

BEFORE AND AFTER AVICENNA

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# BEFORE AND AFTER AVICENNA

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Avicenna Study Group*

EDITED BY

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وَلَعَلَّ هَذِهِ الْحُلُولَ الَّتِي نُخَمِّنُهَا تَكُونُ مَنَابِعَ لِعُيُونٍ تَتَفَجَّرُ نَحْوَ مَطَابِعِ  
كَثِيرَةٍ وَشَبَهَ عَظِيمَةٍ. فَإِنَّ لَمْ يُغْنِ ذَلِكَ، رَفَضْنَا هَذَا الْمَأْخَذَ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ،  
وَأَنْتَقَلْنَا عَنْهُ إِلَى غَيْرِهِ. فَلَيْتَأَمَّلَهَا مُشَارِكُونَا فِي هَذِهِ الْمُبَاحَثِ، مُعَوِّلِينَ  
عَلَى هِدَايَةِ الْحَقِّ الْأَوَّلِ، فَإِنَّهُ مَعَ كُلِّ مُجْتَهِدٍ وَنُورِهِ سَاطِعٌ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ.

*Perhaps these solutions that we suggest will be the sources for springs that will gush forth over many problems and great uncertainties. If that is insufficient, we will abandon this source of explanation and move on to another. Let our colleagues consider carefully these subjects of investigation, relying upon the guidance of the True and First One, for He is with every diligent searcher, and His light shines on every heart.*

– Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mubāḥatāt* (ed. Bīdārfār, Qum 1992), 139.9–12.



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## INTRODUCTION

The papers gathered in this volume represent in part the proceedings of The First Graduate Student Conference on Ibn Sīnā, convened at Yale University, 17–18 March 2001, along with three papers solicited from Dimitri Gutas, Jules Janssens and Robert Wisnovsky, all of whom served as respondents at that conference. Considered as a whole, these papers represent the major trends and concerns of current scholarship on the life and thought of Avicenna, perhaps the most important and influential philosopher of the pre-modern period in the East and West. The contributions of these scholars are here topically divided into three sections: Before Avicenna, The Age of Avicenna, and After Avicenna.

The section “Before Avicenna” contains four papers that address different aspects of the influence of the Classical heritage on Avicenna’s thought as well as the many substantive modifications that Avicenna’s own intellectual development brought to the articulation of Greek philosophy in Arabic. Specific issues of three of the philosophical disciplines treated by Avicenna, viz. logic, metaphysics, and psychology (theory of the soul), are taken up in these papers. A noteworthy aspect of all of these contributions is perhaps not the collective recognition of the degree to which Avicenna was indebted to his first master Aristotle, but rather the exploration of the philosophical concerns shared by the Greek commentators of Aristotle (both Peripatetic and Neoplatonic) and Avicenna. The study of this relation between the commentary tradition and Avicenna is one that traditionally has been undeveloped in Avicenna studies and so the observations offered in these four contributions will undoubtedly open up new horizons for scholars of Avicenna.

Asad Ahmed’s “Avicenna’s Treatment of Aristotelian Modals” presents an analysis of the manner in which Avicenna addressed a problematic aspect of Aristotle’s theory of modal syllogisms. For the purposes of clarifying the background to this problem, Ahmed sets forth useful accounts of Aristotle’s theory and its “inconsistencies” and Avicenna’s general approach to modal syllogistics. The case of

the two Barbaras, one of which Aristotle rejects, the other he inconsistently accepts (since the argument against the first turns out to be applicable to the second also), serves as a model example for the manner in which Avicenna addresses such seemingly contradictory elements of Aristotelian logic. Ahmed highlights the twofold approach Avicenna takes. On the one hand, he defends Aristotle's interpretation through an interesting reading of the major premise of the two Barbaras, a reading which appears to have had an impact on medieval Latin logicians' *de re/de dicto* distinction. However, Avicenna was not a slavish follower of Aristotle and when he departs from Aristotle's theory, he does so through a unique flexibility in the construal of the premises (in the case at hand, necessary conclusions can be drawn from assertoric premises). Ahmed suggests that this flexible construal of premises derives in part from Avicenna's reading of the commentaries of Theophrastus and Alexander of Aphrodisias. Ahmed's contribution again makes apparent both Avicenna's mastery of the Classical tradition as well as his own significant contributions to the history of logic.

Amos Bertolacci's "Some Texts of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the *Ilāhīyāt* of Avicenna's *Kitāb aš-Šifā'*" traces one aspect of Avicenna's reliance on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the *Ilāhīyāt* portion of his magnum opus *Kitāb aš-Šifā'*. Unlike the direct quotations of Aristotle in the *Ilāhīyāt*, the passages Bertolacci examines involve "anonymous quotations" of the *Metaphysics*. These passages have great significance for the study of Avicenna's reception of Aristotle. In a specific sense, they confirm Avicenna's use of Uṣṭāt's Arabic translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, evident in the nomenclature Avicenna employs in particular passages (in the example provided, the use of *huwīya* to render "existent" rather than the more common *mawǧūd*). In broader terms, these passages underscore the sophisticated exegetical techniques Avicenna employed in elucidating the doctrines of his Greek master. In addition, the analysis that Bertolacci applies to Avicenna's use of Aristotle provides a case example of the ways in which such background study will aid in the future critical editing of the *Šifā'*. By identifying the sources Avicenna used in composing the *Ilāhīyāt*, scholars will better understand his choices of philosophical terminology and will be better equipped to make sound editing decisions. Bertolacci's parallel translations of the texts of Avicenna's *Ilāhīyāt*, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and Uṣṭāt's version of the *Metaphysics* serve as a model for similar future investigations of Avicenna's reception of Aristotelian philosophy.

In “Towards a History of Avicenna’s Distinction between Immanent and Transcendent Causes” Robert Wisnovsky investigates Avicenna’s division of Aristotle’s four causes into those that are intrinsic to their effect (formal and material causes) and those that are extrinsic to their effect (final and efficient causes). Arguing against an earlier thesis by Jean Jolivet that such a distinction was not only introduced by Avicenna but also represented a significant departure from Aristotle’s own conception of causality, Wisnovsky provides a detailed overview of the Greek Neoplatonic commentary tradition to which Avicenna was heir. In the course of this overview, Wisnovsky makes it obvious that the commentators’ division of causes is not as significant a departure from Aristotle’s own “underdetermined” distinction of the four causes by matter (material cause) and form (formal, efficient and final causes). The Neoplatonic twofold division of Aristotelian causes apparently surfaces in Arabic philosophy for the first time in al-Fārābī’s commentary on the *Physics*. Avicenna’s own treatment of the four-cause theory evinces a progression in the chronology of his writings, the relevant passages of which Wisnovsky translates. In Avicenna’s earliest work in this sequence, *al-Ḥikma al-‘Arūḍīya*, the Neoplatonic instrumental and paradigmatic causes find a place in his treatment of this division. However, in his later work, *al-Isārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt*, the criterion for division of the causes into the immanent/transcendent dichotomy is discarded in favor of Avicenna’s own distinction between essence and existence which in turn serves as the basis for the division of formal/material causes and final/efficient causes. Wisnovsky concludes that Avicenna’s treatment of causality is representative of a larger characteristic of his metaphysics, in which we see elements of the Neoplatonic project give way to a uniquely Avicennan synthesis of Arabic Aristotelianism and medieval Islamic theology.

Another source of influence on Avicenna’s thought, and one which has not been as vigorously investigated as the Aristotelian connection, is the work of the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus. In “Intellect versus Active Intellect: Plotinus and Avicenna” Rahim Acar focuses attention on the question of Plotinus’ influence on Avicenna’s conception of the active intellect. Acar concludes that while there does not appear to be an immediately discernible relationship between the views of Plotinus and Avicenna (whether in the role Plotinus assigns the cosmic intellect in the creation of the human soul, or indeed in its actualization of the human potential intellect) we can credit Plotinus in part for Avicenna’s theory that human knowledge

derives ultimately from the active intellect. In the process of comparing the theories of Avicenna and his philosophical predecessor Plotinus, Acar offers an illuminating revision of previous scholarship on the issue (most notably the work of Herbert Davidson). He notes that a more recognizable derivation of Avicenna's conception of the active intellect is to be located in the commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius on Aristotle's *De anima* rather than in the Arabic paraphrase of Plotinus' *Enneads*. This conclusion echoes in some respects the findings of Asad Ahmed in the realm of logic and Robert Wisnovsky in metaphysics, and highlights the importance of further research into Avicenna's reliance on, or at the very least, his knowledge of, the Aristotelian commentary tradition. Such research is now all the more readily possible with the English translations of nearly the entire ancient commentary corpus in the series *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle*, under the general editorship of R. Sorabji.

"The Age of Avicenna" is a useful phrase which, loosely construed, applies to both the period of Avicenna's active career and also, considering the enormous impact of his thought in later times, the subsequent periods of development in Arabic-Islamic philosophy. The boundaries of this "age" here are equally fluid, but the papers gathered under the section so titled all treat elements of the historical, social, and intellectual contexts of Avicenna's own time.

Only in recent years, with the work of Dimitri Gutas and Yahya Michot, have we seen a development in the study of the historical context of Avicenna's career. In "Stealing Avicenna's Books" I seek to provide an overview of the historiographical sources available to us for a reconstruction of that context. A specific event reported by Avicenna, scil. the seizure of his works during the attack on Isfahan by the Ġaznavid forces in 421/1030, serves as a case study for the treatment of the few facts about Avicenna's life known to later historians. In the course of investigating this later historiographical tradition (in Arabic and Persian), it becomes clear that the biographer Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī in his *Tatimmat Šiwān al-ḥikma*, while basing his report about the seizure of Avicenna's works on the information provided by Avicenna and his students, perhaps intentionally dated that seizure to a putative *later* sack of Isfahan. In so doing, Ibn Funduq appears to be the source for the unverifiable legend that at least some of Avicenna's books were carted off to Ġazna where they would later be burned in the Ġürid sack of that city in the mid-

sixth/mid-twelfth century. An examination of other contemporary or near-contemporary histories elicits no evidence to corroborate Ibn Funduq's report, but it is his report which, with various modifications, is taken up by later historians such as Ibn al-Aṭīr. As partial explanation for Ibn Funduq's manipulation of the facts in this case I present other instances in Ibn Funduq's *Tatimma* in which the literary topos of just recompense for the perceived faults of Avicenna play a role in Ibn Funduq's accounts of Avicenna's relations with his contemporaries. The conclusions to be drawn from this analysis suggest that very little information about the historical context of Avicenna's career were known to later historians beyond that provided by Avicenna himself and his students, and where that information was lacking later historians had no qualms about presenting a portrait of Avicenna influenced by their own reactions to him. Such a "re-invention" of Avicenna in this specific case is also found to have an impact on the accepted chronology of some of Avicenna's writings.

Avicenna's professional and intellectual relations with the Mu'tazilī theologians of his day have, to date, received very little scholarly attention. Avicenna's assessment of the intellectual rigor of Mu'tazilī views on topics in the Natural Sciences (*at-ṭabī'iyāt*) and some of their metaphysical presuppositions can be pieced together to some degree from random statements in the *Šifā'*, the *Nağāt*, and other works. Alnoor Dhanani's contribution, "Rocks in the Heavens?! The Encounter between 'Abd al-Ġabbār and Ibn Sīnā," investigates a much more substantial source for such a reconstruction. In a (still unedited) letter to an unidentified recipient, Avicenna responds to a question about the nature of space (*makān*) in which Mu'tazilī *kalām* views and definitions are adumbrated and the leader of the Mu'tazilī of the time, the Qāḍī 'Abd al-Ġabbār (d. 415/1025) is expressly quoted. Dhanani examines the evidence for possible professional contacts between Avicenna and 'Abd al-Ġabbār at the Būyid court at Rayy, and presents convincing arguments for Avicenna's knowledge of Mu'tazilī refutations of philosophy, along with a detailed account of 'Abd al-Ġabbār's testimony on physical theories. Dhanani's appraisal of the encounter between Avicenna and 'Abd al-Ġabbār serves as a departure point for a valuable contribution to the ongoing research into the areas of contact and conflict between Aristotelian philosophical and Islamic theological views on physical theories in medieval Islam.

In “Medical Theory and Scientific Method in the Age of Avicenna,” Dimitri Gutas examines the crucial question of Avicenna’s conception of the relation between theory and method in medicine. Gutas notes that medicine was not accorded a place in the classifications of sciences inherited by the medieval Islamic world from late Greek antiquity, and thus presented an epistemological problem for philosophers such as Avicenna seeking to incorporate it into the educational curriculum of the period. Avicenna’s attempt to accommodate medicine within such theoretical constructs shows a development over the course of his career. In an early schema, he subsumed it under a derivative category which included Astrology and Magic and which drew its principles from the theoretical (or “fundamental”) science of physics (i.e., Natural Philosophy). Later in his life, and perhaps following his reported teacher al-Masīhī, Avicenna demoted medicine still further, to a corollary, and thus non-theoretical, category of philosophy in general. Within such schemata, medicine was denied status as a theoretical science with demonstrative principles of its own (deriving such, rather, from physics), and its practitioners, insofar as they were physicians, were precluded from applying the knowledge they gained from experience to the investigation of principles of physics upon which their medicine was based. Gutas concludes that the intellectual and social context in which philosophers and physicians such as Avicenna worked inhibited an evaluation and development of medical theory that would extend beyond the simple description of medical practices. However, this does not mean that such descriptions, based on the observations and experiments of medieval Arab physicians, did not advance medieval medicine or that they do not actually constitute, for modern scholarship, an area for future research into medieval medical theory, and so Gutas enumerates a number of areas and sources that look particularly promising in this regard.

Tariq Jaffer’s “Bodies, Souls and Resurrection in Avicenna’s *ar-Risāla al-Adḥawīya fī amr al-ma’ād*” directly confronts Avicenna’s theory of incorporeal resurrection as he articulated it in the *Adḥawīya*. As in Dhanani’s contribution, Jaffer observes that Avicenna approaches the problem of immortality in this treatise within the context of a refutation of Mu’tazilī views on resurrection. A notable part of Avicenna’s understanding of resurrection is his insistence on locating the individual identity of a person in the soul and his argument that since the soul is separate from the corruptible matter of the

body, it alone is immortal. Jaffer frames his analysis of the issue through a presentation of Avicenna's twofold refutation of the theologians and the supporters of metempsychosis. In the case of the theologians, the precise identities of Avicenna's opponents are left unspecified in the text, but through a careful sifting of the intellectual currents of Avicenna's time, Jaffer is able to offer viable suggestions about whom Avicenna may have had in mind when composing the *Adḥawīya*. In the case of the refutation of metempsychosis, Jaffer makes the important observation that Avicenna deftly overcomes the argument in favor of metempsychosis by refuting the theory of pre-existent souls implicit in his unnamed opponents' stance.

The papers in the section "After Avicenna" collectively constitute a chronological map of the intellectual legacy of Avicenna in the medieval Near East. From the work of Avicenna's student Bahmanyār to the reception of Avicenna in Syriac, all of these contributions make abundantly clear the monumental degree to which Avicenna's thought influenced subsequent intellectual trends. These contributions also represent some of the first detailed studies of a period (twelfth-eighteenth centuries) in Near Eastern intellectual history that has traditionally been considered a time of scholarly conformism and decline. The significant developments in the reception of Avicennan thought outlined below, however, suggest a very different picture of the period in question.

Almost immediately, Avicenna's philosophical legacy underwent considerable transformation at the hands of his student Bahmanyār, as Jules Janssens plots in his "Bahmanyār ibn Marzubān: A Faithful Disciple of Ibn Sīnā?" From the scant evidence that can be collected from Avicenna's papers, it would appear that the relationship between Avicenna and Bahmanyār was not the traditionally fideistic bond of master and disciple common to medieval Islamic educational praxis. One of the reasons suggested for this is that Bahmanyār also drew intellectual influence from the little known figure Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī, whom Avicenna "much despised" (in the words of Janssens) as a result of an earlier public controversy that pitted Avicenna and Abū l-Qāsim against one another. It is, thus, reasonable to ask, as Janssens does in the present contribution, whether or not Bahmanyār's own philosophical work, *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*, reflects any ambiguity in Bahmanyār's allegiance to Avicenna's ideas. Janssens finds that while Bahmanyār presents his work as a model of Avicenna's philosophy

in the organization of his material (following Avicenna's Persian *summa*, *Dānišnāmah-yi 'Alā'ī* in which metaphysics precedes physics), such mimicry overlays substantive alterations to Avicenna's philosophy. In a painstaking analysis of Bahmanyār's work, Janssens presents unquestionable evidence for Bahmanyār's innovations and modifications to the Avicennan program of thought. These departures from Avicennan thought include the discussion of *all* of the Aristotelian categories as well as much that belonged to Avicenna's Physics in Bahmanyār's metaphysical discourse, and the complete exclusion of theological issues from his Metaphysics. Janssens concludes that rather than "re-Aristotelizing" the Avicennan philosophical program, Bahmanyār's intention in reconceptualizing the parameters of the philosophical disciplines may have been influenced by Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī's weak grasp of those disciplines.

An important episode in the reception of Avicenna's thought among later Muslim theologians and philosophers is located in the commentary by Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) of Avicenna's *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*, followed by Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) super-commentary, which aimed in part to defend Avicenna against what Ṭūsī deemed to be misapprehensions on ar-Rāzī's part. Avicenna's *Iṣārāt*, intended as a highly condensed version of arguments and theories developed in greater detail elsewhere, presented a considerable challenge to the exegetical skills of later thinkers. In "Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī's Critique of Ibn Sīnā's Argument for the Unity of God in the *Iṣārāt* and Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī's Defence," Toby Mayer analyzes the reception of Avicenna's metaphysical argument for divine unity in these later commentaries. Mayer begins with a presentation of Avicenna's argument that emphasizes its avoidance of positions based on physical premises and its focus, instead, on the issue of individuation. Mayer then notes that Rāzī's understanding of Avicenna's proof produces enormous difficulties for his commentary in that it leaves many of Avicenna's references without meaningful connection to his premises. While Mayer's examination of Rāzī's views highlights its inconsistencies, it also recognizes an important philosophical presupposition on the part of its author, scil. the belief in a complex God. Mayer suggests that such a belief is to be explained by Rāzī's Aś'arī allegiances, as well as perhaps his readings of the philosopher Abū l-Barakāt al-Baḡdādī. Ṭūsī's response to Rāzī is next set forth in equal detail. Mayer points out that in many instances, Ṭūsī needs only challenge Rāzī's unreflective assertion that the philoso-

phers argue for the univocity of the term “existence” in order to demolish his predecessor’s objections to Avicenna. In doing so, Ṭūsī introduces the idea of “the ambiguity of existence” (*taškīk al-wuğūd*) into his debate with Rāzī. This raises the question of whether Ṭūsī is justified in using such an idea in defense of Avicenna, and so Mayer traces Avicenna’s use of *taškīk al-wuğūd* in his “private statements” found in the *Mubāḥatāt*, noting this important Neoplatonic element in Avicenna’s thought as well as Ṭūsī’s own significantly developed connotation of the term.

Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī appears again in Ahmed H. al-Rahim’s “The Twelver-Šī‘ī Reception of Avicenna in the Mongol Period,” a biobibliographical account of the trajectory of Avicenna’s influence on Šī‘ī authors of the twelfth-fourteenth centuries. Al-Rahim begins his survey by noting the relative lack of scholarly attention directed toward the period in question, which has recently been termed the “golden age” of philosophy in Islamic civilization. Al-Rahim notes that partial reason for this may be the scholarly devaluing of genres such as the commentary and gloss, popular in the period, but presumed to be unoriginal. An important *isnād* of philosophers which links Ṭūsī directly to Avicenna’s student Bahmanyār serves as the framework for al-Rahim’s account of the transmission of Avicenna’s philosophy in the centuries after his death. While much about this *isnād* is historically problematic in al-Rahim’s view, it did serve as a means by which later theologians, particularly those associated with the Niṣāmīya *madrasas*, could articulate their allegiance to Avicennan philosophy. Al-Rahim next presents a bibliographical survey of the most important Šī‘ī philosophical works which served as a curriculum for the study of Avicenna, including those by Ṭūsī and his Twelver-Šī‘ī student al-‘Allāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325).

Another important area for the reception of Avicenna’s thought is to be located in the *Iṣrāqī* tradition of the so-called “school of Isfahan,” and, in particular, the philosophy of one of its major representatives, Mullā Ṣadrā. In “Process Metaphysics in Islam? Avicenna and Mullā Ṣadrā on Intensification of Being,” Sajjad Rizvi examines Mullā Ṣadrā’s doctrine of *taškīk al-wuğūd* (translated by Rizvi as “modulation of being”) in relation to Avicenna’s substance-based metaphysics. As Rizvi explains, the doctrine of *taškīk al-wuğūd* forms a key part of a later Islamic metaphysics that directs attention toward the acts, or processes of being, rather than substance. Rizvi illustrates Mullā Ṣadrā’s interpretation of a process metaphysics through

an analysis of his views on intensification in being and develops this aspect of Sadrian metaphysics by observing its Neoplatonic roots and outlining Mullā Ṣadrā's modifications to the standard Illuminationist interpretation. While Rizvi recognizes that the Peripatetic tradition, as represented by Avicenna, generally does not recognize intensity in being, he notes (as does Mayer in his contribution) that Ṭūsī's commentary on the *Iṣārāt* allows for such a conception of intensity, if not in causality, then certainly in other divisions of being; and this is perhaps also present, albeit in an ambiguous manner, in Avicenna's *Mubāḥaṭāt*. Rizvi thus characterizes Ṭūsī's views as a turning-point in Islamic philosophy which was further developed by Mullā Ṣadrā, who rejects both the Peripatetic and Illuminationist stances on modulation in being. Rizvi concludes with an explanation of how such intensification need not result in a complex divinity in Ṣadrā's thought.

Hidemi Takahashi's contribution, "The Reception of Ibn Sīnā in Syriac: The Case of Gregory Barhebraeus" closes the volume with an outline of an entirely neglected sphere of Avicennan influence: the translation and assimilation of parts of his thought in the medieval Syriac philosophical and scientific works of Barhebraeus. Takahashi provides a brief biographical study of Barhebraeus, followed by a detailed conspectus of those of his philosophical works related to the Avicennan tradition. This corpus includes original compositions influenced by Avicenna's thought and designed to be a philosophical curriculum in Syriac (including *Cream of Wisdom*, modeled on the *Ṣifā'*); translations of Avicenna's works, especially *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīḥāt*; and theological treatises that contain much that can be traced to Avicenna. Takahashi emphasizes the importance of Syriac translations of Avicenna's works as witnesses for the critical editing of the Arabic originals, not simply for their translated material, but also because they often contain the parallel Arabic text. A detailed analysis of a few of the ways in which Barhebraeus employed Avicenna's *aṣ-Ṣifā'* in his *Cream of Wisdom* follows Takahashi's conspectus. Notable aspects of Barhebraeus' methods are that he added a section on practical philosophy absent in Avicenna's work, and his excerption of the *Compendium* of Nicolaus Damascenus (first century B.C.) as part of his discourse. In both cases, Takahashi observes a possible "re-Aristotelizing" (to borrow a phrase from Janssens' contribution) of Avicenna. Takahashi next provides a few examples of textual collocation of the *Cream* and the *Ṣifā'* in order to demonstrate the type of paraphrase and alteration undertaken by Barhebraeus. The vari-

ous aspects of Barhebraeus' significance for Avicennan studies include his role as a thirteenth-century commentator of Avicenna (in which his endorsement of Avicennan philosophy fluctuates); the function of his work as textual witness to Avicenna's oeuvre (often more useful than even the Latin translations); and his role as transmitter of Avicennan philosophy to Oriental Christianity. Much about the Syriac reception of Avicennan thought is little known to Arabists and Persianists; Takahashi's contribution thus constitutes an important foundation for the further development of Avicenna studies.

During the concluding session of The First Graduate Student Conference on Ibn Sīnā, and as a result of the mutual enthusiasm of the participants for the convivial atmosphere of shared scholarship, The Avicenna Study Group was formally created. The participants agreed that the recent growth in research directed toward the life and thought of Avicenna had reached significant a stage as to warrant a formal structure and vehicle for its continued dissemination. The purpose of The Avicenna Study Group is to facilitate communication concerning recent academic research on the life, times, and thought of Avicenna through annual meetings, to disseminate information on manuscripts, primary, and secondary material related to Avicenna and medieval Arabic philosophy in general, and to serve as the first stage in projected major collaborative research projects on Avicenna. The present volume represents the first collective activity of The Avicenna Study Group.

David C. Reisman  
Chicago  
27 October 2002

*Note on the Transliteration of Arabic and Persian*

The transliteration follows the rules of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* for both Arabic and Persian, with the exception of *aw* and *ay* for diphthongs instead of *au* and *ai*, and *á* instead of *ā* for the *alif maqṣūra*. The Persian *-h* (representing the *tā' marbūta*) is retained, and the Persian *idāfah* is represented as *-i* or *-yi*.



BEFORE AVICENNA



## CHAPTER ONE

# AVICENNA'S RECEPTION OF ARISTOTELIAN MODAL SYLLOGISTICS: A STUDY BASED ON CONVERSION RULES AND THE *BARBARA* PROBLEMATIC\*

Asad Q. Ahmed

### *Introduction*

Chapters 8–22 of the first book of Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*<sup>1</sup> deal with his theory of modal syllogisms. These sections have exercised historians of philosophy for quite some time due to what seem to be glaring inconsistencies in Aristotle's account. Here I present some contributions made by Avicenna in trying to find an interpretation of the theory amenable to Aristotle's conclusions. The first section offers a short account of Aristotle's conversion rules and a summary of the modalities of possibility and necessity. One of the main purposes of this section is to serve as a backdrop for comparative excursions (which I leave mostly to the notes). I offer in the notes of this section some aspects of the medieval Latin tradition<sup>2</sup> as it relates to the subject matter. I also sketch some comparisons with Avicenna which I develop more fully in the latter half of this paper.<sup>3</sup> The second

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\* I dedicate this article to CJ.

<sup>1</sup> I use the following translations of the *Prior Analytics* (hereafter *AP*; all references below are to book I unless otherwise noted): *Aristotle's Prior Analytics*, tr. Robin Smith (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989); *Prior Analytics*, tr. A. Jenkinson in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:39–113. I also use the text and translation provided in *Aristotle: The Categories, On Interpretation, and Prior Analytics*, ed./tr. H. Cooke and H. Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) [hereafter Cooke/Tredennick].

<sup>2</sup> For this I am almost wholly indebted to Henrik Lagerlund, *Modal Syllogistics in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> My discussion of Avicenna is based mostly on the *Nağāt* throughout this paper; see *Kitāb an-Nağāt fī l-ḥikma al-mantiqīya wa-ṭ-ṭabīʿīya wa-l-ilāhīya*, ed. M. Fakhry (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Ġadīda, 1985). For certain topics I also refer to Avicenna's *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣifāʾ*, *al-Mantiq 4: al-Qiyās*, ed. S. Zāʾid (Cairo: Wizārat at-Taḳāfa wa-l-Irṣād al-Qawmī, 1383/1964) [hereafter *Ṣifāʾ*] and Avicenna, *Livre des directives et remarques (Kitāb al-Iṣārāt wa l-Tanbihāt)*, tr. A.-M. Goichon (Paris: Librairie J. Vrin, 1951) [hereafter Goichon].

section introduces the famous case of the two *Barbaras* and a corresponding problem found in first figure syllogisms composed of a problematic and an assertoric premise. In the third section, I expound Avicenna's conception of modal propositions with regard to his syllogistics.<sup>4</sup> Here I deal with Avicenna's multilateral readings of modals and set forth conversion rules essential to understanding his modal syllogistic. Finally, in the fourth section, I present Avicenna's construal of the problems presented by the Aristotelian tradition which I introduce in the second section.

### *Notation*

I use  $\rightarrow$  for implication,  $\leftrightarrow$  for mutual implication and, in accordance with the medieval tradition, I use "a" for universal affirmatives, "e" for universal negatives. For particular affirmatives, I use "i"; "o" is used for particular negatives. AaB is to be read as "A applies to all B";<sup>5</sup> AiB means "A applies to some B," etc. P stands for possibility, C, for contingency, N for necessity, I for impossibility (I discuss these modal operators below). Other symbols are explained as they are introduced.

#### *I. Modal Propositions and Conversions in Aristotle*<sup>6</sup>

I assume that the reader is already familiar with Aristotle's non-modal syllogistics—the three figures and the three main methods of

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<sup>4</sup> For a general account of the modalities in Avicenna, see A. Bäck, "Avicenna's Conception of the Modalities," *Vivarium* 30.2 (1992), 217–256. See C. Ehrig-Eggert, "Zur Analyse von Modalaussagen bei Avicenna und Averroes," *Deutscher Orientalistentag, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Suppl. VI*, ed. W. Röllig (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1985), 195–199; and J.I. Saranyana, "Möglichkeit und Notwendigkeit bei Ibn Sina (Avicenna)," in *Orientalische Kultur und Europäisches Mittelalter*, ed. A. Zimmermann and I. Craemer-Ruegenberg (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985) 207–218. For a theologico-philosophical discussion of modalities, see A. Hyman, "Aristotle, Algazali and Avicenna on Necessity, Potentiality and Possibility," in *Florilegium Columbianum: Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. K.-L. Selig and R. Somerville (New York: Italica Press, 1987), 73–89.

<sup>5</sup> εἰ γὰρ τὸ Α κατὰ παντὸς τοῦ Β, *AP*, 25b39.

<sup>6</sup> For an in-depth study of this topic, see R. Patterson, "Conversion Principles and the Basis of Aristotle's Modal Logic," *History and Philosophy of Logic* 11.2 (1990), 151–172.

proof.<sup>7</sup> The familiar rules of conversion of assertoric premises are as follow:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{AaB} &\rightarrow \text{BiA} \\ \text{AiB} &\leftrightarrow \text{BiA} \\ \text{AcB} &\leftrightarrow \text{BeA} \end{aligned}$$

I mention the assertorics only to point out that for Avicenna their conversion is not as simple as one finds in Aristotle. The complexity of his conversion rules point to his multilateral approach to modalities, as is shown in the third section. Averroes' "Question IV"<sup>8</sup> on conversions offers a brief summary of Avicenna's contentions against Aristotle (the details of these contentions are in the notes and in the last two sections below).<sup>9</sup>

Avicenna has doubts against the Philosopher [i.e., Aristotle] when he says that a particular affirmative contingent [proposition] converts with a contingent [particular affirmative proposition].<sup>10</sup> [He also disagrees with him with respect to the following claims:] that a necessary particular affirmative [proposition] converts with a necessary [particular affirmative proposition];<sup>11</sup> that a universal contingent [affirmative proposition]

<sup>7</sup> I.e., *ad impossibile, conversion, ekthesis*. On *ekthesis*, see R. Smith, "What is Aristotelian Ecthesis?" *History and Philosophy of Logic* 3 (1982), 113–127.

<sup>8</sup> "Question IV—de conversionibus" (folio 363) in *Quaesita in libros logicae Aristotelis in Aristotelis opera cum Averrois Cordubiensis commentariis I* (Venetiis apud Iunctas, 1550), 361–379.

<sup>9</sup> *Avicenna dubitat contra Philosophum, quando dixit quod particularis affirmativa contingens convertatur contingens, et quod necessaria particularis affirmativa convertatur necessaria, et quod universalis contingens convertatur particularis. Et similiter dum ait quod negativa de inesse convertatur universalis, et contradicit suo sermoni per materias, nam ipse ait quod dum dicimus aliquis homo scribit est contingens, cum eius conversa non sit contingens. Et per idem etiam ostendit necessaria non convertatur necessaria, neque universalis contingens particularis.*

<sup>10</sup> *AP*, 25a37–41: "When it comes to possible premises . . . the situation with respect to conversion will be the same in all these cases with the affirmatives. For if it is possible for A to belong to every or to some B, then it will be possible for B to belong to some A." Avicenna contests this claim in *Nağāt*, 30.

<sup>11</sup> *AP*, 25a27: "It will also be the same way in the case of necessary premises: the universally privative premise converts universally, while each kind of affirmative premise converts partially. . . . If A belongs to every or to some B of necessity, then it is necessary for B to belong to some A." Avicenna contests this view at *Nağāt*, 30:

The universal affirmative necessary [proposition] converts into a particular affirmative [proposition] as in the preceding account concerning the absolute [propositions]. However, it is commonly believed that its converse must be a necessary [proposition]. For if it were an absolute [proposition], its converse— included in the primary rules [of conversion]—would be an absolute [proposition]. So, some B would be A absolutely; [however], it was [the case that]

converts with a particular [contingent affirmative proposition].<sup>12</sup> [Avicenna disagrees] similarly when [Aristotle] says that a negative assertoric [universal proposition] converts with a universal [negative assertoric proposition].<sup>13</sup>

For Avicenna, modal and assertoric propositions may yield each other through conversions depending on how one construes the proposition.

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every [B was A] by necessity. In reality, it is not necessary that the converse of an absolute [proposition] be an absolute [proposition] without having any necessity in it. For this reason this [common] account does not follow. The correct [opinion] is that the converse of a necessary [proposition] can sometimes be absolute, as your statement, “Every writer is a man.” Then you say, “Some men are writers;” and this is not in virtue of the [kind] of necessity which you want. Rather, if it is [by necessity], it is so in virtue of another necessity which is proper for everything that is contingent (*mumkin*).

<sup>12</sup> AP, 25a41. Avicenna’s response is in *Nağāt*, 30.

<sup>13</sup> AP, 25a7. Avicenna’s response is in *Nağāt*, 27–29. He writes:

It is commonly believed that the negative universal affirmative [proposition] converts into [something] like itself [henceforth *mūlla nafsihā* in this context will be translated “while retaining its original values (of affirmation and negation and truth and falsity)”. For if we say, “No B is A,” “No A is B” is true. Otherwise, let “No A is B” be false and let its contradiction be true, namely, “Some A is B.” [Then] let us suppose that “some” to be something fixed/determined and let it be J. So, that thing which is J is both A and B. So *that* B [predicated of J] is A. However, [it was given as a premise that] no B is A; this is an absurdity. The truth with regard to this is that this conversion is correct not for everything that is considered (*yu’addu*) among absolute [propositions] but only for one in which the condition of the soundness of the joining of necessity is not a time/period which varies in individual [cases], but a concept other than time. An example of this is that the condition with which the joining of the modality of necessity is correct is the condition “for as long as the subject is described by that which was posited along with it.” [It is] like our statement “Everything that is moving (*intaqala*) is changing.” For if you join with it the modality of necessity, it is necessary that you utter (*an taqūla bi-lisānika*) or say in your mind “for as long as it is described as moving.” Sometimes, it is not true to say “as long as its essence exists.” In the likes of such absolute [propositions], this conversion is a necessary consequence. And in their likes, if [the universal negative] (*lā šayʿ*) is true, then the [particular affirmative] (*baʿd*) is false. Or the [particular affirmative] is true and the [universal negative] is false. [In this case, there is no] need to posit time itself as a condition; rather, [they are true or false] absolutely, [not in some designated period of reality]. Examples of these [propositions] are used in the sciences if they are more specific than necessary. . . . If it is not [as we have explained], then it is not necessary that the universal negative absolute [proposition] convert like the examples which Aristotle mentions among which the negation [of the proposition] obtains for some time, as in our statement “No animal is moving by will,” i.e., at the time of its rest; [another] is our statement “No animal is sleeping.” [Aristotle] takes these and their likes as the negations of absolute [propositions]. [Such propositions, however,] do not convert at all.

Returning to Aristotle, the rules of conversion of possibility are first mentioned at *AP*, 25a38. Aristotle says that affirmative possibility premises convert like the assertoric premises. The following rules are accepted:

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{AaB}) &\rightarrow P(\text{BiA}) \\ P(\text{AiB}) &\leftrightarrow P(\text{BiA}) \end{aligned}$$

In the same passage, Aristotle distinguishes among different senses of possibility: that which is not necessary, that which is necessary, and that which is potential.<sup>14</sup> In chapter 13, he says that that which is necessary is said to be possible only equivocally.<sup>15</sup> For we can say that it is possible for man to belong to no horse. In this case, the predication always fails to obtain and, for this reason, it is said to fail only possibly because possibility can be said to fail to obtain for some time.<sup>16</sup> This kind of universal negative possible premise converts with a universal negative possible premise of the same sort:  $P(\text{as N})(\text{AeB}) \leftrightarrow P(\text{as N})(\text{BeA})$ . This is so because the two terms are necessary and not accidental.<sup>17</sup> Insofar as possibility is merely lack of impossibility, it comes out to include necessity in certain cases. At least, this is what Aristotle seems to be saying at *De Interpretatione* 13, 22a26–30, where he explains that something is not possible if and only if it is impossible or necessarily fails to obtain.<sup>18</sup> In the same text, at 13, 22b20, he says the possible is that which is not necessary (in ordinary discourse). I will call the former possibility “possibility” (P), and the latter “contingency” (C) in accordance with the literature.<sup>19</sup> Thus:

<sup>14</sup> *AP*, 25a36.

<sup>15</sup> *AP*, 32a20: Τὸ γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον ὁμωνύμως ἐνδέχεσθαι λέγουμεν.

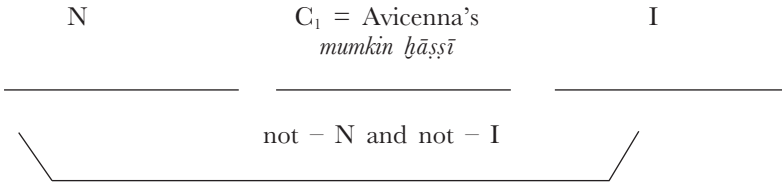
<sup>16</sup> *AP*, 25b3–11.

<sup>17</sup> In *Quaesitum IV*, Averroes explains that a term is necessary if it always stands for its subject (such as an eternal existent or a natural species), accidental if it stands for it sometimes, sometimes not. For example, “white” is an accidental term; “man” is not. Lagerlund, *Modal Syllogistics*, 32.

<sup>18</sup> See grouping II in Jenkinson, 35; see also *De Int.* 22a12–15: καὶ ταύτας οἶσθαι χρὴ εἶναι τὰς ἀντικειμένας φάσεις, δυνατόν—οὐ δυνατόν, ἐνδεχόμενον—οὐκ ἐνδεχόμενον, ἀδύνατον—οὐκ ἀδύνατον. . . . The negation of ἐνδεχόμενον implies the lack of contingency (hence some sort of positive or negative necessity). The negation of δυνατόν implies impossibility (ἀδύνατον). One may deny the contingency of x and still uphold the truth of x, but one may not deny the possibility of x and still uphold its truth.

<sup>19</sup> See J. Hintikka, *Time and Necessity: Studies in Aristotle's Theory of Modality* (Oxford:

Fig. 1. Summary of C, P, N, I



P = C<sub>2</sub> = Avicenna's *mumkin ʿammī*

There are two kinds of contingencies which convey the true sense of the modal. The first kind is what obtains for the most part, as in man's turning gray. For, given the existence of a man, one says "It is possible that he turn gray."<sup>20</sup> This is possibility in terms of potentiality and just falls short of necessity because, as Aristotle explains, a man does not exist forever. But when there is a man, the statement is true either necessarily or for the most part.<sup>21</sup> Aristotle says that such possibilities do not convert as universal negatives.<sup>22</sup> In the same passage, he allows for the conversion of such natural contingencies with respect to particular negative propositions. So, possibility as a general rule or potentiality fails with respect to Ce conversions, but Co conversions go through.<sup>23</sup> The second kind of contingency is that which does not incline in either the direction of realization or non-realization. In chapter 3, Aristotle argues for the conversion of such propositions as (White e Coat).

The promise to give an explanation for the failure of this universal negative conversion in the case of potentialities is not fulfilled in chapter 13 where the topic is taken up again. So the argument

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Clarendon Press, 1973), 29, diagrams iv and v in particular. Kilwardby's summary (apud Lagerlund, *Modal Syllogistics*, 23, n. 24) explains clearly Aristotle's divisions of possibility. See Figure 1 above. Note that Kilwardby's C<sub>2</sub> is Hintikka's P. See also *De Int.* 21a34–38 where Aristotle seems to have different concepts of possibility in mind: *δυνατόν*, often translated "possibility" and *ἐνδεχόμενον*, translated as "contingency."

<sup>20</sup> *AP*, 32b3.

<sup>21</sup> Such cases, according to Avicenna, may also be the fifth kind of necessity; see below.

<sup>22</sup> *AP*, 25b14–19.

<sup>23</sup> See *AP*, XVII for discussion of this topic, and R. Patterson, *Aristotle's Modal Logic: Essence and Entailment in the Organon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 26.

remains somewhat incomplete.<sup>24</sup> In chapter 13,<sup>25</sup> Aristotle speaks about another kind of conversion peculiar to contingency premises. This is what W.D. Ross calls a complementary conversion. Aristotle argues that in the case of possibility that inclines either way, the following conversion rules must obtain:

$$\begin{aligned} C(AaB) &\leftrightarrow C(AeB) \\ C(AiB) &\leftrightarrow C(AoB) \end{aligned}$$

Those particulars which fall under the universals will also follow, as in

$$\begin{aligned} C(AaB) &\rightarrow C(AoB) \\ C(AeB) &\rightarrow C(AiB)^{26} \end{aligned}$$

The proof for these conversion rules is very simple. Aristotle argues, for example, that if possibility means neither necessary nor impossible, then  $C(A) \rightarrow [\text{not } N \text{ and not } I](A) \rightarrow C(\text{not-}A)$ . Similar proofs would apply in the other cases. P, insofar as it may be N, does not allow such conversions.

In the case of necessity premises, the rules of conversion are exactly the same as those for assertoric premises:

$$\begin{aligned} N(AaB) &\rightarrow N(BiA) \\ N(AeB) &\leftrightarrow N(BeA) \\ N(AiB) &\leftrightarrow N(BiA) \end{aligned}$$

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<sup>24</sup> Avicenna includes the first type of contingencies among his fifth type of necessities and the second type of contingencies among his fourth type of necessities. Patterson, *op. cit.*, 26, says that Aristotle allows for the conversion of Pe but not Ce. However, he argues that the same reason may be applied for Pe conversions as for Ce. He uses the premise, P(no man is white) which would fail to convert to P(no white is man); but there are some white things which are necessarily men (Socrates, etc.) But, this is to assume that the import of P premises is possibility for time *t* at time *t*. Or it is to assume Socrates' existence *in re*; or it is to assume necessity of the present and to argue on its basis that this contingency statement assigns possibility for the present. Furthermore, Patterson overlooks the fact that he is giving an example of P insofar as it is C. But P can also be N, according to Aristotle. For a brief discussion of necessity of the present, see note 27 below.

<sup>25</sup> *AP*, 32a30–35.

<sup>26</sup> This conversion is not explicit but may be inferred from Aristotle's arguments thus far.

These conversion rules are found in a short paragraph of chapter 3 (25a26–35). I have found no substantial discussion in the *Prior Analytics* about different kinds of necessities comparable to the kind we find in Avicenna.<sup>27</sup>

## II. *Two Problems*

The much discussed case of the two Barbaras,<sup>28</sup> which occur at *AP*, I,9, is as follows. Aristotle rejects:

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<sup>27</sup> Necessity of the present, in Aristotle, is assigned to present events that simply occur in a way analogous to but not identical with the necessity assigned to past events of the same nature. So, if it is the case that a man walk now, then it is not possible that he not walk now; therefore, it is necessary. This seems to be Avicenna's fourth N. One has to be careful not to confuse this view with Determinism or with the Principle of Plenitude (whereby all possibilities are at some point realized). Nor does this doctrine state that it is only necessary now as I speak that I speak. Necessity of the Present is not limited to now, but to any event the possibility of which is *its* now. In other words, necessity is a term relevant to events occurring at any time. The moment of the necessity and of the truth of the statement that it is necessary are identical. In symbolic notation, we would have:

Necessity of the Present:  $pt \rightarrow N(tpt)$  (read: if  $p$  at  $t$ , then it is necessary that at  $t$  that  $p$  at  $t$ , and so on)  
 Necessity of the Past:  $pt \rightarrow [All(t_1) > t] [N(t_1 pt)]$   
 Determinism:  $pt \rightarrow All (t_n) N[t_n pt]$   
 Where  $t$ =time now;  $p$ =any proposition

See J. Hintikka, "Aristotle on the Realization of Possibilities in Time," in *Reforging the Great Chain of Being: Studies in the History of Modal Theories*, ed. S. Knutilla (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1981), 57–72, and C. Kirwan, "Aristotle on the Necessity of the Present," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 6 (1986), 167–187. Sarah Waterlow uses necessity of the present to explain Aristotle's claim that whatever is always the case is necessarily the case in her *Passage and Possibility: A Study of Aristotle's Modal Concepts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), chapters 1 and 2. See *AP*, I, 4–6 for a discussion of *per se* ( $\kappa\alpha\theta'$   $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}$ ) propositions in Aristotle. Kilwardby and Albert the Great seem to base their *per se primo et secundo modo* necessity propositions on these passages (Lagerlund, *Modal Syllogistics*, 30–31). The conversion of necessary propositions was problematic for Avicenna and other medieval Arabic/Latin logicians. For example,  $N(\text{man a writer}) \rightarrow N(\text{writer i man})$  does not seem to be true. Kilwardby's explanation, following Averroes, was to divide necessity propositions into *per se* and *per accidens*. *Per accidens* necessity propositions have a necessary connection between the term and substratum in virtue of some inseparable but inessential property. One may also try to explain the validity of this conversion as logicians in Kilwardby's time did, by reading "writer" as a rigid designator, not as a suppositum "writer." Averroes probably gets his inspiration from Avicenna. Accidentally necessary propositions, according to Averroes, do not convert. For a full discussion, see Lagerlund, *Modal Syllogistics*, ch. 2. In reference to note 53 in *ibid.*, it is very likely that the example,  $N(\text{man a writer})$  is taken from Avicenna and not through a mistranslation of *AP* into Arabic. See *Šifā'*, 98.15 and 99.3: *ba'du mā yūsafu bi-amahū kātibun huwa insānun bi-ḏ-ḏarūra*.

<sup>28</sup> See R. Patterson, "The Case of the Two Barbaras," *Oxford Studies in Ancient*

$$(AaB) N(BaC) \rightarrow N(AaC)$$

He argues by *ad impossibile*; let us assume that the conclusion is true. Then, take the second premise along with the conclusion in a syllogism,

$$N(AaC) N(BaC)$$

The second premise converts to  $N(CiB)$ . This, along with  $N(AaC)$ , yields  $N(AiB)$ . However, we assumed in the original premise that  $(AaB)$ . The latter is an assertoric premise and carries no necessity along with it. For if one says that every man is sleeping, one is just as entitled to say that no man is sleeping. The conclusion  $N(AiB)$  asserts that it is necessary that some men be sleeping. This contradicts the original premise. Therefore, the contradiction of the conclusion assumed to be true must be true. In other words, it is not necessary that  $AaC$ . Aristotle accepts  $(AaC)$ , an assertoric proposition, as the conclusion of the original syllogism. So,

$$(AaB) N(BaC) \rightarrow (AaC)$$

Aristotle argues that in a *Barbara* constituted of a necessary and an assertoric premise, the conclusion is necessary only when the major premise is necessary. According to this rule, he accepts the following syllogism:

$$N(AaB) (BaC) \rightarrow N(AaC)$$

Let us now return to the *Barbara* with a minor necessary premise and an assertoric conclusion.

$$(AaB) N(BaC) \rightarrow (AaC) \text{ (accepted)}$$

Let us assume  $(AaC)$  to be true and use it along with the second premise to see what conclusion we reach.  $(AaC)$  converts to  $(CiA)$

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*Philosophy*, 7 (1989) 1–40, and P. Thom, “The Two Barbaras,” *History and Philosophy of Logic* 12 (1991), 135–149. The latter offers good summaries of recent attempts at giving a formal and consistent account of this Aristotelian problem. On a problem concerning the modes of mixed syllogisms, see A. Elamrani-Jamal “Ibn Rušd et les Premiers Analytiques d’Aristote,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 5 (1995), 51–74.

to yield the following first figure syllogism with a necessary major premise:

$$N(\text{BaC}) (\text{CiA}) \rightarrow N(\text{BiA})$$

$N(\text{BiA})$  converts to  $N(\text{AiB})$ . And now we have a problem in that  $N(\text{AiB})$  is incompatible with  $(\text{AaB})$  which was assumed to be a true premise in the original syllogism. It turns out that the argument used to reject the *Barbara* with the minor necessary and major assertoric yielding a necessary conclusion must apply against the accepted *Barbara* as well. In other words, the proof used to reject

$$(\text{AaB}) N(\text{BaC}) \rightarrow N(\text{AaC})$$

can be used to reject

$$(\text{AaB}) N(\text{BaC}) \rightarrow (\text{AaC})$$

Should both Barbaras be accepted? Rejected? What is the importance of the major premise?<sup>29</sup>

One famous attempt at explaining the problem is to distinguish between *de dicto* and *de re* necessity statements.<sup>30</sup> *De dicto* truths are

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<sup>29</sup> See Cooke/Tredennick, 241, n. c, and 190, for remarks about Aristotle's confusion over modals.

<sup>30</sup> Attempts to give a coherent account of Aristotle's theory have multiplied over the years. See A. Becker, *Die Aristotelische Theorie der Möglichkeitsschlüsse: eine logisch-philologische Untersuchung der Kapitel 13–22 von Aristoteles' Analytica priora I* (Berlin: Junker und Dunnhaupt, 1931); J. Lukasiewicz, *Aristotle's Syllogistic from the Standpoint of Modern Formal Logic*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); S. McCull, *Aristotle's Modal Syllogisms* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1963); N. Rescher, "Aristotle's Theory of Modal Syllogisms and its Interpretation," in *The Critical Approach to Science and Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Karl A. Popper*, ed. M. Bunge (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 152–177; I. Angelleli, "The Aristotelian Modal Syllogistic in Modern Modal Logic," in *Konstruktionen versus Positionen: Beitr. zur Diskussion um d. konstruktive Wissenschaftstheorie (Paul Lorenzen zum 60. Geburtstag)*, ed. K. Lorenz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 176–215; Patterson, *Aristotle's Modal Logic*. Theophrastus rejected the idea that a necessary and assertoric proposition can yield a necessary conclusion. He insists that the conclusion has the weaker of the two modalities (*peiores* rule); see R. Smith, "Logic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 27–65. The distinction *de re/de dicto* goes back at least as far as Abelard; see Patterson, *ibid.*, 6–11; and W. Kneale, "Modality *de re* and *de dicto*," in *Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*, Proceedings of the International Congress for Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, ed. E. Nagel, P. Suppes, and A. Tarski (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 624.

those that are so just in virtue of the terms of the proposition, such as “all bachelors are unmarried.” *De re* truths are true in virtue of the *res* to which the term refers as in “All white things on the mat are cats” (where all white things on the mat are indeed cats).<sup>31</sup> In fact, both these propositions are necessarily true, the first in virtue of the concepts involved and the second in virtue of the substratum of the subject term. For in cases where all white things on the mat are indeed cats, this is a necessary truth, because all cats are necessarily cats. This is not necessary, as is obvious, in virtue of the terms since being a white thing on the mat does not imply being a cat. In symbolic notation, the difference is clear:

$$\begin{aligned} & \textit{De dicto} \ N(x)[B(x) \rightarrow A(x)] \\ & \textit{De re} \ (x) (B(x) \rightarrow N[A(x)])^{32} \end{aligned}$$

Now, whereas the *de re* reading of the terms allows for Aristotle's argument to go through, the *de dicto* does not. However, a *de re* necessity does not convert, whereas a *de dicto* necessity does by the simple T-rule of modern modal logic:

$$(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow (Np \rightarrow Nq)$$

A similar problem arises regarding syllogisms consisting of a problematic and an assertoric premise if the *Barbara* rule is accepted. Aristotle accepts the following syllogisms:

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<sup>31</sup> Patterson, *Aristotle's Modal Logic*, 11, etc.

<sup>32</sup> Such *de re* truths may be at least of two kinds, according to Averroes. In one case, the subject term may be accidental, as in “Every walking being is an animal” when this is in fact the case. This statement is necessary *per accidens* and *de inesse per se*. The other case is where the subject term is necessary (“Every animal is white”). This is a *de inesse per se* proposition, but not necessary. *De dicto* necessary propositions seem to be those called *de inesse simpliciter* by Averroes. This is where both terms are accidental but are connected in a necessary fashion. Finally, propositions necessary *per se* are those where both terms are necessary and have a necessary connection with each other, thus implying also a necessary connection between the substratum and the predicate (animal a man). Incidentally, it seems that Patterson's weak necessity is a kind of *de re* necessity of the *de inesse per se*/necessary *per accidens* type; his strong necessity seems to be necessity *per se* (Patterson, *Aristotle's Modal Logic*, 11–14). So I have my doubts about whether Patterson's interpretation is at all novel, other than the fact that it points out essential and accidental relations and their importance to Aristotelian logic (and therefore, the importance of his *Metaphysics* to his logic).

$$\begin{aligned} C(AaB) (BaC) &\rightarrow C(AaC) \\ (AaB) C(BaC) &\rightarrow C(AaC)^{33} \end{aligned}$$

Aristotle claims that the first of these two is complete. Let us grant him that for the moment, assuming that he is reading his major premise in some manner that would allow the possibility conclusion to follow. We must assume—expecting Aristotle to be consistent—that he used a similar method of reading his major premise in the case of the two *Barbaras* with a necessary and an assertoric premise. But, then, why does he argue that a *Barbara* with a minor necessary premise yields an assertoric conclusion, but that one with a possible premise does not? Was it not the modality of the major premise that decided the modality of the conclusion?

For the second syllogism above, Aristotle argues through *ad impossibile* and supposition in chapter 15. The proof runs as follows:

1.  $(AaB) C(BaC) \rightarrow C(AaC)$
2. For suppose not- $C(AaC) \rightarrow \text{Impossible } (AaC) \rightarrow N(AoC)$
3. Suppose  $C(BaC)$  to obtain at some time (for this is false, but not impossible)  $\rightarrow (BaC)$
4. Therefore,  $N(AoC) (BaC) \rightarrow N(AoB)$
5.  $N(AoB) \rightarrow \text{not } (AaB)$
6. But  $AaB \rightarrow C(AaC)$ .<sup>34</sup>

Now, Aristotle says that the conclusion of this syllogism (5) would be  $N(AoB)$ .<sup>35</sup> However, earlier (31b37) he established by means of terms that the conclusion of this mixed third figure syllogism is  $(AoB)$ . So, already we seem to have an inconsistency.<sup>36</sup> Accepting  $N(AoB)$ ,

<sup>33</sup> *AP*, 34a34.

<sup>34</sup> Throughout this passage, Aristotle uses δυνατός (potential) rather than ἐνδεψομένος or ἐνδέχασθαι. If we read potentiality as “that which stops short of necessity” such as the graying of every man, then it is a kind of contingency, and the proof is problematic. If we read it as potentiality in the sense of “having some potential,” then it does go through. For every man necessarily has the potential for graying.

<sup>35</sup> *Bocardo* (third figure), 32a4–5.

<sup>36</sup> See Cooke/Tredennick, 270, n. b, for a possible compromise. See notes c and d in the same work for an elaboration of the difficulties associated with this proof. Avicenna, as we shall see, is more wary than Aristotle in giving a proof of this syllogism. But, I suspect that he also fails to satisfy all of Cooke/Tredennick’s concerns. For one, he also does not take into account the negative value of the original

we have a contradiction to the given premise, (AaB). So, Aristotle's proof may work. However, if we adhere to 31b37 and recall that Aristotle does allow two contraries (and therefore a universal and a particular contradictory that falls under that universal's contrary) to be compatible in his earlier proof of the *Barbaras*, then the argument given here fails.<sup>37</sup> It is obvious, then, that there are some underlying tensions which need resolution. How does one resolve these problems? Avicenna supplies some answers to these questions; his suggestions are outlined in the fourth section.

### III. *Avicenna: Modal Propositions and Conversion Rules*

Well aware of the ambiguities in Aristotle's modal logic and of the controversy surrounding it, Avicenna is keen to give a full account of his understanding of modalities within his logical works. The *Nağāt* has a thorough exposition of the modalities of possibility and necessity. An equally important and meticulous account of the meaning of assertoric propositions is also given.

Possibility for Avicenna can be divided under two heads: possibility according to the common account and possibility according to the consensus of the "specialists." In the common account (henceforth PA),  $PA(A) \leftrightarrow \text{not-Impossible}(A)$ . Avicenna says that in this account, necessity is just a species of possibility. This seems to be Aristotle's P.<sup>38</sup> There are, then, only two categories of relation for those who subscribe to this theory: possibility and impossibility.<sup>39</sup> The second kind of possibility (henceforth CA) has the following rule of equivalence:

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minor premise, although he does so with the contradiction of the assumed conclusion of the original syllogism. The full proof is to be found in section IV below.

<sup>37</sup> In certain instances, as in the proof of the necessity *Barbaras*, Aristotle would allow both of the following propositions to be true: "All horses are sleeping;" "no horse is sleeping." It should also be pointed out that in order for both statements to be true, there has to be some reference to time, but Aristotle views universals, at least at *AP*, 34b7–18, without temporal reference. However, if the lack of temporal reference is to lead one to assume the two statements to hold for different periods, then indeed the two contraries/contradictories are true. At *Šifā'*, 38, Avicenna wants the reader to keep in mind the reference to temporality. For if we disregard it, two universals may be true (i.e., we may assume both to be true for different periods). If we keep in mind reference to time (i.e., the same time) two contradictories may not be true (*Šifā'*, 39).

<sup>38</sup> See Figure 1 above.

<sup>39</sup> *Nağāt*, 56.

$$CA(A) \leftrightarrow \text{not-}N(A) \ \& \ \text{not-}I(A)$$

Such a possibility is Aristotelian C. For those who read possibility in this sense, there are three modal relations: possibility, impossibility, and necessity. Avicenna goes on to say that impossibility is just the necessity of non-existence. He points out the following problems with PA when it is confused with CA, i.e., when the common stock of people uses one concept confusing it for the other:<sup>40</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} PA(A) &\rightarrow PA(\text{not-}A) \\ PA(A) &\rightarrow N(A) \\ \text{So, Necessary}(A) &\leftrightarrow \text{Possible}(\text{not-}A) \end{aligned}$$

Also:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Necessary}(A) &\rightarrow \text{not-Possible}(A) \\ \text{Not-Possible}(A) &\rightarrow I(A) \\ \text{So, } N(A) &\rightarrow I(A) \end{aligned}$$

It is obvious that CA is Aristotle's C, a possibility that may just as well obtain as not obtain. PA, on the other hand, is ambiguous as it may be read either as Aristotle's pseudo-necessity, i.e., the application of possibility to things necessary, or as Aristotle's P (possibility in the sense of not-impossible, which coincides with the first part of this disjunction anyway).

Avicenna now turns to complementary conversions and, just like Aristotle, allows it in the case of CA. However, in the case of PA, he contends that complementary conversion would lead to a serious problem. For if  $P(A) \leftrightarrow P(\text{not-}A)$ , then if  $P(A) \leftrightarrow N(A)$ , then  $N(A) \leftrightarrow P(\text{not-}A)$ . And this is absurd in that it says that that which has the possibility of not being must be. Avicenna does not allow complementary conversions for possibilities as potentialities and as genera of necessities.<sup>41</sup> Avicenna discusses the following rules of conversion:<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Nağāt*, 56–58.

<sup>41</sup> *Nağāt*, 66.

<sup>42</sup> *Nağāt*, 66–67.

CAe complementary conversion allowed  
 CA(AeB)  $\leftrightarrow$  CA(BeA) (rejected by example, "C(no man is a writer)" but "not-C(no writer is a man)")  
 CA (AeB)  $\rightarrow$  CA (BoA) (rejected; terms: man, writer)  
 CA(AaB)  $\rightarrow$  PA (BiA) (accepted in that PA, when not N, is not-I)  
 PA(AaB)  $\rightarrow$  PA (BiA)  
 Proof: *reductio* not-PA (BiA)  $\rightarrow$  N(BeA)  $\rightarrow$  N(AeB); but PA (AaB); therefore PA (BiA)

However, this is not a valid proof for CA (AaB)  $\rightarrow$  CA (BiA) because:

Not-CA (BiA)  $\rightarrow$  N(BeA)  $\vee$  N(BaA)  $\vee$  N(BiA)

The only thing that implies just N (BeA) is PA insofar as not-I, i.e., not-PA(BiA)  $\rightarrow$  I(BiA)  $\rightarrow$  N(BeA)

PA(AiB)  $\leftrightarrow$  PA(BiA) (same proof as above)  
 PA(AeB)  $\rightarrow$  PA (BoA) (same proof as above)

Avicenna recognizes six kinds of necessary propositions.<sup>43</sup> They are the following:

1. Necessary for as long as the essence of the subject exists, the essence being such as to exist forever. An example is "God is living."
2. Necessary for as long as the essence of the subject exists, the essence not always existing. An example is "Man is an animal."

Both 1 and 2 are *de dicto* necessities and can be written as N[(x)(B(x)  $\rightarrow$  A(x))]. Below it is shown that Avicenna describes a necessary predication which calls for a *de re* reading. However, it might be possible to give 1 and 2 the following *de re* reading where A and B are necessary terms, i.e., necessarily predicated of x, so implying each other:

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<sup>43</sup> *Nağāt*, 58–59.

$$(x) [A(x) \rightarrow N(B)(x)]$$

This gloss seems identical to Patterson's strong necessity and to Averroes' necessity *per se* where, in the case of the latter, the subject always exists or is some species or genus and the terms are necessary, not accidental. It is also reminiscent of Kaplan's and Plantinga's efforts to reduce *de re* truths to *de dicto* truths.<sup>44</sup>

3. Necessary for as long as the subject is described in a certain manner. An example is "Everything white cuts through the air for sight."

This is a *de dicto* necessity with both terms accidental, producing a necessary connection in virtue of themselves and not the *supposita*.<sup>45</sup>

4. Necessary for as long as the predicate obtains. An example is "Zayd is walking."

This seems to be necessity of the present with a necessary subject and an accidental predicate. Avicenna also alludes to (4i) "Everything walking is a man." However, he does not seem to distinguish between the two. In the latter case, the subject term is accidental and the predicate term necessary. Unlike 4, this is a *de re* necessity.

5. Necessary for a certain designated period of time. An example is "The moon eclipses."

This seems to be the necessity of nature for a specific period of time.

6. Necessary for a certain unfixd period of time. An example is "Every man breathes."

This is the necessity of nature for an undesignated period with a time that is specified for each individual to whom the predicate applies.

Avicenna says that the first two kinds of necessities are similar to

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<sup>44</sup> B. Brody, "De re and de dicto Interpretations of Modal Logic or a Return to an Aristotelian Essentialism," *Philosophy Quarterly of Israel*, 2.1-2 (1972), 117-136.

<sup>45</sup> This is what Averroes would call a *de inesse simpliciter* proposition.

each other in that they obtain for as long as the essence of the subject obtains. The last four kinds of necessities are in virtue of a certain condition of the subject not proceeding from its definition. The first two can be said to be necessities *per se*, the third and the fourth *per accidens*, the fifth and sixth, natural necessities.

Avicenna says that the universal negative necessary proposition converts with a universal negative necessary proposition.<sup>46</sup> However, in the case of universal affirmative necessary propositions, the converse need not be a particular affirmative necessary proposition. Universal affirmative necessary propositions can sometimes yield assertoric particular affirmative propositions. He uses an example, “N(every writer is a man)” whose converse is “Some men are writers” to prove his case. “Some men are writers may be necessary,” he says, “but this is not the [kind of] necessity you want.”<sup>47</sup> It is the kind of necessity applied to all possibilities (perhaps, contingent facts). Again, the particular affirmative necessary propositions need not yield necessary converses. Rules of N conversion:

$$\begin{aligned} N(AaB) &\rightarrow N(BiA) \text{ but also, } BiA \\ N(AeB) &\leftrightarrow N(BeA) \text{ (proof by } \textit{reductio} \text{ and } \textit{ekthesis})} \\ N(AiB) &\rightarrow N(BiA) \text{ but also } BiA \end{aligned}$$

Finally, Avicenna accepts two manners of looking at assertoric propositions.<sup>48</sup> He claims that assertoric propositions can be, according to Theophrastus, those where there is no explicit modality mentioned. The proposition may or may not be necessary according to the last four types of necessities mentioned. Such propositions will allow complementary conversions (e.g.,  $AeB \leftrightarrow AaB$ ) as there is no guaranteed necessity in them. On the other hand, we find Alexander's account where assertoric propositions must be read in accordance with one of the last four types of necessities mentioned. Let us call Theophrastus' manner of looking at assertoric propositions AT and Alexander's manner AA.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Nağāt*, 65–66.

<sup>47</sup> *Nağāt*, 66.

<sup>48</sup> *Nağāt*, 60–62.

<sup>49</sup> Avicenna's presentation of the views of the Alexander and Themistius is found in the *Nağāt*, 60–1.

Important rules of assertoric conversions are as follows.<sup>50</sup> AeB  $\leftrightarrow$  BeA<sup>51</sup> is allowed only for that kind of assertoric proposition in which there is no specific and different time designated for the individual subjects for the proposition to be necessary.<sup>52</sup> The conversion is true when there is no reference to time, for example, (horse e man). The terms are mutually exclusive *per se*. An example of an assertoric e conversion which fails due to temporal reference is: “No animal moves by will” (i.e., at its time of rest). This proposition does not imply that nothing which moves by will is an animal.<sup>53</sup> We should bear in mind that here the converse is a proposition relating the substratum of the accidental subject term to a necessary predicate, whereas in the original statement we have a necessary subject term related to an accidental predicate. One wonders if this is a fair standard of conversion to begin with. Either one must allow some reference to time for the original statement to be true. In this case, the converse should also have a temporal reference (otherwise it fails only by homonymy). Or one must read the predicate in the original proposition as a rigid designator (as one does automatically for the converse when that predicate becomes the subject). In the latter case, both propositions would be false. For assertoric propositions, Avicenna admits the following conversions:

a  $\rightarrow$  i but also a  $\rightarrow$  Ni example: (writer a man)  $\rightarrow$  N(man i  
writer)<sup>54</sup>  
i  $\leftrightarrow$  i but also Ni

<sup>50</sup> *Nağāt*, 63–65.

<sup>51</sup> *Šifāʿ*, 75–77.

<sup>52</sup> Aristotle, *De Int.* 7, 17b23–25.

<sup>53</sup> However, with reference to the same time, both propositions would be true and the conversion would go through. However, Avicenna points out (as Aristotle says about contingencies which incline both ways) that such propositions are not used in demonstrative sciences.

<sup>54</sup> Avicenna proves the assertoric to necessary conversion by *ekthesis*. The common (*māshūr*) proof by *ad impossibile* is problematic, he explains, because it involves the conversion of e propositions which are themselves not always convertible (see above). *Nağāt*, 64; *Šifāʿ*, 88; and Goichon, 166: “Car souvent le prédicat n’est pas nécessaire pour le sujet, tandis que le sujet est nécessaire pour le prédicat.” Avicenna seems to have a happy balance of essentialist and non-essentialist tendencies. Conversions of assertoric to necessary types require theorizing about essences and *per se* relation of terms. Such conversions would not always be true for Avicenna (if, for example, the terms are “white” and “book”).

This brief exposition of possible, necessary, and assertoric propositions has prepared the way for a presentation of Avicenna's solutions to the two problems I outline above.<sup>55</sup>

IV. *Avicenna's Solutions*<sup>56</sup>

In the case of the two *Barbaras*, Avicenna's defense of Aristotle seems to lie in his peculiar manner of reading the major premise.

N(AaB) = Everything described by B, or is the subject of B or is B at some time, necessarily or not necessarily, always or not always, this thing is A at all times or at no time (depending on a or e).<sup>57</sup>

This definition can be written in symbolic logic as:

$$(x) [B(x) \rightarrow N(A)(x)]$$

Such a construal of the necessary major premise certainly does allow Aristotle's conclusions to follow through. For if the major premise says that whatever is B (in any way) is necessarily A, then the minor premise can have any modality attached to it and still yield a necessary conclusion (provided the minor premise obtains). However, in the case where the minor premise is necessary, this definition is of no help in yielding a necessary conclusion. It is read as A is predicated of whatever B is in fact predicated and B is predicated necessarily of C, then A is still predicated *simpliciter* of C. In fact, the term B is not even important. It could be an accidental or essential predicate for C. What is important for the conclusion to be necessary is that B should have a necessary relation with A and must be

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<sup>55</sup> Avicenna's account of conversions is very meticulous. He takes into consideration several different ways of looking at a proposition and the proof methods for conversion before settling on its validity. In many cases, there are multilateral judgments on a proposition's convertibility. I am currently undertaking a full study of these conversion rules as found in the *Nağāt* and *Šifā'*. What I offer here is more or less a gloss to give a sense of Avicenna's position and to prepare the reader for the next section.

<sup>56</sup> What follows is based on Avicenna's discussion of syllogisms (assertoric and mixed) in *Nağāt*, 33–44. The solutions to the two problems, in particular, are found on 37 and 40.

<sup>57</sup> Also *Šifā'*, 31.

a rigid designator for C. It may be an essential or accidental rigid designator—the result will be the same. In these cases, it is the *suppositum* of the subject term, B, not the term itself that counts. So, it seems that the medieval logicians of Abelardian stock may have been directly or indirectly influenced by Avicenna in offering a *de re* reading of the premise in order to let Aristotle's conclusion go through. However, the problem concerning the conversion of such propositions still persists. This is not a real problem for Avicenna, however, who openly subscribes to multiple readings of a necessary proposition. Depending on how a proposition is understood, different conclusions and conversions will follow. The *de re/de dicto* distinction seems to be present in Avicenna, if not in these precise terms (necessity 1 and 3, for example).

But Avicenna does have qualms with a too partial reading of Aristotle. So, he goes on to say that a necessary conclusion does come about when the minor premise is necessary, provided we read the major assertoric premise as AA. An example of this would be the following syllogism where the major premise is read as the third kind of necessity out of the six Avicenna enumerates:

Everything white (necessarily) has the quality of splitting the air  
for vision to occur  
All swans are necessarily white  
All swans necessarily have the quality of splitting the air for  
vision to occur

In this case, the major premise is assertoric but stands as a general necessary case with open variables. The conclusion is necessary and provides a particular instance of the general rule established by the major premise. The conclusion is, therefore, necessary. The lesson Avicenna teaches us is that it is the manner of construing a premise that yields the kinds of conclusions one seeks.<sup>58</sup> As there are different manners of construing a premise, the same syllogism will sometimes yield one conclusion, sometimes another.

He teaches this same lesson when dealing with the second problem. The proof for validating the conclusion rests on *ad impossibile*

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<sup>58</sup> Using such construals, it seems possible to derive necessary conclusions even from two assertoric premises; *Nağāt*, 30.

and a false but not impossible supposition (much like Aristotle). We need to establish the truth of the following syllogism:

$(AaB) CA(BaJ) \rightarrow CA(AaJ)$ <sup>59</sup>  
*ad impossibile*  $\rightarrow$  not- $CA(AaJ) \rightarrow N(AiJ)$  or  $I(AiJ) \rightarrow N(AoJ)$

False but not impossible supposition:

$CA(BaJ) \rightarrow (BaJ)$  (for if it is possible that  
 $(BaJ)$ , then  $(BaJ)$  may  
obtain at some time  
without it leading to an  
absurdity).

So if,  $N(AoJ)$

$(BaJ)$

$N(AoB)$  (this syllogism was proved earlier)

But,  $(AaB)$  was a given premise which contradicts  $N(AoB)$  as  
 $(AaB)$  may or may not be necessary (Theophrastian  
reading).

So, not- $N(AoJ)$

If  $N(AiJ)$

$(BaJ)$

Then,  $N(AiB)$

But,  $(AaB)$  was a given premise which need not be necessary  
(Theophrastian reading).

So, not- $N(AiJ)$

So, if not- $N(AoJ)$  and not- $N(AiJ)$

Then,  $CA(AaJ)$

But if  $AaB$  is taken as  $AA$ , then no contingency is proved.

Throughout this proof, Avicenna insists on pointing out that this conclusion would follow only if we read the assertoric premise as  $AT$ . For it is as  $AT$  that a proposition need not be necessary but may be so. However, if we read the assertoric as  $AA$ , then the conclusion would be  $AA$ . For we would read this major premise just as we read it in the case of the Aristotelian *Barbaras*.  $AT$  premises are  $PA$  premises in disguise;  $AA$  premises are  $N$  premises, i.e., the last

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<sup>59</sup> Again, he first grants that using the same *de re/de dicto* reading as in the *Barbaras*, the conclusion is  $CA$  if the major is  $CA$ . He then proceeds to gloss the syllogism in the manner indicated here as another interpretation.

four N premises out of the six. Again, Avicenna reminds us to be wary of our particular construal of the premises. Read in one way, Aristotle's conclusions are valid and read in another, they are not.

### *Concluding Remarks*

This brief excursion into Avicenna's logic indicates that modalities can be synonymous and homonymous. That is to say, a certain modal operator under one construal is synonymous with another (as in the case of PA and AT) and under another, the same modal may refer to two different concepts (as in PA and CA). Aristotle's inconsistencies in the *Prior Analytics* may be explained in terms of his oversight regarding these matters. Avicenna, sensing this to be the possible source of the confusion, both defends Aristotle (when he specifies a valid construal of a modal for the First Teacher's conclusion to go through) and diverges from him (when he construes a modal in a way his master did not).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Avicenna's inspiration seems to come partly from Theophrastus, Alexander, and Themistius. In order for one to understand the historical development of modal logic to the point when it reaches Avicenna and to appreciate Avicenna's own contributions and originality, one must research the ideas of these philosophers on the subject. This was unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SOME TEXTS OF ARISTOTLE'S *METAPHYSICS* IN THE *ILĀHĪYĀT* OF AVICENNA'S *KITĀB AŠ-ŠIFĀ'*

Amos Bertolacci

The present contribution deals with the Aristotelian background of the *Ilāhīyāt* ("Science of Divine Things") of Avicenna's *Kitāb aš-Šifā'* ("Book of the Cure;" hereafter *Ilāhīyāt*).<sup>1</sup> The *Šifā'* in general, according to what Avicenna himself says in its prologue, is a work stemming from the Peripatetic tradition;<sup>2</sup> the *Ilāhīyāt* in particular is

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhīyāt* (1), ed. G. Anawatī and S. Zā'id (Cairo: Wizārat at-Taqāfa wa-l-Iršād al-Qāwmī, 1960); Ibn Sīnā, *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhīyāt* (2) ed. M.Y. Mūsā, S. Dunyā and S. Zā'id (Cairo: Wizārat at-Taqāfa wa-l-Iršād al-Qāwmī, 1960). I have checked the text of the *Ilāhīyāt* printed in the Cairo edition (= c) against MS Oxford, Pococke 110 (= P110), MS Oxford, Pococke 125 (= P125) and the Tehran lithograph (= t). P110 and P125 are not taken into account in c, whereas t is incompletely reported in the apparatus (I wish to thank J.L. Janssens for having kindly put at my disposal a photostatic reproduction of t). An important witness of the Arabic text is the Latin Medieval translation (= l), recently edited in the Avicenna Latinus series (*Avicenna Latinus, Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, I-IV*, ed. S. van Riet [Louvain: E. Peters, 1977]; *Avicenna Latinus, Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, V-X*, ed. S. van Riet [Louvain: E. Peters, 1980]; *Avicenna Latinus, Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, I-X, Lexiques*, cur. S. Van Riet [Louvain: E. Peters, 1983]). Useful in this respect is also M. Horten's German translation (= h), in so far as it is based on a manuscript tradition that is different from that on which c relies; see his *Die Metaphysik Avicennas enthaltend die Metaphysik, Theologie, Kosmologie und Ethik* (repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1960). An integral French translation of c is available in *Avicenne, La Métaphysique du Šifā', Livres I à V*, Études musulmanes, XXI, tr. G.C. Anawati (Paris: J. Vrin, 1978); *Avicenne, La Métaphysique du Šifā', Livres de VI à X*, Études musulmanes, XXVII, tr. G.C. Anawati (Paris: J. Vrin, 1985). The first volume of Anawati's translation contains a very provisional list of corrections of c. The *Kitāb aš-Šifā'* is the most important and influential philosophical summa of Avicenna. The *Ilāhīyāt* is the fourth section of this work, and deals with the metaphysical science.

<sup>2</sup> Avicenna states that it is "more accommodating to my Peripatetic colleagues" than his *al-Ḥikma al-Mašriqiyya* ("Eastern Philosophy") or *al-Mašriqiyyūn* ("The Easterners"); see Ibn Sīnā, *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Manṭiq: al-Madḥal*, ed. M. al-Ḥudayrī, F. al-Ahwānī and G.C. Anawati (Cairo: Wizārat at-Taqāfa wa-l-Iršād al-Qāwmī, 1952; hereafter *Madḥal*), 9.17–10.7; English translation in Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition, Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Texts and Studies, IV (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 51 (see also the remarks at 110–112).

portrayed in the same passage as containing “the science related to [Aristotle’s] *Metaphysics*.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, although it is not a literal commentary on the *Metaphysics*, but rather a reworking of it, the *Ilāhīyāt* is deeply dependent on the *Metaphysics*.<sup>4</sup>

In the present contribution two examples of the reception of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in the *Ilāhīyāt* are provided. I take into account two texts in which Avicenna anonymously quotes certain passages of the *Metaphysics*. I call them Text 1 and Text 2 respectively. They occur in chapter 4 of the sixth treatise (VI, 4) and chapter one of the seventh treatise (VII, 1). I provisionally qualify their quotation style as “paraphrase.” They can be regarded as particularly significant for the following reasons.

While in other parts of the *Ilāhīyāt* Avicenna also paraphrases the *Metaphysics*, briefly or at length, without mentioning Aristotle, Texts

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<sup>3</sup> *al-‘ilm al-mansūb ilā mā ba‘da ṭ-ṭabī‘a* (*Madhāl*, 11.11). I discuss the exact meaning of this expression in my “The Structure of Metaphysical Science in the *Ilāhīyāt* (Divine Science) of Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-Šifā’* (Book of the Cure),” *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 13 (2002), forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> On the reception of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in the *Ilāhīyāt*, see my “Metafisica A, 5, 986a22–26 nell’*Ilāhīyāt* del *Kitāb al-Šifā’* di Ibn Sīnā,” *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale*, 10 (1999), 205–231; id., “From al-Kindī to al-Fārābī: Avicenna’s Progressive Knowledge of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* according to his Autobiography,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 11.2 (2001), 257–295. Being deeply, albeit freely, linked to the *Metaphysics*, the *Ilāhīyāt* had a tremendous impact on the reception of the *Metaphysics* in the subsequent history of medieval philosophy. This is true in both the Islamic world and the Latin Middle Ages. In the former, the *Ilāhīyāt* superseded to a large extent the *Metaphysics* itself. In the latter, the Latin translation of the *Ilāhīyāt*, accomplished in the twelfth century, was acknowledged as one of the most authoritative interpretations of the *Metaphysics*. For the influence of the *Ilāhīyāt* on Albert the Great, see my “Subtilius speculando, Le citazioni della Philosophia Prima di Avicenna nel Commento alla *Metafisica* di Alberto Magno,” *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 9 (1998), 261–339; id., “Albert the Great, *Metaph.* IV, 1, 5: From the *Refutatio* to the *Excusatio* of Avicenna’s Theory of Unity,” in *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter*, ed. J.A. Aertsen and A. Speer, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, 26 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 881–887; id., “Le citazioni implicite testuali della Philosophia prima di Avicenna nel Commento alla *Metafisica* di Alberto Magno: analisi tipologica,” *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 12 (2001), 179–274; id., “La divisione della filosofia nel primo capitolo del Commento di Alberto Magno alla *Fisica*: le fonti avicenniane,” in *La Divisione della Filosofia e le sue Ragioni, Lettura di testi medievali (VI–XIII secolo)*, *Atti del Settimo Convegno della Società Italiana per lo Studio del Pensiero Medievale* (S.I.S.P.M.), Assisi, 14–15 novembre 1997, ed. G. D’Onofrio, (Cava de’ Tirreni [Salerno]: Avagliano Editore, 2001), 137–155; id., “Albert The Great and the Preface of Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-Šifā’*,” in *Avicenna and his Heritage*, ed. J. Janssens and D. De Smet, forthcoming 2002; id., “The Reception of Avicenna’s ‘Philosophia Prima’ in Albert the Great’s Commentary on the *Metaphysics*: The Case of the Doctrine of Unity,” in *Albertus Magnus 1200–2000*, ed. W. Senner (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 67–78.

1 and 2 have three noteworthy features. First, in them, Avicenna employs an unusual Arabic term, *huwīya*, to signify “existent.” In the rest of the *Ilāhīyāt*, Avicenna uses *mawǧūd*, rather than *huwīya*, to express this very concept. *Huwīya* is preferred over *mawǧūd* in our texts because of the Arabic translation of the *Metaphysics* that Avicenna employed in these particular cases. Second, the comparison with Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* not only helps us to understand Avicenna’s terminology in these texts, but also allows us to decide among some variants in the manuscripts of the *Ilāhīyāt*.<sup>5</sup> Third, Avicenna in these texts engages in a sophisticated type of exegesis: in paraphrasing the *Metaphysics*, he emphasizes the main points of Aristotle’s argument, quotes additional passages from the *Metaphysics* itself, and occasionally refers to doctrines of other Aristotelian works.

I divide what follows into three parts. In the first part, as a preliminary step, I briefly discuss *huwīya* as a philosophical term, and its use in what can be regarded as the most important Arabic version of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and in Avicenna’s *Ilāhīyāt*. The following two parts are devoted to the analysis of Text 1 and Text 2 respectively. The main purpose of this analysis is to identify the sources in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* of the texts I take into account. The comparison with the Aristotelian sources will help to disclose the particular meaning that *huwīya* assumes in Text 1 and Text 2, to emend in some passages the edited text of the *Ilāhīyāt*, and to show Avicenna’s quotation technique. I will substantially neglect a further possible approach, the theoretical one, and I will address the issue of the doctrinal continuity and development of ontology from Aristotle to Avicenna only incidentally.

*Huwīya as a philosophical term and its use in the Arabic translations  
of Aristotle’s Metaphysics and in Avicenna’s Ilāhīyāt*

In philosophical Arabic *huwīya* bears three main meanings. First, in so far as it corresponds to the Syriac *hāwyā*, it means, as the latter does, the present participle “being” in the sense of “something that

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<sup>5</sup> A fully critical edition of the *Ilāhīyāt* is still a desideratum. The current edition does not provide an *apparatus fontium*. I hope to show here that the investigation of the sources of the *Ilāhīyāt*, especially Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, is an inescapable task for future editors of this work.

is” or “exists.” Second, in so far as it is an abstract noun, *huwīya* conveys the meaning of the infinitive “to be” in the sense of “essence.” Third, in so far as it was regarded as deriving from the particle *huwa* (the personal pronoun “he”), it occasionally means “identity,” in the sense of the identity of something with something else, or “sameness.”<sup>6</sup> For the sake of clarity, I will label these three meanings “existent,” “essence” and “sameness” respectively.

I wish to stress two points in this respect. First, *huwīya* is used as a translation of the Greek ὄν (“being” in the sense of “existent”) in the Arabic translation of the *Metaphysics* that Avicenna used. Second, Avicenna in the *Ilāhīyāt* always employs *huwīya* in the meaning of “existent” and “essence,” never in the meaning of “sameness.”

As to the first point, *huwīya* is the rendering of ὄν in the earliest and most extensive Arabic translation of the *Metaphysics*. This is the translation ascribed to Uṣṭāṭ.<sup>7</sup> Uṣṭāṭ invariably translates ὄν in the *Metaphysics* as *huwīya*.<sup>8</sup> Among the extant Arabic translations of

<sup>6</sup> G. Endress, “Die wissenschaftliche Literatur: Die Entwicklung der Fachsprache,” in *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie*, Band III: Supplement, ed. W. Fischer (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1993), 21–22; id. “Du grec au latin à travers l’arabe: la langue, créatrice d’idées dans la terminologie philosophique,” in *Aux origines du lexique philosophique européen, L’influence de la latinitas*, ed. J. Hamesse (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d’Études Médiévales, 1997), 143, 161; H. Hugonnard-Roche, “La tradition syro-arabe et la formation du vocabulaire philosophique latin,” in *ibid.*, 66–67.

<sup>7</sup> The extant parts of this translation are preserved in Averroes’ *Tafsīr* (“Commentary”) of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*; see *Averroès, Tafsīr ma bād at-Tabī‘at*, ed. M. Bouyges, 3 vols. (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1938–1948). Uṣṭāṭ belonged to the circle of translators who gathered around al-Kindī. *Huwīya* as a rendering of ὄν is common not only in Uṣṭāṭ’s translation of the *Metaphysics*, but also in other translations/adaptations of Greek philosophical works which were produced by al-Kindī’s circle, or had some connection with it (see G. Endress, “The Circle of al-Kindī, Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy,” in *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism*, ed. G. Endress and R. Kruk [Leiden: CNWS, 1997], 60–61). This is especially true of the Neoplatonic metaphysical works translated or paraphrased into Arabic. Thus, we find *huwīya* as respondent of ὄν in the *Theologia Aristotelis*, in the Arabic version of Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*, and in the *Liber de Causis* (see C. D’Ancona, “L’influence du vocabulaire arabe: causa prima est esse tantum,” in *L’élaboration du vocabulaire philosophique au Moyen Âge, Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve et Leuven 12–14 septembre 1998 organisé par la Société internationale pour l’étude de la Philosophie Médiévale*, ed. J. Hamesse and C. Steel [Turnhout: Brepols, 2000], 55–57 and nn. 7, 9–11). In a passage of the *Theologia Aristotelis*, *huwīya* is apparently used to translate the Greek τὸ ὅτις (“sameness”) as well (D’Ancona, “L’influence,” 56, n. 10).

<sup>8</sup> See the indexes in *Averroès, Tafsīr*, III:(97)–(98), (231)–(232), (270), and S.M. Afnan, *Philosophical Terminology in Arabic and Persian* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), 121–124.

the *Metaphysics*, Uṣṭāt's appears to be the only one in which *huwīya* is employed as a rendering of ὄν. Avicenna apparently used Uṣṭāt's translation in his literal commentary on book Λ of the *Metaphysics* in his *Kitāb al-Inṣāf* ("Book of the Fair Judgment") edited by 'A.R. Badawī in 1947,<sup>9</sup> and in his "Letter to the Vizier Abū Sa'd" recently edited by Y. Michot.<sup>10</sup> Very likely he had in mind, if not at hand, Uṣṭāt's translation also when he wrote the *Ilāhīyāt*.

The second point I wish to stress is the following. *Huwīya* is quite commonly used by Arab philosophers, both before and after Avicenna.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Arabic text in *Aristū 'inda l-'arab*, ed. 'A.R. Badawī (Cairo: Maktabat an-Nahḍa al-Miṣrīya, 1947), 22–33. French translation and commentary in M. Sebtī, "*Sharḥ Kitāb Ḥarf al-lām li al-shaykh ar-Ra'īs Ibn Sīna*, Traduction, annotation et présentation," unpublished thesis, Paris, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 1992. (I wish to thank the author for having kindly put at my disposal a copy of her work.) Sebtī (1, nn. 2, 5; 5, n. 22) points out that the translation of the *Metaphysics* used by Avicenna in this work is that by Uṣṭāt.

<sup>10</sup> Y. Michot, *Ibn Sīnā, Lettre au vizir Abū Sa'd, Editio princeps d'après le manuscrit de Bursa, traduction de l'arabe, introduction, notes et lexique*, Sagesses musulmanes, 4 (Beirut: Les Éditions Al-Bouraq, 2000). Michot shows that four literal quotations of the *Metaphysics* according to Uṣṭāt's translation occur in this text: 45.12–14 (corresponding to Δ 26, 1023b32–34); 46.3–9 (corresponding to Δ 5, 1015b36–1016a1; 1016a1–4); 47.8–12 (corresponding to Z 11, 1037a22–24); 49.1–5 (corresponding to Z 10, 1035b6–8; Z 10, 1035b10). All of this does not entail, however, that Uṣṭāt's was the only translation of the *Metaphysics* that Avicenna used; I point out Avicenna's use of a different translation in my communication "La ricezione del libro G della *Metafisica* nell'*Ilāhīyāt del Kitāb as-Sīfā*' di Avicenna," read at the international conference "Aristotele e i suoi esegeti neoplatonici, Logica e ontologia nelle interpretazioni greche e arabe," C.N.R., Centro di Studio del Pensiero Antico/European Science Foundation, Network Late Antiquity and Arabic Thought, Rome 19–20 October, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Before Avicenna, we find several occurrences of this term in the most famous and important metaphysical writing by al-Kindī, the *Falsafa al-ūlā* ("First Philosophy"), ed. M.'A. Abū Rīda in *Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafīya* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1950), 1:97–162, and, more recently, in *Œuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'Al-Kindī, II: Métaphysique et Cosmologie*, ed. R. Rashed and J. Jolivet (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), 1–117, with facing French translation. An English translation of Abū Rīda's edition, including a comprehensive introduction and a detailed commentary, is available in A.L. Ivry's *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics* (Albany: SUNY, 1974). The occurrences of *huwīya* in Rashed/Jolivet's edition are at 27.9 ("existence" Rashed/Jolivet; "being" Ivry), 35.14 ("existence" Rashed/Jolivet; "being" Ivry), 97.1, 3, 7, 10, 16 ("existence" Rashed/Jolivet; "being" Ivry). To these occurrences reported in the glossary of the edition (220), the following have to be added: 95.1, 95.2 ("sujet" Rashed/Jolivet; "existence" Ivry). In three of these occurrences (35.14; 95.1; 95.2) *huwīya* possibly has the meaning "existent." See *al-Kindī, Risāla fī mā'iyat mā lā yunkin an yakūn li nihāya* <lahū> *wa-mā llādī yuqāl <fihī> lā nihāya lahū* ("Treatise on the Quiddity of What Cannot be Infinite and What is said to be Infinite"), in *Œuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'Al-Kindī, II:153.22*. Al-Fārābī devotes an entire section of *Kitāb al-Hurūf* ("Book of Particles") to describing *huwīya* and the other terms employed in

It is also widespread in Avicenna's philosophical works.<sup>12</sup> In the text of the *Ilāhīyāt* printed in Cairo in 1960 this term appears twenty-four times (a complete list of occurrences of *huwīya* in the Cairo edi-

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Arabic to translate the Greek terminology for "being"; see *al-Fārābī, Book of Letters (Kūtab al-Ḥurūf)*, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, ed. M. Mahdi (Beirut: Dar al-Mašriq, 1969), §§ 83–86. *Huwīya* occurs also, in the meaning of "sameness," in *al-Fārābī's Fī agrād al-ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-Kūtab al-mawsūm bi-l-ḥurūf*, in *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, ed. F. Dieterici, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1890), 36.16 (German translation in *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, tr. Dieterici [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1892], 54–60; French translation, with textual remarks, in Th.-A. Druart, "Le traité d'al-Fārābī sur les buts de la Métaphysique d'Aristote," *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 24 (1982), 43: "quiddité"; Spanish translation in R.R. Guerrero, "Al-Fārābī y la 'Metafisica' de Aristóteles," *La Ciudad de Dios* 196 (1983), 211–240; partial English translation in Gutas, *Avicenna*, 242: "identity"). After Avicenna, al-Gazālī employs *huwīya* in the *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* (ed. M. Bouyges [Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1927], 321.5; see *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, tr. M.E. Marmura [Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997], 197: "haecceity"). In F. Jabre, *Essai sur le lexique de Ghazālī, Contribution à l'étude de la terminologie de Ghazālī dans ses principaux ouvrages à l'exception du Tahāfut* (Beirut: Publications de l'Université Libanaise, 1970), no entry is devoted to *huwīya* or *huwahuwīya*. For the use of *huwīya* in Averroes, see below n. 80.

