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Cover

Mašhad, Kitābhāna-i Āsitān-i Quds-i Raḍawī 300, f. 1v; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, grec 1853, f. 186v

An Unnoticed Fragment of the Ps.-Theology of Aristotle in a Manuscript of Averroes' Talḥīṣ al-Mantiq Preserved in Iran

Banafsheh Eftekhari, Teymour Morel*

Abstract

This article reports the discovery of a fragment of the ps.-*Theology of Aristotle* in a codex preserved at the Library, Museum, and Documentation Center of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It will be shown that this fragment presents the peculiarity to accompany a copy of Averroes' logical works, namely, the Middle Commentaries on the first four books of Aristotle's *Organon*.

Widespread texts, unusual neighbors

This brief note reports the discovery of a hitherto unnoticed fragment of the ps.-*Theology of Aristotle* (*Uṭūlūḡiyā Aristūṭālīs*) in a codex preserved at the Library, Museum, and Documentation Center of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran, shelfmark: 1981.¹ Located on f. 1r, the fragment covers the end of the fourth *maymar*, titled, *Fī šaraf 'ālam al-'aql wa-ḥusnihi* (*On the glory and beauty of the world of mind*),² corresponding to §§ 54-59 in Geoffrey Lewis' translation.³ We provide a transcription of this fragment below. Interestingly, besides the fragment of the ps.-*Theology of Aristotle*, the codex happens to include Averroes' Middle Commentaries (*Talḥīṣ*) on the first four books of Aristotle's *Organon*, namely, the *Categories* (ff. 1v-24v), *On Interpretation* (ff. 25v-49v), the *Prior Analytics* (ff. 49v-123r),⁴ and

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¹ The manuscript is cataloged in 'A. Ḥā'irī, *Fibrīst-i Kitābhāna-yi Maḡlis-i šūrā-yi millī*, Čāphāna-yi Maḡlis-i šūrā-yi millī, Tīhrān 1345 hš, t. V, p. 478. It was described on the ABJAD database of the PhASIF program at <http://abjad.phic-project.org/> (last consulted 9 June 2023).

² Fr. Dieterici (ed.), *Die sogenannte Theologie des Aristoteles, aus arabischen Handschriften zum ersten Mal herausgegeben*, J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig 1882, reprinted in Fr. Dieterici, *Die Philosophie bei den Arabern im X. Jahrhundert n. Chr. Gesamtdarstellung und Quellenwerke*, Georg Olms, Hildesheim 1969, t. XI, pp. 52.16-54.2; *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'Arab*, ed. 'A. Badawī, Maktabat al-naḡḡa l-miṣriyya, al-Qāhira 1955 (Dirāsāt islāmiyya, 20), pp. 63.3-64.5.

³ Plotini *Opera*, Tomus II, *Enneades IV-V*, ed. P. Henry - H.-R. Schwyzler, *Plotiniana arabica ad codicum fidem anglice vertit Geoffrey Lewis*, Désclée de Brouwer-L'édition universelle, Paris-Bruxelles 1959 (Museum Lessianum, series philosophica, 34), §§ 54-59, pp. 383.38-385.22.

⁴ The text of the *Prior Analytics* is missing its end in this copy. It abruptly ends in the middle of the second

the *Posterior Analytics* (ff. 125r-IIr⁵). The witnesses of the ps.-*Theology* are known to be many and widespread, including in Iran.⁶ Therefore, finding unknown fragments of that work in manuscripts, as is the case here, is not so surprising. The same can be said about Averroes' Middle Commentaries on the first four books of the *Organon*, which, like other of his works, received particular attention in Safavid Iran.⁷ However, to find side-by-side a fragment of the ps.-*Theology* – a paraphrase of Books IV-VI of Plotinus' *Enneads* – and commentaries on logic by Averroes, a supporter of Aristotelianism rather than Neoplatonism, is, in our view, quite remarkable. All the more so since these texts were both copied by what appears to be the same scribe (see below). Of course, such a singular vicinity could be accidental. Yet, if intended, what would be the reasons behind it? Further research will have to address that question, which will, in turn, allow us to better appreciate the circulation of these two great corpora. To enrich the investigation data, we will limit ourselves here to highlighting the elements in the codex that could help us define the context in which it was produced and used over time.

