

## TWO QUESTIONS THE *MAS'ALATĀN* AND THE AVICENNIAN CORPUS

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**Résumé.** Cet article met en lumière un court traité inédit, le *Mas'alatān* (Deux questions), attribué à Avicenne (d. 1037). Alors que le premier témoin du texte, le manuscrit Ayasofya 4853, contient une part substantielle des textes laissés par Avicenne, eux-mêmes partiellement intégrées aux *Mubāḥaṭāt* et aux *Ta'liqāt*, le *Mas'alatān* est resté un ouvrage autonome à la circulation limitée. Il s'agit donc d'abord de vérifier son authenticité d'après les données disponibles. Cet article présente une édition critique du texte ainsi qu'une traduction parallèle, mais il sert également d'étude de cas sur les possibilités de vérification de l'auteur. Il rassemble également des informations codicologiques, mais il propose surtout un commentaire, en analysant les arguments du texte et en les comparant à ce que l'on sait de manière incontestable des positions d'Avicenne. La première question porte sur le fait de savoir si tout existant est localisé dans l'espace, tandis que la seconde explore l'impossibilité d'un corps infini réel. Le commentaire interprète le texte en tenant compte du contexte culturel et théologique qui a pu inspirer de telles interrogations, et tente également d'aborder son influence ultérieure. Outre le fait qu'il dévoile un texte jusqu'alors inédit à la communauté scientifique pour des recherches plus approfondies, il met également en question l'attribution avicennienne du texte.

**Abstract.** This article brings to light a previously unedited short treatise, the *Mas'alatān* (Two Questions), attributed to Avicenna (d. 1037). While the earliest witness to the text is the Ayasofya 4853 manuscript, containing a substantial portion of Avicenna's Nachlass, some of which is integrated into the *Mubāḥaṭāt* and *Ta'liqāt*, the *Mas'alatān* has remained a standalone work with limited circulation. Consequently, the primary concern revolves around the verification of its authenticity and its feasibility given the available data. This article presents a critical edition of the text alongside a parallel translation but it also serves as a case study on the possibilities of authorship verification. It also compiles information from codicology, nevertheless, it primarily focuses on the commentary that analyses and compares the arguments to Avicenna's unquestionably authentic solutions. The first question addresses whether every existent is spatially located, while the second explores the impossibility of an actual infinite body. The commentary endeavors to interpret the text against the cultural and theological background that may have inspired such inquiries, meanwhile also seeks to address its later influence. In addition to unveiling a hitherto unseen text to the scholarly community for further research, it also offers an insight into the limitations of authorship attribution.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The treatise titled *Masʿalatān* (Two Questions) is one of the numerous works attributed to Avicenna (d. 1037), the central figure of Islamic philosophy. Due to his profound cultural influence, a considerable number of titles circulated under his name in the manuscript tradition, including works of uncertain origin. A typical example of such texts is the *Masʿalatān*, which, unfortunately, is not listed in any of Avicenna’s medieval bibliographies and is found in only two manuscripts according to Dimitri Gutas.<sup>1</sup>

The following article serves as a compelling case study on how to approach such materials. Although we are aware that this task would be more straightforward if Avicenna’s unquestionably authentic corpus were critically edited, still, the study of the spurious material is a desideratum providing a deeper understanding of Avicenna’s *œuvre*. As a first step, we present a critical edition of the text with a parallel English translation. Subsequently, we provide codicological remarks that contextualize the transmission history of the manuscripts, followed by a commentary, highlighting the contents and logical structure of the argumentation. This will offer internal evidence of the relation between the treatise and Avicenna’s teaching in his authenticated works. In essence, the primary objective is to gain an insight into the significance of this hitherto unedited text within the context of the Avicennian and post-Avicennian philosophy.

One of the intriguing questions of the vast Avicenna-corpus, due to Avicenna’s reputation, is the problem of authenticity, which piqued the interest of a growing number of scholars in the past decades.<sup>2</sup> One of the early pioneers, David Reisman proposed methodological guidelines for approaching spurious texts. He emphasized the distinction of

<sup>1</sup> Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Leiden / Boston, 2014), p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> David Reisman, “The Pseudo-Avicennan Corpus I,” in John McGinnis, David C. Reisman (eds.), *Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam. Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Avicenna Study Group* (Leiden / Boston, 2004), p. 3–21; David Reisman, “The Ps.-Avicenna Corpus II: The Šūfistic Turn,” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 11 (2010), p. 243–259; Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 389–391; Meryem Sebti, “La question de l’authenticité de l’Épître des états de l’âme (*Risāla fī ahwāl al-nafs*) d’Avicenne,” *Studia Graeco-Arabica*, 2 (2012), p. 331–354; Frank Griffel, “On the Authenticity of the Throne Epistle (*Al-risāla al-ʿarshiyya*) Ascribed to Avicenna,” in Daniel De Smet, Meryem Sebti (eds.), *Penser avec Avicenne. De l’héritage grec à la réception latine, en hommage à Jules Janssens* (Leuven / Paris / Bristol Conn., 2022), p. 193–231.

“witnesses” between external and internal evidence. External evidence refers to “information about the text not found in the text itself,” including the manuscript tradition, codicology, external references to the work in historical accounts, bio-, and bibliographical treatises. On the other hand, internal evidence is derived directly from the text, that is, terminology, syntax, style, metaphors, and greetings.<sup>3</sup> Although this approach remains valid, it seems better to avoid prioritizing one set of evidence over the other in verifying authenticity.<sup>4</sup> We assume that the key is to gather as much data as possible, as the main challenge is the scarcity of information in most cases. Unfortunately, this scarcity is also evident in the case of the *Mas'alatān*. The external witnesses are so few that we are left alone with the internal evidence, which is similarly limited, namely, the text itself and its relation to other works in the Avicennian and post-Avicennian traditions. Authorial style, however, in terms of technical terms, argumentation, theory or general stylistics is elusive, and always allows ample room for variation, as authors can readily modify their writing style or theoretical approach. In the context of Avicenna's works, what is “Avicennian” is hardly definable. Thus, to refine our investigation, a more specific question should be asked, framing it negatively: is there any evidence in our set of data that excludes or significantly undermines the probability of the Avicennian authorship? If the answer to this question is negative, namely, no evidence is present that sufficiently jeopardizes its authenticity when compared to the authentic Avicenna corpus, we consider the work in question as “Avicennian,” meaning that it could be equally written by Avicenna himself, or by another individual representing his thought or philosophical legacy. If this line of reasoning proves viable and precludes the exclusion of Avicennian authorship, the question of whether the author is Avicenna himself, or another individual writing in the later tradition, becomes more complex, depending primarily on the scarcity of data gathered from later authors. In a lucky scenario, one might find the needle in the haystack, if sufficient data is provided explicitly linking the text to a certain author. However, nothing assures that this is the case. The more probable assumption is that the text was penned by an unknown author rather than a well-known, and documented thinker.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Reisman, “The Pseudo-Avicennan Corpus I,” p. 12; 16–20.

