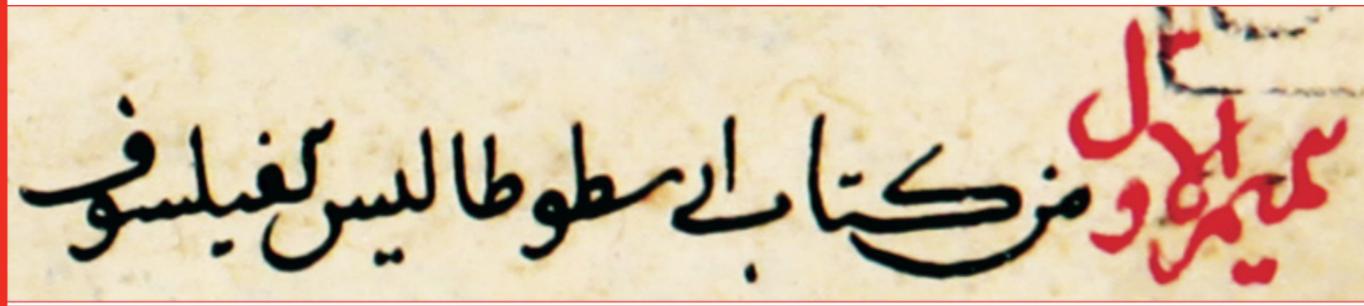
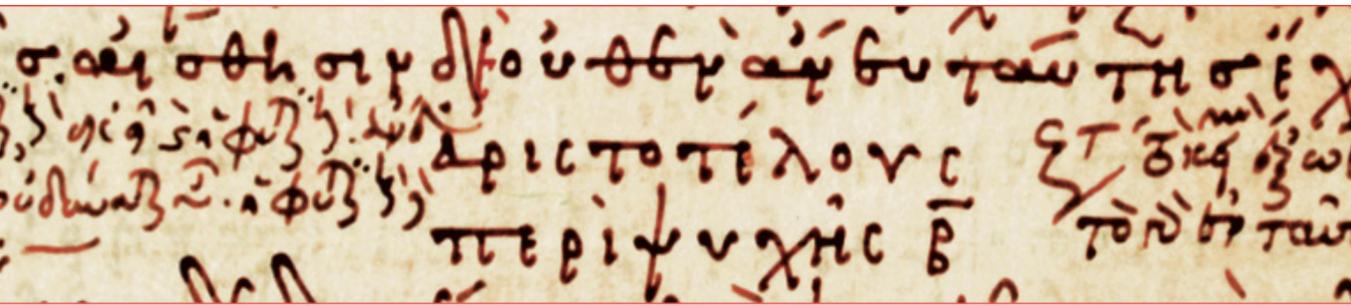


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# *The “Perfect King” and his Philosophers*

*Politics, Religion and Graeco-Arabic Philosophy in Safavid Iran: the case of the Utūlūgiyā*

Marco Di Branco\*

## *Abstract*

During the long span of time which divides the age of Avicenna and Suhrawardī on the one hand, and that of the Safavid empire on the other, the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* seems *prima facie* to have sunk into oblivion in Persia. Closer study of the manuscripts of this work housed in the libraries of Iran, and of their readers, permits us to ascertain that this is not the case. This article, issued from the missions conducted within the context of the ERC Project 249431 “Greek into Arabic”, narrows the focus on the early Safavid era and shows the background of the interest in the pseudo-*Theology* of some scholars of that milieu. In particular, the discovery of a Prologue to the pseudo-*Theology* by Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Daṣṭakī (d. 949/1541) is accounted for, and some implications of this text are discussed.

## *1. Searching for a method*

In the last decade, studies concerning philosophy in Iran during the Safavid period have experienced a significant increase: several works (of uneven quality) have been published, focusing on individual figures of thinkers linked to the political and cultural milieus of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Tabriz.<sup>1</sup> Most of these contributions consist of publishing unedited texts, an approach that has the great merit of making available new materials. What I would like to do in this paper is to narrow the focus on the historical-philosophical context of the circulation of what is in all likelihood the most important among the Graeco-Arabic works widespread in Safavid Iran: the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*.<sup>2</sup> Rula Jurdi Abisaab,

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\* In writing this article I have received the generous help of Gerhard Endress, whose invaluable suggestions and corrections I gratefully acknowledge here. Issam Marjani helped me to decipher many difficult readings of the manuscripts: I am deeply grateful for this. I am also indebted to Rüdiger Arnzen for providing me with crucial information on many Iranian manuscripts of the pseudo-*Theology*; Cristina D’Ancona suggested several improvements. This research would have been impossible without the support of the Directors and staff of the Kitābhāna-i Markazī-i Dāniṣgāh-i Tihārān and of the Kitābhāna-i Maḡlis-i Šūrā-i Islāmī. My sincere thanks go to all; the shortcomings of this article are obviously only my responsibility.

<sup>1</sup> The most important contributions are the following: S.H. Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī. His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, Oxford U. P., Oxford-New York 2007 (Journal of Semitic Studies, Suppl. 18); R. Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran. Najm al-Dīn Maḡmūd al-Nayrizī and his Writings*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2011 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, 82); J. Pfeiffer (ed.), *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Century Tabriz*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2014 (Iran Studies, 8).

<sup>2</sup> The pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* is the focus of the ERC Project AdG 249431 “Greek into Arabic. Philosophical Concepts and Linguistic Bridges”, whose support has permitted my research missions in Tehran, Qom, Isfahan and Mashhad which lay in the background of this article. I am especially grateful to Gerhard Endress for his continued assistance in the preparation of these missions, whose first results are presented here. The main surveys on the scholarship on the pseudo-*Theology* include M. Aouad, “La Théologie d’Aristote et autres textes du Plotinus Arabus”, in R. Goulet (ed.) *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, I, CNRS-Éditions, Paris 1989, pp. 541-90; C. D’Ancona, “Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in Translation”, in P. Adamson - R.C. Taylor (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, Cambridge U. P., Cambridge 2005, pp. 10-31; Ead., “Plotinus. Arabic”, in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*, Springer

Colin P. Mitchell, and Andrew J. Newman have shown how promising is to contextualize the doctrines in their ground-breaking studies on the dissemination of Shi'ism in Iran promoted by Ismā'īl I and his successors,<sup>3</sup> on the epistolography produced by the Persian chancellery between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,<sup>4</sup> and on the society, history, politics and culture of the Safavid Iran.<sup>5</sup> The two pillars of the studies on Safavid philosophy are represented by volume IV of *En Islam iranien* by Henry Corbin<sup>6</sup> and by the path-breaking essay by Gerhard Endress "Philosophische Ein-Band Bibliotheken aus Isfahan".<sup>7</sup> The latter shows how this topic is best approached, namely through an integrated analysis which takes into account not only the philological, codicological, and prosopographical aspects, but also the philosophical, theological, and political implications of the texts discussed. In fact, during the Safavid era both the transmission and the fruition of philosophical texts are closely connected to the political and religious sphere. As Endress has it, "von Ideologen der Schia – die ihre Theologie mit dem Instrumentarium des rationalistischen Kalām schmiedete und die zur Integration der *falsafa* fand – wurde solche Philosophie als Paradigma eines universalen Führungsanspruchs in religiösen Staat der Safawiden erneuert und systematisch formuliert".<sup>8</sup>

In this paper, I will discuss a case in point of the cross-pollination between philosophy and political theology, namely the circulation of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* at the Safavid court. Setting the scene for this implies first to survey the interplay among political activity, religious doctrine and philosophical speculation during the time frame which spans from the Safavid rise to power in Iran (907/1501) to the Kingdom of Shāh 'Abbās, the most important ruler of the dynasty. It is in his reign (1052/1077-1642/1667) that the so called "School of Isfahan" flourished. The interest of the Safavid intellectuals for Graeco-Arabic philosophy is directly connected with specific political and religious issues; hence, the study of the reception of Graeco-Arabic philosophical texts in Persia must include an analysis of its historical context, if one wants to dig out the causes of a cultural and ideological nature which determined the popularity of such texts.

## 2. *The dialectic between Sufism and Shi'ism in the age of Shāh Ismā'īl I (r. 907-930/1501-1524)*

As is well known, the rise to power of the Safavid dynasty originated from a political and religious movement which took advantage of the religious syncretisms widespread in Anatolia and Persia, which combined elements coming not only from Shi'ism and the Sunni messianism, but also from Buddhism and Mazdeism.<sup>9</sup> This movement also created an effective hierarchical and militarized organization, which led it to the conquest and unification of Iran.<sup>10</sup> However, once his leadership was

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Science + Business media B.V. 2011, pp. 1030-8. Cf. also Ead., "La *Teologia* neoplatonica di 'Aristotele' e gli inizi della filosofia arabo-musulmana", in R. Goulet - U. Rudolph (eds), *Entre Orient et Occident. La philosophie et la science gréco-romaines dans le monde arabe*, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, vol. 57, Fondation Hardt, Vandœuvres - Genève 2011, pp. 135-90.

<sup>3</sup> R.J. Abisaab, *Converting Persia. Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire*, Tauris, London-New York 2004.

<sup>4</sup> C.P. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran. Power, Religion and Rhetoric*, Tauris, London-New York 2009.

<sup>5</sup> A.J. Newman (ed.), *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2003 (Islamic History and Civilisation, Studies and Texts, 46); Id., *Safavid Iran. Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, Tauris, London-New York 2006.

<sup>6</sup> H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, IV, *L'école d'Ispahan, l'école Shaykhi, le douzième Imâm*, Gallimard, Paris 1972 (Bibliothèque des idées).

<sup>7</sup> G. Endress, "Philosophische Ein-Band Bibliotheken aus Isfahan", *Oriens* 36 (2001), pp. 10-58.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. M. Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Šafawids: Šī'ism, Sūfism, and the Ġulāt*, Steiner, Wiesbaden 1972.

<sup>10</sup> On the initial phases of Shāh Ismā'īl's political-religious project cf. Newman, *Safavid Iran. Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, pp. 13-25; cf. also A.H. Morton, "The Early Years of Shah Ismā'īl in the *Afzal al-tavārikh* and Elsewhere", *Pembroke*

consolidated, Shāh Ismā'īl, the first ruler of the dynasty, had to face the inevitable tensions between the populist and millenarist agenda of the Qizilbāsh, i.e. the mystical traditions pervading Azerbaijan and Anatolia, and the need for stability and order implied in the establishment of the reign.<sup>11</sup>

Ismā'īl, who was still under the influence of the apocalyptic propaganda of sufi origin, initially portrayed himself as a reincarnation of 'Alī and as a manifestation of the divine light granting the royal investiture (*farr*).<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, already during the first years of his reign, the king invited to Persia some famous Shi'ite '*ulamā*' coming mainly from the area of Ġabal 'Amil in Syria, and placed them in key positions with administrative and religious duties, in order to spread the Twelver Shi'ism through the country.<sup>13</sup> This situation led to the establishment of an articulated dialectic relation between Shi'ism and Sufism, as is apparent in the documents of Ismā'īl's chancellery.<sup>14</sup> A synthesis of mysticism and millenarist views was predictably the outcome of such a move, a mix which incorporates elements of the Shi'ite Sufism and of the juridical and religious doctrines deriving from the 'orthodox' Twelver Shi'ism. As has been pointed out, at the court of Ismā'īl "we encounter a visual use of Shi'ite icons and slogans that, on the face of it, belied the lack of sophisticated appreciation of any legal and theological doctrines at these early dates (...). In those days men knew not of the Ja'fari faith and the rules of the 12 imāms".<sup>15</sup> As a consequence, the first Safavid ruler did not hesitate to react energetically against some heterodox aspects of Sufism: in particular, the cult of Abū Muslim (d. 138/755), the celebrated hero of the 'Abbasid revolution who was an object of extraordinary veneration in the extremist mystical milieu of Anatolia and Persia.<sup>16</sup> It thus appears, already at this early stage of the Safavid rule, one of the most typical features of the relationship between power and religion as it was conceived of by the members of this dynasty: the habit of identifying and selecting

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*Papers* 4 (1996), pp. 27-51, also in C. Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, University of Cambridge, London-New York 1996, pp. 27-51.

<sup>11</sup> On the relationships between the Safavids and the the mystical brotherhoods of eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan cf. S. Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: the Nūrbakshīya between Medieval and Modern Islam*, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia 2003, and L. Lewisohn, "An Introduction to History of Modern Persian Sufism, I, The Nīmatullāhī Order: Persecution, Revival and Schism", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61 (1998), pp. 437-64. Cf. also Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, pp. 30-9.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J. Calmard, "Popular Literature under the Safavids", in Newman (ed.), *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East* (quoted above, n. 5), pp. 315-40, p. 317. Cf. also V. Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismā'īl", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10 (1940-43), pp. 1006-53, p. 1047.

<sup>13</sup> See in particular Abisaab, *Converting Persia* (quoted above, n. 3), pp. 8-10; Ead., "The 'Ulama of Jabal 'Amil in Safavid Iran, 1501-1736: Marginality, Migration and Social Change", *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994), pp. 103-22; R. Ja'fariyān, "The Immigrant Manuscripts: A Study of the Migration of Shi'i Works from Arab Regions to Iran in the Early Safavid Era", in Newman (ed.), *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East*, pp. 315-70. On the contrasts existing in the Twelver community in this period cf. A.J. Newman, "The Myth of the Clerical Migration to Safavid Iran: Arab Shiite Opposition to 'Alī al-Karakī and Safavid Shiism", *Die Welt des Islams* 33 (1933), pp. 66-112.

<sup>14</sup> See for example Bashir, "Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions" (quoted above, n. 11), pp. 38-41.

<sup>15</sup> Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 4), p. 48. Cf. also Newman, *Safavid Iran. Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (quoted above, n. 5), p. 24, and the interesting hypothesis advanced by D. Morgan, "Rethinking Safavid Shi'ism", in L. Lewisohn - D. Morgan (eds), *The Heritage of Sufism, III, Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501-1750). The Safavid & Mughal Period*, Oneworld, Oxford 1999, pp. 19-27.

<sup>16</sup> See in particular I. Mélikoff, *Abū Muslim: le 'Porte-Hache' du Khorassan dans la tradition épique turco-iranienne*, Maisonneuve, Paris 1962. Cf. also K. Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamate Shi'ism", *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994), pp. 135-61, p. 144, and Ead., "Sufis, Dervishes and Mullas: the Controversy over Spiritual and Temporal Dominion in Seventeenth-Century Iran", *Pembroke Papers* 4 (1996), pp. 117-38, also in C. Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia* (quoted above, n. 10), pp. 117-38.

leading personalities within the theological, mystical or philosophical circles, in order to co-opt them in the juridical apparatus; to this, it should be added the talent to replace them with personalities of even radically different leanings, depending on the political needs of the moment.