A codex from Safavid Iran

A few words about the context of the production of the manuscript. The fragment of the ps.-*Theology* and Averroes' Middle Commentaries – at least for the most part⁸ – were transcribed by the same copyist in a quite characteristic *šikasta nasta'liq* script. The copyist is anonymous. Only the copy of the *Categories* is accompanied by a dated colophon, on f. 24v, stating that it was completed on a Wednesday in the middle of *Šafar* 1079, most probably, *Šafar* 15/July 25, 1668. Since the copyist is the same, the fragment presumably dates from around the same time. Unfortunately, we do not know the scribe's identity nor where the codex was copied. Yet, it can be assumed that it was produced in Safavid Iran, where Averroes' Middle Commentaries on the four first book of the *Organon* received special attention,

maqāla, i.e., on p. 175, l. 19 in Badawī's edition in Ibn Rušd, *Talḥiṣ al-Qiyās li-Aristū*, ed. 'A. Badawī, al-Mağlis al-waṭanī li-l-ṭaqāfa wa-l-funūn wa-l-ādāb, Qism al-turāt al-'arabī, al-Kuwayt 1408/1988 (al-Silsila l-turāḡiyya, 17).

⁵ The *Posterior Analytics* end on the recto of the folio following f. 176, which we consider to be the second guard leaf of the manuscript, in accordance with the PhASIF protocol—whereby the first and last unnumbered folios of the volume are regarded as guard leaves, even if they contain text.

⁶ The ERC Project "Greek into Arabic" (AdG 249431) has inventoried over a hundred copies of the work; see the 'Manuscripts' section in https://g2a.ilc.cnr.it/Teologia_Wapp/Home.xhtml?centerPage=teologia (last consulted on 9 June 2023). See also M. Aouad, "La *Théologie d'Aristote* et autres textes du *Plotinus Arabus*," in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, CNRS-Éditions, Paris 1989, t. I, pp. 541-90, in part. pp. 545-6, 566, 573, 577. According to the union catalog *FANĤĀ*, the number of witnesses preserved in Iran is 69; see M. Dirāyatī, *Fibrīstgān-i nuṣḡahā-yi ḡaṭṭī-yi Īrān (Fanḡā)*, 45 t., 1390/2012-1394/2015, t. II, pp. 557-62.

⁷ See G. Endress, "Le Projet d'Averroes: Constitution, réception et édition du corpus des œuvres d'Ibn Rušd," in G. Endress - J. A. Aertsen - K. Braun (eds.), *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition*, Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 1999 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, 31), pp. 3-31, in part. p. 15; R. Pourjavady - S. Schmidtke, "An Eastern Renaissance? Greek Philosophy under the Safavids (16th-18th centuries AD)," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 3 (2015), pp. 248-90, in part. p. 265; the "Digital Averroes Research Environment" (DARE) database, at <https://dare.uni-koeln.de/> (last consulted on 9 June 2023); Dirāyatī, *Fibrīstgān* (above, n. 6), t. IX, pp. 157-8, 171, 185-8 (Middle Commentaries on the *Organon*). Additionally, the MAYT program has so far inventoried a total of 161 witnesses of one or another of the Middle Commentaries on the *Organon*—some of which seem to have gone totally off the radar. The major part of those witnesses is of Iranian origin.

⁸ Throughout the copies of the Middle Commentaries, differences can occasionally be observed in the handwriting style and calamus (e.g., ff. 7v-8v, 12v-14r), sometimes within the same page. In our view, such changes may very well belong to a single copyist practicing different writing styles. Still, it cannot be excluded that several scribes worked together on the manuscript.

as said above, as well as the ps.-*Theology*, for that matter, which was used as “a textbook in its own right” among 16th-17th-century Iranian philosophers.⁹ Other inscriptions found on f. 1r tend to concur with our assumption (see below, p. 226). Finally, the various scribal corrections, annotations, and variant readings in the margins indicate that the codex was copied and studied within a scholarly context, perhaps in a *madrasa*.