<sup>12</sup> A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā (Avicenne)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1938), 411–413 (see also ead., "Huwīya," *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 3:644–645), records eleven occurrences of *huwīya* (three of which are taken from the *Ilāhīyāt*), and translates this term as "ipséité," "substance individuelle" and "essence." In the *Vocabulaires comparés d'Aristote et d'Ibn Sīnā* (Paris: Desclée du Brouwer, 1939), 36a, Goichon regards *huwīya* in the meaning of "substance individuelle" as equivalent to  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\tau\eta\ \omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ , and in the meaning of "ipséité" as equivalent to  $\acute{o}\pi\epsilon\rho\ \tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\ \tau\iota$ . Among the occurrences which Goichon does not take into account, *huwīya* means "existent" in the opening chapter (I, 2) of the *Madḥal* ("Commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge*") belonging to the *Šifā'*; see *Madḥal*, 13.5, 13.7 (Latin translation in *Avicennae peripatetici philosophi ac medicorum facile primi opera in lucem redacta . . .* [Venetiis, 1508; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1961], f. 2ra: "identitas"; English translation in M.E. Marmura, "Avicenna on the Division of the Sciences in the *Isagoge* of his *Šifā'*," *Journal of the History of Arabic Sciences* 92 (1980), 244–245: "individual identity"). Outside the *Šifā'*, *huwīya* means "existent" in the *Risāla fī aqsām al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqlīya* ("Treatise on the divisions of the intellectual sciences"), where it occurs twice; see Ibn Sīnā, *Risāla fī aqsām al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqlīya*, in *Tisʿ rasāʾil fī l-ḥikma wa-ṭ-ṭabīʿīyāt*, ed. Ḥ. ʿAṣī (Damascus: Dār Qābis, 1986), 85.1, 89.19; French translation in G.C. Anawati, "Les divisions des sciences intellectuelles d'Avicenne," *MIDEO* 13 (1977), 326, 330: "identité"; French translation in J. Michot, "Les sciences physiques et métaphysiques selon la *Risālah fī aqsām al-ʿulūm* d'Avicenne, Essai de traduction critique," *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 22 (1980), 68: "ipséité." In the commentary on book  $\Lambda$  of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, belonging to the *Kūtab al-Inṣāf* ("Book of the Fair Judgment"), Avicenna uses *huwīyāt* in the sense of "existents"; see Badawi, *Aristū*, 22.15 (Sebtī, "*Sharḥ*," 2, translates this term as "êtres"). Other occurrences of *huwīya* are, for example (I owe some of these references to D.C. Reisman): *at-Taʿlīqāt* ("The Notes"), ed. Badawī (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1973), 145.2, 147.23, 147.25, 148.5–6; *al-Mubāḥaṭāt* ("The Discussions"), ed. M. Bīdārfar (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Bīdār, 1992), 59.7 (see also J.R. Michot, "La réponse d'Avicenne à Bahmanyār et al-

tion is provided in the Appendix below).<sup>13</sup> In this work, very often *huwīya* means “essence.” In some fewer cases, however, it means “existent.” This happens mainly, if not exclusively, in the texts I analyze below.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, nowhere in the *Ilāhīyāt* does *huwīya* mean “sameness,” though it is sometimes translated in this way. The term Avicenna uses in this work to signify “sameness” is distinct from *huwīya*, albeit similar to it, namely *huwahuwīya*. *Huwahuwīya* derives from *huwahuwa*, meaning “same,” “identical.” This being the case, as far as Avicenna’s *Ilāhīyāt* is concerned, the semantic areas of *huwīya* (“essence” or “existent”) and *huwahuwīya* (“sameness”) have to be kept distinct.

We can now turn to the analysis of Texts 1–2. The tables provided in the following sections report, in three parallel columns (from left to right): Avicenna’s text, the corresponding passages in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and their translation in Uṣṭāt’s Arabic version of the *Metaphysics*. The emendations of the Cairo edition that are discussed are parenthetically glossed.<sup>15</sup>

*Text 1: Ilāhīyāt VI 4, 281.1–4*

Text 1 belongs to the fourth chapter of the sixth treatise of the *Ilāhīyāt*. The sixth treatise of the *Ilāhīyāt* deals with the doctrine of causality. Avicenna takes into account, one after the other, the four

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Kirmānī, *Présentation, traduction critique et lexicque arabe-français de la Mubāhatha III*, *Le Muséon* 110 (1997), 170: “ipséité”; *Risāla fī l-ʿAhd* (“Treatise on the Pact”), ed. Badawī in *Aristū*, 247.4 (see also Michot’s translation in *Ibn Sīnā, Lettre au vizir*, 118: “ipséité”); *ar-Risāla al-Adḥawīya fī l-maʿād* (“Treatise on the Return”), ed. F. Lucchetta (Padova: Antenore, 1969), 13.10–11 (at 12, Lucchetta translates *huwīya* as “ipseità”).

<sup>13</sup> As we will see, in two such cases *huwahuwīya* (“sameness”) has to be read instead of *huwīya*. The lexicon of the critical edition of the Latin translation (*Avicenna Latinus, Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, I–X*, 137, reports only twenty occurrences. J. Jolivet, “Le vocabulaire de l’être et de la création dans la *Philosophia prima* de l’Avicenna Latinus,” in *L’élaboration*, 42, provides an incomplete summary of the data collected in the lexicon of the critical edition.

<sup>14</sup> *Huwīya* could mean “existent” in the *Ilāhīyāt*, 313.7, as well (see Appendix below). However, the lack of a close correspondence with the text of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* leaves obscure the precise meaning of *huwīya* in this case; furthermore, the close connection between *huwīya* and *waḥda* (“unity”)—not with *wāḥid* (“one”) as in Text 1 and Text 2—allows the translation of *huwīya* in this passage as “entity” rather than “existent.”

<sup>15</sup> For other corrections, see below nn. 46, 65, 68, 76.

Aristotelian causes. After the treatment of the efficient cause in chapters 1–3, in chapter 4 Avicenna focuses on the material, formal and final causes. Within the discussion of the material cause we find a digression on “element” (*uṣṭuquṣṣ*), intended as the material constituent of something. This digression can be divided in two parts. Text 1 is its second part.

“Element” (στοιχεῖον) is one of the items Aristotle discusses in the fifth book (Δ) of the *Metaphysics*. *Metaphysics* Δ is a sort of glossary of fundamental philosophical terms. In Δ 3 Aristotle expounds the different meanings of “element.” The first part of Avicenna’s digression on “element” is a paraphrase of *Metaphysics* Δ 3. In this part Avicenna summarizes lines 1014a26–b9 of this chapter. Then, in the second part of the digression Avicenna starts paraphrasing another passage of the *Metaphysics*, namely chapter 3 of book B. Book B, the third book of the *Metaphysics*, is a collection of theoretical problems whose solution Aristotle provides in the rest of the work. In B 3 Aristotle faces the difficulty of whether the universal genera, or the particular constituents, have to be considered elements and principles of things. Thus, the theme of “element” is common to both Δ 3 and B 3. This is why Avicenna links together these two Aristotelian passages in Text 1.

Text 1 consists of eight sections. Let us follow step by step Avicenna’s procedure.

<i>Ilāhīyāt</i> VI 4, 281.1–4	Aristotle’s <i>Metaphysics</i>	Uṣṭāṭ’s Arabic translation of the <i>Metaphysics</i>
First part of the digression on “element” (280.14–17)	Δ 3, 1014a26–b9	497.9–498.11
Second part of the digression on “element” (281.1–4):		
[1] (281.1–2) those who think things are generated only from genera and differentiae regard them [i.e., genera and differentiae] as first elements, <sup>16</sup>	(Δ 3, 1014b9–12) Now, since the so-called genera are universal and indivisible (for there is no formula of them), <u>some say the genera are elements</u> , and more so	(498.11–13) Since the things called genera are universals and do not get divided—because they do not have any formula—some say the genera are elements and

<sup>16</sup> *wa-man ra’á anna l-aṣṣyā’a innamā tatakawwanu [takūnu P125] mina l-aḡnāsi wa-l-fuṣūli ḡ’alahā l-uṣṭuquṣṣāti l-ūlá. . . .*

*(cont.)*

Ilāhīyāt VI 4, 281.1–4

Aristotle's *Metaphysics*Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation  
of the *Metaphysics*than *the differentia*, because the genus is more universal.<sup>17</sup>more so, because the genus is more universal.<sup>18</sup>(B3, 998a20–23) Apart from the difficulty of stating the case truly with regard to these matters, it is hard to say, with regard to the first principles, whether it is the genera that should be taken as elements and principles, or rather the primary constituents of a thing.<sup>19</sup>(215.13–14) These things are very obscure, and in attaining their truth a very big difficulty occurs. (217.17–218.1) Also in knowing the principles a difficulty occurs,<sup>20</sup> since we try to know whether it is necessary to regard the genera, or the things from which all things come, as elements and principles.<sup>21</sup>[2] (281.2) especially “one” and “existent” (*huwīya*).<sup>22</sup>(B3, 998b9–11) And some also of those who say unity and being (τὸ ὄν), or the great and the small, are elements of things (ὄντα), seem to treat them as genera.<sup>23</sup>(219.4–6) Some of those who maintain that “one” and “existent” (*huwīya*), and the great and the small, are elements of existents (*huwīyāt*) use them as, and make them be, genera.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ καλούμενα γένη καθόλου καὶ ἀδιαίρετα (οὐ γὰρ ἔστι λόγος αὐτῶν), στοιχεῖα τὰ γένη λέγουσί τινες, καὶ μᾶλλον ἢ τὴν διαφορὰν ὅτι καθόλου μᾶλλον τὸ γένος. Greek text as in *Aristotle's Metaphysics, A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924); English translation in *The Complete Works of Aristotle, The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. J. Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>18</sup> *wa-li-anna llatī tusammā aḡnāsan hiya kullīyātun wa-lā tanqasimu wa-dālika li-anna laysa lahā kalimatun qāla ba'du n-nāsi inna l-aḡnāsa ustūquṣṣātun wa-innāhā aktaru fī l-ustūquṣṣīyati li-anna l-ḡīnsa aktaru kullīyatan.*

<sup>19</sup> Περὶ τε τούτων οὖν ἀπορία πολλὴ πῶς δεῖ θέμενον τυχεῖν τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν πότερον δεῖ τὰ γένη στοιχεῖα καὶ ἀρχὰς ὑπολαμβάνειν ἢ μᾶλλον ἐξ ὧν ἐνυπαρχόντων ἐστὶν ἕκαστον πρῶτων.

<sup>20</sup> *fa-hādhī l-aṣṣā'u ḡāmīdatun ḡiddan wa-fī daraki haqīqatihā ṣu'ūbatun kaṭīratun ḡiddan.*

<sup>21</sup> *wa-fī ma'rīfati l-awā'ili ṣu'ūbatun aydan fa-innā naḡḡḡu an nā'lama hal yanbaḡī an yuzanna anna l-ustūquṣṣāti wa-l-awā'ila hiya l-aḡnāsu am hiya llatī minhā kaynūnātu ḡamā'i l-aṣṣā'i.*

<sup>22</sup> . . . *wa-ḡuṣṣān al-wāḡida wa-l-huwīyata.*

<sup>23</sup> φαίνονται δέ τινες καὶ τῶν λεγόντων στοιχεῖα τῶν ὄντων τὸ ἐν ἢ τὸ ὄν ἢ τὸ μέγα καὶ μικρὸν ὡς γένεσιν αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι.

<sup>24</sup> *wa-ba'du lladīna yaḡ'umūna anna ustūquṣṣāti l-huwīyāti huwa [sic] l-wāḡidu wa-l-huwīyatun wa-l-kabīru wa-ṣ-ṣaḡīru yasta'milūnahā wa-yuṣayyirūnahā ka-l-aḡnāsi.*

(cont.)

*Ilāhīyāt* VI 4, 281.1–4Aristotle's *Metaphysics*Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation  
of the *Metaphysics*

[3] (281.2) Therefore, they assume that they ["one" and "existent"] are the principles that most deserve to be principles.<sup>25</sup>

(B3, 998b19–21) There will, then, be as many principles of things (ὄντα) as there are primary genera, so that both being (τὸ ὄν) and unity will be principles and substances;<sup>26</sup>

(219.14–220.1) The number of principles of existents (*huwīyāt*) corresponds to the number of first genera; "one" and "existent" (*huwīyā*) are principles and substances of existents (*huwīyāt*),<sup>27</sup>

[4] (281.2) since they are the most universal and general principles.<sup>28</sup>

(B3, 998b21) for these are most of all predicated of all things (ὄντα).<sup>29</sup>

since these more than others are said of all existents (*huwīyāt*),<sup>30</sup>

[5] (281.3) If they were impartial in their judgment, they would know that

[6] (281.3) independent subsistence belongs only to individuals,<sup>31</sup>

(Aristotle's *Categories*, 5, 2b5–7) So if the primary substances did not exist it would be impossible for any of the other things to exist.<sup>32</sup>

(Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's Arabic translation, 8.9–10) Necessarily, then, if the primary substances did not exist, there would be no way of existence for any of those other things.<sup>33</sup>

[7] (281.3–4) so that the things that are close to them [i.e., to the individuals] are worthier to be sub-

(*Categories* 5, 2b7–10) Of the secondary substances the species is more a substance than the genus, since it is

(Iṣḥāq's Arabic translation, 8.12–13) The species, among the secondary substances, is worthier than the

<sup>25</sup> *fa-qad ḡa'alūhā awlā l-mabād'i bi-l-mabda'iyyati.*

<sup>26</sup> τοσαῦται οὖν ἔσονται ἀρχαὶ τῶν ὄντων ὅσαπερ τὰ πρῶτα γένη, ὅστ' ἔσται τὸ τε ἐν καὶ τὸ ἐν ἀρχαὶ καὶ οὐσίαι.

<sup>27</sup> *fa-yakūnu 'adadu awā'ilī l-huwīyāti 'alā 'adadi l-aḡnāsi l-uwalī wa-yakūnu l-wāḥidu wa-l-huwīyatu awā'ila wa-ḡawāhira l-huwīyāti.*

<sup>28</sup> *li-annahā ašadduhā* [-hā add. sup. lin. P110; om. t] *kullīyatan wa-ḡmīyatan.*

<sup>29</sup> ταῦτα γὰρ κατὰ πάντων μάλιστα λέγεται τῶν ὄντων. See also B 4, 1001a21–22: ταῦτα γὰρ ἐστὶ καθόλου μάλιστα πάντων = 261.13–14: *li-anna l-wāḥida wa-l-huwīy-ata awḡabu kullīyatan min sā'iri l-aḡyā'i.*

<sup>30</sup> *li-anna hāḡihī aktara ḡalika tuqālu 'alā ḡamī'i l-huwīyāti.*

<sup>31</sup> *wa-law aṣṣafū la-'alimū anna l-ḡiwāma bi-ḡ-dāti innamā huwa li-l-aḡhāsi. . . .*

<sup>32</sup> μὴ οὐσῶν οὖν τῶν πρῶτων οὐσίῶν ἀδύνατον τῶν ἄλλων τι εἶναι.

<sup>33</sup> *fa-yāḡību idān in lam yakūni l-ḡawāhira l-uwalu allā yakūna sabīlum ilā an yūḡada ṣay'an min tilka l-uḡari.* Arabic text of the *Categories* as in *Manṭiq Aristū*, ed. Badawī (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya, 1948), 1:1–55.

(cont.)

*Ilāhīyāt* VI 4, 281.1–4Aristotle's *Metaphysics*Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation  
of the *Metaphysics*stances and to subsist by  
themselves,<sup>34</sup>nearer to the primary sub-  
stance.<sup>35</sup>genus to be described as  
substance, since it is closer  
to the primary substance.<sup>36</sup>[8] (281.4) and [they would  
know] that they [i.e., the  
things that are close to the  
individuals] are worthier of  
unity (*waḥda*) [existence  
(*wuḡūd*) ed.] as well.<sup>37</sup>(B3, 999a4–5) that which  
is predicated directly of the  
individuals will have more  
unity.<sup>38</sup>(227.12–13) therefore the  
last one which is predicated  
is worthier of unity than  
anything else.<sup>39</sup>

The main point of section [1] is that some philosophers may think that genera and differentiae are elements of things. What Avicenna says in section [1] corresponds to Δ 3, 1014b9–12, where Aristotle maintains that some regard genera, and—to a lesser extent—differentiae, as elements. As far as genera are concerned, section [1] corresponds also to the first alternative Aristotle mentions in B 3, 998a20–23, namely the possibility of regarding genera as elements and principles. Thus, section [1] constitutes the transition from the first part of the digression, which is based on Δ 3, to the second part, which relies on B 3. It is noteworthy that one of the greatest Aristotelian scholars of modern times, W.D. Ross, when commenting on the passage of Δ 3 that Avicenna paraphrases in section [1], refers, in the same vein as Avicenna, to B 3.<sup>40</sup>

In section [2] Avicenna presents “one” and *huwīya* as special cases of genera which have actually been regarded as elements. Section [2] corresponds to B 3, 998b9–11. In this passage Aristotle selects unity and being (ὄν), together with the great and the small, as salient

<sup>34</sup> *fa-mā yaṭihā awlā bi-an* [*bi-an* om. P125] *yakūna ḡawāhira wa-qā'imātin bi-anfusihā.*

<sup>35</sup> Τὼν δὲ δευτέρων οὐσιῶν μᾶλλον οὐσία τὸ εἶδος τοῦ γένους· ἕργιον γὰρ τῆς πρώτης οὐσίας ἐστίν.

<sup>36</sup> *wa-n-naṣ'u minā l-ḡawāhiri t-tāniyati awlā bi-an yūṣafa ḡawharan minā l-ḡnsi li-annahū aqrabu minā l-ḡawhari l-awwali.*

<sup>37</sup> . . . *wa-annahā awlā bi-l-waḥdati* [P110 P125 t 1 h : *wuḡūdi* c] *aydan.* According to the apparatus of c, the reading *wuḡūdi* is attested by MSS B, D, Ḡ; the reading *waḥdati*, on the other hand, is attested in the margin of MS B and in MSS Ṣ M.

<sup>38</sup> μᾶλλον ἂν ἐν τῷ ἔσχατον εἶη κατηγορούμενον.

<sup>39</sup> *fa-yakūnu l-wāḥidu l-maḥmūlu l-aḥīru awḡaba waḥdāniyatan min ḡayrihī.*

<sup>40</sup> Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 1:295.

examples of genera regarded as elements. In Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation of this Aristotelian passage, ὄν is rendered as *huwīya*. Avicenna simply adopts the term *huwīya* that he finds in Uṣṭāṭ's translation as a rendering of ὄν ("being" in the sense of "existent"). I tentatively propose, therefore, to translate *huwīya* in section [2] as "existent."<sup>41</sup>

In section [3] Avicenna attributes to the aforementioned philosophers the belief that "one" and "existent" are primary principles. Section [3] corresponds to B 3, 998b19–21, where Aristotle states that being and unity are principles since they are primary genera. The fact that "existent" and "unity" are primary genera entails, in Avicenna's mind, that they are primary principles as well.

In section [4] Avicenna gives the reason why these philosophers have regarded "one" and "existent" as first principles. The reason Avicenna provides in section [4] is very much the same as the explanation Aristotle gives in B 3, 998b21.

Section [5] is an original addition by Avicenna.

In section [6] Avicenna switches from the *Metaphysics* to the fifth chapter of Aristotle's *Categories*. In this respect it is remarkable that A. Madigan also refers to the fifth chapter of the *Categories* in his recent commentary on book B when commenting on the passage of B 3 that Avicenna paraphrases in one of the next sections (section [8]).<sup>42</sup> Avicenna assigns independent subsistence only to individuals. This corresponds to the passage 2b5–7 of the *Categories*, where Aristotle calls individuals "primary substances" and gives them priority in existence over everything else.

In section [7] Avicenna recasts in general terms the principle that Aristotle in *Categories* 2b7–9 applies to the case of genera and species: the closer something is to individuals, the more it is a substance.

In section [8] Avicenna goes back to *Metaphysics* B 3. This section is a paraphrase of B 3, 999a4–5. In these lines Aristotle says that what is predicated directly of individuals has more unity than what is predicated indirectly of them.<sup>43</sup> If in section [8] we adopt the read-

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<sup>41</sup> The neologism "ipseity" seems to me a less viable alternative. Marmura's choice of translating *huwīya* in Avicenna's *Madḥal* of the *Šifā'* as "individual identity" (see above, n. 12) may be misleading, due to the possible confusion between "individual identity" and "sameness."

<sup>42</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics, Book B and Book K 1–2*, translated and commented by A. Madigan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 77.

<sup>43</sup> In other words, "man" is predicated directly of the individual man Socrates,

ing *waḥda* (“unity”) instead of the reading *wuḡūd* (“existence”) chosen by the Cairo editors, we obtain the same thesis as the one Aristotle expounds in the aforementioned passage. There are other good reasons to prefer the variant *waḥda* to the reading *wuḡūd*. *Waḥda* is attested by three of the six manuscripts of the Cairo edition; it is present also in the Tehran lithograph, and presupposed by the Latin and the German translations. The corruption of *waḥda* into *wuḡūd* can be explained as a scribal error, due to the similarity of the duc-tus (*rasm*) of these two terms. Moreover, if Avicenna were speaking of “existence,” he would simply repeat now what he has already established in section [7] with regard to substantiality and subsistence. If, on the other hand, he is speaking of “unity,” he is applying now to unity what he has just shown about substance and subsistence, in other words about “existent.” The reading *waḥda*, therefore, is very much required by the constant parallelism between “existent” and unity in Text 1.

On account of all this evidence, I tentatively propose to read *waḥda* instead of *wuḡūd* in Avicenna’s section [8].

*Text 2: Ilāhīyāt VII 1, 303.2–16*

Text 2 constitutes the beginning of the first chapter of the seventh treatise of the *Ilāhīyāt*. In this chapter Avicenna expounds the properties of unity and multiplicity.<sup>44</sup> Text 2 can be divided into ten sections. The dependence of sections [3]–[8] from *Metaphysics* Γ 2 has been already pointed out.<sup>45</sup> I wish to show here that sections [2] and [10] also depend on *Metaphysics* Γ. Book Γ is the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*. In Text 2 Avicenna’s paraphrase of Aristotle is quite straightforward and does not need to be analyzed in detail here. My observations will be limited to sections [1], [2] and [10].

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and therefore has more unity than “animal,” which is predicated of Socrates only indirectly, in so far as Socrates is a man.

<sup>44</sup> In the following two chapters Avicenna engages in a criticism of the philosophies of Pythagoras and Plato.

<sup>45</sup> A. Bertolacci, “Avicenna ed Averroè come fonti del Commento di Alberto Magno alla Metafisica di Aristotele: la dottrina dei trascendentali nei commentatori arabi di Aristotele e nel tredicesimo secolo latino,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florence 1998, 65–107; R. Wisnovsky, “Notes on Avicenna’s Concept of Thingness (*ṣay’iyya*),” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10 (2000), 198 and n. 34, 219.

*Ilāhīyāt* VII 1, 303.2–16

Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation  
of the *Metaphysics*

[1 Title] (303.2–4) Chapter on the consequent attributes of unity, namely sameness (*huwahuwīya*) [*huwīya* ed.] and its divisions; the consequent attributes of multiplicity, namely “other” and difference; the types of opposition that are known.<sup>46</sup>

[2 Introduction] (303.5–6) It seems we have exhaustively discussed, with respect to this aim of ours, the things that are proper to “existent *qua* existent” (*huwīya min ḥaytu hiya huwīya*) or are consequent attributes of it.<sup>47</sup>

[3] (303.6) Furthermore, “one” and “existent” (*ma-w-ḡūd*) are equal to each other in being predicated of things.<sup>50</sup>

(Γ1, 1003a21–22) There is being as being (τὸ ὄν ἢ ὅν) and the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature.<sup>48</sup>

(Γ2, 1003b22–24) If, now, being and unity are the same and are one thing in the sense that they are implied in one another as principles and cause are, . . .<sup>51</sup>

(296.5–7) Aristotle says that to a certain science belongs the investigation of “existent” (*huwīya*) in its nature and the investigation of the things that belong to “existent” (*huwīya*) in itself.<sup>49</sup>

(310.2–4) As to “one” and “existent” (*huwīya*), if they are one thing and have one nature, then they follow each other as principle and cause follow each other<sup>52</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Faṣḥun fi lawāḥiqi l-wahdati* [*wa-l-kaṭrati* add. P110] *mina l-huwahuwīyati* [P110 P125 t h : *huwīyati* c] *wa-aqsāmihā wa-lawāḥiqi l-kaṭrati* [*mina . . . kaṭrati* add. mg. P110] *mina l-ḡayri* [P110 P125 B Ġ D Ş M : *l-ḡayrīyati* c t] *wa-l-ḥilāfi wa-aṣnāfi t-taqābuli l-mārifati*. According to c, the reading *huwīya* is attested by the sole MS Ġ; *huwahuwīya*, on the contrary, is witnessed by MSS B, D, Ş, M. The Latin translation has *identitas*.

<sup>47</sup> *yušbihu an yakūna* [*nakūna* punct. P110] *qadi stawfīnā l-kalāma bi-ḥasabi ḡaradīnā ḥādā fi l-umūri llatī taḥtiṣṣu bi-l-huwīyati min ḥaytu hiya huwīyatun aw* [*wa* P125 B Ġ D Ş] *talḥaqūhā*.

<sup>48</sup> Ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη τις ἢ θεωρεῖ τὸ ὄν ἢ ὅν καὶ τὰ τούτω ὑπάρχοντα καθ' αὐτό.

<sup>49</sup> *Qāla Aristū inna li-'ilmīn wāḥidīn mina l-'ulūmi n-nazara fi l-huwīyati 'ilā kunhīhā wa-n-nazara fi l-aṣṣā'i llatī hiya li-l-huwīyati bi-dātihā*.

<sup>50</sup> *tumma l-wāḥidu wa-l-mawḡūdu qad yatasāwagāni fi l-ḥamli 'alā l-aṣṣā'i . . .*

<sup>51</sup> Εἰ δὲ τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ἐν ταῦτόν καὶ μία φύσις τῷ ἀκολουθεῖν ἀλλήλοις ὥσπερ ἀρχὴ καὶ αἴτιον . . .

<sup>52</sup> *wa-ammā l-wāḥidu wa-l-huwīyatu idā kānā ṣay'an wāḥidan wa-kāna lahumā tibā'un wāḥidun fa-ttibā'u kullī wāḥidīn minhumā li-ṣāḥibihī ka-ttibā'i l-awwali wa-l-'illati ba'dihā ba'dan*.

*(cont.)**Ilāhīyāt* VII 1, 303.2–16Aristotle's *Metaphysics*Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation  
of the *Metaphysics*

[4] (303.7) so that each thing that is said "existent" (*mawǧūd*) in a certain respect can be properly said "one" in another.<sup>53</sup>

(Γ2, 1003b26–27) for one man and a man are the same thing, and existent (ὄν), man, and a man are the same thing<sup>54</sup>

(310.5–6) . . . since the expressions "one man," or "man is" (*huwa*), or "this man," signify one thing.<sup>55</sup>

[5] (303.7–8) and everything has one existence (*wuǧūd*).<sup>56</sup>

(Γ2, 1003b32–33) and if, further, the essence of each thing is one in no merely accidental way, and similarly is from its very nature something that *is* (ὄν τι)<sup>57</sup>

(310.11–12) We also say that the substance of each thing is one not accidentally, and therefore we say that the substance of everything is an existent (*huwīyā*).<sup>58</sup>

[6] (303.8) Therefore sometimes it is thought that the concept of each of them is the same.<sup>59</sup>

(Γ2, 1003b25–26) (though it makes no difference even if we interpret them similarly—in fact this would strengthen our case)<sup>60</sup>

(310.4–5) Therefore, there is no difference in their relationship, even if we think in this way.<sup>61</sup>

[7] (303.8) but it is not so.<sup>62</sup>

(Γ2, 1003b24–25) . . . not in the sense that they are explained by the same formula.<sup>63</sup>

(310.4) . . . not because a single definition signifies both of them.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *hattā anna kulla mā yuqālu [lahū add. P125 t] innahū mawǧūdun bi-ʿtibārīn yaṣīḥha an yuqāla [naqūla M P110] lahū [add. sup. lin. P125] imahū wāḥīdun bi-ʿtibārīn.*

<sup>54</sup> ταὐτὸ γὰρ εἰς ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπος [καὶ ἄνθρωπος Ab Γ Al. Ross : om. EJ Asc. Syr. edd.], καὶ ὄν ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπος. For the sigla, see *Aristotle's Metaphysics*.

<sup>55</sup> *li-anna qawla l-qāʿili insānūn wāḥīdun aw insānūn huwa aw insānūn hādā yadullu ʿalā ṣayʿin wāḥīdīn.* The Arabic translator employed a Greek MS similar to EJ.

<sup>56</sup> *wa-kullu ṣayʿin fa-lahū wuǧūdun wāḥīdun.*

<sup>57</sup> ἔτι δ' ἡ ἐκάστου οὐσία ἐν ἐστίν οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὅπερ ὄν τι.

<sup>58</sup> *wa-aydan naqūlu inna ǧawhara kulli wāḥīdīn mīna l-aṣṣāʿi wāḥīdun lā bi-nawʿi l-ʿarāḍi wa-lī-dālīka naqūlu inna ǧawhara kulli ṣayʿin huwīyatun.*

<sup>59</sup> *wa-lī-dālīka [ka-dālīka P110] rubbamā zunnā anna l-nafḥūma mīnḥumā wāḥīdun.*

<sup>60</sup> (διαφέρει δὲ οὐθὲν οὐδ' ἂν ὁμοίως ὑπολάβωμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸ ἔργου μᾶλλον).

<sup>61</sup> *fa-lā faṣla fīmā baynahumā wa-in zanannā miṭla hādā z-zanni.*

<sup>62</sup> *wa-laysa ka-dālīka.*

<sup>63</sup> ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἐνὶ λόγῳ δηλούμενα.

<sup>64</sup> *wa-laysa li-anna ḥaddan wāḥīdan yadullu ʿalā kilayhīmā.*

(cont.)

*Ilāhīyāt* VII 1, 303.2–16Aristotle's *Metaphysics*Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation  
of the *Metaphysics*

[8] (303.8–9) Rather they are the same in subject, i.e., each thing that is characterized by the former is characterized by the latter.<sup>65</sup>

(Γ2, 1003b26–27) for one man and a man are the same thing, and existent, man, and a man are the same thing.<sup>66</sup>

[9] (303.9–12) If the concept of “one” were the concept of “existent” (*mawǧūd*) in every aspect, then the many, in as much as it is many, would not be an existent (*mawǧūd*), as it is not one—even though “one” accidentally occurs to it as well, so that multiplicity is said to be “one multiplicity” (but not in so far as it is multiplicity).<sup>67</sup>

[10] (303.13–14) Therefore it is suitable for us to speak also of the things that are proper to unity and its opposite—i.e., multiplicity—as sameness (*huwahuwīya*) [*huwīya* ed.], homogeneity, congruence (*muwāfaqa*), equality, likeness and their opposites.<sup>68</sup>

(Γ2, 1003b33–36) all this being so, there must be exactly as many species of being as of unity. And to investigate the essence of these is the work of a science which is generically one—I mean, for instance, the discussion of the same (ταὐτοῦ) and the similar

(311.1–3) Thus, it is known that the forms of “one” are as many as the forms of “existent” (*huwīya*), and the absolute investigation of these species and the knowledge of what they are belong to one science—I mean that the investigation of the same (*muttafiq*), the

<sup>65</sup> *bal humā wāḥidun bi-l-mawǧūʿi, ay kullu mā yuṣafu bi-hāḍā yuṣafu bi-dālika* [P110 P125 B Ğ D M t : *bi-dāka* c].

<sup>66</sup> ταὐτὸ γὰρ εἷς ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπος [καὶ ἄνθρωπος Ab Γ ΑΙ. Ross : om. E] Asc. Syr. edd.], καὶ ὃν ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπος.

<sup>67</sup> *wa-law kāna maṣḥūmu l-wāḥidi* [P110 B M : *l-maṣḥūmu l-wāḥidu* P125 : *l-maṣḥūmu mina l-wāḥidi* t c] *min kulli ǧihatin maṣḥūma l-mawǧūdi la-mā kāna l-kaṭiru min ḥaytu* [*ḥaytu* om. P110] *huwa kaṭirun mawǧūdan ka-mā laysa wāḥidan wa-in kāna yaʿridu laḥu l-wāḥidu aydan fa-yuqālu li-l-kaṭrati innahā kaṭratun wāḥidatun wa-lākinna lā* [lā om. P125] *min ḥaytu* [*min* post *ḥaytu* scr. et del. P125] *ḥiya* [*huwa* P110] *kaṭratun*.

<sup>68</sup> *fa-ḥarīyun binā an natakallama aydan fi l-umūri llatī taḥtiṣṣu bi-l-wahdati wa-bi-muqābalatihā* [P110 P125 : *wa-muqābalatihā* t c] *ayi l-kaṭrati miṭla l-huwahuwīyati* [P110 P125 t h : *l-huwīyati* c] *wa-l-muǧānasati wa-l-muwāfaqati wa-l-musāwāti wa-l-muṣābahati wa-muqābalatihā*. Among the MSS on which c is based, the reading *huwīya* occurs only in MS D. The reading *huwahuwīya* is witnessed by MSS B, G, Ṣ, M. The Latin translation has *identitas*.

(cont.)

*Ilāhīyāt* VII 1, 303.2–16Aristotle's *Metaphysics*Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation  
of the *Metaphysics*and other concepts of this  
sort.<sup>69</sup>similar and the other things  
which are similar to these,  
belongs to one science.<sup>70</sup>(Γ2, 1004a9–20) Now since  
it is the work of one science  
to investigate opposites, and  
plurality is opposite to  
unity . . . in view of all these  
facts, the contraries of the  
concepts we named above,  
the other and the dissimilar  
and the unequal, and  
everything else which is  
derived either from these  
or from plurality and unity,  
must fall within the province  
of the science above-named.<sup>71</sup>(316.14–317.8) Since the  
investigation of opposites  
necessarily belongs to one  
science, and the opposite  
of unity is plurality . . . then  
it is known that the other,  
the dissimilar, the unequal  
and all the other things that  
are said in this way or in  
the way of plurality, are  
opposite to the aforementioned  
things. Since knowledge of  
unity belongs to the science  
we mentioned. . . .<sup>72</sup>(I3, 1054a29–32) To the  
one belong . . . the same  
(ταὐτό) and the like and the  
equal, and to plurality  
belong the other and the  
unlike and the unequal.<sup>73</sup>(1286.1–2) . . . to one belong  
the same (*huwahuwa*), the  
similar and the equal, and  
to plurality belong the  
other, the dissimilar and  
the unequal.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup> ὡσθ' ὅσα περ τοῦ ἐνός εἶδη, τοσαῦτα καὶ τοῦ ὄντος, περὶ ὧν τὸ τί ἐστί τῆς αὐτῆς ἐπιστήμης τῷ γένει θεωρῆσαι, λέγω δ' οἷον περὶ ταυτοῦ καὶ ὁμοίου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τοιούτων.

<sup>70</sup> *fa-ma'lūmun anna suwara l-wāḥidi 'alā 'adadi suwari l-huwayyati wa-li-'ilmīn wāḥidin an-nazaru l-mu'llaqu fi hādihī s-suwarī wa-ma'rīfatu mā ḥiya a'nī anna li-'ilmīn wāḥidin an-nazaru fi l-mu'tafiqi wa-š-šabīhi wa-sā'iri l-ašyā'i llati tušbihu hādihī.*

<sup>71</sup> Ἐπεὶ δὲ μίας τάντικείμενα θεωρῆσαι, τῷ δ' ἐνὶ ἀντίκειται πλήθος . . . ὥστε καὶ τάντικείμενα τοῖς εἰρημένους, τὸ τε ἕτερον καὶ ἀνόμοιον καὶ ἄνισον, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα λέγεται ἢ κατὰ ταῦτα ἢ κατὰ πλήθος καὶ τὸ ἕν, τῆς εἰρημένης γνωρίζειν ἐπιστήμης.

<sup>72</sup> *fa-idā waḡaba li-'ilmīn wāḥidin an-nazaru fi l-mawḏū'āti 'alā l-mu'ādalati wa-'adīlu l-wāḥidi fi l-waḏ'i l-kaṭrati . . . fa-ma'lūmun anna l-ašyā'a llati qīlat yu'ādīluhā fi l-waḏ'i l-ḡayru wa-lladī lā šabīhun wa-lladī laysa musāwīn wa-sā'iru l-ašyā'i llati tuḡālu bi-hādā n-naḡi aw bi-naḡi l-kaṭrati wa-idā kāna li-l-'ilmī llati qulnā l-ma'rīfatu bi-l-wāḥidi. . . .*  
The Arabic translator read the second part of the Greek original text according to the following syntax: ὥστε καὶ τάντικείμενα τοῖς εἰρημένους τὸ τε ἕτερον καὶ ἀνόμοιον καὶ ἄνισον καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα λέγεται ἢ κατὰ ταῦτα ἢ κατὰ πλήθος. καὶ τὸ ἕν τῆς εἰρημένης γνωρίζειν ἐπιστήμης. . . .

<sup>73</sup> ἔστι δὲ τοῦ μὲν ἐνός . . . τὸ ταὐτό καὶ ὅμοιον καὶ ἴσον, τοῦ δὲ πλήθους τὸ ἕτερον καὶ ἀνόμοιον καὶ ἄνισον.

<sup>74</sup> *fa-inna li-l-wāḥidi l-huwahuwa wa-š-šabīha wa-l-musāwī wa-li-l-kaṭrati l-ḡayru wa-lā mutašabihun wa-lā musāwīn.*

Section [1] is the title of the chapter. Among the properties of unity, Avicenna includes “sameness” and its divisions. I am inclined to adopt the variant *huwahuwīya* (“sameness”) instead of the reading *huwīya*, chosen by the Cairo editors. For this I rely on the following considerations. First, most of the manuscripts taken into account in the Cairo edition converge on *huwahuwīya*; this reading also occurs in the Tehran lithograph and is presupposed by the German translation. The corruption of *huwahuwīya* to *huwīya* may be explained as a haplography.<sup>75</sup> Second, according to Aristotelian parameters, “essence” or “existent” are not properties of unity. *Huwīya*, therefore, meaning “essence” or “existent,” would be out of place in the present context. Third, *huwīya* does not mean “sameness” in the *Ilāhīyāt*. Avicenna uses the term *huwahuwa* to signify “same” both in the place where he first mentions this concept (chapter I, 4), and in the place where he deals with it in detail (the following part of chapter VII, 1 itself).<sup>76</sup> If *huwahuwa* means “same” in these two places, it can be safely assumed that “sameness” is expressed by *huwahuwīya*, rather than *huwīya*, also in section [1].

Section [2] is the introduction of the chapter, in which Avicenna summarizes the topics he has dealt with in the previous part of the *Ilāhīyāt*. He says he has treated the properties of *huwīya min ḥayṭu hiya huwīya*.<sup>77</sup> In the opening statement of chapter VI, 1, in a simi-

<sup>75</sup> The evidence provided by the Latin translation, in this particular case, is less helpful. In the Latin translation we find *identitas*. At first sight, this term would fit very well as a rendering of *huwahuwīya*. But it is also used to translate *huwīya* in Text 1 (section [2]). Hence, it is impossible to determine whether the Latin translator read *huwahuwīya* or *huwīya* in his Arabic manuscript.

<sup>76</sup> I, 4, 27.6; VII, 1, 303.15–16: “‘Same’ occurs when ‘many’ is made, in a way, a unity and, in a [different] way, something other” (*fa-l-huwahuwa* [P110 P115 : *huwahuwīya* c t] *huwa an yuḡʿala* [P110 P115 : *yuhʿala* c t] *l-kaṭīru* [P110 P115 : *li-l-kaṭrati* c t] *min* [om. c t] *waḡhin waḡdatan wa-min* [P110 : *min* P125 c t] *waḡhin āḡara*). Two MSS of h (Horten’s sigla B and C) report *huwīya* (= “Individualität”) instead of *huwahuwīya* (= “Identität”). The reported text is a paraphrase of *Metaphysics* Δ 9, 1018a 2–13—a passage missing in the extant part of Uṣṭāṭ’s translation. See also the occurrences of *huwahuwa* at 304.1–6.

<sup>77</sup> Avicenna uses two expressions (“things that are proper to ‘existent *qua* existent’,” and “[things that are] consequent attributes of it”) to render the idea of “things that belong to ‘existent’ in itself” in the Arabic translation. In I, 2, 13.13–17, the “proper accidents” (*awāriḍ ḥāṣṣa*) of “existent” (see also 13.13–17) are, together with its “species” (*anwāʿ*), “the things which are consequent to ‘existent *qua* existent’ without condition” (*al-umūru llatī talḡaḡuhū bi-mā huwa maʿwūdun min ḡayri ṣarṭin*; see also 14.2). Hence, whereas the first expression that Avicenna uses in [2] corresponds to the Arabic translation and signifies the “proper accidents” (or properties) of “existent,” the second expression is meant to be more general and to include

lar context, he refers to the properties of *mawǧūd bi-mā huwa mawǧūd*.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, in sections [3], [4] and [9] Avicenna switches to *mawǧūd* in order to signify the very concept he expresses by means of *huwīya* in section [2].<sup>79</sup> He evidently regards *huwīya* and *mawǧūd* as synonyms.<sup>80</sup> *Huwīya* in section [2] therefore means “existent.”<sup>81</sup>

also the “species” of “existent” (namely the categories). Avicenna deals with the properties of “existent” in IV–VI, and with its species in II–III.

<sup>78</sup> VI, 1, 257.5–6: “It is suitable that we speak now of ‘cause’ and ‘caused thing,’ since they are also among the attributes (*lawāhiq*) which are consequent (*talḥaqu*) to ‘existent qua existent’” (*fa-bi-l-ḥarīyi an natakalama l-āna fi l-ʿillati wa-l-māʿūli fa-innahumā aydan mina l-lawāhiqi llati talḥaqu l-mawǧūda bi-mā huwa mawǧūdun*).

<sup>79</sup> One possible reason for this change in terminology is that in section [5] Avicenna dealt with the concept of “existence.” Now, *mawǧūd* does have a verbal noun (*maṣdar*) meaning “existence,” namely *wuǧūd* (the term Avicenna uses), whereas *huwīya* does not.

<sup>80</sup> Averroes regards *huwīya* and *mawǧūd* as equivalent in a digression of his *Tafsīr* and in the *Talḥīṣ* (Concise Exposition) of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*; see Averroès, *Tafsīr ma bād at-Tabīʿat*, II:557.5–558.6; and Averroes, *Compendio de Metafisica, Texto arabe con traducción y notas*, ed. C.Q. Rodríguez (Madrid: Maestre, 1919), 14, 12–21. The digression in the *Tafsīr* is omitted in the latin Medieval translation. A French translation is available in A. Martin’s *Averroès, Grand Commentaire de la Métaphysique d’Aristote, livre lām-lambda traduit de l’arabe et annoté* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984), 27–28, n. 8 (*huwīya* is not translated); Martin’s translation is reproduced in L. Bauoloye’s *La question de l’essence, Averroès et Thomas d’Aquin, commentateurs d’Aristote, Métaphysique Z 1* (Louvain-la-Neuve: E. Peters, 1997), 51–53. Besides the late Medieval Latin translation (*Averrois Cordubensis Epitome in Librum Metaphysicæ Aristotelis, Jacob Mantino hebraeo medico interprete, in Aristotelis Metaphysicorum libri XIII, Cum Averrois Cordubensis in eosdem Commentariis, Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois Commentariis*, VIII [Venetiis apud Iunctas 1562, rep. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1962]) and Rodríguez’s Spanish translation contained in his above mentioned edition (21–22: “ileidad” [sic]), two German translations of the relevant section of the *Talḥīṣ* are available: M. Horten, *Die Metaphysik des Averroes (1198f), Nach dem Arabischen übersetzt und erläutert* (Halle an der Saale: Niemeyer, 1912; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1960), 12–13: “Individualität”; S. Van den Bergh, *Die Epitome der Metaphysik des Averroes übersetzt und mit einer Einleitung und Erläuterung versehen* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1924), 9: “Ipseitāt” = “Individualität.”

<sup>81</sup> The Latin translation renders *huwīya* in section [2] as “sameness” (*identitas*). The idea of sameness, however, is out of place in the present context. Avicenna cannot reasonably say in section [2] that the discussion of the properties of sameness has already been given. In the previous part of the *Ilāhīyāt* he has mentioned “same” (*huwahuwa*) only once, very briefly, in the chapter in which he describes the contents of the work (I, 4, 27.6). In other words, before Text 2 there is no treatment of sameness in the *Ilāhīyāt*. The properties of “existent,” on the contrary, are the object of the treatises IV–VI of the *Ilāhīyāt*. It is therefore “existent” and its properties that Avicenna refers to in section [2]. The reason for the presence of *identitas* in the Latin version may be twofold. Either the translation was based on an Arabic manuscript having *huwahuwīya* instead of *huwīya* in section [2]—but this seems unlikely, since no such variant is recorded in c. Or, more probably, the Latin translator was misled by Avicenna’s use of the term *mawǧūd* in sections [3], [4] and [9] to signify “existent.” From our point of view, this simply means that Avicenna employed *huwīya* and *mawǧūd* as synonyms. But the Latin translator might have misunderstood the switch in Avicenna’s terminology and taken the presence of *mawǧūd* in sections [3], [4] and [9] in the meaning of “existent” as a sign of the fact that

The mention of “existent *qua* existent” (*huwīya min haytu hiya huwīya*) and its properties in section [2] is a reference to *Metaphysics* Γ 1, 1003a21–22. In this famous passage Aristotle describes metaphysics as the science of “being *qua* being” (τὸ ὄν ἢ ὅν) and its essential attributes, in other words, its properties. By “being *qua* being” (in the sense of “existent *qua* existent”) Aristotle means “being in itself,” as distinct from physical being, mathematical being, and so on. *Huwīya* is the rendering of τὸ ὄν in Uṣṭāṭ’s translation of the passage of the *Metaphysics* to which Avicenna is referring.

Some words, finally, on section [10]. Here again I propose to read *huwahuwīya* instead of *huwīya*. The reasons supporting this choice are the same I have mentioned with regard to section [1], plus an additional one. Section [10] is dependent upon *Metaphysics* Γ 2, 1003b33–36 and 1004a9–20. Aristotle includes “same” (τὰυτό) among the properties of unity or “one” in Γ 2, 1003b33–36. The same happens in I 3, 1054a29–32. In the former case Uṣṭāṭ translates τὰυτό as *muttafiq*,<sup>82</sup> in the latter case as *huwahuwa*. It is tempting to assume that Avicenna conflated in section [10] both the aforementioned passages of Γ 2 and I 3. The two different renderings of τὰυτό (“same”) in Uṣṭāṭ’s translation of these two loci might explain the presence of both *huwahuwīya* (“sameness”) and *muwāfaqa* (which I tentatively translate here as “congruence,” in order to distinguish it from *huwahuwīya*)<sup>83</sup> among the properties of unity that Avicenna lists in section [10].<sup>84</sup> This hypothesis, however, will require further corroboration.

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*huwīya* in section [2] did not mean “existent,” but something different. “Sameness” was the easiest alternative to “existent” as a translation of *huwīya* in this context.

<sup>82</sup> With the expression *huwāfiq bi-t-ṭibāʿi* (211.2) he translates τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει φύσιν in *Metaphysics* B 2, 998a6.

<sup>83</sup> *Muwāfaqa* is a *hapax logomenon* in the *Ilāhīyāt*. The term *al-muwāfiq* occurs in I 2, 13.1 and I, 4, 27.5. For the use of *wifāq*, see Ibn Sinā, *Risāla fī aqsām al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliya*, 89.19.

<sup>84</sup> The other properties of unity that Avicenna mentions, with the exception perhaps of “homogeneity,” are also taken from the *Metaphysics*. The term ὁμογενῆ occurs only once in the *Metaphysics* (I 7, 1057b29), where it is not related in any way to unity. It is translated as *muḡānasa* by Uṣṭāṭ (1355.13). Unity in genus, however, is one of the types of unity Aristotle distinguishes in Δ 6.

*Conclusion*

The results of the present investigation can be summarized as follows. First, the Aristotelian sources of the two Avicennan texts have been identified. The sources of Text 1, namely *Metaphysics* Δ 3, B 3 and *Categories* 5, were unknown; those of Text 2, i.e., *Metaphysics* Γ 1–2 and I 3, were only partially ascertained. Second, the presence of the term *huvūya* in the *Ilāhīyāt*, at least in the cases in which it has the meaning of “existent,” has been explained. It is due to Uṣṭāt’s translation of the *Metaphysics*. Avicenna in Text 1 and Text 2 paraphrases the *Metaphysics* according to this translation. Now, in this translation the term *huvūya* is extensively used as a rendering of the Greek ὄν (“being” in the sense of “existent”). Third, the comparison with Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* has allowed, both in Text 1 and Text 2, some emendations of the Cairo edition of the *Ilāhīyāt*. Finally, some light has been shed on Avicenna’s quotation technique and his attitude towards Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Avicenna’s paraphrasing amounts to a summary of the main points of Aristotle’s text, or rather, *texts*. For Avicenna understands some passages of the *Metaphysics* in the light of others, and connects some parts of the *Metaphysics* with some parts of the *Categories*. In establishing some of these connections, he can be regarded as the forerunner of modern commentators. Avicenna is probably referring to this method in the Prologue to the *Šifā’* where he writes that in this work he is going to provide “a straightforward compendium” in which he wishes “to be concise and always to avoid repetition.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Madḥal*, I, 1, 9.10–16; English translation in Gutas, *Avicenna*, 51.

*Appendix*

List of occurrences of *huw̄yā* in the Cairo edition  
and their rendering in the Latin, German and French translations  
(the occurrences discussed in the article are 14–18)

<i>Ilāhiyāt</i> (ed. Cairo 1960)	Latin tr. (ed. Van Riet)	Horten's German tr.	Anawati's French tr.	proposed translation
(1) I, 7, 47.17 <i>al-huw̄yā</i> <i>fī l-wuḡūd</i> (syn. <i>haqīqa</i> , 47.16)	55.53: esse id quod est	77: Individualität in der realen Existenz	1:122: ipséité dans l'existence	essence in concrete existence
(2) III, 5, 121.15	135.31: essentia	189: eigentümliche Natur	1:177: identité	essence
(3) V, 1, 197.10	230.56: essentia; ipsa essentia	288, n. 6: bestimmte Natur	1:234: essence	essence
(4) V, 1, 197.11	230.56: ipsa essentia	288, n. 6: bestimmte Natur	1:234: essence	essence
(5) V, 1, 197.11	230.57: essentia	288: individuelle Wesenheit	1:234: essence	essence
(6) V, 1, 197.11	230.57: essentia	om.	1:234: essence	essence
(7) V, 1, 197.13: <i>huw̄yat al-īnsānīya</i>	230.58: ipsa humanitas	288: individuelle Wesenheit des Menschen	1:234: essence	human essence
(8) v, 1, 198.1: <i>huw̄yat al-īnsānīya</i>	230.62: ipsa humanitas	289: individuelle Wesenheit des Menschen	1:234: essence	human essence
(9) V, 3, 214.12	248.35: essentia	312: individuelle Natur	1:246: essence	essence
(10) V, 3, 215.10: <i>fī huw̄yatihī</i>	249.58: per se	314: eigentümliche Wesen	1:246: essence	in its essence
(11) V, 7, 237.7	V, 5, 267.94: esse	344: eigentümliche Wesenheit (n. 1: Individualität)	1:263: essence	essence
(12) V, 7, 237.7	om.	om.	1:263: essence	essence
(13) V, 7, 237.7	om.	om.	1:263: essence	essence
(14) VI, 4, 281.2	322.81: identitas	410: Individualität	2:34: identité	existent

Appendix (*cont.*)

<i>Ilāhīyāt</i> (ed. Cairo 1960)	Latin tr. (ed. Van Riet)	Horten's German tr.	Anawati's French tr.	proposed translation
(15) VII, 1, 303.3 legendum <i>huwahuwīya</i>	349.3: identitas	442: Identität	2:51: identité	sameness
(16) VII, 1, 303.5	349.8: identitas	442: Individualität <sup>86</sup>	2:51: identité	existent
(17) VII, 1, 303.6	349.9: identitas	om.	om.	existent
(18) VII, 1, 303.14 legendum <i>huwahuwīya</i>	350.21: identitas	443: identité	2:51: identité	sameness
(19) VII, 2, 313.7	362.72: identitas	457: Individualität (n. 1: bestimmte Wesenheit)	2:59: identité	existent [?]
(20) VIII, 4, 348.15	404.89: identitas	506: Individualität	2:89: <i>huwīya</i>	essence
(21) VIII, 5, 351.18	408.77: identitas	511: Individualität	2:92: identité	essence
(22) VIII, 6, 357.5	414.11: identitas	518: Individualität	2:96: identité	essence
(23) VIII, 6, 357.6	414.12: identitas	518: Wesen	2:96: identité	essence
(24) VIII, 6, 357.6	414.13: identitas	518: Sein	2:96: identité ( <i>huwīya</i> )	essence

<sup>86</sup> Horten, 442, translates the Arabic . . . *al-umūri llatī taḥtiṣṣu bi-l-huwīyati min ḥaytu hiya huwīyatun aw talḥaḥūhā* as “. . . der Dinge, die als individua in eigentlichen Sinne bezeichnet werden, oder denen die Individualität anhaftet.” This clearly shows that he understood *huwīya* as “Individualität.”



### CHAPTER THREE

## TOWARDS A HISTORY OF AVICENNA'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN IMMANENT AND TRANSCENDENT CAUSES\*

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In an article published in 1991, Jean Jolivet argued that Avicenna's distinction between formal and material causes, which are *intrinsic* to or *immanent in* their effect, and final and efficient causes, which are *extrinsic to* or *transcend* their effect, was an original and radical "répartition" of Aristotle's theory of the four causes. This is because Aristotle, according to Jolivet, held that the four causes fell on either side of a more basic distinction, that between matter and form: the material cause fell on the side of the matter, while the formal, efficient and final causes fell on the side of the form.<sup>1</sup>

In my article—which satisfies the "Before" rather than "After" Avicenna criterion of this book's title—I argue that the immanent/transcendent distinction which Jolivet detects was not in fact original to Avicenna, but can be found in earlier Neoplatonic treatises and commentaries on Plato's and Aristotle's works. To be precise, the distinction between immanent and transcendent causes emerged over the course of several generations of Neoplatonic thinkers, starting with Plutarch of Athens (d. 432), and developing with his student Syrianus (d.c. 437); Syrianus' student Proclus (d.c. 485); Proclus' student Ammonius (d.c. 514); and Ammonius' students Asclepius (fl. 525) and Philoponus (d.c. 570), through whose "dictated" (ἀπὸ φωνῆς) commentaries on the *Metaphysics* and *Physics*, respectively, we can reconstruct much of Ammonius' own theory of causation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. Jolivet, "La répartition des causes chez Aristote et Avicenne: le sens d'un déplacement," in *Lectio varietates: Homage à Paul Vignaux (1904–1987)*, Études de philosophie médiévale, 65, ed. J. Jolivet, Z. Kaluza, and A. de Libera (Paris: J. Vrin, 1991), 49–65.

<sup>2</sup> For an introduction to these thinkers, see R. Sorabji, "The ancient commentators

It is often forgotten that these Neoplatonic thinkers were interested not only in Platonizing Aristotle but also in Aristotelianizing Plato. A particular challenge for Neoplatonists who aimed to Aristotelianize Plato was figuring out how exactly to apply Aristotle's very useful four-cause theory to the cosmology which they inherited from Plotinus, and which derived many of its basic principles from Platonic works such as the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Philebus*, *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*, the last two of which served as the culmination of the Neoplatonic curriculum. Arguing that Aristotle's four causes could be divided along immanent/transcendent lines was crucial to the Neoplatonists' attempt to face this challenge. When the Neoplatonists were not appealing to Aristotle's four-cause theory—now distinguished along immanent/transcendent lines—in their commentaries on Plato's works or in their own independent treatises, they applied the immanent/transcendent distinction in their commentaries on passages in Aristotle's works where Aristotle discusses the four causes. It is a sign of their interpretive acumen that the Neoplatonic commentators were able to integrate the immanent/transcendent distinction with Aristotle's four-cause theory in such a way that it seems a sophisticated, even compelling, reading of Aristotle's texts.

In short, I hope to prove Jolivet wrong on two points. The first is his claim that Avicenna's immanent/transcendent distinction is original; in fact it was first articulated by Greek Neoplatonists. The second is his claim that the immanent/transcendent distinction in general represents a radical "déplacement" in understanding Aristotle's four-cause theory; in fact Aristotle's theory is more underdetermined than Jolivet makes it out to be, and a division of the four causes along immanent/transcendent lines is, I would argue, just as warranted as Jolivet's division of the four causes along the lines of matter and form. I also provide translations, arranged chronologically, of passages from Avicenna's works where he articulates the immanent/transcendent distinction, and conclude with some tentative observations on how these articulations of the immanent/transcendent distinction throw light on his place in the history of philosophy.

It is certainly true, as Jolivet claims, that Aristotle often collapses the efficient, final and formal causes. For example, when Aristotle starts talking, in *De Anima* 2.4, about the ways in which the soul is

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on Aristotle," in his edited volume, *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (London: Duckworth, 1990), 1–30.

the cause of the body, he maintains that the soul is the cause of the body as efficient cause, as final cause and as formal cause. There he says:

[This is] because soul is a cause in the three ways we have mentioned above; that is, it is a cause as the origin of motion, and that for the sake of which the body exists, and it is the essence of bodies possessing souls.<sup>3</sup>

Jolivet is also correct to point out that Aristotle maintains that the formal, final and efficient causes often coincide in natural things. For example, in *Physics* 2.7 he says:

It is clear that the causes are these, and that this is the extent of their number. Since the causes are four, it is the duty of the natural philosopher to know about each of them, and that the question “On account of what?” should be reduced to them such that the response to it is in accordance with the doctrine of natural philosophy; I mean the matter, the form, the mover, and that for the sake of which. Often three of them devolve into one: for what the thing is, is sometimes also that for the sake of which the thing is, as well as the thing from which the motion first comes, and that in a single sense.<sup>4</sup>

This passage, however, was interpreted by most Neoplatonic commentators as implying that the formal and final causes are identical in a stronger sense than the formal and efficient causes are.<sup>5</sup> I shall try to explain, by way of an example, what the commentators had in mind here. The formal cause and final cause of my son’s coming-to-be are identical in number because the very same form of humanity instantiated in my son’s body at conception serves *both* as a formal cause—as his essence, in other words—and as a final cause—as that in view of which the matter that made up his body was set in motion. I, however, am the efficient cause of my son’s coming-to-be, with the result that my son and I are identical only in the weak sense

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *DA* 2.4, 415b8–13/Aristūṭālīs, *Fī n-Nafs*, Dirāsāt Islāmīya, 16, ed. ‘A.R. Badawī (Cairo: Maktabat an-Nahḍa al-Miṣrīya, 1954), 38.3–5.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Phys.* 2.7, 198a22–28/Aristūṭālīs, *at-Ṭabī‘a*, ed. ‘A.R. Badawī, (Cairo: ad-Dār al-Qawmīya li-t-Ṭibā‘a wa-n-Naṣr, 1964), 1:137.15–138.3.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Philoponus *In Phys.* 2.7 (*ad* 198a14) [*CAG* XVI, ed. H. Vitelli, Berlin, 1887], 297,30–298,6 and (*ad* 198a24), 301,7–302,3 (tr. A. Lacey, *Philoponus On Aristotle’s Physics 2* [London: Duckworth, 1993], 106 and 109–110); and Simplicius *In Phys.* 2.7 (*ad* 198a22) [*CAG* IX, ed. H. Diels, Berlin, 1882], 363,32–364,15 and 365,14–18 (tr. B. Fleet, *Simplicius On Aristotle Physics 2* [London: Duckworth, 1997], 126 and 127–8).

that we are both subsumed under the species “human” (that is, we both possess the form of humanity), and not in the strong (numerical) sense of identity, where the form of human which is currently instantiated in him is the very same form of human which is currently instantiated in me.

The notion that the formal and final causes are identical to each other in a stronger sense than they are to the efficient cause, is supported in other passages where Aristotle simply collapses the end into the form. For example, in a passage intended to encourage philosophers to search for the nearest or most immediate cause of a thing, Aristotle appeals to his four-cause scheme to explain the coming-to-be of a human being:

When it is asked, “What is the cause?” it is necessary, since “cause” is spoken of in many ways, that all of the ways in which a cause can be, be spoken of. For example, “What is the cause as matter of man?” It is the menstrual fluid. The cause as mover? The semen. The cause as form? It is the essence. The cause as that for the sake of which? It is the end. (It is likely that these two are one thing.)<sup>6</sup>

But while this passage clearly supports a strong identification of the formal and final causes, it seems to undermine the claim that the efficient cause is identical to the formal and final causes in only a weak sense. This is because the example of the efficient cause in this passage is not the father, but the father’s semen. In fact, Aristotle implies that, strictly speaking, it is not even the father’s semen viewed as a composite of matter and form which is the efficient cause of the son’s coming-to-be, but only the form of humanity contained in the father’s semen. This is because the matter of the father’s semen was not transferred at conception to the son, but dissolved and evaporated at conception; the form of humanity contained in the father’s semen, by contrast is transferred to the son (*Generation of Animals* 2.3, 737a8–16).

The result is that the form of humanity which was contained in my semen and transferred at conception to my son *is* the very same form of humanity which was instantiated in my son’s body at conception and which served as that in view of which the matter that made up his body was set in motion. It turns out, therefore, that

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<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *Metaph.* 8.4, 1044a32–b1/Aristāṭālīs {ap. Averroem}, *Averroès, Tafsīr ma ba’d at-Tabī‘at*, ed. M. Bouyges, 3 vols. (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1938–1948), 2:1073.15–1074.2.

the efficient cause is numerically identical—that is, identical in a strong sense—to the formal and final causes. I suppose it could be argued that although the very same form of humanity contained in my semen came to be instantiated in my son's body at conception, that form of humanity acted as an efficient cause only while it was contained in my semen. Once the form of humanity was transferred from my semen and came to be instantiated in my son's body at conception, it no longer served as his efficient cause, but started to serve as his formal and final cause. This argument is not really cogent, however, for the most one could hope to conclude is that the efficient cause and the formal and final causes are not numerically identical at the same time: before the moment of my son's conception, the form was contained in my semen; after the moment of conception, the form was contained in him. And once employed, the criterion of temporality could just as easily divide the formal cause from the final cause. The final cause—the form of humanity in view of which the matter that made up my son's body was set in motion—operated only during the process of formation. Once that process of formation was completed, the form of humanity, now fully instantiated in my son's body, operated only as a formal cause.

Partly in response to this confusion, Aristotle holds that some efficient causes are intrinsic to their effects, others extrinsic (τῶν δὲ τοιούτων ἐνίων μὲν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως ἐστίν . . . ἐνίων δ' ἔξω/*wa-min hā-dihī l-anwā'i mā -btidā'u l-harakati fihi . . . [wa-]min hārighīn*).<sup>7</sup> And in other passages Aristotle implies that the semen is not so much an efficient cause as something which the efficient cause (i.e., the father) uses as an instrument (ὡς ὀργάνω/*mitla ālatin*).<sup>8</sup> To sum up, then, while Aristotle holds that the formal, final and efficient causes may sometimes be reduced to the same thing, it is unclear whether the formal cause can be identified in a stronger way with the final cause than either can with the efficient cause. It seems that this is true if the efficient cause is something extrinsic to the effect, such as a father is to his son; but false if the efficient cause is something intrinsic to the effect, such as the form of humanity contained in the father's semen and transferred at conception to the son.

<sup>7</sup> GA 1.18, 724a31–35/*Fī Kawn al-ḥayawān*, ed. J. Brugmann and H.J. Drossaart Lulofs in *Generation of Animals: the Arabic translation commonly ascribed to Yahyā ibn al-Bīrīq*, Publication of the De Goeje Fund, 23 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 29.13–16.

<sup>8</sup> GA 1.22, 730b20/*Fī Kawn al-ḥayawān*, 47.7.

Even the apparently strong identification of the formal and final causes can be undermined. Philoponus points out in his comments on the *Physics* 2.7 passage above that it is only a particular category of final cause which can be identified with the formal. Aristotle holds that the final cause—that for the sake of which—can be spoken of in two ways: in the genitive, as “that in view of which”; and in the dative, as “that for the benefit of which.” Aristotle articulates the distinction in *De Anima* 2.4 (τὸ δ’ οὐ ἕνεκα διττόν, τὸ μὲν οὐ, τὸ δὲ ᾧ/*wa-maʿnā min aḡli ʿalā wiḡhatayni iḥdāhumā laḥū wa-l-uḡrā fīhi*) and *Metaphysics* 12.7 (ἔστι γὰρ τινὶ τὸ οὐ ἕνεκα <καὶ> τινός/*wa-dālika anna mā min aḡlihī yūḡadu li-ṣayʿin wa-li-dī ṣayʿin*), and also alludes to it in *Physics* 2.2 and *Eudemian Ethics* 8.3.<sup>9</sup> Aristotle’s distinction is very compressed and far from transparent. In the *Physics*, the distinction is introduced to show that nature is similar to art in that the form—“that in view of which” an artifact is created, such as the shape of an axe—must be taken into account by the natural philosopher, and not just the matter. Nature is also like art because the matter the artisan uses in creating the artifact is determined by the use which the customer—“that for the benefit of which”—makes of the artifact, given its form. Thus an axe is made of iron and not clay, given the function—cutting—which the form “axe” represents to the person who benefits from using it. By Philoponus’ reckoning, therefore, the final cause and the formal cause are identical only if one is speaking of the final cause as “that in view of which.”

In another very important case, the final cause cannot be held to be identical to the formal cause: the Unmoved Mover is the final cause of celestial activity, but It is not the formal cause or essence of the spheres. Because the Unmoved Mover is not confined to a material body, and because form, by Aristotle’s reckoning (*Physics* 2.1, 193b4–5), is never separable from matter in the real world, but only when speaking in purely logical terms (κατὰ τὸν λόγον), the Unmoved Mover cannot be a formal cause. In other words, because

<sup>9</sup> *DA* 2.4, 415b2/Aristūṭālīs, *Fī n-Nafs*, 37.15–16; and *Metaph.* 12.7, 1072b2–3/Aristūṭālīs {ap. Averroem}, *Averroès, Tafsīr ma baʿd at-Tabīʿat*, 3:1599.3 (reading *li-dī* for Bouyges’ *li-dā*); cf. *Phys.* 2.2, 194a35–36 and *EE* 8.3, 1249b9–19. In the Arabic version of Themistius’ *Paraphrase of the De Anima*, the distinction appears as *wa-llaḏī bi-sababihī yuqālu ʿalā ḡarbayni aḥaduhumā allaḏī min qibalihī wa-l-āḡharu allaḏī laḥū*: Themistius, *In DA* 2.4 (ad 415b2–3), 50,11/*Šarḥ Kūṭāb an-Nafs li-Aristūṭālīs*, ed. M. Lyons in *An Arabic Translation of Themistius’ Commentary on Aristoteles De Anima*, Oriental Studies, II (Columbia, South Carolina: Cassirer, 1973), 68.12–13.

Aristotle holds that the Unmoved Mover acts on Its effects as a final cause, and because the Unmoved Mover is separate from matter, there must therefore be *some* final causes which are separate from matter and hence not collapsible into formal causes.

A commentator could fairly infer from this that whenever a final cause is found to operate in the divine, superlunary world of eternal being, it will be separate from matter and therefore distinct from formal causes. By contrast, final causes which are found to operate in the natural, sublunary world of coming-to-be and passing-away, will be inseparable from matter and will usually, though not always, be collapsible into formal causes. A commentator could further infer that a final cause, when it is taken in itself—that is, when it is *not* collapsible into the formal cause—will be separate *from matter*.

Does the criterion of separateness also apply to the efficient cause? As mentioned above, Aristotle divides efficient causes into those that are intrinsic to their effects and those that are extrinsic to their effects. Given Aristotle's implication that in the case of a son's coming-to-be, the father is the true efficient cause while his semen is his instrument; and given the fact that Aristotle bases his distinction between male and female on the fact that the male is that which generates into another (εἰς ἕτερον/*fī ḡayrihū*), while the female is that which generates into itself (εἰς αὐτό/*fī dātihī*) and is that out of which the generated thing is produced while remaining present in it (καὶ ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται ἐνυπάρχον ἐν τῷ γεννῶντι τὸ γεννώμενον/[this clause is missing in the Arabic]);<sup>10</sup> a commentator could fairly infer that taken in itself, an efficient cause will be separate *from its effect*.

Adding to the weight of evidence prompting a commentator to hold that an efficient cause is separate from its effect is the fact that in the lines immediately following the *Physics* 2.7 passage above (198a26–31), Aristotle makes a clear distinction between the type of moving cause which can be identified with the formal and final causes, and the type of moving cause which cannot. Only those moving causes which are also *moved by another*, Aristotle claims, will be at all identifiable with the formal and final causes. A commentator could fairly infer that a moving cause which is *unmoved*, by contrast, will not be identifiable with the formal and final causes.

<sup>10</sup> GA 1.2, 716a18–23/*Fī Kawn al-ḥayawān*, 4.12–15.

Although the latter category probably refers to the Unmoved Mover, which by Aristotle's reckoning acted as a final cause, the context in which it is introduced is so clearly focused on the efficient cause that Neoplatonic commentators such as Simplicius seized upon it as one way to justify the view that Aristotle held God to be an efficient as well as a final cause. Their reasoning seems to have run as follows: given that a moving cause which is identifiable with the formal and final causes will itself be moved by another; given that a moving cause which is moved by another is distinct from a moving cause which is itself unmoved; given that a moving cause which is itself unmoved will be the Unmoved Mover, or at least something superlunary, divine and eternal; given that when Aristotle uses the term "moving cause" he is usually referring to the efficient cause; and given that what is superlunary, divine and eternal is separate from matter; therefore, there will be one type of efficient cause—a moving cause which is not moved by another—which is extrinsic or transcendent in the sense that it is separate *from matter*, as well as in the sense, mentioned just above, that it is separate *from its effect*.

Aristotle's distinction in *Physics* 2.7 between moving causes which are moved by another and moving causes which are unmoved, and his description of semen as an instrument in *GA* 1.22, also served as evidence by which various Neoplatonic commentators could justify their distinction between the Middle Platonists' instrumental cause and a true efficient cause. Instrumental causes operate in the natural, sublunary world of coming-to-be and passing-away, while true efficient causes operate in the divine, superlunary world of eternal being.<sup>11</sup> Simplicius traces the distinction to Alexander.<sup>12</sup> Philoponus, by contrast, claims that Aristotle allows for the instrumental cause only insofar as it is identifiable with the material cause, that is, in the sense in which the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* uses matter as an instrument.<sup>13</sup>

My general point in performing all this Aristotelian exegesis is simply that Jolivet's analysis of Aristotle's own "répartition" of the

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<sup>11</sup> On the history of the instrumental cause, see R.J. Hankinson, *Cause and Explanation in Ancient Greek Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 342 and 380–381.

<sup>12</sup> Ap. Simplicium *In Phys.* 2.3 (*ad* 194b29), 315,12–18; (*ad* 194b32), 316,6–14; and (*ad* 195a3), 317,23–28 (tr. Fleet, *Simplicius On Aristotle Physics* 2, 72–73, 74, and 75).

<sup>13</sup> Philoponus *In Phys.* 2.3 (*ad* 194b16), 241,15–242,3 (tr. Lacey, *Philoponus On Aristotle's Physics* 2, 53–54).

four causes along the lines of matter and form systematizes Aristotle's thought to an unwarranted degree. In other words, Jolivet's claim that Aristotle divides his four causes along the lines of a more basic distinction between matter and form is undermined by the evidence in Aristotle which implies, first of all, that the identification of the formal, final and efficient causes in natural things must be heavily qualified; and second, that there is an important category of final and efficient causes—namely, those final and efficient causes that are *not* subject to coming-to-be and passing-away—which are extrinsic or transcendent in some sense, either in the sense of being separate *from matter*, or in the sense of being separate *from their effect*. What is more, a commentator could argue that this category of final and efficient cause—those that are extrinsic or transcendent—represents what final and efficient causes are *in themselves*, because it is only this category of final and efficient causes which cannot be identified, in either a strong or weak way, with the formal cause.

Part of what prompted the Neoplatonists to focus on those passages in Aristotle which support the idea that the final and efficient causes are extrinsic or transcendent, was their desire to create a category of form which was also extrinsic or transcendent, at least in the sense of being separate *from matter*. Although Aristotle, as I mentioned above, clearly held that the form was inseparable from matter except when speaking in purely logical terms, the Neoplatonists were committed to the Platonic notion that forms down here in the natural, sublunary world of coming-to-be and passing-away are mere imitations of Forms or Ideas up there in the divine, superlunary world of eternal being. Since Aristotle's formal cause seemed to them to be hopelessly trapped in matter, the Neoplatonists invented a new category of cause—the paradigmatic cause—to accommodate the eternal Ideas. Proclus claims that the Academician Xenocrates was the first to come up with the idea of the paradigmatic cause and to identify it with the Ideas, thereby establishing the Ideas as a separate and divine cause.<sup>14</sup>

It is often unclear whether the Ideas are meant to cause their effects *solely* as paradigmatic causes; or as efficient and final causes

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<sup>14</sup> χωριστὴν αὐτῆν καὶ θεῖαν αἰτίαν: Proclus, *In Parm.*, ed. V. Cousin (Paris, 1864), 888,36–38 (tr. G. Morrow and J. Dillon, *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987], 249); Hankinson is sceptical of Proclus' attribution: *Cause and Explanation*, 326–327 and 351.

as well, with their efficient causality directed towards their effect insofar as their effect is viewed as “proceeding” (πρόοδος), their paradigmatic causality directed towards their effect insofar as their effect is viewed as “abiding” (μονή), and their final causality directed towards their effect insofar as their effect is viewed as “reverting” (ἐπιστροφή). But because of this very ambiguity—because the Ideas could be seen as paradigmatic causes, or variously as efficient, paradigmatic or final causes—the transcendence enjoyed by the Ideas reinforced the notion that *all* efficient, paradigmatic and final causes enjoy the quality of being extrinsic or transcendent. The notion that all efficient, paradigmatic and final causes are extrinsic or transcendent was further reinforced by the evidence in Aristotle, mentioned above, which allowed the commentators to infer that *in themselves*—in a strict or proper sense, that is—efficient and final causes are extrinsic or transcendent, either in the sense of being separate from matter or separate from their effect.

The Neoplatonists employed the transcendent/immanent distinction as a criterion in two ways. The first was to distinguish the *domain* in which the final, paradigmatic and efficient causes operate, from the *domain* in which the formal, instrumental and material causes operate. That is to say, the final, paradigmatic and efficient causes are transcendent in the sense that they are separate from matter, and should therefore be seen to operate (at least immediately) only in the divine, superlunary world of eternal being, a world which is intelligible but not material. The formal, instrumental and material causes, by contrast, are immanent in matter and should therefore be seen to operate only in the natural, sublunary world of coming-to-be and passing-away, a world which is mired in matter. Because in the Neoplatonic hierarchy of being the immaterial is higher and the material lower; because to be higher in the Neoplatonic hierarchy of being can be reduced to the possession of a greater degree of causality, while to be lower can be reduced to the possession of a lesser degree of causality;<sup>15</sup> and because the final, paradigmatic and efficient causes transcended matter while the formal, instrumental

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<sup>15</sup> Here I am convinced by the argument of D. O’Meara (“The hierarchical ordering of reality in Plotinus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. L. Gerson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 66–81) that terms such as “higher” and “lower,” when applied to Neoplatonic cosmologies, are unhelpful and can even be misleading; and that they ought, in fact, to be reduced to “causally prior” and “causally posterior.”

and material causes were either immanent in or simply consisted in matter; the Neoplatonists held that final, paradigmatic and efficient causes were causes in a proper sense (κυρίως), while the formal, instrumental and material causes were mere causal factors or conjoint causes (συναίτια), that is, causes in a derivative rather than in a strict sense.<sup>16</sup>

In his commentary on the *Parmenides*, Proclus claims that Plutarch of Athens, the teacher of Proclus' own teacher Syrianus (Proclus refers to Plutarch as his "grandfather," Syrianus being his "father"), invented the distinction between transcendent causes, which are causes in a proper sense, and immanent causes, which are really only conjoint causes. According to Proclus, Plutarch claimed that Parmenides' five hypotheses can be divided into three about "One" and two about "Non-existence" or "Others." The first hypothesis is about God, the second about Intellect, the third about Soul, the fourth about enmattered form, and the fifth about matter. Numbers 1, 2 and 3 are transcendent causes, while 4 and 5 are not transcendent causes but rather the above-mentioned conjoint causes, a category of cause first distinguished by Plato in the *Phaedo*, which Proclus cites here.<sup>17</sup> Proclus approvingly concludes (*In Parm.* 1061,8–10) that there

<sup>16</sup> Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 13.1 (*ad* 1076a10) [*CAG* VI/1, ed. W. Kroll, Berlin, 1902], 82,2–13 and 14.5 (*ad* 1079b24), 118,25–26; Proclus, *In Parm.*, 983,1–3 (following, with Morrow and Dillon, Westerink's suggestion of τελικὰ for Cousin's τέλεια καὶ; see Morrow and Dillon, *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, 336); *In Tim.*, Vol. 1, ed. E. Diehl, Leipzig, 1903, 2,1–4,5; 4,26–28; 17,15–30 (tr. A. Festugière, *Proclus: Commentaire sur le Timée* [Paris: J. Vrin, 1966–8], 1:24–26, 27, and 45); 263,19–264,3 (tr. Festugière, 2:104–105); and Vol. 3, ed. E. Diehl, Leipzig, 1906, 126,11–13 (tr. Festugière, 4:162). At Proclus, *In Tim.*, Vol. 1, 239,24–240,1 (tr. Festugière, 2:71–72), and Vol. 3, 226,10–18 (tr. Festugière, 5:89), the efficient cause is referred to as ὑφ' οὐ, the paradigmatic as πρὸς ὅ, and the final as δι' ὅ, this being an example of what is sometimes called the "prepositional metaphysics" of the Neoplatonists. The prepositional scheme reappears in Simplicius, *In Phys.* 1.1 (*ad* 184a10), 10,32–11,5, and is applied to the αἴτια κυρίως/συναίτια distinction in Philoponus, *In Phys.* 1.1 (*ad* 184a10), 5,7–25.

<sup>17</sup> Proclus, *In Parm.* 1058,21–1059,19 (tr. Morrow and Dillon, 414–415). Plato hints at the distinction between true causes and συναίτια at *Phaedo* 99B2–4; *Gorgias* 519B1–2; and *Statesman* 281D11–E10; 287B6–8; 287C7–8; the distinction is articulated most explicitly at *Timaeus* 46C7–47A1 and 76D4–8. Because Proclus read the *Phaedo* with Plutarch, and the *Timaeus* with Syrianus (Marinus, *Vita Procli*, chapters 12 and 13; cited by Sorabji, "The ancient commentators on Aristotle," 7), it is difficult to determine whether Proclus learned of the distinction between transcendent causes, which are causes in a strict sense, and immanent causes, which are conjoint causal factors, directly from Plutarch (i.e., when reading the *Phaedo*) or indirectly through Syrianus (i.e., when reading the *Timaeus*).

are four principles after the first, two transcendent and two conjoined (τέσσαρες οὖν αἱ ἀρχαὶ μετὰ τὴν μίαν δύο μὲν ἐξηρημέναι δύο δὲ συμπληρωτικάι).

The second way the Neoplatonists employed the transcendent/immanent distinction as a criterion was not in order to distinguish between the *domains* in which different causes operate but rather to distinguish between *types* of cause. Sometimes, as I just explained, the Neoplatonists used the transcendent/immanent distinction to buttress their rigid assignment of domains to each set of causes, with transcendence as the criterion by which the final, paradigmatic and efficient causes were judged to operate in the divine, superlunary world of eternal being, and immanence as the criterion by which formal, instrumental and material causes were judged to operate in the natural, sublunary world of coming-to-be and passing-away. (Occasionally the different causes were held to occupy even more rigidly assigned *stations* within each domain, with, to take the superlunary world as an example, the final causality of the Good at the top, the paradigmatic causality of the Ideas in the middle, and the efficient causality of the Demiurge at the bottom.)

Other times, however, the Neoplatonists' use of the transcendent/immanent distinction took the form of a general law, according to which final and efficient causes *in general* are extrinsic or transcendent, while formal and material causes *in general* are intrinsic or immanent. In most cases the Neoplatonists turned to this second way of employing the transcendent/immanent distinction when they were not constructing their own theories in independent treatises or commenting on one of Plato's texts, but were instead commenting on one of Aristotle's texts.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Dexippus, *In Cat.* [CAG IV/2, ed. A. Busse, Berlin, 1888], 7,16 (τῶν γὰρ αἰτίων ἃ μὲν ἐστὶν ἕξω χωριστά ἃ δὲ συμπάρεστιν); Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 13.10 (*ad* 1086b14), 162,25–27 (ὁμοῦς δὲ οὐχ εἷς ὁ λόγος περὶ πασῶν ἀρχῶν, ἀλλ' αἱ μὲν στοιχειώδεις ἀχώριστοι, αἱ δὲ) κυρίως ἀρχαὶ χωρισταί); Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* Vol. 3.2, ed./tr. H. Saffrey and L. Westerink, *Theologie platonicienne* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1978), 11,10–11 (πρὸ τῶν συντεταγμένων αἰτίων τὰ ἐξηρημένα); Vol. 5.2, ed./tr. Saffrey/Westerink, *ib.* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1987), 13,19–20 (τάς μὲν ἐξηρημένους αἰτίας . . . τὰς δὲ συντεταγμένας); 5.16, 53,19–20 (ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐξηρημένως αἰτιός ἐστι τῶν ἀπογεννωμένων, ὁ δὲ προσεχῶς); Philoponus, *In DA* 1.1 (*ad* 402a21) [CAG XV, ed. M. Hayduck, Berlin, 1897], 32,18–19 (ἀλλ' αὐταὶ μὲν ἀρχαὶ συντεταγμένα καὶ οἷον στοιχειώδεις εἰσὶν ἀρχαί, τὸ δὲ συνεχές καὶ τὸ διωρισμένον ἐξηρημένα); *In Meteor.* 1.2 (*ad* 339a21) [CAG XIV/1, ed. M. Hayduck, Berlin, 1901], 11,8–11 (ἄλλο γὰρ ὅτι τὸ ἐξηρημένον αἴτιον κυρίως ἐστὶ πρῶτον αἴτιον. . . πρῶτον οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ

Applying this law to Aristotle's texts required less effort than might be expected, even given the ambiguities discussed in the first part of this article. For though Aristotle himself nowhere makes a canonical distinction between transcendent and immanent causes, in *Physics* 2.3 he contrasts the material cause and the efficient cause, saying that the material cause is "present in" or "immanent in" (ἐνυπάρχον) its effect.<sup>19</sup> Philoponus, perhaps following the implication—discussed above—of the *G4*, took the next step, stating explicitly that in contrast to the material cause, the efficient cause comes to its effect from outside (ἐξῶθεν).<sup>20</sup>

Aristotle himself fleshes out the implication of *Physics* 2.3 when, in *Metaphysics* 5.1, he comes close to articulating a distinction between principles that are present in (ἐνυπάρχον) their effects, and principles that are not present in (μὴ ἐνυπάρχον) and thus extrinsic to (ἐκτός) their effects.<sup>21</sup> And while it is not really clear that Aristotle meant for the distinction to be applied to anything other than the difference between material and the efficient principles, Alexander of Aphrodisias extended the category of μὴ ἐνυπάρχον to cover final causes as well as efficient causes.<sup>22</sup> With Alexander now providing some Peripatetic cover, Syrianus, Proclus, Ammonius, Asclepius, Philoponus and Simplicius then paired the formal and material causes (that is, the "conjoint" or "contributory" causes), claiming that they are present in their effects, in contrast to the final and efficient causes (that is, the causes "in a proper sense") which are extrinsic to their effects.<sup>23</sup>

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συντεταγμένον αἴτιον ὁ οὐρανός); and Simplicius, *In Cat.* (ad 1b25) [CAG VIII, ed. C. Kalbfleisch, Berlin, 1907], 66,2–3 (μήποτε οὐ, διττῆς οὐσης τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς μὲν συντεταγμένης τῆς δὲ ἐξηρημένης). The Neoplatonists' use of the term συντεταγμένον appears to derive from Plato, *Laws* 930B6 and D3–4.

<sup>19</sup> ἐνυπάρχοντος at *Phys.* 2.3, 194b24/wa-huwa fihī, Aristūtālīs, at-Ṭabī'a, 101.1.

<sup>20</sup> Philoponus *In Phys.* 2.3 (ad 194b23), 243,29–244,3 (ἐξῶθεν appears at 244,1).

<sup>21</sup> ἐνυπάρχοντος at *Metaph.* 5.1, 1013a4/wa-huwa fī š-šay'i at *Tafsīr ma ba'd at-Tabī'at*, 2:473.8, and μὴ ἐνυπάρχοντος at 1013a7/wa-laysa huwa fihī at *Tafsīr ma ba'd at-Tabī'at*, 2:474.3; τούτων δὲ αἰ μὲν ἐνυπάρχουσαι εἰσιν αἰ δὲ ἐκτός at *Metaph.* 5.1, 1013a19–20/wa-ba'ādu l-ibtida'āti fī l-ašyā'i wa-ba'ādhā hiya hārīga at *Tafsīr ma ba'd at-Tabī'at*, 2:474.11–12.

<sup>22</sup> Alexander, *In Metaph.* 5.1 (ad 1012b34) [CAG I, ed. M. Hayduck, Berlin, 1891], 345,37–346,16 (tr. W. Dooley, *Alexander of Aphrodisias On Aristotle Metaphysics 5* [London: Duckworth, 1993], 13–14).

<sup>23</sup> See Syrianus (whose commentary on Book 3 of the *Metaphysics* was translated into Arabic; see al-Qifī, *Ta'rīḥ al-Hukamā'*, ed. J. Lippert [Leipzig: Th. Weicher, 1903], 42.6), *In Metaph.* 3.1 (ad 995b27), 7,8–10 (where he cites Alexander as the source of the distinction); and 3.2 (ad 996a21), 13,30–14,38; Proclus, *Inst. Theol.*, ed./tr. E.R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), Prop. 75, 70,28–72,4; *In Tim.*,

The Neoplatonic effort to integrate the immanent/transcendent distinction with Aristotle's four-cause theory emerged in early Arabic philosophy, where the first evidence I can find of the distinction is contained in al-Fārābī's lost commentary on the *Physics*, an epitome of which is preserved in Latin. There al-Fārābī distinguishes between matter and form, which are inside the thing which they cause, and the agent and end, which are outside: *materia et forma (que due sunt intra rem) et agens et finis (que due sunt extra rem)*.<sup>24</sup>

In his article Jolivet cited and discussed a number of passages where Avicenna articulates the immanent/transcendent distinction. What I shall now do is provide translations of those passages in the chronological order suggested by Gutas;<sup>25</sup> and add to the passages cited by Jolivet two more passages, one from Avicenna's first treatment of four-cause theory, in the *Hikma al-ʿArūḍīya*, his earliest philosophical *summa*, and the other from the *Risāla al-ʿArṣīya*. I shall then make some tentative suggestions about how Avicenna's thought on this issue may have progressed, and what that progression tells us about his place in the history of philosophy.