### 3. *Shāh Ṭahmāsp (r. 930-984/1524-1576) and the transition from 'popular' to 'doctrinal' Shi'ism*

The year 938/1532 is that of the great religious change of Shāh Ṭahmāsp, son and successor of Ismā'īl, which the same king defined as *tawba* (repentance) – a word of Qur'ānic origin very common both in Sufi and in Shi'ite tradition.<sup>17</sup> The effects of this “repentance” are visible in two royal decrees: the first is dated 939/1533; the second, while bearing no precise date, came a bit later. These documents attest Shāh Ṭahmāsp's endorsement to some Twelver '*ulamā'*';<sup>18</sup> among them, the prominent figure was 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Karakī, the greatest jurist of the Safavid court in the period from the end of the reign of Ismā'īl to 940/1533, when he died.<sup>19</sup> Karakī was the author of works written originally in Arabic and soon translated into Persian which had an amazing circulation and which formed the doctrinal basis of a large-scale campaign in order to spread Shi'ism in the Persian land. This campaign, inaugurated by Shāh Ismā'īl I, was continued with much greater determination by Shāh Ṭahmāsp:<sup>20</sup> under Karakī's guidance the Shi'ite clergy, often marginalized in their areas of origin, reached remarkable power not only in the religious sphere but also in economic and administrative activities.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Karakī became the promoter of a renewed attack against the Sufi brotherhoods and the popular cults, reaching the goal of establishing himself as the unique reference authority for legal and doctrinal issues.<sup>22</sup> According to him, Shāh Ṭahmāsp was a Shi'ite political and spiritual leader, no longer a Sufi, as Shāh Ismā'īl was.

Nevertheless, not all the Twelver '*ulamā'*' supported Karakī. Rather, many of them openly challenged his leadership. As a consequence, showing a complete lack of ethical and religious scruples, he did not hesitate to make agreements with the Qizilbāsh against his Shi'ite opponents.<sup>23</sup> According to Mitchell,

<sup>17</sup> See F.M. Denny, “Tawba”, in *EF*, X, p. 384.

<sup>18</sup> Translated by S.A. Arjomand, “Two Decrees of Shāh Ṭahmāsp concerning Statecraft and the Authority of Shaykh 'Alī al-Karakī”, in Id. (ed.), *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1988, pp. 250-66. Cf. also Newman, *Safavid Iran. Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (quoted above, n. 5), p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> On this prominent Shi'ite scholar see Abisaab, *Converting Persia. Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (quoted above, n. 3), pp. 15-22; S.A. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God & the Hidden Imam. Religion, Political Order and Social Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 1984, pp. 132-7 and 177-90; Id., “Religious Extremism (*Guluww*), Sufism, and Sunnism in Safavid Iran: 1501-1722”, *Journal of Asian History* 15 (1981), pp. 1-35; Newman, “The Myth of the Clerical Migration to Safavid Iran” (quoted above, n. 13); W. Madelung, “al-Karakī”, in *EF*, IV, p. 610.

<sup>20</sup> See Abisaab, *Converting Persia* (quoted above, n. 3), pp. 16-22. On the Persian translations of al-Karakī's works see *ibid.*, p. 28 with n. 142. On Shāh Ṭahmāsp's patronage of the most important Persian Shi'ite shrines see K. Rizvi, *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine. Architecture, Religion and Power in Early Modern Iran*, British Institute of Persian Studies, London-New York 2010 (BIPS Persian Studies Series, 5), in part. pp. 75-101.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>22</sup> For the political aims of al-Karakī cf. S.A. Arjomand, *Conceptions of Authority and the Transition of Shi'ism from Sectarian to National Religion in Iran*, in F. Daftary - J.W. Meri (eds), *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, Tauris, London 2003, pp. 388-409, in part. pp. 393-4.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. R.M. Savory, “The Principal Offices of the Safavid State during the Reign of Isma'īl I (907-30/1501-24)”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23 (1960), pp. 91-105 (repr. in Id., *Studies on the History of Safavid Iran*, Variorum, London 1987 [Collected Studies, 256]); Id., “The Principal Offices of the Safavid State during the Reign of Ṭahmāsp (930-84/1524-76)”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24 (1961), pp. 65-85 (repr. in Id., *Studies on the History of Safavid Iran*). Interestingly, also in the second of the two decrees of Shāh Ṭahmāsp's mentioned above there is no explicit prohibition of Sufi practices or philosophy; on the contrary, as noticed by Arjomand, “Two Decrees of Shāh Ṭahmāsp” (quoted above, n. 18), p. 256, the decree states that the officials of the court, when not attending their duties, can

in the epoch of Shāh Ṭahmāsp we can observe a kind of 'bifurcation' in the Safavid intelligentsia: on the one hand, there was the 'orthodox' Shi'ite clergy, in part of Arab origin; on the other, the Persian notables, generally devoted to philosophy, hermeneutics and devotional mysticism.<sup>24</sup> "Although these network were entangled and shifting constantly – Mitchell states – it would be reasonable to suggest that sixteenth-century Safavid epistemology was defined roughly by two broad intellectual camps: the juridically minded Shi'ite émigrés and their Iranian supporters and those Neoplatonic influenced Persian scholastics who focused on logic, mathematics, and theosophy".<sup>25</sup> In fact, some 'Neoplatonic' (*iṣrāqī*) scholars would soon become key players in the philosophical-political scene of the Safavid court. However, some doubts can be cast on the radical division drawn by Mitchell: the sources suggest a more nuanced assessment, because it was often the case that members of both trends did belong to the same family (in some cases, they were father and son), not to mention the fact that various matrimonial alliances were soon established between Arab emigrants and Persian *asyād*.<sup>26</sup>

After Karakī's death, the role of the first jurisconsult of the empire was assumed by Qāḍī-i Ġahān Qazvīnī (d. 961/1554). The scion of a prominent family of Qazvin, he studied logic, philosophy and astronomy with the famous theologian and philosopher Ġalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (b. 830/1426) at the Madrasa-i Maṣūriyya of Shiraz, one of the most important cultural centres of Persia since pre-Safavid times.<sup>27</sup> Thanks also to his training, Qāḍī-i-Ġahān proved to be able to discuss with those milieus, which had been severely marginalized in the period marked by Karakī's hegemony; he established good relations with both philosophers and theosophists and with the Sufis of the influential brotherhood Nūrbaḥsiyya. Nevertheless, at his death, the Shi'ite theological-bureaucratic apparatus regained the control of the situation, resuming hostile actions against the Sufis: eventually the Nūrbaḥsiyya decided to abandon Persia.<sup>28</sup> Among the most zealous opponents of Sufism and philosophy there is Šayḥ Ḥasan,

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"read the books of the masters of Sufism and sincerity, like the books of ethics which are spiritual medicine", a label which is evocative if not directly of Rhazes' *al-Ṭibb al-rūḥānī*, at least of the literary genre of the "Refinement of Character", famously combining Neoplatonism and Aristotelian ethics. On the various works of Persian authors of the XI<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup> centuries bearing the title *Spiritual Medicine* cf. R. Brague, *Muhammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī (Rhazès), La médecine spirituelle*. Traduction de l'arabe, introduction, notes et bibliographie, Flammarion, Paris 2003, p. 37 with n. 95.

<sup>24</sup> Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 4), pp. 70-71.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. also Abisaab, *Converting Persia* (quoted above, n. 3), p. 14 with n. 36; D.J. Stewart, "The First Shaykh al-Islām of the Safavid Capital Qazvin", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116 (1996), pp. 387-405; L. Lewisohn, "Sufism and the School of Iṣfahān: *Ṭaṣawwuf* and *ʿIrfān* in Late Safavid Iran ('Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī and Fayḍ-i Kāshānī on the Relation of *Ṭaṣawwuf*, *Ḥikmat* and *ʿIrfān*)", in *The Heritage of Sufism*, III (quoted above, n. 15), pp. 63-134, in part. pp. 79-80; J. Cooper, "Some Observations on the Religious Intellectual Milieu of Safavid Persia", in F. Daftary (ed.), *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, Tauris, London-New York 2000, pp. 146-59, and A. Newman, "The Role of the *Sādāt* in Safavid Iran: Confrontation or Accommodation?", *Oriente Moderno* 18 (1999), pp. 577-96.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 196.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 4), pp. 88-95; Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 1), pp. 5-16. On the Madrasah-yi Maṣūriyya see V. Minorsky, "A *Soyūrgḥāl* of Qāsim b. Jahāngir Aq-Qoyūnlū (903/1498)", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 9 (1939), pp. 927-60, in part. p. 953, with n. 4. On al-Dawānī see also A.J. Newman, "Dawānī", in *Enc. Ir.*, VII, pp. 132-3; G. Endress, "Reading Avicenna in the *madrasa*: Intellectual Genealogies and Chains of Transmission of Philosophy and the Sciences in the Islamic East", in J. Montgomery (ed.), *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy. From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, Peeters, Leuven 2006 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 152), pp. 371-422, in part. p. 418; Endress highlights al-Dawānī's place in the history of science and philosophy in post-Mongol Persia as follows: "from al-Abharī, al-Shahrāzūrī and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī [al-Dawānī] took the fusion of Ibn Sīnā's rational and al-Suhrawardī's mystical philosophy into the Sunnī *madrasa*".

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, pp. 95-103, and Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions* (quoted above, n. 11), pp. 198-243.

the author of a treatise against the mystics and ‘gnostics’ (*‘arifān*), the *‘Umdat al-maḳāl fī kufr abl al-dalāl* (*Best Arguments Regarding the Infidelity of the Misguided*).<sup>29</sup> Although strongly influential at court, he still had to face fierce opposition, coming fully to light only after Shāh Ṭahmāsp’s death. The last years of the latter’s reign were in fact characterized by a further rigorous change (the so-called “Second Repentance”: 963/1556), during which Ṣayḥ Ḥasan issued a new series of decrees on ethical and religious matters which were allegedly inspired by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib himself in a dream.<sup>30</sup>

It is quite evident that Shāh Ṭahmāsp’s choice of relying on the more rigorous Shi’ite clergy, modelling in this sense the *madrassa* system and using only bureaucrats from that milieu, is linked to the desire to maintain through the Twelver hierarchies a strong control on those provincial areas that had not yet fully integrated into the Safavid state. It should be stressed that this decision of Shah Ṭahmāsp – as well as similar, or even contrary decisions by other Safavid rulers – is based on exclusively political, ideological and religious criteria, and has no social or ‘ethnic’ justifications. An example which sheds light on this is the matrimonial alliance established by Karakī, the implacable opponent of Sufis and philosophers, with an important family of the region of Astarābād:<sup>31</sup> this same family also gave birth to one of the most important *isrāqī* thinkers of Safavid Persia, Mīr Dāmād, who was the son of the son-in-law of the same Karakī.<sup>32</sup> This circumstance highlights once again the ideological lack of scruples which characterizes not only the Safavid rulers, but also the members of the social and intellectual aristocracy of the *asyād*: the rulers were always ready to seek support in the speculations of the various juridical and philosophical schools and of the various Sufi orders, depending upon the political needs of the moment; the aristocrats were always ready to diversify their ideological profile, thanks to their copious philosophical and religious interests.

#### 4. *Shāh Ismā‘īl II* (r. 984-985/1576-1577): restoration of the sunna or recomposition of the élites?

The death of Shāh Ṭahmāsp marks a profound crisis in the structure of the Safavid rule: in 984/1576 a putsch of the powerful tribe of the Afšār enthroned Mīrzā Ismā‘īl (r. 984/1576 - 985/1577), the rebel son of Ṭahmāsp, who had languished in prison for twenty years for plotting a conspiracy against his father.<sup>33</sup> Scholars often describe the policy of Ismā‘īl II as “crypto-Sunnism”, ascribing to him the desire to restore the *sunna* in Persia.<sup>34</sup> However, Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti remarks that “Ismā‘īl II’s Sunnism was in its turn an invocation to the Sharī‘a, with the intention of providing himself with a weapon which would enable him to undermine the power of the shī‘ī *‘ulamā* by establishing a new balance of power between the Iranian aristocracy and the Qizilbāsh tribes still active in the political field, since, owing to their mutual rivalry, both these elements were not unwilling to give him a sure degree of support”.<sup>35</sup> Ismā‘īl II decided to put a stop to the political

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Abisaab, *Converting Persia* (quoted above, n. 4), p. 26, with n. 127, and K. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs. Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran*, Harvard University Press, Chicago-London 1984, p. 407, with n. 9.

<sup>30</sup> On Shāh Ṭahmāsp’s dream and on the meaning of his decrees cf. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, pp. 319-20.

<sup>31</sup> On this marriage alliance see for example Newman, *Safavid Iran. Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (quoted above, n. 5), p. 24. On the importance of the *sayyids* and theologians from Astarābād and other Māzandarānī centres, cf. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 4), p. 106-10, and Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, pp. 377-378.

<sup>32</sup> On Mīr Dāmād see *infra*, pp. 212-13.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. R.M. Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, Cambridge U. P., Cambridge-New York 1980, p. 68.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. for example Arjomand, *The Shadow of God & the Hidden Imam* (quoted above, n. 19), p. 120; Abisaab, *Converting Persia* (quoted above, n. 3), pp. 41-4; Newman, *Safavid Iran. Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (quoted above, n. 10), p. 46.

<sup>35</sup> B. Scarcia Amoretti, “Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Period”, in P. Jackson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, VI, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, Cambridge U. P., Cambridge 1986, pp. 610-55, in part. p. 643.

power of the Shi'ite élite that shaped the outline of the bureaucratic empire of Shāh Ṭahmāsp; this is reflected in the ideological-religious aspiration to return to the conditions that had brought Ismā'īl I to the throne through a resolute struggle against the Shi'ite rigorism that characterized the last phase of the reign of Ṭahmāsp. However, Mitchell's careful examination of the documentation produced by the chancellery of Ismā'īl II has shown unequivocally that this ruler, despite his will to undermine the structure of power represented by the Twelver hierarchy at the service of his predecessor, never challenged the Safavid's allegiance to Shi'ism.<sup>36</sup> "By attempting to halt the trajectory of jurist notables like Mīr Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Karakī – states Mitchell – and instead privilege networks of scribes, accountants, *adībs*, and scholar-bureaucrats, Ismā'īl II established a dynamic that characterized the Safavid court and chancellery politics for the next two decades".<sup>37</sup> After all, Ismā'īl II's attempt lays the foundation of the administrative 'revolution' of Shāh 'Abbās.<sup>38</sup>

##### 5. *Khudābandah* (r. 985-996/1577-1588) and his 'sublime group'

The reform of Ismā'īl II contains in itself the main elements, political and bureaucratic, that will appear clearly only later, but it was the short reign of his brother Muḥammad Khudābandah which represented a *grand tournant* of Safavid history, in particular for what concerns the ideological and doctrinal aspects of the élite of the government. Khudābandah studied at the school of one of the most prestigious and controversial scholars of the early Safavid era, Šayḥ Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Šamad.<sup>39</sup> One of the key texts for understanding the importance of this turning point is a short letter of Khudābandah to a famous scholar of Shiraz, Mīr Fath Allāh Šīrāzī, who emigrated to India in the early '80s of the sixteenth century.<sup>40</sup> From this epistle we learn not only that Khudābandah, when he was governor of Shiraz, attended the circle of Mīr Fath Allāh Šīrāzī, but also that the king considered its members as "the most exalted group (*zumrah-i 'ālī al-šā'n*)" and "the most perfect kind of humanity (*ḥulāṣah-i anwā'-i insān*)".<sup>41</sup> As Mitchell explains, Khudābandah alludes here to the circle of scholars which loosely coalesced around the Madrasa-i Manšūriyya: consequently, Mitchell rightly concludes that "the later intellectual accomplishments and the resurgence of *isbrāqī* philosophy under the banner of Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Šadrā would appear to owe its roots, at least partly, to Khudābandah's gubernatorial sponsorship and support of this 'most exalted group'".<sup>42</sup> But the appreciation of Khudābandah for "the most exalted group" is not confined to the intellectual and doctrinal sphere. In fact it has, as usual, political implications: those of a real challenge to the Qizilbāsh – still very powerful in spite of Ismā'īl II's attempts to limit their authority – and of further consolidation of the Twelver hierarchy through the support offered to prominent members of the Gnostic and Sufi

<sup>36</sup> Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 4), pp. 151-8.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. K.M. Röhrborn, "Staatskanzlei und Absolutismus im safawidischen Persien", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 127 (1977), pp. 313-43, in part. pp. 314-15. On the reactions of the Shi'ite religious establishment to the religious policy of Ismā'īl II see in particular D.J. Stewart, "The Lost Biography of Baha' al-Dīn al-'Amīli and the Reign of Shah Isma'īl II in Safavid and Afsharid Iran", *Iranian Studies* 31 (1998), pp. 177-205.

