the text of the *Categories*, including longer or shorter portions of it into his exposition of particular topics. Often such periphrastic manner of combining Aristotle's own words with an exposition of them finds close parallels in the commentaries of Ammonius and Philoponus, although the latter authors include the corresponding passages from the *Categories* in the form of *lemmata* before giving their exposition of the text. Given Sergius' general tendency to paraphrase Aristotle rather than to cite him, we are unable to say if there are any passages from the *Categories* at all included by Sergius in his *Commentary* that might qualify as direct quotations. One can point to eight instances in Sergius' treatise where he gives the impression of quoting Aristotle's words rather than paraphrasing them:

(1)	§70	*Cat*. 1a16–17
(2)	§137	*Cat*. 1a24–25
(3)	§222	*Cat*. 3b10
(4)	§223	*Cat*. 3b24–25
(5)	§228	*Cat*. 4a10–11
(6)	§324	*Cat*. 6a36–37
(7)	§332	*Cat*. 6b19–20
(8)	§349	*Cat*. 8a31–32

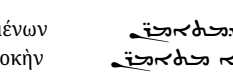
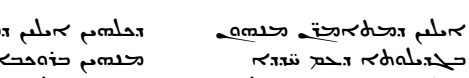
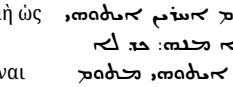
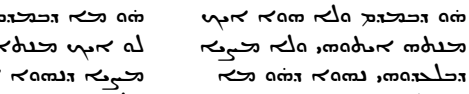
In none of these cases does the text of the *Categories* quoted by Sergius fit with the anonymous Syriac translation of this tract[89]. Thus, we have good reason to assume that Sergius did not use the anonymous Syriac version during his work on the *Commentary*, which is unsurprising given Sergius' own statement in §449 that he would have composed his treatise even without access to Aristotle's text.

87 This is what G. Furlani suggests in his Italian translation of this passage based on ms. L only (Furlani 1922: 136). However, the Syriac text as it is preserved in mss. B and D allows for the interpretation reflected in my English translation of this passage.

88 See also §§299, 300, 306–307, 327–329, 333–334, 343, 350, 370, 376, 380, 383, 385, 388, 409, and 440.

89 Cf. the comparison between the Syriac versions of the *Categories*, including the quotations from it by Sergius, in Hugonnard-Roche 1987 and King 2011.

A closer look at instances (1) and (2) makes the differences between the two texts apparent:

	Greek version	Sergius' *Commentary*	Anonymous Syriac translation
(1)	1a16–17: τῶν λεγομένων τὰ μὲν κατὰ συμπλοκὴν λέγεται, τὰ δὲ ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς		
(2)	1a24–25: ὃ ἔν τινι μὴ ὡς μέρος ὑπάρχον ἀδύνατον χωρὶς εἶναι τοῦ ἐν ᾧ ἐστίν		

Quotation (1) by Sergius belongs to the *prolegomena* part of his treatise and apparently goes back to the Greek commentaries which considered the problem of the scope of Aristotle's work. In this context, the passage of *Cat*. 1a16–17 was traditionally mentioned as an argument that Aristotle's aim was to discuss simple words rather than simple things or notions. It is likely that it was such commentaries that Sergius used as a source of this quotation[90]. Similarly, we may surmise that quotation (2) by Sergius goes back not to a separate version of the *Categories* (be it in Greek or Syriac) but to the commentary tradition, since the Syriac author takes *Cat*. 1a24–25 as a definition of "accident", i.e. of a term that does not actually appear in Aristotle's text. In chapter 2 of the *Categories*, Aristotle speaks of "being in something as subject" and "being said of something as subject" and of various combinations of them which result in four different types[91]. It fell to later commentators to interpret these terms used by Aristotle as referring to universal and particular, on the one hand, and to substance and accident, on the other[92]. In the *Commentary*, Sergius defines the term "accident" with reference to the quotation from Aristotle's text, making no mention of the fact that the term he defines is not found there, which makes it very probable that the source of his quotation is to be found among the Alexandrian commentaries rather than in Aristotle himself[93].

90 Cf. Ammonius, *In Cat*. 9.3–5, Philoponus, *In Cat*. 8.29–33, and Simplicius, *In Cat*. 9.12–13.

91 On Aristotle's terminology in *Cat*. 2, cf. Ackrill 1963: 74–76.

92 Cf. Ammonius, *In Cat*. 25.14–15 and Philoponus, *In Cat*. 29.1. For the ancient commentaries dealing with Aristotle's terms, see Thiel 2004: 73–78.

93 Cf. also Sergius' definition of the 11th type of being-in-something in §149. Where the version of Ammonius and Philoponus have: "as in a subject, as an accident is in a substance" (ὡς ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ὡς τὸ συμβεβηκὸς ἐν οὐσίᾳ, see Ammonius, *In Cat*. 29.17 = Philoponus, *In Cat*. 32.25–26), Sergius skips the first part of the definition. This interpretation seems to be a result of deliberate choice, and it gives good reason to assume that Sergius supposed that no separate text of the *Categories* needed to be consulted alongside his own treatise.