Paratextual elements: from Mashhad to Tehran

Among the paratextual elements the manuscript includes, the latter’s three oldest seals are gathered on f. 1r (see Appendix). Only one is legible, the leftmost of the three. Its content, however, provides us with no date or owner’s name. What can be read is *Huwa l-‘Alī* (“He is the Most High”), in reference to one of God’s names. On the other hand, the rightmost seal (starting with ‘*Abduhu*) is accompanied by an inscription dated 1215 hš/1800, according to which the codex was bought in the city of Mashhad. What seems to be the same seal is found on the verso of the first lower guard leaf (f. IIv) and is accompanied by an almost identical inscription dated 1216 hš/1801. These two elements indicate that the manuscript was, if not produced, at least preserved in the city of Mashhad, a major economic, religious, and scholarly center in Iran and the Šīrī world in general. When the volume was eventually brought to Tehran and acquired by the Library of the Parliament—founded in 1302 hš/1923, at the end of the Qajar period, as the Library of the National Parliament (*Kitābhāna-yi Mağlis-i šūrā-yi millī*)—is unknown. According to the register, all that can be said is that it was purchased from the belongings of a certain Ašraf al-Mulk Falsafī after his death.¹⁰ In the manuscript, a library’s inventory stamp affixed to the upper inside cover indicates that the codex was already part of the Library of the Parliament in 1336-1337 hš/1957-1959.

Two short quotations attributed to Plato and Aristotle

On f. 1r, below the fragment of the ps.-*Theology*, the scribe added two brief yet interesting quotations attributed to Plato and Aristotle:¹¹

Hū [i.e., God]

The divine Plato said: “Thousands of propositions for which I have no demonstration have just proved to be true to me.” Aristotle said: “These current sayings are like the ladder [leading] towards the sought step. Whoever wants to reach it should reach another natural disposition for his soul”.¹²

هو
قال افلاطون الالهى قد تحقق الى الوف من المسائل ليس
لى عليها برهان قال ارسطوطاليس هذه الاقوال المتداوله
كالسلم نحو المرتبه المطلوبه فمن اراد ان يحصلها
فليحصل لنفسه فطره اخرى

These two quotations, most likely apocryphal, and the origin of which is unclear, appear in treatises written by Iranian Šīrī authors, the earliest of which seems to be the *Mağālis*

⁹ M. Terrier, “Mīr Dāmād (m. 1041/1631), philosophe et *mujtabid*. Autorité spirituelle et autorité juridique en Iran safavide shī’ite”, *Studia Islamica* 113 (2018), pp. 121-65, in part. p. 154. Translation is ours.

¹⁰ The codex is recorded under n° 27959 in the register. We thank Mahmoud Nazari, Head of the library’s manuscripts department, for kindly checking the register for us.

¹¹ Here we transcribe Arabic text following the rules of the PhASIF protocol, available at <https://phasif.fr/>.

¹² On the notion of *fiṭra*, see Averroës (Ibn Rushd), *Commentaire moyen à la Rhétorique d’Aristote*, ed. M. Aouad, 3 t., Vrin, Paris 2002, t. III, p. 25, n. 1; J. Hoover, “Fiṭra,” in K. Fleet – G. Krämer – D. Matringe – J. Nawas – E. Rowson (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2019, pp. 423-6.

al-mu'minīn (*Assemblies of the Believers*) by Qādī Nūr Allāh Šahīd, also known as Nūr Allāh b. Šarīf Šūštārī (956/1549-1019/1610).¹³ Šūštārī refers to them within a development concerning the attainment of certainty (*yaqīn*).¹⁴ Two ways (*tarīqa*), he says, allow us to reach certainty. First, the way of the people of speculative reasoning (*abl-i nazar*) – who are called the philosophers (*ḥukamā'*) and the learned (*'ulamā'*). It leads to certainty through speculative reasoning (*nazar*) and inference (*istidlāl*). The other way is that of the people of poverty (*abl-i faqr*) – who are called the gnostics (*'urafā'*) and the friends of God (*awliyā'*). It attains certainty through [spiritual] purification (*tašfiya*) and the perfecting (*istikmāl*) [of the soul]. Similar in their objective, he adds, both ways follow distinct approaches which are of unequal quality since the latter is closer to the truth (*ḥaqīqa*). To support this view, he first alludes to the story of the meeting between the mystic Abū Sa'īd b. Abī l-Ḥayr (357/967-440/1049) and the philosopher Avicenna (370/980-428/1037).¹⁵ He then moves on to the two abovementioned quotations, arranged in reverse order (first Aristotle, then Plato).