1) *Al-Hikma al-ʿArūḍīya*<sup>26</sup>

“Origin” (*al-mabdaʿ*) is that upon which a thing's existence depends, either its matter, if it is material; or its form, if it is composed of mat-

Vol. 1, 237,9–11 and 239,24–240,1 (tr. Festugière, op. cit., 2:68 and 71–72); Vol. 3, 196,14–16 and 202,13–14 (tr. Festugière, 5:54–55 and 61); Asclepius, *In Metaph.* 1.9 (ad 991a8) [*CAG* VI/2, ed. M. Hayduck, Berlin, 1888], 84,7–33 and (ad 991a19) 87,29–30; 5.1 (ad 1013a17), 305,2–17 (where the distinction is stated most canonically: some principles—the formal and material—are present in the effect [αἱ μὲν ἐνυπάρχουσιν], while others—the final and efficient—are extrinsic to the effect [αἱ δὲ ἐκτός]); Philoponus, *In Phys.* 2.3 (ad 194b16), 241,3–5, and implied at *In Phys.* 2.3 (ad 195a26), 252,19–21 (tr. Lacey, op. cit., 53 and 64); Simplicius, *In Phys.* 2.3 (ad 195a3), 316,22–29 (tr. Fleet, op. cit., 74).

<sup>24</sup> Al-Fārābī, *Epitome of Aristotle's Physics*, ed. A. Birkenmajer, “Eine wiedergefundene Übersetzung Gerhards von Cremona,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters*, Suppl. 3.1 (1935), 475.7–8.

<sup>25</sup> D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition, Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Texts and Studies, 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 145 (and 79–145 *passim*).

<sup>26</sup> Unlike many other sections of the *Hikma al-ʿArūḍīya*, this passage is not copied in *an-Nağāt*. The following is a transcription of the passage (MS Uppsala Or. 364, 4v16–5r5):

المبدأ هو ما يتعلق | وجود الشيء به وهو اما مادته ان كان مادياً واما صورته ان كان مركباً || من مادة وصورة  
واما غايته ان كان لغاية ما وجد والميسر والمعين | والالة تلتحق بالفاعل والمثال لنقصان ذات الفاعل عن ان  
يصدر عنه | <و> يوجد منه ما <هو> الفعل <و> الجوهر المركب له سببان مقارنان مادته وصورته | وسببان  
مفارقان فاعله وغايته والعرض له ثلاثة اسباب ليس | فيها الصورة والصورة والمفارقات لها سببان الفاعل  
والغاية \*

ter and form; or its end, if it exists for some end; whereas that which facilitates and particularizes, and the instrument, attach as concomitants to the agent; and the paradigm [exists] because of that very agent's imperfection with respect to the act's issuing and existing from it. A composite substance has two conjoint causes (*sababāni muqārīnāni*)—its matter and its form—and two transcendent causes (*sababāni mufāraqāni*)—its agent and its end. An accident has three causes, of which form is not one. Form and the separate [substances] have two causes: agent and end.

2) *Kitāb al-Hidāya*<sup>27</sup>

140.2–4: Every composite thing which comes-to-be has a cause. The cause is either an agent, or a receptor, or a form in the composite, or an end for the sake of which it exists, since the instrument and the paradigm perfect the agent as an agent in act (*idī l-ālatu wa-l-miṭālu yukmilāni l-fā'ila fā'ilan bi-l-fīl*).

237.4–5: Forms are causes as well as effects. But they are causes in association (*bi-l-mulāqāti*), since they necessitate the existence of what they are associated with, not what they are distinct from (*fa-innahā tūḡibu wuḡūda ma tulāqīhi dūna mā tubāyīnuhū*).

243.5–244.3: The effect of each one [of the four causes] is either conjoined with that very [cause] (*muqārīnuhū fī dātīhi*) or is not like this. A conjoined effect is either such that the cause is a part of its constitution (*ḡuz'u qiwāmihū*) or not. If the cause is a part of its constitution, then either [the part] is such that, left to itself, it is potentially an effect, such as wood for a chair, and [this] is the matter; or it is such that its coming-to-be necessitates the effect's being actual—such as “bedness”—and [this] is the form. If it [the cause] is not a part, then the effect cannot possibly be a part of it [i.e., of the cause], since a part is a constituent, but will instead be conjoined, without being a part of the constitution of the very thing it is conjoined to. And [such a thing] is either an accident, whose cause is the substrate; or the matter, whose cause is the form. Now that [kind of cause] which is separate (*mufāraqun*) without being accidental is either [that] for the sake of [which], namely the end, or that from which but not for the sake of which, namely the agent.

3) *Uyūn al-ḥikma*<sup>28</sup>

Every cause is either a part of that of which it is a cause, or it is not (*kullu sababīn immā an yakūna ḡuz'an mim mā huwa sababun aw lā yakūna*). If it is a part, either it is that part of [the effect's] existence which, [when viewed] in isolation, bestows actuality on that of which it is a

<sup>27</sup> Ed. M. 'Abduh, 2nd ed., Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira al-Ḥadīṭa, 1974.

<sup>28</sup> Ed. 'A.R. Badawī, *Avicennae Fontes sapientiae*, Mémorial Avicenne, 5 (Cairo: IFAO, 1954), 52.3–11.

part; or it is that part of [the effect's] existence which, [when viewed] in isolation, bestows potentiality. That which bestows potentiality—that is, [that] by which a thing is potential and [that] in which a thing's potentiality is contained—is its “matter” and “*hylē*”; the other, which renders it necessary and is one of the causes which render [their effects] necessary, is called a “form.” The causality of that which is *not* a part is directed at the subsistence of that other [that is, directed at the subsistence of the form] while itself either being distinct [from that form] or connected [to that form] (*bi-mubāyanati dātihī aw bi-muwāṣalati dātihī*). That which is [so] while itself being connected is called a “substrate”; while that which is [so] while itself being distinct either gives existence to that which is distinct from it by being [that] for the sake of which [the effect exists], or it does not. That for the sake of which the distinct [effect's] existence is dependent is called an “end”; and what is not that for whose sake [the distinct effect's existence is dependent] is an “agent.” Both are causes which render [their effects] necessary.

4) *Kūtab aš-Šifā'*: *al-Ilāhīyāt*<sup>29</sup>

We say that a thing's cause must either be intrinsic to its constitution and a part of its existence, or not (*immā an yakūna dāḥilan fī qiwāmihī wa-ḡuz'an min wuḡūdihī aw lā yakūna/vel est intra essentiam rei et pars esse eius vel non*). If it is intrinsic to [the thing's] constitution and a part of its existence, then either it is the part on account of whose existence alone it is not necessary that [the thing] be in actuality, but rather only in potentiality, and is called “*hylē*”; or it is the part whose existence is identical to the [thing's] coming to be in actuality, and is “form.” If it is not a part of [the thing's] existence, then either it is that for whose sake [the thing] is, or it is not. If it is that for whose sake [the thing] is, it is the “end.” If it is not that for whose sake [the thing] is, then either [the thing's] existence comes from it with it not being contained in [the thing] except in an accidental way—and is the “agent”—or [the thing's] existence comes from it with it being contained in [the thing], and is also the “element” or “substrate.”

5) *Kūtab an-Naḡāt*<sup>30</sup>

What is more, [a principle] must be either like a part of that whose effect it is, or not like a part. If it is like a part, it is either a part as a result of whose coming-to-be in actuality it does not follow that what is its effect exists in actuality (this being the element) . . . or [it is a part] as a result of whose existence in actuality the existence of its

<sup>29</sup> Ed. M.Y. Mūsā, S. Duniyā and S. Zā'id (Cairo: Wizārat at-Taḡāfa wa-l-Irṣād al-Qāwmi, 1380/1960), 258.1–8/Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina V–X*, ed. S. van Riet (Louvain: E. Peters, 1980), 292.27–36.

<sup>30</sup> Cairo, 1913, 344.2–14.

effect in actuality follows necessarily (this being the form). . . . If it is not like a part then it is either distinct from or associated with the effect itself (*immā an yakīna mubāyinan aw mulāqīyan li-dāti l-ma'lūl*). If it is associated, either the effect will be qualified by it (this being like the form for the matter [i.e., as opposed to the form for the composite]), or it will be qualified by the effect (this being like the substrate for the accident). If it is distinct, it will either be that from which the effect's existence comes, while not being that for whose sake [the effect's] existence is (this being the agent); or it will not be that from which [the effect's] existence [comes], but instead be that for whose sake [the effect's] existence is (this being the end).

6) *Dānišnāmah-yi 'Alā'ī: Ilāhīyāt*<sup>31</sup>

There are two types of cause, one which is contained in the effect itself (*andar dāt-i ma'lūl*) of which it is a part, and another which is extrinsic to the effect itself (*bīrūn az dāt-i ma'lūl*) of which it is not a part. The cause which is contained in the effect itself is of but two types. . . . One is called the elemental cause, and the other is called the formal cause. The cause which is extrinsic to the thing is either a cause for whose sake the thing is, or it is not a cause for whose sake the thing is, but is instead that from which [the thing] is. The former is called the final or perfecting cause . . . while the other is called the efficient cause.

7) *Ar-Risāla al-'Aršīya fī ḥaqā'iq at-tawḥīd wa-itbāt an-nubūwa*<sup>32</sup>

A thing's cause is either intrinsic to its constitution and a part of its existence (*dāḥīlan fī qiwāmihī wa-ḡuz'an min wuḡūdihī*) or it is extrinsic to it (*ḥārīḡan 'anhu*). If it is intrinsic, it will either be the part in respect

<sup>31</sup> *Ilāhīyāt-i Dānišnāmah*, Silsilah-yi intišārāt-i anḡumān-i ātār-i millī, Yādgār-i ḡašn-i hazārah-yi Abū 'Alī Sīnā, Collection du millénaire d'Avicenne, 15, ed. M. Mu'īn (Tehran: Dānišgāh-yi Tīhrān, 1331Š/1951), 53.9–54.9.

<sup>32</sup> Ed. I Hilāl, Cairo, s.n., 18.5–11. In private correspondence David Reisman has alerted me to pieces of terminological, conceptual and grammatical evidence which cause him to suspect that the *Risāla al-'Aršīya* which we have before us today in Hilāl's edition is not Avicenna's *al-Ḥikma al-'Aršīya* but instead a later work, probably from the Iṣrāqī tradition. These pieces of evidence are compelling, and I too now wonder whether the *Risāla al-'Aršīya* should in fact be assigned to Avicenna. But my general sense (admittedly unproven) is that later Islamic philosophical texts almost always presented the distinction between efficient and final causes on the one hand, and formal and material causes on the other, in terms of the *Iṣārāt's* causes-of-existence/causes-of-essence distinction, rather than in terms of the transcendent/immanent distinction found in Avicenna's earlier works. Therefore the fact that the *Risāla al-'Aršīya* passage offers us the transcendent/immanent distinction (not to mention that it articulates the distinction in a very similar way to the *Šifā'*) makes me inclined, in the absence of decisive evidence otherwise, to uphold its attribution to Avicenna.

of which the thing is potential and not actual, namely the matter; or it will be the part in respect of which the thing comes to be actual, namely the form. If it is extrinsic, it will have to be either that from which the thing's existence comes, namely the agent; or it will be that for whose sake the thing's existence is, namely the purpose and end.

8) *Kitāb al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*<sup>33</sup>

Warning: Something may be caused with reference to its essence and its inner reality (*bi-ṭibārī māhīyatihī wa-haqīqatihī*), and it may be caused in its existence (*fi wuḡūdihi*). You can consider the triangle as an example of this. Its inner reality is causally dependent on the plane and the line which is its side, both of which constitute it inasmuch as it is a triangle and possesses the inner reality of triangularity, as if the two were its material and formal causes. As far as its existence is concerned, [the triangle] is sometimes dependent on a cause other than these, one which is not a cause that constitutes its triangularity and that is a part of its definition. This is the efficient cause, or the final, which is the efficient cause of the efficient cause.

To my mind what is striking about the preceding passages is that a major shift can be detected between Avicenna's first articulation of the distinction between formal and material causes on the one hand, and final and efficient causes on the other, and his last articulation of that distinction. Avicenna's first articulation of the distinction, in the *Hikma al-'Arūḍīya* passage, is contained in a brief discussion of the term *mabda'*, "origin" or "principle," corresponding to the Greek ἀρχή. This gives us a hint that Avicenna viewed the distinction between immanent and transcendent causes as part of a tradition of interpreting *Metaphysics* 5.1, Aristotle's own discussion of ἀρχή. In fact, the metaphysics section of the *Hikma al-'Arūḍīya* appears in general to be a version of the "philosophical lexicon" Aristotle offers in *Metaphysics* 5. In addition to *mabda'*, terms such as "potentiality" (*qūwa/δύναμις*; *Metaph.* 5.12), "activity" (*fi'l*), "necessary" (*wāḡib/ἀναγκαιόν*; *Metaph.* 5.5), "eternal" (*qadīm*), "perfect" (*tāmm/τέλειον*; *Metaph.* 5.16), "universal" (*kullī/ὄλον*; *Metaph.* 5.26) and "prior" (*qabla/πρότερα*; *Metaph.* 5.11) are discussed.

All the other passages—apart from the one from the *Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*—are simply reworkings of the distinction first articulated in the *Hikma al-'Arūḍīya*. The only conspicuous change is that Avicenna

<sup>33</sup> Ed. J. Forget, *Ibn Sīnā: Le Livre des théorèmes et des avertissements* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1892), 139.14–20.

includes the Neoplatonists' instrumental and paradigmatic causes in the earliest treatments of the four causes, that is, in the *Ḥikma al-'Arūḍīya* and the *Hidāya*, but discards them in subsequent works. As a result, the *Hidāya* passage can be seen to link Avicenna's earliest works, such as the *Ḥikma al-'Arūḍīya*, with those of his middle period, such as the *'Uyūn al-ḥikma, Kitāb aš-Šifā'*, *Kitāb an-Nağāt* and *Dānišnāmah-yi 'Alā'ī*. (What many of the middle-period works also have in common—unlike the *Ḥikma al-'Arūḍīya*—is the further distinction between matter as cause and substrate as cause, a distinction which Avicenna may have inherited from Simplicius, who in turn traces its provenance to Alexander and ultimately to Boethus, the pupil of Aristotle's editor, Andronicus of Rhodes.)<sup>34</sup>

Most remarkable, however, is the fact that in the *Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt* passage, Avicenna's final articulation of the distinction, the formal and material causes are held to be distinct from the final and efficient causes not because the former pair is intrinsic to or immanent in the effect, while the latter pair is extrinsic to or transcends the effect. Instead, the criterion by which the two pairs of causes are judged to be distinct now consists in the fact that the formal and material causes are held to be causes of *essence*, while the final and efficient causes are held to be causes of *existence*. In other words, Avicenna now appeals to his own, more basic distinction between essence and existence, in order to supply the foundation on which formal and material causes can be distinguished from final and efficient causes. Because Avicenna's distinction between immanent and transcendent causes has now been exposed as part of a long tradition of interpreting Aristotle's four-cause theory, a "déplacement" can truly be said to have occurred only in the *Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt*, where Aristotle's four causes are now distinguished between those of essence and those of existence, instead of between those which are immanent and those which are transcendent.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Simplicius *In Phys.* 1.7 (ad 189b32), 211,13–20.

<sup>35</sup> One problem remains. Even if we accept that the *Risāla al-'Arṣīya* which we have before us today in Hilāl's edition is truly Avicenna's *al-Ḥikma al-'Arṣīya*, as I suggested in note 32, there is other evidence, again pointed out to me by David Reisman, which suggests that the *Risāla al-'Arṣīya* may have been written *after* the *Iṣārāt*. (The evidence is contained in *al-Mubāḥaṭa al-tānīya*, paragraphs 32–35 [*Kitāb al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, ed. M. Bīdārfar (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Bīdār, 1413/1992), 49.1–50.2].) If this is the case, we will have to suppose that in the *Risāla al-'Arṣīya* Avicenna reverted to his old way of dividing the causes. Clearly more research needs to be done on the *Risāla al-'Arṣīya* than is feasible in the present article.

I argue elsewhere that Avicenna's metaphysics is best understood as representing the culmination of one tradition and the beginning of another. The tradition which culminates in Avicenna's metaphysics is what I have called the Ammonian synthesis, by which I refer to the Neoplatonic project of inventing new metaphysical tools for the purpose of integrating Platonic cosmology and Aristotelian natural philosophy. In another sense Avicenna's metaphysics lays the ground for a new synthesis, one between Neoplatonized Arabic Aristotelianism and the Islamic theology of the classical *mutakallimūn*. The shift in Avicenna's method of dividing Aristotle's four causes, from the Neoplatonists' immanent/transcendent distinction to his own essence/existence distinction, which was itself inspired by *kalām* discussions of things and existents, can be seen as yet another example of how Avicenna bridges these two periods in the history of philosophy.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> R. Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, forthcoming; see also my "Notes on Avicenna's concept of thingness (*ṣay'iyya*)," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 10.2 (2000), 181–221, for evidence that Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence derived from *kalām* discussions of things and existents.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INTELLECT VERSUS ACTIVE INTELLECT: PLOTINUS AND AVICENNA\*

Rahim Acar

#### *Introduction*

It is worth comparing Avicenna's conception of the active intellect to Plotinus' conception of the cosmic Intellect with regard to two issues: 1) whether the function of the active intellect of Avicenna is the same as, or similar to, the function of the cosmic Intellect of Plotinus in causing the existence of the human soul; and 2) whether the active intellect's function is the same as, or similar to, the function of the cosmic Intellect in leading human potential intellect to the stage of actual intellect and providing it with intellectual knowledge. I argue that since neither the cosmic Intellect, nor the cosmic Soul of Plotinus stands to the human soul in the manner that the active intellect does in Avicenna, Plotinus' teachings do not show a traceable influence upon Avicenna with regard to the existence of the human soul and actualization of the human potential intellect. However, Plotinus' influence on Avicenna must be acknowledged with regard to the source of intellectual knowledge, namely intellectual knowledge is received directly from the active intellect.

In addition to highlighting the differences between Avicenna and Plotinus, I will make some remarks on the work of Herbert Davidson,<sup>1</sup> who produced some of the finest scholarship on this issue. In his article "Alfarabi and Avicenna on the Active Intellect," and his book, *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes on Intellect*, Davidson draws on material

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\* I would like to thank Professor Robert Wisnovsky (Harvard University) for encouraging me to write on this topic, and for reading a draft of it and making valuable suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> Herbert A. Davidson, "Alfarabi and Avicenna on the Active Intellect," *Viator* 3 (1972), 109–179 [hereafter Davidson 1972]; and id., *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect, Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) [hereafter Davidson 1992].

from Plotinus that he thinks is relevant to Avicenna's conception of the existential and epistemological functions of the active intellect. Since Davidson's goal is not simply limited to the existential and epistemological functions of intellect with regard to the human soul, but with regard to the whole physical universe, he is justified in bringing in passages from paraphrases of Plotinus. However, the connection between Plotinus' conception of the cosmic Intellect and Avicenna's conception of the active intellect is not as strong as Davidson's discussion suggests. Given the fact that Avicenna knew Alexander's and Themistius' commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima*, and given the fact that Avicenna's position looks closer to their position than that of Plotinus, the passages from Plotinus that Davidson discusses to establish the influence of Plotinus do not demonstrate anything more than that Avicenna utilized Plotinus' scheme of emanation.

*Plotinus on the Origination of the Human Soul*

It seems essential to draw a general outline of Plotinus' cosmology in order to understand how Plotinus conceives the origination of the human soul and the character of the relationship between the human soul and its cause. According to Plotinus everything except for the One exists as an emanation from its cause above. God or the One emanates Intellect, i.e., the cosmic Intellect, the latter emanates Soul, i.e., the cosmic Soul, and the cosmic Soul, in turn, emanates what is below.<sup>2</sup>

Although the cosmic Soul is not an independent agent, it is the immediate cause of the physical universe below. The cosmic Soul is in between the intelligible and the material realms, as the effect of the cosmic Intellect and the cause of the physical world below. Although there are three modes of existing (intelligible, psychic and material) there are only two realms of existence: intelligible and material. "Soul" is either in the intelligible realm, or in the material realm, because it does not have its own realm.<sup>3</sup> The cosmic Soul is

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<sup>2</sup> *Uṭūlūḡiyyā Aristūṭālīs/Theology of Aristotle*, ed. 'A.R. Badawī in *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'arab/Plotinus apud Arabes*, Dirāsāt Islāmīya, 20 (Cairo: Maktabat an-Nahḍa al-Miṣrīya, 1955) [hereafter *Theology*], 50.9–10; 135.11–16, 136.1–8.

<sup>3</sup> While Plotinus does occasionally speak of three realms, e.g., *Theology*, 19.16–17, 145–146, passim, his basic distinction is twofold: *al-'ālam al-'ulwī/aṣ-ṣarīf* and *al-'ālam*

in the intelligible realm. It is intellect in some sense, but still different from it. The difference between the cosmic Intellect and the cosmic Soul consists in the latter's being affected by lower things and in its having a desire towards them, or not. While the cosmic Intellect is not affected by lower things, and does not desire them,<sup>4</sup> the cosmic Soul has desire to do things, to create, and to govern. The fact that it does not have its own realm makes the cosmic Soul subsequent to and dependent on the cosmic Intellect, not only with regard to its own existence, but also with regard to creating the world below. In fact such a relationship of dependence is interwoven into the whole system of emanation. In this sense every effect depends on its cause for its existence, and hence for its acts.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the cosmic soul is a means of the cosmic intellect, through the mediation of which the cosmic intellect acts.<sup>6</sup> Thus, although the cosmic intellect is the true and ultimate agent behind what happens in the material world, it is not in direct contact with it. The cosmic Intellect emanates the cosmic Soul, and the cosmic Soul does the rest. The Arabic Plotinus writes:

The soul, therefore, is an intellect which is informed (*taṣawwara*) with desire. However, the soul may either have a universal desire or a particular desire. When it desires universally, it makes (*ṣawwarat*) the universal forms actual, and governs (*dabbarat*) them in a universal, intelligible way without leaving its universal realm. When it desires particular things which are forms for its universal forms (*ṣawwar li-ṣawwarihā l-kullīya*), and decorates them (*zayyanat*), it makes them purer and more beautiful, and it repairs (*aṣlahat*) any defect that occurs to them, and governs them in a higher and nobler way than that of their immediate (*qarība*) causes, which are heavenly bodies.<sup>7</sup>

As Plotinus describes it, the cosmic Soul is an intellect, which is informed by a desire (*ṣawq*). With the desire it has, the cosmic Soul

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*as-sufṭī*, which refer to the intelligible and sensible realms respectively. For the prevalence of this twofold distinction, see, for example, *Theology*, 19.11, 20.2–4, 29–31, *passim*, 56.11–12.

<sup>4</sup> *Theology*, 18.16–19.1.

<sup>5</sup> In this sense God is the one who makes things exist and who fashions their forms; *Theology*, 51.11–17. Compare also Plotinus' statement about the emanation of everything below the cosmic Soul by the cosmic Soul itself, *Theology*, 86.12–18, and his statement that the heavenly bodies are immediate causes of material things, *Theology*, 19.8–13.

<sup>6</sup> *Theology*, 51.3–10.

<sup>7</sup> *Theology*, 19.8–13.

wants to act and to ornament things that it sees in the (pure) Intellect.<sup>8</sup> Seeing intelligibles in the cosmic Intellect, the cosmic Soul creates the world below as a reflection, or illustration of what it sees in the cosmic Intellect. It emanates the material world, and the forms that appear in the material world.

Soul emanates (*tufīd*) its power over this entire world . . . and nothing corporeal . . . is free of the power of Soul. . . . [E]ach body obtains of the power and goodness of Soul in accordance with its ability to receive that power and goodness. . . . [T]he goodness that Soul sends forth is “form,” the underlying recipient of the goodness sent forth being “matter.”<sup>9</sup>

The cosmic Soul’s emanation of the physical world may be through the mediation of nature. Depending on the particular thing that is at issue, it may be through the mediation of a series of vertically ordered causes.<sup>10</sup> The human soul is also among the things whose origin lies in the cosmic Soul.<sup>11</sup> It is emanated by the cosmic Soul, not by the cosmic Intellect. Moreover, the emanation of the human soul is immediate. The link between the human soul and the cosmic Soul is so strong that one may even question the applicability of the term emanation with regard to the existence of particular souls. That is, particular souls are not completely distinct from the

<sup>8</sup> *Theology*, 19.1–4.

<sup>9</sup> *Theology*, 86.12–18, and in Davidson 1972, 127. Davidson refers to the Arabic text in *Theology*, 78, paralleling *Enneads* 4.8.6. However, I could not find the Arabic text on that page; rather, the translation that Davidson supplies conforms to the Arabic text on 86.12–18.

<sup>10</sup> *Theology*, 50.9–10: “We say that God, the high and the noble, is the cause of the intellect, and the intellect is the cause of the soul, and the soul is the cause of nature, and nature is the cause of all the particular things that are subject to generation (*akwān*.” See also *Theology*, 19.12–13.

<sup>11</sup> I could not find a separate and detailed discussion of the emanation of the individual human souls in the *Theology*. But the idea that human souls are emanated by the cosmic Soul and that they are part of it can be supported by passages from the *Theology*. For example, if one wants to talk about the emanation of distinct individual souls, then one should attribute it to the cosmic Soul rather than the cosmic intellect. This is because individual souls are issued in time, and time and temporal things are under the control of the cosmic Soul and the cosmic Intellect does not act in time. See *Theology*, 30.6–14, 31.2–9. That the human souls do not descend directly from the cosmic Intellect but from the cosmic soul is confirmed by the text of *Enneads* and by modern scholarship on Plotinus. See *Enneads* 1.8.14 and 4.3.9 in Davidson 1992, 31; E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen* 3.2, 5th ed. (Leipzig, 1923), 603–4, apud Davidson 1992, 31; and H. Blumenthal, “Neoplatonic Elements in the *De Anima* Commentaries,” *Phronesis* 21 (1976), 73–74, apud Davidson 1992, 25.

cosmic Soul. In other words, they do not have an independent identity. As Plotinus clearly states: “When Soul comes to be in particular things, it is not imprisoned (*maḥṣūra*) in them, . . . but rather, it happens to be both in and out of them.”<sup>12</sup> Even the wording of Plotinus—or the person who paraphrased Plotinus’ work—is interesting. It does not speak of individual souls but rather of the cosmic Soul’s coming to exist in particular things. This shows how loose the connection of particular souls is to their bodies, and also how strong their connection is to their source, the cosmic Soul. Hence it is difficult to assert a distinct identity for individual souls on the basis of Plotinus’ teachings. This conclusion, i.e., that the human soul does not have a separate identity from the cosmic Soul in Plotinus, has some important echoes on the issue of the actualization of the human soul.

*Potency and Actualization of the Human Soul  
and Intellectual Knowledge in Plotinus*

Regarding the potency and actualization of the human potential intellect, two questions may be asked of Plotinus: 1) Is the soul in a state of absolute potentiality, when it enters into the material realm, that is, when it comes to exist as a particular human soul? And 2) Is the human soul something that has the possibility of becoming an intellect, at the beginning of its earthly journey?

Briefly stated, Plotinus’ answer to the second question is negative. The human soul is not something that becomes an intellect at the beginning of its career in the material world. It is soul at the beginning and it ends as a soul when it finishes governing a particular portion of matter. All individual souls, including the human soul, come from the cosmic Soul and return to it again, and not to the cosmic Intellect.<sup>13</sup> This is because particular souls coming from the cosmic Soul are not even totally independent from the cosmic Soul. When the cosmic Soul is associated with a particular body, this does not turn the particular soul into a potential intellect. Descending and associating with particular bodies does not change the existential status of the soul, even though it changes the conditions or status of the soul in terms of its ability to know intelligibles.

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<sup>12</sup> *Theology*, 19.13–15.

<sup>13</sup> *Theology*, 20.6–16, 21.1–3.

Discussing the ability of the human soul to perceive intelligibles leads to the answer to the first question. Plotinus states:

When the soul is in its intelligible place, it sees itself and things [in] there by its [own] power [fully], because things there are simple, and the simple is apprehended (*yudrikuhū*) by only something simple like itself. When the soul happens to be in the sensible realm, it receives that which is in the intelligible realm only by means of activity (*fīl*) that it makes use of here (*tastafīduhū hāhunā*), not by its own power. That is why [here in the material realm] the soul does not apprehend things that it used to see in the intelligible realm. That is because the activity (*fīl*) overwhelms (*yastāgriq*) the power [of the soul to apprehend intelligibles] in the sensible realm, and thus prevents the soul from apprehending what it used to apprehend.<sup>14</sup>

In the material realm, Soul's power to know intelligibles is weakened but not destroyed. Plotinus maintains that leaving its place in the intelligible realm and governing a certain particular body prevents Soul from enjoying the pure power of simple intelligible apprehension. However, it does not destroy the power of Soul to apprehend intelligible things,<sup>15</sup> because it has this power simply by being Soul. In this sensible realm, the human soul needs activity (*fīl*) in order to attain intellectual knowledge. But it does not start with such an absolute potency that an important transformation is required in the soul. In the material realm Soul has only to awaken (*nuhūd*) its power to know intelligibles by acting or striving for intellectual knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

This situation of the soul as particularized in a human being, i.e., as needing to strive for knowledge but being able to have it without any further condition, may correspond to the actual intellect of Avicenna which has passed two stages on the way to acquiring knowledge and which still needs to strive in order to acquire intellectual knowledge. Thus, it may be concluded that, according to Plotinus, the human soul is not potential in the sense that it is for Avicenna. Plotinus' theory reflects more of Plato's theory of the human soul's recollection of intelligibles than Aristotle's potential intellect becoming actual.

As I have noted above, according to Plotinus, intelligibles are found only in the intelligible realm, or in the cosmic Intellect. Even

<sup>14</sup> *Theology*, 100.2–8.

<sup>15</sup> *Theology*, 100.17–20.

<sup>16</sup> *Theology*, 102.1–4. For detailed discussions of the issue see *ibid.*, 99–103.

the cosmic Soul sees intelligibles in the cosmic Intellect; since it is soul it can only have what is “psychic.”<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the human soul can acquire knowledge of intelligibles only from the cosmic Intellect or the intelligible realm. There is only one difference between particular souls and the cosmic Soul in this respect. Whereas the cosmic Soul does not need to make an effort to know intelligibles, the human soul must make an effort to attain that knowledge, because its innate power to know intelligibles is overwhelmed upon entering the material realm.<sup>18</sup> But in any case, intellectual knowledge is attained only directly from the cosmic Intellect.

While there appears to be a genuine similarity between Plotinus’s concept of acquired intellect and that of Avicenna, in that Avicenna adopts the idea that intellectual knowledge is acquired from a transcendent intellect, nonetheless, the acquisition of intellectual knowledge has different implications for Plotinus and Avicenna.

### *Avicenna on the Origination of the Human Soul*

Before examining Avicenna’s position, I must address the manner in which I employ his writings on the soul. I draw on Avicenna’s writings on the soul in the *Šifā’* and the *Nağāt*, but they certainly do not cover all of what Avicenna wrote on the topic.<sup>19</sup> In the *Šifā’* and the *Nağāt*, Avicenna develops similar positions regarding the origination and the actualization of the human soul. But he may have elucidated divergent positions in other works. Such a posited divergence may be taken to represent an evolution in Avicenna’s conception of the soul. If so, the chronology of his works becomes

<sup>17</sup> *Theology*, 19.1–4.

<sup>18</sup> *Theology*, 129.10–20, 130.1–4.

<sup>19</sup> In addition to these two major works, Avicenna wrote a number of smaller treatises on the soul. Among these are the treatises collected by Aḥmad F. al-Ahwānī in *Aḥwāl an-Nafs*, *Risāla fī nafs wa-baqā’ihā wa-mā’ādihā* (Cairo: ‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1952). In addition to the title treatise, this collection includes *Mabḥaṭ ‘an al-quwā an-nafsāniya*, *Risāla fī ma’rifat an-nafs an-nāṭiqa wa-aḥwālīhā*, and *Risāla fī l-kalām ‘alā n-nafs an-nāṭiqa*. Jean Michot provides a French translation of the first section of the title treatise in “Avicenne, *La définition de l’âme*, section 1 de *L’épître des états de l’âme*, traduction critique et lexicque,” in *Langages et Philosophie, Hommage à Jean Jolivet*, ed. A. Elamrani-Jamal, A. de Libera, and A. Galonnier (Paris: J. Vrin, 1997), 239–256, and section 13 in “Prophétie et divination selon Avicenne,” *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 83 (1985), 507–535, with textual corrections of al-Ahwānī’s text.

important. However, while the chronology of Avicenna's works is indeed important for our understanding of the direction of this evolution, dating those writings lies beyond the scope of this article.<sup>20</sup>

I take Avicenna's conception of the soul as articulated in the *Šifā'* and the *Nağāt* to be representative of Avicenna's position because, even though in his other writings the articulation of Avicenna's position shows some divergences, these do not imply a radical split from his position as articulated in those two works.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Determining whether Avicenna's writings on the soul in the *Šifā'* and the *Nağāt* are earlier or later than his other writings is a topic of debate. Dimitri Gutas argues that Avicenna's treatise *Aḥwāl an-nafs* (ed. Ahwānī, op. cit.) was written before those two works and that it was used in composing them. J. Michot dates the treatise to sometime between 421–428/1030–1037 during Avicenna's stay in Isfahan. For a summary of both of their arguments, see Michot, "Avicenne, *La définition de l'âme*," 240–1.

<sup>21</sup> I cannot discuss here all of Avicenna's writings on the human soul to establish this assertion. However, without being exhaustive, I would like discuss Avicenna's position in the epistle *Aḥwāl an-nafs* as an example case. This epistle is one of the texts in which Avicenna may be expected to incline towards a more Neoplatonic position. I am interested in comparing Avicenna's position in this epistle to his position in the *Šifā'* and the *Nağāt* only to the extent that they are relevant to my topic. I give reference to the epistle but not to the *Šifā'* and *Nağāt*, since his position in those works belongs to the main discussion in the body of the paper. The issues on which Avicenna is likely to have diverged in the *Aḥwāl an-nafs* from his position in the *Šifā'* and the *Nağāt* may be summarized as follows. (1) Naming the human soul; Avicenna states (53) that, as far as the human soul's specific substance is concerned, he would not call it soul, except in a figurative sense, but he would call it intellect. (2) Avicenna uses the terms "cosmic intellect" and "cosmic soul," instead of the "active intellect;" he mentions (54) the cosmic soul and the cosmic intellect sympathetically when he reports the usage of the terms "soul" and "intellect" by the ancients. (3i) The relationship between the human soul and the body, in which the human rational soul is not imprinted in the body; when he explains (54, 90) that the genus of soul should be perfection not form, even though body should be taken into account in the definition of the soul, he states "This is because the subsistence (*qiwām*) of the rational soul is not such that it is imprinted in (*tanṭabīʿ*) in the body. When it is called 'form' this is just by way of homonymy (*ištirāk al-ism*)." And (3ii) the relationship between the human soul and the body in which the body is an instrument of the human soul (e.g., 56, 100); when explaining the emergence of the human soul, as well as in his definition of the soul, Avicenna argues (100) that when a portion of matter is available to serve as an instrument for the soul, then separate causes (*al-ʿilal al-mufāraqa*) make the human soul come to be. But neither of these diverging points shows a strong change in Avicenna's position in the *Šifā'* and the *Nağāt*. (1) Even though Avicenna says that he would call the human soul "intellect" and not a soul, this is with regard to the ultimate destination of the human soul. Human soul does not come to be as an actual intellect. It comes to exist with the body as a soul that has the possibility of becoming an intellect. (2) Avicenna's use of the terms "cosmic Soul" and "cosmic Intellect" may not be a firm criterion in arguing for a dependence on Plotinus. Avicenna seems to be reporting a less complicated account of the relationship between soul and intellect, even if he does not argue that it is strictly the case. He identifies (111)

In the *Šifā'* Avicenna explains the existence of the universe, i.e., everything other than God, through his version of the theory of emanation. The existence of the human souls is no exception to the process of emanation from above.<sup>22</sup> The principle that emanates the human soul is the active intellect, which is the last member of the celestial intelligences. It is the giver of all forms appearing in matter, from the lowest ones to the highest one. It emanates a human soul when a portion of matter is prepared to receive the form coming from the active intellect.<sup>23</sup> The human soul is the most developed

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the intellect that leads the human potential intellect to the level of actual intellect as an active intellect (*'aql fā'āl*), and he identifies one substance for the human soul's coming to exist. I emphasize that Avicenna does not refer to the cosmic Intellect, but to an active intellect. Avicenna clearly states (112) that there are many separate intellects and many heavenly souls. This makes it unlikely that Avicenna's use of "cosmic intellect" is the result of the influence of a Plotinian cosmological scheme. (3i) Based on Avicenna's argument that the human rational soul is not imprinted in the body, one may infer that Avicenna's conception of the relationship between the soul and the body is not as strong as he argues in the *Šifā'* and the *Nağāt*, although it is problematic. However, Avicenna argues in the *Šifā'*, as he does here, that the human rational soul is separable from the body; it does not undergo a corruption as a result of the corruption of the body at death. His statement "that human rational soul subsists by itself" is not a contradiction of his position in the *Šifā'*. He argues in the *Šifā'*, as he does here (e.g., 98), that the human soul undergoes a process of perfection. And its body and bodily conditions are the basis on which the soul's perfection and distinct identity depend. (3ii) Whether or not one can give a satisfactory answer to the problem of coherently combining Avicenna's two arguments, i.e., (a) the human soul's perfection is conditioned with its body, and (b) the body is an instrument of the soul and the soul occupies itself with the governance of the body (95), it is very difficult to consider Avicenna's position to be similar to that of Plotinus on the basis of Avicenna's argument that the body is an instrument of the soul. One has to take into account both arguments in understanding Avicenna's position.

There are, however, topics on which Avicenna has the same position in the *Šifā'* and in this treatise. For example, he argues (100–101) that the human soul comes to exist when there is a body prepared to accept it. He also argues (96) that the soul does not exist before its existence in the body, because without the body there can be neither one nor many souls. Furthermore, Avicenna (111) describes the human soul as "material intellect." Finally, he describes (112) the human soul as potential intellect. Hence, despite some divergences between this treatise and the *Šifā'*, Avicenna argues in both that 1) the soul does not have a previous existence and it is emanated by an intellect, and 2) the soul is absolutely potential and becomes perfected in this life with the body.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed explanation of this process of emanation, see, for instance, Davidson 1992, 74–82.

<sup>23</sup> See Avicenna's *De Anima (Arabic Text), Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifā'*, ed. F. Rahman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 261; and F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology, An English translation of Kitāb al-Nağat, Book II, Chapter VI with Historico-Philosophical Notes and Textual Improvements on the Cairo Edition* (repr. Westport, CT, 1952), 59.

of the forms in the physical world, and it is the closest of them to separate entities.

Avicenna rejects the idea that the human soul comes from a pre-existing soul or that it exists before its association with the body.<sup>24</sup> Before the attachment of the human soul to the body, there can be neither numerically many souls nor one single soul that may be the source of the human soul. There can be no prior numerically different souls because the basis for numerical difference and identity of each individual soul is the portion of body receiving it at a certain time and under certain conditions. According to Avicenna, there also cannot be one single soul before its attachment to the body. If there were, the part of that one soul that is attached to the body and the rest would be different things and thus the soul would be divisible. This is not acceptable to Avicenna.

What Avicenna argues regarding the existence, or the origination, of the human soul amounts to two things: 1) the active intellect is the cause of the existence of the human soul; and 2) the human soul does not come from a pre-existing soul, or a group of pre-existing souls. This is exactly the opposite of what Plotinus teaches regarding the existence of particular souls or, more precisely, human souls. Whereas for Plotinus it is the cosmic Soul which causes the existence of the human soul and not the cosmic Intellect, for Avicenna it is the active intellect that is the cause which bestows existence on the human soul. There is a difference in the level of being between the cause and the effect. The cause is an intellect, which has a higher level in the ontological gradation; the effect is a soul, which is below its cause. This is an important point because the difference in level of being ensures the distinct identity of particular human souls. It also drives Avicenna to argue for the pure potency of the human intellect at the beginning of its life.

*Potency and Actualization of the Human Soul  
and Intellectual Knowledge in Avicenna*

The following is a broad outline of Avicenna's conception of the actualization of the human intellect. There are four stages of intel-

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<sup>24</sup> *Avicenna's Psychology*, 56–7; *Avicenna's De Anima*, 223–4.

lect that the human soul goes through: 1) potential intellect; 2) habitual intellect; 3) actual intellect; and 4) acquired intellect. With the exception of the level of acquired intellect, all previous levels are potential, albeit in different senses. The potency of the human potential intellect, or material intellect is “absolute ability (*al-istiḏād al-muṭlaq*) from which nothing happens to have come out in actuality (*lā yakūnu ḥarāḡa minhu bi-l-fīl*), like the potency of an infant (*tifl*) for writing.” After this “absolute potency” there then comes the level of “possible potency,” i.e., intellect *in habitu*, when the human soul has obtained primary intelligibles. These primary intelligibles are not acquired by effort (*iktisāb*), nor can one deny them once one knows them. Next is the level of “perfect potency,” i.e., actual intellect, when the human intellect has known some secondary intelligibles but is not paying attention to them at the moment. In that stage the human soul has the ability to know secondary intelligibles whenever it intends.<sup>25</sup>

The level of the acquired intellect is the highest stage in the actualization of the human intellect. In a sense it is the stage at which the human intellect is truly actual. It represents the moment when the human intellect actually knows intelligibles, when it actually perceives them. For Avicenna, this stage of the human intellect, when the human soul actually knows, is called “acquired” because the human soul acquires intellectual knowledge from the active intellect.<sup>26</sup> After having images of material things in the retentive imaginative power, the human soul ponders (*iṭṭalaʿa*) them. This activity of pondering particular images puts the human soul into conjunction with the active intellect. It makes the human soul ready to receive the emanation of abstract intelligibles from the active intellect.<sup>27</sup> The effect of the active intellect through this conjunction is not to turn particular images in the imaginative power of the human soul into universal intelligibles. Through this conjunction, abstract universal intelligibles come to the human soul directly from the active intellect. Hence the human soul has intelligibles only at the moment when it pays attention to them and receives them from the active intellect.

<sup>25</sup> *Avicenna's De Anima*, 48–9; see also *Avicenna's Psychology*, 50–1.

<sup>26</sup> *Avicenna's De Anima*, 50.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 235–6.

Since for Avicenna intellectual knowledge is found only in the active intellect and nowhere else, the human intellect has intellectual knowledge only when it actually attends to them. In other words, the human soul *knows* only when it is in conjunction with the active intellect, because the human soul cannot store intellectual knowledge.<sup>28</sup> The human soul has to receive the emanation of the active intellect every time it wants to have intellectual knowledge of a certain thing.<sup>29</sup> Thus, for Avicenna, conjunction with the active intellect is a “quotidian event” that occurs whenever the human soul actually thinks.<sup>30</sup>

Two issues highlight the differences between Avicenna and Plotinus: 1) potentiality of the human soul; and 2) the effect intellectual knowledge has on the human soul. With regard to the first issue, for Avicenna the human soul is devoid of even primary intelligibles, let alone the secondary intelligibles at the beginning of its existence in the body. The human soul has only an ability to ascend to a level of intellect to know intelligibles. Hence it is absolutely potential. For Plotinus, however, attachment to a particular body only weakens, or interferes with the human soul’s power to know intelligibles. It is not absolutely potential, since it comes from an actual source, i.e., the cosmic Soul, and it does not undergo a transformation. With regard to the second issue, for Avicenna the human soul develops into an actual intellect by attaining intellectual knowledge, crossing over from being a simple animal soul to being an intellect. However, for Plotinus, the human soul comes closer to its previous state by acquiring intellectual knowledge. That previous state is when it was in the intelligible realm, before descending into the material realm. Here, the theories of Plotinus and Avicenna differ markedly.

The conception of the acquired intellect is the topic in which Avicenna follows Plotinus’ lead. For Avicenna, acquired intellect is the state of the human soul at the moment when the human soul knows intelligibles. It is acquired intellect, (1) because the human soul acquires intellectual knowledge but does not produce intellectual knowledge on its own; and (2) the human soul acquires intellectual knowledge from the active intellect, because intellectual knowledge

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 247–8.

<sup>30</sup> Davidson 1992, 103.

can be found, or can exist, only in the active intellect. This conception of the acquired intellect based on the idea that only the active intellect has intellectual knowledge is definitely reminiscent of Plotinus' teachings. As stated above, for Plotinus, too, the cosmic Intellect is the source from which intellectual knowledge can be drawn. And it must be drawn directly. The similarity between Plotinus' position and that of Avicenna does not bear on the striving for intellectual knowledge,<sup>31</sup> but rather on the idea that intellectual knowledge must be received from a transcendent intellect, since intellectual knowledge cannot be anywhere, or contained in anything other than a pure intellect.<sup>32</sup>

### *Critique of Davidson*

Having compared Plotinus' conception of the cosmic intellect and Avicenna's conception of the active intellect with regard to their function in the existence and actualization of the human soul, it is appropriate to examine Davidson's works on this issue and make some remarks. In his works "Alfarabi and Avicenna on the Active Intellect" and *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes on Intellect*, Davidson considers Plotinus as one of Avicenna's possible sources, because he maintains that both Plotinus and Avicenna assign to intellect a double function: intellect functions (1) "as the cause of the existence of the universe below itself;" and (2) "as the cause of intellectual activity in the soul."<sup>33</sup>

Regarding the existential function of the intellect, Davidson's conclusion that there is a similarity between Plotinus and Avicenna in that both the cosmic Intellect and the active intellect produce the world below as a whole, but not specifically the human soul, is acceptable. However, the similarity between Avicenna's position and that of Plotinus lies simply in their common emanationist scheme,

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<sup>31</sup> This is because the idea that the human soul makes an effort to attain knowledge does not belong exclusively to Plotinus.

<sup>32</sup> Davidson 1992, 86.

<sup>33</sup> Davidson 1972, 125–6. Although the passage there follows Davidson's comments on Alexander, his reference in note 119, which refers the reader to notes 82–85, obviously assumes that the passages from Plotinus that he discusses shows Plotinus' influence on Avicenna. In Davidson 1992, 31–32, Davidson cites the same passages.

according to which what is above in the ontological hierarchy emanates what is below it. But whereas for Avicenna the active intellect is the immediate principle emanating the sublunar world, for Plotinus the cosmic Intellect is not the immediate principle; rather it is the cosmic Soul. Davidson tends to downplay the difference between Avicenna's position, which combines ontological and epistemological functions in the active intellect, and Plotinus' position, which assigns the ontological function to the cosmic Soul and the epistemological function to the cosmic Intellect.<sup>34</sup>

In his treatment of Avicenna's position regarding the active intellect's function in emanating forms in the sublunar world, Davidson points out the similarity between Avicenna's position and that of al-Fārābī in *Risāla fī l-'aql*, which Davidson believes shows Plotinus' influence. Davidson writes: "*Risāla* . . . represents an adaptation of Plotinus's position, wherein the active intellect, rather than Plotinus's cosmic Soul, continually emanates the forms of all natural objects in the sublunar world, and those forms actually appear whenever a portion of matter is ready to receive them."<sup>35</sup> For Davidson, Avicenna's position comes even closer to Plotinus' position because Avicenna assigns to the active intellect not only the emanation of forms in the sublunar world, but also the emanation of matter itself,<sup>36</sup> which receives all forms emanated by the active intellect.<sup>37</sup>

The evidence from Plotinus that Davidson produces with regard to the function of the cosmic Intellect in the existence of the sub-

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<sup>34</sup> Davidson 1992, 32; Davidson 1972, 127.

<sup>35</sup> Davidson 1972, 150–151.

<sup>36</sup> Regarding the emanation of matter, I follow Davidson's interpretation of Avicenna. Nevertheless, this interpretation is open to question. If the prime matter is "pure potentiality," then there is nothing to be emanated. But the active intellect can be considered only the actualizing agent of the things by bestowing their forms. In that case, one may ask: if the prime matter is pure potentiality and non-existent, then on which thing does the active intellect bestow forms? Why not simply say that the active intellect emanates material things? If the existence of the prime matter is considered simply something logical, then one may think that its existence is the result of, or a concomitant of, the existence of the active intellect. Hence in a broader sense, the active intellect is the cause of the existence of the prime matter.

<sup>37</sup> In Davidson 1972, 159, Davidson considers Avicenna's position that active intellect produces matter as well as forms in the sublunar world to be similar to Plotinus' position. However, the similarity amounts to nothing more than the theory of emanation. In Plotinus, Intellect never seems to be next to matter. Soul is a kind of means of Intellect to make things in the material world. Intellect produces soul, and soul produces what is below. This is the case at least according to the Arabic paraphrase of Plotinus. See also Davidson 1992, 82.

lunar world shows that Avicenna adapts the scheme of emanation. But it shows no more than that. In fact, the existence of the human soul is one of the topics in which Plotinus and Avicenna do *not* have much in common. As explained above, according to Plotinus' position, individual human souls do not have independent identity, whereas for Avicenna each individual human soul is unique and totally distinct from its cause. For Avicenna, the active intellect, which has a higher place in the hierarchy of being, issues something below it in terms of ontological gradation. For Plotinus, on the other hand, the cosmic Soul dispatches to particular portions of matter particular souls of its kind, or associates itself to particular things. This distinct identity of the human soul from its source urges Avicenna to accept a potential human intellect that is closer to Aristotle's conception.

Regarding the actualization of the human soul, Davidson discusses some passages from Plotinus to establish the link between Avicenna and Plotinus.<sup>38</sup> He emphasizes the ambiguity of the Arabic texts referring to the cosmic Soul and Avicenna's interpretation of those references as the human soul. In one passage, taken from the *Risāla fī l-'ilm al-ilāhī*, the phrase in question follows the argument that since Intellect is something nobler in the hierarchy of being, Soul does not produce Intellect by evolving on its own, or yield Intellect by a certain development. On the contrary there should be an Intellect that gives the soul intelligibles. Another passage that Davidson quotes in this respect is concerned with the conception of soul as analogous to matter, and therefore receptive of forms emanated by the Intellect and perfected by it. Davidson again emphasizes that the reference to the term "soul" in the text is to the cosmic Soul and that Avicenna understands by this "the human soul." As Davidson states: "Read in this manner Plotinus is describing the human rational soul as a kind of matter that is perfected and receives all of its intellectual knowledge through form coming to it from the realm of the incorporeal intelligences, specifically from the active intellect."<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Davidson 1972, 121, citing *Enneads*, 5.9.4; Arabic paraphrase in *Risāla fī l-'ilm al-ilāhī*, ed. Badawī in *Aftūḥin 'inda l-'arab*, op. cit., 168.18–19. In the *Risāla* we find the phrase "potentiality passes to actuality only through a cause that is in actuality similar to [what] the former [is in] potentiality."

<sup>39</sup> Avicenna's comment on the paraphrase of Plotinus' *Enneads* is found in his *Šarḥ Kitāb al-Uṭūlūḡiyya*, ed. 'A.R. Badawī in *Aristū 'inda l-'arab*, Dirāsāt Islāmīya, 5 (Cairo: Maktabat an-Nahḍa al-Miṣrīya, 1947), 72, apud Davidson 1972, 121–122. See also Davidson 1992, 24.

Throughout his discussion of these texts, Davidson does not take into account Avicenna's apparent misunderstanding of the referent of the term "soul." However, the fact that Avicenna apparently misunderstands the term "soul" seems to be very important in this context, because it suggests that Plotinus' theory is not its source. It also shows that Avicenna read his own preconceptions into the text, certainly influenced by other sources. As Davidson states, the matter-form analogy between soul and intellect is also used by Themistius.<sup>40</sup> Since Avicenna's understanding of the paraphrase of Plotinus accords with Themistius' conception of the relationship between soul and intellect, it is clear that the real source of influence is Themistius not Plotinus. Hence these passages do not establish that Plotinus is among Avicenna's sources here.

Davidson relates another passage which can be thought to support the influence of Plotinus on Avicenna regarding the actualization of human intellect. From the *Risāla fī l-ʿilm al-ilāhī* Davidson quotes: "The intelligible sciences, which are the true sciences, come only from Intellect to the rational soul."<sup>41</sup> This statement is placed in contrast to the sensible knowledge of the human soul. Thus, it means that whereas the human soul's sensible knowledge depends on and comes from material objects, intellectual knowledge comes from the cosmic Intellect. This statement is about the nature of intellectual knowledge in which Avicenna shows a definite influence from Plotinus. However, one should note that this passage is not about the actualization process of the human potential intellect.

In his book, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, Davidson gathers together various statements from the Arabic paraphrases of Plotinus' work into a synthesis:

- [1] A transcendent Intellect has to be assumed in order to account for the passage of the human rational soul from potentiality to actuality.
- [2] Intellectual knowledge is transmitted directly by the transcendent Intellect to human rational souls that are properly oriented and ready to receive Intellect's bounty.

<sup>40</sup> Davidson 1992, 27; Themistius, *On Aristotle, On the Soul*, tr. R.B. Todd (London: Duckworth, 1996), 100, 16 [references to paragraph and line number in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*].

<sup>41</sup> Davidson 1972, 121, citing the *Risāla*, 169.6–7, paralleling *Enneads* 5.9.7.

- [3] The human intellect is like a mirror in which intelligible thoughts from above are reflected.
- [4] Thought at a higher level, at the level of Intellect, is all together, which can be taken to mean that it is undifferentiated; at a subsequent level, it is unrolled, which can be taken to mean that thought becomes differentiated as it descends into the human rational soul.
- [5] The relation of the human rational soul to the intelligible thought it receives is—as Aristotle already suggested and Alexander wrote explicitly—a relation of matter to form; and Plotinus adds that “clear principles” and the “intellectual sciences constituting the form of the rational soul come directly from the transcendent Intellect.”
- [6] Because thought is acquired by the human intellect from above, actual human thought is acquired intellect.<sup>42</sup>

On the basis of this synthesis, Davidson concludes that these views of Plotinus “prefigure Avicenna’s account of the manner whereby the active intellect acts on the human intellect.”<sup>43</sup> However, which of these views specifically belongs to Plotinus? And which concepts have the same meaning for Avicenna and for Plotinus? From these six major ideas, [1] does not specifically belong to Plotinus. As for statement [4], it may be argued that since for Plotinus the distinction between the cosmic soul and the human soul is not clear cut, and since the cosmic soul is the one that occupies Plotinus’s attention, Avicenna’s position is different from Plotinus’ position. Avicenna’s position in this regard may be closer to Themistius’ position, because for Themistius, too, thoughts are all together in the transcendent intellect but are differentiated in the human intellect.<sup>44</sup> With [5], the matter-form analogy is not specifically Plotinian and, at any rate, in this analogy Plotinus means the cosmic Soul and the cosmic Intellect, while Avicenna understands an analogy between individual human souls and the active intellect. The idea of “clear principles” can also mean “primary intelligibles,” which prepare the soul to reach the secondary intelligibles. In this sense, the idea that a transcendent

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<sup>42</sup> Davidson 1992, 25–26.

<sup>43</sup> Davidson 1992, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Themistius, *op. cit.*, 109, 4. Themistius’ position is also reiterated by Davidson 1992, 6.

intellect gives first principles to the human soul was commonplace, and Avicenna's understanding again is closer to the way the Aristotelian commentators understood it.<sup>45</sup> Three ideas belong to Plotinus specifically and are reflected in Avicenna's conception of the source of the intellectual knowledge: [2] the idea that Intellect gives to the soul intellectual knowledge; [3] the human intellect is like a mirror, in which intelligible thoughts from above are reflected; and [6] because thought is acquired by the human intellect from above, actual human thought is acquired intellect.

Avicenna adopts Plotinus' teachings concerning the origin and nature of the intellectual knowledge. Other than this, Avicenna's position is either totally different from Plotinus' position, or he sees Plotinus through peripatetic lenses. Themistius' teachings function as one of these peripatetic lenses between Avicenna and Plotinus. Consequently, except for the origin of the intellectual knowledge, Avicenna does not owe much to Plotinus, such that Plotinus' teachings would "prefigure" Avicenna's theories.

### *Conclusion*

With the exception of the general emanationist model, there does not appear to be a specifically Plotinian influence (through the Arabic paraphrases of Plotinus) on Avicenna with respect to the existence of the human soul. For Plotinus, intellect emanates the cosmic Soul and the cosmic Soul emanates the physical world and particular souls attached to things in the material realm. For Avicenna, on the other hand, the active intellect directly emanates the matter and the forms in the material world as well as souls, including the human soul. Regarding the function of the intellect in the actualization of the human potential intellect, for Plotinus the human soul is not potential in the sense in which Avicenna thinks of the human soul. Moreover, for Plotinus the human soul never exceeds the boundary of being soul. For Avicenna, on the other hand, the human soul starts its career as pure potency and becomes an actual intellect, or reaches the level where it actually attends intelligible forms. With

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<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Themistius, *op. cit.*, 98, 35–99, 32, and 102, 30–104, 14. See also Davidson 1992, 26.

respect to the nature and source of intellectual knowledge, Avicenna's position shows the influence of Plotinus in conceiving intellectual knowledge as something that must be received from the active intellect. More precisely, the similarity between Plotinus' theories and those of Avicenna regarding the function of a transcendent intellect in the existence of the human soul is only a general one which can better be subsumed under the theory of emanation. And with respect to the actualization of the human intellect, it is limited to the nature and source of intellectual knowledge.



## THE AGE OF AVICENNA



## CHAPTER FIVE

# STEALING AVICENNA'S BOOKS: A STUDY OF THE HISTORICAL SOURCES FOR THE LIFE AND TIMES OF AVICENNA\*

David C. Reisman

### *Introduction*

In addition to Avicenna's Autobiography and the Biography written by his disciple al-Ġūzġānī, scholars have long drawn on Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Šiwān al-ḥikma* for historical information related to the social, political and intellectual context in which Avicenna lived and worked. Very few scholars have questioned the reliability of Ibn Funduq's incidental information on Avicenna, although there has been some minor discussion about the nature of his revised version of the Autobiography/Biography Complex which forms the bulk of his entry on Avicenna in the *Tatimma*.<sup>1</sup> In what follows, I present a brief overview of the historical context of Avicenna's career in order then to properly assess the contemporary and near-contemporary historical sources for the period. Since Ibn Funduq's information on Avicenna would appear to be the basis for much of the later historians' accounts, that information must be appraised in order to deter-

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\* I dedicate this study to the memory of Paul Kraus. I thank Dimitri Gutas and Franz Rosenthal for their valuable comments. The following analysis developed out of a hypothesis I set forth in my "The Making of the Avicennan Tradition: The Transmission, Contents, and Structure of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Mubāḥaṭāt* (*The Discussions*)," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2001, concerning the dating of a letter from Avicenna to his student Bahmanyār. At the time I was convinced that the problems related to Ibn Funduq's anecdotes (on which see below) were the result of a simple error on his part; as will become apparent in this study, I now believe the reasons behind Ibn Funduq's misinformation to be more intentional.

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Dimitri Gutas, "Avicenna II, Biography," *EIr*, 1:67, who lists Ibn Funduq's additions to the Avicenna Autobiography/Biography Complex and concludes "not much of this additional information can be taken at face value." However, in the same statement, Gutas explicitly endorses the veracity of Ibn Funduq's "bibliographic reports about the survival of some of Avicenna's books." It is precisely this aspect (at least in part) of Ibn Funduq's testimony that is questioned below.

mine its reliability. Aside from various incidental comments that Ibn Funduq makes about Avicenna which allow us to determine his attitude toward Avicenna, a report in three different versions in the historical works concerning the loss of Avicenna's books form the focus of the investigation. The versions of this report concern two events: the theft of four of Ibn Sina's books or works-in-progress during the occupation of Isfahan by the Ġaznavid Mas'ūd in 421/1030; and the plunder of Avicenna's library (*bayt al-kutub*) during a purported (and by no means historically verified) pillage of Isfahan by Mas'ūd's general Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī in 425/1034.<sup>2</sup>

### *Historical Overview*

In the present state of scholarship, it would not be wise to attempt a thoroughgoing analysis of the political, social and intellectual developments of late fourth/tenth and early fifth/eleventh century Western Iran. The impression of the period and geography in question is that of unmitigated chaos, not only because of the turbulent events of the time but also because of the profound sense of confusion apparent in the reports of contemporary and later historians. Even if we limit our investigation to the immediate boundaries of Avicenna's birth and death dates, and further focus on only the dynasties which Avicenna served in various capacities or came into contact with, the historical record would still be far from smooth and consistent.

The date of Avicenna's birth remains unresolved, but this need not detain us here.<sup>3</sup> We can say with some confidence that in the last decade of the fourth/tenth century, Avicenna was employed for a very brief period as physician to the court of the Sāmānids in Buḥārā. It is at Buḥārā that his real philosophical research began;

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<sup>2</sup> Abū Sahl was appointed civil governor of Rayy and the Ġibāl in 424/1033 and given the *muḥāṭaba* of aš-Šayḥ al-ʿAmīd; see C.E. Bosworth, "The Titulature of the early Ghaznavids," *Oriens* 15 (1962), 229, citing the Persian historian Bayhaqī, on whom see below. This date of appointment is contradicted by the later historian Muḥammad Mīr Ḥwānd, who gives the date 421 in his *Rawdat aš-šafāʿ*, apud Saʿīd Nafīsī, *Dar Pīrāmūn-i Tārīḫ-i Bayhaqī* (Tehran: Furūġī Maḥfūz, 1342/1923), 2:718.

<sup>3</sup> See Dimitri Gutas, "Avicenna's *Madhab*, with an Appendix on the Question of his Date of Birth," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5-6 (1987), 323-336, who posits the birth date of 353/964. I am unaware of any scholarly response to Gutas's hypothesis. The following summary of Avicenna's career is based on the Autobiography/Biography Complex, ed./tr. William E. Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā* (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1974), and the correspondence of Avicenna and his students.

and he speaks of the court library of the Sāmānids, filled with all the books of ancient philosophy, with a true scholar's appreciation. With the collapse of the Sāmānid dynasty at the turn of the fifth/eleventh century and the rise of the Ġaznavids, Avicenna began his long travels, punctuated by periods of employment throughout Western Iran.<sup>4</sup> In the first decade of the fifth/eleventh century, we find him working as a lawyer for the Ma'mūnid dynasty whose days were as numbered as the Sāmānids before them. Though he then sought employment at the Ziyārid court, he arrived too late: the ruler Qābūs ibn Vušmagīr had died shortly before Avicenna entered Ġurġān. In Rayy, Qazwīn and Hamadan, Avicenna served one branch of the Būyid dynasty, then nominally under the rule of Maġd ad-Dawla, but largely directed by his mother, the Sayyida. We are told that he served as their "business manager" but the details of his service are obscure. It was not a pleasant period of employment; apparently Avicenna would later refer to them as "those two despicable creatures."<sup>5</sup> Between 405/1015 and 415/1024, Avicenna is found working as both physician and vizier for another Būyid, Šams ad-Dawla. A vizier's relationship with the various factions of the army is almost always crucial to his success. Avicenna did not fare well in this area; we are told that the army called for his execution.<sup>6</sup> Finally, in 421/1030, Avicenna managed to find respectable employment in Isfahan with 'Alā' ad-Dawla,<sup>7</sup> the tireless campaigner and surely the strongest ruler of the decidedly minor Kākūyid dynasty.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> These travels have been neatly discussed by G. Lüling in "Ein anderer Avicenna: Kritik seiner Autobiographie und ihrer bisherigen Behandlung," *ZDMG* Suppl. III.1 (1977), 496–513.

<sup>5</sup> This inference is based on my identification of the Sayyida and Maġd ad-Dawla as the referents of the dual adjective *al-makrūhaynī* in Avicenna's *Risāla ilā 'Alā' ad-Dawla*, ed. H.Z. Ülken in *Ibn Sīna Risāleleri, 2: Les Opuscules d'Ibn Sīna*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınlarından, 552 (İstanbul: İbrahim Horoz Basımevi, 1953), 44.2; and ed. 'Abd al-Amīr Šams ad-Dīn, *al-Maḏhab at-tarbawī 'inda Ibn Sīnā min ḫilāl falsafatihī l-'ilmīya* (Beirut: aš-Šarika al-'Ālamīya li-l-Kutub, 1988), 399.2.

<sup>6</sup> Gohlman, *Life*, 52/53. I have argued elsewhere that the insurrection against Avicenna may be related to the charge brought against him, likely by Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī, that he attempted to imitate the Qur'ān in his homilies; see "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Three, Section II.A.c.

<sup>7</sup> S.H. Burney, "A Critical Survey of the Anecdotes relating to Ibn Sīnā in the *Chahar Maqāla*," *Indo-Iranica* 9.2 (1956), 41, has rightly noted that there is no evidence that Avicenna was appointed 'Alā' ad-Dawla's vizier; Cl. Cahen, "A propos d'Avicenne," *La Pensée, Revue du Rationalisme Moderne* 45 (1952), 81 (cited also by Gutas, "Avicenna's *Maḏhab*, 326), raised doubts about whether Avicenna even served as vizier to the Būyid Šams ad-Dawla, pointing out that it was not a common practice of the time to appoint court scholars and physicians to such positions.

<sup>8</sup> The history of the Kākūyid dynasty, including Avicenna's patron 'Alā' ad-Dawla,

In this brief summary of Avicenna's fortunes, no fewer than six dynastic courts appear, and that number alone should give us some idea of the very fragmented character of politics and power in Western Iran in the first part of the fifth/eleventh century. The relative order that had been achieved by the Būyids and their Daylamī soldiers in the latter half of the preceding century had rapidly disintegrated, in part because of the very decentralized nature of their rule, most evident in the existence of separate ruling families in each of the major cities of Iraq and Western Iran. The branch in Rayy, with which Avicenna came into contact, could claim only one strong ruler, Fahr ad-Dawla. But his death in 386/997 left only his young and inexperienced son Mağd ad-Dawla as a possible candidate at a time when military skills were all that could ensure success. The fact that his mother the Sayyida managed to hold their small enclave together for the next two decades is a tribute to her character alone. With the Sayyida's death in 419/1028, Mağd ad-Dawla, no longer young but no less inexperienced, made the unwise decision to seek the aid of the Ġaznavid Maḥmūd (r. 388–421/998–1030) against his own restless army, and got imprisonment at the Ġaznavid court instead.<sup>9</sup>

While the fame we assign the Ġaznavids is rightly located in Maḥmūd's stunning victories in Afghanistan and India, there is no doubt that their own hopes of lasting renown lay in western expansion.<sup>10</sup> In a sort of policy statement from the Ġaznavid governor of the Ġibāl province, Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī, a plan is outlined to push west to Baghdad and replace Šī'ī Būyid rule with the Sunnī ideology of the Ġaznavids and then move on to contest Šī'ī Fatimid control in Syria and Egypt.<sup>11</sup> We might advance as partial reason for

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is treated at length in C.E. Bosworth's "Dailamīs in Central Iran: The Kākūyids of Jibāl and Yazd," *Iran, JIBIPS* 8 (1970), 73–95; and id. *New Islamic Dynasties: A chronological and genealogical manual* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 160ff. (note that his statement there "Muḥammad was the maternal uncle" should be corrected to "*Rustam* was the maternal uncle").

<sup>9</sup> See Bosworth, "Dailamīs," 76.

<sup>10</sup> For the metaphorical expression of this imperialist policy in relation to Mas'ūd, whom the poet Manūčihri called Šāhanšāh-yi 'Irāq, see Bosworth, "Titulature," 219; Bosworth surmises that Manūčihri used the title "to combat Buyid pretensions in western Persia."

<sup>11</sup> Bayhaqī, *Tārīḫ-i Mas'ūdi*, P391ff./A414ff. [for these references, see n. 37 below]. Mas'ūd had himself made a similar statement to the Qārāḫānid ruler Yūsuf Qadīr Ḥān upon his assumption of his father's throne; see Bosworth, "Dailamīs," 76, n. 21. Abū Sahl reiterated these to him in 424/1033 before he assumed his duties as 'amīd of Rayy; see below for this investiture.

their failure to do so the singular personality of Avicenna's patron, the Kākūyid 'Alā' ad-Dawla.

This is not to say that 'Alā' ad-Dawla was all that stood between the Ġaznavids and Western expansion, nor even that 'Alā' ad-Dawla's opposition to the Ġaznavids was rhetorically articulated as the last bulwark against such imperialism. The Ġaznavids, whose capitol was located in present-day Eastern Afghanistan, simply did not have the necessary military power to sustain permanent operations on three fronts: in India, in Northeastern Iran (where the rise of the Seljuks presented the real threat to Ġaznavid power), and in Western Iran. Real possibility for this western expansion emerged only at the end of Maḥmūd's reign when he and his son Mas'ūd (r. 421–432/1031–1040) seized control of Rayy, Hamadan, and Isfahan. Within months of that success, however, Mas'ūd was forced to race back to Ġazna to contest the succession of his brother Muḥammad on the death of their father Maḥmūd.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter, the most Mas'ūd could accomplish in Western Iran in the course of the next decade was the appointment of relatively strong governors and military commanders who could take advantage of the ceaseless jockeying for power among the many contenders of the area.<sup>13</sup> The goal quickly became seizure of wealth from the local leaders of the area to finance the Ġaznavid military and cultural expenditures.<sup>14</sup> 'Alā' ad-Dawla, sitting on the golden egg of Isfahan, was thus a primary target for such plunder. 'Alā' ad-Dawla for his part appears to have been intent upon establishing limited control of the region. He did this by alternately challenging the minor successes of the Ġaznavids; and, when the tide turned against him, entering into treaty arrangements with them, as their deputy in Isfahan. Such treaties appear to have been mediated by his ally, the Būyid *amīr* Ġalāl ad-Dawla, who had the ear of the 'Abbāsīd caliph in Baghdad.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Armed with a "resplendent string of fresh *laqabs*;" see Bosworth, "Titulature," 225–6, citing the Persian historian Bayhaqī.

<sup>13</sup> Mas'ūd's choice of local military rulers was not always wise; when he departed for Ġazna at the death of his father he left the Turkish general Tāš Farrāš in charge. Ibn al-Aṭīr says of Tāš Farrāš's reign of terror in Rayy: "[He] had filled the land with injustice and tyranny, until the people prayed for deliverance from [the Ġaznavids] and their rule. The land became ruined and the population dispersed," apud C.E. Bosworth, "Maḥmūd of Ghazna in contemporary eyes and later Persian literature," *Iran, JBIPS* 4 (1966), 86.

<sup>14</sup> For examples of such expenditures and the resulting "financial oppression"; see Bosworth, "Maḥmūd of Ghazna," 85ff.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn al-Ġawzī records one such epistolary intervention in 421/1030; see his

*The Genesis of an Anecdote*

While Avicenna had managed to find a sort of tenured appointment with ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla, the relative insecurity of his patron’s power meant that such tenure was subject to the fortunes of war. In this regard, and for the purposes of addressing the loss of Avicenna’s books, three events recorded by the historians are of importance.

1. In 421/1030, the Ġaznavid Mas‘ūd, then commander for his father Maḥmūd, drove ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla out of Isfahan;
2. In 425/1034, Mas‘ūd’s governor Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī battled ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla at the Karağ gate of Isfahan;
3. In 428/1037, the Ġaznavids Abū Sahl and Tāš Farrāš battled ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla outside Rayy.

We have reliable indications from the correspondence of Avicenna and his students that in 421/1030, as he was fleeing Isfahan, Avicenna was stopped at the gate of the city by a detachment of Mas‘ūd’s soldiers, his saddle-bags were searched, and his papers, including four of his works (some complete, others in early drafts) were stolen. On the other hand, we have very unreliable reports that in either 425/1034 or 428/1037, the conquering Ġaznavid army entered Isfahan and raided Avicenna’s *library*,<sup>16</sup> the contents of which, we are told, were then transported back to Ġazna. It is my contention that we can be relatively confident that copies of four of Avicenna’s books were confiscated in 421/1030, but we can have no confidence in the anecdote concerning the plunder of Avicenna’s library. Such an anecdote appears to form the basis of one of those entertaining but untrue topoi that often fill the gaps in real information set down by medieval Arabic and Persian historians.

The evidence from Avicenna and his students is found in two letters by Avicenna (Avicenna 1 below: to Bahmanyār;<sup>17</sup> and Avicenna

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*al-Muntazam fī ta’rīḥ al-mulūk wa-l-unam*, ed. M. ‘Abd al-Qādir and M.‘A.Q. ‘Aṭā’ (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiya, 1412/1992), 15:206–7.

<sup>16</sup> As we will see, the distinction between a rifling of saddle-bags and the seizure of four of Avicenna’s books, and a wholesale plunder of a *library* is an important one.

<sup>17</sup> The passage is found in *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, ed. M. Bīdārfar (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Bīdār, 1371Š/1992), 49.1–50.4; tr. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition, Introduction to Reading Avicenna’s Philosophical Works*, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Texts and Studies, IV (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 57; cf. “Avicennan Tradition,” Chapter Four,

2: to al-Kiyā),<sup>18</sup> a letter by Ibn Zayla,<sup>19</sup> and al-Ġūzġānī's Biography of his master.<sup>20</sup> The incidental information we can glean from these texts collectively refer to the rifling of Avicenna's saddle-bags at the gate of Isfahan in 421/1030 by Mas'ūd's troops and the removal of four of his works. Ibn Zayla refers to the "late Sultan," by whom he means Maḥmūd, whose forces in that year were commanded by his son Mas'ūd, and al-Ġūzġānī's report makes this explicit. In no other military incursion into Isfahan was Mas'ūd himself involved.

- Avicenna 1 "Aš-Šayḥ al-Fāḍil [Bahmanyār]'s letter arrived, indicating his well-being and the joy that has at last come to him as a result of my deliverance from those life-threatening shocks. As for his sorrow at the loss of *al-Išārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt*, I believe a copy of this book may remain preserved. As for *al-masā'il al-mašriqīya*, I had already packed them up in their quires, or most of them, in such a way that no one's attention would be drawn to them, and I also recorded some things from *al-Ḥikma al-'aršīya* on slips of paper, and it was these that were lost. . . . But certainly *Kūtāb al-Inṣāf* could not but be extensive and rewriting it would be laborious."
- Avicenna 2 "The [*Kūtāb al-Inṣāf*] was lost in the course of some rout, since there was only the first draft."
- Ibn Zayla "In the year that the horsemen of the late Sultan overran these lands, Avicenna was prompted for some reason to occupy himself with a book which he called *Kūtāb al-Inṣāf*. . . . But before all of this was transcribed into a clean copy, he was hindered by a military rout in which all his belongings and books were carried off at the gate of Isfahan."
- Al-Ġūzġānī "The Šayḥ wrote *Kūtāb al-Inṣāf*, but on the day that Sultan Mas'ūd entered Isfahan, the army rifled the Sayḥ's saddle-bags (*raḥl*) containing the book, and not a trace of it was found afterward."

II.B.a. For the few known biographical facts on Avicenna's student Bahmanyār, see "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Three, II.B.

<sup>18</sup> The passage is found in the Letter to al-Kiyā in *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, 375.8–9; tr. Gutas, *Avicenna*, 64.

<sup>19</sup> The passages below are found in *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, 80.3–4, 81.3–4; tr. Gutas, *Avicenna*, 66. On Avicenna's student Ibn Zayla, see "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Three, II.C.

<sup>20</sup> The passage from al-Ġūzġānī's Biography is found in Gohlman, *Life*, 80/81; tr. Gutas, *Avicenna*, 132–3.

While it is undeniable that al-Ġūzġānī's Biography of Avicenna contains much that can reasonably be considered rhetorical, hagiographical, and in some cases even propagandistic,<sup>21</sup> it nonetheless contains much incidental information that can serve as a means of assessing later authors writing on Avicenna. Of even greater value for the life of Avicenna are the private papers and correspondence of Avicenna and his students (represented above by Avicenna 1–2 and Ibn Zayla), in which incidental records of events gain value by their solely conversational nature. Obviously, the writings of Avicenna and his students form *the* primary record of events in which they were involved; and the authenticity of information in later historical works which also make reference to those events must be judged by their standard.

In this regard, and particularly with respect to the reports translated above, we find different versions of what I call the Plunder Anecdote in later authors that have bearing upon the event mentioned by Avicenna and his students. Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī inserted a detailed version of the Plunder Anecdote into his revision of the Autobiography/Biography Complex in the very place that al-Ġūzġānī remarks on the loss of *Kitāb al-Insāf*. Two additional versions of the anecdote are found in the fifth–sixth/twelfth–thirteenth century hybrid history one of whose titles is *Żubdat at-tawāriħ* (the *Żubda* below), and Ibn al-Aṭīr's *al-Kāmil fi t-ta'riħ*, completed around 627/1230. These last two versions are very problematic. In both we find dates different from the one related to the evidence from Avicenna and his students and implicitly used by Ibn Funduq and, in the case of the *Żubda*, we find a new element: the plunder of Avicenna's *library*. This difference in dates has led scholars to believe that Avicenna's works were subject to two different seizures and thus has affected theories about the composition dates of his works, i.e., those works mentioned in his and his students' texts. The reference to Avicenna's *library* has no support in any of the other available literature.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> We may also observe in al-Ġūzġānī's Biography of his master a single-minded attempt not only to stress his master's Aristotelian allegiances (even when Avicenna began to depart from those allegiances; see Gutas, *Avicenna*, 108–9) but also to emphasize his own role in his master's life, to the singular exclusion of all other colleagues and students; see "Avicennan Tradition," 199ff. Recently, Y. Michot has argued that al-Ġūzġānī's work is "hagiographie plutôt que biographie," in *Ibn Sīnā, Lettre au vizir Abū Sa'd, Éditio princeps d'après le manuscrit de Bursa, traduction de l'arabe, introduction, notes et lexique*, Sagesses musulmanes, 4 (Beyrouth: Les Éditions al-Bouraq: 2000), 53\* ff.

<sup>22</sup> The following reports are found, respectively, in Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī's

## Versions of the Plunder Anecdote

Ibn Funduq	<i>Zubdat at-tawārīḥ</i>	Ibn al-Aṭīr
<p>“Then General Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī, along with a group of Kurds, plundered the Ṣayḥ’s saddle-bags containing his books and only parts of <i>Kitāb al-Inṣāf</i> were [later] found. In 545/1150–1, ‘Azīz ad-Dīn al-Fuqqā’ī az-Zinġānī claimed, ‘I bought a copy of [<i>Kitāb al-Inṣāf</i>] in Isfahan and transported it to Marv.’ God knows better. As for <i>al-Hikma al-mašriqīya</i> in its entirety and <i>al-Hikma al-‘arṣīya</i>, al-Imām Ismā‘īl al-Bāḥarī said that both were in the libraries (<i>buyūt kutub</i>) of Sultan Mas‘ūd ibn Maḥmūd in Ġazna until Malik al-Ġibāl al-Ḥusayn and the army of Ġūr and Guzz [Turks] set fire to it in 546/1151–2.”</p>	<p>“Then General Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī went with Tāš Farrāš to Isfahan with an army that filled the length and breadth of the earth and he drove out of it [i.e. Isfahan] ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla Abū Ġa‘far, and raided his treasuries (<i>ḥazā’in</i>) and his palace (<i>dār</i>). Aš-Sāyḥ al-Ḥakīm Abū ‘Alī ibn Sīmā (God have mercy on him!) was the minister of King ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla [at the time], so the army of Tāš Farrāš raided Abū ‘Alī’s library (<i>bayt kutub</i>) and transferred most of his [own] writings (<i>taṣānīf</i>) and his books (<i>kutub</i>) to the storehouses of books (<i>ḥizānat kutub</i>) in Ġazna and they all remained there until Malik al-Ġibāl al-Ḥasan [<i>sic</i>] ibn al-Ḥusayn set fire to [the storehouse].”</p>	<p>“And when Abū Sahl took control of Isfahan, he seized the treasuries and money of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla. Abū ‘Alī ibn Sīmā was in the service of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla, so his books were taken and transferred to Ġazna, and put in the storehouses of books (<i>ḥazā’in kutub</i>) until the armies of al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ġūrī set fire to them, as we will record, God willing.”</p>

(implicitly dated 421/1030)

(implicitly dated after 428/ s.a. 425/1034  
1036)

These three reports coincide in some particulars, viz. that Abū Sahl was the Ġaznavid general who led the sack of Isfahan (for all of the three dates), and that Avicenna’s books were later burned in the sack of Ġazna in the mid-sixth/mid-eleventh century. But they differ in important respects. Ibn Funduq, who undoubtedly based his report

*Tatimmat Šiwān al-ḥikma*, ed. M. Šaft‘ (Lahore, 1351/1932), 56.1–7; *Zubdat at-tawārīḥ/Aḥbār al-umarā’ wa-l-mulūk al-salḡuqīya*, facsimile of MS British Museum Stowe Or. 7, with Russian translation in *Akhbār-ad-daulat as-Seldzhukīia: zubdat at-Tavarikh fi akhbar al-umarā’ wa-l-Mulūk as-Seldzhukīia*, Soobshcheniia o Seldzhukskom gosudarstve, Slivki letopisei, soobshchaiushchikh o Seldzhukskikh emirakh i gosudariakh, izdanie teksta, perevod, vvedenie, primechanii i prilozheniia Z.M. Buniatova (Moskva: Nauka, 1980), 4v.5–12; and Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil fī t-Tā’rīḥ*, ed. Abū l-Fiḍā’ ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaḍī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiya, 1407/1987), 211.25–212.1.

on the texts of Avicenna and his students, notes that Avicenna's *saddle-bags* were plundered, whereas the *Ẓubda* mentions the plunder of a *library* of Avicenna's books, a term that perhaps echoes, if incorrectly, Ibn Funduq's own mention of libraries in connection with the conflagration of Gazna. Ibn al-Aṭīr's report is more sparse in the details of the sack of Isfahan, noting simply that Avicenna's books were taken, without elaboration. Ibn Funduq's report is implicitly dated 421/1030, because he discusses *after* this report the battle at the Karağ gate in 425/1034 (57.2ff.), which was the next major clash between the Gaznavids and Avicenna's patron 'Alā' ad-Dawla.<sup>23</sup> The report in the *Ẓubda* is implicitly dated after 428/1036–7 because of the location of the anecdote in its sequential report of events, scil. the anecdote comes after mention of the date 4 Muḥarram 428/28 October 1036 in this sequence. This is simply incorrect, but may not be overly significant. It is possible that the anecdote was appended to the original text of the *Ẓubda*, without due consideration to correct dating.<sup>24</sup> Ibn al-Aṭīr places his anecdote under the year 425/1034. Herein lies the major ambiguity scholars have faced in reconciling these reports with historical fact, but again, it may not be of great importance: Ibn al-Aṭīr is known to have confused his dates in other instances.<sup>25</sup> At any rate, we may appropriately note that aside from his discourse on the survival of Avicenna's three works, Ibn Funduq has reproduced accurately the act of plunder from Avicenna's saddle-bags mentioned by Avicenna and his students, although the appearance of Abū Sahl is less accurate. The other two reports are very problematic, both with regard to their dating and, in the case of *Ẓubda*, the mention of Avicenna's *library*.

### *The Evidence from Contemporary Historical Sources*

All of the three reports about the seizure and transportation of Avicenna's books translated above issue from the mid-sixth/mid-twelfth century or after. On the basis of the evidence from Avicenna

<sup>23</sup> See "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Four, II.B.a.

<sup>24</sup> For additional details on the transformations of the *Ẓubda*, see below.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, Bosworth ("Dailamīs," 79) has noted Ibn al-Aṭīr's error in dating the battle waged by Tāš Farrāš and Abū Sahl against 'Alā' ad-Dawla outside Rayy to 427/1036, which must be corrected to 429/1037–8.

and his students, there certainly occurred a theft of books from Avicenna's saddle-bags in 421/1030; less confidence can be placed in the reports of a plunder of 'Alā' ad-Dawla's treasuries, of any kind, whether it be in 425/1034 or 428/1036-7. If we are to accept as historically accurate a removal of Avicenna's works from Isfahan other than that which occurred in 421/1030, and since we have no other evidence from Avicenna and his students concerning such a second event, a brief excursus on the available contemporary sources is required.<sup>26</sup> This is necessary in order not only to determine the origin of the Plunder Anecdote but also to verify or to contest the specific facts of the three versions of the Anecdote.

There are many problems associated with an evaluation of the contemporary historiography of fifth/eleventh century Western Iran that hinder investigations such as this one. The fact that the area was subject to repeated military incursions during Avicenna's life and for a period of some two centuries after his death in 428/1037 means that many contemporary written records are irretrievably lost. Furthermore, not only are original works no longer extant; they also often did not even survive through incorporation into later histories in areas that politically were somewhat more stable. Thus, for instance, histories written outside of Iran that record events that happened in Western Iran do not on the whole demonstrate substantial borrowing from local histories.

An equally problematic issue has to do with the very nature of history writing in fifth/eleventh century Iran. There is an undeniable shift in the historiography of the period that moves from annals-based records of fact to compositions that mix records of fact with entertaining stories. This new form of historiography is written in a very ornate literary style that does not hesitate to sacrifice dates and names to the greater glory of the well-turned phrase. With a few very significant exceptions, we can agree with Claude Cahen's judgment that between the end of the fifth/eleventh century and the inception of the Mongol period in the seventh/thirteenth century the writing of history in Iran was reduced to the collecting of morally

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<sup>26</sup> By historical sources I mean the literary historical sources, i.e., written histories. Much progress has been made in the numismatic and archaeological record for this period, but this is of little use in evaluating literary topoi.

instructive anecdotes.<sup>27</sup> It would be supercilious to suggest that this shift in style and intention coincided with the rise of Persian historiography if only for the fact that one of the best examples of this literature for the period is al-ʿUṭbī's *Kitāb al-Namūn*, written in Arabic.<sup>28</sup> However, the rise of Persian historiography did result in another problematic feature of the primary sources: there was a fundamental split in the access to records of the past. Historians writing in Persian on the whole did not draw upon earlier Arabic chronicles; and later historians who knew only Arabic and who covered fifth/eleventh century Western Iran were very limited in the amount and quality of material available to them.<sup>29</sup> These problems must be borne in mind in the search for the origin of the Plunder Anecdote and the determination of its authenticity.

For the late Būyid period, Hilāl aṣ-Ṣābi's (d. 448/1056) supplement to Miskawayh's *Tağārib al-Umam* might have proved of enormous value for determining the authenticity of the Plunder Anecdote, but the extant portion breaks off before the turn of the fifth/eleventh century.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Claude Cahen, "The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. B. Lewis and P.M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 75.

<sup>28</sup> In fact, it has been argued that the development of ornate Persian prose is the result of attempts to mimic Arabic epistolary styles; see Bosworth, "The Poetical Citations in Baihaqī's *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdī*," *ZDMG*, Suppl IV [XX. *Deutscher Orientalistentag Erlangen, 3–8 October 1977*] (1980), reprinted in his *The Arabs, Byzantium and Iran, Studies in Early Islamic History and Culture*, Collected Studies Series, CS529 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), VII, 43f. and the references cited there.

<sup>29</sup> Cahen, *op. cit.*, makes note of this "cleavage of language." A good example is the case of Gardīzī's *Ẓayn al-aḥbār*: it contains a good deal of very solid factual information (though extremely telescoped), but does not appear to have been drawn upon by authors until the eleventh/seventeenth century and then only by authors writing in Persian; see M. Nāzīm, English intro. to his edition of *Ẓayn al-aḥbār*, E.G. Browne Memorial Series, 1 (Berlin: Iranschahr, 1928), 2.

<sup>30</sup> The extant portion of Hilāl aṣ-Ṣābi's *Dayl Tağārib al-Umam*, covering the years 989–992, was originally edited and translated by H.F. Amedroz in *The Historical Remains of Hilāl al-Ṣābi* (Leiden, 1904) and later reproduced in volumes 3 (Arabic text) and 4 (English translation) of Miskawayh's *Tağārib al-umam, The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate: Original Chronicles of the Fourth Islamic Century*, ed./tr. H.F. Amedroz and D.S. Margoliouth (London: Basil Blackwell, 1916–1921). The *Dayl* as a whole most likely covered events up to Tuğril Beg's entry into Baghdad in 447/1055; see Cahen, *ibid.*, 60. While Sibṭ ibn al-Ġawzī (d. 654/1257) used it extensively in his *Mir'at az-zamān fi tā'rīḥ al-a'yān* (although he apparently did not have access to the years 433–447/1041–1055; see Cahen, *ibid.*), what he did use gives no real information on Ibn Sīnā, though he does appear to have drawn on Hilāl's history for his brief report of Mas'ūd's seizure of Isfahan in 421/1030; see Ġanān Galīl M. al-Hamūndī's edition of the years 345–447 (Baghdad: Wizārat at-Taqaḥā, 1990), 345. Hilāl's son Gars an-Ni'ma Muḥammad (d. 480/1088) continued his father's work up to 479/1086 in his *ʿUyūn at-tawārīḥ* which in turn was also drawn on by

Our primary sources for the Ġaznavids<sup>31</sup> in the first half of the fifth/eleventh century include al-‘Uṭbī’s *Kiṭāb al-Yamīnī*<sup>32</sup> and al-Gardīzī’s *Ẓayn al-aḥbār*.<sup>33</sup> Al-‘Uṭbī’s work we can dispense with immediately: it stops at the year 411/1020 and thus is of no use for any of the years in question. But al-Gardīzī’s work, extending to about 440/1048, also makes no mention of any plunder of books. Gardīzī does relate the attack on Rayy by Maḥmūd in Ġumādā al-Ūlá 420/May–April 1029, and notes that at the death of Maḥmūd on 3 Rabī‘ al-Āḥir 421/10 April 1030, his son Mas‘ūd had taken Isfahan (Sipāhān).<sup>34</sup> Further, he notes that Abū Sahl was in Ġazna at the time.<sup>35</sup> This contradicts Ibn Funduq’s report that it was Abū Sahl who led the attack on Isfahan in 421/1030.

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Sibt ibn al-Ġawzī. For the career and works of Ġars an-Ni‘ma, see now C.E. Bosworth, “Ġars Al-Ni‘ma Hilāl Al-Šābi’s [sic] *Kiṭāb al-Hafawāt al-Nādira* and Büyid History” in *Arabicus Felix, Luminosus Britannicus, Essays in Honour of A.F.L. Beeston on His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. A. Jones (Reading, 1991), 129–41, reprinted in his *The Arabs, Byzantium and Iran*, VIII, with correction to the title.