<sup>4</sup> Dimitri Gutas leans towards the importance of codicological data (Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 390–391), whereas David Reisman gives equal weight to internal textual evidence.

<sup>5</sup> Hence, the following analysis seems uncertain due to its corpus-dependence. This applies to stylometric experiments as well, which might project the text into a vector

Despite the challenges inherent in this endeavour, our objective is to collect evidence that contributes to addressing the authenticity question. This project, among others, offers valuable insights into the possibilities and limitations of such a scholarly undertaking. Thus, in addition to presenting the text of the *Mas<sup>2</sup>alatān* to the scholarly community, the following study aims at exploring the potentials of the critical edition of lesser-known works.

## 2. CODICOLOGY

According to Dimitri Gutas' *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, the *Mas<sup>2</sup>alatān* counts only two copies.<sup>6</sup> It is found in the Ayasofya 4853 (hence: A 4853), which contains valuable material for Avicenna's question-answer corpus, most of which was incorporated into the *Mubāḥāṭāt*.<sup>7</sup> The second codex is the Nuruosmaniye 4894 (hence: N 4894), which is a later, large colligatum of Avicenna's works.

### 2.1. Ayasofya 4853 fol. 40r, line 14 – fol. 41r, line 7<sup>8</sup>

The Abjad / PhiC-PhASIF database contains the following description: the codex contains 135 folios, with one and three flyleaves at the end and the beginning, respectively. It is written on oriental paper (yellowed-ivory colour), with dimensions of 165\*115 mm. The written surface is about 125\*75–80 mm. A trace of *mīṣṭara* can be observed in 21 lines per folio. It was written in dark brown ink, with a *nashī* script, and bound along the shorter side of the paper. It contains Bayazit II's ownership seal (fol. 2r; 134v) and another *waqf* seal of Maḥmūd I, the Hunchback (1730–1754).<sup>9</sup>

The codex counts 35 treatises, most of which are attributed to Ibn Sīnā. The *Mas<sup>2</sup>alatān* has no distinct title; the header labels it as

space of authorial stylistic features, but will always depend on the collected corpus. Nevertheless, in a lucky scenario, it might give a definite result, which will still need verification.

<sup>6</sup> GP-PS 2, Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 451; Yaḥyā Maḥdawī, *Fihrist nuskahā-i muṣannafāt-i Ibn Sīnā* (Tīhrān, 1333/1954), 218 [109]. I am grateful for the Süleymaniye library in Istanbul for granting access to the copies of the manuscripts.

<sup>7</sup> Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 453; David Reisman, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition. The Transmission, Contents, and Structure of Ibn Sīnā's Al-mubāḥāṭāt (The Discussions)*, (Leiden / Boston / Köln, 2002), p. 50.

<sup>8</sup> See also Reisman, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition*, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> The data were quoted from the Abjad / PhiC-PhASIF database (<http://abjad.phic-project.org/>). I am deeply indebted to Josep Puig Montada for granting me visitor access.

(*Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān ayḍan min kalāmihi rawwaḥa Allāh rūḥahu and qaddasa ramsahu aḥaduhumā anna laysa kull mauḡūd fī ḡiha wa-l-tānī fī nafy al-ḥalā<sup>3</sup> wa-tanāhīhi in kāna*). Although this descriptive header is merged into the body, the second question (On the denial of the void and its finitude if it were) has a distinct subtitle. The text has no colophon. As far as the orthography is concerned, vocalisation, *šadda* and *sukūn* are occasional; the punctuation is systematic; and initial *hamzas* are omitted. Although some scholars date the manuscript in the 13th century, as David Reisman notes, this assumption seems baseless.<sup>10</sup>

It is to be noted that the title does not mention Avicenna as the author; rather, it follows the copyist's formula to introduce Avicenna, with the following epithet: [...] *ayḍan min kalāmihi rawwaḥa Allāhu ramsahu wa-qaddasa nafsahu*, which also precedes some fifteen other texts in the codex.<sup>11</sup> This epithet, however, follows the labels *afḍal al-muta<sup>3</sup>aḥḥirīn* and *ḥuḡḡat al-ḥaqq*,<sup>12</sup> and seems to derive from a Sufi background.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2. *Nuruosmaniye 4894 fol. 200r, line 21 – fol. 200v, line 6<sup>14</sup>*

According to the Abjad / PhiC-PhASIF database, the volume counts 597 folios with six and one flyleaves at the beginning and the end, respectively. It has a dark brown leather binding with a size of 70\*360\*225 mm. It is written on yellowed ivory paper (225\*355 mm), whereas the written surface is 120\*240 mm. Signs of *miṣṭara* are present, containing 37 lines per folio, in *nashī* script, with black ink, sometimes with red at the headings. The copyist is unknown. It contains two seals of ownership: the former is Bayazīt II's (1481–1512) on folio 597v, whereas the latter is attributed to Baṣīr (1745–1746) folio 1r. A *waqf* donation is executed by <sup>c</sup>Uṭmān III (1753–1757) as it appears on flyleaf Vr.<sup>15</sup>

The codex allegedly contains 138 treatises, most of which are attributed to Ibn Sīnā. The title is written with red ink in an abridged

<sup>10</sup> Reisman, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition*, p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> Ayasofya 4853 fols. 2v, 9r, 13r, 13v, 31r, 41r, 45v, 48r, 50v, 53v, 59r, 79r, 94r, 94v, 99v, 101v.

<sup>12</sup> Ayasofya 4853 fols. 1v, 9r.

<sup>13</sup> On the connections of the Sufi tradition and the Avicennian philosophy, see Reisman, "The Ps.-Avicenna Corpus II."

<sup>14</sup> A similar description can be found in Reisman, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition*, p. 44. Reisman offers another solution as to the *waqf* seal, however, the Abjad / PhiC-PhASIF project seems to be right.

<sup>15</sup> All these data are received from the Abjad / PhiC-PhASIF project.

fashion: *Masʿalatān min kalām al-Šayḥ al-Raʿīs Abī ʿAlī Sīnā fī bayān anna kulla mawǧūdīn* (*basmala* is inserted in black ink, of the same size as the body text) *laysa fī ġiha wa-nafy al-ḥalāʿ*. The *basmala* in the middle indicates that the red main title was added afterwards.<sup>16</sup> The title exactly matches with the A 4853 variant: *Masʿalatān ayḍan min kalāmīhi rawwaḥa Allāh ramsahu and qaddasa nafsahu aḥaduhumā anna laysa kull mawǧūd fī ġiha wa-l-tānī fī nafy al-ḥalāʿ wa-tanāhīhi in kāna*. The treatise has no colophon. Vocalisation, *sukūn* and *šadda* are occasional, the punctuation is irregular, and initial hamzas are usually omitted.

