

## KİTAP TANITIM VE DEĞERLENDİRMESİ

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*Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity. The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition between Rome and Baghdad*, edited by Josef Lössl and John W. Watt (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

This volume deals with the reception history of two Late Antique discourses, which took as their starting points authoritative texts, commentaries on the various books of the Bible, and commentaries on the writings of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. The emergence of both traditions is closely linked to the Egyptian city of Alexandria, which not only housed an important philosophical school but was also the home of the first great commentator of the Bible, the third-century theologian Origen. The sixteen contributions contained in the volume explore how these two discourses, which were originally conducted in the Greek language, later came to be adapted both in the Latin-speaking West and in the Syriac- and Arabic-speaking East.

The first part of the volume, which bear the titles ‘From Alexandria to Rome’, starts with the article ‘Origen: Exegesis and Philosophy in Early Christian Alexandria’ by Alfons Fürst (Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster), which explores how Origen applied methods developed by pagan philologists and philosophers to the Bible and thus turned the Biblical narratives and poems into into scientific prose. The following four contributions then focus on the commentary tradition in Latin Italy and North Africa. The articles ‘Prologue Topics and Translation Problems in Latin Commentaries on Paul’ by Sophie Lunn-Radcliffe (Kings College London) and ‘Ambrosiaster’s Method of

Interpretation in the Questions on the Old and New Testament' by Marie-Pierre Bussières (University of Ottawa) examine how fourth-century Western commentators of the Pauline letters used the works of Latin philologists as guidelines for their work, thus replicating in a more simplistic way the approach that Origen had taken before them. The article 'Philosophical Exegesis in Marius Victorinus' Commentaries on Paul' by Stephen Cooper (Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA) discusses a Western author who was as well versed in philosophy as Origen and who read his own philosophical preconceptions into the Biblical text; and the article 'Jerome's Pauline Commentaries between East and West: Tradition and Innovation in the Commentary on Galatians' by Andrew Cain (University of Colorado, Boulder) challenges the view that Jerome slavishly followed the Origenist method, which he introduced to the West, and argues instead that Jerome was deeply influenced by the existing Latin tradition. The last two contributions in the first section focus on the transmission of the properly philosophical tradition. In the article 'The Bible and Aristotle in the Controversy between Augustine and Julian of Aeclanum' Josef Lössl (Cardiff University) shows that around the year 400 Aristotle's *Categories* were known to Western theologians; and in the article 'Boethius as a Translator and Aristotelian Commentator' Sten Ebbesen (University of Copenhagen) highlights the important role of this author for the transmission of Greek philosophy to the Latin Middle Ages. In the second part of the volume, which bears the title 'From Alexandria to Baghdad', the philosophical discourse becomes the exclusive focus of the discussion. This part starts with the article 'Translating the Personal Aspect of Late Platonism in the Commentary Tradition' by Edward Watts (Indiana University), which distinguishes between two types of philosophical commentaries, those that reflect the situation in the classroom through repeated reference to teacher-pupil interaction, and those that were written by 'private' scholars and aspired to a more systematic and comprehensive interpretation of Aristotle's works. The second article 'Aristotelianism and the Disintegration of the Late Antique Theological Discourse' by Dirk Krausmüller (Mardin Artuklu University) explores how Greek-speaking theologians of the sixth and seventh centuries read the Aristotelian commentaries in search for concepts that would help them to formulate their theological points of view. The following two articles, 'Sergius of Reshaina as Translator: The Case of the *De Mundo*' by Adam McCollum (St. Johns University, Minnesota) and 'Sergius of Reshaina and Pseudo-Dionysius: A Dialectical Fidelity' by Emiliano Fiori (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) focus on a sixth-

century author whose mother tongue was Syriac but who like most of his educated fellow-countrymen also knew Greek. They discuss the techniques that this author used in his translations of both philosophical commentaries and theological treatises of a philosophical bent from Greek into Syriac. Sebastian Brock (University of Oxford) then draws attention to a less known figure involved in the translation process in his article ‘The Commentator Probus: Problems of Date and Identity’. Henri Hugonnard-Roche (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris) in his article ‘Du commentaire à la reconstruction: Paul le Perse interprète d’Aristote’ shows that not all authors in the Syriac-speaking world confined themselves to translating existing Greek commentaries but that there were also attempts at original philosophical thought. The next contribution, ‘The Genesis and Development of a Logical Lexicon in the Syriac Tradition’ by Daniel King (Cardiff University), examines in detail how Syriac counterparts for Greek philosophical terms were created in order to facilitate the translation process. John Watt (Cardiff University) attempts in his article ‘From Sergius to Mattā: Aristotle and Pseudo-Dionysius in the Syriac Tradition’ to reconstruct the school tradition that kept the philosophical discourse alive and eventually passed it on to the Arabs. Thus it is only fitting that the last piece focuses on the Arabic milieu. Philippe Vallat (Institut Français du Proche Orient, Damascus) in his article ‘Al-Fārābī’s Arguments for the Eternity of the World and the Contingency of Natural Phenomena’ shows how this Arabic philosopher went beyond the Syriac tradition where Neoplatonic thought was mediated through Christian adaptations and drew directly on the writings of the pagan Greek philosophers Proclus and Ammonius.