<sup>39</sup> On this interesting personality see Stewart, "The First Shaykh al-Islām of the Safavid Capital Qazvin".

<sup>40</sup> 'A. al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī (ed.), Shāh 'Abbās, *Maǧmū' a-yi asnād va mukātibāt-i tāriḥi-yi hamrah bā yāddāst-hā-yi tafṣīl*, I, Intiṣārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān, Teheran 1974 (Manābī-i tāriḥ va ġuǧrāfiyā-yi Irān, 61), pp. 113-6. Cf. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 4), pp. 172-3. On Mīr Fath Allāh Šīrāzī see S. Husein Qasemi, "Fath Allāh Šīrāzī, Sayyed Mīr", in *Enc.Ir.*, IX, p. 421.

<sup>41</sup> Navā'ī (ed.), Shāh 'Abbās, *Maǧmū' ah-yi*, pp. 113-14.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, p. 173.

milieus, co-opted in his chancellery.<sup>43</sup> It is precisely this milieu that elaborated the absolutist theology of the “perfect man” embodied by the Shāh, which would become a central element of the Safavid ideology starting from the reign of Shāh ‘Abbās.

### 6. *A flexible élite*

From this survey a conclusion imposes itself: the Shi‘ite élite proved to possess the great ability to remain at the centre of the political stage, meeting the ever-changing needs of the rulers who followed one another on the throne. Even though from a theological and doctrinal point of view this élite had internal conflicts, a prosopographical analysis shows that all its prominent members did belong to a limited number of family circles, which in many cases were linked by ties of kinship. In this regard, Devin J. Stewart argued that the crisis which exploded during the reign of Ismā‘il II “galvanized Shi‘ite scholars and brought together within this category several groups, that in earlier times, had had quite different concerns and agenda and had often opposed each other”.<sup>44</sup> For example, two very different figures like the Shi‘ite rigorist ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Karakī and the ‘Neoplatonic’ Mīr Dāmād were members of the same family, and the same is true for lesser known but equally important figures such as Šayḥ ‘Izz al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Šamad (918/984-1512/1576)<sup>45</sup> and his son Bahā’ al-Dīn al-‘Amilī (953/1030-1547/1629).<sup>46</sup> This comes as no surprise in Islamic Persia: a study by Richard W. Bulliet on the city of Nishapur between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries pointed out similar ideological and juridical divisions at the heart of the aristocracy, divisions that caused a state of permanent opposition, giving rise also to impromptu outbursts of violence. As in the Safavid context, the two rival groups belonged to the same social class, very different from the popular strata which adhered to mystical-social movements such as the so-called *ḥurramiyya*. However, their ideological divisions were no less radical and concerned especially teaching, namely the possibility of forming society in their own image and likeness: this conflict ended only with the advent of the Seljuks, who just took away from the Persian aristocracy the monopoly of juridical-religious teaching and put it under the control of their new state.<sup>47</sup> As for the Safavid era, it is often stated that the main turning point in relations between the ruler and the religious and bureaucratic élite of the empire would have occurred in the era of Shāh ‘Abbās (996/1038-1588/1629), when the king promoted a revolutionary alliance between ‘throne and altar’, so to say “an alliance in which the orthodox Shi‘i clergy underwrote the Shah’s claim to a special Shi‘i legitimacy and declared obedience to him to be ordained by God, while the Shah in return did everything in his power to support and promote orthodox Shi‘ism and the Shi‘i clerical establishment”.<sup>48</sup> In the light of what we have seen so far, the ‘revolutionary’ conduct of Shāh ‘Abbās should certainly be reconsidered, since it seems to have its roots in the

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175-6.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Stewart, “The Lost Biography of Baha’ al-Din al-‘Amili” (quoted above, n. 38), p. 203.

<sup>45</sup> On Šayḥ ‘Izz al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Šamad see above all Stewart, “The First Shaykh al-Islām of the Safavid Capital Qazvin” (quoted above, n. 25), *passim*.

<sup>46</sup> On Bahā’ al-Dīn al-‘Amilī cf. Stewart, “The Lost Biography of Baha’ al-Din al-‘Amili”, *passim*; Endress, “*Philosophische Ein-Band Bibliotheken aus Isfahan*” (quoted above, n. 7), p. 28; A.J. Newman, “Towards a Reconsideration of the Isfahan School of Philosophy: Shaykh Bahai and the Role of the Safawid Ulama”, *Studia Iranica* 15 (1986), pp. 165-99.

<sup>47</sup> R. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur, a Study in Medieval Islamic Social History*, Harvard U. P., Cambridge Mass. 1972 (Harvard Middle Eastern Studies, 16), pp. 28-60.

<sup>48</sup> D. Blow, *Shah Abbas. The Ruthless King who became an Iranian Legend*, Tauris, London-New York 2009, p. 181; cf. H. Nahavandi - Y. Bomati, *Shah Abbas Empereur de Perse (1587-1629)*, Perrin, Paris 1998, pp. 175-9.

policy of his predecessors. For example, it should be pointed out that two of the most important members of Shāh 'Abbās's court, Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Amilī and Mīr Dāmād, exercised an important role in the chancellery of both Ismā'īl II and Khudābandah.<sup>49</sup> What distinguishes the relationship of Shāh 'Abbās with the religious and bureaucratic élite of his empire from that entertained by the previous rulers is his inclination, albeit not exclusive, for the *išrāqī* milieu,<sup>50</sup> and his hostile attitude towards the Qizilbāsh and the proliferation of popular Sufism, which was always dangerous to the established order.<sup>51</sup> We will see, however, that the choice of 'Abbās to put in the hands of renowned *išrāqiyyūn* philosophers (who were, at least in part, already active at the court of Ismā'īl II and Khudābandah) some of the most important religious and bureaucratic offices of the Safavid state is mainly linked to a precise ideological project: to create the doctrinal framework for the new conception of kingship elaborated by Shāh 'Abbās, and at one and the same time to reject the accusations of the Shi'ite scholars towards the Safavid monarchy.<sup>52</sup>

### 7. The 'Perfect King' and his philosophers: the 'ilm *išrāqī* and absolutism

As is known, the Persian-Islamic model of kingship adopted by the Safavid dynasty is connected from its beginning with the idea of a special *status* of the monarch, not only from the socio-political point of view, but also in the more committal sense of the ontological nature, so to say, of the man who embodies kingship. Even in the pre-Islamic age Persian culture took for granted that "subject and a sovereign were clean different things".<sup>53</sup> In the Islamic world, the elaboration of this point is rooted in the Platonic-shaped political thought of al-Fārābī<sup>54</sup> and, in Persia, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). The latter is the author of the *Ahlāq-i Nāsiri*, a mirror for princes deeply influential on many Timurid and Safavid scholars, including the already mentioned Ġalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī, Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Daṣṭakī (d. 948/1541), who was the scion of a noble and cultivated family of Shiraz,<sup>55</sup> and especially

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Newman, *Safavid Iran. Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (quoted above, n. 5), pp. 43-4, with n. 23.

<sup>50</sup> As Mitchell rightly underlines, "Abbās was careful to avoid any undue accruing of power by a particular hierocrat or group of clerics" (*The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, quoted above n. 4, p. 192).

<sup>51</sup> On the vehement attacks of the famous philosopher *išrāqī* Mullā Ṣadrā Šīrāzī against the alleged "Sufis", whom he sees as unlearned charlatans and pretenders, see Babayan, "Sufis, Dervishes and Mullas" (quoted above, n. 16), pp. 127-30, and Ead., *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs* (quoted above, n. 29), pp. 417-22.

<sup>52</sup> On the religious dissenters who openly criticized the Safavid monarchy see for example Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, pp. 404-7.

<sup>53</sup> P. Crone, *God's Rule: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, Columbia U. P., New York 2004, p. 154. Cf. also A.K. Lambton, "Quis custodiet custodes? Some Reflections on the Persian Theory of Government. Part I", *Studia Islamica* 5 (1955), pp. 125-48; "Part II", *Studia Islamica* 6 (1956), pp. 125-46; L. Marlow, "Kings, Prophets and the Ulama in Medieval Islamic Advice Literature", *Studia Islamica* 81 (1995), pp. 101-20, and above all C.P. Mitchell, "Am I my Brother's Keeper? Negotiating Corporate Sovereignty and Divine Absolutism in Sixteenth-Century Turco-Iranian Politics", in Id. (ed.), *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran. Empire and Society*, Routledge, London-New York 2011 (Iranian Studies), pp. 33-58.

<sup>54</sup> The features of the true *imām* as given by al-Fārābī in his *Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Perfect City* leave no doubt on the fact that in his opinion the *vexata quaestio* of legitimacy must be answered via the Platonic model of the Philosopher-King; at one and the same time, the very fact that the ruler of the perfect city is called *imām* reveals his leanings, by no means hostile to the Šī'a (one may recall that in 942 he joined the retinue of the Būwayhid Sayf al-Dawla). Cf. Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' arā'ī abī al-madīna al-fāḍila*, A revised text with introduction, translation and commentary by R. Walzer, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1985, revised edition by G. Endress, Great Books of the Islamic World, Chicago 1998, pp. 246.5-248.14; H. Daiber, *The Ruler as Philosopher: A New Interpretation of al-Fārābī's View*, North Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam - New York 1986.

<sup>55</sup> On Ġalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī see *supra*, p. 195, n. 27. On Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Daṣṭakī and his family see Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 1), pp. 24-32, and *infra*, pp. 207-11.

Muẓaffar al-Ḥusaynī al-Ṭabīb al-Kašānī (d. 963/1556), who wrote for Shāh Ṭahmāsp the *Ahlāq-i šifāʿī*, a sort of reworking of Ṭūsī's *Ahlāq-i Nāsiri*.<sup>56</sup> The focus of this political theory is an idea of kingship based on holiness and messianism. As Ahmed Afzar Moin writes in his foundational study *The Millennial Sovereign*, “there developed in this period an ensemble of rituals and knowledge to make the body of the king sacred and to cast it in the mold of a prophesied savior, a figure who would set right the unbearable order of things and inaugurated a new era of peace and justice – the new millennium. Undergirded by messianic conceptions and rationalized by political astrology, this style of sovereignty attempted to bind courtiers and soldiers to the monarch as both spiritual guide and material lord”.<sup>57</sup>

This ideological orientation enjoyed considerable popularity during the entire Safavid period, continuing through the end of the dynasty, as shown by its reappearance in the philosophical and political treatises of the Qağār age.<sup>58</sup> For what concerns the Safavids, two political treatises published by William C. Chittick are worth mentioning, which date from the time of Shāh ‘Abbās II (r. 1052/1077 - 1642/1667) and of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn (r. 1105/1135 - 1694/1722).<sup>59</sup> Apart from some doctrinal differences, the two writings share in a vision of kingship basically inspired by that of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. The philosophical basis of such a vision can be traced back to one of the greatest philosophers of Medieval Persia, Šihāb al-Dīn Yaḥya al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), the founder of the “science of illumination” (*ḥikmat al-išrāq*).<sup>60</sup> It comes as no surprise that Suhrawardī's *Kitāb Ḥikmat al-išrāq* had a great revival during the Timurid and Safavid ages, especially in Central Asia, Persia, and India.<sup>61</sup> Illuminationism sprung from Isfahan, where Avicenna had lived for a long time and where Suhrawardī got acquainted for the first time with the Avicennian tradition.<sup>62</sup>

As already noticed by Corbin,<sup>63</sup> another important centre of Illuminationism especially in the early Safavid period was Shiraz, the city of the great *išrāqī* scholar Quṭb al-Dīn al-Širāzī (d. 710/1311), who wrote a commentary on Suhrawardī's *Kitāb Ḥikmat al-išrāq*.<sup>64</sup> These two ‘schools’ represent

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Lambton, “*Quis custodiet custodes? Part II*” (quoted above, n. 53), p. 126.

<sup>57</sup> A. Afzar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign. Sacred Kingship & Sainthood in Islam*, Columbia U. P., New York 2012, p. 1. On the idea of “sublime absolutism” in the Muslim medieval and pre-modern world cf. also A. al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship. Power and Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Polities*, Tauris, London-New York 2001, pp. 154-200.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. for example M. Van den Boos, *Mystic Regimes. Sufism and the State in Iran, from the Late Qajar Era to the Islamic Republic*, Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2002 (S.E.P.S.M.E.A., 83), pp. 31-72; R. Gleave (ed.), *Religion and Society in Qajar Iran*. Proceedings of the conference held on 4-6 September 2000 in Bristol (...), Routledge Curzon, New York 2005 (Persian Studies Series, 4), and J. De Groot, *Religion, Culture and Politics in Iran from the Qajars to Khomeini*, Tauris, London - New York 2007, pp. 113-66.

<sup>59</sup> W. C. Chittick, “Two Seventeenth-Century Persian Tracts on Kingship and Rulers”, in Arjomand (ed.), *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (quoted above, n. 18), pp. 267-304.

<sup>60</sup> For a useful and up-to-date assessment on Suhrawardī and Illuminationism see H. Ziai, “Illuminationism”, in *Enc. Ir.*, XII, pp. 670-2, and XIII, pp. 1-2. Cf. also C. Martini Bonadeo, “Seguaci e critici di Avicenna”, in C. D’Ancona (ed.), *Storia della filosofia nell’Islam medievale*, Einaudi, Torino 2005 (PBE, 286), II, pp. 627-68, in part. pp. 637-45.

<sup>61</sup> Afzar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign* (quoted above, n. 57), pp. 49-50.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, II, *Sohrawardī et les platoniciens de Perse*, Galimard, Paris 1971, pp. 13-29; Id., *Avicenne et le récit visionnaire*, I, Verdier, Téhéran-Lagrasse 1954 (Bibl. Iranienne, 4), pp. 315-20; cf. also G. Endress, “Athen - Alexandria - Bagdad - Samarkand. Übersetzung, Überlieferung und Integration der griechischen Philosophie im Islam”, in P. Bruns (ed.), *Von Athen nach Bagdad. Zur Rezeption griechischer Philosophie von der Spätantike bis zum Islam*, Borengässer, Bonn 2003, pp. 42-62, in part. pp. 59-62.