<sup>31</sup> C.E. Bosworth has treated three of the following mentioned historians, viz. al-‘Uṭbī, Gardīzī, and Bayhaqī, in his “Early Sources for the History of the First Four Ghaznavid Sultans (977–1041),” *IQ* 7.1 (1963), 3–22; and by J.S. Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the 12th Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 47ff., in greater depth and with historical context.

<sup>32</sup> There are four early printings of al-‘Uṭbī’s *Kiṭāb al-Yamīnī*: 1) ed. Mowlawī Mamlukal Alyy and A. Sprenger (Delhi: Lithographed at College Press, 1847); 2) with the commentary of Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Manīnī (d. 1172/1759) entitled *Hādā Šarḥ al-Yamīnī al-musammā bi-l-Faḥ al-Wahbī*, 2 vols. (Būlāq: al-Maṭba‘a al-Wahabīya, 1286/1869); 3) in the margin of Ibn al-Aṭīr’s *al-Kāmil fī t-tārīḫ*, vols. 10–12 (Būlāq: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kubrā al-Amīra, 1290/1873); and 4) Lahore, 1300/1883. Everett Rowson, who is preparing a critical edition of the work, informs me in private correspondence (30 Sept. 2001) that (3) is dependent on (2), and (4) is dependent on (1), with additional typographical errors. There is also an English translation based on the Persian translation (done about 603/1201) of Abū š-Šaraf Nāšir al-Ġurbādqānī by J. Reynolds entitled *The Kiṭāb-i Yamīnī, Historical Memoirs of the Amīr Sabaktagīn and the Sultān Mahmūd of Ghazna*, Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland (London: W.H. Allen, 1858), and which M. Nāzim, *The Life and Times of Sultān Mahmūd of Ghazna* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1971) 4, n. 1, deemed “hopelessly incorrect.” For a general discussion of al-‘Uṭbī and his work, see Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 53ff.

<sup>33</sup> Abū Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Ḥayy ibn aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Maḥmūd Gardīzī’s *Ẓayn al-aḥbār*, written around 440/1048 (cf. P. Hardy, *History and Theory* 20.3 [1981], 340, who gives the date “between 1050 and 1053”), deals with Iran “from earliest times to the middle of the fifth/eleventh century,” although the extant portion breaks off during the account of the Ghaznavid Mawdūd ibn Mas‘ūd (432–41/1041–9); see Nāzim, op. cit., 5. M. Nāzim’s edition has been noted above. The portion covering the beginning to the Saffārids was edited by Sa‘īd Nafīsī (Tehran, 1333Š/1954). See also Bosworth, “Early Sources,” 8–10; Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 66ff.

<sup>34</sup> Ed. Nāzim, op. cit., 91.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

The single most important historical work written under the Ġaznavid reign and relevant for our purposes is the *Tārīḫ-i Mas'ūdī*, a work written in Persian but with strong Arabic influence by the bureaucrat Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad Bayhaqī who died perhaps around 470/1077.<sup>36</sup> The *Tārīḫ-i Mas'ūdī* is actually the only extant portion of a massive reservoir of historical documentation gathered by the author during his service in the correspondence section of the Ġaznavid court bureau and entitled simply *al-Muḡalladāt*, or *The Volumes*.<sup>37</sup> Bayhaqī's position in the Ġaznavid administration afforded him a unique position for recounting the daily events and correspondence of his masters. We are told that through the course of his career he copied many official documents, diplomatic dispatches, treaties, and private conversations of the Ġaznavid court which, in the leisure of his retirement, he undertook to organize in a systematic manner.<sup>38</sup> His *Volumes* were divided according to the reign of Ġaznavid rulers, and so the volume now entitled *Tārīḫ-i Mas'ūdī* covers Mas'ūd's reign, 421–432/1031–1041.

The fact that Bayhaqī's *History* contains no report of a plunder of Avicenna's saddle-bags in 421/1030 or indeed of his (hypothetical) library in Isfahan in 425/1034 or 428/1036–7 is significant, but

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<sup>36</sup> For general discussions of Bayhaqī and his *History*, see, M. Nāzīm, *Life and Times*, 6–7; M. Minovi, “The Persian Historian Bayhaqī,” in *Historians of the Middle East*, op. cit., 138–40; C.E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994–1040* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963), 10; id., “Early Sources,” 10–14; M.R. Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), with additional references, 22, n. 9 [Waldman's work is a partially successful discussion of Bayhaqī's history in light of speech-act theory; see P. Hardy's review in *History and Theory* 20.3 (1981), 334–344]; S. Nafisi, “Bayhaqī,” EI2, 1:1130–1; Ġ.-Ḥ. Yūsufī, “Bayhaqī, Abū l-Faḍl,” EI, 3:889–894 (with an extensive bibliography); S. Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Enquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 128ff.; J.S. Meisami, “The Past in Service of the Present: Two Views of History in Medieval Persia,” *Poetics Today* 14.2 (1993), 247–75 [compares Bayhaqī and Firdawsī]; id., *Persian Historiography*, 79ff.

<sup>37</sup> The extant portion covers the years 421/1030 to 432/1041, although lengthy quotations in later histories [not all of which can unequivocally be said to be dependent on Bayhaqī] were collected by Sa'īd Nafīsī in his study *Dar Pīrāmūn-i Tārīḫ-i Bayhaqī*, op. cit. The edition of the *Tārīḫ* used here is that of Q. Ganī and 'A.A. Fayyād (Mašhad: Intiṣārāt-i Dānišgāh-yi Mašhad 1324Š/1945; repr. 1391Š/1971) [hereafter “P”]. There is also an Arabic translation based on the Ganī/Fayyād edition by Yaḥyá al-Ḥaššāb and Šādiq Naš'at, *Tārīḫ al-Bayhaqī* (Beirut: Dār an-Naḥḍa al-'Arabiya, 1982) [hereafter “A”]. For other editions and translations, see Waldman, *Toward a Theory*, 50, n. 49; Yūsufī, “Bayhaqī,” 890.

<sup>38</sup> Bosworth, “Early Sources,” 11.

requires some qualification, since so little of the original work is now extant. First, Bayhaqī repeats regularly that he has made plans to set aside a special chapter for all that happened while Abū Sahl was in charge of Rayy and the Ġibāl;<sup>39</sup> we might reasonably assume that he would have addressed the various attacks on Isfahan in this chapter, but it does not appear to be extant. Second, scholars have noted that Bayhaqī's *History* exhibits a lacuna covering several months in the years 424–5/1034–1035.<sup>40</sup> In this missing text Bayhaqī might have mentioned a sack of Isfahan that led to the plunder of 'Alā' ad-Dawla's treasuries and, with them, Avicenna's books (as we find in Ibn al-Aṭīr), but there is no way of knowing this with certainty.<sup>41</sup> Finally, we might note that he makes no reference to such an event under his account of the year 428/1036–7, the implicit date of the *Zubda* report.

However, Bayhaqī's *History* is not entirely inconsequential for our purposes. While the focus of his narrative is on daily court events in Ġazna, it also contains information on the planning and repercussions of activities further afield, including those in Rayy and Isfahan. Thus, we learn that immediately after the death of Maḥmūd in 421/1030, Mas'ūd left Tāš Farrāš in charge of Isfahan, since he had to return to Ġazna to contest succession to the throne [P12/A12]. More importantly, Bayhaqī tells us that on his way back to Ġazna Mas'ūd received letters by express courier from Ġazna, including one from Abū Sahl [P17/A17]. This confirms Gardīzī's report that Abū Sahl was in Ġazna at the time; consequently, Ibn Funduq's information in this regard is not to be trusted. It was only in 424/1033 that Abū Sahl began to play a direct role in events in the Ġibāl

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, P521/A564; and P535/A582.

<sup>40</sup> Bosworth, "Early Sources," 11, with additional references in n. 1; Yūsufī, "Bayhaqī," 890a, who gives examples. N. Aḥmad, "A critical examination of Baihaqī's narration of the Indian expeditions during the reign of Mas'ūd of Ghazna," in *Yādnāmāh-yi Abū l-Faḍl Bayhaqī*, ed. Ġ. Matīnī (Mašhad: Dānišgāh-yi Mašhad, 1350Š/1971), 48ff., summarized the earlier findings of Hodivala on this issue. Waldman, *Toward a Theory*, 45, questions whether the inference of missing parts is a justified one, but offers no counter-arguments.

<sup>41</sup> Arguing against a possible reference by Bayhaqī to such an event either in the lost part of his *Tārīḫ-i Mas'ūdi* or in the "special section" that he mentions in the extant part is the fact that Ibn Funduq, who knew and used Bayhaqī's history (*Tatimma*, 13.4), does not cite him for any information of events related to Avicenna. Ibn Funduq's citation of Bayhaqī in the *Tatimma* is to be contrasted with his complaint, in his *Tārīḫ-i Bayhaq*, about the difficulty of finding copies of Bayhaqī's work; see Aḥmad, "A critical examination," 39.

since it was in this year that he was appointed *‘amīd* of Rayy to replace Ṭāhir al-Kātib, the *kathūdā* there (P387ff./A410ff).<sup>42</sup>

With regard to a possible plunder of Isfahan in 425/1034, we have only a report from Bayhaqī that in Ṣafar 426/December 1034–January 1035, Mas‘ūd, while in Nishapur on his way to Marv, *prognosticated*<sup>43</sup> that as a result of hearing the news of his arrival in Nishapur “the aim of Abū Sahl and Tāš will have become strong and they will have made those [in Rayy] their servants and Ibn Kākū [i.e., ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla, Avicenna’s patron] will become obedient to us; Tāš will go to Hamadan where there are no enemies, and send to the court [at Ġazna] the money, gold and fineries he will have gathered” [P444/A473]. Setting aside the report from Ibn al-Aṭīr, dated 425/1034 (see above), Bayhaqī’s report of Mas‘ūd’s prognostications is the only other piece of evidence we have for a plunder of Isfahan around that year. While al-Ġūzġānī does tell us that there was a battle at the Karaġ gate of Isfahan in that year and that ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla and Avicenna were forced to flee to Īdāġ (see above), he provides no comment about a plunder of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla’s treasuries or Avicenna’s books (or indeed his “library”). Surely, as calamitous an occurrence as the loss of Avicenna’s books in 425/1034 would have received the type of attention Avicenna, al-Ġūzġānī, and Ibn Zayla gave the earlier rifling of Avicenna’s saddle-bags in 421/1030.

In this regard, a series of reports from Bayhaqī on subsequent events are difficult to reconcile with a putative plunder of Isfahan in 425/1034. Bayhaqī informs us that on 8 Dū l-Qa‘da 427/2 September 1036, a letter arrived from Abū Sahl in Rayy describing the flight of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla; Mas‘ūd then wrote to thank Abū Sahl [P501/A540; Bosworth, “Dailamīs,” 78]. Next, shortly after Ṣafar 428/November–December 1036, Mas‘ūd received a letter from Abū Sahl informing him that ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla had sought reprieve and asked to be appointed amir of Isfahan; this reprieve Mas‘ūd granted, because of the intercession of the vizier of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph,

<sup>42</sup> For a general description of the responsibilities of the offices of *‘amīd* (civil governor) and *kathūdā* (quartermaster), see M. Nāzīm, *Life and times*, 141; and Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, 84–5, 122, and index.

<sup>43</sup> That Mas‘ūd is predicting what will happen is evident from the use of the subjunctive present, the present, and the past in the respective clauses of the Persian, which in the modern Arabic translation are rendered by the future present, and past tenses. The English future perfect and future tenses are used in the translation above to render these aspects.

Muḥammad Ayyūb [P510–11/A552; Bosworth, *ibid.*]. Finally, on 21 Ġumādā al-Ūlā 428/12 March 1037, Abū Sahl sent notice that ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla had deceived him and was gathering an army; in this letter Abū Sahl explicitly states that all of the Turkmens of the area were joining ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla *because of the great amount of money and stores that he had* [P521/A564] (my emphasis).<sup>44</sup> If ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla’s treasuries in Isfahan had been seized in 425/1034 as Ibn al-Aṭīr states, where did this “great amount of money and stores” come from? As circumstantial as this evidence is, it does argue against a plunder of Isfahan as described by Ibn al-Aṭīr in the year 425/1034. Finally, if there had been such a wholesale seizure of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla’s treasuries, we might suppose that such booty would have made its way to Ġazna; indeed, the *Ẓubda*, and Ibn al-Aṭīr make it clear that, at the very least, Avicenna’s books were sent to Ġazna. Surely we might expect that Bayhaqī would make note of such a transfer? Bayhaqī says not a word about the arrival of *anything* in Ġazna from Isfahan, let alone the treasuries of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla or even Avicenna’s books.

In the interest of completeness, we may note incidentally that Bayhaqī does provide a brief report on the losses incurred by the Ġaznavids in the battle with ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla outside of Rayy, which occurred probably in Ġumādā al-Ūlā 429/February–March 1038<sup>45</sup> and during which Tāš Farrāš was killed and Abū Sahl had to take refuge in the citadel of Rayy (P535–6/A581–2; Bosworth, “Dailamīs,” 78–9). Thus, the implicit dating of the sack of Isfahan to sometime after 1036–7 that we find in the *Ẓubda* is proved wrong: the final battle between the two armies happened outside Rayy and not in Isfahan.

While it is true that Bayhaqī’s information on events in the Ġibāl is derived only from dispatches from the Ġaznavid generals and bureaucrats assigned to the region, and while it might be conjectured that more precise and detailed information on those events could have been found in the “special chapter” Bayhaqī tells us he

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<sup>44</sup> Mas‘ūd’s vizier tried to convince him of the necessity of going to Ḥurāsān and ultimately Rayy in aid of Abū Sahl, but Mas‘ūd retorted that Abū Sahl had a strong army and was trustworthy and that as long as this was the case, no one should have any worries about “Ibn Kākū [‘Alā’ ad-Dawla], the Daylamīs or the Kurds;” Bayhaqī, P523/A567.

<sup>45</sup> In other words, it did not occur in 427/1036 as Ibn al-Aṭīr reported; see note 22 above.

planned to write about those events or in the lost portion of his reports for the years 424–5, the information that we do have from the extant part of his *History* does not corroborate the reports from Ibn al-Aṭīr or the *Ẓubda* about a plunder of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla’s treasures, and Avicenna’s books, in either 425/1034 or 428/1036–7. We might reasonably assume that such reports do not have their origin in anything Bayhaqī wrote.<sup>46</sup>

Other works of the Ġaznavid period may also be dismissed as sources for the Plunder Anecdote. The *Kūtāb Dīkr aḥbār Iṣbahān* by Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī, who died in 429/1038, should have provided us with a wealth of information about any attacks on the city, but Abū Nu‘aym’s insular world did not extend beyond documenting the *isnāds* of the traditionists of Isfahan.<sup>47</sup> Next, Abū Maṣṣūr aṭ-Ta‘ālibī, who died in the same year as Abū Nu‘aym, compiled a collection of biographies of the poets of his age, with some incidental historical information entitled *Yatīmat ad-dahr*.<sup>48</sup> Again, we find not a word on any sack of Isfahan.<sup>49</sup> We might also note Mufaḍḍal ibn Sa‘d al-Māfarraḥī’s *Kūtāb Maḥāsīn Isfahān*, composed between 465–485/1072–1092.<sup>50</sup> While not strictly speaking a historical work, the rela-

<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the tenor of Bayhaqī’s work would allow us to suggest that such a fantastic anecdote about the plunder of Avicenna’s library would sit awkwardly in his otherwise astute and reasoned presentation of history. Meisami, “The Past,” 265, emphasizes Bayhaqī’s expressed intention of reporting verifiable historical reports; see also Bayhaqī’s comment about Maṣ‘ūd and the importance of impartiality in historiography, translated in Bosworth, “Early Sources,” 13; Yūsofī, “Bayhaqī,” 892a, final paragraph, reiterates Bayhaqī’s “commitment to the truth,” with additional references; and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 81, who also notes the “ethical dimension” of Bayhaqī’s work and compares this aspect to Miskawayh’s historiographical intentions.

<sup>47</sup> Edited by Sven Dederer as *Geschichte Iṣbahāns [von] Abū Nu‘aim*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1931–4).

<sup>48</sup> *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, 4 vols. in 2 (Cairo: Maṭba‘at aṣ-Ṣāwī, 1934). Aṭ-Ta‘ālibī also wrote a continuation of his own work: *Tatīmmat al-Yatīma*, ed. ‘Abbās Iqbāl, 2 vols. (Tehran: Maṭba‘at Fardīn, 1353Š/1934), which includes a section on Abū Sahl, 2:60–2.

<sup>49</sup> It should be noted here that Gohlman’s reference to the *Yatīma* in his *Life of Ibn Sīnā* (136, n. 106) is simply to the name of Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī and not to any report of a sack of Isfahan in 425/1034 as might be expected from his syntax.

<sup>50</sup> *Kūtāb Maḥāsīn Isfahān*, ed. Ġalāl ad-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī (Tehran: Maṭba‘at Maḡlis, 1312Š/1933); Ḥusaynī notes the composition date in his introduction, ġ. See also the study by J. Paul, “The Histories of Isfahan: Mafarrukhī’s *Kūtāb maḥāsīn Isfahān*,” *Iranian Studies* 33.1–2 (2001), 117–132, who notes that the stories in the work cannot “be taken as factual in the sense that we could use them directly as historical reports,” (126).

tive proximity of its composition date to Avicenna's time period might lead us to believe that it would contain some reference to any incursions into Isfahan. Again we find nothing of use for the reconstruction of the history of the period.<sup>51</sup> Other minor Ġaznavid sources are of little use for our enquiry. For instance, we may dispense with the *Dīwāns* of the poets Farruḥī (d. 429/1037–8), 'Unṣurī (d. 431/1039–40), and Manūcihrī (d. 432/1040–1) who often followed their masters on campaign and from whose panegyrics we can glean some minor historical facts; but not in this case.<sup>52</sup>

The preceding investigation into extant historical sources composed during Avicenna's lifetime or shortly thereafter leads to two conclusions. First, it is very unlikely that the Plunder Anecdote, and particularly its narrative placement in either 425/1034 or 428/1036–7, is a product of fifth/eleventh century historiography. Second, none of the extant sources from the period corroborate specific facts of any of the versions: Abū Sahl was not in Isfahan in 421/1030 (Ibn Funduq); the altercation between 'Alā' ad-Dawla and the Ġaznavid forces in 428/1036–7 occurred outside Rayy, not in Isfahan (the *Ḥubda*); there is no conclusive evidence for a seizure of 'Alā' ad-Dawla's treasuries in 425/1034 (Ibn al-Aṭīr), but there is some circumstantial evidence against it; and finally, there are no reports of a transfer of any goods, including Avicenna's books, to Ġazna from Isfahan (Ibn Funduq, the *Ḥubda*, and Ibn al-Aṭīr).

<sup>51</sup> Al-Māfarrūḥī does record, 46–7, an anecdote which indirectly involves 'Alā' ad-Dawla: Mas'ūd, upon arriving in Isfahan (no date given) summons the madman Abū l-Fawāris (who has a "salty manner of speaking," *malīḥ al-alfāz*) and asks him whom he prefers, himself or 'Alā' ad-Dawla, to which Abū l-Fawāris responds: "You will depart, but he will not return."

<sup>52</sup> On the careers and panegyrics of the first two of these poets, see J.S. Meisami, "Ġaznavid Panegyrics: Some Political Implications," *Iran, JBIIPS* 28 (1990), 31–44, and Bosworth, "Farrukhī's Elegy on Maḥmūd of Ġazna," *Iran, JBIIPS* 29 (1991), 43–9, reprinted in his *The Arabs, Byzantium and Iran*, op. cit., XXII. The *qaṣida* reportedly dedicated to Mas'ūd by Farruḥī in Isfahan in 421/1030 and in which he exhorted his master to return to Ġazna and take the throne does not make reference to the recent seizure of Isfahan; Farruḥī, *Dīwān-i Ḥakīm Farruḥī Sīstānī*, ed. 'Alī 'Abd ar-Rasūlī (Tehran: Maṭba'at-i Maḡlis, 1311Š/1933), 301–3; and Meisami, *ibid.*, 38. Incidentally, we can also dismiss a final possible historical source: the anonymous Persian *Muḡmal at-Tawārīḥ wa-l-qīṣas*, ed. Malik aš-Šu'arā' Bihār (Tehran, 1318Š/1939), a universal history written around 520/1126, perhaps by an author working at the court of the Kākūyids of Yazd (Cahen, "Historiography," 65) which contains a chapter on the Buyids (388ff.), and which makes reference to al-'Uṭbī and Bayhaqī for additional information on the Ġaznavids (405) but contains no information on any sack of Isfahan.

*Sixth/Twelfth Century Historiography and the Genesis of the Anecdote*

In fact, it seems that the earliest appearance of the anecdote is to be placed in the mid-sixth/twelfth century. This fact has a certain significance since it is in this century that we begin to see a proliferation of anecdotes about Avicenna in the *adab* works of the period, including those found in Niẓāmī ‘Arūḏī’s charming but utterly fallacious *Çahar Maqāla*.<sup>53</sup> It is also in the mid-sixth/twelfth century that Ibn Funduq (d. 565/1169–70) composed two works that are crucial for our investigation. The first, his *Tatimmat Şiwān al-ḥikma*, completed shortly after 553/1158–9<sup>54</sup> is a supplement to *Şiwān al-ḥikma*, an earlier collection of biographies of the philosophers, and may be described as containing some historical fact with a large dose of fiction.<sup>55</sup> Certainly, Ibn Funduq’s intention in writing this work appears

<sup>53</sup> Niẓāmī himself makes no historiographical claims for his work; see *Chahār Maqāla* (“The Four Discourses”) of Aḥmad Ibn ‘Umar Ibn ‘Alī an-Niẓāmī al-‘Arūḏī as-Samarqandī, with introduction, notes, and indices by M.M. Qazvīnī, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, XI, 2 (Leiden: E.J. Brill), 1910; tr. E.G. Browne as *Chahār Maqāla* (“The Four Discourses”) of Niḏhāmī ‘Arūḏī l-Samarqandī, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, XI, 2 (London: Luzac, 1921). Niẓāmī, who wrote his *Fürstenspiegel* (this is his own description of the work; see, for instance, tr., 22) sometime before 556/1161 (see Browne, intro. to his translation, 5), appears to be responsible for a number of literary anecdotes that have become a mainstay of modern scholarship on the period in question, including Maḥmūd’s hunt for Avicenna and the Firdawsī-Maḥmūd legend, both incorporated, if not entirely credulously, in Bosworth’s narrative in “The development of Persian culture,” op. cit., 38, 39–40. See also the scathing criticism of Niẓāmī by S.H. Burney, “A Critical Survey,” op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> For this date, see the references in “Avicennan Tradition,” Chapter Two, Section III.A.a.

<sup>55</sup> The *Şiwān al-ḥikma*, which Ibn Funduq’s *Tatimma* was designed to continue (or “complete”) and which is traditionally attributed to Abū Sulaymān al-Mantiqī as-Siğistānī, was edited by ‘A.R. Badawī as *Şiwān al-Ḥikma wa-talāt rasā’il* (Tehran: Intiṣārāt-i Nubiyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1974). Another attribution, to Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī, Avicenna’s debating opponent in Hamadan in 405/1014–15 and sometime interlocutor of the *Mubāḥaṭāt* (see “Avicennan Tradition,” Chapter Three, Section One), was argued by W. al-Qāḏī in “*Kitāb Şiwān al-Ḥikma*: Structure, Composition, Authorship and Sources,” *Der Islam* 58 (1981), 87–124, but questioned by J. Kraemer in *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam: Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and his circle*, Studies in Islamic Culture and History, VIII (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 119ff. For a thorough study of the manuscripts and recensions of the work, see D. Gutas, “The *Şiwān al-Ḥikma* Cycle of Texts,” *JAOS* 102.4 (1982), 645–50. Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī’s *Tatimma* was edited by M. Šafi‘ as *Tatimma* [sic] *Şiwān al-Ḥikma* (Lahore, 1351/1932) [and derivatively and poorly by Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī as *Ta’rīḥ Ḥukamā’ al-‘Islām* (Damascus: al-Mağma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabī, 1365/1946)] and summarized in English by M. Meyerhof in “‘Alī al-Bayhaqī’s *Tatimmat Şiwān Al-Ḥikma*,” *Osiris* 8 (1948), 122–217. For biographical information on Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī, see M. Shafi, “The Author of the Oldest Biographical Notice of ‘Umar Khayyam and

to be directed at recording the pithy statements of famous philosophers (the sources for which have yet to be identified) rather than biographical writing properly speaking. It is in this work, as part of his paraphrase of the Avicenna Autobiography/Biography Complex, that we find the earliest version of the Plunder Anecdote.<sup>56</sup> His second work is *Mašārib at-tağārib*, a history of the Ġaznavids and Seljuks that was said to have been in four volumes.<sup>57</sup> It is no longer extant, but the fact that it was one of the few historical works written in Arabic for the period in question ensured that it would serve as the fundamental reference for later Arab authors, most especially for Ibn al-Aṭīr in his *al-Kāmil fī t-ta'riḥ*, completed around 627/1230.<sup>58</sup> Ibn Funduq's comments in his own Autobiography and the *Tatimma* lead us to believe that he composed both works at the same time, and so we might expect that much of the purportedly "historical" information of the *Tatimma* was also to be found in the *Mašārib*.<sup>59</sup> The first dateable appearance of the Plunder Anecdote is, thus, found in Ibn Funduq's *Tatimma*, albeit in early form and derivative in part of the reports from Avicenna and his students; it probably also figured in his *Mašārib*. It is likely through one of these works that Ibn al-Aṭīr learned of it.

It is thus possible to dismiss Ibn al-Aṭīr as an author dependent, at least in this instance, on Ibn Funduq. But the problem of Ibn al-Aṭīr's dating nonetheless remains; while Ibn Funduq implicitly dates

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the Notice in Question," *Islamic Culture* 6 (1932), 586–623, and Q.S.K. Husaini, "Life and Works of Zahiru'd-Din al-Bayhaqi, the Author of the *Tarikh-i Bayhaq*," *Islamic Culture* 28 (1954), 297–318; much of this biographical information is perfunctorily repeated by P. Pourshariati, "Local Historiography in Early Medieval Iran and the *Tārīḥ-i Bayhaq*," *Iranian Studies* 33.1–2 (2001), 140ff. Pourshariati's analysis of Ibn Funduq's historiographical motivations, and indeed her description of his *Tārīḥ-i Bayhaqī*, are indebted to Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 209ff.

<sup>56</sup> The term "Autobiography/Biography Complex" was first used by W. Gohlman in his edition and translation *The Life of Ibn Sīnā* and has been used fairly consistently in the secondary literature since. For the relation of Ibn Funduq's paraphrase of the Complex to other versions and his bibliographical information, see "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Two, Section III.

<sup>57</sup> Ibn Funduq himself says that his *Mašārib* was a continuation of al-'Uṭbī's *Kitāb al-Yamīnī*; see Cl. Cahen "Historiography of the Seljuqid Period," 64ff., who notes that Ibn Funduq cannot mean that he began his work where al-'Uṭbī left off, since we have a quotation of the *Mašārib* from an earlier period, concerning the Būyid vizier Ibn 'Abbād (d. 385/995).

<sup>58</sup> See Cahen, *ibid.*, 65–6, who notes Ibn al-Aṭīr's explicit reference to the *Mašārib* as well as some of the inconsistencies in his use of the work; see also Bosworth, *Later Ghaznavids*, 111ff.

<sup>59</sup> Cahen, 65.

the rifling of Ibn Sīnā's saddle-bags and the removal of his works to Ġazna to 421/1030, Ibn al-Aṭīr places a very similar report under the year 425/1034. There are a number of possible explanations for this discrepancy. A report similar to the one in Ibn Funduq's *Tatimma* may have been found in his *Mašārib*, but bearing the date 425/1034, and Ibn al-Aṭīr used that date. Or, Ibn al-Aṭīr could have drawn not on the *Mašārib* but on the *Tatimma*, with its implicit dating of the event to 421/1030 but, knowing full well that Abū Sahl was not in Isfahan in 421/1030, he could have quietly undertaken the hyper-correction of changing the date to 425/1034.<sup>60</sup> Finally, we have noted above that Ibn al-Aṭīr is not immune from making simple errors in his dating; this may be another instance of such slips.<sup>61</sup>

There are additional significant discrepancies between the reports of Ibn Funduq and Ibn al-Aṭīr but in order to address this, we must first turn to the evidence offered by the *Żubda*. This hybrid history of the Seljuks bears the dual title *Żubdat at-tawārīḥ* and *Aḥbār al-umarāʾ wa-l-mulūk as-Salġuqīya*. The nucleus of the work is based on *Żubdat at-tawārīḥ* attributed to one Šadr ad-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Nāšīr al-Ḥusaynī (fl. 575–622/1180–1225), who in turn based his work, at least for the years 485–547, on the earlier *Nuṣrat al-fatra* by ʿImād ad-Dīn al-Išfahānī (sixth/twelfth century); Ibn Nāšīr's *Żubda* was substantially transformed through excisions and additions by an unknown author of the seventh/thirteenth century.<sup>62</sup> The first four folios of this work contain a skeletal account of the early Ġaznavids and their relations with the Seljuk Turks. The sources for this account are difficult to identify and it is at any rate unclear which of the various hands at work in the *Żubda* is responsible for it. The author(s), after a brief reference to Masʿūd's altercation with the Ḥwārazamšāhs which is dated 4 Muḥarram 428/28 October 1036,<sup>63</sup> records a version of the Plunder Anecdote which, while much more developed, resembles in many respects that of Ibn al-Aṭīr. Both the *Żubda* and

<sup>60</sup> I use the term hyper-correction because, as we have seen, we have no unequivocal corroboration of the plunder of ʿAlā' ad-Dawla's treasuries and Avicenna's books in 425/1034.

<sup>61</sup> See above, n. 25.

<sup>62</sup> See Cl. Cahen, "Historiography," 69–72 who also provides references to other scholarly assessments. Cahen used M. Iqbal's edition (Lahore, 1933) which I have not seen. See the reference to the published facsimile of MS Br. Mus. Stowe Or. 7 above, n. 22.

<sup>63</sup> Šafi' in his edition of Ibn Funduq's *Tatimma*, 56, n. 1, incorrectly transcribed this date from the Stowe manuscript as "427."

Ibn al-Aṭīr explain Avicenna's connection to 'Alā' ad-Dawla in order to introduce their anecdote; both make reference to 'Alā' ad-Dawla's *treasuries* in Isfahan; both use the similar terms *ḥizānat al-kutub* (*Ẓubda*) and *ḥazā'in kutub[ihā]* (Ibn al-Aṭīr) to describe where Avicenna's books were deposited in Ġazna; and both make the assumption that Avicenna's books were indeed transferred to Ġazna at the time of the plunder of Isfahan, something not at all explicit in Ibn Funduq's report. In fact, all of these elements are either implicit in or absent from Ibn Funduq's report. The fact that both the *Ẓubda* and Ibn al-Aṭīr leave out the details of book titles and identities of correspondents mentioned by Ibn Funduq should not be considered significant; these details would be far too specific for the broader perspectives of the *Ẓubda* and Ibn al-Aṭīr. Points of contrast among all of the versions include the *Ẓubda*'s mention of Tāš Farrāš in connection with Abū Sahl, which substitutes for Ibn Funduq's "a group of Kurds" and which is wholly neglected by Ibn al-Aṭīr. The fact that the *Ẓubda* implicitly dates the event to 428/1036–7 explains its addition of Tāš Farrāš: it is only in the final major altercation between 'Alā' ad-Dawla and the Ġaznavid forces that we find the two mentioned together in the sources (e.g., Bayhaqī). Thus, the *Ẓubda*'s first error of dating is consonant with the second error of including Tāš Farrāš.

Conclusions concerning the possible relationships of dependency among the versions of the Plunder Anecdote are difficult to reach. We can be relatively certain that Ibn al-Aṭīr based his report on information from Ibn Funduq, although whether he took that information from Ibn Funduq's *Tatimma* or his *Mašārib* is less certain. Given the present state of our knowledge concerning the lines of transmission in historical works dealing with the period in question, it would be hazardous to posit with certainty how the versions of the Plunder Anecdote in the *Ẓubda* and Ibn al-Aṭīr's *al-Kāmil* relate to one another. The composition history of the *Ẓubda* is still not completely resolved and since there does appear to have been a revision of the nucleus of the *Ẓubda* sometime in the seventh/thirteenth century, i.e., around the time that Ibn al-Aṭīr composed his *al-Kāmil*, it is impossible to know whether Ibn al-Aṭīr also drew on the revised *Ẓubda* or whether the anonymous revisor of the *Ẓubda* drew on Ibn al-Aṭīr's *al-Kāmil*. That the two reports are somehow related seems almost certain but more than that cannot yet be proved demonstrably. At any rate, it is almost a certain fact that both are ultimately derivative of Ibn Funduq.

*The Biases and Motivations of Ibn Funduq*

It is apparent from the foregoing that Ibn Funduq is the source of the early version of the Plunder Anecdote and that he based his report on the texts of Avicenna and his students. The latter conclusion is nowhere more evident than in the fact that the three works by Avicenna mentioned by Ibn Funduq are all found in Avicenna's first letter (Avicenna 1 above); and it should be noted that it is these very three works which had the most problematic process of transmission and loss in the Avicennan corpus.<sup>64</sup> The fact that Ibn Funduq only implicitly dated the rifling of Avicenna's saddle-bags and the fact that he commented on the survival of these works, particularly the survival and then destruction of two of them in Ġazna, led to the generation of the Plunder Anecdote in later histories, including the *Ẓubda* and Ibn al-Aṭīr's *al-Kāmil*. It remains to be determined what Ibn Funduq's motivation may have been for developing a survival story—ending in the burning of Avicenna's books—to add to the information he culled from the texts of Avicenna and his students. Some clues in this regard can be sought in the other anecdotal material pertaining to Avicenna that is found in his *Tatimma*.

In his brief biography of Avicenna's first teacher an-Nātilī,<sup>65</sup> Ibn Funduq charges Avicenna with intellectual plagiarism. Ibn Funduq claims that an-Nātilī was the first to conceive of the theory of a "sanctified soul" (*naḥs qudsī*) and the corollary theory about intuition (*ḥads*), both of which are mainstays of Avicenna's psychology, but that Avicenna never credited his teacher with the theory.<sup>66</sup> He records

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<sup>64</sup> The survival of the *Isārāt* was apparently tenuous at the time that Avicenna wrote his letter to Bahmanyār, since he notes that [only] one copy may yet exist (see the translation in Avicenna 1 above). However, by the time of Ibn Funduq's writing, the transmission of the *Isārāt* in numerous copies was assured; hence Ibn Funduq did not include it in his "survival" report.

<sup>65</sup> *Tatimma*, ed. Šaḥīḥ, 22.1–23.5. Avicenna names an-Nātilī as his teacher in geometry and logic in the Autobiography, tr. Gohlman, op. cit., 20–23/21–25, nothing that he quickly surpassed an-Nātilī in mastery of these disciplines; see also Gutas's translation in *Avicenna*, 24–27, with additional references for the biography of an-Nātilī, such as it is known, 24, n. 9. Gutas, 193, also notes how uncommon it is in Arabic biographical literature for a scholar to emphasize how *little* he learned from a teacher; this very observation may have been behind Ibn Funduq's attempt to rehabilitate an-Nātilī. For further discussion of Ibn Funduq's report, see "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Two, III.A.a.2.

<sup>66</sup> On these theories, see Gutas, *Avicenna*, 159ff.

two statements ostensibly by an-Nātīlī in order to bolster this claim: “You must study the substance of the noble soul,” and “The sanctified soul is not persuaded by the dialectical or rhetorical syllogism.” Implicit in Ibn Funduq’s report is that an-Nātīlī was the progenitor of these theories, but that Avicenna did not acknowledge this “fact.”

Ibn Funduq’s account of Avicenna’s opinion of the physician Abū l-Farağ ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib mixes quotations from a letter by Avicenna’s student Ibn Zayla with his own opinions. Ibn Funduq says that “Abū ‘Alī [ibn Sīnā] denounced [Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib] and disparaged his works.”<sup>67</sup> He then quotes Avicenna as saying “[Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib’s] works should be sent back to the seller and let him keep his money!”<sup>68</sup> Ibn Funduq next draws on the same letter to rehabilitate Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib and Avicenna’s opinion of him by quoting Avicenna to the effect that Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib may once have been a master of medicine but that “his discussion [of the topic] is not clear; some of it is sound and some of it faulty.” What Ibn Funduq leaves out of this assessment is Avicenna’s own supposition, recorded by Ibn Zayla, that Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib suffered “a derangement due to illness that regularly befalls thinkers,”<sup>69</sup> replacing it with his own assessment: “I myself have seen a book by Abū l-Farağ . . . ; I benefited from it and recognized that he was a learned man (*hakīm*).”<sup>70</sup> Ibn Funduq thus concludes that Avicenna was “hurtful (*mu’din*) and insulting (*muḥağğin*)” to Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib, without having to raise the question of an illness that may have affected Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib’s faculties.

Ibn Funduq’s account of Avicenna’s opinion of Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib serves to introduce his peculiar report of a meeting between Avicenna and Miskawayh which in turn serves to buttress his claim that Avicenna was disrespectful of his contemporaries. Immediately after his condemnation of Avicenna for his “hurtful and insulting” behavior toward Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib, Ibn Funduq recounts:

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<sup>67</sup> *Tatimma*, 27.8.

<sup>68</sup> This statement is reported secondhand by Ibn Zayla in a letter Gutas dubbed “Memoirs of a Disciple from Rayy,” in *Avicenna*, 64ff. (and his translation of this sentence, 68). I have argued that the “disciple” is Ibn Zayla in “Avicennan Tradition,” Chapter Three, Section III.C.a, et pass., and that Ibn Funduq modified the quotation of Avicenna to refer to only one book by Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib instead of the original “books” by a number of the Bağdādī scholars; *ibid.*, Chapter Two, Section III.A.a.1, note.

<sup>69</sup> Tr. Gutas, *Avicenna*, 68.

<sup>70</sup> *Tatimma*, 28.8–9.

I saw in a book that Abū ‘Alī [ibn Sīnā] visited Abū ‘Alī ibn Miskawayh . . . who was surrounded by his students. Abū ‘Alī threw a nut at him and said: “Describe the surface of this nut in measures of grain!”<sup>71</sup> Ibn Miskawayh held aloft some fascicles on ethics and threw them at Ibn Sīnā, saying: “You mend your morals first before I determine the surface of the nut, since you are more in need of mending your morals than I am in need of the surface of a nut!” In much the same way did Abū ‘Alī [ibn Sīnā] take stabs at Abū l-Farağ [ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib] in his writings. Disparagement, rebuke and insult are not the normal practice of contemporaneous philosophers; rather it is the determination of truth. Whoever determines the truth has no need to censure the misguided (*ahl al-bāṭil*)—may God safeguard us against vices and bestow upon us in full measure the grace of virtues!<sup>72</sup>

The literary function of the “surface of a nut” topos is particularly obscure. But, while it is not clear to me what Ibn Funduq may have intended by it,<sup>73</sup> nor indeed whether or not he drew upon the works of Avicenna or Miskawayh to construct it,<sup>74</sup> we certainly should not

<sup>71</sup> I believe this is the sense of the statement: *bayyin misāḥata hādihī l-ḡawzati bi-š-šāʿirāt*, *Tatimma*, 29.2.

<sup>72</sup> *Tatimma*, 28.11–29.7. Ibn Funduq’s censure of such scholarly excesses is repeated regularly in his *Tārīḫ-i Bayhaq*; see additional examples in Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 221ff.

<sup>73</sup> Implicit in this statement is my opinion that, despite Ibn Funduq’s vague reference to a book in which he read this account, we can be fairly certain that it is he himself who is the author of the anecdote. See the next note for a possible identification of Ibn Funduq’s source as Avicenna’s *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*.

<sup>74</sup> It may be related in some way to Miskawayh’s comments on the deception of the senses in measuring aspects of the natural world in his *Tahdīb al-aḥlāq*, ed. C. Zurayk (Beirut: AUB, 1966), 7.14–8.16, but such comments are very common in philosophical works. The next defence of Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib in Ibn Funduq’s narrative involves the correspondence between Avicenna and Bīrūnī and this may also have suggested the topos; consider Question Three of the correspondence, concerning dimensions, especially of the circle, and Question Six on the movements of shapes like the egg and the lentil, in *al-Asʿila wa-l-aḡwiba*, ed. S.H. Nasr and M. Mohaghegh, *Islamic Thought (Al-Fikr Al-Islāmī)*, Series of Texts, Studies and Translations, III (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995). Finally, we find a mention of Miskawayh in Avicenna’s *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, a collection of correspondence between Avicenna, his students, and Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī. The reference to Miskawayh is found in a passage of a letter to Bahmanyār, in which Avicenna chastises the latter for what he perceived to be rude behavior: “This is all I can say about each question in one sitting when my aim is to be both brief and enigmatic, as a recompense for impoliteness. Each question in itself could warrant an unequivocal answer filling many pages, but that would have been only if each question had been isolated, self-contained, and its response sought after an interval and in a polite manner, for it would be unseemly of me to behave like Miskawayh, al-Kirmānī, and these kinds of people,” *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, par. 113; tr. “Avicennan Tradition,” Chapter Three, II.A.a; cf. tr. J. Michot, “La réponse d’Avicenne à Bahmanyār et al-Kirmānī, présentation, traduction critique et lexique arabe-français de la *Mubāḥatha*

conclude from the anecdote as a whole that Avicenna and Miskawayh ever actually met.<sup>75</sup> Rather, what Ibn Funduq appears to be attempting in this anecdote is the defence of Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib through the chastisement of Avicenna by his elder contemporary Miskawayh. In fact, such a defence of Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib by another contemporary, the scientist Abū r-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī, follows this in Ibn Funduq's narrative and is even more explicit in its ramifications for Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib. He says:

Abū r-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī had sent some questions to Abū 'Alī [ibn Sīnā]. Abū 'Alī responded to them and Bīrūnī objected to the responses of Abū 'Alī, insulted him and his remarks (*kalām*), and gave him a taste of the bitterness of insults. Abū 'Alī addressed [Bīrūnī] in a way not even commoners would, let alone philosophers. So when Abū l-Farağ [ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib] examined the questions and responses [of Bīrūnī and Avicenna], he said: "He who mistreats people will in turn be mistreated by them. Abū r-Rayḥān served as my proxy."<sup>76</sup>

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III," *Le Muséon* 110.1–2 (1997), 189–190. This passage concludes Avicenna's discussion of the different ways in which people of varying levels of intelligence come upon the syllogistic solutions to difficult questions. [I thank Dimitri Gutas for reminding me of this passage.] This context might also be behind al-Qifṭī's report about a putative meeting between Avicenna and Miskawayh. Al-Qifṭī says: "Abū 'Alī ibn Sīnā said in one of his books, after stating a problem 'I presented this problem to Abū 'Alī Miskawayh and he repeated it a few times and had difficulty understanding it. I finally left him and he still had not understood it.'" Al-Qifṭī then qualifies his information (or tips his hand) by saying: "This is [only] the sense (*ma'nā*) of what Ibn Sīnā said, because I wrote [this] report from memory," *Tārīḥ al-ḥukamā'*, ed. J. Lippert (Leipzig: Th. Weicher, 1903), 332.7–10; German translation by H. Preißler, "Vergleich zwischen Avicenna und Miskawayh," in *Avicenna/Ibn Sina 980–1036, II: Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, ed. B. Brentjes (Halle/Saale: Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 1980), 35. Qifṭī's report is repeated by Bar Hebraeus, *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar ad-Duwal*, ed. Anṭūn Ṣāllḥānī al-Yusū'ī (al-Ḥāzīmīya: Dār ar-Ra'id al-Lubnānī, 1403/1983), 306.14–17.

<sup>75</sup> The historical impossibilities that we face when attempting to verify such a meeting on the basis of such an anecdote are not as neatly overcome as M. Arkoun's discussion might suggest; see *L'humanisme arabe au IV<sup>e</sup>/X<sup>e</sup> siècle: Miskawayh, philosophie et histoire*, 2nd ed., Études Musulmanes, XII (Paris: J. Vrin, 1982), 85–6; cf. Preißler, "Vergleich," 41, n. 1. M. Waldman's criticism (*Toward a Theory*, op. cit., 3) of the uses to which modern scholars put medieval Arabic historical sources, while somewhat indiscriminate, is appropriate in this instance. Of biographers after Ibn Funduq (e.g., Yāqūt, al-Qifṭī, Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a), none take up this anecdote (but compare a similar one by al-Qifṭī in the previous note), with the exception of al-Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥwānsārī (d. 1313/1895), *Rawḍāt al-ḡannāt fī aḥwāl al-'ulamā' wa-s-sādāt* (Beirut: ad-Dār al-Islāmīya, 1991), 1:266–7. Al-Ḥwānsārī's biographies are no more trustworthy than those of Ibn Funduq; see the notes in "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Three, Section II.B.

<sup>76</sup> *Tatīmna*, 29.7–30.1; the meaning of the last statement is that Bīrūnī treated Avicenna in the same manner that Avicenna treated Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib.

In this report, Ibn Funduq again employs a contemporary of Avicenna to serve as a witness against what he perceives as Avicenna's poor treatment of Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib. It also introduces an additional element for our analysis: simple untruth. A reading of the correspondence between Avicenna and Bīrūnī makes it very clear that Avicenna in fact did not address Bīrūnī in a derogatory way; indeed, a notable aspect of Avicenna's responses to Bīrūnī is his explicit deferment to the latter's expertise in the field of geometry.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, Ibn Funduq's report in this part of the *Tatimma* is contradicted somewhat by the related report in his biography of Avicenna's student al-Ma'ṣūmī, later in the *Tatimma*:

When Abū 'Alī responded to Abū r-Rayḥān's questions, Abū r-Rayḥān challenged those questions and used words that amounted to bad manners (*sū' al-adab*) and insolence (*ṣafāḥa*). So Abū 'Alī refused [to continue] the debate. Then al-Ma'ṣūmī responded to Abū r-Rayḥān's challenges and said: "If you had chosen expressions other than these in addressing the Šayḥ [i.e., Avicenna], it would have been more suited to reason and learning."<sup>78</sup>

It is clear from Ibn Funduq's manipulation of his sources in his biographies of an-Nātilī and Abū l-Farağ ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib that he was greatly shocked by what he perceived as Avicenna's arrogant attitude toward contemporary philosophers and scientists. Ibn Funduq's reaction to Avicenna, articulated through a revisionist, perhaps even patently false, presentation of those contemporaries' own responses to Avicenna, equally mars his version of the Autobiography/Biography complex. For example, Ibn Funduq inserts into al-Ğūzğānī's Biography of Avicenna the following account, designed to explain why the Ğaznavid Mas'ūd laid siege to Isfahan in 421/1030, which in turn led to the rifling of Avicenna's saddle-bags and the theft of his works:

A war occurred between the general Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī, ruler of Rayy for Sultan Maḥmūd, and 'Alā' ad-Dawla. Then Sultan Mas'ūd ibn Maḥmūd advanced on Isfahan and took 'Alā' ad-Dawla's sister. So Abū 'Alī [ibn Sīnā] sent a dispatch to Sultan Mas'ūd and said, "If

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<sup>77</sup> See *al-As'ila*, op. cit., 29.5–7. This is not to say that Avicenna was unaware of Bīrūnī's insulting attitude in the course of the correspondence; consider, for instance, his comments in the response to Question 2, 14.3–4: "As for your statement [concerning intellectual fanaticism], such provocation (*muğāyaza*) and rudeness (*muḥāṣama*) is offensive."

<sup>78</sup> *Tatimma*, 95.6–10.

you marry this woman who is a satisfactory match for you, 'Alā' ad-Dawla will cede rule to you." So Sultan Mas'ūd married her. Then 'Alā' ad-Dawla prepared for war [against Mas'ūd], so Sultan Mas'ūd dispatched a messenger to him and said, "I will give your sister over to the rogues<sup>79</sup> of the army!" So 'Alā' ad-Dawla said to Abū 'Alī "Respond!" Abū 'Alī [wrote to Mas'ūd and] said: "Since the woman is the sister of 'Alā' ad-Dawla, she [should] be your wife, and if you divorce her, then she is your divorcee—and alimony is the responsibility of husbands, not of brothers." The Sultan scorned this but sent back 'Alā' ad-Dawla's sister safely and in honor. Then General Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī, along with a group of Kurds, plundered the Šayḥ's baggage, etc.<sup>80</sup>

Any attempt to verify the historicity of such an anecdote on the part of modern historians would be pointless, indeed it would be methodologically naive.<sup>81</sup> Ibn Funduq has inserted this report into the original text of al-Ġūzġānī's Biography for one purpose only: to explain the reason for the attack on Isfahan by Abū Sahl (note the anachronism) as being the result of Avicenna's obnoxious attitude toward the Ġaznavid Mas'ūd. Avicenna's attitude toward Mas'ūd brought on the rifling of his saddle-bags and the loss of his works.

This type of literary causality, in which invented recompenses are incurred by Avicenna for his actual or perceived behavior, is a conspicuous characteristic of Ibn Funduq's treatment and must be considered in his account of the survival and subsequent destruction of Avicenna's books in the library of Ġazna. In fact, a quick survey of Ibn Funduq's accounts of the survival of Avicenna's books is interesting in this regard, particularly when we consider that all of those books that Ibn Funduq mentions are those that have had the most tenuous transmission records. Of Avicenna's *al-Ḥāšil wa-l-maḥṣūl*, no longer extant, Ibn Funduq says that it "was in the library of Būzġān,

<sup>79</sup> "rogues," translates *runūd* (sg. *rīnd*), which is Šafi's conjecture for his base manuscript's reading *w.?.w.d.h.*, on the basis of the seventh/fourteenth century Persian translation of the *Tatimma* (*Durrat al-aḥbār wa Lum'at al-anwār*, ed. M. Šafi', 2nd ed., Tehran: Šarikat-i Sihāmī, 1318Š/1939) which has *rīndān*, 42.4. A. de B. Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français* (repr. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, s.n.), 1:933a, records the Arabic *rīnd*, *runūd*, with the translation "buveur, homme adonné à la débauche ou au vin." Kurd 'Alī, in his edition of Ibn Funduq's *Tatimma*, op. cit., 67.11, conjectures *wulūdihī* (voc.?), but this seems unlikely. "Rogues," *runūd*, appear again in Ibn Funduq's *Tārīḥ-i Bayhaq*; see P. Pourshariati, "Local Historiography," 159.

<sup>80</sup> *Tatimma*, 55.3–56.7.

<sup>81</sup> The topos of legal marital problems surfaces again in Ibn Funduq's unverified explanation of the cause of the historian Bayhaqī's imprisonment; see the summary by Yūsofi, "Bayhaqī," 889.

but was lost.”<sup>82</sup> Of his *al-Birr wa-l-ilm*, which Avicenna himself tells us existed only in his holograph, Ibn Funduq says “in 544/1149–50 I saw [a copy of] it in the possession of the Imām Muḥammad al-Ḥārītān as-Saraḥsī<sup>83</sup>—God have mercy on him! [It was written] in a poor and cramped (*muqarmat*) hand.” This report, which cannot be verified, would appear to have been made simply to accommodate the description of Avicenna’s handwriting.<sup>84</sup> Ibn Funduq’s account of the survival of the three works lost in the riffling of Avicenna’s saddle-bags has been translated above. In that report, it is worth noting that, according to Ibn Funduq, Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-Inṣāf* was purchased by ‘Azīz ad-Dīn al-Fuqqā’ī az-Zinḡānī.<sup>85</sup> The historian Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), who identifies this individual as ‘Azīz ad-Dīn Abū Bakr ‘Atīq az-Zinḡānī, or ‘Atīq ibn Abī Bakr, notes that he made his career as a purveyor of beer and other alcoholic beverages<sup>86</sup> to the Seljuk Sultan Saḡar (r. 511–552/1118–1157).<sup>87</sup> It cannot but be significant that Ibn Funduq would inform us that one of

<sup>82</sup> *Tatimma*, 44.4–5.

<sup>83</sup> Ibn Funduq has a brief report on Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥārītān as-Saraḥsī in the *Tatimma*, 159–60, to which Šafi‘, 159, n. 3, adds additional information from al-‘Imād al-Isfahānī’s *Ḥarīdat al-qaṣr wa-ḡarīdat al-‘asr*, including Ibn al-Ḥārītān’s death date 545/1150: “He wandered and roamed and surveyed most of the climes at his own risk in search of consummate wisdom. . . . He and I had a discussion concerning [the thesis] that two or three [logical] conceptualizations must precede affirmation [of an argument]; I recorded this [discussion] in my *Commentary on the Naḡāt*.”

<sup>84</sup> It is worth noting that Ibn Funduq’s characterization of Avicenna’s handwriting contradicts that of Maṣṣūr ibn Muslim, known as Ibn Abī l-Ḥaraḡāyn (fl. 457–510/1060–1117 in Damascus), whose copies of other of Avicenna’s holographs exist in MS Istanbul University A.Y. 4755 and who says that Avicenna’s handwriting was “a strong and excellent script using a fine nib” (*ḥatt qawīy ḡayyid bi-qalam daḡīq*); see “Avicennan Tradition,” Chapter One, Part Two, Section I.A.b.

<sup>85</sup> Šafi‘ followed his base manuscript (Berlin Petermann 737) for the reading “ar-Rayḡhānī” instead of “az-Zinḡānī,” which is found in MS Köprülü 902 (recorded by Šafi‘, *Tatimma*, 56, n. 4) and confirmed by Yāqūt’s information, on which see n. 87 below.

<sup>86</sup> Indeed, this appears to be the origin of his *kunya* al-Fuqqā’ī; according to Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (repr. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), 6:2428c, *fuqqā’* is a sort of beer made from barley.

<sup>87</sup> Yāqūt, *Muḡam al-Buldān/Ḥacut’s Geographisches Wörterbuch*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1869), 4:50; cited also by Šafi‘, *Tatimma*, 194, and Max Weisweiler, “Avicenna und die iranischen Fürstenbibliotheken seiner Zeit” in *Avicenna Commemoration Volume* (Calcutta: Iran Society: 1956), 62, n. 4 (see also Gutas, *Avicenna*, 133, n. 2).

Avicenna's major philosophical works, no longer extant in its entirety, was purchased by a seller of illegal beverages!<sup>88</sup> We return finally to Avicenna's *al-Ḥikma al-mašriqīya* and *al-Ḥikma al-ʿaršīya*, both of which Ibn Funduq, on the authority of the otherwise unknown Ismāʿīl al-Bāḥarzī, tells us were lost when the library of Ġazna was burned down during the Ġūrid sack of Ġazna. To understand why Ibn Funduq might have invented such a story,<sup>89</sup> we must turn again to Avicenna's own account of his early years of learning. In his Autobiography, Avicenna describes the library of the Sāmānids where he undertook what D. Gutas has called his "graduate education":<sup>90</sup>

One day I asked [the Sāmānid ruler Nūḥ ibn Maṣṣūr's] permission to enter the library, look through it, and read its contents. He gave me permission and I was admitted to a building with many rooms. In each room, there were chests of books piled one on top of the other. In one of the rooms were books on the Arabic language and poetry, in another jurisprudence, and so on in each room a separate science. . . . I saw books whose very names are unknown to many and which I had never seen before nor have I seen since. I read those books, mastered their teachings, and realized how far each man had advanced in his science.<sup>91</sup>

The sense of awe with which Avicenna describes the library is self-evident. Perhaps less so is his intimation that he alone had access to books otherwise unknown to his contemporaries and that such a period of study granted him alone the ability to judge the relative intellectual merits of scholars. It is in this context that we might assess a final report from Ibn Funduq which he inserted into his version of the Autobiography at the end of Avicenna's description of the Sāmānid library:

<sup>88</sup> For the approbation later authors levied against Avicenna for imbibing wine and an analysis of the place of such a habit in Avicenna's philosophical praxis, see Gutas, *Avicenna*, 184ff.

<sup>89</sup> Despite the fact that Ibn Funduq ascribes this report to al-Imām Ismāʿīl al-Bāḥarzī, it is more likely that Ibn Funduq himself is responsible for the information. At any rate, I have not found any references to an Ismāʿīl al-Bāḥarzī in the literature.

<sup>90</sup> *Avicenna*, 153–4.

<sup>91</sup> Gohlman, *Life*, 35–6; the translation above contains only a minor modification in syntax to Gutas's translation, *Avicenna*, 28–9. Cf. the German translations by P. Kraus, "Eine arabische Biographie Avicennas," *Klinische Wochenschrift* 11 (1932), 5–6, and Weisweiler, "Avicenna," 50.

It is agreed that this library was burned down and all of the books were consumed. An adversary [unnamed: *ba'du huṣamā'*] said that Abū 'Alī set fire to the library in order that those sciences and [their] precious knowledge (*naḥā'is*) would accrue to him alone and that the credit for those intellectual benefits (*fawā'id*) would be cut off from their proper authors.<sup>92</sup>

Who is this anonymous hostile witness? He is likely none other than Ibn Funduq himself. Throughout the *Tatimma* Ibn Funduq makes very clear his disapproval of Avicenna. We have seen the lengths to which he goes in defending Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib against what he perceived as the rude judgment of Avicenna; we have seen also the method by which he sought to levy recompense against Avicenna for what he perceived as Avicenna's surliness toward his contemporaries. I submit that the works stolen from Avicenna's saddle-bags in 421/1030 never reached Ġazna and certainly did not perish in the Ġūrīd destruction of its library. Rather, Ibn Funduq invented such a survival story as the just balance to an equally apocryphal story of Avicenna's act of arson against the Sāmānid library.<sup>93</sup>

### *Revisiting the Modern Record*

The evaluation of the historical sources related to the transmission of Avicenna's works has previously been left undone in modern scholarship. This fact has produced an implicit assumption of the veracity of Ibn Funduq's report. Equally, the relationship between Ibn Funduq's report and those of later historians, viz. Ibn al-Aṭīr and the author(s) of the *Żubda*, has not been previously plotted. This fact has led to the assumption, not always implicit, that later reports somehow offer independent verification of Ibn Funduq's information.

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<sup>92</sup> *Tatimma*, 43.9–11.

<sup>93</sup> It should be clear from the foregoing that Ibn Funduq's historiographical intentions did not include solely the "collection of facts" but rather was directed towards the moral "edification" of the reader (see Meisami's correction of Lambton's perception of Ibn Funduq in *Persian Historiography*, 213); such edification was obviously determined by a conception of specific virtues deemed desirable by Ibn Funduq himself or his broader cultural context. We have seen the ways in which such edification undermined the presentation of historical fact in Ibn Funduq's biographies but, while it is perhaps unfair to expect such edification to conform to our modern notions of historicity, we should nonetheless be prepared to discount its value for the establishment of such historical fact.

Paul Kraus appears to be the first modern scholar to outline the extant evidence concerning the loss of Avicenna's works. His "Plotin chez les arabes," published in 1941, contains a detailed note (n. 3, 273–4) in which he listed the testimonies of al-Ġūzġānī, Ibn Funduq, and the *Ẓubda* on the loss of Avicenna's *Kūtib al-Inṣāf* in 421/1030, without mentioning the other works listed by Avicenna in his letter to Bahmanyār (see Avicenna 1 above).<sup>94</sup> He noted that Ibn Funduq named Abū Sahl al-Ḥamdūnī as leader of the expedition against Isfahan instead of the Ġaznavid Maḥmūd (then Sultan) or his son Mas'ūd (who actually led the expedition), but did not comment on the incongruity. A little over a decade later (1954), Shlomo Pines made incidental reference to "the sack of Isfahan, which happened in 1034" in a brief note on the loss of Avicenna's books in his "La conception de la conscience de soi,"<sup>95</sup> without providing any reference to the extant historical works for this date. Two years later (1956) Max Weisweiler *did* cite the relevant primary sources for the date of 425/1034 as that of the loss of Avicenna's books, but he did not subject those sources to the analysis that would have led to a modification of this date.<sup>96</sup> In 1974, W. Gohlman published his edition and translation of the Autobiography/Biography Complex and in the course of commenting on al-Ġūzġānī's testimony (see above, al-Ġūzġānī), raised the issue of when the sack of Isfahan may have occurred. Although Gohlman gave a narration of the attack on Isfahan by Mas'ūd in 421/1030, he nonetheless endorsed the date

<sup>94</sup> Kraus, "Plotin chez les Arabes, remarques sur un nouveau fragment de la paraphrase des *Ennéades*," *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* 23 (1941), 263–295. Kraus followed Šafī's erroneous dating (*Tatimma*, 56, n. 1) of 427 (and not 428) for the report in the *Ẓubda*. Also, it is not surprising that Kraus would neglect mention of the other works, since they do not have as direct a bearing on the transmission of Plotinus as does *Kūtib al-Inṣāf* and related texts.

<sup>95</sup> Pines, "La conception de la conscience de soi chez Avicenne et chez Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī," *AHDL* 29 (1954), 21–98; reprinted in *Studies in Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī, Physics and Metaphysics, The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*, ed. S. Stroumsa (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 1:181–258. The reference above is to 44, n. 2 of the original publication.

<sup>96</sup> "Avicenna," 62, n. 6, citing Ibn Funduq, al-Qifī, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a [*Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, ed. M. Müller, Cairo, 1299/1882], Ibn al-Aṭīr, Ḥwāndamīr [*Ḥabīb as-siyar*, Tehran Lithograph, 1857; derivative of his uncle Muḥammad Mīr Ḥwānd's *Rawḍāt aṣ-ṣafā'*, itself a verbatim translation of Ibn al-Aṭīr's *al-Kāmil*; see Nāẓim, *Life and Times*, 12–13], and the *Ẓubda* (apud Šafī<sup>o</sup>). We have seen that the first, fourth, and last of these sources all have different dates for the plunder of Avicenna's saddle-bags; Weisweiler thus made an implicit choice in favor of 1034.

425/1034 on the basis of Ibn al-Aṭīr's testimony.<sup>97</sup> In 1988, Dimitri Gutas staked claim to the middle ground on the issue in the course of developing his theory concerning the dates of composition and loss of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Inṣāf*.<sup>98</sup> Drawing on Avicenna's letter to Bahmanyār (Avicenna 1) and seeking to reconcile the datings in the reports of Avicenna and his students, Ibn Funduq, and Ibn al-Aṭīr, Gutas argued that Avicenna was referring to two separate events: the loss of *Kitāb al-Inṣāf* in 421/1030; and the loss of (a copy of) *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt, al-masā'il al-mašriqīya* (Ibn Funduq: *al-Ḥikma al-mašriqīya*), and *al-Ḥikma al-'aršīya*. As salubrious as this compromise must have appeared at the time, it nonetheless could only be an informed hypothesis until such time as a broader analysis of the historiography of the problem could be undertaken.<sup>99</sup>

The preceding evaluation of that historiography brings to light a number of interesting facts about the later representation of Avicenna and the historical events in which he was involved. It now seems clear that Ibn Funduq, while drawing on the texts of Avicenna and his students, added significant, and unverifiable, information concerning the survival of Avicenna's books and works-in-progress after 421/1030. The intention behind Ibn Funduq's manipulation of the historical record would appear to derive from his personal antipathy to Avicenna and was designed to levy against him a literary recompense for perceived faults in Avicenna's treatment of his contemporaries. The ambiguity in the dating of Ibn Funduq's report is most likely the cause for the confusion concerning when Avicenna's books were subject to pilfer. This ambiguity produced the alternate dates of 425/1034 for the unfortunate event in the later Arab historian Ibn al-Aṭīr's account, and 428/1036–7 in the later recension of the *Ḥubda*.

The fact that Avicenna and his students make no comment on another loss of Avicenna's books (or the plunder of his *library*) is per-

<sup>97</sup> Gohlman, *Life*, 135–6, n. 106.

<sup>98</sup> Gutas, *Avicenna*, 134–6.

<sup>99</sup> There are yet more random statements by modern scholars on the date of the sack of Isfahan in relation to Avicenna's books; for instance, Cahen, "A propos d'Avicenne," 82, in an uncommonly careless moment, dated it to 1033 (i.e., the very beginning of 424). The references above, however, are sufficient to plot the general trajectory of the debate.

haps sufficient to discredit the hypothesis that there were two occasions on which Avicenna's books were subject to the fortunes of war. However, the fact that none of the extant records of the period corroborate such a second event and, in the case of Bayhaqī's *History*, actually offer circumstantial evidence against it, further obliges us to revise the historical record. We thus must take seriously and at face value the evidence offered by Avicenna and his students concerning the theft of his works from his saddle-bags in 421/1030 by endorsing the dates of composition and loss for the books mentioned by them. This means that, contrary in part to modern treatments of the chronology of his works, we can say with certainty that: 1) *Kitāb al-Inṣāf* was written before 421/1030 and lost *in toto* in that year;<sup>100</sup> 2) that *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt* must have been composed prior to 421/1030<sup>101</sup> and that only a copy was lost in that year. As for Avicenna's testimony concerning the works *al-masā'il al-mašriqīya* and *al-Ḥikma al-'arṣīya*, the identity, contents and survival of these works remains the subject of ongoing research.<sup>102</sup> A final important observation that emerges from the preceding study of the historiography of Avicenna's time is the absolute paucity of information directly related to him

<sup>100</sup> In response to Kraus's question ("Plotin," 274, n. 1) concerning the nature of the extant remains of this work (ed. 'A.R. Badawī in *Aristū 'inda l-'arab*, Dirāsāt Islāmīya, 5 [Cairo: Maktabat an-Nahḍa al-Miṣriya, 1947], 22–74), I have suggested elsewhere that they are likely Ibn Zayla's notes to (or excerpts of?) the work; see "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Three, II.C.c.4

<sup>101</sup> See the alternate date in Gutas, *Avicenna*, 145.

<sup>102</sup> The necessary study of the textual transmission of the work now called *al-Mašriqīyīn* has been undertaken by D. Gutas, "Avicenna's Eastern ("Oriental") Philosophy: Nature, Contents, Transmission," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10.2 (2000), 159–180, but the question concerning the relation of this work to the text entitled *al-masā'il al-mašriqīya* in Avicenna's letter remains (see my hypothesis in a note to "Avicennan Tradition," Chapter Four, II.D.a.). Also, I do not believe that the work entitled *ar-Risāla al-'Arṣīya* which circulates today under Avicenna's name is the work referred to by Avicenna in his letter, or indeed that it is by Avicenna at all. The text of Pseudo-Avicenna's *Arṣīya* can be found in *Mağmū'at Rasā'il aṣ-Ṣayḥ ar-Ra'īs Abī 'Alī al-Husayn ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā al-Buḥārī* (Hayderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uṣmāniya, 1354/1935); edited more recently by Ibrāhīm Hilāl, *ar-Risāla al-'Arṣīya fī ḥaqā'iq at-tawḥīd wa-ṭbāt an-nubūwa* (Cairo: n.p., 1980), on the basis of the Hayderabad publication and MS Mağlis 7851; English translation by A.J. Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology* (repr. Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1992), 25–37; German translation by Egbert Meyer, "Philosophischer Gottesglaube: Ibn Sīnās Thronschrift," *ZDMG* 130 (1980), 226–277. I hope to pursue this in a revisionist study of the Pseudo-Avicennan corpus. For now, see the additional comments by Robert Wisnovsky in the present volume.

in that literature. This raises serious questions about the glorified professional status al-Ġūzġānī accords his master in his Biography, but that is a topic for future research.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Throughout his Biography of Avicenna, al-Ġūzġānī makes it apparent that Avicenna had garnered an important public reputation in the course of his early career and this is endorsed by Avicenna himself in his narrative of their first meeting; see Gohlman, *Life*, 42/3, and compare Gutas's comments in "Avicenna II, Biography," 67b. It is with regard to such contexts that I would propose that rhetorical historiography supercedes almost immediately (in a temporal sense) the record of factual history by a contemporary historian; cf. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 289.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ROCKS IN THE HEAVENS?! THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN ‘ABD AL-ĠABBĀR AND IBN SĪNĀ

Alnoor Dhanani

There are two aspects to the “encounter” between ‘Abd al-Ġabbār (d. 415/1025) and Ibn Sīnā: the personal and the intellectual. By “personal encounter” I mean the actual historical engagement between them, whether in person or via explicit references in their texts. Since they are also the foremost representatives of the disciplines of *kalām* and *falsafa* during the late fourth and early fifth/late tenth and early eleventh centuries, their “intellectual encounter” reflects the more general encounter between these opposing disciplines. These two aspects are of course inter-related, for the personal encounter also incorporates elements of the intellectual encounter. I begin here with what is known about the personal encounter between them and then discuss some aspects of their participation in the intellectual encounter between *kalām* and *falsafa*.

One of the surviving items of Ibn Sīnā’s correspondence is his *Letter from one of the mutakallimūn to the Šayḥ, so he replied* which is also known as the *Risāla fī l-makān*. In the letter, Ibn Sīnā is questioned by an unidentified correspondent (who, according to the title of the text was a *mutakallim*) who states:

In the days of my youth (*šabābī*), I saw a man who asked me: “What is this expanse which extends over all things? Some of the Ancients called it *ilāh* (god) and worshipped it; others called it *faḍāʾ*, still others called it *makān* and *markaz*, while the *mutakallimūn* called it *ġiha* and *ḥayyiz*, and the Muʿtazila called it *muḥāḍāt*. All of them refer to it by *ḥaytu* and *ayna* [where]. In his *Šarḥ Lubāb al-maḡālāt ‘an al-Balḥī*, Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Ġabbār relates: by the term *faḍāʾ*, the proponents of *faḍāʾ* mean the same thing which we mean by the term *muḥāḍāt*. As long as they do not assert that it [i.e., *faḍāʾ*] is a body, nor that it is capable of motion (*dāhib fī l-ġihāt*), nor that it is contiguous (*muḡāwara*), nor that it inheres in (*ḥulūl*), the difference between us and them is merely in the use of terms (*fī l-lafẓ*) not in their meaning (*fī l-maʿnā*). . . .”

I ask our Master, the wise *Šayḥ*, may God perpetuate his high status, that he explain to me what he has found regarding this [subject] so that it can be a cure (*šifāʿ*) and so that by this action he may, God-willing, earn joyful tidings and the blessings of an abundant reward in the hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

Almost at the end of his reply to the posed question, Ibn Sīnā refers back to his correspondent's mention of 'Abd al-Ġabbār:

With regard to what the author of this problem has mentioned, that is, regarding 'Abd al-Ġabbār, that the meaning of *faḍāʿ* is the same as the meaning of *muḥāḍāt*, this is an error regarding both terms.<sup>2</sup> This is because *muḥāḍāt* [being face-to-face or opposite] is a relational attribute of [one] opposing body (*muḥāḍī*) in relation to the body which opposes it (*muḥāḍī*). Therefore if either one of them were absent, then the existence of both would be impossible.<sup>3</sup>

It follows from this text then that when Ibn Sīnā's correspondent was a young man, he was questioned regarding the nature of space by an unidentified discussant. Many years later, the correspondent wrote to Ibn Sīnā seeking to elicit his views on the exchange, in particular seeking further information about the views of the ancients regarding space.<sup>4</sup>

We find two references in this *risāla* to 'Abd al-Ġabbār: the first is by Ibn Sīnā's correspondent who tells us about the general *kalām* use of *ḡiḥa* and *ḥayyiz* for space and the specific Mu'tazilī use of *muḥāḍāt*. This later usage is attributed to 'Abd al-Ġabbār, in particular, to his *Šarḥ Lubāb al-maqālāt 'an al-Balīy*, who equates *muḥāḍāt* with *faḍāʿ*. The second reference is by Ibn Sīnā himself, when he refers back to his correspondent's citation of 'Abd al-Ġabbār regarding the Mu'tazilī use of *muḥāḍāt*. Ibn Sīnā then disputes 'Abd al-Ġabbār's assertion that *muḥāḍāt* and *faḍāʿ* are equivalent and that they both refer to space on linguistic grounds. We cannot, unfortunately, verify the account of Ibn Sīnā's correspondent regarding 'Abd al-Ġabbār's intent in equating *muḥāḍāt* with *faḍāʿ*, for the commen-

<sup>1</sup> *Risāla fī l-makān*, MS Ahmet III 3447, 38v. I would like to thank David Reisman for providing me with copies of this work.

<sup>2</sup> *fa-ammā mā ḍakarāhū šāhibu ḥādīhī š-šubḥati wa-huwa 'Abdu l-Ġabbār bi-anna l-mā'nā bi-l-faḍā'i huwa l-mā'nā bi-l-muḥāḍātī fa-huwa ḡalaṭun min kilayhima . . .* (ibid., 41r).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 41r.

<sup>4</sup> The nature of space seems to have been an issue in vogue during this period, for we have a similar *risāla* by Ibn al-Hayṭam; see his *Risāla fī l-makān* in *Maḡmū' ar-rasā'il* (Hayderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uṭmāniya, 1357/1938), no. 5.

tary which is mentioned here is lost. Nevertheless, in his treatise on *Definitions and Realities* ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s student aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḏā (d. 436/1044) provides a definition of the Mu‘tazilī use of *muḥādāt*, which probably reflects his teacher’s use of the term, as the space (*al-ġiḥa*) which the atom (*ġawḥar*) may occupy.<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, al-Murtaḏā does not define *faḏā’*, since this was not a term used by the *mutakallimūn*. Thus ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s equation of *faḏā’* with *muḥādāt* was primarily meant to inform his readers of the equivalence of these two terms, the former utilized primarily in *falsafa* contexts, possibly in doxographical accounts of the views of early Greek philosophers on space, and the latter utilized by the Mu‘tazilā.

This *Risāla* therefore is evidence of a textual encounter between Ibn Sīnā and ‘Abd al-Ġabbār or, more accurately, Ibn Sīnā’s textual encounter with ‘Abd al-Ġabbār. We do not know where or when the *Risāla* was written, whether it was before or after Ibn Sīnā’s stay in Rayy where, as we shall see, Ibn Sīnā may have met ‘Abd al-Ġabbār. However, we can be sure that Ibn Sīnā must have been exposed to *kalām* early in his career, certainly before this encounter in the *Risāla* with ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s views on space. In his *Autobiography*, Ibn Sīnā tells us that his initial studies included the study of Ḥanafī Islamic law (*fiqh*) with Ismā‘īl az-Zāhid and we also know that during his stay in Gurganġ at the court of the Ḥwārazamšāh ‘Alī ibn Ma‘mūn he became a jurist.<sup>6</sup> He must have been introduced to at least the rudiments of *kalām* in the course of his engagement and study of *fiqh*.<sup>7</sup> However, the mature Ibn Sīnā’s knowledge of *kalām*

<sup>5</sup> Aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḏā, *al-Ḥudūd wa-l-ḥaqā’iq* in *Rasā’il aš-Šarīf al-Murtaḏā*, ed. A. al-Ḥusaynī and M. ar-Raġā’ī (Qum: Dār al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 1405–/1984–), 2:282.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā*, ed./tr. W. Gohlman, (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1974), 20, 40; D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, Islamic Philosophy and Theology: Texts and Studies, 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 25 (and n. 10), 29.

<sup>7</sup> The individualistic character of education does not allow us to ascertain what texts Ibn Sīnā read with Ismā‘īl az-Zāhid. Nevertheless, the study of *fiqh* requires a grounding in the fundamentals of the Islamic creed, in this case, according to the Ḥanafī rite. While it is difficult to draw the general conclusion of the affiliation of legal *madhabs* with *kalām* orientations, Bulliet claims that in the case of the patricians of Nishapur in the medieval period, “all of the known or presumed Ash‘arīs are Shāfi‘īs, and all of the known or presumed Mu‘tazilīs are Ḥanafīs” (R. Bulliet, *Patricians of Nishapur* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972], 36). Bulliet cautions however, that biographical dictionaries for the most part record an individual’s law school, and more rarely his theological orientation. Moreover, Bulliet’s discussion does not include the Mātūrīdīs who were widespread in Central Asia. Ibn Sīnā recognizes the relationship between *kalām* and *fiqh*, not surprisingly, from within his *falsafa* perspective. He suggests that the relationship of *kalām* to the religious sciences

was anything but rudimentary. For example, in his discussion of physical theory in the *Šifāʾ*, in particular, atomism, he demonstrates detailed knowledge of *kalām* arguments concerning atomism between Abū l-Hudayl (d. 227/841–2) and his anti-atomist nephew an-Nazzām (d. between 220–230/835–845).<sup>8</sup> Such familiarity suggests that he was well-versed with *kalām* texts which discussed such arguments in some detail, quite possibly the *maqālāt* genre of texts. Since these arguments regarding atomism are not found in the surviving *maqālāt* works by al-Ašʿarī (d. 324/935) or al-Balḥī (d. 319/931),<sup>9</sup> could Ibn Sīnā have relied on ʿAbd al-Ġabbār’s commentary of al-Balḥī’s *Maqālāt* mentioned in the *Risāla fī l-makān*? We cannot be absolutely certain about this because, as has already been mentioned, this text, like other *Maqālāt* texts, has not survived.

Nevertheless, the claim that Ibn Sīnā may have relied on a source close to ʿAbd al-Ġabbār’s school has some merit because of the indirect evidence provided by texts of ʿAbd al-Ġabbār’s students. In his *Tadkīra fī aḥkām al-ġawhar wa-l-ʾarāḍ*, Ibn Mattawayh (d. 469/1076?) discusses the arguments between Abū l-Hudhayl and an-Nazzām in great detail;<sup>10</sup> and in his *Masāʾil al-ḥilāf bayna l-baṣrīyīn wa-l-baġdadīyīn*, Abū Rāšid an-Nīsābūrī (d. mid-5th/11th century?) details the questions on which the Basrian Muʿtazila had differed from al-Balḥī.<sup>11</sup> We may reasonably suppose that these students relied on ʿAbd al-

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is analogous to the relationship of metaphysics to the physical sciences, in so far as “the *faqīh* takes his principles for granted, namely the necessity of the text of revelation, accounts of the Prophet, consensus, and analogy from the *mutakallīm*” and his “verification of his sources” is not *qua faqīh* but as a *mutakallīm*. Similarly “the physicist (*ṭabīʿī*) takes his principles for granted from the metaphysician (*ilāhī*)”; see Ibn Sīnā, *Fī l-Aġrām al-ʾulūviya* in *Tisʿ rasāʾil fī l-ḥikma wa-t-ṭabīʿiyāt wa-fī āḥirihā qiṣṣat Salāmān wa-Absāl*, ed. A. Hīndīya (Cairo, 1908), 42. I believe that this recognition of a relationship between these two disciplines is not just theoretical, but based on the actual historical relationship of these two disciplines as seen by religious scholars, perhaps including Ismāʿīl az-Zāhid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *aš-Šifāʾ, at-Ṭabīʿiyāt: as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, ed. S. Zāʾid (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣrīya al-ʿamma li-l-Kitāb, 1983), 184–202; P. Lettinck, “Ibn Sīnā on Atomism: Translation of Ibn Sīnā’s *Kitāb aš-Šifāʾ, at-Ṭabīʿiyāt: al-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, Third Treatise, Chapters 3–5,” *aš-Šaġara* 4 (1999), 1–50.

<sup>9</sup> Abū l-Qāsim al-Balḥī, (*Bāb*) *Dīkr al-Muʿtazila min Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn* in *Faḍl al-ʾitizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-muʿtazila*, ed. F. Sayyid (Tunis: ad-Dār at-Tūnisīya li-n-Naṣr, 1986), 63–119.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadkīra fī aḥkām al-ġawāhir wa-l-ʾarāḍ*, ed. S.N. Luṭf and F.B. ʿAwn, *Silsilat Nafāʾis al-Fikr al-Islāmī*, 1 (Cairo: Dār at-Taqaḍa, 1975), 162–207; A. Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām, Atoms, Space, and Void in Basrian Muʿtazilī Cosmology*, *Islamic Philosophy and Science, Texts and Studies*, 14 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 172–181.

<sup>11</sup> Abū Rāšid an-Nīsābūrī, *Masāʾil al-ḥilāf bayna l-baṣrīyīn wa l-baġdadīyīn*, ed. M. Ziyādah and R. as-Sayyid, (Beirut: Maʿhad al-Inmāʾ al-ʿArabī, 1979).

Ġabbār's commentary of al-Balḥī's *Maqālāt* or perhaps even the parts of the *Muġnī* which are lost for this material. We thus have the intriguing, although likely, possibility of Ibn Sīnā's acquaintance with portions of 'Abd al-Ġabbār's works.

'Abd al-Ġabbār al-Hamaḍānī (b. 320/932) was originally an Aš'arī *mutakallim*. He moved from Hamadhan to Basra where he converted to Mu'tazilī *kalām*, studying with the masters of the day. He commenced his writing and teaching career in Baghdad, moved to 'Askar, and then to Rāmahurmuz in 360/970, where he began dictating his *magnum opus*, *al-Muġnī*. He finally moved to Rayy, at the invitation of the Mu'tazilī-leaning Būyid vizier Ṣāḥib ibn 'Abbād (d. 385/995) and was appointed chief *qāḍī*. Here, in 380/990, 'Abd al-Ġabbār completed dictating his *Muġnī*. During the twenty years it took to dictate the *Muġnī*, 'Abd al-Ġabbār composed several other works, including the above-mentioned *Commentary on al-Balḥī's Maqālāt*. In 385/995 he turned to write his *Tatbūt dalā'il an-nubūwa*. In the same year, following the death of Ibn 'Abbād, 'Abd al-Ġabbār was dismissed from his position of chief *qāḍī* and arrested by the Būyid prince Faḥr ad-Dawla. We do not have further information about 'Abd al-Ġabbār's career at court, particularly whether or not he was reinstated following Faḥr ad-Dawla's death. He died in Rayy in 415/1025.<sup>12</sup>

The biographer of the Mu'tazila, al-Ġuṣamī (d. 494/1100) evaluates 'Abd al-Ġabbār's standing and influence, telling us:

I have not found any report which would detract from 'Abd al-Ġabbār's place with regards to virtue or his high standing in knowledge. For he is the one who tore (*fataqa*) *kalām* open, unfolded it, and put it down in great books. As a result, *kalām* spread far and wide, reaching the East and the West. In these books he included the minutiae (*daqīq*)<sup>13</sup> of *kalām* as well as its larger questions (*ġalīl*) [in a manner] which none before him had accomplished successfully.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Al-Ġuṣamī, *Šarḥ al-uyūn in Faḍl al-ītizāl*, op. cit., 366; S.M. Stern, "'Abd al-Ġabbār b. Aḥmad," *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 1:59–60; C. Cahen and C. Pellat, "Ibn 'Abbād," *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 3:671–3; C. Cahen, "Fakhr ad-Dawla," *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 2:748–9; J. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam, The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age*, Studies in Islamic Culture and History, VII, Second Revised Edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 261–262, 272; M.T. Heemskerck, *Suffering in Mu'tazilite Theology, 'Abd al-Ġabbār's Teaching on Pain and Divine Justice*, Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, Texts and Studies, 41 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), 36–53.

<sup>13</sup> The minutiae (*daqīq*, *laṭīf*) of *kalām* primarily refer to cosmological questions. Hence Ibn Mattawayḥ's work is also known as *Tadkira fī laṭīf al-kalām*. I discuss this in "Kalām and Hellenistic Cosmology: Minimal Parts in Basrian Mu'tazilī Atomism," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1991, 21–28.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Ġuṣamī, *Šarḥ*, 365.

As consolidators of their respective disciplines of *falsafa* and *kalām*, as teachers, as authors, and as public officials, Ibn Sīnā and ‘Abd al-Ġabbār are therefore clearly comparable figures of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Moreover, both were also pressed into the service of the Būyids, and as such, their lives were intertwined with the political vagaries and rivalries of their patrons. Like ‘Abd al-Ġabbār, Ibn Sīnā also entered the service of the Būyids in Rayy. But he did so as a member in the court of the young prince Mağd ad-Dawla, son of Faḥr ad-Dawla, and his regent mother as-Sayyida.<sup>15</sup> Ibn Sīnā remained in Rayy until it was attacked by Šams ad-Dawla. We can therefore date Ibn Sīnā’s stay in Rayy to 403–405/1013–15, that is, when he was in his late twenties and ‘Abd al-Ġabbār was in his late seventies and early eighties. The presence of Ibn Sīnā and ‘Abd al-Ġabbār in Rayy during this period clearly provided ample opportunity for a personal encounter.<sup>16</sup> If the composition of the *Risāla fī l-makān* predates Ibn Sīnā’s sojourn in Rayy, then he must have been aware of the now elderly ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s renown. But even if the *Risāla* was written later, it is inconceivable that Ibn Sīnā would not already have been aware of the renowned Mu‘tazilī teacher before his arrival in Rayy or, at the very least, after his arrival there. Unless ‘Abd al-Ġabbār was completely out of favor at court, there may have been official occasions where they were both present. But we may rightly ask: even if these two intellectuals had met, what would they have discussed? Their world-views were quite incommensurable. ‘Abd al-Ġabbār had already written his most significant works, in many of which he had argued against positions of the *falāsifa*. On the other hand, Ibn Sīnā’s career was rising. He was working on the *Qānūn* but had yet to write the *Šifā’* and the *Nağāt*. But he was also familiar with the views of the opposition, in this case the *mutakallimūn*, and had expressed his views against them in his exchange with al-Bīrūnī.<sup>17</sup>

These particulars then, namely, Ibn Sīnā’s textual encounter with ‘Abd al-Ġabbār in the *Risāla*, his probable familiarity with ‘Abd al-

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Life*, 48; C.E. Bosworth, “Mağd al-Dawla,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 5:1028.

<sup>16</sup> Gutas, *Avicenna*, 261.

<sup>17</sup> For this correspondence, see Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā, *al-As’ila wa-l-ağwiba*, ed. S.H. Nasr and M. Mohaghegh, *Islamic Thought (al-Fikr al-Islāmī)*, Series of Texts, Studies and Translations, III (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995); Gutas, *Avicenna*, 145.

Ġabbār's commentary on al-Balḥī's *Maqālāt* or sections of the *Muġnī* or some other work from 'Abd al-Ġabbār's school detailing *kalām* arguments on physical theory, and their simultaneous presence in Rayy, constitute the extent of the known historical encounter between them. There is no indication on the part of 'Abd al-Ġabbār of a textual encounter with Ibn Sīnā. Nevertheless we may presume that he too may have known about the young Ibn Sīnā's presence in Rayy, particularly in light of Ibn Sīnā's close relationship with the prince Maġd ad-Dawla. Moreover 'Abd al-Ġabbār was also a keen participant in the intellectual encounter between *kalām* and *falsafa*. Not only was he interested in, and familiar with, the views of the Ancients and their contemporary exponents among the *falāsifa*, but more importantly, he was highly critical of their doctrines and carried on the *kalām* tradition of attacking them in writing as well as in debate.<sup>18</sup> A substantial portion of this critique, particularly with regards to physical theory and the eternity of the world, which were the usual areas of disagreement between the *mutakallimūn* and the *falāsifa*, was probably recorded in the first three lost volumes of the *Muġnī*. In the parts of the *Muġnī* which have survived, but even more so in the *Tatbīt dalā'il an-nubūwa*, 'Abd al-Ġabbār directly attacks the *falāsifa* on their doctrine of the status of celestial beings and their role in influencing terrestrial events. Aspects of the discussion in the lost sections of the *Muġnī* can be gleaned from his critique of the Sabaens in the fifth volume of the *Muġnī*. He recounts here the areas of disagreement regarding the eternity of the world and theory of matter, but also sharply emphasizes the difference over celestial beings:

Know that everything we have related here regarding their views we have refuted in the preceding chapters which we have dictated. For we have shown that bodies are created in time (*muḥaddaṭa*) and the theory of prime matter (*hayūlā*) is baseless. We have shown that the planets, since they are bodies (*aḡṣām*), are not capable of making bodies and that they are not gods (*ālīha*). We have shown the falsity (*ibtāl*) of the doctrine that they are governors [of affairs in the terrestrial world] (*mudabbir*) and that they are alive (*ḥayya*). . . .

Regarding the argument (*kalām*) against the astrologers (*munaḡḡimūn*) and the partisans of the Sphere (*aṣḥāb al-falak*) we have already discussed this, because much of what they believe, regarding which there

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<sup>18</sup> Kraemer, *Humanism*, 178f.

is a dispute between us and them, concerns their belief in the eternity of bodies (*qidam al-aḡsām*) or the Sphere, and that they or some of them are governors [of affairs in the terrestrial world], and their theory regarding natures (*al-qawl bi-t-tabā'ir*). We have already shown the falsity of all of these [views].<sup>19</sup>

Certainly Ibn Sīnā also questioned the veracity of astrology,<sup>20</sup> nevertheless it is well-known that he shared and strongly defended the *falsafa* view that celestial entities influence the affairs of the terrestrial world via their emanations and that they are alive, precisely the positions attacked by 'Abd al-Ġabbār. The special status of the celestial realm of course plays a central role in *falsafa*, interweaving its cosmology, epistemology, and metaphysics. We should note, however, that one leading figure among the Mu'tazila struggled with the normative *kalām* view which denied celestial efficacy. Biographical dictionaries preserve several anecdotes about Abū 'Alī al-Ġubbā'ī (d. 303/915) which show that al-Ġubbā'ī conceded the predictive aspect of planetary conjunctions, albeit denying a causal role, advocating instead a customary association between conjunctions and terrestrial events.<sup>21</sup> But Abū 'Alī's views failed to win support among the *mutakallimūn*.

A detailed version of 'Abd al-Ġabbār's polemic against the *falsafa* position on the privileged status of celestial beings survives in the *Taḡbīt dalā'il an-nubūwa* where it is repeated in several places. The *Taḡbīt* is a polemical work which aims to discuss the indications for the prophecy of Muhammad. In the course of this enterprise, 'Abd al-Ġabbār launches personal attacks on those who deny prophecy in general and the prophecy of Muhammad in particular. These personal attacks permit an assessment of 'Abd al-Ġabbār's attitude towards contemporaries and predecessors. His critique of the *falsafa* view of the celestial realm occurs in several places. The most prominent of these is 'Abd al-Ġabbār's rejection of the Aristotelian doc-

<sup>19</sup> 'Abd al-Ġabbār, *al-Muḡnī fī abwāb at-tawḥīd wa-l-'adl*, ed. M. al-Ḥudayrī, (Cairo: Wizārat at-Taḡāfa wa-l-Irṣād al-Qawmī, 1958), 5:153–154; J.R.T.M. Peters, *God's Created Speech: a study in the speculative theology of the Mu'tazilī Qādī l-quḍāt Abū l-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Ġabbār* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 30.

