AVICENNA AND HIS LEGACY
CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN LATE ANTiquITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES

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VOLUME 8
AVICENNA AND HIS LEGACY

A Golden Age
of Science and Philosophy

Edited by

Y. Tzvi Langermann

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FOREWORD

Y. Tzvi Langermann

Half a century of research has greatly enhanced our appreciation of the depth and scope of the Avicennan achievement. Avicenna’s (Abū Alī Ibn Sīnā, 980–1037) exhaustive and penetrating study of the entire range of the philosophical and scientific literature of his day, as well as the serious challenges that had been raised to those traditions, particularly on the part of the kalam, led him to formulate a rich, original, and challenging synthesis. For centuries afterwards, thinkers grappled with Avicenna’s legacy. Within this mass of texts one finds many novel and interesting approaches to long-standing issues of science and philosophy.

In November 2005, with generous funding from the German Israel Foundation for Scientific Cooperation, Bar-Ilan University hosted a major conference on post-Avicennan science and philosophy. The present volume emerges from that conference; about half of the papers are revised versions of papers presented at Bar Ilan, while the other half were invited from scholars who could not attend for one reason or another. Taken together, these probings into various facets of the Avicennan achievement and its legacy should make it clear, once and for all, that the half-millennium following Avicenna rightfully deserves to be called a golden age of science and philosophy, as Professor Dimitri Gutas has indeed done in an article cited several times in this volume.

Let us begin with Avicenna’s immediate disciples, Bahmanyār, al-Lawkarī, and the others. Philosophers in their own right, these people enriched the literature with authoritative restatements of the Avicennan legacy; the impact of their own books and opinions has a notable if quiet (i.e., anonymous) presence in later debates. Until recently, little was known about these scholars, beyond their names and woefully incomplete data concerning their literary remains. Recently, all of this has changed for the better; biographical details have been clarified, texts thought to have been lost have been located and published, and some academic studies
have appeared. Ahmed H. al-Rahim opens the volume with a detailed, up-to-date, and accurate inventory.

Four of the papers engage in one way or another the work of Abu Ḥámīd al-Ghazālī, a towering figure in his own right. Scholars have long known that al-Ghazālī studied closely the work of Ibn Sīnā, and that he manifests a negative attitude towards them. Indeed, a not very careful reading of a seminal paper by the great Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher has led many to believe that it was al-Ghazālī’s negative reaction to philosophy, which he knew principally by way of Ibn Sīnā, that put an end to the fruitful and creative period of learning in Islam. According to this distorted and misleading narrative, fuelled by the invective against ‘Orientalism’, al-Ghazālī succeeded in mobilizing faith to block the human spirit. This falsehood has entered into many a catechism.

A close reading of al-Ghazālī, together with Ibn Sīnā — making use of a fuller corpus of the works of both, as well as better editions and the consultation of manuscripts, reveals a very different picture. Al-Ghazālī was philosophically sophisticated, and he found room for some significant teachings of the hellenizing philosophers within the constellation of Islamic belief. However, he was extremely circumspect about letting the reader in to his, al-Ghazālī’s, spiritual world. The less educated the reader, and the less willing or able he may be to progress along the path to knowledge, the more likely he was to come away from al-Ghazālī with a negative view of philosophy. On the other hand, the adept who had progressed well in his studies and who knew how to read al-Ghazālī’s less transparent writings closely and precisely, saw, along with al-Ghazālī, the truth of some philosophical teachings. Frank Griffel and M. Afifi al-Atiki, with their insightful and precise analyses of selected Ghazalian texts, help us to appreciate this.

Frank Griffel enters into the long-standing debate concerning al-Ghazālī’s stance on two key questions: how does God create? How does God govern creation? Some passages from his writings indicate a belief in occasionalism, others an acceptance of secondary causation. Overall, Griffel holds that al-Ghazālī may never have fully resolved those questions. However, a close inspection of key passages from one Ghazalian text, *Mishkāt al-anwār*, reveals that al-Ghazālī — at least at one time, or when aiming at a particular audience — did lean towards the view — much in line with the philosophical tradition to which Avicenna belonged, in principle if not in detail — that God created vice-regents which, continually nourished by effusions of ‘existence’ from the Necessary Existent, govern the universe.

Afifi al-Atiki detects, uncovers, and displays three levels of writing in al-Ghazālī’s approach to *falsafa* (hellenistic philosophy), particularly as formulated for the Muslim public by Ibn Sīnā. He presents this philosophy as ugly in his
Maqāṣid (Intentions of the Philosophers): it appears ugly because he includes without comment teachings that are clearly unacceptable. However, in his Tabāfīt (Incoherence of the Philosophers), this same philosophy is presented as merely bad: specific faults are identified and criticized. Finally, in the corpus of texts known as the Madnūn (restricted), philosophy is seen to be good; sound philosophical doctrines are exploited in order to formulate key Muslim beliefs.

Al-Ghazālī’s project allows him to present a coherent explanation of the world, expressed in traditional terms, whose rationale derives from Avicennan science and philosophy; but he is also able to articulate the traditional, orthodox faith in philosophical terms. The differences in presentation between the good, the bad, and the ugly often amount, as al-Atiki amply demonstrates, to nothing more than the addition or excision of a single word or phrase. In doing so, al-Ghazālī puts into practice a dictum attributed to Ali, the Prophet’s nephew, which states that the true and false can be very similar indeed, just like the venom of a snake so closely resembles its antidote.

Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sinā have in common an important biographical detail: an attraction to Sufism late in life. In this case, it is al-Ghazālī who is much clearer about his position, having shared with us his life’s spiritual journey by way of his autobiography. The fact of al-Ghazālī’s engagement with Sufism is clear, but his precise role in the history of Sufism remains to be clarified.

Binyamin Abrahamov contributes to the elucidation of this issue with a study of Ibn al-Arabi’s attitude to al-Ghazālī. While the connection to Ibn Sinā here is not paramount, the intimate, complex, and variegated relationship between Sufism, theology, and philosophy is an important feature of the post-Avicennan era and is in no mean measure part of the Avicennan legacy. Moreover, Ibn Sinā surely spurred the urge for precise and religiously valid understandings of the concept of ‘existence’, which, as Abrahamov shows, is an important meeting ground between Ibn al-Arabi and al-Ghazālī. Another key commonality is the art of writing. Ibn al-Arabi is convinced that rationality cannot yield a handle on God’s existence, which lies beyond rationality’s reach. He perceives contradictory positions on this issue in different writings of al-Ghazālī. He knows that the divergent positions may not be a true contradiction, but rather a skilled targeting of a different audience, but this, Ibn al-Arabi says, is not acceptable.

Anna Akasoy provides us with a look at the broader picture, calling attention to some of the differences and tensions between the eastern and western reaches of the Islamic orbit. In general, she observes, philosophers from the West never left their homeland, not even to perform the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca. On the other hand, mystics were highly mobile, and several figures from the West — the
most famous being, of course, Ibn al-Arabi — personally met leading intellectuals of the East. After establishing her useful generalizations, Akasoy narrows her focus to the hostile reaction, mainly in the West, to what was perceived as a illegitimate mixture of philosophy and mysticism. Several people were held responsible for this travesty; Akasoy emphasizes the centrality here of criticisms of al-Ghazali, especially of his *Revival of the Religious Sciences*.

Heidrun Eichner tackles one of the most famous items in the Avicennan philosophical legacy: the distinction between ‘existence’ and ‘accident’. Scholarship on this issue has been coloured by the way the kalam — more precisely, figures such as Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and al-Ghazali, who were as well-versed in falsafa as they were in kalam — approached it, that is, the attribution of ‘existence’ to an ‘essence’. However, Eichner points out, the more strictly philosophical Avicennan tradition viewed matters differently. There one distinguishes two different trends: the one giving priority to ‘essence’, championed by al-Suhrawardi, and the other giving priority to ‘existence’, argued by Ibn al-Arabi.

Eichner examines this key problem by way of Ibn Kammuna, an important thinker in the formative period of the Avicennan tradition. She minutely analyses the passages in question, uncovering, in particular, Ibn Kammuna’s debt to two pioneers in elaborating the Avicennan legacy: Ibn Sinâ’s pupil Bahmanyar, and his strongest critic, Fakhr al-Din. Her precise enquiry into Ibn Kammuna’s sources leads Eichner to conclude that, in the end, Ibn Kammuna’s treatment of the issue is highly original.

Ibn Sinâ’s ideas on existence are founded in large measure upon his contemplation of his own existence. Central to this project is his ‘flying man thought experiment’, which shows that a person deprived of all sensory stimulation is still aware of his own existence. From this starting point, the existence of the rest of reality can be shown. Just what valid argument Avicenna has, if any, is the vexation of many scholars. Lukas Muehlthaler observes that Ibn Sinâ certainly felt that he had a good argument, and he turns to the writings of Ibn Kammuna to flesh this out. A close analysis of several writings of Ibn Kammuna, one derivative of al-Tusi, the second depending upon al-Suhrawardi, the third an original synthesis, shows that the conclusion that Avicenna draws is the product of a valid syllogism. Here again, however, we meet another Avicennan guidepost, intuition: the strength of the argument, the capacity of any given reader or discussant to accept its conclusion, depends on an innate capacity to seize the middle term. Two Avicennan foundational beliefs are intimately related: existence is first established by self-awareness, which, in turn, is a perceived as a valid proof only by those endowed with intuition and thus capable of grasping the middle term. As in the paper by
Eichner, a minute dissection of Ibn Kammūna’s sentences, along with the identification of the source of each phrase, ultimately reveals Ibn Kammūna’s originality. Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, whose opus is surveyed by Syamsuddin Arif, is an excellent example of a post-Avicennan thinker whose contribution is just now, ever so slowly, coming to light. Al-Āmidī flourished in the second half of the twelfth century, working in several cities in Egypt and Syria, and experiencing all too personally the hostility that some authorities bore towards philosophy. Characteristically for post-Avicennan intellectuals, al-Āmidī was a jurist, and an important one at that, as well as a theologian (mutakallim). Arif focuses on al-Āmidī’s philosophical opus, al-Nūr al-Bābīr (The Bright Light), and finds that it is modelled closely upon Ibn Sīnā encyclopedic al-Shīfa’ (The Healing). Nonetheless, al-Āmidī reorganizes the materials, both with regard to content and arrangement.

The telling contribution to religious philosophy by Ibn al-Nafis is the subject of Nahyan Fancy’s paper. Ibn al-Nafis’s statement is made in the context of the ongoing discussion within Islam concerning the critical question, is the human intellect self-sufficient for contact with the divine? In other words, can the human soul or spirit — and the precise definition of each of these concepts, and the distinction between them, is an important ancillary issue here — by sole dint of its own efforts reach out and ‘touch’ the divine?

Much of the debate within Islam over this question was articulated in a series of similar parables concerning Ḥayy bin Yaqẓan, a solitary individual, his spiritual progress, and its ultimate outcome. Ibn Sīnā himself wrote such a ‘novella’; following — and criticizing — him are creations by Ibn Ṭufayl in the West and al-Suhrawardi in the East. Some two centuries after Ibn Sīnā, Ibn al-Nafis wrote his version of the story, whose chief goal, as Nahyan Fancy argues, was to reaffirm traditional approaches, against the position of Ibn Sīnā. For, as Fancy shows, philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā had challenged not only specific doctrines, such as the survival of the individual after death, but also the authority of religious leaders to establish what teachings must be taken to be true on the basis of revelation.

In fact, Ibn Nafis’s novella is a response to Ibn Ṭufayl’s work. However, the teachings and authority of Ibn Sīnā had come so completely to dominate in philosophy that the claim (made erroneously by earlier scholars) that Ibn al-Nafis is seeking to rebut Ibn Sīnā is not a simple factual error. While proposing an alternative to Ibn Ṭufayl’s story, Ibn al-Nafis at the same time attacks ‘the central core of the Avicennan system’ (p. 223). However, Ibn al-Nafis is not bluntly confrontational; he rather engages Avicennan philosophy in a complex manner.

‘Reality’ or ‘true reality’ — both are acceptable translations of the key Arabic term haqiqa — became, in the wake of Avicenna, one of the chief objects of
investigation. The quest to understand just what constitutes the real was very much a religious quest as well, since nothing is more real than Allāh, the most real, truly the only Reality. David B. Burrell takes us into the early seventeenth century with his brief but illuminating study on Mulla Ṣadra. Once again, the fundamental notion of ‘existence’ is at the core. Mulla Ṣadra’s disquisition is based upon a critical reading of both Ibn Sīnā and Shaykh al-Ishraq, al-Suhrawardī; in fact, though, it takes its place in a much more ancient wisdom tradition. Mulla Ṣadra is particularly troubled by the Avicennan employment of existence as an ‘accident’ of existing things. How can this be, when existence is the most ‘interior’ of all features? His efforts at untlying this knot lead him to fine distinctions within the concept of existence. Burrell fleshes these out, enriching his discussion with some apt comparisons with Aquinas.

The next batch of essays concern the Avicennan legacy in the sciences. Robert Wisnovsky looks at the reflections of Ibn Sīnā and other Arabic writing authors on a long-standing problem in Aristotelian logic. Aristotle marks an important distinction between ‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect’ syllogisms. However, the criterion is not a question of validity — ‘imperfect’ syllogisms are every bit as valid as ‘perfect’ ones — but rather the manifestness of the conclusion. In the perfect syllogism, the conclusion is immediately apparent, whereas in the imperfect one, an additional logical operation is needed (typically, conversion to the ‘perfect’ form). But why should some valid syllogisms be labelled imperfect? Late classical and Arabic logicians tried to sort this out, for example, by asserting that there are different ranks of perfection; thus those syllogisms whose conclusion is not immediately granted are only less perfect than the others. Wisnovsky shows that, in fact, Aristotle himself had allowed such a ranking, since it is inherent in his employment of both the comparative and superlative forms of teleios.

Clearly intuition plays an important role here, though Aristotle does not mention it in this context: the way the conclusion of one valid syllogism strikes one immediately as correct, while the conclusion of another, equally valid one, seems unnatural and requiring further work, is a matter of intuition. Ibn Sīnā does not mention intuition in his discussion of the issue either, but elsewhere hads, intuition, becomes very much the foundation of his own epistemology.

Sari Nusseibeh studies the matrix of issues connected to divine providence, illustrating the close knitting of logic and theology in Ibn Sīnā’s thought. In order to guide providentially the course of events, God must know each particular event; but to know each event requires a means of ostentation, that is, of pointing to or otherwise singling out each event. Nusseibeh shows that Ibn Sīnā’s theory of providence is comprehensive and complex, taking into account three perspectives: the
causal (God as cause of each event), the epistemic (God’s knowing each event), and the deontic (God’s doing the good with each action).

The Qānūn is without doubt Avicenna’s longest-standing and farthest reaching legacy to medical science. For half a millennium it served as the basis of instruction and practice from India to Italy; it was translated into all the major scientific languages and glossed by generations of scholars. The monumental achievement of this opus has been recognized, but not its real import. The Qānūn is often grouped with the great compendia of Abu Bakr al-Rāzī and al-Majūsī as shining examples of the medical encyclopedias produced by medieval Islamicate civilization. However, the similarity between Avicenna’s Qānūn and those writings is limited only to their length and breadth of coverage. The real contribution of the Qānūn, and I would not hesitate to call it revolutionary, lies in the thorough and systematic integration of medicine into the sciences. Before the Qānūn, medicine employed a physical theory, and a corresponding terminology that differed from that generally in use, and this led to some problems. Ibn Sīnā set out to establish just how and why medicine is a science (‘ilm), as well as to delineate which issues lie within the province of medical science to decide, and which belong to natural science. No wonder, then, that the Qānūn spawned an incredibly rich and diverse satellite literature in the form of commentaries, epitomes, and commentaries to epitomes.

Leigh N. Chipman gives us a first probing into one of the most thorough commentaries on the Qānūn, written by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī. An important astronomer and philosopher, Quṭb al-Dīn’s life project was the study of the Qānūn; he scoured all available commentaries before sitting down to write his own thorough and painstaking gloss. The issue that is chosen for analysis is the key concept ‘ilm (noted in the preceding paragraph), its precise definition, and its proper application to medical science.

In stark contrast to the great fame he earned in medicine, Ibn Sīnā’s work in astronomy has received little notice. To be sure, his contributions to that field of science are not of the same order as his legacy to medicine, but they are by no means insignificant. F. Jamil Ragep enlightens us concerning the Avicennan legacy in astronomy. He examines a short work by al-Juzjānī, Ibn Sīnā’s long-time friend and collaborator, and he finds there some Avicennan themes. Moreover, the treatise records a remarkably accurate measurement of the obliquity of the solar orbit which al-Juzjānī made in Isfahan, possibly together with Ibn Sīnā.

Other developments are connected to changes in the social history of learning. In the post-Avicennan period, more and more scholars who participated in the enterprise of science and philosophy had strong legal (fiqh) backgrounds. This is one feature of the naturalization of science in Islam, as pointed out by A. I. Sabra
in his seminal article on the subject. One increasingly encounters the use of legal terminologies, as well as the application of legal reasoning in the attempt to resolve outstanding issues.

The evolving and complex interactions between astronomy, on the one hand, and philosophy, kalam, and the religious sciences on the other, are the topic of Robert Morrison’s paper. Morrison focuses mainly on the work of Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nisābūrī (d. c. 1330), a student of Qūṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī, as well as a group of scholars working a century later in Samarqand, home to both an important madrasa and an astronomical observatory. The general trend that he detects is to distance astronomy from philosophy, at least formally; basic tenets, such as the immobility of the earth, remain very much in force, even though the arguments pro and con undergo re-examination. Islamic law is very helpful in providing mechanisms for resolving issues where no decisive proof is available. Principles such as divine beneficence and an economy of nature also find application in scientific deliberations.

Two studies examine the reception of Avicenna among Jewish thinkers, in particular, Jews who read Ibn Sīnā in Arabic and wrote up their own ideas in Arabic as well. Making good use of some very recent work, Steven Harvey describes precisely what Jewish thinkers found attractive in Avicenna, and what not. Jews in both East and West had some familiarity with the Avicennan philosophical corpus before the epoch-making work of Moses Maimonides (d. 1204). Indeed, Harvey suggests that Avicenna was known among Andalusian Muslims earlier than is generally believed and that Jewish sources may help clarify this point further. Maimonides thought little of Avicennan natural science, but he saw value in Avicennan approaches to religious issues, such as the nature of worship. Jews in the post-Maimonidean period generally preferred Averroes’s more orthodox Aristotelianism, but Avicenna’s thought continued to exercise a certain influence, especially among those who could read him in Arabic.

Paul B. Fenton focuses upon Jews in the East, including some prominent direct descendants of Maimonides, who maintained the tradition of reading and writing in Arabic. The transmigration of the soul is the theme of his paper. Ibn Sīnā rejected that doctrine; some of his later followers accepted it, or at least maintained that the question whether the same soul can inhabit more than one body has no easy answer. As Fenton shows, Ibn Sīnā’s arguments surface in one way or another in nearly all of the Jewish texts that take up the topic.

Not a few of the names and terminologies found in this volume have by now become common enough in English that we can dispense with the precise transliteration generally employed for Arabic words. We will here write kalam, rather than kalām, and hadith rather than ḥadīth. Other words for which we shall
dispense with the scientific transliteration are Muhammad (when speaking of the prophet of Islam, but not when it appears as the proper name of someone else), Asharite, and Mutazalite. Throughout the book, as, indeed, in this foreword, we have freely shifted between Ibn Sīnā and the by-now firmly entrenched Latin version of his name, Avicenna.

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The history of post-Avicennan philosophy begins with al-Jûzjânî, Bahmanyâr, Ibn Zayla, and al-Ma'sûmî, who, despite the paucity of reliable reports in the bio-bibliographical literature, appear to have played a central role in the collection and transmission of Avicenna’s writings. Moreover, these individuals did not just gather the master’s oeuvre; they also wrote commentaries on and summaries of his major and minor philosophical works. A detailed study of their lives and works remains a major desideratum.¹

In this article I will attempt to answer the following questions about Avicenna’s immediate disciples including, though I will argue that they were not immediate, al-Lawkârî and al-‘Ilâqi: Who were they? How extensive was their study and contact with Avicenna? What role did they play, if any, in the transmission and defence of his philosophy? With which writings of Avicenna are they associated in the bio-bibliographical literature? What works and commentaries did they themselves compose? And who were their students and to what extent can this be determined?

¹ D. Gutas, ‘Notes and Texts from Cairo Manuscripts, II: Texts from Avicenna’s Library in a Copy by ‘Abd al-Razzâq aṣ-Ṣâghûnî’, Manuscripts of the Middle East, 2 (1987), 13–22 (p. 9 n. 17); an exception is D. C. Reisman’s work on Bahmanyâr and Ibn Zayla, The Making of the Avicennan Tradition: The Transmission, Content, and Structure of Ibn Sînâ’s ‘al-Mubâḥathât’ (The Discussions), Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science: Texts and Studies, 49 (Leiden, 2002). See also the references below to Y. Michot’s work (some of which appeared in print after this article was completed), including Ibn Sînâ: Lettre au vizir Abû Sa’d; Édito princeps d’après le manuscrit de Bursa, Sagesse musulmane, 4 (Beirut, 2000); and ‘Le Riz trop cuit du Kirmâni: Présentation, édition, traduction et lexique de l’épître d’Avicenne contestant l’accusation d’avoir pastiché le Coran’, in Mélanges offerts à Hossam Elkhadem par ses amis et ses élèves, ed. by F. Dalemans and others (Brussels, 2007), pp. 81–129.
Introduction

In his biography of Avicenna, Abū ‘Ubayd al-Jûzjâni relates the following vivid account of the nightly study sessions that took place at Avicenna’s residence, which presumably was in Hamadhân, while Avicenna was still in the service of the Büyid amîr, Abû Ṭâhir Shams al-Dawla (r. 387–419/c. 997–1021). In this report al-Jûzjâni also establishes his connection to Avicenna’s philosophical summa, the Shīfâ:

Every night students [talabat al-‘ilm] would gather at his house, while by turns I would read from the Shīfâ and another would read from the Qānûn. When we finished [reading], different kinds of singers arrived, a drinking party [majlis al-sbarâb] was prepared with [all of] its accompaniments, and we engaged [ourselves] in it. [In those days] instruction [taadrîs] would take place at night, because of the lack of free time during the day on account of [Avicenna’s] service to the Amîr.

In Tatimmat Șiwân al-ḥikma Zahir al-Dîn Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqî (d. 565/1169), or his source(s), embellishes al-Jûzjâni’s report with the following details, which are again repeated in later biographies of Avicenna:

While by turns Abū ‘Ubayd would read [yaqra’u min] from Kitâb al-Shīfâ, al-Ma‘ṣûmî would read from al-Qânûn, <Ibn Zayla would read from al-Isbârât and Bahmanyâr would read from al-Ḥâṣil wa-l-maḥṣûl.>.


5 Al-Bayhaqi, Tatimmat Șiwân al-ḥikma, ed. by M. Shaﬁ‘ (Lahore, 1935), p. 49; all of the following Tatimma references are to the Shaﬁ‘ edition (other editions of al-Bayhaqi’s
The significance of this report and its later recensions (indicated above by the angle brackets, which appear only in Shafti’s edition) is not in its historical veracity, because the *Ishārāt wa-l-tanbībāt* appears to have been composed after the period in Hamadhân,⁶ but in the way that it clearly associates each of Avicenna’s four disciples with certain of his works. Another point that this report establishes is the identity of Avicenna’s direct disciples; that is, those whom the bio-bibliographical tradition — which began with al-Jūzjānī, who mentions himself only; the other names, as noted, appearing only in later recensions — regarded as the most loyal to Avicenna’s philosophy and to his *madhhb* (see below). The study sessions in Hamadhân with Avicenna might be identified with reading sessions (*mašālīs al-qirā’a*), where al-Jūzjānī and perhaps others would read Avicenna’s texts back to him, apparently for discussion and possibly in order to establish an archetype of his text (*al-nuskhā al-dustūr*).⁷


Al-Jūzjānī

Al-Jūzjānī is the only immediate disciple whom Avicenna identifies by name in his autobiography. He says that he met him after arriving in Jurjān (403/04–c. 1013/14). His full name is Ābū ʿUbayd ʿAbd al-Wāḥīd b. Muḥammad al-Jūzjānī. Little is known about his life and background, apart from his companionship of and dedication to Avicenna. In his introduction to the Shifāʾ, al-Jūzjānī explains why he sought out Avicenna and became his disciple:

My love for the philosophical sciences [al-ʾulām al-ḥikmiyya] and my desire to acquire true knowledge [al-maʿarif al-haqiqiya] prompted me to abandon my country and emigrate to the country where Avicenna — may God perpetuate his days — resided, because the reports about him that came to my attention as well as his discourse [kalām] to which I was exposed required that I favor him above everybody else known for this discipline and associated with this subject [jumla]. The reports that had reached me about him indicated that he was proficient in these sciences already as a young man — an adolescent still in his teens — and that he had written many works [tasānīf], that he would hardly withhold them [from others], and that he showed little interest in keeping [dahī] copies [for himself]. My desire was thus confirmed that I should go to him and join his company, and insistently request from him to concern himself [only] with writing while I concerned myself with keeping [what he wrote]. So I went to Jurjān where he resided at the time; he was then approximately thirty-two years old.


11 Gutas, Avicenna, pp. 39–40 (Gutas’s translation; Arabic glosses are mine); Avicenna, Shifāʾ, 1, 1.
Al-Jūzjānī’s own account indicates that he was familiar with Avicenna’s philosophical writings before their meeting in Jurjān. These writings would have included Avicenna’s (1) al-Majmū‘: al-Ḥikma al-‘Arūḍīyya; (2) al-Ḥāṣil wa-l-mahṣūl and its section on ethics, viz. (3) al-Bīr wa-l-ībm. In his bibliography of Avicenna’s works al-Jūzjānī mentions that al-Ḥāṣil was in twenty volumes (mujallad) and that al-Bīr was in two volumes, which indicates that he had either read the works or knew their details. Al-Jūzjānī does not mention in the bibliography Avicenna’s first work, Maqāla fi l-Nafs ‘alā sunnat al-ikhtiṣār, which might indicate that he was not aware of it; on the other hand, he may simply not have mentioned it, as, indeed, Avicenna does not name it in his autobiography. What is clear from the introduction of the Shifā’ is that al-Jūzjānī was at least familiar with some of Avicenna’s writings and with his reputation as an up-and-coming philosopher who merited seeking out, to the exclusion of any other philosopher.

What was the nature of al-Jūzjānī’s relationship with Avicenna? In his Kitāb Kayfiyat al-aflāk al-Jūzjānī touches upon this question. There he says, ‘when I began serving [bīna ittisāli bi-khidmat] al-Shaykh Abū ‘Ali [Avicenna] I was eager to acquire his writings and obtain his books […]. I used to keep his books [kāna ‘indi labu kutub] on mathematics which befit his [attainment of knowledge], among them was his book on the principles of geometry [usūl al-bandasa], which was a summary [mukhibaṣar] of Euclid’s [Elements]. More than any other disciple, al-Jūzjānī appears to have played the role of a private secretary (kātib, mudawwin) to Avicenna, whose job it was to record and preserve his works. In the introduction to the Shifā’ al-Jūzjānī says that, given Avicenna’s commitments to statecraft,

I could therefore avail myself of only a few opportunities during which I took down some dictation on logic and physics. When I appealed [to him] to compose long works and commentaries, he referred to the commentaries he had written and books he had composed in his native country. I had heard, however, that these were widely dispersed and that people who owned a copy of them withheld them [from others]; as for him, it was not his habit [‘āda] to save a copy for himself, just as it was not his habit to make a copy from his archetype [yubarriru mina l-dustūr] or transcribe [an archetype] from his rough draft [yukbriju mina

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12 Gohlman, Ibn Sinā, pp. 46–47; also see the longer bibliography, ibid., pp. 92–93.

13 Gutas, Avicenna, p. 94.

14 Sezgin, GAS, vi, 281 n. 3 (translation mine).

15 Al-Fārābī also appears to have had a secretary who recorded his writings: al-Bayhaqi, Tatimma, p. 102.3; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a (d. 668/1270), ‘Uyūn al-anbā‘ fī tabaqat al-aṭibā‘, ed. by A. Müller, 2 vols (Königsberg, 1884; repr. Frankfurt a.M., 1999), ii, 139.19; see Gutas, Avicenna, p. 39 n. 2.
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al-sawād]: he would only either dictate or himself write the manuscript and give it to the person who had commissioned it from him. Moreover, he suffered from successive misfortunes, and disasters destroyed his books.16

As Avicenna’s secretary al-Jüzjānī’s duties would have included the following: (1) taking dictation from Avicenna (istamlaytubu fiba shay’an mina l-manṭiqi wa-l-taḥābiyyāt),17 in the biography al-Jüzjānī says that Avicenna dictated (amlā ‘alayya) to him al-Mukhtaṣar al-Ausat fi l-manṭiq.18 (2) keeping copies of his works, in particular the archetypes, of which — and to al-Jüzjānī’s oft-repeated complaint — Avicenna appears to have been careless in keeping; (3) tracking down lost manuscripts of his works; (4) authenticating copies of Avicenna’s works and keeping a hand list of his published writings (whose end-product was al-Jüzjānī’s bibliography).

Of all Avicenna’s disciples al-Jüzjānī appears to have been the most devoted to the quest of locating his master’s lost works and to encouraging him to (re)write new ones. As for the genesis of the Shīfā’al-Jüzjānī wrote two accounts:19 The first is in his introduction to that work, while the second is found in his biography of Avicenna, which he wrote after his death. In the former al-Jüzjānī presents himself and the other disciples (whose names are not mentioned) as appealing to Avicenna to rewrite some of his lost works. Al-Jüzjānī says:

In the meantime, the hope of ever obtaining his lost works [taṣānifubu al-fa’itā] having dimmed, we asked him to rewrite them. He said, ‘I have neither the time nor the inclination to occupy myself with close textual analysis and commentary. But if you [pl.] would be content with whatever I have readily in mind, [which I have thought] on my own, then I could write for you [pl.] a comprehensive work [taṣānif jāmi’i] arranged in the order which will occur to me’. We readily offered our consent to this and urged that he start with the physics. He began with that and wrote approximately twenty folia, but was then interrupted by administrative disruptions.20

Al-Jüzjānī’s use of the plural pronoun makes clear that he was not alone in making this request of Avicenna and so cannot take sole credit. In the biography, by contrast, al-Jüzjānī uses the singular pronoun when relating the genesis of the Shīfā’. He says:

16 Gutas, Avicenna, p. 40; Shīfā’, 1, 2; Gacek, Arabic Manuscript Tradition, pp. 46, 73.
17 Shīfā’, 1, 2.2.
Then I asked him to comment on the works of Aristotle, but he said that he was not free to do so at that time. ‘But if you would be satisfied with my composing a work in which I would set forth what, to me, is sound in these sciences, without debating with those who disagree or devoting myself to their refutation, I would do that.’ I was satisfied with it, and so he began with the physics of a work which he called the *Shifā*.

What is common to both accounts is an explanation of Avicenna’s conception of his philosophical school (*madhab*), namely, a new synthesis of Peripatetic philosophy, to be distinguished from the literal-minded commentary and exegetical tradition associated, at that time, with the School of Baghdad and its leading proponent, Abū l-Faraj ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 435/1043). The *Shifā* then came to represent this new way of doing philosophy for later generations of philosophers, and for some philosophizing theologians as well, most notably, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). The *Shifā* served also as Avicenna’s summa of the philosophical sciences, replacing Aristotle’s as the subject of study and the object of commentary and philosophical discussions.

Other than the introduction to the *Shifā* al-Jūzjānī also compiled the sections on geometry, astronomy,23 music, and arithmetic for Avicenna’s *Najāt* and *Dānishnāmi-yi ‘Alā‘ī,*24 al-Bayhaqī confirms this in his report, saying that al-Jūzjānī wrote the supplementary (*alḥaqā) sections on the mathematical sciences (*jarāfan mina l-‘ulūmi l-riyāḍiya*) for those two works.

There are a number of explanations as to why al-Jūzjānī wrote these sections on the mathematical sciences. The first is that it was his attempt, following the Peripatetic tradition, to supply those sections that he thought were missing. In other words, it was an apologetic effort whose goal was to avert the criticism of Avicenna’s would-be detractors.26 The second is that Avicenna appears to have had neither the time

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25 Al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimma*, p. 94; Brockelmann, *GAL*, 1, 453, S1, 821.

nor the inclination to reproduce what he had already written of the mathematical sciences in the Shīfāʾ (these sections were in fact the last ones that he himself wrote for any work) and simply left it for al-Jūzjānī, his secretary, to do. The question of al-Jūzjānī’s faithfulness to the Shīfāʾ in compiling the Nağat and Dānishnāmi-ye ʿAlāʾī’s mathematical sections still needs to be determined.

In fine, al-Jūzjānī’s lasting contribution to the Avicennan tradition was his role, as Avicenna’s secretary, in organizing and preserving his works. Moreover, he encouraged Avicenna to continue writing and, in so far as it was possible, to remain focused on the practice of philosophy rather than politics. Whether al-Jūzjānī taught any of Avicenna’s works or had any students of his own is unknown. He appears to have remained with Avicenna until his death in 428/1037. The date of al-Jūzjānī’s own death is unknown. Answers to these and other questions perhaps will only be found once we have had a closer examination of the manuscript tradition of his works and those of Avicenna.

The following is a list of al-Jūzjānī’s works:

1. An elucidation of the difficulties (fasara mushkilāt) of the Qānūn: al-Bayhaqi, Tatimma, p. 94; Shahrazūrī, Nuzhat al-arwāh, p. 317. This work does not appear to be extant.

2. Kitāb al-Hayawān (in Persian); al-Bayhaqi reports that there was a copy in the Niẓāmīyya library (kbazāna) in Nisabūr: Tatimma, p. 94. This work does not appear to be extant.

3. Kayfīyat tarkib al-aflāk: Brockelmann, GAL, S1, 828; Sezgin, GAS, VI, 281. 27


5. Sharḥ Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqqān: al-Bayhaqi, Tatimma, p. 94; al-Shahrazūrī, Nuzhat al-arwāh, p. 317. The title is unattested elsewhere, and the work does not appear to be extant; the ascription is spurious, and the author was in fact Ibn Zayla (see below).


28 On Farghānī, see Sezgin, GAS, VI, 149–51. See also the contribution of Jamil Ragep to the present volume.
Bahmanyār

In his autobiography Avicenna does not mention Bahmanyār by name. In one of the replies, however, found in the Mubāḥathāt collection Avicenna addresses Bahmanyār by the honorific al-Shaykh al-Fāḍil, and in the others as al-Shaykh. Avicenna’s use of this title indicates that he considered Bahmanyār to be more of a colleague than a pupil. Bahmanyār’s earliest known biographer is al-Bayhaqi, who identifies him only as Bahmanyār,31 to which al-Shahrazūrī later added Ibn al-Marzubānī.32 Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a is the first biographer to give what appears to be his full name: Abū l-Ḥasan Bahmanyār ibn al-Marzubān.33 Muḥammad-Bāqir al-Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895) likewise provides the kunya Abū l-Ḥasan, and adds the nisba al-ʿAjamī al-ʿAdharbāyyānī (‘non-Arab, Azerbaijan’).34 The title Kiyyā Raʿīs (and Kiyyā) given by Niẓāmī-ʿArūḍī (d. 556/1161) appears to be a conflation of Bahmanyār with Kiyyā Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Marzubān.35


30 For a detailed discussion of Bahmanyār’s name and title, see Reisman, Avicennan Tradition, pp. 185–92; also see H. Daiber, who refers to two letters by Avicenna appended to a manuscript of the Mubāḥathāt where he apparently addresses Bahmanyār as al-Shaykh al-Fāḍil (‘Bahmanyār, Kiyya’, in Elr, iii, 502).

31 Al-Bayhaqi, Tatimma, p. 91.


34 Khwānsārī, Rawdāt al-jannāt, ii, 153.

Perhaps a more reliable source for Bahmanyār’s name is MS Petermann II 466 (Staatsbibliothek Berlin), where in the introduction to one of the fascicles of the *Mubāḥathāt* it is given as Abū l-Ḥusayn Bahmanyār ibn al-Marzubān al-Kātib (the chancellery secretary).\(^{35}\)

The little that is known of Bahmanyār’s life and works is reported in al-Bayhaqī’s *Tatimma*:

[Bahmanyār] was a disciple of Abū ‘Ali [Ibn Sinā]. He was a Zoroastrian *maṣūṣ ʿl-mil-ḥa* who was not proficient in Arabic *kalām al-ʿArabī*. He was from Ādharbāyjān. Abū ‘Ali’s *Mubāḥith* is largely made up of Bahmanyār’s questions *masāʾiḥ*, which seek [answers to] difficult [philosophical] problems *ghawāmiḍ al-mushkūlāt*. Bahmanyār’s writings include *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, *Kitāb al-Zīna fī l-maṭṭīq*, *Kitāb al-Bābja wa-l-saʿāda*, *Kitāb al-Musāqī*, and many *Rasāʾiḥ*.\(^{37}\)

That Bahmanyār was a disciple of Avicenna there is little doubt. On the other hand, just when they first met and how extensive their contact was is difficult to know. It is unclear whether Bahmanyār participated in the aforementioned Hamadhānī nightly study sessions, since, as we have seen, al-Jūzjānī does not name names in his biography of Avicenna. Niẓāmī-‘Arūḍī reports of their meeting in Isfahān, while Avicenna was in the service of ‘Alāʾ al-Dawla (c. 415–28/1024–37).\(^{38}\) Beyond the reports of al-Bayhaqī and Niẓāmī-‘Arūḍī (who are followed by, among others, al-Shahirzūrī and al-Khwānsārī) there is little else in establishing the date and location of their first meeting.

An earlier date for their meetings is suggested by Reisman, who argues that Bahmanyār’s possible aristocratic lineage — that he was the son of Ispahbad (*amīr*) Marzubān — identifies him as the ‘aristocratic young man, one of the sons of the commanders’, who is mentioned in the letter ‘Memoirs of a Disciple from Rayy’. This identification, if correct, would place Bahmanyār’s meeting with Avicenna in

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\(^{35}\) Reisman suggests that because of Bahmanyār’s possible lineage he could have served, for a time, as a secretary to Sayyida’s son Majd al-Dawla (*Avicennan Tradition*, pp. 185, 191).


Rayy as early as 404/05–1014/15, which presumably would include him among the participants in the study sessions in Hamadhān.

There remains some uncertainty as to whether Bahmanyār was a Zoroastrian or Muslim. To be sure, his lineage would indicate that he was a Zoroastrian, but perhaps his kunya — be it Abū I-Ḥasan or Ḥusayn — if authentic, would indicate that he was either a Muslim, or, at least, had given his son(s) a Muslim name. Bahmanyār’s maternal uncle (khbāḥ), Abū Maḥṣūr Bahrām ibn Khūrshid ibn Yazdīyār, to whom he dedicates his Kitāb al-Tahṣil, is considered by al-Khwānsārī to have been, like his nephew, a Zoroastrian (majūsī) until his ‘conversion’ to Islam.

As for Bahmanyār’s death date, al-Bayhaqi reports that he died nearly thirty years after Avicenna in 458/1066. Brockelmann, who does not indicate his source(s), gives an earlier death date of 430/1038, which suggests that Bahmanyār — who would have died only a year after Avicenna — was closer to him in age, thus reinforcing the suggestion made earlier that he would have been more of a colleague than a pupil. Without knowing Brockelmann’s source, however, it is difficult to accept his date as conclusive. Nevertheless, one argument for accepting this date is that Bahmanyār — like his colleagues Ibn Zayla and Maʿṣūmī (on whom see below) — probably died sometime shortly after Avicenna. According to this line of reasoning, the later date given by al-Bayhaqi for Bahmanyār’s death was intended to connect Abū al-‘Abbās al-Lawkārī (who died sometime after 503/1109) to the latter and thus back to Avicenna himself. In other words, this isnād of philosophers provided the needed authority for al-Bayhaqi’s statement that it was under al-Lawkārī that the philosophical sciences spread in Khurāsān. But even if we admit al-Bayhaqi’s death date for Bahmanyār, al-Lawkārī would have been too young to have studied in any serious way with al-Shaykh al-Fāḍīl.

42 Brockelmann, GAL, 1, 458.
44 The extending of Bahmanyār’s life to meet that of al-Lawkārī is perhaps an example of the mu‘āmmar phenomenon (those men who were blessed by God with longer than
In the bio-bibliographical tradition Bahmanyār is known mainly as a commentator on Avicenna. He is associated with two works in particular: the Mubāḥathāt and the Ta‘līqāt. The Mubāḥathāt consists in part of Bahmanyār’s questions and Avicenna’s responses to him; various versions appeared after Avicenna’s death. The Ta‘līqāt is a collection of notes taken by Bahmanyār of explanations given by Avicenna on fundamental terms in logic, physics, and metaphysics, for which al-Lawkarī prepared the fīhrīst (table of contents) in 503/1109.\(^{45}\) It is unclear whether the discussions (mubāḥathāt) between Avicenna and Bahmanyār or the notes (ta‘līqāt) taken by him took place in Hamadhān, Īs̱fahān, or both. There is some evidence to suggest that Bahmanyār began work on what eventually took shape as the Mubāḥathāt by corresponding with Avicenna even before he met him.\(^{46}\)

Bahmanyār’s philosophical summa is Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl (or Taḥṣīlāt); it was written in Arabic in Īs̱fahān sometime between 415/1024 and 428/1037 and is dedicated to his maternal uncle Bahrām ibn Khūrshid. The work is structured according to Avicenna’s Dānishnāma-yi ʻAlāʾī with sections on logic, metaphysics, and physics (in that order), and it appears to have been translated, possibly by Bahmanyār himself, into Persian;\(^ {47}\) ʿAbd al-Latīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231–32) says he wrote a summary (ḥaṣṣaltu) of the Taḥṣīl.\(^ {48}\) Al-Khwānsārī says that the Taḥṣīl is composed according the way of the Peripatetics (masbsbāʾūn) and that a certain Fāḍil al-Khafārī (?) wrote a gloss on it (naqala ʿanbu fī ḥāṣbiyatibī) which does not appear to be extant.\(^ {49}\) In the bio-bibliographical tradition Bahmanyār is connected with Avicenna’s al-Ḥāṣil wa-l-maḥsūl, but this connection appears to be based on the similarity of titles.\(^ {50}\) Whether there is in fact a connection between al-Ḥāṣil and al-Taḥṣīl will have to await further study.


\(^{47}\) Al-Khwānsārī, Rawḍāt al-jannāt, 11, 153; al-Ṭīrānī, Dbarī’a, 11, 395.

\(^{48}\) Ibn Abī Uṣ̱yabīʿa, ʿUyun al-anbāʿa, 11, 204.5; Daiber, ‘Bahmanyār’, 11, 501.

\(^{49}\) Al-Khwānsārī, Rawḍāt al-jannāt, 11, 153.

\(^{50}\) Gutas, Avicenna, p. 96.
The following is a list of Bahmanyār’s works:


2. *Kitāb al-Zīna fi l-maṯtiq*: al-Bayhaqi, *Tatimma*, 91. The title also appears as *Kitāb ar-Ruḥba fi l-maṯtiq* in the M. K. ‘Alī edition of the *Tatimma*, which is perhaps the result of a scribal or an editorial error with respect to the pointing of the diacritics (both words share the same consonantal skeleton). This work does not appear to be extant.51

3. *Kitāb al-Baḥja wa-l-saʿāda*: al-Bayhaqi, *Tatimma*, p. 91; a portion dealing with God’s knowledge of himself has been preserved in al-Khwānsārī, *Rauḍat al-Jannāt*, ii, 157. Baghdādi gives the following two titles apparently as independent works: *Kitāb as-Saʿāda* and *Kitāb al-Baḥja fi l-maṯtiq wa-l-ṭabiʿi wa-l-ilābī, Hadiyat al-‘ārifin* (1, 244).

4. *Kitāb fi al-Maṣḥīq*: al-Bayhaqi, *Tatimma*, p. 91. This work does not appear to be extant.


7. *Maqāla fi Umūr al-nafṣ wa quwābā* (Istanbul, MS N. Paṣa, 1350H, fols 54–57*). It appears to be the same as the *Maqāla fi ārāʾ al-Maṣṣāʾīn fi umūr

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51 N. Rescher says that this work could be no more than an extract from the logic of the *Tahṣil* (*The Development of Arabic Logic* (Pittsburgh, 1964), p. 157).

al-nafs wa quwābā, which Daiber describes as a supplementary treatise to Avicenna’s Kitāb al-Nafs of the Ǧīfā; and which deals mainly with perception (idrāk) of the souls of man and stars; also see al-Khwānsīrī’s account of Bahmanyār’s theory of the souls, Rawḍāt al-Jannāt, II, 158.


Ibn Zayla

Ibn Zayla like Bahmanyār is not mentioned by Avicenna in his autobiography (nor by al-Jūzjānī in his biography of Avicenna). Al-Bayhaqī gives his name as Abū Maṃṣūr al-Ḥusayn ibn Ṭāhir ibn Zayla, while Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a gives Ibn Zaylan. However, we read in Ibn Zayla’s Kitāb al-Kāfī fi l-māsīqa, which perhaps is the most authoritative source, that his name is Abū Maṃṣūr al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Zayla. The details of his life are little known. He is said to have been a Zoroastrian, but given his name and that of his father and grandfather, he was likely to have been a Muslim. According to al-Bayhaqī he was from Iṣfahān, which is where he was most likely to have met Avicenna (who was there from c. 415–28/1024–37). Like Bahmanyār he appears to have corresponded with Avicenna before meeting him. In a letter to Avicenna that reflects the nature of their relationship he wrote:

In our Master’s statement at the beginning of The Cure, I came upon some contradictory and conflicting points that fall outside the consensus of scholars. So it would behoove him (Avicenna) to provide a correction of that and to disclose the points of view [of his approach], if he can.


54 Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, p. 92, followed by al-Shahrazūrī, Nuzbat al-arwāb, p. 317; al-Ziriklī, al-Aʿlām, II, 254; Kahhāla, Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn, IV, 13; Brockelmann, GAL, S1, 829.


56 Ibn Zayla, Kitāb al-Kāfī fi l-māsīqa, ed. by Z. Yūsuf (Cairo, 1964), p. 2; Brockelmann gives his name as Abū Maṃṣūr al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭābir ibn ʿUmar ibn Zayla (GAL, I, 458); see Reisman, Avicennean Tradition, pp. 195–96.

In his response Avicenna addresses Ibn Zayla by the following titles: *mawla*, *ra‘īs*, and *ḥakīm* (master, leader, and philosopher respectively).\(^{58}\) These titles indicate that Avicenna thought of him more as a fellow philosopher than a pupil. The deference shown to Ibn Zayla is supported by his death date — only twelve years after Avicenna’s own — in 440/1049.\(^{59}\) Furthermore, Ibn Zayla’s use of blunt and direct language in addressing Avicenna indicates that his tone was not that of a (respectful) student but of a fellow philosopher (*ḥakīm*).

The longer bibliography of Avicenna’s works states that Avicenna dictated the *Ta‘liqāt* to Ibn Zayla (‘*allaqābu ʿanbu*’).\(^{60}\) This ascription seems misplaced, because there is no evidence that Avicenna had conceived of a work with that title; the notes that came to form the contents of the *Ta‘liqāt* are generally associated with Bahmanyār and al-Lawkārī.\(^{61}\) Nevertheless, further investigation of the manuscripts of the *Ta‘liqāt* is needed to determine Ibn Zayla’s role, if any, in that work.

The bio-bibliographical works consider Ibn Zayla as an exegete of Avicenna’s more ‘allusive works’, which is largely due to his commentary (*sbarḥ*) on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqqān*.\(^{62}\) However, the *Mubāḥathāt* collection shows him to have been also interested in more conventional Peripatetic issues, for example, the classification of the sciences, especially the issue of the scope of the logician’s rightful field of enquiry, which is raised in the introduction to the *Sḥifā*, as well as other issues raised in *al-Samā‘ al-ṭabī‘ī* of the *Sḥifā*.\(^{63}\)

The following is a list of Ibn Zayla’s works:


3. Kitāb fi l-Nafs: al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, p. 93. This work does not appear to be extant.


**Al-Maʿṣūmi**

Al-Maʿṣūmi appears to have been the closest in age to Avicenna. Brockelmann gives the date of his death as 430/1038.64 Avicenna does not mention him in his autobiography, nor does al-Jūzjānī. Al-Bayhaqī reports that his name (ism) is either Aḥmad or Muḥammad with the patronymic ibn Aḥmad; and that his kunya is Abū ‘Abdallāh and title al-faqīb (the jurist), which appear to be quoted from Avicenna’s Kitāb fi l-ʿĪsbq, which was dedicated to al-Maʿṣūmi.65

In the correspondences, al-As’ila wa-l-ajwiba, between Abū Rayḥān Muḥammad al-Bīrūnī (c. 442/1050) and Avicenna his name appears as Abū Saʿīd Aḥmad ibn ‘Ali al-Maʿṣūmi. Little else is known about him.66 Al-Bayhaqī says of the latter work:

> When Abū ‘Ali [Ibn Sinā] responded to Abū Rayḥān’s questions the latter objected to those answers and replied in terms that were in bad taste [ṣūr al-ʿadāb] and unseemly. And so Abū ‘Ali refused to reply to him and it was al-Maʿṣūmi who responded [in his stead] to Abū Rayḥān’s objections, saying: ‘If you had chosen, Abū Rayḥān, terms other than those in addressing a philosopher [ḥakīm], it would have been more seemly to the intellect [ʿaqīl] and knowledge [ʿilm].’67

The As’ila wa-l-ajwiba consists of ten questions about Aristotle’s al-Samāʾ wa-l-ʿālam, eight of which al-Bīrūnī posed to Avicenna, who responded to each one. The work also includes al-Bīrūnī’s responses to the latter, to which al-Maʿṣūmi

64 Brockelmann, GAL, S1, 828.
66 Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, pp. 95–96; Durrat al-akhbār, pp. 60–61; Shahrazūrī, Nuzbat al-arwāb, pp. 317–18; al-Zirikli, al-A’lām, vi, 228; and Brockelmann, GAL, i, 458, and S1, 828.
responded. Al-Maṣūmi’s rebuke of al-Bīrūnī and responses to him in the As’īla indicate his loyalty to Avicenna and defence of his maddhab.

Al-Maṣūmi is also the author of Kitāb fi l-Mufsāraqāt wa i’dād al-‘uqūl wa-l-‘afālak wa tartib al-mubdi‘āt, on incorporeal beings (mufsaraqāt); of which al-Bayhaqī says there was a copy in the Nīzāmīyya library at Nisābūr, which was seized (akbadhaba) by Jamāl al-Mulk (d. 473/1080–81), Nīzām al-Mulk’s eldest son, never to be seen again. This book is also described by Al-Bayhaqī as ma’sbūq kaffat al-ḥukamā‘ (the beloved of all the philosophers). Al-Bayhaqī reports that he saw a Risāla fi Ṭalimiyyat Allāh ta’āla ascribed to al-Maṣūmi, but expresses doubt about its authorship.

The following is a list of al-Maṣūmi’s works:


2. Kitāb fi l-Mufsāraqāt wa i’dād al-‘uqūl wa-l-‘afālak wa tartib al-mubdi‘āt: al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, p. 95. This work does not appear to be extant.

3. Risāla fi Ṭalimiyyat Allāh ta’āla: al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, p. 96. This work does not appear to be extant.

Summary

The first generation of Avicennan philosophers — al-Jūzjānī, Bahmanyār, Ibn Zayla, and al-Maṣūmi — appear to have been contemporaries of Avicenna, fellow philosophers rather than pupils, who wrote their own works in addition to summaries of Avicenna’s. Al-Jūzjānī may have been the one exception to this observation. He assumed the role of a famulus (kāṭib, mudawwin) to Avicenna in organizing and preserving his writings. The relatively late date for Bahmanyār’s death, 458/1066, may have been convrined by al-Bayhaqī to provide an isnād-like line of transmission of Avicenna’s philosophy to the next generation of Avicennists, most notably to ab-Lawkārī (see below). How then to understand the spread of Avicenna’s philosophy in Khurasān? Part of the evidence is already in al-Bayhaqī’s Tatimma and other bio-bibliographical sources. Al-Bayhaqī reports that he witnessed copies of the works of Avicenna’s disciples in the libraries of the Nīzāmīyya, where no doubt they, along with Avicenna’s own writings, were studied and taught. Thus we have to begin examining the Nīzāmīyya intellectual tradition as a major source for the transmission of Avicennan philosophy.
Appendix

In this final section, I address two philosophers, al-İlāqī and al-Lawkārī. The bio-bibliographical tradition connects them directly, though dubiously, to Avicenna and to his immediate circle of disciples, respectively.

Al-Lawkārī

Al-Bayhaqī attributes the spread of the sciences of philosophy (‘ulūm al-ḥikma) in Khurāsān to Abū al-‘Abbās al-Faḍl ibn Muḥammad al-Lawkārī. Little else, however, is known or reported about al-Lawkārī’s life and the exact role he played in this transmission. His nisba is to the town of Lawkār, which is situated on the outskirts of Marw (al-Shāhijān). Al-Lawkārī’s death date is disputed. Quoting Ṣādiq-İsfahānī’s (d. 1059/1650) Persian gazette titled Shāhid-i Ṣādiq, Āghā-Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī gives 464/1071 as the date of al-Lawkārī’s death; Mudarris-Ṭabrızī (d. 1373/1974), without providing his source, gives 458/1065; and Brockelmann, who likewise does not provide his source, gives 517/1123. The latter date appears likely to be the correct one or close to it, since according to one manuscript of the Taʾlīqāt, al-Lawkārī is reported to have completed its fihrist (table of contents) in 503/1109. Other than Brockelmann’s estimate, there is as yet no definitive early source for al-Lawkārī’s date of death.

68 Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, pp. 120–22; Durrat al-akbbār, pp. 80–81; Shahrazūrī, Nuzbat al-arwāb, p. 327; Baghdādī, Hadiyat al-ʿarīfīn, v, 244; al-Ṭihrānī, Dbar‘a, ix, iii, 948; Muḥammad-ʿAlī Mudarris-Ṭabrızī, Rayḥānat al-adab fi tarājim al-maʿrāfīn bi-l-kaniya aw-l-qaṣab, 6 vols (Tehran, 1333Sh/1954), v, 139; and Brockelmann, GAL, i, 460.

69 Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, p. 120; al-Shahrazūrī, Taʾrīk b al-ḥukamā, p. 327.


72 Al-Ḍarʿa, ix, iii, 948; for Ṣādiq-İsfahānī’s work, see Kbātimab-yi Shāhid-i Ṣādiq, ed. by M. H. Muḥaddith (Tehran, 1377Sh/1989); and its English translation, The Geographical work of Sādik Isfahānī, Oriental Translation Fund, 20 (London, 1832).

73 Mudarris-Ṭabrızī, Rayḥānat, v, 139.

74 Brockelmann, GAL, i, 460.

75 See Badawi’s introduction to the Taʾlīqāt, p. 9.
Al-Bayhaqī reports that al-Lawkarī had been a student of Bahmanyār (which, in many cases, is followed uncritically in later medieval and some modern biographical works). This, however, is unlikely given the probable death date of both philosophers (see above, the section on Bahmanyār). This teacher-student relationship was likely posited either by al-Bayhaqī or by his source(s) partly because the names of both philosophers are associated with the Ta’liqāt but also because of the scholarly need to establish an isnād-like authority, going back to Avicenna himself, for the transmission of philosophy in Khorāsān.

Another report associates al-Lawkarī with ‘Umar al-Khayyām (d. 517/1123), Abū Ḥātim al-Muẓaffar al-Asfīzārī (?), and Maymūn ibn Najīb al-Wāṣīṭī (d. 482/1089). This report states that these four scholars were commissioned to prepare a Zīj (astronomical table) for Malik-Shāh (r. 465–85/1072–92) in 427/1035 or 468/1075. But this report seems doubtful if one considers the account written by Ibn al-Athīr (d.630/1233) in al-Kāmil fi l-ta’rīkh. He, too, writes about a group of scholars commissioned by Malik-Shāh to prepare a Zīj in 467/1074 but neglects mentioning al-Lawkarī as being among these three scholars. Had al-Lawkarī been involved with preparing this Zīj, Ibn al-Athīr likely would have reported this. This association of al-Lawkarī with the famous ‘Umar al-Khayyām, then, appears to be the


77 Brockelmann, GAL, S1, 856.


sort of literary fabrication or trope that is often encountered in medieval Arabic biographical works. It would be appropriate to call this trope ‘the meeting of great minds’. It was intended to convey the sense that contemporaneous (and at times not exactly contemporaneous) ‘great minds’ invariably met and collaborated on some important scholarly work.

Al-Lawkārī is the author of a summa of Peripatetic philosophy titled Bayān al-ḥaqq bi-ḍīmān al-ṣidq (The Explanation of Reality with the Assurance of Veracity). This work is divided into three successive sections: logic, physics, and metaphysics. After Bahmanyār’s Kitāb al-Taḥṣil, this book is one of the earliest and most comprehensive discussions of Avicennan philosophy. In its Eisagoge (al-Madkhal), al-Lawkārī describes the Bayān al-ḥaqq as ‘a middle-length] book which combines commentary and concise exposition’ (kitābun mutawassitun ajma‘a l-sabarha wa-l-talkhīsa) of works of Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī and Avicenna. At the beginning of the metaphysics, al-Lawkārī states further that:

We intend to discourse about the fundamentals of metaphysics [uṣūl al-ʿilm al-īlābi] by way of concise exposition and commentary together, such that we do not forsake any of its canons; and without [any] prolixity by mentioning [all of] its branches [fiṣūrā]; [that is,] except in one science, namely, [the one] on the state of the human soul on its return [ḥāl al-nafs al-insāniyya ‘inda ma‘ādīḥā], when it is separated from [its] bodily connection [al-ʾilāqa al-badānīyya].

It is well established that the De anima was one of the main concerns of Avicenna’s philosophical investigations. As such, it is noteworthy that al-Lawkārī, in his discussion of the metaphysics, singles out the science concerning the soul and its return. However, the extent to which al-Lawkārī’s discourse on the soul is based on Avicenna’s will have to await further examination of the Bayān al-ḥaqq.

In addition to Bayān al-ḥaqq and the fibrist of the Ta’līqāt, al-Lawkārī authored Qaṣīdab-yi Aṣrār-i l-ḥikma (Poem of the Secrets of Philosophy) and a

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81 Thus far, only the Eisagoge of the Logic and the Metaphysics have been edited, both under the general title of Bayān al-ḥaqq bi-ḍīmān al-ṣidq: al-Manṭiq, al-Madkhal: ed. by I. Dibājī (Tehran, 1364Sh/1986) and al-ʿIlm al-īlābī, ed. by I. Dibājī, Majmūʿah-yi Andishāh-yi Islāmī, 2 (Tehran, 1414/1995); also see F. Grimmel’s discussion of al-Lawkārī’s works, Apostasie und Toleranz im Islam: Die Entwicklung zu al-Ghazālīs Urteil gegen die Philosophie und die Reaktionen der Philosophen, Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science, 40 (Leiden, 2000), pp. 341–49.

82 Al-Lawkārī, Bayān al-ḥaqq, al-ʿIlm al-īlāb, p. 3.


commentary (Sharḥ) on the same work, which closely follows the structure and subject matter of the Qaṣida, both of which are in Persian,\textsuperscript{85} as well as other poetry (diwān shīr).\textsuperscript{86} Like Ibn Mālik’s (d. 672/1274) famous al-Alfīyya in the field of Arabic grammar, the Qaṣida was intended as a pedagogical tool to help students memorize the basic principles of logic, physics, and metaphysics. Al-Lawkārī is also reported to have authored some epitomes (mukhtaṣarāt),\textsuperscript{87} presumably, of philosophical works, although there appears to be no evidence of any such titles in the bio-bibliographical literature.

\textit{Al-Lawkārī’s Students}

Al-Lawkārī, according to al-Bayhaqī, was among the well-respected lords (arbāb al-buyūtāt) of Marw, where he may have taught at the Nizāmiyya madrasa there.\textsuperscript{88} Al-Bayhaqī states that al-Lawkārī had a number of students. Although these do not appear to have been prolific or of lasting consequence, they do appear to have benefited by official patronage from the Saljūqs in Khurāsān.

Al-Lawkārī’s students include Qūtb al-Zamān Muḥammad ibn Abī Ṭāhir al-Ṭabāṣī l-Marwāzī, who, as his nisba indicates, was from Marw.\textsuperscript{89} His patron for a period of time was the Saljūq Wazīr Naṣīr al-Dīn Abī 1-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn al-Muẓaffar ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Abī Tawbah al-Marwāzī (d. or k. 530/1136). Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī describes the latter as having himself studied the sciences of the ancients (naẓara fī ‘ulūm l-aqwā‘īlī wa shtagbala bi-taḥšili tilka l-‘ulūm).\textsuperscript{90} Al-Bayhaqī appears to have known Qūtb al-Zamān and had visited his library.\textsuperscript{91}


\textsuperscript{86} Some of al-Lawkārī’s Arabic verse is extant in an unedited supplement to the Šīwān al-bikma by a yet unidentified compiler, Ḳīmām Tatimmat Šīwān al-bikma, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī, Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, MS 935/2, fol. 151‘.10, as quoted in Marcotte, ‘The Life and Works of al-Lawkārī’, p. 135; on the Ūmām, see Gutas, ‘The Šīwān al-Bikma Cycle of Texts’, p. 647.

\textsuperscript{87} Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, p. 121.


\textsuperscript{89} Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, pp. 122–23.

\textsuperscript{90} Tabaqāt al-Shāfi‘īyya, vii, 294.

\textsuperscript{91} Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimma, p. 163.
Quṭb al-Zamān’s students included an Abū l-Fatḥ ibn Abī Saʿīd al-Fundūrajī. He was a Saljūq bureaucrat, who after retiring apparently devoted himself completely (iʿtakafū) to studying, inter alia, philosophy (al-ḥikma) at the madrasa of Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Ḥasan al-Hamadhānī l-Būzanajirdī (d. 535/1140), a popular religious leader and jurist in Būzanajird, a town in Hamadhān. Al-Bayhaqī says that al-Fundūrajī wrote a number of works (taṣānīf) on meteorology (al-ābār al-ʿulwiyya) as well as a Kitāb fī Tafaṣṣīl al-ḥayawānāt (Book on the Species of Animals), neither of which appears to be in extant.

Another one of al-Lawkārī’s students was al-Qāḍī Majd (or Muḥammad) al-Aḍḍāl ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Turkī. He had a number of disputations (munāzārāt) with Sharaf al-Zamān Muḥammad al-ʿIlāqī (discussed below), in which, according to al-Bayhaqī, al-Turkī displayed only a superficial knowledge of the issues (zawābir al-kutub). Additionally, al-Bayhaqī reports that al-Turkī preserved (ḥāfizan) many of Avicenna’s works; though he exhibited knowledge of their contents (maṭālib muṣannafātib), he did not delve deeply into the theoretical sciences (al-maʿqūlat). Al-Turkī lived in Bukhara and worked as a judge. He also taught medicine, arithmetic (ḥisāb), and, presumably, Avicenna’s works at his local mosque (masjid maḥallatibī) until the time of his death in the second half of the sixth/twelfth century.

Al-ʿIlāqī

Sayyid Sharaf al-Zamān (al-Bayhaqī; Sharaf al-Dīn, in Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa) Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-ʿIlāqī (or al-ʿIlāqī) is a third-generation follower of Avicenna and the author of a number of works on philosophy and medicine. Al-Bayhaqī says that he resided in Bākharz in Qūhistān, a dependency of Khurāsān,
before leaving for Balkh in order to serve its governor al-Amīr ‘alā’ al-Dīn Qumāj ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Balkhī (†).\(^{98}\) Al-Īlāqī’s \textit{nīsha} connects him to the district of Īlāq, bordering Farghāna and Shāsh.\(^{99}\) Alternatively, there are two other places named Īlāq: a town in the vicinity of Nishābūr (hence his late-attested \textit{nīsha} al-Nishābūrī); and a village in Bukhara. However, al-Īlāqī does not appear to have lived at any of these places, so the name may derive from a family connection to one of these cities named Īlāq.

The question of al-Īlāqī’s death date and of whether he was a student of Avicenna is discussed by Rudolph Selheim in his description of a manuscript of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (d. 606/1209) \textit{Mulakhkhas fī l-ḥikma}. Selheim (and more recently Gerhard Endress) does not question Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s (and presumably al-Shahrazūrī’s) report that al-Īlāqī was a student of Avicenna. This report led Selheim to question al-Bayhaqi’s report (and Brockelmann’s reading of it) that al-Īlāqī was killed in the battle of Qatwān (or Qatawān), where the Saljūq sultan Aḥmad Sanjār (r. 511–52/1118–57) was defeated by the Qarakhānīds (r. 389–607/999–1211) in 536/1141 because, as Selheim says, al-Īlāqī would have to have been over a hundred years old. Selheim also suggests that that al-Bayhaqi, in reporting al-Īlāqī’s death date, may have confused him with another Īlāqī, namely, the Shāfi‘ī jurist Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd ibn Riḍwān al-Īlāqī (d. 539/1144). While it is not beyond al-Bayhaqi to be imprecise or even to exaggerate his reports, there appears to be little (textual) evidence to dismiss his account of al-Īlāqī’s death date; and even less evidence in support of the reports of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a and al-Sharazūrī (particularly the latter’s, who reports that al-Īlāqī was killed in the battle of Qatwān but nevertheless was a student of Avicenna, linking al-Bayhaqi’s report with that of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a).\(^{100}\) Al-Īlāqī thus appears

\(^{98}\) In Shafī‘ī’s edition of the \textit{Tatimma} the name appears (perhaps incorrectly) as ‘alā’ al-Dīn ibn Qumāj; the full name is provided in Ibn Fuwāṭi (d. 723/1323), \textit{Majma‘ al-ādāb fī mu‘jam al-ālqāb}, ed. by M. Kāzim, 6 vols (Tehran, 1416H/1995), ii, 342–43; and for a narrative of al-Amīr Qumāj’s exploits, see Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{al-Kāmil}, x, 162ff., xi, 86ff.


\(^{100}\) The erroneous dating of al-Īlāqī’s life in the bio-bibliographical literature will have to be corrected; e.g., al-Baghdādī, \textit{Hadīyat al-‘arīfīn}, vi, 71; Brockelmann (who gives al-Īlāqī’s death date as 536/1141 but says he was a student of Avicenna), \textit{GAL}, i, 485, S1, 887; R. Selheim, \textit{Materialien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte}, Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, 17, A, 2 vols (Wiesbaden, 1976), i, 147; and A. Z. Iskander, \‘A Doctor’s Book on Zoology: Al-Marwazi’s \textit{Ṭabā‘i‘ al-ḥayawān} (Nature of Animals)
to have been a contemporary of al-Bayhaqī, who reports that he had a number of
disputations with al-Lawkārī’s student ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Turki at a mosque in
Bukhara (see the section above on al-Lawkārī’s students). Al-Bayhaqī also reports
that al-Īlāqī used to meet with (ikbatala fa ilā) ‘Umar al-Khayyām; however, there
appears to be no evidence to substantiate this meeting of great minds.\(^{101}\)

In philosophy, al-Īlāqī wrote a brief epistle (risāla) on definitions in logic
and philosophy, which was completed in 534/1139–40 (the title remains unknown)\(^ {102}\) —
whose contents will need to be compared with the definitions of philosophi-
cal terms in the Ta’līqāt — and exchanged epistles with Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Karīm
Muḥammad al-Shahristānī (d. 548/1153) on the question of the nature of the Necess-
ary Being’s (wājib al-wujūd) knowledge (‘ilm).\(^ {103}\) However, al-Īlāqī is better
known for his medical works: Ikhtisār al-Kulliyāt, an epitome of the theoretical
sections of Avicenna’s al-Qānūn fi l-ṭibb, later known as al-Fusūl al-Īlāqiyya;
and al-Asbāb wa-l-‘alāmāt, a summary of the aetiology and symptomatology of
the Qānūn’s third and fourth books (not to be confused with al-Samarqandi’s (d.
619/1222) work of the same title). Both works played a significant role in transmit-
ting Avicenna’s Qānūn into Zanjid and Ayyūbid Syria.\(^ {104}\)

on Zoology’, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1937), 481–83 (p. 482 n. 1); G. Endress,
‘Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa: Intellectual Genealogies and Chains of Transmission
of Philosophy and the Sciences in the Islamic East’, in Arabic Theology, Arabic Philoso-
phy: From the Many to the One; Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank, ed. by J. E.

\(^{101}\) Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimmā, pp. 124–25.

\(^{102}\) See L. Cheikho, ‘Catalogue raisonné des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque orientale de
l’Université de Saint Joseph’, Mélanges de l’Université Saint Joseph de Beyrouth, 10 (1925),
107–79 (p. 140). I am currently preparing a critical edition and translation of this work.

\(^{103}\) ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī, Al-Mīllal wa-l-nihāl, Persian trans. by A.Ş.T. İsfahānī,
wa mašābīḥ al-abrār, ed. by ‘A. H. al-Ḥā’iri (Tehran, 1989), dawazdab–sizdab, no. 17;
al-Shahristānī, Maťās–i maktab–i Tājaddīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd-l-Karīm Shabristānī
mun’aqīd dar khvārazm, bamrāb–i maktūb–i Shabristānī bīb Muḥammad Īlāqī va pāsūk–i
ān dar bāra–yi ‘ilm–i vājīb al-‘ujūd (Tehran, 1990); al-Shahristānī, Taʾṣīr al-Shabristānī,
al-musammā maťāṭī al-asrār wa-mašābīḥ al-abrār, ed. by M.‘A. Āḥbash, 1 vol to date
(Tehran, 1417–1997–), 1, 57; G. Monnot, ‘Shahrastānī’, in El, ix, 214–16; and W. Madelung
and T. Mayer, Struggling with the Philosopher: A Refutation of Avicenna’s Metaphysics,
Isma’ili Texts and Translations Series, 2 (London, 2001), pp. 7–8; and Richter-Bernburg, ‘Īlāqī,
pp. 642–43.

\(^{104}\) On al-Īlāqī’s medical works, see Richter-Bernburg, ‘Īlāqī, pp. 642–43.
Other works al-Bayhaqī mentions are *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (Book on Animals), *Kitāb al-Luwāḥiq* (Book of the Appendices),\(^{105}\) *Kitāb fī ʾdād al-wafq* (Book of the Harmonious Arrangement),\(^{106}\) and two ‘mirrors for princes’, *Dust-nāma* and *Ṣulṭān-nāma*; all of these works, however, seem to be lost.

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\(^{105}\) This work, in all probability, is not by al- Ḩāqqī but by Avicenna; on the latter’s *Luwāḥiq, Appendices* to his *Sbīfā*, see Gutas, *Avicenna*, pp. 141–44.

The past twenty years have produced a lively and controversial debate about al-Ghazālī’s (d. 505/1111) views on cosmology, that is, how God creates and how He governs over His creation. Initially, al-Ghazālī was regarded as a faithful Asharite theologian who followed the Asharite model of an occasionalist universe in which God is the only direct and indirect cause of events. However, an ever-growing appreciation of al-Ghazālī’s complex relationship with Aristotelian philosophy, particularly the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 428/1037), has led to the realization that this is not the whole truth. Long before scholars started to discuss al-Ghazālī’s ambivalent relationship with philosophy, however, his cosmology had already been debated. The discussion was initiated almost one hundred years ago after the publication of al-Ghazālī’s Arabic book *Mishkāt al-anwār* (The Niche of Lights).

The *Mishkāt al-anwār* was a relative latecomer among the major works of al-Ghazālī known to Western scholars. Apart from brief studies that were based on manuscripts of the text and its medieval Hebrew translation, Western scholars

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began to read and analyse the book only after the publication of its Arabic editio princeps in Cairo in 1905. Soon the challenges of this text became evident. In an article published in 1914, William H. T. Gairdner (1873–1928) sketches out a number of problems that are posed by passages in Misbkan al-anwâr where al-Ghazâli puts forward teachings that he criticizes and rejects in some of his better-known works. In an attempt to explain and reconcile these apparent contradictions, Gairdner suggested that al-Ghazâli published two different sets of teachings, one in works written for the ordinary people (‘awâm), and a different set of teachings in works that were written for an intellectual elite (khawâs). The Misbkan was of the latter kind, Gairdner suggested, written for a readership that was able to properly evaluate possible conflicts of its teachings with the widely accepted religious doctrines found in the more popular books by al-Ghazâli. But if these two teachings were equally true, Gairdner asked, did al-Ghazâli teach a ‘doppelte Wahrheit’, a double truth? Did he teach one truth for his less educated readers, and another for his well-trained close followers? Gairdner called this question the

3 Al-Ghazâli, Misbkan al-anwâr, ed. by A. ‘Izzat and F. Zakî al-Kurdi (Cairo, 1322/1904–05). The text was reprinted by the Ma‘ba‘at al-Sa‘âda in Cairo in 1325 (1907–08). The text of these two early editions, however, is unreliable. The Misbkan al-anwâr has not yet been critically edited. For this article I have used two semicritical editions and two manuscripts. The editions are by Abû l-I‘lâ ‘Afîfî (Cairo, 1383/1964), who established his text from two manuscripts in Egypt (?) and the editio princeps, and by Abd al-‘Azîz ‘Izz al-Dîn al-Sayrawân (Beirut, 1407/1986). The latter edition is based on ‘Afîfî’s earlier print along with two manuscripts not used by ‘Afîfî, one of which is Beirut, Jafet Library of the American University, MS 297:3: G 41 mA. This is the oldest known manuscript of the text, copied in 541/1147. In my study of the Misbkan I compared the text in these editions with the manuscript from the American University in Beirut and MS Escurial 1130, folios 73a–81a, copied in 611/1214–15. The Escurial MS had not been used in the two editions by ‘Afîfî and al-Sayrawân. S. Dughaym, however, has edited the text of the Escurial MS (without knowledge of its providence and without identifying it) in his edition Misbkan al-anwâr fi tawhîd al-jabbâr (Beirut, 1994). All translations are mine unless noted otherwise.


6 The accusation of teaching a ‘double truth’ was initially levied against some Latin followers of Ibn Rushd (Averroes) in Paris during the late thirteenth century. They were accused of holding that there is one truth on the side of religion and another on the side of philosophy. In his 1277 condemnation of 219 philosophical theses, Étienne Tempier, the Bishop of Paris, accused some Averroists at the Paris University of saying that there are teachings which are ‘true according to philosophy but not according to the Christian faith, as if there were two contrary truths [duae contrarirae veritates] and as if there stood
'Ghazâlî-problem'. The difficulty was, in Gairdner’s words: ‘What is the absolute Islamic truth in his view? Is it the exotericism of the pious ‘awâmm, or the esotericism of the mystic kbawâṣ?’. Here, al-Ghazâlî classifies various religious sects according to how thickly they are veiled from ‘the light’. In the earlier parts of the book, al-Ghazâlî had explained that the word light should be regarded as referring to God as the source of all being. In the closing part of the Veil Section, at the very end of the book, al-Ghazâlî describes the insight of those people who are not veiled and thus have a proper knowledge of the divine. It is this report of the knowledge of the unveiled and initiated that baffled Gairdner. Al-Ghazâlî states here that the people who are not veiled understand that God is neither a being that moves the heavens nor one that governs the heavens’ movements. He is high and exalted over these kinds of activities. God is too sublime even to command (al-amr) the heavens to move. All these actions al-Ghazâlî assigns to other beings, who are below God and who are, in fact, His creations. In al-Ghazâlî’s view, those who have full insight into the divine assume that there are several ‘vice-regents’ of whom the highest one is ‘the one who gives the command’ (al-âmir). The lower beings who receive his order identify him as the ‘one who is obeyed’ (al-muṭâ‘). Given the fact that the unity of God was ‘the anxious care’ of al-Ghazâlî, Gairdner finds this division of labour, so to speak, most disturbing. He points to an ‘apparent contradiction’ of this teaching with what al-Ghazâlî has put forward in his popular autobiography al-Munqidh min al-dalâl (The Deliverer from Error), where he against the truth of Holy Scripture the truth in the sayings of the damned gentiles’ (Chartularium Universitatis Parisienis, ed. by H. Denifle and A. Chatelain, 4 vols (Paris, 1889–97), 1, 543–55 (p. 543)).


9 Gairdner, ‘Al-Ghazâlî’s Misbâkât al-Anwâr’, p. 128: ‘Not only is Allâh now denied to be the immediate efficient cause of the motion of the outermost Sphere, but — and this is startling — it is even denied that that Sphere is moved in obedience to His command. For even this supreme function is explicitly transferred from Allâh to a Being whose nature is left obscure, since our only information about him is that he is not (the) Real Being [al-wujûd al-ḥaqîq].’

teaches that nature (al-ṭabī‘a) does not work by itself, and that all creatures, even supernal entities such as the sun, the moon, and the stars, are subject to the Creator’s command (amr); they have no action by themselves coming from themselves.\(^{11}\)

Gairdner claimed that in the Munqidh, al-Ghazālī taught an occasionalist model of divine creation wherein God is the immediate creator and commander of His creatures, whereas in the Misbākīt God’s creative activity is mediated by ‘vice-regents’, most notably the mutā‘. Gairdner realized that he was not the first scholar stunned by the teachings in the Veil Section; he quotes from the works of Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185–86) and Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), who were equally taken aback by this apparent contradiction in al-Ghazālī’s writings.\(^{12}\) ‘The matter does not lack in strangeness, and it certainly looks as if [al-Ghazālī’s] esoteric theory of divine action differed considerably from his exoteric one.\(^{13}\)

Gairdner’s ‘Ghazālī problem’ of 1914 has yet to be brought up into the ongoing debates over al-Ghazālī, which have been raging for some twenty years.\(^{14}\) The problematic nature of the passage is closely connected to al-Ghazālī’s teachings on cosmology, where we are just beginning to understand the ranges of opinions he expressed. In a more extensive publication I aim to address the larger issues


involved in al-Ghazālī’s cosmology. There I argue that al-Ghazālī was ultimately undecided whether God governs over every element of his creation immediately and as the only cause, or whether His creative activity is mediated by other beings, who are themselves His creations. In some places al-Ghazālī puts forward an occasionalist model of divine creation, but in others he endorses a model that allows for the existence of secondary causes which mediate the divine creative activity.

Al-Ghazālī’s indecisiveness about the way God creates and governs over His creation is expressed in some of his latest works.15 Whereas Gairdner voiced pessimism whether the problem can ever be solved,16 I suggest that once the epistemological status of knowledge about God’s creative activity is taken into account, the apparent contradiction in al-Ghazālī’s teachings on cosmology will be better understood, and maybe even solved. As the two positions quoted by Gairdner are clearly distinct from one another, they represent different speculative attempts to explain God’s creative activity. Overall, al-Ghazālī readily admits to having no decisive knowledge about whether God creates immediately and as the only cause, or by means of secondary causes.

Al-Ghazālī acknowledged that we have no demonstrative knowledge of God’s creative activity, but, nonetheless, he developed speculative models that aim to explain the cosmos and its connection to the divine. This article focuses on what is probably the most interesting of these speculative models. It is in the ‘Third Division’ (al-qism al-tbāliḥ) of the Veil Section at the end of Misbāḥ al-anwār. My analysis of this passage leads to the conclusion that, at least in the Misbāḥ al-anwār, al-Ghazālī puts forwards a hierarchical order of celestial beings that are created by God in order to govern the universe. Although the point is not directly touched upon in this work, the model suggests that God governs His creation by means of secondary causality.

The Cosmology of the Veil Section in ‘Misbāḥ al-anwār’

The Veil Section at the end of the Misbāḥ is a commentary on the non-canonical hadith: ‘God has seventy veils of light and darkness; were He to lift them, the august glories of His face would burn up everybody whose eyesight perceives Him.’17

15 See my Al-Ghazālī’s Philosophical Theology (New York, 2009), pp. 264–74.

16 ‘It also looks as if we shall never know the whole explanation of the matter’ (Gairdner, ‘Al-Ghazālī’s Misbāḥ al-Anwār’, p. 144).

17 The hadith does not appear in the six books. Versions of it are mentioned, for instance, in Ibn Fūrak, Kitāb Mushkil al-ḥadīth wa-bayānīh (Hyderabad, 1362/1943), p. 183.
Al-Ghazālī aims to explain what the veils of light and darkness are, and he classifies various religious groups according to what kind of veil prevents them from understanding the nature of God’s existence. In the first group are those veiled by pure darkness (mujarrad al-zulma). These are people who do not believe in God and in the Day of Judgement, meaning they do not believe in an afterlife and deny that acts in this world lead to reward and punishment in the next. Al-Ghazālī characterizes them as people who do not believe that God is the cause of the world — be it because they believe that nature (ṭabīʿ) is the cause or because they haven’t developed any interest into what causes the world. The latter can be hedonists, egoists, materialists (in a moral sense), or simply people who are interested in gaining honour and fame. Such people often confess Islam but do this mainly out of conformity or in order to achieve some benefit. In reality, however, they worship idols like pleasure, power, personal wealth, fame, or honour.\(^{18}\)

The second group is made up of people veiled from God by light combined with darkness (bi-nūr maqrūn bi-zulma) and they fall into three types. The first are veiled by a darkness that is created by their faculty of sense perception (ḥiss). These people believe in the existence of a God, but assume that He inheres within an idol; their Lord is contained in a piece of metal or stone. Others of this group, like ‘some among the furthest Turks’, assume that their Lord is a particularly outstanding human being. Yet others assert that their Lord is contained in a prime element, like fire, or in a celestial being, like a planet; they may worship the sun as their Lord. The highest sub-group of those veiled by sense perception consists of those who assume that light itself is the highest being and should be considered the Lord.\(^{19}\)

Among those who are veiled by a mixture of light and darkness are two other groups. One is veiled by ‘some light combined with the darkness of the faculty of imagination [khayāl]’\(^{20}\). This group is of a single kind, namely the anthropomorphists (mujassima) who believe that the Lord is some kind of a mighty and sublime body, having human attributes such as sight, wrath, etc. The third and final group of those veiled by a mixture of light and darkness are the ones ‘veiled by the divine lights combined with rational analogies’.\(^{21}\) Here, Al-Ghazālī has in mind people who understand divine predicates like hearing, seeing, talking,

\(^{18}\) Al-Ghazālī, Misbāḥ al-anwār, ed. ‘Affī, pp. 85–87; ed. Sayrawān, pp. 177–79.

\(^{19}\) Al-Ghazālī, Misbāḥ al-anwār, ed. ‘Affī, pp. 87–89; ed. Sayrawān, pp. 180–82.

\(^{20}\) Bi-ba’d al-anwār maqrūna bi-zulmat al-khayāl. Al-Ghazālī, Misbāḥ al-anwār, ed. ‘Affī, p. 89.8; ed. Sayrawān, p. 182.5.

Knowing, powerful, and so on, as if they were the perfection of the equivalent human attributes. Thus, they miss that the essence of the divine is unlike anything in His creation.

This last characterization suggests an Asharite critique of Mutazilite theology. That this is in fact the case emerges from al-Ghazālī’s linking this group with the position that the divine will (irāda) comes into being in time, just as the human will does. Baghdadian Mutazilites like al-Nazzām (d. c. 225/840) understood the word irāda in the sense of ‘an act of volition’ rather than the eternal divine ‘will’ of the Asharites. Such a divine volition precedes every divine act. Yet because there can be no delay in the realization of God’s volition, it does not temporarily precede the divine act. For early Baghdadian Mutazilites at least, every divine act is prompted by a divine volition (irāda) that comes into existence at the very moment of the divine act, while for the Asharites the divine will (irāda) is part of God’s essence and thus eternal (qadim).

The Third Division: Three Groups of Those Veiled by Pure Lights

Most interesting is the third group (qism), those veiled by pure lights (mahḍ al-anwār). These are the people who have gained some insight into God’s being. They are divided further into three subgroups that represent different levels of insight into the divine. As noted by Hermann Landolt, the division follows closely the Qur’anic narrative (6, 75–79) of Abraham’s unassisted discovery of monotheism, a passage that was very dear to al-Ghazālī, who refers to it often.

Al-Ghazālī introduces this story in an earlier passage of the Misbkat. According to the commentary literature, the young Abraham grew up in the darkness of a

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cave in order to avoid the persecution of the Mesopotamian king Nimrod.26 It was there that he began his search for his Lord. When he left the cave one night, he saw a star rising in the east and concluded that it was the Lord. Once the star sat in the west, however, that notion was dismissed. Next he saw the moon rising in the east and assumed this it was the Lord. Again, when the moon sat in the west, he rejected the notion. The same happened with the sun. He saw it rise in the morning and thought that the sun was the Lord, until it sat in the evening. Finally, Abraham concluded that none of these celestial bodies was the Lord. Rather, the maker of them, that is, the creator of the heavens and the earth, is the true Lord and only He should be worshipped.

Abraham’s discovery of true monotheism has great significance for al-Ghazālī. He compares the three groups of scholars who are veiled by pure light to the three false levels of insight that Abraham had gained during his youth. Only a fourth group of people who is not veiled, those who have arrived (al-uṣūl), represents the highest level of those who really understand who the true Lord is. Only this group has gained a proper understanding of tawḥīd.

Al-Ghazālī connects the false insight gained by the three groups in each case with a celestial being they assume as being ‘the Lord’. These celestial beings are known from al-Fārābī’s model of cosmology. The fourfold model in this section (three false conclusions and one correct one) draws upon philosophical cosmology as well as doxography and even heresiography. In the philosophical model of the cosmos, the heavens are made up of spheres that are governed by movers. Basing himself upon earlier philosophical and astronomical models, al-Fārābī taught that there are ten spheres. The lowest is the sublunar sphere of generation and corruption where humans, animals, and plants live. Above the sublunar sphere are the spheres of the moon, the sun, and the five (premodern) planets. Above these are two more spheres, the sphere of the fixed stars and the starless sphere. The spheres encompass each other like the layers of an onion.

In al-Fārābī’s model, God directly acts only upon one being, the highest being; His oneness prevents Him from acting upon anything else. The highest created being is the first intellect, which is the cause of the form and matter of the starless

sphere, that is, the highest, outermost sphere. The first intellect also brings into being another intellect, the second intellect. This second intellect, in turn, causes the second sphere (with its form and matter) — that of the fixed stars — to exist. It also causes the third intellect. This process continues until ten intellects and ten spheres are created. The intellects of these spheres are secondary causes (asbāb thawâni) by which God mediates His creative activity down to the lowest celestial intellect, the Active Intellect (al-‘aqīl al-fā‘īl), which is the cause of the existence of all the beings in the sublunar sphere, viz. the beings on earth.  

27 Al-Ghazâlî knew well this cosmological model from al-Fârâbî’s Siyāsâ al-madâniyyâ (The Political Regime). He includes the relevant passage from al-Fârâbî’s book in his report of philosophical teachings on metaphysics that is preserved in London, British Library, MS Or. 3126.  

Hints at this cosmology are dispersed throughout the Mishkât.  

In his commentary on the veil-hadith, al-Ghazâlî employs the cosmology put forward by al-Fârâbî in Siyāsâ al-madâniyyâ. Significantly, however, and crucially, he adds to it an additional being on the top of the chain, amounting to an additional layer of creation. Therefore, whatever al-Fârâbî and other philosophers thought about the creator and designer of the world is only partly true. The faūlāsîfâ’s creator is for al-Ghazâlî a created being. Beyond him is the real Creator, the real Lord, the one God.  

The First Veiled Group

Al-Ghazâlî’s description of the three groups of scholars who have developed some knowledge of the divine, yet who are still veiled from true insight, is unfortunately
vague. The lowest of these three groups is said to hold the opinion that the mover of the highest heaven, which is the next-to-outermost sphere, that is, the sphere of the fixed stars, is the creator of the world:

The first among them is a group [ṭāʿifā] that knows the meanings of the [divine] attributes properly [tābqīqān] and realizes that the nouns ‘speech,’ ‘will,’ ‘power,’ and ‘knowledge,’ and others cannot apply to God’s attributes the way that they apply to humans. In their teaching [taʿrīf] about God these people avoid using these attributes. When they teach about Him they draw on the relation [of God] to the created things, just like Moses, peace be upon him, taught about God in his answer to Pharaoh’s question: ‘What is the “Lord of the Worlds”?’ [Qur’ān 26. 23] These people say the Lord, who is the Holy One and who is exalted above the meanings of these attributes, is the mover of the heavens and the one who governs [dabbara] them.30

Compared to the groups mentioned earlier in the Veil Section, this group has developed a proper understanding of the divine attributes and their transcendence. This group understands that the Lord is exalted above all anthropomorphic attributes. When they use words like speech, will, power, and knowledge in their description of the Lord, they have a meaning in mind that transcends the ordinary sense of these words.

And when they are pressed by their opponents to explain who is the ‘Lord of the worlds’, they answer just as Moses replied to Pharaoh, namely that He is ‘the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all in between’ (Qur’ān 26. 24), and that He is ‘your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers’ (26. 26). While Pharaoh asked him about the essence (māḥiyāa) of the divine, al-Ghazālī remarks earlier in the Misbkat, Moses responded about the acts of God.31 This seems to lead to the insight that the Lord is the one who moves and governs the heavens (muḥarrīk al-samawāt wa-mudabbirubā).

The shortcomings of this position, however, are still quite significant; they become clear in the course of the discussion of the next higher group. The second group is introduced by the following sentence:

The second group leaves these people behind insofar that it became clear to them that there is multiplicity [kāthara] in the heavens, and that the mover of each single heaven is a different being that is called an angel, of whom there are many. Their [sic. the angels] relation to the divine lights [al-anwār al-ḥābiyya] is the relation of the stars.32

This first group incorrectly believes that the mover of the next-to-outer sphere, who may be regarded as the governor (mudabbir) of all visible heavens and the cause for the existence of the planets, the sun, the moon, and the earth, is the Lord. They assume the existence of a single mover of one heavenly sphere and are unaware of the existence of multiple spheres, each having a mover, who may also be called an angel (malāk).

This first level of insight into the divine is likened to the one Abraham reached when in Qur’ān 6. 76 he erroneously thought that the star (al-kaukab) is his Lord. This is expressed by the sentence that the angels, who are the movers of the spheres, are comparable to the stars that Abraham first identified as his Lord.

The identification of this group proves more difficult than any of the others. The passage about the transcendence of divine attributes makes one think about the Asharites, particularly since the Mutazilites and their shortcomings have just been mentioned. Of course, al-Ghazālī would have in mind a more traditional kind of Asharite than he was himself. The passage about cosmology points to a group that has little knowledge about the makings of the heavens. They naively assume that there is only one sphere and that the one who ordered the visible heavens and the earth is the Lord.

Yet, particularly this last passage about a single heavenly sphere and its mover and governor has next to nothing to do with Asharism. To the extent that early Asharites delved into cosmological speculations, they were prompted to do so by Qur’ānic passages about the seven heavens (e.g., 2. 29). The Qur’ān mentions that God assigned to each of the seven heavens its command (amr, 41.12) and that God governs over this command (yudabbir al-amr, 13.2). One can argue that all Muslim groups are therefore aware of ‘multiplicity in the heavens’ and none fits this description. Muslim groups would also not deny that there are numerous angels in the heavens.

It will become apparent, however, that in his description of the third group of the Veil Section, al-Ghazālī adopts a distinctly philosophical perspective and looks at the world with eyes trained in Farabian cosmology. From that point of view, ‘multiplicity in the heavens’ means the existence of different celestial spheres in which the residing soul can act only upon its own sphere, but not on any other. The highest being, for instance, cannot act directly on any of the lower spheres; for this, it must rely upon the mediation of other celestial beings.

The cosmology of the early Asharites, by contrast, follows an occasionalist model, which assumes that God acts directly upon every being in the heavens and on earth. He does not mediate His government even of all events in the sublunar sphere, but rather creates them immediately and directly. Those who accept the
Farabian model as true may well say that the Asharites fail to understand the existence of ‘multiplicity [kaṭūbih] in the heavens, and that the mover of each single heaven is a different being that is called an angel, of whom there are many’. Of course, early Asharites do not deny the existence of angels, but they do deny that these angels are the movers of celestial spheres.

There is, however, a second possibility as to whom al-Ghazālī had in mind when he drafted these words. We have already observed that the language al-Ghazālī adopts here is distinctly philosophical. The cosmological beliefs of this first group may also point towards an early and naive group of philosophers. The Arabic doxography of pseudo-Ammonius, which was available from the middle of the third/ninth century, reports that pre-Socratic philosophers like Thales and Pythagoras taught the transcendence of the divine attributes. Neither the human intellect nor the soul is able to comprehend them.33 A generation after al-Ghazālī, al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) repeats these reports in his Kitāb al-Milal wa-l-nihal (Book of Religions and Creeds).34 Two generations later, Maimonides (d. 601/1204) writes in his Dalāīlat al-bā‘irīn (Guide of the Perplexed) about the cosmology of the earliest generations of philosophers who lived at the time of the Sabians, the pagan polytheists against whom Abraham struggled.35 Maimonides writes:

The utmost attained by the speculation of those who philosophized in those [early] times consisted in imagining that God was the spirit of the sphere [rūḥ al-falak] and that the sphere and the stars are the body of which the deity, may He be exalted, is its spirit. Abū Bakr ibn al-Ṣāʻīdī = Ibn Bājja has mentioned this in the commentary on [Aristotle’s] *Physics* (al-Samā‘ al-ṭabī‘ī).*\(^{36}\)

In his commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics*, the philosopher Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139), again a figure who wrote one generation after al-Ghazālī, explains that the ‘ancients among those who followed a philosophical method in physics’ (aqdamūna mīmman tafalsafa fī l-ṭabī‘a) differed in their methods; some of them even held opinions that violate sensual experiences. Their achievements were compromised by their limited expertise in logic. They all agreed, Ibn Bājja reports, that there are no differences between existing beings and thus treated them all as if they were of one kind. This was during the times of Parmenides and Melissus, before Aristotle alerted philosophers to the fundamental difference between certain beings.\(^{37}\) But despite Aristotle’s attempts to create physics as a science, the teachings of these earliest philosophers prevailed down to his own time, when, so complains Ibn Bājja, they were upheld by the *mutakallimūn*:

In their enquiries these people were not concerned with natural dispositions [al-ṭibā‘i] until one of them denied their existence. They spoke about something that is set in motion by the natural dispositions only when rejecting [the views] of their adversaries. For example, when they assert that atoms exist, without, however, having enquired much into the matter, [they make this claim] not in order to provide causes for the natural phenomena, but rather because they have encountered it in their polemics with one another.\(^{38}\)

Pre-Socratic attempts at physics and the opinions of the *mutakallimūn* are for Ibn Bājja erroneous for one and the same reason: they disregard the distinctions that lie at the heart of Aristotelian physics, namely the difference between substance and accident as well as between compound beings in the sublunar sphere and simple beings in the heavenly spheres. The atomism of the Asharite *mutakallimūn* — and

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by implication their occasionalism — is just one expression of this disregard for the Aristotelian distinctions of beings. For an Asharite occasionalist all beings consist of indistinguishable small parts that are all equally close to God’s creative activity.

The failure to understand the ‘multiplicity in the heavens’ may indeed refer to both: the philosophical approach of pre-Aristotelian thinkers and the occasionalism of the Asharites. We will see that the next group can be roughly identified with Aristotle and his followers. It thus seems that here, in describing the first group, al-Ghazālī invokes views widespread in his day about the history of philosophy. He has in mind an early stage of philosophy that preceded the teachings of Aristotle. Yet, the same description, which is deliberately unspecific, also fits the cosmological thought of most pre-Ghazalian Asharites.

**The Second Veiled Group**

The second group of those veiled by pure light has gained superior insight and believes that the next higher celestial being, the mover of the highest sphere, is their Lord. This group’s understanding that there are many heavenly spheres and that each sphere has its own mover has already been quoted. The passage continues:

> Then it became evident to them that these heavens are inside another celestial sphere that moves all the others through its motion once [each] day and night. They said the Lord is the mover of that celestial body which is furthest away and which envelopes all celestial spheres, since multiplicity is denied of Him.59

In comparison with the first group, this group has a proper understanding of astronomy and the celestial spheres. Their Lord is the mover of the highest rotating sphere, the starless sphere. Given that there are no physical movements above this sphere, He himself is not in motion. On the other hand, this group fails to realize that even if there are no physical movements beyond the highest sphere, there are still higher beings. This failure to realize the existence of beings higher than the mover and governor of the outermost sphere leads them to their false assumption that he, the mover of the outermost sphere, is the Lord of the World. Again, the error is pointed out only when al-Ghazālī introduces the next higher group:

> The third group leaves these people behind. They say that moving the bodies by way of directly acting upon them [bi-tariq al-mubāsbira] should be [yânbaqhi an] [regarded as] a service to the Lord of the Worlds, an act of worship towards Him, and an act of obedience [jâda] towards Him by one of His servants who is called an

angel. His [scil. the angel’s] relation to the pure divine lights is the relation of the moon among the sensory lights. 40

This group is in error when they think that moving the highest sphere is the most supreme task, and thus worthy of the Lord. In fact, anything that acts directly on a physical object, for instance, by moving it, cannot be regarded as a truly supreme being. Rather, such a being does a service to the true Lord. Moving the highest sphere is the way its mover obeys the Lord and worships Him. The mover itself can be compared to the moon in Abraham’s story, meaning that this second level of insight into the divine is compared to Abraham’s false understanding in Qur’an 6. 77 that the moon is his Lord.

This group is characterized by a single conviction, namely that the Lord is the mover of the highest sphere, who himself does not move. The Aristotelian kinematic proof for God’s existence as the unmoved mover immediately comes to mind. 41 Al-Ghazālī was well aware of this proof. In his extensive doxography of philosophical metaphysics preserved in MS Or. 3126, he distinguishes between two types of proofs for the existence of God, the first type being Aristotle’s kinematic proof, the second, Ibn Sinā’s cosmological proof of God as the being necessary by virtue of itself.

Ibn Sinā’s proof, which will become important for the third group of those veiled by pure light, starts with the simple observation that some things do exist. Aristotle had already said that all existing things, considered by themselves, must either be possible or necessary. 42 This distinction between things that are necessary by themselves and those that are possible is, according to Ibn Sinā, a distinction that we find a priori in our minds. If something that is necessary by virtue of itself really exists outside our minds, its existence cannot be called into question and its eternal existence would thus be demonstrated. God is a being that is necessary by virtue of itself. The things that we witness as actually existing, however, are not necessary by themselves. Their existence is only possible and not necessary, that is, it is contingent and depends on something else that causes it. This other

40 Al-Ghazālī, Misbḥāt al-anwār, ed. ‘Affī, p. 91.7–10; ed. Sayrawān, p. 184.7–10.

41 Aristotle’s kinematic proof for God’s existence is developed in Physics, 256a–259a and Metaphysics, xii.7.1072a–73a. He argues from the necessity of every movement to be the effect of a mover for the fact that, since there are evidently movements and thus movers in the world, there must be somebody or something that has caused the very first movement. ‘First’ here is not understood temporally, but rather ontologically. Cause and effect must exist simultaneously. Thus God who is the cause of the first movement and the prime mover exists co-eternally with this world.

42 Aristotle, Metaphysics, xii.7.1072b.10–13.
being, that is, the necessary existent, makes the existence of contingent beings ‘necessary’ for as long it maintains their existence. Or, to put it another way: the actual existence of a contingent being must derive from some other being. This other being can itself be either necessary by itself or contingent. If it is contingent, the same conditions apply to it as in the previous step. We would thus arrive at a chain where one being that is contingent by itself would necessitate the existence of another being that is contingent by itself. Each of these beings exists only because there is another being that causes its existence, which itself is caused by a third, and so on. By virtue of itself, the entire chain is contingent and thus has nothing that maintains its existence; in short, it cannot exist. Therefore, there must be something outside of our minds that is necessary by itself and that causes the existence of those beings that we witness and that are themselves only contingent. This being is an uncaused cause, it is incorporeal and is one. It is God who, for Ibn Sinā, is ‘the necessary existent being’ (wājib al-wujūd).

Al-Ghazālī’s report in the MS Or. 3126 about the difference between Aristotle’s and Ibn Sinā’s proof reads as follows:

Know that a group amongst the ancients [mutagaddimūn] argued by way of the contingent for (the existence of) the necessary and by way of the effect for (the existence of) the cause. They started with composed beings. They analysed them and ascended from there to the simple things [basā’īt = celestial beings]. They proved demonstrably that there is nothing that moves without (being moved) by a mover, until they arrived at a mover who does not move (himself). He is the first mover. The more recent ones [muta’akkbirūn] argued by way of the creator for (the existence of) his created beings. They began with the elementary beings then moved up from them to discover the necessity of the creator’s existence from (the fact of) His very existence. Once they had established this, they established (the existence of) contingent beings through it. They said: ‘This type of argument is more reliable and nobler, because if we consider the state of being, [we find that] absolute being [wujūd muṭlaq] inasmuch as it is exists, bears witness to Him. So we had no need for the ascent from low to high, because the closest [awla] thing [to mind] is giving evidence to the created things by way of their creator and not giving evidence to Him by way of the created things.’ This is all good, but the second [method] is better.\footnote{Ibn Sinā, \textit{al-Shifā'}, \textit{al-Ilāhīyyāt}, ed. by I. Madkūr, G. S. Qanawātī and S. Zāyid, 2 vols (Cairo, 1960), i, 37–42; Ibn Sinā, \textit{Kitāb al-Najāt}, ed. by Muḥyī al-Dīn Šābīr al-Kurdi (Cairo, 1357/1938), pp. 235–40; Ibn Sinā, \textit{al-Iṣbārāt wa-l-tanbībāt}, ed. by J. Forget (Leiden, 1892), pp. 140–42. On this proof see Toby Mayer, ‘Ibn Sinā’s \textit{Burhān al-Ṣiddiqīn}', \textit{Journal of Islamic Studies}, 12 (2001), 18–39, and Herbert A. Davidson, \textit{Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy} (Oxford, 1987), pp. 281–310.}\footnote{Al-Ghazālī, MS Or. 3126, fol. 3a–b.}
This passage is, of course, al-Ghazâlî’s report of Ibn Sinâ’s position that his proof is superior to Aristotle’s. It should not be identified with al-Ghazâlî’s own opinion. One possible source of the report is Ibn Sinâ’s *al-İsâ‘rât wa-l-tanbîbât* (Pointers and Reminders), which is briefly quoted in the same passage. The report, however, demonstrates al-Ghazâlî’s awareness of the differences between these proofs and of Ibn Sinâ’s claim that his proof conveys a higher level of insight into God’s being. In the London manuscript, al-Ghazâlî calls those who use the kinematic proof for God’s existence *al-mutaqaddimûn*, the ancient ones. This group seems to be the second of those who are veiled by pure light.

