

# Introduction

This book is a diachronic study of discussions on a specific problem in Arabic philosophy—the problem of the semantic role of the copula—from their beginnings during the Graeco-Arabic translation movement to the early 10th/16th century in the Islamic East. The semantic role of the copula, or the problem of predication as it is sometimes called, is a fundamental issue in logic and the philosophy of language, in the philosophy of mind, and in metaphysics. (More on what the problem is about shortly.)

The fact that there is a continuous story to be told about such a fundamental philosophical problem in the Arabic tradition is itself a powerful argument against any lingering or recently revived ideas that in the post-classical period Arabic philosophy lost its intellectual vigor.<sup>1</sup> Following this story, the book argues that discussions about the copula contributed to a surge of interest in questions pertaining to what we today would call philosophy of language. Post-classical Arabic philosophers began to intensely discuss questions of meaning, reference, the analysis of propositions, and the relation of the problem of predication to the notions of judgment and truth.

Telling the story of the problem of predication in post-classical Arabic philosophy would have been inconceivable even two decades ago. The reasons for this have to do with three recalcitrant dogmas of Islamic studies that are entwined with the discipline's own colonialist history. The first dogma was that the “Golden Age” of Arabic philosophy ended with al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) proscription of the philosophers as apostates. The second was that later Muslim clerics prohibited the study of logic. The third was that works written in the form of commentaries are unoriginal. And since most Arabic philosophical works written in the

post-classical period are commentaries, this meant that most of post-classical Arabic philosophy was not worthy of being studied.

These dogmas were late modern articles of faith that conditioned the approach of orientalist Western scholars to post-Avicennan Arabic philosophy. Their role was to keep intact the idea of declining anti-rationalist and religiously oppressive Islamic societies against which the progress of an enlightened Western world would stand out in sharp-enough relief to justify its colonialist ideology. Since 2002, when Dimitri Gutas first critically assessed misguided approaches to the study of Arabic philosophy, these dogmas, too, have been exposed for what they are.<sup>2</sup> But the countless histories their believers have oppressed still need to be written. This book tells one such story, a small contribution to a postcolonial and more global history of philosophy.

Telling a detailed story of the problem of predication in the Arabic tradition would remain near impossible even now, were it not for the considerable work others have recently done in the study of post-classical Arabic logic. One simple reason is that the sheer amount of material, a great part of which remains unedited and housed in manuscript libraries around the globe, would be impossible to navigate for a single scholar.

But thanks to recent work especially by Asad Ahmed, Khaled El-Rouayheb, Tony Street, and Rob Wisnovsky, authors and texts that not long ago were hardly more than names in reference works or titles in manuscript catalogues have now acquired sharper contours and concrete relationships. More than anything else, this book is indebted to Khaled El-Rouayheb's *The Development of Arabic Logic*. Without the biobibliographical guide of *The Development* and its author, planning and undertaking the research trips to manuscript archives would have been impossible.

While the study of post-classical Arabic logic has advanced in great strides over the last decade, most approaches to the material have been based on specific texts or authors, or specific technical problems in syllogistic.<sup>3</sup> Building on this work, this book is an attempt to broaden the view and study not specific authors or texts, but a specific problem across authors, texts, time, and space: it is a *Problemggeschichte*.

In one sense, namely in the sense that there is a continuous *history* of the problem of predication to be told at all, this problem history forms the backbone of the book's overarching argument, which shows the continuity of original philosophical "research" in the Islamic East well into not only the Timurid period, but even the early Safavid period.

In another sense, namely in the sense that there is a history of this particular *problem* to be told, this problem history is not only of historical but also of philosophical interest. The Arabic philosophers surveyed in this study engaged with questions that speak to core issues in early analytic philosophy. Following their arguments allows us, so to speak, to observe *in vitro* how philosophers thought about the problem of predication from within a linguistic framework whose

grammar is in some sense closer to modern logic than to Aristotelian syllogistic. To better understand what that means, it is necessary to properly introduce the copula as a philosophical problem.