<sup>20</sup> Y. Michot, *Ibn Sīnā, Lettre au vizir Abū Sa'd, Editio princeps d'après le manuscrit de Bursa, traduction de l'arabe, introduction, notes et lexique*, Sagesses musulmanes, 4 (Beyrouth: Les Éditions al-Bouraq, 2000), 23–26.

<sup>21</sup> Aḡmad ibn Yahyá ibn al-Murtaḍá, *Kūtb Tabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, ed. S. Diwald-Wilzer (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1961), 94, 98–99.

trine of the unchanging heavens in the context of the incident of the swooping down of the stars (*inqiḍād al-kawākib*):

One of [Muhammad's] signs (*a'lām*) which occurred while he, may the blessings of God and peace be upon him, was in Mecca is the swooping down of the stars and their filling the sky in all directions in a manner which breaks from the customary course of events (*āda*) and departs from the norm (*mu'tād*). This is a great sign (*āya*), a majestic indication, and a momentous manifestation. [Even] the Quran has spoken about this event, relating the account of the jinn: "We searched the heavens and found them to be filled with strong guards and meteors. We would sit on seats to hear; but anyone listening now finds a meteor waiting for him!" (72:8)<sup>22</sup>

As 'Abd al-Ġabbār relates, this indication of Muhammad's prophecy had occupied many of the Mu'tazila. The objection they faced was that this event is not unique. The swooping down of stars is mentioned by earlier poets and in the books of the non-Arabs (*aġam*). It cannot therefore be a sign of Muhammad's prophecy. Both Abū 'Alī al-Ġubbā'ī and Abū Hāšim al-Ġubbā'ī (d. 321/933) conceded that the swooping down of stars (perhaps they mean the phenomenon of meteor showers?), had indeed occurred before Muhammad. Nevertheless, the occurrence of this event to indicate Muhammad's prophecy was a break from the customary course of events because it, unlike earlier events, was different in degree, namely, it filled up the sky. This, in their view, was similar to floods which had certainly occurred before Noah, but the Deluge represented a departure from the norm with regards to its extent and degree. It is this aspect of the degree of the swooping down of stars which is absent in pre-Islamic poetry or the books of the non-Arabs.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, earlier *mutakallimūn* like an-Nazzām and al-Ġāhiz (d. 255/868) agreed that ancient poets had indeed mentioned the swooping down of stars but it was not clear that they regarded this to be a sign for the prophecy of Muhammad. With regards to the mention of meteors (*šuhub*) in the books of ancient non-Arabs, al-Ġāhiz asserted that there was no way to ascertain this (*lā sabīla*

<sup>22</sup> 'Abd al-Ġabbār, *Tatbīt dalā'il an-nubūwa*, ed. 'A.K. 'Uṭmān (Beirut: Dār al-'Arabiya li-t-Ṭibā'a wa-n-Našr wa-t-Tawzī', 1966), 1:64. Abū 'Alī al-Ġubbā'ī's comments on these verses of the Quran are preserved by the Šī'ī author Šayḥ aṭ-Ṭā'īfa aṭ-Ṭūsī in his *Tafsīr at-tibyān*, ed. A.H.Q. al-'Āmilī (Najaf: Maktabat al-Amīn, 1963), 10:149–150.

<sup>23</sup> *Tatbīt*, 1:69.

*ilā l-ʿilmi bihī*) because the translations and the translators could not be trusted.<sup>24</sup>

ʿAbd al-Ġabbār also doubted the veracity of the translations, perhaps not so audaciously as al-Ġāḥiẓ had done. But ʿAbd al-Ġabbār added that these books were transmitted to the Islamic world by the enemies of Islam, those whose most coveted desire was to deny the prophecy of Muhammad. Not only were the translators enemies of Islam, but they had suppressed portions of the works which reveal the errors of the ancients. Moreover, they had used concepts and explications of Muslim intellectuals to dress up the works of the ancients.<sup>25</sup> After this digression, ʿAbd al-Ġabbār then turns to discuss the books of the ancients which had mentioned meteors, in particular Aristotle's *Meteorology*:

Scholars have examined the book known as the *Meteorology*, ascribed to Aristotle. One of the [Christian translators] translated it for an ʿAbbāsīd Caliph as a gift. Scholars have not found any clear mention (*dikran muṣarriḥan*) of the swooping of stars in this book. Rather it is a comprehensive treatise on which scholars have written commentaries, claiming that by this, Aristotle meant that, that is to say [regarding swooping stars] it is something that originates on the earth and rises to the air, or something along these lines.<sup>26</sup>

It is well known that in the *Meteorology*, Aristotle theorizes that meteorological phenomena are produced by moist and dry exhalations rising from the earth as a result of the warmth of the sun.<sup>27</sup> The contact of the warm and dry exhalations in the highest parts of the terrestrial sphere with the circular motion of the ether produces the fiery bursts which we know as shooting stars, torches, and goats.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 1:69–70; see also al-Ġāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. ʿA. Hārūn, (Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938–1945), 6:272–280. ʿAbd al-Ġabbār relates the discussion between the followers of Abū ʿAlī and al-Ġāḥiẓ on their difference of interpretation on the mention of the swooping down of stars in pre-Islamic poetry (*Taḥbūt*, 1:78).

<sup>25</sup> *Taḥbūt*, 1:75–76.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 1:77.

<sup>27</sup> Aristotle, *Meteorology*, 341b1–4. Ibn Sīnā, *aṣ-Ṣifāʾ, at-Ṭabīʿiyāt: al-Maʿādīn wa-l-Āṭār al-ʿulwīya*, ed. ʿA. Muntaṣir, S. Zāʿid, and ʿA. Ismāʿīl (Cairo: Wizārat at-Ṭaqāfa wa-l-Irṣād al-Qāwmi, 1965), 39; P. Lettinck discusses the views of the Greek and Arab philosophers on meteors in his *Aristotle's Meteorology and its Reception in the Arab World, with an Edition and Translation of Ibn Suwār's Treatise on Meteorological Phenomena and Ibn Bājjā's Commentary on the Meteorology*, Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, 10 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), ch. 2, "Phenomena in the Upper Atmosphere," 66–96.

‘Abd al-Ġabbār asserts that one cannot rely on Aristotle’s views even though his partisans trusted in him. Rather, he is not of sound mind (*fa-huwa ġayru kāmili l-‘aql*) because, as these partisans relate, Aristotle believed that the sun, moon, and stars are indivisible, that the sun is neither hot nor is it possible for it to be hot, for heavenly bodies can be neither hot nor cold, neither wet nor dry, neither heavy nor light, neither rough nor smooth, nor can the stars be increased or decreased by even one star, nor can there be any more or less suns, nor does the sun have color, smell, or taste! For ‘Abd al-Ġabbār, the possibility of all of these is clear to the mind, regardless of whether one is learned or ignorant, a scholar or a layman.<sup>28</sup> ‘Abd al-Ġabbār continues:

Aristotle’s ignorance (*ġahl*) includes his belief that the heaven, sun, moon, and stars/planets (*kawākib*) are intelligent, discerning, hearing, seeing, harmful, beneficial, bestowing life and causing death and that every event (*hādīṭa*) in the world derives from their action and influence. But the knowledge that the heaven, sun, moon, and stars (*nuġūm*) are inanimate (*ġamādāt*) and lifeless (*mawāt*) is like the knowledge that rays (*šū‘ā’*) of the sun, rays of the moon, light (*daw’*) of the stars/planets, lightning, clouds, winds, rain, sea, water, air, earth, and fire are inanimate and lifeless. There is no difference between someone who claims this regarding earth, fire, water, air, and plants and someone who claims this regarding stars/planets.<sup>29</sup>

‘Abd al-Ġabbār and most *mutakallimūn* thus reject the *falsafa* view that celestial beings are alive, have attributes similar to those of living, intelligent beings, and influence the terrestrial realm by bestowing life and causing death. Rather they are lifeless and inanimate, like the terrestrial elements of the *falāsifa*: earth, fire, water, and air. As such they have neither souls nor intellects but are merely lifeless, in other words, just rocks in the heavens.<sup>30</sup>

The striking aspect of ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s discussion lies in what he does not state explicitly, but takes for granted. We will recall that the original discussion on the basis of the Quran and indication of the prophecy of Muhammad concerned meteors. ‘Abd al-Ġabbār

<sup>28</sup> *Taṭbīr*, 1:78–79.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:79.

<sup>30</sup> The rejection of a causal role for the stars/planets is discussed by ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s student Šarīf al-Murtaḍā in his *ar-Radd ‘alā l-munaġġimīn* in *Rasā’il*, op. cit., 1:299–312.

knew that in the *Meteorology*, Aristotle regarded swooping stars to be terrestrial phenomena, a result of terrestrial exhalations rising to the upper atmosphere. Yet he slips into the discussion of celestial objects, namely stars or planets without defending this move from meteors to stars/planets. To a *faylasūf* this is a clear breach of the absolute divide between the distinctive celestial and terrestrial realms. What lies behind ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s seeming confusion or gloss over the difference between meteors and stars/planets? I suggest that, despite Aristotle, he failed to recognize or refused to acknowledge a distinction between the terrestrial and celestial realms. That is to say, his failure or refusal was grounded in a world-view which denied any distinction between the celestial and terrestrial realms.

When ‘Abd al-Ġabbār wrote the *Tatbīt*, Ibn Sīnā was only fifteen years old. Clearly, he was not then known to ‘Abd al-Ġabbār, and had yet to author the works which would establish his reputation. As a result, he escaped ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s acerbic critique of the *falāsifa* in the *Tatbīt*.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, should we not expect ‘Abd al-Ġabbār to have been notorious in *falsafa* circles for his critique of their views as well as for his attack on the veracity of the translations, which provided the basis for their link with the Ancients? After all, many controversial subjects were discussed in public at court seances (*maġālis*), and in private between students and their teachers. How can we conceive that Ibn Sīnā was unaware of these views of ‘Abd al-Ġabbār, particularly after his stay in Rayy? But did Ibn Sīnā then seek to defend the *falāsifa* from ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s attack? We cannot categorically ascertain this. But in his *al-Mabda’ wa-l-ma’ād*, which was written before his stay in Rayy, Ibn Sīnā remarks:

One more thing remains, and that is, one may imagine that the various [celestial] objects of desire (*mutaṣawwagāt*) are [mere] bodies (*aġsām*), not separated intellects (*‘uqūl mufāraqa*). Hence it would be as if the body which is baser (*aḡṣas*) is imitated by the body (*mutaṣabbahan bi-l-ġism*) which is prior (*aqdam*) and more noble (*ašraf*).<sup>32</sup>

The target of Ibn Sīnā’s criticism is not mentioned by name. Ten years after his stay in Rayy, during the last decade of his life in

<sup>31</sup> The absence of al-Fārābī among the *falāsifa* attacked by ‘Abd al-Ġabbār is remarkable. I believe that this is due to his relative obscurity, particularly in the circles ‘Abd al-Ġabbār frequented in Basra, Baghdad, and Rayy.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mabda’ wa-l-ma’ād*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Nūrānī, *Wisdom of Persia*, 36 (Tehran: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1984), 66; Gutas, *Avicenna*, 292.

Isfahan, in the *Metaphysics* of the *Šifāʾ* and the *Nağāt*, he elaborated on the same theme:

One more thing remains, and that is, one may imagine that the various [celestial] objects of desire are [mere] bodies (*ağsām*), not separated intellects. Hence it would be as if a body which is baser is imitated by a body which is prior and more noble. This is like what a group (*qawm*) of recent so-called Islamic philosophers (*aḥdāt al-mutafalsifa al-islāmīya*) have supposed, making a muddle of philosophy (*falsafa*) for they do not understand the goals of the Ancients. Thus we say: This is impossible (*muḥāl*) because imitation of it [i.e., the celestial object of desire] requires similarity to its motion, similarity to the direction of its motion, and the purpose which it [i.e., the motion] makes evident.<sup>33</sup>

The *Šifāʾ* paragraph occurs in the ninth *maqāla* of the *Metaphysics*, which treats central aspects of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics: the First Principle (i.e., God); the emanated celestial beings, their souls, intellects, motions, activity, desire, and rank; the manner of generation of the elements from primary causes; providence; and the return of the individual human soul after its separation from the body. Ibn Sīnā takes the divide between the terrestrial and celestial realms for granted. He is adamant in his defense that celestial objects of desire whose motions are, in his view, imitated by celestial bodies are separated intellects, not bodies. Unlike the account in the *Mabdaʾ*, Ibn Sīnā now tells us that the opponents of this position are recent (*aḥdāt*) and belong to the Islamic so-called philosophers (*mutafalsifa islāmīya*). In *Fī l-Ağrām al-ʿulwīya*, Ibn Sīnā applies the appellation *mutafalsifa* to those who had tried to deal with philosophical questions but had gone beyond their depth (and therefore “we do not permit common people (*nās*) to occupy themselves with these sciences”).<sup>34</sup> This is clearly also true in our passage from the *Šifāʾ* and *Nağāt*.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, ed. S. Dunyā, G. Anawatī, and S. Zāʾid, Revised Edition (Cairo: Wizārat at-Taqaḫa wa-l-Irṣād al-Qāwmī, 1960), 399. This question was also important for non-Muslim monotheistic communities (as is implied by ʿAbd al-Ġabbār). A Jewish correspondent asked the Christian *ḫaylasūf* Yaḫyā ibn ʿAdī (d. 363/974) to explain to him the argument for, and the doctrine of, the vitality of the stars; see *Maqālāt Yaḫyā ibn ʿAdī*, ed. Ṣ. Ḥulayfat (Amman: al-Ġāmiʿa al-Urdunīya, 1988), 325, 333–334. Yaḫyā's response does not directly address the question.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Fī l-Ağrām al-ʿulwīya*, op. cit., 46, 52, 54. Elsewhere in the metaphysics of the *Šifāʾ*, in his critique of those who deny universals, he states, “We have mentioned this objection (*šakk*) despite its weakness and absurdity because in our day there has arisen a problem (*šubḫa*) as a result of it, promulgated by a group

The passage in the *Nağāt* differs from the *Šifā'* passage in one significant respect. Instead of an anonymous group, Ibn Sīnā names Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992) as the proponent of the position which he is attacking.<sup>35</sup> Like ʿAbd al-Ġabbār and Ibn Sīnā, al-ʿĀmirī had also resided in Rayy in the service of the Būyids, but as a member at the court of the vizier Abū l-Faḍl ibn al-ʿAmīd (d. 360/970) during the years 350–365/961–976. He did not therefore meet ʿAbd al-Ġabbār in Rayy, although he may have met him in Baghdad.<sup>36</sup> In any case it is quite likely that they knew each other. Al-ʿĀmirī's view of celestial beings is found in his *Kitāb al-Amad ʿalā l-abad* whose subject is the afterlife. He begins with the views of Greek philosophers, attempting to show that their beliefs were orthodox even though independent of revelation.<sup>37</sup> Al-ʿĀmirī maintains a distinction between the terrestrial and celestial realms and asserts the causal influence of celestial bodies on the terrestrial realm. However, he discusses only celestial bodies, not celestial souls nor intellects, and considers the power of celestial bodies to be natural (*tabīʿī*). In contrast, terrestrial rational souls can resist the influences of these bodies because their power is voluntary (*iḥtiyārī*). There is no evidence that al-ʿĀmirī recognized a celestial hierarchy, nor that he considered celestial motion to originate from desire.<sup>38</sup> Ibn Sīnā's epithet "recent Islamic so-called philosopher" certainly characterizes al-ʿĀmirī.

Ibn Sīnā also discussed imitation (*tašabbuh*) and the object of imitation (*mutašabbah*) as they relate to celestial beings in his last major work, the *Išārāt*, albeit in the characteristic manner of "pointers and remarks." These remarks provided Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī the occasion to relate the brief remarks here to the discussion in the *Šifā'* and *Nağāt*:

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(*tāʾifa*) of those who have floundered in [their] attempt at philosophizing (*tafalsafa*)," *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhiyāt*, 202; cf. Michot's translation in *Ibn Sīnā, Lettre au vizir*, \*15.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *an-Nağāt min al-ğarq fī baḥr ad-ḍalālāt*, ed. M.T. Dānišpažūh (Tehran: Dānišgāh-yi Tihṙān, 1985), 645. The paragraphs in both the *Šifā'* and the *Nağāt* need to be verified with the manuscripts and with each other as the variant readings قوم, قدم, and قدم are orthographically close but entail different interpretations, in particular whether the opponents of this position are just one person or a group of persons. See also Gutas, *Avicenna*, 292.

<sup>36</sup> I.e., during al-ʿĀmirī's visits to Baghdad in 360/970 and 364/974–75; see E. Rowson, *A Muslim Philosopher on the Soul and its Fate* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1988), 3–7; Kraemer, *Humanism*, 223–241.

<sup>37</sup> Rowson, *A Muslim Philosopher*, 21.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

Know that one (*baʿd*) of the Islamic so-called philosophers (*al-mutafal-sifa min al-islāmīyīn*) and others inclined to the view that what is imitated is the [celestial] body (*ḡism*). . . . The master refuted this view on the basis that this requires similarity of their motions [both] with regards to direction (*ḡihāt*), and axes [of revolution] (*aqṭāb*). . . .<sup>39</sup>

Ṭūsī therefore explicitly tells us that the position which Ibn Sīnā had attacked was held by more than one individual. Ṭūsī's comment, it seems, reflects both the *Naḡāt* and the *Šifāʾ* readings. That is to say, Ṭūsī acknowledges the one so-called philosopher of the *Naḡāt*, without naming him, but also the reading of the *Šifāʾ*, that the position was held by a group which, in Ṭūsī's opinion, does not consist of "so-called philosophers."

Clearly ʿAbd al-Ġabbār and Ibn Sīnā hold diametrically opposite positions on celestial beings. We may describe this opposition as an encounter of opposing ideas. As we have seen, *kalām* in general, and ʿAbd al-Ġabbār in particular, has a position on celestial beings which was more radical than that of al-ʿĀmirī and therefore perhaps a better candidate for Ibn Sīnā's critique. Not only does ʿAbd al-Ġabbār deny celestial souls and intellects, but he also denies any kind of influence by celestial objects, even just celestial bodies, on the terrestrial realm, which al-ʿĀmirī concedes. ʿAbd al-Ġabbār even has the audacity to claim that some terrestrial objects which are supportive of life are more deserving of the characteristics the *falāsifa* attribute to celestial objects! Could Ibn Sīnā's critique then not also have been directed towards ʿAbd al-Ġabbār in particular or the *mutakallimūn* in general? After all the *Šifāʾ* and *Naḡāt* texts also support the reading of "a group of recent Islamic so-called philosophers" and this is also consistent with Ṭūsī's reading of the passage in the *Iṣārāt*.<sup>40</sup>

While this is indeed a speculative question, I believe that it is difficult to answer it categorically in the negative. That is to say, it is difficult to imagine how Ibn Sīnā could not have known about the *kalām* critique of celestial beings and thereby have responded to it in his attack on "recent Islamic so-called philosophers." Of course this assertion raises a number of issues. We can be justified in maintaining that there is an *intellectual disagreement* between Ibn Sīnā and

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt*, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1957–1960), 3:574.

<sup>40</sup> See note 35.

‘Abd al-Ġabbār. But can we go further and make the claim that from a historical perspective, while Ibn Sīnā was explicitly arguing against the philosophaster al-‘Āmirī, he also was engaged in the defense of the *falsafa* position on celestial beings which was under a more serious attack by the *mutakallimūn*? Why then did he not attack the *mutakallimūn* or ‘Abd al-Ġabbār directly by name? I would suggest that the answer may lie in Ibn Sīnā’s need to be cautious, and caution was dictated by the political vagaries of his time. In the same vein we may also ask why he did not identify al-‘Āmirī by name as a proponent of the position under attack in the *Mabda’* even though al-‘Āmirī was no longer alive? Was this out of respect for the views of a kindred *faylasūf*? This seems rather unlikely given the strong charge of philosophical pretense. Is it likely that Ibn Sīnā’s failure to mention al-‘Āmirī previously was grounded in political reality? Was Ibn Sīnā concerned about alienating patrons, some of whom, like the Būyids, were patrons of proponents of positions that he attacked, for example, al-‘Āmirī and that only later, when it was safe to do so, Ibn Sīnā named al-‘Āmirī as holding the position that celestial objects were bodies? Or is the answer more simple, as Dimitri Gutas believes, and grounded in the early Ibn Sīnā’s customary practice of not directly naming opponents?<sup>41</sup> We cannot of course answer these questions decisively except to note that for some reason Ibn Sīnā decided to name al-‘Āmirī in the *Nağāt*, but not in the *Šifā’* or earlier works, and that interestingly this occurred after his probable personal encounter with ‘Abd al-Ġabbār in Rayy.

Leaving aside the question of why Ibn Sīnā decided to name al-‘Āmirī in the *Nağāt*, what about the reason for his failure also to name the *mutakallimūn* as proponents of the view under attack? Even in his critique of what are clearly *kalām* positions regarding physical theory, Ibn Sīnā refrains in the *Šifā’* from directly attributing them to *kalām* or the *mutakallimūn*, preferring instead designations like “partisans of the vacuum” (*aṣḥāb al-ḥalā’*),<sup>42</sup> “those who believe that time (*zamān*) . . . is an aggregate of instants” (*awqāt*),<sup>43</sup> “those who believe that bodies are actually constituted out of a finite number of [indivisible] parts,”<sup>44</sup> etc. In the *Risāla al-Aḍḥawīya*, where he describes

<sup>41</sup> Gutas, *Avicenna*, 292.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *aṣ-Šifā’*, *aṭ-Ṭabī‘īyāt: as-Samā’ aṭ-ṭabī‘ī*, 116, 123, 145.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 184–5.

the positions of various religious groups on the afterlife, Ibn Sīnā designates one of the groups which “only uphold a physical after-life” as “the dialecticians among the Arabs” (*ahl al-ḡadal min al-ʿarab*), a clear reference to the *mutakallimūn*.<sup>45</sup> But this work is in the form of a letter to Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUbayd and was not intended for public dissemination.<sup>46</sup> In the *Mubāḥaṭāt*, Ibn Sīnā explicitly mentions the *mutakallimūn* regarding their theory of time and the Muʿtazila regarding their doctrine of existence, the customary course of events (*iḡrāʾ al-ʿāda*), God’s knowledge, God’s essence, and essence and attributes.<sup>47</sup> However, this work, a collection of private discussions between Ibn Sīnā and his students, was also not intended for public dissemination.<sup>48</sup> Similarly the mention of *mutakallimūn* in the two sections of the *Naḡāt* is not found in the manuscripts but is most certainly an editorial addition in the printed text.<sup>49</sup> While it is certainly obvious that in his publicly available works, the references to partisans of the atom or the vacuum, etc., are indeed to the *mutakallimūn*, these references identify particular positions on physical theory. I believe that a direct attack on the *kalām* view of the celestial realm in the guise of those who deny that the planets have souls or intellects or believe that planets are merely bodies or believe that the celestial realm has no influence on the terrestrial realm would have exposed Ibn Sīnā’s cosmology and metaphysics—with its eternal world, emanated beings, celestial spheres, souls, and intellects, where spheres are moved by souls out of desire to imitate intellects; the influence of these celestial beings on the terrestrial realm, etc.—to “the common people who should not be occupied with these sciences.” Such a stance would certainly have compromised Ibn Sīnā’s ability to secure patrons and perhaps even his personal safety. This

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *al-Aḍḥawīya fī l-maʿād*, ed. Ḥ. ʿĀṣī (Beirut: al-Muʿassasa al-Ġāmiʿīya li-d-Dirāsāt wa-n-Naṣr wa-t-Tawzīʿ, 1984), 91.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 85; *Life*, 104.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, ed. M. Bīdārfar (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Bīdār, 1413/1992), 93, 152, 234–235, 241–242, 344.

<sup>48</sup> The brief mention of an-Nazzām in particular or the *mutakallimūn* in general in the *Risāla ilā l-waẓīr Abī Saʿd* (see Y. Michot, *Ibn Sīnā, Lettre au waẓīr*, 6, 16) should also be interpreted in the same vein.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Naḡāt*, 522, n. 2, 529, n. 1. The symbol ج in Dāniṣpaẓūh’s edition is not clearly identified in his discussion of the manuscripts and editions of the *Naḡāt* (xcix-c) but must refer to the edition printed in Cairo in 1357/1938 by Muḥyī ad-Dīn Ṣabrī al-Kurdī. The section titles are found in the printing “verified and introduced” by M. Fakhry (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Ġadīda, 1985) which is based on the Cairo edition.

may be the reason why even in the *Risāla fī l-makān*, he is restrained in his criticism of the views of ‘Abd al-Ġabbār or of *kalām* on space, and does not take the opportunity provided to directly attack *kalām* physical theory *in toto*. Indeed, the ambiguity of the term “recent Islamic so-called philosophers” allows for the interpretation that even the *mutakallimūn*, who were meddling in philosophical matters, had entirely misunderstood the goals of the Ancients. Moreover, naming al-‘Āmirī in the *Nağāt* passage can be regarded as an excellent foil that allowed an attack on the *kalām* position without explicitly naming the *mutakallimūn* as proponents of this position, but nevertheless strongly defending the point which is at issue, namely the doctrine that celestial beings are not mere bodies.

For the student of Islamic intellectual history, the encounter between ‘Abd al-Ġabbār and Ibn Sīnā is both simple and complex. The historical aspect is simple, based as it is on a few facts. Ibn Sīnā mentions ‘Abd al-Ġabbār in a text and they were simultaneously in Rayy. On the other hand, the intellectual aspect of the encounter is complex and is not always readily apparent. Ibn Sīnā did not influence ‘Abd al-Ġabbār, as the latter was an old man when Ibn Sīnā was in his intellectual prime. Ibn Sīnā’s influence on *kalām* belongs to a later period, beginning with al-Ġazālī. However, the influence of ‘Abd al-Ġabbār on Ibn Sīnā’s understanding of the *kalām* perspective on several cosmological problems cannot be dismissed, despite difficulties finding direct evidence. I have suggested that ‘Abd al-Ġabbār may be the source for Ibn Sīnā’s knowledge of the *kalām* debate on physical theory. I have also tried to show that Ibn Sīnā’s understandable reluctance to identify particular *kalām* opponents or the *mutakallimūn* hinders our ability to make specific claims. If we are to find areas of intellectual encounter, we must then examine areas common to the programs of *kalām* and *falsafa*, in particular those areas where their perspectives collide. There are several well-known areas of physical theory which we cannot explore because texts are unavailable. However, the status of celestial beings is an area where textual evidence has survived. I have tried to explicate the manner of their encounter regarding this question and outline evidence for suspecting why the *kalām* discussion may have played a role in Ibn Sīnā’s discourse on this subject.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### MEDICAL THEORY AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD IN THE AGE OF AVICENNA

Dimitri Gutas

The question of the relationship of theory to scientific method in classical Arabic medicine is a key area of research which should lead to a better assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and contribute to a historical understanding of the course both of its own progression and of those of the medical traditions dependent upon it, the medieval Latin and the Byzantine. In the present discussion of the issue, I will start from the axiomatic position that structures of knowledge, and the intellectual and social context in which they are valid, determine the nature, methods, and objects of medical research.<sup>1</sup> In Islamic civilization, within which Arabic humoral medicine flourished, the structures of knowledge that applied manifest themselves in the prevailing system of the classification of the sciences and the attendant concepts of categorization in the light of which medicine was regarded.

In late Greek antiquity, and in particular in fifth-sixth century Alexandria, scholars erected an elaborate schema of classification of

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<sup>1</sup> This position is not as ponderous or complex as it sounds; it is actually an observation. If we take contemporary North American society as an example, we see that medical knowledge, i.e., the various disciplines that collectively produce knowledge useful for medical theory and practice (biology, biochemistry, pharmacology, etc.), is classified under the sciences, one of the three branches of our university arts and sciences curriculum, the other two being the social sciences and the humanities. Since medical knowledge is so classified in an intellectual context, it is presumed to be attainable necessarily through the method reserved and appropriate for the sciences, i.e., scientific experimentation, while what does not readily fit into this construct is not researched and hence not considered scientifically knowable. A medical practice from another culture such as acupuncture, for example, apparently ill-fits our categories of knowledge and remains in an epistemological limbo. Second, the social context of the structures of knowledge is equally important in this respect. Research into the pathology of the diseases of the human female, for example, has lagged behind that of the male due to the latter's dominance historically in our society, while pharmacological research is notoriously determined by market forces and not by other considerations more germane to medicine *per se*, such as severity and seriousness of the disease.

Aristotle's works "in which individual treatises corresponded to a field of study. The result of this process was that the classification of Aristotle's works became, in effect, a classification of all the sciences, and hence of all human knowledge."<sup>2</sup> The function of this classification was initially descriptive and pedagogical, but later it also acquired normative value, purporting to reflect ontological reality; that is, the sciences are so many and they are so classified because reality, the world out there, is so structured. This classification was transmitted wholesale into Arabic during the period of the Graeco-Arabic translations from the eighth to the tenth centuries, and it became, with variations dependent upon the background and orientation of each scholar, the basis in medieval Islam of the classification and instruction of the translated Greek sciences. According to this classification—briefly and roughly put—Aristotle's *Organon* (i.e., the logical works, including the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, and prefaced by Porphyry's *Eisagoge*), constituted the canonical nine books on logic, the instrument of philosophy. Philosophy proper (or the sciences collectively) was then divided into theoretical and practical; theoretical philosophy was further subdivided into physics (i.e., natural science), mathematics, and metaphysics, and practical philosophy into personal ethics, household management (i.e., œconomics), and politics.<sup>3</sup> Medicine did not figure in this classification. As a result, Arabic scholars who inherited this schema and studied the Greek sciences in accordance with it, also did not consider medicine as part of the core higher curriculum and did not discuss it in this context.

Some Arabic philosophers and physicians did attempt to present medicine in relation to the basic theoretical sciences, but they could not break the mold of the transmitted structure of knowledge and accordingly ascribed to medicine a marginal place in their classificatory schemes. Avicenna (d. 428/1037), for example, in order to accom-

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<sup>2</sup> D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition, Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Texts and Studies, 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 150 and the references cited there.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the functions of Alexandrian classifications of the sciences and for charts depicting their development, see D. Gutas, "Paul the Persian on the Classification of the Parts of Aristotle's Philosophy: a Milestone between Alexandria and Baġdād," *Der Islam* 60 (1983), 255–67. A more recent general assessment of the subject in Arabic scholarship can be found in J. Jolivet, "Classifications of the sciences," in *Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science*, ed. R. Rashed and R. Morelon (London: Routledge, 1996), 3:1008–1025.

moderate the sciences omitted by the schema he inherited, initially created a special subcategory of the physical sciences in which to put them (Fig. 1). He divided the physical sciences into two, fundamental (*aṣṭī*) and corollary (*farʿī*), and put medicine, along with astrology, physiognomy, dream interpretation, magical instruments (talismans and magical prescriptions) and alchemy, under the second heading,<sup>4</sup> thus making medicine a corollary or derivative discipline of the theoretical science of physics.

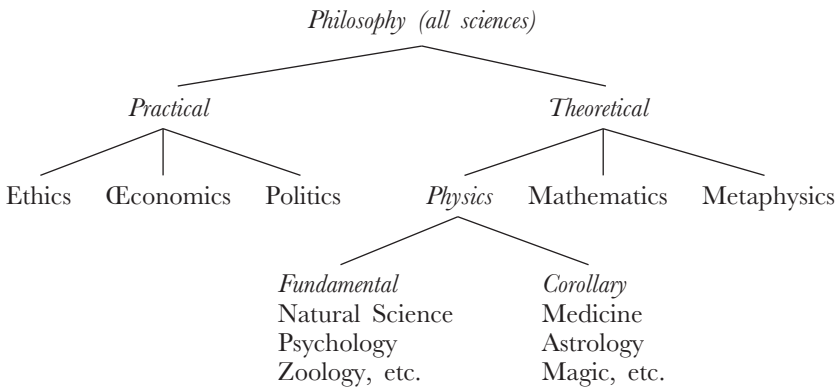
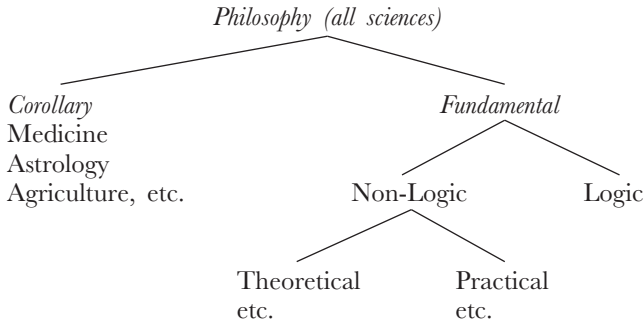


Fig. 1. Avicenna, *The Division of the Intellectual Sciences*

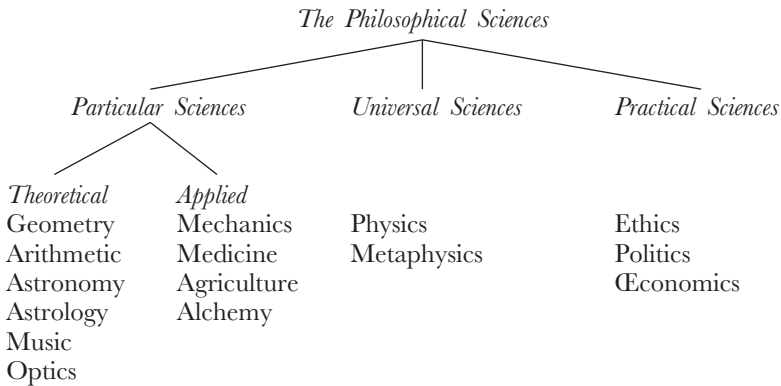
Later in his life, Avicenna changed his mind and demoted medicine even further. In the introduction to one of his last summae of all philosophy, *The Easterners*, he divided at the very outset all sciences into two, fundamental and corollary, eventually subdividing the former into the theoretical and practical, while relegating medicine, along with agriculture, astrology, etc., to the corollary or derivative group.<sup>5</sup> In this classification, medicine stops being a theoretical science at any level (Fig. 2).

<sup>4</sup> J. Michot, “Les sciences physiques et métaphysiques selon la *Risāla fī Aqṣām al-‘Ulūm* d’Avicenne, Essai de traduction critique,” *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 22 (1980), 66–7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Manṭiq al-Maṣriqīyīn* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Mu‘ayyad, 1328/1910), p. 5. For details on this work, see my *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 115f., and “Avicenna’s Eastern (‘Oriental’) Philosophy: Nature, Contents, Transmission,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10 (2000), 159–180.

Fig. 2. Avicenna, *The Easterners*

An older contemporary of Avicenna, and reportedly one of his teachers of medicine, Abū Sahl al-Masīhī (d.c. 401/1010), similarly classified medicine as an applied (*mihnī*) particular science. As such, on the one hand it is contrasted both with the particular theoretical sciences of mathematics (geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, music, and optics) and with the universal sciences of physics and metaphysics, and on the other it is grouped together with mechanics, agriculture, and alchemy (Fig. 3).<sup>6</sup>

Fig. 3. Abū Sahl al-Masīhī, *The Categories of the Philosophical Sciences*

<sup>6</sup> See the complete schema of his classification given in Gutas, *Avicenna*, 151. It is interesting to contrast with such classificatory schemata current in Arabic medicine the Salernitan model discussed by D. Jacquart, “‘Theorica’ et ‘practica’ dans l’enseignement de la médecine à Salerne au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Vocabulaire des écoles et*

This understanding of the place of medicine among the sciences, although ultimately derived from Greek principles, nevertheless differs significantly from that of Galen, for example, because the social and intellectual context in which medicine was discussed by Galen on the one hand and by the Arabic physicians like Avicenna on the other was different. Galen put forward his own discussion of the principles of medicine at a time when the Rationalist, Methodist, and Empiricist schools of medicine were living and viable competitors, deriving their respective philosophical underpinnings from the active philosophical currents of the early Empire: Skepticism, Stoicism, Middle Platonism, and Aristotelianism. The Aristotelianism of Galen's time, moreover, was still in a process of development and had not yet been codified into the "transformed" Aristotelianism (to use Sorabji's depiction) of the sixth-century Alexandrian scholars. By contradistinction, Galenic medicine in Arabic had only this latter, transformed version of Aristotelianism from which to draw its epistemological theory, while it knew of the other schools of medicine only as incidents in past history recounted in Galen's work "On the Sects for Beginners" and related treatises.<sup>7</sup>

Arabic philosophers and physicians thus viewed and *studied* medicine as a derivative and practical science not worthy of inclusion in the roster of theoretical sciences. Accordingly, the question of the source of its philosophical (and epistemological) underpinnings they could answer only in the context of the Aristotelian theory which stated that the first principles of every science are to be sought and discussed not in that science itself but in a higher science. In the introduction to his famous *Canon of Medicine* Avicenna put the matter succinctly:

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*des méthodes d'enseignement au Moyen Age*, ed. O. Weijers (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), 105; reprinted in her *La science médicale occidentale entre deux renaissances (XII<sup>e</sup> s.-XV<sup>e</sup> s.)* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1997), no. VII.

<sup>7</sup> Arabic physicians were well aware of the lapse of time since Galen's days and of the irrelevance in their own time of the sects recounted in Galen's works. As a matter of fact, it appears that some of them used this fact to argue in favor of studying not the integral Galen but only the medical distillation of his works as represented in later, both Greek and Arabic, compendia and digests, the *Summaria Alexandrinorum* (*Ġawāmi' al-Iskandarānīyīn*) and their derivatives. See the arguments against the position in Ibn Ġumayr, *Treatise to Šalāh ad-Dīn on the Revival of the Art of Medicine*, ed. and tr. H. Fāhndrich, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. 46,3 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1983), §§ 84–5.

The physician, in his capacity as physician, should act as follows: for some medical matters he must form only cognitive concepts (*taṣawwur*) of what they are and grant assent (*taṣdīq*) that they, in fact, exist,<sup>8</sup> merely on the basis that they have been posited for his acceptance by the specialist of Physics [natural science], while for other medical matters he should provide demonstrative proofs in his discipline. He should accept on authority that whatever among the former set is like a first principle exists, because the first principles of particular sciences are taken as granted [in those sciences] and proven demonstratively only in other and prior sciences. [This process continues] in this fashion until the first principles of all sciences are ultimately studied in the science of Metaphysics.

Were a physician to begin discussing the proof of temperament, the elements, etc.—all of these things being posited for him in Physics—he would be making a double error because, first, he would be introducing into medicine something which does not belong to it, and second, he would be thinking that he is explaining something while [in reality] he will not have explained it at all.

The things about which the physician must form concepts of what they are, and which, though not immediately obvious, he must accept on authority that they, in fact, exist, are the following: the elements, their existence and their number; the temperaments, their existence and their number; the humors, their existence, their number and their quality; the faculties, their existence, their number and their location; the pneumata (vital spirits), their existence, their number and their location; and that every state changes or remains stable [only] on account of some cause, and the number of the causes.

As for the organs and their use, the physician must come to know them through [personal] perception [or: palpation, *ḥiss*] and anatomy (*taṣrīḥ*).

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<sup>8</sup> As always, Avicenna posits as the primary stages of all cognition the two mental acts *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq*. In the very first chapter of the logic of *an-Naḡāt* (ed. Cairo, 1331/1912, 3–4), he describes these two terms as follows: “Every [kind of] cognizance and knowledge is either forming concepts or granting assent. Forming concepts is the primary knowledge and is acquired by definition or whatever is analogous to it, like our forming a concept about what man is. Granting assent is acquired only through syllogism or whatever is analogous to it, like our granting assent to [the statement] that the universe has an origin.” Although these two concepts in Arabic logic have been much discussed, it would appear that they were ultimately inspired by the beginning paragraphs of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, as very perspicaciously observed by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī (of whom more below), in his unpublished *Kitāb an-Naṣīḥatayn*, MS Bursa Hüseyin Çelebi 823, f. 91v.

The things about which the physician must form concepts and for which he must provide demonstrative proof are the following: diseases, their particular causes, and their symptoms; how to eliminate disease and preserve health. Whatever of these things is not manifest, the physician should provide proof for it by stating in details its parts, its extent, and its duration.<sup>9</sup>

This introductory passage of the *Canon*, which reflects what had preceded in Arabic medicine and determines most, if not all, subsequent developments, establishes the epistemology that is valid for all parts of medicine: the *theory and principles of humoral pathology* are to be accepted as given in natural science (Physics) and their investigation is declared off-limits to the physician.

At this point some clarifications are in order about the terms “theory” and “practice” in this context because they are not unequivocal and it is necessary to define precisely to what they refer. As is well known, ever since Alexandrian medicine in late antiquity, medicine was divided into two major parts, theory (θεωρία) and practice (πρακτική). This subdivision reappears also throughout Arabic medicine, from Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq’s *Mudḥal* (the Latin *Isagoge Iohanniti*) to Avicenna’s *Canon* and beyond.<sup>10</sup> Avicenna takes great pains to specify what he means by “theory” and “practice”: theory (*naẓar*; ‘ilm) he says is “knowledge of the principles of medicine (‘ilmu uṣūli t-ṭibb),” while practice (*‘amal*) is “knowledge of how to practice medicine” (‘ilmu kayfīyati mubāṣaratiḥī), or knowledge of procedural guidelines. Thus, Avicenna insists that both parts consist of *knowing* something and not actually practicing it.<sup>11</sup> For practice of medicine, Avicenna had another term, *tağriba* (experience, the Greek πείρα) which he mentions not in this context in the *Canon*, but in the *Autobiography*:

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn fī t-ṭibb*, ed. I. al-Qašš and ‘A. Zay‘ūr (Beirut: ‘Izz ad-Dīn, 1413/1993), 1:15–16 (= Būlāq ed., 1:5).

<sup>10</sup> See the discussion and references by D. Jacquart, “‘Theorica’ et ‘practica’,” 102–4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn*, 1:13–14 (= Būlāq ed., 1:3). Cf. D. Jacquart, “L’enseignement de la médecine: quelques termes fondamentaux,” in *Méthodes et instruments du travail intellectuel au Moyen Âge: Études sur le vocabulaire*, ed. O. Weijers (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 107–8; reprinted in her *La science médicale occidentale*, no. XII. The Latin translation by Gerard of Cremona of Avicenna’s text cited here is literal but inaccurate: *kayfīyat mubāṣaratiḥī* is rendered as *operandi qualitas*, which does not mean precisely what Avicenna says, “how to practice medicine.” One wonders to what extent this inaccuracy may have caused some of the difficulties in the relationship between *theorica* and *practica* traced by Jacquart.

Medicine is not one of the difficult sciences and therefore I excelled at it in a very short time, to the point that distinguished physicians began to study medicine with me. I cared for the sick, and there opened up to me indescribable possibilities of therapy which can only be acquired through experience.<sup>12</sup>

According to Avicenna, then, there are four gradations between pure theory and sheer practice when it comes to medical matters: (a) “the theory of the theory of medicine,” i.e., the theoretical foundation of medicine which provides the bases and proves the principles of the craft (*ṣināʿa* = τέχνη) of medicine, is discussed in Physics or natural science—it is outside of medicine; (b) “the theory of medicine itself,” i.e., the theoretical part of the craft of medicine, which consists of knowing these principles in the form of doxography (Avicenna says in the same passage in the beginning of the *Canon* that one acquires “convictions,” *ʿitiqād*, through it); (c) “the theory of practice,” or the practical part of the craft of medicine, which consists of knowing, also in a doxographic form, the procedural guidelines for the application of medicine (Avicenna says in the same passage that one acquires “opinions,” *raʿy*, about it); and (d) “the practice itself,” i.e., experience, observation, and sense perception (*ḥiss*, as in the passage above), which constitute the actual practice of medicine—these also lie outside the craft of medicine proper. These four gradations of Avicenna’s classification are outlined in Figure 4.

What this schema means then is that medicine, as an intellectual discipline, includes only items (b) and (c)—theory of medicine and theory of the practice of medicine—and these are the subjects of medical instruction and research. A theoretical or “academic” physician who was not interested in treating the sick would thus be considered as knowing all of medicine were he to study just these two parts—(b) and (c)—i.e., the subjects actually treated in the Arabic medical textbooks written in the course of Islamic civilization. The

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<sup>12</sup> Gutas, *Avicenna*, 27. The translation of the last sentence above is by M. Ullmann in his review of W.E. Gohlman’s *The Life of Ibn Sina in Der Islam* 52 (1975), 148–151, which should also be consulted for the significance of the term *tag̣rība* here. Cf. also the discussion of the *muğarrabāt* in his *Die Medizin im Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 311–313. Avicenna says that medicine is not difficult because, in accordance with his classification of it in the hierarchy of the sciences, as mentioned above, he does not consider it a theoretical science in need of syllogistic demonstration, but only an applied or corollary science that can be learned through rote memorization and, he adds, experience; see the discussion in Gutas, *Avicenna*, 190.

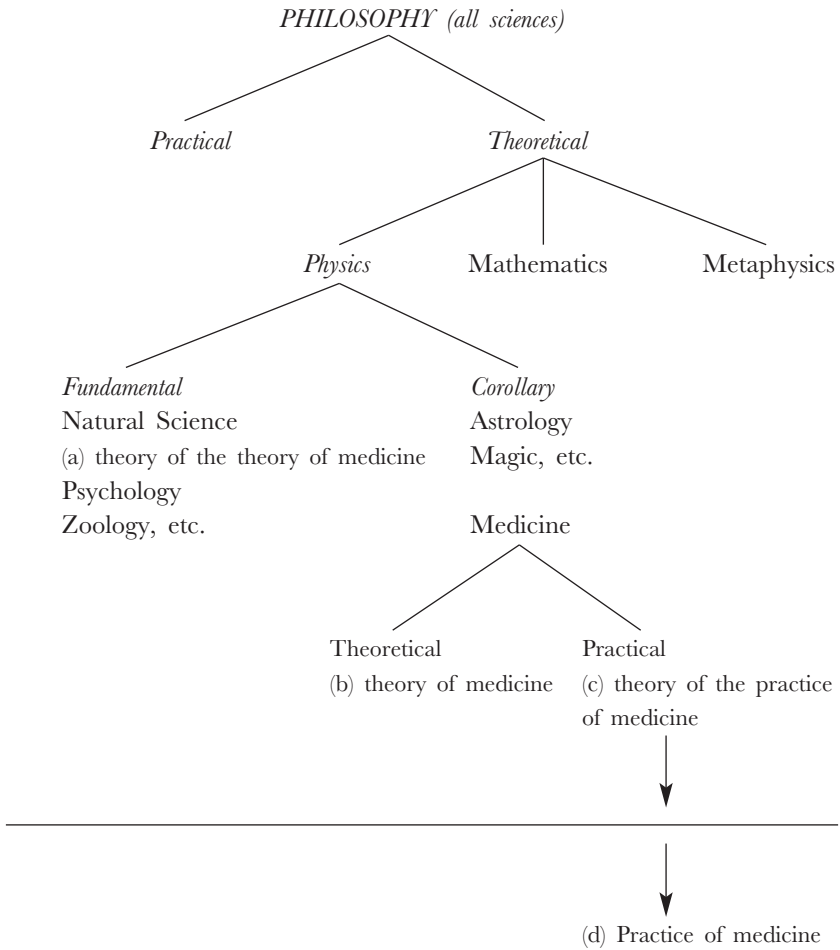


Fig. 4. The gradations of medical engagement in relation to Avicenna's classification of the sciences

activities of the practicing physician on the other hand must necessarily extend to cover also item (d), the practice of medicine, which, however, lies outside of the intellectual discipline or craft of medicine. This is so because, in addition to knowing the *theory* of medicine and the *theory* of its practice, the practitioner must necessarily engage in *diagnosis*, or diagnostic pathology, and *therapy* (including, by definition, surgery, regimen, and pharmacology). Now all of these are to be known by means of a scientific method that consists of a combination of theoretical medical knowledge, reasoning, observation, and testing, as I will discuss. In terms of the ancient schools of medicine, Avicenna is advocating essentially Galenic Rationalism, or a mixture of the Empiricist method tempered by Rationalism.

The scientific method hinted at by Avicenna is further delineated in the work of one of his contemporaries, Ibn Hindū. Before turning to him, however, it is necessary to point to another germinal idea of Aristotle which, coupled with Galen's pronouncements about the origins of medicine, contributed to the formulation of the scientific method.

In the epilogue of the *Sophistici Elenchi* (183b16–184b8) and in the context of specifying his own contributions to logic, Aristotle describes the progress of knowledge in general. At first, he says, the particulars of a science are applied in practice without knowledge of its rules and principles; second, somebody discovers the basis of this science, but because the “beginning of anything is the most important and hence the most difficult” (μέγιστον γὰρ ἴσως ἀρχὴ παντός, ὥσπερ λέγεται, διὸ καὶ χαλεπώτατον, 183b23), little progress is made by that person; subsequent generations, finally, through continuous elaborations and new discoveries, grant the discipline “amplitude” (πλήθος). This depiction of the progress of knowledge was seized upon by Alexandrian scholars in late antiquity who used it to develop a stylized conception of the history of philosophy and science. Avicenna, borrowing directly from them, continued this trend and fashioned a dynamic conception of the development of the sciences in continuous progress through the accumulated knowledge of generations of scientists.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Gutas, *Avicenna*, 202ff. and 219ff. for a full discussion of the implications of this notion for the philosophical work of Avicenna.

Ibn Hindū (d. 410 or 420/1019 or 1029) applied the same conception to the history and method of medicine, adding to it Galen's occasional remarks about the origins of medical reasoning. In his apologetic tract in defense of medicine against its detractors, *The Key to Medicine* (*Miftāḥ aṭ-ṭibb*), he describes as follows the origins of medicine:

Reason discovers medicine by first adopting principles from things that are the result of chance, or intentionally tried, or learned from dreams, or observed from the instinct[ive acts] of animals; then it proceeds from them toward setting thought in motion and empowering analogical reasoning; those principles are thus strengthened and corollaries are built upon them.<sup>14</sup>

The development of medicine, and the scientific method followed in the process, are described by Ibn Hindū in the following passage:

Man first observes (*raṣada*) the beneficial and harmful effects which climatic and environmental factors, foods, drinks, and medications have upon his body and the bodies of others, and how they repel disease from bodies. He then draws analogous conclusions (*qāsa 'alā*) on the basis of the firm knowledge he has of these things, and derives, through a process of reasoning, similar cases [where the same effects could be expected.] Then other people come after him who receive his knowledge, add to it, and increase it by performing the same observations and drawing the same analogous conclusions. All this eventually leads to the appearance of the craft of medicine: it becomes firmly rooted in the minds of its practitioners and devotees until they come to understand every disease from its symptoms and signs; they also understand the treatment that each requires because they are familiar with its causes and certain that something is resisted by its opposite.

For this is the case with every discipline, as Aristotle said: it begins with successive small increments discovered by one individual after another, until when one person forms a conception of these small increments and combines the pieces of information, the ability which

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<sup>14</sup> Ibn Hindū, *Miftāḥ aṭ-ṭibb wa-minhāğ aṭ-ṭullāb*, ed. M. Muḥaqqiq and M.T. Danišpažūh, *Mağmū'ah-yi Tārīḥ-i 'Ulūm dar Islām*, 1 (Tehran: Mu'assasah-yi Muṭāla'āt-i Islāmī, 1989), 49–50. Ibn Hindū's immediate sources here would appear to be Galen's "On the Sects for Beginners," ch. 2, and "An Outline of Empiricism," ch. 2; see M. Frede, *Galen, Three Treatises on the Nature of Science* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985), 4–5 and 24–5. For Ibn Hindū's work on medicine in general, see F. Rosenthal, "The Defense of Medicine in the Medieval Muslim World," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 43 (1969), 519–532; repr. in his *Science and Medicine in Islam*, Variorum Collected Series, CS 300 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990), no. VIII.

in this fashion comes about in his mind acquires the status of a craft while he, in accordance with the extent to which he actualizes this ability, deserves to be called proficient and skilled.<sup>15</sup> This is what the philosophers who discovered the craft of medicine did. [. . .]

Philosophers undertook to observe (*tarassud*) chance happenings, derive information about specific instances by means of testing (*tağriba*), and draw analogous conclusions (*qiyās 'alā*) on the basis of principles coming about through observation (*raṣad*) and personal inspection (*mušāhada*). By means of this procedure there arose the medical craft among the Hindus, Persians, and Greeks, who derived benefit from it and distinguished themselves from the other pre-Islamic nations (like the Arabs, Turks, Slavs, and Africans) who relied upon the action of nature in caring for their bodies.<sup>16</sup>

In this passage we observe the rudiments of an experimental scientific method. The dialectical interplay between observation and theory feeding each other is clearly indicated, while the principle of the reproducibility of an experiment which we hold as one of the criteria of such a method is also expressed: “Then other people come after him who receive his knowledge, add to it, and increase it *by performing the same observations and drawing the same analogous conclusions*” (emphasis added).

Having established this, however, it is necessary to make several further observations. First, this method was applied only to diagnosis and therapy (level [d] in Figure 4), never to the theory of humoral pathology (level [a] in Figure 4), since, as Avicenna (and others) said and believed, that was the domain of the theoretical philosopher dealing with natural science (Physics). Second, and because of the first, a theoretical discussion of medical epistemology such as this is not to be sought in Arabic (text)books of medicine because what they include is the theories of medical principles and practice (levels [b] and [c] in Figure 4), not method; it has to be elicited implicitly from other sources. Such a discussion by its very nature, and because it applies to diagnosis and therapy, is in essence a description of a *practice*, not of a theory and, as was evident in the discussion of Avicenna’s analyses, medical practice (level [d] in Figure 4)

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<sup>15</sup> This passage represents an expert combination of Aristotle’s views of the development of the sciences from the epilogue of *Sophistici Elenchi* with Galen’s statements about the formation of a physician in “On the Sects for Beginners,” ch. 2, Frede, *Three Treatises*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Hindū, *Mifḥāḥ at-ṭibb*, 11.12–12.8, 12.13–17.

itself does not belong to the craft of medicine (levels [b] and [c] in Figure 4). This attitude is naturally not only Avicenna's. In ancient and medieval medical writings, whatever the language (Greek, Arabic, Latin), description of practices *as supporting theory*, including specific case histories, was the exception and not the rule. It would appear that the mental disposition behind this general aversion to describing specific practices in the context of a discussion of theoretical subjects was—what I would call the evil legacy of Platonism—the belief that a single incident, as opposed to a universally valid theory, was ephemeral, not universally applicable by its very nature, and hence not to be recorded, since it did not provide useful knowledge to other people and other times. This fact, however, which has to do with social and intellectual conventions of documentation, should not lead us, through a faulty argument *e silentio* to the conclusion that practices that were not recorded did not in fact actually take place.

This method of observation and testing was applied to the *practice* of medicine—that is, to diagnostic pathology and therapy—but not to the theory of humoral pathology. Because, however, it is not to be found in medical textbooks, little systematic research on it has been conducted by modern scholarship, and its nature and extent have to be implicitly drawn from all available evidence.<sup>17</sup> Ibn Hindū again gives us an example, drawn from Galen, which clearly presents its nature. Wanting to cure scabby pus-filled wounds, Galen knew that he had to apply medication that would clean the wound and help it grow healthy tissue. One salve that he knew was excessively effective in cleansing the wound, to the point of cauterization, while another (κηρωτή), rather than cleansing the wound, added to the impurities. He thought to combine the two salves so that they would mutually eliminate their extreme effects. “Having discovered this by means of analogical reasoning, he tested the compound, and found it in fact to be so.”<sup>18</sup>

Pharmacology appears to be the area where this method was most consistently applied. We have numerous statements that this was so

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<sup>17</sup> The evidence in Arabic in this regard has yet to be thoroughly and consistently investigated; for an impressionistic sketch, see F. Klein-Franke, *Vorlesungen über die Medizin im Islam*, Sudhoffs Beihefte 23 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982) ch. VII (“Die empirische Medizin”), 95–100. The evidence in Latin is in the process of being better investigated; see D. Jacquart, *La science médicale occidentale*, xiv–xvii.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Hindū, *Miftāḥ at-tibb*, 46–7.

from various sources. The philosopher al-Fārābī (d. 339/950–1), for example, toward the end of his *Enumeration of the Sciences*, makes the following incidental statement:

The physician can become perfect in his treatment only by means of two capabilities. One is his ability to command the general principles and rules which he acquires from books on medicine. The second is the ability that comes to him through lengthy application to practicing medicine upon the sick, and the experienced judgment (*ḥunkā*) concerning this practice [that comes about] through lengthy testing (*tağriba*) and personal inspection (*mušāhada*) of the bodies of individuals. By means of the latter ability the physician is in a position to regulate the dosage (*yūqaddir*) of the medications and therapy according to each individual body and each individual case.<sup>19</sup>

Al-Mağūsī (the Haly Abbas of the Latins, d.c. 380/990) says in the introduction to his *al-Kitāb al-Malakī* that medication is necessarily different in different climes; the people of Iraq, for example, reject Greek drugs and develop their own, based on their own experience and testing (*tağriba*).<sup>20</sup>

The actual pharmacology practiced in Arabic medicine, however, has been very little researched, if at all.<sup>21</sup> What is needed is an investigation into the medicinal properties, from the biochemical point of view, of the vast *materia medica* and drug prescriptions in Arabic pharmacology. For example, in the *Dispensatorium* of al-Kindī (d. after 256/870), a prescription for black bile diseases, or mental disorders, contains thirty-six ingredients, including opium (*afyūn*) and henbane (*banǧ*).<sup>22</sup> Even to a non-specialist in pharmacology it is obvious that at least these two narcotics are the active ingredients, which explains why they should be prescribed for mental disorders. The question, however, is with the other ingredients, as well as the active ingredients in all the other prescriptions, which are not immediately obvious.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Fārābī, *Ḥisāʾ al-ʿulūm*, in *Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, Kitāb al-Milla wa-muṣūṣ uhrā*, ed. M. Maḥdī (Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1968), 71:4–8.

<sup>20</sup> Facsimile edition published under the title *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣināʿa at-ṭibbīya/The Complete Medical Art* by F. Sezgin (Frankfurt am Main: Institut für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften, 1985), 1:7.1

<sup>21</sup> For a general assessment, see A. Dietrich, “Islamic Sciences and the Medieval West: Pharmacology,” in *Islam and the Medieval West*, ed. K.I. Semaan (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1980), 50–63.

<sup>22</sup> M. Levey, *The Medical Formulary or Aqrābādihīn of al-Kindī* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 198.

The same considerations as in pharmacology also apply to surgery. Galen's anatomy was always the starting point, but it was at times superseded, by following the scientific method based on observation and testing, and tacitly emended. Testimony to this is borne out by the advances in surgery effected by the Andalusian az-Zahrāwī (d. after 400/1009), the detailed and scientific analysis of which has yet to be undertaken.<sup>23</sup>

Galen, moreover, was not above being openly criticized by Arabic physicians, both in philosophy and in medicine. With specific reference to anatomy we have the testimony of the scholar, philosopher, and physician 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (d. 629/1231) who, after personal inspection of over two thousand human skulls, observed against Galen that the lower jaw-bone is made of one suture-less bone, not of two bones joined at the chin. Having made the observation, he concluded by restating as follows the epistemological foundation of the scientific method to be followed in medicine. By observing the skeletons, he says,

[W]e gained knowledge not obtainable from books, because books either do not mention [these facts that we observed] at all, or indicate them insufficiently, or their contents are contradictory to our observations—but sense perception (*ḥiss*; cf. Avicenna's passage quoted above) is a stronger guide than learning from books. For although Galen had reached the highest degree of cautious inquiry in the task which he undertook and reported, sense perception tells the truth better than he.<sup>24</sup>

Similar remarks by other Arabic physicians may be found strewn in the vast literature of Arabic medicine that has yet to be edited from the manuscripts and translated, let alone studied.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, even at this preliminary stage of investigation into Arabic medicine, the following summary remarks would appear to be warranted by the discussion thus far.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. the comment by M. Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, 149, n. 5: "Über die Chirurgie des abū l-Qāsim [as-Zahrāwī] ist manches geschrieben worden, wenigens jedoch von berufener Hand."

<sup>24</sup> 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, *The Eastern Key*, tr. K.H. Zand, and J.A. and I.E. Videan (London: Allen and Unwin, 1965), 274. See further the references cited in Ullmann, *Medizin*, 67–8.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, the similar statements made by the great physician Ibn an-Nafīs (d. 687/1288) based on his anatomical observations, cited by A. Dallal, "Science, Medicine, and Technology," in *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. J.L. Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1:1225b.

In general, it seems clear, as I have tried to show, that the bases, or elements, of scientific method and experimentation, as we would define them, were known and ascribed to by scientists in Arabic medicine. Nevertheless, it is also clear that Arabic medicine, for all its advances and its progressive character, in comparison with Byzantine Greek and Latin medicine in the early Middle Ages, ultimately never went beyond Galenism and Avicennism. The causes for this are manifold.

In the first place, the scientific method implicit in the works briefly noted here was not applied beyond the narrowly practical concerns of diagnostic pathology, therapy, and pharmacology. As a result, the medical epistemology upon which it was based was not discussed in a theoretical (i.e., epistemological) context because the question was not posed in the context of medicine as a theoretical science: within the received and canonized classification of the sciences in Islamic civilization, medicine was a practical and applied craft whose principles were to be sought outside of itself. What discussion there was, was either incidental or in the context of apologetic or protreptic discourse, and hence the question did not receive the serious analysis that it might otherwise have.

Second, the principles of observation (*taraṣṣud*) and testing (*tağriba*) by means of the senses (*hiss*), although correctly placed at the heart of the medical epistemological process, had no real object to which they could systematically be applied as long as the received dogma of theoretical humoral pathology could not be altered either by the anatomy which was learned in actual practice by generation after generation of physicians, or by therapy that proved effective on the basis of whatever pharmacological or surgical advances had been made. This is because the principles upon which humoral pathology are based were to be found in Physics (natural science) and as such were off-limits to, or not to be questioned by, those medical practitioners most able to effect a change on the basis of their discoveries. In concrete terms, what this meant, if we take Avicenna's four gradations of medical engagement (see Fig. 4), is that the theory of the theory of medicine (level [a]), as part of Physics, could not be altered by information based on experience or testing gained in the practice of medicine at level (d)—levels (a) and (d) were not in contact and could not influence each other. The contact, in the case of a practicing physician, was between the theory of practice and practice itself—levels (c) and (d)—but the results gained in this

fashion were *ad hoc* solutions to medical problems of specific patients; again, they were never generalized to the level of medical theory so that they could influence level (b), let alone level (a), the theory of medical theory.

Third, and as a corollary to the preceding, medicine, given the status accorded to it in the classification of the sciences, never became part of the mainstream *theoretical* academic curriculum; it was only a practical craft, learned and transmitted mostly by way of apprenticeship, in the hospitals.<sup>26</sup> Al-Mağūsī makes the recommendation explicitly. He says that young physicians should become interns in hospitals and attach themselves to professors of medicine in order to treat patients.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of medicine, although known and incidentally described, never became the focus of discussion and argumentation that would have helped its advancement. Given this structural deficiency in the theory and practice of medicine that separated them into two separate fields not in mutual communication, the scientific method described by a scholar like Ibn Hindū had no sources from which to rejuvenate itself other than the received wisdom of Galenic humoral pathology, and it necessarily lost its heuristic power.

These factors were certainly operative in Arabic medicine, and they would seem also to have played a similar inhibiting role in medieval Latin and Byzantine medicine, which derive directly from it, for there also we see a similar inability for experience gained from practice to dissociate itself from the theory of humoral pathology. It should be remembered that the very same *Canon of Medicine* by Avicenna whose theoretical introduction I quoted above was the main textbook in European medical faculties well into the seventeenth century.

If, then, the immediate cause for the inability of Arabic medicine and its Latin and Byzantine Greek extensions to develop into experimental medicine prior to the seventeenth century are to be sought neither in its theoretical position, which was fully cognizant of scientific epistemology, nor in its scientific method, which manifestly contained

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<sup>26</sup> See B.N. Şehsuvaroğlu, "Bīmāristān," in *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 1:1225b, middle; and Ş. Sajjādī, "Bīmārestān," in *EIr*, 4:257b, second half.

<sup>27</sup> *Kūtāb aṣ-Şinā'a aṭ-ṭibbīya* (i.e., *al-Kūtāb al-Malakī*), op. cit., 10.2ff.

significant elements of experimentation, but in the structures of knowledge in the respective traditions, the distant causes are certainly to be found in the societies that fostered these structures of knowledge in pre-modern Europe and the Near East. Alternatively put, the question is what had changed in Western European society by the seventeenth century that generated different structures of knowledge which enabled the scientific methods inherited from humoral medicine to develop into modern experimental medicine—but that is a different subject.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### BODIES, SOULS AND RESURRECTION IN AVICENNA'S *AR-RISĀLA AL-ADḤAWĪYA FĪ AMR AL-MAʿĀD*

Tariq Jaffer

Although Avicenna devotes much of his treatise *ar-Risāla al-Adḥawīya fī amr al-maʿād*<sup>1</sup> to a refutation of various doctrines on the fate of the soul, his ultimate intention is to offer a solution to the problems of personal identity and individual immortality. These problems are evident throughout the treatise, particularly in the refutation of the Muʿtazilī position on the “return” (*maʿād*), for Avicenna uses an argument from personal identity to refute the doctrine that resurrection belongs to bodies only. Avicenna’s own argument in favor of a philosophical “return” contains two demonstrations; first, that the identity of man resides in his soul, and second, that the soul is a separate, immaterial and, hence, immortal substance. The intention of this paper is to offer an exegesis of Avicenna’s refutation of the opponents of the *Adḥawīya*, including the *mutakallimūn* and those who support metempsychosis (*ahl at-tanāsuh*).

In the *Adḥawīya*, Avicenna refutes three principal doctrines on the subject of the fate of the soul.<sup>2</sup> The first two doctrines belong to the *kalām* schools in Islam, and the third belongs to those who support metempsychosis (*tanāsuh*). Although Avicenna does not refer to the

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<sup>1</sup> *Avicenna, Epistola sull vita futura, al-Risāla al-Adḥawīya fī l-maʿād, I: Testo arabo, traduzione, introduzione e note*, ed. Francesca Lucchetta (Padova: Antenore, 1969) [hereafter *Adḥawīya*]. For a general description of the issues involved in Avicenna’s discussion, along with useful notes, see J.R. Michot, *La destinée de l’homme selon Avicenna* (Louvain: Aedibus Peeters, 1986), 14ff.

<sup>2</sup> The return (*maʿād*) is defined in the first chapter of the treatise: “. . . its real meaning is the place or situation which a thing was in, then separates from, then returns to; then, [it means] transportation to the first state or place, or to the place which is a man’s becoming after death” (*Adḥawīya*, 17). Avicenna states his own position on the subject in the clearest possible terms: “If it is false that the return belongs to the body only, and if it is false that it belongs to the body and soul together, and if it is false that it is for the soul by way of metempsychosis, then the return belongs to the soul alone. . . .” (*Adḥawīya*, 139).

*mutakallimūn* by name (he refers to them as *ahl al-ḡadal min al-ʿarab*), al-Ġazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* indicates that the doctrines of bodily resurrection and the joint resurrection of the body and soul belong to the *kalām*. Avicenna's objections to the theological doctrines of resurrection are rooted in a deeper dispute over personal identity and the nature of the self. The brunt of Avicenna's argument is that the *kalām* doctrines are unable to account for the continuity of personal identity through time. In his refutation of metempsychosis, the third and final doctrine he refutes, Avicenna does not specify his opponents. Since Greek and Islamic doctrines of metempsychosis were well known by this time, Avicenna could have had any number of thinkers in mind when he attacked this doctrine.<sup>3</sup> In his refutation of metempsychosis, Avicenna disregards the principal objection of those who support metempsychosis: if human souls are separate substances, and do not transmigrate with the corruption of the body, then there would be an actual infinity of coexisting separate souls, but this is impossible since the actual infinite is impossible.<sup>4</sup> Instead, he refutes a claim inherent in their doctrine, namely that the soul pre-exists the body.

### *The Refutation of the Kalām Positions*

Avicenna's arguments against his opponents begin in the third chapter of the *Aḍḥawīya*. The first doctrine Avicenna refutes belongs to a group of theologians who hold that life is an accident created in the body. Avicenna presents this doctrine as follows:

Those who uphold that resurrection is for the body only are a group of dialecticians who believe that the body alone is animal and human through a life and a humanity created in it. These [latter] are two accidents, death being their non-existence in them or that [i.e., an accident] which is contrary to them. In the second life there is cre-

<sup>3</sup> Avicenna's predecessor Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī (d. 935) is a possible candidate; see Th.-A. Druart, "Al-Rāzī's Conception of the Soul: Psychological Background to his Ethics," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (1996), 245–263, and her recent article on Avicenna, "The Human Soul's Individuation and its Survival after the Body's Death: Avicenna on the Causal Relation between Body and Soul," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10.2 (2000), 259–273.

<sup>4</sup> On this issue, see M.E. Marmura, "Avicenna and the Problem of the Infinite Number of Souls," *Mediaeval Studies* 22 (1960), 232–239.

ated in that body life and humanity after it had decayed and disintegrated, and that very same human returns to life.<sup>5</sup>

The above doctrine, which Avicenna attributes to a “group of dialecticians,” can be traced to Mu‘tazilī circles. Some of the Basrian Mu‘tazila argued that “life” and “humanity” are accidents of the body. When a body has a certain structure (e.g., human or animal), it becomes possible for the accident “life” to inhere in every one of its component atoms,<sup>6</sup> which in turn lays the foundation for the inherence of the accidents of the autonomous power of action, will, and knowledge.<sup>7</sup> The accident “life” is created directly by God. If God were to refrain from creating the accident “life,” the body to which that accident attaches would cease to exist. This is precisely what occurs at resurrection; God returns the annihilated body to existence and re-creates the accident “life” that had been annihilated.<sup>8</sup>

The majority of the Basrian Mu‘tazila were atomists; they held that the soul was not immortal, and that it survived only in unity with the body.<sup>9</sup> They differed, however, over whether death (the quality of being inanimate or non-living) was the non-existence of life or the existence of its opposite in the body (i.e., the accident “death”). Avicenna was well aware of this dispute and alludes to it in his presentation of their doctrine of resurrection.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the

<sup>5</sup> *Adḥawīya*, 21–3; tr. M.E. Marmura, “Avicenna and the Kalām,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 7 (1992), 197.

<sup>6</sup> The accident “life” inheres either in all the atoms which constitute the body, or in the specific structure these atoms constitute as a whole. Man is alive, knowing, has autonomous power, and exists; these attributes are a result of accidents that inhere in the atoms that constitute him. The case is otherwise with God; God has the essential attributes (predicates true at all times) of being Eternal (*qadīm*), Alive (*ḥayy*), Knowing (*‘ālim*), having the Power of autonomous action (*qādīr*), and Existent (*mawǧūd*). For discussions on this subject, see A. Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām: Atoms, Space, and Void in Basrian Mu‘tazilī Cosmology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 18; R.M. Frank, *Beings and their Attributes: The Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu‘tazila in the Classical Period* (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1978), 42ff.

<sup>7</sup> There is some dispute over whether the accident “life” inheres in one atom or many atoms. Some of the Basrian Mu‘tazila argued that each atom needed to have the accident “life” inhere in it so that the whole could be alive, while others argued that the accident “life” could inhere in a single atom, and that the presence of the accident in a single atom could give life to the body.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Gazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers/Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, tr. M.E. Marmura, Islamic Translation Series/al-Ḥikma (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), 219.

<sup>9</sup> J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990–1997), 4:514ff.

<sup>10</sup> See *Adḥawīya*, 23, where Avicenna states that the “dialecticians” thought that death was either the non-existence of the accident “life” or the presence of its

Mu‘tazila did not agree on the relation of this accident to the body, and disagreed about the relation of *nafs*, *rūḥ*, and *ḥayāt* to each other. Although Avicenna does not tell us anything about the nature of the accident “life,” some *kalām* fragments suggest that at least some of the Mu‘tazila held that life was an entitative accident. By this they meant an attribute that is simply possible (*ḡā’iza*), since the being has such an attribute with the simultaneous possibility of its not being so qualified, or of its being qualified by a contrary or different attribute under the same conditions. The accident “life” has an effect upon the substrate of the composite; it is by virtue of the accident “life” in each atom of the living that the whole becomes ontologically a single being, and life’s determinant effect on its substrate is that it renders it living, sentient, and capable of serving as the substrate of certain other accidents.<sup>11</sup>

But how is life (*ḥayāt*) related to the body and how does it differ from spirit (*rūḥ*):<sup>12</sup> Unlike Avicenna, who insisted that the soul originates as a separate substance and survives the corruption of the body, the Mu‘tazila insisted that the soul could exist only with the body. Though the Mu‘tazila disagreed over whether life and spirit were identical, a number of them agreed that life was an accident by virtue of which man becomes alive, and thus also sentient, willing, knowing, etc. It was undoubtedly this doctrine that Avicenna had in mind when he criticized the schools of *kalām* on the subject of resurrection.<sup>13</sup> This doctrine was in circulation in Mu‘tazilī circles in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, and is found in a number of *kalām* sources. According to ‘Abd al-Ġabbār’s *Muġnī*, Abū l-Hudayl (d. 227/841–2) regarded life as something distinct from the body, though he (Abū l-Hudayl) seems to be uncertain whether

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contrary (viz. death). Avicenna probably had in mind Abū ‘Alī al-Ġubbā’ī (d. 303/915), who held that death was the contrary of life, and Abū Hāsim al-Ġubbā’ī (d. 321/933), who held that death was not the contrary of life, which has no contrary. ‘Abd al-Ġabbār (d. 415/1025) should be ruled out as a candidate, since he held that life was not an accident; to be non-living was simply the absence of life and of the unity of being that life entailed; Frank, *Beings*, 50, n. 23; but cf. Abū Rāšid an-Nisābūrī (d. mid-5th/11th century?), who, in speaking for the Basrian theologians, states that the contrary of the accident “life” is not death, and that death is not an accident; see Dhanani, *Physical Theory*, 49, n. 97.

<sup>11</sup> Frank, *Beings*, 107–8.

<sup>12</sup> On this subject, see M. Fakhry, “The Mu‘tazilite View of Man,” in *Recherches d’Islamologie: Recueil d’articles offert à George C. Anawati et Louis Gardet par leurs collègues et amis* (Louvain: L’Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1977), 107–121.

<sup>13</sup> *Aḥḥawīya*, 23.

life should be classified as an accident or a body.<sup>14</sup> But al-Aš'arī (d. 324/935) makes it clear that Abū l-Huḍayl regarded *naḡs*, *rūḡ*, and *ḡayāt* as different things, and that life (*ḡayāt*) was an accident (*'arad*).<sup>15</sup> Abū 'Alī al-Ġubbā'ī (d. 303/915) held that spirit (*rūḡ*) is the body, and that it is other than life, which is an accident.<sup>16</sup> Al-Aš'arī's own view seems to have been that life is an accident (*'arad*), and that it is created (*muḡdata*). He contrasts this with God's attribute (*ḡifa*) "life," through which God does not cease to be living, which is eternal life and not an accident, as it subsists by virtue of itself and is not created.<sup>17</sup> He distinguished spirit from life; spirit in itself is inanimate or non-living, but is essential to the maintenance and continuance of life in the body.<sup>18</sup> Ibn Fūrak makes it clear that al-Aš'arī claimed that spirit (*rūḡ*) is a subtle body (*ḡism laṡif*) circulated in the cavities of the organs of the body. But man is alive by virtue of the accident "life," not through the spirit, since "life" is derived from "living," whereas "spirit" is derived from "spiritual."<sup>19</sup> The subsistence of the body depends on spirit, just as its subsistence depends on nourishment, food, and drink. The condition of the existence of the accident "life" is the existence of spirit and nourishment;<sup>20</sup> the maintenance and continuance of the accident "life" thus depend on spirit, which was commonly understood as a corporeal element or organ distinct from life.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> This is Abū l-Huḍayl's view, according to 'Abd al-Ġabbār's *al-Muḡnī fi abwāb at-tawḡid wa-l-'adl*, ed. 'Abd al-ḡalīm an-Naḡḡār and Muḡammad 'Alī an-Naḡḡār (Cairo: al-Mu'assasa al-Miḡrīya al-'Āmma, 1965), 11:310. On this issue, see Frank, *Beings*, 42f.

<sup>15</sup> Abū l-ḡasan 'Alī al-Aš'arī, *Maḡālāt al-Islāmīyīn wa-iḡtilāf al-muḡallīn*, ed. H. Ritter, Second Edition (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963), 337. According to Aš'arī, Ġa'far ibn ḡarb (d. 236/850) also held that life was other than the spirit (*rūḡ*), and that life was an accident (*'arad*), see *ibid.*, 334. Cf. Ibrāḡīm ibn Sayyār an-Nazzām (d. between 220–230/835–845), who claimed that spirit (*rūḡ*) is the soul (*naḡs*), which is identical with the body; the spirit is alive by virtue of itself and not by the accident "life"; *ibid.*, 333–34 and 'Abd al-Ġabbār, *Muḡnī*, 11:310.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Aš'arī, *Maḡālāt*, 334.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Fūrak, *Muḡarrad Maḡālāt al-Aš'arī*, ed. D. Gimaret (Beirut: Dār al-Maḡriq, 1987), 257.

<sup>18</sup> Other Mu'tazila, including an-Nazzām, held that spirit (*rūḡ*) was identical with life (*ḡayāt*), and that it exists in the body by way of interpenetration; see 'Abd al-Ġabbār, *Muḡnī*, 11:310. Aš'arī makes it clear that an-Nazzām equated the spirit (*rūḡ*) with the body, and that it is the soul; spirit is alive by virtue of itself and not through the accident "life"; *Maḡālāt*, 333–34.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Fūrak, *Muḡarrad Maḡālāt*, 257.

<sup>20</sup> It is for this reason that God can be qualified by life, but not by spirit; *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Frank, *Beings*, 49, n. 14.

Avicenna uses an argument from personal identity to refute the doctrine that resurrection belongs to bodies only. He directs his attack against the Muʿtazilī theologians who identified man with the body.<sup>22</sup> The dispute over personal identity is thus rooted in a deeper disagreement over the nature of the self. While a majority of the *mutakallimūn* adhered to a materialistic notion of the self, and claimed that there was no self-subsisting soul that managed the body,<sup>23</sup> Avicenna argued consistently throughout his writings that the self is an immaterial substance. Many of the Muʿtazila thought that the self was either a subtle material substance that is diffused throughout the body, or an individual material atom to which the transient accident “life” attaches. Avicenna’s argument is that if the self were the body, then resurrection of the body alone would at best produce a replica of the original man. For, since the parts of the body are continually being replaced by one another, the body cannot account for the identity of the same person through time. Avicenna completes this argument against the *kalām* by demonstrating that man is man neither through the body nor through an accident which inheres in the body. The individual, he claims, is what he is by virtue of his soul, and the identity of man resides in his substantial form that exists in his matter. The theologians, Avicenna argues, claim that man is man through the body, and go so far as to deny that the soul and spirit have existence at all; they maintain that bodies become alive by virtue of a “life” created in them, so that life is not the existence of the soul for the body, but is one of the accidents created in bodies.<sup>24</sup>

Avicenna refutes the doctrine that resurrection belongs to bodies only by objecting to the doctrine that the self is a body. He presents this argument as follows:

The human is not human by reason of his matter, but through the form that exists in his matter. Human acts proceed from him, only

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<sup>22</sup> Avicenna argues that even if one were to accept that life were an accident (which, according to Avicenna, it is not), resurrection would be impossible. This argument is presented by al-Gazālī in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* as follows. Even if one were to accept the claim that life is an accident, a “return” would be impossible. For if the accident “life” must pass from existence to non-existence, then to existence, its continuity would be interrupted, and its identity through time requires the endurance of its property “existence” through time; al-Gazālī, *Incoherence*, 219f.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Gazālī, *Incoherence*, 219.

<sup>24</sup> *Adhawīya*, 41–3.

because of the existence of his form in his matter. If his form ceases to exist in his matter and his matter returns to earth or to some other elements, then that human in himself ceases to exist. If then in that same matter a new human form is created, what comes into existence as a result is another human, not that [former] human. For that which exists of the first human is his matter, not form. Moreover, he is what he is, praised or blamed, deserving of reward and punishment, not by reason of his matter, but by reason of his form, and by reason of his being a human, not earth.<sup>25</sup>

Man is not identical with his matter, but with his substantial form that exists in his matter. If man were identical with his matter, then the new human who is rewarded or punished would not be the one who did good or evil, but another. As a result, praise and blame would be ascribed to the wrong person.

The above argument is related to a more rigorous one in which Avicenna insists that an individual is what he is by virtue of his soul. This argument appears in *Risāla fī n-Nafs*,<sup>26</sup> and demonstrates the immateriality of the self by way of an argument from personal identity. The point of the argument is that because the parts of the body are continually being replaced, while the soul knows itself, or the permanence of itself, as continually existing throughout its existence, an individual is what he is by virtue of his soul. Thus, man remains the same man through time by virtue of his soul.<sup>27</sup> Avicenna illustrates this point again in the fourth chapter of the *Adḥawīya*; he defines the soul as that by virtue of which the subject is called “he” and refers to himself as “I.” In the same chapter, he defines the soul as the thing through which man knows that he is he.<sup>28</sup>

The remainder of Avicenna’s argument against the *kalām* doctrine of bodily resurrection is presented by al-Ġazālī in his *Tahāfut*.<sup>29</sup> Either life and the body both cease to exist—and God then returns the annihilated body to existence and returns the accident “life,” which

<sup>25</sup> *Adḥawīya*, 63–54; tr. M.E. Marmura, “Avicenna and the Kalām,” 198.

<sup>26</sup> *Aḥwāl an-nafs: Risāla fī n-Nafs wa-baqā’ihā wa-mā’ādhā*, ed. A.F. al-Ahwānī (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1952).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 183–84; M.E. Marmura, “Ghazzālī and the Avicennan Proof from Personal Identity for an Immaterial Self,” in *A Straight Path: Studies in Medieval Philosophy and Culture (Essays in Honor of A. Hyman)*, ed. R. Link-Salinger (Washington: The Catholic University Press, 1988), 197.

<sup>28</sup> *Adḥawīya*, 145. In his *Risāla fī n-Nafs*, 183, Avicenna defines the soul as that which each person refers to by the term “I.”

<sup>29</sup> Al-Ġazālī, *Incoherence*, 219f.

had been annihilated—or the matter of the body survives as earth and this earth is gathered and constructed in the form of a human, and life is then created in it anew. The first scenario does not fulfill the conditions of a “return,” since a “return” in the real sense involves the continuity of one thing as well as the emergence of another. But in this case, the return cannot be of the same man, since if the body passes out of existence, then there is a break in the continuity of the subject and hence an absence of the continuity of personal identity through time. Since it is impossible for something to pass from existence to non-existence, then back to existence (as this would entail a break in continuity and hence in identity), even if life is an accident (which according to Avicenna it is not), the return, then, cannot be of the same man, for there will still remain an absence of continuity, in this case that of the accident “life.” Finally, if the body survives as earth, and is then reconstructed, then the resurrection could only involve the production of something similar to the original man. For, if the body does not cease to exist and life is returned to it, there is still no continuity of personal identity, for the parts of man are continually being replaced by food. Since man is man not by virtue of his matter but by virtue of his soul, and life or spirit ceases to exist but is then re-attributed to man, the return would at best involve a replica of the original man.

Avicenna presents a number of objections to the doctrine that resurrection belongs to the body and soul together.<sup>30</sup> The main argument against which he directs his objection is that the body at resurrection would join an already separated soul; the resurrected man would be the identical man since the soul would be that same soul. Here he uses a quantitative argument to demonstrate the impossibility that the body is resurrected to join an already separated soul. He argues that matter existing in the world is not sufficient to repro-

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<sup>30</sup> First, the existing matter in the world is insufficient to produce enough bodies for a resurrection. For Avicenna, there are an infinite number of souls and a finite amount of matter existing in the world. Because the corporeal infinite is impossible, the existing matter is insufficient to accompany the infinite number of souls. Second, the divine will, as immutable and unchanging, precludes the possibility of a resurrection. Third, absolute felicity opposes the existence of the soul in the body; true pleasures belong to the activity of the soul itself, and do not concern the body. Fourth, the matters mentioned about resurrection in the revealed law, if taken in their literal sense, would have unpleasant and impossible consequences; see *Adḥawīya*, 69–71.

duce enough bodies for a resurrection. If the world is pre-eternal (as Avicenna maintains), and humans have always existed in the past, and if souls after separation from their bodies retain their individuality, then the number of such souls is infinite. The amount of matter in the sublunar world is finite, however, and the matter available is not sufficient to accommodate all the souls. Hence, there can be no resurrection that involves the return of souls to bodies.<sup>31</sup>

Avicenna then blocks off the remaining escape route by arguing that it is impossible for the soul to return to any matter whatsoever. Here the *mutakallimūn* advance two possibilities: the human soul, an existent that survives the death of the body, could return to the original body when all the parts of that body have been collected, or it could return to some other body, whether that body is composed of the same parts as the original body or not. In both doctrines, the return would be of the same man, since man is man by virtue of his soul and not of his matter.

Avicenna's objection to the first doctrine is that such a resurrection, that is, one in which only those parts present at the time of death are recombined, would lead to the resurrection of people whose limbs had been amputated, or whose ears and noses were cut off, or whose limbs were defective, in exactly the same form as they had in the world.<sup>32</sup> If the supposition of return is confined to the recombination of the parts present at the time of death, resurrection would be an unpleasant and disgraceful event. Further, if it were true that all the parts which belonged to man during his lifetime were resurrected, then it would be necessary that the same part be resurrected as liver and heart and hand and leg at once, for some organic parts derive nourishment from the residuary nourishment of others.<sup>33</sup> Thus, if it is supposed that there are specific parts which had been the matter for all organs, then it is unclear to which organ these parts will return.

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<sup>31</sup> Marmura, "Avicenna and the Problem," 232–39.

<sup>32</sup> *Adḥawīya*, 77–9; al-Gazālī, *Incoherence*, 221.

<sup>33</sup> *Adḥawīya*, *ibid.*; al-Gazālī, *ibid.*

*The Refutation of Metempsychosis*

The final argument Avicenna refutes belongs to those who adhere to some form of metempsychosis.<sup>34</sup> The supporters of metempsychosis hold that the number of (separate) souls is finite, and that these souls rotate over infinitely many bodies. Although Avicenna disagrees over the quantity of separate souls, he disregards this issue and bases his refutation on the claim that the soul cannot pre-exist the body. Avicenna begins his refutation of metempsychosis by presenting the argument of his opponents: those who affirm the transmigration of souls assert that souls are substances separate from matter, that they separate from bodies after death, and that material bodies are infinitely many.<sup>35</sup> The number of souls is either finite or infinite. But if the souls existing now (those separate from material bodies) are infinite, then an actual infinite would exist, and this is impossible. The number of separate souls is thus finite. Since the number of souls is finite and the number of bodies are infinite (since an infinite number has been produced in succession), the rotation of souls over bodies is necessary.<sup>36</sup>

The supporters of metempsychosis hold that the soul must pre-exist the body, and that once this is demonstrated, the rotation of separate souls over bodies is established. Their argument runs as follows. What comes into existence simultaneously with the body is a material form, and the material form is inseparable from the body. The soul, however, is separable, and since souls are separate substances, they do not perish; hence it must precede the body in existence. But there cannot be a new soul for each body, which would

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<sup>34</sup> By the time of Avicenna, a number of various views in favor of metempsychosis were prevalent. On the subject of metempsychosis, see al-Bīrūnī, *Alberuni's India: An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030*, ed. E. Sachau, (London: K. Paul, 1914), 43–44 and 49–51. See also W. Madelung, "Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and Metempsychosis," *Acta Iranica* 16 (1990), 131–143; S. Schmidtke, "The Doctrine of the Transmigration of Soul According to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (killed 587/1191) and his Followers," *Studia Iranica* 28 (1999), 237–254; P. Walker, "The Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Islam," in *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams*, ed. W. Hallaq and D. Little (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 219–38; and G. Monnot, "La transmigration et l'immortalité," *MIDEO* 14 (1980), 149–66.

<sup>35</sup> The infinite number of bodies, since they follow each other in succession and do not form a coexisting magnitude, do not form an actual infinite. The problem of an actual infinity arises with the separate souls because they coexist.

<sup>36</sup> *Adḥawīya*, 99.

result in an infinite number of souls (and this is impossible); therefore, there must be a finite number of souls rotating over an infinite number of bodies, and this is metempsychosis.<sup>37</sup>

Avicenna agrees that souls are substances separate from matter, and that they separate from bodies after death. He also agrees that material bodies are infinitely many, since the bodies follow each other in succession. The supporters of metempsychosis are well aware of the problem of an infinite number of souls, for they use this claim to establish their argument for transmigration: if immortal souls were to coexist, they would form an actual infinite, but the actual infinite is impossible. Avicenna disregards the problem of the infinite number of souls, and instead refutes the claim that the soul precedes the body in existence. He argues that those who uphold metempsychosis make the unwarranted assumption that whatever comes into existence simultaneously with the body is necessarily a material form.

Avicenna demonstrates that it is impossible for the soul to exist before the body, and in doing so refutes the doctrine of metempsychosis, which uses this claim as a premise. Avicenna argues as follows. If the soul were to exist before the body, then there would be either a plurality of souls, or only one soul. But both of these are impossible, and therefore the soul must come into existence with the body. A plurality of souls is impossible, for in their prior existence these souls are immaterial, and since matter is the individuating principle, these souls cannot be many. Nor can souls in their prior existence be one, for if all souls were one, then the soul of Zayd and 'Amr would be one, and this is absurd.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, the soul cannot exist before the body in any way whatsoever. Because the soul cannot exist before the body, but comes into existence with the coming into existence of the body, metempsychosis cannot hold true, for then two souls could inhabit one body—the soul which originates with the coming into being of the body, and the transmigrating soul.