<sup>63</sup> Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, II, pp. 346-61. Cf. now Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 1), pp. 1-44.

<sup>64</sup> On Quṭb al-Dīn al-Širāzī see H. Corbin, *Le livre de la sagesse orientale (Ḥikmat al-išrāq) de Sohrawardī: commentaires de Quṭboddin Shīrāzī et Mollā Šadrā Šīrāzī*, Verdier, Lagrasse 1986 (Islam spirituel), and J. Walbridge, *The Science of Mystic Lights: Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and the Illuminationist Tradition in Islamic Philosophy*, Cambridge Mass. 1992.

the two sides of the same *iṣrāqī* coin, as shown, among other things, by the continuous exchange between the scholars of the two cities.<sup>65</sup>

Although often overlooked in the histories of philosophical thought, Illuminationism, due to its Platonist connotations, has significant political implications. According to Suhrawardī, rulers should bear a sort of hallmark of divine revelation, which seals the relationship existing between them and the invisible source of their authority. In this sense, rulers represent the connection between the world of sense-perception and that of the pure enlightening essence from which everything originates, including political authority. In the *iṣrāqī* view, this is not an abstract idea: rulers, divinely inspired, reside in a separate realm, the "eight clima (*al-iqlīm al-tāmin*)" from which they receive the authority necessary to rule,<sup>66</sup> as pointed out by Hossein Ziai in his account of the transcendent foundation of power in Illuminationism.<sup>67</sup> Suhrawardī himself did not refrain from dealing with kings and princes, in the attempt to put into practice his ideal of a Platonic-Islamic utopia.

As shown by Corbin, it is possible to identify a proper 'chain' of *iṣrāqī* philosophers, from Šams al-Dīn Šahrazūrī to Sa'd ibn Maṣṣūr ibn Kammūna, from Quṭb al-Dīn al-Širāzī to Mīr Ḥaydar Amulī, from Šā'in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī to Ibn Abī Ġumhūr,<sup>68</sup> whose circles appear to be more and more connected to one another from the Timurid period onwards, in parallel with the rise of absolute monarchs such as Tamerlane and Akbar. On the other side, the Safavids themselves were openly inspired by the model of the mystical and illuminationist authority that appeared first under the Timurids, identifying the latter as their direct predecessors.<sup>69</sup> As a matter of fact, the Safavid era experienced a true *iṣrāqī* revival reaching its peak in the era of Shāh 'Abbās (r. 996-1038/1588-1629), and of Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Šadrā in the field of speculative thought. This revival remained as a philosophical and political element recurring well beyond the end of the reign of Shāh 'Abbās. As Endress has it,

The Šafavid philosopher-theologians of the school of the Mīr-i Dāmād and Šadr al-Dīn al-Širāzī (Mullā Šadrā) from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century not only read Avicenna and his commentators, but retraced the chain of transmitters and commentators of their spiritual and intellectual traditions, to its

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Endress, "Reading Avicenna in the *madrasa*", p. 420.

<sup>66</sup> H. Ziai, "Source and Nature of Authority: A Study of Suhrawardī's Illuminationist Political Doctrine", in Ch. Butterworth (ed.), *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy. Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi*, Cambridge U. P., Cambridge (MA) 1992, pp. 304-44. On *al-iqlīm al-tāmin* see for example H. Corbin, *Corps spirituel et Terre céleste: de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran shī'ite*, Buchet-Chastel, Paris 1979<sup>2</sup>, *passim*.

<sup>67</sup> Ziai, "Source and Nature of Authority", p. 307: "One can be a legitimate ruler only by the command of God; thus governance or actual political dominion is justified in the strict sense if and only if it is by and through linkage with the divine, i.e., by the command of God. One of the primary pillars of the illuminationist view of politics, then, is the way living rulers develop the capacity to become recipients of divine command. In addition, they must demonstrate that they have had authority divinely conferred on them, that is, that they control qualities their subjects commonly associate with divine inspiration". Cf. also Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, II (quoted above, n. 62), pp. 94-6.

<sup>68</sup> On these personalities see especially Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, II, pp. 346-61; S.J. Ashtiyani, *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens depuis le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours*, I-II, Maisonneuve - Département d'Iranologie de l'Institut franco-iranien de recherche, Paris-Téhéran 1972-1975, *passim*; R. Pourjavady - S. Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad. 'Izz al-Dawla Ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284) and his Writings*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2006 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, Texts and Studies, 65), *passim*.

<sup>69</sup> On the association between Timurids and Safavids in the Safavid historical sources see S.H. Quinn, *Historical Writing during the Reign of Shah 'Abbas. Ideology, Imitation and Legitimacy in Safavid Chronicles*, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City (UT) 2000, pp. 86-91 and 130-6. On the relationship between power and religion during the Timurid period see B. Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, Cambridge U. P., Cambridge 2007 (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilisation), pp. 208-44.

origins in the various fields of theology, philosophy, mysticism, and – depending on their professional competence – of mathematics and astronomy. Beyond their immediate curricular traditions, however, they fell back on the texts of gnostic and Neoplatonic *ḥikma* from the first period of reception and translation of the original Greek sources (...) Here, the tradition recorded in our manuscripts and in a library of biographical testimonies of a living and variegated practice, can be traced as a continuous, coherent and widely disseminated teaching tradition from the generation of Ibn Sīnā's disciples until the eighteenth century.<sup>70</sup>

As is well known, and has been established by a series of scholars with the decisive contribution of Endress himself,<sup>71</sup> it was precisely in the “first period of reception and translation of the original Greek sources” that Plotinus' *Enneads* IV-VI became the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*.<sup>72</sup> Thus, following the transmission of this text from Baghdad to Safavid Persia amounts to retracing one of the paths of the dissemination of Greek science and philosophy in the Muslim East, and indeed the most important one in the field of metaphysics.

#### 8. *The pseudo-Theology of Aristotle as a foundational text of the ḥikmat al-iṣrāq*

In the elaboration of the *ḥikmat al-iṣrāq* a foundational role is played by Greek philosophy transmitted to the Islamic world via the translation movement of the 'Abbāsīd era.<sup>73</sup> In a well known passage of his *Kitāb Ḥikmat al-iṣrāq* Suhrawardī acknowledges the contribution of Greek philosophers to the “Science of Illumination”:

<sup>70</sup> Endress, “Reading Avicenna in the *madrasa*”, p. 421.

<sup>71</sup> G. Endress, “The Circle of al-Kindī. Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy”, in G. Endress - R. Kruk (eds), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism. Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences dedicated to H.J. Drossaart Lulofs on his ninetieth birthday*, CNWS School, Leiden 1997, pp. 43-76.

<sup>72</sup> The translation of Plotinus' *Enneads* IV-VI dates from the first half of the IX<sup>th</sup> century: the *terminus ante quem* is the revision of the translation made by al-Kindī for his pupil Aḥmad, the son of the caliph al-Mu'taṣim (r. 218-227/833-42). This piece of information is given, together with the name of the translator, 'Abd al-Masiḥ ibn Na'ima al-Ḥimṣī and other important items, at the beginning of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*: cf. 'A. Badawī, *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'arab. Plotinus apud Arabes. Theologia Aristotelis et fragmenta quae supersunt*, Dār al-Nahḍat al-Miṣriyya, Cairo 1955, 1966<sup>2</sup> (Dirāsāt Islāmiyya, 20), p. 3.4-9, and *infra*, p. 210.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. J. Walbridge, *The Leaven of the Ancients: Suhrawardī and the Heritage of the Greeks*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2000, and Id., *The Wisdom of the Mystic East. Suhrawardī and Platonic Orientalism*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2001. Parting company with Corbin's account of the *ḥikmat al-iṣrāq* as the direct heir of the wisdom of ancient Persia, Walbridge casts Suhrawardī as a “reviver of pre-Aristotelian Greek philosophy” and as “the champion of Plato and Presocratic divine philosophy. The Persian Sages appear as confirmation of these ancient philosophical views, particularly the doctrine of the Platonic Forms. (...) Suhrawardī was primarily a self-conscious Platonist, a reviver not of Iranian but of Platonic wisdom” (*The Wisdom of the Mystic East*, pp. 13-15). Even though one can readily agree on the fact that this was the intention of Suhrawardī, the latter's claims should be taken with qualification. Discussing this point would exceed the limits of the present paper; I limit myself to remarking that the “pre-Aristotelian Greek philosophy” (in particular Empedocles' doctrine mentioned by Suhrawardī in the passage quoted above) has little to do with genuine Presocratic thought, coming as it does from doxographical sources reworked in al-Kindī' times, such as the “Doxography” of the pseudo-Ammonius (cf. U. Rudolph, *Die Doxographie des pseudo-Ammonius. Ein Beitrag zur neuplatonischen Überlieferung im Islam*, Steiner, Stuttgart 1989 [Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 49/1]). In particular on the Neoplatonized Empedocles see D. De Smet, *Empedocles Arabus. Une lecture néoplatonicienne tardive*, Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Brussel 1998. Walbridge is not unaware of Suhrawardī's acquaintance with the Neoplatonic works produced in the formative period of *falsafa*: cf. *The Wisdom of the Mystic East*, pp. 53 and 82.

That there are dominating lights, that the Creator of all is a light, that the archetypes are among the dominating lights – the pure souls have often beheld this to be so when they have detached themselves from their bodily temples. They then seek proof of it for others. All those possessing insight and detachment bear fitness to this. Most of the allusions of the prophets and the great philosophers point to this. Plato, Socrates before him, and those before Socrates - like Hermes, Agathodaemon, and Empedocles – all held this view. Most said plainly that they had beheld it in the world of light. Plato related that he himself had stripped off the darkness and beheld it.<sup>74</sup>

Behind this remarkable though generic assessment, inspired by al-Šahrastānī's outline of the history of Greek philosophy,<sup>75</sup> one can detect a source which counts as the true starting point of the *ḥikmat al-išrāq*: the Arabic Plotinus, transmitted under the label of "Aristotle's" *Theology* (*Kitāb Utūlū ḡiyā ay al-rubūbiyya*).<sup>76</sup> It is well known that the pseudo-*Theology* had been commented upon by Ibn Sīnā,<sup>77</sup> and his Notes may count as one of the main conduits that transmitted the text to Central Asia; but Suhrawardī was also directly acquainted with the pseudo-*Theology*, independently of Ibn Sīnā's intermediation. In his *Kitāb al-Talwīḥāt* (*Book of Intimations*), providing a first account of the 'ilm *išrāqī*, he explicitly mentions "Aristotle". The latter, he says, appeared to him in a dream and, entering into a dialogue with him, explained the principles of Illumination in the language of the *Theology*.<sup>78</sup> Obviously, the "Aristotle" of Suhrawardī's dream is nobody if not the "Aristote

<sup>74</sup> J. Walbridge - H. Ziai (eds), Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination. A New Critical Edition of the Text of Hikmat al-išrāq with English Translation, Notes, Commentary, and Introduction*, Brigham Young U. P., Provo (UT) 1999 (Islamic Translation Series), pp. 107-8.

<sup>75</sup> M.F. Allāh Badrān (ed.), Šahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal*, Maṭba'at al-Azhar, II, Miṣr, 1375/1955, p. 757-66; 823-35, and 864-77; cf. D. Gimaret - G. Monnot - J. Jolivet, Šahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, II, Peeters et UNESCO, Leuven 1993 (Collection UNESCO d'œuvres représentatives, série arabe, 25), pp. 153-8; 193-200 and 213-20, cf. also C. Baffioni, *Sulle tracce di Sofia: tre divini nella Grecia classica*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1990.

<sup>76</sup> In addition to the studies mentioned above, n. 2, cf. C. D'Ancona, "Pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, Chapter I: Structure and Composition", *Oriens* 36 (2001) pp. 78-112; Ead., "The Greek Sage, the Pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* and the Arabic Plotinus", in R. Arnzen - J. Thielmann (eds), *Words, Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea. Studies on the Sources, Contents and Influences of Islamic civilization and Arabic Philosophy and Science dedicated to Gerhard Endress on his sixty-fifth Birthday*, Peeters, Leuven 2004 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 139), pp. 159-76.

<sup>77</sup> It was P. Kraus, "Plotin chez les arabes. Remarques sur un nouveau fragment de la paraphrase arabe des *Ennéades*", *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* 23 (1940-41), pp. 263-95 (repr. in Id., *Alchimie, Ketzerei, Apokryphen im frühen Islam*. Gesammelte Aufsätze hrsg. u. eingeleitet von R. Brague, G. Olms, Hildesheim - Zürich - New York 1994, pp. 313-45) who called attention on the Notes by Avicenna on the pseudo-*Theology*. Then, the Notes have been edited by 'A. Badawī, *Ariṣṭū 'inda l-'arab. Dirāsāt wa-nuṣūṣ ḡayr manšūra*, Maktabat al-nahḍa al-miṣriyya, Miṣr 1947 (*Dirāsāt islāmiyya*, 5), pp. 35-74, and translated into French by G. Vajda, "Les notes d'Avicenne sur la *Théologie d'Aristote*", *Revue thomiste* 51 (1951), pp. 346-406; see also L. Gardet, "En l'honneur du millénaire d'Avicenne: l'importance d'un texte nouvellement traduit: les gloses d'Avicenne sur la pseudo-*Théologie d'Aristote*" *ibid.*, pp. 333-45, reprinted with the title "Avicenne commentateur de Plotin" in Id., *Études de philosophie et de mystique comparées*, Vrin, Paris 1972 (Bibliothèque d'histoire de la philosophie), pp. 135-46.

<sup>78</sup> H. Corbin (ed.), Suhrawardī, *Opera metaphysica et mystica*, I, Maarif Matbaasi, Istanbul 1945 (Bibliotheca Islamica, 16), pp. 70-72 and 115. Cf. Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, II (quoted above, n. 62), pp. 61-3; Walbridge, *The Leaven of the Ancients* (quoted above, n. 73), pp. 133-7, cf. also G. Fowden, "Pseudo-Aristotelian Politics and Theology in Universal Islam", in S.M.R. Darbandi - A. Zournatzi, *Ancient Greece and Ancien Iran. Cross-Cultural Encounters*, 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference Athens, 11-13 November 2006, National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens 2008, pp. 65-81 [repr. in P.F. Bang - D. Kołodziejczyk (eds), *A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, Cambridge U. P., Cambridge 2012, pp. 130-48].

virtuel” outlined by Gerhard Endress in a famous essay,<sup>79</sup> the “Aristotle” who emerges from Ibn Sīnā’s reading and re-working of the Aristotelian tradition: a character, created by the Arab *falāsifa* who combined, both in the formative period of *falsafa* and in its mature developments, some genuine elements of Aristotle’s own thought and some fundamentally Neoplatonic traits.