#### THE COPULA AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

Donald Davidson (1917–2003), one of the most influential philosophers of the late 20th century, in his posthumously published monograph *Truth and Predication* (2005) described the problem of predication thus:

Arabic is an economical language: a sentence can get along without an explicit verb. One can say, in effect, “Man mortal,” or “Today rainy,” or “John sad.” This feature of Arabic recently led to a political tempest in Egypt. A book was banned because a review suggested that the author had written “The Koran bad.” The words were spoken by a character in a novel by the Syrian author Haida [*sic*] Haidar, but the reviewer had omitted three little dots between the subject and the adjective. The original context had made clear that Haida [*sic*] had not intended what in English would have been supplied by the word “is.” Confusion about predication can create problems; one of those problems concerns the copula or its absence.

In English, “John mortal” is not a sentence. It becomes one if the word “is” is inserted between noun and adjective. This is a fact of syntax or grammar. But what is the semantic role of the copula? This question and related questions about the nature of predication have been evident since Plato. Yet despite the earnest regard which the semantics of natural languages has attracted over the years, no one who was aware of the problem has come up with a satisfactory account of predication. Or, to put the point more accurately, a satisfactory account exists, but apparently no one has noticed that this account solves the problem. [ . . . ]

The topic should attract our attention. After all, if we do not understand predication, we do not understand how any sentence works, nor can we account for the structure of the simplest thought that is expressible in language. At one time there was much discussion of what was called the “unity of the proposition”; it is just this unity that a theory of predication must explain. The philosophy of language lacks its most important chapter without such a theory; the philosophy of mind is missing a crucial first step if it cannot describe the nature of judgment; and it is woeful if metaphysics cannot say how a substance is related to its attributes.<sup>4</sup>

Davidson was no Arabist, but his anecdotal observations on Arabic grammar are perhaps more apposite than he himself would have expected. The problem of predication has been in evidence since Plato. However, regarding the question of the semantic role of the copula, this is true not only for the Western philosophical tradition. It is also true, and perhaps in a far more interesting way, for the Arabic philosophical tradition. Davidson was right to point out that Arabic grammar does not require the use of a copula (“is”), and the problem of the copula or its absence has indeed created confusion. But I doubt that he imagined the severity of the confusion it caused and the extent to which it elicited philosophical

discussions in the wake of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement. These discussions are the subject of the present book.

Davidson argued that there exists a solution to the problem of predication, and that it was proposed by the logician and mathematician Alfred Tarski (1901–1983). Or rather, Davidson thought that Tarski’s account, when construed in the way done in *Truth and Predication*, shows that the problem as it has been conceived is a pseudo-problem rooted in an ancient mistake. But Davidson was not the first to think that the ancient problem of predication had been dissolved by a mathematician. He was the first to think that this mathematician was Tarski and not Frege, as many in the analytic tradition have thought before him. I think we do well not to see either Frege’s or Davidson’s proposal as the final answer to an ancient philosophical problem. And some more recent contributors would agree.<sup>5</sup>

I do not here intend to offer a solution. Rather, my aim is to plug a “vast historical hole” in Davidson’s (or anyone’s) account of the problem of predication, one that he himself acknowledged and encouraged others to fill (though he likely did not think of the medieval *Arabic* tradition).<sup>6</sup> Much in the optimistic spirit of *Truth and Predication*, I hope that this historical account, partial though it may be, will help to “recognize the pattern of errors into which people have been led and [to] find a reasonable position which retains much of what seemed attractive about the wrong paths while avoiding the pitfalls.”<sup>7</sup>

The focus in this book is on chapters 2 and 3 of Aristotle’s *De interpretatione* (*DI*) and their reception history. It is in these chapters that Aristotle most comprehensively discusses the simple categorical statement and its component parts, and it is primarily in their reception history—in both Greek and Arabic—that the question of the role of the copula is being raised. This choice of focus immediately brings to the fore a fundamental issue in modern scholarship on Aristotelian logic. Since the issue is so central to the history of the problem of predication, and to the history of logic itself, I better address it head-on. This will also allow me to provide a conceptual and terminological framework for the problem of predication that will be of use throughout the book.