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<sup>37</sup> *Adḥawīya*, *ibid.*: “Those who uphold metempsychosis support the validity of what they maintain with their doctrine that it is true [in the case of souls] that they are substances separate from matter, and that they separate from bodies after death, and that material bodies are infinite. But it must be that souls are either finite or infinite. If the souls existing now—those separate from material bodies—are infinite, then that which is infinite in actuality would exist, but this is impossible. And if they are finite—and their bodies are infinite—then transmigration is inevitable, as is their rotation over bodies.”

<sup>38</sup> *Adḥawīya*, 125–7.

However, because each person experiences himself to be one person, not two, it is impossible for two souls to inhabit one body.<sup>39</sup> Metempsychosis is thus impossible on two counts. It admits the possibility of more than one soul inhabiting a particular body, and refuses to concede that the rational soul comes into existence with the coming into existence of the body as a separate substance.

Avicenna's arguments against the *mutakallimūn* and *ahl at-tanāsuh* are incisive. The arguments he advances, particularly those against the theologians, indicate that he was deeply dissatisfied with the theological positions on resurrection. His polemics against the two groups, however, are driven by an urge to explain resurrection in philosophical terms. Although much of the *Adḥawīya* is devoted to polemics, Avicenna's primary intention throughout the treatise is to establish that man's identity resides in his soul (and not the body or anything bodily), and that this soul is a separate, immaterial, and, hence, an immortal substance.

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<sup>39</sup> *Adḥawīya*, 133.

AFTER AVICENNA



## CHAPTER NINE

### BAHMANYĀR IBN MARZUBĀN: A FAITHFUL DISCIPLE OF IBN SĪNĀ?

Jules Janssens

Bahmanyār ibn Marzubān (d. 458/1066) is known as one of Ibn Sīnā's first generation students.<sup>1</sup> He was clearly involved in a direct correspondence with the Šayḫ ar-Ra'īs, which became part of what is known as the *Mubāḥaṭāt*.<sup>2</sup> One of the participants in this correspondence was also Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī, of whom we know very little,<sup>3</sup> except that he was much older than Ibn Sīnā and much despised by him. From the *Mubāḥaṭāt*, it is obvious that Bahmanyār and Abū l-Qāsim were in close contact with each other. Since the former was undoubtedly much younger than the latter, it might be that he chose Abū l-Qāsim as his tutor.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Sīnā explicitly regrets that Bahmanyār sometimes seems to take side with this minor thinker, and does not hesitate to reprehend Bahmanyār for such attitude.<sup>5</sup> Hence, the question may be raised whether Bahmanyār was a faithful

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of both ancient and contemporary reports regarding Bahmanyār, especially his origin, life and relationship with Ibn Sīnā, see D.C. Reisman, "The Making of the Avicennan Tradition: The Transmission, Contents, and Structure of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Mubāḥaṭāt* (*The Discussions*)," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 2001, 310–322.

<sup>2</sup> For a precise account of the material related to Bahmanyār (and Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī), see Reisman, "Avicennan Tradition," 339–393, as well as 404–410.

<sup>3</sup> J.R. Michot, "Une nouvelle œuvre du jeune Avicenne, note complémentaire à propos du ms. *Hüseyn Çelebi 1194* de Brousse," *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 34 (1992), 138–154, 148–150, inclines, but with caution, to identify this Abū l-Qāsim with a secretary of Rayy, called Abū l-Qāsim al-Kātib by at-Tawḥīdī. See also id. (as Yahya Michot), *Ibn Sīnā, lettre au vizir Abū Sa'd, editio princeps d'après le manuscrit de Bursa, traduction de l'arabe, introduction, notes et lexique*, Sagesses musulmanes, 4 (Beyrouth: Les Éditions al-Bouraq, 2000), 20.

<sup>4</sup> See Reisman, "Avicennan Tradition," 321–322.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, ed. M. Bīdārfar (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Bīdār, 1992), 57, § 52; 63, § 75; and 74–76, §§ 113–116; French translation by J. Michot, "La réponse d'Avicenne à Bahmanyār et al-Kirmānī, Présentation, traduction critique et lexique arabe-français de la *Mubāḥaṭa III*," *Le Muséon* 110.1–2 (1997), 143–221 (with reference to the paragraph numbers of Bīdārfar's edition).

disciple of Ibn Sīnā, or, on the contrary, did he distance himself from his (major?) teacher in philosophy?

When looking at his *opus magnum*, i.e., *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*,<sup>6</sup> written in all probability between Ibn Sīnā's and his own death, one initially has the impression that it is a pure compilation of Avicennan texts, Bahmanyār's own role being limited to the actual choice of the combined fragments. Such an impression is only reinforced when one reads the following at the very beginning of the work, immediately after the dedication of the work by Bahmanyār to his maternal uncle Abū Maṣū' Bahrām ibn Ḥūršīd Yazdyār:<sup>7</sup>

(I have composed) a book of the wisdom (*ḥikma*) which the Šayḥ ar-Ra'īs Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā—may God have mercy upon him—has taught,<sup>8</sup> by imitating the order of the *Ḥikma al-'Alā'i*,<sup>9</sup> by taking intentions (*al-ma'ānī*) from the totality of his writings and from what happened through discussion (*muḥāwaratan*) between me and him, and by adding what my understanding (*naẓarī*) has acquired as derivations (*min al-furū'*) [while] being analogous to the fundamentals (*al-uṣūl*). Your looking into his books will furnish you the proof of these derivations.<sup>10</sup>

This opening statement rings distinctly pro-Avicennan. First, Bahmanyār stresses that the wisdom which he will develop in his work is the very same as the one Ibn Sīnā has taught, clearly suggesting that this kind of wisdom was particular to the Šayḥ ar-Ra'īs himself, in

<sup>6</sup> All of my references will be to the edition of M. Muṭahharī, Second printing (Tehran: Intiṣārāt-i Dāniṣgāh-yi Tihrān, 1375Š/1996). In his edition, Muṭahharī often indicates source passages from different parts of the *Šifā'*. He also occasionally refers to the *Nağāt* or to *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt*. Despite a few (minor) mistakes, these references are generally trustworthy and cover a great deal of Bahmanyār's text. However, since I have found two chapters of the *Dānišnāmah*, although in Arabic (see infra), it seems possible, not to say probable, that Bahmanyār also drew on that work, and in a systematic manner. I plan a more thorough examination of this issue for a later publication.

<sup>7</sup> I follow with Reisman, "Avicennan Tradition," 316, n. 80, the reading of the Aleppo manuscript.

<sup>8</sup> D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Islamic Philosophy and Theology: Texts and Studies, 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 11, n. 14 offers another possible translation, based on the variant reading *lubāb* instead of *Kitāb*: "the gist of the philosophy which Avicenna revised."

<sup>9</sup> The work is commonly known as the *Dānišnāmah*. The three parts of the work were published in the series *Silsilah-yi Intiṣārāt-i Anğuman-i Ātār-i Millī, Yādgar-i ğašn-i hazārah-yi Abū 'Alī Sīnā, Collection du millénaire d'Avicenne* (Tehran: Dāniṣgāh-yi Tihrān, 1331Š/1951): *Risālah-yi Maṭīq*, ed. M. Mu'īn and M. Miškāt, vol. 12; *Ilāhīyāt*, ed. M. Mu'īn, vol. 15; *Ṭabī'iyāt*, ed. M. Miškāt, vol. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Bahmanyār, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 1.

other words, that the latter has really innovated a very new way of philosophizing.

Then Bahmanyār evokes what looks like one of the basic expressions of this new way, i.e., a special ordering of the main parts of the philosophical project as adopted by Ibn Sīnā in his *Dānišnāmah*. Although in most of Ibn Sīnā's encyclopaedic works the classical order (logic-physics-mathematics-metaphysics) is indeed respected, this is not the case in his Persian work, which may well be his very last philosophical encyclopaedia.<sup>11</sup> There he adopts an evidently new order, i.e., logic-metaphysics-physics. It is striking that there is no mention of mathematics,<sup>12</sup> but more interestingly, and contrary to the classical curriculum (in its Platonic-Aristotelian line), metaphysics precedes physics. It is therefore not of secondary importance that Bahmanyār explicitly claims to follow this unique order. In doing so, he seems to valorize it as a major contribution of Ibn Sīnā's (mature) thought. This is all the more remarkable since he further claims not to offer a slightly reworked version of the *Dānišnāmah* itself, as later will be the case with al-Ġazālī's *Maqāṣid*,<sup>13</sup> but rather to have dealt with the totality of the writings of the Ṣayḥ ar-Ra'īs and even to have taken into account those ideas which he has learned through direct communication with the Master.<sup>14</sup> The latter affirmation clearly implies that Ibn Sīnā has not written down all of his ideas. But is Bahmanyār not offering himself a pretext in order to introduce personal ideas, having no Avicennan basis at all? In other words, does this claim not constitute at once both a simple strategic

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<sup>11</sup> See my "Les *Tāliqāt* d'Ibn Sīnā, Essai de structuration et de datation," in *Langages et philosophie, Hommage à Jean Jolivet*, Études de philosophie médiévale, 74, ed. A. Elamrani-Jamal, A. de Libera, and A. Galonnier (Paris: J. Vrin, 1997), 109–122, 122 (and n. 39). Let me remark that I do not claim that the *Dānišnāmah* is Ibn Sīnā's last encyclopedic work, but rather that this simply may be the case. To fix in a definite way the relative chronological order of Ibn Sīnā's works, much systematic research, based both on external and internal evidence, has still to be done, and therefore I refrain from any strong affirmation.

<sup>12</sup> Gutas, *Avicenna*, 113, observes that Ibn Sīnā always omits in his later works the mathematical part, probably since he considers its traditional exposé to be basically sufficient, and, hence, not open to any serious conflict.

<sup>13</sup> See my "Le *Dānesh-Nāmah* d'Ibn Sīnā: un texte à revoir?" *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 28 (1986), 163–177, especially 168–175.

<sup>14</sup> Although Bahmanyār's statement can be understood as pointing to an oral communication, it may equally refer in a loose sense to any form of communication, either oral or written. If the latter is the case, Bahmanyār may be alluding to his correspondence with Ibn Sīnā included in the *Mubāḥaṭāt* materials.

and apologetic move? His final affirmation clearly contradicts such an interpretation. He admits that he will present some ideas, not present in the Avicennan corpus, but he immediately adds that such additions are always derivative of principles the basis of which any serious thinker can easily detect in that very same corpus. Hence, at first sight, Bahmanyār's *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* appears as a basically Avicennan-inspired *summa*.

However, a somewhat closer examination of the work immediately elicits a serious qualification of such characterization. In fact, the very basic structure of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* is only *apparently* identical with that of Ibn Sīnā's *Dānišnāmah*. Surely, Bahmanyār still maintains a tripartite division, starting, as did Ibn Sīnā, with logic, and then continuing with metaphysics. But, contrary to the Šayḫ ar-Ra'īs, the latter is not designated as "Divine science" (*ilm ilāhī*), but as "metaphysics" (*mā ba'd at-ṭabī'a*). Although this Aristotelian appellation is not necessarily un-Avicennan,<sup>15</sup> there is no doubt that Ibn Sīnā himself largely preferred the expression *al-Ilāhīyāt* when dealing with the highest science of philosophy, this designation being the one found in all his later major works. Note that this does not mean that the proper "subject" of metaphysics was, according to Ibn Sīnā, the "divine." Not at all! Since the existence of God has to be proved, He cannot be its primary subject. For Ibn Sīnā only "Being *qua* Being" can fulfill such a role. So, metaphysics is first of all an ontology. But it also includes an aetiology (or: archaeology), since it deals with the principles of all the other sciences, and, moreover, it entails a theology, God being the highest and, hence, most noble Being. Ibn Sīnā integrates these three elements, which were present but in a scattered and fragmentary way in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, into one coherent metaphysical system.<sup>16</sup> Bahmanyār, however, seems to limit the metaphysical project to the premisses needed for the totality of the sciences.<sup>17</sup> This might explain why he favors the Aristotelian appel-

<sup>15</sup> The expression *mā ba'd at-ṭabī'a* is, for example, mentioned in Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, ed. 'A.A. Nūrānī, Wisdom of Persia Series, 36 (Tehran: Tehran University, 1363Š/1984), 1.

<sup>16</sup> See G. Verbeke, *Avicenna, Grundleger einer neuen Metaphysik*, Rheinisch-Westphalische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vorträge G 263 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1983), 9–10. The basis for such an integrated vision was already present in al-Fārābī, more specifically in his treatise *Fī Agrād mā ba'd at-ṭabī'a*, as recognized by Ibn Sīnā himself in his autobiography; see W. Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā, A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation* (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1974), 34–35.

<sup>17</sup> Bahmanyār, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 2.

lation of “metaphysics.” But since this affirmation is part of a general introduction, one should not over-emphasize it. A more systematic examination of the contents of this second part of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* is undoubtedly required for a correct evaluation of the relationship between Bahmanyār’s “Metaphysics” and Ibn Sīnā’s *al-Ilāhīyāt*.

Before working out a more detailed survey of the metaphysical part of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*, attention has to be paid to the precise title Bahmanyār gives to the third part of his work. One might naturally expect him to designate it simply by “physics.” This is not the case. In fact, Bahmanyār proposes a quite different appellation, i.e., *al-‘ilm bi-aḥwāl a‘yān al-mawǧūdāt*, “the science of the states of the most noble of Beings,” or, perhaps better, “the science of the states of the essences of the existing Beings.” That the latter translation is perhaps to be preferred reveals itself as soon as one takes into account Bahmanyār’s further division of this section into two parts. The first deals with “the Necessary Existent in Himself and the enumeration of His attributes” (*fi ma‘rifat wāǧib al-wuǧūd bi-dātihī wa-iḥṣā’ ṣifātihī*), while the second treats of “the caused Beings” (*al-mawǧūdāt al-ma‘lūla*).<sup>18</sup> Hence, the third part of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* encompasses the study of the totality of Beings, the divine Being as well as all created Beings. Whereas the examination of the latter is *a priori* not to be excluded from the domain of what Ibn Sīnā, with the Classical tradition, called “Physics,” this is not the case with respect to God. For Ibn Sīnā, the existence of God can only be proved in the science of Metaphysics<sup>19</sup> and thus His essence and attributes can only be the object of research in this science. As for Bahmanyār, the very structure of the third part of his major work gives, at least at first sight, the impression that he, contrary to Ibn Sīnā, does not want to place the study of the “divinalia” wholly outside the scope of physics proper.

When Bahmanyār states in the introduction<sup>20</sup> that “the first subpart (*maqāla*) indicates (*fi dalāla*) the Existent Being (*al-mawǧūd*) who

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 569, resp. 583.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Šarḥ Kitāb Ḥarf al-Lām*, ed. ‘A.R. Badawī in *Aristū ‘inda l-‘Arab*, Second printing (Kuwait: Wikālat al-Maṭbū‘āt, 1978), 23–24, where he states that it is inappropriate, as Aristotle and the Commentators have done, to argue to the First Truth from motion (the passage has been translated into English by F. Zimmermann in E. Booth, *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 3, Series vol. 20 [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983], 109–110).

<sup>20</sup> Bahmanyār, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 2.

has [for His existence] neither secondary nor primary cause (*alladī lā sabab lahū wa-lā ʿilla*), and clarifies (*wa-fihā l-ibāna*) the ultimate goal (*al-ḡarad*) of the *Theologia*<sup>21</sup> and of the book (*maqāla*) *Alpha elatton*,<sup>22</sup> one may still hesitate somewhat in discerning his real intention. To speak of God in terms of “uncaused” rather than “unmoved” may reflect an Avicennan inspiration, although it may also directly derive from the *Theologia*, where God is primarily designated as the First Cause (*al-ʿilla al-ūlā*).<sup>23</sup> As for the reference to *Alpha elatton*, it is equally somewhat ambiguous. Insofar as Ibn Sīnā’s proof “ex contingentia” is based on the idea of the necessary finitude of a series of causally connected Beings,<sup>24</sup> it may have a partial basis in that very part of the Stagirite’s *Metaphysics*, since Aristotle tries to demonstrate in it the necessity of a First Principle based on the impossibility of an infinity of causes. But Aristotle, contrary to Ibn Sīnā, does not radically exclude any kind of possible link with the science of Physics. This is obvious at the very beginnings of his exposé, when he states: “The material generation of one thing from another cannot go on in an infinite progression [. . .]; nor can the source of motion” (my italics).<sup>25</sup> Although Bahmanyār makes no mention of motion, it looks as though he somehow wants to return to the original Aristotelian approach by placing the explicit treatment of God in what appears to be a more immediate connection with physics. Such an impression is only reinforced when he presents the aims of the second section of sub-part two as “[offering] knowledge (*fī maʿrifā*) of the celestial bodies, their souls, their intellects and their other states, and clarifying the ultimate goal of *On Heaven*, as well as (*wa-*) some [items] of *Alpha elatton* and of the *Theologia*.”<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, Bahmanyār does not specify here these items. However, there is little doubt that he has in mind some issues related to the heavens

<sup>21</sup> Bahmanyār refers to the famous *Theologia Aristotelis*, but the present context does not allow one to decide whether or not he accepted its attribution to Aristotle.

<sup>22</sup> Here, the reference is clearly to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, but it should be recalled that this book was the first book in the Arabic translation, and not the second, as in the Greek text as it has been transmitted to us.

<sup>23</sup> *Uṭūlūḡyā Aristūṭālīs*, ed. ‘A.R. Badawī in *Aristū ʿinda l-ʿarab*, op. cit., e.g., 6 and 110 (title of ch. 10).

<sup>24</sup> See M. Marmura, “Avicenna’s Proof from Contingency for God’s Existence in the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifāʾ*,” *Medieval Studies* 42 (1980), 337–352, passim.

<sup>25</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 994a4–6 (Loeb Classical Library, p. 271), tr. H. Treddenik (repr. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 86–87.

<sup>26</sup> Bahmanyār, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 2.

which had been discussed, at least partly and already by Aristotle himself, in metaphysics. However, again, a more systematic analysis is needed in order to offer a well-founded conclusion. Does the change of title of parts two and three involve more than a simple rewording? Does it reveal a fundamental rupture with Ibn Sīnā's thought, and, if this the case, to what extent? To put it briefly: is it really significant, or not?

As soon as one starts to read the work in a more systematic way, one cannot but be struck by its overtly Avicennan tone. Almost immediately one discovers that Bahmanyār quotes large passages, sometimes by way of paraphrasis, but even more often very literally, of Ibn Sīnā's main philosophical encyclopaedia, the *Šifā'*. It has to be noted that Bahmanyār uses almost all of its different books, and thus reveals himself to be very familiar with this basic work of the Šayḫ ar-Ra'īs. Moreover, one finds several quotations of the *Nağāt* and of the *Išārāt*.<sup>27</sup> Most of them have been identified with due care by the editor of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*, M. Muṭahharī.<sup>28</sup> However, while his indications on the whole are correct, they lack precision, insofar as no details are given as to the exact nature of the quotations, nor to their full extent. So, it is not immediately obvious whether one is dealing with literal quotations or rather with paraphrases, or when a quotation concerns a line, a paragraph, a page, or even a chapter. In order to illustrate the enormous difference which exists in this respect between several passages, I present here two examples.

The first passage, i.e., book II, *maqāla* I, *fann* 9 (pp. 320–322), deals with the physical notions of continuity, contiguity, etc. The editor presents *aš-Šifā'*, *as-Samā' at-Ṭabī'ī* (designated by him as *al-fann al-awwal*), *maqāla* 3,<sup>29</sup> chapter 2 as its direct source. A closer analysis shows that this is indeed the case, but that Bahmanyār omits many passages. The whole chapter turns out to be a collection of very literal quotations of different lengths of chapter 2 of book 3 of

<sup>27</sup> Muṭahharī indicates in many cases the precise source of such quotations, but most of the time in a rather vague way, since he neither indicates the precise beginning or end of the quotations nor specifies their actual nature. Despite a few minor mistakes, he has performed a great service by establishing all these primary indications.

<sup>28</sup> See note 6 above.

<sup>29</sup> In fact, he refers to *maqāla* 2, but this is an obvious misprint.

*as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, as the following concordance of page and line numbers makes perfectly clear:

<i>Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl</i>	<i>Aš-Šifāʿ, as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī</i> <sup>30</sup>
320.3–8	178.7–8
320.8–321.5	178.15–179.7
321.5–12	179.9–14
322.1	181.9–10
322.2–3	181.12

In all these cases Bahmanyār copies Ibn Sīnā *verbatim*. Certainly, large parts of the concerned chapter are not reproduced by him, but one cannot but observe that, when he does preserve a passage of the text, he remains faithful to the very wording of his master.

The second fragment, i.e., book III, *maqāla* II, *bāb* 2, *fann* 4 (pp. 657–663), discusses the Divine Decree (*qadāʿ*) and the problem of evil. The editor does not refer to any Avicennan text, and thus suggests that this chapter is an original contribution of Bahmanyār himself. This is clearly not the case, since many of the expressed ideas are already present in Ibn Sīnā’s discussion of this topic in *aš-Šifāʿ, al-Ilāhīyāt*, IX, chapter 6.<sup>31</sup> A few wordings, such as “which is often but not the most often” (*Taḥṣīl*, 659.9 = *Šifāʿ*, 422.10), “the good is willed by essence, not by accident” (*Taḥṣīl*, 569.11–12 = *Šifāʿ*, 421.1–2), are even literal derivations. But the whole chapter has rather to be qualified as a kind of paraphrasis of Ibn Sīnā’s text, including the very basic ideas such as the link between evil and matter, or evil and the individual; the unavoidable occurrence of evil in *this* (i.e., the actual) universe; the divine providence having realized the best possible world, etc.—all of these have undoubtedly a genuine Avicennan ring. And even the evocation (661.10–663.1) of the notion of *daʿwa*, supplicatory prayer, does not necessarily constitute an addition by Bahmanyār himself, since Ibn Sīnā’s *Taʿlīqāt*<sup>32</sup> includes a rather systematic analysis of this notion which bears some vague resemblances

<sup>30</sup> Our references are to the edition by S. Zāʿid, Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣrīya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1983.

<sup>31</sup> One may also take into account the fourth to last chapter of the *Nağāt*, which is very close in wording to the chapter of the *Šifāʿ*.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *at-Taʿlīqāt*, ed. ʿA.R. Badawī (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣrīya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1973), 47–8. I will not discuss here the different recensions of this work, nor the problem of its authenticity, but I see for the moment no better hypothesis than the one I expressed in my “Les *Taʿlīqāt* d’Ibn Sīnā,” 116–118, scil. they constitute students’ notes of lessons by Ibn Sīnā.

to Bahmanyār's exposé. While these surely do not suffice to qualify the *Ta'liqāt* as a direct source, they may indicate that Bahmanyār based himself on Avicennan materials, possibly taken from oral discussions, or, at least, that he further developed ideas which had received only limited attention in Ibn Sīnā's work(s). As such, we are clearly no longer dealing with literal quotation, but rather with paraphrase, or, in some cases, elaboration.

The above examples well illustrate that Bahmanyār deals with his Avicennan source(s) in different ways. Therefore, a close inspection of every single passage is needed in order to determine the exact kind of dependency on Ibn Sīnā. Such an enterprise clearly exceeds the limits of the present investigation, but let us simply note that there is ample evidence that (almost?) every chapter has a direct or at least indirect basis in Ibn Sīnā's writings. Assuming that this basic impression correctly reflects the facts, why should one still doubt that Bahmanyār was a faithful disciple of Ibn Sīnā? Basically because, as indicated above, the titles of books 2 and 3 of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* seem to imply important changes with respect to the very basic structure of the philosophical project as articulated by Ibn Sīnā in the *Dānišnāmah*. A more detailed analysis of the structure of each of these two books will show that a few important changes have indeed taken place.

In the first three chapters of *maqāla* I of book 2, Bahmanyār insists, in complete agreement with Ibn Sīnā, that Being *qua* being constitutes the very subject of the science of metaphysics<sup>33</sup> and, once more following his master, he evokes the basic divisions of Being: the ten categories; necessity, possibility and impossibility; truth and falsehood. In all this, he largely bases himself on *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, I, chapters 2, 5 and 8. Since *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* was conceived as a compendium,<sup>34</sup> the omission of some parts of the source-text is hardly surprising. Such is the case with *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, I, chapters 1 and 3, the former dealing with a negative approach, scil. what metaphysics is not, the latter with its utility and place. However, the systematic

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<sup>33</sup> It is worthwhile to note that Bahmanyār affirms that Being (*wuġūd*) is something general (or: common, *amrun ʿammun*) which is predicated of what is beneath it not univocally but equivocally (*lā bi-t-tawāṭuʿ bal bi-t-taškīk*); see *at-Taḥṣīl*, 282.1. In my view, this affirmation somehow sustains the hypothesis I formulated years ago that Ibn Sīnā adheres to the idea of a transcendental analogy of Being, see my "Avicenna: tussen neoplatonisme en islam," Ph.D. dissertation, Leuven, 1983, 1:133–140.

<sup>34</sup> See note 1 above.

exclusion of any reference to God, which is predominantly present in the very first book of *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*—more precisely in chapters 4, 6, and 7—cannot be qualified as unimportant or, at best, of little significance. For Ibn Sīnā, God remains the highest (though not the first) object of the metaphysical investigation, and therefore he does not hesitate to evoke in the mentioned chapters such issues as the relationship of God with creation (including the topics of prophecy and *māʿād*) and God's unity and unicity. By ignoring them, Bahmanyār apparently wants to emphasize that the science of metaphysics studies chiefly, if not exclusively, Being as such. He at once seems to reject the inclusion into metaphysics proper of a (Neoplatonic) exitus-reditus scheme as Ibn Sīnā had developed and integrated it in an Aristotelian metaphysical framework.

Immediately afterwards, in chapters 4–6, Bahmanyār focuses on the general notion of substance. The *Ilāhīyāt* of the *Šifāʾ* is used only in a very limited way, i.e., the first part of chapter 1<sup>35</sup> of book II, in order to explain the distinction between substance and accidents. The major source of inspiration is, however, *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Maqūlāt*, I, 4; II, 4; and III, 1–3. Thus, Bahmanyār integrates a huge part of logic into metaphysics. He may be imitating Ibn Sīnā, who also discusses the categories, and therefore also substance, both in the *Categories* and the *Metaphysics*.<sup>36</sup> But even then, one looks in vain for the distinction between *maḥall* and *mawḍūʿ* afforded by Ibn Sīnā in the later part of the above mentioned chapter 2 of the *Ilāhīyāt*.

Body becomes the central topic in chapters 7 and 8, where *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, II, 2 is largely the source. As for the discussion of continuity/discontinuity at the beginning of chapter 8, it reminds one somewhat of *aš-Šifāʾ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, III, 2, and its presence here may be due to Ibn Sīnā's remark in the *Ilāhīyāt* that corporeity is the form of continuity.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, the refutation of atomism, presented in chapter 10 and based on *aš-Šifāʾ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, III, 3–5 (as well as one chapter of the *Nağāt*) can easily be explained by Ibn Sīnā's observation that he has already treated this issue in the

<sup>35</sup> Muṭahharī cites ch. 9, but this is clearly a mistake.

<sup>36</sup> A systematic study and detailed analysis of the *Categories* of the *Šifāʾ* (including a thorough comparison with the related parts of the *Metaphysics*) unfortunately is still lacking, although it almost certainly would contribute to a better understanding of Ibn Sīnā's basic philosophical conceptions.

<sup>37</sup> *Aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, 64.6–7.

*Physics*.<sup>38</sup> As for chapter 9, which concentrates on such notions as contiguity and which is completely based on *aš-Šifāʾ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, III, 2 as shown earlier, it looks as though Bahmanyār considers it to be of the very same nature as the two surrounding chapters, that is, as being part of the discussion of corporeity.

In chapters 11–13 several precise articulations regarding the relation between form and matter are brought to the fore. This time *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, II (more specifically chapters 1, 2, and 4) reveals itself as the major source. But at the end of chapter 13 when Bahmanyār states that the number of bodies has to be finite, he once more quotes from *aš-Šifāʾ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, i.e., III, 8.

To summarize, the first *maqāla* of the second book of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* includes what may be characterized as a summary of books 1 and 2 of the *Ilāhīyāt* of the *Šifāʾ*. It is striking that Bahmanyār does not hesitate to incorporate passages taken from a logical and a physical part of the *Šifāʾ*, i.e., *al-Maqūlāt* and *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*. Nevertheless, this in no way involves a radical departure from Ibn Sīnā. In fact, the Šayḥ ar-Raʿīs regularly notes in his *Metaphysics* that knowledge of these sciences is required for a correct understanding of his metaphysical project. By elaborating on these parts, Bahmanyār facilitates to some degree the task of the reader of this metaphysical part. Thus, their inclusion here is perhaps the result of a pedagogical motive. However, we also detected a very significant omission, one which cannot but elicit the following question: does Bahmanyār completely exclude theology from metaphysics? Does he somehow want to return to Aristotle's original project? But then what about book *Lambda*? For now these questions remain unanswered.

The second *maqāla* of the part entitled “metaphysics” of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* examines one by one the nine categories besides substance, viz. quantity (and related topics; chapters 1–6); quality (and related topics; chapters 7–9); relation (chapter 10); when, where, posture and state (chapter 11); action and passion (chapter 12). For this exposé, Bahmanyār has made massive use of Ibn Sīnā's presentation of these categories in the *Maqūlāt* of the *Šifāʾ*, although he also quotes the *Ilāhīyāt*,<sup>39</sup> e.g., in his chapters 3–5 (on “unity”) and chapter 9 (on “science”). Moreover, in chapter 6 (on “place,” *makān*) he combines

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.8.

<sup>39</sup> For more details, the reader may consult the references given by Muṭahharī.

elements taken from *aš-Šifāʿ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, II, 6–9, and in chapter 8 (on the “quality of passion”) he reproduces a part of *aš-Šifāʿ*, *Kitāb an-Nafs*, III, 2. After the logical and quite brief presentation of action and passion in chapter 12 (417–418.10), Bahmanyār extensively analyses the phenomenon of motion (418.11–431), based on *aš-Šifāʿ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, II, 14. Further topics related to motion are discussed in his chapters 13–15 according to IV, 3 of the same work. In chapter 16 attention is paid to the issue of the eternity of motion and time, while in chapter 17 the entire focus is on time. These two chapters also have their source in *aš-Šifāʿ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*; thus, chapter 16 combines passages taken from III, 11 and IV, 9, and chapter 17 combines passages from II, 10–13.

When comparing this second *maqāla* with Ibn Sīnā’s exposé in the *Iḥāyāt* of the *Šifāʿ*,<sup>40</sup> three remarks seem to impose themselves:

1. Contrary to Bahmanyār’s *maqāla*, only three categories, i.e., quantity, quality and relation, are discussed in some detail in Ibn Sīnā’s exposé. This creates the impression that for Ibn Sīnā, besides substance, only these three categories possess a real metaphysical relevancy, notwithstanding their being accidents, as is clearly and explicitly emphasized. Bahmanyār, by taking into consideration *all* categories, undoubtedly weakens the special status accorded the three categories by Ibn Sīnā’s wording;<sup>41</sup>
2. In both works, the topic of unity as related to quantity, and the topic of science as related to quality are treated, but they no longer hold such a central position in Bahmanyār’s exposé as they evidently had in Ibn Sīnā’s, since they are embedded in a much more extensive account of all categories, and related topics;
3. Bahmanyār’s systematic analysis in this framework of three basic physical notions, viz. motion, place and time, can hardly be justified by considering it an additional explanation which was naturally implied by Ibn Sīnā’s text. What Ibn Sīnā had articulated in book 2 of the *Šifāʿ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, in the way of three shorter monographs,<sup>42</sup> as outspoken physical doctrines, becomes in Bahmanyār’s work an integral part of metaphysics. Moreover, it has to be stressed

<sup>40</sup> I refer to this work since it offers the most complete metaphysical exposé of Ibn Sīnā, including his basic ideas in the field.

<sup>41</sup> But, as earlier stated (see n. 36 above), a thorough examination of Ibn Sīnā’s doctrine(s) of the categories, both on the logical and on the metaphysical level, is really needed in order to elucidate what appears to be some of his most fundamental philosophical ideas.

<sup>42</sup> As far as the form of presentation is concerned, these monographs remind one of what is usually designated corollaries with respect to Philoponus and Simplicius.

that Bahmanyār, when dealing in book 3 of *Kūtāb at-Taḥṣīl* with *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, no longer makes any mention of time, and evokes only a few particular items regarding motion and place.

Therefore, it is almost natural to conclude that in this second *maqāla* Bahmanyār rather blurs the boundaries between logic and metaphysics on the one hand, and physics and metaphysics on the other hand. As a disciple of Ibn Sīnā, such an attitude is surprising, since the Ṣayḥ ar-Raʿīs attached great importance to correct logical reasoning and to keeping distinct the respective domains of physics and metaphysics.<sup>43</sup>

*Maqāla* 3, which investigates the notions of anteriority and posteriority, and potency and act, is genuinely Avicennan. It has a solid basis in *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, IV, 1–2. The same evaluation applies to *maqāla* 4, which focuses on the couples universal/particular, multiplication/individualization and genus/species, and, moreover, on definition, it being based on book 5 of the *Ilāhīyāt* of the *Šifāʾ*. However, the very first chapter is an exception. It is entitled “On Perception (*idrāk*), and what is related to it,” and contains elements taken from *aš-Šifāʾ*, *Kūtāb an-Nafs*, II, 2 and V, 2, as well as from *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, VIII, 6 and V, 5.<sup>44</sup> It may still be accepted as strongly Avicennan, but Bahmanyār, before discussing the real metaphysical issue, imports elements from a natural science; in the present case this appears to be preparatory and thus may lead the reader to a better understanding of the relevant topics. *Maqāla* 5 may also be qualified as profoundly Avicennan. It focuses on the topic of causality, closely following the sixth book of the *Ilāhīyāt* of the *Šifāʾ*.<sup>45</sup> But again, one chapter, i.e., chapter 3 (on final causality), encompasses non-metaphysical materials. Based on *aš-Šifāʾ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, I, 13–14, the delicate problem of fate and chance is addressed. Its discussion in a causal context is certainly natural but, as with *Maqāla* 2, one gets the impression that Bahmanyār simply mixes up physics and metaphysics.

<sup>43</sup> Regarding Ibn Sīnā’s insistence on correct logical reasoning, see *Lettre au vizir*, op. cit., 2; and as for his sharp distinction between physics and metaphysics, see note 19 above.

<sup>44</sup> The reference to V, 5 is lacking in Muṭahharī’s edition.

<sup>45</sup> Muṭahharī, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 524, refers to the *Isārāt*, *namaṭ* 5, but several elements of the texts are directly derived from *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, VI, 2. It has to be noted that Bahmanyār inverts the order of the chapter.

*Maqāla* 6 is of a composite nature. The first chapter, in conformity with *aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, VII, 1, discusses consequential accidents (*lawāḥiq*), related to one and unity. In chapter 2, finity figures as a central notion: first, according to *aš-Šifāʿ*, *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*, II, 8, arguments are adduced for the finitude of bodies and numbers; then it is established that there cannot exist an infinity of causes, on the basis of *aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, VIII, 1 (albeit extremely summarized). Once more, one observes the introduction of a physical item, but in this case it clearly has a preparatory function. Based respectively on *aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, IX, 7, and IV, 3, one finds in chapter 3 an account of pain and joy, and in chapter 4 one of the notions of perfect and more than perfect. In the latter chapter, one also finds a part on incorruptibility, which undoubtedly has been inspired by *aš-Šifāʿ*, *Kitāb an-Nafs*, V, 4. In this case, the physical element quite naturally fits into the surrounding metaphysical context, dealing with incorruptibility.

Overlooking the totality of *maqālas* 3–6, we may conclude that Bahmanyār offers a massively Avicennan-inspired doctrine of the modes of Being, the inclusion of physical elements not present in Avicenna being of a rather limited nature. However, when looks at the entirety of the metaphysics, the often massive presence of logical and physical doctrines is rather problematic. One gets the impression that Bahmanyār does not always respect the borderlines between these philosophical disciplines. Moreover, he does not mention Ibn Sīnā's rejection of Plato's theory of ideas (*aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, VII, 2–3) and his religious socio-political doctrine (*aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, X). In the former case, Bahmanyār perhaps considered the issue too historical and/or too technical for its inclusion in a (so-called?) basic presentation of Avicennan philosophy, whereas in the latter he may have decided that it is not really of metaphysical relevance, since, outside the *Šifāʿ*, this topic is never discussed in the metaphysical section of Ibn Sīnā's encyclopaedic works. Such reasons may indeed be plausible. However, of a very different nature is the omission of almost any theological item. As previously stated,<sup>46</sup> theology forms for Ibn Sīnā a constitutive element of metaphysics. Hence, by ignoring it, Bahmanyār seems to undermine one of the pillars of the Avicennan metaphysical system.

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<sup>46</sup> See above and n. 16.

It has already been noted that Bahmanyār did not entitle the third part of his *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* “Physics,” but rather “the science of the states of the most noble of Beings,” or, perhaps better, “the science of the states of the essences of the existing Beings,” and that he discusses in its first *maqāla* the Necessary Existent, i.e., the divine Being. It thus becomes clear that he does not simply reject any philosophical theology, but rather he places it in what appears to be a somewhat different context from the one adopted by Ibn Sīnā. Before concentrating on that context, a brief examination of its contents is worthwhile.

Having indicated, rather than proved,<sup>47</sup> the existence of one single God, Bahmanyār develops a negative theology, insisting on the unity of the divine essence, denying any quiddity in Him, and rejecting any substantiality of Him.<sup>48</sup> As for the divine attributes, they are characterized by him as either negative, relative, or composed of both relation and negation. He then offers a summary proof for God’s existence, based on the distinction between possible and necessary, and on the impossibility of an infinite series of causes. Further, he emphasizes that God is at once Knower, Known, and Knowledge, that is, His self-knowledge implies the knowledge of what is other than Him, that this gives rise to the emanation of all things without creating any plurality in His essence,<sup>49</sup> that God is absolute perfection and free of any desire, and that God is life and truth. Finally, Bahmanyār observes that from the One only one can proceed.<sup>50</sup>

All this rings very Avicennan, and actually may be characterized as a rather succinct summary of Ibn Sīnā’s theology, based on *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, VIII, chapters 4–7, with a few small additions taken

<sup>47</sup> The proof follows only later; see *infra*.

<sup>48</sup> It is somewhat surprising that Bahmanyār in this context does not mention Ibn Sīnā’s famous saying that in God there is no other quiddity than his *annīya* (see, e.g., *aš-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, 344.10), but affirms that the divine essence is a *ḥaqīqa lā ism lahū* (“a truth having no name”), an expression present in the *Taʿlīqāt*, *op. cit.*, 183.15–16 and 185.26.

<sup>49</sup> In this context, Bahmanyār evokes very briefly the notion of providence, stating that it means that God knows all things and is their final cause (*at-Taḥṣīl*, 579.3–4). A more systematic analysis of this basic notion is only offered in the *De Caelo* part, see *infra*.

<sup>50</sup> H.A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect, Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992), 75, n. 3, remarks that despite its Plotinian inspiration, this formulation seems to be original with Ibn Sīnā.

from the same work, chapters 4 and 6.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, it is striking that he concentrates mainly on the divine essence and the related topic of the divine essential attributes, and that he pays only very limited attention to the very proof of God's existence as well as to the relationship between God and creatures. Moreover, as previously indicated, this theology is no longer a part of metaphysics proper. It is now integrated into a study of Beings. Does this mean that there is no longer any room for Physics in Bahmanyār's view?

The second *maqāla* of the third part makes clear that such is not the case. It is divided into four sections, or *bābs*, which constitute a basic survey of the first six parts of the Physics as conceived by Ibn Sīnā, i.e., Physics (general principles), Heaven and Earth, Generation and Corruption, Actions and Passions (Meteorologica I), Higher Influences (Meteorologica II), and On the Soul.<sup>52</sup> But again one finds significant displacements.

In the first section, after what appears to be a general and introductory division of the possible Beings in chapter 1, Bahmanyār elaborates the following physical issues, always based on *aš-Šifā'*, *as-Samā' at-Ṭabī'ī*: motion (I, 6; IV, 9 and 14); finitude-infinity (III, 8–10); corporeal form (III, 10); direction of movement and *situs* (III, 14; with an addition taken from the *Išārāt*); natural place (IV, 9–11) and natural body as principle of motion (IV, 12 and 8). It is perhaps worth noting that most of the quotations derive from books 3 and 4 of *as-Samā'*. Of course, a large use of book 2 had already been made in the metaphysical part, when Bahmanyār discussed the topics of motion, place and time.<sup>53</sup> However, of much more importance is the fact that in the eighth and last chapter, Bahmanyār introduces a passage derived from *aš-Šifā'*, *as-Samā' wa-l-ʿālam*, despite his explicit

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<sup>51</sup> Muṭahharī, 570, also refers to *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, I, 7 and V, 5, but the passage of Bahmanyār's text, which affirms the absence of any plurality or changeability in the divine essence, can in my view be related to *ibid.*, VIII, 5. It has to be stressed that very literal quotations are rare in the whole *maqāla*, at least if the *Ilāhīyāt* of the *Šifā'* did constitute Bahmanyār's major source text for the present exposé. Let me simply note that thus far I see no better candidate.

<sup>52</sup> The omission of the parts on plants and animals is not overly surprising, insofar as Ibn Sīnā, as with mathematics (see n. 12 above) never reexamined them in his later works (as with mathematics, probably considering that they had been established in a satisfactory manner in the Aristotelian tradition before him).

<sup>53</sup> See above.

mention in the title of the section that it deals with the intentions of *as-Samāʿ at-Ṭabīʿī*. In fact, while focusing on simple body and the reciprocal implication of generation and corruption, Bahmanyār clearly brings to the fore materials taken from *as-Samāʿ wa-l-ʿālam*, more precisely, chapters 1 and 4. It would appear that he wants to avoid the treatment of such typically and exclusively earthly phenomena in the section on Heaven.

Although Bahmanyār presents the second section as an exposé (*kalām*) on *as-Samāʿ wa-l-ʿālam*, using the title as given by Ibn Sīnā,<sup>54</sup> he nevertheless deals only with heavenly matters in its elaboration. In the first chapter, based on *aš-Šifāʿ*, *as-Samāʿ wa-l-ʿālam*, chapters 2–3, Heaven is described as the first body. Chapters 2 and 3, which are largely identical,<sup>55</sup> concentrate on the celestial Beings, viz. Intelligences, souls and bodies. It is insisted that the celestial movements are volitional and that the lower world in no way constitutes the motive for these movements. Moreover, a particular emphasis is placed on the role of the celestial Beings, especially the Giver of Forms,<sup>56</sup> in the process of emanation. These ideas remind one of *aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, IX, 2–5. Despite the absence of almost any literal quotation,<sup>57</sup> it is clear that Bahmanyār has been inspired by these chapters, or perhaps a text similar to them. Whatever the case, he obviously introduces outspoken (at least in the Avicennan perspective) metaphysical ideas into a clearly physical context. This becomes even more evident when, in chapter 4, divine providence is analyzed in detail. Its formulation is similar to *aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, IX, 6 (at the beginning), but Bahmanyār omits, at least in the present

<sup>54</sup> As is well known, Aristotle simply mentions *On Heaven*.

<sup>55</sup> Almost identical are the following passages: 641.5–11 = 650.4–7 and 650.17–651.1; 642.2 = 651.5; 642.7–8 = 651.16–17; 642.10–15 = 651.18–652.6; 643.3–12 = 652.9–18; and 643.17–644.7 = 653.1–9. Generally speaking, chapter 3 appears to be an enlarged version of chapter 2. A detailed analysis of both chapters may reveal the exact nature of their mutual relationship, but this falls outside the scope of the present study.

<sup>56</sup> This is especially true in chapter 3, where Bahmanyār refers to it by its classical denomination, i.e., *wāhib aš-šuwār*; in chapter two, it is less emphasized and, moreover, one finds the unusual expression *al-mufīd li-š-šuwār*.

<sup>57</sup> Muṭahharī gives no reference, but the doctrinal similarity with the indicated chapters is rather straightforward; indeed, the very wording is close to that of the *Šifāʿ*, e.g., ch. 2 § 1–IX, 2 (384); § 3–IX, 3 (396), § 7–IX, 2 (386–387), last paragraph–IX, 5 (411); ch. 3–IX, 4 (406).

context,<sup>58</sup> the key notion of knowledge. In the very same chapter the difficult problem of how to explain the existence of evil in light of the divine decree (*qada'*) is given much attention. Here one encounters genuinely Avicennan ideas, viz. evil is the privation of existence or of the perfection of existence; evil happens often, but not most often; evil is accidental and only occurs in the individual; this world could not have been created free of evil otherwise it would not have been this world. A probable, if not certain, source for these doctrines is the remaining part of the very same chapter 6 of book 9 of *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhīyāt*.<sup>59</sup> However, the incorporation of the problematic of evil into a *De Caelo* context, together with the omission of mentioning any act of knowledge in the activity of providence, hardly allows for any understanding of the divine Decree other than in a purely natural way. In accepting such a view, Bahmanyār sharply deviates from Ibn Sīnā, who made a major effort to affirm God as the cause of the Universe while at the same time safeguarding a real link between God and his creation.<sup>60</sup>

Section three deals exclusively with physical matters. Based on *aš-Šifā'*, *al-Kawn wa-l-fasād*,<sup>61</sup> one finds a discussion of the four elements, alteration, growth, rarefaction, condensation and mixture, more precisely in chapters 1–3 and 5. The phenomenon of light and of light rays forms the central issue of chapter 4. A large part of this chapter is directly based on two chapters of the *Ṭabī'iyāt* of the *Dānišnāmah*,<sup>62</sup> as is clear from the following table.

<sup>58</sup> In the first *maqāla* of the third part, Bahmanyār mentioned a very summary definition of providence, which still included an explicit reference to the divine knowledge; see n. 49 above.

<sup>59</sup> As for the chapters 2–3, Muṭahharī also provides no reference. It has to be noted that at the end of the chapter, 662–63, Bahmanyār adds a few remarks on *du'ā'*, which vaguely resemble a passage on the very same topic in the *Tā'liqāt*, 47.20–48.12.

<sup>60</sup> See my “Creation and Emanation in Ibn Sīnā,” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 7 (1997), 45–477.

<sup>61</sup> For details, see Muṭahharī's edition, but at 682, n. 2 one has to read “8” instead of “9.”

<sup>62</sup> I made the discovery of these chapters while finishing the present paper. Due to time constraints, I was unable to investigate further the possible presence of other chapters of the *Dānišnāmah* in the *Tahṣīl* (but see n. 6 above). Let me add that the present discovery seriously strengthens my hypothesis of the existence of an Arabic original of the *Dānišnāmah*. See my “Les *Tā'liqāt* d'Ibn Sīnā,” 110. Muṭahharī's reference to *aš-Šifā'*, *Kitāb an-Nafs*, III, 1–2 is not really adequate (perhaps he was misled by the title of the chapter).

<i>Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl</i>	<i>Dānišnāmah, Ṭabī‘īyāt</i>
686.7–11	42.1–8 (beginning of ch. 19)
687.1–6	42.10–43.3
687.7–688.3	43.7–44.6
688.3–6	45.1–2
688.7–14	45.8–46.4 (end ch. 19)
689.5–690.8	46.7–49.8 (entire ch. 20)

Some of the passages do constitute a literal translation, while others are of a rather paraphrastic nature. However, the similarities between the two texts are striking. It should be mentioned that at the end of the chapter a passage dealing with color has been added and which is clearly based on *aš-Šifāʿ*, *Kitāb an-Nafs*, III, 1. Chapter 6, in its turn, mentions the classes of elements, and discusses such phenomena as liquefaction, congelation, etc., by drawing on *aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Afʿāl wa-l-infʿālāt*, I, 1–2 and 5–9. Bahmanyār does not raise the issue of *mizāğ* as developed from an outspoken medical context by Ibn Sīnā in the second part of the latter work.<sup>63</sup> As for chapter 7, it concentrates on sky-linked items, e.g., clouds, winds, etc., and is based on *aš-Šifāʿ*, *al-Ātār al-ʿulwīya*, II, 1–5. In this case Bahmanyār omits the first part of Ibn Sīnā’s volume where one finds an analysis of earth-linked phenomena such as the origination of wells, mountains, etc. The reason for this omission is not immediately evident.<sup>64</sup> Mention has also to be made of the fact that in the title of this third section, Bahmanyār refers to the *Book of Meteorology*, under the sole title of *al-Ātār al-ʿulwīya*, the usual denomination of Aristotle’s book in the Arabic tradition. Hence, it looks as though he rejects Ibn Sīnā’s division of the Stagirite’s work into two independent treatises.

In the fourth, and last, section, Bahmanyār summarizes *Kitāb an-Nafs* of the *Šifāʿ*. Respecting more or less its order, he discusses the following issues: demonstration of the soul, its substantiality and its incorporeality (*Nafs*, I, 1, 3); the vegetative powers of the soul (*Nafs*, II, 1); the five outer senses (*Nafs*, II, 2–5; III, 1, 5 and 8); the five inner senses (*Nafs*, IV, 1–3); theoretical and practical intellect and the acquisition of knowledge (*Nafs*, I, 5 and V, 1); estimation and dreams

<sup>63</sup> See S. van Riet (ed.), *Avicenna Latinus, Liber quartus Naturalium, De actionibus et passionibus* (Louvain-la-Neuve: E. Peeters), 28\*.

<sup>64</sup> It might be that Bahmanyār judged them sufficiently fixed, as with mathematics (see n. 12 above) and with the section on plants and animals (see n. 52 above).

(*Nafs*, V, 7; IV, 2–3); motive powers (*Nafs*, IV, 4); intellect and the intellected (*Nafs*, V, 2 and 6); classification of the powers of the soul (*Nafs*, I, 5); origination and individuation of the soul, and rejection of the idea of transmigration (*Nafs*, V, 3–4, 7–8; I, 3); resurrection (*Nafs*, V, 4). At first glance, Bahmanyār offers a serious survey of the essentials of Ibn Sīnā’s psychological views.

When overlooking the entire second *maqāla* of the third part of *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*, one gets the impression that Bahmanyār at least partly seems to “re-Aristotelize” the physical project (in its broad sense) of Ibn Sīnā: as with the Stagirite, *On Heavens* deals exclusively with the super-lunar Beings and their activities. Of course, one can barely detect such a notion as that of providence in the Stagirite’s work, but if one wants to include such a notion in an Aristotelian context, no other work seems more natural in which to do so.<sup>65</sup> Also the designation of *Meteorology* by one single title, as indicated above, points in the very same direction. However, at the same time, one cannot but observe that the omission of the basic treatment of motion, place and time here, and its transferal to the context of metaphysics, simply does not fit with a “return to Aristotle.”

From a more encompassing point of view, *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* clearly deviates from Ibn Sīnā’s new philosophical project. It dismisses the extraordinary attempt of that project to elaborate a unified metaphysics. It also seems to reject the unique valorization of theology as expressed by the Ṣayḫ ar-Ra’īs. It rather makes God, as well as (His?) providence part of a (natural?) study of Being. In any case, it is definitely not Avicennan in several of its structural *démarches*, notwithstanding its massive use of Avicennan texts. By limiting metaphysics to a pure ontology, and by re-arranging several physical doctrines, one is occasionally inclined to believe that Bahmanyār had in mind a “re-Aristotelizing” of Ibn Sīnā’s thought. If this is indeed the case, one may seriously doubt whether he has really understood the Stagirite’s thought. The way he mixes up logic, physics and metaphysics clearly has no basis in the great Greek thinker. It rather points to the influence of a figure such as Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī, accused

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<sup>65</sup> One may think of such passages as I, 4, 271a33 in order to include the very idea of providence in the Aristotelian framework. I thank G. Guldentops, J. Brams and W. Vanhamel for their helpful suggestions in this respect.

by Ibn Sīnā of being a weak logician and a slavish follower of a bad Aristotelianism. It therefore seems possible, if not probable, that Bahmanyār sided more with the latter than with Ibn Sīnā.<sup>66</sup> Whatever the case in that regard, our analysis has sufficiently shown that Bahmanyār cannot be characterized as a faithful disciple of Ibn Sīnā.

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<sup>66</sup> By way of hypothesis, and in a very provisional way, I would like to suggest that Ibn Sīnā tried to have the young Bahmanyār among his disciples (probably during his [first] stay in Rayy and/or his stay in Hamadan), but that already during his lifetime and surely in his later years in Isfahan, it became evident that Bahmanyār had taken sides with al-Kirmānī.



## CHAPTER TEN

### FAḤR AD-DĪN AR-RĀZĪ'S CRITIQUE OF IBN SĪNĀ'S ARGUMENT FOR THE UNITY OF GOD IN THE *IŠĀRĀT* AND NAṢĪR AD-DĪN AṬ-ṬŪSĪ'S DEFENCE

Toby Mayer

#### *Introduction*

One of Ibn Sīnā's main aims in his handling of metaphysics seems to have been to cleanse it of non-metaphysical elements. He especially wished to remove premises drawn from physics in arguments with metaphysical conclusions. Ibn Sīnā says as much in the final section (*faṣl* 29) of *Namaṭ* 4 of the *Išārāt*, where he turns back to weigh up the whole *namaṭ*. In speaking in the course of the *namaṭ* on issues like God's existence, unity and transcendence of attributes (*barā'atuhū 'anī ṣ-ṣifāt*), Ibn Sīnā boasts that he has set aside God's activity (*fīl*) and creation, and considered nothing but being *qua* being (*nafs al-wuġūd*).<sup>1</sup> He certainly admits that creation can be grounds for reaching these conclusions about God (*wa-in kāna dālīka dalīlan 'alayhi*). Nevertheless, it is an inferior basis to being *qua* being. Wherever possible, metaphysical conclusions deserve commensurably metaphysical premises. Ibn Sīnā spoke sharply about the other ways of reaching such conclusions. In commenting on Book *Lambda* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, he even said "it is vile (*qabīḥ*) to proceed to the First Reality by way of movement and by way of the fact that It is the principle of movement."<sup>2</sup> Again, in the *Mubāḥaṭāt*, he is reported as saying "It is distressing for me that faith in the reality of the First Principle, and in the reality of Its being one, should be proceeded to by way of movement and the unity of the moved world."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *al-Išārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt* with Ṭūsī's commentary, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1377–1380/1957–1960) [hereafter *Išārāt*], 3:482.

<sup>2</sup> *Šarḥ Ḥarf al-Lām*, ed. 'A.R. Badawī in *Aristū 'inda l-'Arab* (Cairo: Maktabat an-Nahda al-Miṣriya, 1947), 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Kūṭab al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, ed. M. Bīdārfar (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Bīdār, 1413/1992), 84.

Such statements bear out that the main thrust of Ibn Sīnā's argument for God's existence is not *cosmological*, but ontological. Rather than relying on the world's contingency in affirming a Necessary Being, it prides itself on affirming a Necessary Being using nothing but the idea of It, in the mind. But this is another story.<sup>4</sup> The issue in this paper is not the existence of God, but God's unity. It turns out to be equally true of Ibn Sīnā's argument for God's unity in the *Iṣārāt* that it uses nothing but the idea of such a being. In this, his argument starkly contrasts with the arguments for God's unity found in Aristotle and *kalām*. Those arguments are glaringly rooted in physics. In Aristotle, for example, the unity of the world-*motum* is the basis for concluding the unity of the world-mover.<sup>5</sup> Again, in *kalām*, the fact that the world is a cosmos and not a chaos is taken to imply the unity of the power governing the world. The *kalām* argument uses the notion of "reciprocal hindrance" (*tamānuṭ*) and has Quranic origins, notably the verse "Were any gods in [heaven and earth] other than God, then [heaven and earth] would fall into chaos (*fasadatā*)."<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to such proofs, how does Ibn Sīnā show that there could be only one God, referring to nothing beyond the idea of "God" itself? The gist of his argument is in fact already familiar in the thought of al-Fārābī (d. 339/951). In his *Kitāb Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* and his *as-Siyāsa al-Madanīya*, Fārābī presents the argument that if there were two first principles, each of the two would have to have something in common by means of which they share in the status of being "First," and at least one of the two would also have to have something peculiar by means of which it is distinct from the other. Thus, insofar as they are two, one of them would have to be a compound of these factors. But a compound is an effect—an effect of its intrinsic parts, if nothing else. And the First Cause cannot be an effect. So it is one.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See my "Ibn Sīnā's *Burhān al-Siddiqīn*," *Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies* 12.1 (2001), 18–39.

<sup>5</sup> *Metaphysics*, 1073a29.

<sup>6</sup> Qur'ān 21:22.

<sup>7</sup> Fārābī, *On the Perfect State (Kitāb Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila)*, ed./tr. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 60–61; id., *as-Siyāsa al-Madanīya* (Hyderabad: Maṭba'at Maḡlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uṭmāniya, 1346/1927), 14. See also H.A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 295.

The roots of Fārābī's argument reach back, via al-Kindī (d.c. 252/866),<sup>8</sup> to Plotinus's *Enneads*. In the fifth *Ennead*, Plotinus gives an argument against the duplication of the first of the Plotinian hypostases, the One (τὸ ἓν). Two perfectly self-identical "Ones" are inconceivable. The hypothetical duplicate would have to be a compound of the shared "oneness" and a difference of some kind. So the duplicate would be "one" only in the relative sense of the word or, as Plotinus puts it, it would have to be a "one-many" (ἓν ἄρα πολλὰ ἕστα). If the two hypothesized first hypostases are instead thought of as "one" in the absolute sense, they would lose their distinctness and resolve into one.<sup>9</sup> Such arguments as these are the forbears of Ibn Sīnā's proof. However, Ibn Sīnā's argument in the *Iṣārāt* is more complicated than those of Plotinus or Fārābī, in line with Ibn Sīnā's tendency to elaborate, and to bear out conclusions in maximal detail.

#### *Ibn Sīnā's Argument*

The full discussion of the issue runs from *faṣl* 16 to 20. Of these, the main argument which concerns us here comprises *faṣl* 16 to 18. *Faṣl* 20 is the overall conclusion: "the 'Necessary Existent' is not predicated of a multiplicity at all" (*wāğību l-wuğūdi lā yuqālu 'alā katratin aṣlan*).<sup>10</sup> *Faṣl* 19 contains a supplementary argument rehearsed from Aristotle, based on immateriality. Matter is the means by which a single species proliferates in individuals. Matter is absent from the Necessary Existent. So It may not proliferate.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, Ibn Sīnā's main argument from *faṣl* 16 to 18, which builds on that of Fārābī, runs as follows. First come two premises. In the premise in *faṣl* 16, Ibn Sīnā lists all the kinds of internal relation which might be found in any identity involving some attribute held in common and a multiple individuation. There are

<sup>8</sup> G. Atiyeh, *Al-Kindī: The Philosopher of the Arabs* (Rawalpindi: Islamic Research Institute, 1966), 65.

<sup>9</sup> *Ennead*, V.4.1.15–25.

<sup>10</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 472.

<sup>11</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 470–471. Compare Aristotle's argument, *Metaphysics*, 1074a33–37: "... all things which are numerically many have matter. For one and the same definition (*logos*) applies to many, for example 'man,' whereas Socrates is unique. But being's first essential character has no matter, for it is complete actuality. Accordingly, the unmoved First Mover is one both in definition and in number (ἓν ἄρα καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ)."

three elements to consider. The factor common to the kindred individuals;<sup>12</sup> the uncommon factor by which they are different individuals;<sup>13</sup> and finally the linkage of these factors, either by way of the strong relation of concomitance (*luẓūm*) or by way of the weak relation of accidentality (*ʿurūd*). The interaction of these elements results in four possibilities. (1) The common factor might be an inseparable concomitant of the uncommon factor. For instance, as Rāzī (d. 606/1209) says, the nature of a genus might be a concomitant of the natures of various differentiae.<sup>14</sup> “Animal,” for example, is a concomitant of the differentiae “rational” and “irrational,” in the case of man and beast respectively. (2) The uncommon factor might be a concomitant of the common factor. This, however, is absurd. Otherwise the common factor might have permanent properties at odds with one another. But that is impossible by the principle of the excluded middle. We would, for instance, always have to think of “rationality” and “irrationality” whenever we think of “animal.” In (3) and (4) come the corresponding accidental relations, which are both feasible because they involve the separability of the factors.

In Ibn Sīnā’s second premise, given in *faṣl* 17, he marks out the scope of a quiddity’s causal power. Something’s quiddity, considered in its own right independently of existence, may be said to cause some attribute (*ṣifa*) that it has. Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) gives the example of “rationality” (*nāḥiqīya*) causing “wonderment” (*mutaʿaḡḡībīya*).<sup>15</sup> But no quiddity, or subsidiary attribute thereof, could be said to be the cause of its own very external existence. This is because “the cause is prior in existence, and there is nothing prior in existence to existence.”<sup>16</sup> No quiddity, in other words, can somehow generate itself in external reality and bear responsibility for what it precisely lacks, i.e., existence.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *mā tattafīqu fīhi, Iṣārāt*, 456.

<sup>13</sup> *mā taḥtalīfu fīhi, Iṣārāt*, 456.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Sīnā, Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī and Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī, *Šarḥay al-Iṣārāt*, ed. aṣ-Sayyid ʿU.Ḥ. al-Ḥaššāb (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Ḥayriya, 1325/1907) [hereafter *Šarḥay al-Iṣārāt*], 199.

<sup>15</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 458.

<sup>16</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 461–2.

<sup>17</sup> Incidentally, this shows how Ibn Sīnā’s essentialism is far from crude. It seems to amount to an explicit denial of *esse essentiae*.

As will emerge, these two premises are of use to Ibn Sīnā in *faṣl* 18—the proof itself of divine unity. The wording of the *faṣl* is far from easy, and the overall readings of Rāzī and Ṭūsī are badly at odds. However, the basic drift of the argument is clear from Ibn Sīnā's opening words.

The individuated Necessary Existent, if that individuation of It is because It is necessary in existence, then there is no necessary existent other than It. And if Its individuation is not because of that, but for some other reason, It is an effect.<sup>18</sup>

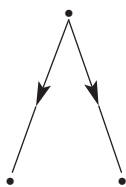
Here Ibn Sīnā posits “the necessary existent” as a species. He does this only for the sake of argument, since to do so literally would yield many problems.<sup>19</sup> If it is taken provisionally as a species in this way, an alternative results. (A) The species might be at one with the individual, so that they are completely coterminous and the Necessary Existent is single insofar as the species is single. Or (B) the species and the individual might be distinct. The two, in fact, would have to be distinct, if there were more than one necessary existent, since they would constitute different individuals sharing in the common species “the necessary existent.” But this separation of species and individual inside each hypothesized necessary being is absurd, since it entails contingency, and contingency is incompatible with the status of necessity. The very idea of intrinsic necessity of existence thus dictates (A). Ibn Sīnā goes on to show in detail how the separation between species and individual, required by (B), would involve absurdity, and he uses the premises given in *faṣl* 16 and 17 to this end. The fourfold list given in *faṣl* 16 is presented again, but is now applied specifically to the necessary existent. The following options emerge.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 464.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., it would imply a quiddity, and hence that the Necessary is a compound of quiddity and existence. But that Ibn Sīnā in some sense entertains “the necessary existent” as a species is made explicit in the following *faṣl* (19) where he reasons on the basis of his argument here in *faṣl* 18 that “things which have a single species-definition (*ḥadd naw'ī*) are single, and are different only because of other causes,” *Iṣārāt*, 470.

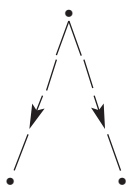
<sup>20</sup> In the following diagrams,  $X \rightarrow Y$  indicates that “X is the concomitant of Y” and  $X \rightarrow - Y$  indicates that “X is the accident of Y.”

(1) species “the necessary existent”



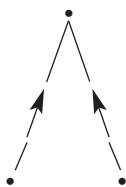
individuations

(2) species “the necessary existent”



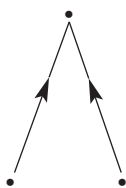
individuations

(3) species “the necessary existent”



individuations

(4) species “the necessary existent”



individuations

It will become clear that Ibn Sīnā does not just rule out each of these options on the grounds that it absurdly inflicts contingency on the Necessary Existent, but that he brings out yet further absurdities.

He eliminates (1) with the words “If the existence of the Necessary Existent\* were a concomitant of Its individuation, the existence would become a concomitant belonging to a quiddity or attribute of something else.”<sup>21</sup> *Prima facie*, the problem here is just that the species

<sup>21</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 465 (\*reading *wāğīb al-wuğūd* for *wāğīb al-wuğūb*).

“the necessary existent,” as a concomitant depending on the individuation, is absurdly made contingent on some cause (i.e., the individuation). This reading is confirmed, implicitly, by the way Ibn Sīnā shortly eliminates (2), in which “the necessary existent” is instead hypothesized as an *accident* of the individuation, for he now says “. . . then it is *a fortiori* due to a cause.”<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless there is an intentional ambiguity in Ibn Sīnā’s elimination of (1) in keeping with the allusive style typifying the *Iṣārāt* (*The Allusions*). It is a fact that, in their commentaries, both Rāzī and Ṭūsī focus on how (1) would violate the second premise (*faṣl* 17): a quiddity cannot bear responsibility for its own existence. And this is confirmed by the curious way Ibn Sīnā words his elimination. He does not say that “the necessary existent” would become the concomitant of something else, rather, that the existence of the necessary existent would become the concomitant of the quiddity or attribute of something else. In this, there is an unmistakable reference to the premise in *faṣl* 17, where he ruled that “it is impossible for the attribute which is the existence of the thing to be due only to its quiddity which does not consist in existence, or due to some other attribute.”<sup>23</sup> It may therefore be taken that Ibn Sīnā has two absurdities in mind in his elimination of (1): the infliction of contingency on the Necessary; and the violation of the second premise.

In (2), as just stated, the species “the necessary existent” is even more obviously dependent on a cause since accidents are in a weaker relation with their subjects than concomitants. Hence, Ibn Sīnā says “it is *a fortiori* due to a cause” (*fa-huwa awlā bi-an yakūna li-‘illa*). Ṭūsī says that “here, ‘*a fortiori*’ points to a new need for a quite separate agent to bring about the things related and their combination.”<sup>24</sup> We may counter that the Necessary Being is itself presupposed to be an ultimate agent, without any agent beyond it. If that is so, however, the individuation would have to bear sole responsibility for its own accident of “necessary existence,” and this again violates the premise given in *faṣl* 17. A quiddity would again have been made responsible for its own very existence.

In (3) the individuations are the accidents of the species “the necessary existent.” While Ibn Sīnā’s manner of eliminating (3) is recondite,

<sup>22</sup> See below under (2).

<sup>23</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 458–462.

<sup>24</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 465.

the basic absurdity with this option is clearly that it makes “the necessary existent” dependent in some respect, on something else. Again, this cause may be quite separate, or, given that the Necessary Existent is itself presupposed to be ultimate, it may be a factor within the subject-accident complex. Ibn Sīnā’s elimination is worded as follows.

If that through which it is individuated [i.e., the individuations] were accidental to [the species], [the species] would be due to a cause. Then, if [the species] and that through which it is individuated were a single quiddity, that cause would be a cause for the particularity of that which by itself is necessary in its existence—and this is absurd. And if [the individuations’] accidentality were subsequent to the individuation of a prior First, our argument would be about that prior thing.<sup>25</sup>

Ibn Sīnā here considers an alternative. Either the species and the individuation are always in union (as he puts it, they form “a single quiddity”), or the species and the individuation are not always in union but must be brought together. If they are always in union (possessed as they are of the ultimacy which goes with the status of necessity), nevertheless, within the union there is a dependence of the species on the individuation, insofar as the species is particularized. But the species in question is that of “the necessary existent” and it is absurd for it to depend in any respect on something else. Alternatively, if we set aside the claim of ultimacy for the being in question, then the union of the species and the accident of individuation must depend on a separate agent which has already been individuated. The very same problems then afflict this new agent, or in Ibn Sīnā’s words, “our argument would be about that prior thing.”

Finally, in (4) Ibn Sīnā dismisses the option in which the individuations are the concomitants of the species with the simple statement “what is left of the disjuncts is absurd.”<sup>26</sup> This option evidently corresponds with the permutation which was presented in *faṣl* 16 as intrinsically absurd, whereby the uncommon factor is the concomitant of the common factor.

What is striking about this highly intricate argument is that Ibn Sīnā at no point rests content with the reasoning that compounding is inflicted on the Necessary Being by all the options. Quite separate problems are highlighted in Ibn Sīnā’s argument. First, contin-

<sup>25</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 466–8.

<sup>26</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 469.

gency may be shown to follow for the Necessary in different and highly specific ways. Second, a quiddity may be shown to have been absurdly made responsible for its own existence. Third, the permutation may be held up as intrinsically absurd.<sup>27</sup> Ibn Sīnā thus avoids simply basing his proof on the principle of divine simplicity, that is, the premise that the Necessary Being must be an absolute simplex. While he of course admits the truth of that, he puts it aside in his proof of God's unity in the *Iṣārāt*. It is unclear whether he does so because he views it as something of a *petitio principii*, or because he sets himself the challenge of going beyond the proof given by Fārābī, Kindī, and Plotinus—since divine simplicity is evidently the basis of their proofs.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Rāzī's Attack*

What is Rāzī's response to this reasoning? Rāzī mounts an extraordinary onslaught against it, and it is not possible here to go into every nook and cranny of his commentary. To begin with, Rāzī's reading of Ibn Sīnā's proof strikes the reader as very odd. Ibn Sīnā found intrinsically absurd the option in which the uncommon factor (the individuations) is the concomitant of the common factor ("necessary existence"). But this "absurdity" is understood by Rāzī to mean that multiplicity in the uncommon factor would have to be negated, so, as Rāzī says, "this would entail that it be said 'wherever there is necessity, there is that individuation.' So, any necessary existent is that individuated one (*mu'ayyan*), so the Necessary Existent is nothing but that individuated one, and it would be one and not multiple."<sup>29</sup> In other words, Rāzī thinks that Ibn Sīnā's proof comes down to this option. But this reading of Ibn Sīnā's proof leads Rāzī into severe difficulties as a commentator. Ibn Sīnā clearly marks out his intended conclusion in the opening words of *faṣl* 18: "If the individuation of the individuated Necessary Existent is *because* it is necessary in existence, there is no Necessary Existent

<sup>27</sup> I.e., when the individuations are the concomitants of "necessary existence."

<sup>28</sup> In fact the simplicity of the First Principle turns out to be the consequence rather than the premise of Ibn Sīnā's thinking. Since none of the internal relations is viable within the divine identity, it follows that It is a simplex.

<sup>29</sup> *Sharḥay al-Iṣārāt*, 205.

other than It.”<sup>30</sup> Rāzī is thus obliged to take this statement to refer to the option in question, in which the individuation is the concomitant of “necessary existence.” But this leaves none of the four options available to be referred to by Ibn Sīnā’s closing words, as already quoted: “What is left of the disjuncts is absurd.” Ṭūsī rejoins: “And there is no disjunct left here to which [Ibn Sīnā’s] statement ‘And what is left of the disjuncts is absurd’ can refer! And there is no doubt that what we have mentioned is more consistent (*ašaddu inṭibāqan*) with the text of [Ibn Sīnā’s] argument. God knows best what is correct.”<sup>31</sup>

We must agree with Ṭūsī. Rāzī’s reading awakens us, however, to an important feature of his outlook. He is inclined to admit relations *in divinis*. He has no problem speaking of X as the concomitant, i.e., the property, of Y, in God. Rāzī, in other words, tends to believe in a complex God. Undoubtedly, this tendency is explained by Rāzī’s grounding in Aš‘arism, which originally fought for a complex God against the severe apophaticism (*ta‘ṭīl*) of the Mu‘tazila. Additionally, Rāzī’s tendency may have been encouraged by his study of the philosophy of Abū l-Barakāt al-Baġdādī (d. after 560/1164), who also maintained a personalist stance in theology and who is known to have influenced Rāzī in other areas of his thought.<sup>32</sup>

Be that as it may, Rāzī does not believe that the option in question is the correct one. He instead upholds the one in which the factors are related in reverse, with “necessary existence” as the concomitant of the individuation—the first permutation. Again, Rāzī is influenced in this by his concerns as an Aš‘arī theologian. The *kalām* motive is in fact quite explicit, for he openly says of the viewpoint he defends “many of the theologians . . . say that the existence of God (Exalted is He!) is additional to His quiddity, and is one of the

<sup>30</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 464.

<sup>31</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 468.

<sup>32</sup> See S. Pines, “Études sur Awhād al-Zamān Abu’l-Barakāt al-Baġhdādī,” *Revue des Études Juives* 103–104 (1937), 59–60; reprinted in *Studies in Abū l-Barakāt al-Baġhdādī, Physics and Metaphysics*, The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines, I (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1979), 28–9; id., “Abū l-Barakāt Hibat Allāh b. Malka al-Baġhdādī al-Baladī,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 1:113. Nicholas Rescher rightly or wrongly maintains the strong influence of Abū l-Barakāt on Rāzī in logic, and even upholds the idea that Rāzī was a direct student of Abū l-Barakāt; see his *The Development of Arabic Logic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 67–68, 169–170, and 183–184.

attributes of His reality.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, al-Ġazālī (d. 505/1111) had earlier seen the divine identity in just these terms.<sup>34</sup>

But Ibn Sīnā has blocked the way to admitting the first permutation. Notably, there is his premise given in *faṣl* 17, that it is absurd for any quiddity to bear responsibility for its own existence. For if Rāzī is right, there is at least one case of a quiddity bearing such responsibility, namely, that of God, whose “necessary existence” is the concomitant of his quiddity. Most of Rāzī’s arguments can be read as aimed at removing this premise, and making way for the concomitance of God’s existence to His quiddity. The first stage in this comprises six arguments that existence is univocal, i.e., invariant in itself. Rāzī actually claims that this is in line with the philosophers’ own views. But against Ibn Sīnā, who claims that God is wholly without quiddity, Rāzī holds that the univocity of existence means that there must be some factor in God other than mere existence, which serves to distinguish Him from contingents, namely, a divine quiddity. God cannot be mere univocal existence. However, this is not the only motive for Rāzī’s arguments that existence is univocal. It additionally follows from the univocity of existence that if existence is invariant and is accidental to quiddity in contingents, then it must also be accidental to existence in God, “since the concomitant of the single reality occurs wherever it occurs.”<sup>35</sup> As Ṭūsī neatly explains: “. . . since [Rāzī] saw the existence of contingents as a thing that is accidental to their quiddities, and he had ruled that the existence of the Necessary is equal to the existence of contingents, he ruled that the existence of the Necessary also is accidental to His quiddity, so His quiddity is different from His existence. Greatly exalted be God above that!”<sup>36</sup> In this way, having established that existence is univocal in his first six arguments, Rāzī immediately puts his conclusion to work in five arguments that existence must be accidental to quiddity. Next come Rāzī’s arguments specifically aimed against the premise in *faṣl* 17, that it is absurd for a quiddity to bear responsibility for its own existence. Rāzī tries to show how this need not be so.

<sup>33</sup> *Šarḥay al-Iṣārāt*, 201.

<sup>34</sup> See Ȳ. Ceylan, *Theology and Tafṣīr in the Major Works of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1996), 76.

<sup>35</sup> *Šarḥay al-Iṣārāt*, 201.

<sup>36</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 458.

Finally, he identifies another hidden premise in Ibn Sīnā's elimination of the first option. This is that the factors involved, the individuation on the one hand, and its concomitant "necessity," on the other hand, are positive or existential (*tubūti*) in status. Rāzī proceeds to give four arguments in *faṣl* 18<sup>37</sup> that "necessity" is a negative or non-existential (*salbī*) attribute. He augments these with two arguments that the individuation, also, is *salbī*. What are we to make of this shocking apophaticism in handling "necessity" and "individuation"? An obvious point is that it destroys the whole basis of this type of Fārābīan argument for God's unity. The argument of course turns on the claim that it is contradictory to hypothesize two radically simple beings. For according to the claim, they would have to be conceptual composites combining a common factor and an uncommon factor. But if Rāzī can show that the relevant factors are negative, then they will not bring about compounding, and two radically simple beings could indeed be hypothesized, without contradiction. As Rāzī puts it: "... from the fact that multiple things share in 'necessity' it does not follow that there be [intrinsic] multiplicity. For things variant in quiddity may share in negativity, without the occurrence in them of composition. For each of two simplexes (*basīṭayn*) which one may hypothesize will undoubtedly share in their negation of everything else, although sharing in negativity implies multiplicity."<sup>38</sup>

Rāzī, to be sure, was no polytheist. He is not out to prove that there might be two or more gods. He simply wants to bring out that Ibn Sīnā's argument fails: you cannot prove God's oneness in this way. Rāzī, as a *mutakallim*, instinctively preferred proofs of God's unity rooted in God's acts and His creation, not God's intrinsic nature. A look at a work like Rāzī's *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn* strongly bears this out. There, he is again fiercely critical of Ibn Sīnā's type of argument for God's unity,<sup>39</sup> but upholds those of the *kalām* type.<sup>40</sup>

Some examples of particular arguments from the chains of arguments offered by Rāzī in his commentary are due. Among the six arguments that existence is univocal are the following. Existence is the contrary of non-existence. Rāzī now invokes the principle of the

<sup>37</sup> *Šarḥay al-Iṣārāt*, 205.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>39</sup> See Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn fī uṣūl ad-dīn* (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Maḡlis Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUṣmāniya, 1353/1934), 31ff.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 221–226.

excluded middle: "Our proposition that either a thing is or is not, is an exclusive disjunction."<sup>41</sup> Rāzī seems to tie the principle into his reasoning more tightly by his selection of terminology. Unusually, the word he uses for "existence" is *tubūt*, not *wuğūd*, and the word he uses for non-existence is *intifā'* not *'adam*. These respectively suggest *iḥbāt* (affirmation) and *nafy* (negation). At any rate, Rāzī means us to understand that just as a *tertium quid* is ruled out in the principle of the excluded middle, a *tertium quid* must be ruled out between existence and non-existence. So existence is univocal. The tone of another argument might be dismissed as rhetorical but for its resemblance to modern "ordinary-language" philosophy.<sup>42</sup> In it, Rāzī draws attention to the difference between a poem in which a word recurs which is the same in form and meaning, and a poem in which a word recurs which is the same in form but has different meanings. The latter would merit the designation "rhyme" (*qāfīya*). On the other hand the former may loosely be called a "rhyme" but is really just repetition (*takrīr*). The word *'ayn*, with all its meanings (spring, eye, spy, etc.), would qualify as a rhyme if repeated as a verse-ending. By contrast, says Rāzī, it is not conceivable for the word *wuğūd* (existence) to be repeated to poetic effect. It only means one thing, and so is purely univocal.<sup>43</sup>

Among the five arguments that existence must be accidental to quiddity are the following. Doubting the modality of the world-cause (necessary or contingent), or whether it is a substance or accident, is not the same thing as doubting its very existence. Existence is thus different from questions of characterization (i.e., quiddity), and the two are distinct in God. While the philosophers hold that minds do not grasp "the reality of the Divinity's essence," nevertheless they hold that unqualified existence (*muṭlaq al-wuğūd*), as a primary concept (*taṣawwur awwalī*), is innately known. This implies that God has both existence (the known) and a quiddity (the unknown). Again, with non-divine things, the same distinction is at work, but in reverse. The quiddity of a triangle is well-known to us, but whether the triangle has actual existence is unknown, to use Ibn Sīnā's own example.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Šarḥay al-Iṣārāt*, 200.

<sup>42</sup> On ordinary-language philosophy, see e.g., J. Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (Penguin, 1968), 440–465.

<sup>43</sup> *Šarḥay al-Iṣārāt*, 200.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

Another argument Rāzī gives is that the philosophers are quite happy to reason inductively in many cases. For example, they argue that since extensions (*abʿād*) require an underlying matter in observed instances, extensions must require it always. Hence, they assert that the celestial spheres need a material substrate of some sort, and they deny something going from point A to point B without anything intervening between the points—the doctrine of atomic leaps (*abʿād ḥālīya*, “instantaneous distances”). The philosophers, in sum, hold that the character of the induced species-nature (*ṭabīʿa nawʿīya*) does not vary. Rāzī says, “When that is established, we say: ‘Existence, insofar as it is existence stripped of other accidents, is a single species-nature, and it is impossible that what it requires varies. And since it is like that, existence in our view is an accident in need of quiddity and requiring it.’”<sup>45</sup>

We come to Rāzī’s four arguments that, contrary to Ibn Sīnā’s claim in *faṣl* 17, it is not absurd for a quiddity to cause its own existence. Among these arguments is the following. It is wrong to insist on a cause always being prior in existence to its effect. There is a clear case of something causal which yet lacks existence, namely the quiddity of contingents insofar as it receives existence. Rāzī says: “Do you not see that the quiddities of contingents are prior to their existences, so their quiddities are causes receptive to their existence, in this case the priority of the receptive cause to the effect being unnecessary?”<sup>46</sup> Rāzī then asks: if quiddity *qua* quiddity can be given the status of receptive cause (*al-ʿilla al-qābīliya*), why should it not be given the status of efficient or existentializing cause (*al-ʿilla al-fāʿiliya*)?

### *Ṭūsī’s Defense*

In his commentary, Ṭūsī slightly says that “remarking on the places where [Rāzī] slipped up is necessary, lest he distort the views of beginners by [their] following in his tracks.”<sup>47</sup> While Ṭūsī chooses to answer Rāzī’s arguments point by point in some cases, a single adjustment is all that is needed to parry much of Rāzī’s attack at

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>47</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 463.

one stroke. After all, the bulk of Rāzī's onslaught takes it that existence is univocal and that the philosophers themselves uphold this. From this it followed for Rāzī that God must have a quiddity to explain His transcendence of contingents, univocal existence not being enough to mark Him off from them; and it also followed that God's existence was accidental to His quiddity, since "the concomitant of the single reality occurs wherever it occurs," i.e., it is the unvarying nature of existence to be some sort of attribute of quiddity wherever it is found. Rāzī was thereby forced to show that in one case, that of the Necessary Being, it was not absurd for the quiddity to bear full responsibility for its own existence, and not have it loaned to it *ab extra*.

But according to Ṭūsī, Rāzī is quite wrong, in the first place, that the philosophers hold existence to be univocal. Instead, what the philosophers actually say is that existence is *not equivocal*. In other words, it does not have a series of actually discrete meanings. But while the philosophers thus hold existence to have some kind of unified meaning (*maʿnan wāḥid*), they claim that it is *predicated unequally*. There is a *tertium quid* between equivocality and univocity, namely, ambiguity.<sup>48</sup> And this, according to Ṭūsī is the correct doctrine: the ambiguity of existence (*taškāk al-wuǧūd*). As Ṭūsī says: "If [the ambiguity of existence] is proved, then the problems of this noble man [i.e., Rāzī] are completely solved. This is because existence is predicated of what is beneath it with a single meaning (*bi-maʿnan wāḥid*) as the philosophers held, and the equivalence (*tasāwūn*) of its subjects (*malzūmāt*) does not follow from that (namely, the existence of the Necessary and the existence of contingents) in reality. For [via ambiguity] things variant in reality might share in a single concomitant."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Matching the commentators' terminology is awkward. Rāzī just uses the expressions *ištirāk lafẓī* (verbal sharing), i.e., equivocality, and *ištirāk maʿnawī* (semantic sharing), by which he clearly means univocity. Ṭūsī uses *ištirāk lafẓī* for equivocality and *tawāṭuʿ* (agreement) for univocity. It seems that, for Ṭūsī, univocity and ambiguity (*taškāk*) are both types of *ištirāk maʿnawī*, understood literally as "semantic sharing". I tabulate the terms as follows:

Rāzī		Ṭūsī	
(a) equivocality ( <i>ištirāk lafẓī</i> )	(b) univocity ( <i>ištirāk maʿnawī</i> )	(a) equivocality ( <i>ištirāk lafẓī</i> )	(b) semantic commonness ( <i>ištirāk maʿnawī</i> )
			(i) univocity ( <i>tawāṭuʿ</i> ) (ii) ambiguity ( <i>taškāk</i> )

<sup>49</sup> *Išārāt*, 460.

Ṭūsī is probably right. Rāzī seems to have misunderstood the position, traceable to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, that being must have a unified meaning on pain of the destruction of the subject matter of metaphysics, the science of being *qua* being. If being is equivocal and a sheer disunity, it cannot be studied systematically by a science, since "not to have one meaning, is to have no meaning."<sup>50</sup> But having a unified underlying meaning does not have to entail existence's flat equality, or univocity, as Rāzī believes.

If existence is ambiguous, then, how exactly does this destroy Rāzī's attack? Clearly, existence no longer would have an unvarying nature, as Rāzī claimed, requiring it to be an attribute of quiddity in every case. It therefore need not be an attribute of quiddity in God.<sup>51</sup> Anyway, Rāzī's whole motive in attributing God with a quiddity—namely, to explain how He is differentiated above contingents—collapses. Existence is instead intrinsically variegated, and what explains God's transcendence is not a quiddity separate from existence, but God's own special existence (*wuğūduhū l-ḥāṣṣ*).<sup>52</sup> God can be pure existence (*wuğūd maḥḍ*), as Ibn Sīnā famously held, yet still totally transcend contingents. Again, Rāzī's arguments that in the case of God a quiddity can bear responsibility for its own attribute of existence become quite superfluous. God no longer need be attributed with a quiddity at all, and the absurdity of a quiddity causing its own existence can be left as it stands.

Ṭūsī has a lengthy and fascinating exposition of the doctrine of the ambiguity of existence in his commentary on *faṣl* 17. To bring out what the ambiguity of existence means, he *inter alia* makes reference to the indeterminate spectrum of color and the inequality between the light (and heat) of the sun and that of lesser sources.<sup>53</sup> I do not propose to go over his exposition in detail here. The question naturally arises, however, of the validity of Ṭūsī's use of the ambiguity of existence to defend Ibn Sīnā's argument against Rāzī. Is it a doctrinal anachronism, foisted on the Šayḫ ar-Raʿīs in reaction to Rāzī's critique, or does it have some real basis in the Šayḫ's philosophy?

<sup>50</sup> *Metaphysics*, 1006b8.

<sup>51</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 460.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 461.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 458–460.

In answering this, a difference must be noted between a more public doctrinal statement like the *Šifā'* and Ibn Sīnā's relatively private statements to be found, for example, in the teacher-disciple discussions contained in the *Mubāḥaṭāt*. Ibn Sīnā seems not to refer by name to *taškīk al-wuḡūd* in the *Metaphysics* of the *Šifā'*. But he does refer to it several times, and explicitly, in the *Mubāḥaṭāt*.<sup>54</sup> So Ṭūsī indisputably uses the doctrine on the Šayḥ's own authority. In fact we know that even before Ibn Sīnā, Fārābī used the doctrine.<sup>55</sup> Ṭūsī himself gives over several pages of his *Maṣāri' al-muṣāri'*—a refutation of Šahrastānī's critique of Ibn Sīnā known as the *Muṣāra'a* (*The Wrestling Match*)—to disproving Šahrastānī's claim that the doctrine of *taškīk al-wuḡūd* was innovated by Ibn Sīnā, and had no earlier basis in “the logic of the sages” (*manṭiq al-ḥukamā'*). Ṭūsī quotes a series of proof-texts from Fārābī, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Aristotle, which attest to *taškīk al-wuḡūd*.<sup>56</sup>

But does Ṭūsī change the expression of the doctrine at all? For example, it is very noticeable in his exposition in the *Iṣārāt* commentary that Ṭūsī lists three kinds of variation (*iḥtilāf*) in existence. It varies in priority and posteriority, deservingness (*awlawīya*) and undeservingness, and strength and weakness (*aš-šidda wa-d-ḍu'f*).<sup>57</sup> It is this last kind of variation which jumps out of the list at the reader. Variation of existence in strength and weakness seems to amount to a heavily committed Neoplatonic doctrine of “degrees of reality,” ill-fitting with basic Aristotelian logical principles like those of non-contradiction and the excluded middle. Additionally, it appears to fly in the face of Aristotle's unqualified assertion that substance (*ousia*), which is “primary being,” does not admit of more and less.<sup>58</sup> It is indeed noteworthy that Ibn Sīnā, for his part, in the *Šifā'* states categorically that existence does not vary in strength and weakness (*lā*

<sup>54</sup> *Mubāḥaṭāt*, 41, 218, 232.

<sup>55</sup> In a seminal study, H.A. Wolfson has cited Fārābī's use of existence as a basic example of an ambiguous term in his *Risāla fī Ḡawāb masā'il su'ila 'anhā*. Wolfson traces the doctrine beyond to Alexander of Aphrodisias, and finally finds it incipient in Aristotle's own thought. See his “The Amphibolous Terms in Aristotle, Arabic Philosophy and Maimonides,” in *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, ed. I. Twersky and G.H. Williams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 1:457.

<sup>56</sup> Ṭūsī, *Maṣāri' al-muṣāri'*, ed. Ḥ. al-Mu'izzī (Qum: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar'asī, 1405/1984), 56–60.

<sup>57</sup> *Iṣārāt*, 459.

<sup>58</sup> *Categories*, 3b33.