The rendering of the subtitle indicates that N 4894 depends on A 4853. The epithet *rawwaḥa Allāh ramsahu wa-qaddasa nafsahu* is peculiar of the former codex, where the copyist regularly uses it. The insertion *ayḍan min kalāmīhi* also seems causeless because the main title contains the name of Ibn Sīnā, whereas in A 4853 it was quite in line with the copyist's reference system. Furthermore, other treatises, especially those surrounding the *Masʿalatān* in N 4894, show a similar trend,<sup>17</sup> all containing the epithet *rawwaḥa Allāh ramsahu wa-qaddasa nafsahu*. Other treatises, however, contained in both volumes, do not share these features.<sup>18</sup> This observation seems to imply that only a section in N 4894 fol. 199–204 contains treatises related to A 4853.<sup>19</sup>

This reasoning points to the direction that the Nuruosmaniye 4894 is based on the Ayasofya 4853, or, at least, on its derivative or archetype, implying and confirming the assumption that the Ayasofya 4853 is earlier.

<sup>16</sup> The same applies to the treatise above on the same folio, *Kalām fī al-akhlāq*.

<sup>17</sup> *Risālat al-arzāq*, N 4894, fol. 199r, line 7, A 4853, fol. 2v; *Kalām fī al-akhlāq*, N 4894, fol. 200r, line 13, A 4853, fol. 50v; *Risāla fī al-ḥadath*, N 4894, fol. 200v, line 7, A 4853, fol. 13r; *Min kalām al-Šayḥ fī khataʿ man qāla* [...], N 4894, fol. 201v, line 21, A 4853, fol. 53v; *Fawāʿid al-Šayḥ al-Raʿīs fī sabab ijābat al-duʿā*, N 4894, fol. 203v, line 5, A 4853, fol. 99v; *Min kalām al-Šayḥ al-Raʿīs fī masʿalat al-mantiq*, N 4894, fol. 204r, line 14, A 4853, fol. 101v.

<sup>18</sup> *Risāla fī aqsām al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*, A 4853, fol. 103v, N 4894, fol. 57; *Risāla al-ṭayr*, A 4853, fol. 99v, N 4894, fol. 205; *Risāla fī istinād ḥaqīqat al-fadāʿ*, A 4853, fol. 88r, N 4894, fol. 81; *Risāla al-ʿaql wa-l-nafs*, A 4853, fol. 52v, N 4894, fol. 559; *Risāla nayrūziyya*, A 4853, fol. 48r, N 4894, fol. 57; *Risāla fī ʿašara masāʿil*, A 4853, fol. 13v, N 4894, fol. 594; *Risāla fī al-aḥlāq*, A 4853, fol. 9r, N 4894, fol. 68.

<sup>19</sup> Whether it constituted a quire, can be only explored if the structure of the whole volume is examined.

### 2.3. *The comparison of the two versions*

Consequently, the two variants closely resemble each other. As implied by the title and the use of the epithet, N 4894 appears to be derived from A 4853, wherein these elements seamlessly integrate into the overall style of the colligatum, exhibiting indications of a deliberate arrangement. The textual variants do not challenge this assumption. Although half a sentence is incorporated into N 4894, which is on the margin in A 4853,<sup>20</sup> due to a *signe-de-renvoi* it is clearly identifiable in the text. Both manuscripts share a common mistake, that is, a repetition of half a sentence,<sup>21</sup> but N 4894 repeats another *bis*,<sup>22</sup> which is found at the beginning of a line in A 4853. There is only one instance that contradicts the dependency of N 4894 on A 4853, namely the reading of *a<sup>c</sup>zam mā* (A 4853) instead of a better fitting *a<sup>c</sup>zamuhumā* (N 4894). Nevertheless, as a stand-alone observation, this is insufficient evidence against the dependency of N 4894. It could easily be argued that the copyist corrected the reading or that the immediate archetype of the latter is different, belonging to the same family. In summary, A 4853 represents the earlier and firmer exemplar of the text.

## 3. COMMENTARY

As we mentioned in the introduction, the *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān* is not listed in either of Avicenna's bibliographies.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, A 4853 contains many Avicennian fragments and important, scattered question-answer material, a part of which was incorporated into the *Ta<sup>c</sup>liqāt* and the *Mubāḥaṭāt*.<sup>24</sup> The *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān* fits well into this context.

As its title tells us, the text contains two questions: the first is an argument showing that not every existent is spatially located, whereas the second addresses the impossibility of the void. The questions do not show any internal coherence, nor share a frame of a broader topic or purpose; they rather seem to be just juxtaposed philosophical problems.

<sup>20</sup> *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān*, p. 206, line 15–16: *ma<sup>c</sup>nā [...] wa-al-wāḡib al-musta<sup>c</sup>mal*.

<sup>21</sup> *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān*, p. 206, line 16–17: *bihi al-wāḡib bi-dhātihi [...] al-wāḡib bi-ḡayrihi*.

<sup>22</sup> *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān*, p. 207, line 14: *bi-l-ḡarūra wa-man jawwaza wuḡūd al-ḡalā<sup>3</sup>*.

<sup>23</sup> Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 451.

<sup>24</sup> Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 453; Reisman, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition*, p. 50–51.

### 3.1. The first question

The first question deduces that there is at least one existent, which lacks spatio-temporal determination. The problem, although implicit, seems to belong to the proofs of God's existence. To be more precise, it aims to show that not all existents are spatially located, implying the existence of at least one incorporeal entity. The text, as we will see, offers a philosophical deduction along very Avicennian lines.

The idea in the first question builds on the *burhān al-ṣiddīqīn* and the composition of bodies: all that is composed is possible of existence; but there is a thing, which is necessary of existence in itself, which, in consequence, cannot be either a body or bodily.

The first premise of the main conclusion consists of a composite syllogism. It builds on a disjunction [1.1], the horns of which [1.1.1]–[1.1.2] show that no located entity is necessary. The second premise [1.2] of the conclusion is the abridged version of the *burhān al-ṣiddīqīn*. The conclusion [1.3] summarises the whole reasoning and assures the validity of the hypothesis:

Some existent is necessary	[1.2]
No necessary is in a direction	[1.1.1]–[1.1.2]
Some existent is not in a direction	

The first argument [1.1] divides predicates of "being in a direction". Whatever is described as being in a direction is also described either as being a body or being dependent on a body. It is meant to be a full disjunction, namely that there is no third option besides being a body or being dependent on a body that could be predicated of "being in a direction." Being in a direction means occupying a spatial location: Avicenna takes it for granted that whatever has a corporeal form, namely, whatever is a body, necessarily occupies a spatial position.<sup>25</sup>

Argument [1.1.1] shows that no single body is necessary because all bodies are divisible, and what is divisible cannot be necessary.

Every [single] body receives discontinuity	All A is B
Nothing, which receives discontinuity is necessary	No B is C
No [single] body is necessary	No A is C

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-ṣifāʾ: Al-ilāhiyyāt (1)*, ed. Ğürġ Qanawātī, S. Zāyid (al-Qāhira, 1960); *Al-ilāhiyyāt (2)*, ed. M. Y Mūsā, S. Dunyā, S. Zāyid (al-Qāhira, 1960), p. 72, line 8 – p. 73, line 7; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-iṣārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt lil-Šayḥ al-Raʿīs Ibn Sīnā*, ed. Muġtabā al-Zāriʿī (Qum, 1381/2002), p. 218–219.