The issue is this. The core of Aristotle’s logical system, the syllogistic, is presented in the *Analytica Priora* (*APr*). What Aristotle presupposes there about how predication works seems to be different from what he states in the *DI*. To illustrate the difference, let me introduce two different proposals for the syntax of predicative sentences.

The first proposal, which I shall call the Forbidden Tree (figure 1), is the one usually associated with Aristotelian syllogistic as it developed in the Western philosophical tradition. The idea is that the most simple items that are truth-apt—which I shall call atomic propositions (AP) for short—consist of two terms (T, T\*), namely a subject (S) and a predicate (P). The terms are connected (X) by a copula (“is” or “are” in English, here “cop”). The two constituent terms of a proposition belong to one and the same grammatical category. On this proposal, both terms

are names, and they may switch around between subject- and predicate-position: they are homogenous and interchangeable. The syntactic role of the copula is here to take two terms and turn them into an AP. The analysis of “Socrates is wise” is represented by:

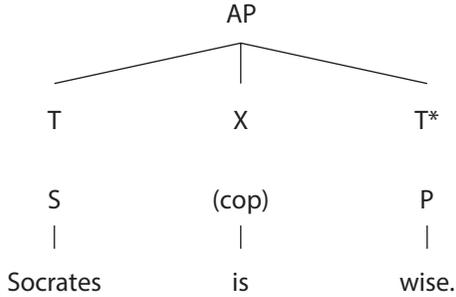


FIGURE 1. Syntactic Forbidden Tree.

The second proposal, to which I shall refer as the Tree of Life (figure 2), is the one largely embraced by modern linguists, and, notably, Fregean logic.<sup>8</sup> Here, an AP syntactically dissolves into a noun-phrase (NP) and a verbal phrase (VP). A VP may contain a full verb, or else it is the role of the copula to turn a NP into a VP. In fact, while the word “is” on the Forbidden Tree–proposal is an actual logical copula (syntactically taking two terms to make an AP, i.e., AP:T,T\*), on this proposal there is no copula, or only what we may loosely call a grammatical copula. (I shall be using “copula” throughout to refer to a linguistic item, and generally in this loose sense, specifying in each case when I use it in a different sense.)

The word “is” here acts, syntactically, as a VP-forming operator ( $VP_{op}$ ) on expressions that are NPs ( $VP:NP$ ), and as such it is part of the predicate. The two constituents of a proposition belong to different grammatical categories, NP and VP, and hence they are heterogenous and not interchangeable. “Socrates is wise” is on this proposal represented by the following syntactic tree:

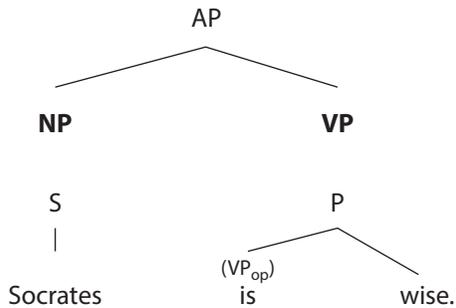


FIGURE 2. Syntactic Tree of Life.

The crucial difference between the two proposals is that on the first there is *homogeneity* between terms and hence a copula is needed to glue the terms together, whereas on the second *heterogeneity* ensures that the elements of APs stick together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. There is no need for a logical copula.