*yaḥtalifu fī š-šidda wa-d-duʿf*), nor does it admit of “less” and “more deficient.”<sup>59</sup> But again, Ibn Sīnā seems more open in the *Mubāḥaṭāt*. For in this more intimate context he again freely assents to the variation of existence in strength and weakness. Even here, however, he is palpably defensive, and clearly feels that he must explain himself. For instance he says: “Every existent whose existence is through fewer intermediaries is more powerful in existence (*aqwá wuǧūdan*). [For example] more powerful in existence is the substance, since it exists for its part through fewer intermediaries [and] weaker in existence is the accident, since it is the reverse of this.”<sup>60</sup>

It is clear in one passage in the *Mubāḥaṭāt* that Ibn Sīnā’s teaching that substance’s existence was “stronger” than accident’s, deeply irritated more conventional colleagues. Michot has read this passage as directed at Abū l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī in particular—a hated competitor at the Būyid court.<sup>61</sup> Ibn Sīnā explains that the variation in existence which Kirmānī finds such an outrage is just a way of referring to its well-known variation in independence and need (*al-istiǧnāʾ wa-l-ḥāǧa*). He protests that it is inexcusable (*lā ʿudra laḥū*) that this point escaped his rival.<sup>62</sup>

By the time we reach Ṭūsī’s commentary, the variation of existence in independence and need has been eclipsed by its metaphysically daring gloss, the variation of existence in strength and weakness, since Ṭūsī’s list leaves out the former and only speaks of the latter. Ṭūsī speaks confidently in terms which Ibn Sīnā as yet uses only fitfully and defensively, held back as he is by Aristotelian strictures. An inconsistency follows in Ibn Sīnā’s works, so that between the *Šifāʾ* and the *Mubāḥaṭāt* he now admits, now denies strengthening and weakening in existence.<sup>63</sup> The same inconsistency can be seen in Ibn Sīnā’s immediate disciples. In Bahmanyār ibn al-Marzubān’s *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*, in one place he categorically states that existence does

<sup>59</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *aš-Šifāʾ, al-Ilāḥiyāt*, ed. Ğ. Anawātī and S. Zāʿid (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī li-ṭ-Ṭibāʿa wa-n-Našr, 1380/1960), 276.

<sup>60</sup> *Mubāḥaṭāt*, 306.

<sup>61</sup> J. Michot, “La réponse d’Avicenne à Bahmanyār et al-Kirmānī, Présentation, traduction critique et lexique arabe-français de la *Mubāḥaṭa III*,” *Le Muséon* 110.1–2 (1997), 186.

<sup>62</sup> *Mubāḥaṭāt*, 71.

<sup>63</sup> Note that there is also an inconsistency within the *Mubāḥaṭāt* itself. Ibn Sīnā affirms strengthening in existence elsewhere in the work, as we have seen; but he also denies it on p. 286.

not vary in strength and weakness, citing the *Metaphysics* of the *Šifā'*.<sup>64</sup> However, earlier in the work he had already said "then know that existence is predicated of what falls beneath it ambiguously, not univocally. And the meaning of that is that the existence which has no cause is prior by nature to the existence which has a cause, and likewise the existence of substance is prior to the existence of accident. Moreover, some existence is stronger, and some of it is weaker (*ba'du l-wuġūd aqwá wa-ba'duhū ad'af*)."<sup>65</sup> In all this, it is as though we capture a crucial moment in intellectual history—the public emergence of a concept long in gestation.

### Conclusion

Sense can be made of Rāzī's highly elaborate commentary on Ibn Sīnā's proof of divine unity in the *Išārāt* once it is seen as basically aimed at admitting the first of Ibn Sīnā's four options. According to this option, God's "necessary existence" is the concomitant of His quiddity. In proposing this option, Rāzī is driven by the understanding that existence is univocal. To begin with, the univocity of existence provides Rāzī with his motive for asserting that God has a quiddity. For, given the equality of existence, a divine quiddity is needed to explain why existence in the case of God wholly transcends existence in the case of contingents. Next, the univocity of existence also provides Rāzī with his explanation of how existence functions as an attribute of quiddity in God, just as in other beings. This is because, given that existence is univocal, it must behave as a single species-nature and its requirement may not vary. So if existence in contingents needs a quiddity as its subject, it must do so in God too. Lastly, Rāzī must refute Ibn Sīnā's premise in *faṣl* 17, namely, that it is never conceivable for a quiddity to bear responsibility for its own existence. If Rāzī is right, then while it is true that contingent quiddities always receive their existences from external agents, in the case of God we are confronted by a quiddity which is fully an agent for its own existence, so this must after all be a conceivable scenario.

<sup>64</sup> Bahmanyār ibn al-Marzubān, *Kūāb at-Taḥṣīl*, ed. M. Muṭahharī (Tehran: Intišārāt-i Dānišgāh-yi Tihṙān, 1375Š/1996), 529.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

But Rāzī's thinking goes against core features of Ibn Sīnā's conception of God—that God is simple, and that He is pure existence untainted by quiddity. Indeed, as an Aš'arī in theology, Rāzī is basically hostile to this philosophical view of God. In his response on behalf of Ibn Sīnā, Ṭūsī is quite right to single out the univocity of existence as the crucial premise in Rāzī's argumentation. According to Ṭūsī, while Rāzī is correct that existence is *not* equivocal, it does not follow that it is univocal. Between equivocality and univocity there is ambiguity, and once it is accepted that existence is ambiguous (*mušakkak*), Rāzī's case largely collapses. First, the ambiguity of existence destroys Rāzī's motive in claiming that God has a quiddity. No superadded divine quiddity is needed to explain why God's existence wholly transcends that of contingents—since ambiguous existence is instead *intrinsically* variegated. Second, an ambiguous reality cannot function as a species-nature. To be sure, it forms some sort of unity (unlike the referent of an equivocal term), but it does not have unvarying requirements. Thus, though existence requires a quiddity as its subject in contingents, it need not do so in God. And in that case, the premise in *faṣl* 17 can remain intact: it is absolutely inconceivable for a quiddity to be the agent for its own existence, in God as in contingents.

Finally, it is demonstrable that Ṭūsī does not use the doctrine of the ambiguity of existence arbitrarily here, in defence of Ibn Sīnā's proof. The doctrine is strongly attested in Ibn Sīnā's own metaphysics, and for that matter, in Fārābī's also. Intriguingly, however, Ṭūsī understands the ambiguity of existence *inter alia* in terms of an actual gradation of existence in strength and weakness. On occasion, Ibn Sīnā directly condemns this very notion, in accordance with vital features of Aristotle's thought, such as the denial that "substance" can increase and diminish, and the principles of non-contradiction and the excluded middle. However, it is clear that in certain texts, notably the *Mubāḥaṭāt*, Ibn Sīnā himself does already assent to the gradation of existence in strength and weakness. I take this to mark a crucial development in Islamic philosophy.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE TWELVER-ŠĪʿĪ RECEPTION OF AVICENNA IN THE MONGOL PERIOD

Ahmed H. al-Rahim

Post-Avicennan Arabic philosophy, with few exceptions, has received little scholarly attention, and remains to this day largely virgin territory.<sup>1</sup> This neglect is particularly true of its development during the Mongol-Tīmūrid period. Specifically, the period between Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) and Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631) and the formation of School of Isfahan has received little attention by scholars.<sup>2</sup> A major reason for this neglect is that many works of this period, the majority of which are still unedited, were written in the style of paraphrases, abridgements (*muḥtaṣar*), commentaries (*ṣarḥ*), super-commentaries, glosses (sg. *ḥāšīya*), and super-glosses. As such, they are considered unoriginal compositions, unworthy of modern scholars' attention.<sup>3</sup> Such stylistic assumptions are misleading given the extent of the period, its geographical scope, and the large number of works dating from this period that have yet to be studied. In considering the vast number of philosophical works extant from the Mongol-Tīmūrid period, some scholars have even concluded that this time was indeed the golden age for Arabic philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See D. Gutas, "Aspects of Literary Form and Genre in Arabic Logical Works," in *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts: The Syriac, Arabic, and Medieval Latin Traditions*, Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, XXIII, ed. C. Burnett (London: The Warburg Institute, 1993), 59.

<sup>2</sup> For a periodization of Twelver-ŠĪʿĪ philosophy, see H. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, tr. L. Sherrard (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), 31–6; and J. Cooper, "From al-Ṭūsī to the School of Iṣfahān," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. S.H. Nasr and O. Leaman (London: Routledge, 1996), 1:585–96.

<sup>3</sup> For an example of this attitude, see W.M. Watt, "The Later Islamic Middle Ages 1250–1850: The Stagnation of Philosophical Theology," in his *Islamic Philosophy and Theology, An Extended Survey*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), 133–42.

<sup>4</sup> D. Gutas, "The Heritage of Avicenna: The Golden Age of Arabic Philosophy, 900–ca. 1350," in *Avicenna and His Heritage*, ed. J. Janssens and D. De Smet, forthcoming 2002 [I thank Dimitri Gutas for an advance copy]; and J.R. Michot who

With Hülegü's patronage of Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī, following the Mongol capture of Alamūt in 654/1256 and the sack of Baghdad in 656/1258,<sup>5</sup> the Twelver-Šī'ī reception of Avicennan philosophy began under the aegis of the ʿIl-Ḥāns. With respect to the Mongol's patronage of the sciences, Bertold Spuler notes, "[h]owever slight an interest the ʿIl-Ḥāns may have taken in learning for its own sake, they were far-sighted enough to make use of the Perso-Arab science for their own ends and encourage it so far as they could, or at least not to place obstacles in its way."<sup>6</sup> The Marāḡa observatory, located near Tabrīz, was the center of philosophical and scientific activity during this period. Hülegü built it in 657/1259 according to the specifications of Ṭūsī, who became its director.<sup>7</sup> There, he prepared his renowned astronomical table, the *Zīj-i ʿIl-Ḥānī*, which he completed near the age of seventy under Hülegü's successor, the ʿIl-Ḥān Abāqā (r. 663–680/1265–1282) to whom it is also dedicated. The Marāḡa observatory apparently had an extensive library which served as a locus for scholars from all over Western and Eastern Asia.<sup>8</sup>

With respect to the intellectual background of Ṭūsī, attention should be drawn to an *isnād* of philosophers allegedly connecting him directly to Avicenna. The *isnād* enjoyed a wide circulation and is reported in a number of works.<sup>9</sup> The *isnād* purports the following

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describes the sixth/twelfth century as "le triomphe de l'avicennisme," in "La pandémie avicennienne au VI<sup>e</sup>/XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, présentation, *editio princeps* et traduction de l'introduction du *Livre de l'advenue du monde (Kitāb ḥudūth al-ʿālam)* d'Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī," *Arabica* 40 (1993), 287–344.

<sup>5</sup> For a history of the period, see B. Spuler, *The Muslim World, A Historical Survey, Part II: The Mongol Period*, tr. F.R.C. Bagley (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969); J.A. Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the ʿIl-Khāns," in *The Cambridge History of Iran, The Saljuq and Mongol Period*, ed. J.A. Boyle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 303–421; and for an account of the capture of Baghdad attributed to Ṭūsī, see *ibid.*, "The Death of the Last 'Abbāsīd Caliph: A Contemporary Muslim Account," in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6 (1961), 145–161.

<sup>6</sup> Spuler, *The Mongol Period*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> See Ḥalīl ibn Aybak aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kutāb al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. H. Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1962), 1:182; Muḥammad ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāit al-wafayāt*, ed. I. 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār aṭ-Ṭaqāfa, 1973–1974), 3:250; and F.J. Ragep, *Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's Memoir on Astronomy (al-Tadhkira fi 'ilm al-hay'a)*, Sources in the History of Mathematics and Physical Sciences, 12 (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1993), 1:13–14.

<sup>8</sup> On the modern excavation of the Marāḡa complex, see P. Vardjavand, *La découverte archéologique du complexe scientifique de l'observatoire de Marāḡé* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1366/1946); Ragep, *Naṣīr al-Dīn*, 1:14, n. 5.

<sup>9</sup> See the Persian translation of Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Šiwān al-ḥikma* entitled *Durrat al-aḡbār va-Lum'at al-anwār*, ed. M. Šaftī, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Šarikat-i

chain of transmission: (1) Ṭūsī was a student of (2) Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād (or Dāmāt) an-Nišābūrī, who was a student of (3) Ṣadr ad-Dīn as-Saraḥsī, who was a student of (4) Afḍal ad-Dīn al-Ġilānī, who was a student of (5) Abū l-‘Abbās al-Lawkarī, who in turn was a student of (6) Bahmanyār, an acknowledged student of Avicenna.

Abū l-‘Abbās al-Faḍl ibn Muḥammad al-Lawkarī<sup>10</sup> is the author of a *fihrist* (table of contents) of the *Ta‘līqāt*, a collection of notes from explanations given by Avicenna on fundamental concepts in logic, physics, and metaphysics recorded by Bahmanyār (d. 458/1066).<sup>11</sup> He prepared the *fihrist* in 503/1109.<sup>12</sup> Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1169) says in a well-known statement that al-Lawkarī was a student of Bahmanyār and that it was under him that philosophy (*‘ulūm al-ḥikma*) spread in Ḥurāsān.<sup>13</sup> However, little documentation exists to detail its transmission. Al-Lawkarī’s major work is *Bayān al-ḥaqq bi-damān aṣ-ṣidq*.<sup>14</sup> It is divided into three sections: logic, physics, and metaphysics, and represents one of the earliest discussions of Avicenna’s philosophy, after Bahmanyār’s *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*. The introduction to the *Bayān* describes the work as a “middle book that combines commentary and concise exposition” (*kitābun mutawassiṭun aḡma‘a š-šarḥa*

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Sihāmī, 1318Š/1939), 108; the summary translation of M. Meyerhof, “Alī al-Bayhaqī’s *Tatimmat Šiwān al-Ḥikma*,” *Osiris* 8 (1948), 206–207; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥwānsārī, *Rawḍat al-ḡammāt fi aḥwāl al-‘ulamā’ wa-s-sādāt* (Beirut: ad-Dār al-Islāmīya, 1411/1991), 6:292; and an *iḡāza* by al-‘Allāma Ġalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn As‘ad ad-Dawānī (d. 908/1502) in which Bahmanyār’s name is omitted, see Āḡā Buzurg aṭ-Tihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-lām aš-Šī‘a* (Qum: Mu‘assasat-i Ismā‘ilīyān, n.d.), 3:169; also M. al-Amīn, *Aḡyān aš-Šī‘a* (Beirut: Dār at-Ta‘āruf li-l-Maṭbū‘āt, 1406/1986), 9:415.

<sup>10</sup> On his *nisba*, see S. Pines, *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, tr. M. Schwarz (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1997), 47, n. 16.

<sup>11</sup> *At-Ta‘līqāt*, ed. ‘A.R. Badawī (Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣrīya al-‘Āmma li-l-Kitāb, 1973); on Bahmanyār, see H. Daiber, “Bahmanyār, Kīā Ra’īs Abu’l-Ḥasan b. Marzbān A’jamī Ādarbāyjanī,” *Elr*, 2:501–3.

<sup>12</sup> See Badawī’s introduction to the *Ta‘līqāt*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> See al-Bayhaqī’s *Tatimmat Šiwān al-ḥikma*, published as *Ta’rīḥ ḥukama’ al-Islām* by M. Kurd ‘Alī (Damascus: al-Maḡma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabī, 1365/1946), 126; Meyerhof, “Alī al-Bayhaqī’s *Tatimmat*,” 176; D. Gutas, “The *Šiwān al-ḥikma* Cycle of Texts,” *JAOs* 102.4 (1982), 646.

<sup>14</sup> Thus far, only the *Eisagoge* of the logic and the metaphysics have been edited, both under the general title *Bayān al-ḥaqq wa-damān aṣ-ṣidq: al-Manṭiq, al-Madḥal*, ed. I. Dībāḡī, (Tehran: Intiṣārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1364Š/1986) and *al-‘Ilm al-ilāhī*, Maḡmū‘ah-yi Andīšāh-yi Islāmī, 2, ed. I. Dībāḡī (Tehran: Mu‘assasah-yi Muṭāla‘āt-i Islāmī, Dānišgāh-yi Tihrān, 1414/1995); on al-Lawkarī’s poetry, see I. Dībāḡī, “Šarḥ qaṣīdat *Asrār al-ḥikma*,” in *Collected Texts and Papers on Logic and Language*, Wisdom of Persia Series, VIII, ed. M. Mohaghegh and T. Izutsu (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1974), 107–135.

*wa-t-talḥīṣa*), based on the works of Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/951) and Avicenna. Its style and arrangement resemble that of Bahmanyār's *at-Taḥṣīl* which, as Bahmanyār states in the introduction, follows that of Avicenna's *Dānišnāmah-yi 'Alā'ī*.<sup>15</sup> Aside from the *Bayān* and the *fihris*t of the *Ta'liqāt*, little else is known about al-Lawkarī's life and works except that he taught at Marw and probably died there sometime in the first quarter of the sixth/twelfth century.<sup>16</sup>

As for Afḍal ad-Dīn al-Ġilānī, he is 'Umar ibn 'Alī ibn Ġilānī al-Balḥī, the author of *Kitāb Hudūt al-'ālam*, an Aṣ'arī work criticizing Avicenna's cosmogony.<sup>17</sup> He was among the first generation of students in the Niẓāmīya college at Marw and Nišābūr and he later had a number of disputations with Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī recorded one such disputation in the *Munāẓarāt* in which he criticizes al-Ġilānī for his weak defense of the temporal creation of the world.<sup>18</sup> Because of the uncertainty of al-Lawkarī's death date, it cannot be established with any certainty that al-Ġilānī studied with al-Lawkarī. The purpose of attempting to link al-Ġilānī, an Aṣ'arī theologian in the Niẓāmīya tradition, to al-Lawkarī, a peripatetic philosopher in the Avicennan tradition, may have been an effort on the part of the biographical tradition to connect the study of philosophy in the Niẓāmīya tradition to an authoritative source in the personage of al-Lawkarī.

<sup>15</sup> Bahmanyār, *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*, ed. M. Muṭahharī, Second printing (Tehran: Intiṣarāt-i Dāniṣgāh-yi Tih-rān, 1375Š/1996), 1; see also J. Janssens' contribution to the present volume. For a discussion of the style and arrangement of the *Dānišnāmah-yi 'Alā'ī*, see D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Texts and Studies, IV (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 114.

<sup>16</sup> C. Brockelmann gives al-Lawkarī's date of death as 517/1123, without citing his source, in *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1943; repr. 1996), I, 460. On al-Lawkarī's date of death, see D. Gutas, "Notes and Texts from Cairo Manuscripts, II: Texts from Avicenna's Library in a Copy by 'Abd-ar-Razzāq aṣ-Ṣiġnāhī," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 2 (1987), 9, and 15, n. 16; Dībāġī also addresses the problem in the introduction to his edition of *al-'Ilm al-ilāhī* of the *Bayān*, 14–16.

<sup>17</sup> Bayhaqī, *Ta'riḥ*, 157; Meyerhof, "'Alī al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat*," 193. On al-Ġilānī and Avicennism in the sixth/twelfth century, see J.R. Michot, "La pandémie," 287–323; and Michot's introduction to al-Ġilānī's *Hudūt al-'ālam*, ed. M. Mohaghegh (Tehran: Mu'assasah-yi Muṭāla'āt-i Islāmī, Dāniṣgāh-yi Tih-rān, 1377Š/1998), i–xv.

<sup>18</sup> Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *al-Munāẓarāt*, ed. F. Kholeif in *A Study on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and his controversies in Transoxiana* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1966), 59–63; Ibn al-Qiftī states that ar-Rāzī authored a refutation of al-Ġilānī, the *Kitāb Ġawāb Ibn Ġilānī*; see *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, ed. J. Lippert (Leipzig: Th. Weicher, 1903), 293; and Michot, "La pandémie," 289.

Šadr ad-Dīn as-Saraḥsī is an otherwise unknown figure, except perhaps as a student of al-Ġīlānī.<sup>19</sup> As for Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (d. 723/1323), the librarian and copyist at the Marāga observatory, names him as Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥaydar al-Faryūmadī (also known as al-Ḥakīm al-Uṣūlī), without mentioning the *nisba* an-Niṣābūrī.<sup>20</sup> It is very likely that he was Ṭūsī’s teacher because the latter quotes Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād in the epistle *Rabṭ al-ḥadīṭ bi-l-qadīm*, and refers to him as “my teacher (*ustādī*), Farīd ad-Dīn Muḥammad an-Niṣābūrī.”<sup>21</sup> Ṭūsī likely studied under him at the Niẓāmīya in Niṣābūr between 610/1213 and 618/1221,<sup>22</sup> during which time he also studied under Quṭb ad-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad as-Sulamī al-Miṣrī (killed in 618/1221<sup>23</sup>).<sup>24</sup> Both Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād and Quṭb ad-Dīn al-Miṣrī studied under Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī. Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād’s most important students were Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī and the Šāfi‘ī Šams

<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, his *laqab* is given as Ḍiyā’ ad-Dīn and his *nisba* as an-Niṣābūrī; see Dībāġī’s introduction to al-Lawkarī’s *al-‘Ilm al-ilāhī*, 76–77.

<sup>20</sup> *Muġam al-ādāb fī maġma’ al-aqāb*, ed. M. al-Kāzīm (Tehran: Wizārat aṭ-Taqāfa wa-l-İrṣād al-Islāmī, 1416/1995), 3:241; this is an important source for the social and intellectual history of the Il-Ḥānīd period. See also F. Rosenthal, “Ibn al-Fuwaṭī,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 3:769–70; and M. Iqbāl, “Ibn al-Fuwaṭī,” *Islamic Culture* 11 (1937), 516–22. Aṭ-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-‘ālam as-Šī‘a*, 3:179, suggests that Farīd ad-Dīn an-Niṣābūrī was the renowned Persian poet Farīd ad-Dīn al-‘Aṭṭār. This is incorrect since al-‘Aṭṭār appears to have died before Ṭūsī arrived in Niṣābūr. Cf. H. Ritter, “‘Aṭṭār, Farīd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 1:752–5.

<sup>21</sup> *Tallīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal bi-īndimām rasā’il wa-fawā’id kalāmīya*, ed. ‘A.A. Nūrānī (Tehran: Mu’assasah-yi Muṭāla‘āt-i Islāmī, Dāniṣġāh-yi Tihrān, 1359Š/1980), 483. Despite the discrepancy between these two names, reports agree that they are indeed the same person.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Ḥwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-ġannāt*, 6:292, reports that he read Avicenna’s *al-İṣārāt* under Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, ed. A. Müller (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Wahbīya, 1299/1882), 30.

<sup>24</sup> On Ṭūsī’s life and works, see aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, 1:179–83; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, 246–52; al-Ḥwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-ġannāt*, 6:278–97; ‘Abd Allāh Afandī al-İsbahānī, *Riyād al-‘ulamā’ wa-ḥiyāḍ al-fuḍalā’*, ed. A. al-Ḥusaynī (Qum: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar‘aṣī, 1403/1982), 5:159–63; al-Amīn, *A‘yān as-Šī‘a*, 9:414–20; M. Raḍawī, *Aḥwāl wa-āṭār-i Abū Ġāfar Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭūsī* (Tehran: n.p., 1335Š/1956); S.H. Naṣr, “al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan,” in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 13:508–14; H. Daiber and F.J. Ragep, “al-Ṭūsī, Abū Ḍja‘far Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 10:746–52; and E. Alexandrin, “Éléments de bibliographie sur Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,” in *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, philosophe et savant du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Actes du colloque tenu à l’Université de Téhéran, 6–9 mars 1997, ed. N. Pourjavady and Ž. Vesel (Tehran: Presses Universitaires d’Iran, 2000), 207–13.

ad-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn ‘Īsā Ḥusrawšāhī at-Tabrīzī (d. 652/1263), the author of an abridgement (*muḥtaṣar*) of Avicenna’s *aṣ-Ṣifā’*.<sup>25</sup>

In his autobiography, *Sayr wa-sulūk*, Ṭūsī fails to mention Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād and Quṭb ad-Dīn al-Miṣrī among his teachers.<sup>26</sup> Written for the chief Ismā‘īlī *dā’in*, his autobiography is a stylized rendition of his conversion from exoteric *kalām* to esoteric Ismā‘īlī philosophy and *da‘wa*. This conversion may explain why he chose to mention only his Ismā‘īlī teachers, including Kamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāsib,<sup>27</sup> and neglected to recognize his non-Ismā‘īlī teachers from the Niẓāmīya in Nišābūr.

The significance of the *isnād*, at least from al-Ġīlānī until Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād—all of whom, it appears, studied and taught in Niẓāmīya colleges of Ḥurāsān—is in establishing that the curriculum in these colleges was not restricted to the study of law and *ḥadīth*, but also included philosophy, particularly the works of Avicenna. The *isnād*, at least in connecting Ṭūsī to Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād, also indicates that the Twelver-Šī‘ī reception of Avicenna’s philosophy, in part, was based on the Niẓāmīya tradition of Ḥurāsān. Moreover, the *isnād* reveals that the two centuries after Avicenna’s death (428/1037) were important in establishing his over-arching influence on the history of philosophy, particularly in the East, and most importantly for the reception and transmission of his works.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ṣafādī, *al-Wāfi*, 18:73–5.

<sup>26</sup> *Contemplation and Action: The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar*, ed./tr. S.J. Badakhchani (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); and F. Daftary, “Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and the Ismā‘īlis of the Alamūt Period,” in *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, philosophe et savant*, 59–67.

<sup>27</sup> Kamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāsib was a student of Bābā Afḍal ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Maraḳī Kāšānī (d. 610/1213–14), as Ṭūsī states in the *Sayr wa-sulūk*; see *Contemplation and Action*, Persian text, 3. On Bābā Afḍal’s Ismā‘īlī affiliation, see J. Rypka, “Bābā Afḍal al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn Kāshānī (or Kāshī),” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 1:838–9; and W. Chittick, “Bābā Afzal al-Dīn,” *ELR*, 3:285–91. For a discussion of his thought, see S.H. Nasr, “Afdal al-Din Kashani and the Philosophical World of Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi,” in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy, Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, ed. M.E. Marmura (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1984), 249–64. Kamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāsib is often confused with Kamāl ad-Dīn Ibn Yūnus, perhaps because they were both mathematicians (hence the former is called Ḥāsib) and/or because they both have the same *laqab* Kamāl ad-Dīn. As such it is sometimes believed that Ibn Yūnus was a student of Bābā Afḍal; see, for example, Daiber, “al-Ṭūsī,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 10:746.

<sup>28</sup> For a general picture of the transmission of knowledge in Ḥurāsān, see R. Mottahedeh, “The Transmission of Learning, The Role of the Islamic Northeast,” in *Madrassa, La transmission du savoir dans le monde musulman*, ed. N. Grandin and M. Gaborieau (Paris: Arguments, 1997), 63–72 [I thank Beatrice Gruendler for bringing this article to my attention].

With the Mongol advance to Ḥurāsān and most likely before the sack of Nišābūr in 618/1221,<sup>29</sup> Ṭūsī departed for Iraq. There, he studied in Mosul with the recognized astronomer and mathematician Kamāl ad-Dīn Mūsā ibn Yūnus aš-Šāfi‘ī (d. 639/1242), who was once himself a student in the Nizāmīya in Baghdad.<sup>30</sup> After completing his studies around the year 630/1233, Ṭūsī wrote his main contribution to logic, the *Asās al-iqtibās*.<sup>31</sup> While retaining the Arabic technical terms, this work is lucidly written in Persian, and thus rapidly became a model for later Persian logical works. It is divided according to the traditional eight books of the Aristotelian *Organon* and closely follows the logical parts of Avicenna’s *aš-Šifā’*.

The major philosophical work on which much of Ṭūsī’s reputation rests is the *Ḥall muškilāt al-Išārāt*, a commentary on Avicenna’s *al-Išārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*. Written as his last work during his Ismā‘īlī phase, around 643/1246 in Alamūt, it was a response to Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī’s critical commentary, the *Šarḥ al-Išārāt*.<sup>32</sup> It embodies his subtle understanding of Aš‘arī *kalām*, which he likely learned as a student of Farīd ad-Dīn Dāmād and Quṭb ad-Dīn al-Miṣrī at the Nizāmīya in Nišābūr. Ṭūsī’s other defense of Avicenna was contained in his *Maṣāri‘ al-muṣāri‘*,<sup>33</sup> a refutation of the crypto-Ismā‘īlī Tāğ ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm aš-Šahrastānī’s *Muṣāra‘at al-falāsifa*.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See E. Honigman and C.E. Bosworth, “Nishāpūr,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 8:62–4.

<sup>30</sup> As-Šafādī, *al-Wāfi*, 1:181; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, 3:24; Ibn Abī ‘Uṣaybi‘a, *Uyūn*, 1:306–8; C. Brockelmann, *GAL*, S I, 859; see also F.J. Ragep’s discussion in *Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s Memoir*, 6–9. Another student of Ibn Yūnus is Aṭīr ad-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1264), the author of *al-Hidāya fī l-ḥikma* and *al-Isāğūğ*; see C. Brockelmann, “Abharī, Athīr al-Dīn Mufaḍḍal b. ‘Umar,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 1:98–9, and G.C. Anawati, “Abhārī Samarqandī, Aṭīr-al-Dīn al-Mofazzal b. ‘Omar b. al-Mofazzal,” *EIr*, 1:216–17.

<sup>31</sup> Ed. M. Raḍawī, (Tehran: Dānišgāh-yi Tihrān, 1367Š/1948); P. Morewedge, “The Analysis of ‘Substance’ in Ṭūsī’s *Logic* and the Ibn Sīnīan Tradition,” in *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, ed. G.H. Hourani (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1975), 158–9.

<sup>32</sup> This work has been considered a commentary only on the physics and metaphysics of Avicenna’s *al-Išārāt*; see G.C. Anawati, “Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 2:751–55. But it appears that ar-Rāzī’s commentary originally also included a section on the logic of the *Išārāt*. [I thank Tony Street for drawing my attention to this.] Princeton University Library contains an early manuscript of Rāzī’s *Šarḥ al-Išārāt* (MS New Series 2022, copied in 679/1280–1) that includes the logic section; see R. Mach and E.L. Ormsby, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts (New Series) in the Princeton University Library* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 85–86, no. 371.

<sup>33</sup> Ed. Ḥ. al-Mu‘izzī, *Min Maḥṭūṭāt Āyat Allāh al-Mar‘ašī al-‘Āmma*, 11 (Qum: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar‘ašī, 1405/1984).

<sup>34</sup> It is interesting to note that Ṭūsī’s father was a second generation student of aš-Šahrastānī; see *Contemplation and Action*, Persian text, 3. Aš-Šahrastānī’s work has

Aš'arī criticism of Avicenna focused on advancing objections raised by al-Ġazālī (d. 505/1111) in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. The three major objections refuted the theory of a pre-eternal world, the theory that God knows only the universal characteristics of particulars, as well as the Avicennan doctrine of the human soul that denies bodily resurrection.<sup>35</sup> It appears that Ṭūsī struggled with Aš'arī criticism until his final days in Baghdad, where he wrote his last work, the *Talḥiṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*.<sup>36</sup> This work is a critical discussion of Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī's *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-muta'ahḥirīn min al-'ulamā' wa-l-ḥukamā' wa-l-mutakallimīn*.

These two commentaries, *Šarḥ al-Išārāt* and *Hall muškilāt al-Išārāt*, spurred a series of adjudications (*muḥākamāt*) that evaluated the arguments of Rāzī and Ṭūsī. The earliest adjudication appears to be authored by Badr ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn As'ad at-Tustarī aš-Šāfi'ī (d. 732/1331).<sup>37</sup> Other adjudications are by Ġamāl ad-Dīn Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), also known as al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī, and his student Quṭb ad-Dīn Muḥammad (or Maḥmūd) ibn Muḥammad al-Buwayhī ar-Rāzī (d. 766/1365), also known as Quṭb at-Taḥṭānī.<sup>38</sup>

Ṭūsī's lasting influence on Twelver-Šr'ism came as result of two principal works. The first, an abridgement of the eight books of the Organon, is the *Tagrīd al-mantiq*, for which al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī wrote

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recently been edited and translated as *Struggling with the Philosopher: A Refutation of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, ed./tr. W. Madelung and T. Mayer (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001); see also W. Madelung, "Našīr ad-Dīn Ṭūsī's Ethics between Philosophy, Shī'ism, and Sufism," in *Ethics in Islam*, Ninth Giorgio Levi Della Vida Conference, ed. R.G. Hovannisian (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1985), 85–101. 'Umar ibn Sahlān as-Sāwī (d. 540/1145), the author of *Kitāb al-Baṣā'ir an-našrīya fī l-mantiq*, also wrote a response to aš-Šahrastānī, the *Ġawāb 'alā š-Šahrastānī*, see GAL, S I, 830–1.

<sup>35</sup> See al-Ġazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, tr. M.E. Marmura (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), xix–xxvi; and M. Marmura, "Avicenna and the Kalām," ZDMG 7 (1991–92), 172–206.

<sup>36</sup> Ed. 'A.A. Nūrānī, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> See Hāġġī Ḥalīfā, *Kašf az-zunūn 'an asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kuṭub al-Ilmīya, 1413/1992), 6:148; Āġā Buzurg aṭ-Ṭihrānī, *ad-Dar'ā ilā taṣānīf aš-Šr'a* (Beirut: Dār al-Adwā', 1403/1983), 20:133.

<sup>38</sup> Aṭ-Ṭihrānī, *ibid.* Al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī's *Muḥākama* does not appear to be extant; see S. Schmidtke, *The Theology of al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1991), 58. Quṭb at-Taḥṭānī's *Muḥākamāt bayna šarḥay al-Išārāt* is extant and has been published along with Ṭūsī's *Hall muškilāt* in *al-Išārāt wa-t-tanbihāt* (Qum: Našr al-Balāġa, 1375S/1996). On Quṭb at-Taḥṭānī, see aṭ-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt 'alām aš-Šr'a*, 3:200–2; and 'A.A. Ni'ma, *Falāsifat aš-Šr'a, ḥayātuhum wa-ar'ahum* (Qum: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1987), 528–30.

the first commentary, the *Ġawhar an-naḍīd fī šarḥ Kitāb at-Tağrīd*.<sup>39</sup> The second work, the *Tağrīd al-kalām*, was an abridgement of *kalām* and Twelver-ŠĪ'Ī dogmatics (*i'tiqād*) for which al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī also wrote the commentary *Kašf al-murād fī šarḥ Tağrīd al-i'tiqād*.<sup>40</sup> Through al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī's commentaries, both works became a part of the Twelver-ŠĪ'Ī college curriculum until the 1950s.<sup>41</sup>

Ṭūsī's *Tağrīd al-kalām* can be divided into two sections. The first section, an analytical discussion of metaphysics and *kalām*, explores concepts of existence and non-existence (*wuğūd wa-l-ʿadam*), quiddity (*māhīya*), causality (*ʿilla wa-l-maʿlūl*), substance and accidents (*ğawāhir wa-l-aʿrād*), bodies and forms (*ağsām wa-ṣ-suwar*), and predicables. This section introduces the essential philosophical issues of Avicenna's metaphysics into the tradition of Twelver-ŠĪ'Ī *kalām*. Ḥillī's commentary is not only useful in clarifying Ṭūsī's discussions, but is also itself a resource for the history of *kalām*.<sup>42</sup>

The *Tağrīd al-kalām*'s second section is a discussion of dogmatics, specifically, God, prophecy, *imāma*, and the return (*maʿād*). There are fewer philosophical arguments in this section. Rather, the arguments are primarily premised on doctrinal grounds, stemming from the Quran and *ḥadīth*. For example, contrary to Avicenna's philosophical arguments against bodily resurrection, Ṭūsī accepts bodily resurrection primarily on doctrinal grounds. This fact notwithstanding, the importance of the work is that it is among the earliest, if not the first, to introduce Avicennan philosophical concepts into Twelver-ŠĪ'Ī dogmatics.<sup>43</sup>

In sum, Ṭūsī played a pivotal role in the revival of Avicennan philosophy. He wrote a series of works effectively defending Avicenna against Ašʿarī criticism, particularly against that of aš-Šahrastānī and Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī. He also had a number of lively exchanges to

<sup>39</sup> Ed. M. Bīdārfar (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Bīdār, 1413/1992).

<sup>40</sup> Ed. Ḥ. al-ʿAmulī (Qum: Muʿassasat an-Našr al-Islāmī, 1417/1996); on the work's date of composition, see Schmidtke, *The Theology of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī*, 61. On the extensive commentary tradition of Ṭūsī's *Tağrīd al-i'tiqād*, see aṭ-Ṭihrānī, *ad-Darīʿa*, 3:352–5.

<sup>41</sup> Ḥillī's commentary *Ġawhar an-naḍīd* was replaced with a more recent introduction by Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muzaḥḥār (b. 1904) entitled *al-Manṭiq* (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Fīrūz ʿĀbādī, 1375/1955).

<sup>42</sup> The *Kašf al-Murād*, together with Ḥillī's *Nihāyat al-marām fī ʿilm al-kalām* (ed. F. al-ʿIrḥān [Qum: Muʿassasat al-Imām aš-Šādiq, 1419/1998]), embody an extensive source of information on the history of *kalām*.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Ḥwansārī, *Rawḍāt al-ğamāt*, 6:281, says that Ṭūsī was the first among the Twelver-ŠĪ'Īs to write about dogmatics (*aqāʿid*) in a philosophical way.

questions and criticisms about philosophy generally and Avicenna in particular.<sup>44</sup> His lasting contribution, however, was in securing the introduction of Avicenna's works into Twelver-Šī'ism.

Al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (648–726/1250–1325) lived during the height of the Il-Ḥān rule in Iraq and Iran.<sup>45</sup> His native town, al-Ḥilla, is situated between Kufa and Baghdad near the ruins of ancient Bābil.<sup>46</sup> The town was surrendered to the Mongols shortly after the sack of Baghdad in 656/1258. Al-Ḥilla remained unscathed from the conquest despite its proximity to Baghdad. This was due in part to Ṭūsī's position as minister of Hülegü as well as his relationship with the patricians of al-Ḥilla, including al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī's father. Al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī began his studies of law and *kalām* in al-Ḥilla. Thereafter, he left, probably to Marāḡa, where he studied under Ṭūsī and Naḡm ad-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 657/1276). Naḡm ad-Dīn al-Kātibī is the author of *ar-Risāla aš-Šamsīya*, a work on logic, and *Ḥikmat al-ʿayn*, a work on physics and metaphysics. Al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī wrote a commentary on both works, the *Qawā'id al-ḡalīya*<sup>47</sup> and *Īdāḡ al-maqāṣid*,<sup>48</sup> respectively. Under Naḡm ad-Dīn al-Kātibī, Ḥillī studied logic, physics, and metaphysics. Al-Kātibī introduced Ḥillī to three important figures.<sup>49</sup> The first, Aṭīr ad-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1264), authored *al-Hidāya fī l-ḡikma* and an established introduction to logic, the *Isāḡūḡī*. He also introduced Ḥillī to the works of Faḡr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī<sup>50</sup> and Muḡammad al-Ḥunḡī (d. 646/1248).

<sup>44</sup> See *Annäherungen, Der mystisch-philosophische Briefwechsel zwischen Šadr ud-Dīn-i Qonawī und Našīr ud-Dīn-i Ṭūsī*, Bibliotheca Islamica, 43, ed. G. Schubert (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995); W. Chittick, "Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The al-Ṭūsī-al-Qūnawī Correspondences," *Religious Studies* 17 (1981), 87–104; W. Madelung, "To See All Things through the Sight of God: Našīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's Attitude to Sufism," in *Našīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, philosophe et savant*, 1–11. Ṭūsī's more technical correspondences are *Aḡwibat masā'il as-Sayyid Rukn ad-Dīn al-Astarābādī li-Našīr ad-Dīn at-Ṭūsī*, ed. ʿA.A. Nūrānī, in *Collected Texts and Papers on Logic and Language*, op. cit., 216–76; and *Muṭārahāt mantiḡīya bayna Naḡm ad-Dīn Dabīrān al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī wa-Našīr ad-Dīn at-Ṭūsī*, ed. ʿA.A. Nūrānī, *ibid.*, 277–86.

<sup>45</sup> On al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī's life and works, see S. Schmitdke, *The Theology of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī*, 9–74; and ead., "al-Ḥillī, ʿAllāma, Ḥasan b. Yūsuf b. Muṭaḡhar," *EI*, forthcoming [I thank the author for advancing me a copy]; ʿA. at-Ṭabāṭabāʿī, *Maktabat al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī* (Qum: Muʿassasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḡyāʿ at-Turāt, 1416/1995); at-Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaḡāt aʿlām aš-Šīʿa*, 3:52–4; and Niʿma, *Falāsifat aš-Šīʿa*, 272.

<sup>46</sup> See J. Lassner, "al-Ḥilla," *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 3:389–90.

<sup>47</sup> Ed. F.Ḥ. Tabrīzīyān (Qum: Muʿassasat an-Našr al-Islāmī, 1417/1996).

<sup>48</sup> Ed. ʿA. Munzavī (Tehran: n.p., 1378/1959).

<sup>49</sup> Schmitdke, *The Theology of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī*, 18–9.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Kātibī also authored a commentary on ar-Rāzī's *Muḡaṣṣal*, the *Muḡaṣṣal fī sarḡ al-Muḡaṣṣal*, for which there is a copy of an autograph dated 717/1317; accord-

In all likelihood, Ḥillī left Marāḡa after Ṭūsī's death in 672/1274. He taught mainly in al-Ḥilla and, for a time, the II-Ḥān Ulḡaytū (r. 703–716/1304–1316) appointed him as a teacher in the *Madrassa Sayyāra* (mobile school), a distinguished position among scholars. This college served as a literary entourage that followed the II-Ḥān on his travels. There, Ḥillī taught his most notable student, Quṭb at-Taḥṭānī, who later authored *Risālat at-taṣawwūrāt wa-t-taṣdīqāt*, the first in a series of works that dealt with Avicenna's epistemological notion that knowledge (*ilm*) is either through forming concepts or granting assent.<sup>51</sup>

Ḥillī continued Ṭūsī's defense of Avicenna in *Iṣārāt ilā ma'ānī al-Iṣārāt*, *Īdāḡ al-mu'ḏilāt min šarḡ al-Iṣārāt*, and *Baṣṭ al-Iṣārāt*.<sup>52</sup> The *Kitāb Kaṣf al-ḡafā' min Kitāb aš-Šifā'* is his principle commentary on Avicenna's *aš-Šifā'*. It appears that he only completed the first two books of the logic, the *Eisagoge* and *Categories*, from this work.<sup>53</sup> Aside from his commentaries he wrote a number of philosophical expositions. His *magnum opus* is *Asrār al-ḡafīya fī l-ʿulūm al-ʿaqlīya*, which is divided into the three sections of logic, physics, and metaphysics.<sup>54</sup> His other major work is his *Tanqīḡ al-abḡāt fī ma'rīfat al-ʿulūm at-talāt*, from which he later wrote an abridgement entitled *Marāšid at-tadqīq wa-maḡāšid at-taḡqīq*.<sup>55</sup> Unlike his *kalām* works that address the arguments

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ing to the colophon of this autograph, the commentator completed his work in Marāḡa in 662/1264 (thus preceding the author's death by thirteen years); see R. Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda Section) in the Garrett Collection, Princeton University Library* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), no. 3041.

<sup>51</sup> Edited with Mullā Ṣadrā's *Risālat at-taṣawwūr wa-t-taṣdīq*, in *Risālatāt fī t-taṣawwūr wa-t-taṣdīq*, ed. M. Šarī'atī (Qum: Mu'assasat-i Ismā'īliyyān, 1416/1995).

<sup>52</sup> These works do not appear to be extant; see Schmitdke, *The Theology of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī*, 59. It should be noted that Ḥillī also wrote a work critical of Avicenna's philosophy entitled *Kaṣf at-talbīs min kalām ar-Ra'īs* ("Exposing the Deceitful Statements of [Avicenna]"), no longer extant.

<sup>53</sup> The *Categories* is extant in a unique manuscript, dated 717/1317; see A.J. Arberry, *The Chester Beatty Library, A Handlist of the Arabic Manuscripts* (Dublin: W. Walker, 1955–1966), no. 5151.

<sup>54</sup> Ed. M.H. Mawlawī (Qum: Markaz-i Muṭāla'āt-i va-Taḡqīqāt-i Islāmī, forthcoming).

<sup>55</sup> The extant portions of *Marāšid at-tadqīq wa-maḡāšid at-taḡqīq* include only the logic part up to the fourth section of the *Topics* (*Kitāb al-Ġadal*) and the metaphysics (*Ilāḡiyāt*) section. For a description of the logic sections, see M.T. Dānišpažūh and 'A.N. Munzavī in *Fihrist-i nushah-hā-yi ḡaṭṭī-yi Kitābhānah-yi Markazī-yi Dānišgāh-yi Tihrān* (Tehran: Dānišgāh-yi Tihrān, 1330–1357Š/1951–1978), 9:934–35, no. 2301; this manuscript is dated 710/1310 and includes the author's *iḡāza* as well as that of his son, Faḡr al-Muḡaḡiqqīn. I am preparing a critical edition and translation of the first book of the logic, the *Eisagoge*. As for the metaphysics section, found in another manuscript, see at-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Maktabat al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī*, 185.

of the *mutakallimūn* together with those of the philosophers,<sup>56</sup> these philosophical works are primarily strict expositions of logic, physics, and metaphysics in the Avicennan tradition.

In conclusion, the twofold significance of Ṭūsī for the Avicennan tradition rests in defending Avicenna against an established Aš‘arī tradition within the Nizāmīya and in successfully introducing Avicenna’s philosophy into Twelver-Šī‘ism. Al-‘Allāma al-Ḥillī is recognized for establishing these works as part of the Šī‘ī commentary tradition that began with his own commentaries on Ṭūsī’s *Tagh̄īds*. These commentaries fixed Ṭūsī’s works and those of the Šāfi‘ī Nağm ad-Dīn al-Kātibī as part of the Twelver-Šī‘ī college curriculum well into the modern period. The symbiosis between Twelver-Šī‘ism and the Šāfi‘ī-Nizāmīya tradition is well documented, at least within the legal studies tradition.<sup>57</sup> This symbiosis is also documented for the Twelver-Šī‘ī tradition of studying Avicenna’s philosophy. In studying the Twelver-Šī‘ī reception of Avicenna, one needs to begin with the Nizāmīya tradition of studying Avicenna’s works that began perhaps as early as Abū l-Ma‘ālī al-Ġuwaynī (d. 478/1085)<sup>58</sup> and culminated in the works of al-Ġazālī and Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī.

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<sup>56</sup> On Ḥillī’s adoption of philosophical concepts in his theological works, see S. Schmidtke, “Al-‘Allāma al-Ḥillī and Shī‘ite Mu‘tazilite Theology,” *Spektrum Iran* 7.3 (1994), 24–6.

<sup>57</sup> See D. Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy: Twelver Shī‘ite Responses to the Sunni Legal System* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998).

<sup>58</sup> Al-Ġuwaynī’s study of Avicenna is noted by R.M. Frank in *al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arite School*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 15 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 1–2.

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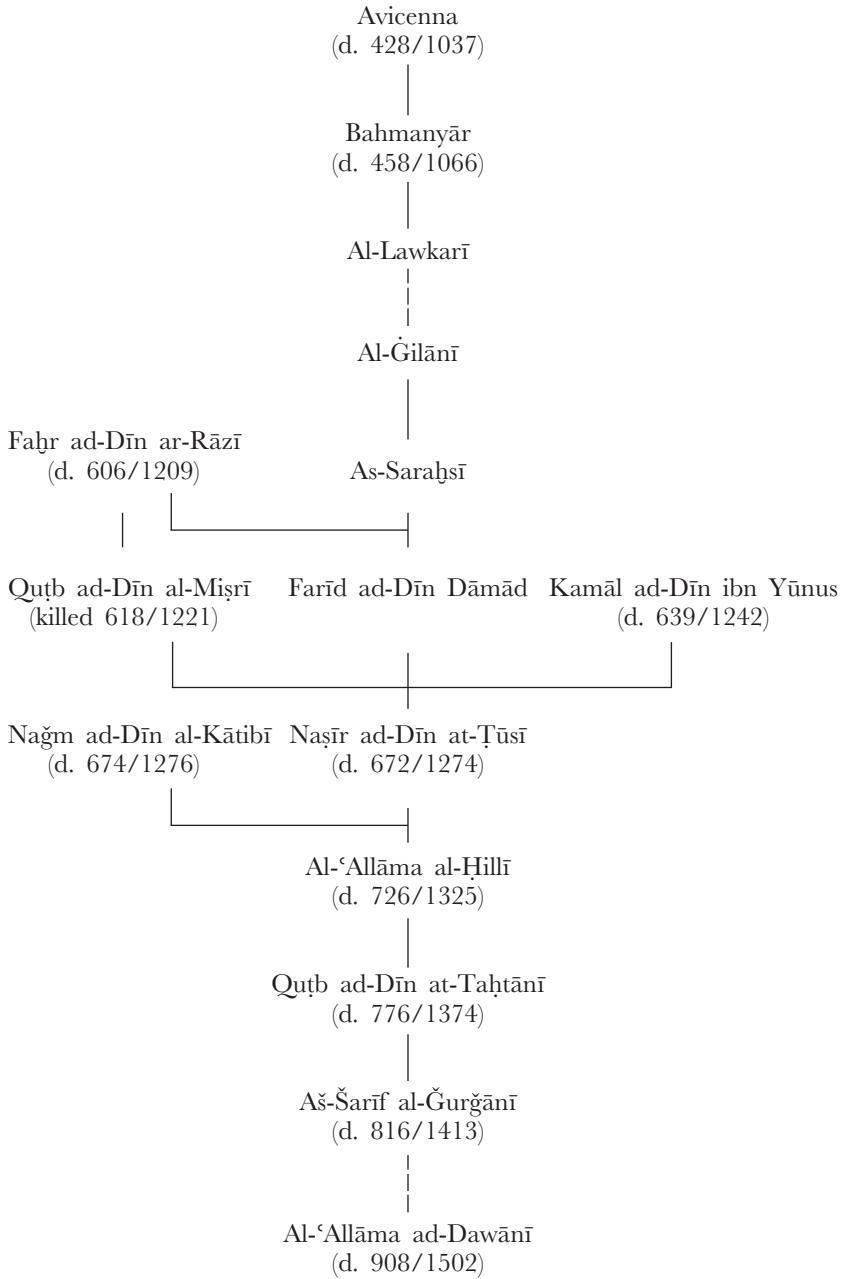


Fig. 1. Philosophers in the East after Avicenna



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### PROCESS METAPHYSICS IN ISLAM? AVICENNA AND MULLĀ ṢADRĀ ON INTENSIFICATION OF BEING\*

Sajjad Rizvi

Creative reconfiguration and dynamic dialectical development characterize later Islamic metaphysics. While the central metaphysical concerns of Avicenna remained broadly Aristotelian insofar as he worked within the confines both of the theory of categories and the primacy of substances within ontology, later developments shifted the focus of metaphysics away from substances towards processes of acts of being.<sup>1</sup> Process metaphysics privileges processes, or acts of being, over things, or unchanging substances.<sup>2</sup> In attempting to discern a process metaphysics in Islamic philosophy, a metaphysics that focuses on being as a processual “structure of events” that undergoes constant motion and which is not primarily a substance,<sup>3</sup> I shall examine the dialectical method whereby Mullā Ṣadrā, the seventeenth-century Iranian *Īshrāqī* philosopher develops his doctrine of intensification in being as such and as substance in particular, as a critique of Avicenna’s denial of intensity in motion and of the Aristotelian denial of motion in the category of substance. Avicenna remains the ground of Sadrian philosophical inquiry. But Mullā Ṣadrā, while acknowledging the great master, is no slavish disciple. His rejection of *taqlīd*, or the rehearsal of philosophical doctrines in awe of the authority

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\* I would like to thank Toby Mayer and Tony Street, as well as the participants of the Conference for their valuable comments. Needless to say, any remaining shortcomings are my own.

<sup>1</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Hikma al-mutaʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliya al-arbaʿa*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ at-Turāṯ al-ʿArabī, 1981) [hereafter *Asfār*], 1:259.5, 260.9. See also P. Morewedge, *Essays in Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism* (Oneonta, New York: SUNY, 1995), xiii.

<sup>2</sup> N. Rescher, *Process Metaphysics: An Introduction to Process Philosophy*, SUNY Series in Philosophy (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1996), 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Asfār*, 3:82.19, 84.18. See F. Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*, Studies in Islamic Philosophy and Science (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1975), 35–36, 97.

of previous masters, is also entirely consonant with Avicenna's own stress on the philosopher's need for verifying truth and forgoing adherence to authority.<sup>4</sup>

I shall first present the Sadrian argument for intensification in being. Then I shall consider his treatment of the Avicennan denial of intensity in being and in substance in particular. Third, I shall assess his critique of Avicenna and his espousal of intensity as the key to his doctrine of modulation of being (*taškik al-wuğūd*). Finally, I shall consider some implications for theology that are raised by intensification.

### I. Intensification of Being

Existents have degrees in existentiality, and being has different domains, some of which are more perfect and noble (*atamm wa-ašraf*) and others more imperfect and more base (*anqaš wa-aḥass*).<sup>5</sup>

Modulation by intensity occurs within the circle of being, from the arc of descent (*qaws an-nuzūl*) from the One to the arc of ascent (*qaws aš-su'ūd*) back to the One.<sup>6</sup> As Šadrā's student, Fayḍ Kāšānī (d. 1090/1680) says in his *Uṣūl al-ma'ārif*, a work that summarizes Sadrian metaphysics,

Being descends from the heaven of absoluteness (*samā' al-iḥlāq*) to the earth of limitation (*ard at-taqyīd*) in *degrees* [emphasis added]. It starts from the most noble and ends with the basest. Thus, a descending path (*silsilat an-nuzūl*) makes its way in it [i.e., being]. Then, it [being] takes an ascent (*su'ūd*), and it continues to progress from the lowest to the most excellent, until it ends with the most excellent in this ascending order.

<sup>4</sup> D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Texts and Studies, 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 191–193. See also *Aṣfār* 1:20.8; Šadrā, *Iksīr al-ʿarīfīn* in *Rasāʾil* (Tehran lithograph, 1885), 138; id., *Šarḥ al-Hidāya* (Tehran lithograph, 1313/1895), 3.13–14; Šadrā, *Sih Aṣl*, ed. M. Ḥwāğavī (Tehran: Intišārāt-i Mawlá, 1376Š/1956), 27.8–9, 79.1–3, 83.1–6, 108.2–3.

<sup>5</sup> *Aṣfār*, 4:277.1–2.

<sup>6</sup> L. Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 106. See also *Aṣfār*, 5:347.19–22; Šadrā, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*, ed. M. Ḥwāğavī (Tehran: Muʾassasah-yi Muṭālaʿāt va-Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1987), 3:66.24.

Whatever is closer to its Originator (glorified may He be!) is closer to simplicity, unity and independence, and further from differentiation, complexity and dependence.<sup>7</sup>

God is the limit case of absolute perfection, intensity and the point of origin and return in the circle of being.<sup>8</sup>

The beatific and ecstatic experience of the “doffing metaphor” of *Enneads* IV.8.1 is associated in the Illuminationist tradition with veils and degrees of light in a vertical hierarchy ascending up to the One.<sup>9</sup> Ṣadrā, in his *scholia* on *Šarḥ Hikmat al-išrāq*, uses this to explain modulation:

Know that the reality of being is graded in levels, one above the other and the higher comprehends all under it in a real sense (*maʿnawī*). So everything that is more potent, is more intense in its comprehension and its rank is more enveloping. Everything that is less potent inclines towards what is more perfect than it. All levels of being are veils that prevent one from noticing the most perfect, the highest being that comprehends everything (*al-wuġūdu l-atammu l-aʿlā l-muḥītu ʿalā kulli šayʿ*). All being is light except that it is differentiated in its luminosity and [those differentiations] become physical and corporeal forms, forms that are tenebrous in comparison to the higher [incorporeal] intellects and souls, since they are contaminated with privation.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Fayḍ Kāšānī, *Uṣūl al-maʿārif*, ed. S.Ġ. Āštiyānī (Qum: Daftar-i Tabliġāt-i Islāmī, 1375Š/1996), 14.10–14.

<sup>8</sup> *Asfār*, 1:253.6–8; Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir al-ilāhīya*, ed. S.Ġ. Āštiyānī (Mashhad: Mashhad University Press, 1961), 63.3–4, and id., *al-Mašāʾir*, ed./tr. P. Morewedge (New York: SSIPS, 1992), 58.2–6. See also Plotinus, *Enneads*, V.6.2.13, tr. A.H. Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966–1988), 5:207; Āštiyānī, *Hastī az naẓar-i falsafah va-ʿirfān* (Tehran: Nahḍat-i Zanān-i Musulmān, 1376Š/1997), 277. For arguments concerning God as a “limit case” in the hierarchy of being found in Neoplatonic and Thomist circles, see B. Miller, *A Most Unlikely God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), especially chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>9</sup> The original text is Plotinus, *Plotini Opera*, ed. P. Henry and H. Schwyzer (Bruxelles: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951–1973), 2:224; tr. Armstrong, *Enneads*, 4:397; Arabic tr. in *Aflūḥin ʿinda l-ʿArab (Uṣūlūġīya)*, ed. ʿA.R. Badawī (Cairo: L’Institut Français, 1948), 22.1–4; Eng. tr. of the Arabic by G. Lewis in *Plotini Opera*, 2:225. For discussions, see F. Zimmermann, “The Origins of the so-called Theology of Aristotle,” in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Kraye, W.F. Ryan, and C.B. Schmitt (London: The Warburg Institute, 1986), 138–141. The passage is found in many instances in Islamic philosophical and mystical texts, and often correctly identified as Platonic in spirit; see, for example, Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīya*, ed. ʿU. Yaḥyā (Cairo: L’Institut Français, 1972), 2:219, and Suhrawardī, *at-Taḥwīḥāt* in *Opera metaphysica et mystica*, ed. H. Corbin (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1945), 1:112, and id., *Hikmat al-išrāq* in *Opera metaphysica et mystica*, ed. H. Corbin, Bibliothèque Iranienne (Tehran: L’Institut Franco-Iranien, 1952), 2:162–65.

<sup>10</sup> Ṣadrā, *Tāʾliqā ʿalā Šarḥ Hikmat al-išrāq* (Tehran lithograph, 1313/1895), 379, marginal note at top of page.

Veils of light are degrees of contingent being graded in intensities from the One, a translunary hierarchy that traverses the division between the sensible and intelligible realms.<sup>11</sup> The closer that a degree of being is to the One, the more intense it is, and the more distant it is, the less intense it is. Perfection in the scale of being is what tends towards simplicity and unity (and indeed the One) and what is most removed from complexity.<sup>12</sup> Every being thus has two aspects: one is a veil that hides the divine by confusing the perceiver into accepting what appears phenomenally before him, but the other is a manifestation of the divine. The former is its quidditative aspect and the latter its existential aspect. This is why beings that are devoid of quidditative features are purer lights that indicate the divine through their existence.

Intensification posits degrees of being that constitute modulation in degrees of perfection and participation. The latter dynamic is significant for the Neoplatonic roots of the problem. Damascius (d. after 529) affirmed that being *qua* soul constantly changes because the forms within it differ through differing levels of participation (*metexis*).<sup>13</sup> Perfect participation is perfect being, that is, God, who is the Agent of this hierarchy.<sup>14</sup> Beings participate in the general “pool of being” sharing in the very roots of being, and differing in their degrees of participation by perfection and imperfection, independence and dependence, and priority and posteriority.<sup>15</sup> The concept of intensification is taken from the Illuminationist tradition’s vision of the hierarchy of lights. The Illuminationist tradition considers quiddities as universals to undergo intensification as well, a concept that Ṣadrā then applies to being.<sup>16</sup> Ṣadrā explicitly tells us that he is reversing

<sup>11</sup> *Asfār*, 6:300.1–11.

<sup>12</sup> Suhrawardī, *al-Mašārīʿ* in *Opera*, op. cit., 1:293, and id., *Hikmat al-išrāq* in *Opera*, 2:87. See also G.Ḥ. Dīnānī, *Qawāʿid-i kullī-yi falsafī dar falsafah-yi islāmī* (Tehran: Muʾassasah-yi Muṭālaʿāt va-Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1372Š/1993), 3:104–105.

<sup>13</sup> C. Steel, *The Changing self: a study on the soul in later Neoplatonism* (Brussels: Koninklijke Akademie, 1978), 108–109. It is important to note that this is a feature of Iamblichean Neoplatonism, since most other Neoplatonists reject it; see R.T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1995), 119–120.

<sup>14</sup> *Asfār*, 1:443.13–19; Ṣadrā, *Ittiṣāf al-māhīya bi-l-wuḡūd in Rasāʾil*, 118. The Agent is more perfect than its effects, following an old Aristotelian rule; see *Asfār*, 3:250.1–5; Ṣadrā, *al-Mašārīʿ*, ed. H. Corbin, Bibliothèque Iranienne (Tehran: L’Institut Français, 1964), 44.8–9. See also A. Lloyd, “The principle that the cause is greater than the effect,” *Phronesis* 16 (1976), 146–156.

<sup>15</sup> *Asfār*, 6:86.5–8.

<sup>16</sup> *Asfār*, 1:441.1–2, 443.2; 4:270.6–9; 5:92.8–13. See also Suhrawardī, *at-Takwīhāt*, 13.22; and id., *al-Mašārīʿ*, 299.

the Illuminationist position.<sup>17</sup> Modulation only applies to being since different intensities of being still permit causality, but if modulation were to occur in quiddity, one quiddity of a different intensity could not be a cause for another.<sup>18</sup> Quiddity cannot undergo modulation because a quiddity defines a certain nature with essential and accidental properties that are true of all its portions and individuals. If it could be more intense, then all those individuals would be so, and so too for debilitation. So quiddity cannot undergo modulation. What defines a quiddity is thus quite strict and what marks out a being is more “fuzzy” and naturally open to modulation. The law of Indiscernibles does not apply equally to both quiddity and being.<sup>19</sup>

Šadrā affirms intensity in substances with three degrees in each substance, a logical, an intelligible and a material, and the whole thing is a manifestation of the divine essence through its sustaining agency.<sup>20</sup> Substantial motion is a concomitant of being. Just as God’s agency brings things into being so does it bring about substantial motion.<sup>21</sup> The relationship between being and motion is described as follows.

Being permits intensification and debilitation (*al-ištidād wa-t-taḍaʿuf*) meaning that it permits intensifying motion. Substance in its substantiality, that is, its substantial being, allows for essential change. The components of a single contiguous motion and their limits do not exist in actuality distinctly, but rather exist in a single being. The quiddities that correspond to these degrees of being, do not exist in actuality as distinct. Rather, they exist collectively like the components of definition [i.e., exist collectively as a definition].<sup>22</sup>

In the Sadrian doctrine, substance undergoes intensification and modulation because it is in motion.<sup>23</sup> Two examples are given for this. First, water when boiled turns into steam, not by changing from a definite substance “water” to a definite substance “steam” through a shifting intensity in its substantiality, but because the being intensifies

<sup>17</sup> *Asfār*, 1:427.9–10; Šadrā, *aš-Šawāhid ar-rubūbiya*, ed. S.Ġ. Āstiyānī (Mashhad: Mashhad University Press, 1967), 134.14–135.4.

<sup>18</sup> *Asfār*, 6:21.7–14, 390.1–3.

<sup>19</sup> The Leibnizian Law of Indiscernibles postulates that “if a is identical to b, whatever is true of a is true of b”; see B. Russell, “On denoting,” *Mind* 14 (1905), 47.

<sup>20</sup> *Asfār*, 2:313.9–314.8.

<sup>21</sup> *Asfār*, 8:256.15–19.

<sup>22</sup> *Asfār*, 9:186.8–13.

<sup>23</sup> *Asfār*, 4:273.5–8.

and the substance undergoes a change and modulation.<sup>24</sup> The vortex of events of that being that is watery remains the substrate of that change. The other famous example is that of the sperm in the womb that develops and becomes an embryo. Substantial motion occurs in bodily substances through the flux of being and the constant layering of ipseities with forms one after another.<sup>25</sup> It is constant renewal of forms since hylomorphism demands that matter never be free of form.<sup>26</sup> The ipseity that undergoes the change remains a constant vortex.<sup>27</sup> The question of substantial motion was raised in Neoplatonism, as Ṣadrā knew well. Motion and being are identical concepts in Plotinus with the same reference in reality as properties of intellect.<sup>28</sup> But they are mentally distinct as intentional objects and cognitive activity. Both Iamblichus (d. c. 326) and Damascius (d. after 529) held that the soul in its descent into the body and then its ascending reversion undergoes substantial change without violating its unity and identity because it changed itself.<sup>29</sup> All the “lives” of the human soul are so many faculties or manifestations of the same substance.<sup>30</sup> What is also useful for us is the “architectonic” approach of later Neoplatonism to the hierarchy of being, shunning the monistic tendencies of both Plotinus and Porphyry.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Asfār*, 4:274.11–14.

<sup>25</sup> *Asfār*, 2:967.

<sup>26</sup> *Asfār*, 2:111.1–113.3. He draws on the Sufi tradition of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240) for the doctrine of the renewal of forms (*tağaddud al-amṭāl*); Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīya* (Būlāq, 1911), 3:303, 4:439, *inter alia*. See Ġalāl ad-Dīn Humā’ī, *Dū risālah dar falsafah-yi islāmī* (Tehran: Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1997), 14, and William Chittick, *The Self-disclosures of God*, SUNY Series in Islam (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1998), 57–66.

<sup>27</sup> *Asfār*, 3:96.8–10, 101.3–103.7; 4:273.22.

<sup>28</sup> L. Gerson, *Plotinus* (London: Routledge, 1994), 99, quoting Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI.3.2.212, tr. A.H. Armstrong, 6:183.

<sup>29</sup> Steel, *The Changing Self*, 157–8. Steel, 55–6, shows how Priscianus uses Theophrastus on this point against his thesis in the commentaries on *De Anima*. According to Aristotle, when a substance changes, its identity is not retained but transforms, since the integrity of its essence has been violated; see C. Witt, *Substance and Essence in Aristotle: An Interpretation of Metaphysics VII–IX* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 3–9; T. Scaltsas, “Substantial holism,” in *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, ed. T. Scaltsas, D. Charles, and M.L. Gill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 121.

<sup>30</sup> Steel, *The Changing Self*, 62, quoting Priscianus.

<sup>31</sup> Steel, *The Changing Self*, 155.

## II. *The Avicennan position*

However, in the Aristotelian and mainstream Neoplatonic tradition, *ousia qua* substance does not admit of more or less.<sup>32</sup> Avicenna denies intensity in being or, more specifically, substance:

Being *qua* being does not differ in intensity or allow of more or less. It only differs in priority, posteriority, independence and dependence, necessity and contingency.<sup>33</sup>

The primary sense of being is substance.<sup>34</sup> Substance cannot undergo intensification and debilitation because it has no opposite and intensity requires opposition and contrariness. Avicenna's student Bahmanyār states:

Substance does not allow of more intense and weaker. Intensification and debilitation is negated with the negation of opposition in which it is not possible to change from one to another through motion. Rather opposition in substance occurs simultaneously and not through motion. Motion does not occur in substances and it is unlike the change from blackness to whiteness.<sup>35</sup>

Bahmanyār makes the link between the denial of intensity and the denial of substantial motion that is critical for intensification. Intensification and debilitation occur where there is motion but one substance cannot be more intense than another nor weaker than another. This does not mean that a substance cannot be prior in substantiality to another. "First substance" is prior in substantiality to "second

<sup>32</sup> According to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1030b413, 1031b114, 1032a46, 1037a1820, intensity within substance violates its unity. See M.L. Gill, *Aristotle on Substance: the paradox of unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 4; C. Evangelou, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 66, quoting Porphyry, *in Cat.*, 2b722, apud S. Strange (tr.), *Porphyry on Aristotle's Categories* (London: Duckworth, 1992), 84. See also L. Goodman, *Avicenna* (London: Routledge, 1992), 58.

<sup>33</sup> Avicenna, *aš-Šifāʿ, al-Ilāhīyāt*, ed. Ğ. Anawātī and S. Zāʿid (Cairo: al-Hayʿa al-Miṣrīya al-ʿamma li-l-Kitāb, 1960), 276.13–15; id., *al-Mubāḥaṭāt*, ed. M. Bīdārfa (Qum: Intiṣārāt-i Bīdār, 1413/1992), 286.7–9; Bahmanyār, *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl*, ed. M. Muṭahharī (Tehran: Intiṣārāt-i Dāniṣgāh-yi Tihārān, 1375Š/1996), 529.13–15; al-Ḥillī, *Kaṣf al-Murād*, ed. Ḥ. Āmulī (Qum: an-Naṣr al-Islāmī, 1988), 29.11–17. See *Aṣfār*, 2:188.13–189.10.

<sup>34</sup> Avicenna, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, 57.7; Bahmanyār, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 304.4–5. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1028a31–b2; and Witt, *Substance and Essence*, 47; M.V. Wedin, *Aristotle's Theory of Substance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 173.

<sup>35</sup> Bahmanyār, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 307.12–308.4. See Aristotle, *Categories* 4a10–21, *Physics* 190a13–21, 190b917 on the need for a continuant; see Gill, *Aristotle on Substance*, 6.

substance” but is not more intense. Priority is attached to the being of substantiality and intensity to the quiddity of substantiality.<sup>36</sup> Although substances are divided into primary (that is, individuals) and secondary (“man”), this distinction in their substantiality is not by grades of intensity or modulation since the distinction is not essential.<sup>37</sup> Substance cannot undergo motion.<sup>38</sup>

The Sadrian counter-argument runs as follows. Substance is extra-mental self-sufficient being. It is not a genus and, like being, undergoes modulation. Being is more primary than substance.<sup>39</sup> Things exist in grades of intensity and existential priority and posteriority. For example, “father” does not precede “son” either causally or in humanity, but rather existentially.<sup>40</sup> The distinction in substances and substantiality is not through the modulation of substantiality as the Illuminationists suggest.<sup>41</sup> Rather, substantiality is a singular undifferentiated concept, but it is the being of the substance that is modulated in grades of intensity.<sup>42</sup> This pertains to the horizontal hierarchy as well. Humans are prior and more intense than beasts in being and not by virtue of “greater substantiality.”<sup>43</sup>

The Peripatetics held that being cannot remain single with grades of intensity (and hence must be multiple in reality) because intensity does not differentiate one from the other and it leads to two problems within the metaphysics of radical contingency.<sup>44</sup> First, there can be no causality, because there is no greater or lesser in potency and a cause must be present with its effect but also more potent than its effect through essential priority and not greater intensity.<sup>45</sup> Causality

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<sup>36</sup> Bahmanyār, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 308.7–9. Aristotle argues that change with respect to substances is irreversible and not intensifying; see *Metaphysics* 994a22–b3; and Gill, *Aristotle on Substance*, 92.

<sup>37</sup> *Asfār*, 4:263.6–11.

<sup>38</sup> *Asfār*, 3:229.12. In the Aristotelian account there is what Gill, *Aristotle on Substance*, 6–7, calls a “paradox of unity” in the description of substance, a conflict between the recognition of change and the need for horizontal unity of substance, that is, a continuant substratum in which changing attributes inhere.

<sup>39</sup> *Asfār*, 1:260.1.

<sup>40</sup> *Asfār*, 4:247.23–248.3.

<sup>41</sup> *Asfār*, 4:265.23–265.4. The Illuminationists do affirm intensity in substance; see Suhrawardī, *at-Takwīhāt*, 13; and Ḥasanzādah in Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 1:696.

<sup>42</sup> *Asfār*, 4:269.4–9.

<sup>43</sup> *Asfār*, 4:269.12–16.

<sup>44</sup> M. Intizām, “Ibtikārāt-i falsafī-yi Ṣadr al-muta’allihīn,” *Ḥīrad-nāmah-yi Ṣadrā* 12 (1998), 79.

<sup>45</sup> Avicenna, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, 269.9–11.

functions with other scales of prior and posterior but not with intensity.<sup>46</sup> As Bahmanyār says,

It holds for priority and posteriority because the cause exists in the first instance and the effect in the second. [It holds for] independence and dependence because the cause does not depend for its being on the effect but rather exists in itself or through another cause. The effect depends on the cause. [It holds for] necessity and contingency because the being of the effect in itself is not necessary since if it were, then it would be necessary without a self-sufficient cause. So its essence is contingent being and only necessary through its cause.<sup>47</sup>

Second, there can be no sufficient cause or preponderance, since no one side of a potential contingent, whether existence or non-existence, dominates.<sup>48</sup>

The Illuminationist response is to deny causality altogether since the hierarchy of lights is not causally related, and concepts such as substances and being are merely intentional.<sup>49</sup> For Šadrā, being has no cause since it must be necessary to exist.<sup>50</sup>

Being exists by itself. It is the determination of itself and the being of its essence. With respect to itself, it is not attached to anything; rather [it is attached to other things] with respect to its accidental determinations and developments following it. So being *qua* being does not have an agent by which it is established, nor does it have matter which is impossible for it, and no substrate in which it is found, nor any form in which it is clothed, nor does it have any *telos*.

Being is too great to be attached to any cause since it has been disclosed that it has no cause at all, nor any cause by which it is, nor any cause from which (*minhu*) it is, nor any cause in which it is, nor any cause which it has.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, the hierarchy of being is not a causal hierarchy. Hence there is no sufficient cause or preponderance.<sup>52</sup> Contingents exist not through

<sup>46</sup> Avicenna, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, 277.1–3.

<sup>47</sup> Bahmanyār, *at-Taḥṣīl*, 529.15–530.4; see also Avicenna, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, 277.7–278.8.

<sup>48</sup> Avicenna, *al-Ilāhīyāt*, 278.4–7.

<sup>49</sup> Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-īrāq*/*The Philosophy of Illumination*, ed./tr. H. Ziai and J. Walbridge, Islamic Translation Series (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999) 120.9–13. See also *Aṣfār*, 4:265.20–23.

<sup>50</sup> *Aṣfār*, 1:53.9ff. See also Ḥasanzādah, *ibid.*, 1:88.

<sup>51</sup> *Aṣfār*, 1:54.6–13.

<sup>52</sup> Ḥasanzādah, *ibid.*, 1:206ff.; Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī, *Šarḥ Ġwār al-farāʿid*, ed. M. Mohaghegh and T. Izutsu (Tehran: McGill Institute of Islamic Studies, 1969),

such agency but because they exist by virtue of the Necessary. They cannot be non-existent or indifferent and then emerge as existents.<sup>53</sup> The cause of being is the One but there is no causality within the realm of being.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, degrees of intensity for the Peripatetics entail different species.<sup>55</sup> But intensification is not differentiated in actual being since, if it were, it would entail composition in motion of momentary entities that are infinite and that is impossible.<sup>56</sup> The Peripatetic mistakes distinctions as occurrent in essences; thus, he posits different species. But in fact *being* is what is considered.<sup>57</sup> The Peripatetic argument is rejected as follows:

The nature of being accepts intensity and debilitation in its simple essence. There is no difference between individuals by an essential differential distinction (*mumayyiz faṣlī dātī*) or by an accidental type (*muṣannif ʿaradī*) or by a feature of species (*muṣahḥiṣ*) that is additional to the ground of its nature. Their individuals and units only differ by essential intensity and debilitation (*aṣ-ṣidda wa-d-ḍuf*), priority and posteriority, nobility and baseness (*aṣ-ṣaraf wa-l-ḥiṣṣa*). Universal concepts that are true of them [i.e., referents] are called quiddities that differ in essence by genus or species or accident. Because of this it is said that being differs in species and that the degrees of more intense and weaker are different species.<sup>58</sup>

But the Peripatetic tradition is not unified on the issue of intensity.<sup>59</sup> Avicenna's commentator Ṭūsī, in his commentary on *al-Iṣārāt*, remarks

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106; and T. Izutsu, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavari* (Tehran: Iran University Press, 1983), 115.

<sup>53</sup> *Ayfār*, 1:221.15–17.

<sup>54</sup> *Ayfār*, 1:401.12–15.

<sup>55</sup> *Ayfār*, 2:187.12–14; Avicenna, *al-Mubāḥaḥāt*, 166.16–167.1, states that different intensities of individuals entail a different species (*nawʿ*); Ṭūsī, *Maṣāriʿ al-muṣāriʿ*, ed. H. al-Muʿizzī (Qum: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Marʿaṣī, 1405/1984), 58.5–6. See Scaltsas, “Substantial holism,” *passim*, on Aristotle.

<sup>56</sup> *Ayfār*, 4:276.3–9.

<sup>57</sup> *Ayfār*, 2:188.13–189.10.

<sup>58</sup> *Ayfār*, 9:186.1–7.

<sup>59</sup> Arguably Avicenna himself equivocates on the issue. Avicenna, *al-Mubāḥaḥāt*, 41.4–7 states:

Being in the essences of being does not differ by species. Rather, if there is differentiation, it occurs through intensification and debilitation (*at-taʿakkud wa-d-ḍuf*). It is in species that the quiddities of things which receive being differ, but the being that overlays them does not differ in species. For man differs from horse in species on account of his quiddity, not his being.

But this does not entail intensification necessarily. Later on, Avicenna, *ibid.*, 71.12–13, clarifies that “intensification” (*at-taʿakkud*) is really priority that occurs in three types: modalities, priority and posteriority, and dependence and independence.

that modulation occurs in being, not only in terms of priority and precedence but also in terms of intensity.<sup>60</sup> In a concession to Avicenna, he does not permit intensity within causality but does within other divisions of being, including Necessary and contingent.<sup>61</sup> He argues that since quiddity cannot undergo intensity yet occurs in different modes, this suggests that the differences are existential instances of quiddity that differ in intensity. It is not quiddity that intensifies.<sup>62</sup> The Peripatetic doctrine holds that distinction by intensity occurs in quiddities through their *differentiae*. But this is rejected because *differentiae* are not grades of intensity and quiddity does not undergo intensification.<sup>63</sup> Being is not distinguished by *differentiae* since it is not a universal.<sup>64</sup> Ṭūsī is already part of a processist turn in Islamic philosophy because he does not automatically consider substance to be the primary referent and sense of being, unlike the other Peripatetics.

### III. *The Sadrian response*

In the *Asfār*, Ṣadrā adjudicates at length between the Peripatetics and Illuminationists on intensity and modulation. The first issue is how things differ: do they differ by the whole of their quiddities, by parts of their quiddities, by extrinsic properties or by their existence? The Illuminationists pick the first option and the Peripatetics a mixture of the second and third. But the correct position is to assert that existents differ by intensity in their being.<sup>65</sup>

The second issue deals with varieties of “more or less.” The first argument considers essences and individuals. The Peripatetics deny any modulation by precedence, priority or perfection within an essence. The Illuminationists permit such distinction. Ṣadrā takes the Illuminationist position and provides the example of light that is graded, intensifies and affects others by itself.<sup>66</sup> The individuation of beings and essences is precisely in such a hierarchy of intensity,

<sup>60</sup> Avicenna, *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*, ed. M. Ṣihābī (Qum: Naṣr al-Balāḡa, 1375Š/1996), 3:33.3–10.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:34.1–2.

<sup>62</sup> Ṣadrā, *aṣ-Ṣawāhid ar-rubūbiya* in *Rasāʾil*, ed. H. Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Intiṣārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1996), 306.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>64</sup> *Asfār*, 1:50.4.

<sup>65</sup> *Asfār*, 1:427–31.

<sup>66</sup> *Asfār*, 1:432.6–433.2.

precedence, excellence and perfection.<sup>67</sup> Against the Illuminationists he makes the point that the distinction between two black bodies is not that one is a more intensely black species than the other but rather that one's being is more intense, which manifests itself in being more black.<sup>68</sup> The unity of the thing is not compromised in intensifying motion since substance is not the primary ontic unit.<sup>69</sup>

The second argument of the Peripatetics is that intensity and modulation in being entails species distinction between individuals. This is a logical impossibility. The Illuminationists deny distinction by species or *differentia*. This is then related to the third argument that intensity and motion only occur in the categories of quantity and quality that are distinct types of modulation. Peripatetics deny intensity or motion in substance.<sup>70</sup> Şadrā, broadly agreeing with the Illuminationists, makes three objections. First, the Peripatetic argument on the distinction of scales of quantity and quality refer to ordinary and conventional language use. But these recourses do not amount to a philosophical proof. The Peripatetics distinguish between the two in a circular fashion entailing a *petitio principii*. In fact, both intensity and more or less are the same *process*.<sup>71</sup> Second, motion occurs not only to these two categories but also in substances. He uses the example of the color spectrum to illustrate this point.<sup>72</sup> Third, intensity occurs in reality, given that there is a vertical hierarchy of being. The higher intelligible world is more intense than this one since Platonic forms undergo modulation by intensity. The intelligible realm allows such gradation but not the *doxa*-ridden realm of *sensibilia*.<sup>73</sup> However, the sensible reflections of forms are of a lower ontological class and indeed "less real."<sup>74</sup> Ultimately, the Necessary is more intense than contingents.<sup>75</sup> One final point (though not an argument) that Şadrā makes is to accuse Avicenna of inconsistency since the latter affirms that some existents are more puissant and

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<sup>67</sup> *Ayfār*, 1:433.13–434.2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ayfār*, 1:436.8–11; 3:83.8–14, 434.1–2.

<sup>69</sup> *Ayfār*, 8:71–74, 80–93, 257.

<sup>70</sup> *Ayfār*, 3:85.12.

<sup>71</sup> *Ayfār*, 1:434.1–2, 438.16–18.

<sup>72</sup> *Ayfār*, 1:437.3–9.

<sup>73</sup> G. Vlastos, *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 65.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>75</sup> *Ayfār*, 1:440.21–441.5.

more intense than others and, within being, both time and motion are scales of intensity.<sup>76</sup>

#### IV. *Intensification and God*

Does intensification entail composition in the divine? Two objections to modulation can be raised in this context. If we take God as the highest degree of being, who is the Necessary and is equal to His attributes, then that entails composition in God. Second, if the actual supposition of modulation is applied to God as the highest and contingents below, then God is limited by the contingents. Since all share being and identity-in-difference, God is confined and bounded by the highest contingent degree. This is a problem, as we know that the being of God is pure and undetermined.<sup>77</sup> These objections are resolved in the following manner. First,

The chain of existents (*silsilat al-mawǧūdāt*) in degrees of being with the supposition of modulation do not have accidental being such that each degree has a border with the other. Each higher degree is not distinguished from the lower by boundaries that are fixed. Rather the chain of degrees is vertical and causal. Each higher degree is the cause of the lower and the lower the effect of the higher. The being of all the modular degrees in the chain contains all the perfections below it but not vice versa.<sup>78</sup>

Second,

The essence of the Necessary who is the highest degree in the chain has all the perfections of the degrees below it *in actu* existing in him. For the philosophers all contingent degrees exist truly and are effects of higher degrees, ultimately of God, and they indicate the greatness and glory of God. But for the mystics, being is exclusive to the essence of the Truth and all contingents are merely shadows and manifestations of Him. The attribution of being to them [contingents] is thus figurative.<sup>79</sup>

The final point about modulation by intensification is that there are two axes of intensification, a vertical hierarchy that traverses the

<sup>76</sup> *Aṣfār*, 2:189.7–10; 3:252.2–5.

<sup>77</sup> Ḥusaynī-yi Ṭīhrānī, *Mīhr-i Tābān* (Mashhad: Intiṣārāt-i ‘Allāmah-yi Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1417/1996), 211.

<sup>78</sup> Ṭabāṭabā’ī, loc. cit., 212.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 213–14.

domains of being, intelligible, sensible and intermediary, and a horizontal hierarchy that organizes this sublunary world of *sensibilia*. The horizontal hierarchy of being also undergoes intensification.<sup>80</sup> There is a gradual intensifying scale from the lowest being, that is, a mineral through the vegetable and animal until one arrives at the human, the most intense type of natural being, of which the most intense is the Perfect Man, the holder and deployer of *wilāya* (sanctified rank and proximity to the One).<sup>81</sup> The unity of the structure of reality is expressed using a common Neoplatonic and Hermetic metaphor of referring to the macrocosm as a “living animal.”<sup>82</sup> But this animal is not a contiguous, atomic composite organism.

The truth is that the circle of being (*dawr al-wuḡūd*) is one.<sup>83</sup> The whole cosmos is a single living great animal, whose limbs are connected one to the other, not in the sense of being quantitatively contiguous in surface and extension but in the sense that every perfect degree of being must be contiguous to a degree adjacent to it in existential perfection, either above it in intensity or below it in debilitation, without any other degree mediating between the two.<sup>84</sup>

The metaphor of the macrocosm is then reintegrated to the metaphor of the microcosm, man.

Man is a single existent possessing many faculties, some of which are intellectual, some psychic and some physical. All these [faculties] are degrees differing in excellence within their class. But the whole is still one essence.<sup>85</sup>

The vertical hierarchy moves from the basest, most passive level of sensibility through the intelligibles to God in a scale of gradation of perfection and modulation of intensity.<sup>86</sup> This is a unified multiplic-

<sup>80</sup> *Asfār*, 5:342ff. See also *ibid.*, 3:131.2–132.8, 402.1–6, 500.1–502.12.

<sup>81</sup> *Asfār*, 5:345–7.

<sup>82</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV.8.3.14–16, tr. Armstrong, 4:407.7–10. See also aš-Šayḫ al-Yūnānī translated by Lewis in Plotinus, *Opera*, 2:235. It draws upon the Neoplatonic concept of the world-soul. See Gerson, *Plotinus*, 63; S. Clark, “Plotinus: Body and Soul,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. L. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 285; and J. Walbridge, *The Leaven of the Ancients*, SUNY Series in Islam (Albany, New York: SUNY, 2000), 92.

<sup>83</sup> The lithograph has *dawr*, while the edition has *dār* (abode).

<sup>84</sup> *Asfār*, 5:342.12–16.

<sup>85</sup> *Asfār*, 5:343.6–8.

<sup>86</sup> *Asfār*, 5:79.4–16; 6:117.4–17. Mišbāḥ Yazdī, *Ta’līqā ‘alā Nihāyat al-ḥikma* (Qum: Dar Rāh-i Ḥaqq, 1405/1984), 43–44, denies any modulation in the vertical hierarchy of being. In response to my paper, Dimitri Gutas posited the objection that

ity in which each level of being is connected and ultimately dependent upon God.<sup>87</sup> The vertical scale also cuts across the modes of being: the concept and word are the least intense; mental being is higher but the reality of being is most intense.<sup>88</sup> The scale intensifies from pure privation to pure being. This is the “limit case” proof for the existence of God as well.<sup>89</sup> This hierarchy also traverses time and the “domains of being” across the distinction between this world and the afterlife. The beings of the afterlife are “more permanent, more intense and more perfect.”<sup>90</sup> People also possess levels of being of which their being in the afterlife is more intense. Of such people, the person who is most intense in his being across all modes of being and all worlds and times is the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*).

The Sadrian vision of reality is a singular unified but modulated circle of being. Distinction between the grades of being is determined by intensification and intensifying motion. Such an ontological vision is posited in contra-distinction to Avicenna in a deliberate dialectical interplay between Avicennan substance metaphysics and pluralism and Sadrian process metaphysics and monism. As such, the stark contrast brings out the centrality of the question of being and the Sadrian contribution to it in Islamic thought.

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it seems nonsensical to suggest that man somehow “exists more” than a horse who exists more than a chair and so on. How can “exist” be used in such a comparative, scalar way? However, such a use of “exist” in Neoplatonic semantics is not unusual. See J. Martin, “Existence, Negation and Abstraction in the Neoplatonic Hierarchy,” *History and Philosophy of Logic* 16 (1995), 69–96.

<sup>87</sup> *Asfār*, 5:349.11–15. See also Ḥusaynī-yi Ṭīhrānī, op. cit., 210.

<sup>88</sup> *Asfār*, 1:263.14–16.

<sup>89</sup> *Asfār*, 5:343.17–20.

<sup>90</sup> *Asfār*, 9:175.2–3.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE RECEPTION OF IBN SĪNĀ IN SYRIAC THE CASE OF GREGORY BARHEBRAEUS

Hidemi Takahashi

#### I. *Introduction*

When we think of the relationship between Syriac and Arabic literature, we tend to think in the first place of transmission from Syriac into Arabic in the early centuries of Islam and to forget that there was also transmission in the other direction. Partly as a result, little study has been conducted so far in this field, be it in the form of straightforward translations from Arabic into Syriac<sup>1</sup> or of Arabic works used as sources in Syriac writing. Those Christians, however, who continued (and still continue to this day) to use Syriac as their literary medium, did not live in isolation from their increasingly Islamic and Arabic-speaking surroundings and those authors writing in Syriac in the centuries following the Islamic conquest were clearly well aware of the scientific developments taking place under Islam.<sup>2</sup> It may be expected that borrowings from Arabic into Syriac will have increased with the progress of the sciences under Islam and that such borrowings will be quite common by the time we reach the so-called Syriac Renaissance of the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. Given the prominence of Ibn Sīnā in philosophy and natural sciences

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<sup>1</sup> See H. Teule, "A Forgotten Segment of Syriac Literature: Translations from Arabic into Syriac," to appear in the proceedings of Symposium Syriacum VIII, held in Sydney, 26th June–1st July, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Relatively early instances where influence of Arabic writing has been detected in Syriac works on philosophy and natural sciences include Moses bar Kepha's *Hexaemeron Commentary* and the anonymous *Causa causarum* (10th c.?). See, respectively, U. Rudolph, "Christliche Bibelexegese und Mu'tazilitische Theologie, Der Fall des Moses bar Kepha (gst. 903 n.Chr.)," *Oriens* 34 (1994) 299–313; and G.J. Reinink, "Communal Identity and the Systematisation of Knowledge in the Syriac 'Cause of All Causes'," in *Pre-Modern Encyclopedia Texts, Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1–4 July 1996*, ed. P. Binkley (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 275–288, and the literature cited there.

during those centuries, it may also be expected that such borrowings in those fields will often go back directly or indirectly to the writings of Ibn Sīnā and that is indeed the case in the writings of the greatest author of that period of Renaissance, the Syriac Orthodox (“Jacobite”) prelate and polymath, Gregory Abū l-Farağ Barhebraeus (Bar ‘Ebrāyā, Ibn al-‘Ibrī).<sup>3</sup>

Barhebraeus was born in 622/3 A.H. (1225/6 A.D.; 1537 A.Gr.) in Melitene (Malatya), a city then under the rule of the Rum Seljuks, but with a large and prestigious community of Syriac Orthodox Christians. After periods of study in Antioch, Tripoli (both then still in Frankish hands) and, possibly, Damascus, he was raised to the episcopate at the tender age of twenty in 644/1246 and was appointed, successively, to the sees of Gubos and Laqabin in the vicinity of Melitene, before being translated, ca. 651/1253, to the more important see of Aleppo, where he was to witness the fall of the city to the Mongols in 658/1260. In 662/1264 he was raised to the office of the Maphrian of the East, the second highest office in the Syriac Orthodox Church with jurisdiction over those areas which had been under Persian rule in pre-Islamic times, and it was during his tenure of this office that he wrote most of his works. As maphrian, his normal place of residence would have been the Monastery of Mar Mattai near Mosul, but he spent a significant part of his maphrianate in Marāğa and Tabrīz, the centers of power of the new Il-Ĥānid dynasty, where he almost certainly came into contact with Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī (597–672/1201–1274), as well as with the group of scholars gathered around him.<sup>4</sup> He died in Marāğa on 5/6th Ğumādā al-Ĥīra 685 A.H. (29/30th July 1286; 1597 A.Gr.).