**The Third Veiled Group**

If this identification is correct, then the ‘more recent philosophers’, that is, philosophers who see in God the giver of existence rather than the first mover, are the third and highest group of those who are veiled by pure light. Their realization that ‘moving’ cannot be the most supreme action, but rather an act of obedience worship to the Lord, has already been quoted. The passage continues:

These people claim that the Lord is the one who is obeyed [*al-muṭâ‘*] by this mover and [they claim that] the Lord, exalted, is the mover of everything by way of the ‘command’ [*al-amr*], not by way of directly acting upon [other things]. Then, there is an obscurity when they try to make the ‘command’ and its essence [*mâbiyya*] understood, and this places limits to the deeper understanding. This book does not go into that.

The Lord of the second group moves the highest sphere as an act of obedience (*țâ‘a*) for the being that this third group considers the true Lord. The Lord of this group is the one who is obeyed (*al-muṭâ‘*). This Lord governs not by causing the movements of lower beings, but by giving ‘the command’, a vague term that is nowhere explained. Al-Ghazâlî blames this group for his own lack of explanation of what ‘the command’ really is.

The more recent philosophers might, for instance, understand it as the order to exist: ‘Be!’ (Qur’ān 6. 73). Al-Fârâbî had already developed Aristotle’s causation of motion into a causation of being. Equally, Ibn Sinâ characterizes God not as

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a mover, but as the being that bestows existence (wujūd) upon His creation. Yet, even these scholars — al-Fārābī, Ibn Sinā, and their followers — are, according to al-Ghazālī, misguided. The shortcomings of their views are again pointed out at the beginning of his portrayal of the next, fourth and final group:

These groups are all veiled by pure light. Only a fourth group are ‘the ones who arrive’. It has also been disclosed to them [tajallā labum ayyatan] that this one who is obeyed [al-muṭā‘] is characterized by an attribute that is incompatible with pure and utmost perfection, on account of a secret that this book cannot reveal. [It has also been disclosed to them] that the relation of the one who is obeyed is the relation of the sun among the sensual lights. Therefore, they have turned their faces from the one who moves the heavens [i.e., the Lord of the second group] and from the one who commands their movements [i.e., the Lord of the third group] to the one who created the heavens and who created the one who gives the command [al-amir] that the [heavens] are moved.

The being that these philosophers consider to be ‘the Lord’ is himself only the mediator between the real Lord and His creation. Al-Ghazālī compares this muṭā‘ to the sun, meaning that this third group is comparable to Abraham discovering in Qur’ān 6. 78 that the sun is the Lord. The model al-Ghazālī has in mind is quite compelling. The god of philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Sinā, out of whom this world emanates according to His nature, is for al-Ghazālī simply the creation of the real God. The real God is the originator of the being that the falāsīf consider to be god.

Al-Ghazālī’s view of cosmology consists of two main elements: first, he adopts the cosmology of al-Fārābī with all its spheres, movers, and the First Being — a cosmology that Ibn Sinā had also accepted. Secondly and crucially, al-Ghazālī adds upon it another layer of creation. The being that bestows existence on others and that is obeyed (muṭā‘) by the movers of the spheres is the first creation of the real God. In fact, the real God does little more than to create this muṭā‘ and to continuously emanate being onto him. The muṭā‘ mediates God’s creative activity, converting it into ‘the command’ (al-amr) by which means the creation of heavens and earth unfolds.

49 Ibn Sinā disagreed with al-Fārābī on secondary issues like the number of spheres and intellects in the lower celestial spheres or whether the celestial souls are purely rational or have imagination; all points that have no bearing upon the present discussion. See A. Hasnawi, ‘Fayḍ’, in Encyclopédie philosophique universelle, gen. ed. A. Jacob, 4 vols (Paris, 1989–98), ii, 966–72 (pp. 967–70).
50 It seems al-Ghazālī uses the word amr with more than one meaning. A. J. Wensick, ‘On the Relationship’, pp. 199–201, remarks that it is used as a synonym for malaktuţ and
Since the Farabian and Avicennan philosophers developed an understanding of the *mutāţ* that is nearly correct, many elements of their teachings on cosmology are true — under the condition that it is not God whom they describe in their teachings but the *mutāţ*, the highest created being. This seems to be the reason why al-Ghazālī writes: ‘To [the fourth group] it has *also* been disclosed’. He implies that the fourth group accepts many teachings of the third, yet still has superior insight. The third group found out that the world, for instance, is a product of the *mutāţ* according to *bis* essence. The fourth group adds that this is not God’s essence. The *mutāţ* has no choice regarding what to create and follows the necessity of *bis* nature. God, however, is not affected by the limitations set by the *mutāţ*’s nature since He is its originator. The *mutāţ* himself does not act directly upon the creation, but indirectly via the command (*al-amr*). He relies on the mediation of the celestial spheres and their movers in order to act on the lower spheres, including the sublunar sphere. His acting upon all creatures other than him is by means of ‘the command’. For the *fālāsifa*, God is the ultimate end point of all causal chains.

Al-Ghazālī seems ready to accept that the *mutāţ* is the end-point of all causal chains that are governed by necessity. It is therefore likely that ‘the command’ is also a reference to causal necessity, that is, the set of laws of nature by which the *mutāţ* governs the world. Yet, in this model the immediate connection between the *mutāţ* and God seems to be determined by God’s free choice, rather than by causal necessity.

*The Fourth Group: Those Who Have Arrived*

Only the last of the four groups, those who have arrived (*al-wāšilān*) at a correct understanding of who is the Lord, understand the created nature of the philosopher’s god. The text continues:

These people arrived at a being that is exalted above everything that sight has perceived previously. The august glories of His face [*subūḥāt waḥīb*] — the First and the Highest — burn up everything that the sight and the insight of the theologians [*al-nāẓirān*] have perceived since they find in Him someone holy and exalted above everything that we have described before.\(^{51}\)

means the opposite of the created world. Its most general meaning is ‘concept’ or ‘idea’; see a passage at the beginning of the thirtieth book in al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā‘ al-dīn*, 5 vols (Cairo, 1387/1967), iii, 473: ‘Every existing thing that is bare of quantity and measure is part of the world of the *amr*.’

This highest level of insight is likened to Abraham’s discovery that his Lord is ‘He who created the heavens and the earth’ in Qurʾān 6. 79. He is the only true existence; and He is the one who truly bestows existence on His creatures. Only ‘those who have arrived’ know of Him and understand that He is the only existence. Among them are a subgroup made up of those who understand that He is the only one who truly exists. This realization leads to their annihilation (fanāʾ):

Then these people divide into smaller groups. Among them is the one for whom everything that he sees is consumed, perishes, and annihilates — but he still remains, observing the beauty and holiness [of God], and observing his own self within His beauty, [a state] that he attained by the arrival at the divine presence [al-ḥadāra al-ilābiyya]. With regard to these people, the objects of vision perish, but not he who sees.

Another group, who are the elect of the elect, pass beyond this. The august glories of His face consume them, and the power of glory overcomes them [or: takes control of them]. They are perished and annihilated. No glance at themselves is left to them, for they annihilate from themselves. And nothing remains save the One, the Truth. The Qurʾānic verse ‘everything perishes save His face’ [28. 88] becomes for them an individual experience [dhawq, literally ‘taste’] and a state [ḥāl]. We referred to this in the first chapter where we mentioned how they apply the word ‘becoming one’ [al-ittihād] and how they think of it. And this is the [utmost] limit of those who arrive [al-waṣīlitān].

Conclusions

In his description of the third and highest class of those who are veiled from God, al-Ghazālī articulates something like a brief history of philosophy that highlights the progress in the field of metaphysics and philosophical theology. Having this history terminate with a group whose knowledge surpasses that of even the most advanced philosophers of his time makes the passage into a statement about Ghazalian cosmology. The most advanced philosophers came close to an understanding but still failed to realize that their Lord is superceded by yet another, even higher being. The language al-Ghazālī uses to describe his cosmology picks up Qurʾānic expressions like ‘the command’ (al-amr, Q 41.12) and ‘governing the command’ (yudabbir al-amr, Q 13.2), but with expressions like ‘sphere’

52 Al-Ghazālī, Miskhāt al-anwār, ed. ‘Afīfī, p. 92.5–13; ed. Sayrawān, p. 185.1–7. According to an earlier passage in Miskhāt, ed. ‘Afīfī, pp. 57. paenult.–58.5, ed. Sayrawān, p. 141.3–9; ‘annihilation (fanāʾ) is not the ‘becoming one’ (ittihād) with God. ‘Becoming one’, al-Ghazālī says, is only a metaphor for understanding the true meaning of tawbīd, namely the realization that all being is He.
(falak), ‘mover’ (muḥarrik), ‘highest celestial body’ (fīrm aqṣā), as well as ‘world of the amr’ (ālam al-amr), it employs the technical language of astronomy and peripatetic philosophy. The key term, ‘the one who is obeyed’ (al-muṭāʾ), is of Qur’ānic origin (Q. 81: 21), like so many others that al-Ghazālī employs. It was used by philosophers like Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) and Ibn Sīnā. However, its usage in a cosmological context is an innovation of al-Ghazālī. The cosmological model presented on the last pages of Misbkhāt al-anwār solves two major problems al-Ghazālī had with Ibn Sīnā’s metaphysics. According to al-Ghazālī’s new cosmology, God created the muṭāʾ, and, along with the creation of the muṭāʾ, God created the muṭāʾ’s nature, thus determining how the world that flows out of the muṭāʾ will look. Expressed in the language of the falāṣīfa, for al-Ghazālī only the creation of the muṭāʾ is an ibdāʾ — a creation ex nihilo — while the creation of the other spheres and intellects are acts of inbi’āth, emanations of form and matter from an intellect. Thus, the first major problem,

53 For ‘ālam al-amr as a philosophical term for the highest celestial spheres just below the ‘ālam al-ruḥābīyya of the First Principle and above the Throne (al-‘arsh) and also above the ‘ālam al-khbal, see al-Fārābī, Fūṣūṣ al-ḥikam, ed. by M. H. Āl Yāsin (Qom, Iran, 1405/1985), pp. 61–62. The ‘ālam al-amr is where the pen (al-qalam) writes on the Preserved Tablet (al-lawḥ al-mahfūẓ). The human spirit (rūḥ) is from the ‘ālam al-amr (ibid., pp. 71–72), and whoever turns from emotions, sense perception, and imagination towards the intelligibles (al-maʿqūlāt) will reach the ‘ālam al-amr, the highest malakūt, and unity with the highest felicity (ibid., pp. 81–82).

54 In the context of cosmology muṭāʾ appears a few other times in al-Ghazālī’s oeuvre; see F. Jabre, Essai sur le lexique de Ghażālī (Beirut, 1970), p. 156. See, for instance, Maʿrīj al-Quds fi madārīj maʿrīfat al-nafs, ed. by M. Ṣabri al-Kurdi (Cairo, 1346/1927), p. 149.16–9: ‘The second method to establish the first amr is that we say: It has been established and confirmed through demonstrations that the First Principle is a king who is obeyed [malik muṭāʾ] who has [labūn] the entirety of the creation as His dominion and property. Every king has in his authority an amr.’ However, the authenticity of the Maʿrījī is not fully established. The phrase ‘a king who is obeyed’ (malik muṭāʾ) appears in Miskawayh, Kitāb al-Fawz al-aṣghar, ed. by Ş. ʿUḍayma (Tunis, 1987), pp. 130–33, and in Ibn Sīnā, al-Najat, p. 223–ult. Al-Ghazālī copied these passages into some of his works, such as the text in the London MS and Miʿyār al-ilm; he employs similar language in his Iḥyāʾ (see Griffel, ‘MS. London, British Library Or. 3126’, p. 20). Miskawayh and Ibn Sīnā — and subsequently al-Ghazālī — use the term in a non-technical sense simply as a metaphor for the soul’s government over the body. The term also appears in a purely political sense, namely that the ruler needs to be obeyed by his subjects (sultān muṭāʾ) in al-Ghazālī, al-Iqtiṣād fi-l-iṭtiqād, ed. by A. Ču-bukçu and H. Atay (Ankara, 1962), p. 236.6–7.

namely how to reconcile a creator whose nature cannot change according to the \textit{falāṣifa} with the theological requirement of creation \textit{ex nihilo} and in time, is solved. While for Ibn Sinā, God cannot but create, and from all eternity emanates being onto the first intellect, al-Ghazālī’s God created the \textit{muṭāʾ} at one point in time. This \textit{muṭāʾ} is the being that \textit{falāṣifa} like Ibn Sinā mean when they talk about the First Principle or the First Being that cannot but emanate unto the intellect of the outermost sphere. Al-Ghazālī takes nothing away from Ibn Sinā’s teachings about the First Principle and his attributes. He just adds that the \textit{falāṣifa}’s First Principle is itself a temporal creation (\textit{muḥdatb}) of the real God — who appears now omnipotent and therefore able to change from being a non-creator to being a creator at any point in time, should He wish to do so.

Al-Ghazālī’s God has chosen a certain arrangement that involves the mediation of His creative activity. He maintains this arrangement by exuding ‘existence’ to the apparatus of spheres and their souls. This arrangement solves the second major problem of Avicennan metaphysics for al-Ghazālī, namely the provenience of the essences, which God turns into existences when He creates. Ibn Sinā had no answer as to where the essences of the beings that God puts into existence come from other than saying: from God’s nature.\footnote{I highlight this problem of Avicennan metaphysics in my review of Robert Wisnovsky’s \textit{Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context} (London, 2003) in \textit{Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie}, 88 (2006), 107–12.} Ibn Sinā implies that the essences are superior to God, who must thus accommodate the existing classes of beings when He creates. For Ibn Sinā, God cannot create anything that is not already determined as a possible existence within His essence. This is an implicit denial of God’s omnipotence. In al-Ghazālī’s model, God creates the essences of all things together with the \textit{muṭāʾ}. They become part of the \textit{muṭāʾ}’s nature, and thus they are creatures of God, who deliberately decided to create the set of essences that we witness in the existing things.

By creating the \textit{muṭāʾ} and His essence God created a mechanism that led to the world in which we live. The design of the \textit{muṭāʾ}, which need not follow any predetermined rules, and which can be an act of free choice and \textit{liberum arbitrium} on the side of God, determines the design of the universe. Once the \textit{muṭāʾ} is created, God’s creative activity follows from Him according to the rules that have been determined within the \textit{muṭāʾ}’s essence. Al-Ghazālī’s universe is one where all events — past, present, and future — are determined with the voluntary creation of its very first creature. Being (\textit{wuḥūd}) is the power source of the universe’s mechanism, so to speak, and it keeps the \textit{muṭāʾ} and his apparatus
going, God infuses being (wujūd) into the muḫāḏ, who — by means of secondary causality — transforms it into the universe and realizes the goals that God had desired when He created this world.

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THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY OF FALSAFA: AL-GHAZĀLĪ’S MAḌNŪN, TAHĀFUT, AND MAQĀSHID, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THEIR FALSAFĪ TREATMENTS OF GOD’S KNOWLEDGE OF TEMPORAL EVENTS

M. Afifi al-Akiti

Some of the main results from the first investigation into a complex set of philosophical writings by al-Ghazālī (Latin, Algazel; d. 505/1111) known simply as the Maḍnūn (restricted) corpus will be presented here. Most of

I am grateful to the following scholars for discussing with me the various issues raised in this paper: my supervisor, Fritz W. Zimmermann, and Robert E. Hall and Yahya Michot. I should also like to thank Y. Tzvi Langermann for the opportunity to contribute to this volume.

1 The present, relatively short, study is based on my three-volume doctoral thesis: ‘The Maḍnūn of al-Ghazālī: A Critical Edition of the Unpublished Major Maḍnūn with Discussion of his Restricted, Philosophical Corpus’ (University of Oxford, 2008). Apart from the various texts transcribed and edited in the thesis, the corpus itself has been charted there and the MSS of its different components described in some detail. It is hoped that my survey of the Maḍnūn corpus, involving around fifty manuscripts, should serve as a prolegomena for further study by the scholarly community. The pagination to the Major Maḍnūn (Maḍ. Maj) follows Pourjavady’s page numbering (and not the MS folios) in his facsimile of the Maragha codex (in Majmūʿab-yi falsafī-i Marāghab (Tehran, 2002); hereafter Cod. Maragha), which includes one of the Major Maḍnūn MSS used in my edition: Tehran, Kitābkhānah-yi Aşghar Mahdavī, MS 587 (1). (No other texts from the Maḍnūn corpus will be used in the paper.) Primary sources are referred to by page and line numbers, and when applicable, these are followed by numbers for book, chapter and/or any other named divisions (in round brackets). Principal passages are numbered for easy reference (with an initial ‘T’); the Arabic texts, with my textual emendations underlined, follow the translations. All translations are mine unless noted otherwise.
the components of this corpus are extant only in manuscripts, but a few have been published, and this somewhat ungainly context has to be spelled out. This essay is predicated on a number of general points and specific details, the substantiation of which would quickly swell it beyond an acceptable size; but I hope the footnotes will present the necessary matter sufficiently and as economically as is reasonably possible.

This work is necessarily long and detailed, but its main thesis can be stated rather simply as follows. I intend to show how the ‘good’ falsafa used by al-Ghazālī in the *Major Maḏnūn* excludes the ‘bad’ falsafa he exposed in the *Tabāfut* and departs from the ‘ugly’ falsafa he presented in the *Maqāṣid* (*DN*), which is in fact the mother text of the *Major Maḏnūn.* In order to demonstrate this properly, I shall examine very closely some passages from all of these texts. Perhaps the reader will wish to have a look first at the conclusions I draw from my analysis (pp. 80–83), and then return to the textual analyses in order to see the cogency of my arguments.

The title *Maḏnūn* is a short form of *al-Maḏnūn bi-b ḍalā ghayr ablib* (that which is to be restricted from those not fit for it) — al-Ghazālī’s own formulation of the title. I have used the term corpus, as the *Maḏnūn* is made up of more than one text, and in the places where he refers to it, al-Ghazālī explicitly mentions more than one kitāb in the *Maḏnūn.*

Al-Ghazālī does not explicitly mention the *Maḏnūn* corpus in the *Iḥyā‘ ʿulūm al-dīn*, his principal work (on religious knowledge, rather like a *Summa theologiae* of Islam). However, he does use the term *maḏnūn* twice, hints at it in a number of places, and addresses the issue of esoteric teachings in the chapter of the *Iḥyā‘* (kitāb II, faṣl 2) where his theological curriculum is laid out in full. He makes the

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2 *Maqāṣid* al-falāṣifā (*Dānishnāmeh*-version) (which I designate *Maqāṣid* (*DN*)), ed. by M. Ş. al-Kurdi (Cairo, 1331/1912); the main books are abbreviated as *Log.* (logic), *Pb.* (physics), *Meta.* (metaphysics).


4 Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā‘ ʿulūm al-dīn*, ed. by B. Ṭabānah, 4 vols (Cairo, 1952). Occurrences: *maḏnūn* bi-b, at *Iḥyā‘*, 1, 54.23–24 (kitāb 1, bāb 5, bāyān 1, ważifa 10, q); negated, as ghayr *maḏnūn* bi-b ḍalā ʾabād at *Iḥyā‘*, II, 8.19 (kitāb XXI, bāyān 4). Hints, e.g., *Iḥyā‘*, 1, 39.18–23 (kitāb 1, bāb 3, bāyān 3). The chapter of the *Iḥyā‘*, entitled ‘On the manner of systematic progress to guidance and the order of the stages of belief’ (*fi waḥf al-tadrij ilā al-irṣbād wa-tartib darajāt al-ʿtīqād*) is kitāb II, faṣl 2.
case for the necessity of restricting certain theological analyses and interpretations from those who are not in a position to understand them and who might thereby be led astray, either in faith or practice; he does this by drawing legal arguments from the Qur’an, the hadith and the precedents of the Ṣaḥāba. Later, he explicitly refers to the Ṣaḥnūn corpus in the corresponding theological sections of the Jawâbir al-Qur’ān and his Arba’īn (both of which are smaller versions of the Iḥyā’). These two writings not only follow the curriculum set out by al-Ghazâlî in the Iḥyâ’ but also provide a more detailed listing of his works.

In what follows I should like to share one of the most fascinating results arising out of the study of the Ṣaḥnūn corpus, and specifically out of the analysis of the component of the corpus that I have come to call the Major Ṣaḥnūn and of its connections with two well-established philosophical writings of al-Ghazâlî, the Tabâfuṭ al-falâsīfa and the Dânisbnâmab version of the Maqâṣid al-falâsīfa.6

Before proceeding further, it would be useful to describe the Ṣaḥnūn corpus briefly. This is a set of writings that is made up of (a) several related and distinctive components but also includes (b) a further group of independent texts that either belong properly to the corpus or are merely associated with it and that usually have their own titles.7 The former, distinctive, components of the corpus can be classified

5 Iḥyâ’, 1, 99.8–100.14 (kitâb u. faṣl 2, mas’alas 4–5).

6 That is, Maqâṣid (DN). This is the well-known version of the Maqâṣid, the one that was translated into Latin and was originally redacted from the Dânisbnâmab- yi ‘Alâ’î of Ibn Sinâ. The careful textual study of Jules Janssens shows that the Maqâṣid (DN) is an ‘interpretative’ and annotative translation of the Persian Dânisbnâmab (J. Janssens, ‘Le Dânesh-Nâmeh d’Ibn Sinâ: Un texte à revoir?’, Bulletin de philosophie médiévale, 28 (1986), 163–77). My thesis not only confirms Janssens’s findings but establishes, as well, that the ‘unknown work by al-Ghazâlî on metaphysics’ first described, but not identified, by Frank Griffel, ‘MS London, British Library Or. 3126: An Unknown Work by al-Ghazâlî on Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology’, Journal of Islamic Studies, 17 (2006), 1–42, is actually another version of the Maqâṣid — but one that is based primarily on the Sbîfâ’ of Ibn Sinâ. This I am calling the Sbîfâ’ version of the Maqâṣid, with the short title Maqâṣid (Sb.). The investigation of this London MS in my thesis fills serious gaps left by Griffel and corrects certain errors made by him. Both Maqâṣid texts are the result of al-Ghazâlî’s careful study of Ibn Sinâ’s philosophical works, and indeed, the first step of a systematic ‘appropriation’ process, whereby materials would end up in a ‘naturalized’ form in his public works, such as the Iḥyâ’. (Throughout this study, I have used Sabra’s terms of ‘appropriation’ and ‘naturalization’ to describe Ghazâlî’s editorial practice when it comes to acquiring materials from the falsafa tradition; see n. 25 below.)

7 An example of (b) is the Misbkhât al-anwâr, a work familiar to many Ghazâlî scholars today since it has been in print for a good part of the last century, but one that has not previously been recognized as a Ṣaḥnūn-related text. In fact, its being a Ṣaḥnūn text finally
into (1) complete manuals or ‘textbooks’, (2) Masâ’il texts as supplements to those manuals, and (3) a sort of hors d’oeuvres to the Maḏnūn, called ‘Ilq al-Maḏnūn, all of which constitute an integrated corpus and define the syllabus for the study of an advanced philosophical theology envisaged by al-Ghazālī. This theological curriculum centres upon the ‘Four Rūkns’, which al-Ghazālī indicates in his authenticated works be the subject matter of the Maḏnūn corpus.⁸ Al-Ghazālī outlines his theological project in kitāb II of the Iḥyā’; the Qawāʿid al-ʿaqaʾīḍ, and its subject matter is precisely the Four Rūkns.⁹

The three components, and most notably, the Maḏnūn manuals, are written in the technical language of falsafā — most of the terms of which have been borrowed wholesale from Ibn Sīnā (Latin, Avicenna; d. 428/1037). This advanced theology (in burbānī, ‘demonstrative’, form) in the Maḏnūn is to be contrasted with the mid-level theology in al-Ghazālī’s al-Iqtiṣād fi l-iṭiqād (in kalāmī, ‘dialectical’, form), and also with the lowest level, for the public (written in the genre of a Muslim creed, in ‘āmmī, the ‘simplest’ form), in his al-Risāla al-Qudsiyya and his celebrated ‘Aqidā, both forming part of kitāb II of the Iḥyā’.¹⁰ Indeed, one of the important conclusions of my thesis is that the Qawāʿid al-ʿaqaʾīḍ, being more than just the proper title for kitāb II of the Iḥyā’, is also the name for al-Ghazālī’s theological project as a whole, a generic term comprehending all four of the prin-

resolves the question of its authenticity, which some have questioned on the grounds that al-Ghazālī made no mention of the Misbkhāt in the rest of his works or even owing to its falsafī content. This matter is explained in my thesis. So also is the fact that some works in category (b) are at the borderline with al-Ghazālī’s public works.

⁸ As, for example, at Jawāb, p. 30.8–9 (qism i, faṣl 4, nāmaṯ 2, ṣabaqa: ‘ulūd). The Four Rūkns are: (1) knowledge of God’s essence (ābāḥ), (2) attributes (ṣifāt), (3) and actions (afʿāl), as well as (4) the human soul’s return to God, called the maʿād. Al-Ghazālī means maʿād in the Avicennian sense as it is presented in the Mabda’ wa l-maʿād and in the Adhawīyya, which embraces knowledge concerning the human soul in all of its aspects and includes matters of eschatology, and, in effect, covers the philosophical syllabus of De anima and the Parva naturalia as well as the strictly religious aspects of the soul’s return to God. See J. R. Michot, La Destinée de l’homme selon Avicenne: Le Retour à Dieu (maʿād) et l’imagination, Fonds René Draguet, 5 (Louvain, 1986), for an account of Ibn Sīnā’s theory concerning the maʿād.

⁹ This is shown in detail in my thesis. Qawāʿid al-ʿaqaʾīḍ is an innovative term describing the Muslim faith. Al-Ghazālī means by it ‘the principle doctrines (of orthodox Sunnis, the abl al-sunna)’; and the peculiar, pluralized form is most likely a reference to the Four Rūkns: ‘the (four) principles of (Islamic) doctrines’. See also n. 87, below.

¹⁰ Al-Ghazālī, al-Risāla al-Qudsiyya; also as faṣl 3 of kitāb II of the Iḥyā’; Tarjamat ‘aqidat abl al-sunna fi kalimatay al-sbābāda (short title: ‘Aqidā); also, as faṣl 1 of kitāb II of the Iḥyā’; pagination of both follows the Iḥyā’.
principal works of that project: the basic-level ‘Aqīda (1) and Risāla Qudsiyya (2); the intermediate-level Ḳaṭṣād (3); and the advanced texts of the Maḍnūn (4). Furthermore, the Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id or indeed, the Four Rukns, represent his theological articulation of the two statements of the Muslim šbabāda. This was a momentous event in the historical development of the Muslim creed. As A. J. Wensinck noted a long time ago, in breaking with the contemporary trend of the muṭakallimūn by turning back to the šbabāda, al-Ghazālī introduced a new form of the creed […] by supplementing the scheme of the šbabāda with the results of kalām. The most advanced theological text considered by Wensinck was the Ḳaṭṣād, and we can now say with confidence, given the perspective of the Maḍnūn corpus, that we know also that this scheme has been extended with the results of falsaḍā.

In sum, the Maḍnūn corpus sits at the top of al-Ghazālī’s theological curriculum and represents the most sophisticated expression of his theological project. It is in this corpus that al-Ghazālī reveals the extent to which his theologizing has developed: by relying on the scientific and philosophical community, he has constructed a unified theological system giving a reasoned explanation of the world, but expressing his ideas in traditional terms. To put it in reverse order, it is in the Maḍnūn that he expresses the orthodox faith in philosophical and scientific terms.

The Major Maḍnūn is one of two Maḍnūn manuals (the other, I discovered to my surprise, is the Ma‘ārij al-quds). It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss

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12 Al-Ghazālī, al-Iṣṭiṣād fi l-iṭiṣād, ed. by I. A. Çubukçu and H. Atay (Ankara, 1962). The extension by means of falsaḍā analysis can be seen clearly, for example, in the way al-Ghazālī appropriated and naturalized Ibn Sinā’s ground-breaking ontological approach in the ilāḥiyyāt, preferring it to the kalam cosmological arguments for God’s existence. This is a further important matter, and should form the subject of a future paper.

13 Both of them are philosophical manuals that cover, systematically, the Four Rukns. What is remarkable is that the texts mirror each other, so that the Major Maḍnūn starts with chapters dealing with God (following the normative order of the Four Rukns), beginning with abstract and ontological discussions and proceeding downwards — ‘descending’ — all the way to the sublunary world where the final chapters reach the human soul. The content of the Ma‘ārij, on the other hand, is the reverse of this. It begins with the human soul (which actually takes up the bulk of the work) and proceeds upwards, or ‘ascends’, going beyond the cosmic hierarchy until it finishes with investigations on theology. But the account of the first three rukns in the Ma‘ārij is diminutive by comparison — it is as if the whole of the Major Maḍnūn were forcibly compressed and stuck on to the end of the Ma‘ārij. The general orientation of their contents — the former descending, the latter
the editorial aspects of this text, but its structure and contents must be briefly described. The work is a detailed and comprehensive examination of the Four Rukns and is divided accordingly into four chapters, each called, appropriately, a rukn. The sequence of those rukns follows the normative order delineated in the Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id. The first chapter starts with an entirely ontological discussion of God, presented as twelve propositions — in the Euclidean sense — regarding the essence of the wājib al-wujūd (as developed by Ibn Sīnā). The work then progresses downward through rukn ii (on God’s attributes) and rukn iii (on God’s actions, a discussion that involves the Physics and cosmology) and ends with the content of rukn iv, relating to the De anima and Parva naturalia — clearly following, in the main, Ibn Sīnā’s synthesis of the Aristotelian, Galenic, and Neoplatonic theories. A table of contents of the work is appended below.

ascending — suggests that they function in tandem with each other, so that the one becomes the complement of the other. It is primarily for this reason — in spite of the fact that none of the Ma‘ārīj MSS to date carry the Maḏnūn title, in contrast to some MSS of the other components of the corpus — that I have placed it in the corpus. Other compelling considerations, however, qualify the Ma‘ārīj as a Maḏnūn text, and they are discussed in my thesis. In particular, there is the inclusion in the Ma‘ārīj of a distinguishing feature of the Maḏnūn texts, a disclaimer warning the reader not to circulate the Ma‘ārīj to those unqualified for it. Indeed, the results of my thesis corroborate my earlier assertion that the work belongs to this corpus (al-Aktī, ‘The Three Properties of Prophethood in Certain Works of Avicenna and al-Ğazālī’, in Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam, ed. by Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman, Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science: Texts and Studies, ed. by H. Daiber and D. Pingree, 56 (Leiden, 2004), pp. 189–212 (p. 206 n. 48)). The surprise is that the Ma‘ārīj acts as a complement to the Major Maḏnūn.

14 In two other works from the Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id set — the Risāla Qudsiyya and the Iqtiṣād — al-Ghazālī does the same by dividing them into four chapters following the normative order of the Four Rukns, except that in the Iqtiṣād the division is called a quth. There are other direct textual links between the Major Maḏnūn and al-Ghazālī’s authenticated texts, notably the Iḥyā‘, but those would distract us from our purpose here. However, one that perhaps should be mentioned is that the khuṭba of the Major Maḏnūn is nearly word-for-word the same as the khuṭba of al-Ghazālī’s Aqīda (the first text in the Qawā‘id set). This fact must be tremendously significant for the student of the Qawā‘id, for their links could not have been coincidental. The Major Maḏnūn, the highest text in the theological curriculum of al-Ghazālī, is being visibly connected with the text of the ‘Aqīda, the shortest work on theology, designed for the lowest level of its study. Upon reaching the apex of this curriculum, the student will be reading a textbook that will remind him of his very first book on theology, the one that had set him on his quest many texts before.

15 One reason why al-Ghazālī finds Ibn Sīnā so attractive that he ends up becoming his favourite falsafī author is that Ibn Sīnā’s writings did present the best-unified general system of scientific thought that included psychology. For the best survey of Ibn Sīnā’s systematic philosophical synthesis combining the classical materials as well as current
The content of the Major Mađnūn is directly based on the Metaphysics and Physics sections of the Dānishnāmāb version of the Maqāṣīd. Not all of those sections of the Maqāṣīd (DN) are reproduced in the Major Mađnūn. However, with some structural changes and with the omission of maqālas I and v from the Metaphysics section and maqālas I, II, III and the first parts of maqāla IV from the Physics, the Major Mađnūn follows the Maqāṣīd (DN):  

Muslim ones, see R. E. Hall, 'Intelect, Soul and Body in Ibn Sinā: Systematic Synthesis and Development of the Aristotelian, Neoplatonic and Galenic Theories', in Interpreting Avicenna (see n. 13, above), pp. 62–86. In fact, Hall shows just how deep the thorough-going integration of psychology is in virtually all aspects of Ibn Sinā’s thought, and that that success ‘sets the standards and prepares the way for the later systematic thinkers of the Islamic and Jewish middle ages’ (p. 64). Indeed, al-Ghazālī was himself one such systematizer, and probably the first from the religious community to recognize and attend to this successful synthesis. He, in turn, did what his predecessor did, but this time integrated Avicennian psychological theory fully into a religious framework and, indeed, crowned it there. It is thus not surprising that we find that the De anima tradition is transmitted effectively through kitāb XXII of the Ḥiyā’, the Shabīḥ ‘ağā’ib al-qālb (Explaining the Wonders of the Heart), which, in turn, not only prefaces the akhlāq books of the Ḥiyā’, but forms the theoretical basis for the philosophical ethics embedded in those books. If the ilāḥiyāt is transmitted through the Qawā‘id al-‘ağā‘id, embedded there in the Four Rūkns, then the De anima enters through kitāb XXII. Al-Ghazālī’s role as a transmitter of the Greek philosophical sciences is easily observed in the Latin world, but the part he played in this regard in the Islamic world, despite its importance, is far less visible. In the Islamic world, the knowledge of Avicenna’s ilāḥiyāt, De anima, and Parva naturalia, for example, was transmitted only implicitly through al-Ghazālī’s public works; and although that knowledge was passed on explicitly through his Mađnūn works, these, of course, reached only the restricted few. My thesis lists the works or parts of works by al-Ghazālī corresponding to the various disciplines of falsafā.

16 Something surprising that has emerged is that al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) appears somehow to have based his text, in certain places in the special section of the Milāl devoted to Ibn Sinā, on either the Dānishnāmāb and/or the Maqāṣīd (DN) or perhaps some other work (al-Milāl wa l-niḥl, ed. by M. F. Badrān, 2 vols (Cairo, 1951–55)). Al-Shahrastānī’s account is effectively a Summa of Ibn Sinā’s logic, metaphysics, and physics (indeed, the order of the philosophical sciences follows the Dānishnāmāb, and consequently, al-Ghazālī’s Maqāṣīd in that version (Milāl, ii, 1053.1–1216.16 (qism ii, bāb 2, fasl 4)). This raises the following questions: (1) Did al-Shahrastānī translate the Dānishnāmāb himself? (2) Did he use the Maqāṣīd (DN) by al-Ghazālī? (3) Did he use the Major Mađnūn? Or even, (4) did he rely on another Arabic version of the Dānishnāmāb or something very close to it, which could be an unidentified work by Ibn Sinā himself or a translation of such a work by somebody else? If the last possibility is plausible, then al-Ghazālī himself and also al-Shahrastānī could have used that text for the Maqāṣīd (DN)/Major Mađnūn and the Milāl. Possibility (4) would mean a search for MSS of an unknown common archetype.
This discovery in itself — the fact that the *Major Maḏnān* has turned out to be a long-unknown daughter of the *Maqāṣid (DN)* — is an astonishing result. That al-Ghazālī’s Four Rukns are expressed in the terms of the *ilāhiyyāt*, *De anima* and *Parva naturalia* is more remarkable still.

These two works of al-Ghazālī are textually very close indeed; but this is where their similarity ends. That brings me to the point of this study. They only have an appearance of being (nearly) identical. Careful scrutiny shows that they are in fact two decidedly different texts in their theoretical content, as the case study below will show. Although their close textual dependence is undeniable, not everything is identical. In fact, some portions of the *Maqāṣid (DN)* have been deliberately omitted; and there are also a number of minor, but crucial, textual reorderings and alterations (ameliorations, from the point of view of what al-Ghazālī considers to be orthodox Muslim doctrine) in the *Major Maḏnān*. What I shall show is that it is those small textual acts of omission and commission that separate the

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This is all preliminary and nothing is yet certain. A quick collation of the texts of the *Milal, Dānisbnāmah, Maqāṣid (DN)*, and the *Major Maḏnān*, however, appears to discount possibility (1) — in those places the translation corresponds exactly with al-Ghazālī’s — and probably also (2) and (3). If, nonetheless, (2) or (3) should turn out to be correct, then we would have in al-Shahrastānī an example of how the very stuff of the *Maqāṣid (DN)* proves that it is an excellent *Summa* of Ibn Sīnā in Arabic, just as history shows its Latin version to have been unbeaten as a Scholastic textbook. This is obviously not the place to carry out the investigation needed to confirm the initial assumptions here, but this unexpected possible example of Ghazālī’s influence is certainly an important side note.

17 The *Major Maḏnān* omits the first parts of *maqāla* v, which have discussions on the lower levels of the human soul, i.e., the vegetative and animal souls, the latter including, notably, the internal senses (*Maqāṣid (DN)*, pp. 274.15–287.10 (*Pb.*, *maqāla* v, *qawwāl* 1–4)). These topics are included in the *Maʿārij*. It appears that the *Major Maḏnān* restricts its treatment to the more elevated parts of theoretical psychology from the *De anima*, and also the *Parva naturalia*, whereas the *Maʿārij* (which is essentially a work about the Fourth Rukn, i.e., on the soul and *maʿād*) includes all of this.
Major Maḏnūn doctrinally from the *Summa* or ḥikāya of Ibn Sinā’s *ilāhiyyāt* in the *Maqāṣid* (DN).

In following that procedure in the *Maḏnūn* texts, al-Ghazālī is actually imparting to his closest colleagues — not to the ordinary theologian — an old lesson of his concerning something which he discusses in the *Munqidh*: that the right and wrong positions in theology actually can be that close to each other, as close as the counterfeit money is to the genuine, or the venom is to its antidote from the same receptacle of the snake (see T10, below). This, I believe, is a method deliberately pursued by him, a method best encapsulated by a universal truth, so dear to al-Ghazālī, that was expressed by ‘Alī.

(T1) *Iḥyāʾ*, 1, 52.27–33 (kitāb 1, bāb 5, bayān 1, wazīfa 7)

He [the student] must never judge that any science is bad simply because of the differences of opinion occurring among its scholars regarding it or because of one or two mistakes in it, or because they do not act in accordance with what their knowledge tells them they ought to do — so that a group can be seen to have abandoned logical reasoning [naẓar] on theoretical as well as juridical issues, on the grounds that, were these to have a basis, their specialists [i.e., the jurists and theologians] would have apprehended it. Exposing these errors has already been done in the *Miʿyār al-ʿilm*. Sometimes a group can be seen to believe that medicine is fake because of a mistake they witnessed being committed by a physician.

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19 It should be noted here that this is one of the many corresponding passages (with minor variations, structurally and textually) between the *Iḥyāʾ* and the *Mizān*. This particular passage is also found at *Mizān*, ed. by M. Ṣ al-Kurdi and others (Cairo, 1328/1910), pp. 155.8–156.6 (*bayān* xxvii, *mutaʿallim*, *wazīfa* 6). It looks as if the text of the *Mizān* forms the matrix for the corresponding passages in the *Iḥyāʾ* — as if the *Mizān* is a draft for the equivalent parts of the *Iḥyāʾ*. In my thesis, I discuss the textual links between those two works; and indeed, I have found, further, that the *Mizān* is a counterpart of the *Miʿyār*.

20 What is meant by naẓar is ‘logical reasoning’. Indeed, the *Miʿyār* is one work in which al-Ghazālī sets out how fiqḥ can benefit from manṭiq, and how logical reasoning can be applied to legal questions. In it he says: ‘You will realize that reasoning on juridical issues is no different from reasoning on theoretical ones in its procedure, its propositions or its standard — but only the sources of the premisses’ (*fa-innā sanuʾārīfūka anna l-naẓara fī l-fiqhiyyūti lā yubāyīnu l-naẓara fī l-ʿaqilīyyūti fī tartibi wa-ṣburāṭibi wa-ʿiyāribi baḥ fī maʿākbid li-muqaddimāti faqāt*) (Miʿyār al-ʿilm, ed. by M. Ṣ al-Kurdi and others (Cairo, 1329/1911), p. 23.2–3 (*intr.*, bāʿīb 2). The differences between legal reasoning and logical reasoning are spelt out in just one place in the *Miʿyār* (pp. 118.8–119.20 (*kitāb* II, naẓar 2, qism 2, nauʾ 2, qism 3, q. 1)).
Sometimes a group believes in the soundness of astrology because a prediction by one turned out to be true, while another group believes it to be fake because of a mistake by another. However, all are mistaken. On the contrary, one must know the thing itself, and not every science can be mastered by every person. For this reason, 'Ali, (may God be well pleased with him!) said: ‘Do not know the truth by men; but know the truth and you will know those who possess it.’

That has become a uniquely Ghazālīan commonplace, and, to be sure, it encapsulates a method deliberately developed by him: that each science, even each theory, should be evaluated on its own merits. In that way, as he says above, even a science that is normally stigmatized as impious can be of benefit whenever it is correct. The same maxim is also quoted elsewhere in the Ḣiyā, where al-Ghazālī sets out this method in contrast to the way he dislikes so much: taqlīd, or blind-following. It also appears famously in the Munqidh, in the middle of his discussion regarding the farāsīfa. The reason for including this maxim in the Munqidh suddenly becomes obvious.

Is it not telling that al-Ghazālī cites a ṣaḥābī precedent, given that we now realize that al-Ghazālī wants to use for his theological project the truth within Ibn Sinā’s ilābīyyāt, at least with respect to the results of the superior ontological approach and the theory of the wājib al-wujūd? Al-Ghazālī reiterates to the best scholars of his community — the expert theologian — the message that they must not shy away from the truth, no matter what its sources: even heterodox authors like Ibn Sinā, or gentle aliens like Aristotle.

Here, I shall examine one case in detail: rukn 11, maqāla 3, da’wā 6.

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21 Fa-yanaqbi lān lā yaḥtuma ʿalā ʿilm bin-l-fasādi li-wujūḏi l-kābulī bayna ʿāṣabibī fībi wa-lá bi-khaṭaʾin wāḥidīn aw ʿāḥādin fībi wa-lá bi-mukhbaṭātibīm mūjība ʿilmīm bin-l-ʿamalī fa-tarūj jamāʿatūn tarākū l-nāṣara fī l-aqīṭy ātī wa{l-ṣaqīḥyātī wa}-mūtaʾallīna fībā bi-annabā la wa-kāna la-bā aṣlūn la-adrakabū arbaḥabū wa-qad maʿaża kāṣhī ābdībī l-sūbābī fī kitābī Mīʾāry l-ʿilmī wa-tarūj ṭaʾīʿatūn yātāqīdīna buṭāna l-ṭībī bi-khaṭaʾin shabhidūdu min ṭabībīn wa-ṭaʾīsātūn iṭtāfaqū sh ūḥāta l-nūfūmi li-sawābīn ittāfaqā li-wāḥidīn wa-ṭaʾīʿatūn iṭtāfaqū buṭānābu l-khaṭaʾin ittāfaqā li-ākhabū wa{l-l-kullū khaṭaʾun ba}l yanbaqbi an yaʿrīfa l-sayāfī fa-lā kullū ʿilmīn yastaqīlū bi-l-ḥabītī bībī kullu shabḥīn wa{l-l-dābīika qa}lā ʿAliyyīn radīya Lāību ʿanbu lā taʿrīfī l-ḥaqqa bi-l-ḥrajīlī ʿirīfī l-ḥaqqa taʿrīfī ablābu.

22 Ḣiyā, 1, 23:31–33 (kitāb 1, baḥ 2, bayān 3, q. 6).

23 Munqidh, p. 111:3–4 (qawl iv, fašl 2, qism 6).

24 The underlinings used in this study are as follows: 

I. 1/abc = pairing an idiosyncratic text with its corresponding text; or indicating a verbal, deinde dicti relationship between two or more different texts; or, when on its own, highlighting a point; II. 1/abc = modified text (either a different word or a contraction or paraphrase), or indicating an inherent dependency between two or more different texts; III. 1/abc = independent text, or indicating something that is missing in the corresponding text.
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<td>لينبع الدعوى السادسة</td>
<td>هو أن الأول سببته بعلم الجزئيات والكلمات</td>
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<td>هو أن الأول سببته بعلم الجزئيات والكلمات</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>حتى يعلم أن الشمس لم تتكشف اليوم وأنها سناكيفت</td>
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<td>دعا إذا جاء القدر بعلم أنها الآن مسدسة وإذا جاء بعد</td>
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<td>عين يوم أنها كانت بالأسس مكدسة فإن هذا يوجب تغيير</td>
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<td>في ذاته لاختلاف هذه العلم عليه وقد سبق أن النبي</td>
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<td>ينذه على أنه واجب لازم التغيير أن المعلم يدعي العلم</td>
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<td>تغير المعلم يذى المعلم وينهذا تغير العلم يذى المعلم</td>
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<td>النص في الصفة التي إذا اختالف تغير المعلم</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>يكمن فيها وشامل بل العلم فصيغة في ذاته يوجب اختلاف</td>
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<td>اختلف الذره وليست العلم إلى المعلم أيضا نسبا لا</td>
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<td>يبجح اختلف العلمائه فتحي يدرس علم واحد</td>
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<td>هو إربان الكسوف يكون إذا كان صار عما به كان</td>
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<td>فإن الجلي صار عما قد كان والعلم فيه واحد</td>
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<td>المعلم يذى المعلم إذا المعلم هو مثل المعلوم المختلطين</td>
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<td>أمثلها خصائص فما جدد المعلم أن السماك يكون</td>
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<td>فهذا حالا إذا كان الكسوف كان في تلك الحالة صار</td>
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<td>جهلا إذا كان الكسوف كان كان وإن صار عما</td>
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<td>بأنه كان [كان] فان هذه الحالة تقايل ما قبلها فهو يذى</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>بل إنه يعلم الأول الأسئلة ب نوع كل يكون منصفا به</td>
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<td>أولا وابدا ولا يذى مثل أن يعلم أن الشمس إذا جاورت</td>
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<td>نسبة الذره فإنها بعيد منها بعد منا إذا ويكون الفرد</td>
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<td>قد اتجه إليها وصار في محاذاتها دمالة بينها وبين</td>
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<td>الأرض محذاة غير تامة مثل لكن بثاتها يدوي أن</td>
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<td>يرى ثلاث شمس كاسا في النجم كما إذا يعلمه كذلك</td>
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<td>أولا وابدا ويكون صادقا سواء كان الكسوف موجودا</td>
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<td>أو معدوما</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>тому أن يقول إن الشمس ليست مكدسة الآن ثم يقول</td>
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<td>إذا إنها مكدسة الآن يكون قد حالف الثاني الأول هذا لا</td>
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<td>يليق بينه لا يذى العلم عليه إذا ما من جزيء ولم في</td>
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<td>مقال كده لا زال مسبع يدعي العلم وخاصة متى عرف يتبقى في</td>
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<td>نشاطة إلى وقت وزمان يبغي عارقا بالأني وابدا</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>فلا يعرف عن علمه تنقلزة ونلا يذى تغير[intاشابة ولا تغير] مما فرض</td>
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<td>الأمر كذلك</td>
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الأ altriًا فيلي لا بندت لمثل هذه الدقيقة

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The two versions from *da‘wā* 6 of the *Major Maḏnūn* and of the *Maqāṣid (DN)* above are the passage where al-Ghazālī discusses how God knows temporal events and changeable things. Comparison shows that there are divergences between the two works. The textual differences provides us with a good example of al-Ghazālī’s editorial practice when ‘appropriating’ materials from Ibn Sinā. In this case, the source text is the *Maqāṣid (DN)*, while the resulting text is the transformed version in the *Major Maḏnūn*. The source text reads as follows.

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25 I use the terms *appropriate* and *naturalize* throughout this study, following the seminal 1987 article by A. I. Sabra, ‘The Appropriation and Subsequent Naturalization of Greek Science in Medieval Islam: A Preliminary Statement’, *History of Science*, 25 (1987), 225–43. He offers an interesting but paradoxical explanation of the evolution of Greek philosophy and science in medieval Islam. According to his thesis, the decline of philosophy/science in Islam is not in the context of conflict or opposition, but is to be seen in the context of partial harmonization and acceptance. I have found that the study of al-Ghazālī’s editorial practice provides me with marvellously rich materials to test out this model of ‘appropriation’ and subsequent ‘naturalization’ between the ‘philosophical’ and ‘religious’ traditions within the Islamic world. Here, ‘appropriation’ and ‘naturalization’, respectively, describe a two-stage editorial process in the method used by al-Ghazālī to acquire and then adopt materials of *falsafa*, primarily, the theories of Ibn Sinā, and then adapt them to suit his own theological project of providing rational analyses, where possible, of the religious faith. Although those terms were originally used by Sabra in the wider historical context of receiving the Greek sciences and the subsequent process of adapting and changing them to suit the Islamic milieu, I have found these terms to be not only convenient but exceptionally accurate for analysing the case of al-Ghazālī’s borrowings from Ibn Sinā. The fact is, there is a method to al-Ghazālī’s borrowing. It is as though a microcosm of the explanation offered by Sabra can be perfectly observed in al-Ghazālī — although this time it does not involve astronomy or any of the exact sciences, but ontology and other ‘speculative’ *falsafā* disciplines. Basically, the process is as follows. Al-Ghazālī would first appropriate, for example, the *ilāḥiyāt* texts of Ibn Sinā, by collating, abbreviating, and analysing them. This he does in his *Maqāṣid* texts and then in the *Maḏnūn* corpus. He can then naturalize any of those materials from the *Maḏnūn* for a wider audience through his public works, such as the *Iḥyā‘*. That such appropriation and naturalization fit al-Ghazālī’s borrowing strategies appears obvious. Elsewhere than in the *ilāḥiyāt*, and in an uncontroversially authenticated corpus of his — the logical works — that two-step strategy also becomes evident and is impeccably exemplified. Resulting from the appropriation of Ibn Sinā’s *manṭiq*, the material and the technical language in the *Maqāṣid (DN)* are then mediated by the *Mi‘yār*, next tempered for the jurists in the *Miḥbāk al-naẓar* and the *al-Mustasfā*, and finally masked completely in the *Qistās al-mustaṣāqīm* for the non-scholar.
(T2) *Maqāṣid (DN)*, 161.4–162.17 (*Meta., maqāla m, daʿwā 6*)

[§1] It is inconceivable that the First Being (the Most Glorious and High!) knows particulars in a way that involves past, future and present, [§2] so that He would know that the sun will not be eclipsed today and that it will be eclipsed tomorrow, and when tomorrow comes He will know that it is under eclipse ‘now’, and when [the day] after tomorrow comes He will know that it was eclipsed ‘yesterday’. That would entail change in His essence because of the differences that differences of knowledge* make to Him, but, as has been shown earlier, it is inconceivable that He should be subject to change.* Change is implied because knowledge follows the object of knowledge. So whenever the object of knowledge changes, so does the knowledge of it change; and whenever knowledge changes, so does the knower change — since knowledge is not among the attributes which are such that, when they become different, the knower does not change, as in [the case of] a thing being to the right or to the left. Instead, knowledge is an attribute of the essence — a difference in which will entail a difference in the essence.* Likewise, the relation of knowledge to the object of knowledge is not a relation in which a difference in the object of knowledge does not entail a difference in it, presupposing no more than a single [item of] knowledge, namely, knowing that an eclipse will take place. So when it occurs, it is knowledge that it is taking place; and when

26 Al-Ghazālī did a great deal of rewriting of the corresponding passage of Ibn Sīnā’s *Dānishnāmah*, but the fundamental doctrinal content remained the same: the Necessary Being cannot be dependent on time, as that would violate the principle of His immutability, i.e., His eternality (Ibn Sīnā, *Dānishnāmah-yi ʿAlāʾī: Ilāhiyyāt*, ed. by M. Muʿīn (Tehran, 1331/1952) (hereafter *DN Meta*), pp. 90.3–93.3 (*faṣl* 32)). Ibn Sīnā’s theory on God’s knowledge of temporal events has been summarized by M. E. Marmura, *Some Aspects of Avicenna’s Theory of God’s Knowledge of Particulars*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 82 (1962), 299–312 (pp. 310–11). In connection with ‘timeless being’, Ibn Sīnā’s theory of time as such is also of interest. An up-to-date presentation of this theory and its historical connections is provided by Y. T. Langermann, ‘Ibn Kammūna and the “New Wisdom” of the Thirteenth Century’, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 15 (2005), 277–327 (pp. 318–26); he refers helpfully to Jon McGinnis’s still unpublished doctoral thesis, where the theory is analysed with great care.

27 Ar. ‘ulūm (pl.); ʿilm, the singular, can be ‘an item of knowledge’, i.e., ‘a knowing’; I translate it here simply as ‘knowledge’. The context becomes clear when the use of ʿilm as ‘an item of knowledge’ or ‘an act of knowing’ is compared with its use below in the *Tabāḥif* (T5), the *Iḥtiṣād* (T7), and the *Risāla Qudsiyya* (T6). The parallel term in Ibn Sīnā’s *Shfīʿa* is *taʿaqqulat*, the First Being’s acts of knowing, which are intellection, apprehension by the intellect; see T9, below.

28 *Maqāṣid (DN)*, p. 143.5–10 (*Meta., maqāla n, amr 9*).

29 This Aristotelian/Avicennian position is omitted in the corresponding part of the *Major Maḏnān*, and this position is also abandoned in the *Tabāḥif* and the *Iḥtiṣād*. In fact, al-Ghazālī argues for the opposite position in those works. See n. 41, below.
it clears, it becomes knowledge that it has taken place — the knowledge is essentially one and the same, change being confined to the object. [That view is unacceptable] because knowledge portrays the likeness [mithqal] of its object, and the different objects will be portrayed differently. If, then, we suppose that the First Being knows that an eclipse will take place, then He will be in a state which, if it remains the same once the eclipse has taken place, will make Him ignorant of the fact that the eclipse has taken place. On the other hand, if He is going to know that it has taken place, that state will be at variance with what went before, and this amounts to change.

[§3] Instead, the First Being knows particulars only in a universal way, attributable to Him eternally, a parte ante and a parte post, and immutably. For example, He would know that when the sun passes through its descending node and returns to it after such and such a time, and the moon reaches it and comes to be in line with it, intervening between it and the earth, without obliterating, not to all of it but, say, a third of it: it follows that a third of the sun will be seen eclipsed in some clime [i.e., at a particular latitude], and He would know this eternally, a parte ante and a parte post, and this would be true whether the eclipse was present or absent.

[§4] If He were to say now that ‘the sun is not eclipsed’ and tomorrow that ‘it is eclipsed now’, the second utterance would be at variance with the first, as would not befit Him Who cannot conceivably be subject to change. This is not suitable to the One Who cannot change. So there is no particular thing, even of the weight of a speck of dust which does not have a cause except that He will be aware of it in a universal way, involving no reference to time or duration, and He will be aware of it permanently, a parte ante and a parte post.

[§5] So not even the weight of a speck of dust escapes His knowledge, even so all of its states will be the same and will not change, whatever time [amr] being supposed in that regard.

30 Also, ‘model’, ‘archetype’ or ‘form’; i.e., the paradeigma of Aristotle in Pb. 194b26 (n.3).

31 Ar. ‘uqda al-dbanah. A node is one of two points at which the orbit of a planet intersects the ecliptic; the descending node is that encountered by the celestial body in its southward passage. The visibility of a solar eclipse depends strongly upon the moon’s parallax; al-Ghazâlî’s account here is schematic, to say the least, but it is sufficiently correct for the point that he wishes to make. Both nodes are mentioned in the Tabâfut, p. 225.9 (mas’ala xii).

32 Qurʾân, Sabaʾ, 34. 3 (hereafter Q.; the name of the sûra is indicated, followed by the Egyptian Standard sûra and verse number).

33 This quotation is an allusion to the Qurʾân, ‘not even the weight of a peck of dust, either in the heavens or on earth escapes Him, nor anything smaller than that, or greater, but it is in a Manifest Book’ (Q., Sabaʾ, 34. 3), which was used previously by Ibn Sînâ, in the Shifaʾ (see T9, below). All occurrences of mithqal dbarra, ‘the weight of a speck of dust’, in the passages of the Maqasid (DN) and the Major Maqâmîn seem to have this Qurʾanic
The doctrine of Ibn Sīnā as presented here in the *Maqāṣid*, namely that God does not know particular things *qua* temporally divided into present, past and future, is also found in al-Ghazālī’s report of Ibn Sīnā’s position in *masʿala* XIII of the *Tabāfut*. The discussions are about God’s knowledge of changeable things as changing: whether God knows that things can and do change, and that, for example, the sun will be eclipsed for residents of a certain swath of the earth’s surface under a given set of astronomical conditions; and whether God knows, eternally, all of the particular temporal states of changeable things. The first half of that chapter in the *Tabāfut*, indeed, directly corresponds to the passage in the *Maqāṣid (DN)* — textually as well as doctrinally.  

34 In the *Tabāfut*, al-Ghazālī identifies Ibn Sīnā as the

verse in mind. It is interesting to note that the original Avicennian texts quoted the verse faithfully — without supplying the antecedent for ‘ānbu — whereas al-Ghazālī’s texts, including the one in the *Tabāfut* (see T4, below), interpolate the antecedent into the verse: ‘an ‘ilmībī; see nn. 57 and 35, below. The *Dānishnāmāb* passage makes no use of this verse at all but contains the possessive construction, ‘His knowledge’ (*DN* Meta., p. 93.3 (fasc 32)).

34 This contradicts the findings of Janssens, ‘Al-Ghazzālī’s *Tabāfut*: Is it Really a Rejection of Ibn Sīnā’s Philosophy?*, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 12 (2001), 1–17 (p. 10). The only correspondence he listed for *masʿala* XIII is in *Shifāʾ*, viii, 6; see also the second part of n. 43, below. In my thesis, I discuss at length the controversy concerning the role of the *Maqāṣid* and its stated intentions vis-à-vis the *Tabāfut*. Certain scholars, such as Janssens and Reynolds (see n. 86, below), have been puzzled by the uncertainty surrounding the *Maqāṣid (DN)* and the role the *Maqāṣid* should play, despite al-Ghazālī’s having announced its relationship with the *Tabāfut*. That is because al-Ghazālī never refers to the *Maqāṣid* by name in any of his authenticated works, in spite of the fact that they mention the *Tabāfut*; moreover, the latter is referred to explicitly by the former, in the *muqaddima* and *kbāṭima* of the *Maqāṣid (DN)*, but never the other way around. On these grounds the authenticity of the *muqaddima/kbāṭima* has been called into question and, in turn, the relationship between the *Maqāṣid* and the *Tabāfut* has itself been subject to controversy. In my thesis I show that Janssens’s and Reynolds’s doubts over al-Ghazālī’s stated intentions concerning the *Maqāṣid* are groundless, yet that is not the case with their call to revise the exaggerated reputation of al-Ghazālī as an out-and-out opponent of falsafā. Janssens, for instance, notices that the *Tabāfut* is only ‘slightly’ related to the *Maqāṣid (DN)* and discovers that, instead, the *Tabāfut* is systematically based on the *Shifāʾ*. That discovery seems to have justified for him the assertion that the *Maqāṣid* and the *Tabāfut* are not related — so much so that he declared: ‘I believe that I can now affirm without any reserve that the *Maqāṣid* was not written as a preparatory work to the *Tabāfut*, and that therefore there is no direct link between the two works’ (‘Al-Ghazzālī’s *Tabāfut*’, p. 13). Obviously his assessment has become untenable, since we now have a further independent text, the *Maqāṣid (Sh)*, that refers to the *Tabāfut*. Janssens’s conclusion must be revised, since we are no longer dealing with a single ‘*Maqāṣid*’, taken from the *Dānishnāmāb*, but also with another, which is redacted largely from the *Shifāʾ*. A detailed textual comparison of the *Tabāfut* and the *Maqāṣid (Sh)* will give Janssens’s careful results on the connections
philosopher who holds this position, which itself is already a compromise with the Aristotelian teaching that the First Being knows only himself and not other things.

(T4) Tabāfut, 223.5–9 (mas’ala xii)

Those who maintain that He knows others [besides himself] — this being the position which Ibn Sinā has chosen — claim that God knows things in a universal way that does not involve time and is not differentiated by past, future and present. At the same time, he claims that ‘not even the weight of a speck of dust, either in the heavens or on earth, escapes’\(^{35}\) His knowledge, except that He knows particulars in a universal way.\(^{36}\)

This is the age-old philosophical paradox connecting the eternal with the changing. Ibn Sinā faced the problem of reconciling the Muslim Godhead — an omniscient being — with the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle — an isolated entity who knows only Himself. His solution was to say that by knowing Himself, God knows everything else as the effects issuing from Himself as the First Cause. How is that eternal knowledge supposed to include temporal events without changing with them? In the Tabāfut, al-Ghazālī criticizes Ibn Sinā’s position, even mocking him for failing to follow (read: make taqlid of) Aristotle, and accuses him of trying to make room for religion by formulating what is in fact a ‘half-baked’ solution paying lip-service to Muslim doctrine (an example of al-Ghazālī’s charge of talbis against the falāsifā).\(^{37}\) Al-Ghazālī proceeded to show that even by the standards of

of the Tabāfut with the Shifā’ — accentuate further the connections between these two texts. Indeed, as this case study shows, there exist interdependences among the texts of the two versions of the Maqāṣid, the Tabāfut, and the Major Maṣnūn that point to one and the same author.

\(^{35}\) Q., Saba’, 34. 3.

\(^{36}\) Wa-man dbababa ilā annabu ya’lamu ghayrabu wa-buwa alladdī ikhtārabu Ibnu Sinā faqad za’ama annabu ya’lamu l-asbya’ā ilman kulliyyan lā ya’dkbulu tahta l-zamānī wa-lā yakbtatīf bi-l-mādī wa-l-mustaqbalī wa-l-āna wa-ma’ā dbālīka za’ama annabu lā ya’zubū ‘an ‘ilmibī mitbqālī dharratin fi l-samāwātī wa-lā fi l-arḍi ilā annabu ya’lamu l-już’iyātī bi-naw’in kulliyin.

\(^{37}\) In a particularly memorable passage, al-Ghazālī implicitly accuses the falāsifā of talbis and of being the ones propounding a double truth, namely, by denying in secret the orthodox doctrines believed by the public, such as the bodily resurrection, simply because such doctrines cannot be rationally proved (Jawābīr, pp. 44.13–45.16 (qism 1, faṣl 9)). That whole section appears to be a personal diatribe against the outré behaviour at court and is a not-so-veiled reference to Ibn Sinā’s merrymaking and wine drinking; see also n. 40, below.
Aristotelian falsaфа, Ibn Sinā’s position was without a satisfactory foundation. He produced an ad hoc argument against Ibn Sinā that God could not know changing things, as this would result in something sequential and thus multiple in God’s essence and a temporal and changing God. If God cannot know changing things because He cannot change — not that al-Ghazālī believed this proposition himself — then He cannot know the many different things outside Himself. He cannot do so even with a universal knowledge of each genus and species, because there are many different such things, and there cannot be multiplicity in God. Thus the ‘halfway’ position of Ibn Sinā becomes untenable, and he had better go back to Aristotle’s original view.⁵⁸

Al-Ghazālī’s ultimate strategy in this question is to agree with Ibn Sinā and the falsaфа that God’s knowledge must be unchanging, for the reasons postulated in the First Rukn speaking about an immutable God.⁵⁹ Unlike the falsaфа, however, al-Ghazālī also wants to hold — as a religious scholar must — that God, despite having an unchanging knowledge, is somebow(i.e., bi-lā kayf, a classic modal expression used by Sunni theologians: ‘without specifying how’) able to know changing things and temporal events, even if that position is paradoxical and logically undemonstrable. Otherwise, if God’s knowledge is limited to genera and species, and does not include temporal events, there will be implications unacceptable to believers. What would be the point of praying for divine intervention? How can we be rewarded or punished in the next life if He is not aware of our actions? It is this very concern that prompted al-Ghazālī to write the Tabāfut in the first place. He rightly saw the consequences of that heretical attitude among some Muslim falsaфа as being subversive of their religious observances, rituals, and scruples.⁶⁰ In the Tabāfut, al-Ghazālī suggests a solution radically different from the one with which the falsaфа were familiar. He abandons the Aristotelian

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⁵⁸ Tabāfut, pp. 232.11–234.4 (mas’ala xii); Aristotle’s position is alluded to here in the phrase maslak ikhwānīkum min al-falsāfa (p. 232.11–13).

⁵⁹ Maḥ. Maj., p. 6.19–20 (rukun, amr 9). Indeed, this more fundamental doctrine is presented in al-Ghazālī’s ‘Aqīda as simply ‘He is beyond change’ (wa-annabu muqaddasun ‘anī l-taghayyuri) (‘Aqīda, 1, 89.25 (tanzīb)).

⁶⁰ This point was made strongly in his introductory remarks to the Tabāfut that precede the first muqaddima (Tabāfut, pp. 4.3–7.7 (intr.)); it is witnessed elsewhere, for example, in the famous reference in the Munqidd to Ibn Sinā’s merrymaking and wine drinking (Munqidd, pp. 156.9–157.5 (qawālīn); see n. 37 above). The disdain that al-Ghazālī shows towards this unacceptable ‘libertine’ attitude of the falsaфа — in his own colourful words from the Tabāfut, ‘the effect of their repulsive facade’ (tawwil mā warā’abu tabṣīl) — appears to be an ongoing concern of his career.
account of knowledge — that a knower’s knowledge changes in accordance with its object (the premiss expressed in T2, §2, above as ‘knowledge follows the object of knowledge’) — replacing change in the substance of knowledge and knower with mere change in relation, which, need not involve a change in that knower. A knower’s knowledge of a changing object should be seen as analogous to the relation of a stationary observer to an object moving, say, from his right to his left: while its position changes relative to the knower, the knower himself does not change.\textsuperscript{41}

One perhaps could say that his solution is creative and imaginative — an example of what Ibn Rushd (Latin, Averroes; d. 595/1198) means (see n. 42, below), when he says al-Ghazālī relies far more on imagination than on sober logic, and a committed Aristotelian would require a leap of faith to accept it. The attitude expressed by his illustration supporting this curious argument appears to show influence from kalam. It does not toe the Aristotelian line (the strict Aristotelian, Ibn Rushd, was to condemn al-Ghazālī’s ‘thought experiment’ here as ‘discord-mongering/mushāqhaba’):\textsuperscript{42} a state at each moment of time corresponds to a piece of knowledge and is an actual created thing, such as the knowledge of Zayd’s arrival tomorrow. So if God had created in us a knowledge that Zayd’s time of arrival is 6 A.M. on 31 August 1957, this could be a permanent and unchanging piece of knowledge, true before, during, and after; and God’s knowledge could

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Tabāfut}, p. 231.7–14 (\textit{mas‘ala} ḥn). That position, it should be noted, is the exact reversal of Ibn Sinā’s, presented in the \textit{Maqāṣīd (DN)}, p. 161.11–12 (\textit{Meta., maqāla} III, \textit{da‘wa} 6) (T2, §2; n. 29, above). This same strategy is followed in the \textit{Iṣtiṣād} (pp. 150.11–151.2 (\textit{qyldn, ḥukm} 3, q. 2); T7, below). The terms used in the discussions by al-Ghazālī in these different works are identical and specific to al-Ghazālī. Such terms from the \textit{Tabāfut} and the \textit{Iṣtiṣād} include, for example, \textit{mukhsījan/munkashīf} in relation to the different states of ‘temporal’ knowledge that are known or ‘manifest’ in the divine perspective, and \textit{tata‘aqaba} in relation to how those different ‘states’ of knowledge succeed each other in the human perspective.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibn Rushd, \textit{Tabāfut al-tabāfut}, ed. by M. Bouyges (Beirut, 1930) (hereafter \textit{TT}), p. 460.15 (\textit{mas‘ala} ḥn); trans. by S. Van den Bergh, 2 vols (London, 1954) (hereafter \textit{TT}(V)), ‘sophistry’ (i, 279). Ibn Rushd accuses the \textit{Tabāfut} of being full of rhetorical statements and dialectical arguments, some of which are more persuasive than others. Indeed, Ibn Rushd portrays al-Ghazālī as an amateur philosopher, who is no more than a \textit{mutakallim} with an insufficient grasp of \textit{falsafa}. In one place, he reminds his readers that only the public would rely on imagination, whereas the one well trained in the rigorous theoretical disciplines is also one who renounces imagination (\textit{TT}, pp. 256.16–257.1 (\textit{mas‘ala} III)). Of course, from al-Ghazālī’s point of view, these creative departures from Aristotelianism accommodate his anti-\textit{taqālūd} agenda and are in fact examples of progress. It is clear that al-Ghazālī and the \textit{fālakṣīja} do not differ just on specific positions but also on the way in which philosophy is to be conducted — but not on philosophy itself as an intellectual endeavour.
be like this. In this way, al-Ghazālī rejects the premiss that knowledge changes with its objects with respect to changing things. Al-Ghazālī’s original example in the *Tabāfut* follows (with the correspondences to the texts of the *Iqtisād* and *Risāla Qudsiyya* underlined): ③

**(T5) Tabāfut, 232.4–8 (mas’ala xm)**

If God were to create in us knowledge that Zayd will arrive at sunrise ‘tomorrow’, and to make this knowledge last without creating a further knowledge or negligence of this knowledge: then by the mere previous knowledge alone, we should know at sunrise that Zayd is arriving ‘now’ and afterwards that he had arrived ‘earlier’. This single permanent knowledge would suffice to include those three states. ④

③ Van den Bergh complains that this example makes no sense: ‘This of course is false; Ghazālī has evidently not seen the point. If God had created in us an everlasting knowledge that Zayd will come tomorrow, this knowledge, if true today, would be false tomorrow and ever afterwards. On the other hand, if God had created in us an everlasting knowledge that Zayd has come, or will come, the former would be false up to the moment he has actually come, but true ever afterwards, whereas the latter would be true till he has actually come and false ever afterwards’ (*TT/V*, n. 153 (notes to p. 278.3)). Al-Ghazālī’s original example may have been confusing to Van den Bergh, especially given the medieval limitations of an accurate reference to time. The difficulty is that the word al-Ghazālī used, ‘tomorrow’ — even with the further qualification of ‘sunrise’, has a changing reference as time passes. If we reformulate al-Ghazālī’s time reference using modern terms as is done above, and which presents what al-Ghazālī must have intended, the example becomes intelligible. The item of knowledge of the (fixed) time of Zayd’s arrival is permanent and unchanging. Only those thinking beings (like us humans) who are temporally bound will view a particular item of knowledge as a past, present, or future event, depending upon their (ever-changing) temporal coordinates; but the time is fixed and permanent for God. The example of ‘Zayd’s arrival’ in the *Tabāfut* recalls al-Fārābī’s use of ‘Zayd’ instead of Aristotle’s ‘sea battle’ for the problem of future contingency in *De interpretatione*, chap. 9 (*Int.*, 19a30-32; F. W. Zimmermann, *Al-Farabi’s Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle’s De Interpretatione* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 94–95). It is found in the *Maqāṣid (DN)*, but not in the original *Dānisbnāmab* passage (*Maqāṣid (DN)*, p. 159.12 (*Meta.*, *maqāla* iii, daʿwā 5)); cf. *DN Meta.*, pp. 88.8–90.2 (*faṣl 31)*. This is an additional case of a *Maqāṣid (DN)-Tabāfut* connection at the expense of the *Maqāṣid (Sb.)-Tabāfut* one; see n. 34, above, and n. 60, below. Al-Ghazālī’s application of this example in the present (kalam) context is what is novel, and the originality is supported further by its occurrence below in the *Risāla Qudsiyya* (*T6*) and the *Iqtisād* (*T7*). The usage of Zayd (and ‘Amr) is a standard feature in *falsef* texts, following the custom of Arab grammarians’ use of them as proper names in their model sentences. The Aristotelian equivalents are *Kallias* and *Socrates*, in the Latin tradition, *Gaius* and *Marius*.

④ *Law khalaqa Lābū la-nā ilman bi-qudūmī zayden ghadan inda tūlūʿī 1-shamsī wa-adāma bāḥdā 1-ilma wa-lam yakbluq la-nā ilman ʿakbara wa-lā ghaflatan ʿan
The example of ‘Zayd’s arrival tomorrow’ also appears in the Second Rukn of the Risāla Qudsiyya and qutb (read: Second Rukn) of the Iqtisād to illustrate how God’s single, eternal knowledge includes temporal events. Not only do these discussions of the question textually resemble those in the Tabāfut, but they add nothing new:

(T6) Risāla Qudsiyya, 1, 109.22–26 (rukn n, ašl 8)

His knowledge is eternal, in the sense that He always knows His essence, His attributes and whatever He originates by way of creation. Whenever the objects of creation come into being, knowledge of them is not new to Him; rather, they were manifest [maksbūfatan] to His eternal a parte ante knowledge. Since, if knowledge were created in us that Zayd would arrive at sunrise, and that knowledge were destined to last until the sun rises, then Zayd’s arriving at sunrise would be known to us in that way, without any other, new knowledge being added. This, then, is how the eternal knowledge of God (the Most High!) must be understood.

And:

(T7) Iqtisād, 149.10–150.1, 150.8, 150.11–151.2 (qutb n, ḥukm 3, q. 2)

The Maker (the Most High!) knew eternally a parte ante that the world would exist at the time of its existence. This knowledge is a single attribute entailing the knowledge in pre-eternity that the world will come to be later; and while it exists, the knowledge that it is there; and after its end, the knowledge that it was there. These three states follow one after the other in the world whereas they are manifest [maksbūfatan] to God (the Most High!) by that attribute, and He does not change; only the states of the world change.

bādbā l-ʿilmī la-kunnāʿinda ṭulāʾi l-sbamsi ʿālimina bi-mujarradī l-ʿilmī l-sābiqī bi-qudūmī bāna wa-baʿda bi-annabu ḍadima min qablī wa-kānā dbālika l-ʿilmī l-wāḥidū l-bāqi kāfiyan fi l-iḥāṣī bi-bādbibī l-aḥwāli l-tbalāṭati.

45 Reading: wa-mahma ḍadatbat al-makblūgātu.
46 Literally, ‘unveiled’.
47 Ar. bal ḍaṣalat maksbūfatan la-bu bi-l-ʿilmī l-azalī. More literally, ‘Rather, their taking place is something manifest to him through that eternal a parte ante knowledge.’
48 Inna ʿilmabu qadimuna fa-lam yazal ʿāliman bi-dbāthibī wa-ṣīfātibī wa-mā yuḥdithubu min makblūgātibī wa-mabmā ḍadātbi l-makblūgātu lam yahdūtu la-bu ʿilmun bi-bā bal ḍaṣalat maksbūfatan la-bu bi-l-ʿilmī l-azalī idb law kbulīqa la-nāʿ ilmun bi-qudāmī zaydīn ʿinda ṭulāʾi l-sbamsi wa-dāma dbālika l-ʿilmī taqdiran ḍhātāṭa ʿalā ilmabu ʿilmabu la-kāna qudūmū zaydīn ʿinda ṭulāʾi l-sbamsi maʿlūman la-nā bi-dbālika l-ʿilmī min ghayri tajad-dūdī ilmin ʿākbara fa-bākadbā yanbāghī an yuṣbama qidamu ʿilmī Lābī taʿālā.
[Al-Ghazālī then illustrates this by using the example of Zayd’s arrival, as in the above passages.] This, then, is how the eternal knowledge of God (the Most High!), which necessarily includes temporal events [ḥawādīth], must be understood. […]

The definite proof of this is that difference of states is a single thing in its division into that which was, will be and is, without adding [anything] to the difference between different essences. It is well known that knowledge — its states — does not multiply on account of there being multiple essences. So how can it multiply on account of there being multiple states of a single essence? If a single knowledge affords the inclusion of various, different entities, why should it be inconceivable that there be a single knowledge affording the inclusion of the states of a single essence in relation to the past and future?

Al-Ghazālī’s imaginative proposal here is as far as he goes in solving the problem set out by the Greeks about the relation of the eternal to the temporal. The worst difficulty for a scientific, demonstrative solution to the problem is the taking into account of the subjective, human perspective on time, and relating that to a timeless being. This could explain why al-Ghazālī decided not to include the kalāmī illustration from the Tabājīt, the Iqtiṣād and the Rīsāla Qudsiyya in the burbānī account that is in the Major Maṣḥānī — despite the fact that the argument for relational change is clearly present in the text of its source, the Maqāṣīd (DN), as the antithesis to the Aristotelian position. Anyway, it is obvious that there remains a paradox. For al-Ghazālī, this may be a case where dogma appears to contradict reason, and the desired conclusion may never be proved rationally — whether by way of falsaṣa' or of kalam — or perhaps be acceptable to the standards of kalam but not of burbān. Ibn Sīnā had avoided these difficulties by limiting God’s knowledge of temporal events. Al-Ghazālī found that intolerable and attempted to find some other way out. Yet the problem is so profound that no attempt at a philosophical

solution may ever be satisfactory. What is certain from this exercise, however, is that al-Ghazālī agrees with the *falsāfah* that, whether or not God knows changeable things as changing (and he does), God’s knowledge itself must be immutable:

(T8) *Tabāfut*, 232.1–4 (*mas’ala xm*)

This is how God’s knowledge must be understood. We grant that He knows things by a single knowledge eternally, *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, and that [its] state is immutable. Their goal is to deny change [in God], and on this there is agreement. However, we do not accept their claim that, of necessity, to assert that [He] knows now that a thing is, and [will know] later that it has passed away, is [to assert] change [in Him]. For how can they know this?50

Let us return to the original discussion and compare the two versions of *da’wā* 6 in order to see how they illustrate al-Ghazālī’s firsthand appropriation from Ibn Sinā. The source for the appropriation is *da’wā* 6 in *maqāla* III of the *Maqāsid* (*DN*), and it is used in *da’wā* 6 in *rukūn* II of the *Major Maḏnūn*, where we can see now what the text of the *Major Maḏnūn* makes of all this:


§1 The First Being (the Most Glorious!) knows particulars as well as universals,

§2 but knows particulars in a universal way, attributable to Him eternally *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, and immutably.

For example, He would know that when the sun passes through its descending node and returns to it after such and such a time, and the moon reaches it and comes to be in line with it, intervening between it and the earth, without obliterating, not to all of it but, say, a third of it: it follows that a third of the sun will be seen eclipsed in some clime [i.e., at a particular latitude], and He would know this eternally, *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, and this would be true whether the eclipse was present or absent.

§3 As a result, not even ‘the weight of a speck of dust escapes His knowledge’,51 even so all of its states will be the same and will not change, whatever time [amr] being supposed in that regard.

50 *Wa-bākadhā yanbagī an yuḍbama l-ḥālū fi ‘ilmī llābi fa-innā nusallimun annabū ya’lamu l-ṭabyā’ū bi-‘ilmī wāḥidin fi ẓ-ṣarā li wa-l-abādi wa-l-ḥālū lā yataghbāyarun wa-ğbaraḏubum nafīy l-taghbāyiru wa-buwa muttafaqun ‘alaybi wa-qawlubum min darūratā itbaṭi l-‘ilmī bi-l-kawāmī l-ānā wa-l-inqīdā’ū ba’d-dabū taghyarun fa-laysa bi-musallimin fa-min aynā ‘arafi ḍbālika.

51 Allusion to Q., *Saba*, 34. 3. See n. 33, above.
The philosopher [falsāfi] has failed to note something so subtle.\textsuperscript{52}

Both versions agree with the line taken in the \textit{Tabāfiw/īqtişād}, viz., of endorsing the principle of God’s immutability in the First \textit{Rukn}. They share the conviction that on this there should be no compromise. On this point, al-Ghazālī agrees with the \textit{falsāsifa} against the Karrāmiyya theologians and also the Jahmiyya theologians among the Mutazila, both of whom held the view that God can change.\textsuperscript{53} The source text in the \textit{Maqāṣid (DN)} was already very explicit in making the case for God’s immutability — for the tenet that God’s unchanging knowledge cannot be subject to temporal differentiation.

Indeed, it could even be inferred from the opening proposition of the \textit{Maqāṣid (DN)} that knowledge of individuals is not to be attributed to God at all:

[T2, §1] It is inconceivable that the First Being (the Most Glorious and High!) knows particulars in a way that involves past, future and present.

The proposition in the \textit{Major Maḏnūn} is different. It turns the negative statement of the \textit{Maqāṣid (DN)} into an affirmation fit for inclusion in al-Ghazālī’s creed:

[T3, §1] The First Being (the Most Glorious!) knows particulars as well as universals.

The next textual divergence (\textit{Maḏ. Maj.}, T3, §2 = \textit{Maqāṣid (DN)}, T2, §3), which could almost pass unnoticed, is actually very interesting — not least because its implications appear problematic. The text of T3, §2, in the \textit{Major Maḏnūn} diverges from the underlying version of the \textit{Maqāṣid (DN)} by a single omission:

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<th>\textit{Maqāṣid (DN)}, T2, §3</th>
<th>\textit{Maḏ. Maj.}, T3, §2</th>
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<td>[…] knows particulars only in a universal way, attributable to Him eternally, \textit{a parte ante} and \textit{a parte post}, and immutably.</td>
<td>[…] knows particulars in a universal way, attributable to Him eternally, \textit{a parte ante} and \textit{a parte post}, and immutably.</td>
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\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ar. wa l-falsāfiyyu lā yatanabbabu lī-mithli bādbibī l-daqaqīqātī}. The meaning of \textit{alsafīyyu} is not entirely certain. Was al-Ghazālī referring to a particular philosopher, who would definitely be Ibn Sinā; or to the \textit{falsāsifa} collectively? Another occurrence of the term would seem to suggest the latter (\textit{Iḥyāʿ}, II, 322.14 (\textit{kitāb xxi}, bāb 2, \textit{rukn} n, \textit{sbarṭ} 4, q. 1)). Al-Ghazālī made this statement to point out that, although his thesis is similar to those of the \textit{falsāsifa} (and, \textit{a fortiori}, Ibn Sinā), his is subtly different.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Tabāfiw}, p. 234.7–8 (\textit{masʿala} xii). He discusses and refutes the positions of the Jahmiyya and the Karrāmiyya in the \textit{īqtişād}, pp. 151.2–152.4 (\textit{qift} n, \textit{bukm} 3, q. 2).
That is a conscious effort by al-Ghazālī to separate the two texts by omitting ‘innamā’/only’ in the Maḏnūn. This poses some difficult questions. Is it al-Ghazālī’s real position on the issue that God’s knowledge of changing, particular things (i.e., individuals and temporal events) is universal in kind? If so, isn’t the position in the Maḏnūn no different from the one in the Maqāṣid, so that al-Ghazālī’s view is the same as Ibn Sīnā’s on this question? That is not the case, as I will argue here. And if it is not the same, what does al-Ghazālī mean by ‘universal’ in the Maḏnūn? And would this single textual divergence then become highly significant philosophically, as well as theologically?

There appears to be a large doctrinal divergence from Ibn Sīnā’s position with just this omission of a single particle. It does indeed seem likely that this is what al-Ghazālī intended, since the inclusion of the ‘innamā’/only’ — at least when read literally — limits the extent of God’s knowledge. Yet al-Ghazālī wants to avoid this limitation. My assertion here is backed by textual evidence, that only Ibn Sīnā, but not al-Ghazālī, uses this restrictive particle. The limiting of God’s knowledge to the universal — to the exclusion of the particular — is found in the Dānishnāmah,54 and hence in the Maqāṣid (DN), and is also stated by al-Ghazālī as Ibn Sīnā’s position in the Tabāfut (T4, above). It is also found in the text of Ibn Sīnā’s Shiṣfā; which we know, especially from the Maqāṣid (Sh.), that al-Ghazālī had studied.55 That explains why it appeared in both versions of the Maqāṣid but not at all in the Maḏnūn. Here is what Ibn Sīnā says in the Shiṣfā:

(T9) Ibn Sīnā, al-Shiṣfā’ Meta., 359.11–14 (vm.6)56

Just as ascribing many actions to the Necessary Being is a diminution of Him, so too would be ascribing [to Him] many acts of knowing [ta’aqqulāt]. Instead, the Necessary Being knows all things only in a universal way; yet no individual

54 DN Meta., 91.13–14 (faṣl 32).
55 Al-Ghazālī, Maqāṣid al-falāsīfā (Shiṣfā`-version): London, British Library, MS Or. 3126. See nn. 6 and 34, above, and n. 61, below.
56 Ibn Sīnā, al-Shiṣfā`: al-lābiyyāt, ed. by G. C. Anawati and others, 2 vols (Cairo, 1960); hereafter Sh. Meta. The parallel passage in the Najāt is at pp. 594.11–595.2 (n.18): Ibn Sīnā, al-Najāt, ed. by M. T. Dānishpazhūh (Tehran, 1364/1985); hereafter Naj. Meta. The corresponding passage in the Maqāṣid (Sh.) is reproduced almost untouched (fol. 187a, 1–6 (v.8)):
thing escapes Him, and 'not even the weight of a speck of dust, either in the heavens or on earth, escapes Him'.\textsuperscript{57} This is among the wonders whose apprehension [\textit{taṣawwur}] requires the subtle brilliance of a genius.\textsuperscript{58}

So, whereas Ibn Sinā definitely restricts God’s act of knowing to a universal sort, the text of the \textit{Major Maḍnūn} simply mentions that way of knowing without explicitly denying that God could know also in a particular way. It is possible, therefore, that al-Ghazālī may simply mean by ‘universal’ that God’s act of knowing is unchanging and eternal. Thus the difference between Ibn Sinā and al-Ghazālī actually reduces to the latter’s finding it unacceptable that on a profound question such as this one, the former could have been certain in limiting God’s knowledge to universals. As he retorted rhetorically in the \textit{Tabāfiṭ} (T8, above): how could anyone possibly know this?

It is likely that al-Ghazālī’s motives come from a realization that to prove demonstratively God’s knowing individuals and temporal events in a concrete and particular way, without compromising the principle of immutability is simply impossible. When a person’s faculty of reasoning has reached its final frontier and faces a paradox such as this, a believer can only do as a believer must: make that leap of faith. This is the part of the contemplative life that al-Ghazālī stipulates for the readers of the \textit{Maḍnūn}, a personal religious experience that can come only from \textit{dhawq}in one’s introspective struggle from a personal relationship with God. If this is so, then that enigmatic statement in the \textit{Major Maḍnūn} becomes the limit of his rational enquiry on the matter. It is one that conforms with his religious beliefs, for this represents al-Ghazālī’s best efforts to achieve the \textit{via media} between the theological priority of affirming God’s attribute of perfect knowledge and the philosophical principle of God’s immutability expressed in the First \textit{Rūkn} of the \textit{Qawā'id} al-‘aqā'id.

The result is that the articulation of his position in the \textit{Major Maḍnūn} does not deny God’s omniscience as revealed from Muslim Scripture and understood by the masses. It is also possible that his statements here may be rhetorically hyperbolic or may simply constitute a hypothesis that is meant only for the eyes of

\textsuperscript{57} Q., \textit{Saba‘}, 34. 3. Unlike al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sinā cites this verse in full; see nn. 33, 35, and 51, above.

those who will not misunderstand his motives, namely, the Maḫnūn readers. In any case, they were designed to fit into the burhānī framework of the First Rukn of the Major Maḫnūn. The very nature of these questions is enough reason for him not to divulge them to those who would make a scandal of even considering such thoughts. Ibn Sinā himself (in the passage T9, above, which was later read by his unexpected sequax) realized how problematic this question was and how delicate its articulation would be.

The difficulty caused by the ostensible resemblance here between the passages of the Major Maḫnūn and the Maqāṣid (DN) can be resolved by understanding the ‘universal’ in the Maḫnūn as referring to a knowledge of time that is eternal and unchanging — and just that, without any further restriction of the character and mode of that knowledge. A careful comparison between the two versions (Maq. Maj., T3, §2 = Maqāṣid (DN), T2, §3) supports that interpretation: (1) al-Ghazālī himself describes that knowledge as ‘eternally, a parte ante and a parte post, and immutably’; \(^9\) (2) he deliberately omits Ibn Sinā’s restricting of the ‘universal’ from the latter’s formulation; and (3) he makes the scope of that knowledge such that it includes all things unqualifiedly, for he explicitly mentions ‘universals as well as particulars’ (in T3, §1) — all this in stark contrast to Ibn Sinā’s original position that temporal knowledge is inconceivable for God and that God knows particular things only in a universal way.

So, yes, the two works when read casually (especially with regard to the kinds of ‘universal’ being respectively considered in them) could easily be misunderstood as having no substantial differences between them. Yet, despite the nearly identical texts of the Maqāṣid (DN) (which is intended to represent Ibn Sinā’s views) and the Major Maḫnūn (where we expect al-Ghazālī to depart from his heterodox source), the result in the Major Maṇnūn is in fact different. It is a decided departure from al-Ghazālī’s own portrayal of Ibn Sinā’s position on this

\(^9\) This proposition does not have an Avicennian counterpart in either the Dānisbnāmab, the Shīfā, or the Isbārat. It is an original statement by al-Ghazālī, just as he formulated it in the Tabāfut (T8): ‘This is how God’s knowledge must be understood. We grant that He knows things by a single knowledge eternally, a parte ante and a parte post, and that [its] state is immutable.’ Among the places where Ibn Sinā discusses God’s knowledge of temporal events are the following: DN Meta., pp. 90.3–93.3 (faṣl 32); Sb. Meta., pp. 359.3–362.11 (viii.6); and Ibn Sinā, al-İṣbārat wa-l-tanbihāt, ed. by J. Forget (Leiden, 1892), Isb.\(^1\), p. 185.4–10 (vi.21: tadbīb) (İsb.\(^2\) is a reference to the nabf chapters, i.e., the chapters on logic, whereas Isb.\(^2\) is to the namat chapters. So ‘İsb.\(^2\), 127.9 (n.11: tanbih)” means page 127, line 9, which is, namat 3, section 11, i.e., a tanbih; and ‘İsb.\(^1\), 81.10 (n.2: ışbara)” means nabf 9, section 2, an ışbara).
question in the *Tabāfut*, which was that God cannot have knowledge of particulars except in a universal way (T4, above). Unlike the *Major Maḏnūn*, Ibn Sinā’s ‘universals’ entail a mode of knowledge that operates by knowing all of the causes of the particulars without reference to specific times. Therein lies the finely honed distinction between Ibn Sinā and al-Ghazālī on whether God knows changeable things as changing. Al-Ghazālī is, in the end, simply making the point that by an unchanging knowledge God knows changing things, period. Ibn Sinā’s position agrees with that but qualifies further the mode of God’s knowledge of particulars so that it can be only through causes that do not depend on time.

The next case of divergence between the *Major Maḏnūn* and the *Maqāṣid (DN)* confirms that departure. It involves an exemplification of the knowledge of a temporal event, viz., the occurrence of an eclipse. The example of the eclipse is not original, but is borrowed from Ibn Sinā, and al-Ghazālī draws upon it elsewhere, as in the *Tabāfut*. Al-Ghazālī uses three variants of this example in the source text (T2, §2, §3 and §4), but the *Major Maḏnūn* omits the first and last ones. The one retained (Maḍ. Maj., T3, §2 = *Maqāṣid (DN)*, T2, §3) is a description of an eclipse occurring in a particular region, and it shows how the eclipse exemplifies God’s unchanging, eternal knowledge of a particular event:

> For example, He would know that when the sun passes through its descending node and returns to it after such and such a time, and the moon reaches it and comes to be in line with it, intervening between it and the earth, without obliterating, not to all of it but, say, a third of it: it follows that a third of the sun will be seen eclipsed in some clime [i.e., at a particular latitude], and He would know this eternally, *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, and this would be true whether the eclipse was present or absent.\(^{61}\)

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\(^{60}\) It appears in Ibn Sinā’s writings, among other places no doubt, at *Sb. Meta.*, pp. 360.11–362.6 (viii.6); *Naj. Meta.*, pp. 596.7–599.12 (n.19); *Isb.*, pp. 182.15–183.11 (vii.18: *isbā‘a*); and *DN Meta.*, pp. 91.14–92.16 (*faṣl* 32). I have called this topos a ‘borrowing’; but al-Ghazālī rewrites it so that it is not a mere rephrasing of Ibn Sinā, but a structured revision. A comparison, for instance, of the description of the eclipse in the *Maqāṣid (DN)* with that in the *Dānisbnāmāb* itself, shows that al-Ghazālī knew examples elsewhere in Ibn Sinā, for instance in the *Shīfā*. What is original is al-Ghazālī’s use of another example, that of ‘Zayd’s arrival’, in a kalām context. See n. 43, above.

\(^{61}\) Interestingly, there is no textual link between the last clause here in the *Maqāṣid (DN)/Maḍ. Maj.* and the *Dānisbnāmāb* itself. Instead, the *Maqāṣid (DN)* text is directly connected with the *Shīfā*, thus helpfully providing the context for al-Ghazālī’s passage: ‘This statement [‘aqd] on your part would be true before that eclipse, during it, and after it’ *(wa-yakūnu ḏadbā l-‘aqdu minka šādiğan qabla ḏabālikat l-kusifī wa-ma‘ahu wa-ba‘dahu)*.
Nothing in this detailed example seems objectionable to al-Ghazālī, and this passage confirms his position as being that by one eternal and undivided knowledge, God somehow knows changing things. The omitted examples from the Maqāṣid, however, include statements that would distinguish Ibn Sinā from al-Ghazālī. The first variant of the example at Maqāṣid (DN) (T2, §2), which is a long passage, contains the idea he had dismissed in the Tabāfut, namely, the Aristotelian conception that the subject, object, and activity of knowing are identical.\(^{62}\)

For certain, he wanted to avoid the unwelcome conclusion in the Maqāṣid (DN) (T2, §2) that ‘this would entail change in His essence because of the differences of knowledge make to Him’. The second variant, at Maqāṣid (DN) (T2, §4), which was interposed between the variant example that is retained above (Maḏ. Maj., T3, §2 = Maqāṣid (DN), T2, §3) and another passage that comes from the Maqāṣid (Maḏ. Maj., T3, §3 = Maqāṣid (DN), T2, §5), also contains unwelcome assumptions that had been dismissed in the Tabāfut. First, the Maqāṣid (DN) (T2, §4) includes an unnecessary qualification to that one, eternal, undifferentiated knowledge: ‘there is no particular thing, even of “the weight of a speck of dust” which does not have a cause except that He will be aware of it in a universal way, involving no reference to time or duration.’ It is no surprise that al-Ghazālī did not want this passage to be included in the Major Maḏnūn, since it explicitly denies knowledge

\[(Sb. Meta., 361.15 (vii.6)).\]

In turn, through the Maqāṣid (Sb.) al-Ghazālī has helped us by revealing the meaning of Ibn Sinā’s uncertain word, ‘aqd (a tempting variant for it would otherwise have been ‘aqīd, as used by some scribes of the Sbīfa?), and has established Ibn Sinā’s original text as ‘This account and statement on your part would be true before the particular eclipse, during it, and after it’ (Maqāṣid (Sb.), fol. 190b, 6–7 (v.9)). This is one of the many instances where the Maqāṣid (Sb.) acts to make clear the obscure passages in the Sbīfa. It makes the case for characterizing (most of) this version of the Maqāṣid as, effectively, an annotation of the Sbīfa, much in the same way that the other version is an ‘annotation’ of the Dānisbnāmah.

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This clause in the Maqāṣid (DN)/Maḏ. Maj. appears related also to the use of ibāta, ‘to include’, in the Tabāfut: ‘this single permanent knowledge would suffice to include those three states’ (T5, above), and in the Iqtiṣād: ‘This, then, is how the eternal knowledge of God (the Most High), which necessarily includes temporal events, must be understood’ and ‘a single knowledge affords the inclusion of various different entities’ (T7, above).

\(^{62}\) This theory is described at Tabāfut, pp. 230.8–231.5 (mas’ala xiii) and dismissed at pp. 231.7–234.5.
of temporal events to God. Secondly, there is a reference in that passage to God’s knowledge of particulars as being through knowledge of their cause: ‘there is no particular thing, even of “the weight of a speck of dust” which does not have a cause except that He will be aware of it.’

This omission from the Maqāṣid (DN) (T2, §4) is, therefore, understandable. Not only did it deny temporal knowledge to God, but al-Ghazālī clearly did not want to limit God’s knowledge in accordance with the Avicennian conception that God’s knowledge of particulars is only through knowing their causes. That is what Ibn Sinā meant when he said God knows particulars, but only in a universal way. So even if, in the Major Maḏnūn (T3, §2), al-Ghazālī retains the formula that God ‘knows particulars in a universal way’ (read: immutable way), articulating it in this manner in order to uphold the principle of God’s immutability, he does not go further than that formulation — in which Ibn Sinā’s restriction has been omitted; and he certainly did not subscribe to the Avicennian view that God’s knowledge of particulars is only through knowledge of their causes.

So it appears that this detail became a doctrina non grata for al-Ghazālī because it denies God’s perfect knowledge and does so unnecessarily. This is a difficult tightrope to traverse, one that is stretched between upholding the principle of immutability as established from reason, at the one end, and at the other, preserving the truth of omniscience as demanded by Scripture; and this difficulty is reflected in the text of daʿwā 6 of the Major Maḏnūn. Although al-Ghazālī’s position on this question is simply put, that by an unchanging knowledge, God knows changing things — nevertheless the way he deals with the difficulties arising from this particular iʿtiqād suggests that for al-Ghazālī, at least in some of the questions he treats, neither religious dogma nor metaphysical investigation yields doctrines of a kind that reason can either prove or disprove with certainty. Those questions must be recognized as such, for reason alone would be unable to build a complete worldview and provide a satisfactory account for every mystery of the ‘unseen’, especially regarding the nature of God. One should certainly treat these sorts of theoretical difficulties that al-Ghazālī faced and examined in the Maḏnūn corpus as yielding valuable results, just as scholars appreciate what may be termed ‘negative research’. One’s lack of results should not at all suggest a lack of faith in the project. Instead, it means there are problems still to be resolved — and just that. A later scholar could pick up the threads and advance the research from where his predecessor stopped.

It should be clear by now that from all those omissions (from a single particle to a few large chunks of text) and those tiny changes there actually arises a significant doctrinal divergence between the two versions of daʿwā 6, and thus between Ibn Sinā and al-Ghazālī. This leads us to the final divergence between
the two texts, the addition of an entirely new sentence in the *Major Ma'ānūn*, a passage without a counterpart in the *Maqāsid (DN)*: 'The philosopher has failed to note something so subtle' (T3, §4). Interpolations of this sort are rare in the *Major Ma'ānūn*. Presumably, it means that al-Ghazâlî’s take on the problem is something so subtle to have been noticed by the *falāsīf*, and the reason why he made this interpolation might well be to signify to his readers that a fine but definite line has been drawn between himself and Ibn Sinâ on this controversial issue. (That ‘line’, of course, is represented by the editing carried out to separate the two texts.) Al-Ghazâlî knew that his readers might well have noticed that the central chapters of the *Major Ma'ānūn* — his Four *Ruknīs* — are based entirely on Ibn Sinâ’s *ilâhīyât* via his own *Maqāsid (DN)*. At the same time, his readers should know through al-Ghazâlî’s *Taḥâfût* that there are doctrinal problems with a number of the positions of this *faylasâf*, among which Ibn Sinâ’s stance on God’s knowledge of temporal events is one of the most important.

This case study has shown the close connection between the *Maqāsid (DN)* and the *Major Ma'ānūn*. Despite their close proximity, they are different works, with subtly distinct doctrines, either in substance or emphasis. These ameliorations reflect al-Ghazâlî’s commitment to basic Sunni doctrines as those formulated in his own *‘Aqīda*. The textual evidence from the two writings shows clearly that al-Ghazâlî made a conscious effort to separate them, even when the editing of the text for the *Major Ma’ānūn* was highly selective and done in relatively few places.

This study has shown, moreover, how al-Ghazâlî’s omissions and additions in the *Major Ma'ānūn* distinguish it from its source text. The omission of large chunks of the *Maqāsid (DN)* — for example, those interposing themselves between the surviving *Major Ma'ānūn* passages — gives us insight into how al-Ghazâlî cleverly adapted those heterodox materials in order to suit his own agenda. The resulting textual modifications of the *Maqāsid* do indeed change the conclusions that emerge in the *Ma'ānūn*. Even the least significant adjustments alter the propositions in the two da‘wâs. They are further examples of what al-Ghazâlî has done elsewhere, as in the *Ma'ārîj al-quds*, where texts of Ibn Sinâ were also involved. In an earlier study, I presented the *Ma'ārîj* as a case of al-Ghazâlî’s ‘appropriation’ from Avicenna.63 The received wisdom of falsafâ in that instance was the theory of the ‘three properties of prophethood’ in Ibn Sinâ’s *Abwâl al-nafs*. Even though the adoption by al-Ghazâlî of Ibn Sinâ’s three properties of prophethood was so close to its source that it could be mistaken for plagiarism, its careful adaptation

resulted in a considerably changed doctrine. As in the *Major Maṣḥūn*, so also in the *Maʿārij*, al-Ghazālī omitted objectionable details from Ibn Sīnā. A procedure almost identical to the making of that single, minuscule omission seen above in the *Major Maṣḥūn* occurs in the *Maʿārij*, where only a single word, *asbāb*, is edited out from the *Aẖwāl*: the ensuing doctrine of the *Maʿārij* ingeniously avoids another restriction of Ibn Sīnā, namely the limiting of miraculous events to natural causes.\(^{64}\) Likewise, it is the omission in the *Major Maṣḥūn* of just a single particle from the *Maqāṣid* (*DN*) which indicates a change in the intended concept of universality. Every divergence between the *Maʿārij* and the *Aẖwāl*, moreover, is found to have a relationship to the *Tabāʕūt*. Likewise, the *Major Maṣḥūn*, too, effects the intervention made by the *Tabāʕūt*. So it is useful to repeat here that al-Ghazālī ‘edited his source’s text whenever the *Tabāʕūt* criticizes an idea, while doing nothing when the *Tabāʕūt* is silent’.\(^{65}\) This is exactly what has been observed now in the case of the *Major Maṣḥūn* vis-à-vis the *Maqāṣid* (*DN*) (its source text) and the *Tabāʕūt*. Like the *Maʿārij*, the *Major Maṣḥūn* keeps the disagreements with the views expressed in its source to an irreducible minimum. This becomes clear only when al-Ghazālī’s text is compared with its source texts and one sees how much in his borrowing it still shares with them.