The homogeneity-view of predication is presupposed by Aristotelian syllogistic, which crucially requires interchangeability. Predicate-terms need to be able to appear in the subject-position and vice versa. For example, any syllogism in the first figure requires the middle term to appear as the subject-term in the major premise and as the predicate-term in the minor premise. Take *Barbara*:

All humans are mortal  
 All Harvard professors are humans  
 ∴ All Harvard professors are mortal

Were the terms not homogenous, they also would not be interchangeable, and “humans” could not appear now as a subject, now as a predicate.

It has been taken for granted not only that Aristotle’s real view on predication was the one presupposed by the *APr*, but also that this was the view nearly everyone in the Aristotelian tradition adopted.<sup>9</sup> And it is generally assumed that *this* view was a logical blunder, ultimately defeating any “reasonable semantics of predicates.”<sup>10</sup> The mistake, it has been maintained, was to disregard the fact that a predicate-term cannot appear in the subject-position without undergoing a change of sense.<sup>11</sup> This has been considered a basic syntactic mistake that ultimately explains, from a modern point of view, why Aristotelian syllogistic never got very far. It needed Frege’s embracing the Tree of Life to create the possibility of introducing many-placed predicates and multiple quantification, and thus give us the far more powerful predicate calculus.<sup>12</sup> The homogeneity of terms was a long-lasting and fundamental, because syntactically basic, equivocation in the history of logic.

Chiefly responsible for disseminating the idea that Aristotle had made a fundamental mistake was the Oxford logician Peter Geach (1916–2013). He thought that Aristotle fatally changed his mind on the analysis of APs and that the severity of this mistake was such that it can only be compared to the original sin:

Unfortunately, Aristotle abandoned at the same time other positions he had held in the *De interpretatione*. He lost the Platonic insight that any predicative proposition splits up into two logically heterogenous parts; instead, he treats predication as an attachment of one term (*horos*) to another term. Whereas the *rhema* was regarded as essentially predicative, “always a sign of what is said of something else,” it is impossible on the new doctrine for any term to be essentially predicative; on the contrary, any term that occurs in a proposition predicatively may be made into the subject-term in another predication. I shall call this “Aristotle’s thesis of interchangeability”; his adoption of it marks a transition from the original name-and-predicable theory

to a *two-term* theory. [...] Aristotle's going over to the two-term theory was a disaster, comparable only to the fall of Adam.<sup>13</sup>

Davidson agreed with Geach that the Aristotelian Forbidden Tree-view was hopelessly confused as an account of predication. And he concurred that it was not until Frege that a satisfactory solution to the problem of predication was even possible—he only denied that Frege had at the same time supplied that solution.<sup>14</sup> The crux of the matter is that Geach, in turn, had also pointed out that Aristotle in *DI* 1–4 presented predication in terms of the Tree of Life, clearly embracing heterogeneity. Geach assumed that Aristotle changed his mind and moved over to the homogeneity-view, which then became the prevalent view until Frege.

Yet—and the present study amply bears this out for Graeco-Arabic Aristotelianism, though it is also true for its Western counterpart<sup>15</sup>—the Aristotelian tradition never abandoned the *DI* as part of the *Organon* (as opposed to, e.g., the *Categories* or the *Posterior Analytics*, as was the case in later Arabic logic) and so the heterogeneity-view persisted. Anyone holding a version of Geach's view will have to explain that fact. More precisely, maintaining a version of that view would require showing how authors who clearly embrace heterogeneity in some of their writing thought (or failed to think) that this was reconcilable with the homogeneity presupposed by the syllogistic, *and* showing that they thought that the logical copula required by homogeneity ultimately superseded heterogeneity as the fundamental logical relation. This, I suppose, may be done, but it is a task that cannot be undertaken here.

Rather, the present study contributes to this issue in the scholarship on Aristotelian logic by documenting the persistence and evolution of the heterogeneity-view in the Graeco-Arabic tradition as it engaged with the first chapters of the *DI*. If seen this way, the discussions on the semantic role of the copula in the context of the *DI*—even if the homogeneity-view is rejected as a basic semantic mistake—may in principle hold in store insights relevant for the problem of predication.