This is a perfect Celarent (I.2) syllogism. The first premise that bodies are divisible fits well into Avicenna's theory of bodies. The form of corporeity means that three dimensions might be posited in the subject; the dimensions, in turn, are continuities falling in the category of quantity or their concomitants.<sup>26</sup> To put it otherwise, bodies are naturally divisible.<sup>27</sup>

Although the expression "receives discontinuity" (*qābil al-infiṣāl*) is not alien from Avicenna's vocabulary, he usually uses this expression to differentiate between what receives discontinuity on the one hand, and continuity on the other.<sup>28</sup> The subject of continuity or discontinuity is matter endowed with corporeal form, which serves as the underlying subject of quantitative accidents. Nevertheless, in this context, one would expect a less literal interpretation of the expression, namely the ability of being divisible, not the subject of divisibility. Still, even in the literal interpretation, the second premise is standing because the expression "receives discontinuity" implies materiality, which implies possibility; thus, necessity does not apply to it. Although the term "necessary" (*wāğib*), appears in an unqualified sense, the author at the end (p. 206, lines 16–17) makes clear that the term "necessary" in these syllogisms refers to the "necessary in itself," not to the "necessary in the absolute sense," which includes the "necessary by another."

The tenet that what is necessary of existence in itself is indivisible is a core idea in the al-Šayḥ al-Ra'īs' Metaphysics. First, because composition requires a cause, excluding it from being necessary in itself;<sup>29</sup> and second, because the uniqueness criterion, implying unshareability, also involves either conceptual or ontological divisibility. The Necessary of Existence in itself is not divisible in any way and is conceptually unshareable.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, if the author means by *qābil al-infiṣāl* the

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-ilāhiyyāt*, p. 66, line 15 – p. 67, line 1.

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-ilāhiyyāt*, p. 65, line 4 – p. 66, line 14.

<sup>28</sup> See, Ibn Sīnā, *Al-iṣārāt wa-l-tanbihāt, ma'a Šarḥ Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, 3 vols., ed. S. Duniyā (al-Qāhira, 1960–1968), vol. 2, p. 164–165; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-nağāt min al-ğarq fi baḥr al-ḡalālāt*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānišpazhūh (Tihṙān, 1379/2000), p. 237; 500–501; Ibn Sīnā, *Uyūn al-ḥikma*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Bayrūt-al-Kuwayt, 1980), p. 48–49.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-ilāhiyyāt*, p. 37, line 14–15; p. 38, line 1 – p. 39, line 14.

<sup>30</sup> See, Ibn Sīnā, *Al-mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, ed. 'Abdallāh Nūrānī (Tihṙān, 1383/2004), p. 11 (= Ibn Sīnā, *Al-nağāt*, p. 556ff.); Ibn Sīnā, *Al-ilāhiyyāt*, p. 43, line 4 – p. 47, line 5; Ibn Sīnā, *Uyūn al-ḥikma*, p. 57; Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt-i dānšnāma-i 'alā'ī*, ed. Muḥammad Mu'īn (Tihṙān, 1353/1975), p. 73–76; Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-hidāya*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abduh (al-Qāhira, 1974), p. 360–361, Ibn Sīnā, *Al-iṣārāt* (Ṭūsī), vol. 3, p. 28–30.

concept of divisibility, [1.1.1] and [1.1.2] are more closely connected to another *Išārāt* passage, the 23rd *faṣl* of the fourth *namat*, as it will turn out shortly.

The second horn of the disjunction [1.1.2] shows that nothing which is dependent on a body is necessary. This argument practically consists of two syllogisms, the first of which is deficient; its conclusion is the first premise of the second syllogism.

Every dependent on a body	
is in need of something else in its existence	All A is B
Nothing, which is in need of	
something else in its existence is necessary	No B is C
Nothing, which is dependent on a body is necessary	No A is C

This syllogism, similarly to the former one, is also a perfect Celarent (I.2). All that is dependent in its existence on a body is in need of a body in its existence. Since a body is something else than an item that is dependent on a body, the first premise immediately follows from this assumption.

Whatever the expression "dependent on a body" covers, seems to amount to any accident that accompanies a body, which, in turn, is a substance. This inference is standing since an accident always needs a subject in its existence, so it cannot be necessary in itself in any way. The expression "depending on the body" is not alien to Avicenna's vocabulary either. It usually describes the relation of soul and body,<sup>31</sup> but sometimes also refers to bodily accidents,<sup>32</sup> especially in the *Išārāt* (4th *namat*, 23rd *faṣl*), where it appears in a context similar to this question, namely, that what is a sensible body or depends on a sensible body, is not necessary of existence in itself.<sup>33</sup> The chapter adduces numerous arguments: what depends on a sensible body in existence, is necessitated by the body, implying that whatever depends on a body, is possible. Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in his commentary on the *Išārāt* interprets this passage that whatever resides in a substrate (*maḥall*), needs it (*muftaqir ilayhi*), and what is in need (*muftaqir*), is not necessary, but

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-šifāʾ: Al-ṭabīʿiyyāt. Al-naḥs*, ed. Jūrj Anawātī, Saʿīd Zāyid (al-Qāhira, 1975), p. 170, 204, 232.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-šifāʾ: Al-ṭabīʿiyyāt. Al-samāʿ al-ṭabīʿī*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr, Saʿīd Zāyid (1983), p. 169.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-išārāt* (Tūsī), vol. 3, p. 47–48. Every sensible body is divisible, either in quantity or in meaning (to matter and form, for example); thus, they are effects, and possible in themselves. Furthermore, sensible bodies have multiple instantiations, which also requires a cause, thus, they are all possible in themselves.

possible.<sup>34</sup> The text of the *Mas<sup>ʿ</sup>alatān* [1.1.2] is closer to Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's version than to Avicenna's by introducing the expression of *muftaqir* (being in need), which entails possibility.

The term *muftaqir* is not a frequent technical term in Avicenna's vocabulary. It appears twice in the *Iṣārāt*. First, it is part of the *mutakallimūn*'s opinion that explains the *fā<sup>ʿ</sup>il / maf<sup>ʿ</sup>ūl* relation,<sup>35</sup> and second, it corresponds to the need of matter for form.<sup>36</sup> Although it also appears twice in the *Mubāḥaṭāt*,<sup>37</sup> and in the *Maqūlāt*,<sup>38</sup> this is not Avicenna's wording for being in need in the framework of discussions on modality. Nevertheless, in Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Šarḥ al-Iṣārāt* it appears 74 times.<sup>39</sup>

Argument [1.2] is practically the recapitulation of the *burhān al-siddiqīn*, in the form of a conditional. The text admits that there is a thing which is Necessary of Existence [in itself] because if all the causes were possible, they would run *ad infinitum*, which is impossible.