Suhrawardī’s dream is modelled on the legendary dream of al-Ma’mūn,<sup>80</sup> the paradigmatic act of foundation of the translation movement. As shown by Corbin, explicit references to the pseudo-*Theology* are embedded also in the *Kitāb Hikmat al-iṣrāq*,<sup>81</sup> not to say that the passage of the *Kitāb al-Talwihāt* quoted above ends with an echo of one of the most famous items of the Arabic Plotinus, the narrative of the author’s ascension to the intelligible realm<sup>82</sup> – with the difference that the ascension, in Suhrawardī’s allusion, was performed by Plato and not by Aristotle, as is the case in the pseudo-*Theology*:<sup>83</sup>

Often I have been alone with my soul and have doffed my body and laid it aside and become as if I were naked substance without body, so as to be inside myself, outside all other things. Then I do see within myself such beauty and splendour as I do remain marvelling at and astonished, so that I know that I am one of the parts of the sublime, surpassing, lofty, divine world, and possess active life. When I am certain of that, I lift my intellect up from that world into the divine world and become as if I were placed in it and cleaving to it, so as to be above the entire intelligible world, and seem to be standing in that sublime and divine place. And there I see such light and splendour as tongues cannot describe nor ears comprehend (pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, Chapter I, trans. Lewis).<sup>84</sup>

It is therefore not a coincidence that, during the Safavid era, when an extraordinary revival of the ‘ilm iṣrāqī took place bringing with it a renewed interest for *falsafa*, the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* was widely read and repeatedly copied at court. According to Christian Jambet, the pseudo-*Theology* was conceived of as the model for the order established by divine sovereignty itself, thus providing the philosophical basis of the theory of the rule of the Perfect Man.<sup>85</sup> More importantly, the pseudo-

<sup>79</sup> G. Endress, “L’Aristote arabe. Réception, autorité et transformation du Premier Maître”, *Medioevo* 23 (1997), pp. 1-42.

<sup>80</sup> On this *topos* cf. D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture. The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ‘Abbāsīd Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th Centuries)*, Routledge, London - New York 1998, pp. 95-104, and J.W. Watt, “The Strategy of the Baghdad Philosophers. The Aristotelian Tradition as Common Motif in Christian and Islamic Thought”, in J.J. Ginkel - H.L. Murre Van den Berg - T.M. Van Lint (eds), *Redefining Christian Identity. Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, Peeters, Leuven 2005 (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 134), pp. 151-65. Cf. also Walbridge, *The Leaven of the Ancients*, pp. 165-71.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. for example Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, pp. 110-11; Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, II, pp. 97-8.

<sup>82</sup> For a survey of the quotations of or inspirations for this passage by later authors from al-Fārābī to Ibn Ṭufayl and beyond, cf. P. Fenton, “The Arabic and Hebrew Versions of the *Theology of Aristotle*”, in J. Krayer - W.F. Ryan - C.-B. Schmitt (eds), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: the “Theology” and Other Texts*, The Warburg Institute, London 1986 pp. 241-64, n. 2 (p. 260) and C. D’Ancona et alii, Plotino. *La discesa dell’anima nei corpi (Enn. IV 8[6]). Plotiniana Arabica (pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, capitoli 1 e 7; “Detti del Sapiante Greco”)*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2003 (*Subsidia mediaevalia patavina*, 4), pp. 282-8, with a detailed commentary on this passage and its Plotinian source.

<sup>83</sup> See below, Appendix II.

<sup>84</sup> Badawī, *Aflūṭīn ‘inda l-‘arab* (quoted above, n. 72), p. 22.2-9; English trans. by G. Lewis, in *Plotini Opera* II, *Enneades* IV-V, ediderunt P. Henry et H.-R. Schwyzer. *Plotiniana Arabica* ad codicum fidem anglice vertit G. Lewis, Desclée de Brouwer - L’Édition Universelle, Paris-Louvain 1959 (*Museum Lessianum. Series philosophica*, 34), p. 225.

<sup>85</sup> According to Ch. Jambet, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie islamique?* Gallimard, Paris 2011 (*Collection Folio Essais*), p. 288, “La souveraineté divine fonde (...) le gouvernement légitime de l’homme intelligible, la légitimité de l’autorité

*Theology* found quite naturally its place in the new landscape of the “universal competence in all of the disciplines of the intellectual and the religious learning” described by Endress as the hallmark of the theologian-scientists who, following the path laid by al-Ṭūṣī, combined science (mostly astronomy and mathematics) with Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī: in their works “not only theology is clad in the language of philosophy, but all of the rational sciences are put under the aegis of *ḥikma*. Indeed, the merging of the paradigms of rational knowledge left permanent traces in the final integration of the Greek traditions of rational science with the Islamic view of the First Cause”.<sup>86</sup>

But Plotinus had been translated into Arabic in 9<sup>th</sup> century Baghdad, and it was from Baghdad that the pseudo-*Theology* spread, directly or indirectly,<sup>87</sup> in the East of the Islamic world. As for the direct circulation of the text, The Notes by Ibn Sīnā show by themselves that it was available in Persia within 1030, namely the date of the sack of Isfahan. In fact, they were part and parcel of Ibn Sīnā’s *Kitāb al-Inṣāf*, which went lost during this sack.<sup>88</sup> Ibn Sīnā was in all likelihood acquainted with the pseudo-*Theology* already in his youth, because this text is alluded to in the *Compendium on the Soul*,<sup>89</sup> and there is evidence that it was available in Persia even before Ibn Sīnā: echoes of it feature in the works of the Persian philosopher al-‘Āmirī (d. 382/992).<sup>90</sup> Thus, it comes as no surprise that there

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dévolue au plus haut degré de l’existence humaine, celui de l’Anthropos parfait. Il suffira aux théories eschatologiques de projeter cette gouvernance intellectuelle sur le cours de l’histoire, sur la personne du Guide, pour transformer la théologie mystique en théorie des grades et pouvoirs spirituels. Le parallèle avec l’œuvre du Pseudo-Denys est frappant. Au lieu de la hiérarchie dionysienne des grades ecclésiastiques, nous aurons la hiérarchie des ‘dignitaires’ ou celle des fonctionnaires de la Cité parfaite. Mais, *a contrario*, il suffira aux théories de l’ascension spirituelle de situer ce pôle intelligible au terme de l’évolution de la substance de l’homme singulier pour en faire la base d’une eschatologie personnelle, d’une gnose, guidant la conversion de l’homme sensible en l’homme de l’intelligence. [...] Nous pouvons donc dire que la *Théologie* a une fonction paradigmatique.” This obviously should not be taken in the sense that the pseudo-*Theology* actually contains a theory of the “rule of the Perfect Man”, which does not feature among the topics dealt with in it: Jambet’s claim should be understood as an account of what the Ismā‘īli readers saw, or were looking for, in a text whose focus is metaphysics with a special emphasis on the destiny of the soul.

<sup>86</sup> Endress, “Reading Avicenna in the *madrasa*”, pp. 418-9.

<sup>87</sup> One of the main conduits for the circulation in Persia of the doctrines held in the pseudo-*Theology* was predictably the collection of the *Epistles* of the Iḥwān al-Ṣafā’ (for some examples of topics and terms of the pseudo-*Theology* embedded in them, cf. S. Diwald, *Arabische Philosophie und Wissenschaft in der Enzyklopädie. Kitāb Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā’, III. Die Lehre von Seele und Intellekt*, O. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1975, pp. 23, 55, 138-9, 179). Another source of knowledge of the doctrines of the pseudo-*Theology* is represented by the doxographical tradition which transmits the “Sayings of the Greek Sage”, which are part and parcel of the Arabic translation of Plotinus produced within the “Circle of al-Kindī” (cf. E. Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader from the Circle of Miskawayh* edited and translated, Cambridge U. P., Cambridge 2014) and which are quoted also by al-Ṣahrastānī, who was in his turn a source of Suhrawardī (cf. above, n. 75).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition. Introduction to reading Avicenna’s Philosophical Works*, Brill, Leiden, 1988 (Islamic Philosophy and Theology. Texts and Studies, 4), p. 136: “The *Fair Judgment* was drafted approximately between 19 December 1028 and 7 June 1029, and this first draft was destroyed by Ma’sūd’s soldiers who pillaged Avicenna’s saddlebags in January 1030”.

<sup>89</sup> The *Compendium on the Soul* is one of Avicenna’s first works; here, he states that the part of the theoretical science dealing with divine matters establishes “the First Creator, the First Created, and the universal soul; the way in which creation occurs; the rank of the Intellect with respect to the Creator, of the soul to the Intellect, of sublunar matter and the forms to the soul, and of the spheres, stars and generated beings to matter and form” (trans. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, p. 19): this enumeration lists the topics dealt with in the pseudo-*Theology*.

<sup>90</sup> Before Avicenna, this Persian philosopher was demonstrably acquainted with the pseudo-*Theology*: cf. E.K. Rowson, *A Muslim Philosopher on the Soul and Its Fate: al-‘Āmirī’s Kitāb al-Amad ‘alā l-abad*, American Oriental Society, New Haven 1988 (American Oriental Series, 70), p. 84.12-18 (Arabic text), and 85 (English trans.); pp. 140.12-15 and 141. Cf. also C. D’Ancona, “The Topic of the ‘Harmony Between Plato and Aristotle’: Some Examples in Early Arabic Philosophy”, in A. Speer - L. Wegener (eds), *Wissen über Grenzen. Arabisches Wissen und lateinisches Mittelalter*, De Gruyter, Berlin - New York

are so many manuscripts of the pseudo-*Theology* coming from Persia.<sup>91</sup> However, one should notice from the outset that most of them date from a much later age than al-‘Āmirī’s or Ibn Sīnā’s.

That a group of the manuscripts of the pseudo-*Theology* are of Iranian origin had been noticed as early as in the 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Andrei Borisov<sup>92</sup>, to whom we owe also the discovery of the so-called “Longer Version” of this work.<sup>93</sup> In all likelihood, Borisov’s idea that the textual tradition of the pseudo-*Theology* splits into an “Iranian branch” and a “Judaic branch” cannot be held any longer at its face value,<sup>94</sup> but what remains true is that a consistent group of manuscripts share the common feature of having been produced in Persia. Nowadays, thanks to the missions conducted within the context of the ERC project “Greek into Arabic”, one can specify that they were produced mostly during the Safavid and Qağār ages.<sup>95</sup>

The relationship existing among them will be discussed in the philological introduction to the critical edition of the pseudo-*Theology*; it is my duty now, in this preparatory essay, to pave the way for the history of the reception of this foundational text in Persia. Following the path laid by Endress in the two essays mentioned above,<sup>96</sup> I will provide in the next paragraph an outline of the

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2006 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 33), pp. 379-405; al-‘Āmirī was conversant not only with the Arabic Plotinus, but also with the Arabic Proclus, as shown by E. Wakelnig, *Feder, Tafel, Mensch. Al-‘Āmirī’s Kitāb al-fuṣūl fi mā ‘alim al-ilāhīya und die arabische Proklos-Rezeption im 10. Jh.*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2006 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, 47).

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Endress, “Philosophische Ein-Band Bibliotheken aus Isfahan” (quoted above, n. 7), p. 20.

<sup>92</sup> A. Treiger, “Andrei Iakolevič Borisov (1903-1942) and his Studies of Medieval Arabic Philosophy”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 17 (2007), pp. 159-95, p. 168: “On the basis of this survey Borisov comes to the conclusion that the textual tradition of the *ThA* can be divided into two secondary branches – Iranian and Judaic – to which all known manuscripts of the text belong. Manuscripts of the latter are more ancient, since the oldest known Iranian manuscript goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century at the earliest, whereas the oldest manuscript of the Judaic branch (...) seem to belong to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, all Iranian manuscripts contain the Short Version of the *ThA*, whereas all Judaic manuscripts (and the Latin translation) contain the Long Version of the text. Borisov explains the interest accorded to the *ThA* in the Iranian milieu as a consequence of the spread of the Ismā‘īliyya and related religious and philosophical teaching”.

<sup>93</sup> There are two versions of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*: (i) the Arabic text as it has come down to us, which was edited in 1882 by F. Dieterici (F. Dieterici, *Die sogenannte Theologie des Aristoteles aus dem arabischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen*, J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig 1883 (Reprographischer Nachdruck der Ausgabe Leipzig 1883, Druckerei Lokay, Reinheim, s.d.), and in 1955 by Badawī (see above, n. 72); (ii) the so-called “Longer Version”, a text which exists only fragmentarily in Judaeo-Arabic script, and which seems to have some features in common with the Latin translation, edited in 1519. It was Andrei Borisov who discovered the existence of these fragments, in a series of articles in Russian analyzed by Treiger, “Andrei Iakolevič Borisov (1903-1942)”, quoted above. The main studies on the “Longer Version” include S. Pines, “La Longue Recension de la *Théologie d’Aristote* dans ses rapports avec la doctrine ismaélienne”, *Revue des études islamiques* 22 (1954), pp. 7-20 (repr. in *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines. Studies in the History of Arabic Philosophy*, The Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1996, pp. 390-403); S.M. Stern, “Ibn Ḥasday’s Neoplatonist. A Neoplatonic Treatise and its influence on Isaac Israeli and the Longer Version of the *Theology of Aristotle*”, *Oriens* 13-14 (1961), pp. 58-120; P. Fenton, “The Arabic and Hebrew Versions of the *Theology of Aristotle*” (quoted above, n. 82); D. De Smet, “Les bibliothèques ismaéliennes et la question du néoplatonisme ismaélien”, in C. D’Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists. Proceedings of the Meeting of the European Science Foundation Network “Late Antiquity and Arabic Thought. Patterns in the Constitution of European Culture”, Strasbourg, March 12-14, 2004*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2007 (Philosophia Antiqua, 107), pp. 481-92.

<sup>94</sup> The critical edition of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* which is currently being prepared by the team of “Greek into Arabic” includes, as an individual volume prepared by Prof. Paul Fenton, also the critical edition of the “Longer Version”, with an assessment of the relationship between the manuscript tradition of the latter and that of the standard version of the pseudo-*Theology*.

<sup>95</sup> I have particularly benefited from the seminar held by Rüdiger Arnzen, “Some dates for the – allegedly or truly – undated manuscripts of the *Theology*” during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop of the project “Greek into Arabic”, Pisa, November 12-14, 2012.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Endress, “Philosophische Ein-Band Bibliotheken aus Isfahan” (quoted above, n. 7); “Reading Avicenna in the *madrasa*” (quoted above, n. 27).

circulation of the pseudo-*Theology* during the pre-Safavid and Safavid age. After the conclusion of the missions that I am conducting within the context of "Greek into Arabic", a complete picture will become possible. Through an in-depth examination of the dates and places of the production of the manuscripts, of the prosopographical aspects related to copyists and patrons, of the circumstances in which the pre-Safavid, Safavid and Qağār copies of the pseudo-*Theology* were commissioned and produced, and taking into account also the other texts associated with it in the manuscripts, new and decisive data will be obtained not only on the dissemination of Graeco-Arabic philosophy in Iran, but also on the philosophical-political attitudes of the Persian élite up to the threshold of modern times.