What is different with the *Major Maṣḥūn* is that the appropriation here does not involve Ibn Sīnā’s text directly. Instead, it is mediated by one of al-Ghazālī’s own texts — the *Maqāṣid* (*DN*) — which serves as the exemplar to be adapted. However, the editorial practice remains the same. The outcome of the careful editing can be described as one of subtle but crucial departures from Ibn Sīnā. To be sure, al-Ghazālī’s editing technique is clinical and systematic; and just as in the *Maʿārij*, so also in the *Major Maṣḥūn*, the adaptations are relatively minimal. He revises in such a way that a simple addition or omission of a large chunk or often a single line or even a word is just enough to make that change. This differs from the adaptations of falsafī materials that al-Ghazālī makes for his works for the general public, such as the *Iḥyā‘*. There, the process of adaptation is no longer a simple case of ‘appropriation’ from Ibn Sīnā but one also of ‘naturalization’ that results in a complete rewriting of the work in question, usually involving transformed terminology and original prose.

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\(^{65}\) Al-Aktī, ‘The Three Properties of Prophethood’, p. 203. Other examples relating to the three properties of prophethood include al-Ghazālī’s acceptance of the Fārābīan-Avicennian conception of symbolic revelation (but with the improvisation in the *Maʿārij* of a real existence for God’s eternal Word) and his embracing of Ibn Sīnā’s theories regarding *ḥadīs* in intellection.
It seems to me that there is a message behind this minimalist technique of editing. Why would al-Ghazālī distinguish those nearly identical texts through minuscule cuts and insertions instead of a complete facelift? Did he want to show how small the divergences really are between the acceptable and unacceptable doctrines? But would he not be worried that his readers might accuse him of merely plagiarizing Ibn Sinā? The signs are that this process is meant to show that there is a lot to be learned from Ibn Sinā despite all the pollution of his unacceptable doctrines. Al-Ghazālī’s editing has the aim of drawing attention of the Maḏnūn readers to the fact that a seemingly minor change can make all the difference between acceptable and unacceptable doctrine. I believe that he wishes to mark off precisely and accurately the falsaṭī theories that may be appropriated for a correct theology, and to do so while keeping the differences from his own views to an irreducible minimum.

As I mentioned at the beginning (p. 59), the minimal acts of editing are probably done because al-Ghazālī wants to make a simple point (but to make it in stark detail for his Maḏnūn readers who have access to the Maqāṣid text). It is in the Munqīdb where he calls attention to the fact that true and false opinions can be as close to each other, and there he uses the image of the counterfeit and genuine money.

(T10) Munqīdb, 116.2–7 (qawl IV, faṣl 2, qism 6, āfa 2)

The close proximity of the counterfeit to the genuine money [jayyīd] does not make the genuine a counterfeit, just as it does not make the counterfeit genuine. In the same way, therefore, the close proximity of what is right to what is wrong does not make the right wrong, just as it does not make the wrong right. This, then, is the extent of what we would like to mention about the problems [āfa] and dangers of falsaṭa.66

The close proximity of the Maqāṣid (DN) to the Major Maḏnūn (or of the Aḥwāl to the Maʿārif) serves to highlight that their difference is as that of counterfeit money to genuine. These two Maḏnūn manuals in fact become a testament to his statement in the Munqīdb of how similar the acceptable doctrines can appear to the unacceptable ones.

It now seems certain that the hypothesis advanced in my earlier study on the Maʿārif—that this work should belong to the Maḏnūn corpus, not least because

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of its proximity to the underlying falsafi texts — is confirmed. Moreover, direct borrowings from the falsafa tradition appear to be characteristic of the Maḏnūn manuals, for al-Ghazâlî is not worried about revealing his controversial sources in this restricted corpus, nor is he concerned about being seen to be citing, reading, and studying those ‘polluted’ texts. As I guessed, that the Maʿārif (and now, indeed, the Major Maḏnūn) is like al-Ghazâlî’s personal workbook, a philosophical manual to be used only by himself and his select students and colleagues — the expert theologians and the râsîkûn (on this, see T12, below). This corpus is where he is free to philosophize, so to speak, and where he engages with the falsifa candidly.

If the Maqâṣid works are his source books on falsafa, then the Maḏnūn corpus becomes his corrected blueprint of the materials he appropriated from that tradition. If the Maqâṣid project is the result of al-Ghazâlî’s careful study of Ibn Sinâ’s philosophical texts, the Maḏnûn project, on the other hand, is the outcome of his modifications of that original appropriation.

Al-Ghazâlî’s appropriation stage with respect to the ilâbiyyât involves no more than a minimal editing of the textual sources — this is confirmed by the Maqâṣid and Maḏnûn texts. However, coupled with this minimum intervention, the appropriation must also entail the purging of any unacceptable doctrines embedded in those suspect sources so as to make the appropriated text suit his own theological requirements. This part of the appropriation process is shown only in the Maḏnûn works and not in the Maqâṣid ones, and this is the only feature that differentiates the Maqâṣid from the Maḏnûn, as the study here bears out. The Major Maḏnûn itself turns out to be the closest of the Maḏnûn texts to the Maqâṣid ones — in terms of sheer word-by-word appropriation — while yet being distinct from Ibn Sinâ’s writings in certain fundamental and controversial positions. What we are left with is a new and different text from what was there in the exemplar, even though the two texts are almost identical and its previous incarnation remains easily recognizable in the new text. This case of appropriation in the Major Maḏnûn establishes a fundamental relationship between a Maḏnûn text, the Tabâfut, and an underlying theory of Ibn Sinâ in the body of a Maqâṣid text. It is in the texts of the Maḏnûn manuals that we are likely to find many of the direct borrowings from the falsifa, before they become naturalized in the rest of al-Ghazâlî’s writings.

All of this is a consequence of al-Ghazâlî’s high regard for that progressive ideal from the formative years of Islam, namely that one should boldly go for knowledge even unto the furthest corners of the world — as long as the enterprise serves the

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religious life. Once more, it is in the Munqīdb, a text that looks more and more like al-Ghazālī’s ‘Enigma machine’, that we find this ideal being cherished. Here he makes a public apologia for his use of philosophical ethics, the falāṣīfā’s akblāq tradition, in the final quarters of the Iḥyā’ devoted to the mublikāt (‘destructive’ or negative traits) and the munjiyyāt (‘constructive’ or positive traits). The importation of akblāq provides a backdrop for his discussions about moderating two excessive attitudes when approaching falsafā: a ‘rightwing’ position, that is reactionary and overdefensive; the other, over-liberally ‘leftwing’, that is lax and religiously naive.68 Those places of the Munqīdb that discuss the problems surrounding the falsafī tradition contain a great deal of invaluable information. They reveal al-Ghazālī’s true attitude towards the falāṣīfā.

The reactionary stance, according to him, is the worse. It rejects completely the works and teachings of the falāṣīfā, simply because of the stigma attached to them through their heretical doctrines.69 In answer to the allegations made against the materials used in the Iḥyā’, al-Ghazālī claims the moral high ground, by confronting the charge that adopting or sharing a position of the falāṣīfā (and still less, studying falsafī materials) means following them blindly or reaching wrong conclusions:

(T11) Munqīdb, 112.6–16 (qawwī, faṣl 2, qism 6, āfa 1)

A group of those whose minds are not competent in these sciences and who are not open-minded about the ultimate aims of these doctrines,70 has objected to some of the statements scattered [mabṭūba] in our writings on the mysteries of

68 Munqīdb, pp. 110–16 (qawwī, faṣl 2, qism 6, āfa 1–2).

69 Munqīdb, p. 110.8–12 (qawwī IV, faṣl 2, qism 6, āfa 1). This is a veiled reference to the twenty problematic doctrines of the falāṣīfā, mostly in the ilāhiyyāt, mentioned earlier (Munqīdb, p. 106.8–12 (qawwī IV, qism 4)); these controversies are, indeed, the subject of the Tabāṣīf.

70 Ar. aqṣā gbayāt al-madhābīb; R. J. McCarthy’s translation: ‘the ultimate aims of our teachings’ (in Freedom and Fulfilment (Boston, 1980), 69; hereafter Munqīdb (MO); W. M. Watt’s translation: ‘the fundamentals of the system’ (in The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī (Oxford, 1994), p. 41; hereafter Munqīdb (WT)). The views being objected to in the Iḥyā’ are ultimately falsafī ones. The use of aqṣā gbayāt al-madhābīb is comparable to a similar phrase, gbayāt kalāmībim, in the muqaddima of the Maqāṣīd (DN): ‘I intend only to make the aim of their arguments understandable’ (lā aqṣīdu illā taṣbīma gbayati kalāmībim) (Maqāṣīd (DN), p. 2.11–12 (intro.)). This is an instance of a textual correspondence between the Munqīdb and the muqaddima of the Maqāṣīd (DN). In my thesis I discuss a fundamental and direct textual connection between these two works, which lies in the proof of ḥikāya (reproduction).
the religious sciences. They claim that those statements are taken from ancient philosophers [awrā'il], even though some of them are the products of my own thought (while it is far from unlikely that they would happen to coincide with each other). Some of them can be found in books of religion; and in most cases, similar ideas can be found in Sufi writings.

On the other hand, let us assume that they are found only in their [i.e., the falāsifā] works. If those views are in themselves sound, substantiated by demonstrative proof [burbān], and do not contradict the Book and the Tradition, then why should they be shunned and rejected? Were we to open this door and go down the path of shunning every truth previously discovered by a flawed person then we would have to shun much of what is true.

71 Ar. asrār 'ulūm al-dīn; a reference to the books of the Ḥiyā' (and its associated works, such as the Kimiyā-yi sa'ādat and the Jawāhir). This is one of several occurrences of mabsūt that invokes the Ḥiyā'. In my thesis, the term mabsūt is analysed in detail. It is established as an integral part of al-Ghazālī’s ‘naturalization’ strategy, which involves the use of literary devices such as falāwī (allusion) in order to integrate the appropriated materials from the Madāni into the rest of his works.

72 Ar. anna ba‘dābā min muwalladātī l-ktāwātīra wa-lā yab‘udu an yaqqa‘a l-ḥāfīrī ʿalā l-ḥāfīrī. Literally: ‘some of them are among the products of thoughts of which it is not unlikely that a horse’s hoof may fall on the prints of another’s’.

73 Ar. kutub sbar‘yya; Munqīdā (MC), ‘scriptures’, p. 69; Munqīdā (WT), ‘revealed Scriptures’, p. 42. The sense is clearly to be understood as referring to any Islamic religious literature, including the Qur’ān and the hadith. The wider point of al-Ghazālī is that Muslim religious (and Sufi) writings have not necessarily been borrowed from an ancient, pre-Islamic tradition.

74 The context and language here (as well as previously in Munqīdā, p. 110.10) immediately invoke the controversy in the early Sunni community between Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and al-Ḥarīth al-Muhāsibī (d. 243/857) over the latter’s engagement with bad theology, which is referred to explicitly later on in the Munqīdā (pp. 118.15–119.5 (qawwāl v)) and in the Ḥiyā’ (i, 95.2–5 (kitāb n, faṣl 2, mas‘ala 1)). The same verbs are used when Ibn Ḥanbal’s reactions are portrayed by al-Ghazālī: n-k-r (IV) ‘to reject’ or ‘to criticize’; and b-j-r (I) ‘to shun’ or ‘to dissociate oneself from’. My thesis examines this controversy and ties it to al-Ghazālī’s possible motives for not circulating the Madāni corpus openly. Although al-Ghazālī took sides with al-Muhāsibī, he was also quick to show his sympathy for Ibn Ḥanbal’s objections and was well aware of the pitfalls of such a risky undertaking.

75 Wa-la-qad i‘taraḍa ʿalā ba‘di l-kalimātī l-matbūthata fi tašṣāfīnā fī asrārī ‘ulūmī l-dīnī tā’ifatun min alladībīna lam tastāḥliīm fī l-ʿulūmī sarā‘irubum wa-lam tanfatiḥ ilā aqṣā ghāyātī l-madbābī baṣā‘irubum wa-za‘amat anna tilka l-kalimātī min kalāmī l-aqrā‘īlī ma‘a anna ba‘dābā min muwalladātī l-kbawātirī wa-lā yab‘udu an yaqqa‘a l-ḥāfīrī ʿalā l-ḥāfīrī wa-ba‘dābā yūjada fī l-ktubī l-sbar‘īyya‘a wa-akhtabarabā mawjūdun ma‘nāhu fī kuṭubī l-ṣaffīyya‘a wa-ba‘dā annabā lam tūjad ilā fī kutubībīm fa-idbā kāna dbalika l-kalāmī ma‘qīlūn fī naṣībīmu ma‘yyadān bi-l-burbānī wa-lam yakun ʿalā
This is al-Ghazālī’s decisive argument against the reactionary position, and he uses as authority the precedent from ʿAlī (T1, above). It is another door that al-Ghazālī opens instead. Because it is only right that things should be judged by their own merits, it follows that the theoretical sciences of the *falāsīfa* — *ilābīyyāt* included — should be treated no differently from their practical sciences. There are no two ways about it. Whenever a view of the *falāsīfa* is found to be unacceptable, it will be criticized (hence the *Tabāfuṭ*); but whatever is found to be acceptable should be adopted (hence the *Maḏnūn*), even if weak minds might feel squeamish about drinking from the original ‘dirty’ cup (hence the *Maqāṣid*). Al-Ghazālī ascribes this aversion to an irrational fear, much as one might now loathe eating from a scrubbed and sterilized bedpan. The same analogy could be applied, he says, to one who has an aversion to using an antidote that comes from the snake itself (fearing that this, too, might be a venom) or to someone in the awkward position of receiving money from a known forger. Effectively, what al-Ghazālī is saying in the *Munqidh* is that knowledge taken from the falsafa tradition should not be judged bad simply because of its negative reputation and notorious errors. This parallels exactly his sentiments in the *Iḥyāʾ* (T1, above) when he warns his students not hastily to judge a science as bad, but to evaluate it first on its own merits.

Having opened that door, al-Ghazālī must now control the access to it. This he discusses in the guise of his warnings about falling into the other extreme: those who uncritically accept and make *taqlīd* of the *falāsīfa*’s teachings. If the above passage is an *apologia* for appropriating falsafa, here he goes on to address the responsibility of the appropriator, effectively an apology for the need to keep the *Maḏnūn* corpus restricted. The need for this restriction should be clear to us by now. If al-Ghazālī has already been witnessing complaints over his *Iḥyāʾ* because of the camouflaged appropriations there from the falsafa’s akhlāq tradition, then how would weak-minded people react to his explicit use of the *ilābīyyāt* and *De anima* — even in a version revised and corrected and certified by him? Here is the pertinent passage from the *Munqidh*:

*mukbâlafatī l-kitâbī wa-l-sunnati fa-li-ma yanbâgbî an yuhjara wa-yunkarâ*Sālibā and ʿAyyād: *yalūkal ţa-law fatahâna hâbdâ l-bâba wa-tâṭarrâqān îlâ an yuhjara kullu ḥaqqîn sabqîqa ilâybi khâṬirîn mubîtha la-lazimâna an nabhîra kathirân mina l-ḥaqqî.

76 *Munqidh*, pp. 113.6–114.7 (*qawel* 4, *fasl* 2, *qism* 6, *āfa* 1). Al-Ghazālī’s actual example is an ancient one: drinking from a glass cup previously used in bloodletting (*cupping*).

(T12) Munqidh, 114.18–115.3, 115.4–14 (qawl iv, faṣl 2, qism 6, ʿāfa 2)

Because of this problem, the reading of their works [i.e., those of the faḍlāsīfah] must be suppressed owing to the risk and danger in them. Just as someone who is not a good swimmer must be safeguarded from slippery shores, so must the public be safeguarded from reading those works [...]..

In the same way, the snake charmer must not handle the snake in front of his young child: since he knows that the latter will imitate him, thinking that he is like him. Instead, he must warn him about this by being cautious himself in front of him. Likewise, the ‘firmly grounded scholar’ [ʿālim rāsīkīb]87 must act in the same way.

Also, when the skilled snake charmer takes a snake, and distinguishes between the antidote and the venom, and extracts the antidote from it and neutralizes the venom, he must not then be stingy with the antidote towards those who need it. Or when the proficient banker [ṣarrāf nāqid baṣīr] puts his hands into the forger’s bag and takes out the pure gold from it and destroys the counterfeit and fake money,79 he must not be stingy with the certified and genuine money to those who need it. Likewise, the scholar [must act in the same way].80

Of course, the ‘skilled snake charmer’ and the ‘proficient banker’ here are talwīḥāt (allusions) to the expert theologian.81 And it is none other than al-Ghazālī himself who is that banker and that snake charmer. He is the one who has isolated the venom in the Tabāqāt, and he is the one who has succeeded in extracting the antidote in the Major Maḍīnūn, after the acceptable and unacceptable doctrines

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87 This Qurʾānic term (pl. rāsīkūn; see T14, below) is used by al-Ghazālī to refer to the expert theologians, who are the Maḍīnūn readers.

79 To put it in a modern context: the counterfeit expert checking out a briefcase of money belonging to a criminal syndicate known to be involved in counterfeiting monies.

had been left so close in the *Maqāṣid (DN)*, the snake of falsafā. He is the experienced diver in the *Jawābīr al-Qur‘ān*, who could swim and navigate the deep waters of falsafā.\(^{82}\)

In sum, there is an underlying relationship between three falsafī works of al-Ghazālī: the *Major Maḏnūn*, the *Tabāfut*, and the *Maqāṣid (DN)*; or indeed, al-Ghazālī’s version of the good, the bad, and the ugly of falsafā. This is what al-Ghazālī himself actually tells us in the passage of the *Tabāfut* below. The new perspective on the *Qawā‘īd al-‘aqā‘īd*, mentioned at the outset of this paper as a generic name for al-Ghazālī’s theological project that is concerned with the Four *Rūkns* (p. 54), not only establishes the Maḏnūn corpus among the works belonging to his theological project, but it also resolves a longstanding controversy over the identification of the *Qawā‘īd al-‘aqā‘īd* in the following famous passage.

\[(T13)\] *Tabāfut*, 77.10–78.7 (mas‘ala)

In this work we have been committed only to muddying their doctrine and throwing dust on the ways of their proofs so as to show their incoherence, and nor have we sought to defend a particular doctrine; in this [that we have written], therefore, we have not gone beyond the purpose of this work. Nor will we thoroughly examine the discussion about the proofs arguing for the origination of the world [ḥadath], since our intention [in mas‘ala] is to refute [ibṭāl] their claim to a knowledge of its eternity [ma‘rifat al-qidam]. As for affirming [itbah] the right doctrine, we will write a work regarding it after completing this one (if success comes, God willing!), and we shall name it, *Qawā‘īd al-‘aqā‘īd*. In it we will be concerned with building up [itbah], just as in this work we are concerned with tearing down [ḥadm]. Only God knows best!\(^{83}\)

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\(^{82}\) In the opening of the *Jawābīr*, al-Ghazālī described an expedition travelling to the sea to reach the islands where the jewels (a *talwil* that stands for the Four *Rūkns*) are mined or diving deep into the ocean to find them. He even taunts those who can only wander on the beaches — an allusion, no doubt, to the religious scholars relying solely on tayyīd and the *mutakallimūn* who are not yet Maḏnūn readers — and invites them to join him in his expedition (*Jawābīr*, p. 9.5–8 (qism 1, faṣl 1)).

This passage from the Tabāfut, coupled with the muqaddima and khātima of the two Maqāsid works, points to this tripartite arrangement. When read together, they suggest the existence of a positive, a neutral and a negative work presenting al-Ghazālī’s engagements with the falāṣīfa. The neutral work is primarily a summary of his favourite falsafī writer — that is to say, al-Ghazālī’s ḥikāya of Ibn Sinā in the Maqāsid texts. This is the ‘ugly’ aspect of falsafā, since it was left unaltered and contained both, the acceptable as well as the unacceptable doctrines. The negative work is the Tabāfut, which addresses the faults of the system presented in the Maqāsid works by, as he puts, demolishing (badm) and dismissing as false (ibṭāl) and feeble (ta’jīz) of certain falsafī doctrines. This is the ‘bad’ aspect of falsafā, since he is showing us its problematic doctrines. And the final work, which is of positive value to his theological project, is the ittbāt in burbānt terms (and not ittbāt in kalāmī or ‘Aqīda terms) of parts of the philosophical legacy deemed fit for appropriation in the Maḍḥīn manuals. This is the ‘good’ aspect of falsafā, since al-Ghazālī makes use of the sound or corrected falsafī teachings in the Four Rukns of the Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id. It confirms his own statements in the Tabāfut passage above, that the Qawā‘id will be about reassembling the falāṣīfa’s doctrines, just as the Tabāfut was about disassembling them.

To his great credit, Duncan Macdonald suggested long ago that one should try to understand the Maqāsid, the Tabāfut, and the Qawā‘id together. Subsequently, Gabriel Reynolds called the scheme of these three works, respectively, al-Ghazālī’s construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of falsafā. Yet scholars have long wondered about the identity of the Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id in the Tabāfut passage. Some have presumed this positive/ittbāt work to be the Iqtišād. To limit the

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84 This is another subtle distinction made in the Tabāfut that must not be forgotten. Al-Ghazālī’s ‘attacks’ against the falāṣīfa are not as ‘all out’ as one might think. There is a method to them. Among the arguments against the views of falsafā are ones which are outright refutations, called ibṭāl, as well as ones which he admits have not proved their case, called ta’jīz. Out of the twenty discussions, nine are definitely ibṭāl (mas’ālas 1, 11, 17, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27), six ta’jīz (IV, 6, 10, 16, 18, 19), and one tābīs (22) (on God as creator). Only four mas’ālas in the Tabāfut show discrepancies between their rubrics in the body of the text and in the table of contents given in the work. Mas’ālas 14 and 18 are termed either ibṭāl or ta’jīz; and mas’ālas 16 and 17, which are on God’s attributes and on causality, respectively, either have no designation or are called ibṭāl.


Qawā‘id to this kalam work, however, is a mistake. I have shown that the Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id could also be used as a generic title for al-Ghazālī’s theological project—a set of works that includes the Maḏnūn writings. Had previous scholars paid heed to one of al-Ghazālī’s favourite methods and unpacked the meaning behind the Qawā‘id and seen past its name, and thereby recognizing its generic nature, they would have solved this long-standing problem—something possible, even if difficult, without access to the Maḏnūn corpus. This new perspective on the Qawā‘id allows us to place the Maḏnūn corpus as the missing burbān link in al-Ghazālī’s theological enterprise. The Maḏnūn corpus is at the top of the Qawā‘id set, and at the very summit is the Major Maḏnūn. These new results, I hope, will resolve the original aporia stated by Reynolds: ‘In the Maqāṣid, al-Ghazālī builds up a philosophical system. In the Tabāfut, he tears this system apart. If that is the entirety of his project, then we are left with nothing but ruins.’

The falsafī ideas appropriated in the Maḏnūn corpus also find their way into the Iḥyā‘ī through the use of talwīḥ. These alien materials must have caused much offence, which eventually led to the short-lived campaign to burn the Iḥyā‘ī in the conservative lands of the Muslim West. Disregarding any political incorrectness that may have been its actual causa creandi, it is not unlikely that some of the alien materials may have been used as the legal pretext for the complaints about

87 This controversy is discussed in my thesis. In brief: since the Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id is the title of al-Ghazālī’s theological book in the Iḥyā‘ī, many have found it hard to believe the prima facie evidence, which indicates that al-Ghazālī was referring to the text of either the ‘Aqīda or the Risāla Qudsiyya; rightly so, since the level of discourse in the Iḥyā‘ī (even if this basic writing is taken to be a positive work of ittbāt, and not a neutral work like the Maqāṣid or a negative one like the Tabāfut) is certainly not on a par with the level of the Tabāfut, where the subject is falsafa. This has led a few scholars, such as Michael E. Marmura, to suggest that the Iqlīṣāḏ is the text being referred to: understandably so, since that was the ittbāt text with the most detail (owing to its engagement with kalam). They would have realized that the Maḏnūn texts, too, like the Iqlīṣāḏ, were concerned with the Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id. Even more attractive would be the greater seriousness of the Maḏnūn texts: they are the products of al-Ghazālī’s engagement with falsafa. I am not denying the possible link to the Iqlīṣāḏ: my point is simply that not only the Iqlīṣāḏ but all or any of al-Ghazālī’s texts that are structured around the Four Rūkns are what is intended by calling the Qawā‘id a work of ittbāt. The Iqlīṣāḏ, like the Iḥyā‘ī, will sound unconvincing if it is to represent the ittbāt process on its own. For al-Ghazālī himself not only limited the role of kalam to the defence of orthodox doctrines (which, indeed, is part of what is involved above in the Tabāfut) but was greatly unimpressed by its methodical inability to reach the level of burbān intended in treatments of the Four Rūkns.


of the *Ilıya*. After all, those naturalized Avicennian materials, whether from the *De anima* or the *ilahiyyat*, also attracted the attention of scholars like Ibn Rushd and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who could see through al-Ghazālī’s codes and *talwiḥāt.* Al-Ghazālī’s success on the ‘naturalization’ front is due in large measure to his didactic gift and presentational skills. He belongs to that rare breed of scholars who can communicate effectively such specialist knowledge in lay popular terms.

The arguments of these three works — the *Maṣūn*, the *Tabāḏut*, and the *Maqāṣid* — are mainly presented at the highest scholarly level, that of *burbān*, a style of exposition which is itself a result of al-Ghazālī’s engagements with the *falsafā*. For al-Ghazālī, *burbān* — but not kalam — is what he considered to be scientific knowledge, the ‘gold standard’ in the art of reasoning — a judgement expounded in his *Miʿyar al-ʾilm*. This standard is higher than what was offered in the tradition from which he emerged and the traditional proofs which he rehearses (or should we say ‘preserves’) in the *Iṭiṣād*. He thus intended the *Major Maṣūn* to be at the cutting edge, the utmost limit of rational or scientific knowledge about (the ultimately unknowable) God, the ‘unseen’, and the other arcane questions posed by religious dogma.

Al-Ghazālī made the art of *burbān* acceptable in the *Weltanschauung* of Islam’s religious scholars. In time, that allowed Aristotelianizing theologians to emerge in the traditional Muslim Asharite school, men such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209–10) — a *doctor subtilis* in his own right. Indeed, al-Ghazālī was the first among this new breed of scholastic theologians: a committed rationalist of the Aristotelian sort, yet equally a spokesperson for the Sunni, orthodox tradition (and also, of course, a strong advocate of Sufism). However, the earlier disputes between Arabic grammar and Greek logic — best exemplified in the famous debate between Abū Saʿīd al-Sirāfī (d. 368/979) and Abū Bishr Mattā (d. 328/940) over the legitimacy of Aristotelian logic — still loomed large in the memories of many in the community of religious scholarship to which al-Ghazālī belonged. Yet al-Ghazālī did what the eminent grammarian Ibn al-Sarrāj (d. 316/929) was unable to do, which was, in effect, to resolve the quarrels between those two sides and, indeed, marry them off.91 If introducing Greek logic into the religious curriculum,

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90 For a sampling of Ibn Taymiyya’s statements, see al-Akītī, ‘The Three Properties of Prophethood’, p. 208 n. 52 and p. 210 n. 58; and for Ibn Rushd, see n. 92, below.

91 Exhibiting an interest in logic — as Ibn al-Sarrāj had done — was generally regarded as disgraceful by the religious community at the time; and the grammatical community were precisely the religious scholars who were the jurists and the *mutakallimān*. For an informative discussion on the context of this controversy and on Ibn al-Sarrāj’s early attempts ‘to marry Arab grammar to Greek logic’, see Zimmermann, *Al-Farabi’s Commentary*, pp. cxviii–cxxxix.
something al-Ghazālī managed to do openly, was not controversial enough, the introduction of the Metaphysics and De anima would have been regarded as unacceptable. It is no wonder that al-Ghazālī could only bring in the theoretical sciences of falsaṣa through the back door. His strategy seems to have paid off, however. This opening of the floodgates (as Ibn Rushd hyperbolically expressed it) somehow allowed religious scholars to teach what amounted to falsaṣa, in the name of teaching logic and ḥikma (ontology, cosmology, and psychology) in the madrasa community. Al-Ghazālī’s openness to falsaṣa even attracted a following, initially in the Eastern Islamic lands but later in the conservative Islamic West as well.

This may sound surprising to those familiar with the view that al-Ghazālī was an out-and-out opponent of falsaṣa. In fact, having ‘disassembled’ falsaṣa — as the Tabāṣfut indicates (T13, above) — he ‘reassembled’ the fragments into another version of it. As the Munqidh shows clearly enough, he was not against philosophy per se, but was opposed to those doctrines of the falsāṣa that contradicted basic Muslim beliefs. A re-examination of simplistic images of al-Ghazālī and a careful re-reading of his established writings, in particular the Iḥyā’, is enough to lead the present-day reader to the same conclusion as was drawn by medieval scholars — friends and foes alike, men such as Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185–86), Ibn Rushd and Ibn Taymiyya. The contents of the Maḏniṯ corpus, as this study has

Indeed, Zimmermann best sums up the mood of the al-Sirāfi-Mattā debate: ‘The debate is represented as a confrontation, not only between Arab and non-Arab, Muslim and Christian, Islamic learning and foreign learning, but also between eloquence and inarticulacy, brilliance and dullness, virtue and vice’ (p. cxiii). There is textual evidence that al-Sirāfi’s debate with Mattā was at the back of al-Ghazālī’s mind when he wrote his Maqāṣid (DN). This is treated in my thesis.

92 Ibn Rushd says, ‘Then came Abū Ḥāmid [al-Ghazālī], who flooded the valley by bursting the dam; that is to say, he made known all of philosophy and the ideas of the philosophers to the general public, according to what he was able to understand’ (thumma jā’u Abū Ḥāmidin fa-ṭamma l-wādiya ‘alā l-qariyyī [Ḥanafī and al-Jābīrī: al-qurā] wa-dhālika annabu sarraḥa bi-l-ḥikmat kullibā lil-jumbūri wa-bi-ārā’ī l-ḥukmā’ī ‘alā mā adābū ilayhi fubmubū): Al-Kashf ‘an manābiṣj al-adilla, ed. by M. ‘A. al-Jābīrī [and M. Ḥanafī] (Beirut, 1998), p. 150.19–22 (fays. iv). The correct word is al-qariyyi, which means ‘waterway’, ‘channel’ or ‘dam’; it replaces al-qurā, which was read by Ḥanafī, under the supervision of al-Jābīrī; the unemended reading would have meant, ‘flooded the valley overlooking the villages’. Ibn Rushd is likely to be thinking of the Arabic proverb, jarā l-wādī fa-ṭamma ‘alā l-qariyyī (the valley surged, and the waterway burst). In either case, the meaning is clear: the floodgates have been opened. Al-Ghazālī cracked open a hole in the valley’s dam, so that all the people were swept away by knowledge of falsaṣa, and this was irreversible.
shown, are the authentic basis for some of the ideas expressed by al-Ghazâlî in his public writings.

Just as the antidote is for the person bitten by a deadly snake, and the money of the forger is for a person who turns to him in desperation (cases where one is considered in fiqâh to be in a state of ḍarūra (having no choice)), so too the Maḏnîn writings are meant for one who is in need of them — not just for anyone. This is where considering the ‘ultimate aims’ of the falâsifa’s enterprise becomes relevant, as al-Ghazâlî says in the Munqîdh (T11, above). The aims of Ibn Sînâ’s ilâbiyyât certainly overlap with those of al-Ghazâlî’s Four Rukns, and where burbân can express and substantiate the orthodox i’tiqâd, why should it be shunned? Thus the Major Maḏnîn and the other Maḏnîn manuals as well as the supplementary texts associated with this component of the Maḏnîn corpus represent al-Ghazâlî’s hair splitting investigations about the Four Rukns. Indeed, one cannot help wondering whether he had this fact in mind when simplifying matters for the public in the Iḥyâ\(^{\text{3}}\).

**(T14)** Iḥyâ’, 1, 39.18–23 (*kitâb*, 1, *bâb* 3, *bayân* 3)

The praiseworthy division [of knowledge] devoted to the ultimate aims of enquiry is knowledge about God (the most High!) and His attributes, His actions and His laws with respect to His creation,\(^{\text{93}}\) and His wisdom in making the next world consequent upon this world.

This is knowledge sought for its own sake, and for the sake of reaching happiness of the next world. Exerting one’s ability, even with the utmost effort, will fail to reach the level of what is required. For it is like a sea the depth of which cannot be fathomed. The floaters [ḥa‘imânî] can only float around its shores and its frontiers to the extent He makes easy for them. Only prophets, saints, and ‘expert scholars’ [râsîkbân fi l-‘ilmî]\(^{\text{94}}\) can penetrate its frontiers — according to their different levels, depending on their different abilities and the variation in the decree of God (the Most High!) concerning them. This is the hidden knowledge which must not be written down in books.\(^{\text{95}}\)

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\(^{\text{93}}\) Ar. *sunnatibi fi khalqibi*: an approximate equivalent of saying, ‘the laws of nature’ (and not God’s laws, meaning religious laws). The phrase may also be translated as ‘His laws with respect to His creating [of this world]’.

\(^{\text{94}}\) *Q. Āl ʿImrân*, 3, 7, or *al-Nisâ*, 4, 162. The term *râsîkbân* alludes to the expert theologians, who are Maḏnîn readers.

\(^{\text{95}}\) Wa-amma l-qismu l-maḥmûdu ilâ aqṣâ ghâyâti l-istiqâ‘i fa-buwa l-‘ilmu bi-l-lâbi ta’alâ wa-bi-siṭâṭibi wa-af‘âlibi wa-suṣnati bi fi khalqibi wa-ḥikmatibi fi tarîhibi l-akbiṟîti
This study shows how the ‘good’ falsafa used by al-Ghazālī in the Major Maḏnūn excludes the ‘bad’ falsafa he exposed in the Taḥāfut and departs from the ‘ugly’ falsafa he presented in the Maqāṣid (DN), the mother text of the Major Maḏnūn. Given what we know about the success that the Maqāṣid (DN) enjoyed as a training manual for ilābiyyāt in the Latin West, something owed entirely to al-Ghazālī’s analytical and presentational gifts, it is tempting to speculate about the less illustrious career of the Major Maḏnūn. Might its history have been different had al-Ghazālī’s circumstances allowed him to publish it openly? The Major Maḏnūn had the potential to become a popular textbook in the philosophical training of Muslim scholastics, just as its mother work, the Maqāṣid (DN), was to become in the West. The signs are there. Despite the low profile of the Major Maḏnūn, the cat of Ibn Sinā’s ilābiyyāt had certainly been let out of the falsāfiṭā’s bag by al-Ghazālī. Within a century, a number of eminent scholars, the rāsikbūn, took up the Avicennian legacy.66 The Eastern Islamic world saw the emergence of a completely new kind of religious scholar: the madrasa-trained, orthodox Sunni who was an Ashʿarī theologian as well as a Shāfiʿī jurist. These scholars included Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631/1234) and ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḥḍādī (d. 629/1231–32) — all of whom were well versed in the ilābiyyāt and in the rest of the theological sciences of the medieval tradition of falsafa, including ontology, cosmology, and psychology. Unlike their founding father, who could only phi-


66 One surviving piece of evidence is the Maragha codex, a teaching collection of philosophical texts beginning with the Major Maḏnūn (see my thesis for the codicological data). This tells us that the Major Maḏnūn had become part of a philosophical syllabus in the East around 597/1201. The Maragha codex belonged to a scholar who studied at the Mujāhidiyya College in Maragha, the city in which Majd al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Jīlī (fl. sixth/seventh century) taught at least two famous philosophers and theologians (both of them, interestingly, Shāfiʿīs): Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and the Ishrāqī thinker, Abū l-Futūḥ al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) (Y. al-Ḥamawi, Muʿjam al-udābāʾ, ed. by I. ‘Abbās, 7 vols (Beirut, 1993), vi., 2807.1–2 (no. 1223); Yaqūt al-Ḥamawi (d. 626/1229) even says that the two were good friends), and Pourjavady suggested that this college may have been where al-Jīlī taught (Cod. Maragba, p. iv). Another possible user of the Major Maḏnūn is al-Shahrastānī (see n. 16, above).
losophize behind closed doors to a restricted audience, they were able to publish their *ilabiyyat* and *falsafa* works in the full light of day.⁹⁷

The Madnūn corpus deals with the seemingly contradictory questions posed by Muslim Scripture and how they can be answered with scientific and rational explanations. For al-Ghazālī, the discussions found in the corpus represent the limits of the theoretical enterprise. Yet when rational enquiry reaches an impasse, he is unsure how to proceed. Perhaps the matter is ultimately insoluble (and faith is needed). Perhaps the truth is accessible only to the prophets and saints; but then again, the problem might be solved down the line by a later scholar, one of the rāsīkhūn. Al-Ghazālī wisely leaves all three options open. The dependence on God is there in the end: all true knowledge, indeed whatever is, comes from Him, and all knowledge leads to Him. This suprarational spirit of al-Ghazālī is typified throughout the works of the Madnūn corpus. It is an admirable and innovative spirit of rational enquiry, where blind faith in God is challenged, yet not trivialized; one which confidently advocates that there is no serious bifurcation between religion and science, but rather a real complementarity between them. All of this is best expressed by the words of Adelard of Bath (d. c. 1160), the famous English Christian scientist, who was a devotee of the *Arabum studia* and studied directly

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⁹⁷ Their *ilabiyyat* texts include the multivolume *al-Maṭālīb al-ʿalīya* of Fakhr al-Dīn (edited for the first time by Aḥmad Ḥījāzī al-Saqqā in 1987) and *al-Nūr al-bābirof* al-ʿĀmidī (a facsimile of the only known nearly complete MS of it — four out of five volumes from the Ismaʿil Saib collection in Ankara — was produced by Fuat Sezgin in 2001). Among al-Baghdādī’s numerous writings in the falsafa tradition, one deserving special notice here is his encyclopedic work on logic, physics, and metaphysics, *al-īmāt* al-kabīr, which, according to Ibn Abī Usaybi’a (d. 668/1270), appears in ten volumes (*‘Uyun al-anbā fi ṭabaqāt al-ḥubbā*, ed. by A. Müller, 2 vols (Königsberg, 1884), ii, 213.12–13 (hereafter ʾṬabaqāt (IAU)); cf. al-ʾHamawi, *Muʿjam*, iv, 1573.1 (no. 677); H. Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, ed. by Ş. Yaltkaya and R. Bilge, 6 vols (Istanbul, 1941–55), i, 571. Ḥājī Khalīfa (d. 1067/1657) listed the work, but no MS has been found so far). The two metaphysicists, al-Baghdādī and al-ʿĀmidī, both studied in Baghdad under the Shāfiʿī jurist and Ashʿarī theologian, Ibn Faḍlān (d. 595/1199), who was famous for his expert knowledge of the two ʿuṣūl — of theology and of law. It is probably Ibn Faḍlān who taught them al-Ghazālī’s theological and legal works. It is interesting to note in relation to what we now know of al-Ghazālī’s use of Ibn Sinā’s writings, that al-Baghdādī described in his autobiography how he was motivated to read Ibn Sinā only after devoting himself to the works of al-Ghazālī, among which he lists the *Maqāsid*, the *Mṭʿyār*, the Mizān and the *Mḥakk* (*Ṭabaqāt* (IAU), ii, 204.4–5). It does appear from all this that there was a thriving Baghdad school of Ghazālī-influenced religious scholars at the time, men who were dedicated to transmitting the theoretical sciences. That is evidently also the case in another school, in Maragha, from which Fakhr al-Dīn emerged (see n. 96 above).
under Muslim and Jewish scholars. He learned from them to lead by reason as far as it could carry him:

I will detract nothing from God [...] but very carefully listen to human knowledge as far as its limits; only where this utterly breaks down, should a thing be referred to God.\(^{98}\)

**Appendix: Table of Contents of the ‘Major Maḍnūn’**

**Khuṭba**

**Muqaddima**

**Rukn 1:** Knowing God’s essence and His ‘properties’.\(^{99}\)

- **amr 1:** He could not be an accident.\(^{100}\)
- **amr 2:** He could not be a body.\(^{101}\)
- **amr 3:** A necessary being could not be like a [Platonic or Aristotelian] form.\(^{102}\)
- **amr 4:** His existence will not be anything other than His quiddity.\(^{103}\)
- **amr 5:** He could not depend upon something else, in a way that something else depends upon Him — in the sense that each could be caused by the other.\(^{104}\)
- **amr 6:** He could not depend upon something else, in a way that something else depends upon Him — not in the sense of causation [as in the proposition above], but rather of a relationship such as that between brothers.\(^{105}\)

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\(^{98}\) Adelard of Bath, *Quaestiones naturales*, ed. and trans. by C. Burnett and others (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 96–98 (iv): ‘Deo non detraho [...] Que quantum scientia humana procedit audienda est; in quo vero universaliter deficit, ad Deum res referenda est’ (I am not slighting God’s role. One should attend to this distinction, as far as human knowledge can go; but in the case where human knowledge completely fails, the matter should be referred to God); Burnett’s translation.

\(^{99}\) الركن الأول في معرفة ذات الله ووازمه

\(^{100}\) الأول أنه لا يكون عراضاً

\(^{101}\) الثاني أنه لا يكون جسمًا

\(^{102}\) الثالث أن واجب الوجود لا يكون مثل الصورة

\(^{103}\) الرابع أنه لا يكون وجوهه غير ماهيته

\(^{104}\) الخامس أنه لا يتعلق بغيره على وجه يتعلق ذلك الغير به على معني أن كل واحد منهم علة للأخر

\(^{105}\) السادس أنه لا يتعلق بغيره على وجه يتعلق ذلك الغير به لا معني العليه لكن على سبيل التضافة كما بين الأخوين
amr 7: It is inconceivable that two things — each of them — can exist necessarily.  

amr 8: He could not have any attribute additional to [His] essence.

amr 9: It is impossible for a necessary being to change.

amr 10: Nothing will issue from a necessary being directly except a single thing.

amr 11: A necessary being cannot be said to have an ‘accident’, as has been explained earlier, so too it cannot be said to have a ‘substance’.

amr 12: Whatever does not necessarily exist must proceed from a necessary being according to [a hierarchical] order.

Rukn II: On the attributes of the First Being.

da’wā 1: God (the Most High!) is living.
nda’wā 2: His knowledge of His self is not additional to His essence.
nda’wā 3: The First Being knows all of the genera and species of existents, for nothing escapes His knowledge.
nda’wā 4: This, too, does not entail any multiplicity in His knowledge or His essence.
nda’wā 5: Just as God (the Most High!) knows the genera and species, He foreknows [all] future contingencies, however unknowable they may be to us.

السابع أنه لا يجوز أن يكون شيئان كل واحد منهما واجب الوجود
الثامن أنه لا يجوز أن تكون له صفقة زائدة على الذات
التاسع أن واجب الوجود يستلزم أن يتغير
العاشر أن واجب الوجود لا يصدر منه إلا شيء واحد

the Scholastics doctrine of creation ex uno.

الحادي عشرة أن واجب الوجود كما لا يقال له عرض كما سبق فلا يقال له جوهر
الثاني عشر أن كل ما سوى واجب الوجود ينبغي أن يكون صادرا عن واجب الوجود على الترتيب
المركن الثاني في صفات الأول
أما الدعوى فاولها أن الله تعالى حق
الدعووى الثانية أن علمه بيئته ليس زائدا على ذاته
الدعووى الثالثة أن الأول عاليم بسائر أنواع الوجودات وأجناسها فلا يعترف عن علمه شيء
الدعووى الرابعة أن هذا أيضا لا يؤدي إلى كثر في علمه وفي ذاته
الدعووى الخامسة هو أن الله تعالى كما يعلم الأجناس والأنواع فيعلم السمكات الحادة وإن كنا لا نعلمها
da‘wā 6: The First Being (the Most Glorious!) knows particulars as well as universals, but knows particulars in a universal way, attributable to Him eternally, a parte ante and a parte post, and immutably. 118

da‘wā 7: The First Being wills, in the sense of exercising will and providence, without that being additional to His essence. 119

da‘wā 8: He is all-powerful. 120

da‘wā 9: The First Being is all-wise. 121

da‘wā 10: He is all-good. 122

da‘wā 11: The First Being rejoices in His Self. 123

Kbātima

Rukn iii: On the actions [of God]. 124

Muqaddama

rukun 1: On what shows [the nature of] the bodies of the lower world. 125

da‘wā 1: The first consequence of composition is straight motion. 126

da‘wā 2: It follows that a body is [partly] defined by having a position [jiba]. 127

da‘wā 3: These compounds move naturally only in a straight line. 128

da‘wā 4: The motion — I mean, of those compounds — is on account of its having come-to-be. 129

rukun 2 of the theory of [God’s] actions: On the celestial bodies. 130

الدعوى السابعة هو أن الأول سببه يعلم الجزئيات والكليات لكن يعلم الجزئيات بنوع كلي يكون منصفا به أزلا وأبدا ولا بغير

الدعوى السابعة أن الأول مريد وله إرادة وعناية وإن ذلك لا يزيد على ذاته 119

الدعوى الثامنة كونه قادر 120

الدعوى التاسعة أن الأول حكيم 121

الدعوى العاشرة أنه جواز 122

الدعوى الحادية عشر أن الأول مبتغى بذاته 123

الركن الثالث في الأفعال

الركن الأول وهو القول فيما يدلى على الأجسام السفلية 124

الدعوى الأولى فاللزم الأول من التركيب الحركة المستقيمة 125

الدعوى الثانية من الأول أن الجسم المحدد للجهاز

الدعوى الثالثة أن هذه المركبات لا تتحرك بالطبع إلا حركة مستقيمة 126

الدعوى الرابعة أن الحركة من حيث حدودها أعني حركة هذه المركبات 127

الركن الثاني من الأفعال القول في الأجسام السماوية 130
da‘wā 1: They move by will.\textsuperscript{131}

da‘wā 2: It is inconceivable for the celestial mover to be a thing of pure intellect that is not receptive to change, just as it is inconceivable for it to be [determined] purely [by its] nature.\textsuperscript{132}

da‘wā 3: They do not move out of concern for the lower world.\textsuperscript{133}

rūkn 3 of the theory of [God’s] actions: On the proof of separate intellects.\textsuperscript{134}

da‘wā 1: Motion shows the existence of a noble substance which is immutable and immaterial, and not impressionable into a body.\textsuperscript{135}

da‘wā 2: Observation has shown the multiplicity of the heavens.\textsuperscript{136}

da‘wā 3: It is inconceivable that celestial bodies are causal to one another.\textsuperscript{137}

da‘wā 4: The separate intellects must be many.\textsuperscript{138}

Rūkn iv: Knowing the soul, namely, knowledge of the [soul’s] return.\textsuperscript{139}

gawwāl [1]: On the human soul.\textsuperscript{140}

gawwāl [2]: On what emanates onto souls from the Active Intellect.\textsuperscript{141}

amr 1: The argument from soul for [the existence of] the Active Intellect.\textsuperscript{142}

amr 2: How its effects arise in [the soul].\textsuperscript{143}

amr 3: Happiness.\textsuperscript{144}

amr 4: Misery.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{131} الدعوى الأولى أنها متحركة بالإرادة

\textsuperscript{132} الدعوى الثانية أنه لا يجوز أن يكون محرك السماء شيئاً عظياً محضاً لا يقبل التغيير كما لم يجز أن يكون طبعا محضاً

\textsuperscript{133} الدعوى الثالثة أنها ليست متحركة اهتماماً بالعالم السفلي

\textsuperscript{134} الركن الثالث من الأفعال وهو القول في إثبات العقول المجازدة

\textsuperscript{135} الدعوى الأولى وهي أن الحركة تدل على إثبات جوهري شريف غير متغير ليس بجسم ولا منطيع فيه

\textsuperscript{136} الدعوى الثانية أن السماء قد دلت المشاهدة على كثرة

\textsuperscript{137} الدعوى الثالثة أن هذه الأجسام السماسية لا يجوز أن يكون بعضها علة للبعض

\textsuperscript{138} الدعوى الرابعة أن العقول المجازدة ينبغي أن تكون كثيرة

\textsuperscript{139} الركن الرابع في معرفة النفس وهي علم المقدم

\textsuperscript{140} القول في النفس الإنساني

\textsuperscript{141} القول فيما يفيض على النفس من العقل الفعال

\textsuperscript{142} الأول دلالة النفس على العقل الفعال

\textsuperscript{143} الثاني كيفية حصوله فيه

\textsuperscript{144} الثالث المعادة

\textsuperscript{145} الرابع الشقاقة
amr 5: The cause of visionary dreams.\textsuperscript{146}

amr 6: Confused dreams.\textsuperscript{147}

amr 7: The cause of knowing ‘the unseen’ when awake.\textsuperscript{148}

amr 8: What causes a human being to have vision in his waking state of
ingines [of things] that have no existence.\textsuperscript{149}

amr 9: The principles of prophetic miracles and other miraculous per-
formances.\textsuperscript{150}

amr 10: On the proof for [the existence of] the Prophet (may God’s bless-
ings and peace be upon him!).\textsuperscript{151}

\textit{Kbātimā}
IBN AL-‘ARABI’S ATTITUDE TOWARD AL-GHAZALI

Binyamin Abrahamov

In his pioneering modern work on Ibn al-‘Arabi, A. E. Affifi makes the following important remark concerning the sources of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s thought:

It is practically impossible to say that any particular philosophy or mysticism is the source of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s whole system. Ibn al-‘Arabi had a foot in every camp, so to speak, and derived his material from every conceivable source. His system is eclectic in the highest degree, but we can easily find the germs from which many parts of this system seem to have developed, in the writings of older philosophers, Sufis, and scholastic theologians. He borrowed ideas from Islamic as well as non-Islamic sources, orthodox as well as heterodox.¹

In his writings, mainly in the al-Futūḥat al-makkiyya (The Meccan Revelations or Illuminations), Ibn al-‘Arabi refers to Sufis, in particular, the major thinkers al-Junayd, al-Muhāsibī, Abū Yazīd al-Bīštāmī, Sahh al-Tustarī, al-Ḥallāj, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī and al-Ghazālī. He also mentions by name Andalusian Sufis like his master Abū al-‘Abbās al-‘Uraybī, Ibn al-‘Arif al-Ṣanhājī and Abū Madyān (d. 594/1197), whom he considers his Shaykh.²

To the best of my knowledge no one has thoroughly researched Ibn al-‘Arabi’s attitude toward al-Ghazālī, although scholars comment on the former’s connections with the latter. For example, in the introduction to his translation of Fuṣūṣ al-bikam (The Bezels of Wisdom), R. W. J. Austin points out that Ibn al-‘Arabi ‘combines the scholastic expertise of Ghazālī with the poetic imagery of Ibn

¹ A. E. Affifi, The Mystical Philosophy of Muhhyid Din-Ibnul ‘Arabi (Cambridge, 1939), pp. 174, 184. All translations are mine unless noted otherwise.

al-Fārīḍ', thus implying that Ibn al-ʿArabī regards al-Ghazālī as a theologian. However, William C. Chittick says that as a rule Ibn al-ʿArabī praises al-Ghazālī as ‘one of our colleagues’, thus including him among the most exceptional Sufis who are the people of realities and verification (tahqīq). Notwithstanding, Ibn al-ʿArabī criticizes al-Ghazālī for dealing with theological and philosophical questions. In Gerald Elmore’s view, ‘the work of al-Ghazālī had a more determinate effect on the formation of the Shaykh al-Akbar’s education than that of any other single author. Ibn al-ʿArabī’s attitude toward the great Muḥyī l-Dīn of the fifth/eleventh century was […] one of respectful and resolute emulation.’ I think that Elmore is right in his estimation of al-Ghazālī’s role in the formation of Ibn al-ʿArabī’s thought.

In the following study I wish to examine Ibn al-ʿArabī’s attitude toward al-Ghazālī. The word attitude was chosen in order to convey the following meanings: Ibn al-ʿArabī’s mentioning of al-Ghazālī whether in a positive or negative manner, his being influenced by al-Ghazālī and his polemic with the latter. We shall follow this order mainly through the examination of Ibn al-ʿArabī’s Futūḥāt al-makkiyya and al-Ghazālī’s Iḥyāʿ ‘ulūm al-dīn. It seems to me that Ibn al-ʿArabī’s thought will undoubtedly be better understood in the light of his great predecessor’s ideas.

First it should be noted that Ibn al-ʿArabī’s companions studied al-Ghazālī’s greatest work, Iḥyāʿ ‘ulūm al-dīn. Ibn al-ʿArabī himself tells us that a pious person named Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Ṣūdāfī al-Tilimsānī used to read before him and his companions the Iḥyāʿ. Apart from mentioning the Iḥyāʿ, Ibn al-ʿArabī refers twice to al-Ghazālī’s Kitāb al-maḏnūn bibi ʿalā ghayr abli bi ʿ (The Book That Should Be

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4 Ibn al-ʿArabī distinguishes between worshipers (ʿubbād), ascetics (zubbād), and common Sufis (muṭlaq al-ṣīḥāya) on the one hand and the people of the heart (aṣḥāb al-qulūb), of contemplation or witnessing (musbābada) and of revelation or unveiling (muqāṣabafa) on the other; the latter are the people of realities and verifications. Al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya, ed. by Ahmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1999) (henceforth Futūḥāt), the end of chap. 47, pt 1, p. 395, the beginning of chap. 309, pt v, pp. 50–51. Chittick, SPK, p. 392 n. 34.
5 Chittick, SPK, pp. 235, 392 n. 34, 405 n. 1. I shall refer later to page 235 and what follows.
7 See Elmore, ‘Ibn al-ʿArabī’s “Cinquain”,’ p. 64 n. 3.

Considering the great length of the al-Futûhât al-makbûtîyya, Ibn al-‘Arabi refers to very few books other than his own, thus making mention of al-Ghazâlî’s works very significant. In spite of the importance Ibn al-‘Arabi ascribes to al-Ghazâlî, we shall see several points of disagreement.

But to begin our survey, Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Futûhât acknowledges al-Ghazâlî in a positive light as a scholar who adheres to the sound position, that is, Ibn al-‘Arabi’s. Ibn al-‘Arabi points out that unveiling (mukâshaba) is connected with meanings, while witnessing (musbâbada) relates to the essences. This is a view shared by many people of God (abl allâb) among whom al-Ghazâlî is reckoned.

At other times al-Ghazâlî is mentioned without evaluation, neither positive nor negative. Such is the case when al-Ghazâlî interprets the letter b in Allâb to mean God’s essence. Likewise, Ibn al-‘Arabi reports without comment al-Ghazâlî’s statement that God’s most exalted name is buwa (He), along with other views, such as those giving priority to anta (you). Ibn al-‘Arabi praises early mutakallîmûn, such as al-Ash’arî, al-Juwainî and al-Ghazâlî, for their proof of God’s unity through dalîl al-tamânu’ (the proof from hypothetical mutual prevention), while at the

10 Futûhât, chap. 374, pt vi, p. 248; chap. 473, pt vii, p. 156. There are two books entitled al-Ma’dûnîn, one of which is called al-Ma’dûnîn al-kabîr and the other al-Ma’dûnîn al-sâqîbîr. Both treatises are suspected of being spurious; see M. Bouyges, Essai de chronologie des œuvres de al-Ghazâlî, ed. by M. Allard (Beirut, 1959), pp. 51–53, H. L. Yafeh, Studies in al-Ghazâlî (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 251–57, 280, and the study M. Afifi al-Akiti in the present volume. However, what is important for our discussion is the fact that Ibn al-‘Arabi considers al-Ma’dûnîn al-Ghazâlî’s.

11 Futûhât, chap. 73, pt iii, p. 7.

12 Futûhât, chap. 68, pt i, p. 504.

13 For both terms see Chittick, SPK, pp. 224–26.

14 This term is synonymous with the people of the truth (abl al-ḥaqq). Chittick, SPK, p. 388 n. 20; p. 400 n. 3. It denotes the Sufis who adhere to the correct beliefs.

15 Futûhât, chap. 210, pt iv, 187.


17 Futûhât, chap. 176, pt iii, p. 447. Al-Ghazâlî is also mentioned as one of the scholars who dealt with God’s names (ibid., chap. 290, pt iv, p. 417).

18 This proof states that if there were two gods the world would not be generated, because they would prevent each other from acting. The existence of a harmonious world
same time accusing later mutakallimün of not adhering to this proof. In dealing with metaphysical matters, Ibn al-‘Arabî says that the place of nature is between the universal soul and the dust cloud (habâ), which is al-Ghazâlî’s view, and that no other place can be ascribed to nature. Concerning theodicy, Ibn al-‘Arabî agrees with al-Ghazâlî’s dictum that this world is the best of all possible worlds. Al-Ghazâlî formulates his position thus: laysa fi‘l-imkân abda’ mimmâ kân, meaning ‘there is no possible world which is more wonderful than the present world (literally, ‘than what exists’).’ Strangely enough, Ibn al-‘Arabî cites this famous dictum incorrectly, replacing mimmâ kân with min badha al-‘alam (than this world).

In one place, Ibn al-‘Arabî even defends al-Ghazâlî against the accusation that he believes in the acquisition of prophecy. Prophecy in Ibn al-‘Arabî’s opinion is not acquired by man but given to man by God. When al-Ghazâlî speaks of an acquirer of prophecy, says Ibn al-‘Arabî, he has in mind a follower of a prophet, like Hârûn who is called in Qur’ân 19. 53 a prophet because he followed Mûsâ.

We now come to the issue of al-Ghazâlî’s influence on Ibn al-‘Arabî. This subject can be divided into two sections: (a) supposed influence; and (b) conspicuous influence. In the first case we assume that Ibn al-‘Arabî was influenced by al-Ghazâlî, but we have no clear-cut evidence, while in the second case Ibn al-‘Arabî mentions al-Ghazâlî.

Al-Ghazâlî’s Kitâb al-tawhîd wa’l-tawakkul seems to be an important source for two of Ibn al-‘Arabî’s most basic notions: the idea that God is the only real existent, and the principle of relativity. As we shall show both issues are interrelated.

proves that its creator is one. The Qur’ânic basis of this proof is sura 21, verse 22, which reads: ‘If there were gods in the heaven and earth except God, they would be ruined.’ For some formulations of this proof in the kalam literature see my Al-Qâsim B. Ibrâhim on the Proof of God’s Existence: Kitâb al-dalîl al-kabîr (Leiden, 1990), pp. 190–92 n. 89.

19 Futûhât, chap. 172, pt iii, p. 434.

20 Habâ’ is the primordial dust which corresponds to al-bayûlā, prime matter, of the philosophers; see M. Chodkiewicz, Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabî (Cambridge, 1993), p. 68.


22 E. Ormsby, Theodicy in Islamic Thought: The Dispute over al-Ghazâlî’s ‘Best of All Possible Worlds’ (Princeton, 1984), pp. 103–07.


24 Futûhât, chap. 73, pt iii, pp. 6–7.
Chittick pointed out that Ibn al-ʿArabī followed early Sufis,²⁵ such as al-Ghazālī, in adhering to the first of these notions.²⁶ He did not, however, expand on al-Ghazālī’s approach. Let us now examine his thought on this issue more closely. Al-Ghazālī divided people into a hierarchy of four levels with regard to the affirmation of God’s unity (tawḥīd).²⁷ To the lowest level belong humans who only utter the words that denote tawḥīd, namely, ‘there is no god but God’, without paying attention to the meaning of the words; some even deny them. Such is the tawḥīd of the hypocrites. The second level is described as ‘the belief of the common people’ (iʿtiqād al-ʿawwâm). They not only affirm God’s unity, but also prove it through using the speculative arguments of the kalam. In the third stratum people see many things but nevertheless consider them originating from one agent. Those who reach the fourth highest stage regard the world as only one entity; they do not see even themselves, thus passing away from their own consciousness. Sufis, says al-Ghazālī, call this stage al-fanā’ fiʾl-tawḥīd (immersing in God’s unity). In sum, the truth as it is (al-ḥaqq kāmā buwa ʿalayhi), in al-Ghazālī’s view, is the existence of only one entity. This truth is known through both revelation (kashf or mukāshafā) and reason (nūr al-ḥaqq).²⁸

On the question of how is it possible to perceive one entity when one observes the heavens, the earth, and other bodies, that is, how the many is one, al-Ghazālī refrains from giving a direct answer, claiming that this problem belongs to the secrets of revelation which cannot be written in books. However, he is ready to divulge a clue to this apparent contradiction between the many and the one. A thing, says al-Ghazālī, may be one from one perspective²⁹ and many from another. For example, a human being is many when we consider his bodily parts, but one in

²⁷ Al-Qushayrī defines tawḥīd as the judgement that God is one (al-ḥukm bi-anna allāb waḥīd): Al-Risāla al-qubayriyya (Beirut, 2000), p. 291.
²⁸ Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyāʿ ʿulūm al-dīn, Al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 4 vols (Cairo, [n.d.]), iv, 245–46. B. Abrahimov, ‘Al-Ghazālī’s Supreme Way to Know God’, Studia Islamica, 77 (1993), p. 158. In this article I tried to prove that al-Ghazālī preferred the intellectual way to know the truth, but now I think that al-Ghazālī intentionally merged revelation, expressed in the above mentioned terms, with reason, expressed, as I will show, in the words perspectives and considerations.
relation to another. Thus, a thing may be one and many at the same time. Likewise, existence is one from one point of view and many from another.\textsuperscript{30}

Elsewhere al-Ghazâlî explains the phenomenon of double existence through a Neoplatonic image:

In existence there is none but God, may He be exalted and exalted, and His acts. If one observes God’s acts as such [\textit{min ba’ythu biyya af’âlubul}], confining himself to this observation, or does not see them [\textit{lam yarabâ}] as heaven, earth and trees [i.e., as particulars], but as God’s making [\textit{min ba’ythu annahâ san’ubul}], since his knowledge cannot reach [lit. exceed] the Godship’s presence,\textsuperscript{31} it is possible for him to say: ‘I know only God and see only God.’ If a person conceives [that] he sees only the sun and its light spreading out in the horizon it is right for him to say: ‘I see only the sun,’ since the light which emanates from it [\textit{al-fâ`id minbâ}] is a part of its totality and is included in it. Everything in existence is a light of the lights of the eternal power [\textit{al-qudra al-azaliyya}] and an effect of its effects. Just as the sun is the source of light [\textit{yanbû‘ al-nûr}] which emanates on every lighted thing, so the essence [\textit{al-ma’nû‘}] which no expression can be given about and which is designated as the eternal power is the source of existence which emanates on every existent thing. Consequently, in existence there is only God, may He be exalted and exalted. Therefore it is admissible for the knower [\textit{al-‘arif}] to say: ‘I Know only God.’\textsuperscript{32}

What al-Ghazâlî is saying here is that logically one can distinguish between God’s acts and His essence, but since the world in all its parts emanates from God, like the rays of light from the sun, the only real existent is God.

Both the notion of God as the only real existent and the notion of observing the world from different perspectives are fundamental ideas of Ibn al-‘Arabi. According to the first idea, which later became known by the term \textit{wa`bdat al-wujûd} (the unity of existence),\textsuperscript{33} existence is one, meaning that the only real existent is God, and the phenomena observed in the cosmos are nothing but manifestations

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibyâ‘}, iv, 246–47.

\textsuperscript{31} By this statement al-Ghazâlî means that a human being cannot know God’s essence (\textit{dbât}), but only His attributes and actions.

\textsuperscript{32} Al-Ghazâlî, \textit{al-Maqâsîd al-asnî sbarîh asmâ‘ allâb al-`husnâ} (Cairo, 1968), pp. 58–59. I translated this paragraph in ‘Al-Ghazâlî’s Supreme Way’, pp. 159–60. What derives its existence from something else has no real, but only a metaphoric, existence, says al-Ghazâlî in \textit{Misbâkát al-asnuwar}. Here God is called not only ‘the true existent’ but also ‘the true light’. \textit{Misbâkát al-anwar wa-miṣfât al-asrâr}, ed. by ‘Abd al-‘Azîz ‘Izz al-Dîn al-Sayrawân (Beirut, 1986), p. 137. I did not find the term ‘true light’ in the \textit{Futûbat}, although the reasoning is clear: if God is true existent and he is also light, he is also true light.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibn al-‘Arabi himself never used this term, which was coined by his commentators; Chittick, \textit{SPK}, p. 79.
of God. Elucidation of this theory is not the aim of this article. One aspect of it, however, is relevant to the subject: the place of God in the world. To put it in a form of questions: Can one find (wa‘ājada) God? And if one can, where is He? Like al-Ghazālī, who states that a thing may be one and many at the same time, Ibn al-‘Arabī puts forward the idea that existence is one and many at the same time and that God is both transcendent and immanent simultaneously.

The same solution to the conflict between the one and the many and the same example used by al-Ghazālī appear in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Fuṣūṣ al-hikam:

There is no real conflict implicit in the variety of forms. They are in fact twofold. All these forms are like the limbs of Zaid. It is quite clear that Zaid is a single personal reality, and that his hand does not look like his foot [...]. In other words he is multiple and single, multiple in form [al-kabīr bi-l-šuwar] and single in essence [al-wābīd bi-l-‘a‘yīn], just as man is, without doubt, one in His essence. We do not doubt that ‘Amr is not Zaid [...] nor that the various individual parts of this one essence are infinite in existence. Thus God, although One in His Essence, is multiple in forms and individual parts.

According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, existence is one; however, from one point of view it is God, and from another it is creation. The distinction between God and creation is not real but is rather an outcome of different considerations.

The term tanzib (literally, to deem something to be above another) denotes God’s transcendence; God is above all things, that is, He cannot be compared to anything, for existence belongs only to him. Rationalist theologians, especially the Mutazilites, share in this opinion. However, from another perspective, there is existence except God, for existence (wu‘ūd) means to find or to be found (wa‘ājada or wujida), and man finds himself and others. Therefore, there is a common ground between God, who can be said to truly ‘find’, and man, who ‘finds’, that is, experiences, his own existence. This is the perspective of tasbih (literally, ‘likening’), which in our context means the likening of God to man or declaring a kind of similarity between God and man. Those who have perfect knowledge of God, that is, the gnostics (‘ārifūn) or the people of God (abl allāh), see existence through both perspectives, tanzib and tasbih.

54 Chittick, SPK, chap. 6.
58 Chittick, SDG, p. xxi.
A similar observation occurs in Chapter 382 of the *Futūḥat*. Here Ibn al-ʿArabī speaks of the beginnings (sābiqa, pl. sawābiq) and terminations (kbāṭima, pl. kbawāṭīm) of things. According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, each concrete thing in existence has a permanent archetype (ʿayn thābita, pl. aʿyān thābita) eternally subsisting in the world of the Unseen. These permanent archetypes are the essential forms of God’s names and potentialities in the divine essence. From the point of view of external existence, the permanent archetypes are non-existent, however they exist as concepts exist in one’s mind. Now, things that exist externally have beginnings and terminations, but, from the point of view of the divine, they perpetually exist as aʿyān thābita. On the other side of the coin, non-existence is the essence of the sensible thing, for the cause of its external existence lies outside the thing. This notion appears also in al-Ghazālī’s *al-Maḍnūn al-ṣagīr* and *Mishkāt*: ‘From the point of view of their essences, things have only non-existence’ (layṣa liʿl-ḥasyāʾ min dbawāṭīhā illā al-ʿadam). In like manner, the word fāṣṭa may be defined in two ways depending on the perspective. In the sensible world it means compensation for the human being’s deeds, that is, reward or punishment. However, in its inward perspective it means all that God gives to the existents in accordance with their natures.

Yet another notion, that of Muhammad’s spirit, which exists primordially before the concrete creation of the world, occurs in al-Ghazālī’s *al- Maḍnūn al-ṣagīr*. He refers to the hadith: ‘I am the first prophet with regard to creation and the last to be sent’ (anā awwal al-anbiyāʾ khalqan wa-ākhbirūn baʿthān). Here the author differentiates between creation (khalq) and bringing into existence (iḥād). He interprets khalq to mean taqdir; that is, literally giving measure or determining, but in this particular case, it signifies God’s establishing the aims and perfections of Muhammad’s personality in His thought. This idea is like an architect who prepares a building plan. This process explains the hadith ‘I was a prophet, when

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Adam was between water and clay’ (*kuntu nabiyyan wa-‘adam bayna al-mâ’ wa’l-ţin*),
which means that the idea of Muhammad existed before Muhammad
was born. The idea of Muhammad is called ‘the holy prophetic Muhammadan
spirit’ (*al-ruh al-qudsi al-nabawiyy al-muḥammando*), which corresponds to Ibn
al-‘Arabi’s *al-baqiqa al-muḥammadiyya*, the Muhammadan reality. 

There is a striking similarity between Ibn al-‘Arabi’s theory of the diversity of
entities and that of al-Ghazâlî’s. Like al-Ghazâlî, Ibn al-‘Arabi states that things
are different because of their different states of preparedness for existence. For
example, partial souls differ with respect to their preparedness to receive the light
of the Universal Soul. The simile Ibn al-‘Arabi uses is lamps and their wicks. The
measure of light and its quality depend on the cleanliness of the wicks and the pu-
rity of the oil in the lamps. What kindles the wicks is the first lamp, corresponding
to the Universal Soul. Al-Ghazâlî points out that the relation of the souls of the
human beings to the angels’ souls is like the relation of lamps to a great fire that
kindles them.

We find a similar structure in the beginning of both the *Iḥyâ* and the *Futūḥat*,
that is, the first part dealing with knowledge and the second with the five essential
commandments (literally, ‘elements’) of Islam (*arkân al-islâm*). Moreover, we
find similarities in two basic issues: (a) the attitude toward jurists (*fuqabâ’*); and
(b) the explanation of the essential commandments. Al-Ghazâlî regards the jurist
as a scholar who deals with outward matters concerning this world; he does not
master the believer’s heart. In other words, spiritual issues are not his concern. 
Ibn al-‘Arabi’s criticism of jurists resembles that of al-Ghazâlî. In his view jurists

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44 Ibn al-‘Arabi repeats this tradition several times. For example, *Futūḥat*, chap. 10, pt 1, p. 207.
48 Al-Ghazâlî, *al-Maḍnûn al-ṣâqîb*, p. 98. This notion is reminiscent of Ibn Sinâ’s idea in *al-Isbârât wa l-tanbihât* (ed. by J. Forget (Leiden, 1892), pp. 126–27), in which he states
that the Active Intellect (*al-‘aqîl al-fa’îl*) is like a fire that causes the potential intellect to
be active.
49 *Iḥyâ*, 1, 17–19. Al-Ghazâlî has an ambivalent attitude to both sciences of *fiqh* and
kalam; on the one hand he admits their value for practical purposes, but on the other he
considers them inferior to the true inward values of religion. For a detailed discussion of
al-Ghazâlî’s attitude toward jurists and speculative theologians, see Yafeh, *Studies*, pp.
373–90.
pay no attention to the spiritual basis of religion or the aim of revelation. Moreover, they judge on the basis of their passions, and not on the basis of reason. He calls them formal scholars (‘ulama‘ al-rusūm), who prefer this world to the world to come and, creation (meaning material values) to the truth. They are also reproached for learning from books and people instead of learning from revelation.

Like al-Ghazālī, Ibn al-‘Arabī examines the five essential commandments through the prism of their secrets. Both scholars devote much space to the laws of each commandment, except the ṣababāda, and add internal meanings to each. Also in both works a discussion of the secrets of ablution (ṣabāra) precedes the discussion of the commandments. We cannot offer here a detailed comparison between the approaches of al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-‘Arabī to each of the commandments. Suffice it to say that, although both scholars deal with the laws of each commandment, Ibn al-‘Arabī devotes much more space to this subject than al-Ghazālī, who concentrates on the internal meanings of every commandment.

Both scholars also maintain a similar conception of the structure of the world. According to al-Ghazālī, all beings exist in the form of pairs except God, who is single. To support his view, he cites Qurān 51. 49: ‘And all things We have created by pairs’ (wa-min kull shay‘ khalaqnā zawjayn). Ibn al-‘Arabī expresses a similar view when saying: ‘God says, By the even and the odd (89. 3). We have already explained that evenness is the reality of the servant, for oddness is appropriate for God alone in respect of His Essence.

Sometimes even Ibn al-‘Arabī’s use of words is reminiscent of al-Ghazālī’s. For example, in al-Ghazālī’s view the eminence of knowledge is determined by the eminence of the object of knowledge (ṣharaf al-‘ilm bi-qadar sbaraf al-ma’lūm). Since God is the highest object of knowledge, man’s knowledge of Him is the most eminent knowledge. Ibn al-‘Arabī follows al-Ghazālī on this idea, even employing the same superlatives as al-Ghazālī: ‘The True Existent is the greatest

54 Iḥyā‘, iii, 27.13–14.
55 Futūḥat, chap. 69 (para. waṣl fi faṣl ṣifat al-watr), ii, 166; trans. Chittick, SDG, p. 175.
56 Iḥyā‘, iv, 308.14.
(a’żam) existent, the most sublime (ajall) and the most eminent (ashraf), and the knowledge of Him is the most eminent, greatest and sublime knowledge.⁵⁷ The most frequently repeated words relating to God and the knowledge of Him used by both al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-‘Arabī are eminence (sharaf) and most eminent (ashraf).⁵⁸

Another stylistic feature that Ibn al-‘Arabī may have learned from al-Ghazālī is the description of the relationships of God’s names one to another, as well as the relationships between His names and contingent things. These relations are expressed through human conversations, that is, the names talk to each other.⁵⁹ Likewise, al-Ghazālī depicts the conversations between the elements that participate in the performance of human acts beginning with God’s attributes such as knowledge and will and ending with the human attributes of knowledge, will and so on.⁶⁰

In sum, there is clear evidence that al-Ghazālī influenced Ibn al-‘Arabī on both cardinal and marginal issues. Notwithstanding, Ibn al-‘Arabī criticizes al-Ghazālī and accuses him of holding inappropriate views. A sign of his ambivalent attitude toward al-Ghazālī is revealed when Ibn al-‘Arabī refers to the former’s Sufism. He once points out that al-Ghazālī and al-Muḥāṣibi belong to the common group of the Sufis (‘āmmat abl hādbā al-ṣarīq; literally, the common people of this way) as distinguished from abl allāb (the people of God), that is, the real adherents of Sufism.⁶¹ But elsewhere al-Ghazālī appears as ‘one of the people of God, the followers of revelation or unveiling’ (aḥad min abl allāb aṣḥāb al-kashf), a title most favoured by Ibn al-‘Arabī.⁶²

We now turn to several issues concerning which Ibn al-‘Arabī disagrees with al-Ghazālī. The first topic is the nature of God. As is well known, Ibn al-‘Arabī holds the absolute transcendence of God’s essence; humans cannot know God’s essence, and all they know about Him are His names and attributes.⁶³ Ibn al-‘Arabī

⁵⁷ Futūḥāt, chap. 369, pt vi, p. 100.
⁶¹ Futūḥāt, iv, chap. 70, pt ii, p. 312.
⁶² Iḥyāʾ, iv, chap. 73, pt iii, p. 6.
⁶³ Chittick, SPK, chap. 4. This view coincides with the traditionalist approach based on the ḥadīth: ‘Do not reflect on God’s essence’ (la taḍakkaru fī ḍbāt allāh). B. Abrahamov, Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 2. Ibn al-‘Arabī cites Qur’ān
presents al-Ghazâlî as holding two contradicting views; on the one hand al-Ghazâlî states that only God knows God, which implies the absolute transcendence of God,\textsuperscript{64} while on the other in his \textit{al-Ma\dh\textbar n bii \textbar \textbar \textbar \textbar \textbar al\textbar ghyr ab\textbar libi} he discusses God’s essence from a rational point of view.\textsuperscript{65} Ibn al-\textsay{\textbar}Arabî fully recognizes this self-contradiction and says that even if it springs from al-Ghazâlî’s will to disguise his true views, this should be regarded as wrongful conduct.\textsuperscript{66} In like manner Ibn al-\textsay{\textbar}Arabî’s rejects al-Ghazâlî’s notion of the affinity (\textit{mun\textbar saba}) between God and human beings.\textsuperscript{67} According to al-Ghazâlî, there is external as well as internal affinity between God and man. External affinity is expressed through man’s imitation of God’s attributes, such as knowledge and compassion, while internal affinity is hidden. However, there are clear allusions that al-Ghazâlî considers knowledge as that which creates affinity between God and human beings.\textsuperscript{68} Another point of disagreement between Ibn al-\textsay{\textbar}Arabî and al-Ghazâlî is the distinction between a saint (\textit{wa\textbar li\textbar y}) and a prophet (\textit{nab\textbar i\textbar y}). In al-Ghazâlî’s view, a saint is inspired (\textit{mul\textbar b\textbar am}), while a prophet is one to whom an angel descends, although in some matters he is too inspired, because he joins sainthood to prophecy. Ibn al-\textsay{\textbar}Arabî regards this view as a mistake and a sign that adherents of such a linkage are bereft of revelation (\textit{dbaw\textbar q}, literally, ‘tasting’). For him, the difference lies in the content of the message the angel delivers. That which is given to a prophet-messenger is different from that given to a saint. Sometimes the angel teaches a saint that which causes the latter to understand a prophet’s sayings.\textsuperscript{69}

Yet another controversy between Ibn al-\textsay{\textbar}Arabî and al-Ghazâlî, noted already by Michel Chodkiewicz, is the question of the highest spiritual stage attainable short of prophecy. In al-Ghazâlî’s view, it is the stage of \textit{\textbar siddiqi\textbar y}, a term derived from Abû Bakr’s nickname al-\textsay{\textbar}Siddîq. However, Ibn al-\textsay{\textbar}Arabî places an intermedi-
ate level between *ṣiddiqyya* and prophecy known as ‘the station of proximity’ (*maqām al-qurba*), which is the highest stage of the saints.\(^{70}\)

Ibn al-ʿArabī’s most aggressive attack on al-Ghazālī focuses on the way the mystic should follow to reach the knowledge of God and His attributes. In the *Iḥyāʾ*, al-Ghazālī describes two paths to knowledge: inspiration (*ilhām*) and reflection (*iʿtiḥāb, ištibār*).

The first way, the way of the Sufis, consists of exercising asceticism, erasing blameworthy qualities and sincere turning to God alone. After such a procedure, a human is ready to receive inspiration from God. This is the way of prophets and saints. Al-Ghazālī acknowledges criticism of the Sufis’ method on the part of rational thinkers (*muzzār, dhawū al-iʿtiḥāb*). These scholars do not deny the possibility of reaching knowledge through the method of inspiration, but they point out that this rarely happens for most people; it works only for prophets and saints. According to these critics, it is almost impossible for man to erase his connections with this world and to continuously evade evil motives that instigate man to do evil acts. Besides, practising the ascetic life without learning true sciences may cause the ascetic to regard false imaginations as true revelation. Thus, knowledge of true sciences should precede man’s ascetic practice and serve as a criterion for examining the nature of what is revealed to the ascetic. Al-Ghazālī seems to have accepted the critics’ view, for he expresses no reservations regarding it. It seems to me that al-Ghazālī refers to the claim that ascetic practice is the only condition for the revelation of truth as being false.\(^{71}\) However, it should be noted that al-Ghazālī also depicts the Sufi way of gaining knowledge as not through learning but through inspiration. He unusually inserts into the present context a personal note: ‘Ascetic practice also sometimes brought me to inspiration’ (*wa-anā aydan rubbamā intabāt bi al-riyahā waʾl-muwazzab īlaybih*).\(^{72}\) All in all, one cannot discern his real view regarding the learning of the sciences. Here, of course, arises the question of al-Ghazālī’s esotericism, but that is the subject of another study.

In the light of the preceding, we shall now examine Ibn al-ʿArabī’s system of attaining unveiling and his criticism of al-Ghazālī’s experience and mystical system. Ibn al-ʿArabī uses the term *ummī* to explain his method. This term appears in the Qurʾān six times,\(^{73}\) two of which (7. 157, 158) refer to Muhammad and denote the

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\(^{70}\) Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, pp. 57–58, 114.


\(^{72}\) *Iḥyāʾ*, iii, 20.

\(^{73}\) Qurʾān 7. 157, 158; 2. 78; 3. 20, 75; 62. 2.
illiterate or one who does not know the Scriptures. In Ibn al-‘Arabi’s thought, ummi does not have the sense of one who does not know the Qur’ān or the traditions, but rather of one whose heart is free of reflection and speculation and hence receptive to divine unveiling in the most perfect manner and without delay. It is unlikely that he who deals with rational arguments should receive from divine knowledge what the ummi receives, because the greater part of the spiritual world lies beyond the intellect. Ibn al-‘Arabi’s criticism of the theologians’ and the jurists’ speculation concentrates on the instability of their judgements; what is correct today may be wrong tomorrow owing to changes in circumstances in the sphere of law or in the appearance of new opponents in the sphere of theology. In contradistinction, the divine revelation is stable and does not change.

At the core of our discussion is the example Ibn al-‘Arabi brings to illustrate his point. This example comes from al-Ghazālī himself, who relates what happened to him when he wanted to join the Sufis. Al-Ghazālī tells us that he relinquished his speculation and reflection, and engaged instead in the invocation of God, hoping to receive divine knowledge that he had not had before. However, he was frustrated, for he realized that what he acquired was a juridical faculty that he had already possessed. Withdrawing to his retreat and practising what the Sufis practise many times did not change his situation — his knowledge remained impure. Al-Ghazālī admitted that although he was no longer like his fellow rationalists, whether theologians or jurists, he failed to attain the Sufis’ level, concluding that


75 Futūḥat, chap. 289, pt iv, p. 409. Chittick translated the beginning of this chapter in SPK, pp. 235–38. In Kitāb al-‘isfār ‘an natā‘ij al-asfār (in Rāsā’il ibn al-‘arabī) (Hādīdārād, 1948), pt ii, p. 7), Ibn al-‘Arabi differentiates between two kinds of travelers (musāfirūn), namely, people who seek metaphysical knowledge. The first group of ‘travellers’ are the philosophers who base themselves only on their intellect and hence deviate from the true way. The second kind are prophets and chosen saints, like the verifiers among the Sufis, who receive their knowledge through unveiling and thus attain the truth. Cf. F. Rosenthal, ‘Ibn ‘Arabī between ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Mysticism’, Orients, 3 (1988), 1–35 (p. 8). It is worth noting that in Ibn al-‘Arabi’s opinion part of what the philosophers state is true; they express wise sayings (bikam) and advocate righteousness (ibid., p. 12).

76 Futūḥat, chap. 289, pt iv, p. 410. The claim that reason leads to self-contradictory arguments and to changes in ideology was already expressed by traditionalist circles in the third/ninth century and repeated in the following centuries. Abrahamov, Islamic Theology, chap. 3.

77 I was unable to find in al-Ghazālī’s writings the source of the following story about him.
'writing upon what has been erased (mahw)\textsuperscript{78} is not the same as writing upon that which has not been erased'.\textsuperscript{79} This means that although he negated his previous scientific knowledge, he could not attain the pure state of one who had not acquired scientific knowledge at all.

In sum, Ibn al-‘Arabi not only opposes the Ghazâlian idea that science is a criterion for recognizing true revelation, but also the possibility of ever reaching the pure state of unveiling once the sciences have been studied. However, how can we explain the fact that Ibn al-‘Arabi himself, who mastered the sciences of jurisprudence, theology, and philosophy, experienced, by his own reports, unveiling? Does this fact not contradict his criticism of al-Ghazâlî? Ibn al-‘Arabi himself supplies the answer. He says that God revealed to him knowledge when he was in seclusion (khalwa).\textsuperscript{80} Elsewhere he enumerates three ways to attain knowledge: (a) by means of the intellect, that is, through speculation (naṣar) or by necessity (darūratat); (b) through tasting (dhauq), which is the knowledge of the states (ahwâl); and (c) divine revelation, which is called the knowledge of secrets (ilm al-asrâr). Whoever knows by such a device knows all the sciences.\textsuperscript{81}

In fine, Ibn al-‘Arabi’s attitude toward al-Ghazâlî is ambivalent. Sometimes he heavily relies on him and sometimes he severely opposes him. This is the approach of an original thinker who both learns from others and also independently develops his own ideas. It would be very interesting to thoroughly examine Ibn al-‘Arabi’s attitude toward other early Sufis, such as al-Bistâmi, in order to clarify the background of his thought.

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\textsuperscript{78} Meaning the scholar who leaves his previous rational knowledge.

\textsuperscript{79} Meaning one who did not occupy himself with rational knowledge; trans. Chittick, \textit{SPK}, p. 237.

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Futûhât}, chap. 66, pt 1, p. 490.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Futûhât}, Introduction, pt 1, pp. 54–55.
THE AL-GHAZĀLĪ CONSPIRACY: REFLECTIONS ON THE INTER-MEDITERRANEAN DIMENSION OF ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Anna Akasoy

Introduction: Abū Bakr al-Ṭūṭūshī

The history of Tortosa, a town located between Barcelona and Valencia close to the Spanish Mediterranean coast, comprises more than 450 years of Arab dominion. Yet, compared with cities like Seville or Cordoba, the Moorish epoch has left only scarce material traces. The best-known evidence of Arab presence in Tortosa is probably a person, Abū Bakr al-Ṭūṭūshī. Born in 1059, more than one hundred years before Tortosa was ‘reconquered’ by the Christians, he studied Islamic law in Zaragoza with Abū l-Walīd al-Bāji (d. 1081) and, through his teacher, he became acquainted with ideas from the East. Al-Bāji had travelled to the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, the Levant, and Egypt, and after his return to the

I am grateful to Charles Burnett, Hans Daiber, Kenneth Garden, and Yossef Rapoport for their remarks on earlier versions of this article.


2 Al-Bāji had studied Mālikī fiqh and hadith in Mecca with Abū Dharr al-Harawi, who had been educated in Khorasan. He also spent time studying in Baghdad, Mosul, Aleppo, and Damascus. See the article on al-Bāji by D. Dunlop in the Encyclopedia of Islam, ed. by E. van Donzel, new edn (Leiden, 1960– ), I, 864–65. Dunlop highlights the impact of this journey on al-Bāji’s intellectual development: ‘He returned to Spain in or about 439/1047 as poor as when he left it, but with greatly extended views.’
Iberian Peninsula, he used concepts of Asharism, which he had studied in the East, in his defence of Mālikism against Ibn Ḥazm.3

Abū Bakr al-Ṭūrūshī might have followed this example when he left the Iberian Peninsula in 1083, two years before the fall of Toledo and three years before the arrival of the Almoravids. His travel route took him to Alexandria first, then to Antioch. He studied in Baghdad, Basra, and Wāsit, went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and spent several years in Jerusalem and Damascus. There he met al-Ghazālī and Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī.4 After Ṭūrūshī had suffered a personal crisis, he retreated from society and lived as an ascetic, first in the mountains of Lebanon, later near Alexandria. When the Fatimid vizier, al-Baṭāʾīḥ, ordered the execution of the fiqhabāʾ of Alexandria, Ṭūrūshī was persuaded to take up a job as a jurist in the city itself. He enjoyed a growing popularity, which triggered the conflicts between him and the local authorities that had arisen from Ṭūrūshī’s rigorous criticism of social misbehaviour such as the consumption of Christian cheese.5 In 1120 Ṭūrūshī was banished from Alexandria to Cairo. A year later, after the assassination of the Fatimid vizier, he returned to Alexandria, where he died in 1126.

Abū Bakr al-Ṭūrūshī is in many ways is good starting point for studying the larger context of this article, the relations between intellectuals and intellectual traditions from the Eastern and the Western shores of the Islamic Mediterranean, or, to put it in other words, the ‘inter-Mediterranean’ dimension in the intellectual history of medieval Islam.

**Andalusian Migration to the East: Some General Outlines**

Ever since the Arab conquest of major parts of the Western Mediterranean, Muslims travelled from there to the core lands of the Islamic world. Their motives ranged

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from hajj to education, commerce, and diplomacy, as well as various political reasons such as espionage, propaganda, and escaping persecution. From the twelfth century onwards, the numbers of immigrants from the Iberian Peninsula, both Muslim and Jewish, rose as a consequence of a dramatic explosion of violence. The Christian ‘reconquista’ took on increasingly brutal traits, and in areas under Muslim control violence increased due to conflicting ideologies and political allegiances. Furthermore, under the Almohads the Jews of al-Andalus were exposed to vicious persecutions and expulsions. The refugees retreated to relatively close places like Ceuta, but also to remoter cities with well-established communities of Western Arabs. Alexandria in particular attracted newcomers and, on account of its status as a ribāt, many Sufis and ascetics. It was also Egypt where many Jews from the Arab West sought refuge, the most famous among them Moses Maimonides.

The impact of this migration on intellectual life and the role of regional backgrounds in the encounters of Western and Eastern scholars in the Islamic Mediterranean have been little explored. In intellectual history scholars often limit their

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7 On violence in al-Andalus in general, see De muerte violenta: Política, religión y violencia en al-Andalus, ed. by M. Fierro (Madrid, 2004), and the recent issue of al-Qantara, 26.2 (2005).


focus to the philosophical and scientific contents of the texts that they study. This article is an attempt to bring the regional or geographical dimension of medieval Islam’s intellectual history into perspective. I would like to begin with some general observations that are of importance for an analysis of the relationship between intellectual traditions of the Eastern and the Western Mediterranean.

1. Philosophers and Mystics

It is sometimes difficult to draw a clear line between mysticism and philosophy as systems of thought. Among the Andalusian authors this applies above all to Ibn Ṭūfayl and his Ḥayy ibn Yaẓẓān, but also to some of the writings of Ibn al-‘Arabi. Yet, one can clearly distinguish two different social types in the Arab West. The mystic and the philosopher are each characterized by a number of distinctive features not generally shared by the other. Philosophers, for example, were es-


10 Philosophy is used here in the sense of falsafā, i.e., the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic tradition of Islam. Louis Massignon employed the term philosophy in a wider meaning and came to different conclusions regarding its relation to mysticism (‘Interférences philosophiques et percées métaphysiques dans la mystique hallagienne: Notion de “l’essentiel desir”’, in Mélanges Joseph Marechal, 2 vols (Brussels, 1950), II, 263–96). The Sufis themselves differentiated between various philosophical traditions. Ibn Masarra (885–931), for example, as well as other Sufis distinguished the speculative reflection of the falsafā from the contemplation of the ḥukamā’ (e.g., Plato), which could lead to a view of the divine (C. Addas, ‘Andalusī Mysticism and the Rise of Ibn ‘Arabī’, in The Legacy of Muslim Spain, ed. by S. K. Jayyusi (Leiden, 1992), pp. 909–33 (p. 917)). See also W. Chittick, ‘Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History’, Religious Studies, 17 (1981), 87–104.


12 Sara Sviri described, for example, the use of a philosophical concept of dreams by Ibn al-‘Arabi, ‘Dreaming Analyzed and Recorded: Dreams in the World of Medieval Islam’, in Dream Cultures, ed. by D. Shulman and G. G. Stroumsa (New York, 1998), pp. 252–73.

13 See A. Akasoy, Philosophie und Mystik in der späten Almohadenzeit: ‘Die Sizilianischen Fragen’ des Ibn Sab’īn (Leiden, 2005), pp. 57–64, and for a more detailed expo-
tablished at courts where they also fulfilled other functions, often as physicians. Ibn Rushd, the most famous case, was a high-ranking judge. Mystics on the other hand were part of the ‘traditional’ *‘ulamā* and usually, if at all, only loosely connected to local institutions of political power.

We know precious little about the education of the Andalusian philosophers. As for the Sufis, the frequent focus of biographical works on ‘traditional religious activities’ suggests to us that the education of the Sufis frequently circled around the study of hadith (hence their professional status as *‘ulamā*). Ibn al-‘Arabī is a good example for this, but also his contemporary and compatriot Ibn Sabīn of Murcia (c. 1217–1270). Similar distinctions can be found among Jewish authors, even though the differences might be less distinctive here. Ibn Gabirol for example corresponds to the social type of the philosopher, whereas Bahyia ibn Paquda corresponds to the Sufi type.  

Another distinguishing feature is migration. None of the Andalusian philosophers left the West, some not even the Iberian Peninsula. Ibn Rushd, Ibn Ṭufayl, Ibn Bājjah — not one of them performed the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca. Of the mystics, on the other hand, none of the more influential figures remained where he was born. Ibn ‘Arabī left twice for the central lands of Arabia never to return again, Ibn Sabīn departed from the Iberian Peninsula as a young man and settled down in Mecca. Others remained in the Muslim West, but changed their residence frequently.

Both characteristics of the Andalusian philosophers — their close connection to a specific court or ruler, and the fact that they did not emigrate — contribute to the explanation of why there was so little transmission of philosophical texts from the West to the East, and why, on the other hand, the mystics were so successful in spreading their doctrines. The way intellectual al-Andalus presented itself in the Eastern Mediterranean and the impact it had there depended very much on these sociological peculiarities of its cultural life.

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14 Some of these distinctions can also be made for Eastern parts of the Islamic world, but the situation is certainly more complicated and there are considerable differences in time and space. Regarding Yitzhak Baer’s claim that philosophy in Spain was basically a movement of the elite against which Hasidism formed, Paul Fenton argued, for instance, that the leaders of the Hasidic movement in Egypt were themselves members of the elite. See P. Fenton, ‘Deux écoles piétistes: Les Hasidei Ashkenaz et les Soufis juifs d’Égypte’, in *La Société juive à travers l’histoire*, ed. by S. Trigano, 4 vols (Paris, 1992–93), 1, 200–25.
2. The Disciples of Ṭūrṭūshī: An Andalusian Network?

The migration from the Muslim West did not lead to a simple brain drain effect, which deprived al-Andalus gradually of its intellectual elite. Even if the immigrants from the West never returned to their lands of origin, they often remained in contact. Metropolises of the Eastern Mediterranean such as Alexandria, Damascus, or further to the south, Medina, harboured large communities of expatriates that attracted even more visitors from the West, some of whom returned to their native lands.\footnote{For the Maghrebian presence in Damascus see L. Pouzet, ‘Maghrébiens à Damas’.} The biographical studies published in recent years by Arabists in Spain offer an important source for understanding these connections. As Delfina Serrano, for instance, revealed in her research on Ibn al-Sīd of Badajoz, a great number of the disciples of this philosopher and grammarian travelled to Alexandria, often on their way to Mecca.\footnote{D. Serrano, ‘Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawṣī (444–521/1052–1127): De los Reinos de Taifas a la Época Almorávide a través de la Biografía de un Ulema Polifacético’, al-Qantara, 23 (2002), 53–92.} We can only suspect how important these travels were for the distribution of knowledge through manuscripts as well as through oral transmission.

Abū Bakr from Tortosa too is a good example for studying the role of education as a backbone of intellectual relations between the Eastern and Western Islamic Mediterranean. One can read the list of Ṭūrṭūshī’s disciples almost as a Who’s Who of the Western learned scene in the early twelfth century,\footnote{For a list of Ṭūrṭūshī’s disciples, see Fierro, Kitāb al-ḥawādīth wa-l-bida‘, pp. 91–106.} which suggests the existence of an Andalusian network that spread over the entire Muslim Mediterranean. Many Andalusians studied with him on their return from a pilgrimage. Among those who returned to the West were two men who had an enormous impact on shaping doctrinal developments there, the already mentioned Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī and the Mahdi of the Almohads, Ibn Tūmart. But Ṭūrṭūshī’s influence stretched even further through ījāzas granted to people who never left the West. A third man, the Qadi Īyāḍ, the icon of Western Mālikism, studied with Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī and never went to Alexandria, but received the ījāza from Ṭūrṭūshī for all of his works.

The fact that these three men who maintained such different views had this educational connection in common points to a general difficulty in studying the intellectual history of Islam. The divisions between certain groups are not always as clear as they may seem to be at first. Does the identification of a person as a
Mālikī, a Sufi, or a mutakāllim for example imply nothing more than the attribution to him of one more or less fixed set of beliefs, as well as an affiliation with a fixed group who shares these. Mālikī and Sufi convictions are not mutually exclusive, even if they are so in a particular person’s case. Reducing a scholar’s identity to one doctrinal affiliation excludes important other aspects. The network around Ṭūrğūshī corroborates that the identities of medieval Muslim scholars, doctrinal or otherwise, were rather complex and multilayered. Considering the prominence of common regional backgrounds in the encounters of scholars, one should take into account that, in any given case, shared origins in the Maghreb (or some other place) was a powerful factor that could offset whatever doctrinal differences may have held between them.  

3. The Impact of al-Ghazālī and Further Ambiguities

Linked to this complexity is the role of al-Ghazālī in the relations between the eastern and western reaches of Islam. Ṭūrğūshī’s attitude to the great theologian was rather ambiguous. In a letter to the otherwise unknown Ibn al-Muzaffar, Ṭūrğūshī justified the burning of al-Ghazālī’s opus magnum Iḥyāʾ ‘ulūm al-dīn by the Almoravids and expounded on his opinion of its author. When they had met personally al-Ghazālī appeared to him as an intelligent and sensible man. Later, however, he changed his opinions. In his opposition to the fuqahāʾ he employed philosophical doctrines and the allegories of al-Ḥallāj as well as the maʿānī of the Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ — all of this, according to Ṭūrğūshī. Under these influences he


19 It is also less likely that such doctrinal differences existed in the first place, if one takes into consideration that many travellers from the Muslim West were, for example, followers of Mālikism.


22 It is not clear what the maʿānī refer to. It could simply refer to the same subjects. Ibn Rushd employs the word in this sense in his Talkhīṣ on the Categories. At the beginning he
spread wrong views such as the claim that prophecy could be acquired simply by virtuous behaviour. According to Ṭūrṭūṣhī, using philosophy in defending Islam is like trying to clean a garment with urine. I will return to these reproaches later.

In his criticism Ṭūrṭūṣhī combined, as Kenneth Garden has recently shown, Eastern and Western traditions of attacking Ḥiyā‘ ‘ulūm al-dīn, and the criticism in his letter was a mere adoption of reproaches uttered by Eastern scholars and copied from al-Māzārī, a Sicilian scholar in the East.23 In any case, Ṭūrṭūṣhī’s opinion had apparently little influence on at least some of his disciples. On the contrary, al-Ghazālī was decisive for the impact Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArābī and Ibn Tūmār exercised in al-Andalus.24 Al-Ghazālī was key to the Almohad propaganda that claimed that Ibn Tūmār had met the great theologian in person and vowed to avenge the burning of the Ḥiyā‘ under the Almoravids. With his integration of Greek logic into Islamic sciences proper, al-Ghazālī provided the rationalist ideology of the Almohads with a firm grounding. Furthermore, his later conversion to Sufism offered an excellent opportunity for the Almohads to join forces with the mystical part of the anti-Almoravid opposition under the Sufi Mahdi Ibn Qaṣī (d. 1151).25

How, on the other hand, did politicians and scholars react in the Arab East to these events in the West? A study of the ‘international’ politics of the Almohads remains to be done, but there are a few well-known sources which have been quoted as a preliminary answer to this question. Ibn al-Qalānīṣī (d. 1160), for example, characterized the doctrine of Ibn Tūmār as a madhbah fikr, whereas Ibn al-Azraq al-Fāriqī (d. after 1177) emphasized the Mahdist claim of the movement.26


26 T. Nagel, Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene: Die Heilszusage des sunnitischen Islams (Göttingen, 2002), pp. 35–39. Doubts with regard to a too literal interpretation of the
Considering the dimension of the ideological, social, and political upheavals in the West these reactions seem rather scanty. However, another peculiarity of Andalusian intellectual culture received far more attention, affirmative as well as critical: the radical Sufism associated with Ibn al-‘Arabī and the doctrine of ṭabdat al-’unat, the unity of being of creator and creation, or ‘monism’. In what follows I will deal with a particular thread of this polemical reaction in the Eastern Mediterranean, the reproach of mixing philosophy and mysticism, or as I would like to suggest calling it, the ‘al-Ghazālī conspiracy’. 27

‘Conspiracy ḥallāġienne’ — ‘Conspiracy ghazālienne’

One of the first Western scholars to study the critical reactions to Andalusian Sufism was Louis Massignon. In an article published in 1962 he pointed out that it was a personal enemy of Ibn Sabīn, a certain Quṭb al-Dīn al-Qaṣṭallānī (d. 1287), who established a tradition of reproaching Andalusian Sufis for having perverted the originally ‘orthodox’ ascetic tradition of Islam, a development which — according to the polemicists — had begun with al-Ḥallāj. This claim, as we have seen, appeared already in Ṭurtūshī’s justification of the burning of the Ḫyāḍ and presumably also earlier. 29 A black list of radical mystics drawn up by Qaṣṭallānī became one of the constituting elements of this polemical tradition. In his article on the ‘conspiracy ḥallāġienne’, as he called it, Massignon mentions briefly another

expression madhbab fikr have been raised by Sarah Stroumsa, ‘Philosophes almohades? Averroës, Maimonide et l’idéologie almohade’, in Los Almohades (see n. 24, above), pp. 1137–62 (p. 1138 n. 5).

27 Akasoy, Philosophie und Mystik, pp. 98–103.


29 Al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) for example, an Asharite of the school of Nīṣābūr, already mentioned a būlūṭiyya in his Farq bayna l-fīrāq. He considered the Sufis part of the abl al-sunna wa-l-jamā’a, except for three men: Abū Ḥulmān al-Dimashqī (d. c. 340/951): ‘qui se cacha derrière les apparences d’un soufi mais qui appartenait en réalité aux ḥulūtiyya’, al-Ḥallāj, and al-Qannād (d. c. 340/951), to whom he attributes Mutazilite convictions. See H. Laoust, ‘La Classification des sectes dans le Farq al-Baghdadi’, Revue des études islamitiques, 29 (1961), 19–59 (pp. 40–41, 49). Even though it was al-Ḥallāj whose ideas Ibn ‘Aqīl (1040–1119) had to renounce, what Ibn ‘Aqīl was criticized for were actually his Mutazilite convictions; see G. Makdissi, Ibn ‘Aqīl: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 7.
element of the polemics, the reproach of using philosophy, which Massignon also attributed to the legacy of al-Ḥallāj.\textsuperscript{30}

I would like to suggest that more than al-Ḥallāj it was al-Ghazālī whose influence on twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sufis was decisive for the tradition of reproaching them for adopting philosophical methods and doctrines. There is also a third conspiracy, which comes occasionally into play in these polemical contexts and which was, again, already mentioned by Ṭūrṭūshī, a ‘conspiration ikhwānien’.