<sup>3</sup> On Barhebraeus and his works in general, see, e.g., A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluss der christlich-palästinensischen Texte* (Bonn: Marcus und Weber, 1922; repr. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968) [hereafter *GSZ*], 312–320; G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, StT 118, 133, 146, 147, 172 (Vatican City: Bibl. Apost. Vaticana, 1944–53) [hereafter *GCAL*], 2:272–281; Ignāṭiyūs Afrām I Barṣaum, *al-Lu’lu’ al-manṭūr fī ta’rīḥ al-‘ulūm wa-l-ādāb as-suryānīya* (Homs, 1943; repr. Glane/Losser: Bar Hebraeus Verlag, 1987) [hereafter *Lu’lu’*], 411–430; Albīr Abūnā, *Adab al-luḡā al-ārāmīya* (Beirut: Maṭba‘at Stārkū, 1970) [hereafter *ALA*], 493–508; and for a bibliography, J.M. Fiey, “Esquisse d’une bibliographie de Bar Hébraeus († 1286),” *ParOr* 13 (1986) 279–312. For some additions to the bio-bibliographical works on Barhebraeus listed by Fiey, 280–284, see Takahashi, “Simeon of Qal‘a Rumaïta, Patriarch Philoxenus Nemrod and Bar ‘Ebroye,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* (<http://syrcm.cua.edu/Hugoye>) 4.1 (Jan. 2001), n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See Takahashi, “Simeon,” n. 90.

Barhebraeus' literary output covers a wide range of subjects, including Biblical exegesis, dogmatic and moral/mystical theology, liturgy, jurisprudence, philosophy, historiography, belles lettres (*adab*), grammar/lexicography, the exact sciences, oneiromancy and medicine. Of these, the areas in which Barhebraeus is most likely to have been influenced by Ibn Sīnā are medicine and philosophy. The lists of Barhebraeus' works<sup>5</sup> mention a "book of the great Canon of Abū 'Alī" (*ktābā d-qānōna rabbā d-Abū 'Alī*), of which he had translated (or abridged?) four quires when he was overtaken by death. This work appears now to be lost, as are indeed the majority of Barhebraeus' medical works.<sup>6</sup> His philosophical works, on the other hand, have fared better and it is with these that we shall be concerned in this paper.

## II. Survey of Barhebraeus' Philosophical Works<sup>7</sup>

Among Barhebraeus' works there are three original works of different lengths (nos. 1–3 below) which deal with philosophy in general,

<sup>5</sup> A list of thirty-one works is found in the continuation of Barhebraeus' *Chronicon ecclesiasticum* by his brother Barṣawmā; see *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, ed. J.B. Abbeloos and T.J. Lamy, 2 parts in 3 vols. (Louvain: Peeters, 1872–7), 2:467–486; and Joseph Simonius Assemanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, 3 vols. (Rome: S.C. de Propaganda Fide, 1719–1728; repr. Hildesheim-New York: Olms, 1975, 1999), 2:268–272. Similar lists with slight variations are found in the metrical biography of Barhebraeus composed by his disciple Dioscorus Gabriel of Bartelli (bishop of Gāzartā d-Qardū/Cizre, d. 699/1300, *Mēmā 'al qaddisā Grīgōriyōs mafryānā d-hū Bar 'Ebrāyā da-'bīd l-Diyōsqōrōs Episcōpā d-Gāzartā mdittā d-Qardū šnāt 1286 m.*, ed. Yūliyōs Yešū' Çiçek (Glanc/Losser: Bar Hebraeus Verlag, 1985), 34–38; see also R. Payne Smith, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae pars sexta, codices syriacos, carshunicos, mendaeos complectens* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1864), 516–522; Assad Sauma, "Commentary on the 'Biography' of Bar Hebraeus," *ARAM* (Stockholm: Arameiska Akademikernas Förbund) 7.15–16 (1998), 35–68, here 39f., and in numerous manuscripts of Barhebraeus' works. See H. Janssens, *L'Entretien de la sagesse, Introduction aux oeuvres philosophiques de Bar Hebraeus*, BFPUL 75 (Liège: Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres/Paris: E. Droz, 1937), 17, n. 1; A. Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonesammlungen, Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde, I. Westsyrische Originalurkunden*, CSCO 307, 317, subs. 35, 38, (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1970), 502, n. 4; and H.G.B. Teule, *Gregory Barhebraeus, Ethicon (Mēmā I)*, CSCO 534–535, syr. 218–219 (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), textus ix–x. Several works not mentioned in these lists (incl. the two Arabic treatises on psychology, see II.9–10 below) are also found attributed to Barhebraeus in manuscripts.

<sup>6</sup> See Takahashi, "Simeon," n. 93.

<sup>7</sup> The best general survey of Barhebraeus' philosophical works remains that provided by Janssens in the introduction to his edition of the *Discourse of Wisdom*

covering the three areas of logic, natural philosophy and metaphysics.<sup>8</sup> The three works were no doubt intended to provide textbooks for a progressive course in philosophy<sup>9</sup> and the alliterating titles they share (*hêwat hekmtā*, *swād sōfiya*, *tēgrat tēgrātā*) indicate that Barhebraeus saw them as forming a kind of a trilogy despite the variance in the dates at which they were composed. There is also a translation of an Arabic work which covered the same range of subjects (translation of *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt*; no. 6) and another which may have done so (*Ḥubdat al-asrār*; no. 5). Barhebraeus also wrote a short treatise dealing with logic only (no. 4), as well as two works, in Arabic, devoted to the subject of psychology (nos. 9–10). In addition, “philosophical” considerations play a large part in his theological works (*Candelabrum*, *Rays*; nos. 7–8) and are also to be found in scattered places in his other works.<sup>10</sup>

[Barhebraeus’ works are referred to by a confusing array of names in secondary literature. I give in parentheses in each case the original Syriac title, followed by the title as given in Assemani’s *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 2.268–321 (on which the names in subsequent European literature are mostly based) and the title encountered in Arabic secondary literature, usually as found in Barṣaum, *Lu’lu’*, 414–430.]

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(Janssens, *Entretien*, op. cit., 1–34). Since relatively little has been achieved since Janssens’ time in the way of editing and studying these philosophical works, a complete overhaul of his survey will have to await the progress of the edition of the *Cream of Wisdom* now under way, but an attempt will be made on the following pages to highlight some of the findings made since 1937.

<sup>8</sup> Only the *Cream of Wisdom* has an independent section dedicated to “practical philosophy” (i.e., ethics, economics and politics); see Section III below.

<sup>9</sup> See F.E. Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs: the Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), 108.

<sup>10</sup> Among this last category of works, one might mention in particular those poems of Barhebraeus dealing with philosophical themes: e.g., the piece on Creation and the rational soul (*Gregorū Bar-Hebraei carmina*, ed. Augustinus Sc seababi [Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1877], 35–46; *Muṣhātā d-Mār Grīgōriyōs Yōhannān Bar ‘Ebrāyā mafriyānā d-madnhā*, ed. Pīloksīnōs Yōhannān Dōlabānī [Jerusalem: Dayr Mār Marqūs, 1929; repr. Glane/Losser: Bar Hebraeus Verlag, 1983], 86–94, no. 7.4); and the “Question of Kamīs bar Qardāhē and Answers of Daniel bar Ḥaṭṭāb and Barhebraeus on the fact that Our Lord does not fall under the ten [Aristotelian] categories,” Sc seababi, 153–156; Dolabani, 157–159, no. 11.2.

1. *Cream of Wisdom* (*Hēwat hekmtā*, *Sapientia sapientiarum Assemanus, recte Butyrum sapientiae alii, Żubdat al-ḥikma*)<sup>11</sup>

The longest and most celebrated of Barhebraeus' philosophical works is the *Cream of Wisdom*, which was one of the last works he composed, in 684/1285–1286.<sup>12</sup> As has long been known, this work is modelled on Ibn Sīnā's *K. aš-Šifā'*, while the title of the work may have been inspired by the words "the cream of truth and choice morsels of the sciences" (*zubdat al-haqq . . . qafīy al-ḥikam*), which occur near the end of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Išārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt*, a work which Barhebraeus translated into Syriac.<sup>13</sup> We shall be looking at this work in greater detail below.

<sup>11</sup> Of the total of twenty-two books which make up this work, only three have so far been published in full. Poetica: D.S. Margoliouth, *Analecta orientalia ad Poeticam Aristoteleam* (London: Nutt, 1887; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 2000), 114–139. De plantis: H.J. Drossaert Lulofs and E.L.J. Poortman, *Nicolaus Damascenus, De plantis, Five Translations*, VNAW.L NR 139, Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1989), 68–113 (with English translation). Oeconomica, chap. I–II: M. Zonta, *Fonti greche e orientali dell' Economia di Bar-Hebraeus nell' opera "La crema della scienza"*, AION.S 70 (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1992) (with Italian translation, incl. that of chap. III); chap. III: G. Furlani, "Die Physiognomik des Barhebraeus in syrischer Sprache I," *ZS* 7 (1929) 1–16 (with German translation). There is a paraphrase, in Italian, of the book *De anima*: G. Furlani, "La psicologia di Barhebreo secondo il libro *La crema della Sapienza*," *RSO* 13 (1931) 24–52. Work is under way on critical editions of five more books, along with the re-edition of one, with a view to publication in the series "Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus" (Leiden: E.J. Brill), comprising Rhetorica: John Watt (Cardiff); De mineralibus and Meteorologica: Takahashi (Frankfurt); Ethica, Oeconomica and Politica: Peter Joosse (Frankfurt).

<sup>12</sup> The colophon in MS Birmingham, Mingana syr. 310, fol. 216r, gives the date of completion of the part on natural philosophy as 22 Āb 1596 A.Gr. (Aug. 1285), while those in Laur. or. 83 (olim Palat. or. 187), fols. 191v, 227r, tell us that the parts on metaphysics and practical philosophy were completed, respectively, at the end of Kānōn I 1597 (Dec. 1285) and on 8 Šbāt 1597 (12 Dū 1-Ḥiġġa 684/8 Feb. 1286).

<sup>13</sup> *Al-Išārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt*, ed. S. Duniyā (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1377–1380/1957–1960), 903.4f.; *Išārāt*, Syriac version, MS Florence, Laur. or. 86, 132r b12f.: ܠܗܘܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܗܘܐ . . . ܠܗܘܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܗܘܐ. The point was first made by D. Margoliouth, *Analecta*, 39f.; see also J. Tkatsch, *Die arabische Übersetzung der Poetik des Aristoteles* (Vienna: Holder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1928–32), 1:88; H. Janssens, "Crème de la science ou Science des sciences?—le vrai titre d'un ouvrage de Bar Hebraeus," *Le Muséon* 43 (1930) 365–372, here 372. Allusions made in the proem of the *Cream of Wisdom* itself (Laur. or. 69, 2v a4ff.) suggest that Barhebraeus wishes us to associate the title with the "cream and honey" of Isaiah 7.15, on which the promised child, "born of a virgin" (Is. 7.14), would be fed (and, through the Isaiah passage, also with Luke 2.40).

2. *Discourse of Wisdom* (*Swād sōfiya*, *Sermo sapientiae*, *Alloquium sapientiae*, *Entretien de la sagesse*, *Ḥadīṭ al-ḥikma*)<sup>14</sup>

The shortest of the three philosophical compendiums, which may have been written in the mid-670s/1270s, has been published in full with a French translation and a detailed commentary by H. Janssens, who found its contents to be essentially Avicennan<sup>15</sup> and found many points of contact between this work and Ibn Sīnā's *al-Isārāt wa-t-tan-bīhāt* and *an-Naḡāt*, as well as the *Risāla fī l-Hudūd*,<sup>16</sup> although he seems not to have made any systematic comparison of the Syriac text with the Arabic texts (as opposed to translations) of Ibn Sīnā's works and as a result does not quite go so far as to specify any of these as the principal source of this work.

Given that this work is based to a large extent on Arabic sources, it is rather ironic that it came to be translated "back" into Arabic, perhaps as early as within the fourteenth century, but more likely a little later.<sup>17</sup>

3. *Treatise of Treatises* (*Tēgrat tēgrātā*, *Negotiatio negotiationum* Assemanus, *Mercatura mercaturarum alii*, melius *Tractatus tractatum*, *Tīḡrat al-fawā'id*)<sup>18</sup>

Barhebraeus' medium-length compendium of philosophy, the *Treatise of Treatises*, is one of the least known of his works. The oft-encountered description of this work as an abridgement of the *Cream of Wisdom* is belied by the fact that we have a manuscript of the work dated 20th Īyār 1587 A.Gr. (May 1276/674; Cantab. Add. 2003),<sup>19</sup> ten

<sup>14</sup> Edition: H. Janssens, *Entretien*, op. cit. For a discussion of the title of the work, see *ibid.*, 18f.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, intro., esp. 11, 28–31.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, index, 362.

<sup>17</sup> Editions of the Arabic version: Iḡnāṭiyūs Afrām I Baršaum, *Kiṭāb ḥadīṭ al-ḥikma li-l-'allāma aš-šahīr wa-ḥuḡḡat al-falāsifa al-ḥaṭīr Mār Ġriḡūriyūs Abī l-Faraḡ Ibn al-'Ibrī* (Homs: Maṭba'at as-Salāma, 1940); E. Platti, "L'entretien de la sagesse" de Barhebraeus, La traduction arabe," *MIDEO* 18 (1988) 153–194 (incomplete, Books 1–2 only).

<sup>18</sup> Unpublished. For a list of manuscripts and published excerpts, see Takahashi, "Barhebraeus und seine islamischen Quellen, *Tēgrat tēgrātā* (*Tractatus tractatum*) und *Gazālīs Maqāsid al-falāsifa*," paper presented at the 2. Symposium zu Geschichte, Theologie und Liturgie der syrischen Kirchen, Wittenberg, 14–16 July 2000 (proceedings due for publication by LIT Verlag, Hamburg/Münster), nn. 17–19.

<sup>19</sup> See W. Wright and S.A. Cook, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), 495.

years before the completion of the *Cream of Wisdom*. The *Treatise of Treatises* is also mentioned in the *Discourse of Wisdom*,<sup>20</sup> so that this work must, in fact, be the earliest of the three compendiums of philosophy composed by Barhebraeus.

A. Baumstark, who had earlier published an excerpt of this work, states in his standard work, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, that it is a reworking of Ibn Sīnā's *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*.<sup>21</sup> The particular passage of the *Treatise* published by Baumstark (on classification of sciences, Treatise 2, introduction) does indeed look like a paraphrase of a passage in the *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, but such correspondences are rather more difficult to find in the rest of the *Treatise*. A closer examination of the *Treatise*, in fact, shows that this work has much more in common with Ǧazālī's *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, both in its details and in its overall structure.<sup>22</sup>

Insofar as the *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* is itself a reworking of Ibn Sīnā's *Dānišnāmah-yi ʿAlāʾī*, we have here another instance where Barhebraeus has used an Avicennan work as his principal source.<sup>23</sup> As in his other works, Barhebraeus mixes the material taken from the *Maqāṣid* with materials from other sources. One of the more important secondary sources in the parts of the *Treatise* examined so far is the Syriac version of the Ps.-Aristotelian *De mundo*.

4. *Book of the Pupils of the Eye* (*K. d-Bābātā*, *L. Pupillarum*, *K. al-Aḥdāq*, *K. al-Buʿbuʿ*)<sup>24</sup>

Besides the three compendiums of philosophy as a whole, Barhebraeus wrote a short treatise dealing with logic, following the pattern of the the *Organon*. H. Janssens found the contents of this work,

<sup>20</sup> *Discourse of Wisdom*, I.4, ed. Janssens [see n. 5 above], 54.4f., tr. 173; Arabic version, ed. Barṣaum [see n. 17 above], 7 ult. f.; om. ed. Platti, 173.14 (cf. apparatus, 191.3).

<sup>21</sup> Baumstark, *GSL*, 317; id., *Aristoteles bei den Syrern vom V.–VIII. Jahrhundert*, Syrische Texte, 1. Bd. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1900; repr. Aalen: Scientia, 1975), 164f. and 182 n. 1.

<sup>22</sup> See Takahashi, "Islamische Quellen," op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> While Barhebraeus was capable of using Persian sources, a comparison of the relevant passages in the *Treatise*, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* and *Dānišnāmah* would seem to show that it was Ǧazālī's Arabic work rather than Ibn Sīnā's Persian work that Barhebraeus used in his *Treatise*, even though at the present state of research the possibility cannot be ruled out that Barhebraeus had access to the *Dānišnāmah* in addition to the *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*.

<sup>24</sup> Editions: C. Steyer, *Buch der Pupillen von Gregor Bar Hebräus*, Diss. Leipzig (Leipzig:

too, to be largely Avicennan<sup>25</sup> and would place its composition before that of the *Discourse of Wisdom*, largely on the grounds that Barhebraeus accepts the fourth figure (*eskēmā, šakl*) of syllogism in the *Discourse of Wisdom* but not in the *Book of the Pupils of the Eye*.<sup>26</sup>

### 5–6. *Translations*

The lists of Barhebraeus' works tell us that he translated into Syriac a work by an older contemporary of his, Aṭīr ad-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1264),<sup>27</sup> entitled *Ẓubdat al-asrār* (*Medulla mysteriorum* Assemanus). It appears that this work is lost both in its Arabic original<sup>28</sup> and in Barhebraeus' Syriac version.

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Pries, 1907) (with German translation of the introduction and Section 1); H.F. Janssens, "Bar Hebraeus' *Book of the Pupil of the Eye*," *AJSL* 47 (1930/1), 26–49, 94–134; 48 (1932), 209–263; 52 (1935), 1–21 (with English translation to end of Section 3). The information given on this work by N. Rescher, *The Development of Arabic Logic* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1964), 206f. is difficult to outdo in its inaccuracy (seven factual errors and one major omission packed into seventeen lines!).

<sup>25</sup> Janssens, *Pupil*, op. cit., intro. vol. 47, 41–44, and translation (in vol. 52), passim.

<sup>26</sup> Janssens, *Entretien*, op. cit., 17. Barhebraeus also accepts the fourth figure and treats it at some length in the *Treatise of Treatises* (I.3, MS Cantab. Add. 2004, 22r.27f., 25v.14–26v.13) and the *Cream of Wisdom* (*Analytica priora* I.2.4, II.3.1–6, MS Laur. or. 69, 72r b20–v a7, 76v b8–77v a22), recognizing five modes (*znayyā*) of conclusion in both (cf. I. Madkour, *L'Organon d'Aristote dans le monde arabe*, 2nd ed. [Paris: Vrin, 1969], 247).

<sup>27</sup> On whom, see G.C. Anawati, "Abharī Samarqandī, Aṭīr-al-Dīn," *EI*r, 1:216f. and the literature cited there. In his *Muḥtaṣar ta'riḥ ad-duwal* (traditionally wrongly called *Ta'riḥ muḥtaṣar ad-duwal*), ed. Anṭūn Ṣāḥḥānī, 2nd ed. (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-Kāṭūlikīya, 1958), 254.14–16, Barhebraeus mentions Abharī among the disciples of Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī and talks of him as being active in Asia Minor (Rūm).

<sup>28</sup> No work under this title is mentioned by Brockelmann in *GAL*, although he does mention a work called *Tanzīl al-afkār fī ta'dīl al-asrār*, citing a manuscript in Mašhad (*GAL* Suppl. I.843 fin.; this work is also mentioned by Ibn al-Akfānī [d. 749/1348]; see D. Gutas, "Aspects of Literary Form and Genre in Arabic Logical Works," in *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts, The Syriac, Arabic and Medieval Latin Tradition*, ed. C. Burnett, Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, 23 [London: Warburg Institute, 1993], 61 with n. 157). The title *Ẓubdat al-asrār* is mentioned at the end of Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*:

والوقوف على مذهب الحكماء فليرجع الى كتابنا المسمى بزيادة الاسرار

(Quoted here from Maḥmūd Fāḍil, *Fihrist-i nushah-hā-yi ḥaṭṭī-yi Kitābhānah-yi Ġāmi'ī-i Gawharšād-i Mašhad*, 3 vols. [Mašhad, 1343–7Š/1964–7], 3:1246, no. 915/5). Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, who had a copy of the commentary on the *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* by Muḥammad ibn Šarīf al-Ḥusaynī [fifteenth c.], wrongly attributes the *Ẓubdat al-asrār* to Ḥusaynī,

The other translation is that of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Iṣārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt* (syriace *K. d-Remzē wa-m'irānwātā*, *L. Indicationum et prognosticorum* Assemanus).<sup>29</sup> The *Iṣārāt* is, in fact, one of the three works of Ibn Sīnā which Barhebraeus mentions by name in the passage of his *Chronicon* devoted to Ibn Sīnā (the other two being the *Qānūn fi t-ṭibb* and the *Šifā'*)<sup>30</sup> and he tells us there that he had himself translated this "marvellous book" (*ktābā tmīhā*) into Syriac. According to its preface, the translation was undertaken at the request of Simeon of Qal'a Rūmāyā (d. 687/1289), who rose to a position of some importance as a physician at the Il-Ḥānid court and whose son, Tāḡ ad-Dawla, and nephew, Philoxenus Nemrod (patriarch 681–691/1283–1292), were taught by Barhebraeus.<sup>31</sup>

The Syriac version remains unedited except for some excerpts from the section on logic published by G. Furlani in 1946, but it is

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evidently taking the sentence quoted above to be a part of Ḥusaynī's comments rather than a part of the text of the *Ḥidāyat al-ḥikma* (Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kāšf az-zunūn*, ed. G. Flügel [London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1835–58], 3:534, s.v. زبدة الاسرار).

<sup>29</sup> Unpublished. Excerpts can be found in G. Furlani, "La versione siriana del *Kūtab al-Iṣārāt wa-t-Tanbīhāt* di Avicenna," *RSO* 21 (1946) 89–101 (based on MS Vat. syr. 191/1). See now also H. Teule, "Barhebraeus' Syriac Translation of b. Sina's *Kitab al-isharat wa-l-tanbihat*," paper presented at the symposium "Redefining Christian Identity," Groningen, 7–10 April 1999 (proceedings due for publication by Peeters, Louvain, in the series OLA). Manuscripts: a) with the Arabic text in Arabic script: Florence, Laur. or. 86 (dated 1278 A.D., see below); b) with the Arabic text in Syriac script (Garshuni): olim Kandanāḍ, Kerala (1497 A.D.; see Baršaum, *Lu'lu'*, 420, n. 6; Mingana, op. cit., infra, 1031–34, ad no. 558); Charfeh, fonds patriarcal 743 (1584 A.D.; see Bihnām Sūnī [Sony], *Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt al-baṭriyarkīya fī Dayr aš-Šarfā*, Beirut, 1993); Damascus, Syr. Orth. Patriarchate 6/4 (1907 A.D.; see Ph. Y. Dolabani et al., "Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque du Patriarcat Syrien Orthodoxe à Ḥomṣ (Auj. à Damas)," *ParOr* 19 [1994] 555–661); Charfeh, fonds patriarcal 744 Sony (olim 99, 1909 A.D.); Birmingham, Orchard Learning Resources Centre, Mingana syr. 558 (1930 A.D., see A. Mingana, *The Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts now in the Possession of the Woodbrooke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham*, I [Cambridge: Heffner, 1933]); b.ii) Section on logic only: Vatican, syr. 191/1 (seventeenth c.?, see Furlani, op. cit.; Furlani's dating of the MS to the fifteenth c. rests on shaky grounds); Paris, Bibl. Nat. syr. 249 (1633 A.D.; see H. Zotenberg, *Catalogues des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaites) de la Bibliothèque Nationale* [Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1874]); Vatican, Borg. syr. 54 (1654 A.D.; olim Maronite College, Ravenna; see A. Scher, "Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Musée Borgia, aujourd'hui à la Bibliothèque Vaticane," *JA* 10e sér. 13 [1909], 249–287; A. Diotallevi, "Ricerca dei manoscritti del Collegio Maronita di Ravenna," *SROC* 1 [1978], 45, no. 30).

<sup>30</sup> *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon syriacum*, ed. Paulus Bedjan (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1890), 219.14–221.8; tr. E.A.W. Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj, the son of Aaron, the Hebrew physician, commonly known as Bar Hebraeus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), 1:196–198.

<sup>31</sup> See Takahashi, "Simeon," §33 et passim.

a generally faithful, word-for-word translation of Ibn Sīnā's Arabic text and, as such, could be of value as an indirect thirteenth-century witness for the text of the *Išārāt*, as well as being, for Syriacists, a hitherto unexploited source for lexicography.

One fact which has largely escaped the notice of scholars is that this Syriac version is usually found in the manuscripts not by itself but accompanied by the original Arabic text in parallel columns, meaning that these manuscripts are themselves direct witnesses of the Arabic text. This applies also to the oldest manuscript of the Syriac version, MS Florence, Laur. or. 86 (olim Palat. or. 185), which was copied within Barhebraeus' lifetime in 677/1278, making it also one of the older witnesses available of the Arabic text.<sup>32</sup> Although this fact is already mentioned by S.E. Assemani in his 1742 catalogue of the Florence manuscripts,<sup>33</sup> neither the Laurentianus nor any of the other manuscripts containing the Syriac version are mentioned in the standard lists of Avicennan manuscripts.<sup>34</sup>

### 7–8. *Theological Works*

Philosophical considerations also play an important role in the theological works of Barhebraeus, such as the *Candelabrum of the Sanctuary* (*Mnārat quḏṣē*, *Candelabrum sanctuarii*, *Manārat al-aqdās*),<sup>35</sup> which was

<sup>32</sup> The beginning of the Arabic text is missing. The Arabic text begins (in mid-sentence) on fol. 10r with the words ترکیب فی حقیقتہ لم یکن ان یدل علیہ (in *al-Manṭiq, nahğ* 2, ed. Duniyā, 251.3). Twenty folios in the middle of the manuscript (fols. 61r–80v) are in a different hand from the rest.

<sup>33</sup> Stephanus Evodius Assemanus, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum MMS. orientalium catalogus* (Florence: Albizianus, 1742), 328: “. . . constat 132 paginis, Syriacis literis, & sermone cum textu Arabico exaratus a Ioanne filio Bacchi, Sabbato, die decima sexta Canun prioris (Decembris) anno Graecorum MDXC. (Christi 1279). ut ad eius calcem adnotatur” (my emphasis; for the date “1279,” read “1278”).

<sup>34</sup> Brockelmann, *GAL* I, 454, S I, 816, no. 20; G.C. Anawati, *Mu'allafāt Ibn Sīnā/Essai de bibliographie avicennienne* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1950), 6–9; Y. Mahdavi, *Fihrist-i nuṣṣah-hā-yi muṣannaḡāt-i Ibn Sīnā/Bibliographie d'Ibn Sīnā* (Tehran: Intišārāt-i Dāniṣgāh-yi Tihṙān, 1954), 34; O. Ergin, *İbni Sīnā bibliografyası*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi yayınlarından, 27 (Istanbul: Yalçın Matbaası, 1956), 12.

<sup>35</sup> Edition in a single volume: Y.Y. Çiçek, *Mnārat quḏṣē meṭṭul šetēsē 'ēdtānāyātā men syāmē d-Mār Grīgōriyōs Yōhannān Bar 'Ebrāyā . . . [Lamp of the Sanctuary (Mnorath Kudshe) by Mor Gregorios Yohanna Bar Ebrayoyo]* (Glane/Losser: Bar Hebraeus Verlag, 1997) (based on MS Jerusalem, St. Mark's 135). For critical editions of the individual bases (with French or German translation), see the list at Fiey, “Esquisse,” 289f. The end of Base IV (list of heresies, corr. ed. Çiçek, 447–458), which is not in J. Khoury's edition of that base, can be found in F. Nau, *Documents pour servir à*

written around 1270<sup>36</sup> and deals with the whole spectrum of dogmatic theology in twelve books, called “bases” (*šetêsē*, *fundamenta*), and the *Book of Rays* (*K. d-Ṣalgē*, *L. Radiorum*, *K. al-Ašī‘a*),<sup>37</sup> which is essentially an abridgement of the *Candelabrum*.

It has been noted in connection with the *Candelabrum* that a clear distinction can be drawn between those parts of this work devoted to philosophical arguments as a preliminary to the theological discussions and the theological discussions proper. For his philosophical arguments Barhebraeus evidently turned to the Islamic philosophers in vogue in his day. In his study of the part of this work dealing with the Resurrection, H. Koffler found that the philosophical arguments used to establish the possibility of the Resurrection were taken largely from the *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-muta’ahhūrīn* of Faḥr ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ar-Rāzī (544–606/1149–1209).<sup>38</sup>

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*l’histoire de l’Église nestorienne*, PO 13/2 (Paris, 1916), 252–265. Edition of a modern Arabic version: Diyūnīsiyūs Bihnām Ġigāwī (ed. Ġrīḡūriyūs Yūḥannā Ibrāhīm), *Manārat al-aqdās li-l-‘allāma Mār Ġrīḡūriyūs Abī l-Farāḡ Ibn al-‘Ibrī mafriyān al-mašriq 1226–1286*, Syriac Patrimony/at-Turāt as-Suryānī, 13 (Aleppo: Mardīn Publishing House, 1996).

<sup>36</sup> On the date of composition of the *Candelabrum*, see Takahashi, “Simeon,” n. 45. The *Book of Rays*, as a summary of the *Candelabrum* is to be dated after it, but before the *Nomocanon* (*K.d-Huddāyē*), in which both these works are mentioned.

<sup>37</sup> Facsimile edition: *Klābā d-Ṣalgē w-ṣurrārā d-šetēsē ‘ēdīnāyātā men syāmē d-abūn qaddīša Mār Ġrīḡōriyōs d-hū Bar ‘Ebrāyā* [*Book of Ṣelge by Bar-Hebraeus, Mor Gregorius Abulfaraj, the great Syrian philosopher and author of several Christian works*] (Istanbul: Zafer Matbaasi, 1997) [reproduction of a manuscript copied in 1996 from a manuscript dated 1576 A.D. = MS Oxford, Bodl. Or. 467]. Edition of Book X (with French translation) in N. Sed, *Le Candélabre de sanctuaire de Grégoire Abou’lfaradj dit Barhebraeus, Douzième base: du Paradis, suivie du Livre des rayons: Traité X*, PO 40/3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), 464–503. Otherwise available in print in short excerpts only (two excerpts already in Faustus Naironus, *Evoplia fidei catholicae-romanae historico-dogmatica* [Rome: S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1694], 197f., 316f.).

<sup>38</sup> H. Koffler, *Die Lehre des Barhebraeus von der Auferstehung der Leiber*, OrChr(R) 28/1 (Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1932), 202–207. Similar observations were made by J. Khoury in his edition of Base IV (Khoury, *Le Candélabre du sanctuaire de Grégoire Abou’lfaradj dit Barhebraeus, Quatrième base: de l’Incarnation*, PO 31/1 [Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1965], 9, 41, 111, 246–249). See further A. Torbey, “Les preuves de l’existence des anges, d’après le traité de Grégoire Bar-Hebraeus sur les anges, Étude critique et sources,” *OC* 39 (1955), 133: “L’étude de cette partie [sc. Base V, de angelis] nous porte à conclure qu’Avicenne est la source principale de presque toutes les preuves que l’auteur attribue aux philosophes pa-ens.” P.-H. Poirier, “Bar Hebraeus sur le libre arbitre,” *OC* 70 (1986) 32, 36 resp.: “Non seulement sont-ils [sc. les musulmans] au centre de ses préoccupations apologetiques, . . . mais l’argument même de la IXe base est élaboré en fonction de la problématique musulmane du libre arbitre telle qu’elle devait être fixée, déjà à l’époque de Bar Hebraeus, par les *mutakallimūn*,” and, “Il est donc clair que Bar Hebraeus a conçu son De

Similarly, in his discussion of mineralogy and meteorology in Base II of the *Candelabrum*, Barhebraeus uses as his main source *Kitāb al-Mabāḥiṭ al-mašriqīya* of Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī.<sup>39</sup> Insofar as ar-Rāzī and other Islamic writers used by Barhebraeus as his sources themselves depend to a large extent on Ibn Sīnā, these “philosophical” parts of the *Candelabrum* and the *Book of Rays*, too, will need to be taken into account when considering the reception of Ibn Sīnā in Barhebraeus.

There are Arabic translations of these two theological works dating back at least to the seventeenth century, the *Book of Rays* having been translated by Ġrīgūriyūs Yūḥannā ibn ‘Abbūd ibn al-Ġurayr aš-Šāmī az-Zurbābī (Syr. Orth. bishop of Damascus 1078/9–1095/6 [1668–84]),<sup>40</sup> and the *Candelabrum* by Sarkīs ibn Yūḥannā az-Zurbābī (d. c. 1080/1669).<sup>41</sup>

#### 9–10. *Arabic Treatises on Psychology*<sup>42</sup>

The subject of the origin, nature and destiny of the human soul is discussed at some length in all three philosophical compendiums, as

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Libero arbitrio en fonction de la problématique, traditionnelle à son époque et dans son milieu, de la théologie musulmane.”

<sup>39</sup> See Takahashi, “The Greco-Syriac and Arabic Sources of Barhebraeus’ Mineralogy and Meteorology in *Candelabrum sanctuarii*, Base II,” paper presented at Symposium Syriacum VIII, Sydney, 26th June–1st July, 2000. Besides *al-Mabāḥiṭ al-mašriqīya*, Barhebraeus uses in this part the Syriac versions of the Ps.-Aristotelian *De mundo* and Nicolaus Damascenus’ *Compendium* (see Section III below). For his geography he depends mainly on Bīrūnī’s *Kitāb at-Taḥḥīm li-awā’il šinā’at at-taḡīm*.

<sup>40</sup> He is known also as the translator of several other works of Barhebraeus. See Samir Khalil Samir, “Bar Hebraeus, le ‘Daf’ al Hamm’ et les ‘Contes amusant,’” *OC* 44 (1980), 152–5, along with the literature listed there at 155, n. 55; to Samir’s list add Miḥā’il Raḡḡī, “Yūḥannā aš-Šāmī az-Zurbābī al-mulaqqab bi-Ibn al-Ġurayr,” *Machriq* 43 (1954) 129–156; Teule, *Ethicon* I [see n. 5 above], versio xiv; H. Kaufhold, “Notizen über das Moseskloster bei Nabk und das Julianskloster bei Qaryatain in Syrien,” *OC* 79 (1995), 77, 78f.

<sup>41</sup> He is probably the son of Gregory John. The date of death above is that given by Baršaum, *Lu’lu’* 461; cf. Raḡḡī, “Yūḥannā,” 153 with n. 1. Earlier, Daniel of Mardin (726–after 784/1326–after 1382; often confused with Daniel bar Ḥaṭṭāb) had composed an abridged Arabic version of the third and fourth bases of the *Candelabrum* under the title *Kitāb al-Isrāq fi l-uṣūl ad-dīniya* (see F. Sepmeijer, “The Book of Brilliance by Daniel Ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb,” *ParOr* 19 [1994], 379–387), as well as another work covering similar grounds and incorporating much material from the *Candelabrum* (*Kitāb Uṣūl ad-dīn*; see Graf, *GCAL* 2:282f., and Sepmeijer, “Book of the Principles of Faith Attributed to Daniel Ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb,” *ParOr* 22 [1997], 405–413).

<sup>42</sup> There is some confusion over the titles of the two Arabic works. Although I retain here the titles under which the works were published by Cheikho and Sbath,

well as in the *Candelabrum* (Base VIII) and the *Book of Rays* (Book VI).<sup>43</sup> In addition to these we have two treatises in Arabic on the soul which have come down to us under Barhebraeus' name.<sup>44</sup> One of these, published under the title *Maqāla muḥtaṣara fī n-naḥs al-baṣarīya* by L. Cheikho,<sup>45</sup> appears largely to be an abridgement of a Syriac work on the soul by Moses bar Kepha.<sup>46</sup> The other, first published under the title *Muḥtaṣar fī 'ilm an-naḥs al-insānīya* by P. Sbath,<sup>47</sup> may be considered an abridged translation of the corresponding part (Base VIII) of the *Candelabrum*.<sup>48</sup>

### III. *Cream of Wisdom and Kitāb aš-Šifā'*

As an illustration of how Barhebraeus uses Ibn Sīnā, we shall examine here the manner in which he uses the *Šifā'* in his *Cream of Wisdom*.

it is to be noted that the proem of the work edited by Cheikho states that *this* work is called "muḥtaṣar fī 'ilm an-naḥs al-insānīya" (ed. Cheikho, *Nubḍa* . . . 1898 [as in n. 45 below], 45.3: وبعد فان هذا مختصر في علم النفس الانسانية . . .; also MS Berlin, Staatsbibl., Preußischer Kulturbesitz, or. quart. 887 [59 ABfalq], 409.3f.). Furthermore, Sbath calls the work published by Cheikho "Maqāla fī ḥilqat an-naḥs/Traité sur la création de l'âme" (P. Sbath, *Bibliothèque de manuscrits Paul Sbath, Prêtre syrien d'Alep: catalogue* [Cairo: H. Friedrich et Co., 1928–34], 1:3), while in MS Berol. or. quart. 887, the title of the work is given as "Maqāla muḥtaṣara fī ḥilqat an-naḥs." At the same time it is the other treatise, the one published by Sbath, which ends: تمت هذه المقالة النفيسة في خلقة النفس الناطقة وخواصها (ed. P. Sbath in *Muḥtaṣar fī 'ilm an-naḥs al-insānīya li-Grīgūrīyūs Abī l-Faraḡ al-ma'rūf bi-Ibn al-'Ibrī / Traité sur l'âme par Bar-Hebraeus, Mort en 1286* [Cairo: H. Friedrich, 1928], 61.3f.; ed. Iḡnāṭīyūs Afrām Barṣaum, *Risāla fī 'ilm an-naḥs li-l'allāma Mār Grīgūrīyūs Ibn al-'Ibrī mafriyān al-ma'ṣiq* [Jerusalem: Dayr Mār Marqūs, 1938], 84.ult.) [Barṣaum's edition is also published in *al-Maḡalla al-Batriyarkīya as-Suryānīya* 5 [1938], 79–97, 113–137, 168–192, 225–243.]

<sup>43</sup> See also n. 10 above.

<sup>44</sup> The two treatises are not mentioned in the usual lists of Barhebraeus' works (see n. 5 above), although it may be that one of these two treatises should be identified with the *Mēmra šennāya* mentioned in the list found in MS Laur. or. 298 (see Takahashi, "Simeon," n. 96).

<sup>45</sup> In *Machriq* 1 (1898) 745–9, 828–33, 934–8, 1084–7, 1113–20. Published separately as appendix to L. Cheikho, *Nubḍa fī tarḡama wa-ta'ālīf al-'allāma Grīgūrīyūs Abī l-Faraḡ ibn Ahrūn al-tabīb al-Malaṭī al-ma'rūf bi-Ibn al-'Ibrī* (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-Kāṭūlikīya, 1898), 44–70; later also in id., *Onze traités philosophiques d'anciens auteurs arabes* . . . (Beirut, 1908) [non vidī], and L. Malouf, C. Eddé, and L. Cheikho, *Traité inédits d'anciens philosophes arabes* . . . (Beirut, 1911), 76–112.

<sup>46</sup> See Graf, *GCAL* II:273f.

<sup>47</sup> P. Sbath, *Muḥtaṣar*, op. cit.; ed. Barṣaum, op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> See G. Furlani, "Barhebreo sull' anima razionale (Dal *Libro del Candelabro del Santuario*)," *Or. NS* 1 (1932), 115. Graf was inclined for this reason to attribute the work to a later translator (Graf, *GCAL* II:276f.; see also his review of Sbath's edition, *OC* 25/26 [1928/9] 130f.).



Damascenus, a first-century B.C. Peripatetic philosopher, historian and adviser to Herod the Great [= Nic. syr.].<sup>52</sup> When we now compare the order of the books in the parts of the *Cream of Wisdom* and the *Šifāʿ* dealing with the natural sciences and in Nicolaus' *Compendium*, we obtain the following results.

<i>Cream of Wisdom</i>	<i>Aš-Šifāʿ</i>	Nic. syr.
I. Auscultatio physica	I. Auscultatio physica	I. Auscultatio physica
		II.–III. Metaphysica
II. De caelo	II. De caelo	IV. De caelo
III. De gen. et corr.	III. De gen. et corr.	V. De caelo (contd.), De gen. et corr.
	IV. De action. et passion.	
IV. De mineralibus	V/1. De mineralibus	VI. Meteorologica I–III
V. Meteorologica	V/2. Meteorologica	VII. De mineralibus, De plantis?
VI. De plantis	VI. De anima	
VII. De animalibus	VII. De plantis	VIII.–IX. De animalibus ( <i>Hist. &amp; Part. an.</i> )
		X. De anima
VIII. De anima	VIII. De animalibus	XI. ( <i>De sensu; De somno; De insomn.</i> )
		XII. ( <i>Gen. an. I–IV</i> )
		XIII. ( <i>Gen. an. V.</i> )

It may be seen that in suppressing the book on “actions and passions” (*al-afʿāl wa-l-infīʿālāt*) and placing the *De plantis* and *De animalibus* before the *De anima*, Barhebraeus is in agreement with Nicolaus against Ibn Sīnā and, more generally, with the traditional order of the Aristotelian corpus. On the other hand, in placing mineralogy before meteorology, Barhebraeus follows Ibn Sīnā, and the materials from Ibn Sīnā's book on “actions and passions,” in fact, survive in the *Cream of Wisdom* by being incorporated into Books III, *De generatione et corruptione* and IV, *De mineralibus*.

<sup>52</sup> H.J. Drossaart Lulofs, “Aristotle, Bar Hebraeus and Nicolaus Damascenus on Animals,” in *Aristotle on Nature and Living Things, Philosophical and Historical Studies Presented to David M. Balme on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. A. Gotthelf (Pittsburgh: Mathesis Publications, 1985), 345–357; H.J. Drossaart Lulofs and E.L.J. Poortman, *Nicolaus Damascenus. De plantis*, op. cit.; see also H.J. Drossaart Lulofs, *Nicolaus Damascenus on the Philosophy of Aristotle, Fragments of the first five books translated from the Syriac*, *Philosophia Antiqua*, 13 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965); Takahashi, “Syriac Fragments of Theophrastean Meteorology and Mineralogy, Fragments in the Syriac version of Nicolaus Damascenus, *Compendium of Aristotelian Philosophy* and the accompanying scholia,” in *On the Opuscula of Theophrastus*, ed. W.W. Fortenbaugh and G. Wöhrle, *Philosophie der Antike*, 14 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2001), 189–225. The Syriac version of Nicolaus is preserved in a unique manuscript, Cantab. Gg 2.14. For the page numbers used here in referring to the text in this manuscript, see Takahashi, ib., 190.

The two books of the *Cream of Wisdom* dealing with mineralogy [= Min.] and meteorology [= Mete.] correspond largely to the fifth *fann* of the *Ṭabī‘īyāt* in the *Šifā’*, which is divided into two “treatises” (*maqāla*) dealing, respectively, with minerals (V/1, *al-ma‘ādin*) and meteorology (V/2, *al-āṭār al-‘ulwīya*). At one further remove, most of the themes treated in these two books go back to Aristotle’s *Meteorologica*, although some of the subjects treated, especially in the Book of Minerals, are only briefly touched upon in the *Meteorologica* and the subject treated in Min. IV. (mathematical geography), for example, is one that is more readily associated with Ptolemy than with Aristotle.

The correspondences of the chapters in the *Cream of Wisdom* to the *Šifā’* and *Meteorologica* may be summarized as follows.

<i>Cream of Wisdom</i>	<i>Aš-Šifā’</i>	Arist. <i>Mete.</i>
Min. I. Rocks, water sources and mountains	V/1.1–3	[I.13]
Min. II. Earthquakes	V/1.4	II.7–8
Min. III. Minerals	V/1.5	[III.6B, IV]
Min. IV. Habitable world	V/1.6	[II.5]
Min. V. Sea	[IV.2]	[I.13], II.1–3
Mete. I. Cloud, rain, etc.	V/2.1	I.9–12
Mete. II. Illusions (rainbows, etc.)	V/2.2–3	III.2–6
Mete. III. Winds	V/2.4	II.4–6
Mete. IV. Thunder, lightning, etc.	V/2.5	II.9–III.1, I.4–8
Mete. V. Natural disasters	V/2.6	[I.14]

It will be seen that the order of the material in the *Cream of Wisdom* is essentially the same as that in the *Šifā’*, which, in turn, differs considerably from that of *Meteorologica* (and Nicolaus’ *Compendium*, where the order in Aristotle is generally followed). On two occasions, however, Barhebraeus has reduced two or three chapters (*fuṣūl*) of the *Šifā’* into one chapter (*qepḫātē’ōn*) in the *Cream of Wisdom* and, on one occasion—in Min. I.—he has added a chapter which has no counterpart in the fifth *fann* of the *Šifā’*, incorporating into it some of the material from the preceding fourth *fann*.

When we then turn to the actual text of the *Cream of Wisdom*, we find that there are indeed numerous passages which may be judged to be paraphrases of passages out of the *Šifā’*. A number of these



وإنما تتكون الحجارة في الأكثر على وجهين من التكون: أحدهما على سبيل التفخيز، والثاني على سبيل الجمود. فإن كثيرا من الأحجار يتكون من الجواهر الغالب فيه الأرضية، وكثير منها يتكون من الجواهر الغالب فيه المائية. فكثير من الطين يجف ويستحيل أولا شيئا بين الحجر والطين، وهو حجر رخو، ثم يستحيل حجرا. وأولى الطينيات بذلك ما كان لزجا، فإن لم يكن لزجا فإنه يتفتت في أكثر الأمر قبل أن يتحجر.

Stones are formed, usually, in two ways: (i) through baking<sup>53</sup> and (ii) through congelation. Many stones are formed from a substance in which earthiness predominates, while many of them are formed from a substance in which wateriness predominates. Clay often dries and is transformed first into something [intermediate] between stone and clay, i.e., a soft stone; then, it is transformed into stone. The most suitable (type of) clay for that (purpose) is that which is glutinous. For if it is not glutinous it usually crumbles before it is petrified.

*Šifāʾ*, *ibid.*, 4.18–9:

فتكون الأحجار إذن إما لتفخيز الطين اللزج في الشمس، وإما لانعقاد المائية من طبيعة ميبسة أرضية، أو سبب مجفف حار.

Stones are formed, therefore, either by baking of glutinous clay in the sun, or by the solidification of wateriness by a drying, earthy nature, or a hot, desiccating cause.

In the second part of [⇒], the opening phrase “secondly by way of congelation” takes up the phrase at *Šifāʾ* 3.11 (see above). The rest of the passage summarises *Šifāʾ* 4.1–13. The reader will, I believe, agree that Barhebraeus succeeds here in summarising fairly accurately and succinctly a passage of Ibn Sīnā which is long-winded and often difficult to follow.

*Cream of Wisdom* [⇒/2]: “Secondly, by way of congelation of water, as it drips or pours down. Water congeals either through the mineralising power of the earth on which it falls, or through an earthy nature in which heat predominates—this being how salt congeals—or [in which] coldness [predominates], or a property which is unknown to us.”

*Šifāʾ*, *ibid.*, 4.1–13:

وقد تتكون الحجارة من الماء السيلال على وجهين: أحدهما أن يجمد الماء كما يقطر أو كما يسيل برمته، والثاني يرست منه في سيلانه شيء يلزم وجه مسيله وتتحجر. وقد شوهدت مياه تسيل، فما يقطر منها على موضع معلوم ينعقد حجرا أو حصى مختلفة الألوان. وقد شوهد ماء قاطر، إذا أخذ لم يجمد وإذا انصب على أرض حجرية تقرب من مسيله انعقد في الحال حجرا. فعلمنا أيضا أن لتلك الأرض قوة معدنية، تحيل السيلال إلى الجمود. فمبادئ تكون الحجارة، إما جواهر طينى لزج، وإما جواهر تغلب فيه المائية. وهذا القسم يجوز أن يكون جموده من قوة معدنية مجمدة، ويجوز أن يكون قد غلبت عليه الأرضية على الوجه الذي ينعقد به الملح، بأن غلبت الأرضية فيه بالقوة دون المقدار: وإن لم يكن على نحو كيفية الأرض التي في الملح، بل على كيفية أخرى، ولكن مشاركة لها في أنها تتغلب بمعاونة الحرارة، فلما يصيبه الحر يعقده، أو قوة أخرى مجهولة عندنا. ويجوز أن يكون بالضد، فتكون أرضيته تتغلب بقوة باردة يابسة تعينه.

<sup>53</sup> التفخيز: ed. Cairo, v. infra, sect. IV.2.

A stone may be formed from running water in two ways. (i) Water congeals in its entirety as it drips or flows. (ii) There is deposited from (the water) as it flows something which adheres to the surface of its channel and petrifies. It has been observed how a portion of running water, dripping on to a certain place, solidifies into stone or pebbles of different colours. Dripping water has been seen which, when extracted, does not congeal but when poured on stony earth near its channel immediately solidifies into stone. We then also know that that earth has a mineralising power, which turns what is liquid into a solid. The bases for the formation of stones are either a glutinous clayey substance or a substance in which wateriness predominates. The conge-lation of the latter category may occur [i] because of a mineralising, solidifying power; [ii] it may occur (when) earthiness has come to predominate over it in the (same) way as that in which salt is solidified, (namely) in that the earthiness predominates in it by (its) power and not by (its) quantity. Even if it is not in the manner of the quality of the earth which is in salt, but of a different quality, nevertheless they are similar in that (earthiness) gains mastery through the help of (a) heat, so that when heat comes upon it it solidifies them; (b) or...an- other power unknown to us; (c) it may occur through the opposite [of heat], so that earthiness predominates through a cold, dry power which helps it.”

In part [ⲗ], Barhebraeus reproduces the following passage of the *Šifāʿ*, which occurs *between* the passages corresponding to [= /1] and [= /2] in the *Šifāʿ*, and adds to this, in [ⲗ], an observation of his own.

*Cream of Wisdom* [ⲗ]: “The princely doctor [*sābā rēšānā* = Arab. *aš-šayḥ ar-raʿīs*, i.e., Ibn Sīnā] has recounted how, when [he was] a child, he saw on the banks of the [river] Gihon clay [used for] washing the head. Twenty-three years later he found it in the form of stone, though porous.” [ⲗ] “I [too] in my childhood went with my parents to a new monastery which was being built beside Melitene, and saw in front of the builders a single block of hard stone in which (pieces of) pottery and coal were mixed.”

*Šifāʿ*, *ibid.*, 3.15–17:

وقد شاهدنا فى طفولتنا مواضع كان فيها الطين الذى يغسل به الرأس، وذلك فى شط جيحون. ثم شاهدناه  
قد تحجر تحجرا رخوا، والمدة قريبة من ثلاث وعشرين سنة....

I saw, in my childhood, places in which there was clay with which head was washed. That was on the river Ġayhūn. Later I saw that (the clay) had petrified into soft stone. The interval was approximately twenty-three years.

*Example 2:* Barhebraeus frequently combines materials taken from different sources in a single passage, as he does below with materials taken from the *Šifāʿ* and the Syriac version of Nicolaus (underline: agreement with Nicolaus; *italics*: agreement with *Šifāʿ*).

*Cream of Wisdom*, Min. II.3.1, Laur. or. 83, 55v a8–15:

... . . . . .  
 ... . . . . .  
 ... . . . . .

(1) Movements of the earth are frequent and great at night *because of the condensation by coldness of (the earth's) surface*,<sup>54</sup> (2) and also at dawn, because the sun causes the wind to move, but is unable to dissipate (it). (3) During the day, the movements occur most at noon, *because [at noon] the heat attracts the exhalation with vigor*, [and at the same time] causes [fem., subject: 'heat'] the...surface of the earth to contract and dry up,<sup>55</sup> and [so] does not allow [fem.] (the exhalation) to escape.  
 Nic. syr. 37 [367r].25–29:

... . . . . .  
 ... . . . . .  
 ... . . . . .  
 ... . . . . .

[27—د: fort. *حجوة*, cf. *But. sap.* loc. cit. supra || 29 *كأض*: fort. *كأض* legend., cf. Olympiodori *In Arist. Mete. commentarii* versionem arabicum, ed. Badawī [1971, ut n. 56 infra], 136.12 *اتحل*]

(1) Furthermore, movements of the earth are frequent and great at night, more [so] than during the day, because the absence of wind occurs more at night than during the day. (3) During the day, they occur at noon; for then the absence of wind occurs more; for the sun then causes [masc., subject: 'sun'] the...outside of the earth to dry up and contract {...}; and therefore does not allow [masc.] the smoky exhalation to rise upwards. (2) Movements of the earth also occur at dawn, because at this time the sun sheds [?] and causes wind to move, but is unable to dissipate (it).

*Šifā'*, *al-Ma'ādīn*, ed. cit. 18.6–8:

... . . . . .  
 ... . . . . .

(1) That occurs mostly at night because of the closure [*taḥṣīf*] by the coldness of the surface of the...earth, (2) and also in early morning; (3) it sometimes occurs at noon due..to the..severity of the..attraction by the heat of vapour, along with the desiccation of the surface of the earth and the return of the coldness towards its interior by way of succession [*ta'āqub*].

<sup>54</sup> *b-yad mraṣṣpānūt qurrā appēh*. The Arabicising construction of the phrase mirrors that of Ibn Sīnā's *li-taḥṣīfi l-bardi* (subjective gen.) *waḡha* (acc.) *l-ardi*. In Syriac one might have expected *l-appēh*.

<sup>55</sup> *qāḫpā wa-myabbšā*. Nic. syr.: *myabbeš w-qāḫpēd*. The more logical order of Nic. syr. is retained by Barhebraeus in his *Candelabrum*, base II, ed. J. Bakoš (*Le Candélabre des sanctuaires de Grégoire Aboulfaradj dit Barhebraeus*, PO 22/4, 24/3, Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1930–33), 130.1.



The examples given above suffice to show that the *Cream of Wisdom* is not simply a paraphrase or a summary of the *Šifāʾ*. What Barhebraeus frequently does in composing his works is to take a particular work—usually an Arabic work—as his model and the framework around which to build his work. He takes much of his material from the work he has chosen as his principal model and usually also follows the order of the material in his model. He then inserts into the framework thus provided materials taken from other sources.<sup>58</sup> This is precisely what he has done with the *Šifāʾ* in his *Cream of Wisdom*.

The source most extensively used after the *Šifāʾ* in the part of the *Cream of Wisdom* on the natural sciences is the Syriac version of Nicolaus' *Compendium*. That Barhebraeus also made use of Greco-Syriac sources other than the *Compendium*, we may infer, for example, from the quotation from Theo of Alexandria's *Small Commentary* on Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* (Εἰς τοὺς προχείρους κανόνας) found in the passage on the precession of the fixed stars in Min. IV.1.2.<sup>59</sup>

Another source which is frequently used in those parts of the *Cream of Wisdom* examined so far is *Kitāb al-Muʿtabar* of Abū l-Barakāt Hibat Allāh ibn Malkā al-Baḡdādī (c. 470–after 560/c. 1077–after 1164).<sup>60</sup>

To provide an overview of the manner in which Barhebraeus combines his sources, I list below the sources identified so far for chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Minerals, dealing respectively with earthquakes, and classification and formation of minerals.

*Šif.*: *K. aš-Šifāʾ*, *Ṭabīʿīyāt*, fann V, ed. Muntaṣir et al. ("Cairo edition").

AB: Abū l-Barakāt, *K. al-Muʿtabar*, ed. Hyderabad [Şerefettin Yaltkaya], 3 parts (Hyderabad: Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUṭmāniya, 1357–8/1938–9).

<sup>58</sup> See Takahashi, "Islamische Quellen," op. cit., section I fin.; id., "Greco-Syriac," op. cit., nn. 38–42.

<sup>59</sup> Laur. or. 83, 57v–58r. Cf. Theo, *Small Commentary*, chap. 12, ed. A. Tihon (*Le "Petit commentaire" de Théon d'Alexandrie aux Tables faciles de Ptolémée*, StT 282, Vatican City: Bibl. Apost. Vaticana, 1978), 236.4–237.2. Although the passage (or at least its contents) is one which was also well-known to Arabic astronomers, the proximity of Barhebraeus' wording to the Greek and the use in particular of transliterated Greek terms ἀποτελεσματικοί, ἔροδος (اكتساب المعرفة) indicate that Barhebraeus must have used a Syriac, not Arabic, source here.

<sup>60</sup> Besides in the books Min. and Mete., Barhebraeus closely follows Abū l-Barakāt, for example, in his refutations of astrology and alchemy at *Cream of Wisdom*, De gen. et corr. II.5 (Laur. or. 83, 44v) and IV.3 (ibid. 50r–51r), where he reproduces, largely verbatim, *al-Muʿtabar*, ed. cit., 2:232f., 231f.

- BK: Moses bar Kepha, *Hexaameron Commentary*, MS Paris syr. 241.<sup>61</sup>  
 DM: Syriac version of Ps.-Arist. *De mundo*, ed. Paul de Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca* (Leipzig, 1858; repr. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1967), 134–158.  
 Nic.: Syriac version of Nicolaus, *Compendium of Aristotelian Philosophy* (see n. 52 above).  
 II.1.1: *Šif.* 15.4f.; Nic. 35.12f. & *Šif.* 17.1; Nic. 35.20–23; Nic. 35.26–31.  
 II.1.2: Nic. 36.13–16; Nic. 36.16–19.  
 II.1.3: Nic. 36.21–23, 30.  
 II.1.4: Nic. 35.31–36.7, 11–13; Nic. 36.20–21; 36.30–37.4.  
 II.2.1: Nic. 37.4f.; 37.5–10; *Šif.* 15.6f.; *Šif.* 16.1–4 & Nic. 37.11f., 16–19; *Šif.* 15.8f.; Nic. 39.6–8, 16.  
 II.2.2: *Šif.* 17.7f.; *Šif.* 17.8–10 (& BK 192v b ult.-193r a25?, & DM 146.13f.); *Šif.* 17.10–14 (& DM 145.17–20?); Nic. 38.22f.  
 II.2.3: Nic. 40.7f., 9–12; *Šif.* 17.15f. (& DM 146.18–22?); Nic. 40.13–17 & *Šif.* 19.11–14.  
 II.2.4: *Šif.* 17.17–19; Nic. 41.14–17.  
 II.3.1: Nic. 37.19f.; Nic. 37.20–24 & Nic. 39.16f., 22–27; *Šif.* 18.3f. & Nic. 38.25–39.2; Nic. 35.27–29 & *Šif.* 18.6–8.  
 II.3.2: Nic. 37.30–38.1 & *Šif.* 18.9–11; *Šif.* 18.14–18 & Nic. 38.6–10; Nic. 38.1f., 5f.  
 II.3.3: *Šif.* 18.19–19.2 (& Nic. 39.27–30, 39.32–40.3).  
 II.3.4: Nic. 40.3–7 (& Nic. 37.10–12); *Šif.* 19.14f. & BK 192r b5–7, 192r b18–v a12?  
 III.1.1: *Šif.* 20.4–5; AB II.229.21; *Šif.* 20.15–18.  
 III.1.2: *Šif.* 20.10–12; Nic. 60.5–7; *Šif.* 20.12–14.  
 III.1.3: *Šif.* 21.3–4; *Šif.* 21.1–2.  
 III.1.4: *Šif.* 21.5–6; *Šif.* 21.6–9.  
 III.1.5: *Šif.* 20.5–9 & AB II.230.1–3; -.  
 III.2.1: AB II.230.17 & *Šif.* 21.10; AB II.230.17f.; AB II.230.19 & *Šif.* 21.13f.; AB II.230.18f. (& 230.4); AB II.230.19f. (& *Šif.* 21.14f., 17).  
 III.2.2: *Šif.* 21.15f.; *Šif.* 21.16–18; *Šif.* 21.18f.; *Šif.* 21.19–22.2.  
 III.2.3: *Šif.* 22.2f.; *Šif.* 22.3–5; *Šif.* 22.5f.; *Šif.* 22.6f.; *Šif.* 22.8f. & AB II.231.8–10; *Šif.* 22.9–11.  
 III.3.1: *Šif.* 22.11–15; *Šif.* 22.16–23.4 (& 23.5–7).  
 III.3.2: *Šif.* 23.2–4 & 23.7–10; *Šif.* 23.5 & 23.10–11; *Šif.* 23.7–9.  
 III.3.3: AB II.230.24–231.3; AB II.231.3f.; AB II.231.12–17; AB II.231.17f.

#### IV. *The Significance of Barhebraeus for Avicennan Studies*

##### 1. *As a thirteenth-century commentator on Ibn Sīnā's works*

It will be clear by now that for Barhebraeus, as for his Islamic contemporaries, philosophy meant, essentially, the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā, the man whom he calls, following the Arabic tradition, *sābā*

<sup>61</sup> Cf. the German translation of L. Schlimme, *Der Hexaameronkommentar des Moses bar Kepha*, GOF.S 14, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977), where the folio numbers of this MS are given in the margin.

*rēšānā* (= *aš-šayḥ ar-raʿīs*)<sup>62</sup> and “the best of the moderns” (*myatṭrā da-ḥrāyē* = *afḍal al-mutaʿaḥḥirīn*).<sup>63</sup>

The question as to whether Barhebraeus himself endorses the philosophical views of Ibn Sīnā is one which cannot be entered into in great detail here.<sup>64</sup> Leaving aside the few instances where Barhebraeus contradicts Ibn Sīnā on matters of detail in his purely philosophical works, it has been noted that there is a clear dichotomy between the views taken in his philosophical works and in his theological works, as exemplified by his acceptance of the philosophers’ view concerning the eternity of the world in his *Discourse of Wisdom* and *Cream of Wisdom* on the one hand and his rejection of it in his *Candelabrum* on the other.<sup>65</sup> To say with G. Furlani that Barhebraeus’ philosophical and theological works were written for different purposes with different audiences in mind<sup>66</sup> does not solve the question as to what views Barhebraeus himself held on such matters and on philosophy in general. H. Janssens suggested that the contradictions in Barhebraeus’ works were due to real doubts and wavering opinions on the author’s part and that it was to overcome these uncertainties that Barhebraeus, like Ġazālī, came to reject philosophy and to embrace mysticism towards the end of his life,<sup>67</sup> but in pursuing

<sup>62</sup> So in his *Chronicon*, ed. Bedjan, op. cit., 219.15 and *Cream of Wisdom*, passim. “*Aš-šayḥ ar-raʿīs*” in his Arabic history, *Muḥtaṣar taʾrīḥ ad-duwal*, ed. Šāḥnānī, op. cit., 77.12, 187.1f., 189.25.

<sup>63</sup> Aristotle, the best of the “Ancients,” is referred to by Barhebraeus simply as “the master” (*rabbān*) in the *Cream of Wisdom*.

<sup>64</sup> It is hoped that I shall have the opportunity to deal a little more closely with this matter in the introduction to the partial edition of the *Cream of Wisdom* now under preparation. It has to be noted at the same time that a satisfactory answer to the question raised here will have to await a careful study of those parts of Barhebraeus’ philosophical output which have yet to be edited.

<sup>65</sup> See H. Janssens, *Entretien*, 9f.; for the *Cream of Wisdom*, see Mete. V.1.3, V.3.1–2.

<sup>66</sup> Furlani, “Di tre scritti in lingua siriana di Barhebreo sull’ anima,” *RSO* 14 (1934), 307.

<sup>67</sup> Janssens, *Entretien*, 12–15. This view finds its support in an “autobiographical” passage in Barhebraeus’ mystical-ascetical work, the *Book of the Dove* (*K. d-Yawnā, L. Columbae*), which is in itself reminiscent of the autobiographical account in Ġazālī’s *al-Munqid min ad-dalāl* and in which Barhebraeus describes how he had at one time dedicated himself to the study of the “Greek” sciences, but failing to find satisfaction in these had turned to the writings of the mystics. In connection with Barhebraeus’ relationship to Ġazālī, it should be mentioned that, whereas he is very much an Avicennan in his philosophical works, his major work on moral-mystical theology, the *Ethicon*, is modelled on Ġazālī’s *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn* (see Teule, *Ethicon*, versio xxx–xxxii, 112–145). In view of the contrast that has sometimes been drawn between the approaches of Ibn Sīnā and Ġazālī as being those, respectively, of a physician and a jurist, it is also worth noting that, while Barhebraeus was a physician by

this line we encounter the difficulty that the last major work Barhebraeus wrote was not one of his mystical works, but his longest exposition of Aristotelian-Avicennan philosophy, the *Cream of Wisdom*.

Whatever his real attitude to philosophy, the philosophical works of Barhebraeus that we have been discussing leave us little doubt that he had an interest in and a good understanding of philosophy. While these philosophical works were not written specifically as commentaries on Ibn Sīnā's works, they contain numerous passages which are translations and summaries of Ibn Sīnā's works and because any form of translation or summarization involves a degree of interpretation, we see reflected in these works how a scholar of high calibre in the thirteenth century understood Ibn Sīnā. Barhebraeus may not be an "original" thinker and his interpretations of Ibn Sīnā usually do no more than reflect the interpretations current in the Orient in his time. Nevertheless, his clear prose style and his skills in summarizing and in presenting difficult ideas in simple language<sup>68</sup> mean that his works can often be used as an aid in elucidating obscure passages of Ibn Sīnā.<sup>69</sup>

One advantage Barhebraeus had over his Islamic contemporaries was his ability to use Syriac sources and in particular the Syriac versions of Greek philosophical works. We have had the occasion to

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training, as a bishop and a leader of a *dhimmi* nation he had also to be competent in jurisprudence and has left us a work in that field, the *Nomocanon* (*K. d-huddāyē*), the parts of which dealing with civil and criminal law have been found to depend largely on Gazālī's *Kitāb al-Waḡīz*; see C.A. Nallino, "Il diritto musulmano nel Nomocanone siriano cristiano di Barhebreo," *RSO* 9 (1922-3), 512-580; repr. with corrections in id., *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1942), 4:214-290.

<sup>68</sup> R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1907; repr. Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1970), 408: "Barhebraeus est avant tout un vulgarisateur, mais c'est en même temps un savant encyclopédiste qui a, à son service, une méthode claire et précise, une critique sagace." Janssens, *Entretien*, 22: "Les sections III, 18 et 19 [of the *Discourse of Wisdom*] fournissent un exemple de cette concision: Bar Hebraeus y développe en une seule page la thèse avicennienne de l'émanation. . . . L'exposé présente, il est vrai, d'importantes lacunes; il n'en est pas moins remarquable que l'auteur ait réussi à faire connaître en si peu de mots les points essentiels de cette théorie assez abstruse, et à rester clair tout en étant le plus bref possible."

<sup>69</sup> This at any rate is the experience of the present writer, in whose case the apparent obscurities in Ibn Sīnā may be due more to his own inadequacies than to real obscurities on Ibn Sīnā's part. Cf. Janssens, *Entretien*, 23: "La clarté qui caractérise le style de Bar Hebraeus apparaît surtout quand on compare ses oeuvres philosophiques avec celles d'autres écrivains syriens ou arabes: il arrive à notre auteur d'être plus clair qu'Avicenne, même dans le développement des idées qu'il lui emprunte. . . ."

note his use of the Syriac versions of the Ps.-Aristotelian *De mundo* and of Nicolaus Damascenus' *Compendium*. Because these Syriac versions are usually more faithful to the Greek originals than the Arabic versions, their use frequently allows Barhebraeus to produce and to insert into his paraphrase of Ibn Sīnā passages where he stands closer than Ibn Sīnā, both in content and terminology, to the original texts of Aristotle and other Greek authors.

With the exception of his use of Syriac sources, Barhebraeus' Christianity does not play any significant role in his purely philosophical works. It is, of course, of prime importance in those theological works, where an attempt is made to combine Aristotelian-Avicennan philosophy with Christian theology, such as the *Candelabrum* and the *Rays*, the first of which has, with some justification, been compared to Aquinas' *Summa theologica*.<sup>70</sup> Despite the possibility of the contacts with the Franks during his time of study in the Crusader states of Antioch and Tripoli and perhaps also later on in Cilicia and at the Il-Ḥānid court,<sup>71</sup> there are no positive indications in Barhebraeus' works (philosophical-theological and historical) that he had any awareness of the developments of Latin Scholastic philosophy.<sup>72</sup> It is all the more interesting, therefore, that the convergence of the same Christian and Aristotelian-Avicennan influences should have led Barhebraeus and Aquinas to compose these two comparable works almost exactly at the same time,<sup>73</sup> even if Barhebraeus does not break new ground in his work in the way that the Angelic Doctor does.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> The comparison goes back at least to E. Boré, "Analyse de l'ouvrage de Barhebraeus intitulé *مصباح القديسين* le *Flambeau des saints*," *JA* 2e sér. 14 (1834), 486; see also Koffler, *Lehre*, op. cit., 26, n. 5, 199; Khoury, "Candélabre," op. cit., 12; P. Kawerau, *Das Christentum des Ostens*, Die Religionen der Menschheit, 30 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1972), 63.

<sup>71</sup> See Koffler, *Lehre*, 207–9 (also Poirier, op. cit., 23, n. 4); and Zonta, "Structure," 927.

<sup>72</sup> Nor, it would seem, was he aware of intellectual developments in the Byzantine world (see Janssens, *Entretien*, 34).

<sup>73</sup> See Furlani, "Tre scritti," 307; Janssens, *Entretien*, 34. Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) and Barhebraeus (1225/6–1286) are almost exact contemporaries and the date of composition of the *Summa*—1267–73—too, is very close to that of the *Candelabrum*, the two dates we have for the composition of the latter being ca. 1267 (Base II) and ca. 1272 (Base IV); see n. 36 above.

<sup>74</sup> This is, at any rate, the judgment of Antoine Torbey in his study of the angelologies of Barhebraeus and Thomas Aquinas, "Fī l-malā'ika, Muqārana bayna l-qaddīs Tūmā wa-Ibn al-'Ibrī," *Machriq* 49 (1955), 724–735. That Barhebraeus himself thought he was producing something novel in the *Candelabrum*, if not in its

2. *As a textual witness*

Another use of Barhebraeus' works for Avicennan scholarship arises out of the fact that he wrote his works in Syriac, a language which has no tradition of accepting loanwords from Arabic (as opposed, it might be mentioned, to loanwords from Greek, in which Syriac abounds). This meant that, unlike commentators and paraphrasts writing in Arabic, Persian or Turkish, Barhebraeus could not leave the Arabic technical terms untranslated but had to find (or invent) the Syriac counterparts for these terms. Even though, with the exception of the translation of the *Išārāt*, what we have in Barhebraeus' works are paraphrases rather than straightforward translations of Ibn Sīnā's works, a judicious use of these paraphrases often allows us to correct (or confirm) the readings in the accepted texts of Ibn Sīnā's works in a way analogous to the Latin translations. Indeed the Syriac texts of Barhebraeus are often better witnesses than the Latin translations, firstly because he had a better knowledge of the Arabic language and the Arabic philosophical tradition than most Latin translators and secondly because Syriac, as a Semitic language, is capable of reflecting the Arabic original more accurately. I give two examples here.

*Example 1*

Šifāʾ, *al-Maʿādīn*, *faṣl* 1, ed. Muntaṣir et al. ("Cairo edition"), 3.10f.

وإنما تتكون الحجارة في الأكثر على وجهين من التكون أحدهما على سبيل التفجير، والثاني على سبيل الجمود.

[ed. Cairensis: التفجير codd. س. د. ب. —ed. Teheranensis sec. Muntaṣir et al., sed reapse التفخير ed. Teheranensis 248.2 (et, ut suspicor, codd.); التفخير Holmyard-Mandeville<sup>75</sup> 71.12, et Bahmanyār, *K. at-Taḥṣīl*, ed. M. Muṭahharī<sup>76</sup> 718.6; "conglutinatio" versio latina, Holmyard-Mandeville 45.5]

Stones are formed, in most cases, in [one of] two ways: (a) by way of eruption [*tafağğur*?] and (b) by way of congelation.

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contents at least in its genre, we may gather from the fear he expresses in the introduction to this work that someone coming across the work for the first time might judge it to be something foreign to the "priestly enclosures" (*darātā kāhnāyātā*); *Candelabrum*, Proem, ed. Bakoš, 25.1f.

<sup>75</sup> E.J. Holmyard and D.C. Mandeville, *Avicennae De congelatione et conglutinatione lapidum*, being Sections of the *Kitāb al-Shifā* (Paris: Geuthner, 1927).

<sup>76</sup> *Kitāb at-Taḥṣīl* (Tehran: Intišārāt-i Dānišgāh-yi Tihārān, 1375Š/1996).

*Cream of Wisdom*, Min. I.1.2, Laur. or. 83, 51v b 14–20

... وقام به حقايق صلابه ايس . سة هم صابة دقمة بللح باللمعة صاصصا ... كصصا واه صابة واملح صاصصا ...

Stones are formed in two ways: (a) by way of baking [*puḥḥārā*] of vis-  
cous clay in the sun . . . (b) by way of congelation of water. . . .

Here, even without turning to the *Cream of Wisdom*, the evidence available is generally in favor of the reading *tafḥīr* (perhaps a coinage by Ibn Sīnā, from *fahḥār*, “earthenware, pottery”)<sup>77</sup> against the reading *tafaḡḡūr* of the Cairo edition, but it is reassuring to have a thirteenth-century witness for the former reading in a language where there is no ambiguity caused by the similarity of the letters *ḥā’* and *ḡīm*. The Syriac *puḥḥārā*, itself probably a coinage by Barhebraeus in this sense,<sup>78</sup> mirrors exactly the Arabic *tafḥīr* in a way that the Latin “conglutinatio” does not and cannot (Syr. √pḥr = Arab. √fḥr; Syr. CuCCāCā, verbal noun of the intensive form Pael = Arab. taCCiC).

### Example 2

*Šifā’, al-Ma’ādīn, faṣl 1*, ed. cit., 22.9–11:

وأما الأذنك فيشبهه أن يكون ردي الزئبق، ثقيلة طينته، ويكون كبريته ردينا منتنا ضعيفا، فلذلك لم يستحكم انعقاده.

ed. Cairoensis<sup>79</sup> (ثقيلة in loco) ed. Teheranensis 255.5 et Holmyard-Mandeville 85.4,<sup>81</sup> Garbers-

<sup>77</sup> Holmyard-Mandeville, 18, n. 4: “نخير” This word, rendered in the Latin version by *conglutinatio*, is unknown to the dictionaries. It appears to mean the conversion of clay into the hard form which it assumes when baked.”

<sup>78</sup> See R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus syriacus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879–1901), col. 3085. The Pael verb *pahḥar* occurs in the relevant sense in Moses b. Kepha, *Hexaemeron Commentary*, MS Paris syr. 242, 162r, Paris syr. 311, 37v a (quoted at Bakoš, op. cit., 84 footnote); see also Job of Edessa, *Bk. of Treasures*, ed. A. Mingana (*An Encyclopaedia of Philosophical and Natural Sciences as Taught in Baghdad about A.D. 817 or Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa*, Woodbrooke Scientific Publications, 1 (Cambridge: Heffner, 1935), 405a 5f.; J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 441b.

<sup>79</sup> Followed by G.C. Anawati, “Arabic Alchemy,” in *Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science*, R. Rashed and R. Morelon (London: Routledge, 1996), 3:877: “having heavy clay (*taqīlatun fīnatuhū*)”.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Abū l-Barakāt, *Muṭabar*, 2:231.10f.: وردى الزئبق ومنته مع ردى الكبريت يكون (“From bad and fetid mercury, [mixed] with bad sulphur, lead is formed.”) منه الامرب

<sup>81</sup> Followed by C. Baffioni, “La tradizione araba del IV libro dei ‘Meteorologica’ di Aristotele,” *AION.S* 23 (Naples: Istituto Orientali, 1980), 96.6: “mercurio impuro, pesante, argilloso”.

Weyer<sup>82</sup>; “luteum”, “ponderosum et luteum” versio latina<sup>83</sup>; malim تفتله طينية (v. infra)]

As for lead, it seems that it is bad in [its] mercury—its clay being heavy [?]<sup>84</sup>—while its sulphur is bad, fetid and weak; and for this reason its solidification is not firm.

It may be seen from the apparatus above that the phrase which appears as *taqīlatun fīnatuhū* in the Cairo edition has caused problems for the editors of the passage. The sentence quoted is a part of a passage discussing how different metals are formed through the combination of mercury and sulphur of different qualities. The problem with the reading of the Cairo edition lies in the fact that clay is not otherwise known to be a component of mercury, while with the reading of the Tehran edition we have the problem that *zī'baq* is not feminine (hence the unwarranted emendation of Garbers-Weyer). The corresponding passage of the *Cream of Wisdom* allows us to propose a solution which is rather different from those proposed so far.

*Cream of Wisdom*, Min. III.2.3, 57r a19f.: ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ  
The mercury in lead is bad and has been killed [*qīl*, corr. Arab. *maqīl*] by a clayey substance [*fīnāyūtā*, corr. Arab. *fīniya*]. . . .

Barhebraeus evidently read the phrase in question as *taqtuluhū fīniyatun*. How mercury can be “killed” will be understood if we remember the use of the word “alive” (Arab. *ḥayy*, cf. Eng. “quicksilver,” Fr. “argent vive”) with reference to its fluidity.<sup>84</sup>

### 3. As an intermediary for transmission of Avicennan thought to Oriental Christians

The decline in the fortunes of the Syrian Christians in the centuries following that of Barhebraeus means that we look in vain among

<sup>82</sup> K. Garbers and J. Weyer, *Quellengeschichtliches Lesebuch zur Chemie und Alchemie der Araber im Mittelalter*, Quellengeschichtliche Lesebücher zu den Naturwissenschaften der Araber im Mittelalter, 1 (Hamburg: Buske, 1980), 39.13.

<sup>83</sup> Holmyard-Mandeville, 53.11.

<sup>84</sup> For the use of the words “kill” and “dead” with reference to mercury, see, e.g., Abū Bakr Muḥammad ar-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Asrār*, ed. M.T. Dānišpažūh (Tehran: UNESCO, 1343Š/1964), 16.19 (tr. J. Ruska, *Al-Rāzī's Buch Geheimnis der Geheimnisse* [Berlin: Springer, 1937], 105.16): تاخذ أبقا حيا فتقتله بموقشيشا بوزنه (“Take live mercury and ‘kill’ it with marcassite of the same weight”); *ibid.*, 18.21 (Ruska 108.8): حتى يببيض ويصعد ميتا ونشيفا... (“[Take a *raḥl* of the mercury to be reddened and the same amount of vitriol. Let it rise] until it becomes white and rises ‘dead’ and dry.”); *ibid.* 16.5 (Ruska 104.24); Abū l-Barakāt, *Muṭabar*, 2:230.6.

them for those who may be said to have made major contributions to the development, as opposed to the mere preservation, of the heritage left by Barhebraeus. Nevertheless intellectual life did not quite come to a standstill among these Christian communities, and for those among them who had the leisure to indulge in intellectual activities Barhebraeus remained an authority in all kinds of fields. When, for example, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Ernest Renan asked a Chaldean priest about the books used for the study of philosophy by his people, the two works mentioned by his respondent were the *Isagoge* and Barhebraeus' *Cream of Wisdom*.<sup>85</sup> Ample evidence for the popularity and prestige enjoyed by Barhebraeus' philosophical and philosophico-theological works among the Christians of the Syriac traditions is provided by the great numbers of manuscripts containing these works, copied and read not only by West Syrians (Syriac Orthodox and Syrian Catholic) but also by East Syrians ("Nestorians" and Chaldeans), by Maronites<sup>86</sup> and, in Arabic translation, by Copts.<sup>87</sup>

At the same time, it might be remembered that Barhebraeus, like most medieval writers, was not always so scrupulous in acknowl-

<sup>85</sup> E. Renan, *De philosophia peripatetica apud Syros commentatio historica* (Paris: Durand, 1852), 71: "quumque percontarer a presbytero quodam hujus sectae [sc. Chaldaeorum] Parisiis hospitante, quinam libri praecipue in scholis popularium ejus usui essent, primus quem memoravit fuit *Isagogi*, quem profundissimum difficillimumque affirmabat, dein *Butyrum sapientiae*" (see also Drossaart Lulofs/Poortman [see n. 11 above], 38). The identity of the "Isagogi" mentioned here will probably have to remain a matter of conjecture, but assuming that a Syriac text is meant, the likely candidates are the commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* by Probus (6th c. A.D.?) and *K. d-Īsāgōgī* by the Chaldean patriarch Joseph II (1077–1124/1667–1712), the latter a work reportedly translated into Syriac from Arabic (there are several nineteenth-century copies of the former in the Chaldean monastery of Mar Antonius near Baghdad, see Buṭrus Haddād and Ġāk Ishāq, *al-Maḥḥūtāt as-suryānīya wa-l-ʿarabīya fī hizānat ar-rabbānīya al-kaldānīya fī Bagdād* [Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat al-Maḡmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿIrāqī, 1988], 1:82–84, nos. 169–171 [= olim Alqosh, Notre-Dame de Semences 51–53 Vosté], and 172; for the latter, see Mingana, *Catalogue*, op. cit., 767, no. 433B-C; more generally on the tradition of Aristotelian logic in Syriac, see S. Brock, "The Syriac Commentary Tradition," in *Glosses and Commentaries*, op. cit., 3–18).

<sup>86</sup> One might note, for example, the two manuscripts of the Arabic-Syriac *Iṣārāt*, Paris syr. 249 and Vat. Borg. syr. 54 (see n. 29 above), copied by the Maronite scholar Abraham Ecchellensis (Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāqilānī, 1013–1074/1605–1664).

<sup>87</sup> Three manuscripts of the Arabic version of the *Candelabrum* are found in the library at the Coptic Patriarchate, even if the copyists of these manuscripts managed to confuse Barhebraeus with Yahyā Ibn ʿAdī (G. Graf, *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes chrétiens conservés au Caire*, StT 63 [Vatican City: Bibl. Apost. Vaticana, 1934], 212, no. 567, 228, no. 628; id. *GCAL* 2:276; see also Khalil Samir, "Bar Hebraeus," in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* [New York: Macmillan etc., 1991], 345f.).

edging his sources. This meant that the Avicennan materials contained in his writings now often carried for their Christian readers the weight of a revered bishop. The literature (both Syriac and Arabic) of the Syrian Christians subsequent to the age of Barhebraeus remains a largely unexplored territory, but it may be expected that an examination of works from that period dealing with philosophical matters in some way will reveal instances where the influence of Ibn Sīnā has entered them through the works of Barhebraeus.<sup>88</sup>

### V. Conclusion

The main aim of the foregoing discussion has been to remind scholars of Avicenna that there was a not negligible Syriac strand to the reception of Ibn Sīnā. The most important representative of this reception is Barhebraeus, the author discussed at some length here, and it is my hope that I have been able to show that there is much in the writings of the learned maphrian which will be of interest not only to Syriacists but also to students of Ibn Sīnā.

Barhebraeus was not, however, an isolated case, and it is worth mentioning here two Syriac Orthodox authors who worked in the period immediately preceding that of Barhebraeus and who may in some respects be considered precursors of Barhebraeus.

Patriarch John XII Aaron bar Maʿdanī (maphrian 628/9–650 [1231/2–52], patriarch 650–661 [1252–63]) is known to have studied Arabic in Baghdad<sup>89</sup> and has left us a collection of poems, many of which have little in common with traditional Syriac poetry but are—like many of Barhebraeus' poems—clearly inspired by Arabic models.<sup>90</sup> Among these poems there is a piece on the soul which is entitled “on the noble origin of the soul and on its debasement through the transgression of the commandment” and which begins: “there descended to you from that height of holiness a comely

<sup>88</sup> As examples one might remember here the two works of Daniel of Mardin mentioned in n. 41 above.

<sup>89</sup> Barhebraeus, *Chron. eccl.*, ed. Abbeloos-Lamy, op. cit., 1:407.15–17, 411.16–413.5.

<sup>90</sup> On Bar Maʿdanī and his works in general, see Baumstark, *GSL* 307f.; Graf, *GCAL*, 2:267–269; Baršaum, *Luʿluʿ*, 409f.; Abūnā, *ALA*, 490–493; Takahashi, “Islamischen Quelle,” n. 7.

dove. . .” The piece, though not simply a paraphrase of Ibn Sīnā’s *al-Qaṣīda al-‘aynīya*, was clearly inspired by it.<sup>91</sup>

The Syriac Orthodox monk Severus Jacob bar Shakkō (d. 638–9/1240–1)]<sup>92</sup> began his study of philosophy under the East Syrian (“Nestorian”) John bar Zō‘bī,<sup>93</sup> continued his studies under Kamāl ad-Dīn Mūsā ibn Yūnus (551–639/1156–1242), and worked in the monastery of Mar Mattai near Mosul.<sup>94</sup> In his study of Bar Shakkō’s major work devoted to the secular sciences, the *Book of Dialogues* (*K. d-dīyalōgō*), J. Ruska found a passage dealing with the seven metals which agreed almost word for word with a passage in the *‘Aḡā’ib al-maḥlūqāt* of Zakarīyā’ ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī (c. 600–682/1203–1283).<sup>95</sup> An examination of a larger section of the *Dialogues* dealing with meteorology and mineralogy reveals that the agreement extends to most parts of that section. Since Bar Shakkō died before Qazwīnī is likely to have written his works, Qazwīnī cannot be the source of Bar Shakkō. For those passages where the two agree, we can, in fact, almost invariably find closely parallel passages in Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī’s *Kitāb al-Mabāḥiṭ al-maṣriqīya*, which, in turn, is based to a large extent in the passages in question on Ibn Sīnā’s *aṣ-Šifā’*, so that these (and no doubt many other) passages of the *Book of Dialogues* may be considered a further instance of the reception of Ibn Sīnā in Syriac.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Bar Ma’danī, *Poems*, ed. Ph. Y. Dōlabānī in *Mémvrē w-mušḥatā d-sīmīn l-Mār Yōḥannān ibn Ma’danī paṭriyarkā d-Antiyōkiya* (Jerusalem: Dayr Mār Marqūs, 1929; repr. Hengelo: Mar Yuhanun Kilisesi, 1980), 6–19, no. 2.3; cf. Mingana, *Catalogue*, 115 (on MS Ming. syr. 44I); G.B. Behnam (tr. G. Akyüz), *Şiir ile felsefe kucaklaşıyor Süryaniler’de felsefik şiirler, Şair filozof Bar Madeni* (Mardin: Mardin Kırklar Kilisesi, 1998), 14, n. 1.

<sup>92</sup> On Bar Shakkō in general, see Baumstark, *GSL* 311f.; Graf, *GCAL* 2:269; Baršaum, *Lu’lu’*, 404–407; Abūnā, *ALA*, 488–490; O.J. Schrier, “Name and Function of Jacob bar Shakkō, Notes on the History of the Monastery of Mar Mattai,” in *V Symposium Syriacum 1988*, ed. R. Lavenant, OCA 236 (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1990), 215–228; Takahashi, “Islamische Quellen,” n. 6.

<sup>93</sup> On whom, Baumstark, *GSL* 310f.; Abūnā, *ALA* 432–434; see also H. Daiber, “Ein vergessener syrischer Text: Bar Zo‘bi über die Teile der Philosophie,” *OC* 69 (1985), 73–80; T. Mannoorampampil, *John bar Zo‘bi, Explanation of the Divine Mysteries*, OIRSI 157 (Kottayam, 1992).

<sup>94</sup> Barhebraeus, *Chron. eccl.*, ed. Abbeloos-Lamy, 2:409.14–411.15; J. Ruska, “Studien zu Severus bar Šakkū’s ‘Buch der Dialoge,’” *ZA* 12 (1897), 23–32.

<sup>95</sup> Ruska, “Studien,” 157–161.

<sup>96</sup> A closer comparison of Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, Bar Shakkō and Qazwīnī, reveals passages where the wording in Bar Shakkō and Qazwīnī agree with each other against ar-Rāzī, so that we must, in fact, posit one more step in the line of transmission, a common (lost?) source of Bar Shakkō and Qazwīnī which, in turn, is

These are just two examples and it may be expected that similar cases will be unearthed with the progress of research on the Syriac (and Christian Arabic) literature of the periods both preceding and following that of Barhebraeus. The Syrian Christians saw and treated the works of Ibn Sīnā largely in the same way as the Islamic majority among whom they lived, but there are certain peculiarities in their reception of Ibn Sīnā which arise out of the fact that they professed a different religion and employed a different language from those of their Islamic contemporaries and these factors render the instances of reception in their works a certain fascination. It is my hope that I shall have the opportunity again in future to report on further instances of such reception and that I may perhaps have interested some others in joining me in explorations in this field of study.

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immediately dependent on *al-Mabāḥiṭ al-mašriqīya*. See Takahashi, "Greco-Syriac," nn. 18–19. In his other major work, the *Book of Treasures* (*Ḳ. d-sīmāṭā*), Bar Shakko seems to depend, even when treating the same subjects as in the *Dialogues*, almost exclusively on earlier Syriac writers, such as Moses bar Kepha and Jacob of Edessa; see F. Nau, "Notice sur le Livre des Trésors de Jacques de Bartela, Évêque de Tagrit," *JA* 9e sér. 7 (1896), 286–331.



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