9. *Pre-Safavid and Safavid manuscripts of the pseudo-Theology of Aristotle and their readers: Ġiyāṭ-al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Daštakī, and after*

During the long span of time which divides the age of Avicenna and Suhrawardī on the one hand, and that of the Safavid empire on the other, the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* seems *prima facie* to have sunk into oblivion in Persia. In fact, this phenomenon is only apparent: analysis of the "chains of transmission" concerning philosophers like Dawānī and Daštakī reveals that the illuminationist strand was lively also during the pre-Safavid period.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, the lack of information about readers and copies of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* is due in all likelihood to the poor preservation of the manuscripts written before the foundation of the Safavid empire.<sup>98</sup>

After Suhrawardī, the first Persian philosopher to have an explicit recourse to the pseudo-*Theology* is the already mentioned Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Daštakī (d. 948/1541), who was one of the most esteemed scholars during the reign of Shāh Ismā'īl I, spending various periods of time in his military camps,<sup>99</sup> although preserving on doctrinal matters an independent stance which led him eventually to leave the court under the reign of Shāh Ṭahmāsp.<sup>100</sup> During one of my missions to Iran, I was lucky enough to find in the manuscript Tehran, Kitābhāna-i Markazī-i Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān 5392 (hereafter: T) the text of the pseudo-*Theology* preceded by a Prologue by one "Ġiyāṭ, known as al-Manṣūr", who is none other than our Daštakī. Here he announces a commentary on the pseudo-*Theology*. The same Prologue features also in the manuscript Princeton, University Library, *Garrett Yahuda* 1029 (hereafter: P).<sup>101</sup> The importance of these two manuscripts is heightened by the fact that both trace back to Daštakī's own era: P is dated 1620, and T, albeit undated as for the main text, contains indications that point to an even earlier date.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 1), pp. 5 ff. and 17 f.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Endress, "Philosophische Ein-Band Bibliotheken aus Isfahan", p. 18.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran*, p. 24-32, in part. p. 27.

<sup>100</sup> The dispute with the influential jurist 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Karakī (cf. above, p. 194) about what is the discipline which is entitled to establish the *qibla*, whether mathematics or jurisprudence, is brilliantly described by Pourjavady, *ibid.*, p. 28; cf. below, p. 209.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. below, Appendix I, for details on these two manuscripts. I have been substantially helped in the codicological and historical analysis of these and of the other manuscripts described in Appendix I by Gerhard Endress, to whom I would like to express once again my sincere thanks. I am also indebted to Issam Marjani for his support and generous help in the examination of all the colophons and *marginalia* of the Iranian manuscripts of the pseudo-*Theology*: my sincere thanks go also to him.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. below, Appendix I.

In both manuscripts (T: f. 1 r 1-19; P: f. 111 r 1-19) the Prologue says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 أَللَّهُمَّ يَا مَتَمَّ الْأَنْوَارِ وَمُنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةِ عَلَى ذَوِي الْأَسْرَارِ نَوَّرْنَا بِأَنْوَارِكَ وَكَمَّلْنَا بِمَعْرِفَةِ أَسْرَارِكَ أَسَدُّ  
 بَابِ الْبُعْدِ عَنْ بَابِكَ وَافْتَحْ دَرَبَ الْقُرْبِ إِلَى جَنَابِكَ. بَصَّرْ أَنْظَارَنَا إِلَى مَعَايِنَةِ نُورِ جَمَالِكَ دَلِّلْ  
 مَشَاهِدَةَ آثَاكَ، صَيِّرْ أَهْلَ النُّورِ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ مَنْصُورًا وَمَشْهُودَكَ فِي مَشَاهِدِ الْأَنْوَارِ مَسْرُورًا وَبَارِكْ فِيهِمْ  
 وَقَدِّسْهُمْ سَيِّمًا سَيِّدِنَا سَيِّدِ الْوَرَى دَلِيلِ الْهُدَى غِيَاثِ أُمَّةٍ أَزَاخِ غِيَاهِبِ الظُّلَامِ بِتَبَاشِيرِ صَبْحِ نُورِ  
 الْكَلَامِ فَنَجِّنَا بِأَنْوَارِ الْهُدَايَةِ عَنِ ظُلُمَاتِ الضَّلَالَةِ وَالْغَوَايَةِ وَآلِهِ أَكَامِلِ ذَوِي الْمَعَارِفِ وَالْحُكْمِ وَأَكْرَمِ  
 ذَوِي الْمَكَارِمِ وَالْكَرَمِ، وَبَعْدُ:

فَإِنَّ الْفَقِيرَ الْحَقِيرَ غِيَاثَ الْمَشْهُورِ بِمَنْصُورٍ يَقُولُ إِنَّ غَرَضَنَا فِي كِتَابِنَا هَذَا هُوَ مَطْلَعُ الْعُرْفَانِ وَفَاتِحَةُ  
 الْبَيَانِ وَخَاتِمَةُ الْبِرْهَانِ الَّذِي هُوَ رَابِعُ مَنَاظِرِ رَابِعِ أَرْكَانِ رِيَاضِ الرِّضْوَانِ هُوَ الْإِتْيَانُ بِحَقِّ  
 الْبَيَانِ لِكَشْفِ أَثُولُوجِيَا الَّذِي نَظَّمَهُ رَأْسُ أَعْظَمِ الْعُرْفِ الْفِيلَسُوفِ الْعَظِيمِ أَرْسَطَاطَالِيْسِ الْحَكِيمِ  
 فَإِنَّهُ وَضَعَهُ بِلْسَانِ يُونَانَ الْقَدِيمِ فَنَقَلَهُ وَتَرَجَمَهُ مِنْ عَرَفِهِ وَتَعَرَّفَهُ. وَإِنِّي أَوْرَدْتُ أَوْلَا رَوَايَةَ عِبَارَتِهِ  
 وَحِكَايَةَ كَلَامِهِ وَمَقَالَتِهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَعْنَيْتُ بِمَا أَرَدْتُ مِنْ أَمْرٍ أَوْ كَلَامٍ بِحَسَنِ الْمَرَامِ فِي كُلِّ مَقَامٍ سَيِّمًا  
 فِيهَا، أَنَّهُتِ الْقَوْلَ وَصَارَ الْقُلُوبَ فِيهِ صَرَعَى. وَبِالْجُمْلَةِ مُؤَلَّفَ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ الْكَرِيمِ هُوَ الْفِيلَسُوفُ  
 الْعَظِيمُ أَرْسَطَاطَالِيْسِ الْحَكِيمِ وَمَفْسَّرُهُ فَرْفُورِيُوسُ الصُّورِيَّ وَمُتَرَجِمُهُ عَبْدُ الْمَسِيحِ الْحَمْصِي  
 وَمُصَلِّحُهُ يَعْقُوبُ الْكَنْدِي. وَمُرْتَبِّهِ وَمُرْصِفُهُ وَمُحَرَّرُهُ وَمَهْدَبُهُ وَمُحَقِّقُهُ وَمَقَرَّرُهُ الرَّاضِي رَحِمَهُ رَبُّهُ  
 الْغَفُورُ الْغَنِيِّ أَبُو عَلِيٍّ بِنِ مُحَمَّدٍ مَنْصُورِ الْحَسِينِيِّ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ حَالَهُ وَأَنْجَحَ أَمَالَهُ وَكَشَفَ بِالْمَعَارِفِ  
 الْإِلَهِيَّةِ بِهِ.

om. T. بالمعارف || om. T. منصور 16 || om. P. إن 7 || T ودل : دلل || T أنوار : P نور 2

Thou my God, Perfection of the lights, You who effuse quietness on those who know the secrets: illuminate us with Your light, make us perfect by the knowledge of Your secrets, close the door on separation from You and open for us the way to the proximity to Your presence. Illuminate our sight towards the understanding of the light of Your beauty, and guide the contemplation of your people. Make the people of Light and Illumination be victorious and let them share in the contemplation of lights, make them happy and bless and sanctify them, in particular our Master, the Master of mankind who is the guide to the right path, the rescuer of the community who has removed the darkness of the gloom through the beginning of the dawn of the light of the Word; he who has effused on us the lights of the guide to the right path, away from the darkness of both reprobation and seduction. And his family is the most perfect among those who possess knowledge and wisdom and the noblest among those who possess nobility and magnanimity.

Then, the poor and humble Ġiyāt, known as al-Manšūr, says: "Our aim in this book of ours is the introduction to knowledge, the opening of the exposition, the seal of the demonstration, and the secret of the explanation, that is the fourth vision of the fourth of the pillars of the garden of rejoicing, which consists in the pursuit of the truth of knowledge in view of the unveiling of the Theology that has been put together by the leader of the great wise men, the great philosopher, Aristotle the wise. He composed it in the ancient language of Greece; then one who knew and understood it interpreted and

translated it. Then I first occupied myself with the interpretation and the literal quotation of his speech and of his treatise; then, I turned to what I needed, items or discourses which help to refine items in all steps, especially about it [i.e. the treatise]; I have accomplished the discourse, and in this hearts became tired". In sum, the author of this noble book was the great philosopher Aristotle the wise, and its commentator was Porphyry of Tyre; its translator was 'Abd al-Masih al-Himši, and its corrector was Ya'qub al-Kindi. The one who prepared, adorned, corrected, verified and rectified it was the blessed Abū 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Maṣṣūr al-Ḥusaynī, may his Lord be merciful towards him, may the much-forgiving and generous God nobilitate his state and grant success to his deeds, may He reveal him the divine kinds of knowledge.

This Prologue is interesting on various counts. First and foremost, it provides the first attestation of the renewed interest in the pseudo-*Theology* at the very beginning of the Safavid era. The "noble book" is cast from the outset as part and parcel of the doctrine shared by the *ahl al-nūr wa-l-išrāq*. One may wonder what was the intended readership of a commentary on the pseudo-*Theology*. In all likelihood Daštakī occupied himself with commenting upon the pseudo-*Theology* for an *išrāqī* circle at the court of Shāh Ṭahmāsp, who at the beginning of his reign was evidently on very good terms with the "people of Light and Illumination": in 936/1529 he appointed Daštakī, the most important *išrāqī* philosopher of the time, *šadr* at the Safavid court, and in the same period Daštakī supported, among other things, the practice of prostration to the Shāh, which he found analogous to the angels' prostration to Adam when God ordered them to do so: a clear sign of his emphasis on the preternatural qualities of the emperor.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, for Daštakī and the *išrāqī* milieu the situation changed very quickly. In fact, shortly after his appointment as *šadr*, Daštakī challenged the powerful jurist Karakī about a number of legal questions, among which the problem of the calculation of the *qibla*. A council was convened in the presence of Shah Ṭahmāsp to settle the disagreement, and Karakī triumphed: in 938/1531-1532 Daštakī was dismissed and returned to Shiraz.

The Prologue contains two distinct items: an account of the circumstances of the composition of the commentary on the pseudo-*Theology* by Daštakī, and a quotation of his own words, which ends when the scribe resumes his account and specifies that the work is indeed by "Aristotle", but the one who has spent so much effort in polishing it is Ğiyāt: the formulae adopted by the scribe show that when the Prologue was composed, he was already deceased. The whole text is rich in allusions not only to the *išrāqī* movement, but also to Sufism: the desire to become *mušāhid al-anwār*, the heartfelt request to be kept in the vicinity (*qurb*) of God, the appellation of *faqīr* for Daštakī, are as many hints to Sufi spirituality. An evident wordplay connects the first part of the Prologue to the quotation of Daštakī's passage. The Master, the *sayyid al-warā* (the Prophet himself) is designated as *ġiyāt ummati*, and Daštakī is presented as the poor, humble "Ğiyāt"; God is asked to grant victory (*našara*) to the *išrāqī* community, and Daštakī has "al-Manšūr" as one of his names.<sup>104</sup>

The Prologue shows that both Daštakī and its author are totally reliant on the pseudo-*Theology* itself as for the pieces of information given about the work and its history. That the pseudo-*Theology* is authored by Aristotle lies beyond doubt for them, and what the Prologue says about the "commentary" by Porphyry, the translation by Ibn Nā'ima al-Himši, and the revision by al-Kindi, is taken from the *incipit* of the pseudo-*Theology*, upon which Daštakī elaborates:

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Abisaab, *Converting Persia* (quoted above, n. 3), p. 18.

<sup>104</sup> "al-Manšūriyya" was also the name of the *madrassa* founded by Ṣaḍr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Maṣṣūr Širāzī Ḥusaynī, the father of Daštakī: cf. Minorsky, "A *Soyūrghāl* of Qāsim b. Jahāngir", quoted above n. 27.

pseudo- <i>Theology</i> , pp. 3.3-9, 4.3-5 Badawī	Prologue
<p>الميمر الأول من كتاب أرسطاطاليس الفيلسوف المسمى باليونانية أثولوجيا وهو قول علي الربويّة، تفسير فروريوس الصوري ونقله إلى العربية عبد المسيح بن عبد الله بن ناعمة الحمصي وأصلحه، لأحمد بن المعتصم بالله، أبو يوسف يعقوب ابن إسحاق الكندي رحمه الله.</p> <p>قال الحكيم: أول البغية آخر الدرك، وأول الدرك آخر البغية. فالذي انتهينا إليه من أول الفن الذي تضمّنه كتابنا هذا هو أقصى غرضنا وغاية مطلوبنا في عامّة ما تقدّم من موضوعاتنا.</p>	<p>إنّ غرضنا في كتابنا هذا هو مطلع العرفان وفتحة البيان وخاتمة البرهان سر التبيان الذي هو رابع مناظر رابع أركان رياض الرضوان هو الإتيان بحق البيان لكشف أثولوجيا الذي نظّمه رأس أعظم العرف الفيلسوف العظيم أرسطاطاليس الحكيم فإنه وضعه بلسان يونان القديم فنقله وترجمه من عرفه وتعرّفه. وإني أوردت أولا رواية عبارته وحكاية كلامه ومقالته ثم استعنت بما أردت من أمر أو كلام بحسن المرام في كل مقام سيّما فيها. أنهيت القول وصرار القلوب فيه صرعى. وبالجملة مؤلف هذا الكتاب الكريم هو الفيلسوف العظيم أرسطاطاليس الحكيم ومفسره فروريوس الصوري و مترجمه عبد المسيح الحمصي ومصلحه يعقوب الكندي. ومرتبّه ومرصفه ومحرّره ومهدبه ومحققه ومقرره الراضي رَحِمَهُ رَبُّهُ الغفور الغني أبو علي بن محمد منصور الحسيني أحسن الله حاله وأنجح آماله وكشف بالمعارف الالهية باله.</p>
<p>The First Chapter of the book of <i>Aristotle the Philosopher</i>, called in Greek <i>Theologia</i>, being the discourse on Divine Sovereignty: <i>the interpretation of Porphyry of Tyre, translated into Arabic by ‘Abd al-Masīḥ ibn Nā’ima al-Ḥimṣī and corrected for Aḥmad ibn al-Mu’tasim billāh by Abū Yūsuf Ya’qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī</i>, may God grant him peace (...).</p> <p>The Philosopher said: First desired last attained and first attained last desired. Where we finish, in the branch of knowledge contained in <i>this book of ours</i>, is the limit of our aim and the extreme of our desire in the whole of our previous works (trans. Lewis slightly modified, quoted above n. 72, p. 486).</p>	<p>Then, the poor and humble Giyāt, known as al-Manṣūr, says: “Our aim in <i>this book of ours</i> is the introduction to knowledge, the opening of the exposition, the seal of the demonstration, and the secret of the explanation, that is the fourth vision of the fourth of the pillars of the garden of rejoicing, which consists in the pursuit of the truth of knowledge in view of the unveiling of the <i>Theology that has been put together by the leader of the great wise men, the great philosopher, Aristotle the wise. He composed it in the ancient language of Greece; then one who knew and understood it interpreted and translated it.</i> Then I first occupied myself with the interpretation and the literal quotation of his speech and of his treatise; then, I turned to what I needed, items or discourses which help to refine items in all steps, especially about it [i.e. the treatise]. I have accomplished the discourse, and in this hearts became tired”. In sum, <i>the author of this noble book was the great philosopher Aristotle the wise, and its commentator was Porphyry of Tyre; its translator was ‘Abd al-Masīḥ al-Ḥimṣī, and its corrector was Ya’qūb al-Kindī.</i></p>