If [all] the causes were possible,	
they would run ad infinitum	If P, then Q
[They do not run ad infinitum]	Not Q
Not all causes are possible	Not P

The idea is a classic in Avicenna's philosophy.<sup>40</sup> Although the text is elliptic,<sup>41</sup> the inference is granted: since not all causes are possible, there is at least one Necessary of Existence; and this will serve as the first premise of the summarising syllogism.

Finally, argument [1.3] provides the answer to the question posed in the treatise, in the following form:

<sup>34</sup> Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Šarḥ al-Iṣārāt wa-l-tanbihāt*, ed. ʿAlī Riḍā Najafzāda, 2 vols. (Tih-rān, 1384/2002), vol. 2, p. 376.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-iṣārāt* (Zārī<sup>ʿ</sup>ī), p. 279–280.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-iṣārāt* (Zārī<sup>ʿ</sup>ī), p. 200.

<sup>37</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-mubāḥaṭāt*, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar (Qum, 1371/1992), p. 65, 136.

<sup>38</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-šifāʿ: Al-mantiq. Al-maqūlāt*, ed. Ğūrğ Qanawātī, Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ḥuḍayrī, Aḥmad Fuʿād al-Ahwānī, Saʿīd Zāyid (al-Qāhira, 1958), p. 50, 51.

<sup>39</sup> Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Šarḥ al-Iṣārāt*, vol. 2, p. 82, 83, 84, 85, 96, 335, 347, 348, 350, 353, 358, 361, 366, 373, 374, 376, 386, 387, 388, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 401, 403, 407, 408, 414, 424, 441, 499, 502, 512, 534.

<sup>40</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-ilāhiyyāt*, p. 39, lines 5–16; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-mabdaʿ*, p. 22–23, Ibn Sīnā, *Al-nağāt*, p. 568–570; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-hidāya*, p. 265; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-iṣārāt* (Ṭūsī), vol. 3, p. 36–48; Ibn Sīnā, *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, p. 55–56

<sup>41</sup> The universal quantifier is missing in P, similarly to the negation of Q. Furthermore, for Avicenna, only the quantitatively ordered infinite is impossible, with a definite time limit; all these conditions are missing in the reasoning.

Some existent thing is necessary,	Some A is B
No necessary is in a direction	No B is C
Some thing is not in a direction	Some A is not C (= not all A is C)

This is a Ferio (I.4) syllogism, the conclusion of which, if conversed, corresponds to the negation of the initial supposition; thus, the statement that all existent is in a direction is false.

To sum up: the first question sounds somewhat naive in asking whether everything that exists is spatially located. As the author admits in the conclusive remarks (p. 206, lines 18–19), his answer offers a logical proof against an opinion that stems from bare human estimation that everything that exists is in a direction, spatially located, and sensible. Some, who cannot imagine anything beyond sense-perception, might naively think that all that exists is what can be seen. This answer is a logical deduction with firm premises and of stable form, proving the opposite of the initial supposition.

Despite the author’s remark that the problem arises from human naivety, the question of whether all existents are spatially located is reminiscent of *kalām* debates about God’s nature. From early on, some Muslims, especially those who stuck to a literal interpretation of the Qur’ān, thought that God is a body. Usually, they were labelled as the *ḥašwiyya*, *muğassima*, or sometimes *mušabbiha*, perhaps linked to the Hanbalites, although Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal would not have agreed.<sup>42</sup> Such a radical, literal interpretation was usually rejected both by the Ash‘arites and the Mu‘tazilites, although the problem was more complicated, due to *āyas* like 25:29: “[...] then established Himself on the throne” (*tumma istawā ‘alā al-‘arṣ*), or those that assert God’s vision. Several solutions circulated as to whether God is spatially located, at least in one dimension – namely – versus the throne. Similarly, if God has vision, he must be in a spatial location vis-à-vis the sensible objects.<sup>43</sup> Such Qur’ān-verses, however, stand at odds with the generally accepted proof for the existence of the Creator, the “four principles” argument, which states that [1] there are accidents, [2] all the accidents are created, [3] bodies-

<sup>42</sup> Al-Šahristānī, *Al-milal wa-l-niḥal*, ed. Amīr ‘Alī Mahnā, ‘Alī Ḥasan Fā‘ūr (Bayrūt, 1993), p. 118–123.

<sup>43</sup> Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ġazālī, *Al-iqtisād fī al-i‘tiqād*, ed. Anas Muḥammad ‘Adnān al-Šarfāwī (Dār al-Minhāġ, s. a.), p. 111–120; Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Tamīmī al-Baġdādī (Bayrūt, 1981), p. 76–78; al-Ġuwaynī al-Imām al-Ḥaramayn, *Kitāb al-irṣād ilā qawāti‘ al-adilla fī uṣūl al-i‘tiqād*, ed. Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Sā‘ih, Tawfiq ‘Alī Wahba (al-Qāhira, 2009), p. 47–48; al-Šahristānī, *Al-milal wa-l-niḥal*, p. 118–123.

atoms cannot be devoid of accidents, [4] so bodies-atoms are created, hence, there must be a Creator. The question, therefore, whether God is a body became a classical topic of *ṣifāt*, namely God's attributes. Accordingly, al-Ġuwaynī addresses the question at length,<sup>44</sup> and similarly, al-Ġazālī, in the *Iqtisād*, builds his 7th postulate upon the idea that God is not in a direction at all.<sup>45</sup>

The text of the *Mas<sup>ʿ</sup>alatān* seems to draw on the 23rd *faṣl* of the fourth *namaṭ* of the *Iṣārāt*, which also addresses the very same question: Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī admits that it is meant to show that the Necessary of existence in itself is not a body, nor a dependent from it.<sup>46</sup> Regarding the incorporeity of God, Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī usually adduces an argument that runs parallel to this question-answer. Since every extended existent is possible, and what is necessary of existence in itself is not possible in itself, the necessary of existence in itself is not extended. The premise, however, that every extended is possible is proved with divisibility as the middle term, but the term *muftaqir* for being in need is significant in these paragraphs.<sup>47</sup> Although the *Mas<sup>ʿ</sup>alatān* is slightly different, it seems to be close to this set of problems, despite the fact that it contains no explicit reference to the theological question of God's corporeity. As far as technical terms are concerned, the presence of *muftaqir* points to the direction that it is closer to Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's style than to Avicenna's, but it is by no means conclusive evidence against authenticity.

### 3.2. Question 2

The second question does not seem to be connected to the first. Although it is still about spatiality, it takes a different direction, demonstrating that there is no actual infinite magnitude. It is practically a

<sup>44</sup> Al-Juwaynī Imām al-Ḥaramayn, *Al-shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. °Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār, Suhayr Muḥammad Mukhtār, Faysal Badīr °Ūn (al-Iskandariyya, 1969), p. 409–427; 510–529.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Ġazālī, *Al-iqtisād*, p. 111–120. In his 9th postulate, treating God's vision, he turns against the *hashwiyya* who could not make sense of any existent unless in direction; thus, they necessarily postulated that God is a body (al-Ġazālī, *Iqtisād*, p. 140; see also Muḥammad b. °Umar Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Nihāyat al-°uqūl fī dirāyat al-uṣūl*, ed. Sa°id °Abd al-Laṭīf Fawda, 4 vols., (Bayrūt, 2015), vol. 1, p. 159).