The fragment: text and variants

The variants in our fragment are numerous. One is illegible.¹⁶ Many probably derive from scribal errors,¹⁷ some of which deprive the text of any meaning.¹⁸ A few other variants differ slightly¹⁹ or more significantly²⁰ from the lessons established in Dieterici, Badawī, and Lewis.

Here is a full rendering²¹ of the fragment (T) that we have collated with the text established by Dieterici (D, pp. 52.16-54.2) and Badawī (B, pp. 63.3-64.5). We also refer to Lewis' translation (L) when deemed significant. The critical edition and French translation of the ERC Project "Greek into Arabic" (AdG 249431) are in preparation, and, for the time being, the text of the program's Arabic Pericopes is that of Badawī.²² For a reproduction of the fragment, see the Appendix. In the footnotes, we give all the variants provided by the fragment except for the *hamza* and undotted letters the *ductus* of which does not correspond to a different word. For the fragment's codicological characteristics, see the manuscript description, which is fully available on the ABJAD database.²³

¹³ See M.H. Hosain, "Nūr Allāh al-Sayyid b. al-Sayyid Sharīf al-Mar'ašī al-Ḥusaynī al-Shushtarī," in C.E. Bosworth - E. van Donzel - W.P. Heinrichs - G. Lecomte (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, t. VIII, pp. 123-4, in part. p. 124.

¹⁴ Nūr Allāh Šūštārī, *Mağālis al-mu'minīn*, 2 t., Islāmiyya, Tihṙān 1377 hš, t. II, p. 3.

¹⁵ See Muḥammad b. al-Munawwir b. Abī Sa'īd b. Abī Ṭāhir b. Abī Sa'īd b. Abī l-Ḥayr, *Asrār al-tawḥīd fī maqāmāt al-šayḥ Abī Sa'īd*, Čāphāna-yi Fardīn wa birādar, Ṭihṙān 1313, pp. 155-156; transl. in Mohammad Ebn E Monawwar, *Les étapes mystiques du shaykh Abu Sa'id. Mystères de la connaissance de l'Unique*, trad. et annot. M. Achena, Desclée de Brouwer, s. n. 1974, pp. 199-200.

¹⁶ The word following *sutūḥ al-ağrām*.

¹⁷ E.g., *li-kull wāḥid minhum ma'wdu'an; ġami' al-quwwa*.

¹⁸ E.g., *wa-lā šay' ḥāss al-munṭabi'* [57]; *fa-li-dālika šarat bi-kullihā yabšar ba'dahā*.

¹⁹ E.g., *wa-hum lā yabšarūna l-ašyā' allatī taqa' tahta l-kawn wa-l-fasād*.

²⁰ E.g., *wa-kull dālika l-'alam samā'ī*.

²¹ In the Appendix we transcribe the Arabic text as faithfully as possible, including letter-pointing, *hamza*, *šadda*, and all voluntary or accidental variants copied by the scribe.

²² Version 1.0.0. See https://g2a.ilc.cnir.it/Teologia_Wapp/Home.xhtml?centerPage=teologia. It includes part of the text, up to *wa-lā yubfā 'alā ba'd šay' mim mā fī ba'd al-batta* (V 8[31], 3.27-4.7).

²³ ABJAD is currently undergoing a major revamp and will be available in Open Access soon.