With their Ismaili Neoplatonism, the Ikhwān al-ṣafā\textsuperscript{2} contributed some more dangerous ingredients to an explosive mixture. Some polemical authors (such as Ibn Khalḍūn) highlighted the Shiite tendencies of radical Andalusian Sufism which might mirror the influence of the Ikhwān al-ṣafā\textsuperscript{2} among Western mystics such as Ibn Qasī.\textsuperscript{31}

In the biographical sources that deal with Ibn al-ʿArabī, Ibn Sabīn, and other Andalusian Sufis one encounters different manners of associating them with philosophy. Sometimes they are criticized in rather vague and general terms. Ibn Kathīr (c. 1300–1373) for instance mentions that Ibn Sabīn’s occupation with philosophy resulted in a ‘kind of heresy’ (naw‘ min al-ilbād).\textsuperscript{32} According to Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (1322–1389/90) the adherents of Ibn al-ʿArabī are kafara zanādiqa wujūdiyya mutafalsifa.\textsuperscript{33} Similar expressions can be found in many other sources,\textsuperscript{34} but the authors do not expound upon just what constitutes ‘philosophical Suf-

\textsuperscript{30} For an exposition of the philosophical elements in Ḥallāj see Massignon, ‘Interférences philosophiques et percées métaphysiques’.

\textsuperscript{31} According to Goodrich, Ibn Qasī did not integrate any Ismaili or Shiite elements from the Rasā’il into his texts, but rather ancient ideas he discovered there. There are, for example, no traces of the complex formulas of the Ikhwān for establishing the arrival of the Mahdī and the Day of Judgement; see D. R. Goodrich, ‘A “Sufi” Revolt in Portugal: Ibn Qasī and his Kitāb Kbal’ al-naʿayn’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1978), pp. 46ff.


\textsuperscript{34} Dhahabi described the Andalusian author of an allegorical text \textit{tafṣīr, al-Ḥarrālī (d. 1240), for example as falsāfi al-taṣawwuf} (Knysh, \textit{Ibn ʿArabi}, p. 305 n. 81). The Yemeni author al-Husayn ibn al-Ahdal (d. 1481) wrote a refutation of Ibn ʿArabi with the title \textit{Kashf al-ḡbiṭā} ‘an ḡaqūq al-tawḥīd wa-l-raḍd ‘alā Ibn ʿArabī al-faylasūf al-ṣūfī (Disclosure of the Truth of the Divine Unity and Refutation of the Philosopher and Sufi Ibn ʿArabī).
ism’. Is it any mixture of elements of both traditions, or rather the subject matter of one tradition approached with the methods of the other tradition, or possibly a very specific mixture of very specific elements? Does it have more to do with the authors and their educational backgrounds, or more with the texts they wrote, the subjects they treated, and the methods and terminology they used? After all, different polemical authors might have also targeted different aspects of philosophical Sufism. A certain vagueness of the term ‘philosophical Sufism’ seems to persist until today. Muḥammad al-ʿAdlūnī ʿIršādī, for instance, lists in his recently published encyclopedia of terms of philosophical Sufism an entire vocabulary of this tradition without defining it. For this contemporary author, as well as for medieval writers, it seems more or less obvious who belongs to the tradition of philosophical Sufism and which issues these people addressed, yet nobody explains the term and the relationship of philosophy and Sufism in it.

The accusation of combining philosophy and mysticism directed against Sufis from the Western Mediterranean was by no means unfounded. Mixtures of this sort are found in the writings of some Muslims, and in some Christian and Jewish authors as well. It is a matter of recent debate how far this syncretism of speculative and esoteric elements reaches into the past. The character of the work of the Sufi Ibn Maṣṣāra (883–931), for example, has been reinterpret ed several times in the last decades with varying conclusions regarding the philosophical element in his mysticism.

See Akasoy, ‘Patronage für Mystiker und Philosophen im arabischen Westen’ and Philosophie und Mystik, pp. 8–9, for sources that mention that Ibn Sabʿīn was educated in philosophy.

M. al-ʿA. ʿIršādī, Muḥjam muštaḥallāt al-taṣāwuruf al-falsafī: muštaḥallāt al-taṣāwuruf kamā taḏawwalabā kbaṣṣatān al-muʿakkbhirān min šāfiyyat al-garb al-islāmī (Casablanca, 2002). The author describes philosophical Sufism only in a very general sense as a philosophical system with esoteric depth.


A new era began with the introduction of the works of al-Ghazâlî. He played a key role in the Almohad propaganda as an integrating figure for the anti-Almoravid opposition of rationalist Almohads and esoteric Sufis, as mentioned before. His impact on Western mystics such as Ibn Qasî and Ibn Sabîn was considerable. Kenneth Garden even credited Iḥyâ’ ʿulûm al-dîn with the sudden rise of Sufism in the Arab West in the middle of the twelfth century. Additional evidence for the enormous influence of al-Ghazâlî in the Western Mediterranean is supplied by the Catalan missionary Ramón Llull (1232–1316) whose mystical inclinations were inspired by Sufism and who composed Latin and Catalan versions of the part on logic of al-Ghazâlî’s Maqâṣid al-falâsîfâ. Even though the Islamic East witnessed its own philosophico-mystical syncretism with al-Suhrawardî and Molla Şadrâ, the tradition of the Muslim West was somewhat peculiar — otherwise authors in the Eastern Mediterranean would have hardly identified it as something so scandalous.

Some medieval authors have described the Western tradition of combining philosophy and Sufism in neutral terms. In his History of Islam Dhababî (1274–1348) characterized Ibn Sabîn as a šûfî ʿalâ qâʾidat zurd al-falâsîfâ wa-taṣawwufîbîm, an expression often repeated in biographical entries. Others criticized individual authors for their failure to bring the different traditions together in a convincing manner. Al-Bâdisî (d. after 1322) considered Ibn Sabîn’s mixture of speculative and esoteric elements a failure, but he attributed it to this particular author’s personal weakness of mind rather than to a general incompatibility.

In a similar manner, Ibn Rushd had already criticized al-Ghazâlî in his Faṣl al-maqaṣîl for switching positions and thereby being methodologically inconsistent:

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39 For a study of Ibn Qasî and his sources see Goodrich, A ‘Sufi’ Revolt in Portugal.
41 Garden, Al-Ghazâlî’s Contested Revival, p. 146.
42 The extent of Islamic influences on the oeuvre of Llull is a matter of dispute. For an overview of the different positions, see S. Trías Mercant, ‘Arabismo e islamologia en la obra de Ramon Llull’, Semitica Escurialensia Augustiniana: Homenaje a Fray Luciano Rubio OSA, La Ciudad de Dios, 208 (1995), 439–52.
44 Arâda an yajma’a bayna l-falsafa wa-l-taṣawwuf ja-bâna ta’assufûbu (He wanted to combine philosophy and mysticism, but it was obvious that he twisted the meaning of the words): ‘Abd al-Ḥaqîq ibn Ismâ’îl al-Bâdisî, al-Maqaṣîd al-sbarîf ʿî dbikr şulaḥâ ʿî al-Rîf, ed. by Saʿîd Aḥmad Frâb (Rabat, 1402/1982), p. 32.
'He is an Asharite with the Asharites, a Sufi with the Sufis, and a philosopher with the philosophers.' Ibn Sab'în expressed the same criticism in his *Budd al-‘ârif*:

Al-Ghazâlî is a language without clarity [lisân dân bâyânî], a voice without words, a madness that combines contradictions and a confusion that splits the inner parts. One time he is a Sufi, another time a philosopher, a third time an Asharite, a fourth time a jurist, and a fifth time a perplexed man. His achievements in the sciences of the ancients are thinner than a spider’s web, and likewise in Sufism.

These almost impertinent remarks did not pay off for Ibn Sab'în. Not only was he criticized for this in the biographical sources, al-Bâdisî even accused him of plagiarizing al-Ghazâlî. Moreover, in one of the ironic twists of intellectual history, Ibn Sab'în became the target of a very similar reproach. In the opinion of Şafâdî (1297–1363) for example, adopting Ibn Sab'în's manner was tantamount to switching between different systems of thought considered mutually exclusive: the biographer criticized his friend, the scholar Dimashqî, for frequently changing his opinions, his fields of interest, and his methods — a habit he identifies with Ibn Sab'în.

Some authors expressed urgent political concerns about philosophical Sufism, which they regarded a danger for the political structure of Islamic societies. Both Sufis and philosophers were suspected of questioning the ‘orthodox’ concept of prophecy, and Shiite and messianic influences aggravated this challenge.

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we have seen, Țurṭūshī was appalled by al-Ghazālī’s use of philosophical ideas in *Ihyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* and in particular his approach to prophecy. He might have had a premonition of the political and ideological upheavals that took place in al-Andalus many years after his death, some of them connected with al-Ghazālī and his use of philosophy. Another philosopher whose concept of prophecy was targeted was al-Fārābī. In his *Hayy ibn Yaẓzān* Ibn ῾Urayd condemned al-Fārābī’s ideas with harsh words. Yet, compared with al-Ghazālī, the philosopher al-Fārābī played virtually no role as an authority among Sufis in the Arab West.

The best-known representative of the polemical tradition who was most adamant in his political concerns was Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406). In harmony with the overall character of his *Muqaddima* he focused on the impact radical Sufis had on social and political life. In general he paid little attention to the metaphysical beliefs of these Sufis, but his accusing them of defending emanationist ideas is consequential for his criticism.51 According to Ibn Khaldūn, radical Sufis as well as Shiites and Christians believed that God was present in privileged people. The combination of metaphysical and epistemological ideas that validated claims of divine inspiration after the prophet Muhammad was a great challenge to the orthodox concept of prophecy, which claims that inspiration of this sort had ceased with the prophet’s death, after which guidance can be obtained only from a proper interpretation of the Qurʾān and sunna.52

**Criticism of Andalusian Sufism by Ibn Taymiyya and Other Polemicists**

The most eminent — others might say, notorious — critic of philosophical Sufism was Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328). It is important to stress that he did not target Sufism as such, but rather differentiated — as many other polemicists did — between the originally pure tradition of the pious Islamic ascetics on the one hand, and a radicalized Sufism that he identified with the ideas of al-Ḥallāj and the adoption of philosophical ideas on the other.53 Whereas others criticized the mixture of

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53 Criticism of al-Ḥallāj was not limited to ‘orthodox’ authors. In his ‘autobiography’, *Misbāḥ al-anwār*, Al-Ghazālī criticized al-Ḥallāj’s claims of having attained a union with God as exaggerated. He refers to al-Ḥallāj’s famous *ana al-ḥaqiq* alongside two similar statements (ed. and trans. by D. Buchman (Provo,UT, 1998), p. 20). Ibn Sabʿīn quotes this passage from *Misbāḥ al-anwār* in his *Sicilian Questions* (see Akasoy, *Philosophie und
philosophy and Sufism in a general or vague manner, Ibn Taymiyya targeted a specific use of philosophy among these Sufis. One of Ibn Taymiyya’s main concerns was that Sufism should aim for submission to God’s laws, whereas philosophers sought to understand the essence of God — an endeavour considered blame-worthy by the pious theologian. Ibn Taymiyya was particularly concerned with the attributes of God and defended *itbāṭ al-ṣifāt* against the views of Mutazilites and Asharites.

It was Ibn Taymiyya more than any other polemical author who targeted the metaphysico-cosmological implications of the doctrine which came to symbolize radical Western Sufism, the already mentioned *waḥdat al-wujūd*. In one of his refutations of this doctrine (*Iḥtāl waḥdat al-wujūd*) Ibn Taymiyya claims that it comprised two basic principles, both of which are wrong and opposed to the beliefs of Muslims, Jews, and Christians as well as to reason. The first principle claims that the existence of the creator and the creation are one and the same: *inna al-wujūd wāḥid fa-l-wujūd al-wājīb li-l-khāliq buwa al-wujūd al-mumkin li-l-makhluq* (there is only one existence, which means that the necessary existence of the creator is identical with the possible existence of the creation). According to Ibn Taymiyya this means mistaking the rays of the sun for the sun itself. He refers to this doctrine as *ḥulūl* (incarnation) or *ittiḥād* (unity, unification) and mentions as their main adherents Ibn al-‘Arabi, al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), Ibn Sab‘īn, ʿAffī al-Dīn al-Tilīmānī (d. 1291), Shushtārī (1212–1269), and others, most of whom are already mentioned in the list drawn up by Qaṣṭallānī. The second conviction is attributed to Ibn al-‘Arabi alone and concerns his concept of the *a‘yān thābita*. Apart from these initially mentioned reproaches much of what Ibn Taymiyya blames the adherents of *waḥdat al-wujūd* for can be subsumed under the category of the Jahmiyya, an early sect linked with the Murji‘a and known for their denial of the divine attributes and their claim that the Qur’ān was created, which served here simply as a general derogatory label for all those who deny the attributes.


54 There is an interesting parallel in the aversion against combinations of *fiqh* and kalam; see G. Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam* (Edinburgh, 1997).


56 Published in *Majmūʿat al-rasāʾil wa-l-masāʾil*, 5 vols in 2 (Cairo, 1923–30; repr. 1976), 1, 75–85.

57 I am following here Alexander Knysh’s translations in his *Ibn al-ʿArabī*. 
Ibn Taymiyya’s refutation of philosophical Sufism targets in particular ontological concepts that do not draw a clear line between creator and creation and thereby deny the unique character of divine existence, and deny as well God’s role as a creator upon whom the existence of the entire creation depends. Because of this common denial of the divine attribute ‘creator’ Ibn Taymiyya identifies the ideas of the Andalusian Sufis with the claims of the Jahmiyya who deny God’s attributes altogether. His criticism of the adherents of the unity of being can hardly be understood as an isolated case. It was part of the overall attack Ibn Taymiyya launched against his numerous enemies in the field of theology. In his Refutation of the Unity of Being he subsumed those who formed the main target of his criticism of metaphysical ideas under the category of the ‘pantheist Jahmiyya’ (ḥulūliyyat al-jahmiyya). Within this category he distinguished two groups. There were on the one hand the Sufis and common people who adhered to the doctrines of ḥulūl and ittiḥād and, on the other hand, the speculative and mutakallimūn Jahmiyya who defend nafy (negation) and taʿṭīl (denial of God’s attributes). Ibn Taymiyya explains this distinction and its rationale as follows: the Mutazilites serve nothing, whereas the Sufis serve everything. Since they need an object for their love and submission, but their hearts find nothing suitable above the earth, they try to encounter such an object in the world. This original description of the Sufi mind notwithstanding, what Ibn Taymiyya targeted in his Refutation was not the moderate and common mystical notion of faţā’ as abandoning self-centredness, but rather its radicalized metaphysical implications expressed in a philosophical language.

A shared concern of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldūn were the similarities between the metaphysico-cosmological ideas of the Sufi monists and the Christian doctrine of Incarnation. The tradition of blaming Sufis for their adoption of elements of Christianity is almost as old as Sufism itself. The reproach might indeed have a real basis in the origins of Sufism that are often associated with monasticism. It might also reflect a certain openness of the Sufis for people of other faiths. Yet, as former inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, Ibn al-ʿArabī, Ibn Sabʿīn, and other Sufis had certainly been witnesses to the violent side of Christian attitudes to Islam. Again, the concerns of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldūn had different tendencies: whereas Ibn Khaldūn dealt with the implications for political structures and power, Ibn Taymiyya seems to have been more occupied with the metaphysical similari-

58 Ibn Taymiyya, Ḥijāl (as in n. 56), p. 83.
ties between these concepts. Nevertheless, he distinguished clearly between the Christian tradition of ḥulūliyya and the Sufi tradition of ittiḥādiyya.⁶⁰

It is evident that Ibn Taymiyya was disturbed by the adherents of the unity of being not only because of the way the doctrine presented itself, but also because he associated it with positions which had been debated in the centre of the Islamic world for centuries. His opposition against the Jahmiyya and other enemies might very well have prefigured the manner in which he perceived the ideas of the philosophical mystics. But there might be other peculiarities of Andalusian Sufism that annoyed him. Even though Ibn Taymiyya did not join those who condemned philosophical Sufism in a general manner, he might have been alarmed by the implications of a very specific mixture. This might lead us further to an answer to the question what philosophical Sufism meant to these medieval Muslim polemical authors. To investigate this further I would like to have a closer look at the role philosophy plays in anti-Sufi polemics.

1. Use of Philosophical Terminology to Explain and Refute Sufi Ideas

In his refutations of the unity of being Ibn Taymiyya made use of philosophical terminology and concepts. To a certain extent, ‘philosophical Sufism’ by its very nature made this necessary. The most obvious point of contact with philosophy was the concern with ṭuwājīd, even if the Sufi musings upon this notion ventured beyond the boundaries set by philosophical debates, and even looked down on them.⁶¹ Nonetheless, they were not shy of occasionally using terms and concepts coined by Ibn Sīnā in his metaphysics. Interestingly enough, the impact of Avicennian philosophy on radical Sufism of Western origin was certainly more significant after it was transferred back eastward. When Ibn Taymiyya criticized al-Qūnawī, he targeted falsafa components of his metaphysics, which are evident, for example, in the latter’s correspondence with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, where al-Qūnawī included lengthy quotations from Ibn Sīnā’s Ta’līqāt.⁶²

⁶⁰ For the Hanbalite tradition of fighting these two, see H. Laoust, ‘Une fetwâ d’Ibn Taimiya sur Ibn Tûmart’, Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 59 (1960), 157–84 (p. 178).

⁶¹ William Chittick has suggested that for the Sufis, speculation about ṭuwājīd was not as important as mystical knowledge. See W. Chittick, ‘Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being’, International Philosophical Quarterly, 21 (1981), 171–84 (p. 177).

⁶² See Gudrun Schubert’s introduction to her edition of the correspondence: Al-Murāsalaḥ bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawi wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī / Annäherungen: Der
The difficulties of determining the significance of Avicennian terminology in this context are just one facet of a pressing and more general problem, namely the circulation of Ibn Sinā’s philosophical works in the Muslim West. The references to Ibn Sinā’s philosophy certainly are more pronounced among the Eastern heirs to Andalusian Sufism. Nonetheless, it is possible to detect traces of this influence among authors of the first generation. Ibn Sab’īn, for instance, defined God in his *Budd al-‘ārif* as *waḥīb al-wujūd,* a notion often associated with Ibn Sinā. Similarly, Ibn ʿArabī’s concept of *wujūd* might reflect Avicennian influences, but the exact relation between philosophy and mysticism in a particular author or text probably remains to a certain degree in the eye of the beholder. Further research into this question should also reconsider al-Fārābī as a possible earlier source for certain philosophical concepts.

Even though Ibn Taymiyya severely criticized philosophy, he employed it himself, for example in his attacks against philosophers in his *Refutation of the Logicians,* as has been pointed out many times. Also in his refutations of *waḥdat al-wujūd* one detects philosophical terminology in many cases. In his *The (True) Reality of the Teaching of Those Who Espouse the Doctrine of Incarnation* for instance, Ibn Taymiyya blames ʿAffī al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī for not distinguishing between essence (*māhiyya*) and existence (*wujūd*), a position which — according to Ibn Taymiyya — had already been rejected by the philosophers of ancient Greece. It is by no means evident that Ibn Taymiyya took this tack in order to fight the philosophical Sufis with their own weapons. Nowhere, to the extent of my knowledge, does Ibn Taymiyya explain why he uses this terminology.

*mystisch-philosophische Briefwechsel zwischen Ṣadr ud-Dīn-i Qonawi und Naṣīr ud-Dīn-i Ṭūsī* (Beirut, 1995).

63 See the contribution by Steven Harvey in the present volume. I would like to thank the author for providing me with a copy of his article.

64 Ibn Sab’īn, *Budd al-‘ārif,* p. 27.


66 Ibn Taymiyya, *Ḥaqqīyat madḥabb al-ittihatīyīn auw waḥdat al-wujūd wa-bayān buṭlānībihi bi’il-baraḥīn al-naqīliyya wa-l-‘aqīliyya,* in Majmūʿat al-rasāʾīl wa-l-maṣāʾīl (see n. 56, above), iv, 28.
Taftāzānī, who compared the Sufis and ancient Sophists, provided an interesting explanation for his use of philosophy. 67 Since, according to Taftāzānī, the radical Sufis did not adhere sufficiently to the Islamic traditions, one should employ logic to refute them. 68 Taftāzānī argued that if, for example, one applied the Sufi concept of absolute existence to Ibn ‘Arabi’s Fushūr al-hikam, one would discover a number of inner contradictions. 69 One of these contradictions was that if the differences between sinners and believers were dissolved and there was neither punishment nor reward in the Hereafter, there would be no paradise and hell altogether.

It is noteworthy that Taftāzānī remarks explicitly that the method of logical refutation was also employed against Christians and Jews. 70 This constitutes in a way a different face of the use of philosophy as a neutral field of encounter in inter-religious contexts, which can be witnessed in several cases throughout Islamic history. From the early days of kalam onwards, it also served as a battlefield.

2. Philosophical Convictions of the Sufis: The Eternity of the World

The doctrine of wâḥdat al-wujūd and its followers were sometimes explicitly associated with philosophical ideas or specific philosophers. Ibn Taymiyya dealt for example in his Ihâl with a variation of this doctrine according to which the distinction between necessary and possible existence correlates with the distinction between matter and form. 71 Ibn Taymiyya attributed this view to the philosophers and similarly to Ibn Sab‘în and other radical Sufis.

Al-Birûnî in his Kitâb fi taḥqîq mā lil-Hînd referred to a doctrine held by the Greek philosophers, according to which only the First Cause has wujūd and is ḥaqiq, everything else is khayāl. This view, al-Birûnî said, is shared by the Sufis. 72 All these reproaches targeted the metaphysical or ontological premises of philosophical Sufism, but often they remained rather vague or have to be understood against the background of a more comprehensive attack against adherents of heretical ideas.

67 Knysh, Ibn Arabi, p. 157. The text was not available to me.
71 Ibn Taymiyya, Ihâl, p. 81.
A curious feature connected with the critique of philosophical Sufism is the accusation that they defend the eternity of the world, a debate which is essentially linked with the interpretation of the Aristotelian Physics and Metaphysics. If one assumes that the essence of the creator and that of the creation are identical, as the adherents of wahdat al-wujūd are supposed to claim, the eternity of the world is a logical conclusion. In the context of radical Sufism, however, this discussion seems alien, if not out of place since the radical mystics denied the validity of peripatetic concepts and problems.

Accusing somebody of defending the eternity of the world — or in other terms, denying God’s role as creator — is not uncommon in Islamic polemics. Ascribing this heretical idea to the Andalusian Sufis might simply be an expression of the polemists’ conviction that they had reached the ultimate degree of un-Islamic beliefs. But there might be more behind the reproach than a general accusation of heresy. After all, Ibn Sabîn dedicated one chapter of his Sicilian Questions to the eternity of the world as a philosophical problem. Ibn Sabîn’s position remains strangely unclear in this text. At the beginning he states that Aristotle had discussed this problem and clearly expressed his opinion, but Ibn Sabîn fails to mention what this opinion is. He declares that in large measure the problem is due to the ambiguity of the word qidam (eternity), and, moreover, that this expression was attributed to Aristotle by later authors — an argument he might have borrowed from Ibn Rushd’s Quaestiones in Physica. This seems to suggest that Ibn Sabîn considered Aristotle an adherent of the createdness of the world. However,


75 Akasoy, Philosophie und Mystik, pp. 341–58 (Arabic) and 413–49 (German).

when he lists a number of proofs for each side of the debate, it is the proofs for
the eternity of the world that are based on Aristotle’s works whereas the proofs
for the createdness are declared Asharite and clearly resemble a similar list in Ibn
Rush’d’s Kasbā ‘an manābij al-adilla.77 Ibn Sab’īn’s explanations remain strangely
contradictory and one might wonder whether this is a deliberate strategy. After all,
Maimonides had described in his Guide for the Perplexed a method of employ-
ing contradictions in order to disguise certain views for the uninitiated,78 and it is
sometimes assumed that Maimonides himself used this strategy for expressing his
secret view on the eternity of the world.79 Even though Ibn Sab’īn lived during the
last years of a waning Almohad regime, his philosophical works are influenced
by doctrines propagated by this movement and its most prominent exponent,
Ibn Rushd. In Paris Averroism would become synonymous with the doctrine of
the eternity of the world. Yet, the style of the Sicilian Questions does not suggest
any such elaboration method, and Ibn Sab’īn himself accuses the Mutazilites in his
Risāla faqīriyya of defending the eternity of the world since they declare that
non-existence (‘adām) is a thing.80

Be this as it may, had a polemicist noticed this text, he would have had a
good argument for claiming that Ibn Sab’īn defended the eternity of the world in
a philosophical sense. Yet, it was not Ibn Sab’īn’s tract but rather the following
anecdote about Ibn ʿArabī around which the polemics circled:

Once Ibn al-ʿArabī and Ibn Surāqa were walking through the Bab al-Faradīs. Ibn
al-ʿArabī said: After so many thousand years, another Ibn al-ʿArabī and another
Ibn Surāqa will be walking through this same gate, and they will have the same
appearance.81

77 Ibn Sab’īn in Akasoy, Philosophie und Mystik, pp. 354 (Arabic) and 442 (German).
trans.: Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes’ Exposition of Religious Arguments, trans. by
in Saadia, Averroes, Maimonides and St. Thomas’, in Saadia Anniversary Volume (New
York, 1943), pp. 197–245 (pp. 211–12).

78 M. Fox, Interpreting Maimonides: Studies in Methodology, Metaphysics, and Mor-
al Philosophy (Chicago, 1990), pp. 67–90 (‘Maimonides’ Method of Contradiction: A New
View’).

Jewish History and Literature, ed. by I. Twersky, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1979–84), 1,
16–40.


81 Knysh, Ibn ʿArabī, p. 57. For an analysis of this anecdote see pp. 66–72.
The fact that Ibn Taymiyya’s and other polemists’ reproaches directed against the Sufis in connection with the eternity of the world were, at least in the case of Ibn al-‘Arabī, slightly confused was not lost on later authors; perhaps it caused further confusion among them. They were too well acquainted with Ibn ʿArabī’s writings to suspect him of defending such explicitly philosophical ideas.\(^{82}\)

It remains an open question how sure Ibn Taymiyya himself was about the Sufis’ doctrines, and not just in the case of the eternity of the world. One perceives a certain divergence between his descriptions of their ideas and his arguments against them. For example, Ibn Taymiyya begins his *Refutation of the Unity of Being* by listing Ibn Sabīn’s heretical utterances, but these play no role later on. In the case of Ibn al-ʿArabī things are different. Ibn Taymiyya is an exception among the polemical authors insofar as he had actually studied the *Fusūṣ al-ḥikam* carefully. Yet it remains unclear, for example, where Ibn Taymiyya took the key term *waḥdat al-wujūd* from. As William Chittick pointed out in several publications,\(^{83}\) even though Ibn ʿArabī might have defended the concept of the unity of being, the term does not appear in his writings but owes its prominence to the polemical tradition. Ibn Sabīn used the term,\(^{84}\) but no systematic exposition of the concept is preserved among his known writings.

It is also important to take Ibn Taymiyya’s personal confrontation with the Sufis in Egypt into consideration. Not unlike Ibn Khaldūn Ibn Taymiyya considered the Andalusian Sufis a significant danger for the political order of Islamic societies. At the beginning of his *The (True) Reality of the Teaching of Those Who Espouse the Doctrine of Incarnation*, Ibn Taymiyya discusses one of the most important dangers these people presented to a Muslim society. They bear a superficial resemblance to true believers and even prophets, so that simple people can be mistaken concerning their character. For Ibn Taymiyya, the adherents of *waḥdat al-wujūd* constitute another case in the tradition of false prophets that has maintained itself since the beginning of Islam, and he equates them with diviners and poets.\(^{85}\)

Yet, in Ibn Taymiyya’s case, this was more than merely a theoretical concern. He attacks the mystics not only for their heretical metaphysics, but also for their current impact on intellectual and political life. Time and again Ibn Taymiyya

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\(^{83}\) See for example his article on *waḥdat al-wujūd* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and other publications mentioned here in this article.

\(^{84}\) For example, in his *Kitāb fībī ḥikam wa-mawāʾīz* in Ibn Sabīn, *Rasāʾil* (see n. 80, above), p. 38.

emphasizes how influential those ideas were among contemporary Sufis. This emphasis is part and parcel of Ibn Taymiyya’s own repeated involvement in political confrontations and his attacks on the ontological premises of philosophical Sufism are in line with his singling them out as his most pronounced political enemies.86

To come back to my initial argument concerning the reproach of defending the eternity of the world: Ibn Taymiyya might not have known the Sicilian Questions, but he might have known enough about Ibn Sab‘īn, his philosophical views, and their possible Almohad background to suspect him and other Andalusian Sufis of such ‘Averroist’ views. An intriguing example of Ibn Taymiyya’s concern about Almohad ideology is a fatwā directed against the Almohad Mahdi Ibn Tūmart in which he uses some of the arguments that appear in his Refutation of the Unity of Being. In this fatwā it is particularly evident that Ibn Taymiyya’s attacks against philosophical Sufism were not isolated but involved a long and extensive tradition of Hanbalite fights against opponents in theology.87 Ibn Taymiyya launches an attack against the Jahmiyya — ‘philosophers, Mutazilites and others who deny the attributes’ — and does not fail to recount the persecutions during the early ‘Abbāsid mihna. Ibn Taymiyya sees Ibn Tūmart in this Jahmite context and claims that according to some Jahmites God is wujūd muṭlaq in the sense that He does not have any attributes. Such an existence, Ibn Taymiyya argues here (as well as in other texts), exists only in human imagination. Other Jahmites claim that God is inherent in his creation. Ibn Tūmart belongs, according to the fatwā, to the first group since he claimed that God was such a wujūd muṭlaq. Ibn Taymiyya identifies this position with the views of Ibn Sinā and Ibn Sab‘īn.

As is evident from this fatwā as well as from Ibn Taymiyya’s other refutations of the unity of being,88 this polemicist was particularly concerned with the term wujūd muṭlaq, which he identified with the denial of God’s attributes. The term appears in a great number of Arabic texts throughout the Middle Ages and does not always have the same meaning. In his study on Ibn al-‘Arabī’s epistemology, William Chittick pointed out that wujūd is not only the verbal noun of wajada in the passive


87 Laoust, ‘Une fatwâ d’Ibn Taimiya sur Ibn Tûmart’.

88 Ibn Taymiyya mentions Ibn Sinā’s idea of a wujūd muṭlaq also in his Refutation of the Unity of Being, p. 81.
meaning of ‘to be found’, i.e., ‘to exist’, but also of the active meaning, ‘to find’. For a Sufi, \textit{wujūd muṭlaq} could have two inseparable dimensions at least: God’s absolute existence (based on the passive meaning), and the exclusive focus of the Sufi on God, ‘to see only God’, which is derived from the active meaning of \textit{wajada}. In the philosophy of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sinā, \textit{wujūd muṭlaq} conveys the idea of God’s necessary being. The closeness to the term \textit{wājib al-wujūd} is reflected in Ramón Llull, who declared that the expression \textit{ens necessarium} corresponded to the Arabic \textit{bujudun muṭlaḥ}.

In his article on Şadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī’s concept of the unity of being William Chittick translates \textit{wujūd muṭlaq} as ‘nonentified being’ as opposed to \textit{wujūd muqayyad}, ‘entified being’. According to Qūnawī God alone is non-delimited being, and the first entification takes place when God has knowledge of Himself. A similar opposition of \textit{wujūd ʿalā al-ʾṭlāq} (‘absolutes Sein’) and \textit{wujūd muqayyad} (‘konditioniertes Sein’) was identified by Tilman Nagel as the backbone of Ibn Tūmart’s metaphysics. Nagel emphasized the parallels in Islamic law.

Ibn Taymiyya attributes the term \textit{wujūd muṭlaq} and his own understanding of it in a rather vague manner to Ibn Tūmart, Ibn Sinā, and Ibn Sabʿīn, which suggests that he did not have a very precise idea of what Ibn Sabʿīn or other radical Sufis meant by it. As mentioned above, it remains an open question to which degree the mysticism of Ibn ʿArabī already prefigured the combination with Ibn Sinā’s philosophy as practised by al-Qūnawī. It is possible that the \textit{fatwā} was an expression of an urgent concern of Ibn Taymiyya evoked in a very specific situation: Henri Laoust, who edited and translated the text, suggested that it was written during Ibn Taymiyya’s stay in Alexandria, a city which harboured like no other in the Eastern Mediterranean Maghrebian communities. It might have been here more than anywhere else that Ibn Taymiyya encountered the intellectual tendencies of the Arab West which he targeted in his writings: Mālikism, Zahirism, and radical


\textsuperscript{91} Chittick, ‘Şadr al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being’.

\textsuperscript{92} Nagel, \textit{Im Offenkundigen das Verborgene}, pp. 105–16.
Sufism. It was also in Alexandria that Ibn Taymiyya responded to another urgent concern by writing his *Refutation of the Greek Logicians*, and one might consider the possibility that these refutations influenced each other.

**Conclusion**

In the Eastern Mediterranean the expatriates from the Muslim West retained certain peculiarities of Andalusian intellectual culture. To put it differently, certain features of their biographies and works can be explained by their Andalusian character. Some of these peculiarities are rather obvious: Ṭūṭūšī, for instance, reacted differently to the arrival of the Crusaders than did other Muslims who had not yet made the acquaintance of the ‘reconquistadores’. The immigrants from al-Andalus urged a *jihād* to defend Muslim territories. In their views of how non-Muslims living in the Dār al-Īslām should be treated, they often turned out to be particularly harsh. In other cases, Andalusians in the Eastern Mediterranean showed a great openness to other faiths, which might reflect more peaceful instances of co-existence in the Iberian Peninsula. The branch of the Sab‘iyya in Damascus included Jewish and Christian members, and Jewish Egypt witnessed under Moses Maimonides’ son Abraham the rise of a whole movement of Jewish Sufis.

With the increase of migration and, at roughly the same time, the emergence of various radicalizing tendencies, the conditions of intellectual encounters between Muslims of the Western and Eastern Mediterranean changed fundamentally. The conflicts became fiercer in the wake of the activities of Ibn al-‘Arabī and Ibn Taymiyya. Nonetheless, the case of Abū Bakr al-Ṭūṭūšī suggests that many of these debates were prefigured in the eleventh century, possibly even earlier.

The polemics against philosophical Sufism are to a certain degree peculiar to the East. One can partly explain it as a specific reaction to the personal impact of Ibn al-‘Arabī. Yet, there should have been more behind it. We can distinguish in the polemics three main reproaches around the influence of philosophy: the syncretistic tendencies also associated with al-Ghazālī, the eternity of the world also associated with Ibn Rushd, and a concept of prophecy inspired by philosophical

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94 Pouzet, ‘De Murcie à Damas’.
epistemology. At least the first two are distinctive features of the philosophical culture of al-Andalus. Ibn Taymiyya might not have been familiar with Ibn Sab‘in’s and his fellow Sufis’ biographies and works, but their Andalusian background might have made them suspicious. Ibn Taymiyya as well as others understood the ideas from the West in terms of what they were familiar with: Mutazilism, kalam, Ibn Sinā’s ontology. Yet, their criticism also reflects peculiarities of the West, and some of their reproaches were not at all unfounded.

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The Chapter ‘On Existence and Non-existence’ of Ibn Kammūna’s *al-Jadīd fī l-Ḥikma*: Trends and Sources in an Author’s Shaping the Exegetical Tradition of al-Suhrawardī’s Ontology

Heidrun Eichner

The time surrounding the turn of the twelfth/thirteenth (sixth/seventh) century is an important period in the history of the Arabic reception of Avicenna’s ontology. By this time, a certain interpretative tradition regarding the Avicennan distinction between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ had been constructed. Subsequently, important and influential schools of thought emerged, partly fostered by a critical discussion of these two concepts. In the course of the later reception, an antagonism developed between a theory of a priority of ‘essence’ over ‘existence’ (connected with the name of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardi, executed in 1191) and a theory of a priority of ‘existence’ over ‘essence’ (connected with the name of Muhyī al-Dīn b. al-ʿArabī, d. 1240).

While the thirteenth century has to be regarded as the formative period where important later trends in the history of Post-Avicennan ontology manifest themselves, very few attempts have been made so far to give detailed, source-based accounts of the thought and intellectual affiliations of important authors of that period. To be more specific, what we need are accounts that are not projections of the later interpretative tradition, or, more precisely, projections of the Iranian interpretative tradition.

In response to this need, I propose to offer here a case study based on the chapter on ‘existence’ of Ibn Kammūna’s *al-Jadīd fī l-ḥikma*. I would like to

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1 On the title of this work, the manuscript tradition as well as further information, see R. Pourjavady and S. Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher of Bagdad: Izz al-Dawla ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284) and his Writings* (Leiden, 2006), especially pp. 87–92.
draw attention to two major interconnected problems regarding the formation of intellectual affiliations and schools of thought in the thirteenth century. The importance of these problems transcends the context of the development of ontological theories and touches upon the formation of major strands in the Arabic interpretation and reception of Avicennan philosophy.

(1) In order to understand how certain ontological theories have developed which later came to be depicted as antagonistic, the full spectrum of positions held in the contemporary discussion of the thirteenth century must be considered. One must look closely in order to determine the extent to which these positions stand in a dialogue with each other and react to each other. This requires not so much a doxographical analysis of isolated positions as it does an analysis of the ways these different positions may have emerged from different notions as to how one ought to frame, and how one ought to solve, philosophical problems prominent in the shared discourse. Applying this approach to the analysis of the relation between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’, the demarcations between the positions held by different authors have to be drawn in a different way than the later tradition depicts them. This later tradition, heavily influenced by tools and concepts of Asharite theology, construes the relation between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ as the question of the attribution of ‘existence’ to an ‘essence’ (al-Ghazâlî, Fâkhr al-Dîn al-Râzî). As opposed to this, both al-Suhrawardi and Ibn ‘Arabî stress that the starting point must be the ‘existent’, which then becomes the object of an analysis carried out by and in the mind. In this context, the importance of the philosophical works of Fâkhr al-Dîn al-Râzî (and especially of his al-Mulakibkhsâfî l-ḥikma) for understanding the continuum of philosophical problems in the later reception of Avicennan philosophy in general, and the debates on ontological theories of the thirteenth century in particular, can hardly be exaggerated.

(2) When investigating the formation of philosophical traditions that distance themselves in one way or the other from Ibn Sînâ, special attention has to be directed towards establishing the factors that shaped the perception of what we may call the canonical Avicennan position. In this connection, we must not forget the importance of shorter works by Ibn Sînâ as opposed to the comprehensive exposition of the Kitâb al-Sbijât, and we must also study the impact of more or less ‘Avicennan’ philosophies in works such as Bahmanyâr’s Kitâb al-Tahsîl, al-Ghazâlî’s Maqaṣîd al-falâsîfâ, and Fâkhr al-Dîn al-Râzî’s al-Mulakbâbhsâfî l-ḥikmâ. It appears to be the case that in certain contexts these works were far more influential for shaping the image of Ibn Sînâ’s teachings than Ibn Sînâ’s own writings.

In the following, I shall discuss some features of the chapter ‘On existence and non-existence’ in Ibn Kamûnâ’s al-fâdîd fî l-ḥikmâ. Ibn Kamûnâ’s Sharh al-Talwîbât was very influential for the later interpretative tradition of al-Suhrawardi’s
thought, but *al-jadid fi l-ḥikma* is the work in which Ibn Kammūna expounds his own philosophical thought in a treatise which is not designed as a commentary. The *al-jadid fi l-ḥikma* is marked by a very peculiar structure: it is divided into seven sections (*bāb*), each of which is divided into seven chapters (*faṣl*). While this heptad division is a specialty of Ibn Kammūna, a closer look at his presentation of ontology immediately reveals that the *al-jadid fi l-ḥikma* — like many other contemporary works — is influenced by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s *al-Mulakbkbaš fi l-ḥikma*. In particular, the second of the seven sections of *al-jadid*, ‘On things common to all concepts’ (*fi l-umūr al-‘āmma li-l-maḥbūmat kullībā*), is influenced not only in its title but also in its further subdivision by the concept of the *al-umūr al-‘āamma*. Units bearing this caption are found in many philosophical and theological works from the thirteenth century onwards. This concept of the *al-umūr al-‘āamma* had been introduced by two works by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, his *al-Mulakbkbaš fi l-ḥikma* and his *al-Mabāḥīth al-Masbriqīyya*. There, the *al-umūr al-‘āmma* take up five chapters. The *al-jadid fi l-ḥikma* slightly modifies this schema and supplements the five *al-umūr al-‘āmma* by two more units.

When in the course of my analysis I refer to the *al-Mulakbkbaš fi l-ḥikma* as a source and as a point of reference for comparison with Ibn Kammūna’s argument, this does not mean that the *al-Mulakbkbaš* is certainly to be identified as Ibn Kammūna’s immediate source. It still remains to be determined more precisely just how the *al-jadid* fits into the spectrum of the early reception of the *al-Mulakbkbaš*.³

Some traces of the wording of al-Suhrawardi’s *Kītāb al-Talwiḥāt* (i.e., a work on which Ibn Kammūna had written a commentary roughly a decade before he wrote the *al-jadid*)⁴ can be identified at the beginning of the text (see *infra*, §1).

Besides these two works that date from the late twelfth century,⁵ the *Kītāb al-Taḥṣīl* of Ibn Sinā’s student Bahmanyār b. al-Marzūbān can be identified as the

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² A similar division is also applied in his shorter *al-Maṭālib al-mubīmma min ʿilm al-ḥikma*; see Pourjavady and Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher*, p. 92.

³ While Ibn Kammūna was familiar with al-Abhari’s *Muntabā al-asfār* (see Pourjavady and Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher*, p. 28), neither the *Muntabā* nor the *Kasbī al-ḥāqāʾiq* nor the *Kītāb al-sbuḵūk* (three works by al-Abhari which are based immediately on the *al-Mulakbkbaš*) was the immediate source of the chapter under consideration here.

⁴ The commentary on the *al-Talwiḥāt* was completed in 667/1268 (see Pourjavady and Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher*, p. 63); the *al-jadid fi l-Ḥikma* was completed in 676/1278 (see ibid., p. 87).

⁵ According to Leiden University Library, MS Or. 1510, the *al-Mulakbkbaš* was completed in 579/1184; see R. Sellheim, *Materialien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, Verzeichnis
most important point of reference for Ibn Kammūna. The way, in the chapter on ‘existence’, Ibn Kammūna chooses his quotations for pasting and paraphrasing the text from the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil suggests that the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil provides the basic outline of the chapter, which Ibn Kammūna then supplements with additional problems.6 On the other hand, the second chapter of Ibn Kammūna’s al-umūr al-‘āmma, dealing with ‘essence’, is not based on Bahmanyār’s text, but rather follows largely the corresponding section of al-Rāzī’s al-umūr al-‘āmma in the al-Mulakbkbaṣ.

For the makeup of the course of Ibn Kammūna’s argument about the relation between essence and existence, it is important to observe that there is a conflict between his two main sources, the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil and the al-Mulakbkbaṣ fi l-ḥikma: the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil, written by a student of Ibn Sinā, constitutes the earliest text written by an author other than Ibn Sinā himself which aims at presenting a systematic presentation of a philosophical system based on Ibn Sinā’s philosophy. Thus, it likewise is the earliest account that tries to give a systematic sketch of the two concepts ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ developed in Ibn Sinā’s writings. The Kitāb al-Taḥṣil devotes the first two chapters of its section on metaphysics (‘ilm mā ba’d al-ṭabi‘a) to a discussion of these two concepts: the first chapter deals with ‘existence’, and the second chapter deals with ‘essence’. These two chapters of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil roughly cover the course of the argument of Chapter 1.5, ‘On pointing to “existent” and “thing” and to their primary parts’ in Ibn Sinā’s Kitāb

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6 In the chapter under consideration here, the philosophical differences between Bahmanyār’s discussion of ‘existence’ and that by Ibn Sinā might suggest that Ibn Kammūna’s choice of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil (and not Ibn Sinā’s Kitāb al-Shīfā) as his point of reference was deliberate. However, also in a passage like the chapter on ‘necessity, contingency and impossibility’ where Bahmanyār paraphrases the Kitāb al-Shīfā very closely, Ibn Kammūna follows the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil rather than the Kitāb al-Shīfā (see Ibn Kammūna, al-Jadīd fi l-ḥikma, ed. by Ḥamīd Marīd al-Kabīsī (Baghdad, 1982), pp. 233.9–8, Bahmanyār, Kitāb al-Taḥṣil, ed. by M. Motahheri (Tehran, 1971), pp. 290.14–291.11, and Ibn Sinā, Kitāb al-Shīfā‘ (Ilāhiyyāt), ed. by G. Anawati and S. Zayed (Cairo, 1960), pp. 35.3–36.6). This observation might suggest that for Ibn Kammūna the choice of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil was not so much motivated by philosophical considerations but rather by the importance of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil as one authoritative exposition of Avicennan philosophy in the thirteenth century. It might be worth investigating whether the fact that Ibn Kammūna (as opposed to his quasi contemporaries al-Abharī and al-Kātibī) chose not to rely primarily on al-Rāzī, has to be seen in the light of his standing closer to al-Suhrawardi’s philosophy.
al-Shífā’, which ends with a discussion of whether or not what has perished can return to existence.

Al-Rāzī’s al-Mulakkhaṣaṣ ǧī 1-ḥikma likewise begins its ontological discussion with two chapters of which the first deals with ‘existence’ (uṣūjūd), and the second with ‘essence’ (mābīyya). The series of topics treated in these two chapters (i.e., the first two units of al-Rāzī’s al-umūr al-ʿāmma) exerts a very great influence on the later tradition. Al-Rāzī includes a more comprehensive list of topics than does Bahmanyār. The topics covered in Chapter 1.5 of Ibn Sīnā’s Kitāb al-Shīfā’ are dealt with in the chapter on ‘existence’, while the chapter on ‘essence’ is based on materials stemming from other parts of the Kitāb al-Shīfā’ as well. If we compare the al-Mulakkhaṣaṣ to the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl, the difference in the structure manifests itself, for example, by the fact that the problem of whether or not what has perished can return to existence is dealt with in the chapter on ‘existence’ in the al-Mulakkhaṣaṣ. The Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl, however, deals with this problem in the chapter on ‘essence’. Al-Jadid ǧī 1-ḥikma integrates the two approaches by combining in the chapter ‘On essence’ arguments and quotations from the first two chapters (‘existence’ and ‘essence’) of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl, and arguments going back to the first chapter (‘existence’) of the al-umūr al-ʿāmma of al-Rāzī’s al-Mulakkhaṣaṣ ǧī 1-ḥikma.

To make it easier to follow the course of the argument in the al-Jadid ǧī 1-ḥikma I shall introduce a division into paragraphs (which is not present in the text itself). Following this division, I either paraphrase or translate Ibn Kammūna’s argument. By identifying how Ibn Kammūna’s argument relates to its two main texts of reference, that is, Bahmanyār’s Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s al-Mulakkhaṣaṣ ǧī 1-ḥikma, I hope to provide some material for situating the analysis of Ibn Kammūna’s argument in its historical context. His elaborations on the terminology for the essence-existence distinction in particular, as well as his discussion of how mental existence is constituted, show that Ibn Kammūna’s treatment of these problems in the al-Jadid ǧī 1-ḥikma is highly original. The most interesting feature in the passage, however, is the connection that Ibn Kammūna establishes between the concept of the ‘secondary intelligibles’ (al-maʿqūlāt al-tbawānī) and al-Suhrawardī’s analysis of existence as a mental construct (see §11).

Synopsis

(§1) Definition of existence.
(§2) Is ‘existence’ or ‘thingness/essence’ more general? Different terminologies.
(§3) ‘Existence’ is identical with being a concrete being; it is not that by which something is a concrete being.
(§4) The notion of ‘existence’ is predicated ambiguously.

(§5) The concept of ‘existence’ is one; this is intuitive.

(§6) ‘Existence’ is common like a concomitant, not like a genus.

(§7) Being in the soul is ‘by existence’.

(§8) Concretization takes place not only by the substrate but also by the differentia specifica.

(§9) ‘Existences’ are notions whose names are not known.

(§10) Existence as predication of the intellect and the relation between existence and essence.

(§11) ‘Existence’ and ‘thing’ are secondary intelligibles.

(§12) Existence as a relation.

(§13) Divisions of ‘existent’.

(§14) Existence ‘in writing’ and ‘in speech’.

(§15) Existence ‘in the mind’.

(§16) Return of what has perished.  

Analysis

(§1) The chapter on ‘existence’ of Ibn Kammūna’s al-fadād fi l-hikma begins with the statement that ‘existence’ can not be defined because its conception is primary (awwali ). Nothing is more general than existence. Therefore, any attempt to define ‘existence’ is a mistake, since the notion ‘existence’ would have to be used in its own definition.

The wording of this first paragraph is based on a passage from the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil (see Appendix (1)), which in its turn paraphrases the Kitāb al-Shifā’. Both

7 My paragraphs begin in the text of the edition on the following page and line numbers: (§1) 211.4, al-wujūd lâ yuṣkhīn taḥdīdūbū; (§2) 211.13, wa-l-sbay‘iya a’amr min al-wujūd; (§3) 212.6, wa-l-wujūd fī l-ayyān; (§4) 212.12, wa-l-wujūd lâ yuḥmāl; (§5) 212.16, wa-law lām yuṣkh man maṣbūman al-wujūd maṣbūman wāḥidūn; (§6) 212.21, wa-‘umūmiyyatūb [‘umūmiyyatū al-lāzim; (§7) 212.22, wa-idhā kāna ‘amman (§8) 213.1, wa-laysa ta‘ayyūn kull wujūd; (§9) 213.4, fa-l-wujūdūt ma‘ānī; (§10) 213.7, wa-law lām yuṣkh al-wujūd; (§11) 214.10, fa-l-wujūd wa-l-sbay‘ tabayyāna; (§12) 214.12, wa-qad yuṣqūlū al-wujūd ‘alā l-nisab; (§13) 214.19, wa-l-mawjūd yuṣqisim ilā mā; (§14) 215.10, wa-yuṣqūlū li-l-sbay‘; (§15) 215.13, wa-immār yadullū; (§16) 217.4, wa-l-ma‘āmil lā yu’ādū bi‘-aynībī.
in the *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ* and in the *Kitāb al-Tahṣil*, the statement that existence is a most primary notion is situated in the context that existence, or ‘the existent insofar as it is existent’ constitutes the subject matter of a universal science which in the *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ* is called *Ihābiyyāt* (divine science), and in the *Kitāb al-Tahṣil* is called ‘ilm mā baʿd al-ṭabiʿa (metaphysics). Ibn Kamīnūa does not refer to the constitution of the subject matter of such a universal science, a topic which features very prominently in Ibn Sinā’s discussion of the metaphysics; this omission is related to the way he structures his own book. *Al-Jādīd* does not contain a section on such a universal science; instead, the ontological enquiry is framed in a section (ḥāb (2)) on ‘common things’, a unit whose conception Ibn Kamīnūa takes over from al-Rāzī’s *al-Mulakkībaš fi l-ḥikma*. While the conception of the *al-umūr al-ʾāmma* in a certain way represents a continuation of Ibn Sinā’s discussion of the constitution of metaphysics, in the *al-umūr al-ʾāmma* the discussion of ‘existence’ is no longer set in relation with the constitution of the subject matter of such a science. In al-Rāzī’s *al-umūr al-ʾāmma*, the first paragraph states that existence is not in need of a definition, and that it is intuitive.

In two passages of this first section of the *al-Jādīd*, the influence of al-Suhrawardi’s *al-Talwiḥāt* (a work on which Ibn Kamīnūa had written a commentary a decade before he wrote the *al-Jādīd*) can be traced. When Ibn Kamīnūa mentions among the terms employed in futile attempts to define existence not only the two concepts of ‘active’ and ‘passive’ but also ‘pre-eternal’ and ‘temporally originated’ (ḥādīt, qadīm), he is influenced by the text of the *al-Talwiḥāt*. Likewise, the wording ‘to take something into its own definition’ can be traced to the *al-Talwiḥāt*, but not to the *Kitāb al-Tahṣil* or to the *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*.

(§2) In the passage translated below, Ibn Kamīnūa raises the question, which of the two concepts is more general: ‘thingness’ or ‘existence’? This attests to the fact that by the time Ibn Kamīnūa wrote his *al-Jādīd*, these two notions had already developed into well-defined and distinguishable concepts. Moreover, in *al-Jādīd*.

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we can discern an awareness of the fact that the historical development of these two concepts has given rise to a variety of competing terminological conventions.

[i.1] ‘Thingness’ is more general than ‘existence’ under the consideration that an intelligible [maʻquṭ] — which is impossible or possible, but which is non-existent — is a thing in the intellect [šbayrī ḥayl] because it has a form in the intellect, and it does not have ‘existence’.

This consideration holds true only if existence is applied specifically to what is among concrete beings. [i.2] If it is understood in a way that is more general than [both] this [concrete existence] and mental [existence, the following holds true]:

It [i.e., the aforementioned non-existent, be it possible or impossible] is a ‘thing’, and considering its being intelligible, it is ‘existent in the mind’. And as it is ‘not existent among concrete beings’ it is not a ‘thing among concrete beings’ [šbayrī ḥayl-ā‘yān].

Further, following another consideration, under one aspect, ‘thingness’ is more general than ‘existence’, and more specific under another aspect: [ii.1] The aspect of its being more general is that it [i.e., thingness] is predicated of it [i.e., existence] and of the essence which is assumed for it. [ii.2] But the aspect of its being more specific is that ‘existence’ is predicated of the specified essence [al-mābiyya al-mukbaṣṣaṣa] and of its concomitant ‘thingness’ as far as it results from a mental consideration [‘alā i‘tibār al-shayrīyya al-lābīqa labā] because they have existence — even if so only in the mind.

[iii] According a third consideration they — I mean: ‘thingness’ and ‘existence’ — are two synonyms whose meaning falls into two parts: ‘among concrete beings’ and ‘mental’.

If [the expression] ‘existence’ is used, usually ‘existence among concrete beings’ is intended.10

The three possibilities introduced by Ibn Kammūna can be visualized by the following graphics:

i.1:  

\[\text{thingness} \quad \text{existence} \quad \text{non-existent} \quad \text{intelligible}\]

i.2:  

\[\text{existence} \quad \text{thingness} \quad \text{existence among concrete beings} \quad \text{‘non-existent’} \quad \text{intelligible} \quad \text{mental existence} \]

\[(\text{relation between ‘existence’ and ‘thingness’: not specified})\]

10 Ibn Kammūna, al-Jadīd, pp. 211.13–212.5.
(§3) After this, Ibn Kammūnā returns to paraphrasing Bahmanyār’s text (see Appendix (2)) and analyses how ‘existence’ relates to ‘being among concrete beings’. Bahmanyār had insisted that ‘being among concrete beings’ is not that *by which* something is found among concrete beings, but that it is identical with ‘being among concrete beings’. Otherwise, there would result an infinite regress. In the course of the spread of al-Suhrawardi’s criticism of a conception of the relation between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ as a relation of attribution, analogous arguments operating with the motive of an infinite regress came to be employed, and it remains to be investigated more closely how the elaboration of these arguments can be related to the reception of Bahmanyār’s *Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl*.11

11 The question of which sources precisely underlie Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī’s interpretation and exposition of Avicennan philosophy in his *al-Mulakīkbaš fi l-ḥikma* and in the *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqīyya* is certainly one of the most important *desiderata* in the investigation of the transformation of Avicennan philosophy in the course of its reception. The passages of the *al-Mulakīkbaš* that are discussed in §3 and §4 offer very strong evidence that the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl* has directly influenced al-Rāzī’s exposition. While al-Rāzī follows Bahmanyār’s analysis in §3 quite closely, the discussion of the notion of *tasbih* which is contained in §4 seems to have inspired al-Rāzī to add another paragraph in which he argues that existence does not accept intensification and diminution (al-Rāzī, *al-Mulakīkbaš fi l-ḥikma*, Berlin Staatsbibliothek, MS Or. Oct. 623, fols 79b.19–80a.4: (10) *fi anna l-wujūd lā yaqbal al-isbtīdād we-l-tanaqquṣ fi l-baqīqa*). Bahmanyār’s analysis quoted in §3 can be discerned in the following *fasl* of the *al-Mulakīkbaš*: (9) *fi anna kawna al-māhiyyati qā’imatan laysa li-ajli šifatin qā’imatīn biḥā: li-anna l-‘llata sābiqatun ‘alā l-ma‘lālī fa-law kāna wujūdu l-shay‘i li-ajli šifatin qā’imatin bihi wa-qiyāmu l-šifat bihi yatawaqqafu
Al-Jadid fi l-ḥikma quotes the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl:

Existence among concrete beings is not that by which something is [found] among concrete beings, and if something would be among concrete beings by its being [found] among concrete beings, there would be an infinite regress. It may be correct that something is [found] among concrete beings, and then the existence which is ‘being [found] among concrete beings’ is that which is existent by it [al-mawjūd bibi — al-mawjūdīyya].

(§4) Ibn Kammūna then turns to explaining how ‘existence’ is predicated of existents: ‘Existence is predicated ambiguously [ḥaml al-tashkik], not univocally [ḥaml al-tawāṭu’.]

Here again, al-Jadid follows the text of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl. However, some important modifications can be observed. Bahmanyār had stated that existence which has no cause (al-uwjūd alladhi lā sabab labū) (i.e., the Necessary of existence, God) precedes existence which has a cause (al-uwjūd alladhi labū sabab), and likewise ‘substance’ precedes ‘accident’. For Bahmanyār, this distinction between caused and uncaused existence is related to the overarching conception of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl, as the hierarchical order of existents is depicted in the structure of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl. In al-Jadid, Bahmanyār’s statements are transformed. Ibn Kammūna says that the existence of the ‘cause’ (‘illa) is stronger and has higher priority (aquā wa-aqdadam) than the existence of the ‘effect’ (ma’īl). Ibn Kammūna supplements Bahmanyār’s statement that substance precedes accident, and that some existence is stronger or weaker, by a further classification of accidents: not only is the existence of ‘substance’ stronger than that of ‘accident’, but also the existence of a ‘stable accident’ (al-‘araq al-qārr) is stronger than that of an ‘instable accident’ (al-‘araq al-ghayr al-qārr), and the existence of a ‘non-relational accident’ (al-‘araq al-ghayr al-īḍāfi) is stronger than that of a ‘relational accident’ (al-‘araq al-īḍāfi). In the thirteenth century, these additional classifications of accidents gained prominence in several writings of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

'alā wujūdībi fi nafsībi lazima l-dawru. wa-kammā kāna dbālika muḥālan thabata anna l-wujūdā buwa nafsū l-kawāni l-a-yāni lā mà bibi l-kawnu fi l-a-yāni (fol. 79b.16–19).

12 Ibn Kammūna, al-Jadid, p. 212.6–9; cf. Bahmanyār, Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl, p. 281.1–5, app. 2. The edition of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl reads al-mawjūdīyya, the al-Jadid reads al-mawjūd bibi. The two variants can hardly be distinguished graphically. According to the first variant, existence would be ‘being existent-ness’, that is it would presuppose something which is existent for then forming the abstract concept. According to the second variant, existence would be that what is existent by it, that is, by being among concrete beings.

13 For al-Rāzī reinforcing the importance of this division by inserting it in a new context, see al-Rāzī, Sbarṭ ‘Uṭīn al-ḥikma, 3 vols (Cairo, c. 1980), 1, 6.3–7 (qārr al-dbāt vs. munqaḍṭ al-dbāt as primary division of ‘existent’). The distinction is used by al-Rāzī for
The chapter ‘On Existence and Non-Existence’ runs:

That is, the existents, that have priority over one another, not parts of a hypostasized entity; his starting point, rather, is the fact that ‘existence’ is tantamount to as a priority among the instantiations of existence which the existents represent.

The difference between Ibn Kammūna’s interpretation and the underlying text by Bahmanyār becomes more obvious when supplemented by the passage in the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil that Ibn Kammūna had left aside. At first sight, there seems to be a certain contradiction both in Bahmanyār’s and in Ibn Kammūna’s analysis of tasbīk: both authors stress that existence is not a hypostasized entity, and that ‘existence’ rather is identical with ‘being among concrete beings’ (see § 3). Why, then, do they insist that certain instances of wujūd enjoy priority over others, or that they may even be ‘stronger’ or ‘weaker’? A first comparison between the texts by Ibn Kammūna and by Bahmanyār (see Appendix (3)) shows that Bahmanyār, unlike Ibn Kammūna, does not take ‘priority’ in existence to be identical with ‘being stronger/being weaker’. Just how Bahmanyār understands the notion of priority in existence becomes evident from a passage which Ibn Kammūna chooses not to paraphrase. Bahmanyār does not at all aim at establishing ‘existence’ as a hypostasized entity; his starting point, rather, is the fact that ‘existence’ is tantamount to the existence of existents’. This equation stands in the background of Bahmanyār’s conception of the ambiguity of existence and of his explanation of priority among existents. When priority is observed to hold among existents, this is to be explained as a priority among the instantiations of existence which the existents represent. So, in Bahmanyār’s argument, it is clear that it is single instantiations of existence, that is, the existents, that have priority over one another, not parts of a hypostasized continuum of ‘existence’. The full passage in the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil runs:

‘Existence which has no cause’ is prior by nature to ‘existence which has a cause’. Likewise, the existence of ‘substance’ is prior to the existence of ‘accident’. Also, some existence is stronger, and some is weaker. It is clear that one can not say: Existence which is common [al-wujūd al-ʿāmm] is predicated of ‘human being’, or of ‘donkey’, or of ‘the heavens’ in the same way [bi-l-tasāwir], like ‘yellow’, or ‘red’. You will know that some bodies have priority over others. This means, that

further structuring the section on accidents both in the al-Mabāḥitib al-Mashriqīyya, 2 vols (Beirut, 1990), and in the al-Mulakākbas fi l-ḥikma.
the existence of these bodies has priority over the existence of others, not that one corporeality has priority over the other corporeality. Likewise, if we say that the cause has priority over the effect, this means that its existence has priority over its existence. Likewise, if we say: 'Two' has priority over 'four', and so on. If existence is not considered, there is no priority or coming-after. So, priority and coming-after are what is made subsist by existences, i.e., by existents.\footnote{Bahmanyār, *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, p. 281.10–20.}

(§5) After having introduced the notion of *tasbīk* in his analysis of ‘existence’, Ibn Kammūna stresses that existence is one single concept (*maṣḥūm al-wujūd maṣḥūm waḥīd*). The two arguments that Ibn Kammūna adduces are (1) ‘existent’ is truly predicated of every existent. This is possible only if ‘existence’ is one. (2) If ‘non-existence’ is not true for something, ‘existence’ is true. So, there must be only two possibilities, which are ‘(one) non-existence’ and ‘one (unified) existence’. These two arguments, which are not present in the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, are widespread by the time of Ibn Kammūna, as they are used in al-Rāzī’s *al-Mulakbkhas* as part of his proof that ‘existence is [something that is] shared in’ (*al-wujūd mushtarak fīhi*).\footnote{See al-Rāzī, *al-Mulakbkhas*, fols 75b.19–76a.5.} Ibn Kammūna adds, however, that these are not proofs properly speaking, because existence is an intuitive concept, and thus there is no need for such proof.

(§6) After this short excursus in which Ibn Kammūna refers to the contemporary discussion on the *mushārakat al-wujūd*, he returns to the text of the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*:

Its being common [*‘umūmiyya*] is that of a concomitant [*al-lāzīm*], not the commonness of a genus, nor that of something that makes it essentially subsist, howsoever it is.\footnote{Ibn Kammūna, *al-Jadīd*, p. 212.21; cf. Bahmanyār, *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, p. 282.2, app. 4.}

(§7) While Bahmanyār (and Ibn Kammūna following him) had insisted that ‘being among concrete beings’ is not *by* existence but that it is identical with existence (see *supra*§3), Bahmanyār (and again Ibn Kammūna following him) stresses that this analysis is not to be extended to ‘existence in the soul’. Bahmanyār states explicitly that the formation of the concept of ‘existence’ like that of other concepts depends on ‘existence’, which is to be understood as referring to external existence:

If it is common (Bahmanyār: if existence is something common) its existence must be in the soul. ‘Existence’ exists in the soul ‘by an existence’ [*bi-wujūd*], since it is like the other notions which are conceptualized in the soul (Bahmanyār: conceptualized).\footnote{Ibn Kammūna, *al-Jadīd*, pp. 212.22–213.1; cf. Bahmanyār, *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, p. 282.10–12, app. 5.}
(§8) In the following, Ibn Kammūna modifies Bahmanyār’s analysis. Bahmanyār had stated that every existent is specified (takbhis kull mawjūd) by its relation to its substrate (maωdīr) and by its relation to its cause (sabab). This relation is not added externally. Ibn Kammūna, however, distinguishes between two stages, specification (takbaṣṣus) and concretization (ta‘ayyūn): first, every existent is specified by what functions as a differentia specifica, then it becomes connected to its substrate (see Appendix (4)).

(§9) Ibn Kammūna next returns to a nearly literal paraphrase of Bahmanyār’s text: the relation between ‘existence’ and the different ‘existents’ is like that of ‘accident’ to the different kinds of ‘accidents’; if these did not have names (like ‘quality’ and ‘quantity’), we would have to specify them in a similar way as we specify existents by describing them as ‘such-and-such an existent’. The relation between ‘existence’ and specific existences (which are ‘existents’) is comparable to that between ‘accident’ and specific accidents. Ibn Kammūna (whose wording here is very close to that of Bahmanyār) states:

Existents are notions [ma‘ānī] whose names are not known, and they are expressed by: ‘such-and-such an existent’ and ‘such-and-such an existent’. To all of them, there adheres in the mind ‘existence which is general’ [al-wujūd al-‘ammī], even if the species’ of accidents would be known by their names and descriptions (as if we were to say, for example, that quantity is ‘such-and-such an accident’, and quality is ‘such-and-such an accident’).  

In the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil, this exposition is supplemented by a passage that is omitted by Ibn Kammūna. Its omission shows that, although Ibn Kammūna had followed the wording of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil very closely so far, the context into which Bahmanyār embeds the argument differs considerably from the corresponding discussion in al-Jadid (see infra §10): Bahmanyār extends the analogy ‘existence and its existents’ to the constitution of the different kinds of ‘thing’ (i.e., the term which in the terminology of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil is equivalent to ‘essence’):

The relation between ‘existence’ and its parts is like the relation of ‘thing’ to what falls under it. The names of the parts of ‘thing’ are known, but not the parts of ‘existence’. This is like the species’ of the numbers: These are notions whose names are not known, and which are expressed by some of their concomitants. So, we say: ‘ten’, i.e. a number which has the specific property and concomitant of being divisible into ten units.

18 Ibn Kammūna, al-Jadid, p. 213.4–7; the edition has wujūd; I read mawjūd (three times); cf. Bahmanyār, Kitāb al-Taḥṣil, p. 283.7–10, app. 7. In Ibn Kammūna’s text, this passage links up with the passage translated below, §10. My division follows Bahmanyār’s argument.

19 Bahmanyār, Kitāb al-Taḥṣil, p. 283.11–14.
(§10) In §9 Ibn Kammūna chose not to follow Bahmanyār’s approach, that is, to establish a parallel between how \textit{wujūd} and \textit{sbay‘} relate to their respective instantiations. As background to this decision we observe that by the time of Ibn Kammūna there had developed a whole tradition as to how to frame the relation between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’. When Bahmanyār paraphrased Chapter 1.5 of \textit{Kitāb al-Sbifā‘} in his \textit{Kitāb al-Taḥṣil}, he was the first to attempt at a systematization of an important philosophical innovation still ‘in the making’. Indeed, systematizing Ibn Sinā’\textquotesingle s disquisitions, especially the problem of how ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ as abstract notions develop from the terminology of earlier kalam, constitutes a major problem.

Ibn Kammūna takes the opportunity here to refer to the contemporary discussion of the question, how ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ relate to each other. Ibn Kammūna stresses that if ‘existence’ were not a purely intellectual predication (\textit{min al-maḥmūlāt al-ʻaqīliyya al-ṣarfa‘}), there would be only two alternatives how to conceive the relation between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’: either ‘existence’ would be simply the essence about which it is predicated (\textit{mujarrad al-māḥiyyāt allāti tuqā‘u ‘alayhā}), or it would be something else. Ibn Kammūna\textquotesingle s own position that existence has relevance only in the context of an analysis carried out by the mind can be classified as an elaboration of al-Suhrawardī\textquotesingle s analysis that existence is a ‘mental construct’ (or rather: aspect, \textit{i‘tibār dhībīnī}).

The two other alternatives named by Ibn Kammūna (which, according to Ibn Kammūna\textquotesingle s analysis, do not rule out still other alternatives, since the possibility that ‘existence’ is something which results from a mental analysis is omitted) had been established as a framework for the analysis of the relation between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ in the writings of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. The latter distinguished three alternatives: existence can be (1) identical with essence (\textit{nafs al-māḥiyya}), or it can be (2) not identical with essence. In this last case, one has to distinguish two subcategories: existence can be (2a) part of essence, or it can be (2b) superadded (\textit{zā‘id}) to essence.\textsuperscript{20} By combining elements stemming from what was to develop into a standard account of the relation between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ in the later post-Avicennan tradition (i.e., elements from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī\textquotesingle s discussion)

\textsuperscript{20} The basic structure of how al-Rāzī had elaborated this schema and how it is connected to the theory of the analysis of the divine attributes can be discerned in the \textit{al-Mabābīth al-Masbriyya} (\textit{al-imtīr al-‘āmma} two chapters: \textit{faṣl} (3) \textit{fi anna l-wujūd zā‘id ʻalā māḥiyyāt al-mumkināt}, (4) \textit{fi bayān anna l-wujūd kbārij ‘an al-māḥiyya}). In the corresponding passage of the \textit{al-Mulakhkhas} (5) \textit{fi anna l-wujūd zā‘id ʻalā māḥiyyāt al-mumkināt}, fols 76a.5–76b.8) the discussion is less differentiated.
with elements stemming from the criticism of this account, Ibn Kammūna gives a highly original analysis of how ‘existence’ relates to ‘essence’:

If ‘existence’ would not be a purely mental predication, it would be either the essences about which it is predicated in an absolute sense [mujarrad al-māhiyyāt], or it would be something else.

If it is the expression for it [i.e., essence in an absolute sense], it would not be applied as one notion to ‘accident’ and ‘substance’ like it is applied to ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’. If we say: ‘A substance is existent’ this would take the rank of ‘a substance is a substance’ and ‘an existent is existent’.

If it is taken in a more general sense than each of the respective essences, then either it is self-subsistent [qā‘im bi-nafsibi], or it is there in these essences [ḥāṣil fi tilka l-māhiyyāt].

If it is self-subsistent, then ‘substance’, for example, is not attributed with it, since its relation [nisba] to it and to something else is the same.

If it is in the substance, such that it is there for it, and ‘existence’ is ‘being there’, then ‘existence’ — when being there — is existent.

If we take its being existent to be an expression for ‘existence’ itself, it is not predicated in one sense, because its meaning in [the case of] things is ‘that it is a thing which has existence’, and in [the case of] existence itself it is ‘that it is existence’.

Also, if existence is ‘among concrete beings’ and if it is not ‘substance’, then it is an ‘accident’. So, it is not there before its substrate [mahall] by an essential priority. This is evident. It is likewise not there essentially together with it. So, it follows that its substrate is not there by existence. Likewise, it is also not ‘after it’, being postponed in an essential way, because in that case, its substrate would be existent before it is existent. This is absurd.

Then, from its being among concrete beings, and from its not being self-subsistent, there would follow that ‘accident’ under a certain aspect is more general than it, and it would no longer be the most general thing absolutely.

Also, if an essence is non-existent, its existence is not existent. If we intelligize ‘existence’ and judge that it is not existent, the concept ‘existence’ is different from the concept ‘existence of existence’. If the essence exists after its non-existence, its existence exists, and existence has an existence. This goes on to infinity for every existence which is among concrete beings. Therefore, an essence in a concrete being [al-māhiyya al-tayniyya] does not have an existence which is added to it [mundaam al tlaybā] in the sense that ‘essence’ and ‘its existence’ are two things in the outward reality [fi l-khārij]. This concrete essence itself is from the agents; it is not the case that something is added to it from the agents, i.e. existence. 21

In the way this argument is constructed we can distinguish the influence of Ibn Kammūna’s two main sources and the conflict that exists between them. Although his terminology deviates from that of al-Rāzī, on the whole, Ibn Kammūna’s argument parallels the discussion by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on the question of the relationship ‘existence’ bears towards ‘essence’. The approach taken by al-Rāzī differs from that of Bahmanyār. Al-Rāzī framed the discussion of the relation between the ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ in a way that is influenced by the discussion about the theory of the divine attributes: ‘existence’ is either identical with ‘essence’, or it is not identical. If it is not identical, it can be (a) ‘inside of the essence’, that is, a part of it (juzʿ minibā), or it is (b) ‘outside of the essence’, that is, superadded to it (zāʾid ʿalaybā) (see supra). Ibn Kammūna presents a similar division; however, he does not accept that this division exhausts all possibilities. He insists that all possibilities presented in the division are false, and thus there results that existence is something which the mind predicates of existent things.

Thus Ibn Kammūna follows al-Suhrawardi’s criticism of the way in which the Avicennan distinction between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ was interpreted by the late twelfth century. Beyond this, the way Ibn Kammūna rephrases al-Rāzī’s distinction is also extremely interesting. He uses first the opposition between ‘essence absolutely speaking’ (mujarrad al-māḥiyya) and ‘something more general’ (maʿnā aʿamm). At this place, like in (§2), Ibn Kammūna asks whether or not one of the two notions is ‘more general’. When Ibn Kammūna uses the term mujarrad, ‘abstracted, absolutely’, in the context of referring to an ‘essence’, this term has a well-established place in the discussion of the Avicennan concept of ‘essence’: an essence can be considered as abstracted from all its external and non-external concomitants, it can also be considered without taking into consideration whether or not it has external or mental existence.22 However, in the present passage, the term seems to be used simply as an equivalent of what is called nafs al-māḥiyya by al-Rāzī in order to designate that what is meant is precisely the very essence itself, nothing else.

As a second step, Ibn Kammūna finds two possibilities for the case that existence is not identical with the individual essences: either it is self-subsistent (qāʿim bi-nafsibī), and thus it is independent from the individual essences, or it is present in the essences (ḥāṣil fī l-māḥiyyāt). To a certain extent, this division represents a division into ‘substance’ and ‘accident’, as the description as ‘self-subsistent’ is that of substance.23

22 In the present context, see, e.g., al-Rāzī, al-Mulakkbaş, fols 81a.12–81b.7, ‘On essence’, (1) fi tamayyuz al-māḥiyya ‘an lawābiqibā, especially fol. 81b.3–7.

23 On Ibn Kammūna’s definition of ‘substance’ (al-qāʿim bi-nafsibī) and ‘accident’ see infra §§12–13, especially n. 33.
The figure shows the parallels between al-Rāzī’s and Ibn Kammūna’s divisions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>al-Rāzī</th>
<th>Ibn Kammūna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nafs al-māhīyya</td>
<td>mujarrad al-māhīyya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghayr nafs al-māhīyya</td>
<td>ma’nā a’amm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dākhil</td>
<td>ḥāṣil fi l-māhīyya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghayr dākhil</td>
<td>qā’im bi-nafsihī</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘ayn</td>
<td>[identical]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juz’</td>
<td>[inside]</td>
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<tr>
<td>shīfa zā’ida</td>
<td>[outside]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In al-Rāzī’s presentation, the notion of mushārakat al-wujūd, ‘sharing in existence’, plays an important role. According to his analysis, in the case of contingent beings, the assumption of mushārakat al-wujūd goes together with the doctrine that existence is different from essence, more precisely, that it is superadded (zā’id) to it. The doctrine of mushārakat al-wujūd, which occupies a central place in his discussion of ‘existence’ in the context of the al-umūr al-‘āmma, derives directly from the interpretation of Avicenna’s discussion of the notion of existence in the Metaphysics, where Avicenna states that existence is ‘something common’. In this context, a more differentiated approach to the term mushārakat al-wujūd, that is, one which would draw on a discussion of its semantic aspect in the context of the logical writings, is not to be found in al-Rāzī. Roughly speaking, al-Rāzī’s move is made possible by the fact that he does not distinguish between the two statements al-wujūd mushṭarīk al-ism (existence is predicated homonymously) and al-wujūd mushṭarīk (existence is shared).

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24 Al-Rāzī’s simplification is criticized, e.g., by al-Ṭūsī in his commentary on Ibn Sīnā’s Pointers and Reminders. For a discussion of this passage, see T. Mayer, ‘Fāhr ad-dīn ar-Rāzī’s Critique of Ibn Sīnā’s Argument for the Unity of God in the Išrāt, and Naṣīr ad-Dīn at-Ṭūsī’s Defence’, in Before and after Avicenna, ed. by D. Reisman (Leiden, 2003), pp. 199–218 (pp. 213–14, especially n. 48). However, this lack of terminological differentiation by al-Rāzī may be part of a more complex historical development, as can be seen by a comparison with Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī’s semantic and ontological theory. Abū l-Barakāt conceptualizes objects in the mind as a class of existents of its own right. Thus, the Aristotelian example for ‘equivocal’ (a man and an image) is interpreted by Abū l-Barakāt as referring to ‘man in
Ibn Kammūnā’s other source, however, that is, Kitāb al-Taḥṣil, introduces the term *tasbīk* into the discussion of *wujūd*. Bahmanyār uses the term precisely in the sense in which he had introduced it in the section on the *Categories*: if the same ‘name’ denotes things that possess no similarity at all (like ‘ayn is applied to ‘source’ or to ‘eye’), this is *mushtarik al-ism* ‘sharing the name’. If there is a certain similarity among the denotations (like ‘the leg of a bed’ and ‘the leg of an animal’), this is *mutashābih al-ism* ‘similar as to the name’. If that to which the name refers exists in both things, but not to the same degree, so that it is ‘stronger’ in one and ‘weaker’ in the other (like ‘existence applied to substance’ and ‘existence applied to accident’), this is called *musbakka al-ism* ‘ambiguous’. If a name has a single denotation which is equally present in the things on which the name is applied (like applying ‘animal’ to ‘human being’ and to ‘horse’, or like predicating universals of particulars), this is *mutawāṭī al-ism*.25

In Ibn Kammūnā’s argument, the connection between *musḥaraka al-wujūd* and claiming that existence is not identical with essence can be traced back to al-Rāzī’s pattern. However, the analysis of Ibn Kammūnā’s argument becomes complicated because Bahmanyār and al-Rāzī use the example of the statement ‘substance is substance’ differently.

For al-Rāzī, the example serves to show that ‘existence’ is not identical with ‘essence’. Otherwise, statements like ‘substance is substance’, ‘substance is existent’, ‘existent is existent’ would be equally meaningless, as these statements bear no information.26 As this position that ‘essence’ is not identical with ‘existence’,

external reality’ and ‘a mental image of him’ (*fi l-munāsaba bayna mawjūdāt al-a’yān wa-mutasawwirat al-adhbān*): Kitāb al-mu’tabar, 3 vols (Haydarabad, 1938), i, 12.9–14. Referring to the idea of *tasbīk* al-wujūd (without naming it), Abū l-Barakāt rejects it as a not authentic interpolation based on the interpretation of the text of Aristotle’s *Categories: fi mā Yasbatamil ‘alaybi ‘ilm mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a* (ibid., especially iii, 15.16–16.7); *fi ajnās al-fawābir wa-l-a’rād* (ibid., especially iii, 17.2–18).


26 One can find in the *Kitāb al-Shīfā* and in the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil* a set of examples from which al-Rāzī’s argument evolved. The statement *ḥaqqiqat ka-dhā mawjūda* is meaningful-full, while the statements *ḥaqqiqat ka-dhā ḥaqqiqat ka-dhā* and *ḥaqqiqat ka-dhā ḥaqqiqa as well as ḥaqqīqat ka-dhā shay‘* are meaningless (see Ibn Sinā, *Kitāb al-Shīfā* (*Lāḥījāyāt*), pp. 31.10–32.2, paraphrased by Bahmanyār, *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, p. 287.1–5, Bahmanyār omits the end of the discussion which centres on the term *shay‘*). That al-Rāzī prefers it to replace the examples can be explained by the evolution of the terminology and the increasing consolidation and systematization of a theory centring on the two concepts ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ in the period lying between the texts.
according to al-Rāzī, goes along with the doctrine of *musbārakat al-wujūd*, in the context of al-Rāzī’s exposition the example (which in the *Kitāb al-Tahṣīl* had been used in order to refute a doctrine implying that existence is predicated *bi-l-isbtirāk*) is an argument which backs the position of *musbārakat al-wujūd* (as al-Rāzī understands this doctrine). In the *al-Mulakkbkbaš fī l-ṭīkma*, al-Rāzī argues:

> What falsifies the assumption that ‘existence’ is identical with ‘essence’ is [...] (2) If the existence of a substance were identical with its being substance, then our saying, ‘A substance is existent’, would have the same degree of uselessness as our saying, ‘A substance is a substance’.27

The context in which Bahmanyār applies exactly this same example differs considerably. The argument is linked to the notion of *isbtirāk*, as it is in al-Rāzī. However, Bahmanyār’s argument takes a completely different turn. Bahmanyār argues against the view that existence is predicated *bi-l-isbtirāk* of the ten categories.

Some people believe that existence is applied to the ten categories *bi-l-isbtirāk*. If this would be the case, the meaning of ‘a substance is existent’ would be ‘a substance is substance’, and likewise for the other categories. However, if we say ‘substance is existent’ this is a judgement which can be either true or false, in the same way like if we say ‘Zayd is writing’. But if we say ‘substance is substance’, this is either idle words or a statement which can not be true or false.

Further: What would be the meaning if someone says: ‘substance is existent by itself, and accident is existent by something else?’ Both these things share in the expression ‘existent’, and then, after this, they are differentiated by its being ‘by itself’ or ‘by something else’. So, ‘existent’ unites the meanings of ‘substance’ and ‘accident’; were it not uniting them, it would not be possible for one to differ from the other by the fact that this one is ‘existent in a substrate’, whereas that one is ‘existent not in a substrate’. Unless existence is not predicated *bi-l-isbtirāk*, it would not be possible that we say ‘For this, only the two extremes of this opposition are possible’.28

In this passage, Bahmanyār applies the term *bi-l-isbtirāk* precisely in accordance with how he had explained it in the section on the Categories. While al-Rāzī regards *musbtarik*, ‘shared’, to mean the same as ‘āmm ‘general, common’, Bahmanyār talks about two different ways by which existence as a common thing (amr āmm, see *Kitāb al-Tahṣīl*, p. 279.4) can be predicated of existents. This may be either

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bi-l-tasbktk or bi-l-istbirāk (that existence could be predicated as a genus, and thus could be subsumed under bi-l-tawāṭr, has already been ruled out; see §4). From this opposition in Bahmanyār’s discussion, there results a specific interpretation of the term bi-l-istbirāk, since bi-l-tasbktk implies an intensification, and — more specifically — a priority of the category ‘substance’ over the remaining categories as ‘accidents’, bi-l-istbirāk is likewise interpreted especially with reference to the categories. In the passage from the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl quoted above (i.e., the passage in the metaphysics) the predication of existence bi-l-istbirāk is not understood to apply to a variety of different essences (as, e.g., in the passage on the Categories paraphrased above), for example, ‘existence predicated of a source’ or ‘existence predicated of an eye’ (inserting the typical examples for homonymy used by Arabic authors, ‘ayn).

Instead, the meaning of bi-l-istbirāk in this passage is narrowed down to the predication of existence of the categories, and — as it becomes clear from the examples adduced — Bahmanyār’s primary focus of interest lies on the distinction between ‘substance’ and ‘accident’. So we have to supply Bahmanyār’s example, which would be as follows. If ‘existence’ would have a different meaning when applied to an accident, the meaning of ‘an accident is existent’ would be ‘an accident is accident’. If ‘existence’ did not have a single meaning, applicable equally to both substance and accident, substance and accident could not be differentiated by using existence as that which becomes differentiated by the addition of ‘in a substrate’ or ‘not in a substrate’.

The following passage from al-Jādid must be analysed against the background of these two conflicting conceptions of isbirāk as well as the conflict in the way in which the example is applied.

If existence were not a purely intellectual predication, it would be [i] either the essences in an absolute sense [miṣjlard al-mabiyyāt] about which it is predicated, or something else.

[ii] If it is the expression for it [i.e., essence in an absolute sense], it would not be applied in the same sense to ‘accident’ and ‘substance’ as it is applied to ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’. If we say: ‘A substance is existent’ this would be just like our saying ‘a substance is substance’ and ‘an existent is existent’.20

At the beginning (i), Ibn Kammūna follows al-Rāzī’s pattern — though he points out that this pattern applies only if one does not accept his own position that existence is predicated by the intellect. In (ii), however, we can detect the influence of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl: when Ibn Kammūna states that there is a difference between the way how existence is predicated of ‘substance’ and of ‘accident’ while there is not such a difference between the way how existence is predicated

20 Ibn Kammūna, al-Jādid, p. 213.7–12; see also supra.
of ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’, this makes sense only if bi-l-isbtirāk is to be un-
derstood in the light of Bahmanyār’s concept of bi-l-tasbkik, that is, existence is
stronger and primary in substance, while in accidents it is weaker and secondary.
In the light of this, it makes sense to state that there is not much difference in the
way how ‘existence’ is predicated of ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’, while according
to al-Rāzī’s conception of musbārakat al-wujūd this is not the case. According to
the focus al-Rāzī’s analysis of musbārakat al-wujūd, the relation of existence to
the essence of ‘accident’, to that of ‘substance’, to that of ‘blackness’ and to that of
‘whiteness’ — in short, its relation to each and every contingent essence — is the
same, that is, it is superadded to it (zā‘i’d ‘alayhā).

In the further course of the argument, from the above table we can see that
there exists a certain similarity between the makeup of Ibn Kammūnā’s distinct-
ion and that of al-Rāzī: al-Rāzī refines the distinction ‘identical with essence’/‘not
identical with essence’ to a threefold division which operates with the distinction
‘inside/outside’, and there result the possibilities ‘identical’, co-extensive, ‘inside,
part of’, and ‘outside, superadded’. Ibn Kammūnā, however, refines the distinction
by applying the distinction ‘selfsubsistent/in a substrate’, and thus there result the
possibilities ‘identical, co-extensive’, ‘selfsubsistent’ (→ ‘outside’), ‘in its substrate’
(→ ‘inside’). Especially in the third case, the different conceptions underlying the
two classifications become obvious. Ibn Kammūnā’s classification suggests that
‘in a substrate’ as opposed to ‘selfsubsistent’ refers to ‘accidentality’, that is, being
in a substrate ‘not like a part of it’ (lā ka-juz’ minbu).

The last part of this passage on the relation of ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ again
operates with an argument that is related to the problem of the infinite regress
resulting from an interpretation of the concepts under discussion, which are the
products of mental analysis, as hypostasized entities. On this, see also §3.

(§11) Ibn Kammūnā now resums his paraphrase of the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil, that is,
the beginning of its second fasāl. The importance of this passage in the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil
lies in the fact that Bahmanyār applies the term ‘secondary intelligible’ to the term
‘thing’ (al-shay‘ min al-ma‘qūlāt al-thānīyya). This marks an important step for the
development of Bahmanyār’s terminology, as it shows that he uses the term shay‘,
‘thing’ very consciously in the sense of ‘essence’ — a terminological precision and ex-
plicitness which is still missing in the underlying passage of Ibn Sinā’s Kitāb al-Shīfā.
The passage in Bahmanyār also has important implications for his interpretation of
the epistemological status of shay‘ (as a technical term). Secondary intelligibles are
intelligibles that are formed on the basis of primary intelligibles. Other than primary
intelligibles they are not the counterpart of perceptions of external items.

Ibn Kammūnā had paraphrased this very passage from the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil al-
ready in his commentary on al-Suhrawardī’s al-Talwihāt in order to explain the term
shay'iyya, which al-Suhrawardī uses there for designating ‘essence’ (see Appendix (8b)). But here in al-Jadīd Ibn Kammūna introduces an important modification that goes beyond the terminological shift between shay' and shay'iyya (due to the different terminologies of Bahmanyār (shay') and al-Suhrawardi (shay'iyya)). Not only ‘essence’ (shay', shay'iyya) but also ‘existence’ is described as ‘secondary intelligible’. Thus, Ibn Kammūna can establish a connection between the Farabian-Avicennan conception of the ‘secondary intelligibles’ present in Bahmanyār’s text and between the position discussed above in (§10), which relies on al-Suhrawardi’s conception of ‘existence’. Al-Suhrawardī’s describes the notion ‘existence’ as the result of an analytical process. Ibn Kammūna says:

> It is evident that ‘thing’ and ‘existence’ belong to the secondary intelligibles, which are related to and based on [muntasib] the primary intelligibles. Among existents there is no existent which is ‘existence’ or ‘thing’. Rather, an existent either is ‘man’ or ‘heavens’ or something else. From the fact that this is intelligized [ma‘qūliyyat dbālikal] it follows that it is ‘existent’ or ‘a thing’.  

(§12) Ibn Kammūna goes on:

> Sometimes ‘existence’ is also applied to relations towards things [wa-qad yuqālu l-wujūdu ‘alā l-nisab ilā l-ashyā’], like if one says, something exists ‘in the house’, or ‘in the market place’, or ‘in the mind’, or ‘in a concrete thing’, or ‘in time’, or ‘in a place’.

> The expression ‘existence’ and the expression ‘in’ in all instances is applied in one sense [bi-ma‘nā wahid].

This remark connects to the preceding in that Ibn Kammūna explains how ‘existence’ can be described as a relation (nisba). In (§11), Ibn Kammūna had extended the notion ‘secondary intelligible’ (which Bahmanyār had applied only to ‘essence’ shay’) to ‘existence’. These ‘secondary intelligibles’ are described both by Bahmanyār and by Ibn Kammūna as based on or related to (muntasib) ‘primary intelligibles’. So, Ibn Kammūna can connect a discussion of the expression ‘to exist in’ with the paraphrase from the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil which went before.

Once again, we can understand how the discussion of the expression ‘to exist in’ is connected to the following passage (§13), which explains the classification of ‘existent’ into ‘God’, ‘substance’, and ‘accident’ by a comparison with the Kitāb al-Taḥṣil. The context there is the definition of ‘accident’ given in the Categories, which describes the accident as ‘what exists in something not as a part of it, and

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what can not subsist without that in which it is.\footnote{32} Bahmanyār discusses this definition given in the Categories in the fourth chapter of the section on metaphysics (i.e., immediately after three chapters which to a large extent can be related to Kitāb al-Shifā', Ilābiyyāt, 1.5). Contrary to Ibn Kammūna, and following the earlier commentary tradition on the Categories, Bahmanyār states that the phrase ‘something is existent in something’ can have a variety of different meanings.\footnote{33}

\(\S 13\) Ibn Kammūna inserts a division of ‘existent’, which uses ‘causation’ and ‘self-subsistence’ as a criterion. He qualifies mawjūd according to its being (a) li-dbāṭībī (li- refers to causality) or (b) bi-dbāṭībī (bi- refers to the mode of subsistence). From this, there result the following alternatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>li-dbāṭībī ‘self-substantial’</th>
<th>bi-dbāṭībī ‘caused by itself’</th>
<th>Terminology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-mawjūd li-dbāṭībī wa-bi-dbāṭībī</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>wājib li-dbāṭībī essentially necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-mawjūd li-dbāṭībī là bi-dbāṭībī</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>jawbar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>‘arād (substance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>Ø-Ø-Ø [void]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\footnote{[All-mawjūdu fī sbay’īn là ka-juz’in minbu wa-lā yaṣīḥyu qiwāmūbū min dūnī mā huwa fībī. This is the wording that Bahmanyār discusses in Chapter 2.1.4, ‘Defining substance and accident’; cf. Bahmanyār, Kitāb al-Taḥsīl, pp. 293–98.}

\footnote{33 See Bahmanyār, Kitāb al-Taḥsīl, pp. 294.8–297.5, especially p. 294.8–10: fa-qawlunā ‘innahū mawjūdun fī sbayin yaqa’u ‘alā asbābā kātbiratīn ba’ḍūbā bi-l-tawāṭu’i wa-ba’ḍūbā bi-l-tashkīkī wa-ba’ḍūbā bi-l-istiṭabībī. wa-layṣa waqū’tā bābdīla lafẓī ‘alā bābdībī l-asbābā illa waqū’ta lafẓīn musbatikīn a’ni ʾidbā quyīsā lāl ājamībā. Cf. the paralleling passage in Ibn Kammūna’s faṣl on ‘substance and accident’ (p. 256.1–4) where Ibn Kammūna avoids using the term mawjūd: wa-qawlunā ‘ka-dī fā-buwa fī kā-dā’ buwa lafẓīn musbatikīn bayna ma’ānin muḥbalifatin. fa-inna kaunna l-sbay’ī fī l-zamānī wa-fī l-KH-Ṣ-B (???) wa-fī l-rāḥati wa-fī l-bārakatī wa-kawmū l-juz’ī fī l-kullī wa-l-kullī fī l-ajzā’ī wa-l-khāsī fī l-‘ammi layṣa lafẓatān fī jamī’ibā bi-ma’nīn wāḥidīn. At the beginning of this chapter, Ibn Kammūna distances himself from the definitions of ‘substance’ and ‘accident’ usually employed. According to the terminology that he prefers, substance is what is self-subsistent (al-jawbar mà qāma bi-dbāṭībī; note, however, the conflict with the classification given here in §13), and ‘accident’ is everything else (wa-l-‘arād mà ‘adābu) (p. 255.4–5).}
This is further supplemented by a division into ‘essentially existent’ \( (\text{mawjūd bi-l-dbāt}) \) and ‘accidentally existent’ \( (\text{mawjūd bi-l-‘araq}) \). ‘Essentially existent’ is everything which is there among concrete beings in an independent way, be it substance or accident.\(^{34}\) The existence of an accident as such \( (\text{bi-‘aynībī}) \) is not identical with the existence of the substrate \( (\text{maḥāl}) \) in which it inheres, because the substrate can exist without the accident, like a body that turns black. ‘Accidentally existent’ entities are entities relating to non-existence (read: \‘adamiyyāt\), such as rest (i.e., not moving, privation of motion) and inability, and ‘aspects’ \( (\text{i‘tibārat}) \) which are entities that are not realized among concrete beings. These are said to exist accidentally among concrete beings. What Ibn Kammūna labels as ‘accidentally existent’ serves to accommodate primarily attributes pertaining to non-existence \‘adamiyyāt, sometimes also called salbī (as opposed to thubūtī, wujūdī, ijābī\), a classification that becomes important especially in the thirteenth century through the synthesis between the terminology of kalam and Avicennan philosophy in the writings of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and aspects that have no real existence as concrete beings \( (\text{i‘tibārāt}) \, a\class{language}{class} of \class{language}{entities} produced only by mental analysis, prominent especially in al-Suhrawardī’s thought).\(^{35}\)

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
& \textbf{Types} & \textbf{Concrete Examples} \\
\hline
\textit{mawjūd bi-l-dbāt} & \[\text{\‘a\‘yān}] \text{ jawbar} \ ‘\‘araq & ‘body’ jism \ ‘blackness’ sawād \\
\hline
\textit{mawjūd bi-l-‘araq} & \‘adamiyyāt & ‘rest’ suktān (\(<->\) ḥarakā) \ ‘inability’ ‘ajz (\(<->\) qudrā) [no examples] \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\(^{(\S 14)}\) At this point Ibn Kammūna inserts a short remark that statements like ‘something is existent in writing’ and ‘something is existent in speech’ are figurative \( (\text{majāz}) \). This can be traced to al-Rāzī’s \textit{al-Mulakbkhaṣ fi l-ḥikma} where this statement fills a whole (though very short) paragraph.\(^{35}\) The four stages ‘existence in concrete beings’ — ‘existence in the mind’ — ‘existence in speech’ — ‘existence in writing’ is a schema which derives from the reception of Aristotle \textit{De interpretatione}, 1.1. In the thirteenth century arguments related to these four stages are

\(^{34}\) [\text{Almūmā al-mawjūd bi-l-dbāt fa-kull mā labū ḥuṣūl fī l-‘a\‘yān mustaqīl jawbaran kānā aw ara\‘ādān: Ibn Kammūna, al-\‘adād, p. 215.4–5.}

prominent in the context of a discussion of an Avicennan conception of ‘mental existence’, but they are also found in a variety of other contexts (see also supra (§12) ‘to exist in the mind — in a concrete thing’).

(§15) (a) In the following passage as well, the influence of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi is prominent. In the *al-Mulakkbhas* he raised the question of whether or not there exists something called ‘mental existence’. Though his answer is negative, by including this chapter in the *al-Mulakkbhas* al-Razi established ‘mental existence’ as a topic to be discussed in this context. Al-Razi himself explains knowledge as a relation (*nisba*), and he affiliates his theory of knowledge to that of Plato. Ibn Kammuna’s uses the following standard argument pro ‘mental existence’:

Among that what points to ‘mental existence’, beyond what has already been [discussed] concerning the state of ‘thingness’ and ‘existence’, is that we conceptualize things whose existence either is impossible — like the simultaneity of two opposites — or which are not existent among concrete beings, like a moon which is always eclipsed or a man who is always writing, or like a mountain made from hyacinth, or an ocean out of quicksilver. We distinguish between these conceptualized things [*mutasawwirat*], and everything which is distinct [*mutamayyiz*] is persistent [*ibahit*]. Since it is not in external reality [*al-kbarij*], it is in the mind.56

(b) The arguments that follow against mental existence to which Ibn Kammuna alludes (215.18–216.1) are those of the *al-Mulakkbhas*.

(c) Then, Ibn Kammuna goes on to explain the relation between ‘absolute non-existence’ (*’adam mutlaq* and ‘existent in the mind’ (*mawjûd fi l-‘dibni*) as that of cause and effect (*’illa wa-malîh*):

The non-existence of the cause necessitates the non-existence of the effect, but the non-existence of the effect does not necessitate the non-existence of the cause; the same applies for [the pairs] ‘condition’ and ‘what is stipulated by this condition’ [*al-sharîf wa-l-masbrûf*], and ‘absolute non-existence’ and ‘existent in the mind’.58

The connection between ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ and between ‘condition’ and ‘what is stipulated by it’ is reported in the *al-Mulakkbhas* as an argument for there being multiplicity (*ta’addud*) and distinction (*imitiyaz*) in absolute non-existence.59

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(d) The following passage discusses how ‘non-existence’ and ‘mental existence’ relate to each other. Ibn Kammūna focuses his attention on the problem that an analysis of how we pass a judgement about non-existent entities requires a careful distinction between the different concepts and classifications employed.

[i] The statement: ‘a thing either is absolute non-existence or existent in the mind’ is not true, but the statement ‘a thing either is absolute non-existence or not absolute non-existence’ is true. And the statement: ‘a thing either is existent in the mind or not existent in the mind’ is true. So, the concept of ‘absolute non-existence’ is represented \textit{[yatamatibtbal]} in the mind, and it becomes an individual form to which there accedes an individualized mental existence.

[ii] The negation \textit{[raf]} of external affirmation \textit{[tibbat kbāriji]} is a mental affirmation \textit{[tibbat dbibni]} which relates to an external non-affirmation \textit{[lā-tibbat kbāriji\textbf{]}}. That — in the mind — it is conceptualized and distinguished from what is different from it, that it is concretized in itself and persistent in the mind, does not contradict the fact that that which is related to it is not persistent in external \textit{[reality]}.

One does not pass judgement about what is not persistent in external \textit{[reality]}, that it is not conceptualized absolutely; but one does pass judgement that it is conceptualized as ‘not being persistent’ and that it is not conceptualized as having another description. A comprehensive negation \textit{[raf]} of persistence which encompasses by some concept ‘external’ and ‘mental’ is not persistent, and it is not at all conceptualized, so that one could pass a judgement about it.

[iii] So, it is not possible [to pass a judgement about it] insofar as it is ‘this something which is conceptualized’, and it is not possible insofar as it is ‘not persistent’. This is not a contradiction because the two subjects [of predication] are different.

[iv] If we say: ‘existent’ is divided into ‘what persists in the mind’ and ‘what does not persist in the mind’, then what is ‘not existent’ \textit{[lā-mawjūd]} is [according to a division in which ‘existent’ is one alternative] the opposite of ‘existent’ \textit{[qasim al-mawjūd]} insofar it is ‘non-existent’ \textit{[ma’dūm]} And it is a part of ‘what persists in the mind’.\footnote{Ibn Kammūna, \textit{al-jadīd}, p. 216.3–18.}

(i) First, Ibn Kammūna clarifies the terminology and points out which notions oppose each other. Inserting \(x\) for ‘a thing’, \textit{shay}, \(A\) for ‘is non-existent in external reality’, \textit{ma’dūm}, and \(B\) for ‘is existent in the mind’, \textit{mawjūd fī l-dbibn} his statement may be formalized in the following way: The statement \(\forall x[(Ax \lor Bx) \land \neg (Ax \land Bx)]\) is not true. What is true, however, are the statements \(\forall x[(Ax \lor \neg Ax) \land \neg (Ax \land \neg Ax)]\) and \(\forall x[(Bx \lor \neg Bx) \land \neg (Bx \land \neg Bx)]\). Therefore, some \textit{ma’dūm} (or more specifically: the ‘absolutely non-existent’, \textit{al-ma’dūm al-muṭlaq}) can be existent in the mind: \(\exists x (Ax \land Bx)\).
(ii) As Ibn Kammūna insists, when persistence/affirmation in external reality \( (ithbāt khārījī, \text{E}) \) is negated \( (raf': \text{negating existence, N}) \), this mental operation is not simply a negation of external existence \( (\forall x \, [\text{N}(\text{Ex}) \rightarrow \neg \text{Ex}]') \), but it leads to persistence/affirmation in the mind \( (ithbāt dhīnī, \text{M}) \) \( (\forall x \, [\text{N}(\text{Ex}) \rightarrow \text{Mx}]') \). If we speak about ‘absolute non-existence’, we are considering a case where the external existence of some ‘thing’ is negated, but not its existence in the mind: the negation of every ‘thing’ \( (- \text{sbay'}-x) \) leads to an affirmation in the mind: \( (\forall x \, [\text{N}(\text{Ex}) \rightarrow \text{Ex} \land \text{Mx}]) \). That there is something in mental existence leads to the formation of a concept, while external existence is not decisive for the formation of a concept \( (\forall x(\text{Mx} \rightarrow \exists y \text{Cyx}), \forall x(\text{Ex}) \rightarrow (\exists y \text{Cyx}) \rightarrow (\exists y \text{Cyx})') \). This means that some things have no external existence but only existence in the mind, \( (\exists x(\neg \text{Ex} \land \text{Mx})) \), and we can have concepts of things which have no persistence in external reality \( (\exists x[\neg \text{Ex} \land \text{Cx}]) \).