More importantly for the purposes in hand here, the Prologue reveals the clear intention of connecting the pseudo-*Theology* with the philosophical tradition Daštakī belongs to: that of the Avicennian-Illuminationist thought. This is shown by a detail which sheds light on the intentions of the promised commentary. We are told that its aim is to provide the “seal of the demonstration, *ḥātimat al-burhān*” and to open the way to the “unveiling of the *Theology, kašf Uṭūlūḡiyā*”: two

expressions which are clearly reminiscent of one of the early works by Daštakī, the *Mir'āt al-ḥaqāiq wa-muǧlī al-daqa'iq*, on which Pourjavady has called attention:

In the epilogue to this work, he explains that he once underwent an extraordinary inner experience in 895/1490-91, as a result of which solutions to some philosophical problems became clear to him. Thus explanations in this work are based not on demonstrative proof (*burhān*) but rather on the evidence of a spiritual unveiling (*kašf*).<sup>105</sup>

This narrative is modelled upon a passage of Ibn Sīnā's autobiography, in which he recounts how the sudden intuition of the solution to a theoretical problem came to him in a dream, after he had completed all the steps of demonstrative reasoning.<sup>106</sup> Daštakī's narrative follows in Ibn Sīnā's footsteps, and it is telling that the commentary announced in the Prologue counts for him precisely as the *kašf* of the work labelled *Theology*, which was written in Greek, an ancient language, by the *rāis* of the philosophers and wise men of the past, Aristotle. Such an "unveiling" marks the turning point between demonstrative science, *burhān*, and intuitive knowledge leading to the spiritual peak of Illumination, *išrāq*. That the pseudo-*Theology* is framed against the background of Daštakī's Avicennian and Illuminationist readings is suggested by the twin allusion to Ibn Sīnā's autobiography and to Suhrawardī's heritage as it appears in the *Promenade of Souls and Garden of Rejoicings in the History of Philosophy* by al-Šahrazūrī (d. between 1288 and 1304), with its climactic account of Suhrawardī at the end of the chain of transmission of *ḥikma*.<sup>107</sup>

It is worth noticing that the two manuscripts of Tehran and Princeton do not contain the promised commentary, but only the text of the pseudo-*Theology*. Further research will ascertain whether or not the commentary is extant as an independent work, and in this case the *Tahrīr Utūlūǧiyā* mentioned by the editor of Daštakī's works 'Abd Allāh Nūrānī, and listed also by Pourjavady,<sup>108</sup> is the best candidate. Be this as it may, the Prologue attests in and by itself that the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* features already at the beginning of the Safavid revival of the *ḥikma al-išrāq* as the pinnacle of man's knowledge: demonstrative science paves the way for the ascension to the direct, intuitive vision of truth itself, and it is "Aristotle" who performs this ascension, providing guidance to it by his *Theology*.

Another reference to the pseudo-*Theology* is contained in a work of Naǧm al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Nayrīzī (d. after 943/1536), a pupil of Daštakī who had close relationships with prominent personalities of the newly established Safavid regime.<sup>109</sup> In his *Šarḥ Hidāyat al-*

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran*, p. 27 with n. 156.

<sup>106</sup> The passage of Ibn Sīnā's *Autobiography* is translated into English and commented upon by Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* (quoted above, n. 88), pp. 27-8: "Every time I was at loss about a problem, concerning which I was unable to find the middle term in a syllogism, I would repair on its account to the mosque and worship, praying humbly to the All-Creator to disclose to me its obscurity and make its difficulty easy. At night I would return home, set the lamp before me, and occupy myself with reading and writing. Whenever I felt drowsy or weakening, I would turn aside to drink a cup of wine to regain my strength, and then I would go back to my reading. Whenever I fell asleep, I would see those very problems in my dream: and many problems became clear to me while asleep".

<sup>107</sup> Also in this case the allusion is quite concealed, and the terminology is not exactly the same: al-Šahrazūrī's "Garden of Rejoicings" is the *rawḍat al-afṛāḥ* and Daštakī's one is the *riyād al-riḍwān*, but the allusion was undoubtedly clear for the addressees. On al-Šahrazūrī cf. the excellent entry by E. Cottrell, "al-Shahrazūrī, Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd Shams al-Dīn", in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*, Springer Science + Business media B.V. 2011, pp. 1190-4.

<sup>108</sup> Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran*, p. 31 n. 199.

<sup>109</sup> As Pourjavady rightly underlines (*ibid.*, p. 57), Nayrīzī had been under the patronage of rulers who have been appointed by the Shāh: he may even have been sponsored by the Shāh himself. This fact "indicates that he was on good terms

*ḥikma*, an unedited commentary on the *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* of the philosopher, mathematician and astronomer Aṭīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. ca. 663/1265), completed in Shiraz in 905/1595-6, al-Nayrīzī lists the various sources which he used for his commentary: among them, he mentions the *Theology*, which he attributes to Aristotle.<sup>110</sup> Pourjavady has the great merit of calling attention to this passage of the *Šarḥ Hidāyat* which, along with Daštakī's commentary, is one of the first attestations of the renewed interest in the *Theology*.

Further references to the *Theology* in Safavid philosophical literature feature in the works of Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631), who was an eminent member of the "School of Isfahan"<sup>111</sup> and an intimate of the Safavid court during the reign of both Shāh 'Abbās and Shāh Šafī.<sup>112</sup> As Corbin, Endress, Ian R. Netton and Sajjad H. Rizvi have noticed, in Mīr Dāmād's *Kitāb al-Ġadawāt, Kitāb al-Qabasāt* and *Risālat al-Ḥal'īya* the quotations of and allusions to the *Theology* are numerous.<sup>113</sup> In particular, in his *Kitāb al-Ġadawāt* Mīr Dāmād mentions a Persian version of the *Theology*, which may have been prepared by Abū l-Ḥayr Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Fārisī, a pupil of Daštakī;<sup>114</sup> in the *Risālat al-Ḥal'īya* his vocabulary is reminiscent of that of the pseudo-*Theology*.<sup>115</sup>

As for Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā al-Qawāmī al-Šīrāzī, also known as "Šadr al-muta'allihīn" and popularly as "Mullā Šadrā", he famously was a reader of the *Theology*. Mullā Šadrā was born in one of the noblest families of Shiraz; he studied philosophy and theology with Mīr Dāmād in Isfahan, and taught in his native-city at the bequest of the family of Shiraz's Safavid governors.<sup>116</sup> In

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with the new government. He was directly linked to the court, perhaps through Shāh Mīr, the son of Malik Maḥmūd Ġān, who had studied with Nayrīzī for a while and was later on appointed by the Shah as vizier". Cf. also H. Corbin, *Philosophie iranienne et philosophie comparée*, Buchet-Chastel, Tehran-Paris 1977, pp. 96 f.

<sup>110</sup> Al-Nayrīzī, *Šarḥ Hidāyat al-ḥikma*, MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, *Carullah* 1327, f. 211, quoted by Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran*, p. 113 with n. 26.

<sup>111</sup> On the presence of the pseudo-*Theology* in the so-called "School of Isfahan" see Endress, "Philosophische Ein-Band Bibliotheken aus Isfahan" (quoted above, n. 7), pp. 20-21; for an outline of this "School" cf. S.H. Nasr, "The Place of the School of Isfahan in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism", in L. Lewisohn - D. Morgan (eds), *The Heritage of Sufism*. III, *Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501-1750)*, Oneworld, Oxford 2007, pp. 3-15; S.H. Rizvi, "Isfahan School of Philosophy", in *Enc.Ir.*, XIV, pp. 119-25.

<sup>112</sup> Among other things, he prepared a number of theological texts for the imperial chancellery to be sent as official correspondence to the Ottoman court. On the life and works of Mīr Dāmād cf. 'A. Awḡabī, *Mīr Dāmād: Bunyān-guzār-i ḥikmat-i yamānī*, Anjuman-i Ātār va Mafāḥīr-i Farhangī, Tehran 2002; A.J. Newman, "Mīr Dāmād", in *Enc.Ir.*, VI, pp. 623-36, and Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, IV (quoted above, n. 6), pp. 9-53. On Mīr Dāmād's relationships with both Shāh 'Abbās and Shāh Šafī cf. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran* (quoted above, n. 4), p. 193.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Endress, "Philosophische Ein-Band Bibliotheken aus Isfahan", pp. 28-9, 'A. Awḡabī (ed.), Mīr Dāmād, *Kitāb al-Ġadawāt*, Anjuman-i Ātār va Mafāḥīr-i Farhangī, Tehran 1380 h.š./2001, pp. 15; 27, and 49; M. Mohaghegh - T. Isutzu - A. Mūsavī Bihbahānī - I. Dībāḡī (eds), Mīr Dāmād, *Kitāb al-Qabasāt*, McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran 1977 (Wisdom of Persia Series, 7), p. 3 (cf. also the edition by M. Muḥaqiq, Danišgah-i Tihṙān, Tihṙān 1367 h.š./1988, Index, p. 493); and Mīr Dāmād's *Risālat al-Ḥal'īya*, ed. H. Corbin in *Confessions extatiques de Mīr Dāmād, maître de théologie à Ispahan (ob. 1041/1631-1632)*, in *Mélanges Louis Massignon*, I, Institut Français de Damas, Damas 1956, pp. 331-78, in part. pp. 365-8. Cf. also Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, IV, pp. 45 f.; I.R. Netton, "Suhrawardī's Heir? The Ishrāqī Philosophy of Mīr Dāmād", in Lewisohn - Morgan (eds), *The Heritage of Sufism*. III, pp. 225-46, in part. p. 237, and S.H. Rizvi, *Mullā Šadrā Šīrāzī: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, Oxford U. P., Oxford 2007 (Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement, 18), p. 151.

<sup>114</sup> A Persian translation of the *Theology* is also quoted by the late seventeenth century philosopher 'Aliqulī b. Qaraḡghay Ḥān: cf. Rizvi, *Mullā Šadrā Šīrāzī*, p. 151 f.

<sup>115</sup> Mīr Dāmād, *Risālat al-Ḥal'īya*, pp. 365-8 Corbin (see above, n. 113); cf. Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, IV, p. 46.

<sup>116</sup> On Mullā Šadrā's biography see Rizvi, *Mullā Šadrā Šīrāzī* (quoted above, n. 113), pp. 5-30.

his autograph notes concerning his works, edited in 1998 by Muḥammad Barakat, there is a list of books that he possessed in his personal library, and this list includes a *Mağmū'a rasā'il* containing the *Uṭūlūḡiyā*,<sup>117</sup> which Mullā Ṣadrā quotes and repeatedly comments upon in his philosophical works.<sup>118</sup>

The last milestone in the history of the Safavid reception of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* is represented by the commentary by the philosopher, theologian, jurist and politician Qāḏī Sa'īd Qummī (d. 1103/1691), who was appointed as *qāḏī* in Qom by 'Abbās II.<sup>119</sup> His unfinished *Tā'liqāt* (Glosses) on the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise mark the main exegetic effort concerning the *Theology* implemented during the Safavid era.

## Appendix I

Tehran, Kitābhāna-i Markazī-i Dānišgāh-i Tihrān 5392.

Muṣṭafā Dirāyatī, *Fibrīst-wāra-i dastniwištḥā-i Irān*, Kitābhāna, Mūza wa-Markaz-i Asnād-i Maḡlis-i Šūrā-i Islāmī, Tihrān 1389 h.š./2010, vol. 1, p. 184, n° 5117. – Muḥammad Taqī Dānišpažūh, *Fibrīst-i nuṣḥabā-i ḥaṭṭī Kitābhāna-i Markazī-i Dānišgāh-i Tihrān*, vol. 15, Čāpḥāna-i Dānišgāh-i Tihrān, Tihrān 1345 h.š./1966, p. 4234.

73 ff., paper, 7 × 13 cm, 19 lines on 12 × 17.5 cm. – *Nasta'liq*. A fine old copy, but suffering from worm-damage. – Not dated, ca. 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> cent. h. Reader's note on first end paper, dated Ġumādā I 1067; *waqf* notice of the family of Mullā Muḥammad Ismā'īl Astarābādī dated 1249 h; further information, also on the seals, is given in the catalogue.

*Uṭūlūḡiyā*.

The manuscript contains an 'edition' of the ps.-Aristotelian *Theology*, with a prologue by Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Daštakī (d. 948/1541) announcing a *Tabḏīb* of the text, but without the promised commentary. No marginal annotations.

Princeton, University Library, *Garrett Collection, Yahuda* 1029.

R. Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda section) in the Garrett Collection, Princeton University Library*, Princeton University, Princeton (N.J.) 1977, p. 255, n° 2990. – Princeton University Digital Library, URL: <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/g732d9035>.

196 ff., paper; 192 × 122 (110-130 × 55-70) mm. bound to 194 × 132 mm. – Dated (*Uṭūlūḡiyā*) on 14 Šafar 1030/1620 (colophon, f. 195r).

<sup>117</sup> M. Barakat, *Yaddāšt ḥā-i Mullā Ṣadrā hamrā ba fibrīst-i kitābhāna-i ṣaḡṣī-i Mullā Ṣadrā*, Intišārāt-i Bidār, Qum 1377 h.š./1998, pp. 65-73. Cf. Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī*, pp. 117-13 and p. 130; M. Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy. Philosophy and Scripture in Mullā Ṣadrā*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2012, p. 184 with n. 86.

<sup>118</sup> For a list of Mullā Ṣadrā's quotations from the *Theology* see H. Daiber, "Mullā Ṣadrā on the Problem of Creation and the Role of Greek Philosophers. New Light on Mullā Ṣadrā as Historian of Greek Philosophers", *Spektrum Iran* 13 (2000), pp. 1-22, in part. p. 17 with n. 39; cf. also, from a theoretical point of view, S.H. Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics. Modulation of Being*, Routledge, Oxon - New York 2009 (Culture and Civilization of the Middle East).