Sergius' dependence on the commentary tradition in his quotations of Aristotle's text is also apparent in case (5). While quoting *Cat*. 4a10–11 (τὸ ταὐτὸν καὶ ἓν ἀριθμῷ ὂν τῶν ἐναντίων εἶναι δεκτικόν), Sergius omits the word ἀριθμῷ. This term is likewise omitted in the corresponding part of Ammonius' commentary (see *In Cat*. 52.12) which contains not the lemma (where the word is present), but its later exposition by Ammonius that includes once again the quotation from Aristotle's text. These examples, together with Sergius' general tendency to paraphrase Aristotle's text rather than to quote it, show that the Syriac scholar most likely did not make use of the text of Aristotle's *Categories* itself, either in Greek or in Syriac translation.

This conclusion makes Sergius' treatise irrelevant for the dating of the anonymous Syriac version of the *Categories* (for the sake of brevity hereafter abbreviated as *Anon.*), since he apparently borrowed the quotations from Aristotle's text from those Greek commentaries that he brought from Alexandria and used for his work, not from a separate copy of the *Categories*. What nevertheless brings Sergius' *Commentary* and the *Anon.* close to one another is the fact that both works belong to the same early period of the reception of Aristotle's logic in Syriac schools[94].

Since during this period the Syriac logical lexicon has not been fully established, it is unsurprising that both in Sergius' *Commentary* and in the *Anon.* we find different attempts at interpreting particular Aristotelian terms and finding proper Syriac equivalents for them. In some cases, these attempts go in different directions (cf. the two examples above). It is worth noting, however, that it is not only between Sergius and the *Anon.* that we see differences in terminology and in how Aristotle's text is rendered; even within the *Anon.* itself we find various ways of interpreting the text of the *Categories* and different ways of rendering the same Greek terms[95]. There are some passages in Sergius' *Commentary*, conversely, which use terminology similar or identical to what we find in the *Anon.*:

(1) In §327, Sergius renders two terms from *Cat*. 6b2, θέσις and αἴσθησις, with the same two Syriac words, ܣܬܘܡܐ and ܐܬܚܫ̈ܝ, both of which appear in the corresponding passage in the *Anon.*

(2) In §366, while explicating *Cat*. 8b26–27, where Aristotle speaks of ἕξις and διάθεσις as the two primary kinds of quality, Sergius translates them as ܩܝܡܐ ܕܩܝܡ, "stability", and ܩܝܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܩܝܡ, "instability". It is apparent that in this way Sergius was eager to convey the spirit of Aristotle's text rather than its literal meaning. A similar attempt of interpretation, although in more limited form, is found in *Anon.*, which, like Sergius, renders ἕξις with ܩܝܡܐ ܕܩܝܡ, but διάθεσις as ܣܬܘܡܐ, "position" (cf. the translation of θέσις in the previous example).

(3) In §376, Sergius comments on *Cat*. 10a11 and renders the Greek terms σχῆμα and μορφή as ܩܝܡܐ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ. In so doing, he agrees with both the *Anon.* and

94 Cf. King 2011: 230–235.

95 Cf. King 2010: 30–35.

with the later Syriac versions of the *Categories*, all of which appear to represent the same tradition of interpretation of Aristotle's text in this respect.

(4) In §383, the *Commentary* refers to *Cat*. 10a29–30, where Aristotle speaks of things that are called "paronymously" (παρωνύμως). In order to make this Greek term comprehensible, Sergius applies the Syriac expression ܡܕܝܢܚܝܬ ܡܢ ܡܕܡ ܐܝܬ, "such things which derive from something". Similar explicative translation appears also in the *Anon*., which renders the Gr. παρωνύμως λέγεται in *Cat*. 10a29–30 as ܐܝܬܝܗܒ ܐܬܪ ܕܡܕܝܢܚܝܬ.

These examples demonstrate that in both the *Commentary* and in *Anon*. we see different attempts at understanding Aristotle's logical terminology, which in many cases turn out to belong to the same tradition. If we recall Sergius' remarks quoted above about Syriac translations and interpretations of Aristotle's logical texts which predate him, we may assume that neither Sergius nor the author(s) of the *Anon*. were completely isolated in their work. Rather both texts appear as part of a general process of reception and creative adaptation of Aristotle's logic in Syriac schools in the late 5th — early 6th century, a process that was taken up by subsequent generations of Syriac Aristotelians, whose names are also known to us.

Sergius' contribution to this process may hardly be overstated. Given the long history of reception of his *Commentary* (see 1.2, above), we may assume that this text was studied in both West and East Syriac schools, having been preserved to the present day both in full and in abridged form (as selected quotations, paraphrases, and epitomes). These textual witnesses, which will be discussed in the following sections, contribute to our knowledge of the afterlife of Sergius' work.