The ‘things’ about which Ibn Kammūna had been talking so far were ‘things’ \( (\text{sbay'}) \) in the sense of the ‘classical’ theological terminology: things which can be described (or even defined) as ‘persistent in the mind’ \( (\text{thābiṭ fi l-dhibn}) \). Every ‘thing’ in this sense, however, can not be identified with a universal quantifier in the sense of ‘everything’, and Ibn Kammūna steps out from the traditional classification of ‘things’ by considering one more alternative: the negation of both external and mental persistence. As he points out, in this case, no concept can be formed, as there results no persistence in the mind: \( \forall x((\neg \text{Ex} \land \neg \text{Mx}) \rightarrow (\neg (\exists y \text{Cyx}))' \). Again, external existence has no impact at all on whether or not a concept is formed: \( (\forall x \, [(\neg \text{Ex} \land \neg \text{Mx}) \lor (\text{Ex} \land \neg \text{Mx})] \rightarrow (\exists y \text{Cyx})') \). In this last case, ‘everything’ \( (x) \) in Ibn Kammūna’s argument no longer falls under what a more traditional theological terminology would label as a ‘thing’ \( (\text{sbay'}) \), something which has persistence in the mind. However, Ibn Kammūna’s argument introduces an additional step into the traditional discussion: the question whether or not what is non-existent is a thing \( (\text{bal al-\text{ma}dīm \text{sbay'}}) \) is rephrased as whether or not there is a concept of the \( \text{ma}dīm \).

(iii) In the case of negating external but not internal persistence, a concept is formed, and we pass the judgement that it is ‘not persistent’ \( (\text{laysa bi-thābiṭ}) \), i.e., the external counterpart of the concept is not persistent in external reality. The concept of absolute non-existence (in external reality) conveys that absolute non-existence is ‘not persistent’, and that it as no other attributes. In the case of negating both external and internal persistence, no such concept is formed. Passing a judgement about it is not possible, since we have no concept of it. It is ‘not persistent’, not just in external reality, but also in the mind. Unlike the first case, where being ‘not persistent’ refers to the idea of being ‘not persistent [in external reality]’, in the second case being ‘not persistent’ includes as well that there is no such idea at all.
(iv) Ibn Kammūna’s explanation of the relation between ‘existent’, ‘non-existent’ and ‘persistent’ may be illustrated by the following diagram. Here ‘existence’ means ‘external existence’.

(e) Ibn Kammūna next turns to a more specific problem in the analysis of how non-existent things can be objects of knowledge, that is, the question whether ‘being distinct’ (tamayyuz) requires that something has a buwiyya. That the conceptualization of things which are not existent requires that there is some distinction between these non-existent entities, is an argument which is connected to the Mutazilite position that the ‘non-existent’ is both ‘persistent’ (thābit) and a ‘thing’ (shay); thus this argument becomes connected to the elaboration of an Avicennan ‘essence’ — ‘existence’ distinction (see also supra §15a).

The term buwiyya plays an important role in the context of the thirteenth-century discussion influenced by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardi. In this discussion, the term buwiyya acquires new connotations which make it necessary to distinguish carefully between its usage in this later discussion and its employment earlier. Indeed, even before the thirteenth century, the term buwiyya was used in several different senses. Avicenna, for example, uses it in the sense of Syriac bāwyā, ‘being, existent’, as well as in the sense of an abstract noun conveying the meaning of the infinitive ‘to be’, hence ‘essence’. It also is interpreted as being etymologically connected to buwa, ‘he’, interpreted in the sense of ‘identity’. 41

41 For a comprehensive discussion of the term buwiyya in Ibn Sinā’s llābiyyāt, see A. Bertolacci, ‘Some Texts of Aristotle’s Metaphysics in the llābiyyat of Avicenna’s Kitāb aṣ-Ṣifā’.
With these considerations in mind, we suggest that the passage from the *al-jadīd* to be cited presently is an interesting document illustrating how the term *buwiyā* was understood in the thirteenth century:¹²

‘Being distinct’ does not require that the two distinct entities are two *buwiyās*; *‘buwiyā’* and *‘non-buwiyā’ ([al-lā-buwiyā]) are distinct, and *‘non-buwiyā’* has no *buwiyā*. Therefore, if one would assume that it has a *buwiyā*, under this aspect it would form a part of *buwiyā*. But insofar as it has been assumed that it is not *buwiyā*, it is [according to a division in which *buwiyā* is one alternative] the opposite of *buwiyā* [qasīm al-buwiyā]. That about which ‘existent’ is negated is merely ‘described’ [mauṣūf], not in consideration of having this or any other description [ṣīfā], even if this follows for it.³⁵

(f) Ibn Kammūna goes on:

In the judgement about external things [*al l-umūr al-khārijyya*] it is stipulated that the mind corresponds to the external [reality] by [means of] external things [*mutābaqa at al-dhibn [lī-] l-khārij ... bi-umūr khārijyya*]. This is not stipulated in the case of intelligibles and in the case of mental judgements about mental things.⁴⁴

This passage is directed against the concluding remark of the section on *wujūd* in the *al-Mulakbkbäs* which, again, argues against the assumption of ‘mental existence’. There, al-Rāzī says:

You already have heard about the ‘mental form’. Even when assuming it, there remain problems. The mental form would only be an intellection which is true [*ta‘aqqul šahīf*] if it would correspond to what is in external reality [*mutābiqa lī-mā fi l-khārij*]. This is only the case if we assume something in the external reality [*amr mā fi l-khārij*], and this is the problematic point.⁴⁵

(§16) Now, Ibn Kammūna turns to the problem, whether or not what has perished can return to existence. A discussion of this problem can already be found in Ibn Sīnā’s *Kitāb al-Shīfā* at the end of the fifth *faṣl*, the *faṣl* in which Ibn Sīnā develops the distinction between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’. This problem is briefly alluded to in the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, and the paradigm that is set up in order to deal with the problem in the *al-Mulakbkbäs fi l-ḥikma* can be traced also in the later

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¹² See also the discussion of *buwiyā* in §16.


tradition of Asharite theology. In the makeup of this argument, considerable evolution may be observed.

In the *Kitāb al-Shīfā*, Ibn Sinā’s main argument had been that a return to existence would require that a thing returns together with all of its specifics, among which there is its specific time (*waqṭ*). So, during the second time, the first time would have to return, and both times would be identical. In this case, this could not be labelled as a ‘return’.\(^{46}\) In the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, an additional argument is employed. From the very conception of ‘something which returns’ (*al-muʿād*) there follows that before the time of its return (i.e., during the time in which it is not existent) it can be pointed to (*yakūnu ilaybi isbāra*).\(^{47}\) Al-Rāzī’s presentation of the problem seems to be an elaboration of that of the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*. It is explicitly criticized in the writings of Athīr al-Dīn al-Abhari.\(^{48}\)

Ibn Kammūna begins this section with a paraphrase of the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, and from the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil* he adopts the term *mustaʿniʿ* for designating that which has originated for the first time, as opposed to a *muʿād*, which is there after it has perished earlier. Ibn Kammūna identifies time (*zamān*) and substrate (*maḥāl*) as factors by which two similar things (*mutamāthbilayn*) are to be distinguished. Among these two factors, time can not be repeated. During the period of absence from existence which a *muʿād* would have to have, its ‘personality’ (*buwīyya*) would have to be existent, and existence and a certain time returns to it — otherwise there would be no difference between the two forms (*ṣūratān*, i.e., the first and the second ‘life’ of the *muʿād*).

He then explains why time does not return:

If it would return, in the state of returning it would have persistence, and it would have had persistence before. Since the notion that it is persistent is its essence and self [*māḥtiyya wa-ḍbāṭ*], and since its essence and self are not persistent, the fact that ‘it is persistent now’ and the fact that ‘it had been persistent before’ are

\(^{46}\) See Ibn Sinā, *Kitāb al-Shīfā* (*Ilābiyyāt*), p. 36.6–19.

\(^{47}\) See Bahmanyār, *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil*, p. 290.5–10. In Bahmanyār’s text, parts of Ibn Sinā’s argument about the conception of the non-existential are integrated into a slightly modified discussion. In the course of these modifications the argument that the non-existent can be pointed to is transferred to the discussion of the *muʿād*.

\(^{48}\) Al-Abhari’s criticism centres on the concept of *buwīyya*. Al-Rāzī had introduced the term *buwīyya* which — as compared to the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣil* — replaces in his argument the phrase *yakūnu ilaybi isbāra*. Al-Abhari criticizes Al-Rāzī’s arguments, both in the (earlier) Kitāb al-ḥaqāʾiq fī taḥṣīr al-daqaʾiq (lāmiʿ) (6) fī annā ma ṣālaʾ anbūtā l-wujūd lā yuʿād, Tehran, Parliament Library, MS majmūʿa 2752, pp. 111–13), and in the (later, in general more critical towards al-Rāzī) Muntābā al-afkār fī ibānāt al-afkār (ibid., pp. 284–85) the problem is discussed extensively. In the *Muntābā*, al-Abhari points out that time (*waqṭ*) is not part of the *buwīyya*. 
identical. So, it has not been removed from existence, nor has it returned. This is contrary to what was assumed.

If the meaning were something else, i.e., that it has been persistent before, and ‘being before’ itself is that what returns, not time would be returning but something else. From this results that — if time would return — it would not be time. This is absurd.49

As we can see from this passage, the problem of whether what has perished may have a return to existence has leads Ibn Kammūna to insert a reflection on the nature of time, and Ibn Kammūna’s elaboration of the problem differs considerably from that of al-Rāzī and that of Bahmanyār. Although Ibn Kammūna knows al-Abhari’s Muntahā al-ajkār, in the discussion of the return of the non-existent his elaboration shows no traces of an immediate influence of al-Abhari’s criticism of al-Rāzī’s presentation. As it seems, al-Rāzī’s presentation of the problem has instigated a more comprehensive discussion of the problem which manifests itself also in Ibn Kammūna’s text.

Appendix

The Kitāb al-Taḥṣil as paraphrased in the al-Jadīd fī l-ḥikma and in the Sharḥ al-Talwiḥāt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) al-Taḥṣil, 280.1–6</th>
<th>al-Jadīd, 211.4–7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wa-ma‘lūmun anna mawqū‘a l-‘ilmī yūḏa‘u fi awā‘ilī kullī ilmin bi-ḥaddihi muṣaddaka‘an bihi wa-mawqū‘u hādhā l-‘ilmī</td>
<td>al-wujūdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>là yumkinu tahdiduhū li-annahū awwaliyyun fi l-taṣawwuri ḏī dh layṣa laḥū jinsun wa-lā fāsλun wa-bi-l-jumlati là Shay‘un a‘rafu minhu ḥattā yu‘arrafa bihi wa-lā shay‘un a‘ammu minhu ḥattā yu‘khdhdhā fī ḥaddihi</td>
<td>là yumkinu tahdiduhū li-annahū awwaliyyu l-taṣawwura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (2) **al-Taḥṣil, 281.1–7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wa-dḥālika lī-anna l-wujūda</td>
<td>wa-l-wujūdu fī l-a’yāni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laysa huwa mā yakūnu biḥi l-shay’u fī l-a’yāni</td>
<td>lā mā biḥi yakūnu l-shay’u fī l-a’yāni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bal kawnuhū fī l-a’ya’ni aw šayrūratuhū fī l-a’ya’ni</td>
<td>wa-law kāna l-shay’u fī l-a’yāni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-law kāna l-shay’u yakūnu fī l-a’yāni</td>
<td>bi-kawnihī fī l-a’ya’ni lata-salsala ilā ghayri l-nihāyatī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi-kawnihī fī l-a’ya’ni la-tasalsala ilā ghayri l-nihāyatī</td>
<td>fa-mā kāna yaṣīḥḥu kawnu l-shay’i fī l-a’ya’ni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa-mā kāna yaṣīḥḥu kawnu l-shay’i fī l-a’ya’ni fa-idhān al-wujūdu l-ladhī huwa</td>
<td>fa-mā kāna yaṣīḥḥu kawnu l-shay’i fī l-a’ya’ni fa-idhān al-wujūdu l-ladhī huwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l-kawnu fī l-a’ya’ni huwa l-mawjūdiyyatu, thumma laysa yatabayyatu min ħadhā anna l-kawnu fī l-a’ya’ni huwa kawnu shay’in</td>
<td>wa-lū yatabayyatu min ħadhā l-maḥfūmi annahū kawnu fī l-a’ya’ni li-shay’in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-lākinna l-burhāna wa-l-ḥissa awjaḥā anna ba’da l-kawni fī l-a’ya’ni huwa</td>
<td>bal huwa qad yakūnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>li-shay’īn mā</td>
<td>li-shay’īn mā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-ba’ḍuhū lā yaqtarinu bi-shay’īn</td>
<td>wa-qad lā yakūnu min ḥaythu l-maḥfūmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wa-allā in yamna’u min dḥālika dalīl munfaṣīl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (3) **al-Taḥṣil, 281.10–13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thumma ‘lām anna l-wujūda yuḥmalu ‘alā mā taḥtahū ḥamlā l-tashkika lā ḥamlā l-tawātū’ā</td>
<td>wa-l-wujūdu lā yuḥmalu ‘alā mā taḥtahū ḥamlā l-muwaṭṭatū bī ḥamlā l-tashkīki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-mānā dḥālika anna l-wujūda l-ladhī lā sababa ṭabū muqaddimu bī-l-ṭabī ‘alā l-wujūdi l-ladhī lābū sababun</td>
<td>wa-inna wujūda l-‘illati aqwā min wujūdi l-ma’lūli wa-aqūdamu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-kadhālika wujūdu l-jawhari mutaqaḍdimun ‘alā wujūdi l-‘araḍī</td>
<td>wa-kadhā wujūdu l-jawhari bī-l-nisbatī ilā wujūdi l-‘araḍī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-aṣdān fa-inna ba’da l-wujūdi aqwā</td>
<td>wa-wujūdu l-‘araḍī al-qārī aqwā min wujūdi l-‘araḍī l-ghayri l-qārī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-ba’ḍuhū aḍ‘afū</td>
<td>wa-l-iḍafīyyu aḍ‘afū min ghayri l-iḍafīyyi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (4) **al-Taḥṣil, 282.1–2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fa-qad bāna anna l-wujūda amrun ʿammun yuḥmalu ‘alā mā taḥtahū lā bī-l-tawātū’ī bī-l-tashkīki</td>
<td>wa-kawnuhū maḥfūman wāḥidān wa-maqūlān bī-l-tashkīki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>laysa mimmā yaḥṭāju fihi ilā iqāmati burhān. wa-l-ladhī dhukira bī bayānihī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(5) al-Taḥṣil, 282.10–12</strong></td>
<td><strong>al-Jadīd, 212.22–213.1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-idhā kāna l-wujūdu amran ṣamman fa-yajibu an yakūna wujūduhū fī l-nafsī fa-inna l-wujūda yūjadu fī l-nafsī bi-wujūdin idh huwa ka-sāʾirī l-maʿānī l-mutaṣawwara</td>
<td>wa-idhā kāna ṣamman fa-yajibu an yakūna wujūduhū fī l-nafsī fa-inna l-wujūda yūjadu fī l-nafsī bi-wujūdin idh huwa ka-sāʾirī l-maʿānī l-mutaṣawwara fī l-nafsī</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>(6) al-Taḥṣil, 282.13–14</strong></th>
<th><strong>al-Jadīd, 213.1–3</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wa-lladhi fī l-a’yāni minhu huwa mawjūdun mā, wa-takhsīṣu kulli mawjūdin huwa bi-iḍāfatīhi ilā mawdūʿīhi</td>
<td>wa-lladhi fī l-a’yāni minhu huwa mawjūdun mā, wa-laysa taʿayyunu kulli wujūdin bi-mawdūʿīhi fa-qāṭṭ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ay yutaqawwamī bi-iḍāfatīhi ilā mawdūʿīhi l-khāṣṣi wa-ilā sababīhi lā an yakūna al-iḍāfatū lalḥiqathu min khārijin</td>
<td>ka-taʿayyunī l-ḥamratī mathalan bi-mawdūʿīhā wa-innāmah yatahǎṣṣṣāṣu kullu wujūdin bi-mā jārā majrā fāʾsī fī l-ḥalāma l-thumma yāqtarīnī bi-l-mawdūʿī</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>(7) al-Taḥṣil, 283.7–10</strong></th>
<th><strong>al-Jadīd, 213.4–7</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(8a) <strong>al-Taḥṣīl, 286.4–7</strong></td>
<td><strong>al-Jadīd, 214.10–13</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>al-shay’u</strong></td>
<td><strong>fa-l-wujūdu wa-l-shay’u</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min al-maʿqūlāti l-thāniyatī al-mustanidati</td>
<td>tabayyana annahumā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilā l-maʿqūlāti l-ūlā</td>
<td>min al-maʿqūlāti l-thawānī l-mustanidati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-ḥukmuhū ḥukmu l-kulliyiy wa-l-juzʿiyyi wa-l-jinsi wa-l-nawʿi</td>
<td>ilā l-maʿqūlāti l-ūlā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa-laysa fi l-mawjūdāti mawjūdun</td>
<td>fa-laysa fi l-mawjūdāti mawjūdun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huwa shayʿun</td>
<td>huwa wujūdu aw shayʿun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bal al-mawjūdu immā insānun wa-immā falakun</td>
<td>bal al-mawjūdu immā insānun wa-immā falakun (ed.: mlk) aw ghayrahumā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thumma yalzamu maʿqūliyyata dhālika an yakūna shayʿan</td>
<td>thumma yalzamu maʿqūliyyata dhālika an yakūna mawjūdan aw shayʿan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-ka-dhālika l-dhātu wa-ka-dhālika l-wujūdu bi-l-qiyāsi ilā aqsāmihi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(8b) <strong>al-Taḥṣīl, 286.4–7</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sharḥ al-Talwiḥāt</strong> 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>al-shayʿu</strong></td>
<td><strong>al-shayʿiyatu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min al-maʿqūlāti l-thāniyatī al-mustanidati</td>
<td>min al-maʿqūlāti l-thāniyatī al-mustanidati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilā l-maʿqūlāti l-ūlā</td>
<td>ilā l-maʿqūlāti l-ūlā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-ḥukmuhū ḥukmu l-kulliyiy wa-l-juzʿiyyi wa-l-jinsi wa-l-nawʿi</td>
<td>ḥukmuhū fi dhālika ḥukmu l-jinsi wa-l-nawʿi wa-l-kulliyiy wa-l-juzʿiyyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa-laysa fi l-mawjūdāti mawjūdun</td>
<td>fa-laysa fi l-mawjūdāti mawjūdun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huwa shayʿun</td>
<td>huwa shayʿun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bal al-mawjūdu immā insānun wa-immā falakun</td>
<td>bal al-mawjūdu immā insānun wa-immā shajaratun wa-ghayrahumā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thumma yalzamu maʿqūliyyata dhālika an yakūna shayʿan</td>
<td>min al-māhiyyātī l-mutakḥaṣṣiṭāth thumma yalzamu maʿqūliyyata kulli wāḥidin min hādīh an yakūna shayʿan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| wa-ka-dhālika l-dhātu wa-ka-dhālika l-wujūdu bi-l-qiyāsi ilā aqsāmihi |

---

50 The text follows the unpublished edition of S. H. S. Musawi. I am grateful to Reza Pourjavady for having provided a copy of it to me.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(9) <em>al-Tahsil, 290.5–7</em></th>
<th><em>al-Jadid, 217.4–5</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wa-min hādhā yu‘lamu</td>
<td>wa-l-ma‘dūmu lā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ā l-ma‘dūma lā yu‘ādu</td>
<td>yu‘ādu bi‘ayniḥi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>li-annahū awwala shay‘in</td>
<td>ay ma‘a jamī‘i ʿawāridiḥī l-mushakhkhiṣati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yuḥbaru ‘anhu bi-l-wujūdi</td>
<td>l-annahū idhā qila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>li-annahū yu‘ādu fa-qad</td>
<td>yu‘ādu fa-qad ukhbirā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ukhbira ‘anhu bi-amr</td>
<td>fa-qad ukhbirā ‘anhu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wujūdiyyin</td>
<td>bi-amr wujūdiyyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-illā lam yakun bayna l-mu‘ādi wa-</td>
<td>fa-inna bayna l-mu‘ādi wa-l-musta‘nifi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bayna l-musta‘nifi khilqatan</td>
<td>wujūdahū farqan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farqun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The thought experiment of the Flying Man appears for the first time in the works of Avicenna (Ibn Sinā, d. 428/1037). Avicenna invites us to picture ourselves in the state of a mature human being that lacks both sensation and memory. He then prompts us to consider whether in such a state we would be affirming the existence of our selves:

I thank the participants of the Bar-Ilan conference for their valuable comments on the initial draft of the paper and the members of Yale’s Working Group on Arabic philosophy for discussing with me a later version. Additional thanks go to Tzvi Langermann, Yitzhak Melamed, Cornelia Schöck, Tony Street, and Alexander Treiger for helping me improve the final draft. For all remaining mistakes and shortcomings I alone am responsible. Translations are mine, except when indicated otherwise.

1 To date, no precursor for Avicenna’s Flying Man has been identified, but scholars have pointed out that the thought experiment resembles some passages in Augustine. For a conspectus of these passages, with references to literature on the question, see R. Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200–600 AD: A Sourcebook*, 3 vols (London, 2004), i, 166–71.

2 The name usually given to the thought experiment, ‘Flying Man’, derives from a provision of sensory deprivation in some of its versions, namely that we are asked to imagine ourselves suspended or falling in the air or in a void. D. L. Black, ‘Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing that One Knows’, in *The Unity of Science in the Arabic Tradition: Science, Logic and Epistemology and their Interactions*, ed. by S. Rahman, T. Street, and H. Tahir (Dordrecht, 2008), 63–87 (p. 83 n. 3), suggests that the use of the name in Western scholarship goes back to E. Gilson, ‘Les Sources gréco-arabes de l’augustinisme avicennisant’, *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 4 (1929–30), 4–149 (especially p. 41 n. 1).
Avicenna was convinced that the thought experiment will lead us to the conclusion that we affirm the existence of ourselves even in a situation in which we fail to affirm the existence of our body. He trusted the outcome of the experiment to the proposition that ‘what is affirmed is different from what is not affirmed and what is acknowledged is different from what is not acknowledged’ (Anna l-mutbbata ghayru illadbi lam yutbhat wa-l-muqarraf bi bi ghayru lladbi lam yuqarra bi). 4 Avicenna outlines this argument twice in the psychological part of the Sifā’s, including the passage translated in paragraph 1, and once in Al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt. 5 All three versions of the argument rest


4 K. al-Nafs, p. 16.12. Modern scholars disagree as to the purpose of the Flying Man in the K. al-Nafs. Marmura claims that it comes to prove that the soul is immaterial (‘Avicenna’s “Flying Man”’, p. 391); Hasse claims that it comes to prove that the soul is independent from the body (Avicenna’s ‘De anima’, p. 86). See also below, paragraph 6.

upon the assumption that we have constant self-awareness (ṣbuʿūr bi-l-dhāt). In one of his later works, al-Mubāḥathāt, Avicenna sums up the Flying Man as ‘an argument which establishes the soul on the basis of a supposition in which self-awareness is a prerequisite’ (al-ḥujjatu l-mutḥbitatu li-l-nafsi al-mabniyyatu ‘alā fardin yuzamtu fī biṣbuʿūrun bi-l-dhāt).

Modern scholars studying the Flying Man focus their attention on the prerequisite of self-awareness. They spend less time evaluating Avicenna’s argument and, when they do, often reach negative results. Some claim that Avicenna is not arguing for a categorical conclusion, but merely provides the perspicacious reader with a reminder (танbih) for the fact that we have constant self-awareness. However, the aforementioned passage from the Mubāḥathāt indicates that Avicenna is arguing for something, because he refers to the Flying Man with the technical term for argument (ḥujjā). Others concede that Avicenna argues for a categorical

mura, ‘Avicenna’s “Flying Man”’ and Hasse, Avicenna’s ‘De anima’. Hasse also considers the version in the Masābrīqīyun, which is almost identical to that in K. al-Nafs, t.1, as well as a passage in the Risāla al-Adḥawīya fi l-maʿād with an argument that shares some features with the Flying Man.

6 The term self-awareness, customarily used to render ṣbuʿūr bi-l-dhāt is problematic, because it can be understood in terms of the modern concept of ‘consciousness’. However, paragraph 2.1, below, shows that such an understanding runs contrary to Avicenna’s usage. He uses the term to denote the awareness of the self of itself. This ‘self-awareness’ pertains to the self insofar as it is an immaterial substance. Because Avicenna considers the human soul an immaterial substance, he regards constant and immediate self-awareness as one of the basic constituents of the soul. In the Taʾliqūt, for example, he declares that self-awareness is essential to the soul (al-ṣbuʿūr bi-l-dhāt dhātī līl-nafṣ) and identifies it with our existence (ṣbuʿūrūnā bi-dhātinā buwa nafṣa wujūdīnā) (ed. Badawi (Cairo, 1973), pp. 160–61, trans. in D. L. Black, ‘Estimation (Wabm) in Avicenna: The Logical and Psychological Dimensions’, Dialogue, 32 (1993), 219–58 (p. 4)). The classical study of the subject of self-awareness is still Pines, ‘La Conception’ (see especially pp. 21–56). More recent studies are given in the references of Black, ‘Avicenna on Self-Awareness’.

7 Al-Mubāḥathāt, ed. by M. Bīdārāf (Qum, 1992) (hereafter Mubāḥathāt, cited by paragraph and page number), 56. p. 58.1–2.


9 The term reminder describes not an alternative form of argument, but an alternative way of presenting an argument. In a reminder, Avicenna merely hints at an argument and leaves it to the the perspicacious reader to work out its exact form. On Avicenna’s ‘indicative’ method see D. Gutas, Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition (Leiden, 1988), pp. 307–11.
conclusion but claim that his argument is fallacious either because of its form or because of its premises. Michael Marmura claims that Avicenna takes a hypothetical premise to a categorical conclusion. 10 Deborah Black points out that Avicenna’s argument ‘contains the obviously fallacious inference pattern, “If I know x but I do not know y, then x cannot be the same as y”’, 11 which I take to refer to the move of the argument from an epistemological to an ontological distinction (being unaware of the referential opacity of x). However, even if Avicenna’s modern critics are correct and his argument is fallacious, we are left with the question of why Avicenna himself considered it to be valid. It appears that unless we can answer this question we cannot understand what the Flying Man is all about.

To find an answer I propose that we look at interpretations of the Flying Man by post-Avicennan philosophers. 12 Their approach to Avicenna’s texts can supplement our own in interesting ways. As historians of philosophy we are sometimes tempted to focus on the Sbiṭa and the Iṣârât, for in these ‘canonical’ works, Avicenna presents his views in expository form. Some post-Avicennan philosophers, on the other hand, are attracted by problems that Avicenna’s ‘canonical’ works left unsolved. This leads them to consider those works of Avicenna that record the (sometimes aporetic) discussion of unsolved problems, works such as the Ta’liqat and the Mubâḥathât. As a result, their understanding of a given

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10 The argument ‘operates within an imagined, hypothetical framework’, but ‘the language of its conclusion is categorical’ (Marmura, ‘Avicenna’s “Flying Man”’, p. 388; see also pp. 390 and 392). Marmura also claims that Avicenna begs the question by ‘assuming the very thing to be proven — an immaterial self capable of self-awareness while totally oblivious of the body and anything physical’ (ibid., p. 388). It is quite clear, however, that Avicenna does not assume an immaterial self, but only a self that is unaware of anything corporeal. Al-Râzî later exploited this distinction, when he used Avicenna’s thought experiment to establish the difference between the material body and the soul which he understood to be a subtle material substancediffused throughout the body. See M. Marmura, ‘Fakhr al-Dīn al-Râzî’s Critique of an Avicennan Tanbîh’, in Historia philosophiae medii aevi, Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, ed. by B. Mojsisch and O. Pluta, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1991), II, 627–41 (pp. 630–33).


problem in Avicenna’s philosophy is often more comprehensive than our own, even though they pursue their own philosophical agenda and often disagree with Avicenna on central issues.

A case in point is the interpretation of the Flying Man by the Jewish philosopher ʿIzz al-Dawla Saʿd b. Maḥṣūr Ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284). Unlike most (if not all) post-Avicennan philosophers, Ibn Kammūna rejects the widely accepted Avicennan tenet that the human soul comes into being with the body and argues instead for the eternity a parte aucte of the human soul. Despite this disagreement, he is an expert student of Avicenna’s theory of the soul and agrees with it in many respects. Ibn Kammūna interpreted the Flying Man in three of his writings: in the commentary on the Talwiḥāt by al-Suhrawardi (d. 587/1191) entitled al-Tanqīḥāt fī sharḥ al-Talwiḥāt, which he completed in 1268; in the commentary on Avicenna’s Ishrārāt, entitled Sbarḥ al-uṣūl wa-l-jumal min muḥimmāt al-ʾilm wa-l-ʾamal, which he completed in 1273; and in his untitled philosophical summa, which he completed in 1278 and to which later writers refer as al-Jadīd fī l-ḥikma or al-Ḵāṣbihī fī l-ḥikma. Ibn Kammūna’s discussion of the Flying Man will show what kind of premise he and Avicenna considered the Flying Man to be and why they thought it can serve


15 Ibn Kammūna, Al-Tanqīḥāt fī Sharḥ al-Talwiḥāt, partial ed. by H. Ziai and A. Alwiša, in Refinement and Commentary on Subrawardi’s Intimations: A Thirteenth-Century Text on Natural Philosophy and Psychology: Critical Edition with Introduction and Analysis (Cosa Mesa, 2002) (hereafter Tanqīḥāt); Sbarḥ al-Uṣūl wa-l-jumal min muḥimmāt al-ʾilm wa-l-ʾamal (hereafter Uṣūl), quoted from London, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collection, MS 4545 (= Arabic Loth 484) and Istanbul, MS Süleymanie Kütlüphenesi, Lâleli collection, MS 2516 (an edition of the work by Pourjavady and Schmidtke is in preparation); Al-Jadīd fī l-ḥikma, ed. by H. M. al-Kabīsī (Baghdād, 1982), and now by H. N. Isfahani (Tehran, 2008) (hereafter Ḥāṣbihī). I thank Hamed Najī Isfahani for allowing me to consult his edition before publication.
in a valid argument. In addition, Ibn Kammūna’s interpretations of the Flying Man will highlight the literary form of the Uṣūl and the Tanqihāt. The samples from Ibn Kammūna’s commentaries will show that the label ‘commentary’ is attached to works of rather varied literary forms.\footnote{The importance of commentaries in post-Avicennan philosophy has been emphasized by R. Wisnovsky, ‘The Nature and Scope of Arabic Philosophical Commentary in Post-classical (ca. 1100–1900 AD) Islamic Intellectual History: Some Preliminary Observations’, in Philosophy, Science, and Exegesis in Greek: Arabic and Latin Commentaries, ed. by P. Adamson, H. Baltussen, and M. W. F. Stone, 2 vols (London, 2004), ii, 149–91. His article also provides a useful inventory of post-Avicennan commentaries.} In the remainder of the paper, I will discuss the commentaries not in the order in which Ibn Kammūna wrote them, but rather in the chronological order of the texts they come to explain. I will start with Ibn Kammūna’s commentary on the Ishbārāt version of the Flying Man in the Uṣūl, continue with the commentary on the Tālīwihāt version in the Tanqihāt, and end with a glance at Ibn Kammūna’s own version in the Kāṣīf.

The Flying Man in Ibn Kammūna’s ‘Uṣūl’

In the Uṣūl, his commentary on the Ishbārāt, Ibn Kammūna highlights the problematic move of the Flying Man argument from an epistemological to an ontological distinction. In the passage Ibn Kammūna is commenting on, Avicenna first claims that we are aware of the existence of our selves even in the most extreme states and then introduces the Flying Man:

[2.1] Reminder. Turn to your self and reflect whether being sound — and even in other states in which you would, however, discern a thing correctly — you would be unaware of the existence of your self and not affirm your soul [tağhibūl ‘an wujūdī ḍbātika wa-lā ṭubbitu nafsaka]. In my opinion this does not happen to the intelligent person. Even the self of the sleeper while he is asleep and of the drunk while he is drunk will not be oblivious of itself, even though the representation of his self to him [tumanātibulubu li-ḍbātīḥ] does not remain in his recollection.

[2.2] Would you imagine that your self [law tawabbamta ḍbātaka] has just been created and is of sound mind and body, and it [sc. the self] is supposed [wa-furiḍa] to be altogether in such a position and of such a constitution that it does not perceive its parts, and its limbs do not touch, but are rather spread apart, and it is suspended for a moment in temperate air [mu‘allaqatun fi bawā‘in ṭalqin], then you would find that it will be unaware of everything except the affirmation of its being [gḥafalat ‘an kulli sbay‘in illā ‘an ṭubūtī anniyyatibā].\footnote{Ishbārāt, pp. 319.5–320.7. Cf. the translation by Marmura, ‘Avicenna’s “Flying Man”’, p. 391.}
Avicenna states in paragraph 2.1 that we are aware of the existence of our self even if we are asleep or drunk. Our drunk and sober selves differ (with regard to self-awareness) only in that the possessor of the former, having sobered up, will not remember that his self was aware of itself while intoxicated. In the following paragraph, 2.2, Ibn Kammūna introduces the Flying Man. If we compare this version of the Flying Man with the version in the *K. al-Nafs* quoted above, we find that both versions describe the exact same two-step process we have called the thought experiment of the Flying Man. In a first step, the person conducting the experiment pictures himself (*yatawabhamu l-waḥid / law tawabhamta*) in the state of a Flying Man, which entails complete sensory deprivation and a lack of memory.18 This part of the thought experiment is referred to both by Avicenna and later commentators as a supposition (*fard*).19 In a second step, the person reflects (*ibumma yata'ammahlu*) whether his self, in the supposed state of the Flying Man, would be aware of anything. Avicenna predicts that the person will conclude (*wajadat*) that his self would affirm (*atbata*) or not be unaware of (*lā yagbfu ʾcan*) his affirmation of the existence or the being of itself.20

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18 I translate the verb *tawabhamu* with ‘to imagine’. It should be noted, however, that the verb is related to the noun *wabm*, used by Avicenna as a term to describe that faculty of the soul which (in its most basic function) perceives the connotation or implication (*maʾnan*) associated with sensible forms. For example, it allows a sheep to perceive that the form of a wolf connotes or implies danger. The term is usually translated with ‘estimation’. On estimation and on its function in thought experiments such as the Flying Man see D. L. Black, ‘Estimation (Wabm) in Avicenna’, especially pp. 22–24.

19 See, for example, in paragraphs 4, 8.1, and 11, below.

Let us now turn to Ibn Kammūna’s commentary on this passage in the *Uṣūl*. Ibn Kammūna composed the *Uṣūl* in less than two months.\(^{21}\) The short period of composition alone conveys that he relied on pre-existing material, but he himself reveals in the introduction how and from what sources he composed his text:

[3] So far what concerns the commentary on the exordium [*kuṭūba*] and the introduction [of Avicenna’s *Ishārāt*]. Following the same method, but with additions, I comment on the remaining books. Among [these additions] is what I gathered from the books of the most eminent scholars and what I discovered through my own small capacity of thought. The largest part I epitomized from the commentary of our master, the expert in the ancient and modern sciences, the king of all true scholars, the foremost among the meticulous philosophers, the Patron of the truth, the dynasty, and the religion [Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī]. [...] I quoted [in my work] the *Ishārāt* of the Ra’īs Abū ‘Alī [Avicenna] verbatim, preserving their elegance and beauty, not omitting the slightest thing, except that which was necessary [to omit] in order to incorporate his [sc. Avicenna’s] words [into my work], as for example the *wāw ‘atf* and the *fāʿ taʿqib*, as well as that which was necessary [to omit] in order to clarify the meaning [of the text], as for example the substitution of a pronoun [with its antecedent].\(^{22}\)

Ibn Kammūna thus combines the full and only slightly adapted text of Avicenna’s *Ishārāt* with an epitome of the commentary by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) into a work that blurs the distinction between text and commentary.\(^{23}\) We can confirm Ibn Kammūna’s method of composition by comparing his commentary on the Flying Man with that by al-Ṭūsī. To facilitate the comparison in the following translation of the two texts, parallels to Avicenna’s *Ishārāt* in paragraph 2.2 are set in italics and passages shared between al-Ṭūsī in paragraph 4 and Ibn Kammūna in paragraph 5 are set in boldface.

used specifically to render the concept of individual being. In fact, we will see below while discussing paragraph 9 that in the context of the Flying Man the term refers to the being of an individual self. However, I have not found evidence to suggest that ‘individual being’ is the established meaning of *annīya* in post-Avicennan philosophy. For this reason I have chosen to render the term with its most generic English equivalent.


\(^{23}\) Ibn Kammūna suggests in the introduction (MS Ragıp Paşa 845, transcribed in Pourjavady and Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher*, p. 61) that whoever prefers to distinguish Avicenna’s text from the commentary can do so by highlighting the *Ishārāt* passages with a red mark or something similar (*fa-man aḥabba an yumayyīza al-fāza l-ʾishārātī ‘an bāqī l-kalāmi fi-l-yumayyīza dhāliku bi-alāma l-ʾhumratī aw ghayribā*). This advice was followed by either the copyist or a reader of MS Lâleli 2516.
[4] Next he adds by way of explanation the supposition [fard] of the state of a man in which [this man] does not perceive anything except for his self. Namely he imagines [a] that he has just been created so that he is without any recollection, on condition that he is [b] of sound mind so that he is mindful [yatanabbala] of his self and on condition that he is of sound constitution so that no illness affects him and he would [as a result of it] perceive some circumstance as his self that is not his self [fa-yudriku ḥālan li-dbātibī ghayru dbātībī]. He imagines also that he is [in such a position] that he does not see his parts [c] so that he does not perceive a whole and judges that he is [tantamount to] it. And [he imagines furthermore] that his limbs do not touch so that he does not feel through his limbs, but [he imagines that they are] rather spread apart and suspended in temperate air [fī bawā‘in talqin] with a fatḥa on the tā‘ and a sukūn on the lām. This means that no [d] strange quality such as heat or cold can be felt in it. One says: ‘a temperate day’ and ‘this temperate night’ because it has nothing hot or cold or anything irritating. The condition that the air be temperate has been imposed only [e] so that he does not sense anything [sba‘y] outside of his body as well. It follows that a human being [f] in a state like the one mentioned is unaware of everything such as his limbs and his organs, his being a dimensional body, [g] his senses and faculties, and all things outside of [5] Would you imagine [a] your self [as] having just been created without any recollection, but nevertheless [as being] [b] of sound mind, so that it is aware of itself, and [as being] of a sound constitution, so that no illness affects it [as a result of which it] would perceive some state as its self that is not its self. And [if, in addition, your self] is supposed to be altogether in such a position and of such constitution [c] that it does not perceive its parts so that it does not perceive something which it judges to be [tantamount to] its self. And [if it is assumed finally] that it is suspended for some time in temperate air, that is [d] air which is of such a quality that differs from warm, cold, and so forth, so that it [e] feels nothing extraneous. Then you would find that [f] in the state mentioned it [sc. your self] is unaware of everything, including its limbs, its organs, all extraneous bodies, [g] senses, and faculties, as well as [all] extraneous accidents except the affirmation of its being. And the self is not unaware of it [i.e. this affirmation] in any state. Since the known is something else than the unknown, our self is something else than all these other things. Therefore its knowledge of its existence is evident ['ilmuhā bi-wujūdihā wādhun] and needs [h] not to be acquired through an argument [ḥujjā] or through exposition [qawāl shārīḥ].

24 A marginal note corrects ghāfīla in the text of British Library, MS 4545, fol. 89v, l. 23, to wa-qad ghafalat, the text of MS Lâleli 2516 and the text of Ishārāt.

25 Ibn Kammūna, Uṣūl (British Library, MS 4545, fol. 89v, ll. 16–29; MS Lâleli 2516, fols 134v, l. 13–134v, l. 6); the text of both manuscripts is identical, except for the difference
**him except the affirmation of his self**
[illā `an َثَبَعَتَي ِذَٰٰتِي] alone. Since the first and clearest of perceptions is the human being’s perception of his self, it is clear that such a perception cannot be acquired through a definition or a description or [h] established through an argument [ḥujjaj] or a demonstration [burhān].

The comparison not only confirms that Ibn Kammūna chose the *Ishbārāt* as the main body of the *Uṣūl* and supplied it with excerpts from al-Ṭūsī’s commentary. It also shows how Ibn Kammūna tailored these excerpts to fit the text of the *Ishbārāt*. For example, he replaces the subject of the thought experiment in al-Ṭūsī’s commentary, the ‘he’, which al-Ṭūsī had borrowed from the *K. al-Nafs*-version, with the self (*dbātī*), the subject of the *Ishbārāt*-version. He also trims al-Ṭūsī’s philological digression on the term *ṭalq* (temperate) and retains only the brief explanation of its meaning.

Yet Ibn Kammūna alters not only the wording of al-Ṭūsī’s commentary. He also alters its argument. Al-Ṭūsī argues that constant self-awareness is the most fundamental kind of apprehension and as such cannot be proven through an argument or a demonstrative proof. He states in a later passage that his remarks come to counter the critical commentary of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209/10). Al-Rāzī had criticized Avicenna for failing to explain whether constant self-awareness is primary or requires a demonstrative proof. Because al-Ṭūsī introduces the Fly-

indicated in the previous note. See for Ibn Kammūna’s definition of the terms exposition (*qawel sbārīb*) and argument (*ḥujjaj*), the definitions in *Kabīfi*, p. 152.6–7: ‘Thinking that leads to conception is called exposition; thinking that leads to assent [i.e., determination that the concept is in accordance with reality] is called argument’ (*wa-yūsammā l-fikru l-muwaṣṣilu ilā l-taṣawwuri qawlan sbārībān wa-l-fikru l-muwaṣṣilu ilā l-taṣdiqi ḥujjajān*).

26 Hall mushkilāt al-ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt’, in *Sharḥ al-Ishbārāt* (Cairo, 1325 AH), p. 122.3–11.

27 In al-Razī’s words: ‘The Shaykh [i.e., Avicenna], after elaborating in mentioning degrees, claimed next that the human in all these states must perceive the being of his self [lā badda an yakūna mudrīkan li-anniyati dbātī] that is, its existence. Hence, the sum total of his words in this section is that the human basically is never unaware of his self in any of these states. He, however, did not show whether this proposition is primary or whether it requires demonstrative proof. And on the supposition that it requires demonstrative proof, he did not mention at all an argument to support it’ (*Sharḥ*, printed in the margins of *Sharḥay*...
ing Man after paragraph 2.1 with the words ‘[n]ext he [sc. Avicenna] adds by way of explanation the supposition of the state of a man’, we can assume that al-Ṭūsī understands the Flying Man as an illustration for the assumption that we have constant self-awareness, an assumption that cannot be proven.\footnote{Some modern interpreters of the \textit{Isbārāt} version follow Ṭūsī’s view (see n. 8, above).}

Ibn Kammūna, however, uses the occasion to introduce an argument much more akin to that in the \textit{K. al-Nafs} version:

(1) The self is unaware of all things (corporeal) in the state of the Flying Man (\textit{wajadtabā fi mitbli l-ḥalati l-madīkūrati qad ghafalat ‘an kulli sby’in ḥattā ‘an a’zdā‘ibā l-ẓābīra}).

(2) The self is not unaware of the affirmation of its being in any state (\textit{illā ‘an ṭabūtī anniyatibā faqat fa-innabā lā taghľulū ‘anbu fi ḥalān min al-ḥāwli})

(3) The known is something else than the unknown (\textit{al-ma‘lūmu ghayrū mā laysa bi-l-ma‘lūm}) (assumption).

(4) The self is something else than ‘all these other things ((\textit{ḥiyāl mugbāyiratun li-kulli bādhibi l-usahaan ‘i}) (conclusion from (1) and (2) on the basis of (3)).

(5) Hence, its knowledge of its existence is evident (\textit{fa-idban ‘ilmubā bi-wujūdībā wādīhūn}).

Proposition 5 resembles the conclusion in al-Ṭūsī’s commentary, even though it is not exactly clear how Ibn Kammūna arrives at it without al-Ṭūsī’s stipulations. His conclusion in 4, however, is missing at this point in both Avicenna and al-Ṭūsī. Most importantly for our purpose, neither Avicenna in the \textit{Isbārāt} nor al-Ṭūsī in his commentary state proposition 3 explicitly, but Avicenna uses a similar proposition in the \textit{K. al-Nafs} version quoted in paragraph 1, above. In wording, however, it differs from proposition 3. Ibn Kammūna states that ‘the known [\textit{ma‘lūm}] is something else than the unknown [mā laysa bi-l-ma‘lūm]’. Avicenna states that ‘what is affirmed [\textit{mutbah}] is different from what is not affirmed and what is acknowledged [\textit{muqarr bihi}] is different from what is not acknowledged’. The terminology suggests that Avicenna and Ibn Kammūna differ in how they view the epistemological state of the Flying Man. Avicenna seems to consider it self-awareness and Ibn Kammūna...
self-knowledge. However, Avicenna’s second version of the Flying Man in the *K. al-Nafs* (v.7) shows that we cannot draw such a distinction:

[6] Let us return to what we mentioned earlier. We say that would a man be created all at once and would he be created with his limbs [spread] apart and would he not see his limbs, and would he not happen to touch them, and they would not touch [each other], and would he not hear a sound, then he would be ignorant of the existence of all of his organs, while he would know the existence of his being as one thing, being ignorant of all this *wa-ʿalima wujuda anniyyatibī shay’an waḥidan ma‘a jabli jamī‘ī dbālka*. What is unknown cannot be identical with what is known *wa-laysa al-majbūlu bi-ʿaynibī buwa al-ma‘lūm*, and in reality these organs belong to us only like garments.⁸⁰

This version differs from the previous two versions in the way in which Avicenna describes the first step of the thought experiment. There Avicenna expresses it with the verbs ‘to affirm’ (*athbata*) and ‘not to be unaware of’ (*lā yaghfulu ‘an*); here he expresses it with the verbs ‘to be ignorant’ (*jabila*) and ‘to know’ (*ʿalima*). The same holds for the proposition 3. At the end of paragraph 6 Avicenna states that ‘what is unknown cannot be identical with what is known’ (*wa-laysa al-majbūlu bi-ʿaynibī buwa al-ma‘lūm*) which reflects a concept of self-awareness that is more akin to knowledge arising from the application of the intellect. In fact, even though Avicenna discussed the nature of self-awareness extensively in later works, he never committed himself to an unambiguous definition of its epistemological status.³¹

Ibn Kammūna follows in his version of proposition 3 a wording similar to that of the second *K. al-Nafs* version. This might show that he considers the epistemological status of self-awareness to be more akin to knowledge than primitive self-awareness. More important for our purpose is that Ibn Kammūna introduces proposition 3 in a text in which it is neither stated explicitly nor supplied by his main source. This indicates that he considers it an integral part of Avicenna’s argument rather than a fallacy. To understand why Ibn Kammūna introduced this proposition we have to look at his discussion of the Flying Man in the *Tanqīḥāt*, his commentary on al-Suhrawardī’s *Talwīḥāt*.

⁷⁹ In her analysis, Black calls the first state ‘primitive self awareness’ (*Avicenna on Self-Awareness*, p. 65 and passim) and the second ‘second-order awareness’ or ‘knowing that one knows’ (ibid., pp. 76–81).


The Flying Man in Ibn Kammūna’s ‘Tanqīḥāt’

In the *Tanqīḥāt*, Ibn Kammūna not only provides the syllogism that shows why he considers proposition 3 a valid move. He also shows why he (and Avicenna) consider the Flying Man a valid premise for such a syllogism.

The translation below shows that the passage on the Flying Man in the *Tanqīḥāt* differs from that in the *Uṣūl* in its form. In the *Uṣūl*, as we have seen above, Ibn Kammūna combines the verbatim text of Avicenna’s *Ishbārāt* with an epitome of al-Ṭūsī’s commentary. In the *Tanqīḥāt*, however, he keeps text and commentary apart: he quotes a short passage from al-Suhrawardi’s *Talwīḥāt*, analyses the argument, and then breaks up the text into smaller lemmas which he explains one after another. In the translation below, the quotation from al-Suhrawardi’s *Talwīḥāt* in paragraph 7.1 is followed, in paragraphs 7.2–5, by Ibn Kammūna’s analysis and commentary of selected lemmas:

[7.1] [Quotation from al-Suhrawardi’s *Talwīḥāt*] Indeed, you do not become unaware of your self [*dhātaka*] when you are asleep, when you are awake, when you are sober, or when you are drunk. And suppose that you have been created all at once with a perfect intellect, [and that] you do not apply your sense to anything that belongs to you or to anything else, [and have] the limbs spread so that they do not touch, [and you are] in the air, then you would be ignorant of everything except your being [annīyatīkā]. The bodies and accidents which you have not yet perceived have therefore nothing to do with your self [lā madkhal labū]. You intellect [your self] without them and without the need for an intermediary, an indication, or something corporeal that causes perception. Hence your knowledge that your self is incorporeal is necessary [jā-ma‘rifatuka li-dhātika annābā ḥayyrū jīrmiyātīn ḍarātīyā].

[7.2] [Ibn Kammūna’s commentary:] This statement encompasses two conclusions. The first conclusion is that man’s rational soul is a separate substance [*jauhbar mujarrad*] that is neither a body nor an accident. Its demonstrative proof [*burbānubū*] is the following: ‘The self of every man, this man is not unaware of it in all five aforementioned states, namely: when he is asleep, when he is awake, when he is sober, when he is drunk, and when he is spread-eagle in the manner mentioned [by al-Suhrawardi]. And ‘Every body and accident this man is unaware of when he is in one of [338.10] the five states, namely [in this case] the fifth’ which everyone who is endowed with perspicacity [*dhū faţāna*] understands necessarily. From the second figure follows that the self of every man is neither a body nor an accident, hence it is an incorporeal substance.

[7.3] When you understand this, then his statement ‘Indeed, you do not become unaware of your self when you are asleep, when you are awake …’ means that in the state of sleep [man] controls his imaginations and at times [338.15] matters of thought and reason. Thus, while he exercises control he is aware that it is he who controls. This is for him to be aware of his self.

[7.4] His statement: ‘would you assume your ḍbāṭ’ means: ‘would you assume your self / soul [nafsak], and his saying [suspended] in the air’ conveys that he is not placed on a firm body, so that he would be affected by it and aware of it. Regarding ‘air’: man does not feel air, unless it strikes him with a violent blow or bears on him, or is of a quality [that is] different from the quality of [his] skin. Without this, man does not become aware [339.5] of [the air’s] touch.

[7.5] And his saying ‘you would be unaware of everything except your being’ is a premise based on reflection [muqaddama iʿtibārīya] to which assent only people who possess perspicacity [abl al-ḍafāna] to whom its usefulness is restricted. He whose mind stops short of understanding this reflection [man yatawaqqafu ḍibnubu ‘an al-tafaṭṭun li-bādha l-ʿtibār], so much so that [he thinks] it is possible that there should exists a person that is perfect in disposition and intellect [kāmil al-khīla wa-l-ʿaql] and not afflicted by any harm — for this is the supposition that has been made — would not be aware of his self, but his judgement [bukmubu] would rather be the judgement of an inanimate being [339.10] then this demonstrative proof [burbān] is for him a loss. But for him who possesses comprehension [this proof] is conclusive.

In his analysis, Ibn Kammūna first points out (7.2) that al-Suhrawardī argues for two conclusions (maṭṭābāyn): the first conclusion states that ‘man’s rational soul is a separate substance [jawbar mujarrad] that is neither a body nor an accident’, and the second states that ‘everyone’s knowledge of his proper essence and his apprehension of it necessarily lacks an intermediary’. He then establishes the first conclusion through a demonstrative proof (burbān) that sets out al-Suhrawardī’s propositions as a categorical syllogism of the second figure (Camestres). As customary in Arabic logic, Ibn Kammūna presents the minor premise (6) before the major (7).

(6) The self of every man, this man is not unaware of it in all five aforementioned states (Ṭanqīḥāt, 338.6–7: anna ḍbāta kulli insānin la yaghfu ḍhālika l-insānū ‘anbāfī ḥālatin mina l-ḥālātī l-khamsati l-ḥādathātī) (self-evident and result of thought experiment; minor — e-proposition).

(7) Every body and accident, this man is unaware of it when he is in one of the five states, namely the fifth which everyone who is endowed with perspicacity understands necessarily (Ṭanqīḥāt, 338.9–11: kullu jismin wa-ʿaraḍin fa-inna dhālika l-insāna yaghfu ḍhāla ṣan ḍi ḥālatin mina l-ḥālātī l-khamsati wa-biya l-khāmisatu minbā ḍalā mā yaʿlamubu kullu ḍi ḍaṭānatin min nafsībi ʿīlman ḍarūrīyān) (result of thought experiment; major — a-proposition).

33 Cf. Avicenna, K. al-Nafs, p.16.5; Mubāḥatbāt, 73, p. 62.
34 Ṭanqīḥāt, 337.13–339.10.
35 We will confine our discussion to the first conclusion, because it is there that Ibn Kammūna elaborates on the form of the argument.
(8) The self of every man is neither a body nor an accident (hence it is an incorporeal substance) (Tanqīḥāt, 338.11–12: anna dhāta kulli īnsānīn laysat bi-jismin wa-lā ‘araḍīn fa-biyya idban jawharun mujarrad) (from minor (6) and major (7) — e-proposition).

The syllogism mirrors proposition 3, which states that the known (here the self) is different from the unknown (here bodies and accidents). But is this second figure syllogism productive? Tony Street has shown in the past that Avicenna rejects second-figure syllogisms with two absolute premises as sterile. Hence, the second-figure Camestres above would not produce. But Street has also shown that Avicenna and al-Suhrawardi both consider Camestres with a necessary (D) minor premise and a possible (M) major to conclude in a necessary proposition (i.e., Camestres MLL). He explains this on the basis of Avicenna’s exposition in the Naqāṭ: Avicenna invites us to consider the two premises, no J is possibly B, and every A is possibly B. The second (major) premise tells us that B is possible for A’s nature, whereas the first tells us that B is essentially excluded from J’s nature; so A and J are essentially different natures, and the conclusion must be the necessity proposition, no J is possibly A. The same modal operators can be added to the premises of Ibn Kammūn’s syllogism. For we can read the minor premise (6) as stating about the nature of the self that ‘this man’ is necessarily not unaware of it (necessary e-premise) and the major premise (7) as stating about the nature of every body and accident that ‘this man’ is possibly unaware of it (possible a-premise). One must therefore not accept that the imaginary state of the Flying Man is true, but only that it is possible, which would address at least part of Marmura’s critique (above at n. 10).

We understand now on a formal level how the above syllogism mirrors proposition 3 and how both Ibn Kammūn and Avicenna can accept it as valid. But how can the middle term of the syllogism, that is, ‘this man is aware of’ escape the critique that it is based on an epistemological distinction (Black at n. 11)?

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36 This point was also made in Dr Street’s presentation at the Bar Ilan conference. His contribution has since been published as ‘Suhrawardi on Modal Syllogisms’, in Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages: Studies in Text, Transmission and Translation, in Honour of Hans Daiber, ed. by A. Akasoy and W. Raven (Leiden, 2008), pp. 163–78. I wish to thank Tony Street for providing me with an advance copy of his article and for discussing with me its implications for Ibn Kammūn’s syllogistic rendering of the Flying Man.

37 Street, ‘Suhrawardi’, p. 171, referring to Avicenna, Kitāb al-Naqāṭ, ed. by M. Kurdi (Cairo, 1331), p. 58. I should note that no p is possibly q is how Street sets out the necessary e-proposition every p is necessarily not q. In this he follows P. Thom, ‘Logic and Metaphysics in Avicenna’s Modal Syllogistic’, in The Unity of Science in the Arabic Tradition: Science, Logic and Epistemology and their Interactions, ed. by S. Rahman, T. Street, and H. Tahir (Dordrecht, 2008), pp. 361–76.
The most important statement for this purpose appears in paragraph 7.5, where Ibn Kammūna describes proposition 7 as ‘a premise based on reflection [muqaddama iʿtibārīya] to which assent only people who possess perspicacity [abl al-ṭaṣādīq] to whom its usefulness is restricted’.\(^{38}\) This explanation clearly elaborates on his claim in paragraph 2.1 that proposition 7 is necessarily understood by ‘everyone who is endowed with perspicacity [dbū ṭaṣādīq]’.

Ibn Kammūna did not invent the classification of the major premise as a premise based on reflection. In fact, much of paragraph 7.5 corresponds word-for-word to a passage on the Flying Man in Avicenna’s *Mubāḥathāt*.\(^{39}\) This becomes clear when we compare the Arabic text of paragraph 7.5 with two passages from Avicenna’s *Mubāḥathāt* (translated below in paragraphs 8.1 and 8.3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tanqīḥāt</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mubāḥathāt</strong></th>
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\(^{38}\) On the origin of ‘assent’ (taṣādīq) and the related concept of ‘conception’ (tasawwur) as well as their interpretation by modern scholars see now the introductory chapters in J. Lameer, *Conception and Belief in Śadr al-Dīn Sbīrāzī (ca 1571–1635): Al-Risāla fi l-tasawwur wa-l-tasādīq: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Tehran, 2006) and cf. the review by J. Janssens in *Bibliotheca orientalis*, 65 (2008), 258–62.

The comparison shows that most of paragraph 7.5 derives from Avicenna’s 
*Mubāḥathāt*, and (if we take into consideration paragraph 8.4, below) we can 
surmise that it is also the source for the contrast of *dāʾiʿun* and *qāṭiʿun*. We do 
not know at present whether Ibn Kammūna copied the passages directly from 
the *Mubāḥathāt* or whether he used an intermediary source.\(^\text{40}\) We can be certain, 
however, that he shares Avicenna’s assessment that the Flying Man serves in a 
premise based on reflection. To understand what premises based on reflection 
are, we will first read the passage from the *Mubāḥathāt* in its original context and 
then look at the commentary by Ibn Kammūna on the systematic presentation of 
such premises in Avicenna’s *Iṣbārāt*.

The passage from the *Mubāḥathāt* belongs to a lengthy discussion of the 
Flying Man in which Avicenna answers questions by his disciple Bahmanyār 
Ibn al-Marzubān (d. c. 1050), who had been disputing the Flying Man with Abū 
l-Qāsim al-Kirmānī.\(^\text{41}\) We can infer from Avicenna’s reply that al-Kirmānī denied 
constant self-awareness and the possibility of complete sensory deprivation. For 
example, Avicenna quotes al-Kirmānī claiming that a sleeper lacks self-awareness 
(*Mubāḥathāt*, 66) and that a person suspended in temperate air (i.e., a Flying Man) 
would still feel the presence of the air (*Mubāḥathāt*, 73).\(^\text{42}\) Avicenna eventually 
approaches these objections in detail (*Mubāḥathāt*, 66–74), but he first explains 
why al-Kirmānī cannot accept the thought experiment (*Mubāḥathāt*, 56–59):

\[8.1\] As for the discussion of the argument that establishes the soul [al-ḥuwa al-
mutbbita lil-nafs] on the basis of a supposition [fārd] in which awareness of the

\(^{40}\) We also have to allow for the possibility that the *Mubāḥaṭāt* passage derives from an 
earlier work of Avicenna that served as Ibn Kammūna’s immediate source.

\(^{41}\) On the identity of Kirmānī see D. Reisman, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition: 
The Transmission, Contents and Structure of Ibn Sinā’s ‘al-Mubāḥathāt’ (The Discussions)* 
(Leiden, 2002), pp. 16–19.

\(^{42}\) Even though Avicenna explicitly refers to the *K. al-Nafs*-version (presumably 1.1, trans-
lated in paragraph 1, above), we cannot exclude that Bahmanyār and al-Kirmānī had access 
to the *Iṣbārāt* version at the time of their dispute. For al-Kirmānī’s claim ‘the person 
which is suspended, according to the supposition [fārd, i.e., the Flying Man], in temperate air 
[bawā’ sakhsabbi]’ (*Mubāḥathāt*, 73, p. 62) would nevertheless perceive the presence of the 
air seems to presuppose the *Iṣbārāt* version, because only in that version Avicenna describes 
the person, or rather the self, as ‘suspended momentarily’ (mu’allaqatun ṭaḥzatan mā) in 
‘temperate air’ (bawā’ taḥqi); in the *K. al-Nafs* version, he describes the Flying Man only as 
‘falling in the air or a void’ (yabūn fi bawā’ aw kbalā) in a way that does not allow him to 
perceive the resistance of the air. On the related chronological problems see Reisman, *The 
self [šunuʿr bi-l-dhāt] is a prerequisite, that Shaykh [al-Kirmānī] already took counsel with me on this matter when he wanted to read back to me the Kitāb al-Nafs of the Shifā' and I wanted to decline. I told him: This one does not belong to the arguments that compel you to agree. For this proof [hayān] is built upon a premise based on reflection [muqaddama iʿtibārīya] to which assent [taṣdiq] readily only people who possess perspicuity and subtle intelligence [abl al-faṭāna wa-l-ʿuṣl]. Because he not only lacks these two, but also regards this premise with an angry eye, the doubt overcomes him faster than water flows down a slope.

[8.2] There are syllogisms built upon premises to which only some people assent but not others, as is the case with sensory premises and [premises based on] experience and observation, like Galen’s proof [hayān] that some bones are sensitive because of his experience with [his own] teeth. I seem to have pointed this out already in that very book [fāṣ al-kitāb], and it is arranged in a way that will awaken the impartial man to this reflection, if it has not crossed his mind to engage in it.

[8.3] To sum up: this argument is either wasted or decisive. It is wasted with regard to him whose mind stops short of understanding this reflection [man yatawaqqafu ḏībnuṣu ṭan al-tafaṭṭun li-bāda l-iʿtibār], so much so that [he thinks] it is possible that a man exists that is perfect in disposition and intellect [kāmil al-khiṭa wa-l-ʿaql] and not afflicted by any harm — this is the supposition that has been made —, but that his judgement [ḥukmubul] would rather be the judgement of an inanimate being in that he would not be aware of his essence until he opens his eyes, for example, and his sight meets [that part of] his surface that is visible, so that what he perceives is his self which he is aware of. For nothing can perceive a thing, unless at the time it is perceiving, it [also] perceives its own self.

[8.4] For such people this argument is not useful, or rather, it is wasted [dāʾiʿun] — I mean the argument that is discovered from the reflection of the person upon the state of his self [or soul, al-buṣjatu llatī tustanibaṭu min iʿtibār l-sbakṣī ḥala nafsībi] — and they need an argument that is based on species and genus such as ‘because the bodies have such and such animal actions, they have a principle that is such and such which is the soul’ and similar [arguments]. With regard to the perspicacious, however, [this argument] is decisive [qāṭiʿun].

Avicenna is clearly engaged in an argument ad hominem: he claims that Kirmānī rejected the Flying Man not because the argument is flawed, but because Kirmānī failed to understand it. And he failed to understand the argument because it is a premise based on reflection (muqaddama iʿtibārīya). As such, Avicenna states in paragraph 8.3, it ‘is wasted with regard to him whose mind stops short of understanding this reflection’ (man yatawaqqafu ḏībnuṣu ṭan al-tafaṭṭun li-bāda l-iʿtibār).

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33 Michot, ‘La Réponse’, p. 169, translates ḏēkaranī ḏēlik as ‘me les a rappelés’, perhaps reading the second or the fourth form of the verb.
Why only the perspicacious can agree to premises based on reflection, Avicenna explains in paragraph 8.2. Such premises resemble premises based on sensation, experience, and observation. The latter premises, too, are only accepted by persons who have sensed, experienced, or observed the subject of the proposition by themselves. Avicenna presents the example of Galen’s proof that some bones are sensitive (bones that can ache are sensitive, some bones, i.e., teeth, can ache, therefore some bones are sensitive). Galen’s proof will compel only those among us who have suffered from toothache; those with healthy teeth will not be able to assent to the premise ‘some bones can ache’ and will therefore reject Galen’s proof. The same holds true for premises based on reflection: only persons who can and do reflect on the state of their self can assent to what they learn from this reflection.

Avicenna presents a more systematic account of how premises based on reflection relate to premises based on sensation, experience, and observation in the logical part of the *Isḥārāt*. There Avicenna mentions statements based on reflection as a kind of observational statements (*mubsābadāt*). In order to confirm that Ibn Kammūna agrees with Avicenna on this topic we will read his commentary on the relevant passage. Following al-Ṭūsī, Ibn Kammūna systematizes Avicenna’s account: observational statements are acquired through the soul and its faculties. There are those statements that are acquired through the external senses (*maḥṣūsāt*) and those that are acquired through the internal senses (*iʿtibārīya*). A special case of the latter are statements that are based not on the observation of the faculties of the soul, but rather on the observation of the soul itself. As in the *Uṣūl* passage above (paragraph 5), I present Avicenna’s text in italics and Ibn Kammūna’s epitome of al-Ṭūsī’s commentary in boldface:

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[9] Observational statements [*mubsābadāt*] are like the sensible [*maḥṣūsāt*], which are the propositions the assent to which is acquired only through the sense. Such as our judgement [*ḥuẓẓ minā*] that the sun exists and that it is shining, and our judgment that this observed fire is hot, not every fire, because the sense, insofar as it is sense, does not produce a judgement with regard to universals [*ḥuẓẓ kullī*], and it lacks the power of judgement. Rather, the judgement about what the sense perceived pertains to the intellect. And [observational statements are also] like the reflective propositions [produced] through the observa-

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44 Black, ‘Avicenna on Self-Awareness’, p. 75 (at n. 46), briefly refers to the following passage, but is interested in the epistemological rather than the logical status of self-awareness.

45 Avicenna considers here statements as such rather than in their function as premises of an argument. Hence he uses the term ‘statement based on reflection’ (*qāṭiya iʿtibārīya*) rather than ‘premise based on reflection’ (*muqaddama iʿtibārīya*).
Ibn Kammūnā agrees with Avicenna that statements based on reflection are to be classified with statements that result from observation. Specifically, they are to be classified as propositions that derive from the observation of either the internal senses or the soul itself. From among the examples Avicenna presents, the one most resembling the thought experiment of the Flying Man is the reflection on ‘our soul (not through its instruments)’, that leads to ‘[the knowledge] that we are aware of our selves’ (annā nash‘uru bi-dhawātīnā). This example corresponds to the conclusion drawn by Avicenna in paragraph 8.3 and to that presented by Ibn Kammūnā in paragraph 7.5, namely that if we reflect on our soul in the state of a Flying Man we will assent to the proposition that our self is, in such a state, unaware of everything other than itself.

Not everyone, however, can assent to such a proposition. In the Mubāhāṭāt (paragraph 8.1–3) and, by implication, in the Isbārāt (paragraph 9) Avicenna stresses that propositions based on a certain observation are given assent only by those who have made the same observation. This condition also obtains for propositions based on reflection. They are given assent only by persons capable of reflection or, according to Avicenna, ‘people who possess perspicuity and subtle intelligence’ (abl al-faṭānā wa-lutf al-išābā). Avicenna’s view is echoed by Ibn Kammūnā who holds ‘everyone who is endowed with perspicacity understands necessarily’ what is stated in proposition 7 (above, p. 192). The nature of propositions based on reflection is thus one reason why not everyone can assent to the argument of the Flying Man.

A second reason follows from the position this proposition occupies in the syllogism proposed by Ibn Kammūnā. Because the proposition appears as the predicate term of both the minor and the major premise in a second-figure sylo-

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46 MS Lâleli 2516, fol. 68. Cf. the text of Avicenna’s Isbārāt and Tūsī’s commentary, 1, 394. Cf. the translation in Ibn Sinā, Remarks and Admonitions: Part 1, Logic, trans. from the original Arabic with an introduction and notes by S. Inati (Toronto, 1983), p. 120.

47 Tânqīḥāt, p. 338.9–11: ‘alā mà ya’lamubu kullu dhī faṭānati min nafsibi ‘ilman ḍaruṭīyan.
gism (Camestres *MLL*) it functions as its middle term. In Avicenna’s epistemology, knowledge is acquired through the forming of syllogisms. The most important and difficult step in this process is the discovery of the middle term. Avicenna alludes to this step when he describes the argument of the Flying Man in paragraph 8.4, above, as ‘the argument that is discovered from the reflection of the person upon the state of his self [or soul, *al-ḥujjatu llatī tustanbaṭu min i‘tibārī l-sbakṣī ḥāla nafsīḥī*]. For the verb ‘to discover’ (*istanbaṭa*) is used by Avicenna as the technical term for the discovery of the middle term of a syllogism.\(^{48}\) Moreover, the capacity of a person to discover the middle term of a syllogism depends on the strength of his or her intuition (*ḥads*).\(^{49}\) Ibn Kammūna expresses the same view more explicitly when he concludes his discussion of the Flying Man in the *Tanqīḥāt*:

\[10\] The person who reflects [*wā-man yata‘ammal*] on this question depends on his intuition [*ḥads*] to pass judgement on its truth. If through intuition no answer is achieved, but speculation [on this question] is prevented from [using] intuition or in the case of somebody who does not possess intuition [at all], it is inappropriate to withhold [from him] all of the premises.\(^{50}\)

Finally, Ibn Kammūna also seems to agree with Avicenna on how to help persons who lack the appropriate capacity for intuition. Ibn Kammūna suggests in paragraph 10 that they should be presented with the premises of the argument. This recalls Avicenna’s suggestion in the *Iṣbārāt* (end of paragraph 8.4) that one should present such persons with a traditional argument based on genus and species.

The Flying Man’s usefulness is thus restricted in two ways: because it centres on a proposition based on reflection it is restricted to persons capable of conducting this reflection, and only persons who have the appropriate capacity for intuition can discover that this proposition serves as the middle term of a syllogism.\(^{51}\)

Despite these agreements, Ibn Kammūna’s syllogistic interpretation of the Flying Man in the *Tanqīḥāt* surpasses Avicenna’s versions in the quantity of its minor premise (the self of *every* man) and in the interpretation of its conclusion.


\(^{50}\) *Tanqīḥāt*, pp. 346.15–347.1.

\(^{51}\) On the connection between *faṭāna* and *ḥads* in Ibn Kammūna see Langermann, ‘Ibn Kammūna and the “New Wisdom”’, p. 290.
Avicenna holds the view — emphasized by al-Ṭūsī in paragraph 9 — that observational (and reflective) premises do not pertain to universals: we know that the fire we observe is hot, but from this observation we cannot conclude that every fire is hot. Were we to quantify propositions based on self-knowledge in the same way, and there seems to be no reason why we should not, then we could state only: ‘I know that my self is aware of itself’ and ‘I know that my self is not aware of any body or accident’. We would thus conclude that ‘my self is not a body or an accident’. Ibn Kammūna, however, states the subject term of proposition 7 as ‘the self of every man’, which allows him to reach the universal conclusion that ‘the soul of every man is an immaterial substance’. This leads him to label his argument a demonstrative proof (burhān), whereas Avicenna uses throughout the generic term for argument (ḥujja).

Ibn Kammūna surpasses Avicenna also in his interpretation of the conclusion. What exactly Avicenna thought the Flying Man comes to prove is a point of contention. We have focused on the distinction between self and body. Ibn Kammūna in the Tanqīḥāt, however, goes one step further and claims at the end of paragraph 7.2 that because the soul is neither a body nor an accident it must be an incorporeal substance. This goes beyond what Avicenna thought the Flying Man can prove.

It appears, however, that at a later point Ibn Kammūna changed his mind. In the Kāšīf, at the opening of the chapter that ‘establishes the existence of the soul and explains that its intelligibles cannot be attained through a bodily instrument and that the soul does not require the body for intellection which is the perfection of her self’, Ibn Kammūna explicitly denies at the end of the following passage that the Flying Man can prove that the soul is a substance:

[11] Through our souls we find that had we been created instantaneously to the perfection of our intellects, would not apply our senses to any part of us or to anything extraneous, would remain like this for a moment [suspended] in air that lacks any quality we could be aware of — our limbs spread out so that they do not touch one another — then, being in such a state, we would be unaware of everything with the exception of our being [anniyatina]. We know [fā-naʿlam] that the bodies and accidents which have not yet occurred to us have nothing to do with [lā


53 See nn. 4 and 8, above.
madkhal] our selves which we have intelleced [‘aqalnābah] without these things. Hence the self of which we are not unaware, according to this supposition [fard], is distinct from our organs and extremities and from all extraneous bodies, senses, faculties, and accidents […]. This establishes for you the existence of a thing with which agrees what has been said [above] about the specification [ta’rīf] of the soul, except for it being a substance.\(^{54}\)

What occasioned Ibn Kammūna’s change of mind can only been determined once the differences between Ibn Kammūna’s views in the commentaries and his views in the Kāshīf are better known.

At present we can only add that the Kāshīf version of the Flying Man seems to show an affinity with the version in the Talwiḥāt. Al-Suhrawardī states in paragraph 7.1, above, that ‘the bodies and accidents which you have not yet perceived have therefore nothing to do [lā madkhal labā] with your self. You intellect [your self] without them’. Ibn Kammūna echoes this wording when he states in the Kāshīf (paragraph 11, above): ‘we know [fa-na’lam] that the bodies and accidents which have not yet occurred to us have nothing to do with [lā madkhal] our selves which we have intelleced [‘aqalnābah] without these things.’ Moreover, in the Talwiḥāt version of the Flying Man (end of paragraph 7.1, above), al-Suhrawardī interprets the self-awareness of the Flying Man as knowledge. This interpretation seems to reflect a move in his epistemology which interprets Avicenna’s concept of self-awareness as self-knowledge, aided by passages in Avicenna such as paragraph 6. Ibn Kammūna seems inclined to accept al-Suhrawardī’s interpretation of self-awareness.\(^{55}\) But since it has not been completely understood how al-Suhrawardī’s epistemology incorporates Avicenna’s concept of self-awareness we have to limit ourselves to these speculations.\(^{56}\)


\(^{55}\) See, for example, the fifth problem in Ibn Kammūna’s (undated) second letter to al-Ṭūsī which I analyse in my dissertation: ‘[As for the thesis] that everything separated from matter necessarily intellects itself [‘aqil li-dbāṭībi], nothing of what has been established according to the methods which Avicenna mentions in the Iṣbārāt, in the book al-Mabda’ wa-l-ma‘ad, and in other books of his results in certainty […]. It is as is the method of the martyr Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī with regard to this problem surpasses all others. Hence [my question], how can one establish a demonstration for this conclusion which is the most important of all conclusions sought in philosophy?’ (Ajwībat al-vasā’il al-Naṣīḥyya, musbatīl bar 20 risāla, ed. by A. Nūrānī (Tehran, 1384/2005), p. 27). On this letter see Pourjavady and Schmidtke, A Jewish Philosopher, pp. 120–21.

\(^{56}\) For a first attempt, see the study by R. Marcotte, Suhrawardī (d. 1191) and his Interpretation of Avicenna’s (d. 1037) Philosophical Anthropology (unpublished doctoral
Concluding Remarks

I want to conclude by summing up the result of the investigation. The brief excerpts from Ibn Kammûna’s commentaries have shown that we have to allow for silent quotations in both texts. In the Uşûl, al-Ťusi seems to be the main source of such quotations; in the Tanqîhât we have to cast a wider net and include texts such as Avicenna’s Mubâhaftât. Moreover, the two commentaries differ in their form. Even though Ibn Kammûna quotes the source in both texts, the ways in which he combines the source with his commentary differ greatly. This difference, I propose, reflects Ibn Ibn Kammûna’s different goals. In the Uşûl, Ibn Kammûna intends to highlight Avicenna’s Isbârat by producing a ‘self-explanatory’ version through a seamless blend of Avienna’s text and the reworked excerpts from other sources, mainly al-Ťusi’s commentary. In the Tanqîhât, on the other hand, Ibn Kammûna seems to highlight his own, lengthy, commentary by distinguishing it from the brief lemmas through clear textual markers.

As for the interpretation of the Flying Man itself, both Avicenna and Ibn Kammûna think that proposition 3 that ‘the known is different from the unknown’ in combination with the thought experiment of the Flying Man suffices to establish that the self and the body differ in nature. Ibn Kammûna syllogistic rendering of the argument, especially when supplied with modal operators, supports proposition 3 and would be acceptable by Avicenna. Furthermore, both Avicenna and Ibn Kammûna consider the outcome of the thought experiment a proposition based on reflection, specifically reflection on the soul which results in valid, if only particular, knowledge that in the state of a Flying Man our self is ‘unaware of everything except itself’. They also agree that the nature of this proposition based on reflection limits its audience to perspicacious persons (abl al-fâjûna) and that its function as a middle term of a syllogism can only be grasped by persons who possess intuition (ḥads). Ibn Kammûna disagrees with Avicenna on the quantity which propositions based on reflection can receive. He formulates them as universal propositions, even though Avicenna explicitly states that they are particular. Ibn Kammûna also disagrees with Avicenna on the scope of the conclusion. In the Tanqîhât he argues that the Flying Man can establish that the soul is an immaterial substance, a view Ibn Kammûna later recanted for reasons yet unknown.

As for the initial question, whether these results suffice to invalidate the critique raised by Marmura and Black, it appears that they do not suffice in all points, but they can show why both Avicenna and Ibn Kammûna would reject Black’s critique that their inference is fallacious as well as Marmura’s critique, that the premise of the argument is hypothetical (if the thought experiment can be reduced to accepting premise 7 as a possible a-proposition). In any case, the investigation has shown why both Avicenna and Ibn Kammûna considered the argument of Flying Man a valid argument. It has also shown that post-Avicennan philosophers deserve close and accurate study, not only in their own right, but also because they can shed new light on Avicenna’s thought.

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Al-Āmidī’s Reception of Ibn Sīnā: Reading Al-Ñūr al-Bāhir fī al-Ḥikam al-Zawāhir

Syamsuddin Arif

I. Introduction

In his classic essay published in 1951, Ignaz Goldziher made a strong case for the negative attitude of orthodox Muslim scholars towards the so-called ancient sciences (‘ulūm al-awā‘īd), which include philosophy and logic, citing among others the al-Āmidī affair as a case in point.1 Goldziher’s conclusion and the assumptions upon which it is based have been called into question recently by Sonja Brentjes and Dimitri Gutas.2 It is argued that in fact one may refer to the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries as the ‘golden age’ of Islamic philosophy.3


For it was during this period that the ancient sciences flourished and Ibn Sīnā’s legacy gained momentum, giving rise to a torrent of intellectual exchange and discussion, and a corresponding literary output. Among those who took part in this intense philosophical activity, al-Āmidī is too outstanding a figure to ignore. His philosophical writings represent a significant episode in the reception of Ibn Sīnā’s thought among later Muslim philosophers and theologians. In what follows I shall present a small study on al-Āmidī and his work, with special attention to his Kitāb al-Nūr al-Bābir fī al-Ḥikam al-Zawābīr and its relation to Ibn Sīnā’s Kitāb al-Shifāʾ, offering a detailed conspectus of Kitāb al-Bābir as well as analysis of its contents and textual collation in order to illustrate the manner in which al-Āmidī exhibits the influence of Ibn Sīnā.

Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, whose full name was Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Abī ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Sālim ibn Muḥammad al-Āmidī at-Taghlībi, or alternatively

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al-Tha‘labī,⁶ was born in 551/1156.⁷ in Ḍāmid, a small town in eastern Anatolia known in ancient times as Amida and now called Diyār Bakır, Turkey.⁸ At the age fourteen, after having received his early education, he left his hometown for Baghdad in order to study law under the Ḥanbalite Ibn al-Mannā (d. 583/1187)⁹


The sources are in disagreement with regard to the correct spelling of al-Āmidī’s surname. Historians such as Abū al-Fidā‘ī, al-Yāfī‘ī, al-Subkī, Ibn Kathīr, and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbāh read ‘al-Tha‘labī’ instead of the more likely ‘al-Ṭaghibi.’ However, they are unanimous that in any case the surname refers to a certain Arab tribe, although it does not necessarily imply that he was of Arab descent, as it could merely suggest that his ancestor was a client or protégé of an Arab master, as was common at the time. Both readings are therefore acceptable since the tribe of Ṭha‘lab derives from that of Taghib. See al-Sam‘ānī (d. 562/1166), al-‘Anṣāb, ed. by ‘A. al-R. ibn Yahyā, 6 vols (Hyderabad, 1963), iii, 57 and iii, 133–36; cf. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Lubāb fī Tābībīb al-‘Anṣāb, 3 vols (Cairo, 1357), i, 177 and i, 193–95.

While the great outlines and all the important events of his life are known, chroniclers differ as to some details and dates. Ibn Khallikān and al-Ṣafāḍī, who were al-Āmidī’s students, assign the year 551 AH as the birth date of al-Āmidī. Others like al-Qīfī (Ṭārīkh, p. 161) places it sometime after 550, whereas al-Dhahabī (Ṣīyār, xxii, 364) says it could be between 553 and 559 (nayf)⁶.


He is Abū al-Fatḥ Nasr ibn Fītyān ibn Muṭahhar al-Nahrwānī, a renowned legal scholar of Iraq (Faqīh al-‘Irāq), leader of the Ḥanbalites (Shaykh al-Ḥanābīlah) of the period, and a teaching professor (shaykh) at the Madrasah al-Ma‘mūniyya of Baghdad. According to al-Dhahabī, however, his full name was Shayf al-Dīn Abu al-Muẓaffar Muḥammad ibn Muṣḥib ibn Fītyān ibn Maṭar al-Nahrwānī ibn al-Manī al-Ḥanbali; he was born in 567 AH and died in 649. See Ṣīyār, xxiii, 252; cf. al-Ṣafāḍī, al-Wā‘īf, v, 52–53; Ibn Ṣafī al-‘Imād, Shadbarath, v, 246. Among al-Āmidī’s fellow students under Ibn al-Mannā was the celebrated Ḥanbalite jurist Ibn Qudāmah (d. 622/1223).
as well as under the prominent Shāfi‘ite jurist Ibn Faḍlān (d. 595/1198).\textsuperscript{10} It was during his stay in this metropolis that al-ʿĀmidī’s interest broadened. Thus, apart from rigorous legal training, he managed to study philosophy and logic, allegedly under some Christian and Jewish scholars. In 582/1186 he moved to Aleppo, where he reportedly met the famous Suhrāwardī al-Maqtūl (d. 587/1191).\textsuperscript{11} But a year later he left that city for Cairo, where he was to spend the next twenty years of his life. Al-ʿĀmidī soon rose to prominence, apparently due to his academic excellence and his breadth of knowledge. But his fame and success had caused him some trouble too. A number of scholars, most likely out of envy, accused him of heresy (fāṣād al-ʿaqīdah) and intellectual corruption (iḥlāl al-ṭawīyyah), of upholding the doctrine of taʿlīl (denying God’s attributes), and of subscribing to the doctrines of philosophers and ancient sages.\textsuperscript{12} They signed a petition (māḥdar), demanding that al-ʿĀmidī be sentenced to death. Even though he was eventually declared ‘clean’, the accusations ruled out as being unfounded, al-ʿĀmidī, fearing for his life, fled to Ḥamāh, Syria. In response to the charge levelled against him, he is said to have quoted the following verse:\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{(Unable to compete with him, they envied the young man, | And so have the folk turned against him, hostile as enemies.)}

In Ḥamāh, al-ʿĀmidī placed himself at the service of al-Malik al-Manṣūr (r. 587–617/1191–1221), who had a madrasa built for him, where he was to teach for the next four years. The governor also stipulated for al-ʿĀmidī a considerable allowance (jāmikīyyah) and had a regular audience with him.\textsuperscript{15} Upon al-Manṣūr’s death, al-ʿĀmidī was summoned to Damascus by al-Malik al-Muʿazzam (r. 615–24/1218–27)

\textsuperscript{10} He is Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim Yaḥyā ibn al-Faḍl Ibn Faḍlān, a prominent Shāfi‘ite leader of his day. We are told that among al-ʿĀmidī’s classmates under Ibn Faḍlān was ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādi (d. 629/1231).

\textsuperscript{11} See al-Ṣafadi, \textit{al-Waṣī bi al-Wafayāt}, xx1, 341.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibn Khallikān, \textit{Wafayāt al-ʿAyyān}, iii, 293.


\textsuperscript{15} See Ibn Wāṣil, \textit{Muḥarrīj al-Kurūb}, iv, 78. For the context in which the term jāmikīyyah was used, see Abū Shāmāh, \textit{al-Dhayl}, p. 236.
who appointed him to the chair of the Madrasah al-ʿAziziyyah. Al-ʿĀmidī’s career and fortunes came to an end two years later. The new ruler of Damascus, al-Malik al-Ashraf (r. 626–34/1229–37), who took over the city from al-Malik al-Muʿazzam, soon issued a decree banning the study and teaching of kalam, philosophy, and logic. Not long thereafter al-ʿĀmidī was dismissed from his post, to be confined in his house for the rest of his life. Al-ʿĀmidī breathed his last on Tuesday, the third day of Safar 631/8 November 1233, at the age of eighty and was buried at Mount Qāsiyūn, not far from Damascus.16

II. Survey of al-ʿĀmidī’s Philosophical and Theological Works

Although he was first and foremost a jurist, the voluminous and influential writings al-ʿĀmidī left to posterity undeniably testify to his authority in other fields as well. He wrote over a dozen books on a wide range of subjects, from law and theology to logic and philosophy. It is unfortunate, however, that of some twenty-five works of his, only less than a half appear to survive, while the rest seem to be lost or known only by name.17 What follows is a brief description of his extant theological and philosophical works.

1. Subtle Truths on Wisdom (Daqāʾiq al-Ḥaqāʾiq fi al-Ḥikma)

This is one of al-ʿĀmidī’s early works on Peripatetic philosophy. Its subtitle is given variously by different authors: fi al-Ḥikma (as in Ibn Kathīr and Ḥājjī Khalīfah); fi ʿIlm al-Awāʾil (as in al-Qīṭī and Tashkoprūzādeh); fi al-Manṭiq (as in Brockelmann). Taking into account the fact that al-ʿĀmidī entered the most productive period of his life during his sojourn in Egypt, I am inclined to date the work sometime before 612/1215. The authenticity of this work is corroborated both by

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16 Al-Ṣafādī, al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt, xxii, 345.

internal and external evidence. Al-Āmidī often refers to it in other works of his such as the _Akbār al-Afaqār_. The Ḥanbalite theologian Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328) also mentions this work, frequently quoting from it _in extenso_ whilst criticizing and refuting the _falāṣifa_ and _mutakallimūn_ in his _Darʾ Taʿāruḍ al-ʿAql wa al-Naql_. Although it must have originally comprised several volumes, as mentioned by al-Qīṭī and Ḥājjī Khalifah, only the first volume of this work appears to be extant, namely the section on logic. The surviving manuscript was once preserved in the library of al-Bārūdī in Beirut (as noted by Brockelmann) and ʿĪsā al-Maʿlūf, but later it was removed to Princeton University Library (Garret Collection, MS 42 B). I have not yet had the opportunity to study this work, so I cannot offer here a detailed comparison with other works of al-Āmidī.

2. Splendid Light on Bright Wisdom (al-Nūr al-Bābir fi al-Ḥikam al-Zawābir)

Modelled on Ibn Sinā’s _Kitāb al-Shifā_, this encyclopedic work on logic, physics, and metaphysics may be considered as al-Āmidī’s _magnum opus_, a clear testimony to his mastery and erudition in the field of philosophy. Its authorship is attested by al-Āmidī’s students such as al-Qīṭī and al-Ṣafādī. But Ḥājjī Khalifah gives a different subtitle, namely _fi ʿIlm al-Awāʾil wa al-Awākbīr_. Unfortunately it survives only in part in a unique manuscript that has yet to be edited. According to Fuat Sezgin, the surviving portion of it was copied in 592/1196 and was discovered among the collection of the Iṣmāʿīl Sāʿīb Library (MS 4830) in Istanbul. However, following its transfer to the library of Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi, University of Ankara, where it is now housed, only four out of five volumes were found (MSS 631 (vol. i), 2866 (vol. ii), 4624 (vol. iii), and 4830 (vol. v)), while the fourth part is still missing. The extant portion has been recently published in facsimile by the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, University of Frankfurt (ser. C, vol. lxvii, 2001). It is this work that we shall be looking at in greater detail below.

3. Unveiling the Distortions (Kashf al-Tamwīḥāt)

As indicated by its subtitle, _Sharb al-Iṣbārāt wa al-Tanbihāt_, this is a refutation of Fakhru al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s critical commentary on Ibn Sinā’s _al-Iṣbārāt wa
l-Tanbihât. It was composed sometime before 617/1220, during al-Ämîdi’s sojourn in Ḥamâh since, according to Ibn Abî Uṣaybi‘a, al-Ämîdi dedicated his work to the ruler of Ḥamâh, al-Mansûr ibn Taqī al-Dîn. Despite its importance, this special work has yet to attract the attention it deserves from scholars, past and present, and still awaits critical edition and study. It is preserved in the British Library (London, MS Or. 8253), as well as in the Staatsbibliothek (Berlin, MS Pm. (Petermann) 596 = no. 5048 in Ahlwardt’s Catalogue).

4. First-Born Thoughts on the Principles of Religion (Abkâr al-Afkâr fi ʿUṣūl al-Dîn)

Of all al-Ämîdi’s works, this one is perhaps the best known and most frequently cited, especially by later scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Îjî. It was completed in Cairo sometime in 612/1215, prior to al-Ämîdi’s departure to Syria. Due the wide reception and profound influence it exerted, this multivolume work has survived in its entirety, copies of which are found and preserved in many libraries, for example, Sûlaymaniye (MS 747) and Köprülü (MS 794) libraries in Istanbul, and Berlin (MS Petermann I, 133 = no. 1741 in Ahlwardt’s Catalogue). Reminiscent of Fâkhîr al-Dîn al-Râzî’s al-Maṭâlîb al-ʿAlîyâb, the Abkâr is a kind of summa theologiae. It has recently been edited and published in five volumes by Ahmad Muḥammad al-Mahdî, titled Abkâr al-Afkâr fi ʿUṣūl al-Dîn li al-Imâm Sayf al-Dîn al-Ämîdi (Cairo, 2002).

5. Goal of the Aspiration in the Science of Kalam (Gbâyat al-Marâm fi ʿIlm al-Kalâm)

This compendium on Asharite Kalam appears to be an abridgement of the Abkâr al-Afkâr, as anyone comparing the contents of both works can easily notice. As such, the work must have been written probably during al-Ämîdi’s tenure in the ʿAzîziyya Madrasa in Damascus, sometime between 617/1220 and 626/1229. The only surviving copy of this important work is preserved in Shahid Pâsha Library (MS 1694) in Istanbul, upon which Hasan Maḥmûd ʿAbd al-Laṭîf based his edition of it (Cairo, 1971).


Like his Kâshf al-Tamwîhât mentioned earlier, al-Ämîdi’s Mulâbkhâba al-Maṭâlîb al-ʿAlîyâb, as its title clearly indicates, is also a refutation of Fâkhîr al-Dîn al-Râzî. In it al-Ämîdi reviews and criticizes al-Râzî’s theological theses and arguments as found in al-Maṭâlîb al-ʿAlîyâb (The Sublime Enquiry), the latter’s magnum
opus. According to Hasan Mahmud 'Abd al-La'tif, there is one copy of it preserved in Feyzullah Library (MS 1101) in Istanbul as well as in Ma'had al-Makhtutat Cairo (MS 3, Tawhid), which has been, however, wrongly given the title Abkar al-Afkar.

7. Clarifier on Elucidating the Words of Philosophers and Theologians (al-Mubin fi Sbarh Alfaz al-Hukama' wa al-Mutakallimun)

This is a dictionary of technical terms that are commonly understood and used by philosophers and theologians in their discussion. It reminds us of Ibn Sina's Kitab al-Hudud (Book of Definitions) and the like. The work was probably written in Hama, sometime before 617/1220, since the author dedicated the treatise to the local ruler. It is preserved in several libraries such as the Zahiriyyah (MS 9199) in Damascus, and it has been edited and published at least three times in recent years: as part of the collection La Terminologie philosophique chez les arables, edited by 'Abd al-Amir al-A'sam (Baghdad, 1985; 2nd edn, Cairo 1989); again by the same editor (Beirut, 1987); and later by Hasan Mahmud 'Abd al-La'tif al-Shafi'i (Cairo, 1993).

It should be clear by now that al-Ämâdî's extant works are academic in nature, having been composed in connection with his career as a scholar and teacher. Al-Nur al-Babir, just like Abkar al-Afkar, is a particularly rich treasure trove of philosophical thought spanning a vast range of issues in logic, epistemology, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. Nevertheless, in part because of the lack of critical editions of some of al-Ämâdî's extant works, the value and significance of his oeuvre, some of which are unpublished in any form, as well as the complex relationship between them, such as that between the extant portions of his al-Nur al-Babir and the Daqâiq al-Haqâiq, is not entirely clear. Indeed, while there have been numerous studies on the legal and theological aspects of al-Ämâdî's thought, it was only recently that scholars began to pay attention to his philosophical writings.


22 G. Endress 'Die dreifache Ancilla. Hermeneutik und Logik im Werk des Sayyafadin al-Ämâdî', in Logik und Theologie: Das Organon im arabischen und im lateinischen Mittelalter, ed. by D. Perler and U. Rudolph (Leiden, 2005), pp. 117–45. I am grateful to Professor H. Daiber for drawing my attention to this article.
III. ‘Al-Nūr al-Bābir’ and ‘Kitāb al-Shifā’

Neither the date of composition nor the history of transmission and survival of this important work can be established with certainty. One can only surmise, on the basis of al-Āmīdī’s words in the prologue that it must belong to his latest works, probably composed during the last period of his life, following his untimely retirement. Indeed, towards the end of page 2 (fol. 2') al-Āmīdī recalls the predicament in which he found himself when he set out to write the book:

I continued to draw upon [the legacy of philosophers] and excavate its hidden secrets, enjoying it in seclusion and conversing with it all the time, until I became old, when the time had come for me to leave [this world], the vigour of my youth having faded away, and the sign of [my] departure appeared. I found it impossible both to elucidate my findings and to suppress it, owing to the time constraint, absence of assistants and friends, and [due to] the prevalence of heresies [ghalabat al-abwā'] over [sound] beliefs, excessive fanaticism, lack of enthusiasm on the part of students as well as declining interest of those wishing [to study this].

Our present survey of al-Nūr al-Bābir is based on the extant portions of the text that are preserved in the unique manuscript copy. As noted above, it was discovered among the collection of the Ismāʿīl Sāʾib Library (MS 4830) in Istanbul by Professor Fuat Sezgin in 1959, who later published it in facsimile editions in 2001. According to him, the manuscript was presumably copied in the year 592/1196. It contains 724 folios of nineteen lines per page, written in unvocalized naskhī style. It is obvious from the troubled state of the text that the copyist was not familiar with the material he encountered in the text. Moreover, he apparently found his source frequently to be difficult, if not impossible, to read because it was itself a much less than a perfect copy. A goodly number of words in the manuscript merely convey the copyist’s vague impression of what he found in front of him. Thus, although his own hand is reasonably clear, he did not or could not provide a sound text to work from, and, therefore, many emendations seem to us to be necessary.

This work has the standard classical falsafa objective of elucidating the kind of knowledge that would lead to the perfection of one’s rational soul in order to attain true happiness. In the prologue al-Āmīdī tells his reader that the acquisition of this knowledge is possible when one learns what is called practical philosophy (falsafa ʿamaliyya) such as politics and ethics, the purpose of which it is to produce good citizens, as well as theoretical philosophy (falsafa nazarīyya), which includes metaphysics, the mathematical sciences, and natural science. Practical

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knowledge is taught by prophets and divine messengers, but not so theoretical knowledge. The latter sciences represent the effort and result of enquiries carried out by various thinkers and travellers in search of truth.\textsuperscript{24} Al-Āmidī further explains that in this book he engages himself in rational enquiry (\textit{al-baḥṭb al-fikrī}) and theoretical investigation in order to ascertain the truth and extract the core details (\textit{‘uyūn al-daqaqīq}) from the doctrines of the Greek sages and the philosopher-metaphysicians (\textit{maqāla al-ḥukamā‘ al-Yūnāniyyīn wa al-falāsifab al-ilābīyyīn}), leaving no questions unanswered and no riddles unsolved.\textsuperscript{25}

The book consists of five major divisions (\textit{juz‘}), each being further divided into parts (\textit{maqāla}), chapters (\textit{fann}), subchapters (\textit{qā‘idab}) and sections (\textit{faşl}). The overall plan of the book follows exactly the order of the philosophical sciences as classified in the Aristotelian tradition developed by Ibn Sinā in \textit{Kitāb al-Sbīfā}, namely logic-physics-mathematics-metaphysics. The variation in the order occurs, if at all, in the internal arrangement of each one of these sciences and in the treatment of its respective subject matter. The following is the general outline of the work:

I. Logic (vols I–II, fols 1–400\textsuperscript{v})

1. Introduction = \textit{Eisagoge} (\textit{maqāla} I, \textit{faşl} 1–10)
2. On Explanatory Terms (\textit{maqāla} II, \textit{faşl} 1–2)
3. Peri Hermeneias (\textit{maqāla} III, \textit{fann} 1–2; \textit{fann} 1 (\textit{faşl} 1–8), \textit{fann} 2 (\textit{faşl} 1–3))
4. On the Forms of Argumentation (\textit{maqāla} IV, \textit{fann} 1–8: \textit{fann} 1, \textit{qā‘idab} 1 (\textit{faşl} 1–6), \textit{qā‘idab} 2 (\textit{faşl} 1–5), \textit{fann} 2 (\textit{faşl} 1–2), \textit{fann} 8 (\textit{faşl} 1–9)) = Prior Analytics
5. On Demonstration (\textit{maqāla} V, \textit{faşl} 1–22) = Posterior Analytics
6. On Dialectic (\textit{maqāla} VI, \textit{faşl} 1–10) = Topica
7. On Sophistics (\textit{maqāla} VII)
8. On Rhetoric (\textit{maqāla} VIII, \textit{faşl} 1–3)
9. On Poetics (\textit{maqāla} IX, \textit{faşl} 1–2)

II. Natural Sciences (vol. III, fols 401\textsuperscript{v}–584\textsuperscript{v})

1. Physica (\textit{maqāla} I, \textit{faşl} 1–3)
2. On Motion and Rest (\textit{maqāla} II, \textit{fann} 1 (\textit{faşl} 1–10))

\textsuperscript{24} Al-Āmidī, \textit{al-Nūr al-Bābir}, fols 1′–2′ = pp. 2–3 (facsimile edition).

\textsuperscript{25} Al-Āmidī, \textit{al-Nūr al-Bābir}, fol. 2′ = p. 3 (facsimile edition).
3. On Place (maqāla ILog, fann 2 (faṣl 1–2))
4. On Time (maqāla ILog, fann 3)
5. On Magnitude (maqāla ILog, fann 4 (faṣl 1–2))
6. On Infinity (maqāla ILog, fann 5 (faṣl 1–5))
7. On Direction (maqāla ILog, fann 6)
8. On the Heavens and the Universe (maqāla ILog, fann 7, qā‘idab 1 (faṣl 1–3), qā‘idab 2 (faṣl 1–4)) = De Caelo et De Mundo
9. On Coming To Be and Passing Away (maqāla ILog, fann 8 (faṣl 1–6)) = De Generatione et Corruptione
10. On Actions and Passions (maqāla ILog, fann 9 (faṣl 1–2)) = De Actionibus et Passionibus
11. On Mixture (maqāla ILog, fann 10 (faṣl 1–2)) = De Mixione
12. On Minerals, etc. (maqāla ILog, fann 11 (faṣl 1–3)) = Mineralogy and Meteorology

III. Metaphysics (vol. V, fols 585v–724r)

1. On the Subject, Purpose, Use, Rank, and Name of Metaphysics (maqāla I)
2. On the Division of Being (inqisām al-mawjūd) into Ten Categories (maqāla II, faṣl 1–7)
3. On the One and Many and Their Concomitants (maqāla III, faṣl 1–4)
4. On the Division of Being into Causes and Effects (maqāla IV, faṣl 1–8)
5. On the Proof of the Necessarily Existent Being and Its Attributes (maqāla V, faṣl 1–6)
6. On the Degrees of Causes and Effects, on the Emanation of the Universe from the Principle of Being, and on the Movement of Celestial Spheres (maqāla VI, faṣl 1–7)
7. On the Destination and Return of the Souls and Bodies (maqāla VII, faṣl 1–2)
8. On Prophecy, Miracles and the Case of the Righteous Caliphs and the Rightly-Guided Leaders (maqāla VIII, faṣl 1–3)

When comparing the general layout of al-Nūr al-Bābīr with that of Shīfāʾ one finds that al-Āmīdī does not always follow Ibn Sīnā. First, he places the discussion of the Ten Categories (al-maqūlāt al-ʿasbr) not in logic but rather in the metaphysical
section, whereas Ibn Sinā deals with them in the section on logic. Second, al-Āmīdī’s book (at least the extant portions) does not include discussions on the soul (kitāb al-nafs), plants (kitāb al-nabāt), and animals (kitāb al-hayawān). Third, al-Āmīdī devotes a separate chapter in the physics to the question of elemental mixture (fī al-mizāj), whereas Ibn Sinā subsumes it under the section on coming to be and passing away (fī al-kawn wa al-fasād). Finally, one wonders whether al-Āmīdī also wrote as Ibn Sinā did on the mathematical sciences, namely, geometry (‘ilm al-bandasa), astronomy (‘ilm al-bay’a), arithmetic (‘ilm al-ḥisāb), and music (‘ilm al-mūslaq). Since the fourth volume of his al-Nūr al-Bābir is still missing, one must be content with private guesses that are difficult to verify.

Equally noteworthy is al-Āmīdī’s treatment of metaphysics. A cursory look at the relevant section in al-Nūr al-Bābir reveals that al-Āmīdī took liberty with regard to the ordering and selection of the subjects to be discussed. Thus, for example, he places the chapter on the One and the Many before that on the proof for the Necessary Existent. Ibn Sinā, in contrast, deals with the concept of existence, the Necessary and Possible Existent in the first maqāla, immediately after the introduction. Judging from the structure of the book, one gets the impression that al-Āmīdī was somehow influenced by his theological background, seemingly having in mind the God of Abrahamic religions when discussing the Necessary Existent and His Attributes. Moreover, al-Āmīdī curiously left out the question about the complete and the deficient (al-tāmm wa al-nāqiṣ), discussed by Ibn Sinā in maqāla iv.3. The problems of universals and particulars, genus and species, differentia and definition are also excluded from the discussion. All this seems to demonstrate that although he must have used Ibn Sinā’s text, al-Āmīdī deliberately chose not to follow its plan.