Appendix

قال فى الحكمة الرابع من اثولوجيا¹
والروحانيون اصناف وذلك ان منهم من يسكن السماء التى فوق هذه السماء النجومية والروحانيون
الساكنون فى تلك السما كلهم² كل واحد منهم فى كليه³ سمائه الا ان لكل واحد منهم موضوعا⁴
معلوما غير موضع صاحبه لا⁵ تكون الاشياء الجرمية التى فى السماء لانها ليست باجسام ولا تلك
صار كل واحد منهم فى كليه تلك السما ونقول ان من وراء السماء جسم ايضا [أيضا] ولذلك⁶
العالم سمائي وليس هناك وكل ذلك⁸ هذا العالم سماء وارض وبحر وحيوان ونبات وناس سماويون⁷
بعضهم من بعض شئ ارضي البته والروحانيون الذين هناك ملايين للانسان الذي هناك لا ينفر⁹
وكل واحد لا ينافي صاحبه ولا يضاده بل يستريح اليه وذلك ان مولدهم من معدن واحد وقرارهم
تقع تحت الكون والفساد وكل واحد منهم يبصر يبصرون الاشياء التى¹¹ وجوهرهم واحد وهم لا¹⁰
هناك نيّره مصيئة وليس هناك شئ مظلم البته ولا شئ حاس¹³ ذاته فى ذات صاحبه لان الاشياء¹²
بل كل واحد منهم نير ظاهر لصاحبه لا يخفى عليه منه شئ لان الاشياء هناك ضياء فى المنطبع¹⁴
بعض البته¹⁷ ولا يحفى على بعض شئ مما فى سى يبصر بعضها¹⁶ ضياء فلذلك صارت بكلها¹⁵
بل انما نظرهم اذ ليس نظرهم بالاعين الدايره الجسدانية الواقعة على سطوح الاجرام المك.و.ه.¹⁸
التى للحواس الخمس جميع القوه²¹ التى اجتمع فى الخا الحاسه الواحده²⁰ بالاعين العقلية الروحانية¹⁹

¹ قال ... اثولوجيا T : om. D B.

² كلهم T : om. D B.

³ post كليه add. فلك D B.

⁴ موضوعا T : موضوعا D B.

⁵ post لا add. كما D B.

⁶ ولذلك T : ولذلك D B.

⁷ وارضاً وبحراً وحيواناً ونباتاً وناساً سماويين : T D وارض ... سماويون B.

⁸ ذلك T : من في هذا D B.

⁹ ينفر T B : يتغير D "shunning" L [Plotini Opera (above, p. 223, n. 3), II, p. 385].

¹⁰ لا T : om. D B.

¹¹ post لا add. التى D B.

¹² post الاشياء add. التى D B.

¹³ حاس T : حاسياً D حاسياً B "hard" L [II, p. 385].

¹⁴ المنطبع T : لا ينطبع D B "unimpressible" L [II, p. 385].

¹⁵ كلها T : كلها D B.

¹⁶ post بعضها add. بعضاً D B.

¹⁷ شئ add. et del. T : om. D B.

¹⁸ المك.و.ه. * non legitur T : المكونة D B "coloured" L [II, p. 385].

¹⁹ الروحانية : T الروحانية D B.

²⁰ الحاسه الواحده : T الحاسه الواحده D B "in whose one sense" L [II, p. 385].

²¹ القوه T : القوى D B "the faculties" L [II, p. 385].

فى هناك مكتفيه بنفسها مستغنيه عن الاغراق²⁴ بل الحاسه السادسه²³ مع قوه الحاسه السادسه²² خارجة عن ولا خطوط²⁷ ابعاد مسامته²⁶ الالات اللحميه اذ ليس بين مركز دايه العقل وبين مركزه²⁵ ذلك فانها بخلاف²⁹ المركز الى الدايه لان هذا من صفات الاشكال الجرميه فاما الاشكال الروحانيه²⁸ ابعاد بينهما³² عليها واحده وليس³¹ اعنى ان مراكزها والخطوط التي تدير³⁰

²² B T : السارية D "the sixth" L [II, p. 385].

²³ B T : بل الحاسه السادسه D "Indeed the sixth sense" L [II, p. 385].

²⁴ T : الاغراق B "apportionment" L [II, p. 385].

²⁵ T : مركزه D B "the circle of its distances" L [II, p. 385].

²⁶ T : مسامته D B "spacial" L [II, p. 385].

²⁷ D B : خطوط T : خطوطا.

²⁸ D B : الروحانيه T : الروحانيه.

²⁹ B : بخلاف ، D : بخلاف T : فانها بخلاف.

³⁰ D B : تدور T : تدير.

³¹ B : ليس D T : وليس.

³² D T : بينهما B : بينهما.