<sup>46</sup> *Iṣārāt* (Ṭūsī), vol. 3, p. 47–48.

<sup>47</sup> Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Al-arba°in fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥiġāzī al-Saqā, 2 vols. (al-Qāhira, 1986), vol. 1, p. 149. A similar argument is to be found in Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Al-maṭālib al-°ālīyya min al-°ilm al-ilāhī*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥiġāzī al-Saqā, 9 vols. (Bayrūt, 1978), vol. 2, p. 25–26, but instead of divisibility, composition is the middle term. That is to say, what is extended is composite, and what is composite is possible.

variant of the so-called “ladder argument,” or *burhān al-sullam*, well-known especially in the Eastern part of the Islamic world. The reasoning is based on an Aristotelian demonstration against the possibility of the actual infinite body,<sup>48</sup> that is, if a circularly moving body would be infinite, the *radii* stemming from its centre would also be infinite. The distance of the diagonal between two radii would also be infinite, which cannot be traversed. Hence, an infinite body cannot move circularly.

Avicenna elaborates on this argument in *al-Samāʿ al-Ṭabīʿī*. However, he explicitly states that involving motion is superfluous because a simple, static reading is sufficient to show that there is no actual infinite body or actual infinite magnitude extending limitlessly.<sup>49</sup> The argument also appears in the later *Iṣārāt*, albeit incorporated into another context, namely to show that matter cannot exist without a form. Thanks to the *Iṣārāt*, the *burhān al-sullam* became integrated into the *ḥikma* tradition in the Islamic East.<sup>50</sup>

The answer starts with the opposite of the conclusion: there is no actual infinite body because if there was, two infinite intervals might exist [2.1]. If so, the distance between two posited points would continuously increase by a unit as we move towards the infinite [2.2], thus, an infinite number of additions would be possible. The text is elliptic at this point; it seems to omit a disjunction: in this case, these infinite additions would either exist inside one chord or not. [2.2.1] In the first case, it would be infinite, yet delimited by the intersecting points, and finite, which is a contradiction. [2.2.2] In the other case, every supposed intersecting interval is finite and different. [2.2.2.1] If every interval is finite and different, there is a largest instance among them. [2.2.2.2] If there is a largest possible one among them, which cannot be larger, the two initial intervals would break at it and be finite, which is a contradiction. [2.3] Thus, every single body, surface and line is finite (see tab. 1 below).

If we compare the argument to its authentic versions, namely to that of the *Šifāʾ*<sup>2</sup> and *Iṣārāt*, we find that the *Šifāʾ*<sup>2</sup>-version is simpler at one point but more elaborated at another. It is more explicit that a new chord contains the earlier augmentations and it adds a given measure to it so that every new interval / chord contains all the former augmentations

<sup>48</sup> Aristotle, *On the Heavens* (Loeb Classical Library, 1939), book I, chapter 5, 271 b 26–272 a 7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Sinā, *Al-samāʿ al-ṭabīʿī*, p. 215, line 14.

<sup>50</sup> On the history of the argument see Jon McGinnis, “Mind the Gap: The Reception of Avicenna’s New Argument against Actually Infinite Space,” in Ali Gheissari, John Walbridge, Ahmed Alwishah (eds.), *Illuminationist Texts and Textual Studies. Essays in Memory of Hosein Ziai* (Brill, 2018), p. 272–306.

actually. Thus, all the augmentations actually exist as an infinite; so this is an infinite interval containing the former finite lengths but it is still delimited by the two initial radii, which is a contradiction.<sup>51</sup> That is, the *Šifā*<sup>2</sup>-version "stops" at [2.2.1] but elaborates on the reason why a chord should contain an infinite number of additions, no matter how obscure the premise may seem.<sup>52</sup>

In terms of structure, the variant of the *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān* is much closer to the *Išārāt*-version. The second horn [2.2] elaborates on the rather problematic assertion that if there is an infinite number of augmentations, they exist in a chord. This premise is probably the weakest point of this argument because the assertion that there is a possibly infinite number of augmentations in the chord does not necessitate that that chord would ever *actually* exist.<sup>53</sup> As Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī interprets it, since this premise is not evident (*bayyina*), Avicenna comes up with the refutation of its contrary (*ibtāl naqīdihā*).<sup>54</sup> If we suppose that the chord is not infinite, then there must be a chord, which is such that no longer chord comes afterwards that would contain the possible additions. Since no longer chord is present, it would figure the longest possible chord, which is finite, and at this point the two initial radii would stop, not being infinite anymore, leading to contradiction.<sup>55</sup>

The variant of the *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān* does not significantly deviate from this reading, although the style is much simpler: if the chord is finite, then all the chords are finite and different (*mukhtalifa*) from each other entailing that there is a longest possible chord between the two initial intervals, which finally breaks them. The addition of difference is peculiar to the *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān* version, which implicitly plays an explanatory role: if the chords are finite, and different, there must be a longest possible instance. Thus, it leads to a contradiction. In other words, the *Mas<sup>3</sup>alatān* seems to be a simplistic reworking of the *Išārāt*-version.

Thanks to the impact of the *Išārāt* in the later madrasa curriculum, the "ladder argument" became integrated into later scholarly discussions so that it found its place in the *ḥikma* tradition, like in Abharī's

<sup>51</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-samā<sup>c</sup> al-ṭabī<sup>c</sup>*, p. 215, lines 8–14.

<sup>52</sup> On this, see Mohammad Saleh Zarepour, "Avicenna on Mathematical Infinity," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 102, no. 3 (2020), p. 379–425, p. 392.

<sup>53</sup> Zarepour, *Mathematical Infinity*, p. 392–396.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-išārāt* (Ṭūsī), vol. 2, p. 187.

<sup>55</sup> This reconstruction is based on *Al-išārāt* (Ṭūsī), vol. 2, p. 187–188.

*Hidāya*<sup>56</sup> and Kātibī's *Hikmat al-ʿayn*,<sup>57</sup> although it is also to be found in Bahmanyār's *Tahṣīl*.<sup>58</sup> The first link to this continuation was Abū al-Barakāt al-Baġdādī (d. 1165)<sup>59</sup> and the commentary tradition on the *Iṣārāt*, like Šaraf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī,<sup>60</sup> or to mention only the most important thinkers, that of Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1204), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274) and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1364).<sup>61</sup>

However, these texts, being usually more elaborated and offering philosophically more in-depth analyses, do not show any significant sign of influence from the *Masʿalatān*.<sup>62</sup> The question of whether the later commentaries or glosses did rely on it lies beyond the scope of this paper.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The first question addresses the naive impression that only spatially located things exist. Avicenna's *burhān al-ṣiddīqīn* forms the core of the argument, demonstrating the existence of the Necessary of Existence in itself. Since every spatially located entity is possible in itself, it follows that not all existents are spatially located. The second question is a simplified version of the so-called "ladder argument." As our philological observations suggest, in terms of technical terms, structure and argumentation, the *Masʿalatān* is closer to the text of the *Iṣārāt*, than any other Avicennian work.