#### “BEING” ANOTHER WAY: THE COPULA IN THE ARABIC PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION

It might come as a surprise that a philosophical tradition whose primary language of expression does not require the use of a grammatical copula developed such an interest in the question of its semantic role. As Davidson remarked, the fact that the insertion of “is” or an equivalent between a noun and an adjective turns a succession of words into a sentence “is a fact of syntax or grammar.”<sup>16</sup> More precisely, we should say, it is a fact of the syntax or grammar of *some* languages: for example, of Greek, Latin, Persian, German, English—but not of Arabic, or, let us

say, Syriac, some Slavic languages, or some artificial languages like Frege's *Begriffsschrift*. A straightforward explanation of why discussions about the copula arose in the Arabic tradition is given by the Arabic renditions of the Greek equivalent of "is" during the Graeco-Arabic translation movement.

In Aristotle's works, and particularly in the *DI*, translators were confronted with passages in which that little word "is" (*esti*) mattered for philosophical argument or logical analysis. So they forged artificial expressions to have ready at hand a single word (rather than circumlocutions) to translate the Greek "*einai*" and its various grammatical forms. Would discussions about the role of the copula have arisen without these translations? That is of course a moot question—but I do not see why they *could not* have. The simple reason is this: there still is, in Arabic, a difference between saying "John, mortal," listing words as it were, and "John mortal," signifying what in English would be expressed by "John is mortal."

Of that difference Arabic scholars, including grammarians with no business in Aristotelian logic, were aware. And most philosophers agreed that the difference here is that in the second case but not in the first there is a relation (*nisba*, which I shall call "nexus," pl. *nexūs*, throughout) indicated between what "John" stands for and what "mortal" stands for. This nexus, most Arabic philosophers thought, is best signified by an artificial copula, though it may be left out as in Arabic it is implicitly understood.

So much was widely agreed. But this sounds as if Arabic philosophers took APs to be best represented by the Forbidden Tree. For saying that two terms are connected by a copula signifying the nexus between the things they stand for appears to be just another way of saying that the logical copula syntactically takes two terms to make an AP. This, however, was not the case.

From the very beginning, Arabic philosophers recognized a type of heterogeneity that was—even though purportedly Aristotelian—ultimately rooted in the grammatical structure of Semitic languages, and thus markedly different from anything in the Western tradition, as far as I can see. In Arabic, and in Semitic languages in general, most words consist of three radicals. From this trilateral root many vocables, including grammatical verbs, can be morphologically derived. Usually, the meanings of these vocables are derived from the basic semantic spectrum of the root vocable (though at times their meanings can be widely disparate). Such derived vocables were seen as *including* the signification of a nexus to a subject and as such were essentially distinct from proper names or non-derived vocables that did not include the signification of a nexus.

Much of the developments in conceptualizing the proposition and its parts in the classical period of Arabic philosophy (ca. 300–600/900–1200) was foreshadowed by the Greek commentators of late antiquity. To illustrate this continuity, we should acknowledge another syntactic tree as a third basic proposal. On this proposal "NW" is a naming-word, "SW" a statement-word, and the brackets are

significant, so that there is, on a syntactic level, homogeneity between NWs and heterogeneity between NW and SW:

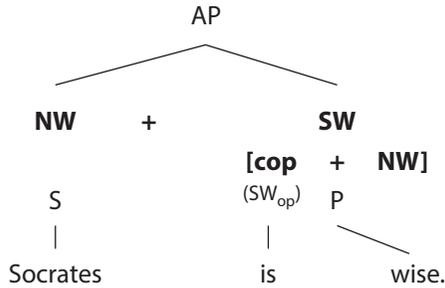


FIGURE 3. Syntactic Tree Three.