To explain this departure from Ibn Sinā’s text at least two factors must be taken into account. The first is that the omission was apparently intentional. Al-Āmīdī might have thought it unnecessary to repeat what he had dealt with at length in the logical section of the book. Second, al-Āmīdī’s ordering can be defended by noting that while Ibn Sinā proceeds along the ‘path of discovery’ (via intentionis), al-Āmīdī follows the via doctrinae—quite understandably, since his chief purpose as a theologian is to establish the truth of religious doctrine.

The resemblance between al-Nūr al-Bābir and Ibn Sinā’s Shifā’ is apparent in both its overall structure and contents. In al-Āmīdī’s discussions of logic, physics, and metaphysics, Ibn Sinā’s writings are present implicitly or explicitly throughout al-Nūr al-Bābir. In order to illustrate the manner in which he draws upon Ibn Sinā’s text, I shall examine a few passages from al-Nūr al-Bābir in comparison with the similar ones in Ibn Sinā’s Shifā’.
Some of the most significant of al-Āmidī’s implicit references to Ibn Sīnā occurs in *maqāla* IV.5, where al-Āmidī reproduces *in extenso* but with slight stylistic changes Ibn Sīnā’s long argument in *maqāla* VIII.1, on the finitude of the Efficient and Receptive Cause.26 Tacit references are to be found also in the preceding chapter (*maqāla* IV.4), where al-Āmidī presents — and ultimately rejects — the Platonic theory of forms and the pre-Socratic doctrines. Al-Āmidī’s exposition summarizes Ibn Sīnā’s treatment in *maqāla* VII.2–3 of the *Śbjā*.27 Whereas Ibn Sīnā sets forth his refutation in detail, al-Āmidī does not.

Al-Āmidī’s reliance upon Ibn Sīnā’s text can be gathered from many other passages in *al-Nūr al-Bābir*. In *maqāla* II.2 al-Āmidī discusses the concept of the Many and its concomitant opposites.28 Also, in *maqāla* V.3, al-Āmidī describes how the universe and everything therein emanates from and owes its existence to the Principle of Being (*mabda‘ al-lā‘īnāt*) — a Plotinian cosmological theory commonly held by Muslim philosophers and mystics. This idea as well as the principle *ex uno non fit nisi unum*29 have also been expounded by Ibn Sīnā in his major works.30

In *maqāla* VII.1–2, al-Āmidī discusses how the rational soul of human beings is influenced by the celestial souls and how it receives illumination from the Active Intellect. Arguments similar to those put forth by al-Āmidī on this issue can be found in Ibn Sīnā’s *Śbjā*, *maqāla* IX.3, where he discusses where the human soul would finally return upon leaving the body and what should be done in order to attain happiness in the next life. From such examples of explicit or implicit reference it is evident that al-Āmidī’s study of Ibn Sīnā’s philosophical corpus was a significant source of his ideas.

There are indeed a few issues that Ibn Sīnā does but al-Āmidī does not touch upon in the metaphysics section of his book. The importance and benefit of worship


for one’s well-being in this world and in the Afterlife, the family matters, the necessity of government, popular obedience, and morality — all this is not discussed by al-Âmidî. However, al-Âmidî does include in the final section the discussion on the possibility of miracles and the controversy surrounding the status of the four rightly guided caliphs.

**Concluding Notes**

The preceding investigation, preliminary though it is, may lead to two conclusions. First, given the fact that the three centuries subsequent to Ibn Sinâ’s death witnessed the proliferation of philosophical writings such as al-Âmidî’s *Daqā’iq al-Âhaqā’iq* and *al-Nûr al-Bâbîr* it is misleading to characterize the period in question as that of decline and stagnation; and so it is historically baseless to link the supposed downturn to the alleged negativism of the so-called Islamic orthodoxy. Second, although al-Âmidî seldom mentions his sources explicitly, there is little doubt that in composing his philosophical works al-Âmidî did make use of Ibn Sinâ’s texts, but frequently with modification and refinement. This finding only reinforces the general impression that Ibn Sinâ’s philosophical doctrine had been so influential throughout the Muslim world that it became identified with philosophy itself.\(^{31}\)

While it is true that he adopted Ibn Sinâ’s method of rational analysis and argumentation, al-Âmidî was also critical in his approach, his own contribution lying in the fact that he provided a cogent and coherent assessment of Ibn Sinâ’s philosophical legacy. But to recognize that al-Âmidî’s philosophy owes a great debt to Ibn Sinâ is not equivalent to suggesting that the *Shaykh al-Ra’îs* is the only influence on him; al-Âmidî also drew upon other thinkers. Rather it simply means that whatever he took on from other sources is held to be compatible with what he already held in common with Ibn Sinâ. Finally, it should be noted that to draw attention to the sources of al-Âmidî’s works is not to say that everything he holds philosophically can be traced back into historical antecedents.

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The Virtuous Son of the Rational: A Traditionalist’s Response to the *Falāsifa*

Nahyan Fancy

Dimitri Gutas has recently made a strong case for considering the three centuries after Ibn Sinā (lat. Avicenna, d. 1037) as the ‘Golden Age of Arabic Philosophy’.¹ He argues that during this period, the ‘originality and depth of philosophical thought’ and the ‘diffusion of philosophical work and influence on society in general’ far surpassed that of earlier and later periods.² Recent work has substantiated Gutas’s claims, not only by highlighting some of this originality, as in the case with Ayman Shihadeh’s work on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), but by also documenting the widespread influence of falsafa, especially that of Ibn Sinā, on thirteenth-century intellectual discussions, ranging from kalam to *fiqh*.³

However much the religious scholars were interested in appropriating aspects of the Avicennian system, Ibn Sinā still posed huge problems for them. Since he was primarily committed to a Neoplatonic Aristotelian system, he called for inter-

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² Gutas, ‘The Heritage of Avicenna’, p. 84.
interpreting religious texts in light of this system.\(^4\) In the event of a conflict between the literal meaning of Scripture and this system, he, and the falsāfa in general, rejected the literal meaning. The falsāfa justified privileging the truths of their philosophical system over Scripture by claiming that since revelation must appeal to the masses, and since it is impossible to communicate ‘deeper truths […] to the multitude’ fearing that they may lose their religion, revelation can at best only be an ‘imitation of philosophy’.\(^5\) For that reason, Ibn Sinā denied the use of scriptural sources in philosophical arguments concerning the most central religious doctrines, for example, bodily resurrection.\(^6\) Instead, he argued that the falsāfa alone had access to the truth about these doctrines, thus undermining the authority of all other religious scholars. More importantly, the falsāfa’s self-avowed access to these truths was not through revelation but independent of it. That is, they argued that reason is self-sufficient and capable of arriving at religious truth independently. As such, they rejected the very foundation of traditionalist thought: that revelation must ground all religious discussions, ranging from law to complex theological discussions on anthropomorphism, the creation of the universe and resurrection.\(^7\)

Ibn al-Nafis (d. 1288) took up the gauntlet on behalf of the traditionalists. His critique was a direct response to Ibn Ṭufayl’s (d. 1186) Ḥayy ibn Yaʿqūbān in which Ibn Ṭufayl advocates a rational mysticism.\(^8\) In this text, Ibn Ṭufayl argues for the possibility of arriving at religious truths through falsāfa and a mystical vision of God, but independent of prophetic revelation. This dangerous mix of falsāfa and Sufism in Ibn Ṭufayl’s work is what specifically elicits Ibn al-Nafis’s forceful attack

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\(^5\) F. Rahman, Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy (London, 1958), p. 42; and Marmura, ‘The Islamic Philosophers’ Conception of Islam’, p. 97. Al-Fārābi is the first fāylasūf who lays down this principle, which not only forms the cornerstone of al-Fārābi’s own political philosophy, but it is also central to the philosophical system of his successors, including Ibn Sinā, Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd.

\(^6\) Rahman, Prophecy in Islam, pp. 42–45.

\(^7\) See B. Abrahimov, Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism (Edinburgh, 1998).

on the principle of the self-sufficiency of reason. Ibn al-Nafis counters with his own narrative, Fādil ibn Nāṭiq, to not only attack this principle, but also to show that exoteric revelation itself is rational and, as such, should not be ruled out of philosophical arguments a priori. Furthermore, he proceeds to show that Ibn Sīnā’s difficulty in establishing the individuality of a human soul after death can only be solved using Scripture, which, in turn, implies that bodily resurrection can be rationally defended. His text reveals the ‘originality and depth of philosophical thought’ that Gutas highlights as the chief characteristic of this period. Moreover, his text assumes a complex interplay between reason and revelation that cannot be captured adequately using models that presuppose a strictly dichotomous and combative relationship between reason and revelation.9

I. Bypassing Revelation: Ibn Ṭufayl’s Challenge to Traditionalists

Ibn al-Nafis’s treatise is entitled The Treatise Relating to Kāmil on the Life-History of the Prophet.10 However, in biographical entries on Ibn al-Nafis, this work is referred to only by the name of the narrator in the story — Risālat Fādil ibn Nāṭiq (The Book of Fādil ibn Nāṭiq).11 The alternate title is significant as it illustrates that Ibn al-Nafis’s account was received by his audience as a reaction to two earlier epistles bearing the title Ḥāyy ibn Yaqẓān — Ibn Sīnā’s recital about a hermit, and Ibn Ṭufayl’s narrative about a philosophical mystic.12 In fact, Ibn al-Nafis’s biographers say so explicitly:

9 See, for example, G. Endress, ‘The Defense of Reason: The Plea for Philosophy in the Religious Community’, Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften, 6 (1990), 1–49; and R. Taylor, “Truth does not contradict truth”: Averroes and the Unity of Truth’, Topoi, 19 (2000), 3–16. Endress assumes a combative relationship that can only be quelled once reason is suffocated by revelation and made to submit to dogma. Taylor follows Leo Strauss in claiming that the falasifa merely professed a harmony between reason and revelation to escape persecution; see L. Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing (Glencoe, 1952).

10 This is the title stated at the end of the manuscript; J. Schacht and M. Meyerhof, The Theologus Autodidactus of Ibn al-Nafis, Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Notes (Oxford, 1968), p. 86 (henceforth, Theologus).


[Najm al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī has] seen a small book of [Ibn al-Nafīs] which [Ibn al-Nafīs] opposed to the Treatise of Ḥayy ibn Yaqqūn ibn Sinā and which he called the Book of Fāḍil ibn Nāṭiq. In it he defends the system of Islam and the Muslims’ doctrines on the missions of the Prophets, the religious laws, the resurrection of the body, and the transitoriness of the world [kharāb al-ʿālam].

The changes in the names of the central character(s) from Ibn Sinā’s and Ibn Ṭufayl’s tales to that of Ibn al-Nafīs are important, a point to which I shall return shortly. For now, it is important to emphasize that the biographers not only pick out religious theses that are defended by Ibn al-Nafīs; they also single out precisely those theses that the falsāfī rejected as being irrational. Bear in mind that the falsāfī’s denials of bodily resurrection (al-baʿth al-jismānī) and of the temporality of the world (kharāb al-ʿālam) were what led al-Ghazālī to declare Ibn Sinā and the falsāfī to be heretics.

It is also important to note here that the biographers confused Ibn Sinā’s and Ibn Ṭufayl’s narratives with each other and assumed incorrectly that Ibn al-Nafīs’s tale was a response to Ibn Sinā’s allegory. Yet their error in confusing these two works reflects the complicated manner in which these texts are intertwined, and does not merely represent a factual error. Firstly, Ibn al-Nafīs’s own contemporaries were in the habit of confusing Ibn Ṭufayl’s and Ibn Sinā’s treatises. Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282), for example, assumed that ‘perhaps he (Ibn Sinā) wrote it [Ḥayy ibn Yaqqūn] in Persian, and so we may have an Arabic translation of it, made by Ibn Ṭufayl’. The matter is further complicated by the fact that the theory of emanation

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14 Ibn al-Nafīs also defends some other religious theses that are not brought up by these biographers, e.g., the Sunni understanding of the caliphate and the events leading up to resurrection.


found in Ibn Ṭufayl’s text ‘is, transparently, another outline of Avicenna’s system’.

Additionally, Ibn Ṭufayl’s mysticism could also have been confused with the quasi-mystical elements in Ibn Sinā’s writings, especially since Ibn Ṭufayl himself suggests that Ibn Sinā was a true mystic. In fact, Ibn Ṭufayl’s main claim — that a person may arrive at the truths of religion independent of revelation — also builds off of Ibn Sinā’s Fārābīan argument for the self-sufficiency of reason. Hence, as we take a closer look at Ibn al-Nafis’s Risāla and compare it to Ibn Ṭufayl’s Ḥāyy, we should always bear in mind that Ibn al-Nafis is also attacking the central core of the Avicennian system.

At the beginning of his treatise, Ibn al-Nafis states that his ‘intention in this treatise is to relate what Fāḍil ibn Nāṭiq transmitted from the man called Kāmil concerning the life-story of the Prophet and the ordinances of religious law [al-sunan al-sbāriyya]. The biography of the Prophet and the ordinances of religious law are aspects of religion that are accessible and known to every lay Muslim. As such, there is no reference in Ibn al-Nafis’s text to some hidden or esoteric truths.

On the other hand, Ibn Ṭufayl’s treatise is filled with references to esoteric and hidden truths from the outset. For example, he begins his treatise by stating that he has been ‘asked […] to unfold […] the secrets of the oriental philosophy’

17 H. Davidson, Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect (Oxford, 1992), p. 148. Ibn Ṭufayl’s reliance on Avicenna’s system is, of course, not at all surprising since he himself acknowledges his debt to Ibn Sinā and al-Ghazāli in the prologue of his text; see D. Urvoï, The Rationality of Everyday Life: An Andalusian Tradition (Apropos of ʿHaṭīy’s First Experience), in The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥāyy ibn Yaḥẓān, ed. by L. Conrad (Leiden, 1996), pp. 38–51, 45; and Ibn Ṭufayl’s Ḥāyy ibn Yaḥẓān: A Philosophical Tale, trans. by L. Goodman (Los Angeles, 1983), pp. 95–97, 100–03 (henceforth, Ḥāyy (English)).


20 Theologus, p. 38.
to the best of his ability. Further on in the introduction, he claims that those who acquire this truth (al-haqq) can ‘speak of it publicly only in riddles [ramz], because our true, orthodox and established faith [al-millata l-hanifa wa-l-shari’ at al-muhammadiyya] guards against a hasty plunge into such things’. Thus, unlike Ibn al-Nafis’s introduction, the entire emphasis of Ibn Ṭufayl’s introduction is on a hidden, mystical, esoteric wisdom (ḥikma) that needs to be discovered by the reader through the riddles (ramz) provided within the tale.

Moreover, Ibn Ṭufayl suggests in the above quote that there might be a disparity between the ‘orthodox and established faith’ and this esoteric wisdom. The last part of the book is then devoted entirely to illustrating that the esoteric truths that Ḥayy arrives at independently are, in fact, in harmony with revealed religion, even though they may not appear to be so at first. As Ibn Ṭufayl states:

[Absāl] related all the religious traditions describing the divine world, Heaven and Hell, rebirth and resurrection, the gathering and the reckoning, the scales of justice and the strait way. Ḥayy understood all this and found none of it in contradiction with what he had seen for himself from his supernal vantage point [maqâmâtib al-karīm].

The falāsifa’s (and the Sufi’s) elitism is quite prominent in this quotation. Ibn Ṭufayl clearly suggests that Ḥayy’s independent path to the truth is better than revelation (‘supernal vantage point’). Ḥayy is further bemused, according to Ibn Ṭufayl, by the religious accommodation of material ‘inanities’ and the presence of anthropomorphic descriptions of God in revelation that are not only grossly incorrect, but also, in his opinion, lead people astray.

At this juncture, we see the underlying conflict between the falāsifa and the Sufis, on the one hand, and the traditionalists on the other, rearing its head: revelation is superfluous for the elite because it speaks of a reality that has already been grasped by them at a higher level. Moreover, only those elites who have access to the underlying truth through a more powerful means than revelation

21 Ḥayy (English), p. 95.
22 Ḥayy (English), p. 99; and Ibn Ṭufayl, Ḥayy ibn Yaqqân, ed. by A. N. Nādir (Beirut, 1993), p. 20 (henceforth, Ḥayy (Arabic)).
23 An additional character in the tale who seeks solitude on Ḥayy’s deserted island, without knowing beforehand that Ḥayy lives there. Absāl proceeds to communicate to Ḥayy all knowledge of the outside world, including its rules, customs, and religious traditions.
24 Ḥayy (English), p. 161, my emphasis; and Ḥayy (Arabic), p. 93.
have the right to interpret religious texts. Thus, Ibn Ṭufayl’s proposed harmony between Ḥāyy’s knowledge and that of the masses would frustrate and annoy the traditionalists, not only because it considers revelation an inferior way of arriving at the truth, but also because, far from conceding some interpretive authority to the traditionalists, Ibn Ṭufayl actually calls them ‘irrational animals’.

Ibn Ṭufayl adds that, when Ḥāyy recognized that people were focusing too much on the literal text and losing the underlying reality towards which the metaphors beckon, he started to teach a group of men that ‘approached nearest to intelligence and understanding’ from amongst the masses. However, ‘the moment he rose the slightest bit above the literal […] they recoiled in horror from his ideas and closed their minds.’

The more Ḥāyy taught, the more repugnance the group felt, despite the fact that these were men who loved the good and sincerely yearned for the Truth. Their inborn [deficiency] simply would not allow them to seek Him as Ḥāyy did, to grasp the true essence of His being and see Him in His own terms. They wanted to know Him in some human way.

Finally, Ḥāyy is said to have concluded ‘that most men are no better than unreasoning animals [aktbarubum bi-manzilati al-ḥayawān ghayr al-nāṭiq], and realized that all wisdom and guidance, all that could possibly help them was contained already in the words of the Prophets and the religious traditions’.

Thus, Ibn Ṭufayl explicitly equates the masses, and the most intelligent amongst the masses, that is, the traditionalists, with irrational animals. He states that the only path to salvation for them is to adhere to the literal meaning of the revealed texts. Yet, since these ‘unreasoning animals’ are incapable of rising ‘above the literal [al-zāḥiṭ], it implies, in effect, that the literal text of revelation must also be irrational.

This is precisely the legacy of Ibn Sinā’s sophisticated philosophico-theological  

26 Ibn Rushd even tries to argue that revelation condemns revealing the elite understanding of theological issues to the masses; see his The Book of the Decisive Treatise: Determining the Connection Between the Law and Wisdom & Epistle Dedicatory, trans. by C. Butterworth (Provo, UT, 2001).

27 Ḥāyy (English), p. 162. Ibn Ṭufayl is subtly referring to the traditionalist scholars as the select group from amongst the masses that approaches ‘nearest to intelligence and understanding’.

28 Ḥāyy (English), p. 163.

29 Ḥāyy (English), p. 163.

30 Ḥāyy (English), p. 164; and Ḥāyy (Arabic), p. 96.

31 Ḥāyy (English), p. 163; and Ḥāyy (Arabic), p. 95.
The word &ldquo;faith&rdquo; is often used in philosophical discussions on religious doctrines. Such an explicit rejection of the authority of Scripture would certainly have unnerved the traditionalists.

Thus, it is not surprising that a traditionalist would take up the challenge presented by Ibn Ţufayl, in order to show that those who cling to the literal word of revelation are also being rational. That, in a nutshell, is the entire purpose of Ibn al-Nafis&rsquo;s treatise. Schacht and Meyerhof are wrong in entitling the book Theologus Autodidactus, since the title is a misnomer. Ibn al-Nafis&rsquo;s goal is not to show how a person can independently arrive at all the exoteric truths of revelation — that would run counter to his traditionalist belief in the necessity of revelation for arriving at the Truth. Rather, the goal is to show that exoteric revelation is itself rational and, consequently, should be accepted within the confines of a demonstrative, philosophical argument.

Thus, we return to the change in the title of the work from Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān to Fāḍil ibn Nāṭiq. The word Fāḍil in the title is derived from the word faḍl (virtue) — the word Ibn Ţufayl uses to describe the masses (abl al-faḍl) of the island who are no better than unreasoning animals (bi-manzilati al-ḥayawān ghayral-nāṭiq). By calling his character Fāḍil ibn Nāṭiq, Ibn al-Nafis is directly responding to the last part of Ibn Ţufayl&rsquo;s text. He means to show that the virtuous, religious masses (abl al-faḍl) of Ibn Ţufayl&rsquo;s island are not irrational but rational for believing in exoteric scripture. His entire allegory is one long argument against what he and

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33 Hasanali, &lsquo;Texts, Translators, Transmissions&rsquo;, p. 106.

34 For more on Ibn al-Nafis&rsquo; commitment to traditionalism, see my dissertation, &lsquo;Pulmonary Transit and Bodily Resurrection&rsquo;, chap. 2.

35 Ḥayy (Arabic), pp. 89, 96, my emphasis. Of course, Ibn Ţufayl&rsquo;s purpose in using the term faḍl would have been to connect with al-Fārābī&rsquo;s notion of a virtuous city (madīnat al-faḍila) and the Fārābīan belief not to disclose philosophical truth to the non-philosophers; see Marmura, &lsquo;The Philosopher and Society&rsquo;.

36 Hasanali seems to think that the parallels in Ibn Ţufayl and Ibn al-Nafīs&rsquo; texts are limited to the first part, and so misses out on the reason why Ibn al-Nafīs names his character Fāḍil ibn Nāṭiq; see Hasanali, &lsquo;Texts, Translators, Transmissions&rsquo;, pp. 107–08.
his contemporary traditionalists took to be the central message of Ibn Ṭufayl’s text: that traditionalism is irrational.

II. Rejecting the Principle of Self-Sufficiency, Accommodating ‘Falsafa’

We have already seen that Ibn al-Nafis states that his aim in the text is to convey what Kāmil came to learn about the Prophet Muhammad and his life history. The story itself begins in a manner comparable to that of Ibn Ṭufayl’s fable, that is, with a description of a deserted island and the spontaneous birth of a human — Kāmil in the case of Ibn al-Nafis, and Ḥayy in the case of Ibn Ṭufayl. Both Kāmil and Ḥayy proceed to observe the natural world and, in the process, arrive at a belief in God as the creator of the universe. However, there are important differences in both accounts that directly bear on Ibn al-Nafis’s rejection of the self-sufficiency of reason, and Ibn Ṭufayl’s advocacy of a rational mysticism.37

Ibn Ṭufayl’s Ḥayy observes the natural world in order to progress systematically to the knowledge of the spiritual world.38 Ibn al-Nafis’s Kāmil, on the other hand, does not dwell upon anything spiritual during his dissections and observations of the plant and animal kingdom.39 The philosophical and metaphysical systems that are so prominent in Ibn Ṭufayl’s account are entirely missing from that of Ibn al-Nafis. Instead, Kāmil stays away from larger metaphysical questions as much as possible. The most that he indulges in such larger questions is to affirm, on the basis of his observations ‘that all parts of […] animals and plants exist for certain purposes and uses, and that nothing of them is superfluous and useless’.40 By making Kāmil stay away from metaphysical and theological speculations, Ibn al-Nafis is making a subtle point about how little the natural world can reveal about the divine, spiritual world — a point that comes to the fore in his dramatic shift in the narrative a few paragraphs later.

37 There are also significant differences in the accounts of spontaneous generation, as well as of the early lives of Ḥayy and Kāmil that are not important for our current purposes. I examine these differences more carefully in Chapter 4 of my dissertation, ‘Pulmonary Transit and Bodily Resurrection’.

38 Ḥayy (English), pp. 115–27; and Hasanali, ‘Texts, Translators, Transmissions’, p. 115.

39 Theologus, pp. 40–43; and Hasanali, ‘Texts, Translators, Transmissions’, p. 115. Moreover, as Hasanali points out, instead of focusing on ‘spiritual notions’, Ibn al-Nafis chooses to highlight Kāmil’s observations of ‘aggressive predators and timid victims’ in the animal world. ‘These observations are not incidental. The lessons that Kāmil learns is that the human animal is helpless and needs to live within the norms of society’ (pp. 115–16).

40 Theologus, p. 43.
Of course, the discussions about the natural and celestial world in both texts are meant to lead up to arguments for the existence of God. Yet, the similarity between the two texts at this point is merely superficial.\textsuperscript{41} Ibn Ṭufayl believes strongly in the eternity of the universe since it is precisely this knowledge that allows Ḥayy to attain the mystical vision of God rationally without recourse to revelation. On the other hand, as a staunch traditionalist, Ibn al-Nafis categorically denies both the eternity of the universe as well as the possibility of arriving at religious truths independent of revelation. The respective discussions on the natural worlds of both authors reflect these very different purposes and perspectives.

As we have already seen, Ibn Ṭufayl’s entire purpose behind his detailed description of Ḥayy’s observations of the natural and celestial world is to illustrate just how much Ḥayy came to learn about the spiritual world from them. Moreover, we also know from the later parts of the text that Ibn Ṭufayl is committed to (1) a theory of emanation,\textsuperscript{42} and (2) the possibility of being guided by the unchanging celestial beings and intelligences towards the unchanging divine in order to accomplish a mystical union during which Ḥayy can envisage ‘the whole structure of spiritual intelligences, bodies and matter that emanates from the Divine’.\textsuperscript{43} Thus, for Ibn Ṭufayl, Ḥayy not only needs to infer the existence of God from his observations, he also needs to find in these observations a path to the unchanging, eternal One. For that reason, Ibn Ṭufayl is committed to the eternity of the universe because, in his mind, only an unchanging, eternal universe that is most like the Platonic eternal forms can lead Ḥayy to meditate on the divine.

Consequently, his proofs for the existence of God are more proofs for the possibility of an eternal universe than for the existence of God,\textsuperscript{44} for he is forced to confront al-Ghazālī’s charges of heresy against Ibn Sīnā for believing in an eternal universe.\textsuperscript{45} The actual Avicennian argument for the existence of God based

\textsuperscript{41} Other commentators have generally failed to notice the subtle, yet important, differences between the existence proofs of Ibn Ṭufayl and those of Ibn al-Nafis; see Theologus, p. 30; and Hasanali, ‘Texts, Translators, Transmissions’.

\textsuperscript{42} Ḥayy (English), pp. 152–55.


\textsuperscript{44} Hawī has nicely abstracted from Ibn Ṭufayl’s treatise all his proofs from the existence of God and presented them in a succinct, logical fashion; see S. Hawī, ‘Ibn Ṭufayl: On the Existence of God and his Attributes’, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 95 (1975), 58–67.

\textsuperscript{45} Al-Ghazālī’s ‘Fourth Discussion’ specifically targets the falāṣfī’s contention that the world is simultaneously eternal and created; see his The Incoherence of the Philosophers.
on the distinctions between contingent beings (mumkin al-wujūd) and necessary existents (wājib al-wujūd) is hardly brought into the picture.\textsuperscript{46} In fact, at the conclusion of his proofs for the possibility of an eternal, yet created universe, Ibn Ṭufayl merely adds that the God who is ‘the non-corporeal Author’ necessarily exists.\textsuperscript{47} This further strengthens the claim that Ibn Ṭufayl is far more interested in making a point about the eternity of the universe than he is in deploying a proof for the existence of God that would actually be received well within the larger, Sunni community in the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{48}

Ibn al-Nafis, on the other hand, shuts out in the course of his narrative any possibility of bypassing revelation. Thus, in the first part of the treatise, he intentionally blocks off Ibn Ṭufayl’s proposed path towards a mystical vision at three places. First, as has already been mentioned, Ibn al-Nafis sticks to an empirical description of the natural world and stays away from all metaphysical language. This is so even though Ibn al-Nafis subscribes to Aristotelian physics and metaphysics generally, that is, the distinction between matter and form, and body and soul.\textsuperscript{49} Second, he passes over any description of the celestial world.\textsuperscript{50} He does not want to open up the possibility for Kāmil to posit an unchanging, eternal heaven, based on the seemingly incessant, identical daily rotation of the stars and planets. Since Kāmil never posits an eternal, unchanging world, he cannot use that as a means to understand and relate to the eternal, unchanging God. Hence, Kāmil has no need to contemplate the possibility of an eternal universe and the problems that such a universe would create for a traditionalist understanding of a willing, creator-God.\textsuperscript{51}

He explicitly accuses them of heresy on this count at the conclusion of the treatise as well (p. 230).

\textsuperscript{46} For the history and evolution of this classic Avicennian argument, see Wisnovsky, \textit{Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context}; and Wisnovsky, ‘Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition’.

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Hayy} (English), p. 135; and \textit{Hayy} (Arabic), p. 65.

\textsuperscript{48} See Wisnovsky, ‘One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn in Sunni Theology’.

\textsuperscript{49} See, for example, \textit{Theologus}, pp. 109–11. These Aristotelian distinctions are also found in all his medical works.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Theologus}, p. 43: ‘Then [Kāmil] passed on to the celestial bodies and observed their movements and their respective positions, and their revolutions and the like, as we have explained in another book.’ Though it would be nice to locate such a book, if indeed Ibn al-Nafis ever wrote it, the real point is that Ibn al-Nafis wants to undercut Ibn Ṭufayl’s main argument at its source.

\textsuperscript{51} As it is, Ibn al-Nafis firmly deniers the eternity of the universe; see his \textit{Mukhtašar fi ʾilm uṣūl al-ḥadīth}, ed. by Y. Zaydan (Cairo, 1991), p. 121. He also rejects the stability and
He concludes this section using the classic Avicennian proof for the existence of God, based on the distinctions between the necessarily existent and contingent beings, an argument that was increasingly becoming part of theological discussions during the thirteenth century.52

Finally, Ibn al-Nafis blocks the path towards the falāṣīfī’s self-sufficiency of reason and Ibn Ṭūfayl’s rational mysticism by completely shifting the narrative once Kamīl becomes aware of the existence of God:

When [...] Kamīl had reached in his knowledge the degree described [...] he desired to know what are the claims of the Creator on His servants, and he reflected whether it was convenient that the Creator should be worshipped and obeyed, and which was the method of knowing the worship concordant with His Majesty, and he continued to think about this for some time. Then it happened that the winds threw upon the island a ship in which [there were] a great number of merchants and other people.53

This shift is important because it shows that Kamīl never actually resolves these issues on his own. Instead, Kamīl becomes enamored with the visitors, their food, clothes, and other details of their lives, and proceeds to learn about their communities, their cities, and their language.54 Only after he has mingled with these visitors and learned their ways does Kamīl return to reflect upon God. By that point, however, the problematic has completely changed. Kamīl is no longer interested in deriving the ‘claims of the Creator’, or ‘the method of knowing the worship concordant with His Majesty’. Rather, Kamīl sets aside his earlier questions, and immediately proceeds to rationalize the necessity of prophethood, divine revelation, and the progressive nature of prophecy:

unchanging nature of celestial motions later on in his discussion of events leading up to the last day in Theologus (pp. 89–91).

52 The argument states that the necessarily existent in itself (wājīb al-wujūd bi-dhātīhī) brings into being all beings that are contingent in themselves (mumkīn al-wujūd bi-dhātīhī), and that there can only be one such being; see Theologus, pp. 43–44. Also see Wisnovsky, ‘One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn in Sunni Theology’.

53 Theologus, p. 44, my emphasis.

54 Theologus, p. 45: ‘Then [Kamīl] became friendly with them; they covered him with clothes, he ate their food and was pleased with them. They endeavoured to teach him their language and he learned much of it. They informed him of the condition of their cities and what was eaten in them [...] So they took him to a city near to that island. He ate the food of the inhabitants, and put on their clothes and it gave him enormous pleasure. He remembered how miserable his life had been because he was always naked in cold and heat, and had to confine himself to natural foodstuffs, and the animals always attacked and bit him.’
Man can live well only if he is with a community who keep between them a law by which all disputes are settled. This is possible only if that law is met with obedience and acceptance, and this is the case only if it is believed to come forth from Allah, and this is the case only if it emanates from a person whom they regard as truthful when he informs them that it comes from Allah. Then he reflected on the beneficial role of this Prophet, and found it threefold. Firstly, he transmits to mankind Allah’s law [...]; secondly, he makes known to mankind the majesty and other attributes of Allah; thirdly, he makes known the resurrection and the happiness and unhappiness which are prepared for them in the world to come [...]. These things are accepted only with difficulty by the natures of many people [...]. Had not men in our time become acquainted with the precepts of the law, and accustomed to its doctrines, they would at once disapprove of it and disbelieve the Prophets. As the acceptance of these things is difficult, men would, if the Prophet revealed them at once, without having been preceded by other Prophets […], be very much deterred from him and would strongly declare him to be a liar. Therefore it is fitting that at first some Prophets should reveal that part of these things which is most easily accepted and most urgently needed for the preservation and the good life of mankind, namely the transmission of Allah’s law to men […].

Kämil for this reason believed that the purpose of prophecy cannot be realized by one Prophet, but that there must be several Prophets of whom the first bring the (doctrines) which prepare men for the understanding of those (doctrines) which the later Prophets bring. Every one of the later Prophets must repeat what his predecessor brought and add to it until the beneficial function of prophecy is completed with the last Prophet. Therefore the last one must know all that his predecessors brought, and must be able to reveal all that his predecessors had revealed. Therefore the Prophet who is the Seal of the Prophets must be the most excellent of them.55

Ibn al-Nafis’s argument for prophecy is very similar to that of the falāṣifa. Both al-Fārābī and Ibn Sinā, had earlier established the validity of prophecy based on an Aristotelian understanding of humans as inherently social beings.56 Ibn al-Nafis’s use of their arguments, whether for prophecy or the existence of God, reveals that he is interested in appropriating the teachings of falsafa that are not directly antithetical to the literal interpretations of Scripture. His real concern is the falsāfiya’s belief in the self-sufficiency of reason as far as religious truths are concerned. Although Ibn al-Nafis accepts their claim that one can prove the existence of Prophets


and their missions through reason alone, that is as far as he is willing to go. Once prophecy is established, however, one cannot do without Prophetic revelation. All subsequent religious enquiry, whether into the nature of the laws, the attributes of God, or the nature of the afterlife, must proceed by taking into account both reason and revelation. That is, either the enquiry proceeds with truths explicit in Scripture that are then post facto shown to be rational, for example the biography of the Prophet, the religious laws, and so on; or, it proceeds with Scripture providing enough hints so that the rational elite can extract from its symbols and metaphors the underlying truths. Therein lies Ibn al-Nafis’s disagreement with the falasifa. For Ibn al-Nafis, unlike the falasifa, reason has no independent path to discovering religious realities. Ibn al-Nafis’s commentators have generally failed to understand this important distinction.57

The fact that Ibn al-Nafis rejects the possibility of the self-sufficiency of reason with regards to every religious truth is supported by a number of passages in the text. We have already seen that he breaks the narrative at precisely the point where, if Kāmil were to follow in the footsteps of Ḥāyy, Kāmil would have independently arrived at the means to worship the Creator. Kāmil, instead, is forced to come into contact with humans and to become a part of human society, which he ultimately ends up extolling.58 Once acquainted with human culture and history, Kāmil then returns to his rational contemplations. However, it is quite evident at this point that Kāmil is not independently ‘discovering’ past historical events. Rather, he is merely rationalizing the occurrence of events that have been narrated to him. That explains why Ibn al-Nafis so carelessly refers to actual names of places, religions, and figures over the course of the narrative. For, if Ibn al-Nafis was serious about presenting Kāmil as a theologus autodidactus, he would certainly have not made such elementary mistakes. Schacht and Meyerhof record these slips but fail to see their significance.59

57 The prose of Ibn al-Nafis’s text has posed significant problems for modern commentators. His assertions that Kāmil reflected on certain topics on his own have led them to assume that Ibn al-Nafis advocates some kind of autodidactic learning; see Theologus, p. 31, and Kruk, ‘Neoplatonists and After’.

58 Theologus, p. 45.

59 Theologus, p. 35: ‘As regards the general plan of the work, Ibn al-Nafis […] refrains from pointing out himself the concordance between the results of the reasoning of his hero and the actual facts, but leaves that to the reader; nevertheless the word Islam escapes him […]. It is also inconsistent, given his premisses, that he should mention Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, and Jesus, the Jews, the Christians, and the Zoroastrians, as well as the Banū Ḥāshim, in connexion with the genealogy of the Last Prophet […], Mecca and
Ibn al-Nafis’s goal to rationalize received religious history and truths, as opposed to rationally discovering them, is also evident in his discussion of the biography of the Prophet. At every step of the biography, Ibn al-Nafis provides arguments to illustrate that the details, events, and the character of the Prophet are in absolute conformity and harmony with reason. Take, for example, the manner in which he rationalizes the genealogy of the Prophet. Ibn al-Nafis’s readers would agree with the statement that the ‘noblest possible genealogy’ is that which goes back to Abraham since he ‘is held in equally high esteem by all religions.’

Thus, in order for the Seal of the Prophets to be the ‘most excellent of the Prophets’, under Arab notions of character and lineage, he too must be a descendant of Abraham. Furthermore, since this Prophet brings a new revelation and completes the mission of prophecy, he cannot be part of another religion prior to preaching this new revelation. That is so, because if he were a part of another religious tradition, then he would be considered an apostate by the followers of that religion when he brings forth the new Scripture, thus inviting ‘people to shun him’. For this reason he cannot be a Jew or a Christian, and so he cannot be from the descendants of Jacob or Esau. Thus, he must be from amongst the descendants of Ishmael, and since the noblest of them are the Hashimites, he must also be a Hashimite. As it turns out, this entire genealogy of the Prophet that Kamil provides is in fact the agreed-upon genealogy of the Prophet amongst Muslims.

It should be evident from these texts that Ibn al-Nafis is not even trying to suggest that Kamil constructed this genealogy independently or autodidactically. The numerous errors committed by Ibn al-Nafis in actually referring to the historical figures, along with the form of the argument itself, suggest that he is only interested in showing that these events are in perfect harmony with reason. The liberal

the Ka’ba […], and Yemen in connexion with the Last Things […], apart from other minor facts of this kind.’

Theologus, pp. 49, 124–25.

For the importance of genealogy and lineage in judging the nobility of people in Islamic societies, see F. Rosenthal, ‘nasab’, in EI², vii, 966–97.

Theologus, p. 124.

I disagree with Schacht and Meyerhof’s understanding that Ibn al-Nafis meant Jesus (Iṣā) here and not Esau (Īṣ) (Theologus, p. 49 n. 2). Medieval Muslims considered Jews to be the descendants of Jacob (Israel) and Christians to be the descendants of Esau; see Ibn Manẓūr, Lisan al-ʿarab, new edn, 18 vols (Beirut, 2000), ix, 308, 499. Besides, Muslims accept the traditional Christian belief that Jesus led a celibate life, so it would be impossible for Ibn al-Nafis to claim that Christians are the physical descendants of Jesus.
use of the phrase *là budda wa-an* (necessarily) throughout the text is meant to bring into sharp focus the inner logic and rationality of the sequence of events. It is not meant to suggest some absolute notion of necessity. Even less should it be seen as an example of Ibn al-Nafis’s adherence to the doctrine of *'aslah*, “that which is most right and proper”. 64 This specific notion was developed by Muta-zilite *mutakallimün* to express how certain things were necessarily incumbent upon God, such as to create His creatures in the best possible way. 65 Although Ibn al-Nafis subscribes to this doctrine for some specific things, 66 it certainly does not shape his treatise in its entirety. The concept of *'aslah* was invoked by the *mutakallimün* to argue that God has no other choice but to act in certain ways. It was thus used in order to remove multiplicity from God’s actions by suggesting that God has recourse to only the most proper course of action, something that can be known *a priori*. However, Ibn al-Nafis’s entire discussion of the life of the Prophet is filled with contingent details whose ordering and succession can only be rationalized and deemed ‘most proper’ *a posteriori*. The difference is subtle, yet important, for the proper kalam sense of *'aslah* leaves the door ajar for the principle of the self-sufficiency of reason, whereas the one preferred by Ibn al-Nafis bolts that door shut. All Ibn al-Nafis wants to allow is that there is an inherent rational order to the major events that occurred during the Prophet’s life — from his birth into a particular family, to his migration to Medina, to his takeover of Mecca, and then to his death in Medina. 67 Therefore, a person who believes in the literal details of the biography of the Prophet cannot be considered anything but rational. 68

64 *Theologus*, p. 32.


66 For example, he certainly believes that it is necessary for God to send Prophets to reveal his law, and he also believes that God must ‘necessarily take the greatest care of everything’ (*Theologus*, p. 44).

67 *Theologus*, pp. 120–25.

68 The rationality of the exoteric details of the life of the Prophet is most clearly illustrated by Ibn al-Nafis in his discussion of the Prophet’s physical and moral characteristics. Herein, Ibn al-Nafis takes great care to emphasize the harmony between the Prophet’s known temperament and health-related problems and the science of medicine and physiognomy; see *Theologus*, pp. 116–21. For the status of physiognomy as a science in the medieval Islamic period, see Y. Mourad, *La Physiognomontie Arabe et le ‘Kitāb al-Firāsār’ de Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Paris, 1939); and R. Hoyland, ‘Physiognomy in the Muslim World’, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 30 (2005), 361–402.
Thus, by going over the basic outline and certain intimate details of the Prophet’s life, Ibn al-Nafis hopes to have shown that the figure of the Prophet, his mission, his character, and his life history are all in harmony with reason. Moreover, Ibn al-Nafis is not, strictly speaking, relying on aslaḥ. That would require him to believe in the possibility of arriving at all this information from first principles, without recourse to revelation — a possibility he clearly rejects. What he has shown, however, is that the literal and exoteric aspects of religion to which the masses adhere are not contrary to reason. In fact, if anything, they can be shown to be in perfect harmony with reason. Thus, Ibn Ṭufayl is unjustified in calling the masses ‘irrational animals’. They are, rather, the virtuous followers of a rational plan — symbolized by the name Fāḍil ibn Nāṭiq (Virtuous son of the Rational).

III. Bodily Resurrection and the Problem of Individuation

Thus far, Ibn al-Nafis has tried to argue that Ibn Ṭufayl incorrectly assumes that one can discover religious truths without recourse to revelation. Unlike Ibn Ṭufayl’s Ḥayy, Ibn al-Nafis’s Kāmil is unable to discover rationally anything apart from the existence of God. Instead, Kāmil rationalizes the various religious rituals and practices, only after he has learnt of them through the shipwrecked crew (here symbolizing divine revelation itself). Consequently, he has also been able to successfully argue against Ibn Ṭufayl’s claim that the exoteric aspects of revelation, to which the masses adhere, are irrational.

However, Ibn al-Nafis has still not addressed Ibn Ṭufayl and the falāṣīfā’s primary concern that an exoteric scriptural understanding of the afterlife is fundamentally irreconcilable with a philosophical understanding of the underlying issues. Of course, the falāṣīfā assume that they have arrived at a demonstrative understanding of these issues, an assumption that al-Ghazālī and other thirteenth-century scholars denied vehemently. Nonetheless, almost all of these scholars merely engaged in a ‘negativist’ enterprise of criticizing the falāṣīfā’s rejection of bodily resurrection, God’s will, and other attributes, in ‘defence of the common orthodox creed’. On the other hand, Ibn al-Nafis not only wants to criticize the

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69 The translation of the narrator’s name as ‘Virtuous son of the Rational’ is found in M. Mahdi, ‘Remarks on the Theologus Autodidactus of Ibn al-Nafis, Studia Islamica’, 31 (1970), 197–209. However, Mahdi does not attach the same meaning and significance to the name change.

70 See al-Ghazālī, Incoherence of the Philosophers.

falāsifah, he also wants to engage in a more positive theological enterprise in order to establish his basic claim that revelation is necessary for any rational enquiry of religious doctrines. Hence, he confronts the contemporaneous scriptural and rational understandings of this problematic religious doctrine, in order to illustrate the mutual interdependence of revelation and reason.

There is no doubt that the belief in the promise of a life after death is one of the main tenets of Islam. Traditional Islamic sources contain an overwhelming amount of material on the events of the Last Day and the promised future life. Thus, it comes as no surprise that most major Muslim thinkers have defended a doctrine of the afterlife. Ibn Sinā, in fact, provided the most thorough rational defence of this doctrine than had hitherto been put forth. Like his proofs for the existence of God, Ibn Sinā’s defence of individual immortality and afterlife, albeit a spiritual one, acted as a springboard for subsequent discussions on these topics, including those of Ibn Ṭūfayl and Ibn al-Nafis.

Ibn Sinā’s specific doctrine of the soul and its survival after death, along with the problems this doctrine generates, is a direct consequent of his engagement with kalam and the Hellenistic, Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle that moulded the Arabic translations of Aristotle. On the one hand, he strenuously rejects the atomistic universe of kalam and its ‘materialist doctrines of the soul’. His proofs for the immateriality of the soul are designed specifically to attack the kalam doctrines. On the other hand, because he is firmly committed to Aristotelian understandings of matter and form, he is confronted with two inter-related problems: (1) if the soul...
is indeed the form of the body, how can it survive death? (2) If the soul indeed survives the death of the body, as it must in order to support individual immortality in Avicenna’s system, what individuates it in an Aristotelian universe where the only individuating principle is matter? Although Ibn Sinā never succeeded in resolving the second problem, his solution to the first problem develops out of a Neoplatonic Hellenistic understanding of the Aristotelian definition of soul.74

The Aristotelian definition of soul that had the most impact on subsequent Hellenistic and Islamic discussions was his definition of the soul ‘as the first [entelechy] of a natural body potentially possessing life’.75 As Robert Wisnovsky has recently shown, the early Hellenistic commentators, Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. 205 CE) and Themistius (fl. 365 CE) came to understand entelechy in the framework of completeness and ‘endedness’. In the hands of the Neoplatonic commentators, especially Ammonius (d. c. 521 CE), this understanding of entelechy as completeness and endedness was used to support a specifically Neoplatonic metaphysics of reversion and procession. Within this metaphysics, the Neoplatonic commentators divided the four Aristotelian causes into those that transcend their effects (final and efficient), and those that are immanent in their effects (formal and material). From there it is easy to see that they could argue for the separability of the soul qua final cause, but final cause as understood in the Neoplatonic sense of transcending its effect. And it is this understanding of soul as entelechy, understood as completeness and perfection, and the final causes as transcending their effects, that found its way into the Arabic translations of Aristotle and his commentators upon whom Ibn Sinā relies.76

The core essence of Ibn Sinā’s understanding of the soul is that it is a substance that is beyond the physical or corporeal. Over the course of his works, he provides a number of arguments for the incorporeality of the soul, ranging from the necessity for the receptacle of universal notions to be indivisible and hence immaterial,77 to

74 See Wisnovsky, Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context for details concerning this argument. What follows has been abstracted from Wisnovsky’s brilliant work.
75 Aristotle, De anima, ii.1.412a27–28.
76 Wisnovsky, Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context, chaps 2–5.
77 Fazlur Rahman, Avicenna’s Psychology: An English Translation of ‘Kitāb al-Najāt’, Book II, Chapter VI, with Historico-Philosophical Notes and Textual Improvements on the Cairo Edition (Oxford, 1952), pp. 41–54. According to Aristotle, or at least according to the non-dualistic interpretation of his passages in De anima, ii.2, iii.4, and iii.5, each individual’s active intellect must be immaterial since it is concerned with universals. Hence, it is considered separable from the body and survives its death. However, since Aristotle is not vested in personal immortality, he need not worry about the numerical identity of the different
the idea that the material body continually undergoes change and dissolution and so cannot be the basis for individual unity over time, to his famous ‘Flying Man’ thought experiment which establishes the immaterial soul as the true referent of ‘I’ in humans.\footnote{M. Marmura, ‘Avicenna’s “Flying Man” in Context’, \textit{Monist}, 69 (1986), 383–95.} Naturally, the incorporeal nature of the soul can be easily reconciled with, and has traditionally been considered, the Aristotelian position.

Furthermore, Ibn Sinā agrees with Aristotle that the soul does not exist prior to the body and only comes into existence with the body.\footnote{Ibn Sinā’s rejection of this Platonic notion of an independent prior existence of the soul is most prominent in his attack on metempsychosis; see M. Marmura, ‘Avicenna and the Problem of the Infinite Number of Souls’, \textit{Medieval Studies}, 22 (1960), 232–39; and T. Jaffer, ‘Bodies, Souls and Resurrection in Avicenna’s \textit{ar-Risāla al-Adhawiyya fi amr al-ma‘ād’}, in \textit{Before and After Avicenna: Proceedings of the First Conference of the Avicenna Study Group}, ed. by D. Reisman, with the assistance of A. H. al-Rahim (Leiden, 2003), pp. 163–74.} Thus, he completely rejects the Platonic soul-body dualism. Yet, unlike Aristotle, Ibn Sinā refrains from defining the soul as the form of the body. As a committed Aristotelian, he recognizes that forms are immanent in matter. As such, forms cannot exist outside and apart from matter, and so cannot be preserved after the matter is corrupted, or in this case, after a person dies. For that reason, he restricts himself to defining the soul as ‘a first perfection of a natural instrumental body to perform the activities of living.’\footnote{Wisnovsky, \textit{Metaphysics in Context}, p. 114.} This is precisely the Aristotelian definition of soul as the ‘first entelechy’, except that Ibn Sinā has come to understand ‘entelechy’ as ‘perfection’ in light of the Ammonian tradition.

The Ammonian background is even more apparent in his discussion of perfection in his \textit{Marginal Notes on Aristotle’s ‘De anima’}, wherein he explains that perfection is a much broader term that encompasses not only the forms immanent in matter, but also perfections that are separable from matter.\footnote{Wisnovsky, \textit{Metaphysics in Context}, p. 117.} Consequently, Ibn

active intellects after death; see, for example, G. E. R. Lloyd, \textit{Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of his Thought} (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 195–201. Ibn Sinā, on the other hand, believes that there is only one active intellect for the entire species, and thus needs another immaterial substance that is capable of receiving universals for each individual, i.e., the rational soul. For an initial foray into the \textit{falāsafā’s} understanding of the active intellect, see Davidson, \textit{Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes}.\footnote{Ibn al-Nafis reveals in his discussion of perfection in the \textit{Sharḥ al-Qānūn} that he too is aware of this distinction between form and perfection in Ibn Sinā’s \textit{falāsafā} (see below).}
Sinā can claim that since the human soul *qua* final cause of the body transcends its effect, and since the human soul is a perfection of the body that is not immanent in its matter, it is separable from the body and can survive its death.\(^{82}\)

Although earlier commentators had taken this Avicennian move to be reminiscent of Neoplatonic soul-body dualism,\(^{83}\) Wisnovsky has conclusively shown how Ibn Sinā could argue for the separability of the soul as an Aristotelian:

\[\text{Given Avicenna's rejection of the Platonic/Plotinian doctrine of the soul's preexistence and descent into the body; given the fact that Aristotle's position on the soul's, or at least the intellect's, separability or separatedness is more underdetermined than most modern scholars have allowed; given the radical conceptual transformation which the concept of perfection underwent as a result of the activities of Greek commentators and Greco-Arabic translators; and finally, given Avicenna's inheritance of an increasingly hardened distinction between the formal and material causes, which are intrinsic to or immanent in their effect, and the final and efficient causes, which are extrinsic to or transcend their effect, Avicenna's position on the soul's separability or separatedness should, I believe, be seen as a sophisticated and justifiable reading of Aristotle by a philosopher who stands as the culmination of the Ammonian synthesis, rather than as a symptom of his being in thrall to some caricature of Platonism or Neoplatonism.}\(^{84}\)

Wisnovsky's outstanding work shows that Ibn Sinā was absolutely convinced about the separability and survival of the individual rational soul after death and that he could philosophically justify such a position, given his understanding of certain key Aristotelian passages and concepts. In other words, he could philosophically justify a belief in personal immortality. However, an important problem continued to trouble him: the problem of individuating incorporeal souls after their separation from bodies. Since Ibn Sinā firmly believed in the incorporeality of souls, and since matter is the only individuating principle in the universe for him, Ibn Sinā still needed to show how the separable human souls maintain their individuality after death. He continued to struggle with this important puzzle and was never able to 'provide a complete treatment' for it. He acknowledged that individuation is 'essential for the existence of the human soul and [that it] is caused by its connection to a particular body' even after death. Yet, he was never able to provide a satisfactory account of this connection, and he even admitted

\(^{82}\) For a detailed study, see Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, chap. 6.


that it was ‘obscure’. Subsequently, the soul’s principle of individuation became the central problem that post-Avicennian falsafa and its critics had to tackle with regard to the problem of resurrection. Not surprisingly, the problem of individuation also forms the cornerstone of Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn al-Nafis’s discussions of soul and resurrection.

Like Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl posits the existence of a ‘principle over and above' corporeality that enables a body to accomplish its tasks as a plant, animal, or human. Thus, he maintains that the true identity of a human being is the incorporeal soul, which is imperishable by virtue of being incorporeal. As a result, Ibn Ṭufayl subscribes to a purely spiritual resurrection and afterlife, and strongly opposes the possibility of a corporeal afterlife.

However, unlike Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl does not subscribe to the Neoplatonic notions of final causes as perfections that transcend their effects. For that reason, the Avicennian definition of soul as the first perfection of a natural body does not figure into Ibn Ṭufayl’s account. Instead, as a stricter Aristotelian, Ibn Ṭufayl defines the soul (nafs) as the ‘form’ (šūra) of a material body — but not just any body; rather, he calls it specifically the form of the spirit (ruḥ). Thus, Ibn Ṭufayl’s solution to the Avicennian problem of individuation is to tie the soul to this material spirit. Consequently, his entire solution to personal immortality revolves around the imperishability of the spirit, for if the corporeal spirit is imperishable, then the soul which is the form of the spirit must be imperishable and, thus, immortal too.

Ibn Ṭufayl tries to argue for the imperishability of the spirit in a number of ways. First, since he strongly identifies with Sufi notions of describing the physical world as a simulacrum of the divine, and since he also believes in the eternity of the world and the theory of emanation, he maintains that the corporeal spirit and the


86 Hayy (English), p. 123.

87 Hayy (English), pp. 135–36.


89 Hayy (English), pp. 95, 123; and Hayy (Arabic), pp. 16–17, 50–51.

90 Ibn Ṭufayl’s understanding of the relationship between the soul and spirit is also related to his belief in mystical visions and monistic mysticism; see my dissertation, ‘Pulmonary Transit and Bodily Resurrection’, chap. 3. In Chapter 4, I also provide more details concerning the physiological relationship between soul and spirit in Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl, and Ibn al-Nafis.
incorporeal soul are united in a strong imperishable bond. Thus, while describing Ḥayy’s spontaneous generation from a mass of fermented clay, Ibn Ṭūfayl states:

In the very middle [of this mass] formed a tiny bubble divided in half by a delicate membrane and filled by a fine gaseous body, optimally proportioned for what it was to be. With it at that moment joined ‘the spirit which is God’s,’ in a bond virtually indissoluble, not only in purview of the senses, but also in that of the mind. For it should be clear that this spirit emanates continuously from God.91

The ‘fine gaseous body’ is the corporeal spirit, while ‘the spirit which is God’s’ is a reference to the incorporeal soul.

Second, Ibn Ṭūfayl suggests that the spirit actually remains intact after death.92 The first place he states this claim is in his discussion of Ḥayy’s dissection of the doe that nurses the infant Ḥayy. As Ḥayy cuts the doe open, he realizes that the doe had died because the physical spirit that had ‘lived in that chamber [i.e., the left ventricle of the heart] had left while its house was intact’, implying that the spirit had not actually been destroyed.93 Later, Ḥayy confirms the indestructibility of the spirit by vivisecting another unspecified animal. Here, Ḥayy notices that the left ventricle of the heart is ‘filled with a steamy gas’. However, as soon as he cuts it open, burning his hand in the process because of the animating heat of the spirit, the spirit departs and the animal dies.94 Here too, the emphasis is on the departure of the spirit and not on its dissipation or disintegration in the surrounding air.

Finally, Ibn Ṭūfayl even suggests that the spirit is actually akin to the fifth element of the heavenly bodies rather than the four terrestrial elements:

The implication Ḥayy drew from [his speculations on the soul and spirit] […] was that the vital spirit with the stablest equilibrium would be fit for the highest form of life to be found in the world of generation and decay. The form of such a spirit could virtually be said to have no opposite. In this it would resemble the heavenly bodies, the forms of which have none at all. The spirit of such an animal [i.e., the human spirit], being truly at a mean among the elements, would have absolutely no tendency up or down. In fact, if it could be set in space, between the center

91 Ḥayy (English), pp. 106–07, my emphasis.

92 Since Ibn Sinā firmly accepts the material generation of rūḥ and upholds the Aristotelian physical tenet that all terrestrial things are corruptible, he cannot entertain the possibility of an incorruptible rūḥ. Besides, in the Najât, Ibn Sinā specifically states that any composite body is corruptible and according to his definition of rūḥ in the Qānūn, the rūḥ is a composite body; Rahman, Avicenna’s Psychology, p. 62, and Ibn Sinā, al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb, 3 vols (Beirut, 1999), 1, 98.

93 Ḥayy (English), p. 114.

94 Ḥayy (English), p. 117.
and the outermost limit of fire, without being destroyed, it would stabilize there, neither rising nor falling. If it moved in place, it would orbit like the stars, and if it moved in position it would spin on its axis [...]. Thus it would bear a strong resemblance to the heavenly bodies.\textsuperscript{95}

Ibn Ṭufayl thus believed in the indestructibility of the spirit (rūḥ). Now, since the soul is the form of the spirit, and the spirit is imperishable, as it is akin to the imperishable fifth element, the spirit can serve as the eternal, material substrate for the soul, allowing it to perpetuate its individuality even after its separation from the body. The problem, as far as traditionalists like Ibn al-Nafīs are concerned, is that Ibn Ṭufayl’s defence of an individual afterlife (1) is not based on revelation, and in fact, bypasses revelation altogether; (2) it is very much a spiritual form of an afterlife and not one that involves the kind of physical, bodily pains and pleasures as described in the Qur’ān and hadith; and, finally, (3) it is closely tied to Ibn Ṭufayl’s monistic mysticism and defence of mystical visions, as the following passage on Ḥayy’s mystical vision reveals:

Here [i.e., in the bowels of the sphere of the moon] too was an essence free of matter, not one with those he had seen [i.e., the other emanated celestial intelligences] — but none other. Only this being had seventy thousand faces […]. In this being, which he took to be many although it is not, Ḥayy saw joy and perfection as before. It was as though the form of the sun were shining in rippling water from the last mirror in the sequence, reflected down the series from the first, which faced directly into the sun. Suddenly be caught sight of himself as an unembodied [sic] subject [dhātān mufrāqatan]. If it were permissible to single out individuals from the identity of the seventy thousand faces, I would say that he was one of them. Were it not that his being was created originally, I would say that they were he. And had this self of his not been individuated by a body on its creation I would have said that it had not come to be.

From this height he saw other selves like his own, that had belonged to bodies which had come to be and perished, or to bodies with which they still coexisted. There were so many (if one may speak of them as many) that they reached infinity. Or, if one may call them one, then all were one. In himself and in the other beings of his rank, Ḥayy saw goodness, beauty, joy without end.

He saw also many disembodied identities […] covered with rust. They were ugly, defective, and deformed beyond his imagining. In unending throes of torture and ineradicable agony, imprisoned in a pavilion of torment, scorched by the flaming partition.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{95} Ḥayy (English), p. 141.

\textsuperscript{96} Ḥayy (English), p. 153 (my emphasis; parenthetical emendations are in the original translation); and Ḥayy (Arabic), p. 85.
As I have already shown, Ibn al-Nafis’s main point throughout this text is to deny the principle of the self-sufficiency of reason while emphasizing the rationality of revelation itself. As far as revelation is concerned, the Qurʾān consistently describes the hereafter in physical terms and attacks explicitly those who deny bodily resurrection (36. 78–79). Hence, Ibn al-Nafis has no choice but to defend the rationality of this doctrine.

Immediately after rejecting the possibility of a purely incorporeal afterlife, arguing instead that the afterlife is reserved for an individual ‘composed of body and soul’, Ibn al-Nafis proceeds to explicate what he means by soul: ‘There is no doubt that man is composed of body and soul; the body is the thing which can be perceived, but the soul is that to which one refers when one says “I”’. He then proceeds to provide classic Avicennian arguments to establish the incorporeality and imperishability of the soul. Like Ibn Sinā, Ibn al-Nafis claims that ‘the body and its parts are continuously in dissolution and reconstruction’, while ‘that to which man refers [when saying “I”] […] remains constantly the same’. This implies that something immaterial must be the true referent of ‘I’. Similarly, he denies that the soul can be an accident (‘arad) that inheres in a body, which clearly shows that he also sides with Ibn Sinā’s criticisms of the kalām doctrines on this point.

Finally, he argues for the immateriality of the soul by relying on Avicennian notions of cognition. Since cognitive notions and forms are universal and cannot be divided, they cannot be acquired by material substances. As a result, Ibn al-Nafis argues that the soul must be immaterial.

As we can see, Ibn al-Nafis’s understanding of the immateriality of the human soul is almost identical to that of Ibn Sinā and illustrates that he was certainly not

97 *Theologus*, p. 57. Ibn al-Nafis seems to suggest that the Prophet cannot represent the afterlife in purely incorporeal terms because most people’s intellects cannot grasp such a concept. As such, it leaves open the possibility that, like Ibn Sinā, Ibn Ṭūfayl, and al-Ghazālī, he too may believe that descriptions of a physical afterlife are merely metaphorical. However, given some of his arguments later in the text, there is scarcely any doubt that Ibn al-Nafis firmly believed in the doctrine of bodily resurrection and a physical afterlife (see below).

98 *Theologus*, p. 57.


100 See Marmura, ‘Avicenna and the Kalam’, pp. 197–203; and *Theologus*, pp. 58, 110.

persuaded by al-Ghazālī’s critique of Ibn Sīnā on this issue.102 His defence of the immateriality of the soul also suggests that he was not a supporter of kalam atomism or, in general, kalam understandings of the soul. Furthermore, he even rejects the Aristotelian understanding of soul as form, since he never uses the term ‘form’ (šūra) to define or describe the soul. In fact, as his earlier medical commentary on Ibn Sīnā’s Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb (The Canon of Medicine) reveals, Ibn al-Nafis agreed with the falāsifa that forms are immanent and so inseparable from matter, and that the human soul needs to be separable.103 As for the soul being the form of an imperishable spirit, Ibn al-Nafis already rejected such notions in his commentary on the Canon.104 Consequently, he does not even entertain such a possibility in this work (Fāḍil ibn Nāṭiq).

Since Ibn al-Nafis agrees with Ibn Sīnā in the incorporeality, imperishability, and separability of the human soul, he is forced to confront the problem of individuation. He recognizes the gravity of the problem as soon as he postulates the immateriality of the soul: ‘If this is so, it [i.e., the soul] cannot exist before the existence of the mixed matter from which the body of man comes forth, because if it existed before that matter, it could be neither one nor manifold, and could not possibly subsist at all.’105 In true Avicennian fashion, Ibn al-Nafis rejects the soul’s existence prior to that of the body and proceeds to provide proofs of this claim. He finally concludes that ‘the soul of man can exist only after the existence of matter mixed in a manner corresponding to (the nature of) man, and the existence of this matter is a prerequisite for the existence of the soul of man’.106 The

102 For al-Ghazālī’s critique of Ibn Sīnā’s arguments for the immateriality of the soul, see Marmura, ‘Ghazali and the Avicennian Proof’; and al-Ghazali, The Incoherence of the Philosophers, discussion 18.

103 Ibn al-Nafis, Sharḥ al-Qānūn, London, Wellcome Library, Oriental MS Or. 51, fol. 63a.1–2. It is difficult to ascertain whether or not Ibn al-Nafis accepts Ibn Sīnā’s definition of the soul as the first perfection of the body. In this same passage, Ibn al-Nafis shows that he clearly understands Ibn Sīnā’s definition and how that allows for a possibility of the separable human soul (fol. 63a.1–6). But it is hard to tell whether he actually endorses it. Ibn al-Nafis certainly does not subscribe to a Neoplatonic emanation scheme, nor to a metaphysics of procession and reversion. Thus, even if Ibn al-Nafis accepts this definition, it is only for the purpose of establishing the existence of an incorporeal, separable human soul. However, as we have already seen, Ibn al-Nafis relies on other Avicennian proofs to establish the incorporeality and separability of the human soul.

104 See Chapter 4 of my dissertation, ‘Pulmonary Transit and Bodily Resurrection’.

105 Theologus, p. 58.

106 Theologus, p. 58; parenthetical emendations are in the original translation.
problem then is to determine exactly the connection between the soul and ‘this matter’ and to determine whether ‘this matter’ continues to exist after the rest of the body disintegrates.

I have dealt with Ibn al-Nafis’s understanding of the connection between the soul and the body elsewhere.  

Suffice it to say, in his earlier *Commentary on the Canon*, he introduces certain revisions in Avicennian physiology that allow him to offer an entirely new theory of generation, along with a new theory of pulsation and the pulmonary transit of blood. According to this theory of generation, once the male and female semen mix and create a mixed matter that has a temperament appropriate to receive an animal or human soul, God issues the soul to this matter to which it is then associated. As the embryo grows and generates organs, the soul, naturally, is also associated with the entire organism. However, at least in its first instance, the soul is directly connected to the original, mixed matter of balanced temperament. Thus, if there is some matter that should not degenerate as long as the soul is alive, it should be this matter:

This matter is generated from sperm and similar things, and when the soul becomes attached to it […], the body is generated from it. This matter is called the [‘ajb al-dbanab]. It is absurd that this should become lost as long as the soul subsists […]. The soul of man is imperishable [… so,] [t]his matter which is the [‘ajb al-dbanab] is imperishable (too). Therefore it remains after the death and decomposition of the body, and the soul with which it remains continues to be perceiving and noticing, and that time it experiences pleasures or pain; these are the pleasures and pain in the tomb.

Then when the time for resurrection […] comes, the soul stirs again and feeds this (nucleus of) matter by attracting matter to it and transforming it into something similar to it; and therefrom grows a body a second time. This body is the same as the first body inasmuch as this (nucleus of) matter in it is the same, and the souls in the same. In this way resurrection takes place.

The reference to ‘ajb al-dbanab is clearly taken from one of the most well-regarded hadith collections in Sunni Islam, the *Muwaṭṭa* of Imām Mālik ibn Anas (d. c. 795): ‘The earth eats all of the son of Adam except the ‘ajb al-dbanab. He was created from it, and on it he is built.’ The philosophical problem of individuation

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107 See Chapter 4 of my dissertation, ‘Pulmonary Transit and Bodily Resurrection’.

108 *Theologus*, pp. 58–59; parenthetical emendations are in the original translation itself. Schacht and Meyerhof translate ‘ajb al-dbanab as ‘coccyx’.

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is thus solved by turning to revelation, for there is no way of rationally determining whether the original mixture of matter actually survives throughout one’s life.

However, I should emphasize that this hadith is only one among a multitude of hadith that are concerned with the status of body and soul after death. The majority of hadith, and even Qur’anic verses, refer to the possibility of a free soul/spirit that leaves the body at death and even views it from afar. Some traditionalists, in fact, even rejected the authenticity of this tradition on the ‘ajb al-dhanab. Thus, Ibn al-Nafis’s defence of bodily resurrection using this tradition reveals that he was trying to reconcile reason and revelation in his own unique way. Since he was committed to aspects of the Avicennian system, such as the immateriality and substantiality of the soul, he picked out only that element of the religious corpus that could fit with these notions. Moreover, his solution to this problem is also consistent with the changes he introduces into Galenic physiology, or, more accurately, Avicennian physiology. Thus, far from slavishly adhering to religious dogma and making reason subservient to revelation, Ibn al-Nafis tries to allocate authority to both, all the while striving to maintain a reasonably coherent position. Finally, the appeal to the ‘ajb al-dhanab to solve the problem of individuation further strengthens his case against the self-sufficiency of reason.

**IV. Concluding Remarks**

Ibn Sinā’s importance to philosophical and theological discussions during the thirteenth century should certainly not be underestimated. His proofs for the existence of God and the necessity of prophecy, and his defence of the immortality and immateriality of the soul — all of these are marshalled in by Ibn al-Nafis to defend traditional doctrines. Yet Ibn al-Nafis can never grant Ibn Sinā the claim that revelation is inadmissible in rational proofs, for that diminishes the authority of revelation and allows for the possibility of bypassing revelation altogether.

le Muwatta’ de Malik, le Musnad de Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Deuxième edn, 8 vols (Leiden, 1992), II, 189. Interestingly, the same section contains another hadith that talks of the rūḥ surviving in the ‘trees of the Garden until Allah returns it to’ the believer’s body (Malik, Muwatta’, p. 91). Since this understanding of rūḥ does not jive with Ibn al-Nafis’s falsafa-derived understanding of rūḥ and nafs Ibn al-Nafis clearly disregards this hadith. According to Wensinck, the hadith on the ‘ajb al-dhanab also appears in the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.


Thus, Ibn al-Nafis goes to great lengths to reject such a possibility and to show that revelation is necessary for rational speculation on theological topics. In the process, Ibn al-Nafis reveals some of the originality to which Gutas eludes, in the way in which he actively appropriates certain aspects of the Avicennian tradition, as well as the religious tradition, while rejecting others. There is nothing inevitable about Ibn al-Nafis’s particular selections from both traditions, as can be seen in the different way in which his predecessors and contemporaries appropriated from these traditions while dealing with the same issues and the same texts.\textsuperscript{112}

More importantly, Ibn al-Nafis’s particular solution to the problem of resurrection is related not only to his denial of the \textit{falāṣīfī}s appeal to the principle of the self-sufficiency of reason, but also to his new theories in physiology and anatomy. Ibn al-Nafis was able to sever the connection between soul and spirit that underlies Ibn Ṭufayl’s solution to the Avicennian problem of individuation only because he was also willing to reject Avicennian physiology. In fact, he proposed a new physiology, along with a new theory of pulsation and the pulmonary transit of blood, because he was committed to a strict hylomorphic psychology.\textsuperscript{113} That he was able to adhere to aspects of the Avicennian system while defending basic traditionalist tenets illustrates the new avenues that thirteenth-century scholars were exploring with regards to the relationship between reason and revelation. Historians that posit either an eternal destructive relationship between reason and revelation, or an eternal non-compromising harmony, do a disservice to the complexity of the options that were available to thirteenth-century Islamic scholars.

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\textsuperscript{112} Baydawi (d. 1316), for example, reconciles Ibn Sināʾ’s immaterial soul with aspects of the tradition that speak of souls as free substances that float freely after death; see \textit{Nature, Man and God in Medieval Islam: ʿAbd Allāb Baydawi’s Text, Ṭawālīʿ al-Anwār min Majālīʿ al-Anzār}, along with Maḥmud Isfahani’s Commentary, \textit{Majālīʿ al-Anzār, Sharḥ Tawālīʿ al-Anwār}, ed. and trans. by E. Calverley and J. Pollock, 2 vols (Leiden, 2002), 1, 666–67, 672, 673–74, 677, 679, 681–82, 716–17.

\textsuperscript{113} This argument forms the core of Chapter 4 of my dissertation.
What follows is a ‘work in progress’, an attempt to translate the reflections of Mulla Sadra Shīrāzī (980/1572–1050/1640) on existence into English, and do so in an idiom that will help our contemporaries to grasp the intentions of his enquiry: Maqāṣid falsafat Mulla Sadra, if you will.1 Taken from Volume I of his magnum opus, al-Asfār al-arba‘īn, these passages reflect the goal of that work itself: wisdom.2 So we are catapulted, if you will, into a world of philosophical enquiry to which Pierre Hadot has recently introduced many of us.3 This world contrasts starkly with modes of philosophy current in the West, though it is telling that that world is busy discovering Hadot’s work.4 I was initially drawn to attempt a comparative study of Mulla Ṣadra and Thomas Aquinas, based on al-Shīrāzī’s summary text, Kitāb al-Maṣbā‘īr, in response to an invitation to the Mulla Ṣadra conference in Tehran (1999), and from there I was led to translate the passages on existence from his major work.5 Let us first attend to his introductory

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1 I am especially grateful to Tzvi Langermann’s careful editing, which discovered some egregious misreadings in my translation of Mulla Sadra, herein corrected.


4 See Philosophy as a Way of Life, ed. by A. Davidson (Oxford, 1995).

5 The Arabic text was published by H. Corbin, Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques (Tehran, 1964). My essay is ‘Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and Mulla Sadra Shirazi...
remarks, as they locate this enquiry in a wisdom tradition which sees our life and enquiry as a journey with significant stages.\(^6\)

The First journey: from creation to the One who [alone] is real and true [al-Ḥaqq], by way of investigating the nature of existence [wuṣūd] and its essential attributes, in distinct stages. The First Stage: the knowledge which human beings require for this task, from among all the [modes of] knowing, with an introduction and six stations.

*Introduction.* Concerning our knowledge of philosophy with its primary divisions, its goals and its nobility.

Know that philosophy is able to perfect the human soul by bringing it to know the reality of existents according to their proper essences, as well as accurately assessing their existence by way of proofs grasped by the mind; or else accepted by tradition, as befits the majority of human beings. Now if you wanted, you could say that the order of the universe is intelligibly ordered according to human capacity, which can attain to a certain qualified resemblance [tashbīḥ] of the Creator most High, since human beings came to be as something kneaded from dough — that is, [by way of] intelligible form together with created sensible matter.\(^7\) The soul has two aspects, [the one] bound [to matter, the other] abstract. No doubt then that wisdom has two branches, in accordance with the cultivation of these two trajectories, for the improvement of the two faculties for the two branches, [the one] speculative and abstract, [the other] practical and bound [to matter].

The goal of the speculative [faculty] is to engrave upon the soul the form of existence [reality], in accordance with its order, perfection, and completeness, after which it can become knowing and rational and conformed to the real world not in matter but in its forms, variety, [21] shape and figure. Indeed, this sort of wisdom is that to which the chief Messenger — praise and blessing to him — aspires as he asks in his invocation to his Lord, saying: ‘Lord, show us things as they really are.’ And also to the friend of God [Abraham] — may he be praised and blessed, when he asked: ‘Lord, grant me wisdom’ [4. 83]. Now the wisdom in question must be right judgement regarding existence, attending to what may be needed to conceive things properly.

So it is clear that such an enquiry will entail a spiritual journey, as intimated in the very title of the work itself, and clarified in these introductory remarks. As we shall see, the very existence of things links each thing with its creator, so the link itself will share in the inexpressibility of God. In this way, a philosophical

(980/1572–1050/1640) and the Primacy of *esse/wuṣūd* in Philosophical Theology*, Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 8 (1999), 207–19.


\(^7\) ‘We created man from clay, from earthy substance duly fashioned’ (Qur’an 15. 26).
enquiry into existence cannot be a merely conceptual (or ‘abstract’) endeavour. So it should be fascinating to note how carefully Mulla Şadra proceeds, altering ways of enquiry already standard to ‘philosophers’, notably Ibn Sīnā, to meet his stringent demands for articulating existence as the link of creatures to their creator:

Now there can be no definition of existence, and so no demonstration regarding it. For definition and demonstration can only proceed when the definitions concern those things between which we can distinguish [by weighing them] on proper scales. But what if one must believe what one cannot perceive, without perceiving anything else preceding it? So, for example, when we wish to know whether intelligence exists, we must first have arrived at yet other beliefs, yet will certainly come in the end to a belief without any other belief preceding it [27], indeed one necessarily [embedded] in the soul, offering a primary elucidation from the intelligence itself — like saying that something is a thing. For a thing has nothing contrary to it; while two contraries cannot come together, nor can both be eliminated in one situation as opposed to another; and so also must one say with regard to conception. Though a conception requires another conception that precedes it, this is not true for every conception. Instead, it [the chain of conceptions] must end at one concept where it [the chain] stops, one which does not require a concept that precedes, for examples, necessity, possibility, or existence. Now these concepts, and those similar to them, provide trustworthy meanings at the very centre of the intellect, inscribed in [our] intelligence in innate and primary [fashion]. So when one sets out to exteriorize these ideas in speech, it stimulates the mind and rouses attention, concretizing them by indicating the other things centred in the intellect in order to make them useful by means of other things that are more common than they are.

So existence will partake of the primary notions available quite naturally to intellect, yet there will be further peculiarities with this ‘notion’ which must be more than a notion, since what it expresses cannot properly be expressed in a predicate form. For that reason Ibn Sīnā’s strategy of articulating existence as something which ‘comes to’ (‘araḍa, accidit) the essence will not do, for existing must be more interior to existing things than a feature of them could ever be. One way to

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8 Avicenna on being as the first notion in the intellect: ‘L’existant [al-manjūd], la chose, et le nécessaire [sont tels que] leurs ‘intentions’ [ma’āni] se dessinent dans l’âme d’un dessein premier; dessein qui n’a pas besoin d’être acquis a partir d’autres choses plus connus qu’elles’ (La Metaphysique du Shifā’, trans. by G. C. Anawati (Paris, 1978), 1.5.1).

9 Mulla Şadra is following Aristotle here, who insisted that substance has no contrary, though predicates will always have them.

10 Compare Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, 1.8.1: ‘now existence is more intimately and profoundly interior to things than anything else, for everything as we have said is potential when compared to existence’; cf. also 1.4.1.3.
see this is to remark on the inherently ambiguous character of the term *exists* as we apply it. And closely linked to that, we shall notice his recourse to *participation* (*isbtirāk*). He begins Chapter 2 by announcing its subject:

[1.35] What is predicated of existence is understood to be predicated ambiguously, rather than predicated conventionally.

Existence participates in essences [literally: quiddities] in a way close to that of first [intelligibles], for intelligence finds relation and similarity between one existent and another, but nothing of the sort between an existent and nothingness. For if existents were unable to participate in a [single] understanding, so that they would differ in all respects, their situation would be like that of existence with respect to nothingness: no relation at all between them. […] But we have here before us an infinity of things that can be understood, though one can only consider each one of them singly, asking whether it participates [36] in existence or not; but since there is no need to do so, it is known that existence is participatory [existents all participate in existence] […]. Regarding existence being attributed to what is below it ambiguously — that is, regarding their greater entitlement, priority, precedence, or strength — existence in some existing things as opposed to others is determined by their essence, as we shall see, while in some it is prior to others on account of nature, while in still others it is more perfect and powerful. Now the existence which has no cause has primacy over what takes its existence from another, and so is naturally prior to all existing things. Similarly the existence of each one of the active intelligences is prior to that of subsequent ones, as the existence of substance is prior to the existence of accidents.

The Aristotelian way of speaking, a ‘systematically ambiguous’ discourse that Aquinas will ennoble as ‘analogous’, proceeds ‘according to prior and posterior’.¹¹ Mulla Ṣadra explores this route to help us see how terms used equivocally may lead to unambiguous understanding:

[37] Indeed, without considering existence, there can be no priority or posteriority, since being prior or posterior, perfect or deficient, strong or weak, are found in existents in their very ‘thisness’ [or: identities], and not in any other thing, and [likewise] to things and essences in their very existences, but in themselves. You will receive further clarification upon this in this section, in the investigations into ambiguity in this book. It has now been clarified here how existence — in so far as it can be understood — is something common [‘āmmi] to be predicated of existing things with disparities and not merely conventionally.

Yet the most telling ambiguity in the term *existence* stems from its ordinary use to identify individuals, by contrast with its more ‘philosophical’ use as ‘common existence’, an ambiguity already present in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Mulla Ṣadrā takes great pains to separate these two meanings in Chapter 3, entitled ‘That common existence, [known] spontaneously, is an intellectual contemplation, which does not inform its individuals’:

So we [must] say: this distinction between things and existence is not part of our comprehension of existing things. Rather, the comprehension of both is the same throughout, whether or not their application conforms to the tradition of the philologists, or whether or not the being of an existent involves things other than existence. Instead, absolute existence arises from some special properties that are true of it, not from the very comprehension of existence. Ibn Sinā says something like this in his metaphysics [*al-Shiḥāṭ*]: ‘necessary existence is already understood by the very [expression] “necessary existence,” just as unity is already understood by the very [expression] “one” [*al-Shiḥāṭ*, 1.6]. Now one can understand by this either that the essence of necessary existence is like that of humanity, or that it is an essence quite different from other essences like humanity; it simply is what it is, necessary existence. Recall what we understood about unity: whatever anything is — something or its very self or humanity, it remains one. So let it be said: we must distinguish *unity* or *existent*, as essences attributed to something, from *unity* and *existent* in so far as it is one and existent.

This last animadversion should remind us of Plotinus’s insistence that we cannot even say that the One is one! *So existing*, as what links the One with the many, will share in that same ineffability. Yet now, it appears, Mulla Ṣadrā is ready to say what can be said:

Moreover, Ibn Sinā’s said in his ‘notes’ [*ta’līqāt*] to *De anima*; Should I be asked whether existence is existent or not, the answer should be that it is existent in the sense that the true reality of existence is existent: that is, existence is the state of being existent [*al-mawjūdīyya*].

So Mulla Ṣadrā insists that al-Suhrawardī cannot elide the central insight of Ibn Sinā regarding the crucial distinction of creator from creatures, as between that which exists ‘by right’, and that to which existing is granted. Mulla Ṣadrā attempts to express this *existing* yet more intimately:

So we [must] say: if existence were not an individual true reality [*haqīqa*], distinct from the properties [a thing has], how could essences differing in themselves ever be described? Or different levels [of things]? Yet they are described in this way. Now necessary existence has no need of a cause to be what it is, while the existence of possible [beings] differs from it essentially. Nor can there be any doubt of the difference, by way of negation or privation, between need and lack of need
regarding the necessity of essences or levels of essence. Therefore there can be no
doubt that there is in every existent something beyond its properties: namely, un-
derstanding it to exist. Otherwise, how could existences differ essentially, as even
those who go astray suggest; or [how could there be] different levels [of being],
as yet other sects have noticed? Yet sheer generality, by analogy with properties,
yields species without any differences. [...] To realize this, [know that] existence
itself establishes the essence, for a thing is not established in its essence unless
there be a way of proposing the essence be established. [...] As the master [Ibn Sinā] said in his enquiries: [...] existence which has emanated
from another has its being dependent on that other, and subsists in it as though
bestowed from another which subsists according to an existence necessary in it-
self [al-Shifāʾ, 1.6]. Now the subsistence proper to a thing cannot be separated
from it since it is proper to it. And he says in another place concerning this: either
existence requires another and so is in need of another to subsist, or it is so well
endowed with it that its subsistence is proper to it. So it would not be true [in gen-
eral] that existence exists requiring another and depend on it as though it were not
true that existence [also] exists well endowed and independent, without subsisting
from another but rather as an unlimited true reality. I say that a sensible intelligent
person, exercising the power of intuition, understands from this discussion why
we [47] resist proposing a demonstration of these matters, notably with respect to
that time in which all possible existents and ordered individuals depend on neces-
sary existence for their consideration and their nature, along with the diffusion and
blockage of light which does not subsist independently with respect to its very es-
sence [buwtīya]. Now it is not possible to perceive [a thing’s] proper individual es-
sence separate [from this dependence, any more than we can perceive] individual
existents independently, since what is natural is also dependent upon another. [...] Differing from a true reality in that it is pure individual realization and bearer
of individuality, [existence is what] individuates without needing any property to
identify it. On the contrary, by its union with every essence it affords distinction
and realization to the essence, bringing it out of obscurity, ambiguity, and conceal-
ment. For true existence appears per se in all its ways of appearing, so appearing
[69] in everything else that essence appears to, with, in, and from existence. [...] [71] It is as though one were to think of the degrees of existences as glowing with
the light [proper to] necessary true realities, manifesting the true divine existence
as it is manifested in the form of individuals, coloured with the colours of possible
essences, yet blocked by their created forms from [manifesting] the identity of the
divine necessity

While there can be no demonstration of these matters, primarily since existing
defies definition, we are nonetheless led to realize that we cannot understand cre-
aved things properly without a sustained attempt to grasp the internal link they have
with the creator in their very existing. Yet while this mode of enquiry exceeds the
bounds of philosophical enquiry as normally practised by Islamic philosophers
like Ibn Sinā, it is arguable that they too realized that an authentically philosophical
search must move into these more esoteric arenas. Yet Mulla Šadra’s inspiration is also clearly Ibn al-’Arabî. It is that connection which needs to be more thoroughly explored, as we continue this ‘work in progress’.

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In his influential monograph *Die aristotelische Syllogistik*, Günther Patzig claimed that ‘up to now’ — that is, in the over two thousand years between Aristotle and Patzig — the nature of Aristotle’s distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms ‘has not been properly understood’.¹ In one powerfully argued chapter of the book, Patzig introduced Aristotle’s distinction as well as the problems that arose from it; surveyed and picked apart previous explanations of the distinction — from the ancient and late antique Greek and medieval Latin commentators, as well as from nineteenth-century European historians of logic — and also proposed his own alternative explanation; and finally concluded that Aristotle’s distinction, when understood along the lines that Patzig proposed, turns out in the end to be logically unjustifiable. My aim in this paper is to supplement Patzig’s survey of previous interpretations of how perfect and imperfect syllogisms differed one from the other, by taking into account how a representative sample of Arabic

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thinkers dealt with the distinction. I shall begin, like Patzig, by summarizing what Aristotle has to say about it. I shall then turn to three confusions that arise from the distinction, and survey the reactions and attempted solutions of subsequent thinkers from the late antique Greek exegetical tradition, as well as from the Arabic philosophical tradition that was its direct heir. Finally, I shall return to Aristotle and suggest that there is a potentially crucial element in this discussion that might have informed the commentators’ views and which modern scholars, including Patzig, seem to have ignored: Aristotle’s discussion of *to teleion* (the perfect or complete) in *Metaphysics*, v.16.

I. Aristotle

At *Prior Analytics*, 1.1.24b18–22 (Arabic: 108.1–4), Aristotle defines the syllogism (*sullogismos*) as

a discourse in which, certain things having been supposed, something different from the things supposed results of necessity because these things are so. By ‘because these things are so’ I mean ‘resulting through them’, and by ‘resulting through them’ I mean ‘needing no further term from outside in order for the necessity to come about’.

Immediately following this, at 24b22–26 (Arabic: 108.5–9), Aristotle goes on to define a special kind of syllogism, the perfect syllogism:

I call a deduction complete [*teleios*] if it stands in need of nothing else besides the things taken in order for the necessity to be evident; I call it incomplete [*atelēs*] if it still needs either one or several additional things which are necessary because of the terms assumed, but yet were not taken by means of premises.

In other words, the distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms rests not on the criterion of validity or invalidity, on whether or not the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises, but instead on whether or not it is immediately apparent that the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. A perfect syllogism is one in which the necessity is immediately apparent, and an imperfect syllogism is one that requires something else — here referring to a logical operation such as conversion — in order for its necessity to become apparent.

So much for the definition; which syllogisms are perfect in practice? Aristotle gives his answer in Book I, Chapter 4, 25b32–35 (Arabic: 113.7–10): those syllogisms are perfect in which the middle term serves as the subject for one extreme term and as the predicate for the other extreme term. All syllogisms of this type, which Aristotle labels the first figure at the end of this chapter, at 26b28–33 (Arabic: 118.8–11), are perfect.

Not only does Aristotle explicitly state that all (pantes) first-figure syllogisms are perfect, he implies that no syllogisms from the other figures will be perfect. This is because all the problems are proven or resolved by means of or on account of this figure (dia toutou tou skbêmatos). A commentator on the Prior Analytics could plausibly construe Aristotle’s earlier insistence that a perfect syllogism needs nothing outside of itself — it needs no logical operation such as conversion — in order for its own necessity to be apparent, as committing him to the idea that the second and third figures, because they are proven by means of or on account of this first figure, will be imperfect, since they need the first figure in order to be proven — in order for their necessity to be made apparent, in other words. This implication is confirmed and made explicit in the next several chapters of the Prior Analytics, where Aristotle discusses the second and third figures, and in some instances contrasts the actual perfection of the first figure with the potential perfection of the second and third figures.3

Taking stock in An. Pr., I, 7, Aristotle makes a general inference (I.7.29a30–34 (Arabic: 130.8–11)):

It is furthermore evident that all the incomplete deductions are completed on account of the first figure. For they all come to a conclusion either probatively or through an impossibility, and in both ways the first figure results. For those completed probatively this results because they all come to a conclusion through conversion, and conversion produces the first figure. And for those proved through an impossibility, it results because, when a falsehood is supposed, the deduction comes about through the first figure.

To sum up, then, it appears that a perfect syllogism will be any valid syllogism whose conclusion follows necessarily from the premises in a self-evident way; and second, that all first-figure syllogisms satisfy this requirement and are thus perfect; while by contrast second- and third-figure syllogisms do not satisfy this requirement and are thus imperfect.

3 An. Pr., I.5.27a1–3 (Arabic: 119.3–4) and 28a4–7 (Arabic: 124.3–5); I.6.28a15–17 (Arabic: 124.14–16) and 29a14–16 (Arabic: 129.6–7).
II. Problems and Reactions

Aristotle’s distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms seems straightforward enough. Upon closer examination, three problems arise. The first is that of inconsistency, since it emerges later in *Prior Analytics*, Book 1, that on Aristotle’s account not all first-figure syllogisms are perfect. For although all assertoric syllogisms of the first figure are perfect, not every modal syllogism of the first figure is perfect. It turns out, then, that there is such a thing as an imperfect first-figure syllogism. This complicates matters. We are suddenly confronted by the disappearance of what earlier chapters had led us to believe was a comforting extensional identity between perfect syllogisms and first-figure syllogisms. How then to account for modal syllogisms of the first figure that are not perfect?

The second problem is that of arbitrariness. For even if we leave aside the apparent anomaly of imperfect, first-figure modal syllogisms, the criterion of ‘obviousness’ that Aristotle proposes for perfect syllogisms seems hopelessly subjective. I must confess that it is only a syllogism in Barbara whose necessity is immediately apparent to me; slightly cleverer people might feel the same way about Barbara and Celarent, but not about Darii and Ferio; very clever people might well feel that the necessity of syllogisms in the second figure is immediately apparent, but not that of syllogisms in the third figure; and geniuses might feel that all valid syllogisms are immediately apparent. How then can obviousness serve as the criterion by which we distinguish between perfect and imperfect syllogisms, when what is transparent to one person is obscure to another?4

The third problem is that Aristotle seems to be using *teleios* here in an ambiguous way. Remember that in his definition of ‘syllogism’, Aristotle says that a syllogism ‘needs no further term from outside in order for the necessity to come about’. So there is a sense in which all valid syllogisms are complete, since they all contain within themselves everything they need to conclude necessarily. It is only first-figure syllogisms, however, that contain within themselves everything they need to conclude necessarily in an obvious or immediately apparent way. There is thus a tension between two senses of completeness or perfection: a general sense that applies to all valid syllogisms in all the figures, and a special sense that applies only to syllogisms in the first figure. This tension created confusion among later commentators, who were also forced to resolve the apparent anomaly of

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4 It is possible that Avicenna and his post-classical Muslim commentators may have had this problem in mind when articulating and employing his celebrated theory of *hadīs*, or ‘intuition’. I am grateful to Tzvi Langermann for pointing this out to me.
first-figure modal syllogisms that were imperfect, and to unpack the frustratingly subjective and arbitrary use of ‘obviousness’ as a criterion to distinguish between perfect and imperfect syllogisms.\(^5\)

Several options were open to them:

(a) *Endorse the idea of degrees of perfection, or degrees of naturalness*

One interpretation — that of most commentators, both Peripatetic and Neoplatonic — was to maintain, in apparently flagrant opposition to Aristotle, that the term *teleios* should be applied to all valid syllogisms in all the figures, and not be restricted to those syllogisms in the first figure. Patzig recounts that according to Ammonius, Theophrastus held that not only was the first figure perfect, the second and third figures were perfect too, a position adopted by all Neoplatonists from Porphyry onwards.\(^6\)

In order to temper their apparent disagreement with Aristotle, many of these commentators embraced the idea that there are degrees of perfection or completeness. As I shall discuss in the next section, the idea that there are degrees of completeness is something which Patzig dismisses as utterly counterintuitive: he claims that on Aristotle’s account a thing is either complete or it is not, and that while there may be a sense in which Aristotle allows for degrees of incompleteness, there is no such thing as degrees of completeness.\(^7\)

But the notion of degrees of *teleiotês* was not at all counterintuitive to the Greek and Arabic commentators. Patzig says that Alexander of Aphrodisias reasoned that because there are certain first-figure moods which are not perfect — that is, certain imperfect first-figure modal syllogisms — the first figure cannot be said to differ radically from the second and third figures. All valid syllogisms are perfect in a sense, just to varying degrees. For example, Alexander says that Barbara and Celarent are more perfect than Darii and Ferio.\(^8\) Philoponus follows Alexander

\(^5\) For the sake of economy I shall postpone discussion of the perfection or imperfection of first-figure modal syllogisms until a future article and focus here on discussions of assertoric syllogisms. Needless to say, this makes my conclusions less than definitive. For a clear introduction to the problem of modal syllogisms in Arabic logic, see Tony Street’s ‘Arabic and Islamic Philosophy of Language and Logic’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (July 2008), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arabic-islamic-language> [accessed December 2008].


here, explaining that Barbara and Celarent are more perfect than Darii and Ferio because Barbara and Celarent have universal copulas.9

In the Arabic philosophical tradition the clearest and most enthusiastic exponent of the idea of degrees of perfection was the North African scholar al-Akhḍārī (d. 1534). In his popular didactic poem al-Sullam al-mura'wniq fi l-manṭiq, itself a versification of the equally popular Ḣaṣbāṭi fi Athīr al-Dīn al-Abhārī (d. 1264), al-Akhḍārī described the four figures of the syllogism as being ordered according to perfection (wa-bi'yah 'alā l-tarībi fi l-takāmmul).10 Two of al-Akhḍārī's later commentators explained the scale of perfection among the syllogistic figures by saying that it corresponds to degrees of honour and excellence (al-sbaraf wa-l-mažīya: al-Rahūnī al-Tīwānī, [n.d.]), and by saying that the first is the most excellent of the figures (af'dal al-asbkāl: al-Dāmanhūrī (d. 1778)). Al-Rahūnī al-Tīwānī and another commentator, the al-Azhar professor al-Bājūrī (d. 1861), explained that the first figure was the most natural because it possessed, to the greatest degree, the naturalness that came from the middle term's quality of transitivity between the subject of the first premise and the predicate of the second premise.11

The claim by some of al-Akhḍārī's commentators that perfection can be explained as a function of naturalness reflects an earlier exegetical trend. A number of classical Arabic philosophers avoided explicitly adopting the idea that there are degrees of completeness or perfection, while still embracing the idea that there was a difference in degrees, rather than an absolute difference, between the various figures. But this difference was held to consist in degrees of naturalness, with degrees of completeness or perfection implied but never stated.

For example, in his last major work, the Pointers and Reminders, Avicenna (d. 1037) says that while the second and third figures are not self-evident, they are close to nature, at least compared with the much derided fourth figure:

An indication of the types of predicative-conjunctive [i.e., categorical] syllogisms

As for [this] class, it requires that the middle term be either a predicate in the minor [premise] and a subject in the major [premise]; or the opposite of that; or a predicate in both; or a subject in both. Now people call the first category [in this class] the first figure. It has been found to be perfect and very excellent (ṣaad wa-

9 Patzig, Aristotle’s Theory of the Syllogism, pp. 72–75.
10 Al-Sullam al-mura'wniq fi l-manṭiq (lemmas contained in Tīwānī's commentary; see n. 11, below), p. 54.15.
Its deducibility is intuitively probative [and] self-evident, [and] not in need of any [further] proof \( \text{[takātnu qiyāsīyyatubu darāriyyata l-nātijati bayyinatan bt-nafsibā lā taḥtaju ila ḥujjatin]} \). In a similar way, what is opposite to this is found to be distant from nature \( [ba'īdan 'aṃī l-ṭabā'] \), [and] in need, for the explication of the deductibility of what follows-as-conclusion from it, of a ‘doubly hard effort’, given that its deductibility hardly presents itself to the mind or of nature. The remaining two classes, though they are not evident in their deductibility [reading \( \text{bayyinay qiyāsīyyatibimā} \) for Forget’s \( \text{bayyinay qiyāsīyyatin mā} \)], are, among the syllogisms, close to nature: sound nature is on the verge of apprehending their deductibility before that [deducibility] is made evident, or this is on the verge of presenting itself to the mind as self-evident. Thus the rationale of their deductibility is closely paid attention to. For this reason they have come to be accepted, whereas the opposite of the first [figure, i.e., the fourth figure] has been discarded, and the acceptable predicative-conjunctive figures came to be three [in number]. From them [i.e., any of these figures] nothing is concluded from two particular [premises]; as for [the question of whether or not anything can be concluded] from two negatives, there is an investigation of this that we shall make clear for you.\(^{12}\)

The theme of naturalness is expanded upon by Averroes (d. 1198), who claims that the first, second, and third figures are natural, while the fourth is unnatural. This is because no natural thought process alights upon it, nor does it occur in the way people talk:

Let us examine which arrangement of them [i.e., terms] can correctly be said to be the figures that are natural to the cogitative faculty \( [\text{al-asbkāla l-ṭabī'īyyata lī-l-quantila l-fiškiyyati}] \) — I mean those [figures] upon which people alight by nature, and not by some artificial means [\( \text{alallāti yaqa‘u 'alayhā l-nāṣu bi-l-ṭabī‘ī lā bi-quwwatin sinā'īyyatin} \)]. For this is the syllogism which this art [i.e., logic] aims to present — I mean that [syllogism] the delineation of whose genera it [this art of logic] aims for and distinguishes the probative types in one genus or another from those which are not probative. In [the course of] this investigation it will become clear to you that the assertoric figures are three, and that the fourth figure, which Galen postulated, is not a natural figure \( [\text{lāyṣa bi-shbakīn ṭabī'īyin}] \) — it being [the one where] the middle term is the predicate of the major term and the subject of the minor term — because no natural thought-process uses it [i.e., the fourth figure] — I mean that it is not found in people's discussions; and even if it were, it would be a genus of the first figure and not a fourth [figure].\(^{13}\)


\(^{13}\) Averroes, \( \text{Talḥīṣ Kitāb al-Qiyās} \), ed. by M. Qāsim (Cairo, 1983), p. 78.9–16.
A little further on Averroes describes what he means by a ‘natural syllogism’: that which thought conveys without any deliberation (*wa-buwa llladbi ta‘it bibi l-fikratu min ghayri rawiyatin*; 82.13). In other words, it is primitive and intuitive. The connection with the first figure becomes clearer in the next paragraph, where Averroes says that the arrangement of terms in the first figure is self-evidently deductive (*qiyyāsiyyun*), and that it is found in us (or by us) by nature (*wa-annabu yi‘jadu lanā bi-l-ṭab‘*; 79.2–5).

(b) *Omit the perfect/imperfect distinction*

One exegetical reaction that seems to have been unique to Arabic logicians was simply to discard the distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms. To be precise, I do not mean that they chucked out the distinction between syllogisms whose conclusions follow necessarily from their premises in an obvious or self-evident way, and those that do not. On the contrary, that was felt to be a useful distinction. What they discarded was the labelling of the former as complete or perfect and of the latter as incomplete.

For example, al-Qazwīnī al-Ḵāṭībī (d. 1276) does not expressly mention the distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms in his *al-Risālat al-Shamsīyya*, the most influential logic handbook in the Arabic tradition. All that al-Ḵāṭībī says is that the conclusions of the first figure are self-evident (*bayyīnatun bi-dbāṭibā*). Like al-Damanhūrī’s comments on al-Akhḍarī’s *Sullam*, the commentaries on the *Shamsīyya* by al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī (d. 1365), al-Jurjānī (d. 1413), and al-Siyālkūṭī (d. 1657) all contain the claim that the first-figure syllogisms are the noblest (*al-ḥasrāf*) of the syllogisms. Unlike al-Damanhūrī, however, the commentators on the *Shamsīyya* do not make an explicit connection between the first-figure syllogisms’ nobility and their perfection. This is implied, however, since Barbara is taken to be noblest for what seem to be Neoplatonic intuitions that echo those of Philoponus: namely, that the affirmative is better than the negative (because existence is better than non-existence), and that the universal is better than the particular.

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15 Al-Rāzī and others, *Sharḥ al-Shamsīyya* (Cairo, 1905), p. 195. I have not been able to check this, but al-Damanhūrī may have been following the commentary by al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī on al-Urmawī’s (d. 1283) *Maṭāliʿ al-anwār* (entitled *Lauwāmiʿ al-asrār fī sharḥ Maṭāliʿ al-anwār*) in explicitly connecting syllogistic perfection and nobility in this way; I am grateful to Asad Ahmed for pointing this out to me. Apparently one aspect of the Realist-Nominalist debates among medieval Latin philosophers and logicians turned on...
In his own summary of logic and theology, the Tabdhīb al-maṭṭīq wa-l-kalām, al-Taftāzānī (d. 1389) also neglects to mention the distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms. As with al-Kāṭībī’s commentators, al-Taftāzānī expounded on the special qualities of the first figure — its nobility and so on — without mentioning its perfection.16 His commentators al-Khabīṣī (d. 1640) and al-Yazdī (d. 1606) explained that the first figure is closest to nature because first-figure syllogisms conclude intuitively (badhīhiyyu l-intāf), and do not therefore require any speculation (naẓar, i.e., enquiry or investigation), as is the case with the syllogisms of the second and third figures.17

Similarly, in his handbook of epistemology, metaphysics, and logic, the Kitāb sullam al-‘ulūm, the Indian Muslim thinker al-Bihārī (d. 1708) also declines to make an explicit distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms. Just as al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274) had claimed in his comments on Avicenna’s Isbārat, al-Bihārī says that the first figure is in a natural order (‘alā naẓmin ṭabī‘iyin). He also observes that some people feel that the syllogisms of the second figure conclude in a self-evident way just as those of the first figure do.18

We can speculate about some of the reasons why the distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms was so readily discarded in much of the Arabic tradition, even though it had been clung to with such tenacity by the Greek commentators. For one thing, the structure of most post-classical Arabic logical texts (at least those that were produced after the Shamsiyya of al-Qazwīnī al-Kāṭībī) was quite different from that of the Prior Analytics. Instead of dealing with assertoric syllogisms first and then moving on to modal syllogisms, the Arabic logicians tended to frontload their heavy discussions of modality, placing them in the context of the proposition, before the syllogism is even introduced. (In this respect they took the lead from De interpretatione, 11–13.) And when syllogisms finally do make an appearance, the assertoric and the modal are introduced together. For the Arabic logicians the major distinction between different types of syllogisms was of course that between the conjunctive (iḥṭirānī) and the hypothetical (iṣṭithnā‘ī), now that

the question of whether a certain type of syllogism (e.g., Barbara) or a certain type of proposition (e.g., ‘Socrates is a man’) exists in re, to the exclusion of other types. I am grateful to Stephen Menn for pointing this out to me.