<sup>119</sup> See Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, IV (quoted above, n. 6), pp. 123-201, and S. Rizvi, (Neo)Platonism Revived in the Light of the Imams: Qāḏī Sa'īd Qummī (d. AH 1107/ AD 1696) and his Reception of the *Theologia Aristotelis*, in P. Adamson (ed.), *Classical Arabic Philosophy: Sources And Reception*, N. Aragno Editore, Torino 2007 (Warburg Institute Colloquia, 11), pp. 176-207. For the edition of Qummī's *Glosses* see S.J. Aštiyānī, *Plotinus, Enneads ("Theology")*. *The Arabic Translation of Ibn Nā'imah al-Ḥimṣī. With the Glosses of Qāḏī Sa'īd Qummī*, Tehran 1396 h.š./1976.

1.-4. ff. 1r-108v: A treatise on arithmetics, and (2.-4.) treatises of philosophical theology by ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Īḡī, al-Ġurġānī, and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.

5. ff. 111r-195v: *Kitāb Utūlūḡiyā*.

Preceded (f. 111r) by a preface by Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Daštakī announcing his *Tahdīb* of the *Utūlūḡiyā*. This is followed by the standard text of the ps.-Aristotelian *Theology*, as ‘edited’ by Daštakī, but without the promised commentary.

Tehran, Maḡlis-i Šura-i Islāmī, 1174 Ṭ[abāṭabā’ī].

Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra-i dastniwištā-i Īrān*, vol. 1, p. 184, n° 5126. – ‘Abd-al-Ḥusayn Ḥā’irī, *Fihrist-i Kitābhāna-i Maḡlis-i Šūrā-i Islāmī*, 23 (Tihṙān Čāpḡāna-i Maḡlis, Tihṙān 1376 h.š./1997), p. 668.

99 ff. (paginated, pp. 1-197) – *Nasta’liq*. – Dated (p. 195) 1129 h by Ibn Muḡammad Raḡīm Isfandyār.

1. pp. 1-127. *Utūlūḡiyā*.

2. pp. 130-195. Šadr-al-Dīn al-Širāzī: *Iksīr al-‘arīfīn fī ma’rifat ṭariq al-ḡaqq al-yaqīn*.

*Expl.* p. 195.9ff.:

وكتب هذه السطور بيده الجانية الفانية في هذه الأيام والشهور من عام الف وإحدى وثلثين مؤلفها ومترجمها المسكين المستكين محمد المعروف بصدر الدين الشيرازي حامدا لله مستغفرا لذنيه ومصليا ومسلما على نبيه وآله غفر الله له ولوالديه ولسائر المؤمنين حيثما كانوا في البلاد نجاهم الله عن مولات يوم المعاد والله ولي الرشاد. سيبقي خطي برهنة من زمانه وكتبه تحت الجنادل مدفون يوم الاثنين ٢٩ شهر رمضان فاضت بركاته على اهل الايمان من شهور سنة ١١٢٩ من الهجرة المقدسة ابن محمد رحيم اسفنديار غفى عنهما.

The second text, an Arabic adaptation of a treatise written in Persian by Afḡal al-Dīn (Bābā Afḡal) al-Kāšānī (d. ca. 610/1213-14), ends with an apograph of the author’s and translator’s colophon, i.e. Šadr al-Dīn (Mullā Šadrā) Muḡammad al-Širāzī (d. 1050/1640): “Muḡammad, also known as Šadr ad-Dīn aš-Širāzī, wrote these lines by his guilty and ephemeral hand in the days and months of the year 1031, compiler and translator [of this treatise], humble and submissive, praising God and asking for His forgiveness through the intercession of His Prophet, praying and blessing His Prophet, may God forgive him, his parents and all the believers wherever they may be in the lands, and God save them from the pains of the Day of Return; God is the one who grants the right way. – Survive will my writing as a token of this temporal existence, while its writer will be buried beneath the stones. [Dated on] Monday, the 29<sup>th</sup> Ramaḡān, may its [*scil.* the holy month’s] blessings come down on the people of faith, in the year 1129 of the sacred Hiḡra, [by] Ibn Muḡammad Raḡīm Isfandyār, may God forgive both [father and son].”

On the text, see R. Mach, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts (new series) in the Princeton University Library*, Princeton 1987, p. 78 n° 338, ms. Princeton n° 2003 (a collection of *Rasā’il* by Mullā Šadrā), ff. 9v-37r, dated 7<sup>th</sup> Šā’bān, 1034 h, copied by M. Bāqir b. Zayn-al-‘Ābidīn Yazdī, where the same colophon is copied from the author’s autograph.

Princeton University Digital Library URL: <<http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/2514nk55z>>.

(The treatise was first printed in *Rasā’il Ahbūd Mullā Šadrā, Kārḡāna-i Aqā Mīrzā ‘Abbās*, Tihṙān 1302/1885, n° 7: pp. 278-340).

There is no direct evidence that the exemplar of the *Utūlūḡiyā* was also transcribed from Mullā Šadrā’s copy, even though the book was found in his personal library; see M. Barakat, *Yaddāštḡā-i Mullā Šadrā hamrā bā fihrist-i kitābhāna-i šaḡṣī-i Mullā Šadrā*, Intišārāt-i Bīdār, Qum 1377 h.š./1998, pp. 65-73; cf. Rizvi, *Mullā Šadrā Širāzī*, pp. 117-13, in part. p. 130, and Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy* (quoted above, n. 117), p. 184, n. 86.

## Appendix II

### Suhrawardī, the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, "Plato", and "Aristotle"

As mentioned above (p. 203 and n. 77), the passage of the *Kitāb Hikmat al-iṣrāq* which alludes to the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* is puzzling: while in the latter the statement "Often I have been alone with my soul and have doffed my body (...)" is attributed to Aristotle,<sup>120</sup> Suhrawardī attributes the saying to Plato, and this not only in the passage quoted above, p. 203, but also in another passage,<sup>121</sup> while in the *K. al-talwihāt* he occasionally remarks that the narrative of the mystical ascension has been attributed also to Aristotle.<sup>122</sup> This mention of Plato attracted first the attention of Carlo Alfonso Nallino. In the 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in his book-length review article of the Italian translation published in 1917 by Ignazio Di Matteo of the mystical poem by Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), apropos a verse which is clearly reminiscent of the topic of the ascension, Nallino remarked:

Par di sentire qui una eco fedele delle prime parole colle quali Plotino (*Enneadi* IV, VIII, 1) descrive le estasi da lui sperimentate (...), descrizione ben nota agli Arabi, che sogliono attribuirli ad Aristotele, trovandosi essa inserita nella *Teologia* del pseudo-Aristotele. (...) La visione è riferita per intero nella *Teologia* (...) e nel trattatello d'al-Fārābī sull'accordo fra Platone e Aristotele (...). Ad essa accenna pure as-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (m. 587 eg.), *Hikmat al-iṣrāq*, 378, ma attribuendola a Platone; il commentatore ash-Shirāzī la riferisce per intero (pp. 378-379), togliendola dal *K. al-talwihāt* dello stesso as-Suhrawardī, dove ancora figura Platone in luogo dello pseudo-Aristotele (Plotino).<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Cf. above p. 204 with n. 84. The narrative in the first person is preceded by the words "*kalām labū*, Discourse of the author", p. 22.1 Badawī. There is no scholarly consensus about the author who is alluded to: according to F.W. Zimmermann, "The Origins of the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*", in J. Kraye, W. F. Ryan, C.-B. Schmitt (eds), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: the "Theology" and Other Texts*, The Warburg Institute, London 1986, pp. 110-240, in part. pp. 143-9 and 217-21, it is Plato, while C. D'Ancona *et al.*, Plotino. *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi* (quoted above, n. 82), pp. 280-2 point to Aristotle. Given that in the standard version of the pseudo-*Theology* the book is attributed to Aristotle, and that there is no mention of Plato at this point, I think that the speech in the first person is referred to Aristotle: the mention of Plato occurs only in indirect testimonies (Suhrawardī and the Latin version) which cannot prevail over the direct testimony of the pseudo-*Theology* itself.

<sup>121</sup> "The faith of Plato and the master visionaries is not built upon such rhetorical arguments, but upon something else. Plato said: 'When freed from my body I beheld luminous spheres'. These that he mentioned are the very same highest heavens that some men will behold at their resurrection "On the day when the earth will be changed to other than this earth and the heavens, and will appear before God, The One, the 'Triumphant'. Plato and his companions showed plainly that they believed the Maker of the universe and the world of intellect to be light when they said that the pure light is the world of intellect. Of himself, Plato said that in certain of his spiritual conditions he would shed his body and become free from matter. Then he would see light and splendour within his essence. He would ascend to that all-encompassing divine cause, and would seem to be located and suspended in it, beholding a mighty light in that lofty and divine place. The passage of which this is a summary ended with the words 'but thought veiled that light from me' ". Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*. A New Critical Edition of the Text of *Hikmat al-iṣrāq* with English Translation, Notes, Commentary, and Introduction by J. Walbridge - H. Ziai, Brigham Young University Press, Provo (UT) 1999 (Islamic Translation Series), pp. 110-11.

<sup>122</sup> *Kitāb al-talwihāt*, ed. H. Corbin, in Shihaboddin Yahya Sohravardi, *Œuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, Académie impériale iranienne de philosophie - A. Maisonneuve, Tehran - Paris 1976 (Bibliothèque Iranienne, n.s., 1), pp. 1-192, in part. pp. 112.10-113.6.

<sup>123</sup> C.A. Nallino, "Il poema mistico arabo d'Ibn al-Fāriḍ in una recente traduzione italiana", *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 8 (1919-1921), pp. 1-106, repr. in Id., *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti*, vol. II. *L'islām. Dogmatica - Šūfismo - confraternite*, a cura di M. Nallino, Istituto per l'Oriente, Roma 1940 (Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto per l'Oriente), pp. 191-288, in part. p. 279 with n. 1.

Ten years later, in his review of Massignon's *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam* (1929) Nallino noticed that in the Latin version of the pseudo-*Theology* the same attribution to Plato occurs. Here is the Latin passage:

Atque hoc idem opinatus est Plato de anima universali dicens: Ego pluries speculando secundum animam relictis corporis exuviis visus sum mihi frui summo bono cum gaudio admirabili, unde restiti quodammodo attonitus; tum, agnoscens me esse partem mundi superioris adeptusque vitam aeternam, sub luce magna inenarrabili inaudibilisque ac incogitabili, lassitudine autem delapsus ab ista speculatione intellectus ad imaginationem lux illa deferuit, unde remansi tristis. Rursum relicto corpore reversus inveni animam luce plenam, et tum corpori influentem, tum supra elevatam. Inquit igitur Plato: qui conatus mundum supremum ascendere intellexerit substantias divinas causasque universales, profecto maximum consequetur praemium.<sup>124</sup>

The hypothesis advanced by Nallino was that two versions circulated in the Arab world, one with Aristotle as the speaker, and another with Plato:

A p. 176 [of Massignon's book] è riportato il famoso racconto dell'estasi di Plotino (*Enneadi* IV 8, 1) secondo la cosiddetta *Teologia d'Aristotele* in arabo: estasi che, narrata in prima persona nella *Teologia*, è quindi considerata dagli Arabi come estasi d'Aristotele. Mi sia permesso qui di osservare che dieci anni or sono (...) avevo rilevato che il racconto si trova anche in due opere del famoso mistico eterodosso as-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, ma attribuito a Platone anziché ad Aristotele; aggiungo ora che questa stessa attribuzione a Platone ricorre anche nel rimaneggiamento latino, attraverso versione ebraica, della predetta *Teologia di Aristotele*, fatta fare intorno al 1515 dal ravennate Francesco Roseus o De Roseis e stampato per la prima volta a Roma nel 1519 (...). Ciò fa supporre che effettivamente corressero fra gli Arabi due diverse redazioni della *Teologia*, almeno per quel che riguarda questo capitolo, e che il "Platone" d'una delle due sia una confusione, facilmente spiegabile presso gli Arabi, in luogo di "Plotino".<sup>125</sup>

This explanation did not meet the approval of Geoffrey Lewis, the translator of the Arabic Plotinus into English: since the "discourse of the author" is said to be an allegory (*ramz*), Lewis suggested that the translator into Latin was spontaneously led to refer the speech to Plato, who famously expresses himself allegorically.<sup>126</sup> When he discovered the so-called "Longer Version" of the pseudo-*Theology*, Andrei Borisov<sup>127</sup> also noted that it expands the text with respect to the standard version; the comparison with the Latin version convinced him not only that the Latin version had been made on the basis of the "Longer Version", but also that the latter was the original version of the pseudo-*Theology*, while the standard version was, in his eyes, an abridgement.

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<sup>124</sup> *Sapientissimi Philosophi Aristotelis Stagiritae Theologia sive mystica philosophia secundum Aegyptios noviter reperta et in latinum castigatissime redacta*, Romae 1519, Liber Primus, caput quartum, fol. 3 r. The text is identical also in the edition published by Francesco Patrizi da Cherso at the end of his *Nova de universis philosophia* under the title *Mystica Aegyptiorum et Chaldaeorum a Platone, voce tradita, ab Aristotele excepta et conscripta philosophia*, Ferrariae, apud Benedictum Mamarellum, 1591, Liber primus, Caput quartum, p. 5 r.

<sup>125</sup> C.A. Nallino, review of L. Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam* (1929), *Oriente Moderno* 10 (1930), pp. 47-50, repr. in Id., *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti*, pp. 466-72, in part. pp. 470-1.

<sup>126</sup> G. Lewis, *A Reexamination of the so-called Theology of Aristotle*, PhD Thesis, St. John Baptist College, Oxford 1949, p. 256.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. above p. 206 and n. 92.

If so, one may think that in the original version the speaker was Plato: this is the hypothesis advanced by Zimmermann.<sup>128</sup> According to D'Ancona, the mention of Plato by Suhrawardī and in the Latin translation is best accounted for by the presence in the standard version of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, at the end of the first chapter (where the narrative of the ascension is located), of a long passage where the author, "Aristotle", praises "the noble divine Plato, *Aflātūn al-šarīf al-ilāhī*" for his doctrines.<sup>129</sup> Finally, Garth Fowden thinks that Suhrawardī substituted Plato for Aristotle on his own devising:

Al-Suhrawardī's so-called 'illuminationist' philosophy was in part inspired by the Arabic version of Plotinus' *Ennead* 4.8.1 on the experience of shedding the body and beholding "the sublime light high in that divine place" – though, realizing al-Kindī's "Aristotle" could not possibly have said this, al-Suhrawardī reattributed the idea to Plato.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Zimmermann, "The Origins of the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*", thinks that it was Ibn Nā'ima al-Ḥimšī, the translator of Plotinus into Arabic, who substituted Plato for Plotinus (p. 145). Fenton, "The Arabic and Hebrew versions of the *Theology of Aristotle*" (quoted above, n. 82), p. 260, sides tentatively with the opinion that Plato stands for Plotinus in Suhrawardī's source.

<sup>129</sup> D'Ancona, "The Greek Sage" (quoted above, n. 76).

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Fowden, "Pseudo-Aristotelian Politics and Theology in Universal Islam" (quoted above n. 78), p. 71 (= p. 143).



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