The role of "is" here is twofold. As a grammatical copula it acts as an operator taking a NW and turning it into a SW. But by signifying a relation that is irreducible in analysis, it still acts as a logical copula, taking two NWs to make an AP. This is because SWs, which can only occur in the predicate-place, are always analyzable as consisting of a copula and a NW. In other words: Only NWs can occur in the subject-place. If an NW appears in the predicate-place, it can only act as a predicate, if it is conjoined by a copula that signifies that what the NW signifies is related to what the subject signifies. The signification of this relation is always contained in SWs and may be contained in certain NWs, so that in some cases no grammatical copula needs to be expressed. Conceptually, however, the relation so signified is an irreducible element and is always part of the predicate. (Hence, it is important that the brackets are significant.) Tree Three is a hybrid of the two Trees of Paradise, and it raises various new problems—but it is, ultimately, closer to the Tree of Life, because on the syntactic deep level, the copula is part of the SW. Most of the contributions by the Greek and Arabic authors surveyed in this study, various though they are, can be made to fit this third proposal.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book consists of two parts. The first part deals with the Graeco-Arabic transformation of the problem of predication and the subsequent Arabic appropriation of this heritage by Fārābī and Avicenna, spanning the so-called classical period (roughly 300/900–600/1200). The second part covers the post-classical period (roughly 600/1200–900/1500) and follows the tradition from Baghdad and Khurāsān to the Persian heartland, then to Samarqand, and eventually to Shīrāz, with a look ahead to the Indo-Muslim tradition in Mughal India.

This structure reflects the book's overall argument that Arabic philosophy, of which logic became an integral part, did not degenerate after the 6th/12th century. To the contrary, the evidence suggests that instead of being a mere coda to the great philosophers of the classical period, we should see the early post-classical period as an overture to a prolific 8th/14th century in which Arabic logic fully emancipated itself from its Greek roots. In the period leading up to the 10th/16th century, it came to include, in conversation with developments in adjacent scientific disciplines, rigorous research in what we would call philosophy of language.

Each part has a different character owing to the fact that there is plenty of scholarship on Aristotle and the classical Arabic philosophers treated in the first part, but very little on most of the post-classical authors treated in the second. While authors surveyed in the first part hardly need introduction, in the second part I have tried to give the reader a sense of the lives and works of the characters whose contributions I discuss. I have engaged more broadly with scholarship in the first part, whereas in the second part I have often found myself on new territory. Another difference is that the source texts in part 1 are all direct or indirect comments on the *DI*. In part 2 this was no longer possible. There, setting out from the commentaries on Avicenna's *Ishārāt* III.7, I follow a more labyrinthine path through the intertextual web of handbooks, philosophical summae, and their commentaries, glosses, and superglosses.

In both parts I have striven to contextualize the discussions on the problem of predication within larger developments. In the first part I highlight the importance of the historical circumstances (chapter 2) and cross-cultural translation (chapter 3) for the appropriation of Greek logic. The decisive role Avicenna played in the emancipation of Arabic logic from the Greek textual tradition is emphasized in chapter 4. In the second part, larger developments that are both reflected by and visibly shaped the discussions on the problem of predication are the critical attitude first toward Avicenna (chapter 5), and then toward Rāzī (chapter 6). Further, the need for logic handbooks to be used in madrasa teaching (chapters 6 and 7) and the emergence of formal disputation theory (chapter 7) decisively shaped new forms of philosophical argumentation within the genre of the commentary. Finally, developments in other linguistic disciplines, especially in rhetoric and semantics and in the new science of *'ilm al-waḍ'*, had a palpable impact on the reconceptualization of the problem of predication (chapter 8). While these developments are interwoven with the narrative of the individual chapters, the guiding thread has been the development of the discussions on the problem of predication.

In chapter 1 a close reading of Aristotle's *DI* 2–3 provides the Greek background to the Arabic appropriation of the problem of predication. Revisiting Geach's Myth of Adam's Fall, the chapter shows how the question of the semantic role of the copula first emerged when Aristotle's Greek commentators, who attempted a coherent

interpretation of the *Organon*, were forced to make sense of apparently contradictory passages on the role of the word “is” in predication.