16 Al-Taftāzānī, Tabdhīb al-maṭṭīq wa-l-kalām (Cairo, 1965), p. 73.5–6 (top).


hypothetical syllogisms had to be included in the discussion. Perhaps Aristotle’s distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms seemed to these Arabic logicians to be little more than a troublesome relic.

(c) Distinguish between ‘complete’ (tāmm) and ‘perfect’ (kāmil)

Finally, there was Averroes’s reaction, which seems to me to be unique to him. The Arabic phrase tāmm wa-kāmil was a commonly used hendiadys for teleios in some of the Arabic translations of Aristotle’s works, though not in the Prior Analytics itself. The double term tāmm kāmil was used by many Arabic authors, including Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209/10) in his summary of Avicenna’s Isbārāt:

The natural arrangement amongst syllogisms is for the minor to fall under the middle and the middle to fall under the major, for then it is known that the minor falls under the major. This is the first figure, it being the perfect syllogism [wa-buwa l-qiyāsu l-kāmilu l-tāmmi].

By contrast, Averroes distinguishes between tāmm and kāmil:

Some syllogisms are perfect and others, as we have said, are imperfect. The perfect [al-kāmil] is that which, with respect to the obviousness of whichever conclusion follows from it, requires the application of nothing other than itself, by means of which its concluding would be made clear. The imperfect is that which, in terms of the clarification of whatever conclusion follows from it, requires the application of some thing or things other than what is entailed from the premises that had been postulated. This is because every [valid] syllogism must be complete [tāmm]: it will not lack anything by which it is a syllogism. This is then divided into two types, of which one lacks something in virtue of which its being a syllogism is made clear (it being that which has been specified here by the name ‘imperfect’), and of which the other does not lack anything in virtue of which its being a syllogism is made clear (it being the ‘perfect’ [kāmil]).

In other words, Averroes makes a distinction between a syllogism’s being complete (tāmm) and a syllogism’s being perfect (kāmil). The quality of completeness extends to all valid syllogisms, which lack nothing for their conclusions to follow necessarily from their premises. These are then divided into two categories, perfect and imperfect, depending on whether or not that syllogism needs anything other than what is contained in it to make its necessitation of the conclusion obvious.


20 Averroes, Talkbiṣ Kitāb al-Qiyās, pp. 66.9–67.3.
As far as I know this is the first time *tāmm* and *kāmil* were distinguished one from the other in such a canonical way. As mentioned above, in the Arabic versions of Greek texts where the hendiadys is used as a translation of *teleios*, the two terms are almost always paired as *tāmm wa-kāmil*, with no distinction between them implied.

To sum up: the reactions of the Arabic logicians to the confusions created by Aristotle’s distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms can be categorized as follows:

a) To carry on the Greek exegetical tradition, endorsed by Peripatetic as well as Neoplatonic commentators, of viewing not just syllogisms in the first figure but all valid syllogisms as perfect or complete in some way, though differentiated by their possession of greater and lesser degrees of perfection; or, alternately, of avoiding an explicit embrace of the notion of degrees of perfection, while at the same time advancing a differentiation amongst the syllogisms in terms of degrees of naturalness.

b) To embrace Aristotle’s distinction between syllogisms whose conclusions follow necessarily from their premises in an immediately obvious way, and syllogisms that do not, while at the same time dispensing with the labels ‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect’ to describe that distinction.

c) To distinguish between two Arabic terms — *tāmm* and *kāmil* — that were normally taken to be synonymous, by holding now that *tāmm* signifies the general sense of completeness that all valid syllogisms possess, whereas *kāmil* signifies the special sense of perfection that all first-figure assertoric syllogisms possess.

### III. The Different Senses of Teleios

As I mentioned earlier, Patzig dismisses out of hand the notion that Aristotle might have allowed for degrees of syllogistic perfection or completeness:

For Aristotle, ‘perfection’ is not an attribute which a syllogism can have in greater or less degree, and consequently the self-evidence in which the perfection of an inference consists must not belong to it in greater or less degree; it is either present or absent.\(^{21}\)

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Patzig does not cite an Aristotelian passage to support this assertion, but instead refers to a 1930 article by H. Scholz.\textsuperscript{22} It is this assumption that I wish to undermine now. More specifically, I shall return to Aristotle to determine whether there is sufficient textual evidence to support Patzig’s intuition that perfection cannot obtain in a syllogism to greater and lesser degrees. (Admittedly, Patzig might have allowed that things other than syllogisms can, on Aristotle’s account, admit of degrees of perfection; however, I saw no evidence of such a qualification in the work being discussed.) Might the commentators in fact have chosen to focus on something that Patzig chose to ignore? First of all, it is not just the commentators but Aristotle himself who uses \textit{teleios} in its comparative and superlative forms. At \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, I.7.1097a25–b21, Aristotle claims that the more a thing is an end in itself and not sought or chosen for the sake of something else, the more \textit{teleios} that thing will be, and goes on to say that happiness is that which is most \textit{teleios} (as well as that which is most \textit{autarkês} — ‘independent’ or ‘self-sufficient’). The centrality of this discussion — the definition of happiness — within the Aristotelian corpus makes it clear that Aristotle was comfortable with the idea of degrees of \textit{teleiotês}. Which other relevant passages from the Aristotelian corpus might help us sort out the confusions that arise from his distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms?

One surprising characteristic of the modern discussions of perfect syllogisms — at least all those that I have read, which is not exhaustive, to be sure — is that none contains any reference to Aristotle’s extended discussion of the perfect, \textit{to teleion}, in Chapter 16 of \textit{Metaphysics}, Book V, his ‘philosophical lexicon’. Instead, most contemporary analyses of the distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms start from the assumption that the central problem is how \textit{sullogismos} should be construed, and whether it should be understood as the basis of an axiomatic system or of a natural deduction system. Only secondarily do they treat how the distinction between perfect and imperfect is to be construed.\textsuperscript{23}

Let us turn, then, to \textit{Metaphysics}, v.16:

The complete [\textit{to teleion}] is spoken of (A) in one way as that outside of which no part whatsoever can be found; for example a time-span: each thing’s complete


time-span consists of that outside of which no time at all can be found which is part of that time-span. Similar to this is (B) that to which some kind of excellence applies, and that which is spoken of in the sense of goodness, whenever it has a superiority in its genus; for example a doctor is complete and a piper is complete when they have no deficiency in their special kind of excellence. In this way ['complete'] is said — by means of transference [metapherontes] — of bad things. For we say ‘a complete liar’ and ‘a complete thief’ because we also apply the term ‘good’ to them, as when we say a good thief and a good liar. Every single one of these complete things and all their substances are then said to be complete when, with respect to their particular kind of excellence, no part of their natural magnitude is deficient. (C) Those things in which their worthwhile end exists are also said to be complete [eti bois buparkbei to telos, spoudaion on, tauta legetai teleid], for they are complete in virtue of possessing an end; and since an end is a kind of limit [bôst' epei to telos tôn eskbatôn ti estl] we transfer it to bad things, saying that a thing is completely ruined and completely destroyed when there is no deficiency in the destruction, but it is instead at the utmost degree of badness. For this reason passing away is also said, by way of transference, to be a completeness, because both are limits. Because the end, being what something is on account of, is a limit [telos de kai to bou beneka es- kbaton], those things which in virtue of themselves are said to be complete are thus spoken of in these ways: some in the sense that they have no deficiency or excess with respect to the good, nor is it possible to find anything beyond them with regard to the good; and other things more generally are called complete through there being nothing superior to them in each genus, nor is there anything [complete] beyond them. As for the other things [that are called complete but not in virtue of themselves], they are in respect of these, either by producing, or possessing, or fitting with one of these things [that are complete in virtue of themselves], or by being in another kind of relation to things which are said to be complete in the primary way.\(^2\)

In this passage Aristotle distinguishes between various senses of to teleion. He begins by saying that to teleion is that which has quantitative completeness or wholeness. That is, a thing is teleion when it has parts and when none of its parts is missing. Aristotle next claims that teleion applies to degrees of excellence in a particular field of endeavour: a doctor is complete when there is no degree of excellence in doctoring beyond what he has attained. Next, he says, things in respect of which a telos obtains may be said to be teleion. Here telos — ‘end’ — can be construed as referring to the idea of ‘limit’ (peras in Greek), or it can be construed as referring to the idea of ‘final cause’ (to bou beneka in Greek).

As mentioned above, modern commentators on the Prior Analytics, including Patzig, tend to ignore this passage. My guess is that if pressed, most would claim to have operated under the assumption that the first meaning offered by Aristotle here — quantitative wholeness, the meaning most easily translatable as ‘complete’ — is the one we should turn to when trying to figure out what he means by the distinction between sullogismos teleios and sullogismos atelēs. In my opinion, this is why several of them, most prominently Patzig, presupposed that the idea of degrees of perfection is counterintuitive, and that a thing can only be understood as being either teleios or not. This could be because in Prior Analytics, I.1, Aristotle seems to pass without interruption from his definition of syllogism in general to his definition of the perfect syllogism. Clearly, the syllogism in general is complete in the quantitative sense of not missing any part or term by means of which it concludes validly. But there is no definitive evidence that Aristotle did not have one of the other two senses of teleios in mind when he then moved on to discuss perfect syllogisms. (Indeed, the fact that all valid syllogisms are effectively held to be quantitatively complete, while only first-figure syllogisms are held to be teleioi, indicates that quantitative completeness is precisely not what Aristotle had in mind when he used the term teleios in the Prior Analytics.)

For example, the Greek and Arabic commentators may have been comfortable with the idea of degrees of perfection because they were thinking of teleios in the second sense articulated in Metaphysics, v.16: as superiority in a genus. Tony Street may not be a perfect logician, in the sense that it would be false to assert that there is no degree of excellence in doing logic beyond what he has attained; but he is doubtless a more perfect logician than I am, in the sense that of all the members of the genus ‘logician’, he is closer than I am to that upper limit of excellence.

What about the last sense of teleios, according to which to teleion is held to be that in which a telos obtains? In what sense might first-figure assertoric syllogisms be ‘endy’ or ‘telic’? First, we should construe telos here in the sense of final cause and not in the sense of limit. This is because Aristotle seems to be hinting at some kind of causal relation between perfect and imperfect syllogisms when he asserts over and over again that the second- and third-figure syllogisms are perfected on account of (dia) the first-figure syllogisms.

Second, we should turn for help to yet another Aristotelian distinction, one between two types of final cause: that in view of which and that for the benefit of which. Aristotle articulates the distinction in De anima, II.4, and Metaphysics, XII.7, and alludes to it in Physics, II.2, and Eudemian Ethics, VIII.3. He asserts that to hou heneka, ‘that for the sake of which’, may be spoken of in two ways: in the genitive, as to hou (or tinos), ‘that in view of which’; and in the dative, as to
bōi (or tini), ‘that for the benefit of which’. I admit that Aristotle’s distinction is very compressed and so underdetermined that it may not support the weight of exegesis I am about to pile on top of it.)

The contexts in which Aristotle introduces this distinction are quite different. The *Physics* passage in some respects represents the fullest outline of the distinction and is also the most relevant to our discussion, since in the other passages God is one of the two things being distinguished. In the *Physics* passage the distinction is meant to show that nature is similar to art in that the form acquired at the end of a process — *that in view of which* an artefact 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 that the artisan employs in creating the artefact is determined by the use which the ‘customer’ or ‘end user’ — *that for the benefit of which* — makes of the artefact, given its form. Thus an axe is made of iron and not clay, given the function — cutting — that the form ‘axe’ represents to the person who benefits from using it.

Admittedly, Aristotle does not draw this distinction in order to differentiate between two ways of being *teleios*, but rather in order to differentiate between two ways of serving as a final cause (to *bou beneka* or *telos*). Nevertheless, it seems obvious that it could only be in the *to bou* sense that first-figure syllogisms are *teleios* in the sense of telic or endy. On this reading, first-figure syllogisms, given their characteristic self-evident form, are those *in view of which* a logician performs logical operations on second- and third-figure syllogisms. The beneficiary here would be either the logician’s ‘customer’-student, to whom she must convey her knowledge in as self-evident a form as possible; or the ‘artisan’-logician herself, who in perfecting second- and third-figure syllogisms rearranges her own knowledge into a set of deductions whose necessity is self-evident and thus converts that knowledge into the kind of deep understanding which is impregnable to sophistic attack.

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25 *To men bou, to de bōi*: DA, ii.4.415b2, and *estί gar tini to bou beneka [kai] tinos*: *Metaph.*, xi.7.1072b2–3 (although the correct reading of this line is the subject of much controversy); cf. *Phys.*, ii.2.194a35–36 and *EE*, viii.3.1249b9–19. The most detailed treatment of Aristotle’s distinction between *to bou* and *to bōi* is K. Gaiser, ‘Das zweifache Telos bei Aristotes’, in *Naturphilosophie bei Aristoteles und Theophrast*, ed. by I. Düring (Heidelberg, 1969), pp. 97–113.

In any case, one advantage of this interpretation of *sullogismos teleios* is that the difference in self-evidentness amongst the moods of the first figure no longer seems so worrisome. To Patzig, the fact that a syllogism in Barbara exhibited transitivity to a greater degree than a syllogism in Ferio was evidence that Aristotle could not have thought that the transitivity of first-figure syllogisms underlay their perfection, given that no difference in degrees of perfection was allowable, at least on Patzig’s account. This is what led Patzig to surmise that it was the relatively limp quality of ‘seamlessness’ rather than the more causally robust quality of transitivity that lurked at the bottom of Aristotle’s notion of syllogistic perfection.

But with *teleios* understood as ‘telic’ or ‘endy’, there is no longer any competition between the moods of the first figure: in one sense, each will be equally ‘endy’. This is because the *teleiotês* or ‘endiness’ of Barbara is meaningful only with respect to the first moods of the second and third figures. After all, logical operations are performed on Darapti not in view of Barbara, but in view of Darii. The result is that Darii stands as a telos ‘in view of which’ logical operations are performed on Darapti just as deservedly as Barbara stands as a telos ‘in view of which’ logical operations are performed on Bocardo.27 Even if one were committed to the idea that first-figure syllogisms varied in their respective degrees of perfection, and that syllogisms in Barbara are more *teleios* than those in Darii, the reading of *teleios* as ‘endy’ or ‘telic’ would not be undermined. This is because when Aristotle does use *teleios* in the comparative and superlative forms in *EN*, 1.7, he has in mind this sense of *teleiotês* as ‘endedness’.28

Patzig recounts that according to Ammonius, Themistius was the only important commentator to have opposed the exegetical trend towards seeing valid syllogisms in all the figures as *teleios*, with some commentators going so far as to maintain that the first-figure syllogisms are more *teleios* than those of the second figure, and so on.29 I believe that Themistius’s reason for opposing this trend is that he had the telic or endy understanding of *teleios* in mind, an understanding

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27 On Aristotle’s own account, first-figure syllogisms are special in that they are autotelic or self-perfecting (*epitelountai [...] di’ bautôn; A.Pr., 29b6–8), i.e., they are causally self-sufficient, ends in themselves, and not means to further ends. And even though first-figure syllogisms can be reduced (*anagein*) to the other figures, perfecting (*teleioun*) is a one-way street culminating in the first figure; on this see G. Striker, ‘Perfection and Reduction in Aristotle’s Prior Analytics’, in *Rationality in Greek Thought*, ed. by M. Frede and G. Striker (Oxford, 1996), pp. 203–20.


that underscores the absolute difference between first-figure syllogisms and those of the second and third figures. My reading of Themistius’s position is supported by the fact that in contexts other than syllogistic, Themistius was the first major advocate of the ‘telic’ or ‘endy’ interpretation of teileios.30 It is also possible that Averroes understood kāmil in this way, as telic or endy, when he differentiated kāmil from tāmm, which clearly meant quantitatively complete. On this account Averroes used tāmm to signify the first sense of teleios (‘quantitatively complete’) articulated in *Metaphysics*, v.16, and kāmil for the third sense of teleios (‘telic’ or ‘endy’) articulated in *Metaphysics*, v.16.

**Conclusion**

With these entirely Aristotelian distinctions in mind — first, between *to teileion* as that which is quantitatively complete, *to teileion* as that which possesses superiority in a genus, and *to teileion* as that which is ‘endy’ or ‘telic’; and second, between a *telos* as ‘that in view of which’ and a *telos* as ‘that for the benefit of which’ — we will have put ourselves in a position to look with greater sympathy than Patzig exhibited at the Greek and Arabic commentators’ varied interpretations of Aristotle’s distinction between perfect and imperfect syllogisms.

To be sure, I am not saying that we should feel constrained by the commentators’ hermeneutical commitment to the systematic nature of Aristotle’s thought. Aristotle the problem-thinker demands less from us than Aristotle the system-thinker. And it may turn out to be the case that Aristotle’s use of teleios to describe a certain set of syllogisms is isolated and technical, just as Euclid’s use of teleios to describe a certain category of number is. But the commentators’ devotion to the systematic nature of Aristotle’s thought forced them to look through the corpus for tools to make opaque passages clearer. My sense is that the blindingly bright laser beam of attention that logicians have focused on the *Prior Analytics* over the past fifty years has cast the rest of the corpus in shadow, with the result that obvious sources of help in understanding certain aspects of the *Prior Analytics*, such as *Metaphysics* v.16, are downplayed or ignored. In this sense, the project of studying the long Greco-Arabic tradition of commentaries on Aristotle’s logic texts, though an end in itself, will have the beneficial side effect of helping us more completely understand Aristotle’s own logic.

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Although my main topic in this paper is Providence, or *al-‘ināyah*, it turns out to be necessary along the way to shed light on two other topics, namely, God’s knowledge of particulars on the one hand, and Avicenna’s theory of reference to particulars on the other. Of these three topics the last, that is, Avicenna’s theory of reference, will seem perhaps out of context. Therefore, I shall first say a few words about it before I set out to explain how the three main issues are related.1

What I mean by ‘reference to particulars’ here is simply the means used to pick out, or to refer to, that particular object about which something is being said or stated. Obviously, knowledge *about* particulars presupposes reference *to* particulars: if I claim to know something about someone, then given the assumption that my claim is rational I must be able to demonstrate that that person constitutes an object of knowledge for me in the first place — an exercise which I can do only if I can point at that person (ostentation, meaning a sensory manner of identifying him/her), or I can use his or her name intelligibly as a way of referring to him/her, either directly (proper name), or by extension (demonstrative pronoun); or I can use some description or the other by which I can properly show that he/she is the object of my discourse. In terms of the statement or sentence which contains my claim of knowledge, or which is itself my claim of knowledge, the subject-term

1 The set of subjects dealt with in this paper were also a matter of major concern among Christian philosophers. Compare in this regard William Ockham, *Predestination, God’s Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, trans. and ed. by M. M. Adams and N. Kretzmann (Indianapolis, 1983). Ockham comments on some of the same Aristotelian passages to which Avicenna refers.
in the sentence (a singular term — typically, a proper name or a demonstrative pronoun) will fulfil a function which is quite different from that which the predicate (a general term) fulfils. The subject-term indicates which object is being talked about (it picks it out or refers to it), while the predicate-term indicates what is being said about it.

Analogously to the way that knowledge about particulars presupposes reference to particulars, a theory about knowledge of particulars must also presuppose a theory about reference to particulars. This means that one cannot hope to explain adequately a theory of knowledge of particulars without presenting a theory of reference alongside it. In this respect Avicenna, on whom work has been done in the field of God’s knowledge of particulars, and more recently, in the field of the reference of singular terms, is still in need of research and explanation.²

I should now like to address the full range of the problem, or to show how Providence, knowledge, and reference are connected: one can introduce Avicenna’s Providence initially and tentatively by saying that it is a mechanism (a theory) by which he sets out to explain, and defend, the claim that God, from a perspective lying outside time and space, both causes and knows the minutest particular or detail in the universe, in parts and in sum, as an order in the best of possible worlds. His knowledge of these details, moreover, follows (from the human point of view) from His being their cause.

² For a discussion of the subject of God’s knowledge of particulars, see M. Marmura, ‘Some Aspects of Avicenna’s Knowledge of Particulars’, American Journal of Oriental Studies, 82 (1962), 299–312. For a more recent discussion see O. Leaman’s chapter ‘Can God Know Particulars?’, in his An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 108–20. As the reader will ascertain, my analysis does not totally correspond with that of Leaman’s, which may in some part explain why I do not share his scepticism. For a discussion of the subject of reference, see the recent article by S. Inati, ‘Ibn Sina on Single Expressions’, in Islamic Theology and Philosophy, ed. by M. Marmura (Albany, 1984), pp. 148–59. The editor of the present volume also kindly drew my attention to a very recent, and relevant, article by Peter Adamson — ‘On Knowledge of Particulars’ — delivered at a meeting of the Aristotelian Society, April 2005. Adamson argues, inter alia, that Avicenna’s position requires him to maintain that human beings, too, know particulars in a universal way. Adamson’s conclusion (and the premises which lead him to it) is at variance with my own interpretation concerning Avicenna’s theory of knowledge (where I clarify the distinction between logical entities, e.g., particulars, or ju‘z‘iqiqát, as objects of knowledge, and sensible objects, e.g., form and matter, or ajzā’, as objects in the external world). See my ‘Al-Aql Al-Qudsi: Avicenna’s Subjective Theory of Knowledge’, Studia Islamica, 69 (1989), 39–54, for a discussion of this issue. Notwithstanding, Adamson’s discussion (including the causal aspect of God’s knowledge) relates to the heart of the issues I take up in this paper.
Clearly, if this is how Avicenna views Providence, the connection with the themes of knowledge and reference becomes obvious: in order to answer the question, presupposed by the Providence claim, ‘How can God know anything about someone?’ Avicenna presents his theory of (God’s) knowledge. And in order to answer the question, presupposed by the knowledge claim, ‘How can God know of someone — and hence focus on him (or have him as) an object of knowledge?’ Avicenna presents his theory of reference. Hence, I suggest that Avicenna’s theory concerning God’s knowledge, and his other theory concerning reference, are in fact integral parts of the more general theory of Providence, or al-‘ināyah, which is a comprehensive theory about (a) the causal relationship between God and the universe; (b) the epistemic relationship (i.e., how God can be said to know particulars in this universe); and (c), the deontic relationship (whether what God causes to come into being is good).

A distinctive mark of Avicenna’s theory concerning God’s knowledge of particulars is that God, according to this theory, has such knowledge.3 Even so, Avicenna claims that God’s knowledge of particulars is universal — and is not therefore (like the particulars themselves) subject to change. The preparation of the groundwork for the support of this dual claim is first encountered, I think, in Avicenna’s logical works, where he addresses himself to Aristotle’s distinction between necessary and possible truths.4 To Aristotle, the distinction is fairly straightforward: some

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3 See Avicenna’s discussion in al-Shi‘ā/‘al-Ilāhiyyāt, ed. by F. Anawati and S. Zayed, rev. with an intro. by I. Madkour, 2 vols (Cairo, 1960); pp. 358–62, henceforth Metaphysics, cited by page and line number. He quotes (ibid., p. 359.13–14) a Qur’ānic passage (34.3) specifying God’s knowledge of the minutest atom in the universe. In this regard, it is interesting to note that in the course of his criticism of the philosophic school in Islam, al-Ghāzālī totally ignores Avicenna’s statements on the subject, and includes him along with al-Fārābī as sharing three doctrinal opinions, including the denial of God’s knowledge of particulars, which in conjunction form in this opinion sufficient grounds for calling these philosophers ‘infidels’—see the English translation of his Deliverance from Error in W. M. Watt’s The Faith And Practice of al-Ghazali (London, 1953; repr. 1970), p. 37.

4 Aristotle discusses the issue of contingency in his On Interpretation, 18a27–19b4. It is legitimate, though perhaps disputable, to say on the basis of this discussion that he believed some events in the universe to be contingent, especially those corresponding to statements whose subjects are singular terms. Also in his Categories, 4a1–4a9, Aristotle talks about singular statements (i.e., therefore, contingent statements) as also having truth-values that differ in accordance with changes that occur to the ‘existing conditions’ or ‘facts of the case’, which the statements describe. Aristotle returns to this issue in his Metaphysics, 1051b12–16, where he clearly stipulates that regarding contingent facts, the
statements are only possibly true, in the sense that they do not possess constant truth-values, while others are necessarily true, in the sense that they possess truth-values which neither change nor are they such that they can change. Statements about particulars are paradigms of possible statements, because such statements will change in truth-value in accordance with the changes that occur to the particulars. Statements about universals, on the other hand, are paradigms of necessary statements, because universals, unlike particulars, do not change.

This distinction assumes the guise of a dilemma when one comes to consider the concept of an omniscient Being: if God is attributed with knowledge of particulars (or with knowledge of statements whose truth is subject to change), then surely God must be assumed as possessing knowledge (or an epistemic state) which changes. For example, God would have to be supposed as knowing, first, that a statement is false, and then as knowing, at a later stage, that it is now true. This implies a change in God’s epistemic state. He can once be described as not yet knowing something, and He can then be described as now knowing it. Regardless of the potency of this, or any other analogous argument, it inevitably raises the question whether it is worthwhile to pay such an exorbitant price (the inconstancy of God’s knowledge) for the dubious ‘honour’ of attributing to Him knowledge of particulars. But while such a doubt can be entertained by a totally Aristotelian, or Neoplatonist philosopher, it is much harder for it to be entertained by a Moslem who believes, sincerely, the Qur’anic assertions that not even the minutest dust particle escapes from the province of God’s knowledge.

In his logical works (primarily, the Prior Analytics of the Shifā’), Avicenna (with his eyes on two major Aristotelian schools of commentators) works out a plan to interpret all statements as necessary statements (therefore with eternal, or unchanging truth values), whether these are about particulars or about universals.\(^5\) The same statements come to be false and true, whereas for necessary facts statements maintain their truth-values. Avicenna related this issue to God’s knowledge of particulars in his al-Shifā’ (Metaphysics. p. 359.3–5). However, already in that work in al-Qiyās, ed. by S. Zayed, revised and introduced by I. Madkour (Cairo, 1964) (henceforth On Syllogistics, cited by page and line number), p. 21.16, he begins his discussion on trying to show how all statements, whether singular or general, can be regarded as necessary, and therefore with eternal truth-values.

\(^5\) On Syllogistics, pp. 21–37. A complete analysis can be found in the author’s Harvard thesis, ‘The Foundations of Avicenna’s Philosophy’, presented in 1978, chap. 2. Avicenna distinguishes between statements about God that are necessarily and unconditionally true, and all the rest of the statements. The latter are regarded by him as necessarily though conditionally true. I call the conditions (shūrāt) involved ‘qualifiers’ (as opposed to quan-
According to the plan, a distinction is made between statements that are unconditionally necessarily true (like, for example, the statement that God exists), and statements that are conditionally, and therefore (i.e., insofar as that is the case) necessarily true (like, for example, the statement that Aristotle exists). Avicenna does not invoke here his metaphysical distinctions to show that the latter statement’s necessity, unlike the first’s, is causal rather than essential. He concentrates, rather, on making full use of the circumstances by virtue of which true statements are true. We may see his argument as consisting of several steps. All statements about particulars are included in the category of conditionally true statements. These are possibly (i.e., sometime) or necessarily (i.e., always) true if viewed in the context of the conditions by virtue of which they are held to be true. To abstract such statements from the circumstances or conditions by virtue of which they are held to be true is indeed to observe them either as being false, or even as being without truth-values whatsoever. However, to consider these statements ‘in-context’ is to consider them as possessing such values, ‘conferred’ upon them by virtue of those conditions or contexts, and determining therefore the temporal continuity of the value in question. Thus, a statement form like ‘The moon is at an eclipse’, considered abstractedly, is indeterminate — that is, it could be true or false depending on the circumstances (time, space, etc.) in which it is uttered, or to which it refers. However, if these circumstances are expressed in the statement in question, or are viewed as an integral part of it (see below), then this statement will perforce have to be viewed as a necessary statement — that is, as a statement which is always true qua those circumstances. The statement ‘The moon is at an eclipse at time T and position P’ is, if true at all, then true always: before, during, and after the eclipse. One manner of understanding Avicenna’s move here is to see him as separating between how lasting a predicate is said to be true of a subject (de re), and how lasting the value of truth is as this is attributed to the statement in question (de dicto), and then as claiming that, viewed in the latter manner, the statement’s value is eternal.

Observe that the circumstance or condition by virtue of which this statement is viewed as being necessarily (i.e., always) true is, in this respect, a spatio-temporal condition, or a circumstance having to do with a position in space at a specific time. But not all conditions are of this type, nor do all conditions render statements indifferently as necessary statements. Avicenna distinguishes between three main

tifiers, aswär), and I distinguish between three such groups of qualifiers in the Avicennian system, which I call ‘existential’, ‘conceptual’, and ‘temporal’. Avicenna himself refers to them as wujūdi, min baytib huwa kadhā, and fi zamān kadhā.
types of conditions on the basis of which all so-called possible statements can be viewed as being true. One can call these ‘existential’, ‘conceptual’, and ‘spatio-temporal’. All statements (except for ‘God exists’), Avicenna argues, require what one might call an ‘existential qualifier’ for them to be accepted as being true in the first place. For example, the statement that Zayd writes requires that Zayd be in existence for it to be true at all, and therefore the implicit qualifier here would be ‘so long as he exists’. However, such a qualifier will simply reveal or reflect the circumstance or condition by virtue of which the statement in question can be entertained as being true in the first place. But Zayd may stop writing, and the statement can therefore come to be false, even as Zayd continues to exist. To ‘pin’ an eternal truth-value to it requires, as in the case of the eclipse, to invoke its spatio-temporal circumstance. Similarly, a leaf may reflect light, but only for as long as the leaf has colour, for example the colour white. But the very leaf comes in time to lose its brilliance and to cease reflecting light. Thus it continues to exist as a leaf but no longer reflects light. Avicenna argues such a statement thus comes to be false only if viewed in abstraction of that other circumstance by virtue of which it was made true in the first place, namely, the affixation of colour to the organism in question. This affixation may be called ‘conceptual’ (to distinguish it from the existential and spatio-temporal conditions or qualifiers). Incorporate this conceptual qualifier into the statement and we come up with an eternal truth-value (the leaf reflects light so long as it is white).

Suffice it concerning these distinctions in this context to say that, according to Avicenna, if certain of these qualifiers are included, implicitly or explicitly, in the statement by virtue of which the statement is held to be true in the first place, then such statements can be regarded as necessary statements, or as statements that do not ever change in truth-value. While Avicenna does not address himself to God’s knowledge in this context, leaving the matter to be dealt with in his metaphysical works, even so the implication is clear, and the groundwork is already prepared: such statements with eternal truth-values can, after all, be held to be within the province of God’s eternal knowledge.

However, these ‘manoeuvres’ do not yet present the whole picture: it is one thing to reformulate sentences about particulars in such a way as to endow them with eternal truth-values and quite another to try to understand how they can be entertained by God as epistemic statements, or as statements which can be attributed to Him as a subject of knowledge. We here have two obstacles to overcome: the first obstacle has to do with whether God, like us, is bound in space-time with regard to His knowledge. The other requirement, we should remember, has to do with
how we could conceive a particular as an object of knowledge for the universal Mind of God in the first place.

So let us now turn our attention more specifically to an example that Avicenna mentions in his metaphysical works, where he obviously utilizes a distinction that he discusses at great length in his logical works, and which is a natural extension of his discussion of the above-mentioned qualifiers, or conditions.

Let us assume that we are talking about the moon’s eclipse and can present the precise spatial and temporal coordinates pertaining at a particular eclipse, expressed by the formula ‘*T*P’. According to our previous discussion this formula ‘*T*P’ is the qualifier or condition describing the circumstances by virtue of which our statement is held to be true, and if it is expressed in the relevant statement, then the statement will have to be regarded as a necessary one. Our previous example, rewritten, can be presented as: ‘The moon is at an Eclipse at *T*P’.

However, while it is one thing to claim that this statement now has only one unchanging truth-value, it is quite another to consider how it can be entertained by an agent as an object of knowledge. Briefly, one can stipulate the existence of two possibilities: either the agent, at point T in time, or from the viewpoint of *T*P in time-space, knows that the moon is at an eclipse; or, one can say that the agent knows that the moon is at an eclipse at *T*P. These two separate understandings can be expressed by the following statements:

S1: God, at *T*P, knows ‘the moon is at an eclipse’.

S2: God knows ‘the moon is at an eclipse at *T*P’.

The difference between S1 and S2 can be expressed in terms of the context in which to consider the qualifier (‘at *T*P’) as occurring: Avicenna’s explanation is that S1 presents it as occurring in the context of the subject-term, while S2 presents it as occurring in the context of the predicate term. Explaining it to ourselves in different terms, we may say S1 presents it as a modality qualifying the object of knowledge (de re), whereas S2 presents it as being part of that object of knowledge (de dicto).

In his logical works, and before even any reference to God is made at all, Avicenna discusses these two interpretations (of the qualifiers) as applying to any unspecified agent of knowledge and argues that qualifications such as these should not be thought of as being part of the subject; rather, they should be incorporated into the predicate-context.7

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6 *Metaphysics*, pp. 360.11–361.7.

7 This is obvious in Avicenna’s treatment (On *Syllogistics*, pp. 21.13–27.9). He even uses the example of the eclipse in this context (ibid., p. 39.1–7).
In his *Metaphysics*, Avicenna clearly draws on this distinction, using his preferred interpretation to describe how God can be said to know of a particular event, such as an eclipse. Of course the two sentences, or interpretations, allow for unchanging truth-values. However, S2, unlike S1, does not require God to be posited as lying within a spatio-temporal context. It posits Him as lying outside the scope, but as knowing an event in-context — one which is described by a necessary, or eternal, sentence.

It is a moot question whether Avicenna's logical discussions are a conscious prelude to his discussion on God's Knowledge. But they objectively constitute the foundations for this discussion.

I have tried to show that Avicenna's theory concerning God's knowledge of particulars is at its roots a theory about predicates, or more precisely about the logical form of predicates.

In contrast, Avicenna's theory of reference can be regarded as a theory about subject-terms. In a sense, the first theory poses some such question as this: assuming to begin with that God can be claimed to posit a particular object in the universe as an object of thought, then in what sense can any truth about this object be necessary, that is, not subject to change? This question was answered by claiming that these truths were conditioned on certain circumstances which, if included in the predicate part of the statements expressing them, would render those statements eternal. But now the more basic question can be asked: How can God be assumed or claimed to posit a particular object in the universe as an object of thought in the first place? How can God be claimed to know that a particular predicate such as, for example, 'drinks hemlock at \( T^*P \)', is true of Socrates in particular — given, that is, that to posit God as knowing Socrates in the same manner by which we know him (i.e., by sense and the use of a proper name) is to posit a changing epistemic state which God possesses, analogous to the state of knowledge we possess? Once again, it seems to me that Avicenna develops a clever theory (which I call his 'theory of reference') to address and solve this particular problem. In my view, this theory anticipates, in substance, two related theories advanced by Bertrand Russell at the beginning of the (last) century. Russell's first theory is his distinction between knowledge-by-acquaintance and knowledge-by-description (a knowledge theory). His second theory is his famous 'Theory of Descriptions' (a reference theory).

Avicenna too seems to distinguish between knowledge of an individual that is founded on sight and sense (\( bi'l-mushāhada wa-l-ḥiss \)), and knowledge of an individual 'in a universal sense', by means of a description which is uniquely true
of him. Knowledge that God possesses about individuals, though eternal, cannot be claimed to be founded on His knowledge of those individuals, because this knowledge is founded on the basis of sight and sense. To begin with, knowledge that is based on such a means of reference can only be supposed to obtain when the object of predication comes to exist in time. But in this case such knowledge will also have to be supposed as coming to exist in time.

Avicenna’s distinction can first be traced in his apparently trite distinction between singular and general utterances. There he argues that a general term, however unique it contrives to be, nevertheless remains such that it is capable of being true of more than just the object of which it happens to be true — that, in other words, it is a universal. He contrasts this with a singular term that must be assumed and understood as having a meaning (or sense) which cannot be partaken of except by one individual.

The implication of this classical explanation, of course, is that a description is a universal term. But the question that can now be asked is whether certain changes can be introduced to this universal term such that it can begin to perform a referring function analogous to that performed by proper names/demonstrative pronouns or direct ostention. If a way can be found such that a description can both remain universal and perform such a referring function, then it will be possible to explain God’s knowledge of particulars in accordance with it, rather than in accordance with the method normally associated with such knowledge about particulars, namely, through sight and sense. Thus God’s knowledge of particulars, in other words, as well as his knowledge about them, can be assumed to remain universal.

I submit that Avicenna makes the required changes in his Metaphysics by stipulating two separate but inter-related claims: first the claim that there is at least one eclipse, for example, of which a particular description is true. The second claim is that there is at most just one eclipse of which that description is true. Thus Avicenna says that one first knows a particular eclipse by knowing its universal description (such as being the object or event of which such and such specific circumstances are true); and one also knows, in addition and separately (li-ḥijjatin mā) that the eclipse cannot but be one, or that it happens to be only one (dhālika’l-kusūf lā yakūnū illā wāhidan bi-‘aynīhī). Avicenna specifically

8 See Avicenna’s al-Shifā‘/al-Madkhal, ed. by F. Anawati and others (Cairo, 1952) (henceforth, Introduction), pp. 26–27. Avicenna uses such general terms as ‘the sun’, ‘the moon’, etc., which only happen to refer to one object. Later (Introduction, p. 70) Avicenna introduces his conditions for allowing a universal term to pick out only one object; see below.
adds that this second item of knowledge does not negate the description’s universality.\footnote{Metaphysics, pp. 360–61.} Avicenna’s claim, then, would seem to be that knowing a particular description to be uniquely true of an object is not inconsistent with that description being a universal. This claim, made in the context of God’s knowledge of particulars, obviously enables the ascription to God of such knowledge as this is not founded on ‘sight and sense’.

Avicenna’s remarkable distinction implies a problem (recall Russell’s distinction between two types of knowledge) of which he was well aware. Continuing his discussion of unique reference ‘in universal way’ Avicenna adds that

in spite of all this, it may not be possible for you to judge, concerning this (thing) now, whether that eclipse exists or not, unless you know the particulars of movement through sense observation.\footnote{Metaphysics, p. 361.1–3. All translations are mine.}

This seems to be saying that while you may know of a particular by a description, it does not follow to say that you can identify that particular empirically. Thus, let us say that I refer to Socrates by the definite description ‘the philosopher who drank hemlock’, and I say about him that he was a source of irritation to the Athenian establishment. My statement ‘the philosopher who drank hemlock was a source of irritation to the Athenian establishment’ referring, as it does, to Socrates, is truth-functionally equivalent to the statement ‘Socrates was a source of irritation to the Athenian establishment’. However, it is not epistemically identical with it: while I may know \textit{the first statement} to be true, I may not for that reason be said to know that it is about \textit{this particular person}, who is Socrates, unless I can be ascribed with knowledge of particulars through the means of sight and sense. If God cannot be ascribed with this knowledge through such means, and can only be ascribed with it through the means of universal but definite descriptions, then His knowledge of particulars will be epistemically distinct from a human being’s knowledge of those particulars.

In summary, then, Avicenna develops two inter-related theories, one of knowledge of particulars (reference), and one of knowledge about particulars, as part of a more general theory which attempts to explain the nature of God’s knowledge of the sublunary world. However, the question remains, ‘How does God come to have any such knowledge in the first place?’ This is the question to which al-‘ināyab addresses itself, although it addresses itself to much more.
It is now possible to address the general question of *al-ʾināyab*. To do this I shall start with a quotation from Avicenna that I shall draw upon for discussion in this final section of my article:11

It behooves us, now that we have covered this length [in our investigations] to determine what *al-ʾināyab* means. It has undoubtedly become clear to you from what we have previously explained that lofty causes cannot do what they do for our own sake, or be in general such as to be concerned with something, or feel called upon to do something, or acquire a preference to do something. Yet you cannot deny the strange traces [of such causes] in the formation of the universe, of the parts of the skies, animals and plants — all of which do not come about by accident but require a certain plan.

Thus you should know that *al-ʾināyab* is the being of the First [cause] knowledgeable in Himself of what existence is like in the order of goodness; a cause in Himself of goodness and perfection insofar as this is possible; and content with it in the manner mentioned. Thus He intellects the order of goodness in the manner in which this is most possible; and what He intellects emanates from Him as order and as goodness, in the best possible manner in which He intellects it, such emanation being most perfectly directed to order, in so far as this is possible. This is the meaning of *al-ʾināyab*.

The problem of God’s epistemic as well as ‘mechanical’ relationship with the world (what He knows of it, and what He does with it) is perhaps as old as Aristotle, who argues that the Prime Mover cannot think but of Itself (and cannot but think of Itself!), thereby causing motion12. Neoplatonically developed, this statement comes to describe a series of superlunary processes involving cosmic souls, intellects and bodies, ultimately leading to the formation of the sublunary world. This process is described in terms of bodies that move both naturally and by volition. This comprehensive picture, however, still leaves unsolved the basic Aristotelian issue of whether to assume or posit that there exist lofty cosmic agents which intend to bring about the existence of something which is ontically inferior to themselves. Some Neoplatonic theories apparently addressed this issue by ascribing a form of such intentions to these causes. According to one such theory that Avicenna singles out for criticism, it is claimed that while motion in itself is motivated or caused by the desire of the souls/intellects of planetary bodies to emulate that which is ontically superior to themselves, the modalities of such


12 See Aristotle’s comments in his metaphysical works (1074b) on the Prime Mover’s object of knowledge being himself. For a fuller discussion of the relation between movable versus unmovable substances, see Aristotle, 1071b2–1073a12.
motions are actually motivated or caused by a secondary desire — to manipulate sublunary behaviour and processes.

Avicenna rejects this theory, partly because he rejects the possibility of an immaterial intellect having particular preferences and desires (whether primary or secondary), and partly because he believes that such a theory would entail the paradox of an ontically superior being fulfilling itself through the agency of an inferior being.

Avicenna’s own theory, which he presents as a way out, envisages two distinct processes, as well as two kinds of causality. While something A may not intend to cause something else B, even so it may, in the process of intending to cause a third object C bring about B, even necessarily. Thus while God is not motivated by the desire to bring the world into existence, even so the world is necessarily brought into existence through an activity which God is motivated to do, namely, self-contemplation. This activity, because it is directed at Himself, does not therefore denigrate from His value. In this sense, God acts as a First Cause. Being such a cause, God intellects several series — perhaps even an infinite series — of causal chains leading to possible particular events, including one such series that is most in accordance with order and goodness. Thus Avicenna says that God knows what existence is like in the manner of order and goodness. He also says that God knows what is the closest to absolute goodness out of two possible matters.

From the world’s point of view, the immediate cause of the movement of planetary bodies is explained, in each one of those bodies, in terms of the soul’s attempt to emulate the intellect associated with that body. At one point Avicenna remarks.

13 For a discussion of these theories, see Metaphysics, pp. 393–401.

14 There are, besides the above-quoted passage on al-‘ināyab, several other passages in Metaphysics where Avicenna states his belief that (a) God knows both what is and what is possible (e.g., p. 364.13–14); (b) God knows the order of goodness in existence (e.g., p. 363.10 and p. 403.4–5); and (c) God knows that what ought to be — i.e., the order of goodness — will follow upon his knowledge of it (p. 363.12–13 and p. 402.17). See also Metaphysics, p. 437.9–12. Avicenna’s conception of this ‘order of goodness’ involves, it appears, the intellection of the entirety of the causal relations that obtain between particulars (ibid., p. 360.1–3 and p. 362.4–11). Even if an ordinary man were to know all events on heaven and earth, and to know their nature, he also would then understand the manner of all that will happen in the future (p. 440.2–4) — note in this respect that this intellectual facility is not what Avicenna endows the prophetic imaginative faculty with.

15 Metaphysics, p. 390.5–8.
If you consider the condition of natural bodies in their natural desires to be in fact somewhere, you would not be surprised (to learn) that a body desires to be in one position rather than another of the positions that it is possible for it to be in, or desires to be in the most perfect (position) qua being in motion.

The modality of motion is explained in terms of immediate causes, as the physical effect of the souls’ attempts to emulate what is better, and, ultimately, to emulate what is best. It is important in this context to emphasize that in thus presenting moral comparisons in connection with the modality of motion different logical possibilities of motion are presupposed. In addition, if this is the case with planetary souls, it is presumably also the case with human souls. More precisely, the human soul is the immediate cause of how a human being acts, although God is the First Cause of the fact that a human being acts. Thus different logical or physical possibilities exist for motions or acts which present different ethical or moral options for the immediate agent, whether a planetary or a human soul. The soul makes a choice of how to act, namely, in accordance with the order of goodness.  

To return now to the beginning and to address some basics: existence flows from God as a First Cause. There are logically different manners of existence. Of these logically different manners of existence, one manner of existence is that of order and goodness. The immediate causes of the actual manner of existence are human and planetary souls. In their desire to be better, these souls choose a course of action from amongst other naturally or logically possible courses. Therefore, their choice is consistent with the order of goodness.

Given all this, now the main question can be asked: if God is not the immediate cause of what happens, and what happens is one of different logically or naturally possible courses of action, then how can God know what course of action, or what particular order in the universe, will or does in fact obtain? This is the question that al-‘ināyah, I submit, addresses itself to, in the following manner.

The first element is God’s knowledge of the various possible courses of action (for example, that Socrates can choose to drink hemlock or not).

The second element is God’s knowledge of what course of action is best from amongst the various logical and natural possibilities (for example, that Socrates’ drinking hemlock is closer to the order of goodness).

The third element, finally, is God’s knowledge that the best course of action will in fact obtain (for example, that Socrates will do what is best).

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16 *Metaphysics*, p. 387.14–17, where he specifically talks about natural as well as volitional motions.
In conjunction, these three epistemic elements are equivalent to the claim that God knows future truths about particulars (i.e., so-called ‘future contingents’ — that God knows, for example, that Socrates will drink hemlock).\textsuperscript{17}

In sum: God must first be credited with the ability to have a particular (such as Socrates) as his object of knowledge. This is facilitated in Avicenna’s system by what I called ‘Avicenna’s theory of reference’, according to which definite but universal descriptions are used in order to stand in for direct ostension and for referential means that are rooted in such ostension, such as, paradigmatically, proper names. Secondly, God must be credited with having knowledge about such objects. This is facilitated in Avicenna’s system by his theory of knowledge of particulars, according to which (a) statements about particulars are presented in such a way as to be ascribable with eternal (i.e., necessary) truth-values, and (b) spatio-temporal conditions that allow such fixed truth-values are not envisaged as restricting the agent of knowledge, or as in any way enveloping Him. Instead, such conditions are presented as being part of the statement itself as an object of knowledge. Finally God’s involvement in the creation and therefore knowledge of particular facts is facilitated by Avicenna’s theory of \textit{al-‘ināyab}. This is a system of indirect involvement akin (logically) to the system describing God’s knowledge of particulars. According to it, order and goodness flow from God’s self-contemplation, and God knows what in particular will occur because, conjunctively, He knows (a) what order and goodness are, (b) what all the natural and logical possibilities are, and (c) that the best flow of events (i.e., the order of goodness itself) will obtain.

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\textsuperscript{17} A problem may be raised at this point, which is the distinction Avicenna makes between the moon, for example of which there only happens to be one, and Man, of whom there are many — or, in other words, between a species that is ‘scattered’ (\textit{muntashbir}) among various individuals and a species that is confined to one individual. It may be argued that Avicenna does not allow for God’s intellection of Socrates, for example though he does allow for God’s intellection of an eclipse, or a planet (see \textit{Metaphysics}, p. 359.7–9). However, I believe that what Avicenna is trying to do in these passages is to distinguish between two kinds of species and not between a species and an individual. In my interpretation, God’s intellection of Socrates would be possible in so far as Socrates is not ‘scattered’ among units which constitute him. On the other hand, a concept or a meaning that cannot be understood except in so far as it related, e.g., predicatively, of various units or individuals, may be argued by Avicenna as being a purely logical, i.e., human construct, and can only be understood in reference to those units or individuals.
IS MEDICINE AN ‘ILM? A PRELIMINARY NOTE ON QUṬB AL-DĪN AL-SHĪRĀZĪ’S AL-TUHFA AL-SAʿDIYYA (MS ŞEHID ‘ALI PEŠA 2047)

Leigh N. Chipman

This paper presents my first steps in a project aiming at a critical edition of selections from one of the foremost commentaries on Ibn Sinā’s al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī’s al-Tuhfa al-saʿdiyya. After a transcription and translation of the first page (two lemmas) of the commentary proper, I will discuss the issues arising from the commentary and suggest directions for further research.

Al-Tuhfa al-saʿdiyya, ‘the gift to Saʿd’, dedicated to Saʿd al-Dīn al-Sāwūjī, vizier to the Īl-khān Maḥmūd Ghāzān (r. 695–703/1295–1304), is not as well-known as Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī’s philosophical and astronomical writings.1 Yet its impressive bulk — just under a million words — and the time he devoted to composing it (three versions composed over the course of fifty-five years), can allow it to claim to be his masterwork. This masterwork stands within the tradition of satellite literature of the Qānūn: commentaries, abridgments, and supercommentaries, and according to

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Quṭb al-Dīn himself, summarized all the important studies on the *kulliyāt* (general principles), Book I of the *Qānūn*: those of Ibn al-Nafīs, Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Sāmīrī, Ibn al-Quff, Hībatallāh Ibn Jumayʿ, Ibn al-Tılmīd, and ʿAbd al-ʿLāṭīf al-Bağhdādī. Quṭb al-Dīn began work on this commentary as quite a young man, but his major breakthrough came in 681/1282, when he visited Egypt on a diplomatic mission, and came across several *Qānūn* commentaries in libraries there. The first edition of his own commentary, known as *Sharḥ kulliyāt al-qānūn*, was completed in 682/1283, the second in 694/1294–95, and the third and final edition, now called *al-Tuhfā al-saʿdiyya*, was completed in 710/1310, ten weeks before Quṭb al-Dīn’s death in Ramaḍān 710/February 1311.

**Text and Translation**

The text that follows is based on the Istanbul manuscript, MS Şehid ‘Ali Peşa 2047, dated to 1317. The earliest manuscript at my disposal, MS Khalili 776 (dated 1305), is missing several folios between what are now numbered folios 5b and 6a, and this passage does not appear there. Variant readings according to MS Ayasofya 3649 (undated, but apparently early):

2 This list is taken from Quṭb al-Dīn’s autobiography that appears in the introduction to the *Tuhfā*, as cited by A. Z. Iskander, *A Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts on Medicine and Science in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library* (London, 1967), p. 45. For information about these authors and their commentaries, see ibid., notes.


4 I would like to thank the following people for providing me with electronic copies of the manuscripts used for this paper: John Walbridge of Indiana University, Süleymaniye, MS Şehid ‘Ali Peşa 2047; Tzvi Langermann of Bar-Ilan University, Süleymaniye, MS Ayasofya 3649; Nahla Nasser of the Nour Foundation, London, MS Khalili 776.

5 For a description of this manuscript, see E. Ihsanoğlu and others, *Catalogue of Islamic Medical Manuscripts (in Arabic, Turkish and Persian) in the Libraries of Turkey* (Istanbul, 1984), p. 69.


7 For a description of this manuscript, see E. Ihsanoğlu and others, *Catalogue of Islamic Medical Manuscripts*, p. 70.
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
The first chapter of the first subsection of the first section (fann) of the first book of the Qāmūn, on the definition of medicine. A definition is the compound expression explaining the meaning of the thing in a way that is both limiting and comprehensive. Linguistically, it is taken from the ‘border’, that is a barrier, because a definition prevents a thing from entering the thing defined and prevents a thing from leaving it. Tibb in the language means enchantment and from it is ‘the man has been enchanted’ [tubba al-rajul] and then he is enchanted [maṭbaḥ]; and repair, and from it is ‘I have repaired the water-skin’ [tababtu al-siqā]; and habit, thus it is said ‘this is not in my tibb, meaning ‘my habit’; and from it the poet’s verses:16 ‘And not that our habit [tibbun] was cowardice, but / Our desires and the rule of others’; and art and skill, so that any skilled craftsman is called tabib — al-Marrāʾ17 said: The she-camel will obey the reins tied to the side of her throat / Through the nose-ring, no matter the gentleness of her skilled [rider] tabībubā; and technically it [= the meaning] has moved to a theoretical craft from

11 MS Ayasofya 3649: افتخار: لَه في الام
12 MS Ayasofya 3649, added here above the line: وليس فليس
13 MS Ayasofya 3649, added here in the margin: وليس فليس
14 Missing from MS Ayasofya 3649: اذا العرف ليس بما غير الطب:
15 In the margin here, missing from MS Ayasofya 3649: اذا العرف ليس بما غير الطب:
which is known how to preserve the health of the human body and how to return it when it has ceased. [This change happened] either because of its requirement of complete skill or because of its necessity, like habit or nature, to the physician, or because of its improving the body, or because some of the treatments are miracles, just like enchantment. Because the Shaykh [Ibn Sinā] said in the *Shifāʾ* that since the thing's essence derives from the four causes, it is necessary to mention them in the definition of the thing, so that the definition will be complete, as is said in the definition of the sword, that it is a professional tool made of iron of a certain length and breadth with sharpened edges for cutting the organs of animals in killing, it was said: Medicine is known through them [i.e., the four definitions above].

[Ibn Sinā] — may Allah have mercy upon him — said: ‘I say that medicine is a science’ — this is the genus that implies the sciences within it. And if it is said that medicine is mostly a matter of opinion [ẓanī], so how can it be called a science, do not answer as al-Qurashi answered, which is that ‘the intention in science is to theoretical art, and this does not preclude its problems being a matter of opinion, since there is no indication of a science in them except in an interpretation that we will mention’. Rather, answer that most of it is prevented from being a matter of opinion, because the general principles [kulliyāt] mentioned in its two parts are matters that are known and proven, some through the sense[s] [al-hāṣ] and evidence/observation [al-iʿyān] and some through categorical propositions [al-jazm] and demonstration [al-burbān], and therefore the sheik Abū Naṣr — may God be pleased with him — said that it is indeed an active art from true foundations [innabā šināʿa fāʿila ‘an mabādiʿ šādīqā]. Certainly opinion may exist in the knowledge of people’s particular conditions [abuwal juzʿiyyā], such as determining treatment for the injury of illness, since there is no path in that to certitude, for each temperament [mizzāj] has its own special balance [iʿtidāl baṣṣ], so that the quantity [qadr] of someone’s leaving it [i.e., leaving his balance, thereby becoming ill] and the quantity of the strength of the drug and its weakness are of what cannot be known except by estimation [takhmīn], but this is not of medicine but rather derives from it, and what derives from something is different from it [= from the thing itself; bāḏāh layṣa min al-ṭibb bal buwwa mustafād minбу wa-l-mustafād min al-shayʿ ghayribu]. Thus what is supposedly true [al-maẓnūn] is not of medicine and what is of medicine is not what is supposedly true [in other words, medicine is not all ẓanī]. Even it were granted [sullima] that some of what is ‘of medicine’ is opinion, yet this will not prevent it being called a science in a general

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19 The distinction between ‘being of’ a thing (minbu) and being ‘derived from’ it (mustafād minbu) is clearly of great importance to Qūṭb al-Dīn. Further study is required to elucidate the precise implications of each.
way, as it is said the science of the stars [i.e., astrology]20 and of dream interpretation, although most of the two of them are matters of opinion. And it is cited from him [wa-mā ārida ‘alayhī]21 also that he made science a genus for medicine, despite it not being a science because it is not theoretical. Otherwise [if it were a true science], it would have a particular subject [of study], but this cannot be so, since the human body [which we would expect to be the subject of medicine] is already the subject of natural science, and it is forbidden that one thing should be the object of two arts [ṣinā’atayn]. And indeed it would have a final end [gbēya], but that cannot be the achievement of health, since that is achieved through nature without having need of science [ifqār lil-‘ilm], for it is achieved by non-Arab nations who have no physician. Nor can it be practical, for then it would achieve its purpose, but we have already shown that it can have no purpose or final end, wa-laysa fa-laysa.22 And it achieves what Abū l-Faraj b. al-Ṭayyib mentioned in his commentary on Kitāb al-firaq,23 answering [mardād] that there is no barrier to a single thing being the object of two arts from two aspects, and because the achievement of health through nature does not prevent it being achieved through art, and often nature is insufficient for this and art assists it, and the unexpectedness [ṭuru’) of a situation preventing attainment [bulūgh] of the target does not contest [lā yaqduḥ] medicine’s being able to attain [muḥallaghan] the target, just as the unexpectedness of a situation preventing the protection of a ship like the blowing of hurricanes does not contest that art’s being able to preserve it. Thus it is said: medicine is a science, not a cognitive knowledge [maʿrifa],24 because its general principles are known, and because the theoretical arts are called sciences [ʿulūm], not cognitive knowledges [maʿārif].

20 This, of course, begs the question of whether astrology should indeed be considered a science. For a discussion of the epistemological status of astrology in medieval philosophy see Y. Tzvi Langermann, ‘Maimonides’ Repudiation of Astrology’, Maimonidean Studies, 2 (1992), 123–58, especially p. 131 n. 22, and pp. 134–37.

21 It is not clear who is being cited here. The last authority mentioned was al-Fārābī, but so far I have been unable to find a statement of his that corresponds to this wording. On the contrary, in his Risāla fi l-ṭibb (see previous note), he consistently speaks of ṣinā’at al-ṭibb. It is perhaps more likely that Qūṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī is referring to an unknown interpreter or critic of Ibn Sīnā who claimed that Ibn Sīnā uses ʿilm here as a genus for science, thus watering down the claim that medicine is science.

22 That is, none of the conditions needed for it to be a science can be met — laysa — hence it is not a science — fa-laysa.

23 A manuscript of this work is held at Manisa. See F. Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, 13 vols (Leiden, 1967–2000), iii, 80; E. Ihsanoğlu and others, Catalogue of Islamic Medical Manuscripts, p. 167.

24 It is difficult to find a one-word translation for maʿrifa that will express its difference from ʿilm as a form of knowledge outside a mystical/religious context, where ‘gnosis’ or ‘acquaintance’ seem serviceable. Lane defines al-maʿrifa as ‘the perceiving a thing by
Discussion

What are the questions that bother Quṭb al-Dīn in this section? The issues that seem to arise from the concise text of the Qānūn and to require expansion in the commentary are these: What is a definition? What is a science (ʿilm)? Why is medicine a science? These are indeed very basic problems, the solutions to which will influence the following close to half a million words of the Tuhfa.

Quṭb al-Dīn begins and ends his commentary on the first chapter-heading, fī ḥadd al-ʿilm, by explaining what a definition is. He begins by positing the etymology of the word ḥadd, in terms very similar to those of a present-day student of falsafa:

Ḥadd, the word used in Arabic for ‘definition’ means edge, boundary, limit, border. Thus in terms of definitions it gives the limits or boundaries of the meanings of words. It gives a limit or edge to words in the sense that a definition shows how far the meaning of a word extends and where it ends.²⁵

Al-Shīrāzī goes on to define the meanings of ʿṭibb in Arabic. He gives a list quite similar to that appearing in the near-contemporary dictionary Lisān al-ʿarab,²⁶ and even gives examples using the same lines of poetry. The order in which the various meanings appear is different in the two sources. It seems to me that the order is not random in either case, and forms a meaningful ranking of the possible interpretations of ʿṭibb. The ranking of the meanings of ʿṭibb according to Lisān al-ʿarab and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī are compared in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Rank in Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī</th>
<th>Rank in Lisān al-ʿarab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enchantment (sihr)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair, correction (īslāḥ)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habit (ʿāda)</td>
<td>3 (quotes Farwa)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

reflection and by consideration of the effect thereof [on the mind or sense] so that it has a more special meaning than al-ʿilm’ (E. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, 8 vols (London, 1860-90), s.v. ‘-r-f’) while the entry “ʿIlm” in EI, iii, 1133–34, considers maʿrifā to be knowledge acquired through reflection or experience which presupposes a former ignorance.


²⁶ Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿarab, s.v. ‘-b-b’, i, 554.
While similar, the lists are not identical, and it is particularly striking that the same lines of poetry are used to exemplify different usages by each author: Farwa’s line is used to explain the meaning ‘habit’ by Qūṭb al-Dīn and ‘desire’ by Lisān al-‘arab, so that either the tribe has no habit of cowardice or no desire for it. Similarly, al-Marrār’s line is used to explain ‘art/skill’ and ‘gentleness’ respectively, thus either the rider’s skill or his gentleness in controlling his she-camel are irrelevant if there is a nose-ring.

Lisān al-‘arab adduces poetry to explain two meanings of ṭībb that do not appear in the Tuhfā: gentleness and desire. These less common meanings of ṭībb are perhaps ignored by Qūṭb al-Dīn because they are not necessary, or even superfluous, to his definition by way of the four causes.

While Lisān al-‘arab starts with the most common meaning of ṭībb as medicine, ‘the treatment of the body and the soul’,27 al-Shirāzī reaches this meaning (which he defines somewhat differently, as the preservation of bodily health and its return when absent)28 at the end of four other, perhaps earlier, meanings of the term. Al-Shirāzī suggests that ṭībb is a technical term used by physicians, and its medical meaning derives from the previous four. With his quotation from Ibn Sinā’s Shifa’, he seems to make these four meanings parallel to the Aristotelian four causes, although it is not quite clear which meaning is parallel to which cause. Repair would presumably be the final cause, and the physician’s skill the efficient cause, but it is hard to know what to make of ‘habit’ and ‘enchantment’.

Why is medicine a science, according to Qūṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī? Usually, medicine was barely admitted to the company of sciences. In its currently known version, al-Fārābī’s Ilṣa’t al-‘ulūm, the most famous and influential classification of the sciences, makes no reference to medicine at all.29 The attitude to medicine

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27 Lisān al-‘arab, 1, 553: ilāj al-jism wa-l-nafs.

28 This is Ibn Sinā’s definition, forming the next clause of the opening sentence of the Qāmūn and the next few lemmas of the Tuhfā.

29 According to O. Baker, Classification of Knowledge in Islam: A Study in Islamic Philosophies of Science (Cambridge, 1998), chap. 1, especially pp. 21–24, al-Fārābī takes very
could be highly ambiguous, as in the case of al-Ghazālī: while admitting medicine’s theoretical and practical importance — not only is it one of the natural sciences, it is a fard kifāya, that is, knowledge of medicine is incumbent upon the Islamic community although not upon the individual Muslim — and castigating his contemporaries’ neglect of medicine, at the same time al-Ghazālī insists that medicine pertains only to the body and has no religious or spiritual significance. He thus implies that medicine is of only secondary importance, in comparison with the religious sciences.

Medicine was not merely divided into theoretical and practical sides; in its very nature it seemed to partake both of the sciences and the crafts, due to its reliance on experience (tajriba), which could not be demonstrated rigorously: there was serious debate as to whether it was not merely an art. Ibn Khaldūn discusses medicine both in Chapter 5 of the Muqaddima, which deals with various ways of making a living, and in Chapter 6, which deals with the sciences:

Section 28 [of Chapter 5] The craft of medicine. The craft of medicine is needed in settled areas and cities but not in the desert. This craft is necessary in towns and cities because of its recognized usefulness. Its fruit is the preservation of health among those who are healthy, and the repulsion of illness among those who are ill, with the help of medical treatment until they are cured of their illnesses. […]

little interest in medicine: he wrote extensively on almost all branches of medieval science except medicine — but see now S. Stroumsa, ‘Al-Fārābī and Maimonides on Medicine as a Science’, Arabic Sciences and Philosophy, 3 (1993), 235–49, for a convincing argument that the Risāla fī l-ṭibb is in fact part of a larger recension of the Iḥṣā’. In contrast to al-Fārābī’s seeming lack of interest, Ibn Sinā’s project in his Qānūn, as Langemann has argued, was precisely to place medicine on a sound scientific basis. See Y. Tzvi Langermann, ‘Criticism of Authority in the Writings of Moses Maimonides and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Řāzi’, Early Science and Medicine, 7 (2002), 255–75, especially p. 267.

30 Bakar, Classification, pp. 213–18.


When accepted as a science, medicine was considered one of the natural sciences. Sometimes it would head the list of natural sciences as in al-Akfānī’s classification, but at other times it would be considered only a minor branch of natural science, as in the thought of Ibn Sinā. According to Osman Bakar’s summary of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī’s division of the sciences in Durrat al-tāj, medicine is a minor branch of natural science (al-‘ilm al-ṭabī’ī). Natural science, in turn, is a division of theoretical philosophical sciences. In this al-Shirāzī is following Ibn Sinā’s division of the sciences (with which it may be assumed that he was familiar), and not, as Bakar suggests, formulating an original division of the sciences of his own. This view of al-Shirāzī is reinforced by Pourjavedy and Schmidtke, who show that ‘given its heavy dependence on Ibn Kammūnā’s Kāshīf, Durrat al-tāj can hardly serve as a source for the study of Quṭb al-Dīn’s philosophical views’.

Let us now turn to Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī’s explanation here of why medicine should be considered a science. He begins by glossing Ibn Sinā’s statement ‘I say that medicine is a science’ as ‘this is the genus that implies the sciences within it’. Each genus implies a science, according to Aristotle. He immediately continues with an attack on the view that medicine cannot be a science, as it is a matter of opinion. Not only is this view wrong, but so is the defence of medicine proffered...


36 Bakar, Classification, p. 254.

by al-Qurashi (Ibn al-Nafis). According to the latter, when medicine is referred to as a science, the meaning really is that medicine is a theoretical art (ṣināʿa nazariyya), and then opinions are not a problem, as such forms of knowledge are not held to the rigorous standards of logic and proof required of sciences. However, al-Shirazi rejects this compromise. Medicine can be considered a true science, according to him, because its general principles are indeed known and proved both logically and through the senses. These do not rely on opinion (ẓann) alone. It is true that individual treatment may be a matter of opinion, but that is because of the individuality of each patient. In each case, the physician must use the scientific principles of medicine to determine the appropriate treatment — but this treatment based on opinion (mażnūn) is not medicine itself, it is merely what is derived from it. The practical application of a science is not the science itself, Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi says.

At first glance, it may seem that medicine is not a science, because it cannot fulfil the conditions of having an object and a final purpose. Qutb al-Din refers to Abū l-Faraj b. al-Ṭayyib’s commentary on Kitāb al-firaq in order to resolve this problem. Abū l-Faraj considers it possible for two sciences to have different aspects of the same thing as their objects. In this way, one may say that medicine does have an object, and that object is the human body — not generally speaking, for that is the object of natural science, but in the particular aspect of preserving health. Similarly, regaining health is the purpose of medicine. It may be that nature can be sufficient for this purpose, as is shown by the fact that health may be regained by people who have no physicians, but medicine will often be needed to come to nature’s aid. Qutb al-Din compares medicine to navigation: external circumstances, like hurricanes, may prevent a captain from protecting his ship, and in like manner external circumstances, like illnesses, may require the physician’s aid to restore health. In the same way that a ship may founder in a storm, despite the best efforts of the crew, a person may be overcome by illness, despite the best efforts of the physician.  

The explication of why medicine is a science brings us to the question of what a science is. Al-Shirazi refutes to his satisfaction some objections to Ibn

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38 Interestingly, Maimonides also compares medicine to navigation, but in a very different way, in order to reject tajriba as a valid source of knowledge. According to him, someone who relies on an experienced physician who yet does not proceed through logical reasoning (qiyās) is like someone who submits himself to the blowing of the wind when setting out to sea. In either case, the outcome is the result of chance (Langemann, ‘Maimonides’ Repudiation of Astrology’, p. 137).
Sinā’s assertion that medicine is an ‘ilm; the precise nature of his defence must be deferred to a future study, after the criticisms have been identified, and the precise meaning of concepts such as ‘theoretical art’ have been clarified. Nonetheless, this much is clear from the closing lines of this section. If astrology and dream interpretation can be considered sciences, despite being largely based on opinion and surmise, then, at the very least, medicine meets the standards set in those disciplines. In all cases, general principles are used to predict individual cases, each of which depends as well on particularities that may be unknown to the practitioner and may as well deviate somewhat from the general rule. Having settled this matter to his satisfaction, al-Shirāzī turns, in the following paragraphs, to discussing exactly what medicine is.

Conclusions

The difference between a truly learned physician and a mere practitioner is embodied in the former’s knowledge of Ibn Sinā’s Kulliyāt. In his commentary on these first lemma of the first book of the Qānūn, we see Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī making use not only of earlier and contemporary commentaries on the same book, but also referring very often to philosophical works, both by Ibn Sinā (e.g., al-Shifā’) and by others (e.g., al-Fārābī). The study of additional passages of the Tuhfā will elucidate the relationship between Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī and Ibn Sinā on several levels: First, Ibn Sinā’s medicine as seen by Quṭb al-Dīn’s medicine; second, Ibn Sinā’s medicine as seen by Quṭb al-Dīn’s philosophy; and last but not least, Ibn Sinā’s philosophy as seen by Quṭb al-Dīn’s philosophy.39

Very little work has been done to date on post-Avicennian medicine in the East. Discussions of medicine in the Mamlūk/Mongol periods usually deal with the relations between the physicians and the sultans and amirs, not with the actual theory and practice of medicine as evinced by contemporary writing. A vast literature still remains in manuscript, and this project aims to uncover a small corner of it.

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39 John Walbridge’s presentation at MESA 2006 (18–21 November, Boston), ‘Quṭb al-Dīn Shirāzī’s Commentary on the Canon of Medicine. Its Form and Some Logical and Philosophical Notes’, is an example of such a study.
THE *KHILĀŠ KAYFIYYAT TARKĪB AL-AFLĀK* OF AL-JŪZJĀNĪ: A PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION OF ITS AVICENNIAN THEMES

F. Jamil Ragep

Abū ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) is, of course, best known as a philosopher and physician, and his fame in those areas has tended to overshadow his other work. But as I have argued elsewhere, his astronomical writings are not inessential, and he and his circle represent, I believe, an important turning point in the history of astronomy in the Islamic world. Surprising for someone often characterized as a ‘Neoplatonist’, Ibn Sīnā had a remarkable interest in the practical side of astronomy as reflected in his observational programme, a large-scale astronomical instrument that he designed, and a number of remarkably accurate parameters resulting from them. Ibn Sīnā also was interested in a number of cosmological issues, and he discussed the dynamics of celestial motion and the earth’s possible rotation. Finally, his understanding of mathematical astronomy, as separate from astrology and philosophical cosmology, would play a major role in continuing attempts in the Islamic world to separate astronomy, as one of the mathematical disciplines, from Aristotelian natural philosophy.¹

One indication of Ibn Sīnā’s influence in astronomy can be seen through the work of Abū ‘Ubayd ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Muḥammad al-Jūzjānī (eleventh century), who was his longtime companion as well as his editor, literary executor,

biographer, and scientific collaborator.\textsuperscript{2} In addition to his astronomical work with Ibn Sinā during his lifetime, Jūzjānī wrote at least one astronomical treatise after Ibn Sinā's death entitled \textit{Kbīlās kāfīyyat tarkīb al-aflāk} (Epitome on the manner of the arrangement of the orbs). This work reflects many of the Avicennian themes discussed above, as we will detail below. The text itself is extant in a single manuscript, Mashhad MS Āstān-i Quds 392 (= Mashhad 5593), pages 92–106. (The title is given explicitly by Jūzjānī on p. 93.) It has not been clear, however, what the relationship of this work is to an extract (\textit{mustakbraj}) that was made apparently by Jūzjānī himself (\textit{istakbrajību} occurs on the title page of the Leiden manuscript)\textsuperscript{3} from a work with a similar name, \textit{Kitāb kāfīyyat tarkīb al-aflāk} (Book on the manner of the arrangement of the orbs).\textsuperscript{4} This extract exists in three manuscript copies (Leiden, MS Or. 174, fols 63b–67b; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Thurston 3, fols 144b–146a; and Bodleian Library, MS Marsh 720, fols 288a–292b) and was edited and translated by George Saliba.\textsuperscript{5} From an examination of the Mashhad manuscript and a comparison with the text edited by Saliba, I can conclude that the extract was made (with some rearrangement) from the \textit{Kbīlās tarkīb al-aflāk} that now exists only in a truncated form in the Mashhad exemplar. Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that Jūzjānī wrote only one astronomical work and that the ‘second’ work is in fact only an extract from the \textit{Kbīlās}. Variants on the name are minor and there is no need to assume a work other than that represented from the Mashhad manuscript as the source for the extract.

The \textit{Kbīlās tarkīb al-aflāk} was written as a commentary on al-Farghānī's (ninth-century) \textit{Kitāb al-jawāmī}, a compendium of Ptolemy's \textit{Almagest}.\textsuperscript{6} What we have of the \textit{Kbīlās} is certainly not a full commentary on Farghānī's treatise but rather comments on various points that Jūzjānī found of interest. Historically, one of


\textsuperscript{4} Sezgin, \textit{Geschichte}, p. 281.

\textsuperscript{5} Saliba, ‘Ibn Sinā’.

the more interesting aspects of the work is his criticisms of his predecessors for not providing correct accounts of the orbs. In a sense, what Jūzjānī seems to be doing is criticizing the catalogue summaries of the *Almagest* that one finds, say, in Farghānī and providing material that might replace such accounts with a more holistic one based upon the cosmographical framework of Ptolemy’s *Planetary Hypotheses*. Neither Jūzjānī nor Ibn Sinā ever wrote such an independent treatise that provided a coherent account of the orbs, a type of treatise that would later be called a *bay’ā* basiṭa work;⁷ nevertheless, the *Khilās* does go into considerable detail regarding the arrangement of the orbs. It is worth noting that Jūzjānī refers to his contemporary Ibn al-Haytham, who had written one of the first works that could be considered part of the *bay’ā* tradition.⁸ Another aspect of the work that is of considerable interest is the report of an observation of the obliquity of the ecliptic that was made in Isfahan, presumably by Jūzjānī with Ibn Sinā. As mentioned above, it has been known that Ibn Sinā engaged in an astronomical observational programme and even wrote a treatise describing a rather large observing instrument;⁹ here we have evidence showing that he and his associates were capable of considerable precision.

In lieu of an edition and translation of the *Khilās* (which is in preparation), I present here an outline of the contents along with some brief notes. I hope in this way to give a taste of the considerable importance that the Ibn Sinā circle had for the future directions of astronomy in Islam.

*I. Introduction* (pp. 92–93): Jūzjānī begins by stating that the highest mathematical science is that of ‘the arrangement [*tarkīb*] of the orbs and their configuration [*bay’ā*] and the configuration of the earth and the motions of the awesome orbs that indicate the wisdom of the Creator, most exalted and high, and the perfection of His workmanship’. He then goes on to discuss and critically assess his predecessors in these fields. About Ptolemy, he remarks that what he presented in the *Almagest* was according to geometrical lines rather than bodies and spheres. When

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Ptolemy did deal with them in the *Planetary Hypotheses*, however, the treatment was not exhaustive and he did not explain the equant and equant orb. Jūzjānī then mentions Abū Ja‘far al-Khāzin (d. c. 970) and his *Zīj al-ṣafā‘īb*, al-Nayrizī (fl. late ninth century), and Thābit ibn Qurra (d. 901) as more recent astronomers who failed to deal with such issues as the equant. Finally he cites Ibn Sinā, who told Jūzjānī that he had figured out the equant but he had informed no one of the solution. Jūzjānī sardonically remarks that he believes that he (Jūzjānī) is the first to have understood how to resolve the equant problem.

II. *Structure of the treatise* (p. 93): Jūzjānī states that he will use Farhānī’s work (which he refers to as *al-Fuṣūl*) as the basis for his discussion. Interestingly, he states that he will set aside what Farhānī has done in ‘ilm al-bay’a, perhaps further indicating his dissatisfaction with his predecessors’ work in this area.

III. On faṣl 2 of Farhānī (pp. 93–94): Jūzjānī discusses how to use a dioptra to establish that the sky and its rotation are spherical.11

IV. On faṣl 4 of Farhānī (p. 94): On the variability of the amount one sees of the sky, depending on one’s distance from it.

V. On faṣl 5 of Farhānī (pp. 94–96): Here Jūzjānī deals with the slow motion (precession) of the fixed stars. In the course of the discussion, he brings in the problem of how one orb (say that of the highest orb responsible for the daily motion) moves the orb below it that contains the fixed stars. Jūzjānī opts for the idea (contra-Ptolemy in the *Planetary Hypotheses*) that this results from the physical embedding of the poles of the lower orb into the higher, like two nails. He then moves on to the question of the reported changes in the obliquity. Jūzjānī attributes to the Indians the idea that there is an eighth-degree periodic change in the obliquity and states that one needs to posit an additional orb between the equinoctial sphere and the sphere of the fixed stars. This seems to conflate the trepidation theory found in Theon of Alexandria with the proposal of Ibrāhīm ibn

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Sinān. At any rate, Jūzjānī then notes that the obliquity, according to the reported observations from Ptolemy up to his own time, has indeed been decreasing and that having an additional orb, which he describes in some detail, might account for these observations. He remarks that such a model might eventually result in a zero-obliquity, at which point, he speculates, water will cover the earth completely and all life and civilization will cease. One of the more remarkable parts of this passage, and indeed of the treatise as a whole, is Jūzjānī’s report of his own observation in Isfahan (perhaps in collaboration with Ibn Sinā) that found the obliquity to be 23°33′40″, which is remarkably accurate for the time in question (probably around 1030–40). In the appendix to his summary of the *Almagest*, Ibn Sinā reported a value of 23°33′30″.14

VI. *On faṣl 10 of Fargbānī* (pp. 96–98): Jūzjānī reviews some of the basic material related to co-ascentions of zodiacal arcs.

VII. *On faṣl 11 of Fargbānī* (p. 98): Jūzjānī makes a brief comment regarding the fact that the sun’s daily path is not exactly parallel to the equinoctial.

VIII. *On faṣl 12 of Fargbānī* (pp. 98–106): This long section dealing with the configuration and arrangement of the planetary orbs contains the most interesting and historically significant parts of the treatise. Jūzjānī begins by reviewing some of the observations that made it possible to hypothesize the standard ordering of the planets, though he indicates a certain scepticism since the observations cannot lead to definitive conclusions. Here he also mentions the famous transit of Venus that was observed by Ibn Sinā, which would seem to show that Venus was below the sun.15

Jūzjānī then proceeds to enumerate the various orbs that bring about the motion of the sun. From a historical viewpoint, it is interesting that he seems at first to follow earlier writers (Thābit ibn Qurra and al-Nayrīzī) in considering the


lunules (the crescent-shaped complementary parts that come about when an eccentric sphere is embedded within a concentric sphere)\textsuperscript{16} to be orbs. But then he quotes his contemporary Ibn al-Haytham to the effect that sections of orbs need to be equal, which seems to mean that a lunule of varying thickness would not qualify. This, indeed, is what one finds in later bay'a works, and Jûzjâni himself states that he will follow Ibn al-Haytham in this matter. (By the way, this is the first evidence I am aware of that establishes that someone in Ibn Sinâ’s circle knew of Ibn al-Haytham.)\textsuperscript{17}

Jûzjâni then moves on to describe the orbs of the other six planets, starting with the moon. In total, he finds there are forty-two spheres surrounding the earth. He then discusses the epicycles and states that they are not single spheres but rather composed of several spheres, just as the case of the orbs surrounding the earth. The total number of epicycle spheres is, according to Jûzjâni, thirty-one, so the total number of orbs in his cosmography is seventy-three.

The last section deals with the equant problem, and this is the part edited and translated by Saliba. What Jûzjâni seems to be doing here is providing a physical model that will bring about the motion required by the equant. As Saliba points out, Jûzjâni seems not to understand that simply displacing the eccentric orb with an equant orb does not solve the problem, since one thereby undermines the distance-speed relationship of the epicycle centre with respect to the earth that had led Ptolemy to establish the equant in the first place. This solution led to a rather severe attack by Qutb al-Din al-Shirâzî in the thirteenth century.

The very last part of the extract edited by Saliba, which deals with the deviation of the epicycle diameter, is missing from our manuscript, which indicates that the Mashhad manuscript is not complete. Whether Jûzjâni dealt with other topics in Fârghânî’s treatise is unknown.

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\textsuperscript{16} Naṣîr al-Dîn al-Ṭūsî refers to these as complementary bodies that are parts of spherical orbs, not actual orbs. See Ragep, \textit{Naṣîr al-Dîn}, 1, 140–43.

\textsuperscript{17} A. I. Sabra was the first to point out this passage to me. This reference is of significance in evaluating recent claims that there may have been two Ibn al-Haythams; Jûzjâni clearly assumes that his readers will know \textit{the} Ibn al-Haytham, since he provides no other identification. Cf. A. I. Sabra, ‘One Ibn al-Haytham or Two? An Exercise in Reading the Bio-Bibliographical Sources’, \textit{Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften}, 12 (1998), 1–50, and A. I. Sabra, ‘One Ibn al-Haytham or Two? Conclusion’, ibid., 15 (2002–03), 95–108.
The sophisticated attacks of occasionalist Asharite kalam on falsafa, and the usurpation of falsafa by kalam are known to researchers.1 Some of this same scholarship has also paid attention to how the mutakallimīn’s refutation of falsafa extended to astronomy and to how astronomers responded to that scepticism.2 The present study provides more information, and over a broader time period, about astronomers’ responses to the mutakallimīn’s scepticism. It explores the relationship between astronomers’ responses to the mutakallimīn’s scepticism and the way in which the astronomers construed the relationship of astronomy to falsafa.

I would like to thank Tzvi Langermann for his editorial assistance and for his comments on a draft of this article. This study originated as a draft of part of the fourth chapter of my book Islam and Science: The Intellectual Career of Nizām al-Dīn al-Nisābūrī (London, 2007). This study covers a chronological range broader than that of my book. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted. All translations from the Qurʾān are from A. J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted (New York, 1955).


The starting point for the debates over astronomy’s relationship to falsafa among the scholars I discuss is the work of Ibn Sinā (d. 1037). Parts of Ibn Sinā’s Shifāʾ, such as the Ṭabiʿiyāt (Physics) and Burbān (Demonstration) indicate the faylāṣīf’s engagement with earlier mutakallimūn’s increasingly sophisticated knowledge of matters of science and natural philosophy. Ibn Sinā’s work, in turn, furnished the background for al-Ghazālī’s (d. 1111) Tabāṣfut al-falāṣīfā (Incoherence of the Philosophers). Tabāṣfut al-falāṣīfā is a systematic critical review of the falāṣīfā’s arguments and explanations, including those for natural phenomena. Particularly relevant, given this article’s focus on theoretical astronomy (iḥl al-bay’a), is al-Ghazālī’s refutation of the necessity of the intermediate causal connections that the falāṣīfā asserted in their explanations. Still, al-Ghazālī, in his Tabāṣfut, did not deny astronomy’s ability to predict accurately celestial phenomena, or even to explain certain ones. For example, he agreed with Ibn Sinā (and the astronomers) that when the earth intervened between the sun and the moon, a lunar eclipse would occur. Accepting that explanation, in his opinion, was of no harm to religion: ‘Whoever thinks that to engage in a disputation for refuting such a theory is a religious duty harms religion and weakens it. For these matters rest on demonstrations — geometrical and arithmetical — that leave no room for doubt [...]. The harm inflicted on religion by those who defend it in a way not proper to it is greater than [the harm caused by] those who attack it in the way proper to it. As it has been said: “A rational foe is better than an ignorant friend.”’ Put differently, this statement of the falāṣīfā, because it was beyond doubt, was not harmful to religion. Thus al-Ghazālī, though his criticism of falsafa questioned


4 See al-Ghazālī, The Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tabāṣfut al-falāṣīfā), trans. and intro. by M. E. Marmura (Provo, UT, 1997).


6 Al-Ghazālī, Incoherence, p. 6.

7 Al-Ghazālī, Incoherence, p. 6.

8 Because of space limitations, I have chosen to discuss al-Ghazālī because of his impact on Islamic intellectual history, not because he epitomized or subscribed wholly
implicitly the causality inherent in the physical models used by astronomers, did not question the validity of all of astronomy’s conclusions.

Inasmuch as the Tadhkira reflected al-Ghazālī’s knowledge of Ibn Sīnā’s work, it is important to note that the example of lunar eclipses indicates al-Ghazālī’s acceptance of an explanation for lunar eclipses that was not based, according to Ibn Sīnā, on a traditional syllogism. In Kitāb al-Burbān from al-Shīfā, Ibn Sīnā described a process known as ḫads (intuition), which he defined as grasping the middle term in a syllogism spontaneously. ḫads, then, was a new way to find the middle term in a syllogism; the resulting explanation was equivalent to knowledge gained from a syllogism. The specific example that Ibn Sīnā gave for ḫads was when one sees the moon being illuminated from the sun’s side and notices that the changes in the moon’s illumination follow the changes in the sun’s position. ḫads enabled one to grasp that the middle term in the syllogism is that the sun illuminates the moon. Then, if the sun does illuminate the moon, one could conclude that the interposition of the earth between the sun and the moon will cause a lunar eclipse.

In the following centuries, astronomers reassessed the relationship of their science and its foundations to the conclusions of falsafa. Texts on theoretical astronomy (‘ilm al-bay’a), such as the Tadhkira of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), distanced ‘ilm al-bay’a from falsafa by borrowing conclusions directly from physics (al-ṭabi‘iyyāt) or natural philosophy (al-ḥikma al-ṭabi‘iyya) rather than situating ilm al-bay’a within falsafa, thereby implying that ‘ilm al-bay’a was no to Ashari kalam throughout his career (cf., R. M. Frank, Al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arite School (Durham, 1994)). Indeed, important recent research has uncovered al-Ghazālī’s debt to Ibn Sīnā. See R. M. Frank, Creation and the Cosmic System (Heidelberg, 1992), p. 9: ‘Al-Ghazālī is commonly recognized as the one who made the first great adaptation of the intellectual heritage of Greek philosophical thought to the elaboration of Sunni theology.’ See also the contributions by Frank Griffel and Afifi al-Atiki in the present volume.

9 Ibn Sīnā, Burbān, p. 259. For another reference to ḫads, see Ibn Sīnā, al-Ishbārāt wa-l-tanbīḥā ma‘a sharb Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, ed. by S. Dunyā, 4 vols (Cairo, 1957–60), 11, 207. Ibn Sīnā’s positions developed throughout his life. Dimitri Gutas has identified a revised version of ḫads in which the middle term of the syllogism could be acquired instantaneously or through thinking (fikr) (‘Intuition and Thinking: The Evolving Structure of Avicenna’s Epistemology’, in Aspects of Avicenna, ed. by R. Wisnovsky (Princeton, 2001), pp. 1–38 (pp. 3–4)). Gutas’s analysis of these versions of ḫads begins on p. 6.

10 The metaphysical foundations of certain types of scientific explanations are a topic of my book (see Islam and Science, pp. 79–84 and 109–12) on one of the scholars mentioned in this article, Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nisābūrī.
longer a subdivision of falsafa.\textsuperscript{11} Astronomers began to give more attention to establishing their science on observations.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{Hads} continued to play a role; when Ibn Sinā mentioned \textit{hads} in Kitāb al-Burbān, he also argued for the utility and reliability of knowledge gleaned from experience (\textit{tajriba}).\textsuperscript{13} Subsequently, in a commentary on al-Ṭūsī’s \textit{Zīj-i Īlkhānī} (The Ilkhanid Astronomical Handbook), a handbook of astronomy that includes tables and information about astrological applications, the astronomer and Qur’ān commentator Nizām al-Dīn al-Nisābūrī (d. c. 1330) used the terms \textit{hads} and \textit{tajriba} to explain how astrology drew useful conclusions that were not religiously objectionable. Astrology had been the target of attacks from \textit{mutakallimūn}, often due to astrology’s connection to falsafa, and from the falsāfī (including Ibn Sinā), often due to the uncertainty of its predictions.\textsuperscript{14} But if God controlled the heavens and events on earth, predictions based on such connections, though contingent, were not out of the question. Al-Nisābūrī wrote:

But by way of intuition [\textit{hads}] and experience [\textit{tajriba}] many things have become apparent to those of intellect [‘\textit{nqalā‘}], from the times of their [the planets’] effects at each locale [\textit{mawāfi}], namely when a turn of their fate [\textit{masīr}] occurs at that locale. And also such that each time that they suppose, for example, that the time that a child comes into existence, that degree from the orb of the zodiac that should be on the eastern horizon, they make the starting point [\textit{maḥḍā‘}]. They divide, accordingly, the orb of the zodiac into twelve, as the way to do that has become known within this book. There is no doubt that the positions of the planets at the appearance of that ascendant at a locale should be particular [\textit{makhṭūṣ bāṣbād}].\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{13} Ibn Sinā, \textit{Burbān}, p. 259.


In this case, al-Nisābūrī used ḥads more in the sense of ‘conjecture’: experience (tajriḥa) is the basis for ḥads in astrology, and experience is, in the end, limited.16 Still, he could argue for the validity of astrological predictions without either defining precisely the stars’ role in a syllogism or specifying a connection, based on natural philosophy, between the celestial and terrestrial realms. Al-Nisābūrī was not the only astronomer to mention ḥads, Mu‘ayyad al-Dīn al-‘Urḍī (d. 1266), an astronomer to whose work al-Nisābūrī referred, used ḥads to describe the thought processes that led to Ptolemy’s determination of theoretical models for planetary motions as well as at least one of his own insights.17 While the connection to tajriḥa

16 For the translation of ḥads by conjecture, see Mu‘ayyad al-Dīn al-‘Urḍī, Kitāb al-Hay’a: The Astronomical Work of Mu‘ayyad al-Dīn al-‘Urḍī (Beirut, 1983), p. 59. See also, now, G. Saliba, Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 118–19. In his Qur‘ān commentary (Gharā‘ib al-Qur‘ān wa-raqib‘ib al-furqān, 30 vols in 12 (1905–06 [Būlāq edn]; repr. Beirut, 1992), xxii, 80–81), al-Nisābūrī acknowledged that stars could play a causal role as long as the heavens were understood to be fully subjugated to God’s control. As for the role of experience in astrological predictions, see McGinnis, ‘Scientific Methodologies’, p. 326. According to the mutakallimūn, too, the astrologers’ conclusions could not be considered inductions; the mutakallimūn argued that one could not be certain that one has observed the relevant similarities nor that one observed a sufficient number of cases to justify a necessary generalization. Thus, the limits on tajriḥa seem to me to prevent one from concluding that ḥads, for al-Nisābūrī, yielded knowledge equivalent to that gained from a syllogism. An astronomer who appears later in this study, ‘Abbād al-‘Alī al-Bīrjandī, at least in one case, used ḥads to describe how advocates of a moving earth could explain available observations of the fixed stars. He wrote (Sbrḥ Taḥrīr al-Maḥṣūṭi, London, British Library, Loth MS 742, fol. 19): Fa-inna al-ard idhā tabarrakat nābu al-masbriq mi‘ādā‘ zabura li-sākinahā min al-kawākib mā kān muḥta‘alā‘ anbum fî al-masbriq wa-ḥtājaba ‘anbum bi-ḥadsibā mā kāna minbā‘ fî al-maghrīb.

17 On the role of ḥads in al-‘Urḍī’s astronomy, see Y. T. Langermann, ‘Ibn Kammūna and the “New Wisdom” of the Thirteenth Century’, Arabic Sciences and Philosophy, 15 (2005), 277–327 (pp. 293–95), and al-‘Urḍī, Kitāb al-Hay’a, p. 122. Al-‘Urḍī also used (Langermann, ‘Ibn Kammūna’, p. 295, and al-‘Urḍī, Kitāb al-Hay’a, p. 191) the word inspiration (albama, ilābām) to describe a step on the way to the discovery of his own models. For al-Nisābūrī’s citations of al-‘Urḍī, see Morrison, Islam and Science, pp. 156–57, 232 n. 77, and p. 259 n. 6. Al-Taftāzānī (in Sbrḥ al-Maqaṣīd, ed. by ‘A. al-R. ‘Umayra, 5 vols (Beirut, 1989), iii, 155–56) recognized (while also disparaging) the role of ḥads in the astronomers’ creation of their models. He noted the astronomers’ inability to demonstrate conclusively (īdā bā darā‘a wa-lā burbān ‘alā īmā‘an an takān tilka al-ikhtilāfāt li-ashāb ‘ikbar) the impossibility of alternative explanations. Moreover (cf. Saliba’s quotation of
meant that *ḥads* was not always certain, the results of *ḥads* do not seem to have been considered religiously objectionable.

The fact that at times more than one theory could account for the available observations posed another problem. Most famously, Ptolemy acknowledged two mathematically equivalent but physically incongruent solar models. Astronomers had to rebut the *mutakallimūn*’s scepticism which insinuated that the theories accepted by astronomers as true were nothing more than one possibility among others that were equally possible. Astronomers, in addition, had to advocate for their preferred models without presuming the superiority of *falsafa*’s physics; *ḥads* did not, at least for al-Nisābūrī, furnish the one true model in such a case. Al-Nisābūrī’s argument in favour of one model over another borrowed ideas from religious scholarship. In particular, its foundation rests upon the principle of economy in nature.21


19 Acknowledging the advice of G. Freudenthal (“Instrumentalism” and “Realism” as Categories in the History of Astronomy’, *Centaurus*, 45 (2003), 227–48 (pp. 242–43)) not to project contemporary philosophy of science backwards onto earlier periods, I would describe the astronomers’ epistemological position as one in which they held the likelihood of their explanations to be preponderant. In Islamic law, *tartīb* was rendering a certain *ratio legis* preponderant (*arjaḥ*). See W. Hallaq, *Authority, Continuity, and Change in Islamic Law* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 128–29. *Tartīb* was an expression that scientists used to describe their reasoning. Al-Nisābūrī (Morrison, *Islam and Science*, p. 87) used the phrase *tartīb min ghāyr murajjih* in his explanation of why he rejected attributing the motion of the solar apogee to an outer orb.

20 Al-Nisābūrī’s teacher Ḥubb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1311) was certainly interested in the one true model for a given celestial phenomenon. Cf. G. Saliba, ‘A Redeployment of Mathematics in a Sixteenth-Century Arabic Critique of Ptolemaic Astronomy’, in *Perspectives arabes et médiévales sur la tradition scientifique et philosophique grecque*, ed. by A. Hasnawi, A. Elamrani-Jamal, and M. Aouad (Leuven, 1993), 105–22 (p. 120): ‘In the work of Shīrāzī, by Shīrāzī’s own confession, one was always seeking the one mathematical model that was simply the true one.’

21 Ibn Rushd attributed astronomers’ departure from the true astronomy of homocentric orbs to what A. I. Sabra has called a ‘misguided application of the principle of economy’ (‘The Andalusian Revolt against Ptolemaic Astronomy’, in *Transformation and Tradition in the Sciences*, ed. by Everett Mendelsohn (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 133–53 (p. 142)). The relevant text here is Ibn Rushd, *Tafsīr mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*, ed. by M. Bouyges (Beirut, 1948), pp. 161–64, especially p. 163. The fundamental disagreement between the scholars whom
In order to understand al-Nīsābūrī’s ideas, we need to begin with his teacher, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (d. 1311). Al-Shirāzī stated, in the initial chapters of his al-Tuhfah al-shabīyya, that there was no unnecessary excess in nature.22 In the Tuhfah, al-Shirāzī used this principle of economy in nature to tout the advantages of a solar model employing an eccentric over the (geometrically equivalent) model that uses an epicycle.23 In his later Fa’alṭa fa-lā talum, he referred to the principle of economy in his discussion of the total number of orbs in the cosmos.24 Al-Shirāzī also relied on the principle of economy in the Tuhfah when addressing the model for the motion of the fixed stars. He wrote: ‘Therefore it is not conceivable that the motion of a star in the heavens be like the motion of a fish in water; this being so, then it is necessary to establish an orb for each star that would move [each star] with its motion unless the motion of a number of stars agree in measure and direction.’25 And indeed the evidence suggested that there was need for more than one orb for the fixed stars.

A similar principle of economy or simplicity, though not stated as such, was the basis for al-Nisābūrī’s rebuttal, in his tafsir (Gharāʾib al-Qurʾān wa-raghāʾib al-furqān), of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s remark that there may as yet be unmeasured variations in the fixed stars’ motions such as would necessitate additional orbs to account for their motions.26 Al-Nisābūrī did not deny the possibility that God might create multiple orbs to move the fixed stars, but without observations of variations in the motions of certain fixed stars, there was no reason to make the admittedly conceivable proposal of separate orbs for each fixed star.27 Along those same lines, al-Nisābūrī wrote in his final astronomical text, Tawdīḥ al-Tadhkira (Elucidation of the Tadhkira), that one orb would suffice for each observed celestial motion.28

this study discusses and Ibn Rushd concerned the question whether the eccentric orb and the epicycle were natural, and not whether nature functions economically.

24 Al-Shirāzī, Fa’alṭa fa-lā talum, SL, Fatih MS 3175/2, fol. 168v.
25 As quoted in Morrison, ‘Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī’s Hypotheses’, p. 27.
27 Nizām al-Dīn al-Nisābūrī, Gharāʾib al-Qurʾān, ii, 84.
Throughout his *tafsir* al-Nisābūrī accepted much of what al-Ghazālī had to say about falsafa in his *Tabāfut*, even adopting at times al-Ghazālī’s occasionalist language; but taking the scepticism of the seventeenth chapter of the *Tabāfut* too far served no purpose for al-Nisābūrī. In other words, there was no reason not to conclude that God’s actions were economical.

Other statements in Gharā‘ib al-Qur‘ān provide more information about how God’s actions, and so also the structure of the heavens, could be rationalized. Specifically, al-Nisābūrī wrote that the legal principle of the preservation of the optimum, *ri‘āyat al-aṣlaḥ*, was the rationale (ḥikma) for God’s actions. Al-Ghazālī had linked divine wisdom (ḥikma) to divine beneficence inasmuch as we were living in the best of all possible worlds. Al-Nisābūrī’s own view emerges in his comments on Qur‘ān 5.64 (‘The Jews have said, “God’s hand is fettered”’), where he criticized those, including philosophers, who hold that God was obligated to make things happen only in a single order (‘alā wāji’d). The principle of *ri‘āyat al-aṣlaḥ* was not a cause of God’s actions but instead a way to describe God’s actions as well as to point out their underlying rationale. Unlike Mutazilite mutakallimūn, al-Nisābūrī did not constrict the range of God’s action. Since God could not have shortcomings, there was no need to interpret apparent shortcomings metaphorically. The human, then, was capable of finding the reason behind God’s actions, and science could play a role in such explanations.

The fine line between constraining and rationalizing God’s actions, and science’s role therein, can be seen in al-Nisābūrī’s comments on Qur‘ān 2.5–6 (‘As for the unbelievers, alike it is to them whether thou hast warned them or hast not warned them, they do not believe. God has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a covering, and there awaits them a mighty chastisement’). Al-Rāzī had been unable to make a meaningful distinction between voluntary and


31 As cited in E. L. Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought: The Dispute Over al-Ghazālī’s ‘Best of All Possible Worlds’* (Princeton, 1984), p. 35. See also R. Frank, ‘Al-Ghazālī’s Use of Avicenna’s Philosophy’, *Revue des études islamiques*, 55–57 (1987–89), 271–84 (pp. 278–79): ‘The third term is God’s “ordering the forms of created beings according to the most beautiful ordering”’.


involuntary motions while preserving human responsibility for sin.\textsuperscript{34} Al-Nisābūrī, drawing on Ibn Sīnā’s \textit{Ṣbifāʾ}, used the case of involuntary tremors to explain how apparently involuntary actions could arise from the will.\textsuperscript{35} Involuntary motions are simply the result of a lower level of motives (\textit{dawāʾ}\textsuperscript{36}) than voluntary motions. Al-Nisābūrī’s comments provide a scientific explanation for how God could cause sin, all the while preserving the possibility (or likelihood) of attributing sin to human volition. Science helped Nisābūrī appreciate how God was fully involved in the world. Al-Rāzī’s occasionally sceptical remarks in his \textit{tafṣīr} imply that he did not always accord science that same capability.\textsuperscript{36}

Perhaps al-Nisābūrī’s clearest expression of his confidence in the human intellect’s ability to draw conclusions about the causes of events in God’s creation is to be found in the parallel he drew between theoretical astronomy and \textit{fiqh}, the most central of the religious sciences. In his commentary on al-Ṭūsī’s \textit{Zīj-i Ilkhānī} he stated that ‘a few of the causes of the variations [in the celestial motions] shall be closer to the intellect [or understanding; \textit{fahm}] in the same manner that the causes [\textit{‘ilal}] that they mention within books of jurisprudence [\textit{fiqh}], for example, should be with regard to the \textit{uṣūl} of jurisprudence’.\textsuperscript{37} The causes of the variations of the celestial motions were configurations of orbs. He did not, however, state specifically that the \textit{uṣūl} of astronomy, the knowledge of which might be contingent, were equivalent to \textit{uṣūl al-fiqh}, which traced their authority to revealed texts. Instead, a more apt comparison would be with the determination of the ‘\textit{‘ilal} in a case of reasoning (\textit{qiyyās}) in Islamic law: a few of the ‘\textit{‘ilal} of the celestial motions could be determined in the same way as the ‘\textit{‘ilal} of laws. In cases where a scholar was faced with more than one possible ‘\textit{illa}, the criterion of \textit{maṣlaha} (public welfare), a criterion related to the above-mentioned rationale of \textit{al-aṣlāḥ}, served

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} Al-Rāzī, \textit{al-Taḥṣīr al-kabīr}, II, 44.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Al-Nisābūrī, \textit{Gharāʾib al-Qurʾān}, 1, 147. For Ibn Sīnā’s explanation, see Ibn Sīnā, \textit{al-Shīfāʾ: Kitāb al-Nafs}, ed. by J. Qanawātī and S. Zā‘īd (Cairo, 1975), p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Al-Nisābūrī, \textit{Kashf-i ḥaqāʾiq}, Fatih MS 3421, fol. 2’. The variations that al-Nisābūrī mentions in the quotation are with regard to the positions and motions of the planets.
\end{itemize}
to distinguish between multiple competing and seemingly appropriate causes (‘ilab).\(^{38}\) The possibility of errors did not exclude the application of the principle of mašlaḥa in the central Islamic science of fiqh. As we saw in al-Nisābūrī’s comment about astronomy’s successful explanation for retrograde motion, justification for allowing the human intellect insight into God’s actions, in order to appreciate God’s majesty, could come from Islamic sciences, such as fiqh, and not from falsafa.\(^{39}\)

The religious value of rationalizing comes to the fore in tandem with the principle of economy in al-Nisābūrī’s commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s al-Tadhkira fī ʿilm al-bay’a, entitled Tawḍīḥ al-Tadhkira (Elucidation of the Tadhkira). Acknowledging that the planets’ apparently irregular retrograde motions are caused by God, al-Nisābūrī expressed his astonishment that each of two hypotheses, those of the epicyclic and the eccentric orbs, suffices to explain the perplexing loops that each of the planets traces in the sky. He wrote:

> And by my life [la-ʿumrī], achieving truth in eliciting the reasons that necessitate the observed variations of the planets, with their motions being themselves [fi anfusīhā] uniform, is something of majestic import [amr ʿażīm al-qadr] and truly perfect for the mathematical perspective of philosophy [fa-tamām li-l-nazaẓ al-taʿālimi min al-falsafa]. Its great import consists in this, that it has arrived at things found in the observable divine bodies which are among the observed bodies [al-aṣām al-ilābiyya allātī min bayn al-aṣām al-marʿīyya], whose affairs proceed directly and orderly.\(^{40}\)

Motions that appear to be anything but uniform and rotational could be explained through combinations of two uniform rotational motions. Al-Nisābūrī appreciated, and, more importantly, accepted the models for retrograde motion because they represented an economical solution to a complex problem. The principle of economy in nature existed in falsafa, but al-Nisābūrī preferred to turn elsewhere for arguments that God does not make things needlessly complex and that nature is accessible to the human intellect.\(^{41}\) The parallels with fiqh...
that al-Nisābūrī drew indicate how science had become a part of a tradition of religious scholarship.