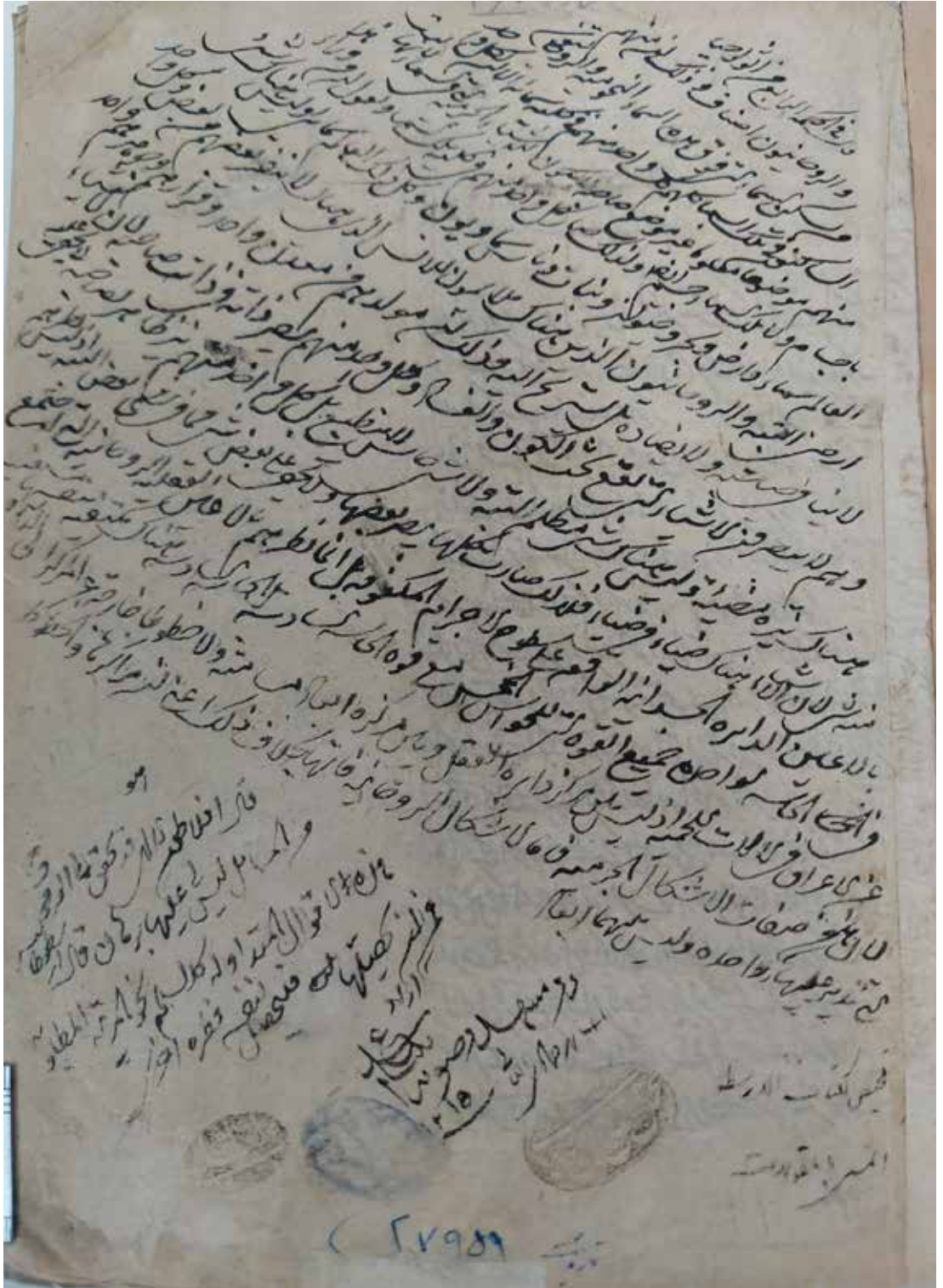


Fig. 1. MS Mağlis-i Šūrā-yi Islāmī 1981, f. 1r. © Kitābhāna Mūzih wa Markaz-i asnād-i Mağlis-i šūrā-yi islāmī, Tihṙān.