Chapter 2 supplies the historical background to the translation and appropriation of the Greek tradition by the first Arabic philosophers. Historical circumstances required Fārābī to make Greek logic understandable, and palatable, to a hyper-critical audience that insisted that the sole route to knowledge and understanding was Arabic grammar. Fārābī argued that language is historically constructed in such a way that it is inherently ambiguous. He conceived of his own philosophical project as being concerned with disambiguating language by studying utterances insofar as they signify meanings. Fārābī thinks that that is especially what the *DI* does.

Chapter 3 presents Fārābī’s novel reading of the analysis of atomic propositions in his commentary on the *DI*. Applying the theory of etymological word formation from Arabic grammar to Aristotle’s notion of paronymy, Fārābī stipulates syntactic rules based on a type of heterogeneity between nouns that are etymologically derived and nouns that are not. Further, he holds that categorical statements need a copula. For lack of an Arabic word, he advises to use “*mawjūd*” (literally, is found). Contrary to its grammatical form, Fārābī considered “*mawjūd*” a logical particle, signifying a second-order concept, namely that of a predicative function.

Chapter 4 discusses Avicenna’s take on the linguistic section of the *DI* in the *Shifā’*, where he further develops Fārābī’s theory of derived names by systematically integrating two different types of *maṣādir* (verbal nouns). Then two passages from his later works are briefly introduced: they appear to be contradictory and were to catch the attention of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, with whose challenge to Avicenna part 2 begins.

Chapter 5 introduces, in the context of the early reception of Avicenna, two figures whom Ibn Khaldūn called the first of the “later logicians.” Rāzī challenged Avicenna’s position that the copula “*huwa*” is needed to signify the nexus of the meaning of the predicate to the meaning of the subject. According to Rāzī, the meaning of a derived name includes the nexus and the use of “*huwa*” would amount to a useless repetition. Khūnajī criticizes Rāzī, arguing that what is signified by “*huwa*” is not the same as what is included in the signification of a derived name.

Chapter 6 charts how Rāzī’s and Khūnajī’s critical attitude shaped a scholarly praxis among a group of logicians connected to the Marāgha observatory that led to a dramatic increase in the output of logical works. Ṭūsī criticized Rāzī’s Repetition Argument, and Abharī, Kātībī, and Urmawī contributed to a deepening of the discussions on the copula, shifting the focus to questions about the right conception of the nexus in light of modality and conversion.

Chapter 7 looks at three scholars of the post-Marāgha generation: Samarqandī, Hillī, and Taḥṭānī. Samarqandī is discussed as a paradigmatic case for the

confluence of new dialectical theories and logical research. Ḥillī and Taḥṭānī authored some of the most influential commentaries on the works of the Marāgha generation, paving the way for an intensification of logical research. Taḥṭānī developed a universal notion of unsaturatedness, rejecting the copula.

Chapter 8 looks at how the debates further developed in Samarqand, Shīrāz, and later Mughal India. Characteristic of these discussions is the increasing influence of semantic theories from rhetoric (*balāgha*) and the new science of imposition (*‘ilm al-waḍ’*). The rejection of doctrines on the copula, now seen as a superfluous remnant that originated with the Arabic translations of Aristotle’s Greek, finds a full expression in Taftāzānī, who remarkably turns back to Fārābī to understand the origins of those doctrines. Jurjānī, who weaves together the threads of semantic theories from *balāgha* and *‘ilm al-waḍ’*, replaces the old doctrines with a truly Arabic account of the semantic role of the copula. Mediated by Dawānī, the Mughal tradition partly reverted to Avicennan doctrines. However, Mughal authors tended to treat the problem in prominent places of logical works, discussing it in connection with the nature of judgment (*ḥukm*).