A few decades after al-Nisābūrī’s career, some doctors of the kalam took up the equant problem, the solutions of which were a significant achievement of Islamic astronomy. The problem arose from the conflict between the finding of Ptolemy (fl. 125–50 CE), on the basis of observations, that certain orbs rotated uniformly about an axis that does not pass through their centres, on the one hand, and the physical reality that orbs could rotate uniformly in place only about an axis passing through the orb’s centre on the other. falsafā’s doctrine of the orbs’ uniform rotational motion reflected this physical reality. Among al-Nisābūrī’s predecessors, al-Urḍī, al-Ṭūsī, and al-Shirāzī, all of whom were associated with the observatory in Marāgha (Iran), proposed alternative models, founded on uniformly rotating orbs, that resolved the physical inconsistency of the equant while retaining the predictive accuracy of Ptolemy’s models. But the mutakallim ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355) suggested that it was conceivable, in the models for the planets, that God could make the eccentric orb rotate so that the motion of the epicycle centre would appear uniform about the equant point.


43 For more on these models, see, for starters, Ragep, Tadhkira; G. Saliba, Islamic Science; and E. S. Kennedy, ‘Late Medieval Planetary Theory’, Isis, 57 (1966), 365–78.

44 Mu‘ayyad al-Dīn al-Ījī, Kitāb al-Mawāqif bi-Sharḥ al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, ed. by ‘A. al-R. ʿUmayra, 3 vols (Beirut, 1997), II, 451–52. The commentary of al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 1413), a noted commentator on the Tadhkira, on this passage (II, 457) did not question the substance of what al-Ījī says. Regarding the lunar model, al-Ījī suggested that the inconsistencies of the Ptolemaic models might necessitate a reconsideration of the principle of uniform rotational motion as a premise of astronomy (II, 443). For another perspective, consider the case of Maimonides, who compartmentalized physical and mathematical approaches to astronomy. On that, B. Goldstein (‘Models in Ancient and Medieval Astronomy’, Centaurus, 24 (1980), 132–47 (p. 139)) wrote, ‘We may note that Maimonides was not concerned with the problem introduced by the equant. Moreover,
It is clear from this and other criticisms of astronomy that the *mutakallimūn* were aware of what the Marāgha astronomers were doing.\(^{45}\) Al-Ījī remarked that partial volitions (*irāḍāt juzʿīyya*), volitions that did not all will the same thing, could combine to produce observations of motion uniform about the equant point.\(^{46}\) Al-Ījī himself did not consider the implications of non-uniformly rotating orbs for the planets’ retrograde motion; he retained epicycles instead of proposing that the same partial volitions might move the deferent orb backwards.\(^{47}\) He did not explain why his proposal of partial volitions was preferable to the astronomers’ solutions for the equant; from his perspective, it was sufficient to show that his proposal was simply conceivable. Al-Ījī’s statements may have been a challenge to astronomers to establish through other means what they had adopted from falsafā. Astronomers affiliated with the fifteenth-century Samarqand Observatory patronized by Ulugh Beg had a chance to examine to al-Ījī’s arguments, as well as some similar remarks concerning astronomy found in a book by the latter’s student, Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 1389), *Sbarḥ al-Maqāṣid*.\(^{48}\) Research into the

one may ask: if physical principles are not required to guide the astronomy, why must he adhere to the principle of uniform circular motion? See also N. Swerdlow, ‘Aristotelian Planetary Theory in the Renaissance: Giovanni Battista Amico’s Homocentric Spheres’, *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 3 (1972), 36–48 (p. 36): ‘The motivation for the models developed by the Marāgha astronomers and Copernicus was that, believing as they did that the motions of the planets were controlled by solid spheres, it was apparent by simple mechanical sense that the rotation of a sphere can be uniform only with respect to its diameter, but not with respect to any other straight line.’ I have not found evidence that astronomers responded to al-Ījī’s criticism with an argument similar to that presented by Swerdlow. Rather, Swerdlow’s formulation of the equant problem indicates how al-Ījī’s statement is problematic.

\(^{45}\) On this awareness of astronomy, see also al-Taftāzānī, *Sbarḥ al-Maqāṣid*, iii, 186–88, where al-Taftāzānī minimized the astronomers’ attempts to establish the foundations of *bay’a* on *inī* proofs (proofs of the fact, as opposed to proofs of the reasoned fact; on this see Ragep, *Tadbikra*, p. 39). But this acquaintance with astronomy does not belie any commitment to the enterprise of astronomy itself. Cf. Y. T. Langermann, ‘Arabic Cosmology’, in *Early Science and Medicine*, 2 (1997), 185–213 (p. 209). There Langermann observes that the major writers on kalam were not practising astronomers.

\(^{46}\) Al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, ii, 451: *Wa-fī al-kull fa-inna ḥarakāt al-ajfāk irāḍiyya fa-mādābā yaman‘ an takhtalif bi-ḥasab mā yata’aqab ‘alayhā min irādāt juzʿīyya?* On the same page, al-Ījī attributed the astronomers’ frustration with the equant to their insistence on uniform rotation.


\(^{48}\) On al-Taftāzānī and his teachers (e.g., al-Ījī and Qūṭ āl-Dīn al-Rāzī), see ‘Abd al-Ḥayy ibn al-ʿImād al-Ḥanbali, *Sbaḥbarat al-dhabab fi akhbār man dhabab*, 8 vols (Cairo,
Samarqand Observatory, and on the associated madrasa, has found that religious texts, including the works of mutakallimun such as al-Ījī and al-Taftāzānī, were part of the tradition of scholarship there. 50 I will mention in these final pages some examples of how astronomers connected with the Samarqand Observatory, in light of astronomy’s continued presence within the tradition of religious scholarship there, addressed the extent of astronomy’s dependence upon falsaфа.

Qāḍī Zādah Rūmī (d. c. 1436), a prominent astronomer and instructor at Samarqand, composed a commentary on al-Ṭūsī’s recension of the Almagest (Tabrīr al-Majīṣṭī). 51 At the beginning of the commentary, Qāḍī Zādah argued that heaven is composed of orbs. This was in line with their perfection, and accorded with God’s expansiveness (awsaʿīyya); all the while Qāḍī Zādah emphasized that there is no unnecessary excess in the celestial bodies (falakiyya). 52 He noted further that the observations he cited do not exclude other explanations, but they do provide evidence (yadull ālā) for uniformly rotating orbs. 53 Earlier, al-Ījī, perhaps drawing indirectly on Ptolemy’s own words, had mentioned the possibility of replacing the orbs with belts. 54 Al-Taftāzānī, too, had been sceptical of the mathematical and observational evidence for the existence of orbs, pointing out...


51 Qāḍī Zādah, Ḥāṣbiya ‘alā al-Majīṣṭī, Berlin Staatsbibliothek, MS 5657, fol. 3’.

52 Qāḍī Zādah, Ḥāṣbiya ‘alā al-Majīṣṭī, fol. 3’.

53 That was in addition to al-Ījī’s aforementioned question about the need for uniform rotational motion. For Ptolemy’s reference to the mansbūrāt, in the Planetary Hypotheses, see The Arabic Version of Ptolemy’s Planetary Hypotheses, ed. by B. Goldstein, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 57 (Philadelphia, 1967), pt iv, p. 37. The word mansbūrāt appears in lines 18 and 23. See also Sabra, ‘Science and Philosophy’, p. 35.
that demonstrations from evidence (istidlālāt) were not decisive proofs. Qādī Zādah recognized the lack of absolute certainty in founding astronomy on natural philosophy (al-tabi‘iyyāt); al-Taftāzānī had written that God (al-qāsīr) could do away with the requirements of nature. But as critical as al-Taftāzānī appeared with respect to the astronomers’ demonstrations of the rotation of the heavens, he nonetheless granted the conclusions of the astronomers, which he criticized, the status of āḥāds: ‘if that [al-Taftāzānī’s argument] were granted, then what was mentioned [the astronomers’ demonstrations] conveys [the heavens’] roundness [and rotational motion (istidārā) and [earth’s] position in the middle [tawwassuṭ] only on the basis of the senses, not truth. So one cannot but conclude that it is conjecture (taḥaddus), just like the illumination of the moon by the sun.’

Qādī Zādah’s argument for the ease and likelihood of uniformly rotating orbs was based upon mathematics (al-ta‘līmiyyāt). He characterized the arguments for the composition of the heavens out of orbs as ‘iqnā‘iyya (persuasive), that is, not decisive; significantly, they were not derived from falsafa. Qādī Zādah’s response to critics such as al-Ījī and al-Taftāzānī was to meet them on their own ground by focusing his arguments on religious concepts and mathematics, rather than attempting to reassert the primacy of falsafa’s physics. From Qādī Zādah’s point of view, his arguments yield a conjecture that is most likely, whereas al-Taftāzānī had dismissed all such explanations as conjecture.

Another point of astronomy that forced astronomers to confront the extent of astronomy’s dependence on falsafa was the question of whether or not the earth, centred in the cosmos, moved with a diurnal motion. Al-Bīrūnī was an astronomer in Islamic civilization who argued that the question of the earth’s rotation could be settled by means of observational tests; after him, al-Ṭūsī, al-Shirāzī, and al-Nisābūrī all assayed the viability of demonstrating the earth’s lack of diurnal motion by means of observations alone, without recourse to falsafa. Quite illuminating

54 Al-Taftāzānī, Sbarb al-Maqāṣid, iii, 186–88. The astronomers’ arguments on the basis of observation did not conclusively disprove the conceivable of another cause.

55 Al-Taftāzānī, Sbarb al-Maqāṣid, iii, 186.

56 Al-Taftāzānī, Sbarb al-Maqāṣid, iii, 188: Wa-law sullima, fa-ma ḏbukira la yufid illā al-istidārā waw-l-tawwassuṭ bi-ḥasab al-ḥiss dūna al-ḥaqīqa wa-l-maḥṣ illā bi-l-rijūṣ ilā anna dhālika taḥaddus ka-ma fi istidārāt al-qamar bi-l-sbams. I translate taḥaddus as conjecture because al-Taftāzānī clearly did not consider knowledge gained through taḥaddus to be equivalent to that gained through a syllogism.

57 Qādī Zādah, Ḥāshiya ‘alā al-Majīṣṭi, fol. 3’.

are the statements of ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Bīrjandi (d. 1525), an astronomer in the scholarly tradition of the Samarqand madrasa who commented on al-Ṭūsī’s *Tadbkira* and *Tabrīr al-Majīṣī* (Recension of the *Almagest*) and referred, in his commentary on the *Tadbkira*, to al-Taftāzānī’s *Sbarḥ al-Maqāṣīd*. Bīrjandi also wrote a gloss on Qāḍī Zādah’s commentary on al-Jaghmīnī’s *Mukabkbas*, an introductory summary of ‘ilm al-bay‘a. In his commentary on the *Tadbkira*, written in 1508, al-Bīrjandi concluded that recourse to phylisical principles from falsafato establish a stationary earth, in light of the inadequacy of observational tests, was necessary and appropriate. But al-Bīrjandi’s *Sbarḥ Tabrīr al-Majīṣī* (Commentary on the Recension of the *Almagest*) deserves examination, too, because there he gave more careful consideration to perspectives on the earth’s rotation that differed with the conclusions of falsafa.

Although al-Bīrjandi did not name the proponents of the earth’s diurnal motion, their views closely resemble those found in kalam texts. For instance, al-Ījī had written that the air surrounding the earth would accompany the earth in its motion, were it to exist, thereby obviating the possibility of any observational test of the earth’s motion. According to al-Ījī, a ball thrown upwards would be carried along with the earth’s rotation as it moved up and down, due to the fact that the surrounding air conforms to the earth (yushāyī‘ubā al-bawā’) in its motion. Likewise, an arrow shot in the direction of the earth’s purported motion and another shot in the opposite direction would each land an equal distance from the argument that an observational test could settle the matter. Al-Nisābūrī (p. 152), following al-Ṭūsī, disagreed with al-Shīrāzī about the decisiveness of an observational test.

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60 I have used Bibliothèque nationale de Tunis (BnT), MS 12982 of his *Ḫāṣbiyya ‘alā Sbarḥ Qāḍī Zādah ‘alā al-Mukabkbas fī al-bay‘a*.

61 Ragep, ‘Ṭūsī and Copernicus’, p. 158. See also al-Bīrjandi, *Sbarḥ al-Tadbkira*, MS Arabic 4285, fols 37r–38r. There al-Bīrjandi mentions some arguments in favour of a rotating earth similar to those he would mention in his *Sbarḥ Tabrīr al-Majīṣī* and his *Ḫāṣbiyya ‘alā Sbarḥ Qāḍī Zādah ‘alā al-Mukabkbas*, but dismissed those arguments more readily than he did in his other texts. Al-Bīrjandi also responded to al-Qūshijī’s (d. 1474) position (see Ragep, ‘Ṭūsī and Copernicus’, p. 157), which was that only an observational test could determine whether the earth rotated, and that such a test did not exist. Therefore, nothing false followed from a rotating earth. For more on al-Qūshijī’s separation of astronomy from falsafa, see Ragep, ‘Freeing Astronomy from Philosophy’.

point of origin due to the motion of the conforming air. Al-İji then contended, in contradiction to the presumption of a stationary earth, that the earth could have a natural inclination towards rotational motion (mabda' mayl mustad'ir) but could nevertheless be moved by compulsion (qasırān) rectilinearly. Moreover, al-İji noted, a wheel moves simultaneously with both rotational and rectilinear motion, but its dual inclinations (mayl) do not negate each other (lä nusallim tanāfi'ibimā). One could conclude, as a commentator on the Mawāqif did, that al-İji implied here the possibility of more than one type of natural motion existing in the earth. In an earlier era, but in the same vein, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī had written in his al-Maṭālib al-‘āliya that what all bodies had in common was greater than the difference between an inclination to one type of motion or to another. Al-Rāzī’s statement could be construed, in turn, as a response to Ibn Sinā’s claim in his al-Iṣbārāt wa-l-tanbībāt that whatever had an inclination towards rotational motion, that is, a celestial orb, could not also have an inclination towards rectilinear motion. Thus, al-İji’s views are a direct development from earlier debates concerning the doctrine of a stationary earth.

63 Al-İji, Mawāqif, ii, 484–85. Certain astronomers shared these arguments against the viability of observational tests of the earth’s rotation.

64 There were different categories of mayl, one of which (mayl qasırī) was analogous to the impetus found in European science. Al-İji was certainly aware (S. Pines, ‘Études sur Awhād al-Zammān Abu’l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī, Revue des études juives, 103 (1937), 33–64 (p. 49) (repr. with the same pagination in S. Pines, Studies in Abu’l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (Jerusalem, 1979)) of these categories. For Ibn Sinā (see Pines, ‘Études’, p. 50), mayl qasırī was what permitted projectiles to continue in their motion. But whatever al-İji’s understanding of projectile motion may have been, the key point here is al-İji’s conclusion that there was no observational test that could determine whether or not the earth had a daily rotation. This, in turn, raised the important question of whether there could be more than one inclination (mayl) in a single body.

65 Al-İji, al-Mawāqif, ii, 485. See also n. 68, below, as Ibn Sinā held the view that whatever had an inclination to rotational motion could not have an inclination to rectilinear motion.

66 Al-Jurjānī’s commentary on this paragraph of the Mawāqif (see al-İji, al-Mawāqif, ii, 487) understood al-İji’s statement about the lack of opposition in the inclinations to entail the possibility of two types of inclinations towards natural motion existing in the earth. Al-Jurjānī wrote: Ay tanāfī al-maylayn ḷattā yulzim al-munāfāb bayn al-mabda’ayn.

67 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Maṭālib al-‘āliya, ed. by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Shāhīn, 9 vols in 3 (Beirut, 1999), vi, 120.

68 Ibn Sinā, al-Iṣbārāt wa-l-tanbībāt, ii, 301. Cf. al-Qūshjī’s statement (Ragep, ‘Ṭūsī and Copernicus’, p. 157) that ‘it is not established that what has a principle of rectilinear inclination
In a manner reminiscent of his *Tadhkira* commentary, al-Birjandi, in his commentary on *Taḥrīr al-Maṣḥūṭ*, written seven years later in 1515, explained that observational tests could not establish whether or not the earth moved; the only viable demonstration (burbān) comes from falsafa. Al-Birjandi probably had in mind al-Qushjī’s statement that falsafa was unnecessary for bay’a and that the earth’s rotation entailed nothing false (shay‘ min al-mafāsid). But al-Birjandi’s remarks in his commentary on *Taḥrīr al-Maṣḥūṭ*, when read carefully, acknowledged certain strengths in the views of those who held that the earth might in fact have a natural inclination towards rotational motion. These arguments deserve our attention because of the chronological relationship between al-Birjandi’s two commentaries, and also because the *Tadhkira* and *Taḥrīr al-Maṣḥūṭ* are not the same type of text. Before presenting the arguments from falsafa for a stationary earth, but only after he is through discussing the observational tests, al-Birjandi pointed out that a rotating earth entails three things that are contrary to nature (*mukhabāṭa li-l-ṭabh‘a*). The first is that a rotating earth denies rotational motion to an orb, a body suited to rotational motion. The second is that the earth is not suited to rotational motion. The third is that the earth would have to participate is prevented from [having] a circular motion. The Arabic (‘Ali al-Qushjī, *Sharḥ Taẁīrī al-‘aqāʿīd* (Tehran, 1890[?]), p. 195 (pages are unnumbered)) reads: *innabū lam yatubbat imtiyā‘ al-ḥaraka al-mustadira ‘alā mà fīḥ maḥda‘ mayl mustaqīm*. Note that al-Qushjī did not mention an inclination to circular motion in this passage; but for Birjandi, the issue was whether the two principles are mutually exclusive.

69 Al-Birjandi, *Sharḥ Taḥrīr al-Maṣḥūṭ*, MS Loth 742, fols 19r–20v, especially fol. 20v. He wrote: *Fāʿl sbāḥ al-arḍ lā tataharrak ḥaraka mustadira ʿašru waḥ-dhū būrōn tāmm lākinnab ṣafī‘i wa-arbāb al-taʿālīm yataḥāsabūn dbāla‘ika* (Therefore the earth does not move with a circular motion and this [the preceding] is a complete demonstration, but it is physical [i.e., from the physics of falsafa] and the masters of the mathematical approach shun that).

70 On al-Qushjī, see Ragep, ‘Ṭūsī and Copernicus’, p. 157. Al-Birjandi began several folios in *Sharḥ al-Tadhkira* on the matter of the earth’s rotation by writing (MS Arabic 4285, fol. 36): *Fīlam anna madībāb al-ḥaqq anna al-arḍ sākina lā ḥaraka labā* (Know that the correct teaching is that the earth is at rest, not possessing any motion).

71 Al-Birjandi, *Sharḥ Taḥrīr al-Maṣḥūṭ*, MS Loth 742, fol. 19v. The discussion of the possibility of the earth’s diurnal motion begins on folio 17v. That chapter began with a discussion of the earth’s place in the centre of the cosmos and the earth’s lack of motion up or down.


with the orbs in rotational motion, but observations show that the earth has the principle of rectilinear (i.e., not rotational) motion.

Al-Bīrjandi, however, qualified those points that would seem to render a rotating earth contrary to nature. The second point (that the earth is not suited to rotational motion) he described as an argument of persuasion (ṣūrah ʿaqlī), pointing out that a rotating earth leads to nothing that is contrary to the bases of natural philosophy (mukhālis ṭīli-qawāʾid al-ḥikmah al-ṭairīyya). Instead, wrote al-Bīrjandi, in view of the earth’s density and the comparative gracefulness (laṭifā) of the orbs and the air, it is more proper (al-ansāb) that the orbs move instead of the earth. The adjective ansāb carried overtones of principles from Islamic legal theory that were connected to mašlaḥa. If no single raṭiʿa of ilā (illa) is specified for a given ruling of Islamic law, mašlaḥa is then the criterion for determining munāsaba (suitability, cf. ansāb) of a raṭiʿa legis. If nothing else, al-Bīrjandi reminded us that Islamic law accepted something less than a decisive proof as a basis for a legal decision.

Al-Bīrjandi also addressed the third point in the rebuttal (that observations show that the earth has the principle of rectilinear motion). The presence of an inclination to rectilinear motion in the parts of the earth, evident in the free fall of earthly bodies, may not preclude an inclination to rotational motion in the whole; the matter needs to be investigated (fībi baḥth). Moreover, since according to the claim of the philosophers (ʿalā zaʾmīhīm), an orb cannot be divided, the philosophers have no way of knowing that the parts of an orb necessarily lack an inclination to rectilinear motion. We do not find here the rebuttal of that position that al-Bīrjandi gave in his earlier commentary on the Tadbkira. Al-Bīrjandi, in his

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74 Al-Bīrjandi, Sharḥ Tabrīr al-Majṣīṣī, fol. 19, ll. 9–10. In light of al-Bīrjandi’s ultimate preference for argument from falsafa, I have concluded that the second argument is less persuasive.

75 Al-Bīrjandi, Sharḥ Tabrīr al-Majṣīṣī, fol. 19‘. There he wrote that among those who inclined towards a rotating earth were aṣḥāb Rasūl Il-kwān al-Safā‘; people who argued that since the rotational velocities of the planets closer to the earth were greater, and that the slowest orb was the eighth orb (responsible for the motion of the fixed stars in precession), it would be munāsib that the earth’s rotational velocity would be greatest (a period of twenty-four hours).

76 Hallaq, History of Islamic Legal Theories, p. 88.

77 Al-Bīrjandi, Sharḥ Tabrīr al-Majṣīṣī, fol 19‘.

\(\text{ḥāshiyya} \) on Qāḍī Zādah’s commentary on al-Jaghmīnī’s \textit{Mulakhkhaṣ}, the date of completion of which has not been ascertained, cited some philosophers (\(\text{ḥukamā}^\circ\)) who attributed rotational motion to the orb of the earth although sense perception indicated that the parts of the earth moved with rectilinear motion.\(^{79}\) He accounted for that suggestion, again, with the idea (certainly not his own) that the presence of an inclination in a part does not obviate the existence of another inclination for the whole. Taken together, al-Bīrjandī’s qualifications to his second and third points about why a moving earth would be contrary to nature in his \textit{Sbarb Taḥrīr al-Majīṣṭī} mitigate the strength of the first point (that a rotating earth would deny rotation to an orb, a body suited to rotational motion). Regarding the first point in his rebuttal of a rotating earth, al-Bīrjandī conceded that proponents of a rotating earth eliminate the highest orb responsible for the daily motion, thereby taking the sting out of his objection.\(^{80}\)

Al-Bīrjandī’s response in his \textit{Sbarb Taḥrīr al-Majīṣṭī} to the suggestion of a rotating earth treated falsafa as the best available option for settling the question.\(^{81}\) Even an argument that al-Bīrjandī characterized as being something other than philosophical, that is, that it was more proper for the orbs to rotate than the earth, draws upon findings of falsafa (that the orbs were ‘graceful’). But al-Bīrjandī did not argue in his commentary on \textit{Taḥrīr al-Majīṣṭī}, as he had in his \textit{Sbarb al-Tadhkīra}, that it was natural for astronomers to answer the question of the earth’s rotation by means of arguments drawn from falsafa for the reason that ‘\(\text{īlm al-bay’a} \) had borrowed its foundations from physics (\(\text{ṭabi‘iyyāt} \)) in the first place.\(^{82}\) Rather, the conclusion I draw from his commentary on \textit{Taḥrīr al-Majīṣṭī} is that while a rotating earth was conceivable, the preponderance of evidence (e.g., parts of the earth are not observed to move with rectilinear motion) suggests to him a stationary earth. In

\[\text{al-naqṣ al-muṣlaq wa-yalzam minbu an yamīl al-majmūʿ ilayh ayyād}. \text{Fa-mabda’ al-mayl al-mustaṣiq thābit fī jumlatibā ayyād}.\]

\(^{79}\) Bīrjandī, \textit{Ḥāshiyya ‘alā Sbarb Qāḍī Zādab ‘alā al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-bay’a}, BnT, MS 12982, fol. 22v.


\(^{81}\) Cf. Dallal, ‘Islamic Paradigms’. Cf. also al-Nisābūrī, \textit{Sbarb Taḥrīr al-Majīṣṭī}, BnT, MS 3663, fol.10v. This is the corresponding section of al-Nisābūrī’s commentary on \textit{Taḥrīr al-Majīṣṭī}, a text written before al-Īji completed \textit{Kitāb al-Mawāqīf}. Al-Nisābūrī, though he did not identify as a \textit{mutakallim}, was sympathetic to kalam; yet he wrote only that a moving earth would entail things contrary to nature (\(\text{umūr mukhālīfa li-l-ṭabi‘a} \).)

\(^{82}\) He did not assert that the reply of falsafa was the correct teaching (\(\text{madhbab al-ḥaqiq} \) as he had in \textit{Sbarb al-Tadhkīra}.}
sum, al-Birjandī did invoke falsafa’s physics to argue for a stationary earth in his commentary on Taḥrīr al-Majisti, but he did not view a moving earth as a threat to the science of astronomy, nor did he argue for a stronger link between falsafa and astronomy.

Al-Birjandī’s discussions about the issues involved in the rotation of the earth tell us a great deal about the acceptance of astronomy (a debate that centred upon the relationship between astronomy to falsafa) within a tradition of religious scholarship (a debate whose primary concern was the soundness of falsafa’s conclusions). His deliberations add to the picture we drew in the first part of this article on the basis of the deliberations of his predecessors. Kalam’s criticisms of falsafa, as well as astronomers’ own preference for mathematical proofs both withstanding, falsafa remained relevant for some astronomers.

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83 See Ragep, ‘Tūsī and Copernicus’, p. 158, for al-Shirāzi’s remarks, from Nibāyat al-īdrāk, about how astronomy’s proofs were less susceptible to doubt than falsafa’s.
I. Introduction

What was the extent of Avicenna’s influence on Jewish thought? I begin by cutting to the chase and offering my conclusion. Avicenna exercised a marked influence on medieval Jewish thought — probably greater than most scholars in the field imagine — but this influence did not approach that exercised by al-Fārābī and, a fortiori, Averroes. Put another way, Avicenna’s name was well known among Jewish thinkers, but he did not acquire the stature among them that he attained among his co-religionists or even among the Scholastics.

There has never been any doubt concerning Avicenna’s influence on Jewish thought, but research over the past decade has sharpened the picture of this influence and broadened its scope. I have in mind, in particular, the studies of Mauro Zonta on Hebrew Avicennism and that of Warren Zev Harvey, on Avicenna’s influence on Maimonides.¹ As a result of this research, there is now emerging a sense regarding why Jews turned to Avicenna, and why they hesitated to do so. In the present paper, I will sum up the recent studies on Avicenna’s impact on Jewish thought, point to some rather neglected areas of influence, and try to paint a portrait of the image of the *shaykh al-ra‘īs* among medieval Jewish philosophers.

I think it is useful in discussing the influence of Avicenna — or for that matter, al-Fārābī — on medieval Jewish thought to distinguish between his influence on pre-Maimonidean Jewish thinkers, on post-Maimonidean ones, and on Maimonides himself. I have for many years been of the opinion that an Islamic philosopher’s authority among post-Maimonidean Jews was to a great extent determined by Maimonides’ estimation of him. I begin then with a brief survey of Avicenna’s influence on pre-Maimonidean Jewish philosophy, that is, on those thinkers who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to some extent in the East (mainly in areas now forming Iraq), but primarily in the West, in particular, in al-Andalus, and who could read Avicenna in the original Arabic.

II. Avicenna’s Impact on Pre-Maimonidean Jewish Thought

One of the most striking features of the history of medieval Jewish thought is that the Islamic *falāṣīfa*, who so dominated post-Maimonidean Jewish philosophy, had only a minor impact on it until the last decades of the twelfth century. This is true, for example, with regard to al-Fārābī, and it is no less true with regard to Avicenna. Thus, although Judah Halevi’s *Kuzari* (1140) is in part a critique of that stream of Aristotelian philosophy that was espoused by the Islamic *falāṣīfa*, it is hard to know what occasioned this particular critique. Shlomo Pines has shown that Halevi’s portrayal of the teachings of the philosophers is based on those of Avicenna and Ibn Bāja, concluding on the basis of Halevi’s conflicting accounts of the opinions of the philosophers in Book 1.1 and Book v.2–12 — in particular, with regard to the question of the possibility of conjunction in this life with the Active Intellect — that Halevi at first may have identified philosophy with the teachings of Ibn Bāja, and later, while completing the book, was exposed to the influence of Avicenna’s writings. Pines supports his claim by citing certain evidence that suggests that Avicenna’s writings were not generally known in Spain until around the time of the completion of the *Kuzari*, that is, around the late 1130s. Yet apart from the question of when Avicenna’s writings arrived in Spain, we do not know


3 Pines, ‘Shi’ite Terms’, p. 216. Pines does not mention dates, but he suggests that Avicenna’s writings ‘came to be known relatively late in Muslim Spain’. He supports this claim by noting that Ibn Bāja (d. 1138) does not seem to refer to him.
of any Jewish philosophers of Halevi’s day who were influenced by or even well read in Avicenna. Halevi’s younger friend, Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1167), was certainly influenced by some of Avicenna’s writings — for example, in his treatment of God’s knowledge of particulars and, as Zev Harvey has pointed out, in the distinction between necessary and possible existence⁴ — but he is the exception and in any case was not so influenced as to be classified as a philosopher in the mould of the ḥalāṣīfā.

Here I must interrupt my discussion with an important digression. I mentioned Pines’s claim that Avicenna’s writings were not generally known in Spain until the late 1130s. This claim is crucial, for if true, we would not have to concern ourselves with the possible influence of Avicenna on Jewish thinkers in Spain in the eleventh century and first third of the twelfth century. Pines’s claim is further strengthened by recent remarks of Dimitri Gutas that the Andalusian philosophers were at least initially ‘poorly informed’ about Avicenna. Indeed, while Gutas deftly traces a rich tradition of the study of Avicenna’s philosophy during this period throughout the Near East, he is virtually silent about al-Andalus.⁵ Like Pines, he finds evidence for the unavailability of Avicenna’s writings in Spain in Ibn Bājja’s apparent ignorance concerning Avicenna.⁶ A far more definitive statement regarding Avicenna’s influence in Spain than either Pines or Gutas was prepared to make was made by Miguel Cruz Hernández in an article on Islamic thought in the Iberian Peninsula: ‘Ibn Ṭufayl was the first Andalusi thinker who knew and used Ibn Sinā.’⁷ Given that Ibn Ṭufayl’s use of Avicenna occurs in his Hayy ibn Yaqqān, which is now thought to have been written somewhere between 1177 and 1182,⁸ Cruz Hernández’s claim is certainly remarkable. It is also false. Although the several collections that have recently appeared on Avicenna’s influence and

heritage, including the present volume, have not to my knowledge pointed to any pre–Ibn Ṭufayl influence of Avicenna on Islamic thought in the West, I suspect Avicenna was much better known in Spain at that time than is generally thought. As for Cruz Hernández’s claim, Averroes — although a younger contemporary of Ibn Ṭufayl — was already citing Avicenna and quarrelling with him in 1159 in his epitomes, some two decades before the writing of /lists/ Hayy ibn Yaqqān. But even apart from Avicenna’s influence on Hispano-Islamic thought at the time, there is definite evidence that he was known in Spain in Jewish circles, at least beginning with Halevi.9 In fact, Avicenna’s impact on twelfth-century Jewish thought has a decisive part to play in the study of the extent of his presence in al-Andalus at that time. Such a study, at present still a desideratum, is crucial for appreciating the intellectual currents in twelfth-century Islamic Spain.

I return now to my discussion. I had just mentioned the noticeable presence in Ibn Ezra’s writings of key Avicennian teachings. Thanks to the recent studies of Israel Levin and Aaron Hughes, we can now say even more. Levin established that Avicenna’s risāla, Ḥayy ibn Yaqqān, unquestionably served as the basis of Ibn Ezra’s philosophic poem, Ḥayy ben Meqis.10 Hughes, in several studies, has sought to define the precise nature of this influence, as well as why and where Ibn Ezra parted from his source. For him, Ḥayy ben Meqis is an allegorical tale that presents ‘one of the fullest expressions of [Ibn Ezra’s] philosophical worldview’,11 and can best be understood in light of its similarities and departures from Avicenna’s treatise.

This is a good illustration of how Avicenna’s influence on Jewish thought can be of use today in our study of his influence on Islamic thought. Gutas has written repeatedly on Ibn Ṭufayl’s interpretation of Avicenna and on the relation of the former’s Ḥayy ibn Yaqqān to the latter’s. Yet Gutas could not say with any degree of certainty whether Avicenna’s Ḥayy had reached Spain at the time of Ibn Ṭufayl.


His own view is that Ibn Ṭufayl possibly knew the work, but even this statement seemed too strong to him. Reasons Gutas: ‘It is difficult to assume that Ibn Ṭufayl had access to Ibn Sinā’s Ḥayy b. Yaẓār [. . .]. Had [it] been readily available in Andalus, it is hard to see how it could have been possible for Ibn Ṭufayl so radically to alter [its] contents in his own tale and still claim to be presenting Ibn Sinā’s Eastern philosophy.’ But we know now that Avicenna’s Ḥayy was circulating in al-Andalus, for Ibn Ezra based his Ḥay on it before he left Spain in 1140. It also seems quite unlikely that Ibn Ezra in the 1130s would have had access to a text of Avicenna’s to which a confidant in the court like Ibn Ṭufayl would not, several decades later.

We can say with certainty that Avicenna was known and impacted upon Jewish thinkers in Spain — at least as early as the 1130s, when Halevi and Ibn Ezra came under his influence. Scholars have suggested Avicenna’s influence on earlier Hispano-Jewish thinkers. For example, recently, Hagit Mittelman in her thesis on the Commentary on Ecclesiastes of Isaac Ibn Ghīyāt, an eleventh-century halakhist and exegete and head of the yeshiva of Lucena, has suggested the influence upon him of Avicenna’s al-Najāt, Aḥwāl al-nafs, and Fī aqṣām al-‘ulūm al-‘aq莉yya. Her arguments are based for the most part on similar phrases and are, I believe, intended to be more suggestive than definitive. In any case, I know of no definitive evidence of Avicennian influence on Hispano-Jewish thought prior to the period of Halevi and Ibn Ezra.

While Avicenna was thus known to pre-Maimonidean Jewish thinkers, it would be a mistake to call any of them card-carrying Avicennists, any of them that is until


13 See, e.g., Hughes, Texture of the Divine, pp. 22 and 213 n. 35; 1160 in n. 35 is a typo; it should be read 1140.


15 The author of the anonymous Kitāb ma’anī al-nafs (ed. by I. Goldziher (Berlin, 1902)) refers to Avicenna, and may be one of the earliest Jewish authors to do so. The book is thought to have been written sometime between the mid-eleventh and mid-twelfth centuries, and likely in Spain or North Africa, but nothing definitive is known.
Abraham Ibn Da‘ud, who in 1160–61 in Toledo wrote *al-‘Aqīda al-raft‘a* (The Exalted Faith). Prior to Ibn Da‘ud, as we have seen, Avicenna exercised a certain influence on Jewish thought. I have mentioned Ibn Ezra’s adoption of Avicenna’s distinction between necessary and possible existence. Actually this distinction is found slightly earlier in twelfth-century Spain in the *Microcosm* of Joseph Ibn Ṣaddiq. Ibn Ṣaddiq wrote: ‘Therefore the philosophers wrote that He whose existence is necessary is the Creator, may He be exalted, while the created beings are all possible.’ Yet Ibn Ṣaddiq was far further than Ibn Ezra from being an Avicennist. Pines writes of Halevi that he ‘was greatly impressed by [Avicenna], and he may have tried, notwithstanding the critique of philosophy […] to adapt his own ideas […] at least to some extent’ to an Avicennian framework. But again Halevi was certainly not an Avicennist, and I wonder to whom his critique of Avicenna and other *falāsifa* was directed, for we know of no Hispano-Jewish thinker of the time who could be identified with the teachings of Avicenna or any of the *falāsifa*. The first Jewish thinker who indeed fits this mould is Ibn Da‘ud, and his book the *Exalted Faith* is the first Jewish Aristotelian work. Although Ibn Da‘ud does not mention Avicenna’s name, there is no question that he is his primary philosophic source in his book, and that Ibn Da‘ud, like earlier Jewish thinkers, is particularly indebted to him in his treatment of focal topics such as God and the human soul. Ibn Da‘ud’s book was quickly overshadowed by the next great Jewish book rooted in Aristotelian philosophy and science, Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*. The question of Avicenna’s influence on Maimonides is more complex than that of Avicenna on Ibn Da‘ud; and unlike Ibn Da‘ud, Maimonides clearly valued al-Fārābī more than Avicenna.


III. Avicenna’s Impact on Maimonides

As is well known, Maimonides near the end of his life advised Samuel Ibn Tibbon, the translator of the Guide of the Perplexed, which philosophers to read and which are not worth reading. Maimonides had only the highest praise for al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and Averroes, but was reserved in his praise of Avicenna. For him Avicenna’s books are good, but they are not as good as those of al-Fārābī. Nonetheless, they are still useful and worth studying. What is particularly striking about this evaluation of Avicenna is that it does not appear with the praises of the other falasifa, but at the very end of the letter, almost as an afterthought. Of course, the fact that Maimonides is reserved in praising a thinker in the letter or even does not mention him at all does not mean that that thinker did not influence him with regard to certain formulations, analogies, or examples, but it does probably suggest that Maimonides did not want to direct attention to that thinker or encourage the reader to turn to his works. In fact, Avicenna’s impact upon Maimonides in the Guide is not limited to formulations, analogies, or examples, but involves central themes in his philosophy.

It is now generally acknowledged — to a great extent, thanks to Shlomo Pines — that Avicenna’s influence upon Maimonides’ teachings in the Guide is greater than one might have thought on the basis of Maimonides’ qualified praise for him in his letter to Ibn Tibbon, the fact that he does not mention him at all in the Guide, and the often contemptuous attitude towards him by Maimonides’ fellow Aristotelian, Averroes. Yet, it is also true that his view of Avicenna’s science with its departures from Aristotle was not so different from that of Averroes. For Maimonides, one does not learn true science — that is, Aristotelian science — from Avicenna. True science is learned from the works of Aristotle, explicated and interpreted by Averroes and the Greek commentators, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius, along with the treatises of the great philosophers al-Fārābī and Ibn Bājja. Where does Avicenna fit in for Maimonides? And in what ways are his books useful? The answers can be found in the kind of influence he exerted on the Guide.

Pines showed that Avicenna may have influenced Maimonides in the following areas: (1) the description of God as a Necessary Existent, whose existence is


identical with His essence; (2) Maimonides’ negative theology; (3) certain aspects of his theory of prophecy; and (4) perhaps his notion of intellectual worship.\footnote{Pines, ‘Philosophic Sources’, p. cii.} Zev Harvey has recently pointed to Maimonides’ use of Avicenna’s metaphysical proof for the existence of God and argued that, unlike Avicenna, Maimonides held that the metaphysical proof was dependent on the unproved premise of the eternity of the world. In other words — and Maimonides, of course, does not say this explicitly — Avicenna’s metaphysical proof for the existence of God is not really a proof. Harvey surmises that Maimonides was drawn to Avicenna’s metaphysical speculations because they ‘represented the most intelligent and sublime metaphysics’. He maintains that for Maimonides, demonstrations in metaphysics are impossible, ‘so it makes no sense to try to use strict philosophic methodology in discussing metaphysical issues’, In other words, in the area of metaphysics or theology, where orthodox Aristotelian science loses its edge, Avicenna’s teachings can be of use.\footnote{This significant point has also been made recently by Idit Dobbs-Weinstein. According to her, Maimonides considered the writings of the other \textit{falasifa} ‘superior to those of Avicennal for philosophic instruction’ because of their ‘demonstrative quality’, but the writings of Avicenna superior ‘both in form and content for instruction in “divine science”’ (Maimonides’ Reticence toward Ibn Sin\={a}, in \textit{Avicenna and his Heritage} (see n. 1, above), pp. 285–86).} Harvey concludes that Maimonides turned to Avicenna’s metaphysics because it ‘most effectively directed the mind toward the knowledge of the Unknowable’.\footnote{W. Z. Harvey, ‘Maimonides’ Avicennianism’, pp. 114–16. On Maimonides’ presentation of Avicenna’s metaphysical proof, see also W. Z. Harvey, \textit{Physics and Metaphysics in Hasdai Crescas} (Amsterdam, 1998), pp. 73–76.} This fits in nicely with Pines’s observation that Avicenna’s system ‘is much more consonant with religious feeling […] and doubtless also with religion \textit{tout court} as conceived in the Middle Ages than the doctrine of the Orthodox Aristotelians’.\footnote{Pines, ‘Philosophic Sources’, p. xciii.}

The studies of Pines and Harvey present us with a clear picture of Avicenna’s impact on Maimonides.\footnote{Certain other recent attempts to describe this influence are not as helpful, add virtually nothing to the picture, and are at times misleading. See, for example, the entry ‘The Influence of Islamic Thought on Maimonides’, in the online \textit{Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy}, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (2005), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/maimonides-islamic> [accessed December 2008].} In addition, topical papers such as those by Binyamin Abrahamov and Amira Eran on Maimonides’ use of \textit{hads} and its indebtedness to Avicenna are very helpful for further defining and illustrating the extent of this
influence.\textsuperscript{26} Several years ago I argued that Avicenna was likely Maimonides’ direct source for his unconventional use of ‘ishq for love of God in \textit{Guide}, iii.51.\textsuperscript{27} More recently, I have argued, following Pines’s lead,\textsuperscript{28} that Avicenna’s discussion of outward prayer, that is, ritual prayer, and inward prayer — which for Avicenna is the true worship — influenced Maimonides’ discussion of prayer and intellectual worship in the \textit{Guide}.\textsuperscript{29} Such influences should not be surprising. While Maimonides had little use for Avicenna’s version of Aristotelian physical science, Avicenna’s thoughts on the divine and man’s relation to God were helpful pointers and guides on roads where demonstration could not tread.

\section*{IV. Avicenna’s Impact on Post-Maimonidean Jewish Thought}

Post-Maimonidean Jewish Aristotelians — no doubt under the influence of Maimonides, but also of Averroes — at first showed little interest in Avicenna, and surprisingly few of his works were translated into Hebrew. Avicenna was viewed by them as an Aristotelian but not a very faithful or reliable one. Thus the leading fourteenth-century translator of scientific texts from Arabic into Hebrew, Kalonymus ben Kalonymus, distinguished Avicenna from the ‘important philosophers’,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Shlomo Pines suggested that the expression ‘intellectual worship’ is ‘reminiscent of Avicenna’s views’ in the \textit{Treatise on Prayer}. See his ‘Philosophic Sources’, p. cii.
\item \textsuperscript{29} See S. Harvey, ‘Avicenna and Maimonides on Prayer and Intellectual Worship’ (to be published in \textit{Proceedings of the Workshop, Exchange and Transmission across Cultural Boundaries: Philosophy, Mysticism and Science in the Mediterranean World}).
\end{itemize}
Alexander of Aphrodisias, al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and Averroes.\textsuperscript{30} The problem again was that Avicenna all too often ‘inclined a bit from the path of Aristotle’.\textsuperscript{31} These views were shared by learned Aristotelians such as Joseph Ibn Kaspi and Gersonides, who also had no use for the scientific writings of Avicenna. Indeed when Aristotelian philosophers such as Isaac Albalag, Moses Narboni, and Moses ben Judah turned to the account of Avicennian science, presented by al-Ghazālī in his \textit{Maqāṣid al-falāṣīfa} (Intentions of the Philosophers), they did so as a springboard for teaching essentially Averroean science.\textsuperscript{32} The best science in their eyes was simply Aristotelian as explicated by Averroes. There was no reason for serious students of natural science to look elsewhere.

Yet it is becoming increasingly clear that Avicenna’s philosophy and science indeed made an impact on post-Maimonidean thought, either through his own writings, through Averroes’ critique of his writings, or through al-Ghazālī’s account of his science in the \textit{Intentions of the Philosophers}. While it is true that Avicenna’s Arabic texts had relatively little impact on Jewish thought prior to Ibn Da’ud and Maimonides in the second half of the twelfth century, Avicenna is quoted in the thirteenth century by authors such as Samuel Ibn Tibbon and Shem-Tov Falaquera, using their own direct Hebrew translations from the Arabic,\textsuperscript{33} and from Latin translations of the Arabic by Hillel of Verona.\textsuperscript{34} Among authors who wrote in Arabic, he


clearly influenced Moses ben Joseph Halevi in the thirteenth century and Joseph Ibn Waqqār in the fourteenth. Some of those who turned to Avicenna found his philosophy more compatible with religion than that of the other *fālāṣīfa*, while others like Falaquera favoured the philosophy and science of Averroes, but still found Avicenna of value. As I have mentioned, little of Avicenna was translated into Hebrew. Apart from (1) the immensely popular translations of *al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb* and other medical writings, (2) two treatises translated from the Latin and falsely attributed to Avicenna, and (3) some passages cited in Hebrew by Ibn Tibbon, Falaquera, and a few others, the major translator of Avicenna was Ṭodros Ṭodrosi, who in his anthology of translated philosophic texts (dated 1343) included the sections on physics and metaphysics from *al-Najāt* and some other chapters and passages from Avicenna. Mauro Zonta has claimed that Ṭodrosi’s interest in Avicenna, like that of certain other Jewish thinkers we have mentioned, may have derived from his desire to reconcile Judaism not with the strict Aristotelianism of Averroes, but with a more moderate form of philosophy that is more compatible with traditional Judaism. Surprisingly, Ṭodrosi’s translation of Avicenna’s *al-Najāt* does not seem to have been too popular or influential, and it is extant

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36 This five-part book was exceedingly popular in Hebrew translation as is evident from the dozens of extant manuscripts of the various partial translations of the text and of the translation of an abridged version of it. The main Hebrew translation of *al-Qānūn* was that by Nathan ha-Me’ati in 1279 of Books II–V. As a further sign of the work’s great popularity among medieval Jews, there are more manuscripts of it in Arabic with Hebrew characters than any other book by an Islamic author. See Y. T. Langemann, ‘Arabic Writings in Hebrew Manuscripts: A Preliminary Relisting’, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 6 (1996), 137–60 (pp. 156–57). Langemann concludes (p. 157): ‘Clearly, Ibn Sinā’s book was the most important text used by Jewish doctors in medieval and Renaissance times.’


today in only two manuscripts.40 Dov Schwartz has shown that a group of Spanish commentators on Ibn Ezra in the second half of the fourteenth century adopted various teachings of Avicenna,41 but there is little evidence that they were directly familiar with al-Najāt or any other of Avicenna’s scientific texts. These authors for the most part were interested in Avicenna’s teachings concerning God, His creation, and the human soul, but unlike the Jewish Aristotelians, do not seem to have been particularly learned or interested in logic or to have studied natural science systematically. Thus, for example, several of them adopted Avicenna’s distinction between essence and existence and spoke of God as the Necessary Existent, as Schwartz has shown, but do not seem to have studied Avicenna’s physics, which precedes these teachings. Indeed some may not even have been aware that these were Avicenna’s teachings.42

At around the turn of the century, Ḥasidai Crescas (1340–1410/11), in his revolutionary critique of Aristotelian physics, was perhaps the first Jew to study al-Ghazālī’s reworking of Avicennian science carefully in Hebrew translation as a serious alternative to purely Averroean physics. Crescas turned to the book for clarification of Aristotelian science and for help in his arguments against that science. Crescas highly valued the thought of Avicenna and those who reformulated his teachings, al-Ghazālī and Ibn Daʿud.43 He favoured al-Ghazālī’s formulations of Avicennan science to those of Avicenna himself, perhaps because the former’s text was more readily at hand and more familiar to Crescas than those of Avicenna, but probably also because Crescas preferred al-Ghazālī’s simple and clear formulations.44 In any case, it is in the fifteenth century that the Intensions of the Philosophers became the most popular scientific text in Hebrew, and it is through this text and through al-Ghazālī’s devastating critique of Avicenna’s philosophy and theology in his Incoherence of the Philosophers, rather than through the few

40 Gabriella Berzin, a doctoral student at Harvard University, is currently preparing a critical edition of the section on psychology in ʿOdros’s translation of al-Najāt, along with a study of the influence of al-Najāt on medieval Jewish thought. The extent of this influence will have to await completion of her study.

41 D. Schwartz, Yashan be-qangan ḥadasb (Jerusalem, 1996).

42 Schwartz, Yashan be-qangan ḥadasb, pp. 125–38.


Hebrew translations of Avicenna’s works, that Jews became familiar with the full range of Avicenna’s teachings.45

V. Conclusion

This brief sketch of Avicenna’s influence on post-Maimonidean Jewish thought refers to his impact in the West. In the East — in Egypt where Maimonides’ descendants lived for centuries, in Yemen, and in other lands — in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, Jews continued to write in Arabic, but showed little interest in the philosophic tradition of the *falāsifa*.46 They were very familiar with the writings of Maimonides, but tended to read him through Sufi or Neoplatonic glasses.47 Their philosophy strayed far from the path of Aristotelianism and was blended with mysticism and esoterica. Yet if any of the Islamic *falāsifa* made an impact during this period on Jewish thinkers in the East, it is surely Avicenna. Paul Fenton, for example, has noted that several of Avicenna’s ‘Sufi works’ were copied during this period into Hebrew characters.48 What appealed to these Jewish thinkers was not Avicenna’s science, but his more mystical teachings.

The impact of Avicenna upon medieval Jewish philosophy was neither as great as it was in Islam nor as dominant as that of al-Fārābī and Averroes. Few of his works were translated into Hebrew, and they do not seem to have been widely read. Yet the fact is that his influence was, nonetheless, quite significant. Certain Hebrew philosophical terms and expressions repeatedly used in medieval Jewish thought — for example, *meḥuyyaw ba-meši’ut* (necessary existent), *efshari ba-meši’ut* (possible existent), *noten ba-ṣuvot* (giver of forms), *sekel bayyulanı* (hylic intellect), *sekel be-qinyan* (intellect in habitu), *ba-ḥush ba-mesbuttaf*

45 See Harvey, ‘Alghazali’s Account of Natural Science’, especially pp. 374–76.

46 David Blumenthal has, for example, pointed to the ‘ignorance of the Aristotelianism of Averroes’ on the part of the early fifteenth-century Ḥoter ben Shlomo, one of the leading Yemenite thinkers and interpreters of Maimonides of the period. See D. Blumenthal, *The Commentary of R. Ḥoter ben Sbelomo to the Thirteen Principles of Maimonides* (Leiden, 1974), p. 41.


(the common sense), ‘isbq (passionate love)—are taken from Avicenna or derive their meaning from him. In addition, his metaphysical proof for the existence of God, his understanding of essence and existence, his teaching of God’s knowledge of particulars, his theory of the soul and how man acquires knowledge, his notion of prophecy, his doctrine of immortality and the perfection of man, and many other teachings all penetrated deeply into the fabric of medieval Jewish thought. Indeed it is not possible to understand the history of Jewish philosophy without first understanding the philosophy of Avicenna.

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NEW LIGHT ON MAIMONIDEAN WRITINGS ON
METEMPSYCHOSIS AND THE INFLUENCE OF AVICENNA

Paul B. Fenton

Introduction

The Jewish debate concerning the doctrine of metempsychosis, or reincarnation, can be divided into two usually divergent approaches, the theologico-philosophical, on the one hand, and the Kabbalistic, on the other. As in many other theological topics, the Jewish discussion was, in a large measure, a reflection of the treatment of the subject in Muslim thought, where it aroused almost unanimous opposition, though it was upheld by certain Mutazilites. Calling themselves the partisans of Divine Unity and Divine Justice, it was the Mutazilites' trust in the essential justice of God that induced some of their number to believe in reincarnation on account of the opportunity it afforded to all to attain salvation. It was perceived as a feasible solution to the problem of the gratuitous suffering of innocent children and dumb animals, devoid of moral responsibility. The earliest refutations of metempsychosis which have come down to us, such as that of the Mutazilite ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1023), usually circumscribe this difficulty by attributing to God the virtue of ‘ītād, that is, ‘compensation’, in order to clear Him from the possible commitment of injustice.


This negative view of metempsychosis influenced the tenth- and eleventh-century Jewish *mutakallimūn*, such as Sa‘adya Ga‘on,\(^3\) as well as the Qaraite Ya‘qūb al-Qirqīsānī\(^1\) and Yusuf al-Andalusi.\(^5\) On the other hand, metempsychosis gained favour with some Shi’ite sects and was popularized by the Ismā‘īlī-inclined *Encyclopedia of the Sincere Brethren*.

However, by way of comparison, the disproof of metempsychosis occupied a much less important place in Muslim apologetic literature than the refutation of dualism or the eternity of the world. Perhaps the reason was that this doctrine was anchored in lands, such as Greece and India, that were remote from the centres in which Muslim theology was developed in the formative period. The debate on the subject thus remained marginal for many generations.

The point of view of the *falāsīf* was somewhat different; being deeply preoccupied with psychology and the destiny of the soul, they displayed, on the contrary, a keen interest in metempsychosis and its implications. They were divided between the psychological doctrine of Aristotle, according to which the soul was the form and entelechy of body, and that of the Neoplatonists, who perceived the soul as a pre-existent, individual substance, unrelated to the body except accidentally.

For al-Fārābī (d. 950), each human destiny is a unique occurrence and he declares at the end of his *Uyūn al-masā‘īl*: ‘Soul cannot have existed prior to body, as Plato claims, and it cannot pass from one body to another as claim the adepts of metempsychosis’.\(^6\)

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\(^1\) *Kitāb al-anwār*, ed. by L. Némoyer, 5 vols (New York, 1939–42), i, 54, and ii, 307–18, where Qirqisani, who uses the term *karr*, *takrīr*, or, more often, *tanāṣuḥb*, accuses Anan ben David of believing in transmigration of souls, attributing to him a work on the subject. In his commentary on Genesis 2. 7 Qirqisani upholds that each soul is created with its body, an argument against transmigration. See also H. Ben-Shammai, ‘Transmigration of Souls in Tenth-Century Jewish Thought in the Orient’, *Sefunot* 20 (1991), 117–36, especially p. 132.


\(^4\) Al-Fārābī, *Uyūn al-masā‘īl*, ed. by F. Diericke, *Alfarabi’s philosophische Abhandlungen* (Leipzig, 1892), p. 64. Nevertheless, the Hebrew poet, Immanuel of Rome, erroneously attributes to him the belief in metempsychosis and condemns him, in consequence,
I. Ibn Sīnā’s Refutation of Metempsychosis

Of special significance is the doctrine of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), who, as in most of his philosophical stands, adopted and enriched al-Fārābī’s position. In his Taʿlīqāt on the Theology of Aristotle, he rejects the pre-existence of the soul and argues that its ‘recollection’ of a previous life prior to its descent into body is either a façon de parler or is a misunderstanding based on a faulty text (tahrif).7 He specifically combats the belief in metempsychosis in at least two other places, in his Abwāl al-nafs and his Najāt.8

In the latter, a special chapter is devoted to the ‘Refutation of the Transmigration of Souls’,9 preceded by two preliminary chapters (12 and 13): ‘Concerning the Temporal Origin of the Soul’, in which Ibn Sīnā denies the pre-existence of soul, and ‘The Soul Does Not Die with the Death of the Body’, in which he proves the incorruptible nature of the soul. Despite the latter’s being a spiritual entity, according to Ibn Sīnā, it is the soul of a specific physical body, which is permanently imprinted with that soul’s qualities.10 Moreover, the soul is not attached to the body through an arbitrary or accidental connection, but by a natural and binding inclination to a specific body to which it is suited so that both come into existence at the same time. In addition the soul is aware of its body and consolidates it. Consequently, it is impossible to posit that it passes after death to a new body to which it has to adapt, for bodies require a soul that suits their particular physical constitutions and temperaments. Moreover, were it possible for the same soul to suit two bodies, then since each will in any event be endowed with a new soul created along with it, that body would have two souls. In short, a body can only have one soul which is its accidental cause and the transfer of a soul from one body to another is an impossibility.

Since we are later to demonstrate the textual parallels in the Maimonidean writings, it is worth quoting the chapter in question in its entirety. For this purpose, we propose to use the translation by F. Rahman.


7 Ibn Sīnā, Taʿlīqāt, ed. by A. Badawi (Cairo, 1973), p. 29.


9 Book II, chap. 6, par. 14.

10 This derives from the Aristotelian doctrine according to which each body requires a particular soul. Cf. De anima, 1.3.407b15.
1. Ibn Sinā, *Najāt, al-ṭabīḥyāt*, Book II, Chapter 6, paragraph 14

Refutation of the Transmigration of Souls

We have made clear that souls only come into being and multiply when the bodies are prepared to receive them, in the sense that this readiness of the bodies necessitates the emanation of their souls from the separate causes. It is therefore obvious that this does not happen by chance or accident, so that the existence of the soul which comes into being may not be due to the fact that this particular temperament of the elements requires that a soul should come into existence and govern it, but to the fact that a soul exists already and it happens that a body also comes to exist with it. For if it were so, then there would be no essential cause for multiplicity but only an accidental one; we have learnt that the essential causes are prior to the accidental ones. This being so, every body needs with the proper temperament of its elements the existence of a special soul for it. It is not possible that some bodies require it while others do not, for the individuals of species do not differ concerning matters which constitute their essence.

So if we suppose a soul transmigrating into several bodies each of which requires for itself the existence of a separate soul attached to it, then two souls will come together in one body at the same time. Again, as we have said, the relationship between the soul and the body is not in the sense that the soul is imprinted in the body, but in the sense that the soul is occupied with the government of the body so that it is conscious of that body and the body is influenced by its actions. And every living being is conscious that he has a unique soul which governs and controls it, so that if there be another soul of which the living being is not conscious, neither is it conscious of itself, nor does it occupy itself with his body — then such a soul has no relationship with his body, for the relationship only subsists in this way. Thus there cannot be transmigration in any sense. This is enough for anyone who demands a summary of the subject, although we discussed it at length.11

2. The Influence of Avicenna’s Refutation of Metempsychosis on Judeao-Arabic Authors

Avicenna’s refutation of metempsychosis exercised a decisive influence on Jewish thinkers of the Aristotelian school. However, prior to the spread of the Kabbalistic teachings on transmigration, the doctrine elicited relatively little interest and, apart from Abraham Ibn Da‘ud (c. 1180),12 Jewish philosophers who expressed themselves in Arabic were few to use it.

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12 *Emūnāb rāmāb*, ed. by S. Weil, 2 vols (Frankfurt a.M., 1852) 1, chap. 6, 39, originally written in Arabic. Hebrew Aristotelians are more numerous. See, *inter alia*, Jacob Albo,
The question again came to the fore in the central lands of Islam, particularly in medieval Egypt, probably in response to the spread of the Shiite form of the doctrine under Fatimid rule.

As stated above, in its literal sense, the doctrine of metempsychosis was dismissed by almost all of the theological schools except for certain Shiite sects. However, in a more refined interpretation, in particular in connection with the multiple forms and degrees of the soul’s manifestation, the theory continued to fascinate those thinkers of a Neoplatonic turn of mind, be they from among the extremist Shiites, who professed the doctrine of raj’ā — especially the Ismā‘īlī, Druze, and Nusayris — or be they of the Sufis, who propounded the doctrine of the pre-existence of the individual soul. The Sufis, too, were divided on the issue. For example, the Andalusian mystic residing in Egypt, ‘Ali al-Shustari (d. 1269) classifies the reincarnationists as heretics, while Ibn Arabi (d. 1240) seemingly upheld the belief in reincarnation, for which he was later criticized by Ahmad Sirhindi.

II. Metempsychosis in the Writings of the Maimonideans

1. Abraham Maimonides

As far as we know, the great philosopher of the Jewish tradition, Moses Maimonides (1134–1206) did not discuss the issue of metempsychosis, although, as we shall see below, his commentators infer that he did, indeed, allude to the subject. On the other hand, two outstanding figures of the Maimonides’ dynasty, Abraham ha-Nagid (1186–1237) and David II ha-Nagid (1335–c. 1415) devoted significant chapters to its refutation in their respective works. Since these authors had little, or even no knowledge of Kabbalistic traditions, it is not unreasonable to suggest that


13 On this see M. Smith, ‘Transmigration and the Sufis’, Muslim World, 30 (1940), 351–57.

14 Cf. L. Massignon, Passion de Hallaj, 4 vols (Paris, 1975), i, 341. It seems he had in mind the Ismā‘īlī.

15 Sirhindi, Maktūbāt-I Imām-I Rabbānī (Lucknow, 1889), letter 58. ‘Alá’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 1336) also dismisses the belief in Chapter 4 of his Mashāri awwāb al-quds, Berlin Staatsbibliothek, MS Or. oct. 2313, fols 85a–90b: buttan i’tiqad al-littibādi wal-bū-luli wa-tanāsukhi.
the religious and intellectual climate in Egypt, suffused with the beliefs of the Sufis, Ismā‘īlīs, and Druze, on the one hand, and the anti-Fatimid persecution pursued by the Sunni restoration, on the other, may have stirred Abraham Maimonides to take up his pen against the doctrine. Unfortunately, Rabbi Abraham Maimonides’ monumental composition Kifāya al-‘abidin has not been preserved in its entirety. Of the original Judaeo-Arabic text of the final section, which dealt with the destiny of the soul, only fragments have survived. However, chance has it that a quotation from the Nagid’s discussion of transmigration, supposedly from this very section, has survived in a Hebrew version copied by the fourteenth-century Neoplatonic thinker Samuel Zarza in his Megor hayyim, a supercommentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra. The circumstances surrounding this quotation and its repercussions will be discussed below. Here is the passage, taken from the Mantova 1559 edition of Megor hayyim, followed by our translation:

16 It is significant that already the eleventh-century Spanish traveller Benjamin of Tudela was aware of the Druze belief in metempsychosis. See The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, ed. by M. Adler (London, 1907), p. 18.


18 On the other hand, it is possible that the discussion was included in one of the introductions to part four of the work, which apparently dealt with the soul’s survival and retribution. See our tentative reconstruction of the Kifāya in ‘En marge du Kitāb Kifāya al-‘abidin’, Revue d’études juives, 150 (1991), 385–405 (p. 405).

19 On this author, see D. Schwartz, The Philosophy of a Fourteenth-Century Jewish Neoplatonic Circle (Jerusalem, 1996), pp. 53–57. The same author also published and discussed this passage in his article ‘Criticism of Metempsychosis in the Middle Ages’, Mabananayim, 6 (1994), 104–13 (pp. 112–13) (in Hebrew).

20 The printed edition has been compared with the Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. MS 253, dated 1583.
The light of the lamp disappears when its oil is exhausted, or after its extinction.22 In its disembodied state, the soul perishes, is cut off, and ceases to exist, just as

they believed that the soul possesses subsistence and survival after its separation. Therefore the [new] soul is necessarily another. Were the soul, on the other hand, to remain in existence, it would necessarily be divested of matter, for its corpse remains in this world [lit. ‘with us’] in the state of decay and decomposition, beyond all doubt abandoned by soul. The latter’s destiny follows necessarily one of two possibilities: either, (1) in its disembodied state, the soul perishes, is cut off, and ceases to exist, just as the light of the lamp disappears when its oil is exhausted, or after its extinction,22 which is its separation from its substratum, i.e., the oil; or, (2) it remains in existence. This division is absolute, there being no other possibility whatsoever. Were the soul to perish and disappear, then it would in no way be liable to retribution, since it retains no reality liable to reward or punishment.

Of this state no reasonable person in his right mind can entertain any doubt or imagine an alternative situation. Nevertheless, certain devotees among the ancient peoples considered false the possibility of the [independent] survival of a disembodied soul. Thus, while acknowledging the separation of a soul from its corpse, they believed that the soul possesses subsistence and survival after its separation. They were thus induced to believe in the foolishness of metempsychosis, i.e. that when the soul leaves the dead [body] it migrates and enters another body and forgets that in which it had formerly dwelt. This doctrine, which was never professed by a true philosopher, cannot be an object of belief for a follower of the Torah, for it derives from the foolish opinion of those who believe in the eternity of the world, whose name has been effaced by God from His universe and whose creed has been eradicated, by compassion for the dwellers on earth. As they have perished, so shall perish their remnant, and all their likes.)

Unlike most of his predecessors, Abraham Maimonides does not exclusively invoke in this passage moral or theological arguments, but rather rational proof, a

21 Thus in Alashqar (see infra).
22 Read: kibbuyo.
fact which may account for its recurrence among later authors. On the one hand, like Avicenna, he denies that the soul perishes with the body, but, on the other, he subscribes to the Neoplatonic (and Sufi) belief that the soul is pre-existent. To be sure, elsewhere in the Kifāya he declares that the soul is ‘a noble, divine form, quarried from the heavenly world’, indeed ‘created in a spiritual, angelic [malakūtī] world’. Now, all theories that accept the pre-existence of the individual soul may perceive in the period of the soul’s sojourn in the body a specific stage amongst innumerable others. It is perhaps precisely his acceptance of soul’s pre-existence that urged him to dismiss so emphatically transmigration as a belief foreign to philosophy and the tenets of the Torah. As for his associating it with the principle of the eternity of the world, it is a possible reference to either Platonic teaching or the Hindu doctrine of the eternal cycle of karma, known to the classical Muslim heresiographers. Interestingly, Abraham Ibn Migash was later to claim that the author of the Kifāya was referring to the beliefs of the Druze ‘in whose corrupt ideas many of our people have been ensnared’.

2. The Kabbalah and Abraham Maimonides’ Later Influences

The foregoing text in fact owes its survival to the interest aroused by the re-emergence of metempsychosis in later Neoplatonic and Kabbalistic writings from the thirteenth century onwards, which constituted a serious challenge to rationalistic thinkers. In contrast to its sporadic appearance in earlier medieval texts, the theory of transmigration had become deeply embedded in the exegesis, theology, and psychology of Jewish tradition and thus called for an in-depth and systematic refutation. It is not here the place to provide a full exposition of the subsequent authors who came under the sway of or opposed the Kabbalistic doctrines. Suffice it to mention here those who wrote in Arabic or were aware of Abraham Maimonides’ doctrine.

25 See, e.g., Shahristānī, Kitāb al-milal wa-nībāl, 4 pts (Cairo, 1968), III, 100 (chap. 4.1).
26 In his Kebōd Elohim (Constantinople, 1585), fol. 106a, Abraham Migash (see supra).
27 The question was masterfully dealt with by G. Scholem, Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit (Zurich, 1962), chap. 5: ‘Seelenwanderung und Sympathie der Seelen’, pp. 193–247, 297–306. See also Schwartz, ‘Criticism of Metempsychosis’.
In his *Treatise on the Conciliation of the Kabbalah and Philosophy*, Joseph Ibn Waqqār, who was active in fourteenth-century Toledo, expresses his uneasiness in the face of this belief, which he feels is solidly based on the authoritative teachings of the mystics, by abstaining from stating his position. Nevertheless, he recognizes that the arguments of the philosophers — and he probably has Ibn Sinā in mind — are weak. In reaction to the Kabbalistic explanation of levirate marriage in terms of a reincarnation of the deceased brother’s soul, Samuel Zarza, who flourished in Castile around 1360–80, rebuffs metempsychosis with a whole conglomerate of arguments in his *Megōr ḳayyim*, a supercommentary on Ibn Ezrā. Interestingly, he perceives this belief as a totally pagan doctrine, taught by the Druze as already described by Benjamin of Tudela. As proof of its unfoundedness, Zarza adduces the above-quoted passage from Abraham Maimonides *Kifāya*. Unskilled in the Arabic tongue, it is not clear whether he had at his disposal a Hebrew translation of that work, which has not come down to us, or, as was his wont, had requested the translation from an informant. Whatever the case, it is noteworthy that this selfsame quotation is cited by subsequent authors. First amongst them is Joseph Alashqar, who shows a keen interest in the Kabbalistic doctrine of *gilgul* in his *Ṣofnat pa’neah*. Prior to the quotation, which he may have borrowed from Zarza, though he did, it seems, read Arabic, he confesses that were it not for fear of his fellow Kabbalists, he would have subscribed to Rabbi Abraham Maimonides’ opinion of the heretical nature of the doctrine of metempsychosis. In view of the latter part of our study, it is noteworthy that Alashqar was active in Tlemcen in the second half of the fifteenth century, where it seems there was a special interest in this theme at that time. Indeed, in the introduction to his commentary on Job, his older compatriot, Simon ben Zemah Duran (1361–1444), also broaches the

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30 Joseph Alashqar, *Ṣofnat pa’neah* (Jerusalem, 1991), fol. 64b.

31 S. Schwarzfuchs in *Tlemçen, mille ans d’histoire d’une communauté juive* (Paris, 1995), does not do justice to the city as a centre of Kabbalistic learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was here that, *inter alia*, the important Kabbalistic compendium contained in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of American (hereafter JTS), MS Mic. 1640 was copied in 1531. For knowledge of the *Kifāya* in Tlemcen at this time, see Solomon b. Simon b. Zemah Duran (1400–1467), *Responsa* (Jerusalem, 1998), no. 162, p. 113.
subject of transmigration in his discussion of Jewish dogmas, and his ideas may, in turn, have influenced Jacob Albo’s subsequent treatment.\textsuperscript{32}

Later, Abraham Ibn Migash, who acted as physician to the Ottoman sultan in the second half of the sixteenth century, devoted several chapters of his \textit{Kebōd Elohim} to the refutation of metempsychosis. He too adduces the Abraham Maimonides’ quotation, which he probably borrowed from Zarza, although he introduces it with a passage suggesting it was his own translation.\textsuperscript{33}

\section*{3. David II Maimonides’ Refutations of Metempsychosis}

As far as we know, the fullest treatment of transmigration by a Judaeo-Arabic author flowed from the quill of David II Maimonides, the last known member of the famous dynasty, who flourished in Egypt and Syria around 1335–1415. Twenty years ago we published a study detailing his vast literary output, largely taken up with commentaries on his illustrious forbears’ writings. However, he also penned an independent philosophical work of no mean significance, the \textit{Tajrīd al-ḥaqā‘iq al-naẓariyya wa-talḥibīs al-maqāṣid al-nafsāniyya} (Abstract of Speculative Truths and Extract of Ethical Aims), in which he is considerably dependent on Ibn Sinā.

In his other writings, the Nagid displays familiarity with the works of his earlier Aleppan compatriot Yahyā al-Suhrawardi (1154–91), and indeed wrote out a copy of one of the latter’s compositions, as we shall see presently.

Apparently, David Maimonides was most preoccupied with the doctrine of metempsychosis, which he discusses in no less than three places.


\textsuperscript{33} Abraham Ibn Migash, \textit{Kebōd Elohim} (Constantinople, 1585; facs. edn Jerusalem, 1977), pt ii, chaps 10–13, fol. 105a–108b, especially fol. 105a–b. Cf. my \textit{Treatise of the Pool}, 2nd edn (London, 1995), p. 23. Here is the passage: ‘Harken to the words of Rabbi Abraham son of Maimonides in his Arabic work \textit{al-Kitāba}, that is “The Comprehensive Compendium”, also called \textit{Kifāyat al-‘abidin}, i.e. “Compendium for the Servants”, which he composed in the Arabic tongue. Now I have never seen it in a Hebrew version apart from two precious chapters which I translated at the request of a person to whom I was indebted. One deals with the explanation of the midrashic method, which I included in my composition \textit{Abodat ba-Lewi}, for the readers’ benefit. I also copied part of this chapter in my work \textit{Magen Abrāham}. The other deals with the eternity of the Torah and explains the notion of “consolation” as applied to God. Likewise I included part of this chapter in my composition \textit{Emeq ba-Sidim} in which it can be found.’
Since the Nagid resided in Syria for many years, his curiosity in this subject may have been aroused by his familiarity with the belief in transmigration upheld by the Nusayri and Druze sects that inhabited those parts. Furthermore, he was acquainted with Joseph Tub-Elem, a member of the Castilian circle of Neoplatonic philosophers, who fiercely opposed the doctrine of transmigration.\footnote{See Schwartz, \textit{The Philosophy}, pp. 44–45. The members of this circle ‘did not aspire to create any kind of synthesis between the realms of philosophy and Kabbalah, as expressed through their uncompromising refusal of metempsychosis among those thinkers who explicitly broached the subject.’ Moreover, in his Hebrew Bible commentary \textit{Mikhlal yofr}, preserved in Saint Petersburg, Russian National Library, MS II Firk. Heb. A 69, David II Maimonides, through his attachment to Abraham Ibn Ezra, can be perceived as the ‘Oriental counterpart’ to the Castilian Neoplatonists. Incidentally, he mentions in that commentary (fol. 12b) the \textit{Megalleh 'Amidqot} of Samuel Ibn Motot, a forerunner of that circle.}

Besides his reading of Ibn Sinā, David Maimonides’ interest may also have been inspired by the teachings of Suhravardi.\footnote{An account of Suhravardi’s influence on Jewish thought has yet to be written. In addition to the \textit{Al-alwāb al-‘imādiyya}, discussed below, the genizah has yielded at least one other work by Suhravardi in Hebrew characters: II Firk. Evr.-Arab. I.1039 + I.2219, apparently the only extant copy of his \textit{Raqām al-quds}. The latter is referred to by Shahrazūrī, \textit{Nuzbat al-arwāb}, 2 vols (Haydarabad, 1976), II, 128. See P. Fenton, \textit{A Handlist of Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts in Leningrad} (Jerusalem, 1991), p. 93.} The latter expresses divergent views on metempsychosis, ranging from outright rejection, taxing it as the worst of beliefs, to implicit sympathy and possibly even support of the doctrine. Of particular interest in this regard is his \textit{al-Alwāb al-‘imādiyya}, which he authored for the statesman Malik ‘Imād al-Dīn Artūq. Now a copy in Hebrew characters is to be found in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek manuscript, Heb. oct. 399.\footnote{A comparison with the printed text (Shaykh al-ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Yahya Suhravardi, \textit{Three Treatises al-Alwāb al-‘imādiyya}, ed. with an intro. by N. G. Habibi (Tehran, 1977), shows that the Berlin MS is complete while displaying some interesting variants.} Upon examining this manuscript, which was first described by Steinschneider,\footnote{Cf. M. Steinschneider, ‘Schriften der Araber in hebräischen Handschriften’, \textit{Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft}, 47 (1893), 335–85 (pp. 365–66), and M. Steinschneider, \textit{Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin}, 2 vols (Berlin, 1878–97), II, no. 218, p. 66. Steinschneider states that the manuscript was acquired from Shapiro’s Nachlass. Like many of the latter’s other finds, it probably originated from the Cairo Genizah.} we were able to identify the script as that of Rabbi David II Maimonides,\footnote{Furthermore, it belongs to a \textit{maghmā’a} of which another part, originating in the Cairo Genizah, is to be found in Saint Petersburg, Russian National Library, MS II Firk. Evr.-Arab. I. 4815: \textit{Maqālat al-wudāb fī ma‘nā n-nafs war-rāb}, generally attributed to pseudo-Bāhūyā. Cf. Fenton, \textit{A Handlist}, p. 132 and our study ‘The Literary Legacy’, pp. 19–20.} a further indication of
the Nagid’s interest in the writings of Suhrawardi. However, more significant is the fact that in the following passage Suhrawardi offers a short rebuttal of transmigration, containing the quintessence of his doctrine.

(Principle)
Transmigration is impossible for were the governance of the soul to pass to [another] body of its species, it would be on account of the suitability of the second body’s temperament to the soul’s disposition. This would necessitate on the part of the Bestower of forms the providing of another soul. Thus a soul’s passing to it would result in a single animal having two souls, [the one] transmigrated and [the other] emanated, which is impossible. Again, if the soul descends from a human to an animal, the [animal] bodies would be in excess of the transmigratory souls, whereas if it were to ascend from the [animal] to the human, the souls would outnumber the bodies, and this is impossible.)

Here, as in most of his writings, Suhrawardi argues, like Ibn Sinā, that reincarnation would imply that a body could possess two souls given that every body necessitates the coming to be of a new soul. In addition, the fact that animals and plants are more numerous than humans precludes the possibility of the transmigration of human souls into animals and plants.

Somewhat different is his presentation of the doctrines of transmigration in his main work Hikmat al-isbrāq, to which an entire chapter is devoted. While providing a detailed review of the various proponents of the doctrine, Suhrawardi declines to explicitly define his own stand on the issue. Later Isbrāqī commen-


41 See also Suhrawardi, al-Masbāri: wal-mutārābāt, pt 3, chap. 5, ed. by H. Corbin (İstanbul, 1945), t, 499.

tators, such as Shahrazūrī (d. after 1288), a firm proponent of metempsychosis, perceived in Suhrawardī’s reserve an indication of his endorsement of the doctrine. Later, the Jewish philosopher Ibn Kammūna (d. 1284) in his commentary on Suhrwardī’s *Talwiḥāt*, exhibits clear support of the doctrine while severely criticizing Suhrwardī’s arguments against it.\(^{43}\)

4. David Maimūnī’s Commentary on Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torab*

To return to R. David, his first discussion of metempsychosis is to be found in his Arabic commentary on Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torab*, *Hilkōt Yesōdey ba-Tōrāb*, Chapter 5, which has been preserved in a genizah manuscript in Saint Petersburg.\(^{44}\)

It is noteworthy that in his preceding comments on Chapter 4, paragraph 9, R. David perceives in Moses Maimonides’ words an implicit refutation of the doctrine of metempsychosis. Since no such refutation is otherwise known to us from Maimonides’ writings, it is interesting to speculate whether Rabbi David had this from family tradition. His own comments are clearly based on Ibn Siinā and read like an Avicennian commentary on Maimonides.

In any case, R. David attacks a group who believe that after its separation from the body, the soul passes to another body. This would suggest that there were contemporary Jews who upheld this belief, if, indeed, he is referring to his coreligionists. In his remarks, R. David brings a lengthy quotation from a second source, a hitherto unknown epistle he had especially composed on this very subject at the request of one of his correspondents: *Risālat al-baḥth al-rāṣikh fī ibṭal madḥhab at-tanāṣukb* (Firm Enquiry into the Refutation of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis). The latter seemingly dealt with various theories appertaining to this doctrine in order to refute them. He quotes the quintessence of his rebuttal, which allows us to reconstruct the contents of the epistle, which we have previously published with a Hebrew translation.\(^{45}\)


\(^{44}\) See Fenton, ‘Literary Legacy’, pp. 8–9.

Here, R. David's demonstration is mainly based on the concepts of the soul's self-awareness and recollection. Though he relies on Ibn Sinā for the former, for the latter he follows another source that is yet to be identified. In his opinion, it is impossible that the memories of a lifetime should be effaced from the soul. The very fact that we have no recollection of a former life is proof that transmigration is baseless. This rebuttal is the opposite of Plato's proof of the pre-existence of the soul precisely through the phenomenon of anamnesis.

Commentary of Maimonides' Mishnei Torah, i, Chapter 1, Hilkhōt Yesodey ha-Torah, iv, 9, Saint Petersburg, Russian National Library, Second Firkovich Collection, MS I. 1497, fol. 60a–62
NEW LIGHT ON MAIMONIDEAN WRITINGS
Maimonides distinguishes between nefesh, i.e., the ‘higher soul’ which governs the body, e.g., by deploying the senses and receiving and analysing their data, and neshəməb the ‘lower soul’. David Maimonides — and later Joseph Caro — gloss the latter as the ‘vital spirit’ (al-raḥ al-ḥayawānī), a medical term designating the intermediate spirit of the three usually recognized in the Galenic tradition (though Galen himself apparently recognized only two).

it would either be (1) one or (2) many. If it were (1) one and governed [multiple]
bodies, and if the soul were single then all beings would apprehend the same
things as that which a single individual apprehends [...]'. But, were it to be divided
after being one, then it would prove to be a body.\footnote{Since by definition the soul is a simple substance; by being composite it becomes a
body, for only the latter is divisible.} Hence, its refutation has been
demonstrated. Were the [soul] to be multiple, then its [multiplicity] would be
discerned either from its quiddity and its peculiar dispositions or from its separate ac-
cidents. Now it cannot be [distinguished] by its quiddity and peculiar dispositions
for they are held in common, and that which is held in common does not admit
differentiation. Nor can it be [distinguished] by separate accidents for the latter
affect an entity by reason of its recipients, for quiddity is not affected by accidents
in essence; indeed, if this were not the case then each accident would be [...]. Now
the recipient of the soul is but the body [...] [without] bodies existing, souls would
not originate and come to be.

As for his statement: 'Therefore whenever it separates from body, which is com-
posed of elements, the vital spirit disappears since the latter does not exist inde-
pendently of body, on which it depends for all its activities.'

This is the logical conclusion of the foregoing, whose purport we have explained.
However he says of the vital soul \(\text{nesham\"abh} \) that it requires a body for \textit{all} of its ac-
tions, whereas the rational soul \(\text{nefesh}\)\footnote{Hence it requires it for some. The continuation, dealing with the issue of universals
and particulars, is unclear.} is not said to require the \(\text{nesham\"abh for all} \)
of its actions.\footnote{Here Maim\"uni differs with Avicenna who affirms (Rahman, p. 57) that the soul
has a natural yearning to occupy itself with body. The latter idea may derive from
Plotinus's \textit{Enneads}, iv.7.13.3, which mentions the soul's concern for body and its ap-
petite to descend into body in order to edify the sensual world on the pattern of the
intelligible.} For the latter is unemployed in the faculty of the particulars, as you
know from the introduction, since some of the rational soul's actions, i.e. those
that belong to it in essence, do not require the assistance of the physical faculties
for the apprehension of the universals.

Know that since the soul is not imprinted in the body and not needful of it for its
particular actions, there is no yearning binding it to the body, [for] the latter would
be a relationship, and a relationship is the weakest of accidents.\footnote{Therefore, it is
impossible for it to disappear with the [body's] disappearance, but it persists with
the persistence of the immaterial objects of its knowledge, which are God, the
immortal intellects and the supernal souls. This is the meaning of his statement:
'The rational soul, however, does not perish for its activity does not depend on the
vital spirit.] It grasps and apprehends the immaterial forms and knows the Creator
of all things and exists everlastingly, etc.'
[3.3, David Maimûnî’s ‘Firm Enquiry into the Refutation of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis’]  

‘Know that a certain faction professes that after the dissolution of its body, the human soul [receives] the governance of another body in the manner of [the first].

[fol. 61b]. They adduce various proofs and statements, most of which I have mentioned in an epistle which I composed for one of our coreligionists. In that epistle, entitled the *Firm Enquiry into the Refutation of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis*, I sought to refute their opinion with the following argument:

Had our souls governed other bodies prior to the present body, we would, by now, have been aware of this situation. […]\(^{51}\)

We state that the proof derives from the following: actions produce permanently acquired qualities — an obvious and well-known fact through induction [*istiqrā*]. Indeed, if a person studies a certain lesson one hundred times, the lesson remains in his memory. The more he repeats it, the stronger his remembrance. This is the situation when he acquires this after a day or two. Were he to have begun his study from the outset of his existence, constantly engaging his understanding and applying his attention to the very end, it would necessarily be impossible for him to become oblivious of this state. Having established this we then say: had we been, prior to this body, in another body, and we were during that period [aware] of that body, in the nether world, and we were […] aware of its state [fol. 62a], our awareness that we had been in such a state would necessarily be fixed in our souls and permanently embedded within our minds. Short of such a fixedness and implantation, there would at least be a sort of recollection of this experience, or part thereof. Now, inasmuch as absolutely nothing of this occurs, it follows that the claim of metempsychosis is null and void.

If it were to be objected: why can one not say that awareness [peculiar] to each body is subject to the survival of the soul, and [that if] that body [perishes], then at the disappearance of the condition, its dependent effect also ceases. Moreover, we could also claim: ‘why is it not possible to say that the person in such a situation, is so distraught with repelling adversity, that, on account of his intense preoccupation with such concerns, he forgets the state of his previous bodies? Similarly, by way of comparison, a drowning person or one caught in a fire can become oblivious of his father and mother, or his homeland.’

The answer to the first objection is that whenever an individual refers to the ‘self’,\(^{52}\) he either designates this body, or something else, which, nevertheless, is

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\(^{51}\) Here too the text is faulty. Using logics the author discusses the refutation of a consequent of a hypothetical syllogism (*sahrtīyya*) but the argument is unclear.

\(^{52}\) The idea of self-awareness as a basis of knowledge is not Aristotelian. It is, however, one of Avicenna’s key-concepts, used, for example, in his ninety-fifth chapter on soul as a unity. In his note there to p. 111, Rahman suggests a Neoplatonic origin such as Philoponus,
dependent on this body for its existence, or else it is something distinct from this body, whose existence is not dependent on the latter. If it clings to [body], then the doctrine of metempsychosis would be null and void.

[fol. 62b] [...] clings to [body but is distinct from it] [...] the soul is receptive to knowledge. Were that not so, the soul would not be conscious of its experience during this period and unaware of the state of the body during this time, whereas that receptiveness is a necessary component of its essence.

We have already explained the persistence of these events necessarily imprints this awareness in the soul’s [...] the extreme of that which is in this category is the death of the body. Now the death of the body is tantamount to the destruction of the place of action, and the destruction of the latter does neither necessarily imply forgetfulness nor the disappearance of awareness of familiar phenomena. Having established this, it necessarily follows that this awareness abides.

As for the claim that extreme preoccupation with present concerns provokes a state of forgetfulness of a previous situation, we retort that this is highly implausible since most of the time we find our minds to be calm and at ease so that, during this leisure we can reflect on many types of exact sciences and exalted and abstruse pursuits. Now when we fathom our minds in such states, it does not in the least occur to us that we had existed in other bodies. This is a proof that [...] would be [...] after the disappearance of the body and being stripped of bodily characteristics. And this is the meaning of the verse: ‘And the wheel falleth shattered into the pit; and the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it’ [Eccl. 12. 6–7].

5. David Maimūnī’s Refutation of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in his Tajrīd al-Ḥaqāʾiq, Chapter 45.

David Maimonides also discusses our topic in the forty-fifth chapter of his monumental Tajrīd al-Ḥaqāʾiq, which is devoted to a refutation of the doctrine of metempsychosis. It is here reproduced from the unpublished manuscript preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. As can be ascertained from a comparison with Ibn Sinā’s chapter bearing the same title, reproduced above, David Maimūnī adheres very closely to the Avicennian position, even to the point of using the same wording.

De anima, ed. by M. Hayduck (Berlin, 1897), I. 13, p. 464. A similar concept is to be found in Ibn Kammuna’s Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, ed. by L. Nemoy, in Ignace Goldziber Memorial Volume, 2 pts (Jerusalem, 1948–58), II, 93.

On this work see our ‘Literary Legacy’, pp. 2–8.
Rabbi David II Maimonides, *Tajrid al-haqiq*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Pococke 332 (Neubauer 1313), fol 70b-72a

54 In the previous chapter, 44 (fol. 70): "If a halaf is a head of a halak, its halaf is valid, but if its halaf is a halak, then it is invalid.

55 Here something is missing. Compare the Hebrew version (infra): "This is a halif of a halif, and it is valid.

56 The printed editions read: "Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 141, note 2."
New Light on Maimonidean Writings

The printed editions read: "The soul can cleave to another body after the demise of the body to which it was attached."

Chapter Forty-five: On the refutation of the doctrine of metempsychosis

Know that metempsychosis is an impossibility. Metempsychosis is the [theory] that the soul can cleave to another body after the demise of the body to which it was attached. The refutation of the doctrine is as follows: Upon leaving the body, the soul

57 The printed editions read: "איכא שכנן אלו אמורי שכל מי מילאתי להי עאני שמואל ואל שלום".
either clings to another body [already] endowed with a soul and thus [continues to] exist — but this is absurd for a given body cannot possess two souls simultaneously, an occurrence which is impossible; or, it does not enter a body endowed with a soul, and remains in expectation of another body which will come into being and to which it will inhere. This too is an absurdity, as we have demonstrated previously, for the coming into existence of a soul can only be with [that] of a body.58 Furthermore, the soul does not possess in the world a place in which it waits. In addition, it is impossible for the soul to belong to another body.

Another proof that the soul does not migrate from one body to another is that each soul has a specific temperament which it does not ever share with another body. Thus each body necessitates a specific soul which is suitable to it in accordance [to its temperament]. It is thus true that a soul does not migrate from one body to another in any way.

This measure [of reasoning] which we have reported, is sufficient for him who seeks a summary, for the matter bears a longer discourse than the present.59

It is now obvious to you that the particular human soul comes into being with the creation of the body to which it adheres. It is also clear to you that the soul does not disappear with the death of the body, and does not perish with the extinction of the form which was integrally in the body. This is the case, since it has been demonstrated that the soul is not impressed within the body and its subsistence is not [dependent] upon it, for its attachment to body is quite unlike the attachment of the earthly soul to body, but the body is an instrument for it, as we have repeatedly explained.

Consequently, the soul does not expire with the demise of the body for the vanishing of the instrument does not necessarily imply the disappearance of the person who utilizes this instrument. Thus we find that the chisel may disappear, but the carpenter does not disappear with the disappearance of the chisel. Moreover, the action of the essential, specific soul upon it is unlike the relation of the animal and natural soul to the body, none of which has an effect except through the body.

For this reason, when the body dies, they perish, for they do not possess anything of themselves beyond the body. As for the rational soul, its status is unlike theirs since it does not exercise a specific action upon the body inasmuch as it is body. Its only essential and specific action upon the [body] is intellectual apprehension, which it deploys in order to achieve the process through which [fol. 71b] it is united with its principle. And this is accomplished through […] the adherence. When it is deficient, it does not realize perfection. The latter state is called ‘Hell’.

Therefore, there is a great difference between the death of a righteous person and a wicked one. When a righteous person expires, his soul is saved from the snares

58 As in Ibn Sinā’s Najāt, the previous chapter (chap. 44, fol. 70a) deals with the soul’s coming to be simultaneously with the body.

59 This assertion is almost identical with Ibn Sinā’s observation at the end of the chapter in the Najāt.
and nets of the world, and he obtains life in the hereafter and felicity, whereas when the wicked dies he is delivered from the harshness of the inhabitants of the world but suffers the wretchedness and torments of the hereafter. Concerning this, our sages have stated in the twenty-third chapter of the treatise Sabbath: ‘We have learned in the Baraytha that Rabbi Eli’ezer said: ‘The souls of the righteous are beneath the wings of the Divine presence, as it is said “Yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life” [i Sam. 25. 29], whereas those of the wicked are bound and wander in the world, as it is said: ‘and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling’ [ibid.].’ Now Rashi compares the term ‘bound’ [zōmemōḥ] to the expression ‘iron chatters’ [zemāmāʾ (TB Shabbat 51b)], i.e. ‘chains’, meaning that the (wicked souls) remain imprisoned in darkness deprived of light and peace.

Thereafter our Sages stated [TB Shabbat 152b]: ‘Had I been dead, I could not have told you such a thing.’ Thus said Samuel: ‘The [intermediate] souls and those [of the wicked] are delivered to Dumah, but the former have repose while the latter do not.’ [...] I did not inform you of the mystery of this statement, only its exoteric explanation. He stated that all wicked and righteous souls return to their principle, which occurrence is called damāb.60

‘However, perfect souls have repose, whereas the others do not. This is what I have mentioned to you. It is fitting that you meditate their explanation in this passage of the words of Solomon, peace be upon him: “And the spirit returneth unto God who gave it” (Eccl. 12. 7).

‘Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun’ [Is. 30. 26]. We have already fully explained this in several places, having stated to you that by ‘sun’ he means the Active Intellect, whereas ‘moon’ designates the ‘soul’. Since such is the case, for this reason Rabbi Simon b. Lakish said: ‘There is no hell in the world to come. The Holy One blessed be He will extract the sun from its sheaf. The righteous will not only be healed thereby, (as it is said): ‘But unto you that fear My name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings’ [Mal. 3. 20], but will also delight therein, as it is said: ‘and ye shall go forth, and gambol (as calves of the stall)’ [ibid., whereas the wicked will be judged therein, as it is said: ‘For behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall set them ablaze.’[ibid., v. 19] [TB Nedarim 8b]. How great is his statement. The word ‘hell’ refers to the moment that the soul leaves this veil, which is the corporeal form [...] its sheaf, that is the cover which intervenes between the soul and the Active Intellect, and it will attain [healing] through the Active Intellect, which is compared to the sun. If it be perfect, then it will [obtain] delight and enjoyment. But if it be deficient, it will

60 We have not encountered this explanation of damāb elsewhere. It is unclear whether Maimuni is referring to the original ‘silent’ state (as the Hebrew denotes) of the soul, which would seem to imply acceptance of the soul’s pre-existence, or a sort of ‘limbo’, where, according to Neoplatonic doctrine, imperfect souls linger.
obtain from it absolute [anguish] on account of the sins it committed which are [...] and coming to be [?]. It is fitting to elucidate this issue in a separate chapter [...] on this subject for necessity calls for expounding the theme [...] a person’s belongings and what he is about to encounter. If he be of those that follow the [...] of remoteness, then he will obtain everlasting permanence and strive in that which will bring him to the virtues ‘It may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph’ [Amos 5, 15].’) 

6. David Maimunî’s influence: The Revelation of Truths and the Candia Debate

The apex of the debate on transmigration was the great disputation opposing the rationalist Rabbi Moses Ashkenazi and the Kabbalist Rabbi Michael ha-Kohen Balbo, which took place in Candia in 1468. Each presented his doctrine in a well-argued treatise, both of which have survived in MSS 105 and 254 of the Vatican Library, containing no less than twenty arguments against the belief in transmigration. The contents of this debate, which include a long chapter on transmigration, have been discussed by previous authors.61

However, it is our present purpose to show that amongst the sources upon which the participants drew was a hitherto unidentified treatise, which is in fact a Hebrew translation of the previously quoted text by Rabbi David II ben Joshua Maimuni, the latter’s refutation of metempsychosis appearing in the Tajrid. This discovery reveals for the first time the hitherto unknown widespread and abiding influence of the writings of David ha-Nagid, a fact which corroborates our supposition, formulated a quarter of a century ago, that in view of the relatively numerous manuscripts of his works to have been preserved, he must have enjoyed widespread celebrity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.62


In his theological and philosophical arguments against metempsychosis, Rabbi Moses Ashkenazi requested from a Rabbi Judah, a North African scholar passing through Crete, to translate the chapter in question. This rendition was then copied into MS 254, which is the account by Rabbi Moses. The text, which appears as a supplement to the four treatises forming the substance of the debate, was apparently added no later than 1478, that is twenty-one years after the disputation. Its significance was not recognized by the scholars who dealt with the subject, and neither E. Gottlieb nor A. Ravitzki relate to the passage nor discuss its possible source. On folio 78a of the MS Rabbi Moses mentions the following occurrence:

In the year 5238 [i.e. 1478] there arrived here in Crete a Jew named Judah son of Efrayim, the great sage who resided in Tlemcen in the far Maghreb. I related to him the matter of the debate that had taken place over the issue of transmigration, and I questioned [or: borrowed from] him concerning a work composed in the Arabic tongue which discusses this matter. I requested him to translate it into Hebrew and he complied. The following is the text which is the forty-fifth chapter from the Treatise of the Realization of Truth, thus is the work entitled.

The ‘great sage residing in Tlemcen’ referred to is undoubtedly Rabbi Efrayim ben Israel al-Naqāwa, born in Toledo in 1359. Forced to leave Spain in the wake of the anti-Semitic riots of 1392, he settled in Tlemcen, today in Algeria, where he died in 1441. A spiritual disciple of Maimonides, he composed in the latter’s defence his Sba’ar kebōd ba-shem, wherein he weds off Nahmanides’ criticisms of his Master. It is noteworthy that in his day, and for a period of several decades afterwards, Tlemcen was a thriving cultural centre with special interest in Neoplatonic speculation, as indicated by the unusually numerous manuscripts of this tendency copied in that city between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In Hebrew amitat ba-amitōt. Interestingly, on folio 79a of his above-mentioned Hebrew commentary on the Pentateuch, called Mikblal yōfi (supra, n. 34), David II Maimonides supplies a quote in Hebrew from this work to which he gives the Hebrew title Bērur ba-amitiyōt ba-‘iyūnīyōt we-ba-kōbōt ba-nafsbiyōt. However, this does not necessarily imply that the work was available in a Hebrew translation.

For example: Ibn Shem Tob, Sefer ba-middōt (JTS, MS 2450) dated 1450; Samuel Zarza, Mikblal yōfi (Breslau, Rabbinical Seminary, MS 48) dated 1459; Judah al-Khallas, Mesiaḥ illemim, (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS 1334), dated 1493; Joshua ha-Levi, Halikbōt ‘olām (Moscow, Russian State Library, MS 1156), dated 1504; Joseph al-Ashqar, Šofenat pa’anæah (Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, 4°154), dated 1529; Joseph al-Ashqar, Refi‘at ba-nēfēsh (Frankfurt a.M., Staatsbibliothek, MS An. 20), sixteenth century; Judah Pushṭūr, Emeq sukboṭ (Budapest, Rabbinical Seminary, K58) sixteenth century; Samuel Ibn Motot, Mesbōbēb netiḥōt (JTS, MS 1640) dated 1531; Nissim of Marseille, Ma’aseb nissim (JTS, MS 2462), dated 1539.
Rabbi Efrayim al-Naqāwa left two sons: Rabbi Israel, the eldest, for whom he composed the work just referred to, and Rabbi Judah. The latter was a distinguished scholar who became spiritual leader to the communities of Oran, Mostaganem, and finally Tlemcen. Here we see that he had also travelled to Crete. He exchanged responsa with Rabbi Simon ben Zemah Duran, whose son, Rabbi Zemah, author of Yakkin u-bo’az, married Rabbi Judah’s daughter.65 Interestingly, Rabbi Simon, though of a philosophical turn of mind, was prepared to accept the doctrine of transmigration. Indeed, in his essay on Providence which serves as an introduction to his commentary on the Book of Job, he too touches on the destinies of the soul. With the Kabbalists, he shares the belief in the pre-existence of the soul and rejects the belief that it only comes into being with body. In view of man’s inadequacy in achieving perfection in a single life, ‘it is possible that the soul’s situation conforms to the teachings of the true Kabbalists who believed that souls were enshrined in successive bodies.’66

Supposedly, Rabbi Judah, who supplied the present counterargument derived from R. David ha-Nagid, was a rationalist and an opponent of the theory of transmigration of the soul.

Here is the Hebrew passage which will be found to be largely faithful to the Judaeo-Arabic text from the Tafrid al-ḥaqā’iq quoted above:

Rabbi Moses Ashkenazi, Debate on the Matter of Metempsychosis, MS Vatican 254, fol. 78a–b:

בשנת ה’תרכו אר חכם הנבון ר”י יידא בכיר אשר מספר ויאמר כיធיע אפרים חסן המורי شيئא חיה בזלתמן
אשקב העבר המיתוני שלא ענייה ethernet שלום. האנשים הסירו מחברות בשר
בר מדבר עניין זה. הבקשתי מנהל שיתיקות שלוש הקדוש כה שעשון זה השחתה והאפרים
המمتاز האמתה האמת כה קרא הסתרחבר. הפר טיב המתים האפרים שהשתחו לכלifications
בן אחר אותו פרקון מנהghan ושכר היה העם. בזלתו היה הדעת אתאיה. הלך
העוף את הגיהנה של גודו... הנה [787] ההריתנו שלום אנומא.

נטשו את הגיהנה של גודו אחר אחר שםمفasca לא פעמים. ...

פשת בנתך אתך והור ממעג. אם הליה 똛ח ש言い לא נשפכת מצופה השחתה עד
שתחנןفعןIRON ממתиш אתך והור ובו. ויפשעה אחיה הפרדה מנהghan והאפרים דהוא השתחו לכלифика
שהיום אחיה הפרדה הל שדיבר מחברות שלושאין לא נשפכת עם השחתה בכל מנהghan
הפדר ממלא את היה должен יהיה החיפה ממנה שתחנת שנפה בזלתו. ...

עד כי אל התחלת המש
דוש קר אם מנהghan אחיא למשכות מחברות בין זה מנהghan שהשחתה לא משכי

67 This sentence is lacking in the original Arabic.
NEW LIGHT ON MAIMONIDEAN WRITINGS

The printed versions have:

See Rashi, ad loc.
Conclusion

The appearance of this text in a multicultural context is of great significance. Here we have a Maghrebi scholar, hailing from the Muslim West and visiting the island of Crete, which then belonged to the Republic of Venice. He translates an Eastern source for an Ashkenazi Rabbi, who wishes to use it as a further argument against his contemporary Byzantine opponent. More significant still is that hitherto no information was available relating to the reception of the *Tajrid al-ḥaqāʾiq*, one of the last noteworthy productions of Judaeo-Arabic philosophy. We now know that this work, composed in Syria by Rabbi David II, the last known member of the great Maimonides’ dynasty, had reached the far-off Maghreb and continued to be read there at least until the second half of the fifteenth century. Through the present debate it is now clear that it must have had an even further impact beyond the borders of the Arabic-speaking communities through the continued interest in the theme of metempsychosis.

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