The *Masʿalatān* is a very brief set of questions, found in the Aya-sofya 4853 containing much of Avicenna's question-answer material

<sup>56</sup> Aṭīr al-Dīn al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Abharī, *Hidāyat al-ḥikma, maʿa ḥāšiyatihā al-ġadīda al-musammāt Dirāyat al-ḥikma*, ed. Kāmīrān Aḥmad al-ʿAṭṭārī, Muḥammad Šahzād al-Naqšbandī al-ʿAṭṭārī (Karachi, 2019), p. 62–67

<sup>57</sup> Naġm al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥusayn Abū al-Maʿālī ʿAlī b. ʿUmar Dabīrān al-Kātibī, *Hikmat al-ʿayn*, ed. Šālīḥ Āyḍīn b. ʿAbd al-Maġīd al-Turkī (s. a.), p. 38.

<sup>58</sup> Bahmanyār b. Marzubān, *Al-tahṣīl*, ed. Murtaḍā Muṭaḥharī (Tīhrān, 1349/1970), p. 348.

<sup>59</sup> Awḥad al-Zamān Hibat Allāh b. ʿAlī b. Malkā Abū al-Barakāt al-Baġdādī, *Al-kitāb al-muʿtabar fī al-ḥikma*, 3 vols. (Iṣfahān, 1415/1994), vol. 2, p. 85, line 17 – p. 86, line 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ayman Shihadeh, *Doubts on Avicenna: A Study and Edition of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī's Commentary on the Iṣārāt* (Leiden / Boston, 2016), p. 201–204.

<sup>61</sup> On the history of the ladder argument, see, McGinnis, "Mind the Gap."

<sup>62</sup> See, Ibn Sīnā, *Al-iṣārāt* (Ṭūsī), vol. 2, p. 183–191; Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Šarḥ al-Iṣārāt*, vol. 2, p. 46–54; Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Rāzī, *Al-muḥākamāt* (Qum, 1375/1955), p. 61–70. This observation similarly applies to al-Abharī, see al-Abharī, *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*, p. 62–64.



some of which may be of uncertain authenticity. The text is so tiny that its authenticity is almost impossible to verify. Despite not being listed in Avicenna's bibliographies and appearing only in relatively late manuscripts, the contents of the treatise do not exclude the authenticity. Nevertheless, its brevity, descriptive title, and limited availability make it unlikely to be a forgery driven by commercial motives. If it is not authentic, it is a misattribution at best, possibly due to its theoretical similarity to Avicenna's oeuvre.

While the material draws heavily on the *Išārāt*, its dependence on that work is not a conclusive argument in favour of its authenticity. Given the enormous influence of the *Išārāt* in the later centuries, the *Mas<sup>ʿ</sup>alatān* fits naturally in the context of the post-Avicennian philosophical discussions. The presence of the term *muftaqir*, more indicative of Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's style than Avicenna's might easily suggest a later madrasa tradition origin. As far as the second question is concerned, it appears to be a simplistic reworking of the "ladder argument" from the *Išārāt*, providing little additional insight.

Regarding the initial question, of whether the text contains evidence to exclude its authenticity, the answer is negative, as shown by the data presented in this article. While the style might appear simple, and some aspects point towards the later tradition, they are insufficient to definitely refute its authenticity, or verify it entirely. The treatise is unmistakably Avicennian, contributing to the vast influence of the al-Šayḥ al-Ra<sup>ʿ</sup>īs. In this case, the label "Avicennian" is the most appropriate, signifying that it is not non-Avicennian on theoretical grounds. While this may sound like a double negation, the overall result is positive. Due to the scarcity of information, however, we are not in a position to decide whether the author is Avicenna himself, or someone following in his footsteps. Although the presence of some features might equally indicate a later origin, the results are not conclusive due to the absence of compelling evidence to definitely associate the text with any known author. Nevertheless, this study is expected to encourage scholars to delve further into the Avicennian corpus to gain a better understanding of his philosophical legacy and cultural impact.

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Tab. 1: Structure of the argument

[2.1] If it goes ad infinitum, there are two radii with an infinitely growing distance one unit by one unit	If P, then Q
[2.2] If so, equal augmentations in infinite number possibly exist	If Q, then R
[If so, they exist either infinitely in one chord or not]	If R then either W [or Y (= not W)]
[2.2.1] If they exist infinitely	If W, then W1
[2.2.2] If they do not exist in one chord, then all these dimensions are finite and different	If W1, then W2
[2.2.2.1] If so, there is a longest possible chord	Not W2 (contradiction), not W1 and not W
[2.2.2.2] If so, the radii break at the intersection with the longest chord	If Y1, then Y2
If so, then they are finite (contradiction)	If Y2, then Y3
[2.3] Every body, surface and line is finite	Not Y3 (contradiction), not Y2, not Y1 and not Y Then not P

## 5. EDITION AND TRANSLATION

5.1. *Apparatus criticus: sigla and abbreviations*

ا	A 4853 fol. 40r, line 14 – fol. 41r, line 7
ن	N 4894 fol. 200r, line 21 – fol. 200v, line 6
+	addition
–	omission
مكرر	iterated
فوق السطر	interlinear addition
؟	questionable reading
[...]	editorial addition that does not pertain to the text

5.2. *Orthography and Grammar*

In contrast to the transmitted texts in the manuscripts, the present edition writes the hamza or supplements it if omitted, according to the modern orthographical standards. Furthermore, it adds the indefinite accusative ending. In the critical edition, A 4853 is used as the base text because it is the older reading, supposedly.

The *šadda* and *sukūn* are not included in the edition. Furthermore, minor orthographical variations are not listed in the apparatus; this applies especially to the following cases:

- inconsistent use of the hamza, especially at the end of the word: الاشيا instead of الأشياء (A fol. 41v, line 7) or مسأله instead of مسألة (A fol. 41v, line 5);
- omission of diacritical marks is not indicated in the apparatus;
- occasional *tanwīn* is not indicated in the apparatus criticus.

Two Questions also from his words, may God revive his spirit and sanctify his soul. The first is about the elucidation [of the tenet] that not every existent is in a [spatial] direction, and the second is on the denial of the void and its finiteness if existed.

[1.1] As for the elucidation that not every existent is in a [spatial] direction, it is that everything that has a direction is either a body or [a thing] depending on a body. Every [single] body or every [single] thing depending on a body is not necessary of existence. Thus, everything that has a direction is not necessary of existence; thus, the necessary of existence is not in a direction.

[1.1.1] The elucidation [of the tenet] that every [single] body is not necessary is that every body receives discontinuity. No thing that receives discontinuity is necessary, thus, no thing, which is a body is necessary.

[1.1.2] The elucidation [of the tenet] that no thing that is dependent on a body is necessary is evident. [The thing] dependent on the body in its existence needs the body in its existence, thus we say that everything, which is dependent on the body needs something else in its existence; and no thing, which needs something else in its existence is necessary, therefore, no thing, which is dependent on a body is necessary.

[1.2] We say that the existence of the thing, which is necessary of existence, has been approved for us because the causes do not run ad infinitum. If there is a [chain of] possible cause[s], it runs ad infinitum; thus, not every cause is possible. Then at least one of the causes is necessary; thus, the existence of the necessary has been approved.

[1.3] We say that some of the existent things are necessary, and no thing of the necessary is in a direction. Thus, some of the existent things are not in a direction, and it is the meaning of our statement that not every existent is in a direction; and this is what we wanted. The [term] necessary used in these syllogisms means the “necessary in itself”, not the “necessary in the absolute sense” so that the “necessary by another” would be implied by it. If our statement that not every existent is in a direction is true, then its opposite, that every existent is in a direction is false. This universal statement is taken by the human soul, following estimation that does not perceive the existent which is not in a direction, and neither is it possible for it. It has been settled that this statement is false.

- ١٤٠١،  
ن ٢٠٠٠
- مسألتان أيضاً من كلامه روح الله رمسه و قدس نفسه إحداهما في بيان أنه ليس كل موجود في جهة والثانية في نفي الخلاء وتناهيه إن كان [١.١] أما بيان أنه ليس كل موجود في جهة أن كل ما له جهة فهو إما جسم أو متعلق بجسم وكل جسم وكل متعلق بجسم فإنه غير واجب الوجود فكل ذي جهة فهو غير واجب الوجود فواجب الوجود ليس بذوي جهة
- ٥ [١.١.١] بيان أن كل جسم فهو غير واجب أن كل جسم قابل للانفصال ولا شيء من قابل الانفصال بواجب فلا شيء من الجسم بواجب
- ١٠ [٢.١.١] وبيان أنه لا شيء من المتعلق بالجسم بواجب | ظاهر فإن المتعلق في وجوده بالجسم مفتقر في وجوده إلى الجسم فنقول كل متعلق بالجسم مفتقر في وجوده إلى غيره ولا شيء مما هو مفتقر إلى غيره بواجب فلا شيء مما هو متعلق بالجسم واجبا [٢.١] ونقول قد ثبت لنا وجود شيء واجب الوجود لأن العلة ليست متسلسلة إلى غير النهاية وإذا كانت علة ممكنة تسلسلت إلى غير النهاية فليس كل علة ممكنة فبعض العلة واجب فقد ثبت وجود الواجب
- ١٥ [٣.١] فنقول بعض الأشياء الموجودة واجب ولا شيء من الواجب بذوي جهة فبعض الأشياء الموجودة ليس بذوي جهة فهو معنى قولنا ليس كل موجود بذوي جهة وذلك ما أردنا والواجب المستعمل في هذه القياسات يعني به الواجب بذاته لا الواجب مطلقاً حتى يدخل فيه الواجب بغيره وإذا كان قولنا ليس كل موجود في جهة صادقاً كان نقيضه وهو أن كل موجود في جهة كاذباً وهذه القضية الكلية تحكم بها النفس الإنسانية إتباعاً للوهم الذي لا يدرك الموجود لا في جهة ولا يمكنه ذلك وقد بان أن هذه القضية كاذبة

<sup>١</sup> مسألتان: + مسألتان من كلام الشيخ الرئيس أبي علي بن سينا في بيان أن كل موجود ليس في جهة ونفي الخلاء [ن]. <sup>١</sup> إحداهما: أحدهما [١، ن]. <sup>٢</sup> والثانية: والثاني [١، ن]. <sup>٣</sup> في: + بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم [ن]. <sup>٤</sup> بواجب: رواجب [١]. <sup>٥</sup> ١٧-١٦ به ... بغيره: مكرر [١، ن]. <sup>٦</sup> الواجب: فوق السطر [ن].

[2] Question on the denial of the void and its finitude if it existed

[2.1] Every interval in a mass or void is finite if its existence is possible. Its demonstration is that if an infinite interval were possible, the supposition of two infinite intervals starting from one starting point would be possible, while the chord between them would be continuously growing by a unit, the number of which is infinite.

[2.2] In consequence, the existence of an infinite number of equal additions would be possible.

[2.2.1] If its existence were possible inside one chord among these intervals, this chord would be infinite, while it is confined between the two extremes, and it is impossible.

[2.2.2] If it were not the case, then every one of these supposed chords between the first two intervals is finite, while being different.

[2.2.2.1] If the chords of every [addition] are finite, while being different, there is a largest [chord] among them, thus, among these chords, there is a largest [chord],

[2.2.2.2] That one would be the largest possible between the first two intervals, and no larger chord would be possible between them. Thus, the two intervals cut off at it and would not go further. But we supposed them to be infinite, [and] this is a contradiction.

[2.3] Thus, every body and every surface and every line is necessarily finite. Who allows for the existence of the void, consequently has to admit that it finishes at a certain limit.

God Almighty knows best the reward, and He is the place of return and the end of the journey.

[٢] مسألة في نفي الخلاء وتناهيه إن كان

[١.٢] كل بعد في ملاء وخلاء إن جاز وجوده فهو متناه برهانه أنه إن أمكن بعد لا يتناهي أمكن فرض بعدين غير متناهيين خارجين من مبدأ واحد لا يزال البعد بينهما يتزايد بقدر واحد لا نهاية لعددها

ن ٢٠٠ ظ

[٢.٢] فيمكن وجود | زيادات متساوية لا نهاية لعددها

[١.٢.٢] فإن أمكن وجودها في بعد واحد من هذه الأبعاد كان هذا البعد غير متناه وهو محصور بين حاصرين وهذا محال

[٢.٢.٢] وإن لم يكن ذلك فكل واحد من هذه | الأبعاد المفروضة بين البعدين ١١ و الأولين محدود وهي مختلفة

[١.٢.٢.٢] وإذا كان بعد كل واحد منها متناهي القدر وهي مختلفة ففيها ما هو أعظمها ففي هذه الأبعاد المفروضة ما هو أعظمها

[٢.٢.٢.٢] فيكون ذلك أعظم بعد ممكن بين البعدين الأولين فلا يمكن بعد بينهما أعظم منه فينقطع البعدان عنده ولا ينفذان بعده وقد فرضناهما غير متناهيين هذا خلف [٣.٢] فكل جسم وكل سطح وكل خط متناه بالضرورة ومن جوز وجود الخلاء لزمه

١٥ القول بتناهيه إلى حد ما

وألله أعلم بالعقاب وإليه المرجع والمعاد

١٠ كان: كانت [١، ن]. ١٠ متناهي: تناهي [ن]. ١١ أعظمها: أعظم ما [١]. ١٤ بالضرورة ... الخلاء: مكرر [ن]. ١٦ وألله ... والمعاد: والحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة على محمد وآله أجمعين [ن].